



DEVELOPMENT EMERGENCY MODALITY

Joint Programme 2022 Annual Progress Report

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UNCT/MCO: Lao People's Dem. Rep.

Reporting Period: 1 January - 31 December 2022

JP title: High-frequency data collection, monitoring, and analysis of socioeconomic data to support evidence based policymaking in a volatile time period

Thematic SDG Areas: Food systems transformation; Decent jobs & universal social protection; Climate action & energy transformation; Transforming education;

PUNOS: UNICEF

Stakeholder partner: Parliamentarians; Civil Society Organizations; Sub-national Governments; National Government; Disaster Risk Management actors; IFIs/DFIs; Private sector; Bilateral aid organizations;

Gender Marker: Gender-responsive (for example, the JP aimed to respond to specific gendered needs, such as linking social assistance with GBV response services or maternal health support)

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Annual Progress

Overall JP self-assessment of 2022 progress:

Satisfactory (majority of annual expected results achieved; 1 to 3 months delay in implementation)

Overall Progress

The JP is a high-frequency data initiative that generates targeted, disaggregated, and timely data on selected indicators/variables and produces recommendations for policymaking and programmatic interventions. It aims to bring the evolving challenges faced as a result of the food, finance, and energy crisis by the most vulnerable groups – particularly children, women, girls, ethnic groups, and people with disabilities - of the country to the attention of policymakers.

It has three workstreams: identifying vulnerable groups that have been impacted by the crisis, analysing the food security and livelihoods in Lao PDR, and analysing the macroeconomic situation of the country. Corresponding with the workstreams, the JP plans to produce three bulletins and an overarching policy brief, and organize a policy dialogue workshop.

As part of the Joint Programme, the voices of 1,800 households will be captured by the end of the programme across the 17 provinces in Lao PDR. This first-hand, up-to-date information about the impact of the crisis is crucial to readjust policies and programmes in country. Additionally, the sentiments from 425 firms from 8 different sectors will be captured through surveys by March 2023.

Thus far, the JP has produced two of the three planned bulletins. Desk reviews and data collection efforts in several provinces

across the country for the third bulletin are currently underway.

The first bulletin identified groups that are most vulnerable as a result of the crisis and proposed policy options to mitigate the shocks they are experiencing. It was disseminated to concerned stakeholders, including government ministries and other government entities, development partners, civil society, the private sector, and UN agencies.

The second bulletin that focused on the food security and livelihood state of the country was prepared and circulated to all concerned stakeholders in December. The bulletin identified policy options that cater to both the short and medium-term needs and productive capacities of vulnerable groups. The two bulletins have been directly shared with more than 100 entities working in Lao PDR including governmental focal points, development partners, NGOs, academia, private sector organisations and UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

SDG Acceleration progress towards the SDGs, focusing on the main SDG targets

The JP was designed to contribute to about five SDG targets. The key ones are:

- “Target 1.1: By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.” The JP identifies the most vulnerable groups impacted by the crisis, the challenges they face, and proposing policy options, the JP contributes to the country's poverty reduction efforts.
- “Target 1.5: By 2030 build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.” The JP anchors in the principle of “leave no one behind,” the policies and course corrective options being proposed focuses on building the resilience of the most vulnerable members for them to prevent their assets from depletion and weather shocks and crisis.
- “Target 3.d: Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.” The JP enhances and strengthens the capacity of one of the research intuitions of the country, LASES/MRI, by assisting in developing high-frequency data collection and analysis tools and technics. This organization is a parastatal that independently operates and advises both the Government and the Party on a variety of social and economic fields.

Constraints that were encountered and any adjustments that were made to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the JP and the coherence and coordination of UN system support.

Deploying the project team on time was one of the challenges experienced especially in light of the short preparation and overall timeframe of the JP. With the bureaucracy associated with regular administrative and financial management processes that followed, the commensurate sense of urgency was not upheld. As a result, acritical lesson is the need to create a sense of urgency among all JP partner entities and their representatives in line with the expectations and rational of the emergency modality of the Joint SDG Fund window.

Next steps, scaling and sustainability [up to half a page]

Aiming at sustaining the initiative to improve the availability of timely, disaggregated data to support more effective policy and programmatic responses and enhancing the capacity of implementing institutions, the UN Country Team developed a concept note and submitted it to the UN Human Security Trust Fund to solicit funding.

If secured, the new fund will strengthen the partnership between the UN and the Government of Lao PDR. The different outreach and communication products – bulletins, policy briefs, and dialogue sessions – hoped to provide an opportunity and a platform to dialogue policy options. Tools and techniques for high-frequency data will further be strengthened, and the capacity of the implementing institution will be further solidified.

Strategic Partnerships and Communications

Explain how diverse stakeholders were engaged with the JP

National and sub-national counterparts from the Government of Lao PDR led two of the data collection workstreams. The findings of the surveys have been shared with more than 100 entities working in Lao PDR including the actors listed above. In a further step, stakeholders will be invited to discuss mitigation measures and solutions during a policy workshop in March 2023.

Key meetings and events organized

JP steering committee/ programme board meeting	Strategic partners/ donors	Kick-off meeting event
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Priority Cross-cutting Issues

Cross-cutting results/issues

The JP is a project bridging the data need in an uncertain time by developing indicators, tools, and techniques to increase the availability of quality, timely, reliable, and disaggregated data in Lao PDR. As demonstrated in the two bulletins produced and disseminated, issues of vulnerable groups and the most disadvantaged by the crisis took center stage, the state of the food security and livelihoods in the country analysed, and pertinent policy options were proposed.

In this regard, the bulletins pointed out that women and girls are more vulnerable to economic shocks due to their limited access to income resources, education and skills development, and health services, including services related to reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health.

Adolescent girls in Lao DPR are particularly vulnerable, due to high rates of early pregnancy and child marriage which often result in social exclusion, school dropout, and limited access to social services and eventual opportunities for long-term economic security. Data shows that women and girls are exposed to more domestic violence and harmful practices during economic stagnation.

In terms of priority setting and cross-cutting issues, the bulletin concludes to continue to make Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and Basic Life Skills Training accessible in and out of school to all young people and supporting strategic interventions such as providing financial assistance and accommodation for increasing girls' retention in schools as well as facilitating family planning programmes.

How did the JP apply the Gender Marker

The JP is Gender-responsive (for example, the JP aimed to respond to specific gendered needs, such as linking social assistance with GBV response services or maternal health support). Policy dialogues, advocacy (e.g. direct inputs to national policies, strategies, laws, including women's and girls' rights groups in coordination mechanisms); Evidence, data collection and analysis (e.g. gender assessments of programmes; policy briefs, costing for scale-up of social services);

JP address the below cross-cutting issues and principles of leaving no one behind

Human Rights	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Environmental and social standards
No	Yes	Yes	No

Contribution to enhancing SDG Financing

Drafted a bill, strategy, and/or approved a law increasing the fiscal	Produced financing, costing, diagnostic and feasibility analyses as a basis to invest or	Improved efficiency (cost savings) in the management of programmes/schemes	Improved effectiveness (value for money; i.e. social impact of	Drafted policies/regulatory frameworks or developed tools to incentivize private	Structured new financial instruments (public, private or blended) to
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space for the policy in focus	increase spending on the SDGs		\$1 spent) of spending	sector investment on the SDGs	leverage additional funding
No	No	No	No	No	No

How and in which area your JP contributed to enhancing SDG financing