SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Strengthening the capacity of ASEAN Member States to design and implement risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems for resilience

Lao PDR Case Study

WFP
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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings of a case study of Lao PDR's national social protection system, which sought to identify the factors that would enable that system to be responsive to shocks. The case study involved field visits and in-country interviews and is one part of the project titled 'Strengthening the capacity of ASEAN Member States (AMS) to develop risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection for resilience'.

Research design and methodology

With a focus solely on schemes implemented by the Lao PDR government relating to floods and droughts the case study looks at the different aspects of the Lao PDR social protection system that contribute to its effectiveness, including coordination and capacity; delivery and targeting systems; and financing mechanisms. The case study proceeded through three stages: a literature review (including of legislation, policy plans, and programme evaluations); fieldwork (interviews with stakeholders, including ministry officials, United Nations (UN) agency and non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives, government representatives, and village-level respondents); and analysis.

Poverty, risk, and vulnerability profile

Lao PDR is a lower-middle-income country (LMIC) and is classified in the 'medium' category of the Human Development Index (HDI). Despite significant economic progress over the last two decades, Lao PDR still has one of the highest poverty rates in the ASEAN region, with around a fifth of its 6 million people in poverty. According to the World Risk Index (WRI) Lao PDR is a 'medium risk' country and is highly vulnerable to disasters, with high susceptibility, a lack of coping capacity, and a lack of adaptive capacity. Flooding and storms are the most frequent and destructive natural hazards faced in the country. Lao PDR experiences annual monsoon flooding (July–September) and saw major floods in 2009, 2011, and 2013. The floods in 2009 and 2011 affected over 100,000 people, killed dozens, and damaged houses and infrastructure, with an estimated cost of more than US$100 million. In the 2013 flooding, 12 out 17 provinces were severely flooded, affecting approximately 347,000 people and costing the country US$219 million.

Targeting systems

Responsibility – The mandate for disaster risk management (DRM) in Lao PDR is shared across government ministries, co-led by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW). The National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee (NDPCC) is responsible for overall coordination, including recommending the declaration of a state of emergency and requests for humanitarian assistance, as well as developing a master plan for the response and mobilising resources.

Laws, policies, and plans – While draft laws on DRM and climate change are being developed and there are several national-level policies (e.g. the National Disaster Management Plan 2001–2010 and National Disaster Risk Strategic Plan 2003–2020), there is currently no finalised national disaster response plan or associated standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Early warning system and procedures – Lao PDR has a national strategy for its early warning system (EWS), including SOPs. When a disaster is identified, the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH), under MoNRE, issues a written warning to the Prime Minister's Office, and this is sent to the NDPCC and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The warning is broadcast through media outlets and communicated using mobile phones and radio systems.

Disaster risk financing – While there are five funds that can support disaster preparedness and response activities to varying degrees – including the National Contingency Fund and State Reserve Fund and the Disaster Management Fund – stakeholders point to the lack of sufficient contingency funds. International disaster flash appeals were launched in response to the floods in 2008 and 2009, but only 46 per cent and 75 per cent of the funds requested were actually received. Thus, there is an acute need for effective disaster risk financing in Lao PDR.

Gaps in DRM – Overall, the DRM system is not well prepared to anticipate and respond to disasters, especially large-scale disasters. Gaps in DRM provision include poor coordination; a lack of clarity on detailed roles and responsibilities; a gap between actual need and the provision of support (often filled by NGOs and agencies like the Lao Red Cross (LRC)); the fact that district and village bodies do not have sufficient capacity to prepare for disasters or sufficient contingency funds; a lack of accurate, district-level risk profiling and hazard forecasting; and the absence of databases of those affected by disasters.

Social protection in Lao PDR

Overview: The social protection sector in Lao PDR is nascent, with low coverage and the lowest spending among all AMS. MoLSW has the mandate for social welfare (through the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and social security but different ministries and government bodies operate fragmented schemes, including social health insurance, national health insurance, free schooling, the national school meal programme, and old age pensions. NGOs (funded by development partners) run programmes for disadvantaged groups, such as vulnerable children and those affected by disaster.

Policies and plans: The Eighth National Social Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) 2016–2020 commits to improvement of, and access to, social protection, while the Draft National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) 2018–2030 (close to finalisation) envisages that 'By 2030, Lao people have access to basic social protection services…' In line with these documents, the last few years have seen a considerable investment in improving access to and coverage of social security, including health insurance.

Gaps in social protection: Lao PDR does not have any nationwide regular social welfare programmes that provide benefits (either cash or in-kind). Although there have been a number of donor-/NGO-led pilots which have tested the delivery of such benefits there is limited appetite and acceptance of cash-based assistance in the country. While the DRM sector provides relief in the immediate aftermath of a shock, it provides almost no direct support to affected households or communities in relation to medium-term support (from relief to recovery) which would enable people to not only cope but also to recover. There are currently no experiences of social protection systems in Lao PDR being used to respond to shocks.

Opportunities for shock-responsive social protection: In line with the foregoing, the social protection sector in Lao PDR presents few, if any, opportunities for shock-responsive social protection programming. It is currently premature to identify social protection programmes that might be suitable for shock response. However, two facts stand out: improving the coverage of social protection would help to build the resilience of the rural poor in the face of increased exposure to climate change risks; and, despite resistance, introducing cash entitlements to ensure a minimum of income security for those not covered by the contributory schemes could be a crucial step for the development of a comprehensive social protection floor over the coming years.

Conclusions/recommendations

The social protection sector in Lao PDR is nascent, and the DRM systems require significant improvement. The momentum of the ASEAN declaration on social protection can be leveraged by Lao PDR to invest in its own social protection system while learning from and contributing to the developments in other ASEAN countries.

Key policy recommendations include the following:

1. **Technical assistance on public financial management to relevant line ministries**: While Lao PDR has a number of funds that support disaster preparedness and response, knowledge regarding their use is scarce and their suitability to respond efficiently to localised disasters is unclear. The provision of technical assistance to MoLSW and MoNRE on public financial management can clarify how line ministries can access contingency funding and suggest mechanisms to coordinate such requests. Moreover, technical assistance can help clarify the role of the National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee (NDPCC) in fund mobilisation and budget execution for disaster preparedness and response. This assistance should lead to quicker access to (greater) funding for disaster preparedness and response, especially at the district and provincial levels.

2. **Improve coordination among line ministries**: To bring about better coordination and joint decision making among key Disaster Management Committee members and development partners the following should be implemented (among other initiatives): finalising a joint disaster management plan; carrying out joint post-disaster assessments, budgeting and planning at the district level; regular communication through Department for Disaster Management and Climate Change (DDMCC) meetings; and integrating DRM in the action plans of relevant line ministries.

3. **Build capacity across the DRM cycle**: Translating existing DRM policies and plans into action requires capacity building at ministries, particularly at MoLSW. The DSW should be trained on core social protection concepts, especially focusing on how social protection sectors have developed in the ASEAN region; and on operationalising the proposed Child Grant and Disability Grant in the Draft Social Protection Policy (2017), which will require training on building appropriate data systems, targeting protocols, payment mechanisms, grievance redressal functions, and monitoring and evaluating performance.

4. **Extend coverage of priority social protection programmes in disaster-prone communities:** There are no specific programmes to support recovery from disasters, which leaves poor, agrarian households highly exposed to covariate shocks, with no safety net. In the long term there should be provision of both emergency relief and recovery assistance to rural, remote households that are more vulnerable to flood damage.

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1. Introduction

'Asia Pacific: Multiple disasters affect millions in the region' – IFRC, July 2018[1]

South-east Asia is one of the most disaster-prone regions of the world (ASEAN Secretariat 2016). Between 2000 and 2015 more than 200 million people in the region were affected by disasters and the estimated total economic loss reached US$8 trillion (Babel 2016). Climate change causes an increase in the frequency and severity of hazards, and this is expected to lead to more frequent disasters. Addressing the root cause of disaster vulnerability in the region and building long-term resilience is vital to breaking the cycle of recurrent humanitarian crises, alongside eradicating the remaining high levels of poverty.

The complementarity of social protection and DRM[2] is increasingly acknowledged by ASEAN, as reflected in recent agreements and declarations concerning both subjects. This is in line with the increased global interest in shock-responsive social protection, with several development partners, regional coordination bodies, and country governments initiating research and policy dialogue on the issue (OPM 2015; Hallegatte, Vogt-Schilb, Bangalore & Rozenberg 2016; ADB 2018; Michal Rutkowsk 2018; WFP 2018, p. 2018). Social protection systems, if informed by risk variables and equipped with flexible delivery modalities, can not only enhance the effectiveness of disaster response and recovery but also reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience, while encouraging livelihood transformation.

As part of the ASEAN–UN Joint Strategic Plan for Disaster Management 2016–2020, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in collaboration with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), and the WFP, is implementing a joint project, funded by the European Commission's European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), entitled **'Strengthening the capacity of AMS to develop risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection for resilience'**. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of AMS to design and implement risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems to reduce the vulnerabilities of at-risk populations, strengthen their capacity to respond to and recover from shocks, and thus enhance households' resilience in order to mitigate the effects of shocks and improve preparedness for further crises.

In this context, WFP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific has commissioned a Regional Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in ASEAN by Oxford Policy Management (OPM). The overarching research question is: **What factors enable social protection systems and programmes in ASEAN countries to be responsive to shocks and to deliver effective response?** This research includes the following studies:

- A regional literature review – which includes a general overview of recent shocks experienced by countries in the region, and of poverty and vulnerability, and identifies experiences in the use of national social protection mechanisms to respond to shocks.

- A case study in Thailand – which aims to identify the factors that would enable the national social protection systems to be responsive to shocks.

[1] https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/2018/07/30/asia-pacific-multiple-disasters-affect-millions-in-the-region/
[2] DRM is the application of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk, and manage residual risk, contributing to the strengthening of resilience and reduction of disaster losses (UNISDR 2009).

- A case study in Lao PDR – which aims to identify the factors that would enable national social protection systems to be responsive to shocks.

- A regional synthesis report – which synthesises the findings of the other research outputs and provides recommendations to the ASEAN Secretariat, AMS, and cooperating partners.

This report presents the findings of the Lao PDR case study. It is based on a series of field visits and in-country interviews conducted in July 2018[3]. This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the scope of the research, conceptual framework, and research tools;
- Section 3 describes the context of Lao PDR in terms of poverty, risk, and vulnerability;
- Section 4 describes Lao PDR's DRM sector;
- Section 5 describes the nascent social protection sector; and
- Section 6 concludes and presents some policy recommendations.

[3] This report was drafted before the national disaster in July 2018 that claimed a number of lives and resulted in a large economic losses in the Attapeu province: https://reliefweb.int/report/lao-peoples-democratic-republic/lao-pdr-flooding-office-un-resident-coordinator-situation. Assessing the response to this disaster is beyond the scope of this research.

2. Research design

2.1 Scope of the research

The ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection was adopted by the 23rd ASEAN Summit in October 2013, in Brunei Darussalam. In the declaration, social protection is defined as 'interventions that consist of policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty, inequalities, and vulnerability by assisting the poor, at risk, vulnerable groups such as but not limited to persons with disabilities, older people, youth, women, children, undernourished, victims of disasters, migrant workers, as well as families and communities to: i) enhance their capacities to better manage risks and ii) enhance equal access to essential services and opportunities on a rights based/needs based approach'(ASEAN Secretariat 2013).

Within the social protection spectrum, this research focuses on schemes implemented by governments (with or without external financing) and includes the following types of programmes:

Social assistance: non-contributory transfers

- Social transfers (cash and in kind)
- Social pensions
- School feeding programmes
- Public works or cash for work
- Excluding fee waivers and subsidies

Social insurance: contributory transfers

- Old-age pensions
- Unemployment benefits
- Child allowances

It is worth noting that we do not classify DRM support provided in the immediate aftermath of a shock as social protection (cash or in-kind transfers). Also, social care services and active labour market policies are not among the social protection policies studied in this research.

Citizens of AMS are exposed to a range of shocks that can impact their wellbeing. Covariate shocks affect large numbers of people and/or communities at once, in comparison to idiosyncratic shocks (such as the death of a breadwinner) that may affect only individual households or household members. This research focuses on covariate shocks only and, given Lao PDR's risk profile (briefly described in Section 3) in relation to hydro-meteorological hazards,[4] the analysis focuses on floods and droughts.

2.2 Conceptual framework

Social protection can build better coping strategies and prevent negative responses (such as reducing food consumption, taking children out of school, and selling productive assets). Regular social protection

[4] **Hydro-meteorological hazards** are of atmospheric, hydrological, or oceanographic origin. Examples are typhoons, hurricanes, floods (including flash floods), droughts, heatwaves and cold spells, and coastal storm surges. **Hydro-meteorological** conditions may also be a factor in other hazards, such as landslides, wildland fires, locust plagues, epidemics, and in the transport and dispersal of toxic substances and volcanic eruption material (www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology).

schemes (social assistance, social insurance, and employment policies) can provide income support that allows households to encourage livelihood investment, diversify sources of incomes (particularly those in agriculture), and develop their human capital and improve their employability. In addition, specific environmental conservation projects – for example, through public works – can enhance households' coping capacity at the community level.

In responding to shocks, social protection can provide affected households with extraordinary support by vertically and horizontally expanding existing schemes or utilising existing mechanisms, such as beneficiary databases, disbursement mechanisms, networks of social workers, and a state's budget allocation. It can also expand access to social insurance (unemployment, sickness leave, health, invalidity, and survivors' insurance), allowing for a swift and cost-efficient disaster response.

The conceptual framework for this assignment draws on the earlier theoretical framework developed by OPM (OPM 2015; Beazley, Solórzano & Sossouvi 2016) and further adapted for this research. This framework provides a systematic approach, which is used in analysing existing literature relevant to answering the core research question: **What factors enable social protection systems and programmes in ASEAN countries to be responsive to shocks and to deliver effective response?**

An in-depth analysis of the factors enabling social protection systems to be responsive requires studying several different aspects of such systems, from high-level policies to operational mechanisms. We categorise these different aspects in the following manner:

Source: OPM

Coordination and capacity

A responsive social protection system requires that DRM and social protection sectors, as well as others, work together to maximise their impact. In this component we study existing mechanisms to promote such coordination.
In addition, the capacity of the sectors is fundamental for their ability to respond. We focus on studying their mandates, plans, and strategies.

Delivery systems

Delivery systems are the tools, processes, and administrative mechanisms that a programme has in order to operate. Although every delivery mechanism has an important role to play, international evidence shows the following two are the most important for a system to be responsive and hence the ones we focus on:

- Targeting systems – the capacity of the system to identify and select people affected by shocks; and
- Delivery mechanisms – the capacity to transfer cash or in-kind support

Information systems

Socioeconomic and disaster risk and vulnerability information systems can play an important role in helping to plan responses (ex ante) and to identify the affected households (ex post).

