



# Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary

## Appraisal Stage

### **(ESRS Appraisal Stage)**

Date Prepared/Updated: 09/01/2022 | Report No: ESRSA02233



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
Lao People's Democratic Republic		P178002	
Project Name	Lao PDR Statistical System Modernization		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Poverty and Equity	Investment Project Financing	8/22/2022	11/10/2022
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Lao Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Planning and Investment		

Proposed Development Objective

The PDO is to improve the capacity of the Lao PDR Statistical System to produce and disseminate good quality statistics in a timely manner and to enhance use of key statistics, and in case of an Eligible Crisis or Emergency, respond promptly and effectively to it.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Total Project Cost	21.00

**B. Is the project being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?**

No

**C. Summary Description of Proposed Project [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]**

The Lao People's Democratic Republic, a lower-middle-income country of 7.3 million people, is a small landlocked country with abundant natural resources. Having been one of the fastest growing economies in East Asia and the Pacific before COVID-19, Laos is experiencing a growth slowdown. While the economy grew at an average of 7.0 percent per year between 2003 and 2019, signs of deceleration appeared in 2013. GDP growth steadily declined from



8.0 percent in 2013 to 5.5 in 2019, before falling to 3 percent in 2021 owing to COVID-19. Laos is also facing deteriorating macroeconomic conditions. Fiscal stress has forced expenditure cuts in key development areas, while the exchange rate depreciation has exacerbated the impact of rising global inflation on livelihoods and food security. The regional context plays a key role in shaping economic opportunities, with the Laos-China railway representing an important investment in regional connective infrastructure. Against the backdrop of this shifting and increasingly complex and transforming economic landscape, evidence-informed decision making is more important than ever.

The national statistical system, known as the Lao PDR Statistical System (LSS), consists of the Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB), the statistical centers of line ministries and agencies, and the statistical centers at the provincial- and district-levels. LSB, a semi-autonomous ministry-equivalent organization, is the main producer of official statistics and the LSS coordinator. Laos has made progress in advancing its statistical capacity in recent years. Activities within the realm of official statistics have grown over the years. There has been an increase in data production both by LSB and the statistical centers of line ministries to support the policymaking process. The growth momentum reflects an increasing level of government support and continuing collaborative efforts with bilateral and multilateral donors. A demand for the statistical system's products is strong, both from the Government of Laos to support monitoring and evaluation of the National Socio-Economic Development Plans (NSEDP) and from international communities.

Despite what has been achieved in the past few years, high-quality data to guide decision making are lacking and there are still important data gaps to be filled and data dissemination to be strengthened. Laos lags its regional peers in advancing the national statistical system's performance. The country's overall Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) score was estimated at 54.1 in 2019, lower than 56.2 for Cambodia, 66.0 for Vietnam, 72.2 for Indonesia, 75.7 for Philippines and 76.1 for Thailand. The largest gap is in data services, in which the country ranks in the lowest quintile of the global ranking, suggesting an opportunity for improvement in areas of data dissemination, data releases, online access, and other data services. The LSS also ranks low in the second lowest quintile of the global ranking in the areas of data sources and data infrastructure, suggesting weaknesses in collection of censuses, surveys, administrative and geospatial data as well as the standards and methodologies for compiling statistics. Significant challenges remain in compilation and dissemination of economic and national accounts statistics. National accounts statistics currently published are insufficient to assess the performance of the economy. Data on government finance, public debt, and international investment positions are not regularly updated in the public domain. Insufficient commitment to dissemination and implementation of the Statistics Law to ensure data sharing between core statistics producers has been viewed as a key weakness.

As a system, limited data sharing and integration have hindered evidence-based policymaking on cross-cutting issues. Development of the LSS has been driven by policy agendas and national development plans, which have been implemented and assessed at the sectoral level. Each ministry has the responsibility of compiling and disseminating its own statistical indicators for public consumption. There are governance issues with respect to data sharing and integration. The lack of an overarching data governance model has led to fragmentation in data standards and technical solutions for data sharing, which hinders data interoperability across different sectors and affects the possibility of integrating data to inform policies on cross-cutting issues. The lack of data integration has resulted in an underutilization of administrative data collected by line ministries and, compounded with weak data dissemination, has undermined the value of the LSS's products. While LSB has played a role of the LSS coordinator with some degree of success, there is scope to further strengthen the LSB's capacity to lead the system and produce the desired outcomes.



