Concept Note (Draft)

Lao People's Democratic Republic
The 2nd National Workshop on
Digital and Transport Connectivity for the Socioeconomic Resilience of Rural Communities

8 - 9 May 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR

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1. Background:

With the objective to improve rural digital and transport connectivity for socio-economic resilience, ESCAP launched the "Digital and transport connectivity for the socioeconomic resilience of rural communities during the post-COVID-19 period in Asia-Pacific countries" project in 2022. The project aims to enhance the capacity of government officials in Bangladesh, Lao PDR, and Samoa to develop innovative strategies in response. As part of the project, a 2-day national workshop was held in 2023. The workshop featured presentations by national consultants and experts from the ICT and transport sectors to outline the current connectivity status. It also included a roundtable discussion to discuss potential actionable strategies to improve digital and transport connectivity in Lao PDR.

In 2024, a follow-up 2-day national workshop will be organized, bringing together relevant stakeholders to review the proposed actionable strategies prepared by national consultants, share good local and regional practices, as well as identify and prioritize possible actionable strategies for implementation.

2. Objectives:
- To share findings of national research and actionable strategies report on promoting digital and transport connectivity.
- To promote good practices on improving rural digital and transport connectivity among relevant stakeholders in Lao PDR and the Asia-Pacific region.
- To discuss how to implement innovative actionable strategies aimed at improving rural digital and transport connectivity for socio-economic resilience.

3. **Organizers**
   - The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
   - The Ministry of Technology and Communications and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Lao PDR

4. **Participants:**
   - Representatives of the Government of Lao PDR
   - Relevant experts and stakeholders from Lao PDR

5. **Date and venue:**
   - Date and time:
     8-9 May 2024 (UTC +7 Vientiane Time)
   - In person event
   - Venue: **Crowne Plaza Vientiane**, Pathuxay & Thatluang Meeting Room, G Floor
   - Address: 20 Samsenthai Road, Nongduang Nua Village Sikhottabong District, Vientiane - 01000, Lao PDR

Tentative Programme

Lao People's Democratic Republic
The 2ⁿᵈ National Workshop on
Digital and Transport Connectivity for the Socioeconomic Resilience of Rural Communities
Vientiane, Lao PDR

8 May 2024, 9:30 am-4:15 pm (UTC +7 Vientiane Time)
9 May 2024, 9:30 am-12:00 pm (UTC +7 Vientiane Time)

Day 1, 8 May 2024

Time	Sessions
09:00 - 09:30	Registration

09:30 - 10:00	**Session 1: Opening Remarks**
	• Lao PDR UNRC representative (8 mins)
	  ✓ **Mr. Bakhodir Burkhanov**, UN Resident Coordinator, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, Lao PDR
	• Representative from Ministry of Technology and Communications (8 mins)
	  ✓ **Mr. Saysomvang Souvannavong**, Deputy Director General, Lao National Internet Center (LANIC), Ministry of Technology and Communications
	• Representative from Ministry of Public Works and Transport (8 mins)
	  ✓ **Ms. Amphayvanh Keopadith**, Deputy Director General, Department of Transport, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
	• Participants self-introduction
	
	Moderator: **Ms. Lingling Zhang**, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, IDD, ESCAP

10:00 - 10:30	Photo Session and Coffee Break
10:30 - 12:00	**Session 2: ESCAP Presentations** • IDD officer briefing (15 mins) ✓ **Ms. Lingling Zhang**, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP

	• TD officer briefing (15 mins)
	    ✓ **Mr. Ishtiaque Ahmed**, PhD, Economic Affairs Officer, Transport Division (TD), ESCAP
	• Presentation 1: Actionable Strategies Report on promoting ICT connectivity (20 mins)
	    ✓ **Mr. Vasira Mysavath**, ESCAP Consultant
	• Presentation 2: Actionable Strategies Report on promoting transport connectivity (20 mins)
	    ✓ **Dr. Thanousorn Vongpraseuth**, ESCAP Consultant
	• Q&A
	• Discussions

12:00 - 13:30	Lunch

13:30 - 14:40	**Session 3: Good Practices to promote Rural ICT and Transport Connectivity**
	• Presentation 1: Development of the ICT Infrastructure in Lao PDR (15 mins)
	    ✓ **Mr. Soulisack Phommasand**, Director of Internet Gateway Division, Lao National Internet Center (LANIC), Ministry of Technology and Communications
	• Presentation 2: Empowering Rural Internet and Digital Connectivity in Lao PDR: Challenges & Opportunities (15 mins)
	    ✓ **Ms. Soudalin Khouangvichit**, Deputy Director of Division, Lao Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Ministry of Technology and Communications
	• Presentation 3: How LTC Provide Digitalization Service and Transport Connectivity in Lao PDR (15 mins)
	    ✓ **Mr. Paiyang Nengchee**, Deputy of Network Development Section, Department of Network Development, Lao Telecom
	• Q&A

14:40 - 15:00	Coffee Break
15:00 - 16:10	**Session 4: Good Practices to promote Rural ICT and Transport Connectivity** • Presentation 1: How LOCA Rethink Rural Transportation Service (15 mins) ✓ **Mr. Souliyo Vongdala**, CEO, LOCA

	• Presentation 2: The Promotion of Public Transportation to Rural Area (15 mins)
	   ✓ **Mr. Anan Vonthivongsy**, Staff, Vientiane Capital State Bus Enterprise
	• Presentation 3: Vientiane Urban Transport Planning and Situation (15 mins)
	   ✓ **Mr. Lamkha Saignasane**, Head of Transport Unit, Department of Public Works and Transport of Vientiane Capital
	• Q&A

16:10 - 16:15	**Session 5: Wrap-up of the 1st day meeting**

Day 2, 9 May 2024

Time	Sessions
09:30 - 09:35	**Session 6: Day 1 Summary** IDD officer and/or TD officer provide a summary of Day 1.
09:35 - 10:30	**Session 7: Discussion on Actionable Strategies** Representatives from the key Ministries will be invited to facilitate the session. Participants will be divided into two groups by sector (ICT and Transport) to review the actionable strategies presented on Day 1. Each group will discuss, identify, and prioritize possible actionable strategies for implementation. Participants will also consider the good practices presented in previous sessions to develop a realistic plan and explore potential collaboration across sectors. A rapporteur from each group will be invited to provide a brief presentation on the outcomes of the discussions. • Introduction (10 mins) • Group exercise (45 mins)
10:30 - 10:50	Coffee Break
10:50 - 11:55	**Session 8: Way forward** Representatives from the key Ministries will continue to facilitate the session. After the presentation of the discussion outcomes by the rapporteurs from both groups, participants will be engaged in a discussion regarding the next steps, potential cross-sectoral collaboration, and actionable strategies for implementation. • Presentations by rapporteurs (15 mins) • Roundtable discussion (45 mins)
11:55 - 12:00	**Session 9: Closing Session** • Distribute and collect evaluation sheets.
12:00 - 14:00	Lunch

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