

Country Assistance Policy
for Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)

April 2012

1. Significance of Assistance

Located in the center of Indochina, Lao PDR shares a border with five countries: Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam and situated in the heart of the Mekong Region. From this sort of geopolitical condition, the “security and prosperity of Lao PDR” emerges as a precondition for the “security and prosperity of the Mekong Region” and, furthermore, as a precondition for the “security and prosperity of ASEAN as a whole.”

Lao PDR has shown a steady economic growth against the backdrop of buoyant development in the areas of mineral resources and hydroelectric power generation. On the other hand, there still remain some issues to be resolved in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and graduate from the Least-Developed Countries (LDC) index.

It is indeed meaningful to Japan, which aims for its hand-in-hand growth in Asia, to extend its assistance to Lao PDR from the perspectives of strengthening interconnection of ASEAN and narrowing gaps between its new members and old members toward setting up the ASEAN Community in 2015.

Since 1991 Japan has built good relationships with Lao PDR as the top donor of assistance to the country. For instance, Japan and Lao PDR are in a harmonious relationship in a variety of international arenas such as UN.

2. Basic Policies of Assistance (Overall goals):

Supporting for

(1) Achieving MDGs by 2015 and

(2) Graduating from the LDC index by 2020

The Lao government declares the goal of attaining more than 8% economic growth in 7th National Socio-economic Development Plan. However, although it regards economic development as an urgent issue, it aims at a well-balanced economic growth from concern about negative effects that may be brought about by rapid economic growth.

Japan assists Lao PDR to achieve its development goals. To that end, Japan has selected the issues of “Development of Economic and Social Infrastructure,” “Agricultural Development and Forest Conservations,” “Improvement of Educational Environment and Human Resource Development,” and “Improvement of Health Care Services” as its priority

areas in light of the matters promoted by ASEAN integration, stronger connectivity and narrowing intra-regional disparities. In particular, Japan provides its assistance with greater emphasis on the promotion of environmentally compatible economic growth.

3. Priority Areas (Intermediary goals)

(1) Development of Economic and Social Infrastructure

Japan extends its assistance which is instrumental to strengthening ASEAN connectivity including development of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and airports, environmental improvement in investment and trade such as logistics park which will enhance inroads of Japanese enterprises into the Lao market, rectifying disparities in access to electric power within Lao PDR and enhancing power export through expanding electric power in safe and stable manner with the ultimate aim of achieving a sustainable economic growth. At the same time, in order to realize a balanced economic growth, Japan provides its assistance in the fields of environmental management, water treatment plants, and urban planning that contributes to building an environmentally harmonious and comfortable society.

(2) Agricultural Development and Forest Conservations

Japan provides its assistance to increase productivity with irrigated agriculture and promote the cultivation of commercial crop with the aims of achieving a stable economic growth in Lao PDR and narrowing gaps between the urban and the rural generated by economic growth through enhancing the agricultural sector that is the key industry in Lao PDR and increasing the earnings of farmers who constitute a huge majority of poor people. At the same time, Japan extends its assistance for sustainable use of forest resources toward forest conservation and livelihood improvement toward poverty reduction.

(3) Improvement of Educational Environment and Human Resource Development

In order to develop human resources who contribute to socio-economic development, Japan gives its assistance to improve educational environment, raise the quality of teachers, and upgrade school management. In primary and secondary education, focus will be placed on science and mathematics education in which Japan has a rich body of knowledge accumulated through its experiences in a great number of countries. Assistance is given also to higher education and technical and vocational education in order to enhance the private economic sector.

(4) Improvement of Health Care Services

For achieving the health-related MDGs, Japan provides its assistance for strengthening health systems through development of human resources and improvement of health facilities to increase access to health care services with a focus on Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH).

4. Issues to be kept in mind

- (1) Pay attention to the necessity of improving governance such as administrative capacity, institutional building and the judicial system from the viewpoints of promoting development and raising the effects of assistance.
- (2) Based on the action plan for “A Decade toward the Green Mekong” Initiative, pay attention to the compatibility of environment and economic growth, sustainable development, and the necessity of measures against climate change.
- (3) Unexploded ordnance (UXO) which is still all over the country impedes the expansion of farm lands and infrastructure lands, thereby presenting a barrier in the way for socio-economic development. Hence, bear in mind the necessity of UXO clearance as a cross-sectoral issue.

