



Joint Programme on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women for Mainstreaming Gender into the National Development Agenda in Lao PDR
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: FROM 12.2020 TO 12.2024

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Programme Title: Joint Programme on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women for Mainstreaming Gender into the National Development Agenda in Lao PDR ● Programme Number (if applicable): 00130773 ● MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 00124568 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p><i>(if applicable)</i> Country/Region Lao PDR</p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme ● UNDP ● UNFPA 	<p><i>Priority area/ strategic results</i> Strategic Priority 3 – Governance and Rule of Law: By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, are better served by public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, able to exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR are upheld.</p>
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: MPTF /JP Contribution :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● by Agency 2,673,000 UNDP: 1,573,000 UNFPA: 1,100,000 	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National counterparts (government, private, NGOs & others) and other International Organizations ● Lao Women’s Union (LWU) ● National Commission on the Advancement of Women and Children (NCAWMC)
	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration (<i>months</i>) 48 months Start Date³ 16.12.2020</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.
² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;
³ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

TOTAL: TOTAL:
2,673,000

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.

Evaluation Completed

X Yes No Date: *31st July 2023*

Evaluation Report - Attached

X Yes No Date: 31st March 2024

Original End Date⁴ : 30.09.2024

Revised End Date: 31.12.2024

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⁴ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

16DOA	16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
CEDAW	CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
CNA	CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT
CRC	CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
CSO	CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION
ESP	ESSENTIAL SERVICES PACKAGE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS SUBJECT TO VIOLENCE
GBV	GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
ICPD	INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IP	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER
IWD	INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY
KOICA	KOREA INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY
LWU	LAO WOMEN’S UNION
LYU	LAO YOUTH UNION
NAP	NATIONAL ACTION PLAN
NCAWMC	NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, MOTHERS AND CHILDREN
NIM	NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MODALITY
NSEDP	NATIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN
OSSC	ONE-STOP SERVICE CENTRE
PMC	PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT
SOP	STANDARD OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE
SDG	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
TOR	TERMS OF REFERENCE
UNDP	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
UNFPA	UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
VAW	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

FINAL PROGRAMME REPORT FORMAT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout its duration, the Programme on Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women for Mainstreaming Gender into the National Development Agenda in Lao PDR has achieved significant progress towards gender equality and justice. Central to the Programmer's success is the collaborative effort with the Lao Women's Union (LWU), the National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (NCAWMC), the Ministry of Health, and justice sector agencies. These partnerships have led to the creation and implementation of key initiatives like the Social, Health, and Justice and Policing Sectors Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for GBV response. Additionally, the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (2021-2025) and the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality (2021-2025) were developed and endorsed.

The Programme also supported the Lao Government in meeting its international obligations by drafting and submitting the 10th CEDAW report, which was reviewed by the CEDAW Committee. This review provided feedback on progress and identified areas for improvement in combating violence against women. Moreover, a National Review of the Beijing Declaration's implementation was conducted to guide future gender equality efforts, with the results presented at regional and global forums.

Study tours to Mongolia and South Korea offered Lao officials' practical insights into establishing One-Stop Service Centers for GBV survivors and enhancing overall GBV response mechanisms. Building on these insights, a comprehensive national GBV administrative data system was created, featuring harmonized paper-based forms, a digital dashboard, and training materials. Stakeholders from LWU, health, and social services received training on the new GBV digital data collection system, which emphasizes survivor-centered approaches and better documentation to improve GBV data collection and response.

The Programme also drove institutional and policy reforms, including a Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) of the Justice sector and the development of a Capacity Development Plan (CDP) to enhance the capacity of justice service providers for a more gender-responsive approach to GBV prevention and response. Furthermore, the Programme empowered Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to produce the first-ever Parallel Report on CEDAW implementation, amplifying voices advocating for women's rights and gender equality.

I. Purpose

The Joint Project on Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women for Mainstreaming Gender into the National Development Agenda in the Lao PDR (Khan Hom Project) is implemented by the Lao Women's Union in partnership with UNDP and UNFPA, with financial support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). This four-year project (2020-2024) aims to strengthen institutional capacity of government agencies in Lao PDR to prevent and respond to gender-based violence through the development of policies to ensure provision of coordinated multisectoral health, social, and justice services to survivors and capacity development of service providers deliver quality services.

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the governance mechanism and policy framework to mainstream the prevention and elimination of GBV against women in the national development agenda – Ninth National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPlan) and Legal Sector Master Plan – in Lao PDR.

The expected outcome of the programme is strengthened national capacity for the effective, systematic and accountable prevention of and response to VAW in Lao PDR through policy dialogues and providing support to the Lao Government to integrate international instruments, CEDAW recommendations, Beijing+25, ICPD 25 and SDGs into the development of the new phase 5-year National Action Plan on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women (2021–2025) and the 5-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021–2025) and supporting them to effectively implement these national action plans.

The Project is in line with the Lao PDR – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (UNSDCF) Strategic Priority 3 – Governance and Rule of Law: By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, are better served by public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, able to exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR are upheld.

II. Assessment of Programme Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

UNFPA

Key Achievements under output 1 & 2:

UNFPA effectively supported the Lao Government in the development and high-level endorsement of the Second National Action Plan on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW NPA) and the Fourth National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (GE NAP) in May 2021, further strengthened by Prime Minister’s Decrees in September 2021. These national plans are aligned with global frameworks such as the ESP, CEDAW, SDG 5, Beijing Platform for Action, and ICPD PoA. With the EVAW NPA (2021–2025) focusing on prevention, response, and coordination, and the GE NAP prioritizing six key areas for gender equality, both have been successfully integrated into the sectoral plans of all 18 provinces, 17 line ministries, and equivalent organizations nationwide, ensuring comprehensive implementation.

Under the Khan Hom project, UNFPA supported LWU to scale up the LWU's Male Engagement Manual (2022-2024) to prevent GBV and advance gender equality and SRH rights. TOT sessions in 9 villages across 3 provinces trained 77 individuals (46 men, 31 women). These master trainers then sensitized 2,979 community members (1,656 men, 1,323 women) in 18 villages across 3 provinces, increasing their understanding of gender dynamics, GBV and SRH.

