

Country Name	Capacity Development for Sector-wide Coordination in Health Phase 2
Lao People's Democratic Republic	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>The Ministry of Health (MOH) of Lao PDR implemented various programs and projects with supports of many development partners (DPs). However, the interventions by DPs did not result in effective improvement of the health status of people in the country because the projects were implemented in the limited, unbalanced and overlapped issues and areas without coordination between MOH and DPs as well as among DPs. In order to realize the coordination in the health sector, JICA commenced a technical cooperation project, the "Capacity Development for Sector-wide Coordination in Health Phase 1" (2006-2010). Under the project, the Sector Working Groups and Technical Working Groups (TWGs) were established within MOH, and a Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism was introduced for coordinating programs/projects. However, TWGs had not been well functioning, and the projects had not been implemented based on the mid-term and long-term perspectives.</p>				
Objectives of the Project	<p>Through strengthening of management and monitoring capacity of TWGs and the Secretariat, promotion of coordination between TWGs and MOH's departments, introduction of the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism at provincial and district levels, and upgrading of the Sector Common Workplan/Monitoring Framework for a national health development plan, the project aimed at implementing strategic sub-sector development plans with effective alignments and harmonization under the 7th five-year Health Sector Development Plan, thereby contributing to implementation of strategic plans, effective coordination and resource allocation in a sustainable manner by MOH to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Goal: MOH is able to implement strategic plans and conduct effective coordination and resource allocation in a sustainable manner to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Project Purpose: Under the 7th five-year Health Sector Development Plan, strategic sub-sector development plans are implemented with effective alignments and harmonization. 				
Activities of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project Site: the whole of Laos Main Activities: 1) Strengthening of management and monitoring capacity of TWGs and the Secretariat, 2) Promotion of coordination between TWGs and MOH's departments, 3) Introduction of the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism at provincial and district levels, 4) Upgrading of the Sector Common Workplan/Monitoring Framework for a national health development plan, etc. Inputs (to carry out above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> <p>Japanese Side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Experts: 18 persons Training in the third country: 8 persons (3 in the Philippines, 3 in Thailand, 1 in Cambodia and 1 in Vietnam) Equipment: copiers, a notebook computer, a headset, etc. Local expenses: cost for project activities </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> <p>Japanese Side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Experts: 18 persons Training in the third country: 8 persons (3 in the Philippines, 3 in Thailand, 1 in Cambodia and 1 in Vietnam) Equipment: copiers, a notebook computer, a headset, etc. Local expenses: cost for project activities </td> </tr> </table> 			<p>Japanese Side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Experts: 18 persons Training in the third country: 8 persons (3 in the Philippines, 3 in Thailand, 1 in Cambodia and 1 in Vietnam) Equipment: copiers, a notebook computer, a headset, etc. Local expenses: cost for project activities 	<p>Japanese Side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Experts: 18 persons Training in the third country: 8 persons (3 in the Philippines, 3 in Thailand, 1 in Cambodia and 1 in Vietnam) Equipment: copiers, a notebook computer, a headset, etc. Local expenses: cost for project activities
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Project Period	December 2010 - March 2016 (Extension: December 2015 - March 2016)	Project Cost	(ex-ante) 330 million yen, (actual) 275 million yen		
Implementing Agency	The Ministry of Health (MOH)				
Cooperation Agency in Japan	National Center for Global Health and Medicine (NCGM)				

II. Result of the Evaluation

1 Relevance
<p><Consistency with the Development Policy of Laos at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation and Project Completion></p> <p>The project was consistent with Laos's development policies of "The 6th five-year Health Sector Development Plan" (2006-2010) indicating the importance of coordinating international assistance to improve aid efficiency at the time of ex-ante evaluation and "The 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan" (2016-2020) setting a sector wide coordination in a sub-program of "international, public and private cooperation" at the time of project completion.</p> <p><Consistency with the Development Needs of Laos at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation and Project Completion ></p> <p>The project was consistent with Lao's development needs of activation of a Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism including TWGs for alleviating the lack of coordination between MOH and development partners and among the partners which prevented efficient implementation of development projects in the country.</p> <p><Consistency with Japan's ODA Policy at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation></p> <p>The project was consistent with "The Country Assistance Program for Laos" (2006) raising the improvement of health services as one of the priority areas in order to attain Millennium Development Goals.</p> <p><Evaluation Result></p>

In light of the above, the relevance of the project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