Attached paper: Rolling Plan

Rolling Plan for the Lao People's Democratic Republic

As of April 2015

Basic Policy of Assistance	Assistance for achieving MDGs and leaving the category of LDC
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Priority Area 1	Development of Economic and Social Infrastructure
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Development issue 1-1	[Background and Current Situation] Transport network development is an integral element of poverty eradication and is essential to promoting economic growth in the Lao PDR, as the country is landlocked and located in the center of the Mekong Region. Public investment has been allocated to projects in this sector on a priority basis since the 1980s and national trunk roads and bridges such as National Road Rt13, Rt9, the Mekong bridge in Pakse and the 2nd Mekong Bridge have been developed with the support of the Japanese Government. However, the development of roads in provinces that link to national trunk roads and bridges and the proper maintenance of the roads and bridges are necessary because the percentage of paved roads is still only 17%. In addition, the development of air transportation is necessary to secure means of rapid transport and to promote ASEAN connectivity.			[Strategy] The possibility of assistance for the development of and technical assistance for the maintenance of trunk and local roads in provinces will be considered in the context of the synergetic effect of close coordination with other sectors so that the social and economic infrastructure that has been developed will be used more effectively. In the field of aviation, the further necessity and possibility of assistance will be considered on the basis of the results of the previous installation of facilities and provision of technical assistance.							
	Japan's Assistance Program	Program Summary	Project	Scheme	Schedule						Assistance Amount (100 million Yen)

Development issue 1-1	Japan's Assistance Program	Program Summary	Project	Scheme	Schedule						Assistance Amount (100 million Yen)	Note	
					before JFY2014	JFY2015	JFY2016	JFY2017	JFY2018	JFY2019			
Development of transport networks	Program for transport networks development	Assistance is provided for effective utilization of major trunk roads and bridges. Based on this principle, cooperation is given for the improvement, maintenance and operation of trunk roads in provinces. In the field of aviation, assistance is extended to the introduction of new CNS/ATM Systems that enhance air traffic safety, in addition to the development of facilities.	The Preparatory survey for the Project for the Reconstruction of the Bridges on National Road No.9	PS									
			Project for Improvement of the Road Management Capability	TCP							7.70		
			Project for the Capacity Development for Transition to the New CNS/ATM Systems in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam	TCP							5.00	Including study costs in Cambodia and Vietnam.	
			Planning Advisor to Cabinet Office, Ministry of Public Works and Transport	EXP									
			ASEAN-Japan Logistics Partnership	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism - TA									
			ASEAN-Japan Action Plan on Environment Improvement in the Transport Sector	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism - TA									
			ASEAN-Japan Cooperation on Natural Disaster Prevention in the Transport Sector	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism - TA									
			The Project for Improvement of National Road No.9 as East-West Economic Corridor of the Mekong region	GA							32.73		
			Project for Construction of Sekong Bridge on NR16B in the Southern Region of Laos	GA							22.81		
			Grant Aid in the field of telecommunication and transportation	GA							0.08		
Vientiane International Airport Terminal Expansion Project	LA							90.17					

[Background and Current Situation]
 The Lao PDR has enormous hydropower potential. The government places a high priority on hydropower development for both domestic supply and for export, aiming at earning foreign currency. These projects are being advanced by private funding and donors' support. Additional power generation and the improvement of electric power transmission and distribution networks are still needed on a wide scale. To meet these needs in a proper and sustainable fashion, enhancement of the ability of energy administration agencies, which deal with development policy and the development of the electricity grid, and the establishment of the system for cross-border electricity trade among the GMS countries remain important tasks.

[Strategy]
 In order to increase the power supply for socio-economic development in the Lao PDR, while ensuring it remains stable, sustainable and efficient, assistance is provided for reinforcing the administration of the electricity and power sector. Assistance, with the active utilization of cooperation with the private sector, is also provided for developing energy sources and rural electrification, and for improving electric power transmission, distribution networks and systems operations for the cross-border electricity trade in the region.