The proposed project aims at improving the capacity of the LSS to produce and disseminate good quality statistics in a timely manner and to enhance use of key statistics. The project is closely aligned with the FY2022 – 2026 World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework (CPF) in strengthening governance and institutions. It is also aligned with the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021 – 2025 through its direct support to the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, and the Sustainable Development of the National Statistical System 2016-2025 and Vision by 2030 in Laos. Lastly, the project contributes to monitoring progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and the World Bank corporate commitments including climate change, gender, and citizen engagement.

To achieve the PDO and support the modernization process of the LSS, the project will focus on three components:

**Component 1: Improving availability and quality of statistics.** The objective of this component is to improve the availability and quality of key statistics that meet international standards. Improving availability means adding new statistical products and increasing the frequency of existing statistics while enhancing quality means improving the accuracy, reliability, relevance, and timeliness of statistics. These will be achieved by an improvement in collection of administrative, census and survey data as well as data compilation methodologies. In particular, the project will finance technical assistance to improve the compilation and survey methodologies and finance survey implementation including consultancy for survey design, software, enumerator trainings and compensation, transportation, technical assistance and capacity building for data analysis and reporting, and publications. This component will support statistics produced by the LSB and the statistical centers of line ministries or equivalent agencies under the LSB’s technical guidance. It is made up of two subcomponents: i) Economic statistics; and ii) Social statistics.

**Component 2: Enhancing use of statistics.** The objective of this component is to enhance the use of statistics produced by the LSS through data integration and dissemination. This component also lays the groundwork for the modernization of LSB and the LSS through piloting data integration and making an investment in an early development of the four pillars for a data governance and management architecture: i) standards and protocols; ii) data management team; iii) ICT infrastructure; and iv) data literacy. This component operationalizes the 2017 Statistics Law that assigns LSB the responsibility to provide quality assurance and technical endorsement to statistics produced by the LSS, as well as to collect, consolidate, and request statistics from the line ministries and to disseminate them at the national level. It is made up of three subcomponents: i) Data integration; ii) Data dissemination; and iii) ICT infrastructure.

**Component 3: Strengthening institutional capacity and project management.** It is made of two subcomponents: i) Strengthening institutional capacity; and ii) Project management.

#### **D. Environmental and Social Overview**

D.1. Detailed project location(s) and salient physical characteristics relevant to the E&S assessment [geographic, environmental, social]

The Project will be implemented nation-wide through LSS using the LSB as the implementation agency along with the statistical center of line ministries or equivalent agencies under the LSB’s technical guidance.



Despite its achievements in reducing poverty, Lao PDR faces significant longer-term challenges in growth related to the digital economy and youth employment. Lao PDR Statistical System (LSS) is characterized by (i) ineffective institutional coordination between various statistical data producers; (ii) inadequate analytical capability and qualified personnel in statistical system; (iii) weak statistical infrastructure, and information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure. The proposed Lao PDR Statistical System Modernization Project will support the GoL’s strategy to improve the availability and quality of key statistics and enhance the efficiency of the statistical system for evidence-based decision making.

Lao PDR is culturally diverse with 50 ethnic groups. Cities in Lao PDR are small in population, with only the capital city, Vientiane, having a population of more than 100,000 people and few high-rise buildings. City centers are not very densely built up and have wide peri-urban areas around them. The total population of Laos is 7.3 million people in 2020. Besides the urban-rural divide, because the country is geographically long, there is also often a divide into 3 areas, North, Central and South.

