

Concept Note
High Level Sector Working Group Chair and Co-Chair Meeting
9 October 2025, Vientiane Capital
Venue: Hotel (tbc)

Background

The Lao PDR Round Table Process (RTP) is the country's principal platform for national development cooperation and policy dialogue, established in 2000 to foster inclusive, transparent, and results-oriented partnerships between the Government and development partners. The RTP is designed to ensure that development assistance is aligned with national priorities, supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and is delivered in a manner that is effective, accountable, and mutually beneficial.

At the heart of the RTP are the principles outlined in the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (VD) and its Action Plan (VDCAP, 2016–2025), which emphasize country ownership, alignment with national strategies, harmonization of partner efforts, results-based management, and mutual accountability. These principles are further reinforced by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), which guides the RTP's commitment to inclusive partnerships, transparency, and a focus on tangible development outcomes.

The RTP is structured around a series of high-level and technical meetings, including the annual Round Table Implementation Meetings (RTIM), the five-yearly High-Level Round Table Meetings (HL-RTM), and regular meetings of the Sector Working Groups (SWGs). The SWGs are the backbone of the RTP, providing a forum for in-depth consultation, coordination, and monitoring of development efforts across ten key sectors: health, education, governance, infrastructure, macroeconomics, trade and private sector, UXO/mine action, illicit drug control, agriculture and rural development, and natural resources management and the environment. Each SWG is led by a government ministry and co-chaired by a development partner, ensuring shared leadership and broad participation from line ministries, national institutions, development partners, civil society, and the private sector.

The International Finance and Cooperation Department (IFCD) of the Ministry of Finance (MOF), formerly the Department of International Cooperation (DIC) of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), serves as the RTP Secretariat. It is responsible for coordinating the overall process, organizing meetings, and ensuring that the principles of effective development cooperation, such as inclusivity, transparency, and mutual accountability are upheld. The Secretariat also plays a key role in facilitating communication between the Government and its partners, tracking progress on agreed actions, and supporting the implementation of national development plans.

2025 marks a pivotal year for the Lao PDR's development agenda. It is the final year of implementation of the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP), which has guided the country's development trajectory over the past five years. The Government and its partners are now engaged in formulating the 10th NSEDP (2026–2030), which will set the strategic

direction for the next phase of national development and coincide with the final stretch toward achieving the SDGs by 2030. The 10th NSEDP is being developed through an inclusive and consultative process, drawing on feedback and recommendations from SWGs, development partners, and other stakeholders to ensure that it is responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Other major milestones in 2025 include the update of Lao PDR's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the launch of the next phase of the Vientiane Declaration (VDCAP 2026–2030), and the country's anticipated graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026. These developments underscore the importance of strong institutions, effective coordination, and sustainable financing mechanisms to support the country's transition to middle-income status and its long-term development goals.

The HL-SWGs Chair and Co-Chair meetings are critical in this context, providing a platform for government and development partners to review progress, share feedback, and coordinate preparations for the upcoming 14th HL-RTM in November 2025. These meetings ensure that the formulation of the 10th NSEDP, the new Vientiane Declaration, and the VDCAP are informed by broad-based consultation and reflect the collective priorities and commitments of all stakeholders. The October 2025 meeting will also feature initial findings from the Sustainability and Institutional Mapping exercise, which aims to strengthen institutional capacity, promote good governance, and ensure the sustainability of development results.

By bringing together a diverse range of actors and perspectives, the RTP and its associated meetings play a crucial role in fostering a shared vision for Lao PDR's development, building consensus on key reforms, and mobilizing the resources and partnerships needed to achieve the country's aspirations.

Objectives

The primary objective of this meeting is to provide a platform for government and development partners to review and discuss the 10th National Socio-Economic Development Plan Version Five, ensuring that it reflects the collective feedback and priorities of all stakeholders. The meeting will also updates on the development of the VDCAP and implementation on the DOHA programme of action, which will guide effective development cooperation in the coming years. In addition, participants will coordinate efforts and share updates in preparation for the 14th High-Level Round Table Meeting (HL-RTM), a key milestone for Lao PDR's development agenda. The meeting will further feature the initial findings from the Sustainability and Institutional Mapping exercise, supporting the country's goal of strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring the sustainability of development results as Lao PDR approaches graduation from Least Developed Country status.

Target delegation of HL-SWGs Meeting:

- Chair and Co-chair of 10 SWGs and secretariat
- Development Partners
- INGOs, CSOs/NPD, LNCCI
- NA and Line Ministries
- Ministerial-level organization