

Developing a Country Action Plan and Indicators to Guide the Implementation of the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

1st February 2007

1. Introduction

At the Ninth Round Table Meeting (9RTM) in Vientiane in November 2006, the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) and 22 partner countries and organizations signed the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The number of development partners that are signatory to the Declaration may increase, with the Government of Lao PDR welcoming expressions of participation in, and signing of, the Declaration by 15 February 2007.

In the consultation meetings leading up to the 9RTM, many development partners felt that it was necessary to develop a Country Action Plan (CAP) with time bound targets and indicators to accompany the Declaration. It was agreed that a CAP would be developed and endorsed by the GoL and Development Partners (DPs) by 31 May 2007.

The purpose of this document is to describe the proposed process for developing the CAP over the next four months. This document and proposed process replaces the *Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Revised Schedule for Follow-up Actions* (prepared 24 November 2006).

2. General Approach

It is recognized that the process for developing the CAP should be **inclusive**, such that it should enjoy the broad support of all parties to the Vientiane Declaration. That it should also be **flexible**, recognizing that development partners will be able to implement at different speeds, and that it should be **predictable**, that is, it should enable everyone to understand how they can be involved in developing and approving the Action Plan and enable them to plan their participation with confidence.

The key principles of the CAP is that it should be **simple and realistic**; that it should comprise **time bound indicators and targets**; that it should address issues of donor and government **transparency**; and that it should comprise **monitoring and follow up arrangements** to ensure it is a living document that will be updated as necessary over time. Importantly, the CAP needs to consider the role of existing donor co-ordination and aid effectiveness mechanisms such as the OECD DAC Survey and the Sector Working Groups.

It is suggested that the CAP should be developed through a three-tiered approach comprising a High Level Forum, Task Force and Secretariat. The role and function of each group is set out in the below table.

What For?	Who?	Meet How Often?	How?
1) Decisions “High Level Forum”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Vientiane Declaration signatories plus potential partners 	Meet three times: 1. Approve process 2. Mid-term report and presentation of final draft CAP 3. Approval of CAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government sets the three meeting dates in advance • Invites Heads of Delegations and Government Representatives • Chaired by Vice-Minister and UN Resident Coordinator
2) Consensus Building “Task Force”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key GoL agencies and all DPs wanting active participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet three to five times, for half day at a time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops consider, edit and finalize drafts of the CAP • Professional facilitator • GoL chair and rotating DP co-chair
3) Preparation “Secretariat”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoL plus 2 or 3 DPs with suitable capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet weekly, or as often as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group plans and manages workflow, generates drafts, consults with others as necessary, and ensures all parties are kept informed. • No decision-making power

3. Mandate, Requirements and Participation of the Three Different Groups

High Level Forum

Mandate:

- Responsible for approving the process at the beginning, ensuring progress half way through, and approving the CAP and associated indicators at the end.

Participation:

- Inclusive of all parties to the Declaration, as well as any other interested participants who want to make a contribution to Aid Effectiveness in the Lao PDR
- Participants should be Heads of Delegations level, and should be able to make commitments on behalf of their Embassy / Organization given sufficient advance warning and information.

Process:

- The High Level Forum will meet three times:

- First meeting: February, approve process for developing the CAP
- Second meeting: early May, formal briefing and presentation of final draft CAP for comments
- Third meeting: late May, approval of final CAP
- Exact dates for each meeting will be scheduled by end of February, and confirmed through invitations sent out by the Government
- Each participant will receive relevant background materials at least five working days before each meeting
- Requiring a time commitment of approximately 12 hours over 4 months for both preparation and meetings.

Task Force

Mandate:

- Responsible for building consensus on the CAP through discussing, editing and finalizing drafts prepared by the Secretariat
- Will recommend a final CAP to the High Level Forum

Participation:

- GoL: MoFA, MoF, CPI, plus key line ministries
- DPs: Would need all large donors to be effective, but any others who want to be involved would be welcome to participate
- DIC has already requested DPs (letter dated 15 January) to send their nominations to DIC by 19 January 2007. Final nominations will close on 5 February 2007.