Since the project aims to support institutional transformation to improve the statistical system in Lao PDR, the project is not expected to include any civil works. Therefore, no sensitive environmental features would be impacted. However, under Component 2, ICT infrastructure and consulting services will require replacement and purchase of IT equipment (computers, printers, tablets). E-waste management (including packaging material waste management) would be the environmental issue that will need particular attention.

Key stakeholders include line ministries, all ministries contributing their data and statistical users including the National Assembly, government officials, students, NGOs, etc. Stakeholder consultations was conducted at the national and provincial levels with participation of key stakeholders on 7th June 2022.

#### D. 2. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity

The LSB under the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), the apex entity of the national statistical system, will be the main implementing agency. The LSB will be responsible for planning, executing, and reporting on project activities including maintaining adequate procurement, financial management and auditing arrangements. In the 2017 Statistics Law, the LSB was assigned the responsibility of providing the overall direction of the national statistical system through the power to draft the development strategy of the system. It thus has a great deal of influence on the development of the horizontal system and the official statistics that the system generates. Operationally, LSB has the responsibility to collect, consolidate, and request statistics from the line ministries and to disseminate them at the national level. The ministries are obliged to seek the LSB’s technical endorsement on the surveys to be conducted. Although not explicitly stated, the Statistics Law clearly implies a national statistical coordinator role for LSB within the national system.

The organizational structure of the LSB is expected to change during the implementation period. Currently, the LSB consists of four departments: i) Department of Economic Statistics responsible for macroeconomic and business statistics; ii) Department of Social Statistics responsible for social and vital statistics; iii) Department of Administration responsible for administrative and external relations affairs of LSB, personnel and capacity building; and Department of Data Services responsible for ICT and data dissemination. It is expected that during the project implementation period the Department of Administration and Department of Data Services will be merged to form a new Department of Environmental Statistics. This integration is likely to benefit the project’s data dissemination strengthening.

The World Bank has worked closely with the LSB in a previous project – Lao PDR’s Strengthening the National Statistical System Project. The LSB has a good understanding of the World Bank’s operational procedures, including



fiduciary and safeguards, but has no experience with implementing the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) The project implementation team was established and is headed by Deputy Head of the LSB and include project staff from the LSB’s departments, qualified persons (local consultants) who will be trained in the World Bank’s procurement and financial management (FM) procedures and be responsible for procurement and FM support, and qualified persons (local consultants) for ICT-related support, and qualified persons (national consultants) for environment and social management support. The LSB will take the lead on coordinating with key stakeholders , including LSB departments, relevant line ministries and agencies and donors for implementation of the project.

A Capacity Needs Assessment has been carried out as part of the preparation of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). This informed Component 3 which has activities to support capacity building and knowledge on the ESF implementation. A working agenda for institutional capacity strengthening/ building measures was an integral part of the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) on the need for assigning staff to take on E&S responsibilities, hire part time national environmental and social consultants and identified tentative training items, to ensure ownership and sustainability of the resources.

**II. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS**

**A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)**

Low

**Environmental Risk Rating**

Low

The Environmental Risk is assessed to be Low at this stage, as only negligible or minimal environmental risks and impacts are anticipated from the project activities. The project does not support civil works, and environmental risks and impacts are confined to disposal/recycling of packaging material, and electronic waste when equipment is replaced/repared. The client has prepared an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) which also includes an e-waste management plan. In addition, the project included description of technically and financially feasible measures to improve energy efficiency (e.g., use of energy-efficient equipment) as part of the ESMP.

**Social Risk Rating**

Low

The social risk is classified as Low. Whilst the project aims to deliver a range of benefits, project activities have the potential to generate minimal, predictable, mitigatable social risks and impacts, low in magnitude. Social risks and impacts anticipated for this project include: (a) lack of stakeholder engagement; (b) risks related to the labor and working conditions of project workers; (c) risk of exclusion and discrimination particularly of ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups if not adequately represented in statistical data collection; (d) risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) and Violence Against Children (VAC) when conducting household interviews and (e) risk of data security and privacy. These risks and impacts are low, and they are for the most part predicable and possible to mitigate during the lifetime of the project. This risk rating also takes into consideration lack or minimal ES capacity of LSB, which was assessed during preparation. The anticipated risks can be mitigated through appropriate actions/risk management plans. Particular attention will be paid to monitor and verify compliance in the application of ESS2 as well as ESS7.

