

**ກອງປະຊຸມໂຕະມົນປະຈຳປີ 2023: ຮ່າງບົດລາຍງານສຳລັບໜ່ວຍງານຂະແໜງການ**  
**RTIM 2023: Sector Working Group Reporting Template**

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*ບົດລາຍງານນີ້ແມ່ນບົດລາຍງານຮ່ວມລະຫວ່າງປະທານ ແລະ ປະທານຮ່ວມໜ່ວຍງານຂະແໜງການ. ກະລຸນາປຶກສາຫາລືຮ່ວມ ກັບໜ່ວຍງານຂະແໜງການຍ່ອຍພາຍໃຕ້ໜ່ວຍງານຂະແໜງການຂອງທ່ານ ຕາມຄວາມເໝາະສົມ, ແລະ ຄັດຕິດບັນດາເອກະສານ ທີ່ກ່ຽວຂ້ອງກັບບົດລາຍງານນີ້.*

*This is a joint report of SWG Chair and Co-chairs. Please consult with your sub-sector working groups as appropriate, and consider annexing relevant documents to this report.*

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SWG Name: **Illicit Drug Sector Working Group**

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## 1. ເປົ້າໝາຍ ແລະ ຄາດໝາຍຫຼັກ ຂອງໜ່ວຍງານຂະແໜງການໃນປີ 2023 (1/2 ໜ້າ)

### 1. Main objectives and targets of Sector Working Group in 2023 (1/2 page)

#### Overview of Sector Performance in 2023

Lao PDR faced a growing illicit drug challenge in 2023, with the methamphetamine market in East and Southeast Asia continuing to expand, and the use of Lao PDR as a transit for methamphetamine trafficked from Myanmar intensifying. These trends reflect a key driver for drug trafficking across the region: major organised crime groups are operating in Myanmar with limited constraints, and are thus boosting production and supply.

The Lao National Commission on Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC) continued to coordinate Laos' response to drug issues. Work has involved substance seizures (including ice /methamphetamine) and heroin, precursor chemical disposal, the establishment of checkpoints along major routes. Several departments within the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), the Customs Department in the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Public Work are also heavily involved in the response to the different threats posed by drug trafficking, production and consumption in Laos.

Work was coordinated under the National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control (NADPCC 2021 to 2023). The NADPCC elevated the importance of drug issues for domestic policymaking, and stipulated additional resources allocating to addressing production, trafficking and usage. The Sector Working Group was briefed on challenges implementing the NADPCC in 2023 including: the knowledge, experience, and skills of officials; infrastructure of drug treatment centres; the storage and disposal of precursor chemicals; budget constraints; and building the capacity of specialised officials.

The NADPCC was extended to 2025 during the 6th Ordinary Session of the National Assembly (November 2023). Focus areas for the extended NADPCC include: re-education programs, legal information dissemination, formulation and improvement of drug laws, data collection, law enforcement, enhanced supervision, streamlining organizational structures, and international cooperation.

Sector outputs and activities	Update on the Progress/note on situation and relevant information to highlight sector performance	Challenges, opportunities and way forwards
<b>A. Actions/activities relating to the RTIM key recommendations and those highlighted in SWG Call for Action 2021/2022/2023</b>		
Enhanced coordination	Agreement was reached for the SWG to proactively coordinate and determine priorities for the sector.	During 2022 the Illicit Drug Sector Working Group determined to enhance coordination through the group. It was agreed: (1) to complement the formal working group mechanism through the holding of smaller, and more regular, informal meetings; and, (2) to establish and Excel based coordination format to be used to identify priorities, develop synergies and mitigate duplication and overlap.
Enhanced border security ( <i>SWG/RTIM recommendation</i> )	<p><b>Notes on the situation:</b> Lao PDR is located in the centre of the Mekong region, a region characterized by high levels of organized crime, and borders all the other Mekong countries. Lao PDR's location and limited capacities make the country an attractive transit point for organized crime groups. Increasing amounts of synthetic drugs and other illegal products are trafficked through Laos.</p> <p><b>Update on progress:</b></p> <p><b>On Border Management:</b> The Government of Laos continues to work with international partners to enhance capacities on Border Management. An important intervention in this regard is the Border Liaison Office (BLO) network, a network of offices at frontline border crossings around the country. 2023 saw the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> BLO in Salavan Province. Technical assistance continues to be provided to these offices, including the provision of equipment, training, and other capacity building measures. The programme is implemented by UNODC jointly with the Ministry of Public Security, and funded by the Government of Japan and by the</p>	Lao PDR is an important transit country for organized criminal networks, and this challenge is likely to increase in the years to come. With on-going regional integration and facilitation of cross border trade and transportation, organized criminal networks are likely to increasingly exploit Lao PDR's porous borders. Enhanced capacities for intelligence driven law enforcement and border control is necessary.