<Status of Achievement of the Project Purpose at the time of Project Completion>

The Project Purpose was partially achieved by the time of project completion. Through the project, the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism was introduced into seven provinces out of 18 provinces. However, only two provinces, Attapeu province and Sekong province, fully introduced the mechanism, and other provinces just introduced a part of it (Indicator 1). In order to align and harmonize procedures between MOH and DPs, the format for annual operational planning was prepared by the project, and the annual operation planning by using the format was being progressed, but it did not reach the sufficient alignment and harmonization of the procedures(Indicator 2). Furthermore, all programs and projects were endorsed by MOH and DPs under “the 7th five-year Health Sector Development Plan” (2011-2015) (Indicator 3), and most of DPs aligned their programs/projects under the Plan (Indicator 4). It should be noted that indicator 1 and 2 were achieved by the time of ex-post evaluation.

<Continuation Status of Project Effects at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The project effects have been continued since the project completion. After the project completion, not only provinces of Attapeu and Sekong but also other provinces started to introduce the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism. At the time of ex-post evaluation, all of 18 provinces have fully operated the mechanism. This is because, after the project was completed, MOH incorporated the mechanism into “The 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan” (2016-2020). In addition, the mechanism has been mentioned at a roundtable meeting that is organized once a year, having the attendance of director general of PHOs. For the district level, PHOs have mandated to technically support all DHOs. Each PHO has conducted dissemination seminars to their DHOs, and all the DHOs in the whole nation have attended such seminars by the time of ex-post evaluation. For instance, one PHO organizes an internal meeting after the annual National Sector-Wide Coordination meeting and disseminates information to the key personnel from DHOs. According to the MOH, this coordination mechanism has become regular practice among the health sector; however, the introduction and operation of the mechanism at the district level has been limited due to a lack of follow-up procedures to the DHO’s technical issues for which there is insufficient support from PHO. . The format for annual operational planning, the tools of progress reporting, and the Sector-wide indicators developed by the project have been revised, authorized and utilized by MOH and DPs, which has led to the more alignment and harmonization of procedures between them. As a result, all programs/projects under “The 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan” (2016-2020) have been recognized by MOH and almost of all the programs/projects have been supported by DPs. Additionally, although the in-depth data on the number of DPs which align projects/programs under the Plan is not available, according to MOH, most of DPs have aligned their projects/programs under the Plan.

<Status of Achievement for Overall Goal at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The Overall Goal has been achieved at the time of ex-post evaluation. All of programs/projects under “the 8th Five-Year Health Sector Development Plan” (2016-2020) have been shared with DPs (Indicator 1). The percentage of the budget provided to implement programs/projects under the Plan to the total budget of MOH was 2.94% in 2011/12 but increased to 7.2% in 2017/18 (Indicator 2). DPs such as JICA, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and World Health Organization (WHO) have provided financial supports to MOH to implement the programs/projects under the Plan, and the amount of the supports increased from 463,510 million Kip in 2016 to 709,227 million Kip in 2019 (Indicator 3). As mentioned in the continuation status of project effects, the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism has been fully introduced and operated at a provincial level while not at a district level. However, DHOs have managed to carry out programs/projects under “the 8th Five-Year Health Sector Development Plan” (2016-2020) with technical supports by PHOs (Indicator 4). This can be seen from the fact that access to some health services such as Antenatal Care (ANC) and Delivery by Skilled Birth Attendant (SBA) has been improved (Indicator 6). According to MOH, the mechanism has maximized the health sector development in Laos brought by aid (Indicator 5). The reasons for this are as follows: 1) all concerned personnel of the government of Laos have clearly been aware of their mandates, roles, and responsibilities on the health sector development through the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism, which has led to a significant increase in their ownerships, 2) all key DPs have aligned their projects/programs under a single policy framework, and such information has been shared among relatives, and 3) the mutual accountability between the government of Laos and DPs has been increased. Furthermore, the retention rate of health workers has been improved from 2.88 in 2013/14 to 3.02 in 2017/18 (Indicator 7).

<Other Impacts at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

Positive impacts by the project were observed at the time of ex-post evaluation. According to MOH, the project brought a wide range of positive impacts on gender. For example, the introduction of the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism has strengthened Maternal, Newborn and Child Health care service and immunization programs, which has enabled more mothers and children to enjoy them. There were no other positive or negative impacts observed.

<Evaluation Result>

Therefore, the effectiveness/impact of the project is high.