**B. Environment and Social Standards (ESSs) that Apply to the Activities Being Considered**

**B.1. General Assessment**

Public Disclosure



## ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

### **Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Project:**

The project will have mostly positive benefits as the interventions will set up a robust statistical system in the country which will result in, among others, correct estimates of poverty, gender & vulnerability assessments, MDGs, SDG indicators and other.

The Project will not finance civil or infrastructure works that can induce risks and/or negative environmental and social impacts. Thus, no key environmental and social risks related to physical and geographical issues, biodiversity, land access, and cultural heritage, have been identified. However, the project recognizes the following standards as relevant to the project: ESS 1; ESS 2; ESS 3, ESS 4, ESS7 and ESS 10.

Environmental impacts expected from the project are negligible and limited to disposal or recycling of packaging material and electronic waste when ICT equipment is replaced or repaired. E-waste management regulations are not yet in place and enforced in Laos, nor is the Extended producer responsibility (EPR) ; as generation of electronic waste are envisaged, the Borrower has prepared a packaging and electronic waste management plan and will trigger EPR provisions through the ESMP, which initially disclosed on May 27, 2022 on LSB website. In addition, the project has included description of technically and financially feasible measures to improve energy efficiency (e.g. use of energy-efficient equipment) as part of the ESMP. Consultation meetings for the management tools were conducted in a manner consistent with applicable government guidance on COVID-19 measures in hybrid format on June 7th and the results adequately incorporated in the updated management tools. Finalized instruments and their Lao translations are scheduled for disclosure in August 2022.

Lao PDR is developing Lao Environmental and Waste Management Project (P175996), which aims to improve environmental, solid waste and plastics, and pollution management in Lao PDR; in these conditions, depending on the timing of project implementation, the project's e-waste management will benefit from the national strategy to be implemented under the Lao Environment and Waste Management Project.

Potential social risks and impacts include: (a) lack of stakeholder engagement; (b) risks related to the labor and working conditions of project workers; (c) risk of exclusion and discrimination particularly of ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups; (d) risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) and Violence Against Children (VAC) when conducting household interviews and (e) risk of data security and privacy. These risks and impacts will be managed and mitigated through an ESMP, including LMP and the CERC manual as annex, and the SEP.

Prior to appraisal, LSB, with the support from consultants, prepared an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). The ESMP for all locations where the project will be implemented. The ESMP details (i) the measures to be taken during the implementation and operation of the project and (ii) the actions needed to implement these measures. It also includes an overview of the regulatory and legislative framework and describe briefly the environmental and social baseline in the country. It further includes measures to promote universal access to project benefits (access to data) for people with disabilities, including visually impaired people. The ESMP also includes (i) Labor Management Procedures (LMP) including Workers' Grievance Procedure, waste procedures, etc. , (ii) e-waste management plan, (iii) description of technically and financially feasible measures to improve energy efficiency (e.g., purchase and use of energy-efficient equipment), (iv) OHS procedure, (v) preparation of Budget, (vi) staffing and



operational arrangements for project environmental and social risk management, including staff capacity assessment and training and vii) the CERC manual.

A SEP including a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) was prepared prior to appraisal to guide the Borrower to identify stakeholders, build and maintain a constructive relationship with them, and to meet communication and disclosure requirements with a particular focus on project-affected parties. The SEP includes inclusion and engagement strategies for ethnic groups. Further details are provided under ESS7 and ESS10.

The ESMP was prepared with active participation from those potentially affected people and organizations through public consultations with relevant stakeholders and the findings incorporated into the ESMP, SEP and inform the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP). Following review by the World Bank, the draft documents were disclosed by the LSB prior to project appraisal and consulted upon. Due to inadequate knowledge on the ESF, external consultants were hired to support LSB with the preparation of the required ESF instruments during project preparation.