This component studies the role of data in the social protection sector in responding to shocks, as well as early warning system (EWS) used to inform social protection planning or responses, either automatic, such as when an index triggers an automatic expansion, or not automatic – the provision of information and data for social protection policy decision making.[5]

Financing mechanisms

Responses to shocks through social protection systems require predictable, protected and layered funding sources.[6]

All the components above determine the capacity of social protection to respond to emergencies. Based on OPM's framework (OPM 2015), when policymakers consider the use of social protection systems to address emergency needs, there are a number of strategies that they may employ to scale up the overall level of support that the system provides to vulnerable people:

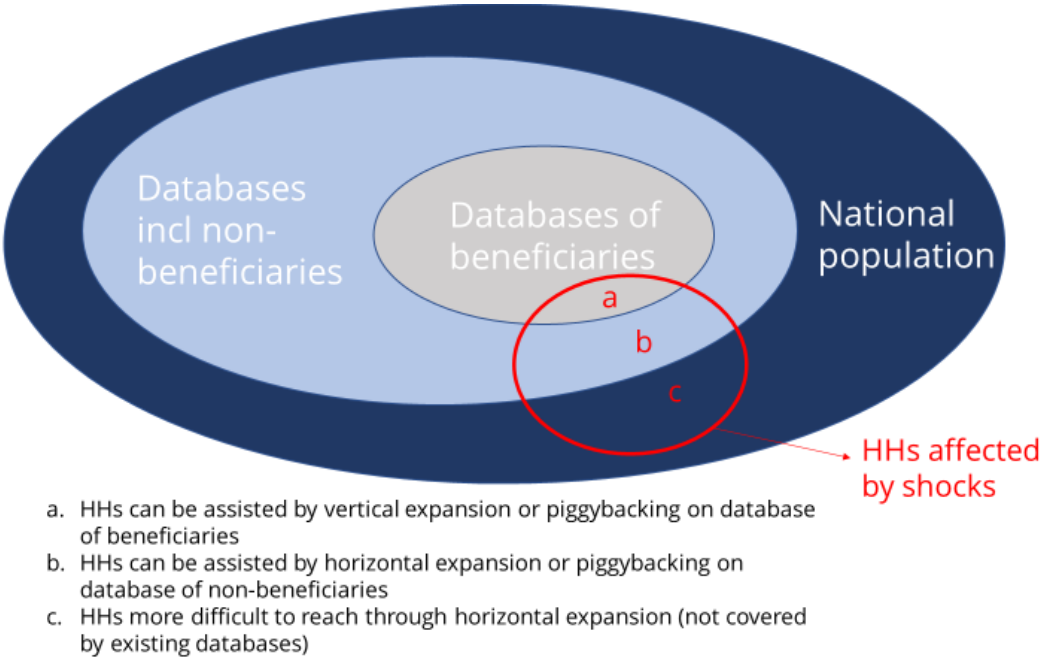
1. **Vertical expansion**: increasing the benefit value or duration of an existing programme or system;
2. **Horizontal expansion**: adding new beneficiaries to an existing programme or system;
3. **Piggybacking**: using a social protection intervention's administrative framework, but running the shock response programme separately;
4. **Alignment**: describes designing an intervention with elements resembling others that already exist or are planned, but without integrating the two. Governments may align their systems with those of humanitarian agencies or vice versa; and
5. **Making design tweaks**: making small adjustments to the design of the core programme.

It is important to note that these strategies of scale-up are not without risk and should not be seen as standalone responses to shocks including natural disasters. The figure below shows the targeting challenge that systems face when they are expanded vertically or horizontally, or when they allow responses to 'piggyback' on them. First, the basis of the targeting challenge is the fact that the households affected by the shocks are not necessarily beneficiaries of existing social protection programmes, or

[5] We do not assess the effectiveness of early warning systems. We will limit the analysis to identifying experiences in which such systems have been used to inform or trigger social protection responses.
[6] Although this study does not conduct a thorough assessment of disaster risk financing, it does review the existing mechanisms and their capacity to fund social protection responses.

included in the social registry or other registries. Consequently, despite having strong targeting programmes and systems, horizontal expansion would be necessary in any case. However, the greater the coverage of programmes and registries, and the better the quality of the data they contain, the easier it will be to respond. In principle, if beneficiaries of social protection programmes could be easily reached with vertical expansion and non-beneficiaries whose information is in the registries could be easily reached with horizontal expansion, then the challenge would be reaching those affected households that do not belong to either of these two categories (Barca & O 'Brien 2017; O'Brien et al. 2018).

FIGURE 1: TARGETING CHALLENGE IN THE EXPANSION OF RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION



Source: OPM (2015) and Barca (2017)

2.3 Research design

The research for this case study consisted of three phases: a literature review, fieldwork, and analysis. In relation to the first phase, a review of legislation, policy plans and strategies, manuals of operations, periodic reports, and programme reviews, assessments and evaluations was conducted.

Data collection through fieldwork in Lao PDR was conducted from 4 to 14 June 2018. The research team was led by Maham Farhat (OPM), with the participation of Manithaphone Mahaxay (WFP Lao PDR), and Aphitchaya Nguanbanchong (WFP Regional Bureau). Interviews were conducted in Vientiane and in two locations frequently affected by floods: Khongxedon District, Saravane Province, and Xay District, Oudomxay Province.

Key informant interviewees for this research included ministry officials, UN agency and NGO representatives, and WFP Country Office staff in Vientiane and district level. Discussions were also held with government representatives and village-level respondents (Village Development Committee (VDC) members and flood affectees). The full list of key informants interviewed is in Annex A and the list of main research questions is in Annex B.

The third phase of the research consisted of analysing the data collected, triangulating the information gathered with the literature review and interviews at central and local level, and finally answering the research questions.

Methodological caveats

There are a number of caveats to this research. First, interviews were conducted largely in the Lao language which led to some difficulty in translating 'standard' social protection concepts. We could not sample community members randomly, nor were we able to interview them independently. Discussions with district disaster prevention and control committees (DDPCCs) and village disaster prevention and control committees were held in a group setting, which again limited the scope of feedback on coordination and communication processes. Last, most of the data provided in this report draws on published literature in the English language. There is a likelihood that information from relevant documentation, published and unpublished, in the Lao language has not been covered.

Despite these constraints, the report draws on a significant number of key informant interviews, especially covering several departments within ministries relevant to the social protection and DRM sectors. Interviews were also done in two different locations with officials from all administrative levels (province, district, and village level). Findings were therefore triangulated during the research and through secondary data published in English.

3. Poverty, risk and vulnerability in Lao PDR

Poverty

Lao PDR is a resource-rich, land-locked nation of over 6 million people that joined ASEAN in 1997. The table below provides information about key socioeconomic indicators in Lao PDR. The country has seen significant economic progress over the last two decades, lifting thousands of people out of absolute poverty. Lao PDR is now a LMIC and has experienced rapid economic growth and human development in recent years (see Table 1). Gross domestic product (GDP) growth has averaged 7.8% over the last decade, with one-third of the growth coming from use of natural resources – hydropower, minerals, and forests.[7] Foreign investment has increased. Education attainment, life expectancy, and infrastructure have all improved over time: Lao PDR is now classified in the 'medium' human development category (as measured by the HDI). (UNDP 2016) Human development outcomes have generally improved over time, and although gender inequality still exists, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) has decreased over time. The Lao PDR government aims for the country to graduate from Least Developed Country status by 2020 to become an upper-middle-income country by 2030.

Despite this impressive growth, around one-fifth of the population still live under the poverty line ($1.90 per day at 2011 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)), while income disparity has increased over time (with the Gini index rising from 34.3 in 1992 to 36.4 in 2012). Aggregate improvements in socioeconomic welfare in Lao PDR hide significant differences in both the level of poverty and the rate of progress across regions and different socioeconomic groups. According to World Bank estimates based on 2012/13 data, poverty is substantially higher in rural areas (at 28.6%) compared to urban areas (10.0%). The data also indicate that poverty has declined faster in urban areas, increasing the urban–rural gap over time. Moreover, poverty is higher among ethnic minorities in general and is geographically concentrated but not necessarily in provinces with the highest poverty rates. (Pimhidzai, Fenton, Souksavath & Sisoulath 2014)

TABLE 1: KEY SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS LAO PDR

	1990	2000	2010	2016
Population, total (millions)	4.26	5.33	6.25	6.76
Population growth (annual %)	2.9	1.7	1.5	1.4
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)	..	33.5	23.4	..
Poverty headcount ratio at $1.90 a day (2011 PPP) (% of population)	32.6	33.8	22.7	..
Gross National Income (GNI) *per capita*, Atlas method (current US$)	190	280	1,000	2,150
GNI *per capita*, PPP (current international $)	1,100	1,890	3,870	6,270
GDP growth (annual %)	6.7	5.8	8.5	7
HDI value*	0.4	0.466	0.546	0.598
HDI female*		0.426	0.517	0.576
Gini index (WB estimate)	34.3		36.4	

[7] www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/overview

	1990	2000	2010	2016
Income share held by lowest 20%	8.2	8.6	7.6	..
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	54	59	64	67
Gender Inequality Index*[8]		0.578	0.506	0.462
Primary completion rate, total (% of relevant age group)	43	67	86	100
Statistical capacity score (overall average)	..	..	70	64
Foreign direct investment, net inflows (BoP, current US$) (millions)	6	34	279	997
Net official development assistance received (current US$) (millions)	149.1	280.9	413.4	398.3

Notes:

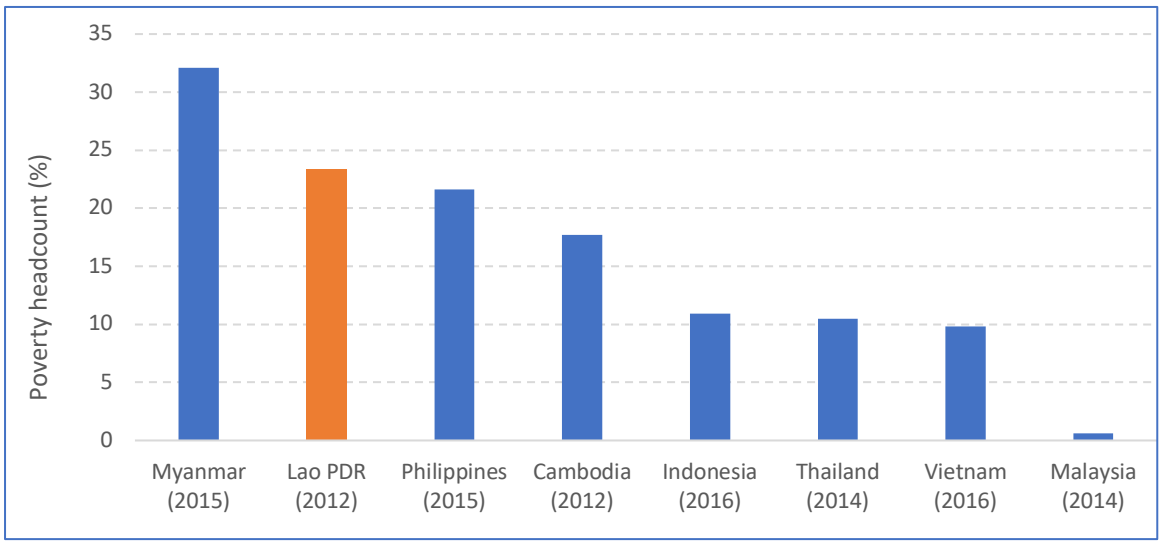
Source is World Bank World Development Indicators, Lao PDR profile unless otherwise stated (World Bank 2018)

*Source is United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2016, p. 2016)

Figures in blue refer to periods other than those specified.

Within ASEAN, Lao PDR has one of the highest poverty rates in the region (see Figure 2), with poverty levels comparable with Philippines but much higher than Cambodia, Indonesia, and Viet Nam, which are also LMICs (there is no data available on Brunei Darussalam and Singapore).

FIGURE 2: POVERTY HEADCOUNT (%) – ASEAN COUNTRIES



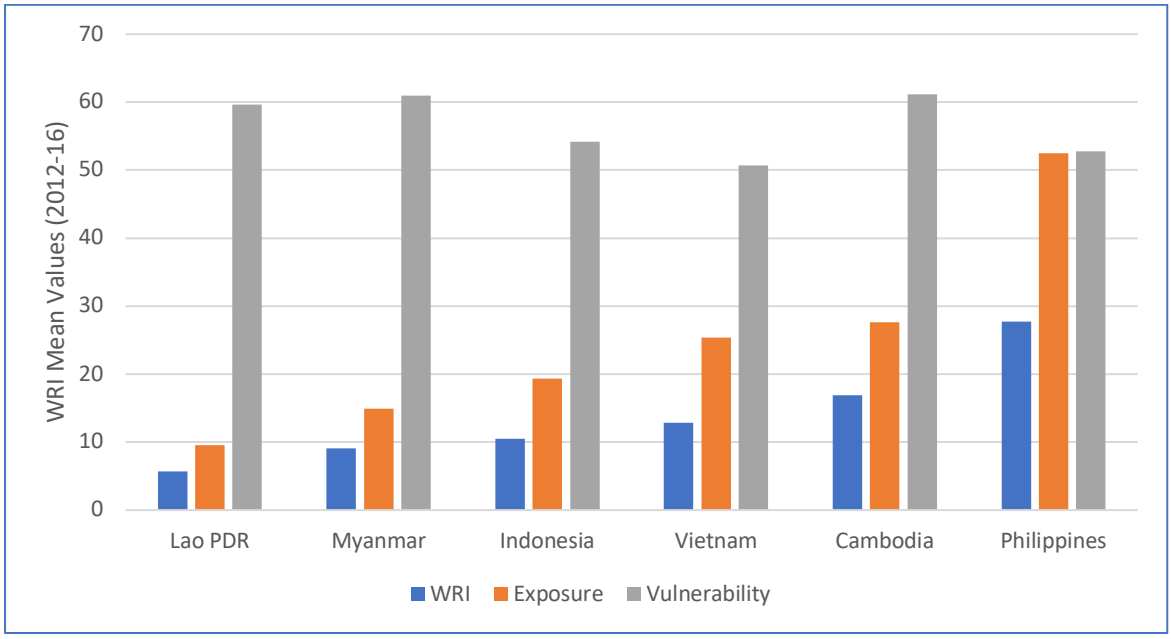
Source: World Bank, Global Poverty Working Group, based on national poverty lines. Most recent year available.

[8] The value of GII ranges between 0 and 1, with 0 being 0% inequality, indicating women fare equally in comparison to men and 1 being 100% inequality, indicating women fare poorly in comparison to men.

Risk and vulnerability

There are several ways of measuring a country's risk profile and Lao PDR is seen overall as a 'medium risk' country according to both the WRI (2016) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) INFORM index (2018).[9] Lao PDR is one of the countries with the lowest level of exposure to natural hazards overall in the ASEAN region: in 2016 it ranked ninth out of 10 ASEAN countries, with Philippines (first), Brunei Darussalam (second) and Cambodia (third) as the countries with the highest exposure, and Singapore (tenth), Lao PDR (ninth), and Thailand (eighth) as the least exposed (Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft 2016).

FIGURE 3: WRI LMICS (ASEAN)



However, Lao PDR is highly vulnerable to disasters because of its poor ability to cope with them, with a 'high' score on the WRI vulnerability index, lack of coping capacity index, susceptibility index, and lack of adaptive capacity index (see Figure 3 and Table 2). Within the LMICs in the ASEAN region, Lao PDR has relatively low exposure to natural disasters but high levels of vulnerability due to the lack of capacity to cope with the impact of disasters. This is in line with the regional comparisons provided by the IASC INFORM Index (2018).[10] It is worth noting that the highest risk indicators for Lao PDR on the INFORM 2018 database are exposure to tropical cyclones, under-five-underweight children, domestic food prices, and physical exposure to floods. The lowest five risk indicators include agriculture stress/drought, food price volatility and people affected by droughts (see Table 6 in Annex C).

