

## Summary of Evaluation

<b>1. Outline of the Project</b>	
<b>Name of Country:</b> Lao People's Democratic Republic	
<b>Name of Project:</b> Capacity Development for Sector-wide Coordination in Health (Phase-2)	
<b>Sector:</b> Health	<b>Scheme:</b> Technical Cooperation
<b>Department in-Charge in JICA:</b> Laos Office	
<b>Duration of Project:</b> Five years, from December 2010 to December 2015	
<b>Implementing Organization:</b> Ministry of Health (MOH)	
<b>Other Related Cooperation Activities:</b> National Center for Global Health and Medicine (NCGM)	
<b>1-1 Background</b>	
<p>The technical cooperation on Capacity Development for Sector-wide Coordination in Health Phase 2 (CD-SWC2 or the Project) was launched on 16 December 2010 and will be completed on 15 December 2015. With the remaining cooperation period of approximately four months, JICA conducted the Terminal Evaluation from 2 to 29 August 2015.</p>	
<b>1-2 Outline of the Project</b>	
(1) Overall Goal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The MOH is able to implement strategic plans, and conduct effective coordination and resource allocation in a sustainable manner to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).</li> </ul>	
(2) Project Purpose	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Under the 7th five-year health development plan, strategic sub-sector development plans are implemented with effective alignments and harmonisation.</li> </ul>	
(3) Outputs	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problems identified through the monitoring of the 7th five-year health development plan and its programmes/sub-programmes are appropriately addressed through meetings of Sector Working Group Policy Level (SWG (P)) and Sector Working Group Operational Level (SWG (O)) and the Secretariat/Coordination Unit.</li> <li>2. Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Technical Working Group (MNCH-TWG) is effective in solving the problems identified through the implementation and monitoring of the MNCH package strategy (including Skilled Birth Attendant (SBA) development plan).</li> <li>3. Human Resources for Health Technical Working Group (HRH-TWG) is effective in solving the problems identified through the monitoring of the Health Personnel Development Strategy by 2020.</li> <li>4. Health Planning and Finance Technical Working Group (HP&amp;F-TWG) is effective in facilitating joint planning and monitoring five year health development plan and annual operational plan of the programmes/sub-programmes.</li> </ol>	
(4) Inputs	
(Japanese side)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Long-term experts: Chief Advisor, Health System Strengthening, MNCH and Project Coordinator/</li> </ul>	

<p>Institutional Capacity Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term experts: In the areas of Sector Common Workplan and Monitoring Framework (SCWMF), Monitoring Capacity of Five-year Health Sector Development Plan, Evaluation and Development of MNCH Strategy, Geographic Information System (GIS), etc.</li> <li>• Provision of Equipment: photocopiers, computers, headsets, printer, etc.</li> <li>• Training: Local and international</li> <li>• Project operation cost</li> </ul> <p>(Lao side)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment of counterparts: 32 counterparts including Project Director, Project Managers</li> <li>• Office space and utility costs</li> <li>• Meeting rooms for coordination activities</li> </ul>			
<b>2. Members of Evaluation Study Team</b>			
Members	Team Leader:	Ms. Saeda Makimoto (Senior Representative, JICA Laos Office)	
	Health Systems:	Dr. Tomohiko Sugishita (Senior Advisor (Health/Medicine), JICA HQs)	
	Sector-wide Coordination:	Dr. Chiaki Miyoshi (NCGM)	
	Cooperation Planning 1:	Mr. Masaki Aoki (Representative, JICA Laos Office)	
	Cooperation Planning 2:	Ms. Nami Kishida (Health Division 4, Health Group 2, Human Development Department, JICA HQs)	
	Evaluation Analysis:	Mr. Naoki Take (Consultant, Kaihatsu Management Consulting, Inc.)	
	Cooperation Planning 3:	Mr. Vangxay Phonelameuang (Assistant Programme Officer, JICA Laos Office)	
Duration	From 2 to 29 August 2015	Type	Evaluation
<b>3. Outline of Results of Mid-term Review</b>			
<b>3-1 Achievements of Outputs</b>			
3-1-1 Output 1			
Indicators		Achievements	Evaluation
1. To what extent the managerial capacity of SWG (P) and (O), the Secretariat is strengthened		Monitoring <i>7th Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP)</i> is a fixed agendum. Most of issues raised at SWG (P) and (O) in 2014 were addressed.	Good
2. To what extent SWG (P) and (O) and the Secretariat guide and support PHD and DHO in developing coordination mechanism		Number of provinces with fully functioned SWC mechanism: 2 among 18 provinces	Fair