An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), drawn and agreed between the Bank and the Borrower, is setting out the important measures and actions that are required for the project to meet environmental and social requirements over the project's lifetime. These measures will be implemented within a specified time-frame and the status of implementation will be reviewed as part of project monitoring and reporting.

The preparation of E&S instruments was supported by national Environmental and Social consultants with guidance and supports provided by the LSB. It was prepared with active participation from potentially affected people and organizations and the findings and feedback from public consultations are incorporated into the ESMP, SEP, and inform the ESCP. The consultation included interviews, face-to-face and virtual consultations, involvement of representatives and representative groups, and was conducted virtually or in hybrid form, in order to be consistent with applicable government guidance on COVID-19 measures for public gatherings. Due to the limited institutional capacity for ESF instruments preparation, the LSB will hire independent E&S consultants to support the project implementation.

### **ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure**

The LSB prepared a SEP, including a GRM, before appraisal and incorporated the findings from the stakeholder identification and assessment process during project preparation. The SEP will be updated, disclosed, and implemented throughout the different phases of the project life cycle. It was developed early in the project preparation process to inform engagement, to address key risks and develop communication and engagement strategies and materials to effectively reach out to affected and interested stakeholders to ensure accessibility and cultural appropriateness. The approach to engagement activities takes into account the needs of ethnic groups, vulnerability, language, literacy as well as consent, both as part of engagement and also assessment process. The engagement will not only ensure that risks are managed but also that benefits are accessible to all.

The project is expected to involve different groups of stakeholders, including government line agencies and the private sector. The project's stakeholders and the level of their engagement were identified and analyzed by the LSB during project preparation, and included: (a) line ministries, all ministries contributing their data, (b) individuals and





groups: civil society organizations, women’s organizations, Ethnic group leaders and organizations, (c) private sector: data collection and analyzing companies, users of Lao statistical data (d) academia, international NGOs working with statistics as statistics users, (e) recipients of capacity building on data literacy among statistical users including the National Assembly, government officials, students, and (f) other development partners at the central level.

Meaningful engagement will be key for managing concerns as well as the potential risks and impacts resulting from the project activities. The engagement will continue to need to take into consideration consent, language, literacy, access to information, vulnerability, child protection, and cultural needs of the various groups including ethnic groups. The project is nationwide and as such likely to operate in areas where ethnic groups are present. The project is expected to bring substantial benefits, including, improved use of publicly available statistics.

The SEP will be implemented, updated, and disclosed throughout the different phases of the project life cycle. It was developed early in the project preparation process to inform engagement to address key risks and develop communication and engagement strategies and materials to effectively reach out to affected and interested stakeholders to ensure accessibility and culturally appropriateness.

The SEP includes a Project Grievance Mechanism and measures to ensure disclosure to project-affected peoples and groups and other stakeholders. The SEP also includes provision of information on how the data will be collected to facilitate data security and privacy during the data collection stage of household surveys.

As part of the information disclosure arrangement, the initial draft ESMP including LMP and the waste management plan, the ESCP, and the SEP were disclosed publicly on 24 May 2022, on the LSB website.

Translation into Lao language of the Executive summary of the ESMP and SEP as well as the ESCP were also disclosed on the same date on the same website. Consultation meetings were conducted in a manner consistent with applicable government guidance on COVID-19 measures for public meetings in hybrid format on June 7th. The results of these meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders are adequately recorded in the updated instruments and these instruments were re-disclosed on the same website on June 7th 2022. Finalized instruments and the translations into Lao are scheduled to be disclosed in August 2022, using the LSB website: <https://www.lsb.gov.la/>.

## **B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts**

**A brief description of the potential environmental and social risks and impacts relevant to the Project.**

### **ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions**

The project will involve civil servants (government staff appointed from the implementing and concerned agencies at all levels), direct workers (consultants hired directly by the PMU) and contracted workers (service providers, employees of consulting firms), but is not anticipated to involve any primary supply workers (workers from ongoing providers of essential goods and materials) nor community workers.