Achievement of Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results
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(Project Purpose) Under the 7th five-year Health Sector Development Plan, strategic sub-sector development plans are implemented with effective alignments and harmonization.	1. To what extent coordination mechanism is introduced at the provincial and district levels.	Status of the Achievement: Not Achieved (Partially Achieved) (Project Completion) • Out of 18 provinces, only two provinces (Attapeu province and Sekong province) fully introduced the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism and 5 provinces (Saravanh province, Champasak province, Phongsaly province, Oudonxay province, and Louang Namtha province) partially did. (Ex-post Evaluation) • All of 18 provinces have introduced and operated the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism. At the district level, although all the DHOs in the whole nation have attended the dissemination seminars, the introduction and operation of the mechanism has been limited.														
	2. To what extent procedures are aligned and harmonized by Departments of MOH and DPs.	Status of the Achievement: Not Achieved (Achieved) (Project Completion) • Annual operational planning with use of the format for annual operational planning developed by the project was on-going between MOH and DPs. (Ex-post Evaluation) • The format for annual operational planning, the tools of progress reporting, and the Sector-wide indicators developed by the project have been revised, authorized and utilized by MOH and DPs.														
	3. To what extent project/program under a single policy framework are recognized among MOH and supported by DPs.	Status of the Achievement: Achieved (Continued) (Project Completion) • All of programs/projects were endorsed by MOH and DPs under the 7th five-year Health Sector Development Plan. (Ex-post Evaluation) • All of programs/projects under “the 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan” (2016-2020) have been recognized by MOH, and almost of all the programs/projects have been supported by DPs.														
	4. Numbers of DPs which align with project/program under a single policy framework are increased.	Status of the Achievement: Achieved (Continued) (Project Completion) • Most of DPs aligned their projects/programs under the 7th five-year Health Sector Development Plan. (Ex-post Evaluation) • Although the in-depth data on the number of DPs which align projects/programs under “the 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan” (2016-2020) is not available, according to MOH, most of DPs have aligned their projects/programs under the Plan.														
(Overall Goal) MOH is able to implement strategic plans and conduct effective coordination and resource allocation in a sustainable manner to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.	1. Programs under a single policy framework are shared with DPs.	(Ex-post Evaluation) Achieved • All of programs/projects under “the 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan” (2016-2020) have been shared with DPs.														
	2. Inputs allocated by MOH to implement programs under a single policy framework.	(Ex-post Evaluation) Achieved • The percentage of the budget to implement programs/projects under the 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan to the total budget of MOH has been increasing. [Percentage of the budget to implement programs/projects under the 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan to the total budget of MOH (Unit: %)] <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2011/12</th> <th>2014/15</th> <th>2016/17</th> <th>2017/18</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2.94</td> <td>6.01</td> <td>7.8</td> <td>7.4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2011/12	2014/15	2016/17	2017/18	2.94	6.01	7.8	7.4						
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	3. Inputs allocated by DPs to implement programs under a single policy framework.	(Ex-post Evaluation) Achieved • DPs such as JICA, UNICEF, and WHO, have provided financial supports to MOH to implement programs/projects under “the 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan” (2016-2020). [The amount of financial supports from DPs to MOH (Unit: Million Kip)] <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> <th>2019</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>N/A</td> <td>463,510</td> <td>533,597</td> <td>353,397</td> <td>709,227</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	N/A	463,510	533,597	353,397	709,227				
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N/A	463,510	533,597	353,397	709,227												
4. All PHOs (Provincial Health Offices) and DHOs build system and structure for coordination mechanism	(Ex-post Evaluation) Partially Achieved • All of 18 provinces have introduced and operated the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism. At the district level, although all the DHOs in the whole nation have attended the dissemination seminars,. However, the introduction and operation of this mechanism in the district level has been limited.															
5. Aid efficiency is improved through coordination and harmonization.	(Ex-post Evaluation) Achieved • According to MOH, the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism maximized the health sector development in Laos brought by aid.															
6. Access to health services is improved.	(Ex-post Evaluation) Partially Achieved • Out of four indicators regarding health services, two indicators have improved, and the remaining two indicators have been slightly worsened. [Access to Selected Health Services (Unit: %)] <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Indicator / Year</th> <th>2013</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>ANC</td> <td>62</td> <td>85</td> <td>85</td> <td>86.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Delivery by SBA</td> <td>38</td> <td>51.8</td> <td>56.7</td> <td>57.9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Indicator / Year	2013	2016	2017	2018	ANC	62	85	85	86.4	Delivery by SBA	38	51.8	56.7	57.9
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		Prenatal Care	48	35.7	45.1	47.6
		DTP-HepB-Hib3	87	79	81.3	83.9
	7. Retention of health workers is improved.	(Ex-post Evaluation) Achieved				
		• The retention rate of health workers has improved.				
		[Retention rate of health workers (Unit: %)]				
		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2017/18	
		2.88	2.87	3.22	3.02	

Source : Terminal Evaluation Report, Questionnaire and Interview with MOH and PHOs

3 Efficiency

Although the project cost was within the plan (ratio against the plan: 83%), the project period slightly exceeded the plan (ratio against the plan: 110%) due to additional activities such as the approval and introduction of a monitoring tool and the discussing of future direction of “coordination” between MOH and DPs. The outputs were produced as planned. Therefore, the efficiency of the project is fair.

