

Capacity Development and Consultation Workshop on Lao PDR National Data Governance Framework - Concept Note

Brief description

Data and related issues and developments in the public sector have become increasingly important in terms of government analysis and operations, academic research, and real-world applicability and acceptance. Data is now integral to every sector and function of government—as essential as physical assets and human resources. Much of the operational activity in government is now data-driven, and many Governments would find it difficult, if not impossible, to function effectively without data.

This project seeks to address existing challenges and gaps in digital data management and cooperation, focusing on enhancing the institutional capacities of countries to utilize, manage and govern data in a comprehensive, objective and evidence-based manner, through regional and global cooperation. The project will build on the momentum of recent initiatives, including the Initiative on Partnership for Asia and Pacific Development.

To this end, the project will support Asia and Pacific countries, LDCs and SIDS to assess key data management and governance challenges and strengthen government officials' and stakeholders' knowledge of sound and secure data management, working closely with UN RCOs and UNCTs; support national and regional initiatives in fostering an open, fair and non-discriminatory business environment for digital data cooperation through mutual benefit, win-win outcomes and common development; support countries in developing institutional capacities for developing national digital data policies and strategies for ensuring data quality, access, security, privacy and usage, and for promoting data security through consultation, collaboration and shared benefits; make available relevant legislative information and toolkits for advancing digital data cooperation agreements through case studies.

The objective of the Project is enhancing the institutional capacities of government officials and stakeholders in Asia and Pacific countries, in particular the LDCs and SIDS (that will be considered as priority countries), for digital data management, data governance and data cooperation to achieve mutual benefit, win-win outcomes and common development.

The project will be implemented by the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), in cooperation with other UN agencies.

Background

The Lao Government is committed towards a digital economy with a vision to adopt the latest ICT tools across tiers of administration at the ministries, departments, provinces, districts, and villages

in Lao PDR. The Ministry of Technology and Communications (MTC) is working towards shaping the digital transformation agenda in Lao PDR particularly in enhancing e-services such as online banking, e-government, and e-commerce. The government is keen to increase transparency in

online businesses and investments and private sector growth to better connect the economy to the global opportunities.

The 10-year Digital Economy Strategy (2021 - 2030) and the 5-year National Digital Economy Development Plan (2021-2025) has highlighted that the government should embrace data-driven processes that can remove barriers to managing, sharing, and reusing data, and apply data to transform the design, delivery, and monitoring of public policies and services. Lao PDR wants to ensure that citizens are aware of their data rights in terms of security and transparency of use.¹

In the World Bank report 'Positioning the Lao PDR for a digital future', one of the key priorities highlighted by the government to strengthen governance and coordination is to develop a 'Government Data Strategy and Data Infrastructure Framework'. In this regard UN DESA will support the Lao government to do a baseline study and assess the 'existence of data management strategy, basic data registers, data exchange agreements and protocols, use of big data and analytics, among others'.

Project description

This project seeks to address the existing challenges and gaps, focusing on enhancing the institutional capacities of the Government of Lao PDR to utilize, manage and govern data in a comprehensive, objective and evidence-based manner, through a whole-government approach and through regional and global cooperation. To this end, the project will:

- Support the Government to assess key data management and governance challenges and strengthen government officials' and stakeholders' knowledge of sound and secure data management, working closely with UN RCOs and UNCTs.
- Support the Government in fostering an open, fair and non-discriminatory business environment for digital data cooperation through mutual benefit, win-win outcomes and common development.
- Support the Government in developing institutional capacities for developing national digital data policies and strategies for ensuring data quality, access, security, privacy and usage, and for promoting data security through consultation, collaboration and shared benefits.

UN DESA in collaboration with the Ministry of Technology and Communications (MTC) of the Government of Lao PDR will be hosting a national consultation workshop with representatives from

¹ World Bank Report - <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/c01714a0bc2ca257bdfe8f3f75a64adc-0070062022/original/Positioning-The-Lao-PDR-for-a-Digital-Future-11-10-22.pdf>

governments, private, public sector, civil societies, academia and other key stakeholders to develop a national data governance framework.

2. Objectives of the Workshop

The objective of the National Consultation Workshop is three-fold, as follow:

- engage stakeholders from different agencies and other non-government stakeholders to participate in the official dialogue and knowledge exchange on proposing a national data governance framework for Lao PDR
- discuss the existing opportunity and gap assessments for proposed focus areas, emerging from dialogue and interaction among workshop participants, including the proposed UN DESA data governance framework of 4 pillars and 6 elements
- identify the next course of action in strategic planning and implementation for setting up a national data governance framework

3. Thematic Areas and Guiding Questions

The primary thematic areas of the Workshop are as follows:

Four (4) pillars of National Data Governance: Policy, Institutions, People/Partnerships, Processes:

- Policy: existing policy and regulatory framework;
- Institutions: existing institutional framework
- People: existing data ecosystem and mapping of stakeholders
- Processes: existing data processes

Six (6) elements of National Data Governance:

- Data standards and classification
- Data sharing, exchange and interoperability, including open government data
- Data security (and data protection)
- Data privacy (and ethics)
- National data infrastructure (including e.g., datacenter, cloud, data services, etc.)
- Linking data governance to digital identity)

Guiding Questions for focus group discussions:

1. For the specific focus area, what are the key strengths and weaknesses in the existing national data governance?
2. For the specific focus area, what are the opportunities and threats in building national data governance?
3. In relation to the specific focus area, which concerns might be considered in planning and implementing the national data policy and strategy?

4. How do we co-create a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach in national data governance, including the effective participation of the private sector and civil society?
5. Which approach should we follow: a whole-of-government whole-of-society approach visa-a-vise a silo approach (e.g. achieving quick wins) in national data governance?

4. Expected Outcomes

The following are the expected outcomes of the Workshop:

- To build institutional and individual capacities, with participants get insight on issues of national data governance (for government data)
- To build a shared understanding on issues of the data governance in the public sector
- To identify the strengths and weakness of the existing national data governance
- To identify the next course of actions and potential interventions with a proposed timeline

The outputs of each of the sessions and a follow up action plan will be captured in the summary report. A policy brief may be issued by UN DESA in consultation with the Ministry of Technology and Communications, Lao PDR.

5. Date and Venue

Date/time: 11 - 12 May 2023

Venue: Crowne Plaza, Vientiane

(lunch and coffee breaks will be provided at the Workshop venue)

Number of participants: 50 - 60

(Note: by invitation only; including organizers, resource persons and support staff)

6. Participants

It is expected that the participants for the workshop to include:

- Senior government officials
- Non-governmental experts from the private sector, civil society, think tanks, academia, with knowledge and experiment in national data governance frameworks
- Experts from other countries
- Staff representatives from UN Resident Coordinators' Office and other related UN agencies
- Experts and staff members from UN DESA and Government of Lao PDR

7. Languages

The Workshop will be conducted in both English and local language. Participants are welcomed to use local language during interactive discussions and break-out group discussions.

8. Surveys and evaluation

Pre-workshop surveys and post-workshop evaluations will be circulated. A follow-up questionnaire could be sent out to participants after the Workshop.

9. Organizers and Facilitators

The Workshop is jointly organized by the Division of Public Institution and Digital Government (DPIDG) of UN DESA and Ministry of Technology and Communications (MPTC), Government of Lao PDR