Labor related risk include the risk of (i) workers health and safety resulting from unsafe working conditions, (ii) employment discrimination, (iii) labor related disputes and (iv) Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment



(SEA/SH). Child labor is not foreseen in the project. Workers health and safety risks include risks related to road travel during survey work in remote areas of the country.

The LSB developed a Labor-Management Procedures (LMP) applicable to the project. The LMP sets out how all categories of project workers will be managed and treated in line with the national Labor Law and ESS2. The LMP also ensures that different project teams and workers will be provided with adequate resources, first aid-kits available at working sites, and can be contacted/reached in case of emergency. The project’s Labor Management Procedures (LMP) also take into account the latest COVID-safe guidelines mandated by the government and/or best practice in the country, in order to maintain a safe working environment for workers and for the community and minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This includes hygiene practices, use of PPE and ensuring sick workers can self-isolate and access pay.

In Laos, gender-based violence (GBV) remains a serious issue. Distance and travel time to health facilities increase the difficulty for women to seek care, while gender norms contribute to widespread tolerance and acceptability of GBV and reduces women’s willingness to seek help. The program for household data collection will need to ensure that any risks of SEA/SH, VAC and data privacy during interviewing is addressed. A SEA/SH Risk Assessment assessed SEA/SH risks across project interventions and means of mitigating them are included as part of the ESMP. To address the risk of SEA/SH, the ESMP and SEP include a template of a Code of Conduct (CoC) to prevent and manage SEA/SH and violence against children (VAC). These Codes of Conduct (CoC) will be included in the letter of appointment for government staff and contractors. The SEA/SH risk rating is assessed to be Low. The project does not include infrastructure construction works and will for the most part operate in easy to access urban centers. SEA risks are identified for the part of household data collection, especially in remote areas and SH risks are identified for regular working conditions.

The project shall be carried out in accordance with the applicable requirements of ESS2, in a manner acceptable to the Bank, including through, inter alia, implementing adequate occupational health and safety measures and setting out grievance arrangements for project workers, among others.

All the standards set for the contracted workers in the ESS2 will be applied through contracts and the LMP to avoid potential issues with compliance of the ESS2 standards.

The LSB developed a labor grievance mechanism, as part of LMP, for all groups of workers, which is also able to collect and address potential grievances coming from these workers.

### **ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management**

The relevance of ESS3 is mainly related to ensuring efficient energy consumption, proper management of solid waste and electronic waste generated.

The project activities will support institutional transformation by improving the statistical system in Lao PDR. It would develop an ICT plan to support the modernization of the LSB and the LSS through investment to upgrading and improving existing ICT infrastructure (by supply of PCs, tablets, printers, software licenses, network connection, data center, etc.) and to modernize ICT infrastructure. In view of resource efficiency, the project has included description of technically and financially feasible measures to improve energy efficiency (e.g., use of energy-efficient equipment)



as part of the ESMP. It should also be considered that dismantled electronic equipment and materials generated when supplying ICT infrastructure with new IT equipment may cause risks to human health and the environment if not disposed of in an environmentally sound and safe manner. Where obsolete equipment and materials cannot be reused, they should be recycled or disposed of by licensed contractors.

The relevant provisions were included in the e-waste management plan. This plan addresses the proper dismantling, storage, handling, and final disposal of e-waste in accordance with internationally recognized practices and includes the monitoring of the types/quantities of waste electrical and electronic equipment disposed of and document evidence of proper management (e.g., recycled, refurbished, discarded, exported). The e-waste management plan (including packaging material waste management) is included in the ESMP.

Lao PDR is developing Lao Environmental and Waste Management Project (P175996), which aims to improve environmental, solid waste and plastics, and pollution management in Lao PDR ; in these conditions, depending on the timing of project implementation, the project's e-waste management will benefit from the national strategy that will be given under the Lao Environment and Waste Management Project.

#### **ESS4 Community Health and Safety**

IT equipment will be installed within the existing footprint of facilities. The risk of improper disposal of electronic waste could pose risks to community health and safety; therefore, the LSB prepared an e-waste management plan included into the ESMP to be prepared by the project.