[9] The value of GII ranges between 0 and 1, with 0 being 0% inequality, indicating women fare equally in comparison to men and 1 being 100% inequality, indicating women fare poorly in comparison to men.
[10] www.inform-index.org/Countries/Country-profiles

TABLE 2: WRI MEAN VALUES (2012-2016), LMICS

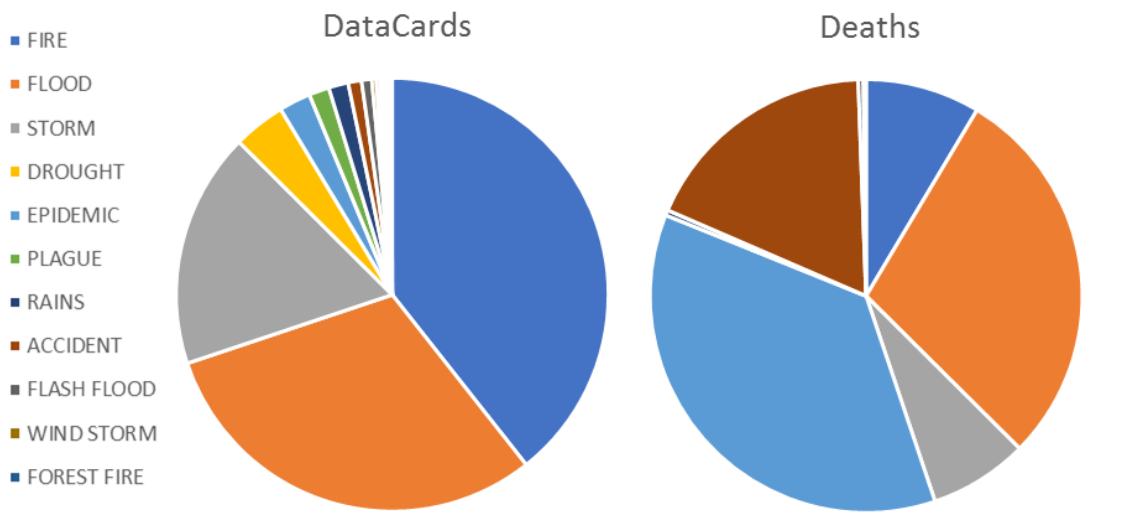
LMICs	WRI	Exposure	Vulnerability	Susceptibility	Lack of coping capacity	Lack of adaptive capacity
Lao PDR	5.69	9.55	59.6	40.85	84.89	53.06
Myanmar	9.06	14.87	60.95	36.23	88.06	58.55
Indonesia	10.49	19.36	54.19	32.36	80.94	49.27
Viet Nam	12.84	25.35	50.66	27.22	76.74	48.01
Cambodia	16.92	27.65	61.18	41.69	86.81	55.04
Philippines	27.69	52.46	52.78	32.97	80.92	44.45

Lao PDR is prone to a number of natural hazards. The National Risk Profile of Lao PDR identified seven major natural hazards: floods, storms, drought, landslides, disease outbreaks and epidemics, unexploded ordnance, and earthquakes (ADPC 2010). Among these hazards, flooding and storms have occurred most frequently in the last decade, affecting the most people and resulting in greater economic losses compared to other hazards as a result of low crop yields and damage to infrastructure (HCT 2018).

The DesInventar database(UNISDR 2018) also provides information the types of disasters suffered by Lao PDR between 1990 and 2012. It lists 4,215 datacards or incidents and, as shown in the figure below, the highest numbers of recorded incidents are fires, followed by floods and storms. The highest mortality is attributed to epidemics, followed by floods and accidents.

The list of key informants interviewed can be found in Annex A and the list of main research questions can be found in Annex B.

FIGURE 4: LAO PDR COMPOSITION OF DISASTERS (1990-2012)



Source: DesInventar database (ibid.)

The contingency plan for Lao PDR notes that seasonal flooding occurs every year in the country during the south-west monsoon season, from July to September. Major floods have recently occurred in 2009, 2011, and 2013. The most significant and prolonged flooding tends to occur in the central and southern provinces, when rivers and tributaries fill with normal or exceptional precipitation in their respective

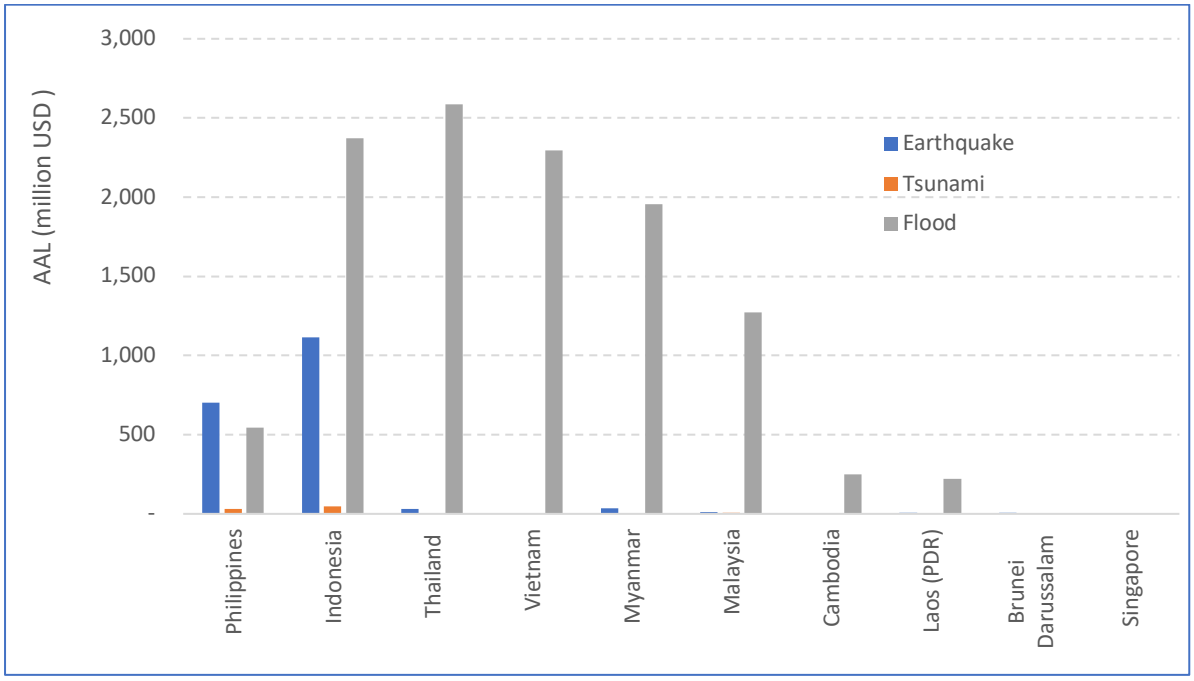
catchment basins and are then prone to overflowing as the waters from the flooded Mekong advance downstream. In 2015 and 2016, flash floods caused by tropical storms also affected northern provinces. Rainfall trends indicate that the rainy season is now starting earlier than usual in many parts of the country, affecting the start of the agricultural season. On the other hand, central parts of the country have seen an increase in tropical storm intensity, bringing heavier rain than usual. Concentrated rainfall over a short time, particularly in the southernmost parts of the country, increases flood risk during the rainy season (HCT 2018). The most common risk scenario for Lao PDR is flooding, but most flood-related events are small- to medium-scale emergencies. Flooding in the lowland areas can last for weeks, destroying crops and food storage, impacting infrastructure, causing temporary population displacement, and increasing the risk of water-borne, vector-borne, and other disease outbreaks (ibid.)

Figure 5 shows the average annual loss (AAL) caused by earthquakes, tsunamis, and floods.[11] Lao PDR's size and relatively small exposure to shocks translates into relatively small economic losses from hazards compared to other AMS. At the same time, Lao PDR experiences greatest economic losses through exposure to floods. It is important to note, however, that these averages mask infrequent, yet very costly, natural hazards that occur in the country. Lao PDR has experienced increased intensity and severity of natural hazards that have sometimes turned into unprecedented disasters: for example, Lao PDR was severely impacted by flood (particularly flash floods) caused by Typhoon Ketsana in 2009 and by the Typhoons Haima and Nokten in 2011. Reports suggest that more than 100,000 people were affected, dozens of people were killed, and houses and infrastructure were damaged (ADPC, NDMO & MoLSW 2012). Economic loss was reported in many sectors, including agriculture, public works and transport, education, health, water and sanitation, tourism, industry, and trade, with estimated cost of more than US$100 million (ibid.). Moreover, small-scale but recurrent events cause increasing loss of human lives and loss of property.

Natural disasters are of particular importance to Lao PDR due to their severe impact on the agriculture sector: over 95% of the farming systems are vulnerable to flooding, drought, and delayed onset of the rainy season (GoL 2014). The most common hazards for the agricultural sector in Lao PDR include annual river and flash floods, landslides, occasional storms and typhoons during the rainy season, drought and acute water shortages during the dry season, as well as forest and community fires, agricultural pests, rodent infestations, and animal epidemics. Among these, the three most common weather- and climate-related hazards with the highest impacts on agricultural production are floods, droughts, and storms, which often trigger secondary hazards such as landslides, forest and community fires, pest or rodent infestations, and outbreaks of animal disease (ibid.).

[11] 'The AAL is the average expected loss annualized over a long time frame. It represents the amount that countries would have to set aside each year to cover the cost of future disasters in the absence of insurance or other disaster risk financing mechanisms'. (UNISDR, 2015).

FIGURE 5: AAL BY HAZARD, AMS



Source: UNISDR 2015

4. Disaster risk management in Lao PDR

The section provides an overview of the DRM system in Lao PDR and its main policies and actors. It also identifies gaps in the provision of support to populations affected by natural disasters, which could be potentially filled by social protection. The report focuses on government DRM systems because responses to shocks, including emergencies, are largely led by the government in the country (see Box 1).

BOX 1: LAO PDR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The Government of Lao PDR (GoL) has the overall responsibility for leading the emergency response. UN agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), Red Cross Societies, and development partners, coordinated through the IASC, support the government response. The UN agencies, the LRC, and development partners have standing agreements with the government that enable humanitarian activities in the event of a disaster. INGOs sign memoranda of understanding with the relevant line ministries (mainly the MoLSW) for development activities, and separate agreements are required at the national and provincial level to conduct emergency response activities.

The Resident Coordinator: Under the overall lead of the government, the Resident Coordinator is responsible for leading and coordinating the international emergency response.

IASC: The Lao IASC is the mechanism for overall coordination of humanitarian actions among the government and resident international actors. The Lao IASC is co-chaired by the Director-General of DSW/MoLSW (with the Director-General of the Department of International Organizations (DIO)/Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) as deputy), and the Resident Coordinator. The Representative of WFP acts as deputy co-chair on the UN side. The deputy co-chair has an advisory role to the co-chairs. In Lao PDR, IASC membership is extended to the UN agencies, relevant government line ministries, state-owned enterprises, Red Cross Societies, INGOs, non-profit associations, and development partners (HCT 2018).

The last major humanitarian response in Lao PDR was in 2013, when the country experienced one of its worst natural disasters as five major monsoon storms hit the country between July and September. Twelve out of the 17 provinces were severely flooded, affecting approximately 347,000 people. The official estimated loss and damage from the disaster was US$219 million.[12]

Source: HCT 2018

4.1 Disaster risk management system

Policy and mandate

The mandate for DRM in Lao PDR is shared across ministries and co-led by MoNRE and MoLSW. The specific mandate of disaster response moved from MoLSW to MoNRE in 2013, and subsequently back to MoLSW in 2017.

Draft laws on DRM and climate change are being developed by the government with the support of LRC. The timeline for finalisation remains unclear.

At the time of writing this report, there is no finalised National Disaster Response Plan for Lao PDR or SOPs. Stakeholder interviews indicated that a Draft National Disaster Response Plan document was

[12] www.unocha.org/asia-and-pacific-roap/lao

developed in 2015 with the support of WFP, in close collaboration with the Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change (DDMCC). The draft highlights the roles and responsibilities of relevant ministries for an effective and timely response to emergencies, with coordination through DDMCC. However, this draft is yet to be finalised.

The DRM system in Lao PDR is underpinned by several national-level policies:

- National Disaster Management Plan 2001–2010

  The Plan aims at: identifying the focal point in all sectors; developing and establishing early warning and information systems in all 142 districts of the country; setting up information networks in disaster-prone villages; constructing warehouses for storing emergency assistance materials in all provinces and some disaster-prone districts; continuing public awareness activities through the media; widely organised training on disaster management for all sectors and levels; organising simulation exercise with the involvement of rescue team units in sectors and communities; and raising the capacity for cooperation with other countries in the Asian, regional, and UN frameworks to exchange information and experiences on disaster management.

- National Strategic Plan for Disaster Risk Management 2003–2020

  Lao PDR has reportedly made good progress on implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Disaster Risk Management, which is in line with the Hyogo Framework of Action and ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). Under this Plan, legislation and disaster risk management and reduction have been improved and developed at national and local levels (ADPC, NDMO & MoLSW 2012). According to the 'Three-Builds Policy', governance in Lao PDR is increasingly decentralised. This is in line with an increased focus on community-based DRM. At the same time, there has been some work done on piloting the Strategic Plan on DRM, although none of this has been finalised or institutionalised (Aslam Perwaiz, Kilian Murphy, Thanongdeth Insisiengmay & Somvath Keokhamphoui 2015).

- Seventh NSEDP 2011–2015 and Eighth NSEDP 2016–2020

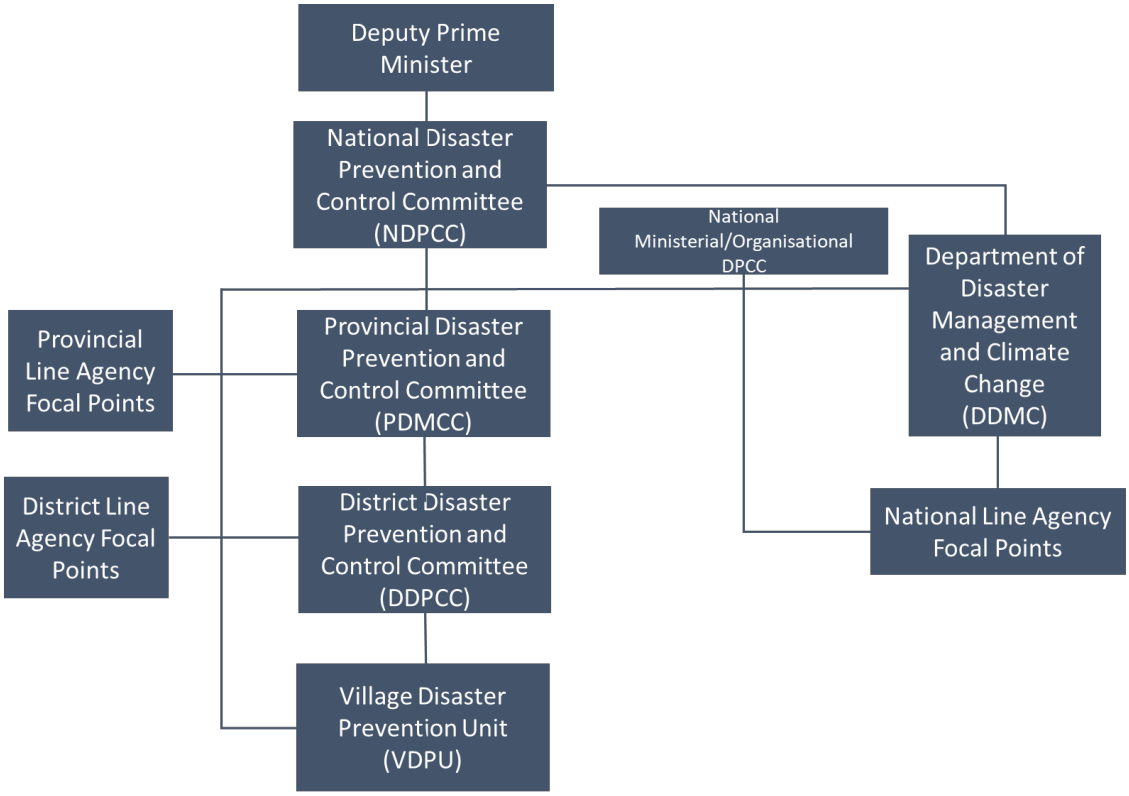
  The eighth NSEDP also reflects the Socioeconomic Development Strategy until 2025 and Vision 2030. It prioritises DRM through laying out clear targets under Outcome 3. Moreover, Output 2 is titled 'Prepare to Cope with the Disaster Risks and Impacts from Climate Change' and Output 3 relates to 'Reducing the Instability of Agricultural Production Caused by Disaster Impact'.

