



Date: May 14, 2024

Minute of meeting

Project Information: National Planning and Financing for Inclusive Development (NPFID) project, 00134240

Subject: RTP Retreat for preparation of the 2024 Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM 2024)

Date: 13 May 2024, at Crowne Plaza hotel

Objective of the Meeting: To disseminate the PM's Instruction to implement the results of the RTIM 2023 and to discuss the draft concept note of the RTIM 2024

Participants:

Attached.

Prepared by: Khamsouk Sophilavanh (Mr), Senior Technical Coordinator

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Reviewed and approved by:



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Date:



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Date:

Name: Ms. Sisomboun Ounavong.
Title: Director General of DIC, RTP secretariat

Name: Ms. Martine Therer.
Title: Resident Representative, UNDP

On May 13, 2024, the Department of International Cooperation, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, organized the 2024 Round Table Process (RTP) retreat to prepare for the Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) 2024. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Sisomboun Ounavong, Director General of the Department of International Cooperation, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and co-chaired by Ms. Martine Therer, Resident Representative of UNDP Lao PDR. There were 63 participants, including 11 women, from various line ministries, development partners, and representatives of the private sector.

In her opening remarks, the chair expressed that the Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) is an inclusive forum for discussing and exchanging views on the progress of implementing the National Socio-Economic Development Plans (NSEDPs) between the government and development partners. Held every five years, high-level round table meetings provide inclusive forums to support the design and implementation of the country's national development plans. RTIMs are conducted annually to review the progress made in the past year and establish joint priorities for the upcoming year.

The RTIM 2023 was held on 13 February 2023 and was chaired by the Minister of Planning and Investment and co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator, with participants from line ministries, provincial government representatives, development partners, NGOs, CSOs, and the private sectors.

The results and the way forward from RTIM 2023 have been delivered to the Prime Minister's office for further instructions to guide relevant stakeholders, namely line ministries, in developing, planning, and taking action to contribute to the achievement of the country's development agenda. The PM's instructions were issued on May 6, 2024, with Reference Number 686/PMO, providing detailed guidance for respective line ministries to integrate actions into the sector development plans.

Given the number of significant events scheduled to take place this year, including the ASEAN Summit in early October 2024 and the National Assembly meeting in November 2024, along with the presentation of the draft 10th NSEDP at the National Assembly meeting, which directly relates to the RTIM 2024 for consultation on the progress of formulating the 10th NSEDP, the chair suggested to conduct the RTIM 2024 in mid-October 2024.

The co-chair also emphasized that RTIM 2023 covered the Mid-Term Review of the 9th NSEDP, highlighting the challenges facing Lao PDR that need to be addressed through cooperation between the government and development partners. It is crucial for the RTIM to assess the role of the SWGs in contributing to the implementation of the 9th NSEDP and in preparing for the 10th NSEDP. Follow-up on the progress of implementing the 9th NSEDP and its supporting financial strategy is necessary to ensure the full integration of a financing strategy into an NSEDP. The outcomes of RTIM 2023 should be incorporated into the SWGs' priorities for implementation. Although time is limited, it is essential for SWGs to include the results of RTIM 2023 in their discussions with development partners to contribute to the formulation of the 10th NSEDP.

I. Objective

The objective of the 2024 RTP retreat is to disseminate the PM's instructions to implement the results of the RTIM 2023 and to discuss the draft concept note for the RTIM 2024.

II. Consultation and Conclusion

The meeting proceeded with the presentation of the Prime Minister's instructions and general information on the draft RTIM 2024 concept note by the DIC-MPI. This was followed by separate group discussions based on the objectives outlined by the chair and co-chair to exchange information on the progress of implementation, drawing from the results of RTIM 2023, and to effectively organize RTIM 2024 inclusively.

During the meeting, recommendations from the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP), the Financing Strategy of the 9th NSEDP, and the RTP guidelines were presented. The challenges currently faced by Lao PDR necessitate cooperation and supportive partnerships from development partners to ensure long-term sustainable and inclusive development. These priorities will be integrated into the Sector Working Groups' (SWGs) agenda for discussions with development partners, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and the private sectors to accelerate the implementation of the 9th NSEDP and contribute to the formulation of the 10th NSEDP.