Japan's Assistance Program	Program Summary	Project	Scheme	Schedule						Assistance Amount (100 million Yen)	Note
				before JFY2014	JFY2015	JFY2016	JFY2017	JFY2018	JFY2019		
Expansion of safe and stable power supply	Assistance is provided to improve the capacity of administering electricity enterprises by, for example, introducing electric power technical standards in order to expand the power supply in a safe and stable fashion. Likewise, assistance is given for the construction of transmission networks and the development of facilities related to rural electrification, thereby contributing to achieving the Lao government's electrification target of 80% by 2015 and 90% by 2020.	XeKatam Hydropower Plant Project	PS								
		Power Policy Advisor	EXP								
		Issue-based training, etc.	TR								
		Nam Ngum 1 Hydropower Station Expansion Project	LA							55.45	
		Southern Region Power System Development Project	LA							41.73	
Power development program											

Development issue 1-2
 Expansion of safe and stable power supply

Power development program

Program for agricultural and rural development and strengthening the administration of agriculture and fisheries	capacity building of administrative organizations.	Project for Strengthening Research and Development on Fisheries and Aquaculture	GA							7.14	
		Grant Aid in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries sector	GA							0.11	
		Comprehensive Assistance Program for SPS-related Measures and Cross-boarder Control of Infectious Diseases	ML								
		Program for Veterinary Sanitation Measures in Asia and the Pacific Region	ML								
		Project on Controlling Animal Diseases and Strengthening Food Security under "One Health Concept" (provisional)	ML								
		ASEAN+3 Program for Long and Medium-term Demand and Supply Outlook Information Development	ML								
		Improving Statistics Data on Food Processing and distribution in ASEAN region	ML								
		Program for Contributions to the Complete Transition to ASEAN+3 Emergency Rice Reserve System	ML								
		Project for Promotion of Sustainable Fisheries in Southeast Asia	ML								
		Project for support to food security in Mekong River Basin	ML								
		Survey on Crop Rotation and Food Manufacturing of Konjac in Lao PDR	SSM								
		The Study on Disaster Management Plan in Rural Areas	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries - TA								
		Study on effective introduction of technologies for agriculture and rural development	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries - TA								
		The High Level Official's Seminar	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries - TA								

Priority Area 3	Improvement of Educational Environment and Human Resource Development											
	<p>[Background and Current Situation]</p> <p>The Lao PDR has a paucity of education facilities, a shortage in terms of the number and capacity of teachers, and a limited education budget. As a result of the measures taken by the Lao government, the net enrolment rate in primary education has been improving; however, the completion rate has not. As for early secondary education, there are insufficient schools and classrooms to accommodate an increased number of enrolled pupils.</p> <p>Teachers have undergone courses in school management and teaching methods at teacher training institutes. However, their contents do not necessarily reflect actual needs, thereby hindering the delivery of high-quality education to pupils.</p>					<p>[Strategy]</p> <p>In the field of education, measures will be taken to address issues primarily related to the Japanese New Educational Cooperation Policy 2011–2015. To improve the rates of enrolment and completion in primary education, primary education infrastructure will be improved. And, at the same time, infrastructure for early secondary education will be developed so that those who have finished primary education will be readily accommodated.</p> <p>Additionally, to raise the quality of education, assistance is provided to improve school management, as well as upgrading the quality of teachers, particularly in science and mathematics in which Japan has an advantage with its rich body of knowledge.</p>						
Development issue 3-1 Improvement of basic education	Japan's Assistance Program	Program Summary	Project	Scheme	Schedule						Assistance Amount (100 million Yen)	Note
	Basic Education Improvement Program	In order to raise the quality of education, comprehensive assistance is provided including improvement of curriculum, textbooks, the teacher training curriculum, and the capacity of teachers, especially in mathematics where the low learning outcomes need to be addressed. This assistance utilizes Japan's rich experience accumulated through past Japanese assistance activities in the Lao PDR. Assistance is also extended to develop infrastructure and improve school management.	Project for Supporting Community Initiative for Education Development (Phase 2)	TCP	before JFY2014	JFY2015	JFY2016	JFY2017	JFY2018	JFY2019	3.90	
			Project for Improving Teaching and Learning Mathematics for Primary Education	TCP								
			Education Policy Advisor	EXP								
			Improvement of Quality of Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals on Sciences and Mathematics for Primary Education	CTR								
			Issue-based training, etc.	TR								
			Volunteers in the field of Basic Education	JOCV/SV								
			JICA Partnership Program in the field of Basic Education	JPP								
			The Project for Improving Secondary School Environment in the Southern Provinces	GA							10.69	
			Grant Aid in the education research sector	GA							1.26	
Ninth Poverty Reduction Support Operation			LA							5.00	This is also listed in Maternal and Child Health Improvement Program.	