With data being collected and stored, data security and privacy is a key component build into the project, including awareness training on data security and privacy. Data security and privacy topics are incorporated as an integral part of the capacity building for statistical producers and users and strengthening of the institutions of the implementing agency, under component 3.1. Project design is addressing data security and privacy and in addition, the ESMP covers a subset of the data security/privacy field through integrating the need for regular awareness raising for project staff on data security/privacy (including measures to prevent any unauthorized access to, or, losses of confidential information); include data privacy/literacy as part of the data literacy trainings and integrate due processes in the household surveys and requiring contractors to pay attention to data security and privacy as part of their contracts and incorporate a specific clause on this in their Workers' Code of Conduct.

The SEP also includes provision of information on how the data will be collected including how participants and others can seek information, advice or make a complaint.

#### **ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement**

This standard is currently considered not relevant. The project does not have a construction component. IT and office equipment will be installed within the existing footprint of facilities.

#### **ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources**



IT equipment will be installed within the existing footprint of facilities; hence, ESS 6 is not relevant to the proposed project.

**ESS7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities**

Given that the project has a nationwide scope, the project will include Ethnic groups as beneficiaries. The project area is culturally diverse, there are 50 distinct ethnic groups in Laos. The 50 ethnic groups in Laos are classified into four ethno-linguistic families namely Hmong Iew Mien, Mone-Khmer, Chine-Tibetan and Lao-Tai. The term “Ethnic Groups” is often used for ethnic minority groups belonging to the first three ethno-linguistic families (Hmong Iew Mien, Mone-Khmer and Chine-Tibetan) who meet the characteristics and definition of Indigenous Peoples under ESS7. The Constitution (amended 2015) recognizes ethnic groups’ self-identification as members of a distinct cultural group with a separate identity from the mainstream society. The Lao Front for National Development (LFND), through its Department of Ethnic Affairs (DEA), is the main counterpart responsible for dealing with issues related with Ethnic Groups. LFND is a GOL mass organization with a strong local presence in all provinces and districts.

Project activities in areas where Ethnic groups are present must ensure that they have culturally-appropriate opportunities to benefit from the project activities, including being included in statistics, accessing and analyzing the statistical data. Therefore, it is essential that the project mainstreams Ethnic groups into activities involving data collection and analysis and target these groups specifically and in an appropriate manner, during statistic collection and allowing for differentiated statistical analysis. This will include appropriately naming ethnic identities as part of the data collection. Special attention to the needs of ethnic groups in engagement including ensuring translation into relevant languages during data collection. Special attention was and will continue to be paid to ensure the active participation of the different ethnic groups and representatives in the project’s stakeholder engagement activities and to ensure that any information shared is sensitive to cultural needs. Measures for this are included into the SEP.

**ESS8 Cultural Heritage**

There are no physical activities that would lead to impacts on cultural heritage.

**ESS9 Financial Intermediaries**

No project activities is related to financial intermediaries.

**C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply**

<b>OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways</b>	No
<b>OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas</b>	No

**B.3. Reliance on Borrower’s policy, legal and institutional framework, relevant to the Project risks and impacts**



**Is this project being prepared for use of Borrower Framework?**

No

**Areas where “Use of Borrower Framework” is being considered:**

The client's E&S Framework is not proposed to be relied on for this project, in whole or in part. The Framework will not likely address the risks and impacts of the project in a manner to achieve objectives materially consistent with the ESSs.

**IV. CONTACT POINTS**

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**Borrower/Client/Recipient**

Borrower: Lao People’s Democratic Republic

**Implementing Agency(ies)**

Implementing Agency: Lao Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Planning and Investment

**V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

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**VI. APPROVAL**

Task Team Leader(s): Somneuk Davading, Tanida Arayavechkit  
Practice Manager (ENR/Social) Mona Sur Cleared on 08-Jul-2022 at 07:20:59 GMT-04:00

Public Disclosure