Process:

- The Task Force will meet three to five times in a workshop format to consider draft sections of the CAP:
 - First meeting: proposed for 28 February
 - Second meeting: End March
 - Third meeting: End April
 - Forth meeting: Mid May
- The Secretariat will schedule the first meeting for 28 February. The date for second and subsequent meetings will be decided amongst Task Force members at the end of each meeting.
- GoL will host the workshops, with a rotating Bilateral DP co-chair.
- Each workshop would need to finalize a section of the CAP by the time it closed. The secretariat will be responsible for sharing the drafts of each section (and other relevant information) with taskforce members at least five working days before each workshop.
- Workshops would be run by an objective professional facilitator who would be responsible for ensuring good participation and effective progress towards the goals. The Secretariat will be responsible for drafting the TOR for the facilitator, with the Government responsible for selecting appropriate candidate. DPs are encouraged to send their nominations for a facilitator to the Government as soon as possible, in

order to recruit and brief s/he in time for the first Task Force meeting scheduled for 28th February.

- Participation requires a time commitment of approximately 40 hours over 4 months for both preparation and meetings.

Secretariat

Mandate:

- Responsible for supporting the process, including planning and managing workflow, generating draft material for the Task Force to consider (consulting with participants as necessary in doing this), and ensuring a regular and accurate supply of information to Task Force and High Level Forum members.
- Has no decision-making power

Participation:

- Small group (6-10) comprising representatives from Government (DIC, CPI, MoF) and two to three DPs preferably those involved in the working group for the OECD DAC Survey.
- Nominations to join the Secretariat need to be sent to DIC by 5 February 2007.

Process:

- GoL convenes weekly meetings (or as many as necessary) and divides up work across the Secretariat
- Participation requires a time commitment of approximately 1 day a week over 4 months.

4. Communications

The existing RTM website will be updated to include a new section for the Vientiane Declaration. Up-to date information on the process and progress being made will be posted on the website.

It is envisaged that the Secretariat will prepare monthly progress reports that will be posted on the website and sent by email to members of the High Level Forum, Task Force and any other interested parties. Towards this end, the Secretariat will set up a mailing list.

All communication (eg. inquiries, feedback) should be directed to the Secretariat who will be responsible for responding in a timely manner. A dedicated email address will be set up for this purpose.

5. Time Schedule for CAP Preparation

The below table sets out the proposed schedule for meetings over the next four months. As mentioned, the Secretariat will confirm the date of first Task Force Meeting (proposed for 28 Feb), and the dates for the second and third High Level Forum meetings.

When?	What?	Responsibility?
February	First High Level Forum meeting to approve proposed process for developing CAP	DIC to arrange HLF
	Nominations close for participation on Task Force and Secretariat on 5/2/07. (Nominations to be sent to DIC).	DIC
	DPs and Government all encouraged to send their nominations for a professional facilitator to DIC	DP /Govt DIC
	Secretariat to meet at least twice to prepare workplan, update RTM website, consult with GoL and DPs, and prepare drafts for first Task Force meeting (including recruiting professional facilitator).	Secretariat
	First Task Force meeting to review existing CAP and provide comments (28 Feb).	Task Force
March	Secretariat meets as required.	Secretariat
	Second Task Force meeting (end of March)	Task Force
April	Secretariat meets as required.	Secretariat
	Third Task Force (end of April) to finalize Draft CAP for presentation to Higher Level Forum.	Task Force
May	Secretariat to meet as required	Secretariat
	Second High Level Forum meeting – formal briefing of progress, and review and provide comments on final draft CAP (early May)	Task Force
	Fourth Task Force meeting to revise CAP based on comments from High Level Forum.	DIC to arrange HLF
	Third High Level Forum to approve CAP	DIC to arrange HLF

5. Implementation and Monitoring Mechanisms – What will happen post 31st May?

It is imperative that during the drafting of the CAP and Indicators that the implementation and monitoring mechanisms are developed and agreed upon. The Secretariat will be responsible for drafting proposals for how to effectively implement and monitor the

Country Action Plan, and the Task Force will need to discuss and finalize these draft arrangements before final approval by the High Level Forum.

An initial suggestion was that after May 31st the Secretariat should remain functioning, however the Task Force should be dissolved with monitoring activities for certain sections of the CAP becoming one of the responsibilities of the relevant Sector Working Groups. The High Level Forum meetings will continue to occur through the Round Table Process meetings. Such a suggestion, as well as other ideas, will need to be comprehensively researched and discussed over the coming months.