### 3-1-2 Output 2

Indicators	Achievements	Evaluation
1. Whether MNCH-TWG is able to monitor progress of MNCH Package Strategic Plan according to SOP.	MNCH-TWG regularly reviewed MNCH Strategy. MNCH-TWG used evaluation of the current MNCH Strategy and development of the new strategy.	Excellent
2. To what extent alignments and coordination are made based on MNCH Package Strategy at provincial level.	At least 6 out of 18 provinces with functioning coordination mechanism: Attapeu, Sekong, Saravanh, Champasak, Houaphan and Xiangkhoang	Moderate
3. To what extent alignments and coordination are made based on MNCH Package Strategy with DP.	Most of DPs implemented activities in line with MNCH strategy.	Good
4. Inputs allocated by MOH/DPs to implement MNCH Package Strategy	Most of DPs provided inputs in line with MNCH strategy.	Good

### 3-1-3 Output 3

Indicators	Achievements	Evaluation
1. Whether plans are 1) developed, and 2) monitored, and 3) measures are taken to optimally allocate and retain human resources.	At least <i>Health Personnel Strategy</i> is developed and shared among stakeholders. Monitoring is done with use of data. However, three problems out of 21 identified were solved.	Good

### 3-1-4 Output 4

Indicators	Achievements	Evaluation
1. To what extent HP&F-TWG 1) updates and 2) monitor the Monitoring Framework for <i>HSDP</i> as well as upgrade the Framework so as to measure the progress of output	The monitoring framework was updated by HP&F-TWG, incorporated into sector-wide indicator matrix and biannual progress reports. The monitoring framework was developed and exercised to monitor <i>the 7th Five-year HSDP</i> .	Good
2. Whether annual plans based on available resources are 1) developed and 2) monitored and evaluated at central, provincial and district levels.	Annual plans were piloted only at two provinces, followed by revision of the planning template.	Fair

### 3-2 Evaluation by Five Criteria

#### (1) Relevance

Relevance of the Project is excellent. It has been firmly aligned with 7th *HSDP* and Japan's direction of cooperation to the health sector in Lao PDR. The Project has also properly addressed the needs of stakeholders in Lao health sector regarding the sector-wide coordination.

#### (2) Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the Project is moderate. Based on the indicators and performance of sector-wide coordination, the level of achievement of Project Purpose is moderate. Results of evaluation of Output 1-4 show MNCH and HRH TWG have performed better. Especially MNCH-TWG has performed coordination with proactive manner.

#### (3) Efficiency

Efficiency of the Project is moderate. The Project has made achievements with a minimum input. However, the inputs of the Project were not enough to timely enhance achievements from the other project in the same JICA Programme. As for Lao side, counterparts have been assigned from MOH for project implementation, but their competing tasks and responsibilities prevented it from holding SWG and TWG regularly

#### (4) Impact

Realisation of positive impact from the Project is expected. Based on the current status of available indicators of Overall Goal, they are moving forward to the achievements. The Project brought a positive impact that was not foreseen at the time of the commencement. Ministry of Planning and Investment appreciates sector-wide coordination in health as one of the best examples and refers the other sectors as reference. In addition, existence of the Project enabled JICA Programme for Improvement of Maternal and Child Health Systems to have synergic impact.

#### (5) Sustainability

Overall, sustainability of SWC is expected, although it still needs more support to some aspects.

[Policy Aspect] Sector-wide coordination is aligned with the draft 8th *HSDP*. Round Table Meeting will be sustained as Ministry of Planning and Investment keeps framework of Vientiane Declaration.

[Institutional Aspect] It is necessary to firmly revise TOR of SWC including strategic direction of the Secretariat, communication among Departments and their role and function.

[Technical Aspect] Many TWGs expressed that they can sustain the meeting itself without any support, but that it is necessary to be provided technical inputs in the meeting and to support the measures and solutions technically.

[Financial Aspect] Since direct cost of TWG is not huge, it is not so difficult for MOH to cover. State budget allocation to the health sector is increased year by year, while support from the Global Fund will be prospective for SWG and TWG.