In 2020, UNFPA helped the LWU integrate GBV, early marriage, school dropout, gender equality, family planning, and SRH content into their Women’s 3 Goods Handbook, extending its reach to remote ethnic communities for EVAW NAP implementation. From 2022-2024, LWU conducted Training of Trainers with 633 women from Provincial LWU, Provincial Health Department, District LWU, District Health Officer and District Agriculture Office from 18 provinces nationwide. After the training, Government Officials travelled to 743 villages in 130 districts in 18 provinces to disseminate the knowledge gained. Across the 18 provinces, 43,941 community members (27,803 women, 15,188 men) were sensitized on the consequences of early marriage, gender, GBV, family planning and SRHR. In addition, in 2024 UNFPA review aligned the handbook with SDGs (1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 13), ICPD PoA priorities, and CEDAW, recommending SMART indicators and digital monitoring for the updated handbook now being prepared for printing and implementation.

UNFPA supported the LWU in developing a Women’s Leadership Manual, aligning it with international standards for gender equality and women's empowerment to equip women in central and provincial roles with vital leadership skills. Following a pilot in Vientiane Capital, Bolikhamxay, Savannakhet, and Champasack

provinces involving 233 participants (including 7 men) who trained on key leadership topics, the manual is being revised based on feedback for improved design and illustration before final printing, endorsement, and implementation.

Under the Khan Hom Joint Programme, UNFPA supported the Lao Government to draft Lao PDR's 10th CEDAW report, highlighting government progress in advancing women's rights through legal and policy reforms and the mainstreaming of CEDAW principles. The 10th CEDAW report was submitted to the CEDAW Committee in March 2023, tracking advancements in various areas, including addressing discrimination and promoting women's participation. The CEDAW Committee reviewed the report, leading to a Lao delegation response in October 2024 and the subsequent issuance of concluding observations evaluating progress and identifying areas for improvement in eliminating discrimination against women in Lao PDR.

With KOICA and UNFPA's support, Laos conducted a National Beijing + 30 Review to assess progress and challenges in implementing the Beijing Declaration (adopted in 1994) across twelve gender equality areas. This review, aiming to align future actions with global commitments like the SDGs, involved government and development partners reaching consensus on a draft report outlining collaborative priorities for 2025-2030: promoting legal equality and justice access, enhancing women's education and training, improving healthcare access (including SRHR), supporting female entrepreneurs, and gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction. The review was submitted to UN ESCAP, presented at the Beijing 30+ Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference in November 2024, and contributed to the global Beijing 30+ review at CSW69 in March 2025.

The Khan Hom Project ensured the support for GBV survivors through different sets of vocational training conducted at the Protection centers and other convenient settings to provide them an avenue to be economically empowered. The training includes Mak Bueng and silver trees making, Angel mushroom production, tailoring, food preparation and cooking, hospitality management, beauty makeover and creating flower arrangements for Baci Ceremony 'Pha Kuan', reaching **a total of 107 individuals including 97 female and 10 male at risk of GBV** and other kinds of violence. Among all, a 16-year-old survivor affected by physical violence participated in a three-month beauty training program who was able to create an earning source through applying her knowledge and skills gained from the training.

Throughout the project period, UNFPA contributed in strengthening the capacity of mass media to combat VAWG through organizing training for media outlets on ethical GBV reporting. Additionally, media awareness activities through radio and TV programs **reached more than 1,89,198 audience and audience per month, covering 35% of the population in the province.**

As part of advocacy efforts, the project has contributed to organizing a significant number of events and initiatives to promote GBV awareness and widely invite the public to engage in GBV prevention generating significant engagement of the public. Such events and initiatives are the commemoration of the International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism Campaign. The **2023 IWD has reached more than 700 participants** made up of ministers, vice ministers, vice presidents of organizations at the central level, ambassadors, international organizations, NGOs, the Women's Union of ministries and community members. Throughout 2022-2024, the **16 DoA campaigns reached** over 6,734,212 population out of 7,800,000 population) 86% of population are sensitized on GBV prevention through awareness raising campaign during 16 days of Activism Against GBV, led by UNFPA and mobilizing 77 partners

In June and October 2023, UNFPA together with UNDP facilitated study tours to Mongolia and the Republic of Korea for Lao government officials and LWU representatives to enhance their capacity in addressing GBV and providing survivor-centered services. The Mongolia visit focused on learning about the establishment and operation of One-Stop Service Centers (OSSCs), observing models under police, social sectors, and hospitals, and understanding digitalized GBV data systems. Key outcomes included agreed action points for Laos such as developing GBV case management databases, applying the OSSC model, improving protection shelters, and establishing a comprehensive OSSC at Mohosot hospital with specialized staff and protocols. The Republic of Korea study tour further exposed Lao delegates to integrated OSSC models (Sunflower), women's hotlines, vocational training centers, and forensic services, leading to plans for improving OSSC/OSSU operations in Laos, enhancing hotline and vocational training for survivors, strengthening GBV coordination, and advocating for a national forensic center.

In 2024, Lao PDR chaired and hosted the 3rd ASEAN Women's Leaders' Summit in Vientiane, focusing on strengthening the care economy and resilience towards the ASEAN Community post-2025. A key side event, themed "No Wrong Door," specifically addressed women's empowerment and the prevention of violence against women. This platform enabled senior leaders and development partners to discuss solutions, share knowledge, and strengthen protections for women and girls, emphasizing the importance of donor support in integrating essential services for survivors into national policy and developing standard operating procedures for GBV response. The summit, which drew over 120 participants, aimed to foster knowledge sharing and institutional strengthening to enhance GBV prevention systems and gender equality within ASEAN.

To track the implementation of the 2nd National Action Plan on Preventing and Eliminating Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children (2021-2025) and the 4th National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025), UNFPA hired an international expert to develop an M&E framework aligned with SDGs, CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, and ICPD25+, outlining data collection guidelines and tools for government and service providers. The consultant drafted the framework, which was discussed in two consultation meetings in November and December 2023 with relevant line ministries, revealing some initial challenges in understanding M&E roles; however, the framework was subsequently finalized and is now being used to monitor progress, challenges, and lessons learned, serving as a vital tool for accountability and informing the development of new National Plans of Action in 2025.

Building on study tour insights, UNFPA hired international experts to develop a GBV administrative data system, creating both paper-based forms aligned with global and domestic standards (integrated into Social, Health, and Justice SOPs) and a digitized dashboard, along with training materials for national counterparts. The digitized system, covering incident data, case management, and aggregate monitoring, was the focus of a UNFPA-supported training in October 2024 for 45 participants from LWU and the health sector, teaching them practical skills in using the new platform. A follow-up online workshop in December 2025 further enhanced the capacity of 24 participants from social services and health in efficient and survivor-centered GBV case management and documentation using the harmonized data collection forms, including new child-focused tools, while also emphasizing the importance of thorough safety planning documentation.