The parallel group discussions were organized in approximately 40 minutes to discuss on overall aims, themes, focused areas, meeting formats, dates and locations, field visits, other matters, and recommendations for improving RTIM 2024. The results of group discussions are as follows:

1) Group discussion 1:

1. Objective of discussion:
 - To prepare the 10th NSEDP
 - To engage policy discussion to address gaps in socio-economic development
 - To engage implementation monitoring mechanism in preparation of LDC graduation
2. Propose overarching theme for the RTIM 2024: Enhanced Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation to Accelerate the Implementation of the 9th NSEDP and preparation of the 10th NSEDP (2026-2030) for achieving SDGs and LDC graduation.
3. Key focused areas:
 - Data (Lao Social Indicator Survey III)
 - Human Development and Environment for Sustainable Economic Development
 - Digitalization (Cross-cutting)
 - Implementation of the 9th NSEDP Financing strategy, focusing on human capital and demographic transition
4. Format: Prefer one full day event with parallel group discussions
5. Date and Location:
 - Second half of October
 - Vientiane Capital / Luang Prabang (300 Participants)

6. Field visits: To be further discussed
7. Development cooperation and other related matters: To be further discussed
8. Other comments for improvement RTIM 2024:
 - Pre-consultations are needed
 - Propose establishing Energy Sub-Sector Working Group and Social Protection Sub-Sector Working Group
 - Clearly define the role of the Ministry of Finance

2) Group discussion 2:

1. Objective of the discussion:
2. Propose overarching theme: Proposed to merge the following three themes.
 - Enhance Accelerating the Implementation of the results of the 9th National toward 2030 Agenda stability and Preparation of 10th NSEDP
 - Enhanced Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation to Accelerate the Implementation of the 9th NSEDP and preparation of the 10th NSEDP (2026-2030) for achieving SDGs and LDC graduation
 - Enhancing evidence-based policy and monitoring of NSEDP and LDC
3. Key focused areas:
 - LDC
 - VNR3
 - Accelerating the implementation of the 9th NSEDP
 - Formulation of the 10th NSEDP
 - For panel discussion: Should focus on the implementation of the recommendations of the RTIM 2023
4. Format: Option 1: One full day meeting with parallel group discussion; Pre-Consultation meetings 1 or 2 week before RTIM with virtual field visit showing on the RTIM 2024
5. Date and Location:
 - Location: Vientiane Capital
 - Date: 10 October 2024 may not work as ASEAN submit is ongoing during 6-11 October. Propose end of October - early November 2024 as tentative dates
6. Field visits: virtual field visit.
7. Development cooperation and other related matters: Policy discussion should be made more evidence based as we now have the Lao Social Indicator Survey III.
8. Other comments for improvement RTIM 2024: The RTIM 2024 should allow more substantive engagement rather than each party stating one's works.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has proposed that RTIM 2024 should include the results of the ASEAN Summit as one of the key discussion areas. Additionally, the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry has suggested that the outcomes of the private sector and EU plus Australia Forum be included on the agenda of RTIM 2024.

Given that the National Assembly meeting is scheduled for November 2024, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) aims to organize RTIM 2024 before the National Assembly Session to present the results of RTIM 2024 on the formulation of the 10th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) for reporting at the National Assembly. However, the MPI will reconsider the date of RTIM 2024 since the ASEAN Summit will be held in October and the National Assembly Session in November, as well as the time required for RTIM 2024 preparation.

It is crucial that RTIM 2024 takes place in Vientiane Capital, as several major events are scheduled during October and November 2024. The content of RTIM 2024 should include a follow-up on the outcomes of RTIM 2023 regarding data digitalization, the role of Sector Working Groups (SWG) in preparing for the 10th NSEDP and addressing cross-cutting issues missing from the SWG's agenda, namely energy and social protection.

As the Department of International Cooperation (DIC) at MPI serves as the RTIM secretariat, they will report these results to the national steering committee of the Round Table Process (RTP) to seek further guidance for the preparation of RTIM 2024.