



Project Information Document/ Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet (PID/ISDS)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 27-Jun-2019 | Report No: PIDISDSC24849

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Lao People's Democratic Republic	Project ID P167601	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Lao People's Democratic Republic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Project (P167601)
Region EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC	Estimated Appraisal Date Jul 22, 2019	Estimated Board Date Apr 01, 2020	Practice Area (Lead) Health, Nutrition & Population
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Finance	Implementing Agency Ministry of Home Affairs	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To establish a functional electronic civil management information system and improve coverage of civil registration of vital events, particularly births and deaths, in Lao PDR.

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	21.00
Total Financing	21.00
of which IBRD/IDA	20.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS**World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	20.00
IDA Credit	20.00

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Counterpart Funding	1.00
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Borrower/Recipient	1.00
Environmental Assessment Category B - Partial Assessment	Concept Review Decision Track I-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a landlocked country in the middle of Southeast Asia.** It is bordered by China to the north; Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam to the south and southeast; and Myanmar to the west. Lao PDR's population is estimated at 6.9 million. It has the lowest population density in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community, with much of the land in mountainous areas, which are uncultivated. Lao PDR is endowed with natural resources, including forests, wildlife, water (the 1,700-kilometer Mekong River is the second-most-diverse watershed in fish biodiversity worldwide), and mineral resources. It is administratively divided into northern, central, and southern regions and further into 17 Provinces plus Vientiane capital, 148 Districts and 8,459 villages. Although two-thirds of the population live in rural areas, the urban population increased by 40 percent between 2005 and 2015.

2. **Lao PDR is a lower-middle-income country, with a gross national income of US\$2,270 in 2017.** It is one of the fastest-growing economies in the ASEAN community, with average gross domestic product growth of approximately eight percent per year since 2000. The poverty rate decreased from 46 percent in 1992 to 34 percent in 2002-03 to 23 percent in 2012-13, but 80 percent of the population lived on less than US\$5.50 a day in 2011 purchasing power parity dollars, compared with less than 20 percent in Thailand and less than 40 percent in Vietnam. Lao PDR is slowly transitioning from a rural, agrarian economy to one based primarily on mining and tourism. Access to basic services such as education, health, and infrastructure has improved, and more than 90 percent of households have electricity; 43 percent of villages have 4G Internet access, and that is increasing steadily. According to the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) (2016-2020), the Government of Lao PDR aims to graduate from its least-developed country status by 2020; consolidate its international integration, especially within the context of the ASEAN economic community; and take concrete steps toward industrialization and modernization to improve its people's well-being. In this context, the 8th NSED underlines the importance of improving registration of vital events (including birth, death, marriage, divorce, and migration) to provide timely and accurate data to improve planning and monitoring of development programs at the national and Provincial levels.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

3. **Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) provides the foundation for good governance and has benefits in**



several sectors. The United Nations defines civil registration as the continuous, permanent, compulsory, universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population as provided through decree or regulation in accordance with the legal requirements of a country.¹ While serving the fundamental purpose of providing legal status and its corresponding documentation as proof of such status, civil registration linked to identity management systems is critical to accessing social services such as education, health, social welfare, and financial services such as credits and inheritance. For instance, by helping to accurately identify the poor to target them with essential, good-quality health services and social safety net programs, CRVS contributes to achieving universal health coverage (Sustainable Development Goal [SDG] target 3.8) and substantial coverage of poor and vulnerable people by social protection systems (SDG target 1.3). In addition, systematic collection and analysis of statistics on vital events such as birth, death, marriage, divorce, and adoption, is critical to effective planning and monitoring of programs at the national and lower administrative levels, as well as monitoring SDGs. A unique identification number (UIN) assigned at birth allows data stored in the national civil register to be linked with databases belonging to other ministries (e.g., family book, national identity card, District Health Information System [DHIS2], civil service, social registry, pensions, social security, passport, transportation or driver's license, taxes, health care, finance, education, voter rolls, immigration), increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery. The importance of CRVS is also recognized in the SDGs, with specific targets and indicators such as:

Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (by checking identity documents for legal age to marry).

Target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.

Target 17.18: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including least-developed countries and small island developing states, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely, reliable data disaggregated according to income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in the national context.

Indicator 17.19.2b: Proportion of countries that have achieved 100 percent birth registration and 80 percent death registration.