Sector outputs and activities	Update on the Progress/note on situation and relevant information to highlight sector performance	Challenges, opportunities and way forwards
	<p>United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund.</p> <p><b>On Container Control:</b> To improve the control of containers entering the country, a Container Control Unit is supported at the Friendship Bridge in Thanaleng, Vientiane. Support to the unit is provided by UNODC in cooperation with the Government of Lao PDR, and is funded by the Governments of Japan and Australia.</p>	
<p>Proper regulations of Special Economic Zones (<i>SWG/RTIM recommendation</i>)</p>	<p><b>Notes on the situation:</b> Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have become a common tool in Southeast Asia to attract investments and stimulate economic development. However, government regulation and oversight of SEZs are often insufficient, making them targets for organized crime.</p> <p><b>Update on progress:</b></p> <p><b>On Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism:</b> UNODC has continued to work in conjunction with the Lao PDR Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) (Anti-Money Laundering intelligence Office (AMLIO), Bank of Lao), the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance (Customs Department), Office of the Supreme People’s Prosecutor, and the Ministry of Public Security (Economic Police Department), to provide capacity building, through a programme of training events, to enhance institutional compliance with internationally accepted best practice in the field of addressing AML/CFT, and to provide mentoring to improve the implementation and effectiveness of the aforementioned institutions. The AML programme is supported by the Government of the United States.</p>	<p>In August 2023 Lao PDR’s Financial Action Task Force (FATF) 4<sup>th</sup> Cycle Mutual Evaluation was published. The assessment was undertaken by the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), which is a FATF Style Regional Body (FSRB). The evaluation assessed both Lao PDR’s technical compliance and effectiveness in implementing the FATF AML/CFT Standards.</p> <p>The findings and recommendations of the MER provide a framework for the delivery of continued support to improve Lao PDRs AML/CFT infrastructure and, thereby, enhance its capacity to mitigate AML/CFT risks, including those emanating from the illicit narcotic trade.</p> <p>As a result of the strategic deficiencies identified in the MER, Lao PDR is undergoing a 12-month “Observation Period” at the conclusion of which the FATF will consider Lao PDR’s Post Observation Period Report and decide whether it should enter the International Cooperation Review Group process (ie, the grey list).</p>
<p>Enhanced Evidence Based Treatment, including Community Based Treatment (<i>SWG/RTIM recommendation</i>)</p>	<p><b>Notes on the situation:</b> Laos is increasingly becoming a transit country for synthetic drugs. This leads to more availability and more use.</p>	<p>Drug trafficking through Lao PDR has increased dramatically over the past five years, leading</p>