To support the EVAW NPA, endorsed Social and Health Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for essential GBV survivor services were rolled out nationally and in selected provinces from 2022-2024. Training on the Social Sector SOP reached 431 social service providers, significantly enhancing their knowledge of GBV

principles, protection, support services, referral processes, and data collection. Similarly, training on the Health Sector SOP equipped 246 health professionals across three provincial hospitals with skills in first aid, forensic and clinical care, survivor registration, evidence collection, and referral pathways. Participants from both sectors agreed on collaborative approaches to effectively assist GBV survivors.

Concurrently, protection centers in Attapeu, Champasak, Bolikhamxay, Savannakhet, and Vientiane Capital provided crucial 24/7 psychosocial counseling via hotlines and WhatsApp, alongside emergency referrals. These centers assisted a total of 230 survivors (196 women and 34 men) with mental health support, legal aid, economic assistance, and other referrals at both provincial and district levels, demonstrating a significant effort to provide essential services to those affected by violence.

To assess the progress of the National Action Plans for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Gender Equality, UNFPA engaged national and international consultants who conducted desk reviews, while NCAWMC assessed the implementation of the EVAW NAP Phase II (2021-2025) in three provinces with 105 participants. The findings from these assessments informed a draft mid-term review report, which was then discussed at a consultation workshop with 90 government and development partners who highlighted challenges in achieving key indicators and recommended further training across sectors. Incorporating this feedback, the consultants finalized the mid-term review report for UNFPA and NCAWMC, aiming to improve the implementation of both national action plans and address identified gaps to effectively achieve their objectives.

Sub-output 1: Support the development and implementation of the 2nd Five-Year National Plan of Action on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women (2021-2025) (EVAW NPA) and the 4th National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025) (Gender Equality NPA)

1.1 Provide technical assistance to formulate and finalize the National Strategic Plan on EVAW (2021–2025).

UNFPA played a pivotal role in supporting the Lao Government to develop the Second National Action Plan on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW NPA). This NPA aligns with the Essential Service Package (ESP), a globally recognized framework for providing social, health, justice, and policing services, as well as coordinating responses to gender-based violence (GBV). It is designed to uphold the Lao PDR's international commitments to eliminate violence against women, such as those outlined in CEDAW, SDG 5, and ICPD.

It was endorsed by the Government of Laos in May 2021, and reinforced by the Prime Minister's Decrees issued in September of the same year, the EVAW NPA focuses on prevention, response, and coordination. Prevention aims to reshape public attitudes and behaviors through awareness campaigns led by relevant ministries and sectors. Response prioritizes enhancing essential services across social, health, police, and justice sectors, while coordination emphasizes multi-sector collaboration, establishing mechanisms at national and sub-national levels, and implementing referral pathways to address incidents of violence effectively. This plan serves as a five-year roadmap (2021–2025) to systematically prevent and respond to violence against women.

1.2 Provide technical assistance for the integration of NAP on EVAW in the sectors' plan.

The EVAW NAP has been successfully integrated into the sectoral plans of all 18 provinces and 17 line ministries, along with ministry-equivalent organizations across Lao PDR. This includes 8 key party organizations, such as the Lao Women's Union (LWU), Lao Youth Union (LYU), Lao Trade Union, Party Cabinet Office, and the National Politics Institute, ensuring robust and comprehensive sub-national implementation.

Over 780 government staff have actively contributed to this process, playing essential roles in drafting, implementing, and monitoring plans at ministerial, provincial, and sectoral levels. Their efforts have been instrumental in aligning these plans with national policy frameworks, reinforcing the systematic approach to eliminating violence against women in Lao PDR.

1.3 Provide technical assistance to formulate and finalize the National Strategic Plan on Gender Equality (2021–2025)

UNFPA supported the Lao Government to develop the Fourth National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (GE NAP), a strategic framework designed to advance gender equality in alignment with Lao PDR's international commitments. Integrating key principles from the Beijing Platform for Action, the SDGs, and the ICPD PoA, the plan represents a unified effort to drive progress in advancing gender equality in Lao DPR. The Gender Equality NAP focuses on six priority areas: women's health and reproductive health, political participation, economic empowerment, education, employment, and social protection.

The plan was officially endorsed by the Government of Laos in May 2021 and reinforced through Prime Minister's Decrees issued in September of 2021. It serves as a comprehensive policy framework; it outlines actionable strategies to promote gender equality and empower women across sectors over a five-year period from 2021 to 2025.

1.4 Provide technical assistance for the integration of NAP on Gender Equality in the sectors' plans.

UNFPA successfully supported the Lao Government in integrating the NPA on Gender Equality into 17 line ministries and 18 sectoral and provincial plans, demonstrating a collaborative effort to embed gender equality across all levels of governance and planning. This unified strategy engaged over 780 government staff responsible for drafting and executing ministerial and provincial plans, strengthening both national and sub-national systems to align implementation with national gender equality policies in Lao PDR.

Activity 1.5: Implementation of the National Plans of Action

To support the Government of Laos to implement national policy frameworks, in particular the EVAW NPA and the Gender Equality NPA, priority actions of the NPAs were identified by the Government of Laos and UNFPA to prioritize support, as follows:

- a) Working with men and boys to transform social norms.
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- b) Women's 3 Goods handbook to sensitize community on GBV prevention and SRH promotion.
- c) The Women's Leadership Manual development and implementation
- d) Supporting the 10th National Periodic CEDAW launch.
- e) National Review Beijing +30 Review
- f) Vocational training for GBV survivors
- g) Strengthening capacity of mass media to combat VAWG
- h) Conduct outreach to raise awareness on GBV, gender equality and sexual reproductive health.
- i) Advocacy, events, and campaigns.

a) Working with men and boys to transform social norms

A priority action under the EVAW NAP is to work with men and boys to change community attitudes towards gender equality, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. To implement this priority action, in 2020 UNFPA developed a Male Engagement Manual. The manual engages in various sessions focused on sex/gender, power dynamics, gender as a system, masculinities, and prevention of GBV. They also learned about fostering healthy relationships, the role of men in addressing GBV, sexual and reproductive health, and community engagement planning for sustainability.