4. **The CRVS in Lao PDR is weak, but critical progress has been made in recent years toward establishing a national civil registration program.** In 1990, the national assembly enacted the Family Registration Law (FRL), which was amended in 2009 to require registration of vital events. Registration was recorded in the family book, which is paper based and administered by the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) and is mainly used for security purposes. Vital statistics are not generated from the registrations recorded in the family book, which were incomplete. Recognizing that civil registration in Lao PDR is not universal and that the country has one of the lowest rates of birth registration (estimated at 34 percent in 2017) in the ASEAN, the Government established the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) in 2011. MOHA's Department of Citizen Management (DCM), formerly a department within MPS, has been mandated with registering vital events in Lao PDR. Joint field visits with MOHA, the World Bank Group (WBG), and Korean experts² to Luangprabang Province, Champasak Province, and the Vientiane capital office in March and April 2017 identified some challenges, including (a) lack of clarity of the roles and responsibilities of MOHA and MPS regarding migration registration, which generates frustration among the populace; (b) limited staff for civil registration; (c) limited office space; (d) lack of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and no Internet access, with some staff using their personal laptops; (e) no vehicles for outreach services; (f) limited annual budget (e.g., some Districts receive 10 million Laotian kip (~US\$1,200) per District per year, whereas other Districts received much less); (g) delays in the expected reporting schedule (quarterly from village to District, half yearly from District to Province, and yearly from Province to the central level); (h) lack of training on civil registration; (i) lack of awareness about registration, particularly in rural areas; and (j) registration fees are

¹ See Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, rev. 3.

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/Demographic/standmeth/principles/M19Rev3en.pdf>

² World Bank and Korean experts provided joint technical assistance to MOHA from 2015 to 2017.



a barrier to registration among the poor. As a new agency, MOHA DCM had limited experience working with development partners (DPs) and building a CRVS system, but, since 2015, technical assistance from the WBG and Korean experts has increased the capacity of DCM staff. Since May 2015, a WBG-Korea team has supported MOHA in finalizing the 2016-2025 CRVS Strategic Plan; reviewing the 2009 FRL and shared findings from a comparative analysis of laws on CRVS systems from Estonia, Ethiopia, South Korea, and Vietnam,³ which fed into amendment of the 2009 FRL; providing input into the design of a civil management information system (CMIS); and revising the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for notification, registration, and certification of birth, death, marriage, divorce, and migration. From March 28 to April 1, 2016, MOHA, with support from the WBG-Korea team, organized the first-ever national stakeholder consultative workshop on CRVS for DPs and national and Provincial officials from eight line ministries⁴ to seek inputs into development of the CRVS Strategy, review the 2009 FRL, and share international experiences.

5. The Government of Lao PDR is committed to improving CRVS and has developed a 2016-2025 CRVS Strategic Plan. At the first ministerial conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, held in November 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand, the Government of Lao PDR joined other countries in the region in adopting the Ministerial Declaration to “Get Everyone in the Picture” in Asia and the Pacific, endorsing the Regional Action Framework on CRVS, and proclaiming 2015-2024 as the Asia and the Pacific CRVS Decade. Subsequently, MOHA, with support from WBG and Korean experts, worked closely with the seven other line ministries to draft the Lao PDR 2016-2025 CRVS Strategic Plan, which the Prime Minister endorsed on May 10, 2017. The Government subsequently requested WBG financial and technical support in its implementation. The three goals of the Strategy are to (a) achieve universal civil registration of births, deaths, and other vital events; (b) provide all individuals with legal documentation of civil registration of births, deaths, and other vital events, as necessary, to claim identity, civil status, and ensuing rights; and (c) produce and disseminate accurate, complete, timely vital statistics (including causes of death) based on registration records. The eight priority areas of the Strategy are to (a) improve the legal and regulatory environment to enable a well-functioning CRVS system; (b) improve the CRVS system’s organization, functioning, and services for universal coverage; (c) increase human resources and capacity building; (d) create a comprehensive CMIS and produce and disseminate vital statistics based on civil registration records; (e) invest in infrastructure and equipment; (f) increase community awareness for full participation and universal use of CRVS services; (g) expand financial resources (investment and operational budget); and (h) strengthen external coordination and assistance. On May 31, 2018, the Deputy Prime Minister, along with the President of Lao Women’s Union and the Vice Minister of Home Affairs, launched a birth certificate issuance campaign as part of the celebration of International Children’s Day.