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	<p>While a scientific drug use survey is needed to confirm numbers, it is likely that drug use is on the rise.</p> <p><b>Update on progress:</b></p> <p>Important progress has been made on enhancing and expanding access to <b>Evidence-Based Treatment and Care Services</b>. Support has included medication, technical support and capacity building to 34 Community-Based Treatment (CBTx) sites across the country. Community-based treatment and care services provide alternatives for people who do not require residential treatment and who may be experiencing health and social problems related to their drug use. This work has been implemented by the Government of Lao PDR in Cooperation with UNODC, with funding from the Governments of Japan and the United States.</p>	<p>to increased availability and likely increased use of illicit drugs.</p> <p>There is a significant need to enhance and expand availability of evidence-based drug treatment, as well as to gain better knowledge of drug use patterns.</p>
Sustainable Alternative Development ( <i>SWG/RTIM recommendation</i> )	<p><b>Notes on the situation:</b> Laos continues to be a major producer of opium. Opium is cultivated in all the northern provinces, primarily in poor and remote areas. After a hiatus of eight years, a new opium survey was conducted in 2023. The previous one was conducted in 2015, when an estimated 5,700 hectares were used for opium cultivation. The 2023 results indicate an estimated 5,000 hectares were being used for opium cultivation. Although the overall area of cultivation has remained fairly static over the eight-year period, it is difficult to assess whether there has been a decline and renewed growth, or whether it has actually remained static, because of the lack of surveys during the intervening period. Nevertheless, the need for sustainable alternative development interventions, as well as regular updated opium surveys, remains.</p> <p><b>Update on progress:</b></p>	<p>Opium cultivation continues at high levels in Lao PDR. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted trade channels for legal products, and there remains a risk that more communities will turn to opium cultivation as a consequence.</p> <p>There is a need to expand and build on successful Alternative Development interventions, and to introduce sustainable income alternatives to more communities as an alternative to the cultivation of opium.</p>

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	<p>A model Alternative Development programme continues to be implemented in Huapanh province, where supported communities are in the process of transitioning from illicit poppy to coffee. In 2021, the farmer-owned Vanmai cooperative entered into a long-term commercial agreement with the French coffee roaster Malongo, ensuring the cooperative a market for their coffee until 2025. The cooperative successfully harvested, processed and exported green coffee beans amounting to 20 tonnes, 40 tonnes and 60 tonnes in 2021, 2022, 2023 respectively. The coffee is being sold through Malongo in the European market.</p> <p>Based on the successful model in Huapanh, the Government of Lao PDR requested UNODC to explore possibilities for initiating a similar programme in Phongsaly province and this was successfully commenced in the autumn of 2023. Since then, UNODC has conducted several missions to target areas and has initiated coffee cultivation as alternative to opium poppy.</p> <p>The programme in Lao PDR is implemented by UNODC and the Government of Lao PDR, and is funded by the United States, Luxembourg, Germany, and historically Japan.</p>	
<p>Strengthen systems for data gathering and intelligence sharing, including a National Drug Use Survey (<i>SWG/RTIM recommendation</i>)</p>	<p><b>Notes on the situation:</b> The nature of organized crime means that data are less readily available than for legal activities. However, more data and systems for information gathering is necessary. Importantly, more information on (1) drug use patterns, (2) opium cultivation, (2) border communities, and (4) trafficking patterns are needed.</p> <p><b>Update on progress:</b></p>	

Sector outputs and activities	Update on the Progress/note on situation and relevant information to highlight sector performance	Challenges, opportunities and way forwards
	<p>A study was concluded in 2022 by UNODC on Organized Crime in Border Communities. The study focused on how border communities are affected by organized crime and drivers for their involvement. In addition, the network of Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) has continued to collect data and produce intelligence on trafficking patterns.</p>	
<p>Regional Cooperation (<i>SWG/RTIM recommendation</i>)</p>	<p><b>Notes on the situation:</b> The transboundary nature of Organized Crime makes international and regional cooperation between law enforcement agencies essential. This includes both operational cooperation and cooperation on developing joint policies.</p> <p><b>Update on progress:</b></p> <p>The key policy level regional cooperation mechanism for Illicit Drugs is the Mekong MOU on Drug Control, where heads of drug agencies from all the Mekong countries plus China participate. UNODC provides secretariat services for the MOU. The Senior Officials Meeting and Ministerial Meeting of the Mekong MOU on Drug Control were held in Beijing, China, in September 2023 and the Lao Commission for Drug Control and Supervision and Vice Minister of Public Security actively participated.</p> <p>An additional key mechanism for cross-border operational cooperation is the regional Border Liaison Office (BLO) Network. Intelligence shared through this network continues to be instrumental in drug seizures.</p>	
<p>Improve control and detection of precursor chemicals (<i>SWG/RTIM recommendation</i>)</p>	<p><b>Notes on the situation:</b> there is a need to improve control and detection of precursor chemicals, through strengthened forensic drug laboratories and Law enforcement to identify shifts in the precursor chemical market.</p>	