Under the Khan Hom project, LWU has scaled up the Male Engagement Manual, focusing on preventing GBV, and advancing gender equality and sexual and reproductive health rights. From 2022-2024, TOT training sessions on the male engagement manual were conducted in 9 villages in 3 provinces, including Attapue, Champasak, Bolikhamxay, with a total of 77 participants including 46 men and 31 women. The master trainers conducted male engagement sessions in 18 villages in 3 provinces, with a total of 2,979 participants, including 1,656 men and 1,323 women have been sensitized and increased understanding of gender dynamics, the impact of patriarchal norms on both women and men, and the importance of promoting SRH in their communities.

b) Implementing Women's 3 Goods handbook to sensitize communities on GBV prevention and SRH promotion

In 2020, UNFPA integrated content on GBV, early marriage, school dropout, gender equality, family planning and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) into the *Women's 3 Goods Handbook* of LWU, and supported them to implement in target provinces, in support of implementation of the National Action Plan on EVAW. This intervention boasts a significant reach to remote communities, especially diverse ethnic communities living in hard-to-reach locations. Following the training of 633 women from Provincial LWU, Provincial Health Department, District LWY, District Health Officer and District Agriculture Office from 18 provinces nationwide as Master Trainers, the new trainers, travelled to 743 villages in 130 districts in 18 provinces to disseminate the knowledge gained. Across the 18 provinces, 43,941 community members (27,803 women, 15,188 men) were sensitized on the consequences of early marriage, gender, GBV, family planning and SRHR. The handbook is aligned with both national and international commitments.

c) The Women's Leadership Manual development and implementation

The Women's Leadership manual was developed in alignment with internationally recognized concepts of women's leadership. It incorporates best practices and principles that emphasizes gender equality and

women's empowerment. The manual aims to equip women with knowledge and skill necessary to excel in leadership roles across various sectors at the central and provincial levels.

d) Supporting the 10th National Periodic CEDAW

Under the Khan Hom Project, the 10th Periodic Report of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was drafted recognizing the positive impacts and progress the Government's law reforms and policies have made on advancing women's rights. The report also includes mainstreaming CEDAW principles in many policy frameworks such as the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the RMNCAH Strategy, as well as enshrining CEDAW in targeted laws and policy such as the National Plan of Action on Gender Equality. It also tracks progress of Lao PDR to afford rights to women and girls in all their diversity, address discriminatory stereotypes and gender roles, combat gender-based violence and human trafficking, and promote women's participation in political and public life as well as equal access to education, healthcare, employment, social and economic benefits, and family life of women and girls.

The 10th CEDAW periodic report was submitted to the CEDAW Committee in Geneva on 2 March 2023. Following the submission, the CEDAW committee reviewed and provided a list of issues for the Lao government to respond to. In October 2024, during the 89th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Lao delegation attended to provide clarifications and responses to the committee's concerns.

Following this session, the CEDAW committee issued its concluding observations. These observations serve a comprehensive evaluation of the Lao PDR's progress in implementing measures to eliminate violence against women. They also identify ongoing challenges and areas of improvements for Lao PDR.

e) National Review Beijing +30 Review

The Beijing Declaration, a landmark global policy framework for gender equality and women's empowerment, adopted in 1994 and signed by Laos, has guided efforts to address twelve critical areas of gender equality over the past three decades. With the support from KOICA and UNFPA, Laos undertook a National Review to comprehensively evaluate progress, challenges, gaps, and lessons learned in implementing the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action. The review aims to identify areas for improvement and align future actions with international commitments such as the SDGs, ICPD25, the Paris Agreement, and regional gender equality initiatives.

The government of Lao PDR and development partners reached a consensus on the draft report and affirmed their commitment to implementing the Beijing Declaration and Action Plan from 2025 to 2030. This collaboration will focus on: 1) promoting equality under the law and ensuring access to justice, including political participation and representation; 2) enhancing the quality of education, training, and lifelong learning for women; 3) improving access to quality healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health and rights; 4) supporting female entrepreneurs; and 5) preventing and reducing disaster risk while paying attention to gender roles and strengthening resilience.

The review was submitted to UN ESCAP and presented at the Beijing 30+ Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference in Bangkok in November 2024 and subsequently contributed to the global Beijing 30+ review at the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2025.

f) Vocational training for GBV survivors

As part of the priority actions, Khan Hom Project grounds the vocational training in the Lao cultural context, ensuring it is relevant and applicable to the specific needs of the survivors in particular communities. This increases the effectiveness of the training by ensuring that the skills taught are practical and useful within the local context, leading to greater success in securing employment or starting businesses.

To give effect to this, LWU conducted vocational training in tailoring and cooking for 15 vulnerable and at risk women and girls from Luang Namtha, Phongsaly, Xiengkhuang, Bokeo, Attapeu, Savannakhet, Bolikhamxa, and Oudomxay in 2022. A total of 8 women were trained in tailoring, including hand-made and sewing machine tailoring, making signs and upper wear, as well as cotton purses and cosmetic bags. A total of 7 women were further trained in cooking, learning 17 savory meals and 23 sweet meals. The trainees also practiced at the Landmark Riverside Hotel to learn about hospitality, including welcoming and servicing guests, and learning to cook Thai and international food that were not included in their training courses.

Vocational training on how to grow angel mushrooms for 20 survivors of violence was conducted November 2023 in Bokeo province, where survivors learned how to grow and cultivate angel mushrooms that are easily cultivated in the terrain of Bokeo.



In Attapeu province, after the opening of a new protection shelter, vocational training centred around learning to make Mak Bueng and silver trees for 5 days in October and 10 days in November 2023 for 12 survivors. LWU observed that survivors were interested in both types of vocational training and paid close attention to learn these skills and actively increase their knowledge, so that they can make them professionally in the future to generate income whilst maintaining the traditions of Laos.

In Savannakhet province, 7 female survivors (4 from Kaisomphon district and 3 from Pong District) received tailoring training in December 2023, learning fundamental knowledge and skills on how to use sewing machines to sew clothes, to design, measure, and cut. The practical component involved practicing cutting, how to iron the glue, joining the head pieces, joining the head, body and bottom parts of the Lao skirts.

In 2024, a training session on creating flower arrangements for Baci Ceremony ‘Pha Kuan’ for female victims of violence was held in Attapeu Province. 14 women participated, including 04 trainers and assistants from the provincial women's union, along with 10 women who are survivors of violence. During the training, participants learned to create flower stupa offering ‘Mak Beng’ in different sizes, flower arrangements for

Baci Ceremony ‘Pha Kuan’ and Money Tree offering ‘Ton Ngern’. The skills acquired will enable them to apply this knowledge in business ventures, helping them to generate income.