6. The amended FRL was approved on June 14, 2018. An FRL drafting committee (comprising representatives from MOHA, MOJ, MPS, MOFA, MOLSW, the Department of Law of the National Assembly, and the Legal Department of the Government Office) was formed under the overall guidance of the Vice Minister of Home Affairs. Given that Vietnam enacted CRVS legislation that went into effect in January 2016, the WBG provided financial support to MOHA to invite two officials from Vietnam on October 24 and 25, 2016, to share their experiences with the Lao PDR FRL drafting committee, which developed a costed work plan; held a consultative workshop in Vientiane from March 20 to 24, 2017; and received feedback from other line ministries. MOHA held stakeholder consultations in the northern, central, and southern regions during July and August 2017 to obtain input from Provincial offices of the 8 line ministries noted earlier, the District Office of Home Affairs, and village chiefs. The WBG and the Korea Legislation Research Institute provided expert feedback on the draft amended FRL based on international experience. The MOJ reviewed the draft amended FRL during October and

³ World Bank. 2017. A comparative analysis of laws on civil registration and vital statistics systems : Estonia, Ethiopia, Vietnam, and South Korea (English). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/237491510746694949/A-comparative-analysis-of-laws-on-civil-registration-and-vital-statistics-systems-Estonia-Ethiopia-Vietnam-and-South-Korea>

⁴ MOHA, Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), MPS, Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW).



November 2017, and on December 25, 2017, the Prime Minister requested that it be submitted to the National Assembly. The WBG provided financial support to MOHA to hold a national stakeholder consultative workshop with the Standing Committee of the National Assembly from February 12 to 16, 2018. The ordinary session of the National Assembly, VIII Legislature approved the amended FRL on June 14, 2018, and the President of Lao PDR promulgated it on July 31, 2018 and published it in the official gazette.

7. **A CMIS has been designed, but funds for its implementation are inadequate.** In 2016, MOHA recruited Advanced Programming and Information Systems (APIS, a local ICT consultancy firm) to design a CMIS, taking into consideration the Lao PDR context. APIS developed three options with increasing levels of complexity (basic, intermediate, and advanced) and costs, and MOHA decided on the intermediate option.

8. **Lao PDR is one of the 77 prioritized International Development Association (IDA) and Blend countries prioritized for support in the 2016-2030 WBG CRVS Action Plan.** The WBG Data Council endorsed the 2016–2030 Strategic Actions Program for Addressing Development Data Gaps in December 2015, which includes action plans for 3 initial priority areas: household surveys, CRVS, and price statistics. In addition, one of the indicators for the 18th Replenishment of IDA Funding is the number of lending operations with CRVS activities. At the November 2014 Ministerial Conference on CRVS in Asia and the Pacific, the Minister of Home Affairs met with the WBG Country Director in Bangkok and requested WBG support. In response, the WBG, along with Korean experts, undertook 13 missions between May 2015 and December 2018 to provide CRVS technical assistance to MOHA, but support for implementation of the CRVS Strategy requires a lending operation. Based on discussions with MOHA, the proposed Project will support the activities listed in the Project description section.

Relationship to CPF

9. **The country partnership framework (CPF) for Lao PDR for 2017 to 2021, which supports the 8th NSEDP, aims to support lasting accessible opportunities for all.** It prioritized three areas for WBG engagement: supporting inclusive growth, investing in people, and protecting the environment. A robust CRVS system will contribute to inclusive growth and one of the three crosscutting themes in the CPF: enhance effectiveness of public governance and administration. The CPF also states that improving CRVS is critical to monitoring and achieving the SDGs. One of the projects that the CPF proposed for supporting inclusive growth is statistics and CRVS project to increase the capacity of the government of Lao PDR to produce and disseminate reliable, timely macroeconomic and social-poverty statistics for the monitoring and evaluation of the 8th NSEDP targets and SDGs and to conduct regular macroeconomic surveillance.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

To establish a functional electronic civil management information system and improve coverage of civil registration of vital events, particularly births and deaths, in Lao PDR.

Key Results (From PCN)

10. The three proposed PDO-level results indicators are:

- A. Number of provinces providing birth registration data via the electronic CMIS to the central level
- B. Percentage of births registered
- C. Percentage of deaths registered



D. Concept Description

Project Components

11. The proposed Project has the following three components: strengthening provision and use of civil registration services; monitoring and impact evaluation; and Project management.

12. **Component 1: Strengthening provision and use of civil registration services.** Component 1 of the proposed Project has two subcomponents: (1a) strengthening the provision of civil registration services; and (1b) generating demand for civil registration services and citizen engagement.