4 Sustainability

<Policy Aspect>

“The 8th five-year Health Sector Development Plan” (2016-2020) setting a sector-wide coordination in a sub-program of “international, public and private cooperation”, and “Health Sector Reform” (2013-2025) also promotes a sector-wide coordination mechanism. As the project aimed at implementing strategic sub-sector development plans with a wide range of donors through the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism, it has been endorsed by the national policies.

<Institutional Aspect>

There have not been major changes in the organizational setting for the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism.

[National level]

The Department of Planning and International Cooperation of MOH has been a secretariat of the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism. 6 staff have been assigned there, and according to them, as they have fulfilled their responsibilities without any major problems, the number of the staff has been sufficient.

[Provincial level]

The Health Promotion Section of PHO has played a role in supporting Department of Planning and International Cooperation of MOH as a deputy secretariat of the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism. The Section in each province has had 2 staff, and according to them, as they have performed their roles without any major problems, the number of the staff has been enough.

[District level]

As described above, the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism has yet to be fully introduced and operated at a district level, there are no specific organizations in charge.

[Monitoring Framework for Five-year Health Sector Development Plan]

The monitoring framework for five-year health sector development plan developed by the project has been sustained and functioned. With the framework, all issues related to health sector have been monitored on a regular basis.

<Technical Aspect>

The staff of the above-mentioned organizations at national and provincial levels has sustained the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their responsibilities given. According to the staff, although there is no internal training, since the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism does not require the staff to have any specialized knowledge and skill, the knowledge and skills of the staff are considered to be sufficient. However, as many coordinators of TWGs trained by the project were retired and new coordinator units do not fully understand the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism, internal training on the Mechanism and meeting facilitation skills will be needed.

<Financial Aspect>

MOH reported that the necessary budget for the Sector-wide Coordination has been provided by DPs including the Global Fund, the Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank and been secured every year and that where the budget is not enough, additional budget is allocated by the Government of Laos. According to the budget data from 2015 to 2019, it can be confirmed that a certain amount of budget has been secured every year. The budget has been consumed to hold technical working group meetings four times a year and round table meetings for policy dialogue once a year. The situation is considered to continue.

The Budget of promoting the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism (Unit: Million Kip)

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (Plan)
400	400	300	300	500

<Evaluation Result>

Therefore, as there have been some problems from the institutional aspect, the sustainability of the effects through the project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project achieved the Project Purpose aiming at implementing strategic sub-sector development plans with effective alignments and harmonization under the 7th five-year Health Sector Development Plan by the time of ex-post evaluation and achieved the Overall Goal aiming at implementing strategic plans and conducting effective coordination and resource allocation in a sustainable manner to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. As for the sustainability, the organizational setting at a district level, which was targeted by the project, has not been established even at the time of ex-post evaluation. As for the efficiency, the project cost slightly exceeded the plan.

Considering all of the above points, the project is evaluated to be satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing Agency:

- The Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism has not been fully introduced and operated at a district level due to DHO’s technical issues even though dissemination seminars have been provided to all the districts. In order for DHO to operate within this mechanism thereafter, MOH should take measures to improve the technical capacity of the DHO staffs, such as establishing standard follow-up procedures and training on the mechanism for the staff periodically.

Lessons Learned for JICA:

- MOH, especially department and division concerned, have done well on the dissemination of the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism at central and provincial levels. For example, they have logged the mechanism to MOH policy and take it as one of the important agendas at a roundtable meeting and to be operated in the countrywide. However, it was difficult to disseminate the Sector-wide Coordination Mechanism at a district level in Laos due to the limited resources of provinces and the weak coordination with PHOs. Therefore, at the planning and implementation stage for future projects targeting the whole of a target country, strategies sufficiently considering limited human resources and weak governance at sub national levels should be examined.



Roundtable Meeting at MOH



Meeting on Capacity Development for Sector-Wide Coordination in Health
Phase 2 at MOH