In addition, in 2024, vocational training on beauty salons for survivors of violence was conducted in Xieng Khuang Province. A 16-year-old survivor affected by physical and mental violence participated in a three-month beauty training program who was able to create an earning source through applying her knowledge and skills gained from the training.

g) Strengthening capacity of mass media to combat VAWG⁵

In June 2022, UNFPA conducted a TOT with media outlets on promoting gender equality, challenging harmful traditional norms and gender roles, and ethical reporting on GBV. NCAWMC subsequently conducted this training with the Association of Journalists in Savannakhet in October 2022 with 33 journalists (18 women, 15 men) responsible for reporting news. This training resulted in enhancing the understanding of the role of sub-CAW within the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism to prevent VAWG; international and domestic laws on EVAW, as well as the critical role of media and journalists to change the narrative on gender roles and GBV. Participants were also upskilled and increased their capacity to write ethically on incidents of GBV and ethically use images, and how to highlight VAW as a public issue not a private “family” issue, especially during international days relating to women and GBV.



LWU Media Department also subsequently conducted this training with a total of 41 journalists (37 women and 4 men), including the Vice President of Provincial Women's Union of 04 provinces, Lao Women's Media Department, the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism and those who are working in the provincial media unit of 4 provinces, including Bokeo, Bolikhamxay, Savannakhet and Champasack, attended as well as academics invited from the MoICT both virtually and in-person. The results were an increased understanding of the root causes of violence against women, the roles of media workers to protect, prevent and challenge GBV. The journalists had increased capacity in developing a media production plan, evaluation of awareness of communities, identifying appropriate platforms to disseminate EVAW information, and producing radio spots, e-posters, short video clips in the lead up to the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV.

In 2024, the media team of the Women's Union of Attapeu, Savannakhet, Bokeo and Bolikhamxay province developed a media program on Lao women and development, which was broadcast on the provincial TV and radio station reaching more than 163433 listeners and audience per month, covering 35% of the population in the province.

Bolikhamxay Province Lao Women’s Union further raised awareness around violence against women and children through multiple mediums. The broadcasts airing in 3 languages (Lao, Hmong, and Khmu) including 3 short dramas on 3 topics (Domestic violence focusing children; Domestic violence focusing couple

⁵ Under the EVAW NAP, a priority action for prevention of VAWG is to “*Strengthen capacity for mass media on combating violence against women and girls, and elimination of outdated cultural and customary traditions that discriminate against women and obstruct the advancement of women.*”

argument; Deception and all forms of violence) reached 19,733 radio listeners, with 1,582 more reached through village loudspeakers.

Moreover, a short drama on women's experience of violence was broadcast on Bolikhamxay Provincial TV to an estimated 3,500 audiences, and an additional 950 views with 55 shares on the Provincial Women's Union Facebook page.

The Department of Information of Lao Women's Union conducted awareness activities through articles published in Vientiane Times - the largest circulating first English newspaper in the country- on these three topics: *Everyone can protect women and girls from violence in every place; It is time to invest in women to accelerate the progress in Lao PDR; Laos has demonstrated success in promoting the rights of women and girls in international meetings.*

h) Conduct outreach to raise awareness on GBV, gender equality and sexual reproductive health

In 2024, LWU with the support of UNFPA, implemented the Prevention of Gender Based Violence Awareness Campaign addressing a range of topics, including the situation and impacts of violence, some key messages from anti-violence laws, gender roles and equality, health education, nutrition, family planning and the impacts of early marriage. Out of the campaign, mobile counseling services have been provided to 1886 participants including 1677 women and no participants under 18 years of age in the 35 villages of 5 districts. Additionally, the Women's Union of Champasak Province promoted this information through their Facebook page, which has 1,532 followers.

During the reporting period, various GBV awareness initiatives under Noi Ecosystem and UNFPA support were carried out across Lao PDR. Media campaigns using radio, TV, Facebook, and village loudspeakers reached over 200,000 people monthly, disseminating information on GBV prevention, relevant laws, and support services.

Outreach campaigns involved 1,886 participants in 35 villages and 1,431 participants across five districts, enhancing awareness of gender equality and violence prevention. Additionally, the Women's Union leveraged Facebook and radio to amplify key GBV messages, while media and outreach initiatives emphasized combating violence and promoting laws protecting women and children.

Furthermore, UNFPA organized **songs for sisters and families** through the Lao Women's Union media and others. By doing this, people particularly Lao women in different ethnic groups are aware of the meaning, importance and participation in combating violence against women in all forms and preventing it from happening within their own families, published via Facebook 01 times, through radio program for 03 months and through TV program for 03 months.

During this period, the provincial team of Attapeu and Bokeo **hosted a radio program on Lao Women and Development**, which was broadcast every Saturday on FM 102 MHz in Attapeu Province and Monday to Thursday on FM 102.75 MHz in Bokeo Province. This initiative **resulted in 44 broadcasts over three months, covering five districts in both provinces. The estimated reach is over 125,033 listeners per month**, which is approximately 30% of Attapeu Province's population and 35% of Bokeo Province's population. The Attapeu Province team further delivered six radio spots, released news 24 times and developed a script for a video clip featuring a short story.

Both the programs contributed in disseminating information about the role of the Counseling and Protection Center for Women and Children, as well as related laws, including the Law on Combating and Preventing

Violence against Women and Children, the Law on the Development and Protection of Women and Children, the Law on Gender Equality, and other relevant legislation to people from all ethnic groups in Bokeo Province.

Both the provinces individually managed a Facebook page titled respectively "**Attapeu Provincial Women's Union**" and "**Women's Union of Bokeo Province**" which published news 94 times, and contributed in knowledge dissemination sessions on the GBV prevention held for the public in five districts—reached a total of 725 participants including 478 women. The participants gained an understanding of the use of violence against women and children, as well as essential information for preventing and addressing such violence. They also recognized several relevant laws, including those concerning violence against women and children, the Law on Women Development, The Law on Gender Equality, and the roles of the Counseling and Protection Center for Women and Children. Advocacy activities in Attapeu and Bokeo Provinces reached approximately 125,033 listeners per month via radio and engaged 725 participants through knowledge sessions.

i) Advocacy, events, and campaigns

Organized International Women's Day event.