Development issue 3-2	[Background and Current Situation] Twenty years have passed since the transition to a market economy. However, the private sector has not yet fully grown. Therefore, the development of engineers and management personnel who support the private sector is important, as well as the development of administrative officials who will assume responsibility for promoting the private sector. To that end, long-term measures are required, and the National University of Laos is expected to play an important role in this process. One essential task for the Lao PDR is to strengthen higher education while taking into account industry-academia collaboration. Likewise, with an increase in foreign investment and the development of special economic zones, it will become increasingly necessary to supply labor markets with people who have basic academic and technical abilities. To meet this need, vocational training and technical education in various fields will be required.			[Strategy] Assistance, such as the establishment of MBA courses, is also offered through projects implemented by the Lao-Japan Human Resource Cooperation Center for the development of business people. In addition, assistance is extended, targeting primarily those who have completed early secondary or higher education, to cultivate human resources with basic academic abilities and capabilities of responding to changes in labor market demands.									
	Expansion of higher and technical education that is instrumental in strengthening the private sector and the transition to a market economy	Japan's Assistance Program	Program Summary	Project	Scheme	Schedule						Assistance Amount (100 million Yen)	Note
Higher and Technical Education Quality Improvement Program		Assistance is primarily provided to the National University of Laos in order to strengthen the private sector and develop people for the transition to a market economy. Assistance is also provided to business people.	Project for the Capacity Development of Business Persons through Laos-Japan Human Resource Development Institute	TCP	before JFY2014	JFY2015	JFY2016	JFY2017	JFY2018	JFY2019	4.97		
			ASEAN University Network / Southeast Asia Engineering Education Development Network (AUN/SEED-Net) Project Phase3	TCP							39.34	This is the total amount including amounts to other countries.	
			Advisor to Savannakhet University for Development of Industrial Human Resource	EXP									
			Issue-based training, etc.	TR									
			Volunteers in the field of higher education	JOCV/SV									
			In-Country Training in the field of higher and technical education	ICT									
			JICA Partnership Program in the field of higher and technical education	JPP							1.41		
			Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship	GA								47.13	
			Skills Evaluation System Promotion Program	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare - TA									
			Special Program for Capacity Building in the Food Industry in ASEAN Least Developed Countries	ML									

