

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION

A. Major Development Partners: Strategic Foci and Activities

1. Development partners have played an important role in the health sector of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). In 2016, the government financed 51.8% of total health expenditures, while 17.7% was financed by external resources.¹ All partners support the Health Sector Reform Strategy (HSRS) for 2013–2025, with the goal of universal health coverage. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) works at national, provincial and regional levels; current assistance includes: (i) subprogram 2 of the Health Sector Governance Program, (ii) Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Health Security Project, and (iii) GMS Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Prevention. In addition to ADB, the leading development partners in the health sector are the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and World Health Organization (WHO). Table 1 summarizes the ongoing work of all partners by area, duration and amount of support.
2. JICA supports developing human resources, and improving health facility access and quality, especially for maternal, newborn, and child healthcare (MNCH) services. In 2018, JICA projects focus on: (i) sustainable development and quality assurance of health care professionals, and (ii) improvement of teaching hospitals.² ADB is in close contact with JICA, especially regarding human resources and health financing, and possible future collaboration.
3. WHO provides technical support for health system strengthening towards universal health coverage, including health policy development, human resources for health, health services delivery, health information systems, and health security.³
4. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria focuses on strengthening and expanding disease specific programs, while the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization supports vaccine supply and improving cold chain management.
5. The Korea International Cooperation Agency supports implementation of the integrated MNCH strategy in Vientiane Capital, Luang Prabang and Oudomxay provinces.
6. The Luxembourg Development Agency assists provincial and district health authorities in Bolikhamxay, Khammouane, and Vientiane provinces to increase coverage of more effective and efficient health services, and supports the Ministry of Health (MOH) in improving access to MNCH through the United Nations Joint Program for MNCH.
7. Swiss Red Cross provides technical and financial support to MOH on health financing and social health protection, strengthening health system management and service delivery.
8. The European Union finances the multisector nutrition support program. Similarly, the United States Agency for International Development has established (with MOH) the National Nutrition Institute to improve child malnutrition by targeting household nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene practices; and financed programs that strongly advocate the International Health Regulations and global health security agenda.

¹ Government of Lao PDR. Ministry of Health. 2017. *National Health Accounts Report Fiscal Years 2012–2013, 2013–2014, 2014–2015, 2015–2016*. Vientiane.

² JICA. [Country Assistance Policies, Rolling Plan for Lao PDR](#). (accessed 10 October 2017).

³ WHO. 2017. *Lao PDR-WHO Country Cooperation Strategy 2017–2021*. Manila: WHO.

9. The World Bank's Health Governance and Nutrition Development Project and additional financing supports: (i) governance reforms in the health sector, focusing on the health management information system, including birth registration; (ii) delivery of health services (MNCH and family planning); and (iii) nutritional, social, and behavioural change and communication. ADB and the World Bank have closely collaborated on health sector reforms, and will continue to do so to achieve universal health coverage.⁴

Table 1. Major development partner projects in health

Development Partners	Project Name	Duration	Amount (\$ million)
Health System Development and Reform			
ADB	Health Sector Governance Program-Subprogram 2	2015–2018	25.0
World Bank	Health Governance and Nutrition Development Project and Additional Financing	2015–2020	41.4
Lux-Development	Lao–Luxembourg Health Sector Support Programme, Phase II	2014–2020	25.5
JICA	Project for Improving Quality of Health Care Services	2015–2020	4.3
	Sustainable Development and Quality Assurance of Health Care Professionals	2018-2023	5.0
WHO	Systems Strengthening Program/ Support for Health Sector Reform	2015–2020	15.0
SRC	Contributions to Universal Health Care in the Lao PDR-Phase I	2014–2017	2.3
	Contributions to Universal Health Care in the Lao PDR-Phase II	2017–2021	equivalent 3.0
	Improving Accountability in Health Financing and Functioning of the National Health Insurance Branches in Provinces	2014–2017	1.0 equivalent
	Lao Equity Through Policy Analysis and Research Networks (LEARN)	2015–2020	2.5 equivalent
KOICA	Health Professional Training, Education Development Centre, University of Health Science	2015–2020	5.0
Nutrition			
European Union	Multi-sector Nutrition Support Programme in the Lao PDR	2016–2020	55.5
USAID	Nutrition and Community Sanitation	2017–2020	6.0
	Lao-American Nutrition Institute	2017–TBC	4.0
UNICEF	Nutrition Supplement Programme (included in the European Union program above)	2016–2020	
Mother and Child Health Care			
UNFPA	Reproductive Health / Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health	2016–2020	4.2
Lux-Development	Maternal, Newborn and Child Health through Joint UN Program	2017–2020	7.5 equivalent
KOICA	Integrated MNCH and Paediatric Education (I HOPE project)	2014–2018	9.5
	MCH Outreach Program for Improving Health Service Delivery and Nutritional Status in Luang Prabang	2017–2021	7.0
KOFIH	Integrated Package of MNCH Services	2015–2018	3.9
GAVI	Health Systems Strengthening Project	2016–2020	7.8
SRC	Strengthening MNCH in Luang Prabang Province	2014–2017	1.4
	Basic Health and Organizational Development (Lao Red Cross)	2014–2017	1.5 equivalent
Save the Children Fund	Primary Health Care in Luang Prabang and Bolikhamsay and Xiengkhuang provinces	2013–2017	3.0 equivalent
Control of Communicable Diseases			