UNFPA with the generous support of KOICA supported LWU celebrated the International Women's Day under the theme: Invest in women: Accelerate progress, on March 05, 2024, at the International Training and Cooperation Center (ICTC). The event was participated by over 300 participants from senior party-state leaders, representatives of party organizations, families of country leaders, the Committee of the President of the Lao Women's Union, Development Partners, Provincial Lao Women's Union, Ministries-Organizations, Vientiane Capital Lao Women's Union, Business Women's Association. During the event, a seminar was organized on the topic: violence against women and children, in Xiengkhuang Province. In 2023, UNFPA hosted the Third Family Health Walk ceremony, to promote women's access to safe public places. It was held on the morning of March 8, 2023 at That Luang in Vientiane, with opening remarks from H.E Dr. Inlavanh Keobounphan, President of LWU, Mariam A.Khan, Representative of UNFPA, and more than 400 participants made up of ministers, vice ministers, vice presidents of organizations at the central level,

ambassadors, international organizations, NGOs, the Women's Union of ministries and community members.

In addition, the Family Healthy Walk also aimed to promote women and girls to access safe public places. There were many sports activities, including Lao traditional sports. The event also exhibited the work and products of public and private sectors, and development partners to promote women's rights and prevent violence against women and girls.

See press release [here](#).



To celebrate the 69th anniversary of the Lao Women's Union, Lao Women's Union organized a conference on the prevention and combating violence against women, violence, against children and trafficking in persons on July 19, 2024. This conference, held in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of



the International Day Against Human Trafficking (July 30, 2014 - July 30, 2024), centered on the theme "Don't Leave Children Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking." It also aligns with the Lao Youth Development Strategy Plan (2021-2030) and the National Women's Development Plan (2021-2025), specifically Program VII, which aims to promote the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of women and children in accessing the justice process. This includes Project no. 46, which focuses on protecting women and children who are victims of violence in various

forms and emphasizes the importance of educating young people about the prevention and combating violence against women and human trafficking.

Organized 16 Days of Activism Against GBV

The 2023 16 Days of Activism Against GBV campaign was organized with a significant number of activities and events including the *Orange the World* campaign, Patuxay monument, lighting up and coloring public spaces and UN House in orange as a signifying to raise awareness of GBV and widely invite the public to engage in the campaign. The 16 DoA was ended with a successful closing ceremony with the participation from a number of dignitaries and representatives from development partners and government sectors to

recommit ending GBV in Lao PDR and to boost the momentum to further strengthen joint efforts. During this campaign, the Media Department of LWU created IEC materials to post on their social media channels (such as E-Posters) from central, provincial and district level to raise awareness on violence against women reached 7,924 people which was also aired on the radio every Tuesday and Thursday 6 times, expected to have a total audience of 867,480 people (15% of the total population), the details are available at [Wrap Up](#)

[16 Days of Activism Campaign in Lao PDR 2023 UNFPA Laos.](#)



PM voices support for ending violence against women
 Prime Minister Sonevay Siphandone has delivered a speech to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, which this year takes the theme "Unite to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Women and Girls". People in Laos and many other countries mark this day, when governments reaffirm their commitment to preventing and responding to violence against women and girls. Around the world, women are experiencing increasing violence, in various environments.



The 2024 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign, themed "Toward 30 Years of the Beijing



Declaration and Platform for Action: UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls", was launched with the participation from over 40 partners and 300 individuals, including line ministries, NGOs, and civil society. The launch organized different activities including media workshop on ethical reporting on GBV, media trip to observe the GBV response and prevention, video message from the Prime Minister, lighting up Patuxay orange with a message in Lao and English, Organizing the first ever fashion show with a story on the different forms of violence in a public space: 1st event of the ASEAN Park.

A total of 17 media platforms covered the launch reaching 140,000 people through publishing articles on different print and electronic media outlets. The campaign's message reached over 40,000 people via various social media platforms, 79,000 through the UNFPA Page, and an additional 1,400,000 through billboard advertising including 05 billboards on ending VAWG in sign language.

KOICA's contribution for this important advocacy campaign supported a high-level event with Laos' major national monument symbolizing ending Violence Against Women and girls, supported the dissemination of the Prime Minister's message as well as messages at community level, resulting in community mobilization domestically as well as the ASEAN, regional and international communities recognizing that the Lao PDR, especially the senior leadership, has given importance and attention to the prevention and combating of violence against women and girls.

Activity 1.6 Organize an international exchange

Mongolia

A study tour to Mongolia was organized from 19-23 June 2023, with 7 participants from LWU and Sub-CAW of the Ministry of Health. The visit strengthened the capacity of responsible government actors on GBV and standards for the provision of quality social welfare and health services, which is survivor centered. The Delegation was led by Mme. Inlavanh Keobounphanh, the former president of LWU, and valuable lessons

were exchanged with Mongolian government ministries during a 5-day mission funded under the "Khan Hom" KOICA project, including the police, Ministry of Social Protection, District hospitals and Mongolia's National Committee on Gender Equality. The Lao Delegation learned valuable lessons on establishing and operationalizing One-Stop Service Centers (OSSC) for survivors of violence, and sensitizing key government stakeholders to digitalized GBV administrative data systems—yet to be established in Lao PDR.

Site visits to observe OSSCs in different settings, including under police and social sectors, as well as in hospitals in capital city Ulaanbaatar and provincial city Darkhan, provided critical lessons to the Lao



Government on safety, security, innovative vocational training initiatives and ensuring survivor-centred response services. OSSCs aim to provide integrated comprehensive support for GBV, conduct awareness-raising activities to prevent violence through behavior change, and strengthen multisectoral coordination so that there is no "wrong door" for a survivor to knock on. The establishment of OSSCs aligns with the Lao 2nd National Plan

of Action on Preventing and Elimination of Violence Against Women (2021-2025) (NPAVAW).

The outcome of the study visit was several agreed upon action points to implement in Laos, including: development of paper-based and digital databases for GBV case management to begin with LWU and then expand to other GBV response sectors; as far as possible apply the OSSC model for GBV through investing human resources into the OSSCs to ensure operationalization; improving the rooms of all OSSCs protection shelter for more homely/inviting feeling; establishment of OSSC at the Mohosot hospital and staffing one permanent staff, with other doctors on call from different department/units (or hospitals if necessary) (consider outpatient caller codes for different injuries, red=SV, green = DV, blue = child abuse), specialized psychologist or psychiatrist, social worker, other specialized doctors (e.g. operating physician, women's physician, STD physician).

After the study tour, UNFPA and partners secured the following press release: [Lao officials visit Mongolia to exchange Good Practices on Gender-Based Violence Survivor Protection Mechanisms](#). A similar press release was also published in Mongolia.