13. **Subcomponent 1a: Strengthening the provision of civil registration services.** The proposed activities for strengthening the provision of civil registration services include: disseminating the 2018 FRL; establishing a CMIS; introducing approaches to boost birth registration; introducing approaches to boost death registration and medical certification of cause of death; improving marriage, divorce, and migration registration; capacity building of appropriate personnel; and supportive supervision.

14. **Subcomponent 1b: Generating demand for civil registration services and citizen engagement.** Lack of awareness about registration of vital events, particularly in rural areas, has been identified as a major bottleneck. Accordingly, a consulting firm will be recruited during Project preparation to design and implement a social and behavior change communication (SBCC) program to improve the registration of birth, death, marriage, divorce, and migration in Lao PDR. A SBCC consultant will also be recruited to assist MOHA in supervising the firm.

15. **Component 2: Monitoring and Impact evaluation.** The monitoring and evaluation of the Project will entail process evaluation (monitoring of implementation progress), monitoring of the results framework, and impact evaluation. Process evaluation will be employed as a tool for learning during implementation; quarterly, semi-annual, and annual Progress Reports will be developed and disseminated to stakeholders, and data will be used to make informed decisions and take appropriate corrective action during Project implementation. In addition, data will be collected to monitor the Results Framework. An impact evaluation of the combined SBCC program and CMIS will employ quantitative and qualitative methods. Impact evaluation baseline and endline data will be collected.

16. **Component 3: Project management.** A National Program Coordination Office (NPCO) will be formed and staffed with MOHA personnel and consultants to manage the implementation of the Project. The capacity of MOHA staff will be enhanced with a combination of on-the-job training and short courses. The Project will also support the renovation of office space and the provision of office furniture and equipment for Project personnel and consultants. Additionally, MOHA has designated a conference room in the existing MOHA building, which will be equipped for training of staff from central, Provincial and District levels. Some operating expenses of the NPCO will also be covered by the Project.

SAFEGUARDS

A. Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

The project will finance under the Component 3 renovation of an existing office space for staff and consultant which will only be limited to the partitioning and painting works, procurement of additional equipment (computers plus multi-



function laser printers [Scan, Print, and Copy]), furniture for office and training room. Although no environmental impact is anticipated under the proposed Project activity, an Environmental Code of Practice (ECOP) will be developed and applied during implementation.

B. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity for Safeguard Policies

The borrower’s institutional capacity for safeguard policies is low but sufficient for adequately managing the safeguards risks of the project.

C. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Viengkeo Phetnavongxay, Environmental Specialist
Alkadevi Morarji Patel, Social Specialist

D. Policies that might apply

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	Yes	The project will finance under the Component 3 the partitioning and painting of an existing office space for staff and consultant. Thus, the environmental impact will be relatively minor, temporary, and site specific and can be managed through proper implementation of ECOP addressing issues related to worker safety and construction waste disposal etc. Since both OP 4.01 and OP 4.10 are triggered, the project’s environmental categorization is B.
Performance Standards for Private Sector Activities OP/BP 4.03	No	Project does not entail involvement of private sector activities
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	No	Project is unlikely to affect natural habitats.
Forests OP/BP 4.36	No	Project is unlikely to affect forests.
Pest Management OP 4.09	No	Project does not entail pest management.
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	No	Project's interior refurbishment is unlikely to affect PCR.
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	Yes	This policy is triggered as project activities will be carried out in ethnic communities. The main social risk relates to the potential exclusion of members of ethnic groups from project benefits, especially birth and family registration. This risk can be mitigated through the design and implementation of measures to ensure members of ethnic groups receive culturally appropriate benefits from project activities. These



measures will be included in the project operational manual. Such measures may include an adapted citizen engagement and grievance management system, as well as specially adapted project activities such as the development of a communication strategy based on an audience analysis targeted towards ethnic groups, an impact evaluation that disaggregates results by ethnic groups, and the translation of relevant documents (such as the family registration law) into key ethnic minority languages.

Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	No	The project will not finance civil works that might result in land acquisition or resettlement.
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No	Project does not entail dams.
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No	Project is unlikely to affect international waterways.
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60	No	Project is not in disputed area.

E. Safeguard Preparation Plan

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS

Jan 25, 2019

Time frame for launching and completing the safeguard-related studies that may be needed. The specific studies and their timing should be specified in the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS

Simple ECOPs guiding interior refurbishment will be developed as a part of the bidding documents. The main elements of an indigenous peoples plan will be integrated into the project operational manual. The ECOP and required plans will be developed and disclosed before the project appraisal

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APPROVAL

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Approved By

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