Sector outputs and activities	Update on the Progress/note on situation and relevant information to highlight sector performance	Challenges, opportunities and way forwards
	<p><b>Update on progress:</b></p> <p>Through the <b>Precursor Control Programme</b>, UNODC has continued to work with Lao PDR to enhance capacities for precursor detection and to raise awareness of challenges associated with non-controlled chemicals for the illicit manufacture of drugs. The precursor control programme is funded by the Governments of Japan and the United States.</p>	
Continue improvement of <b>drug-related judicial instruments</b> , making them more effective and relevant( <i>SWG/RTM recommendation</i> )	<p><b>Update on progress:</b></p> <p>The Government of Lao PDR has developed is implementing a new National Drug Control Master Plan 2021-2025. Given the scale of drug usage, production and trafficking, the Government also decided to make drug control and suppression a National Agenda item for 2021-2023. This has now been extended to 2025. This National Agenda elevates the importance of drug issues for domestic policymaking, and should assist in securing additional resources to addressing production, trafficking and usage.</p>	
Support from other development partners	<p><b>Australia</b></p> <p>Australia’s \$30 million (over eight years, 2021-2029) Mekong-Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime (MAP-TNC) promotes cross-border cooperation between Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos and supports their efforts to tackle drug trafficking, child sexual exploitation and financial crimes. MAP-TNC is delivered through Australian whole-of-government agencies (Australian Federal Police, Australian Border Force, AUSTRAC, Australian Tax Office, Attorney General’s Department and Home Affairs). The program has completed over 2.5 years of implementing including activities in Lao PDR.</p> <p>In November 2022, the Australian Transactions Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) delivered advanced financial intelligence analyst training to AMLIO officers in Vientiane. In September 2023, AUSTRAC also delivered an intelligence fundamentals training to Mekong counterparts, including AMLIO officers, in Phnom Penh. Both training courses enhanced knowledge and developed skills to help provide intelligence on money flows associated with drug trafficking. In February 2023, AUSTRAC provided funding to AMLIO staff to attend an ASEAN</p>	



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	<p>meeting of financial intelligence units held in Singapore, which enhanced regional collaboration on common high-risk issues such as drug trafficking.</p> <p>The Australian Federal Police (AFP) continues to provide law enforcement training and equipment for Lao police engaged in anti-narcotics and other transnational crimes. Increasing direct operational cooperation between the AFP and MPS has resulted in successful operational outcomes for both Laos and Australia, yielding drug seizures and arrests. AFP also continues to facilitate timely and accurate exchange of intelligence between Mekong countries relating transnational serious organised crime.</p> <p>Australia, through the Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Border Force, also supports an ongoing ‘Strengthening Cargo Borders in the Mekong’ program of border law enforcement and border management capacity building with Lao customs officials. Under the AUD 4.5 million, three-year program, Australian Border Force will provide trainers to assist Lao PDR counterparts to better target, detect, search and seize illicit goods in the supply chain, including precursors and illicit narcotics.</p> <p><b>Canada</b> [Update pending]</p> <p><b>European Union</b> [Update pending]</p> <p><b>Germany</b> Germany is also supporting the alternative development project in Houaphanh Province implemented by UNODC. The aim is to introduce sustainable livelihood alternative through coffee cultivation. A farmer’s organization has been established through the cooperation with the German cooperative association DGRV. The project receives funding until the end of 2025.</p> <p><b>Japan</b> Japan has been providing annual training courses titled “Control of Drug Offences” through the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to Lao Government officials. Japan also supports global and regional anti-illicit drug activities that cover the Golden Triangle by funding UNODC projects, including the Global SMART (Synthetics Monitoring; Analyses, Reporting and Trends) program. Since 2018, Japan has supported the provision of materials and equipment for to Ministry of Public Security of Lao PDR to help strengthening its capacity for countermeasures against illicit drugs. This grant aid aims to prevent and combat terrorism-related crimes, including drug trafficking which could lead to terrorist financing.</p> <p><b>Luxembourg</b> Luxembourg has supported the alternative development project implemented by UNODC in Houaphanh Province since 2016 and continues to support the programme as it expands into Phongsaly Province. Through Project LAO/031 “Support to Legal Teaching and Training and to the Promotion of the Rule of Law Concept in Lao PDR” implemented by Luxdev together with ILSTA (Institute for legal support and technical assistance), Luxembourg also supports many activities at the</p>	