Republic of Korea

The study tour highlighted several key recommendations for improving the response to gender-based violence (GBV) in Laos. The delegation gained valuable insights into the integrated service model approach, which includes psychological support, immediate health care, and legal assistance. Based on these observations, the

Lao delegates enhanced the operation and management of One-Stop Service Centers (OSSC) and Provincial Counselling and Protection Centers. Furthermore, the study visit created the impetus for developing the Justice and Police Sector SOP.



The 3rd ASEAN Women's Leaders' Summit

In 2024, Lao PDR chaired and hosted the 3rd ASEAN Women's Leaders' Summit, titled "Strengthening Care Economy and Resilience Towards ASEAN Community Post 2025," along with side events held from August 21-23 in Vientiane. This meeting served as a platform for senior leaders and development partners to discuss solutions, share knowledge, and strengthen protections for women and girls. It also highlighted the crucial role of donor support in promoting sustainable progress, particularly in integrating essential services for women and girls who are victims of violence (ESP) into national policy. The meeting attracted over 120 participants, both in-person and online.

Sub-output 2: Support NCAWMC and LWU to develop EVAW NPA and GE NPA M&E Framework **Activity 2.1: Support NCAWMC to develop EVAW and GE M&E framework**

The Joint Programme, with technical expertise from UNFPA together with NCAWMC developed the EVAW and GE NPAs M&E framework. This M&E framework is designed to track implementation and indicators of the 2nd *National Action Plan on Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Violence against Children (2021-2025)* (PEVAW NAP) and the 4th *National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025)* (Gender Equality NAP) that is in line with the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (especially indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform for Action and ICPD25+.

This M&E Framework is now finalized and being used to track progress, challenges and lessons learnt of the implementation of EVAW and GE NPAs and serves as a critical tool for ensuring accountability, measuring the effectiveness of interventions, and guiding future improvements for the development of new NPAs on EVAW and GE in 2025.

Activity 2.2: Improve monitoring and reporting system for gender/GBV data from district to central.

To strengthen GBV administrative data collection management and build on the lessons learned from the Mongolia and South Korea study visits, UNFPA, in collaboration with LWU and MoH, hired two international expert consultants to develop a comprehensive paper-based and digitalized GBV administrative data collection systems. These systems, drawing from the developed Social, Health and hotline data collection, align with GBVIMS+ and domestic law.

The paper-based system facilitates incident data collection, case management and service provision for

survivors, as well as aggregate incident monitoring within central and provincial counselling and protection centers and hospitals. The digitalized system was developed based on the paper-based data collection model. These harmonized GBV administrative data collection systems enable LWU and MoH to collect standardized GBV data for analysis, monitoring, and reporting.

The capacity building sessions for LWU and MoH on utilization of the digital data collection systems were conducted in Vientiane from October 1-4, 2024, with 45 participants. Additionally, further training was organized literally from 4-5 December, 2024, with 24 participants, focusing on enhancing GBV data collection, case management, documentation practices, monitoring and reporting.

Activity 2.3: Support the development and implementation of the Social and Health Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) for provision of essential social and health services for GBV survivors.

To support the implementation of the EVAW NPA and improve health and social services for survivors of violence, the Social and Health Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for provision of essential Social and Health services for EVAW/GBV survivors was officially endorsed and commenced roll out at the central and selected provinces.

From 2022 to 2024, comprehensive training sessions on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for both the social and health sectors in Lao PDR were conducted across Attapeu, Champasak, Bolikhamxay provinces and at the central level, reaching a total of 677 participants (424 women, 253 men). Social sector training focused on equipping service providers with knowledge on gender-based violence (GBV), protection principles, referral mechanisms, and data collection, resulting in improved coordination and agreement among ministries on assisting survivors. Health sector training targeted provincial hospitals and covered first aid using the LIVES principle, forensic care, documentation, evidence handling, and referral pathways, significantly enhancing healthcare providers' capacity to respond effectively to GBV.

Provision of essential services for survivors

All the protection centers including Attapeu, Champasak, Bolikhamxay, Savannakhet, and the Vientiane capital provided psychosocial counselling through hotline and WhatsApp number and ensured 24/7 emergency referral services. They have recorded significant number of individuals seeking counseling for various issues, including adultery, rape, child abuse, physical abuse, child custody, premarital sex. A total of 187 survivors were assisted with mental health and counselling sessions, legal assistance and economic support along with other referral services both at the provincial level and district level. In addition, 192 survivors of violence were provided with healthcare and referral services from central and provincial hospitals.

2.4 Mid-term review of NPA EVAW and GE

UNFPA provided technical expertise to undertake a mid-term review of the National Action Plans for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Gender Equality with the participation of the , NCAWMC which assessed the implementation of the five-year National Action Plan to Prevent and Eliminate Violence Against Women, Phase II (2021–2025)

The MTR identified challenges in achieving key indicators, emphasizing gaps in implementation and areas requiring further attention and highlighted the need for additional training to various sectors to enhance their understanding and effective application of the action plan. The findings from the MTR have since helped improve implementation of the two national action plans and address the identified challenges to achieve their objectives effectively.

- **UNDP**

Key Achievements

UNDP has made significant progress in implementing gender-sensitive procedures within the Justice Sector during the project period, focusing on tangible results:

- Launched the first Justice and Policing Sector Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Gender-Based Violence response.
- Developed a framework to review legislation through a gender lens.
- Supported Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in producing the first Parallel Report on CEDAW implementation.
- Assisted in amending key legislation including the Law on Lao Women's Union and the Law on Development and Protection for Women.
- Created a Manual and tools for communications and community outreach on Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
- Trained 30 Master Trainers to extend GBV prevention skills and knowledge to communities.

These efforts have advanced gender equality, improved victim support mechanisms, and strengthened institutional capacity to prevent violence against women. Laying a strong basis for further systems strengthening and improved service provisions for victims and survivors of GBV in Lao PDR.

Sub-output 3: Strengthened capacity of the justice sector for GBV response and prevention through the implementation of the NAPEVAW.

The Programme through UNDP contributed to the achievement of Sub-output 3 in three main areas: (i) developing the Justice Sector SOP for VAW prevention and response, (ii) organizing an International Conference combined with an exchange programme with the Republic of Korea and other neighboring countries, and policy dialogues to strengthen the institutional capacity of the LWU to effectively address the Gender and VAW issues, and (iii) advocacy.

Building on these efforts, UNDP has spearheaded a transformative initiative, instituting gender-sensitive protocols and coordination frameworks within the Justice Sector. This groundbreaking effort aims to decisively address, safeguard, and elevate the status of women, girls, and survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Central to this milestone is the formulation and official adoption of the inaugural Justice and Policing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), marking a pivotal advancement towards equitable justice and empowerment.