Disaster risk management administration

The DRM system in Lao PDR is underpinned by the NDPCC[13] and disaster risk management committees at provincial and district levels (see Figure 6).[14] These national and subnational committees include several different line ministries and coordinate in response to a disaster. Figure 6 presents a high-level organisational chart.

[13] Established under Prime Minister's Decree No. 220, 28 August 2013.
[14] As of October 2011, Prime Minister Decree 373/PM renamed the NDMC to the National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee (NDPCC).

FIGURE 6: NDPCC ORGANISATIONAL CHART[15]



Source: Adapted from CFE-DMHA (2017)

The NDPCC: disaster management is overseen and coordinated by the GoL through the NDPCC.

The NDPCC is chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, while the Ministers of the MoNRE, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), MoLSW, and Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) act as deputies of the committee. Other members include the Deputy Ministers of Ministry of Health and Ministry of Public Security, the Deputy of Lao Youth Union, the President of LRC, the Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Defence, Heads of Cabinet Office of Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), MoFA, Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Department of Media at Ministry of Industry and Trade.

The NDPCC has the following responsibilities (HCT 2018):

- Overall coordination of disaster management, including recommendations to the prime minister to declare a state of emergency and a request for country, regional, or international humanitarian assistance;
- Coordination of emergency response, including development of a master plan for response based on line ministry preparedness response and DSW (MoLSW) preparedness and response plans;
- Mobilisation of resources for disaster management;
- Coordination of disaster risk challenges into national and sectoral work plans; and
- Development of policies and regulations related to DRR and provision of overall direction for provincial and district-level disaster plans.

[15] There are several versions of this organogram in numerous documents. These reflect changes over time (as well as ongoing) in terms of administrative nomenclature in Lao PDR.

Provincial and district disaster prevention and control committees (PDPCCs): The PDPCCs are comprised of provincial departments and of the LRC and are chaired by the Vice Governor. The PDPCCs are the pivotal point for the implementation of disaster management resources in the province and serve as a channel for information and disaster management resources (ibid.).

The PDPCCs through their secretariats are responsible for coordinating the provincial emergency response, including the actions of organizations in the field, leading assessments, and/or participating in assessments supported by INGOs, non-profit associations, LRC and Red Cross Societies, and the UN, and informing the Department of Climate Change Management (DCCM) of the required assistance for the response. The PDPCCs will coordinate with DSW to disseminate early warning information to the districts (ibid.).

District disaster prevention and control committees (DDPCCs): The DDPCCs are comprised of a chairman and members of all district-level department heads. The district-level committees will participate in assessments coordinated by the PDPCCs or INGOs/UN agencies/LRC, and report to the PDPCCs if assistance is required. The DDPCCs may also request assistance through the Provincial Disaster Prevention and Control Committee from non-profit associations, INGOs, and private entities that are present at the district level (ibid.).

Village Disaster Prevention Unit (VDPU): Also known as Village Disaster Prevention and Control Committees and Control Committees (VDPCC). These are part of the NDPCC structure and are responsible for preparing for and taking rapid action in the event of an emergency and ensuring that support is provided to affected households. VDPCCs also mobilise resources for disaster management at the village level and establish volunteer groups for relief operations. VDPCCs also provide the initial information on the effects of the disaster (ibid.).

In practice, the composition of VDPUs or VDPCCs is often the same as village education development committees (VEDCs). VEDCs are composed of at least seven individuals, including the village head (serving as chairperson), representatives from the Women's and Youth Union, and the School Director. Their role is described as promoting enrolment and completion, as well as supporting school management and learning achievement, through liaison with the wider community, providing cash and in-kind support and participating in school activities (Amanda Seel, Nic I'Anson & Soukkasem Lomathmanyvong 2015).

The MoLSW through the DSW supports the strategic coordination of all disaster preparedness response and relief operations, including data collection and assessments, response, and recovery. The MoLSW also co-chairs the IASC as well as the Emergency Task Force. The DSW has a key communication role in reporting the disaster situation, the planned emergency response, and the recovery activities to line ministries, including through the NDPCC, and in coordinating with the DMH in disseminating early warning information to the PDPCCs. The MoLSW also acts as focal point for ASEAN in disaster management (HCT 2018).

The MoNRE was created in 2011.[16] The MoNRE through the DCCM is responsible for climate change mitigation, risk mapping, early warning, and land, water, and natural resource management in a disaster context. It also serves as focal point for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. At national level, the Cabinet Office makes up the institution's core, with 12 departments operating around it. Particularly relevant for DRM and climate change adaptation in agriculture are two departments: the previously mentioned DDMCC and the DMH. At subnational and local levels, provincial and district offices for natural resources and the environment have been established, but these do not follow the same organisational structure of those offices at central level.

The DDMCC: The DDMCC is the national secretariat for NDPCC and takes the key role in overall data gathering and assessment in cooperation with relevant data collectors for reporting to the NDPCC on a timely basis for its decision making, supervision, and action. The DDMCC is currently working to operationalise and institutionalise disaster data and information management systems. Current projects strengthen these systems, including strengthening the DesInventar disaster losses database project completed in 2011, by transferring the software to DDMCC and training staff. The law on DRM is being

[16] MoNRE was formerly known as Water Resource and Environmental Agency.

drafted by DDMCC. It is also the department that approves projects from provinces and districts in regard to disasters and climate change. The DDMCC was reorganised into the Department of Climate Change in August 2017 (CFE-DMHA 2017).

The DMH was established in 1950 as the sole national service provider for weather, climate, water, and earthquake data/information, forecasts, and early warnings.[17] From the time of its establishment, the DMH has operated under three different ministries and one administration. Since 2011, the DMH has operated under MoNRE and is composed of eight divisions.

The DMH serves as a member of the NDMC and has overall responsibility for providing hydro-meteorological early warning information services countrywide and real-time meteorological and geophysical data collection and data exchange. This includes analysing data to issue daily forecasts, weekly, and monthly outlooks, warnings for any approaching events that might cause damage and losses of life and property, and the dissemination of such warnings to relevant users (e.g. in aviation, agriculture, transport, etc.). The DMH further analyses, compares, and publishes data for the appraisal of long-term weather and seismographic trends and analyses extreme events observed in the past to project their future trends (e.g. climate change, weather modification, land–ocean–atmosphere interaction, seasonal weather prediction, etc.)(GoL 2014). DMH provides hydro-meteorological and forecasting information, including warning bulletins to NDPCC through its secretariat, the DSW, and to subnational government structures and the public. During the rainy season, daily updates are issued to DSW, via email, fax, or phone. Upon receipt of a serious early warning, the DSW will contact PDPCCs directly to share this information (HCT 2018). For enhanced DRRM and EWS in agriculture, the climate and agro-meteorological, hydrology and weather forecasting divisions are of particular relevance (GoL 2014).

MPI: In coordination with other line ministries, MPI leads post-disaster needs assessments to identify the scale of damage and loss of the affected sectors. Although MPI is not directly tasked with working on emergency response and humanitarian relief, it is tasked with overseeing recovery activities, including post-disaster assessments. Ensuring successful early recovery measures requires coordination and the active early participation from MPI in response planning (HCT 2018).

MoFA: MoFA is a member of the NDPCC and in the event of a disaster is responsible for leading broader resource mobilisation efforts and for issuing requests for assistance to the international community to support national disaster response efforts. MoFA approves the memoranda of understanding between organizations and line ministries, and is a core member of the IASC (ibid.)

The LRC: The LRC, a member of the International Federation of Red Cross's national societies, remains close to the government as a 'civil organization auxiliary to the government in humanitarian services'. The LRC responds to the needs of the most vulnerable people nationwide through its core programmes and services, which focus on disaster preparedness, risk reduction, and emergency response at the community level. The LRC communicates early warning information, provides emergency relief supplies including food and medical kits, and conducts village-level rapid assessments in coordination with the DDPCCs in times of emergency.

The Red Cross structure in Lao PDR consists of a national office, 17 provincial branches, and 47 district chapters. The president of the LRC is a member of the NDPCC, and the LRC national office communicates directly with the DCCM. The provincial branch coordinates with the PDPCCs, and the LRC district coordinator is a member of the DDPCC. Since 2004, LRC community activities have been implemented through the VDPCCs and other volunteer members. The Austrian, Australian, Danish, French, Luxembourgian, German, and Swiss Red Cross Partner National Societies support the LRC. Over recent years, the movement has responded to all the major floods that have occurred in the country (ibid.)

The Lao military performs critical roles and is a key asset in all phases of disasters. It is responsible for preparing and training for operations with lead or supporting roles in the pre-disaster, response, and early recovery phases. While the military support to disaster preparedness and response is important, the

[17] Until 1976, DMH was known as National Meteorological Service.

Ministry of National Defence has limited resources and capabilities. Stakeholder interviews suggested that, in all likelihood, large-scale disaster response efforts would be led by the military (as was the case with the emergency response to typhoons in 2009 and 2011).

4.2 The Lao PDR's early warning system

An Early Warning System (EWS) is an integrated system of hazard monitoring, forecasting and prediction, disaster risk assessment, communication, and preparedness activities systems and processes that enables individuals, communities, governments, businesses, and others to take timely action to reduce disaster risks in advance of hazardous events[18]. A multi-hazard EWS with the ability to warn of one or more hazards increases the efficiency and consistency of warnings through coordinated and compatible mechanisms and capacities, involving multiple disciplines for updated and accurate hazard identification and monitoring for multiple hazards.

Lao PDR has a national strategy for EWS, including SOPs on early warning upgrading and setting up of a data collection and monitoring system, improvement of flood and weather monitoring and forecasting, earthquake monitoring, and dissemination of flood early warning information (ADPC, NDMO & MoLSW 2012). The strategy outlines existing governance, institutional and legal arrangements, gaps, and needs for improvement of EWS and identifies a road map for operationalisation of the strategy from 2010 to 2015 outlining short-, medium-, and long-term interventions (Aslam Perwaiz et al. 2015). The EWS has received project-based technical assistance from the Asia Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) on communication guidelines, including advice on the timing of warning messages, the content of warning bulletins, the selection of warning recipients, and steps for developing an information dissemination website (ibid.)

The DMH has a major role in terms of providing early warnings for any hazard detectable by its meteorology and hydrology equipment stationed throughout the country. Domestic stations feed data to DMH and the data are utilised for weather and flood forecasts. DMH also receives regional data from the Global Telecommunication System (CFE-DMHA 2017). According to a 2013 assessment of the DMH in Lao PDR, DMH is able to provide basic hydro-meteorological services for disaster risk purposes (UNISDR, World Bank, WMO, DMH & GFDRR 2013). However, compared to other countries in the region, it lags in core capacities and forecasting technology. These include a limited number of meteorological and hydrological stations, absence of an upper air station, lack of radar coverage, and reliable telecommunication systems for the collection of data and dissemination of forecasts and warnings. Under its environmental services, the DMH lacks capacity in greenhouse gas inventory and monitoring.

DMH's lack of capacity and resulting challenges in communicating timely hazard information were also verified in stakeholder interviews for this study (ibid.). Most respondents noted that, although the accuracy and timeliness of forecasts have improved during recent years, the communication of information to direct users still needs improvement. Respondents also demanded better forecasting information at the micro level so that district- or village-level disaster management and planning could be undertaken. The GoL Action Plan on Disaster Risk (2014)(GoL 2014) also notes that the EWS remains relatively weak in terms of issuing reliable, timely warnings to specific sectors and in terms of reaching communities at risk. It also requires a better information network to collect location-specific climate data and improve access to the latest tools and methods (e.g. GIS). Such improvements would enhance DMH's capacity in developing climate scenarios and improve forecasting and agro-meteorological services. Despite the existence of historic climate data since 1986, no observations or analyses by the government have taken place due to lack of funding, capacities, and facilities. Furthermore, a consistent issue has been the user-friendliness

[18] www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology#letter-e

and visibility of the early warning information provided by DMH. This includes data presented on the DMH website,(ibid.) as well as written notifications sent to line ministries and relevant stakeholders. Currently, early warnings are posted on the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) Facebook page(ibid.) and stakeholder interviews suggested that WhatsApp groups are used to communicate hazard warnings across administrative levels. While the use of social media is efficient and alleviates the need for cumbersome formal channels, these communication channels need to be institutionalised and made available to remote, vulnerable communities, which may not have access to electricity or mobile phone networks.

Another source of early warning data is from the Mekong River Commission (MRC), which monitors Mekong River conditions and flood forecasts. The MRC Regional Flood Forecasting Unit reportedly issues a daily flood forecast at 10am during the flood season period (1 June to 31 October). The MRC distributes a five-day forecast to the responsible agencies within states. The MRC website can be accessed to obtain dissemination process details and flood bulletins/warnings. The MRC's primary responsibility is to provide timely forecasts to the disaster management offices and other related offices of member countries. The disaster offices receiving the information will inform the public and agencies according to their procedures. Therefore, in the case of Lao PDR the MRC mainly communicates with the DMH and the NDPCC at the central level instead of interacting with the provincial or district-level authorities (CFE-DMHA 2017). Stakeholder interviews for this research suggested that data from Mekong River Commission is no longer used by government authorities.

EWS-related activities in the Lao PDR context also require engagement at the local level with community members as information on localised hazards is often provided by community members to village authorities, moving up the administrative chain.

Early warning procedures

DMH is the pivotal entity required to report threats and hazards to the government authorities and NDPCC. There are reportedly different lines of communication once DMH initiates the process (ibid.). The reported early warning procedures include(ibid.):

- A disaster such as flooding is identified.
- The DMH then issues a written warning to the Prime Minister's Office.
- The warning is sent to the NDPCC, and all line ministries at the same time.
- The warning is broadcast through the media outlets of the disaster management organizations at the national through district levels.
- There is an early warning communication system using mobile phones and radio systems from the central level to the provincial and district levels. If the warning is for a specific province, DMH notifies the appropriate provincial DMH office.

In addition to this channel, the prime minister can authorise notification of disasters through the ministries without going through NDMC/NDPCC.