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	<p>central and provincial levels of the Office of the Supreme People’s Prosecutor, People’s Supreme Court, State Inspection Authority, Customs and Anti-Money Laundering Intelligence Office amongst others. Activities and themes have included professional skills training courses/workshops/seminars on law and law enforcement matters such as anti-corruption, cybercrime, organised crime including drugs, anti-money laundering and trafficking (drug, human, wildlife, etc.). Luxembourg also facilitated exchanges with agencies from neighbouring countries.</p> <p><b><i>United Kingdom</i></b>  The UK National Crime Agency (NCA) engage with law enforcement partners in Laos, principally the Ministry of Public Security via an International Liaison Officer based in Hanoi Vietnam. This engagement spans all forms of serious and organised crime, most notably human trafficking and child sexual exploitation, and abuse including travelling child sex offenders.</p> <p>During 2023 the NCA visited Laos three time. Two of these visits were bilateral ones where potential training and capacity building were discussed and also to establish clear channels for information sharing. The third visit was for the ASEANAPOL meetings where the NCA brought a delegation of nine officials. The UK has funded two programs supporting Lao Customs in combatting the illegal trade in wildlife and bulk cash smuggling. This support included anti-cash courier training, and an assessment of Wattay International Airport and the Friendship Bridge border crossing with regard to border security and smuggling. A request has been submitted to the Laos authorities for a follow-up visit in relation to customs to identify what further support the UK could provide. The UK hope this visit will take place in the first quarter of 2024.</p> <p><b><i>The United States</i></b>  Supporting Lao government efforts to counter narcotics trafficking and its negative effects on communities is a top foreign assistance objective of the United States. To strengthen law enforcement capabilities, the United States supported numerous workshops to share best practices in narcotics investigation, chemical and precursor chemical identification, and diversion. Additional trainings focused on building capacity to combat cybercrime and money laundering, skills that are critical to the effective investigation of drug trafficking. The United States also supports the interdiction of illegal narcotics through the provision of specialized equipment for Lao Customs, Counter Narcotics Police, the Laos Commission on Drug Control (LCDC), and others. Other support included funding for Alternative Development in Houaphanh Province. This years-long effort has moved local farmers away from the cultivation of illicit opium poppy to instead grow high-quality coffee for export through a community cooperative. The success of the project prompted its expansion in 2023 to Phongsaly Province, where initial activities, including the installation of special areas to grow coffee seedlings, were fully underway at the end of the year. The United States also supports the continued development of Community Based Drug Treatment in Laos to provide evidence-based therapies for those struggling with drug addiction. Support included training for health care staff in</p>	

Sector outputs and activities	Update on the Progress/note on situation and relevant information to highlight sector performance	Challenges, opportunities and way forwards
	community clinics, limited renovation of facilities, and the provision of over the counter supplies for treatment.	

2.ໝາກຜົນ ແລະ ຜົນໄດ້ຮັບ ທີ່ບັນລຸໄດ້ໃນປີ 2023 ພາຍໃນຂະແໜງການຂອງທ່ານ ມີຫຍັງແດ່ ທຽບກັບຄຳແນະນຳ ທາງດ້ານນະໂຍບາຍໃນກອງປະຊຸມໂຕະມົນປະຈຳປີ 2022, ແລະ ແຜນພັດທະນາເສດຖະກິດສັງຄົມແຫ່ງຊາດຄັ້ງທີ 9, ເປົ້າໝາຍພັດທະນາແບບຍືນຍົງແຫ່ງຊາດ ແລະ ແຜນຍຸດທະສາດຂອງຂະແໜງການ? (1-2 ໜ້າ)