### **3-3 Facilitating Factors**

#### (1) Regarding the plans

- Existence of Vientiane Declaration enabled Ministry of Health to firmly recognise SWC. Every ministry has a mandate to organise SWG and periodically report to the Round Table Meeting.

#### (2) Regarding the implement process

- The Development Partners following the Paris Declaration and Busan Partnership Agreement to promote aid effectiveness.
- MOH ensured ownership to the sector-side coordination such as chairpersonship of the meetings.
- All stakeholders expressed commitment to the sector-wide coordination.
- Interactive communication among stakeholders, especially between the MOH and Japanese Expert Team.
- The process of decentralisation by devolution promotes ownership of coordination and planning/monitoring at provincial level.
- JICA Program to Maternal and Child Health Systems promotes interactive communication and mutual progress among technical cooperation.

### **3-4 Impeding Factors**

- High expectation and different interest to the function of “coordination” promotes sometimes exaggeration and discourage among stakeholders.
- The coordination management is immature to promote institutional sustainability and effective feedback mechanism.
- The incentive mechanism for participation to coordination meetings is not well supported and officially endorsed.
- Chairpersons in SWC mechanism could not cope with their competing tasks to hold the meetings regularly.
- TOR was not sufficiently adjusted to the actual circumstances such as restructuring of the Ministry.

### **3-5 Conclusion**

From evaluation results based on the five criteria, the Evaluation Team observed that the Project Purpose is promising and sector-wide coordination mechanism has been certainly strengthened with increasing number of TWGs at central level and its extension to provincial level is being re-explored. In addition, the Project is developing key tools to meet emerging challenges, such as result based management, programmatic planning and progress monitoring. Finally “coordination” became an institutional culture towards ensuring effectiveness and efficiency of organizational management. Further development of SWC under emerging demands for “coordination” is strongly expected.

It is also recognized that coordination mechanism, especially MNCH-TWG, has been tremendously developed for their strategic orientation and self-reliance within a short period. This experience can be a model for autonomous and further development of sector-wide coordination.

As notable advances, with stronger leadership and commitment of the MOH, it is commented that the MOH and DPs could make initial dialogue for further development of “coordination” in the face of emerging local and global issues in the remaining period of the Project. For this purpose, JICA and other DPs are expected to contribute intellectual ideas and innovations into this sector-wide coordination mechanism.

Finally, the Evaluation Team cherishes the leadership by the MOH for high commitment and contribution to the sector-wide coordination to execute *8th Five-year HSDP* and promotes a foundation for health systems strengthening and overall management towards realisation of Health Sector Reform and Universal Health Coverage.

### **3-6 Recommendations**

#### **(1) To MOH**

- Since the Secretariat is a driving force of sector-wide coordination mechanism, it should continue to be strengthened for further development.
- MOH might reconsider the meaning and significance of “coordination” in the wider governmental and global contexts
- MOH might consider promoting a function of policy and information management as an essential coordination function of sector-wide coordination.
- While the coordination is demanded to respond an emerging agenda articulated by Universal Health Coverage, health managers and stakeholders are expected to foster managerial competencies.
- Department of Planning and International Cooperation should continue to develop revised annual budget plan, monitoring tools and consolidated reporting form for effective resource tracking and result-based management.

#### **(2) To JICA**

- The newly developed JICA project for improving quality of health services is expected to promote the sector-wide coordination.
- While respecting ownership and leadership of the sector-wide coordination by Lao MOH, JICA might keep catalytic engagement of technical and managerial support for sector-wide coordination mechanism.
- The Project might be extended for several months to execute its remaining and newly emerged activities.

### **3-7 Lessons Learned**

- The sector-wide coordination as an entry point to improve management capacity of the MOH was effective to ensure effective and efficient execution of health service provision.
- Capacity development was a labour intensive and time-consuming process, but finally it seems that “coordination” became an institutional culture.
- While the SWC mechanism provides an environment for interactive and proactive communication,

further development such as longer-term strategic planning and budgeting is expected to be enabled under the single sector policy management led by Lao government.

- It is important that SWC mechanism should harmonise the efforts between central and provincial levels for standard implementation.
- The meaning of “coordination” should be regularly reflected by a wider systemic point of view and acknowledged by all the concerned parties in a manner of continuous dialogue.