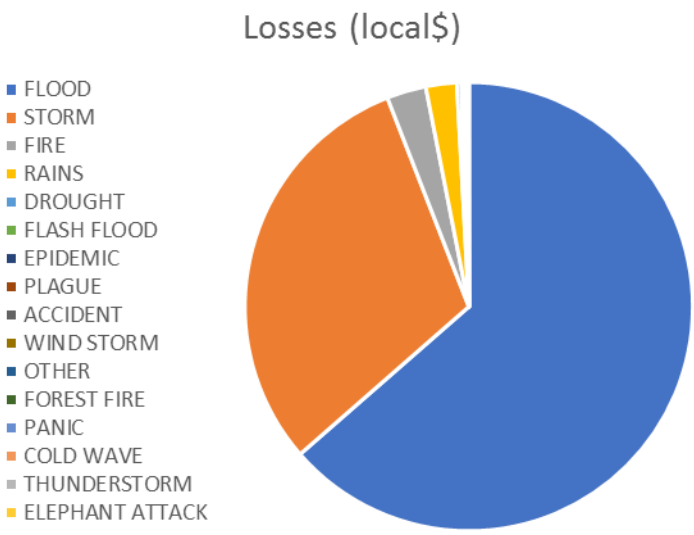
The EWS in Lao PDR is also influenced by the nature of the hazard: a hazard that occurs within the mandate of a single department or ministry will be reported through the vertical hierarchy from the technical district level of the said ministry to the central level (Vientiane). If resources are required beyond the responsible ministry, the ministry will notify the prime minister, who will then ascertain whether the NDMC/NDPCC should be involved. Events with multi-sector impacts are most likely to trigger the participation of the NDMC (ibid.)

It is worth noting that an emergency operations centre currently exists in Vientiane, housed at the MoLSW and funded by ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre). However, this centre is used primarily to receive information on hydro-meteorological hazards regionally and is not used for emergency preparedness or responses for Lao PDR.

4.3 Disaster risk financing

Lao PDR suffers from significant economic losses due to natural disasters. Major events such as Typhoon Ketsana in 2009 and Typhoon Haima in 2011 resulted in reported damages estimated at over US$121 million. Severe flooding in 2013 caused damages in excess of US$270 million. Data from the DesInventar database shows that, between 1990 and 2012, the majority of recorded losses (in local currency) resulted from floods, followed by storms, fire, and rains (see Figure 7). International disaster flash appeals were launched in response to floods in 2008 (US$10 million) and Typhoon Ketsana in 2009 (US$12 million). Only 46 per cent and 75 per cent of the funds requested were actually received in 2008 and 2009 respectively. (World Bank 2017) This indicates an acute need for effective disaster risk financing in the face of both large-scale disasters such as occasional typhoons as well as recurrent and localised disasters such as river floods and flash floods.

FIGURE 7: RECORDED LOSSES (1990-2012)



Source: DevInventar database (ibid.)

An assessment by the World Bank (2017) provides a snapshot of the funds available in Lao PDR for disaster-related expenditure (see Table 3). (World Bank 2017) There are five national-level funds and one provincial level fund that can support disaster preparedness and response activities to varying degrees. The National Contingency Fund and State Reserve Fund are held centrally at the MoF and can be used for relief, response, and rehabilitation activities. The Disaster Management Fund (with zero available funding) is held by MoNRE and can be used only for preparedness and relief but not rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Social Welfare Fund is held by MoLSW and can only be used for relief and response. The Road Maintenance Fund, under MPWT, with the largest funding, can only be used for rehabilitation and reconstruction. At the same time, some provinces hold their own emergency funds for disaster relief and response.

TABLE 3: USE OF DISASTER FUNDS IN LAO PDR

Name of fund	Prepared-ness	Relief and response	Rehab and recon-struction	Available fund-ing (LAK billion)
National Contingency Fund (Budget Dept, MoF)		✓	✓	100
State Reserve Fund (MoF)	✓	✓	✓	300
Disaster Management Fund (DDMCC, MoNRE)	✓	✓		0
Social Welfare Fund (MoLSW)		✓		0.5
Road Maintenance Fund (MPWT)[1]			✓	400
Provincial Emergency Fund[2]		✓		0.2

Notes:
1) Approx. 10% for disaster use
2) In selected provinces

Source: (ibid.)

It is worth noting that, despite the existence of these financing mechanisms, a lack of sufficient contingency funds was the most frequently raised issue at the provincial and district level during stakeholder meetings. Very few respondents demonstrated an understanding of how these funds work and the ways in which they could coordinate with other line ministries on use of funds. Respondents suggested that the National Contingency Fund could only be used in response to large disasters and requested decentralised access to funds for local disasters.

Stakeholder interviews also revealed different ways in which provincial and district authorities have overcome the lack of financing for disaster response. This includes creating a district-level contingency fund, financed through private contributions (LAK 5000–10,000 per family per year [19]). Although these amounts are small in absolute terms and the initiative is in line with provisions laid out in Decree 169 (see Annex D), such an approach is problematic and inherently regressive for extremely poor households. It was unclear during field research if these funds could be used to respond to all types of disasters – there was some indication, for example, that this fund could not be used to respond to droughts. Other provinces rely on external financing from NGOs or development partner projects to provide relief to disaster affectees.

4.4 Gaps in disaster risk management

The DRM sector in Lao PDR is still developing: it benefits from a well-established administrative structure that involves multi-sectoral coordination and participation. This is underlined by associated legislation that

[19] The exchange rate is US$ 0.5 to US$ 1.18.

clarifies the overall roles and responsibilities and mandates of respective institutions. At the same time, this research, among numerous others, has identified some gaps in DRM provision:

- The DRM sector suffers from a lack of clarity on detailed roles and responsibilities, which is compounded by recent organisational changes and a continued push to decentralise and devolve DRM.[20] An example of this is the change in disaster response mandate from DSW (at MoLSW) to MoNRE in 2013 and back to DSW in 2017. Such changes are often accompanied by a loss of capacity and institutional memory built over time. It also results in a lack of clarity on the rules of engagement and contact points for non-government actors such as NGOs.

- There is a gap between actual need and provision of support in response to shocks. Stakeholder interviews suggested there is a significant gap in terms of the support provided for disaster relief and recovery: district authorities tend to procure and distribute relief items based on available resources rather than need. The support varies in its nature (amount, type, and duration), based on resources available to the district authorities, including provisions made by NGOs. In practice, the support provided by DSW (MoLSW) largely constitutes emergency relief and does not support disaster affectees in the recovery phase. The gap in disaster relief is often filled by NGOs and agencies like the LRC. Although limited to two field sites, our research suggested that the speed of emergency response was largely satisfactory in the communities affected by floods. However, the support did not extend beyond immediate relief and households had to resort to informal coping mechanisms (borrowing, selling animals, etc.) to recover from the impact of floods. This was particularly the case for households that lost seed stocks – an expensive agricultural input that was not recompensed in the aftermath of floods.

    - Furthermore, at the local level, DDPCCs and VDPCCs/VDPUs do not have sufficient capacity to prepare for disasters through use of appropriate storage facilities (for food stocks) and contingency funds. This means that responses to local disasters are often ad hoc and insufficient to cover all affectees.

- Another key gap identified in the DRM sector by respondents during primary research, as well as in the literature review, is the lack of accurate, district-level risk profiling and hazard forecasting. To date, risk mapping and profiling has been conducted at the national level in 2010 but not at the provincial or district level (ADPC 2010; ADPC, NDMO & MoLSW 2012). Similarly, there is a lack of knowledge on conducting multi-hazard assessments and on the demarcation of potential risks from natural disasters.[21]

- According to the ADPC,[22] disaster data collection, database management, and information management in Lao PDR has improved over time. However, there is significant room for further improvement, especially in terms of automating information systems and reducing manual collation of information. Our field research suggested that there were no 'databases' of households or individuals affected by disasters. Information was recorded on paper forms with aggregate numbers entered in Excel spreadsheets and communicated to provincial and central levels.

[20] For example, following Prime Ministerial Decree No. 75/PM dated 28 February 2018, MoLSW conducted a national meeting to present and endorse the decree on roles and responsibilities of the NDPCC in May 2018. The draft decree and meeting minutes are yet to be published.
[21] See (ADPC, NDMO & MoLSW 2012)
[22] See (ibid.)

- Despite the established structures, a June 2016 simulation exercise conducted by UN agencies (led by WFP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, including NGOs and government)(HCT 2018) and a community-level simulation exercise conducted by ADPC (Aslam Perwaiz et al. 2015) revealed very similar gaps in the disaster response system, centring on the lack of clear roles and responsibilities. This, compounded by a lack of agreed SOPs, means that the DRM system is not well prepared to anticipate and respond, especially to large-scale disasters. There is also little evidence to suggest that results from these exercises and local-level pilots translate into a consolidated action plan. For instance, the UN-led simulation exercise in 2016 was followed by an Emergency Response Preparedness Workshop in December 2016. Since then, there has been no finalisation of a National DRM Plan. For this to happen, there needs to be a concerted push from relevant agencies to lead the finalisation of DRM law, adopt a final DRM Plan, and train relevant ministry focal points. ADPC's assessment(ibid.) further suggested that, in addition to engaging community members in building resilience, it is important for relevant agencies, especially the NDPCCs, to take ownership and provide leadership.

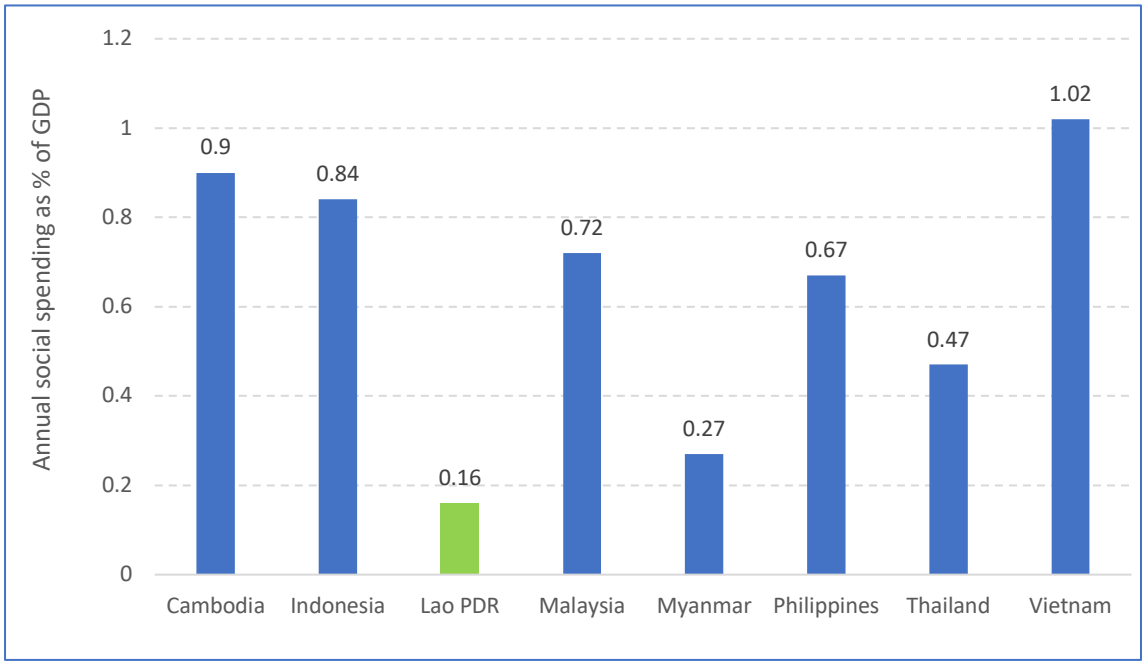
- Finally, as with other sectors, the DRM sector suffers from coordination challenges. At one of our research field sites, the PDPCC and DDPCC members[23] had not conducted any meetings during the entire year (2017). Stakeholder interviews further suggested that, in a number of villages, coordination between DDMCs and communities relies solely on village heads as VDPCCs have not been fully established. Although administrative structures for DRM (NDPCC, etc.) are well defined on paper, in practice there is greater enforcement needed on their intended coordination functions. Coordination issues become particularly challenging when relief efforts cannot be coordinated to provide effective support to affected households. For example, post-disaster needs assessments are conducted by different line ministries and results compiled at a later stage. Stakeholder interviews also suggested that local-level disaster estimates provided by NGOs or UN agencies sometimes differ from estimates gathered by local disaster management committees.

[23] Provincial and district committees

5. Social protection in Lao PDR

The social protection sector in Lao PDR is nascent, with low coverage and low spending. At the time of writing, Lao PDR does not have a finalised NSPS. Furthermore, spending on social protection, although rising, is still small: Lao PDR spent only 0.16 per cent of its GDP on social protection in 2011 – the lowest among all AMS (see Figure 8 below). Although these figures are somewhat dated, it is likely that the percentage remains comparatively small, even if spending may have improved in actual terms due to increased coverage of some social insurance programmes.

FIGURE 8: SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SPENDING IN ASEAN COUNTRIES (AS % OF GDP)



Source: ASPIRE database, Data from Lao PDR are from 2011.

Note: Latest year available, includes conditional and unconditional cash transfers, social pensions, school feeding, public works, and food and in-kind transfers, among other types of social assistance.

Social protection policy

There are several decrees and policy documents that cover parts of access to social protection services (see Annex D). Most notably, the government aims to achieve Universal Health Coverage by 2025. The eigth NSEDP (2016–2020) commits to improvement of and access to social protection (Outcome 2, Output 5). Specific targets include (MoPI 2016):

1) Ensure insurance and health insurance coverage of 80 per cent of the population by 2020.
2) Implement a policy that provides benefits to 31,830 people who made outstanding and great contributions to the national democratic revolution.
3) Establish a social fund in all 18 provinces and help improve the quality of life for deprived people and victims of disasters and human trafficking.
4) Establish networks for protecting the rights and interests of children and prevent and combat human trafficking in 800 villages.

The GoL, in collaboration with ILO and other partners, conducted an assessment-based national dialogue (ABND) on social protection, starting in 2013 and ending in 2017 (Silas Theile & Michael Cichon 2017). This fed into the development of a draft National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) 2018–2030. The draft strategy lists increasing coverage of health insurance, social security, and social welfare by 2030 (see Box 2)(GoL 2017a). There no programmes or targets in the draft strategy specifically aimed at improving gender inequality.

It is pertinent to note that key informant interviewees suggested that the draft is at a very early stage of finalisation. Once the NSPS is finalised, its operationalisation will be a long-term process. For instance, two NSPS action plans (2018–2024 and 2025–2030) will be developed as a following step to the NSPS. These would need to be costed, and funding would need to be secured. A National Social Protection Committee will be established through Prime Ministerial Decree at the beginning of the NSPS implementation. An NSPS Secretariat will take responsibility for frequently meeting and monitoring NSPS's implementation. A Management Information System will be developed to help in the tasks of these bodies in planning, coordinating, and supervising the implementation of the NSPS and the overall situation of social protection in the country (ibid.)

BOX 2: DRAFT NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION STRATEGY (2017)

The overall draft National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) is guided by the principles of equity, adequacy, effectiveness, universality, progressivity, and sustainability. The proposed NSPS vision is as follows:

'By 2030, Lao people have access to basic social protection services, consisting of health insurance, social security, and social welfare, in an equitable, adequate, effective and sustainable way'.

The NSPS has defined two major goals in aiming to ensure effective universal access to social protection services, and higher levels of protection for those more in need. Each goal is further disaggregated into Strategic Objectives (SOs). The SOs are classified into three big functional groups: Health Insurance (SO 1.1), Social Security (SO 1.2 and 1.3.), and Social Welfare (SO 2.1 and 2.2). Each of the SOs contain a set of activities to perform during the implementation of the NSPS.