⁴ WB. 2017. *Country Partnership Framework for Lao PDR FY2017–2021*. Washington D.C.

Development Partners	Project Name	Duration	Amount (\$ million)
ADB	GMS Capacity Building for HIV/AIDs Prevention Project	2013–2018	5.0
	Second GMS Regional Communicable Disease Control Project and Additional Financing	2011–2017	15.0
European Union	GMS Health Security Project	2017–2022	12.0
	Development of a Lao PDR–Cambodia One Health Surveillance and Laboratory Network	2014–2018	2.3 equivalent
Institute Pasteur	Support to Institute Pasteur, Lao PDR	2014–2019	3.7
USAID	Emerging Pandemic Threats 2	2014–2018	0.15
	Strengthening National Laboratory Systems	2017–2021	3.0
Global Fund	Health Systems Strengthening Program	2016–2017	3.7
	Tuberculosis Control Project	2018–2020	7.8
	Malaria Control Project	2018–2020	10.6
	HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment Project	2018–2020	6.9

ADB = Asian Development Bank, GAVI = Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, Global Fund = the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, JICA = Japan International Cooperation Agency, KOFIH = Korea Foundation for International Healthcare, KOICA = Korea International Cooperation Agency, Lao PDR = Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lux-Development = Luxembourg Development Agency, MNCH = maternal, newborn, and child healthcare, SRC = Swiss Red Cross, UNFPA = United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF = United Nations Children’s Fund, USAID = United States Agency for International Development, WHO = World Health Organization.
Source: Asian Development Bank.

B. Institutional Arrangements and Process for Development Coordination

10. The government has established 10 sector working groups (SWGs), which are coordinated by the Ministry of Planning and Investment.⁵ The Health SWG is chaired by the Minister of Health, and co-chaired by the Ambassador of Japan to the Lao PDR, together with the WHO representative on behalf of development partners. SWG members include the government, development partners (including United Nations agencies and nongovernmental organizations) and the private sector. SWGs provide a forum to build consensus on development priorities, and improve sector-specific aid coordination and effectiveness, in line with the Vientiane Declaration. Through the health SWGs, the MOH developed the national HSRS for 2013–2025. The MOH has further established six technical working groups (TWGs) to harmonize and coordinate activities under the MOH’s work plan, supported by development partners.⁶ The Minister of Health issued a decree in August 2017 to establish a committee overseeing health sector reform, sector coordination and decentralization reform. MOH is in the process of restructuring the TWGs to align with the priorities of the HSRS.

C. Summary and Recommendations

11. A mechanism for development coordination in the health sector is in place, and development partners are guided by the HSRS framework for collaboration under the leadership of MOH. Continued coordination between development partners through the TWGs to harmonize planning, reporting, and fund-flow between development partners is strongly recommended.

⁵ Government of Lao PDR. The Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Planning and Investment <https://rtm.org.la/sector-working-groups/overview/>.

⁶ The TWGs focus on planning and finance; human resources; maternal, child health and nutrition; health care; food and drugs; and hygiene and health promotion.