2. What are the key results and impacts achieved within your sector in 2023 against the [2022 RTIM policy recommendations](#), and [9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP](#), SDGs and sector strategies? (1-2 pages)

*[Comment DPF: RTIM policy recommendations from 2022 are set out below. The IDSWG is really only centrally concerned with Recommendation 5 and we can talk to the use of the IDSWG as a cooperation, coordination and deconfliction forum...]*

1. Implementation of the 9th NSEDP for the fiscal year 2022 and plan for 2023, this involves recounting the challenges and reviewing the efforts to address them.
2. 9th NSEDP Financing Strategy and seeking development partner support for its implementation.
3. Resilience Framework setting out immediate priority actions for 9th NSEDP implementation.
4. LDC Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) developed by the Government for broader stakeholders, in anticipation of opportunities for more detailed feedback to be organized after the RTIM.
5. Review of progress on development cooperation and the review of the Sector Working Groups (SWGs).

*[Comment DPF: The relevant outcome and outputs from the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP appears to be those set out below, although neither seem to specifically mention illicit drugs...]*

- Outcome 6: Public governance and administration is improved, and society is equal, fair, and protected by the rule of law
3. Output 3: Ensure political stability, peace and order, unity, democracy, justice and civilisation within the society

*[Comment DPF: It may be best for us to focus in this section on National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control (NADPCC 2021 to 2023)... and SDGs 8 and 16...]*

3a. ໂດຍອີງໃສ່ບັນດາຄຳແນະນຳໃນບົດທົບທວນກາງສະໄໝຂອງແຜນພັດທະນາເສດຖະກິດສັງຄົມແຫ່ງຊາດຄັ້ງທີ 9, ບຸລິມະສິດປະຈຳປີ2024 ຂອງໜ່ວຍງານຂະແໜງທ່ານມີຫຍັງແດ່? (1 ໜ້າ)

3.a Building on the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, what are the SWG's key priorities for 2024? (1 page)

3b. ໂດຍອີງໃສ່ບັນດາຄໍາແນະນໍາໃນບົດທົບທວນກາງສະໄໝຂອງແຜນພັດທະນາເສດຖະກິດສັງຄົມແຫ່ງຊາດຄັ້ງທີ 9, ບຸລິມະສິດຂອງໜ່ວຍງານຂະແໜງທ່ານເພື່ອກະກຽມແຜນພັດທະນາເສດຖະກິດສັງຄົມແຫ່ງຊາດຄັ້ງທີ 10 ມີຫຍັງແດ່? (1/2 ໜ້າ)

**3.b Building on the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, what are the SWG’s key priorities for the conceptualization of the 10<sup>th</sup> NSEDP? (1/2 page)**

*[Comment DPF: I have replicated this part from the opening paragraph as this would appear to be the IDSWG priorities for 2024. The MTR is not yet available...]*

The IDSWG discussed progress challenges and opportunities in December 2023 and committed to: formalize strategies, further collaboration, and continued support in addressing the challenges posed by illicit drug trafficking in Lao PDR and in the region. Participants expressed optimism about the progress made and reiterated their dedication to the shared goal of creating a drug-free environment in Lao PDR.

Priority areas for drug control cooperation included law enforcement, drug demand reduction (treatment, rehabilitation, and infrastructure development), drug supply reduction (alternative development, precursor chemical control, and storage/disposal), and capacity building for officials.

4. ບົດຮຽນສໍາຄັນທີ່ທ່ານສາມາດທອດຖອນໄດ້ຈາກໜ່ວຍງານຂະແໜງການ ແລະ ຈາກບົດລາຍງານທົບທວນກາງສະໄໝຂອງແຜນພັດທະນາເສດຖະກິດສັງຄົມແຫ່ງຊາດຄັ້ງທີ 9 ມີຫຍັງແດ່?(1/2 ໜ້າ)

**4. What are the key lessons learned for the SWG, including from the MTR of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP? (1/2 page)**

*[Comment DPF: we really need to see the MTR before being able to provide input here...]*