Goal 1: Everyone has access to effective social protection services.

- Objective 1.1: Health insurance has expanded its coverage and increased the quality of its services.
- Objective 1.2: Social security covers all the workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector.
- Objective 1.3: Social security covers an increasing number of workers in the informal sector.

Goal 2: The vulnerable population has expanded access to increased levels of social protection.

- Objective 2.1: Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.

  Activities under this include non-contributory programmes such as a universal child cash grant, national disability grant, and national social pension (65 and above). All of these are meant to be implemented by MoLSW. Other activities include national school meals programme, school block grants, and secondary education scholarships.

Source: GoL (2017) Draft National Social Protection Policy (unpublished)

It is important to note that social protection, in its entirety, is a relatively new concept and not a recognised 'sector' in its own right. MoLSW has the mandate for social welfare (through DSW) and social security (through the National Social Security Fund (NSSF)). Social welfare is defined in Decree 169 as 'physical and mental assistance and services offered to victims of disasters and disadvantaged people in society through contributions from the Government, individuals, legal entities, the community, and both domestic and international organizations'. Despite this comprehensive definition, there are no regular social assistance programmes targeting poor or vulnerable individuals. The draft NSPS also does not include any specific proposed schemes for poor households or individuals.[24]

There are several decrees on social protection in the process of finalisation. These include a decree on social relief for the disabled, championed by the Department of Policy and Disabled at MoLSW.[25] Recent progress reports by sector working groups (GoL 2017b) indicate a continued GoL commitment to expanding the social protection sector. Overall, the government is fully aware that universal social protection is important to protect human development gains from shocks and misfortunes. It notes that GoL is working on the coverage of social and health security, including for the disaster affected, elderly, and disabled (with support from various development partners). There is also reportedly increased attention toward improving access to social welfare. Currently, there is a taskforce set up to look at how to make investment sufficient, predictable, and sustained to improve the quality and access to quality social protection, including measures to address important issues related to the coverage and scope of pensions, as well as for health care services for the elderly, homeless, and underprivileged. In addition, there is a consideration to carry out a proper analysis for establishing a mechanism to manage and protect child benefits and encourage workers and people in all professions to contribute to the health insurance fund (ibid.)

Social protection coverage

The social protection sector as it stands comprises various fragmented schemes implemented by a range of ministries and government bodies. The table below lists the main schemes that can be classified as social protection and are presented in the draft NSPS (2017). (GoL 2017a) These social protection schemes are government led, either in funding terms or in their delivery systems.

Although the concepts of disadvantaged groups and social benefits exist in Lao PDR, the scheme for revolutionary heroes is the only substantial government programme so far. Programmes for vulnerable children, victims of unexploded ordinances, disabled persons, and disaster affectees are largely run by NGOs and funded by development partners (SPSL 2015).

[24] See social protection landscape by 20130 in Section 3, (GoL 2017a)
[25] Based on stakeholder interviews

TABLE 4: SOCIAL PROTECTION SCHEMES IN LAO PDR

Scheme	Target group	Implementing actor	Type
SASS and SSO compulsory social health insurance – Health by 2020[1]	Civil servants (SASS) and formal economy workers (SSO)	NSSF (MoLSW)	Contributory
National Health Insurance – Health by 2020[1]	Poor informal economy workers and Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health programme (MNCH)	National Health Insurance Bureau (NHIB) (Ministry of Health: MoH)	Mix
National Health Insurance – Health by 2025[2]	Civil servants, formal economy workers, the poor, informal economy workers, and MNCH	NHIB (MoH)	Mix
Free schooling (block grants to abolish school fees)	Students at all levels of education	MoES	Non-contributory
Cash/scholarship grants for secondary education	Students from poor families	MoES	Non-contributory
National School Meal Programme[3]	Primary and secondary school students in disadvantaged districts	MoES, WFP, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Education for Development Fund	Non-contributory
Secondary School Stipend Programme	Lower and upper secondary student stipend targeting poor households	Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Non-contributory
Formal Contributory Social Security: unemployment benefit; sickness benefit; employment injury; occupational disease and nonwork-related disability benefit; maternity benefit; •childbirth grant; survivor's benefit; death grant	Formal economy workers; public sector workers; police; military and their dependants; self-employed (voluntary); and informal economy workers (voluntary)	NSSF, MoLSW	Contributory
• Severance pay; • Paid sick leave; • Paid maternity leave	Formal economy workers	Labour Law No. 43/NA (2013)	
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) scholarships	Students from poor and disadvantaged families	MoES, ADB, GIZ	Non-contributory

Scheme	Target group	Implementing actor	Type
Livelihood support and essential social services through community asset creation	Communities in targeted poor districts	Poverty-Reduction Fund (PRF) [4]	Non-contributory
Old Age Pensions	Compulsory coverage of formal private sector and public sector employees, voluntary coverage of self-employed and informal workers	NSSF, MoLSW	Contributory

Notes:

1. Situation by 2020 according to the National Health Insurance Strategy (2017–2020):
   'Members of the armed forces and police force and their dependents are provided health-care treatments at military hospitals financed by member contributions and the government budget. Health insurance for the military and for the police falls under the authority of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Public Security, respectively. The Ministry of Defence's scheme uses a capitation system similar to SASS, while the Ministry of Public Security's scheme uses a fee-for service system. Post-retirement, health insurance coverage is transferred to the NSSF'.
2. Situation by 2025 according to the National Health Insurance Strategy (2017–2020).
3. The National School Meals programme supported by WFP will be handed over to MoES, with this process already started in 2018.
4. The PRF was established by a Prime Ministerial Decree 073/PM in 2002, as a financially autonomous organisation attached to the Government's Office.

Source: GoL (2017) Draft National Social Protection Policy (unpublished)

The last few years have seen a considerable investment in improving access and coverage of social security, including health insurance. The formal social security insurance scheme under the NSSF covers workers for a range of benefits, with NSSF schemes covering most of the public sector and some of the formal private sector. However, this results in poor coverage of the total workforce as the informal economy continues to make up about 80 per cent of the workforce (Silas Theile & Michael Cichon 2017). The NSSF provides health coverage to the formal public and private sector, while free health care is provided for the poor (Health Equity Fund), those in maternity, and for children younger than five years (MNCH) (ibid.) Voluntary community-based health insurance (CBHI) has so far only achieved limited coverage. The table below presents estimates of coverage of selected social protection programmes in Lao PDR.

TABLE 5: COVERAGE OF SELECTED SOCIAL PROTECTION SCHEMES IN LAO PDR

Social protection programmes	Coverage (# individuals)	% of population	% of target group	Funding
NSSF – health insurance for civil servants and formal private sector workers	550 339	8.6	37	Contributory
Health Equity Funds	626,180	9.8		Mainly donor+ GoL
CBHI, voluntary contributory health insurance for informal economy	151,981	22.4	4.8	Contributory+ GoL subsidy
MNCH programme	110,290 (Mothers) 214,937 (children under 5)	1.7 (Mothers) 3.4 (Children under 5)	59 (Mothers) 26 (Children under 5)	GoL+ Donors
National School Meals Programme (NSMP)[1]	2,135/8,884 primary schools; 200/1,586 secondary schools		24% primary; 12.6% secondary	Mainly donor+ GoL

Notes:

1. MoES NSMP: 306 primary schools; WFP: 1,509 primary schools and 200 secondary schools; Catholic Relief Services and Education for Development Foundation: 316 and four primary schools respectively.
2. Most of these numbers are estimates from 2014

Source: Theile and Cichon (2017)

Lao PDR does not have nationwide regular social welfare programmes providing either in cash or in-kind benefits to specified beneficiary groups. To date, social welfare or social assistance programmes have mainly consisted of short-term in-kind assistance for disaster victims and specific vulnerable groups such as victims of trafficking or orphans. These typically fall under the mandate of DSW in MoLSW. Other social protection schemes include education-related schemes implemented through MoES, including free education through block grant financing of schools, the NSMP, scholarship programmes for TVET and, to a limited extent, secondary education. Poverty-reduction programmes implemented by the PRF, although not classical social protection schemes, aim to provide a minimum of access to essential goods and services through community asset creation and livelihood promotion activities (ibid.).

BOX 3: THE NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME

School meals programmes were initiated in Lao PDR by WFP in 2002. Currently, there are mainly three school meals programmes in selected districts – run by WFP, CRS, and EDF respectively. MoES launched the NSMP in 2012, and intends to gradually take over implementation from development agencies. A Policy on Promoting School Lunch was adopted in 2014 (Decree No.1679/ MoES).

While the WFP's programme was originally set up to curb malnutrition, the NSMP, under MoES, is now mainly an effort to improve school attendance and completion rates (ibid.).

The school meals programme is currently fragmented, in terms of coverage, benefit package, delivery, and implementation. On the whole the programmes are largely donor funded with little government contribution. In terms of coverage:

- The MoES NSMP targets 312 primary schools in districts with low educational and socioeconomic outcomes. The NSMP provides cash transfers to school authorities who manage procurement and storage of food supplies on their own.
- The WFP targets pre-primary and primary children in disadvantaged districts.
    - From 2014 to May 2018 WFP supported 1,429 schools in 30 districts (seven provinces).
    - From September 2018 to June 2019 WFP plans to support 1,444 schools in 31 districts (eight provinces).
    - From September 2019 to 2021 WFP plans to support 929 schools in 22 districts.
- CRS provides school lunch to 350 primary schools.
- EDF is currently supporting three primary schools in Nhommalath District, Khammouane Province.
- The target groups according to the Policy on Promoting School Lunch are as follows: children in kindergarten, pre-primary, primary, and secondary school in rural, remote, and poor areas, ethnic communities, children with special needs, and children in areas with low educational outcomes, gender disparities, and a high prevalence of malnutrition.

Handover of school meals to government

Starting in 2010, WFP handed over implementation of school meals in two districts to MoES. By 2019/20, 500 schools will be integrated into the NSMP, and the remaining 950 in June 2021. The World Bank-funded NSMP will also be handed over to the GoL in June 2019.

At the time of writing, WFP's school meals programme handover plan was officially approved by GoL in June 2018. The GoL has committed to take over complete implementation of the WFP school meals programme by 2021, starting June 2019 with the 500 schools indicated above. The WFP Country Strategic Plan (2017–2021) notes that WFP intends to gradually shift from direct food assistance toward more technical assistance (WFP 2017, p. 2017).

Source: various, including authors' fieldwork

There is no experience of government-led social protection programmes providing regular cash transfers in Lao PDR. There have been a number of donor/NGO-led pilots(Silas Theile & Michael Cichon 2017) that tested delivery of benefits through cash, such as the World Bank Community Nutrition Pilot Project, ADB's Basic Education for Girls Project, and DFAT's Resilient Livelihoods for the Poor project (using a 'Graduation' model for poverty alleviation in selected communities in Southern Laos). There is no indication that these pilots have resulted in scaled-up programming using cash transfers.

5.1 Gaps in social protection

As mentioned in the previous section, the social protection sector in Lao PDR is at an extremely early stage of development. Stakeholder interviews for this research suggested that social protection is still widely perceived as either 'social welfare for typically widowed, disabled or orphaned individuals' or 'contributory assistance for those in the formal sector'. The development of the social protection sector thus requires foundational support through finalisation of the Draft National Social Protection Policy, underpinned by associated legislation that clearly codifies social protection and allocates mandates to respective line ministries. This needs to be accompanied by increased investment by the GoL in social protection spending, especially on social assistance. The development of an integrated social protection sector is therefore a long-term initiative.

An important consideration for the development of future social protection is the use of cash-based programming. There is currently no notable experience of providing cash transfers by the GoL, and, even as emergency assistance in the aftermath of disasters, cash handouts were reportedly rare. Stakeholder interviews suggested that there is limited appetite or indeed acceptance of cash-based assistance in the country. Cash does not need to be the only instrument suited for delivering social assistance, but based on overwhelmingly positive global evidence it does demand some consideration (Kapur, Mukhopadhyay & Subramanian 2008; Arnold, Conway & Greenslade 2011; Gentilini 2016). The ABND process recognises that regular cash benefits are a crucial policy instrument that should be considered and explored by stakeholders and policymakers in Lao PDR (Silas Theile & Michael Cichon 2017). Introducing cash entitlements to ensure a minimum of income security for those not covered by the contributory schemes could be a crucial step for the development of a comprehensive social protection floor over the coming years.

Improving the coverage of social protection also aligns with building the resilience of the rural poor in the face of increased exposure to climate change risks. The GoL's Plan for Action for Agriculture (2014) recognises that smallholders and landless poor in Lao PDR face a high level of risk from natural hazards and climate change (GoL 2014).

5.2 Shock-responsive social protection in Lao PDR

The ASEAN Strategic Guidance on Disaster Responsive Social Protection points to various potential rationales for shock-responsive social protection.(FEG Forthcoming) These include efficiency gains from faster response to disasters, pooling financial and programmatic resources, and speeding up decision making. Shock-responsive social protection also implies improved preparedness for disaster response through improving the resilience of households exposed to shocks.

When studying the factors that can enable social protection schemes to be more responsive, the coverage of such schemes is a key factor. In theory, programmes with higher coverage – be that geographic coverage (national coverage or in vulnerable regions) or individual coverage (higher coverage of vulnerable households) – present more opportunities for responses. As discussed above, the coverage of social protection programmes in Lao PDR is low. This presents few, if any, opportunities for shock-responsive social protection programming.

Furthermore, there is currently no experience of social protection systems being used to respond to shocks. As noted above, social protection is not yet a fully mature sector in Lao PDR – this applies to all aspects of the social protection system: policies, mandates, financing, and delivery. The DRM sector in itself focuses on providing relief in the immediate aftermath of a shock, providing almost no direct support to affected households or communities in relation to medium-term support (from relief to recovery), which would enable people to not only cope but also to recover.

Given the nascent and fragmented nature of the social protection sector, it is premature to identify social protection programmes suitable for shock response. Social security programmes, which have

limited coverage (largely urban), are inherently inflexible and difficult to scale given their contributory nature. Specific social assistance programmes such as the National School Meals Programme (NSMP) are not suited for vertical or horizontal expansion in Lao PDR's case for a number of reasons. First, school meals are provided only when schools are open and school holidays in Lao PDR coincide largely with the rainy season, which is when most communities are affected by floods. Second, school buildings themselves are not always immune to flooding, especially flash flooding. Third, the coverage of school meals continues to be limited to selected districts and the programme is fragmented with large variations in delivery, as well as financing across WFP, CRS, EDF and MoES. For example, MoES NSMP schools receive cash grants, often with significant delays, and procurement of food is managed by schools locally. This contrasts with WFP schools where food supplies are provided by WFP, which handles supply chain and procurement. Finally, national school meals fall within the mandate of the Inclusive Education Centre at MoES, which currently has little coordination with DSW on disaster response and in itself is highly capacity constrained.

However, in the long term, once the social protection sector matures, the sector has the potential to be shock responsive by *design* – through related mandates and joint activities conducted by relevant ministries. A key opportunity in this regard is coordination for DRM, especially for disaster relief and response. As noted in Section 4.1, mandates for disaster response and social protection both lie with the DSW in MoLSW. Furthermore, the existing structure of inter-ministerial coordination on DRM through disaster management committees is set up to function at all administrative levels. The eighth NSEDP also lists two important priority activities under the social protection outcome that strengthen the link between DRM and Social Protection(MoPI 2016):

- Disseminate policies and decrees on social welfare, including the social safety net, to victims of disasters and ensure coordination with Outcome 3, Output 2 (Prepare to Cope with the Disaster Risks and Impacts from Climate Change).
- Enhance emergency assistance programmes extensively to help victims of disasters, with cooperation from all members of society.