Priority Area 4	Improvement of Health Care Services												
	<p>[Background and Current Situation]</p> <p>The state of health in the Lao PDR is characterized by a low life expectancy and a high fertility rate. Maternal and child health in particular is still a pressing issue because maternal mortality and child and infant mortality rates are high for the Southeast Asia region. Local residents lack awareness of public health and hygiene. Furthermore, it is still very difficult to access basic medical services because of undeveloped infrastructure, especially in mountainous areas. The main causes of child death are infectious diseases, including pneumonia and diarrhea, followed by non-infectious diseases affecting neonatal infants caused by premature birth. 60% of pregnant women do not receive antenatal care, and 80% of deliveries occur at home without skilled birth attendants; mothers do not have the opportunity to access necessary and proper healthcare services for safe delivery and neonatal care.</p>					<p>[Strategy]</p> <p>In the field of health, assistance is provided to develop human resources and strengthen institutional capacity for appropriate policy-making and implementation at central level and improve access to public health care services at local level, particularly targeting the CLV "Development Triangle Area," in order to improve maternal and child health toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).</p> <p>Assistance is also provided to enhance the service quality of health facilities and accessibility to quality health services, strengthen safeguards, and improve public health and sanitation in order to achieve the goal of UHC.</p>							
<p>Development issue</p> <p>Strengthening health systems to improve maternal and child health services</p>	Japan's Assistance Program	Program Summary	Project	Scheme	Schedule						Assistance Amount (100 million Yen)	Note	
	<p>Maternal and Child Health Improvement Program</p>	<p>Assistance is provided to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Health and provincial-level authorities to implement maternal and child health services, particularly in the southern provinces.</p>	Capacity Development for Sector-wide Coordination in Health Phase 2	TCP	_____	_____					2.59		
			Project for Strengthening Integrated Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Services	TCP	_____	_____						3.61	
			Project for Sustainable Development of Human Resource for Health to Improve Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Services	TCP	_____	_____						2.62	
			The Project for Development of Innovative Research Technique in Genetic Epidemiology of Malaria and Other Parasitic Diseases in Lao PDR for Containment of Their Expanding Endemicity	TCP	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	4.00	
			Project for Improving Quality of Health Care Services	TCP		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----		
			Health Policy Advisor	EXP		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----		
			Issue-based training, etc.	TR	_____	_____							
			Volunteers in the field of improvement of maternal, neonatal and child health services and improvement of health management at communities	JOCV/SV	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____		
			JICA Partnership Program in the field of Health Care Services	JPP	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____		
			The Project for Strengthening Health Service Network in Southern Provinces	GA	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	7.41	
			Grant Aid in the medical and health sector	GA	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	0.89	
Ninth Poverty Reduction Support Operation			LA	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	5.00	This is also listed in Basic Education Improvement Program.	

Others													
	Japan's Assistance Program	Program Summary	Project	Scheme	Schedule						Assistance Amount (100 million Yen)	Note	
					before JFY2014	JFY2015	JFY2016	JFY2017	JFY2018	JFY2019			
(Others)	Governance Strengthening Program	<p>Assistance is provided to develop human resources and financial statistics in the Ministry of Finance.</p> <p>Assistance is also provided to develop management techniques for public investment projects, and human resource development at central and local levels of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), thereby strengthening public financial management.</p> <p>At the same time, support is extended for building the capacity of personnel and institutions in judicial affairs and the administration of justice, in order to develop judicial systems appropriate to social and economic conditions while considering the transition to a market economy governed by the rule of law.</p>	Project for Human Resource Development in the Legal Sector (Phase 2)	TCP	—						4.51		
			Project for Establishing Public Investment Plan under NSEDP	TCP	—						3.77		
			Financial Statistics and Policy Advisor	EXP	—								
			Volunteers for the strengthen governance capacity of provinces and counties	JOCV/SV				-----					
			Regional Seminar on Good Governance for Southeast Asian Countries	Ministry of Justice - TA		-----							
	Others			Laos Pilot Program for Narrowing the Development Gap towards ASEAN Integration (LPP)	TCP	—						12.50	
				Project for Strengthening Management Capacity of UXO Lao	TCP			-----					
				Advisor for Strengthening Training Management Capacity and Promoting Poverty Reduction through UXO Clearance in Lao PDR	EXP	—							
				Project for Acceleration of UXO Clearance for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication	GA	—						8.64	
				Grant Aid in the field of UXO Clearance	GA	—						1.58	
				Volunteers in the field of emotional education and culture development	JOCV/SV				-----				
				Volunteers in the field of sports, budo etc.	JOCV/SV				-----				
				Grant Aid in the field of sports	GA	—						0.06	

Legend: [PS] = Preparatory Survey, [TCP] = Technical Cooperation Project, [EXP] = Expert, [CTR] = Country-focused Training, [TR] = Issue-based Training / Training Program for Young Leaders, [JOCV] = Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, [SV] = Senior Volunteers, [JPP] = JICA Partnership Program, [xx-TA] = Technical Assistance implemented by organizations other than MOFA and JICA, [GA] = Grant Aid (other than specific grant aid schemes listed below), [LA] = Loan Aid (ODA Loan), [ML] = Multilateral Cooperation, [SSM] = Support for Small and Medium sized Enterprise, Solid Line [-----] = Schedule, Dash Line [- - - -] = Tentative Schedule