

GENDER ACTION PLAN

1. The expected impact of the GMS Tourism Infrastructure for Inclusive Growth Project is increased tourism employment for men and women living in underdeveloped segments of the GMS Central Corridor. The outcome will be increased tourism receipts in the participating provinces. Lao women will benefit from project activities that support small and medium enterprise development and create employment related to tourism. Women will also benefit from better representation in destination management through inclusion in project-supported forums and partnerships. The project's gender category is effective gender mainstreaming.

2. While 73% of Lao women are active in the labor force (compared to 78% for men), women are over-represented in seasonal employment and temporary jobs. Women also generally earn less than men and are under-represented in managerial positions and higher-paying industries. According to the World Bank-ADB Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR, high domestic and on-farm workloads, limited mobility, poor infrastructure and limited Lao language proficiency among ethnic women are key barriers to expanding women's economic opportunities. Women living near project sites confirmed their interest to expand or open small enterprises, and identify tourism retail services as a lucrative opportunity that is less arduous than farming. Poor and low-income women can enter the tourism sector with small investments but many require access to affordable credit and training, in particular ethnic households, and where the household head is a woman.

3. Project activities will increase women's access to the economic benefits of tourism. The Design and Monitoring Framework (DMF) includes a number of gender-specific indicators, including that at least 50% of newly created jobs will be held by women. The purpose of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) is to ensure that women benefit both directly and indirectly from all project activities. The GAP will also ensure women's meaningful participation in decision-making and includes measures to reduce risks and mitigate negative impacts associated with tourism such as human trafficking, child exploitation, and the transmission of HIV/AIDS. The project coordination unit will be responsible for implementing the GAP and preparing consolidated quarterly monitoring reports for submission to ADB. It will engage an international (4 months) and national (12 months) gender specialist to support GAP implementation and monitoring. Project implementation units will appoint men and women counterparts as gender focal points to work closely with the gender specialists to ensure effective implementation of the GAP. The GAP budget is about \$87,000, to be financed from the ADB loan.

Table 1: Gender Action Plan, Lao PDR

Actions	Targets/Indicators	Responsible
Output 1: Last-mile tourism access infrastructure improved.		
Output 2: Environmental services in cross-border tourism centers improved.^a		
1.1 For all infrastructure subprojects, PIUs and consultants meet with women and men on detailed designs and inform them about employment opportunities during and after construction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two public consultations held with local population and stall operators for each subproject. 50% of participants in consultation meetings are women. 	PCU, PIUs, LWU and consultants.
1.2 For all infrastructure subprojects, ensure that civil works bidding documents include numerical targets for women's employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of the unskilled workers hired for construction are local; at least 20% of local unskilled workers are women. 	PCU, PIUs and consultants.
1.3 For all infrastructure subprojects, detailed design of infrastructure at tourism sites maximizes fixed and mobile vendor retail space for women and road design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of stall operators (majority are women) return to original retail space after construction. • 80% of new stalls allocated to women. • Specific design measures adopted such as 	PCU, PIUs, consultants and contractors.

Actions	Targets/Indicators	Responsible
includes safety measures.	wide shoulders and public lighting.	
Output 3: Institutional capacity to promote inclusive tourism growth strengthened.		
3.1 Ensure women (including ethnic women) are appointed to committees and forums for destination management and institutional strengthening and create enabling conditions for their participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DMO management committees include 40% women (ethnicity proportional to local population); at least 2 DMOs led by a woman.^b • Women account for 50% of stakeholders at public-private partnership consultations. 	NSC Chair & PCU Director and PIU Director.
3.2 Increase women's access to economic opportunities through development of tourism-related enterprises and livelihood activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500 small and medium-sized enterprise operators (50% of whom are women) gain access to professional tourism-related business support services and microfinance. 	PCU, PIU and consultants.
3.3 Training program in hospitality services includes outreach to disadvantaged women through partnership with LWU's existing vocational training programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% of hospitality service trainees are women (proportional to ethnicity in local area). 	PCU, PIU and consultants.
3.4 Implement safety, health, and heritage conservation awareness programs; and measures to combat child exploitation and human trafficking, in partnership with LWU, women business leaders, law enforcement, DMOs, and tourism businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of heritage protection measures, health and safety, and measures to prevent child exploitation and human trafficking increase among 6,000 people (50% women). • At least 50% of participants in health and hygiene/sanitation training are men. 	
Output 4: Effective project implementation and knowledge management.		
4.1 Ensure women are represented in the project's National Steering Committee and in PIUs and PCUs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSC has at least 2 women members. • Women hold 30% of management and professional posts in PCU and PIUs. 	NSC Chair, MICT and DICT Director.
4.2 Appoint women representative of the National Steering Committee to oversee the project's strategic directions for gender equality and focal persons in PCU and PIU responsible for gender mainstreaming & GAP implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Focal Person designated in NSC, PCU and PIUs. • GAP is reviewed, monitored for progress and follow-ups agreed annually by NSC. • GAP is integrated into annual and quarterly work plans of PCU and PIU. 	NSC Director PCU Director and PIU Directors.
4.3 Recruit gender consultant (s) to support GAP implementation, training of contractors and consultant team, and SME consultants to implement activities to increased women's access to economic opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and SME consultants hired for GAP and women's livelihood activities. • 100% of PCU, PIU, and project implementation consultant staff trained in gender equality and GAP implementation. • Gender actions stated in work plans. 	PCU Director.
4.5 Women members from NSC, PCU and PIUs access opportunities to participate in GMS trainings and meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are 30% of representatives at GMS events on behalf of Laos. 	NSC Director, PCU Director.
4.6 Develop a project performance management system that provides information on the differential impacts of the project on both women and men.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators for tracking progress and project benefits gender disaggregated. • Monitoring of safeguards plans track differential impacts on women and men. • Gender actions noted in progress reports. 	PCU Director and consultants.
4.7 Tourism statistics harmonization includes systematisation of sex-disaggregated data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All standardized tourism statistics related to people disaggregate by sex. 	PCU Director and consultants.

DICT = Department of Information, Culture and Tourism, DMO = destination management organization, GAP = gender action plan, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, LWU = Lao Women's Union, MICT = Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, SME = small- and medium-sized enterprises, NCS = National Steering Committee, PCU = project coordination unit, PIU = project implementation unit.

^a Actions apply to all infrastructure subprojects and are therefore the same for Outputs 1 and 2.

^b A destination management organization is defined as a public, private or public-private entity responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism in a geographic region defined for that purpose.