As social protection evolves in the long run, the role of specific social protection programmes in responding to disaster must be clarified through legislation (law and decrees), a National DRM Plan, and a National Contingency Plan. As noted in earlier sections, these are still in the process of finalisation in Lao PDR.

Another potential avenue for integrating social protection in disaster response is through disaster risk financing. From a risk financing perspective, both social protection programmes and reconstruction of public assets costs (post-disaster) constitute an 'explicit contingent liability' for governments.[26] Emergency response (relief and recovery costs), which are typically unpredictable, constitute implicit contingent liabilities. Risk financing mechanisms such as established funds (i.e. the State Reserve Fund and the Social Welfare Fund) at the central level (see Section 4.3) can be used for both preparedness and response activities channelled through social protection systems. This should support building the resilience of vulnerable households *ex ante*, and rapidly reaching the worst-affected households following a disaster (World Bank 2017).

[26] The government pays a significant portion of post-disaster response costs, and these expenditures can be seen a contingent liability—that is, as an obligation that may or may not come due, depending on whether particular events occur. This is in contrast to a direct liability, which is an obligation whose outcome is predictable.

Conclusion and recommendations

The social protection sector in Lao PDR is nascent, while the DRM systems, although functional, require significant improvement. Investing in strengthening the social protection and DRM sectors in relation to their regular programming would, in the long term, also lead to increasing the opportunities for its use in emergency response.

There are two key lessons from international debates that are worth taking into account when considering making Lao PDR's social protection system more risk-informed: i) more mature systems tend to present more opportunities for responding – this implies that investing in social protection for its routine operations increases the possibilities for shock response; and ii) ex ante planning and preparedness in terms of making social protection systems more flexible and risk-informed is important for a timely and adequate response (Rodolfo Beazley & Valentina Barca Forthcoming; Beazley & Solorzano 2017).

There is also an important need for further research and knowledge sharing, since there has been limited engagement by key government agencies with the international debates around shock-responsive social protection.

Finally, the ASEAN declaration on social protection provides a unique opportunity to make social protection systems in the region more responsive. The declaration emphasises the role of social protection systems in responding to the effects of climate change, disasters, and economic crises. This momentum can be leveraged by Lao PDR to invest in its own social protection system while learning from and contributing to the developments in other AMS.

Considering the Lao PDR context, this research study presents the following key policy recommendations:

1. Technical assistance on public financial management to relevant line ministries

There are a number of funds, largely held at the central level, which support disaster preparedness and response. However, knowledge regarding the use of these funds is scarce and their suitability to respond efficiently to localised disasters is unclear. It is therefore important to provide technical assistance to MoLSW and MoNRE on public financial management so they better understand how budgeting cycles work (in line with national five-year development plans) and how funding requests can be timed and communicated to align with annual budget plans. This type of support can also clarify how various line ministries can access contingency funding and suggest mechanisms to coordinate such requests. Moreover, it can help clarify the role of NDMC in fund mobilisation and budget execution for disaster preparedness and response. The outcome of such assistance should be quicker access to (greater) funding, especially at the district and provincial level. This is critical as most disasters are localised, with response and recovery consequently led by PDMCs and DDMCs.

2. Improve coordination among line ministries through existing structures (NDMCs, PDMCs, and DDMCs)

A large number of policy documents, including the eighth NSEDP, recognise the need for better coordination within government and between development partners. In practice, this is made difficult by reliance on 'project-based' financing and implementation rather than sector-based planning and

programming. There are several key activities with the DRM sector that can encourage better coordination and joint decision making among key DMC members and development partners. These include:

- Finalising a joint disaster management plan at the central level and conducting more simulation exercises at all administrative levels.
- Joint post-disaster assessments, budgeting, and planning at the district level.
- Enforcing regular communication through DDMC meetings, developing and publishing clear terms of reference for all members, creating data sharing protocols, and distributing meeting minutes with action points.
- Integrating DRM in the action plans of relevant line ministries, including Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Ministry of Health (MoH), and Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). This has already been done for Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MoAF).
- Sector working groups already exist as a coordination function for development partners. Working group meeting often provide policy and programming updates but rarely inform joint planning. Clear leadership from MoLSW can promote the use of these working groups for joint programming to minimise duplication and maximise areas for support to the ministry.

4. Build capacity across the DRM cycle

In many ways, existing policies and plans have already laid out clear targets for the DRM sector, including improving preparedness and response. This is evident for instance in the eighth NSEDP, which lays out a large number of targets and lists clear priority actions such 'Improve the Committee for Prevention and Disaster Management at each level, and develop risk reduction and readiness and response plans to disasters at national and local levels.'(MoPI 2016). What needs to be done in the Lao PDR context is translating these plans into action. As with progress in other sectoral activities, this requires a significant push in capacity building to help ministries operationalise plans and policies and subsequently implement activities with clear performance targets.

This is particularly the case for MoLSW, which has a large mandate (disaster response and social welfare) and needs capacity building at all levels to ensure adequate disaster preparedness and response (especially as the handover from MoNRE is very recent). Key areas for capacity building constitute the following:

- Greater number of DSW staff at the central level;
- Training to DSW on localised vulnerability assessments and risk mapping;
- Training to DSW on supply chain logistics for disaster preparedness and response;
- Technical assistance to DMH on improving the accuracy and communication of forecasts;
- Support on finalising a joint disaster management plan that details roles and responsibilities together;
- Support on conducting simulation exercises, specific to types of disasters; and
- Improving the operational effectiveness of the emergency operations centre in Vientiane.

Further DRM sector recommendations are provided in Box 4.

BOX 4: DRM RECOMMENDATIONS BY APDC

Lao PDR's DRM sector continues to improve. Stakeholder interviews conducted for this research suggest that the improvement needs identified in earlier reports, such as ADPC's assessment in 2012, still hold:

1. The DesInventar database (of national disaster losses) needs updating on a regular basis and inclusion of disaster events going further back than 30 years. It should also include low profile hazards, such as earthquakes.
2. Systematic data gathering. In addition to the general improvement of the DesInventar database, systematic ways to gather disaster data at district and village level should be put in place. So far, most of the information on the village and district levels is based on secondary literature. Gathering of first-hand information in a timely manner would tremendously improve the quality of the database.
3. Institutional strengthening for comprehensive risk assessment. There is a need to improve the existing capacities for comprehensive risk assessment to ensure that the data available are analysed in the right way and can be used to inform policy development.
4. Capacity building for probabilistic risk assessment. Provincial authorities are using standardised templates for the collection of disaster data. However, especially with regard to probabilistic risk assessment, there is a need to institutionalise standardised systems within the key ministries.
5. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into poverty-reduction strategies in Lao PDR.
6. Poverty-reduction programmes and strategies should include risk reduction aspects such as awareness raising, capacity building, and local-level risk financing.

Source: APDC (2012)

5. Laying the foundations of an integrated social protection sector

The draft NSPS is a good first step in consolidating GoL's policy priorities for social protection. However, the finalisation of the policy will be a long-term process. In the interim, key actors in the social protection sector – especially DSW at MoLSW – would benefit from training on core social protection concepts, especially focusing on how social protection sectors have developed in the ASEAN region.

In the medium to long term, DSW would require significant technical assistance on operationalising the proposed Child Grant and Disability Grant in the draft NSPS (2017). This would necessitate increased capacity and training on building appropriate data systems, targeting protocols, payment mechanisms, grievance redressal functions, and monitoring and evaluation of performance.

6. Extend coverage of priority social protection programmes in disaster-prone communities (in the long term)

The draft NSPS (2017) provides a focus on extending the coverage of social welfare to vulnerable populations. This should include the provision of both emergency relief and recovery assistance to rural, remote households more vulnerable to flood damage. Currently, there are no specific programmes to support recovery from disasters, which leaves poor, agrarian households highly exposed to covariate shocks with no safety net.

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Acronyms

AADMER	ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response
AAL	Average Annual Loss
ABND	Assessment-Based National Dialogue
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADPC	Asia Disaster Preparedness Centre
AHA	ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management
AMS	ASEAN Member States
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CBHI	Community-Based Health Insurance
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DDMCC	Department for Disaster Management and Climate Change
DDPCC	District Disaster Prevention and Control Committee
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EDF	Education for Development Foundation
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GNI	Gross National Income
GoL	Government of Lao PDR
HDI	Human Development Index
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LMICs	Lower-Middle-Income Countries
LRC	Lao Red Cross
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MNCH	Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health

MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MPWT	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
MRC	Mekong River Commission
NDMC	National Disaster Management Committee
NDMO	National Disaster Management Committee
NDPCC	National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee
NHIB	National Health Insurance Bureau
NSPS	National Social Protection Strategy
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PDPCC	Provincial Disaster Prevention and Control Committee
PRF	Poverty-Reduction Fund
SASS	State Authority for Social Security
SOs	Strategic Objectives
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedure
SSO	Social Security Organization
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
VDPCC	Village Disaster Prevention and Control Committee
VDPU	Village Disaster Prevention Unit
VEDC	Village Education Development Committee
WFP	World Food Programme
WRI	World Risk Index

Annex A List of respondents

Institution	Location	Instruments
Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	Vientiane	Group Discussion
Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	Vientiane	KII
Inclusive Education Centre, Department of ECE, Ministry of Education and Sport	Vientiane	KII
Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	Vientiane	KII
Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	Vientiane	KII
Department of Social Security, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	Vientiane	KII
Department of Policy, Disability & Elderly, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	Vientiane	KII
Ministry of Planning and Investment	Vientiane	KII
Department of Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	Vientiane	KII
WFP Lao PDR – Supply Chain & Logistics, School Feeding, Nutrition and Agriculture, VAM	Vientiane	Group Discussion
International agencies - RC, FAO, UNICEF, UNFPA, WB	Vientiane	Group Discussion
DFAT, Australian Embassy	Vientiane	Group Discussion
Lao Red Cross Society	Vientiane	Group Discussion
Oxfam	Vientiane	KII
PDMC and DDMC (MoLSW, MAF, MoE, LWU)	Khongsedone District, Saravan Province	Group Discussion
VDPCC + flood affectees	Village Nuixang, Khongsedone District, Saravan Province	Group Discussion
PDPCC and DDPCC (MoLSW, MAF, MoE, LWU, Red Cross)	Xai District, Oudamxay Province	Group Discussion
VDPCC + flood affectees	Village Huay Khum, Xai District, Oudamxay Province	Group Discussion
WFP field office team	Oudamxay District, Oudamxay Province	Group Discussion

Annex B Research questions

ການເສີມສ້າງຄວາມສາມາດຂອງບັນດາປະເທດສະມາຊິກອາຊຽນ ສໍາຫລັບການສຶກສາລະດັບພາກພື້ນ ກ່ຽວກັບລະບົບການຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມທີ່ຕອບສະຫນອງສະຖານະການສຸກເສີນ

Strengthening capacity of ASEAN Member States to design and implement risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems for resilience

The questions below are intended to guide the interviews with stakeholders, but they are not prescriptive. It is recommended to select and tailor the questions based on the country or countries of experience as well as the corresponding sector (SP, HA, DRM).

The overarching research question is: **What factors enable social protection systems and programmes in ASEAN countries to be responsive to shocks and to deliver effective response?**

ຄໍາຖາມຕໍ່ໄປນີ້ເປັນແບບຄໍາຖາມສໍາຫລັບການສໍາພາດຜູ້ທີ່ມີສ່ວນກ່ຽວຂ້ອງ ແຕ່ບໍ່ແມ່ນຄໍາຖາມທີ່ໃຊ້ຖາມຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດໂດຍກົງ. ຂໍແນະນໍາວ່າ ໃຫ້ເລືອກຄໍາຖາມທີ່ເຫມາະສົມກັບຄຸນລັກສະນະ ແລະ ປະສົບການຂອງປະເທດນັ້ນໆ ລວມທັງພາກສ່ວນກ່ຽວຂ້ອງທີ່ເຫມາະສົມ (ການຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມ, ການຊ່ວຍເຫລືອດ້ານມະນຸສະຍະທໍາ ແລະ ການຈັດການຄວາມສ່ຽງທາງໄພພິບັດ).

ຄໍາຖາມວິໄຈຕົ້ນຕໍມີຄື: **ປັດໄຈໃດທີ່ເປັນປັດໄຈສົ່ງເສີມລະບົບຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມ ແລະ ການດໍາເນີນງານໃນປະເທດອາຊຽນ ເພື່ອໃຫ້ສາມາດຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ເຫດການສຸກເສີນ ແລະ ເພື່ອໃຫ້ປະຊາຊົນໄດ້ຮັບການບໍລິການແກ່ຍ່າງມີປະສິດທິຜົນ?**

Date and place: ວັນທີ່ ແລະ ທີ່:	

Participants (interviewees and interviewers) ຜູ້ສໍາພາດ ແລະ ຜູ້ໃຫ້ສໍາພາດ

Name ຊື່	**Position** ຕໍາແຫນ່ງ	**Institution** ຫນ່ວຍງານ/ອົງການ

Main sector and countries of experience: **ພາກສ່ວນກ່ຽວຂ້ອງ ແລະ ວຽກງານ**	

SP: Social Protection ການຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມ

HA: Humanitarian Aid ການຊ່ວຍເຫລືອດ້ານມະນຸສະທໍາ

DRM: Disaster Risk Management ການຈັດການຄວາມສ່ຽງຕໍ່ໄພພິບັດ

SRSP: Shock-response SP ການຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມທີ່ຕອບສະຫນອງສະຖານະການສຸກເສີນ

EXS: Early warning system ລະບົບເຕືອນໄພລ່ວງຫນ້າ

Sectoral context บริบทของสายงาน	What are the strengths and challenges of SP / HA / DRM in the region / country? (main programmes and strategies, coverage, effectiveness) – overview

ການປະຕິບັດງານຂອງພາກສ່ວນກ່ຽວຂ້ອງ	ຄວາມເຂັ້ມແຂງ/ຈຸດດີ ແລະ ຂໍ້ຄົງຄ້າງ/ຈຸດອ່ອນຂອງ ລະບົບຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມ (SP) / ຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫລືອດ້ານມະນຸສະທຳ (HA) / ແລະການຈັດການຄວາມສ່ຽງຈາກໄພພິບັດ (DRM) ໃນພາກພື້ນ / ສປປ ລາວ ມີຫຍັງແດ່? (ລວມເຖິງແຜນການ ແລະ ແຜນຍຸດທະສາດທີ່ສໍາຄັນ, ຄວາມຄວບຄຸມ, ປະສິດທິຜົນຂອງແຜນວຽກ) - ໃນພາບລວມ
Shocks **ສະຖານະການສູກເສີນ**	Which are the typical shocks affecting the region / country? What have been the specific major covariate shocks in recent years? What are the characteristics of shocks affecting the country or region (natural vs man-made, onset, etc.)? ມີສະຖານະການສູກເສີນປະເພດໃດແດ່ທີ່ໄດ້ສົ່ງ ຜົນກະທົບຕໍ່ ສປປລາວ? ມີສະຖານະການສູກ ເສີນໃດແດ່ທີ່ມັກເກີດຂຶ້ນ ໃນໄລຍະ 2-3 ປີຜ່ານມາ? ສະຖານະການສູກເສີນດັ່ງກ່າວນັ້ນມີລັກສະນະ ແນວໃດ (ໄພທໍາມະຊາດ, ໄພທີ່ເກີດຂຶ້ນໂດຍມະນຸດ, ໄພທີ່ເກີດຂຶ້ນໂດຍກະທັນຫັນຫລືຄ່ອຍໆເກີດ ຯລຯ)?
	How does vulnerability to shocks relate to poverty? Do shocks tend to affect areas / sub-groups characterised by higher poverty rates? 3. ຄວາມສ່ຽງຕໍ່ສະຖານະການສູກເສີນມີການພົວພັນກັບຄວາມທຸກຍາກແນວໃດ? ສະຖານະການສູກ ເສີນມີແນວໂນ້ມທີ່ສົ່ງຜົນກະທົບເຂດທີ່ / ປະຊາຊົນທີ່ ມີຄວາມທຸກຍາກກ່ວາບໍ່?

Shock-response SP (SRSP) **ການຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມທີ່ຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ເຫດການສຸກເສີນ**	In your opinion, can SP contribute to preparing and responding to shocks? How? 4. ຕາມຄວາມເຫັນຂອງທ່ານ, ການຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມມີສ່ວນເຮັດໃຫ້ມີຜົນຕໍ່ການກຽມພ້ອມ ແລະ ຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ເຫດການສຸກເສີນໄດ້ບໍ່? ໄດ້ແນວໃດ?
	Is there an appetite for enhancing the role of SP in shock-response? (from governments, partners and regional bodies) 5. ມີແນວທາງໃນການເສີມສ້າງບົດບາດຂອງລະບົບຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມເພື່ອ ຕອບສະຫນອງເຫດການສຸກເສີນຫລືບໍ່? (ຈາກຄະນະລັດຖະບານ, ບັນດາຜູ້ມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມ ແລະ ອົງການພາກພື້ນ)
	Are you aware of any SRSP experience? (give examples to explain what SRSP is) 6. ທ່ານມີປະສົບການທາງ ດ້ານການໃຊ້ລະບົບຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມທີ່ມີຢູ່ເພື່ອການຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ເຫດການສຸກເສີນຫລືບໍ່? (ກະ ລຸນນາຍົກຕົວຢ່າງ)
	What SP schemes would be better placed to flex and respond during emergencies? 7. ລະບົບຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມ ລະບົບໃດທີ່ມີຄວາມຍືດຍຸ່ນຫຼືສາມາດປັບແກ້ ແລະ ເຫມາະສົມໃນການຕອບສະຫນອງ ເຫດການສຸກເສີນໄດ້?

	What design and implementation features of the SP system have elements of flexibility and adaptability to facilitate rapid and adequate shock response? (ask in particular about targeting, data and delivery mechanism) 8. ລັກສະນະການອອກແບບ ແລະ ການປະຕິບັດຂອງລະບົບ ຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມ ມີອົງປະກອບຂອງຄວາມຍືດຫຍຸ່ນຫຼືສາມາດປັບແກ້ໄດ້ ແລະ ສາມາດປັບຕົວ ເພື່ອຕອບສະໜອງ ຢ່າງ ກະທັນຫັນ ແລະ ເໝາະສົມ ຕໍ່ເຫດການສຸກເສີນ? (ຖາມ ໂດຍສະເພາະກ່ຽວກັບເປົ້າຫມາຍ, ຂໍ້ມູນແລະ ກົນໄກການໃຫ້ບໍລິການ)
	Which stakeholders (public, private, communities, donors, etc.) support and which might oppose the use of SP systems to respond to humanitarian emergencies, or closer collaboration between SP and HA, and why? 9. ອົງການຈັດຕັ້ງ / ອົງການໃດ (ລັດຖະບານ, ເອກະຊົນ, ຊຸມຊົນ, ແຫຼ່ງທຶນ, ແລະ ອື່ນໆ) ສະຫນັບສະຫນູນ ຫຼື ເປັນອຸບປະສັກໃນການໃຊ້ລະບົບການຄຸ້ມຄອງ ທາງສັງຄົມໃນການຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອດ້ານມະນຸດສະທຳເມື່ອເກີດໄພພິບັດ, ຫຼືການປະສານງານຢ່າງໃກ້ຊິດລະຫວ່າງການປົກປ້ອງສັງຄົມ ແລະ ການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອມະນຸດສະທຳ?

SP & DRM **ການຄຸ້ມຄອງຄວາມປອດໄພ ດ້ານສັງຄົມແລະ ການຄຸ້ມຄອງຄວາມສ່ຽງ ທາງໄພພິບັດ**	Has there been any recent experience of coordination between, or integration of, social protection and DRM policies? 10. ມີປະສົບການໃນການປະສານງານຫຼືການເຊື່ອມໂຍງກັບ ຫຼື ການປະສານສົມ ທົບນະ�โยบายການຄຸ້ມຄອງໄພພິບັດ ແລະ ການປົກປ້ອງສັງຄົມຫຼືບໍ່?
	Is there space for dialogue and collaboration between these two sectors? How could this dialogue be promoted? 11. ມີຊ່ອງໃດທີ່ຈະປະສານການຮ່ວມກັນລະຫວ່າງການປົກປ້ອງດ້ານສັງຄົມແລະການຄຸ້ມຄອງໄພພິບັດບໍ່? ແລະເຮັດແນວໃດພວກເຮົາຈະສາມາດສົ່ງເສີມການຮ່ວມມືນີ້ໄດ້?
	Have Early Warning Systems been used to trigger SP or HA responses? What kind of responses? Have these responses been effective and timely? 12. ມີການໃຊ້ລະບົບການເຕືອນໄພລ່ວງຫນ້າເພື່ອກະຕຸ້ນ ການຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ການປົກປ້ອງສັງຄົມ ຫຼື ການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອດ້ານມະນຸດສະທຳຫຼືບໍ່? ມີການຕອບສະຫນອງປະເພດໃດແດ່? ການຕອບສະຫນອງ ດັ່ງກ່າວມີປະສິທິຜົນ ແນວໃດ ແລະ ທັນເວລາບໍ່?
	Do national emergency response plans provide a role for SP in the immediate response? What kind of role? 13. ແຜນການຕອບສະຫນອງໄພພິບັດສຸກເສີນແຫ່ງຊາດມີບົດບາດໃນການການປົກປ້ອງທາງ ສັງຄົມໃນການຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ເຫດການສຸກເສີນຫຼືບໍ່? ມີບົດບາດຫຍັງແດ່?
Finance **ການເງິນ**	How are emergency responses typically funded? (domestic vs foreign resources) 14. ການຕອບສະຫນອງໄພພິບັດສຸກເສີນ ໂດຍປົກກະຕິແລ້ວ ໄດ້ງົບປະມານມາຈາກໃສ? (ແຫຼ່ງ ທຶນພາຍໃນ ຫຼື ຕ່າງປະເທດ)
	Are there ex-ante financial mechanisms for emergency response such us regional or private insurances or contingency funds?

	If yes, for what can it be used? And how is it triggered? 15. ມີກົນໄກສໍາລັບການຈັດສັນງົບປະມານເພື່ອນໍາໃຊ້ເຂົ້າໃນການຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ໄພພິບັດຫຼືບໍ່ ເຊັ່ນ ການປະກັນໄພພາກພື້ນ ຫຼື ພາກເອກະຊົນ ຫຼື ກອງທຶນສຸກເສີນ? ຖ້າມີ, ໃນກໍລະນີໃດ? ແລະ ວິທີການນີ້ສາມາດກະຕຸ້ນໄດ້ແນວໃດ?
	What are the main financing and budgetary constraints to timely and adequate social protection shock response according to the literature and experts? In planning future responses, how can these be resolved? 16. ຄວາມຫຍຸ້ງຍາກທີ່ສໍາຄັນທາງດ້ານການງົບປະມານ ແລະ ການເງິນ ເພື່ອໃຫ້ທັນເວລາ ພຽງພໍ່ໃນການຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ການປົກປ້ອງສັງຄົມອີງຕາມການສຶກສາຄົ້ນຄ້ວາ ແລະ ຜູ້ຊ່ຽວຊານ ມີບັນຫາໃດແດ່? ໃນການວາງແຜນການຕອບສະຫນອງໃນອະນາຄົດ, ວິທີການເຫຼົ່ານີ້ສາມາດ ຈະແກ້ໄຂໄດ້ແນວໃດ?

EWS **ການເຕືອນໄພລ່ວງຫນ້າ**	Is there an Early Warning System? What agency implements it? What data does it use? What indicators-alerts produces? 17. ມີລະບົບການເຕືອນໄພລ່ວງຫນ້າແນວໃດ? ີຫນ່ວຍງານໃດທີ່ຮັບຜິດຊອບຫນ້າທີ່ນີ້? ມີຕົວຊີ້ວັດການແຈ້ງເຕືອນຫຍັງແດ່?
	Do early warning indicators – indexes trigger automatic responses? How are they used? 18. ຕົວຊີ້ວັດທີ່ນໍາໃຊ້ໃນການເຕືອນສາມາດກະຕຸ້ນ ໃຫ້ເກີດການຕອບສະຫນອງ ຜົນກະທົບທາງໄພພິບັດ ຢ່າງອັດຕະໂນມັດຫຼືບໍ່? ຕົວຊີ້ວັດເຫຼົ່ານີ້ຖືກນໍາໃຊ້ແນວໃດ ?

HA **ການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອດ້ານມະນຸດສະທໍາ**	Are there examples of ways in which humanitarian interventions have piggybacked on social protection system components or existing policies? Are there examples of efforts to strengthen the coordination between humanitarian and social protection shock response? 19. ມີບໍ່ ຕົວຢ່າງຂອງວິທີການທາງດ້ານມະນຸດສະທໍາທີ່ໃຊ້ປະໂຍດຈາກລະບົບ ຫຼື ນະໂຍບາຍການຄຸ້ມຄອງທາງສັງຄົມທີ່ມີຢູ່ແລ້ວ? ມີບໍ່ ຕົວຢ່າງຂອງຄວາມພະຍາຍາມເພື່ອເສີມສ້າງຄວາມ ສ້າງຄວາມເຂັ້ມແຂງການເຊື່ອມຕໍ່ ການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອດ້ານມະນຸດສະທໍາແລະການປົກປ້ອງສັງຄົມທີ່ຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ເຫດສຸກເສີນ?
	What is the role of humanitarian agencies in emergency response? หน่วยงานด้านมนุษยธรรมมีบทบาทอย่างไรในการตอบสนองภาวะฉุกเฉิน 20. ພາລະບົດບາດຂອງອົງການມະນຸດສະທໍາໃນການຕອບສະຫນອງຕໍ່ເຫດການສຸກເສີນແມ່ນຫຍັງ?
Others questions / comments **ຄໍາຖາມ / ຄໍາເຫັນອື່ນໆ**	

Annex C Additional tables

TABLE 6: INFORM – RISK INDICATORS FOR LAO PDR

Indicator	Rank	Score
HIGHEST 5 RISK INDICATORS		
1. Physical exposure to tropical cyclone of Saffir-Simpson category 1 (absolute) - raw	21	*6.90 Physical exposure to tropical cyclone of Saffir-Simpson category 1 (absolute)*
2. Physical exposure to tropical cyclone of Saffir-Simpson category 3 (absolute) - raw	21	*7.80 Physical exposure to tropical cyclone of Saffir-Simpson category 3 (absolute)*
3. U5UW	16	*5.90 Children Underweight*
4. Domestic Food Price Level Index	8	*8.50 Domestic Food Price Level Index*
5. Physical exposure to flood (relative) - raw	5	*10.00 Physical exposure to flood (relative)*
LOWEST 5 RISK INDICATORS		
1. Agriculture Stress Index Probability	159	*0.00 Agriculture Drought Probability*
2. Domestic Food Price Volatility Index	117	*1.80 Domestic Food Price Volatility Index*
3. People affected by drought (absolute) - raw	61	*8.40 People affected by droughts (absolute)*
4. People affected by droughts (relative) - raw	58	*1.10 People affected by droughts (relative)*
5. Domestic Food Price Level Index	8	*8.50 Domestic Food Price Level Index*

Source: http://www.inform-index.org/Countries/Country-profiles

Annex D Government of Lao PDR decrees

There are a large number of decrees, policies and strategic documents with reference to social protection in Lao PDR. The draft social protection policy (2017)(GoL 2017a) provides the following list:

- Decrees No. 073/PM (2002), No. 222/PM, and No.10/PM (2012), about the Poverty Reduction Fun (PRF)
- Decree on People with Disabilities No. 137/GOV (2014)
- Decree on Social Welfare No. 169/PM (2013)
- Decree 273/PM (2014) on the National Policy for Free Maternity for All and Free Health Services Children Under 5
- Decree No. 470 on National Health Insurance
- Decree No.1679/Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) (2014) on Promoting School Lunch
- Constitution of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2015)
- Education Law No. 133 (2015)
- Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2016-2020)
- Health Sector Reform Strategy (2013-2025)
- Health Sector Financing Strategy (2016-2020)
- Labour Law No. 43/NA (2013)
- Law No. 01/NA (2001) on Hygiene, Disease Prevention, and Health Promotion
- Law on Healthcare (2005)
- National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy
- National Health Insurance Strategy (2017-2020)
- National Human Resources Development Strategy to 2025

The following sections provide selected text from GoL Decrees, English translated versions.

D.1 Decree 158 on establishment of NDMC

Date: 18th April 2003

Article 2: Roles and Responsibilities.

1. Responsible for disaster preparedness and management as a center of coordination in national disaster management.
2. Study and plan policies on disaster management then process to Lao Government.
3. Research and collect data and statistic on disaster victims and make requests for assistance.
4. Mobilization from individuals, organizations, internal and external in kinds and money for disaster management.
5. Public awareness about disaster in order to prevent disaster hazards and incidence that may occur. Consider to put disaster management, environment and natural conservation into school curriculums.
6. Direct relief operation, disaster preparedness, response and rehabilitation by using
7. government budget and the contribution of concerned agencies, International organizations and non-governmental organizations. Regularly report to the Government.

8. Coordinate and enhance provincial governors to establish provincial and district disaster management committee. Improve capacity of this matter

D.2 Decree 169 on Social Welfare

Date: 19th June 2013

Article 2 Social Welfare

Social welfare refers to physical and mental assistance and services offered to victims of disasters and disadvantaged people in society through contributions from the Government, individuals, legal entities, the community, and both domestic and international organizations.

Article 7 Targets of Social Welfare

Targets of social welfare consist of the following:

1. Orphans who are under 18 years of age, homeless, have no guardians, or live
2. with a poor family;
3. Those with physical or mental disabilities who cannot take care of themselves,
have no guardians, or live with a poor family;
4. Senior people aged 60 or above who are poor or live with a poor family;
5. Victims of human trafficking who are poor or have contracted infectious diseases threatening their health and life;
6. Individuals or families who are affected by natural disasters.

Article 8 Methods of Social Welfare

Social welfare comprises two methods: emergency and regular methods.

1. Emergency method refers to immediate help for victims of disasters;
2. Regular method refers to assistance provided to victims of disasters and
disadvantaged people after receiving information from concerned sectors;
3. All help shall be implemented based on the study of information about the victimized people and families provided by relevant sectors.

Article 29 Social Welfare Management and Inspection Organizations

Social welfare management and inspection organizations comprise:

1. The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare;
2. The Provincial and Vientiane Capital Labor and Social Welfare Divisions;
3. The District and Municipal Labor and Social Welfare Offices.

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