Sub-Output 3, Activity 3.1: Development of a capacity needs assessment report

The activity entailed conducting a comprehensive Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) within the Justice Sector, culminating in the submission of a proposal and Terms of Reference (TOR) to the Lao Women's Union (LWU), a pivotal step towards enhancing the sector's preparedness in addressing gender-based violence (GBV).

The findings encapsulated within the CNA report served as a clarion call, highlighting the pressing need for bolstered capacity within the Justice Sector to effectively implement the National Action Plan on Eliminating Violence Against Women (NAPEVAW) and provide requisite support to GBV survivors. Key recommendations emanating from the report underscored the imperative of developing a comprehensive Justice Sector Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), enhancing the capacity of each agency to adhere to NAPEVAW guidelines, instituting a digitalized case management system, and instituting mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure accountability.

The launch of the CNA report not only symbolized a culmination of analytical efforts but also heralded a pivotal juncture in the sector's trajectory. It facilitated the establishment of a clear roadmap for future endeavors, characterized by resolute buy-in and commitment from justice sector agencies. As a result, the groundwork was laid for concerted action in the ensuing year, poised to drive substantive progress in the realm of GBV prevention and response within the Lao context.

Sub-Output 3, Activity 3.2 Support the development of the Justice and Policing Sector SOP for GBV response and prevention, and develop capacity of the Justice and Policing Sector to implement SOP

The activity involved conducting a comprehensive Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) within the Justice Sector, resulting in a proposal and Terms of Reference (TOR) submission to the Lao Women's Union (LWU). This was a crucial step towards improving the sector's ability to tackle gender-based violence (GBV).

Preliminary findings were shared in November 2021, and by December 2021, the report was finalized. The formal launch of the CNA report on March 10, 2022, included 48 stakeholders from various organizations, with 33 female participants.



The CNA report highlighted the urgent need to strengthen the Justice Sector's capacity to implement the National Action Plan on Eliminating Violence Against Women (NAPEVAW) and support GBV survivors. Key recommendations included:

- Developing a comprehensive Justice Sector Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
- Enhancing agency capacity to follow NAPEVAW guidelines
- Establishing a digital case management system
- Ensuring ongoing monitoring and evaluation

The report's launch established a clear roadmap for future efforts in GBV prevention and response within Laos. UNDP's work culminated in creating a framework within the Justice Sector, focusing on gender sensitivity, response efficacy, and empowerment.

The Justice and Policing SOP provides precise protocols and standards tailored to address violence against women. Its victim-centric approach guarantees quality services and reaffirms a commitment to supporting survivors. By strengthening the justice system with this mechanism, society sends a clear message that violence will not be tolerated.

The journey towards this milestone began in 2021, with an evidence-driven process that led to the SOP's launch. UNDP's efforts included a thorough CNA within the Justice Sector, evaluating the readiness of agencies to implement NAPEVAW measures. The findings informed strategic priorities for capacity building and highlighted the need for tailored SOPs.

Addressing a critical gap in Laos' justice landscape, UNDP facilitated the establishment of the EVAW Focal Team, comprising key officials from diverse agencies. Drafting workshops throughout 2022 led to the endorsement of the Justice Sector SOPs on January 18, 2023, by a High-Level Committee.

Capacity Development Plan

The CNA identified several critical gaps, such as inadequate training, insufficient resources, and lack of coordination among justice service providers. To address these issues, the assessment recommended comprehensive training programs, increased funding, and improved inter-agency collaboration. The impact of these recommendations is profound, as they aim to enhance the skills and efficiency of justice providers, ultimately leading to more effective prevention and elimination of violence against women.

The implementation of these recommendations is anchored in the Capacity Development Plans (CDPs) and the Justice and Policing Sector's SOP. By aligning with international standards and benchmarks, these plans ensure that justice institutions are well-equipped to handle cases of violence against women with greater sensitivity and efficiency.

The Training of Trainers (ToT) on the Justice and Policing SOP

The ToT was designed to improve the skills and knowledge of key personnel from various justice institutions. This initiative was crucial to ensure that these institutions could effectively implement the Justice and Policing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), training 29 master trainers, 69% of whom were female who gained significant knowledge and proficiency in the subject matter. This was followed by Cascade Trainings in Bokeo and Savannakhet, ensuring the continued dissemination of knowledge and skills acquired during the Training of Trainers (ToT) Workshop, thereby reinforcing the capacity of stakeholders within the justice and policing sectors. By extending the reach of SOP training to additional regions, UNDP facilitated widespread adoption and implementation of SOP protocols, fostering a culture of adherence to standardized procedures across various jurisdictions. Moreover, the Cascade Trainings served to deepen understanding and proficiency among a broader audience, promoting long-term sustainability in the application of SOP principles and methodologies.



Justice SOP Master Trainers delivered Cascade Trainings in Bokeo and Savannakhet on 20-21 March and 3-4 April 2024

Through these concerted efforts, UNDP aimed to establish a lasting legacy of improved justice and policing practices, contributing to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in addressing legal and societal challenges,

including supporting victims and survivors of GBV. Furthermore, the development of institution-based work plans fosters a systematic approach to the implementation of SOPs, potentially fostering long-term sustainability in GBV prevention and response efforts, beyond the lifespan of the project.

Sub-Output 3, Activity 3.3 Research and surveys on how to strengthen the governance mechanism and policy framework of Gender/EVAW, Building evidence for improving access to justice

The research highlighted several critical areas requiring attention. Comprehensive training programs should be established to enhance CSOs' capacity in data collection and advocacy. Addressing unofficial fees deterring women from seeking justice is also a priority. These initiatives would improve access to justice and support for survivors.

Implementing research outcomes into the Justice Sector Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is vital. This ensures that survivors' experiences and community perspectives are well-represented, bolstering evidence-based approaches against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

UNDP's efforts have transformed Lao PDR's institutions, focusing on eradicating GBV and amplifying women's voices. Through international conferences, exchange programs, and policy dialogues, UNDP, alongside UNFPA, has strengthened the Lao Women's Union (LWU) to address these issues.

Key achievements include:

- Significant policy and institutional improvements.
- Creation of a framework aligning laws with international standards like CEDAW.
- Comprehensive legal reforms implementing the National Action Plans for Eliminating Violence Against Women (NAPEVAW) and Gender Equality (NAPGE).

These efforts have established a stronger legal framework, positioning Lao PDR towards gender equality and the eradication of GBV. In September 2022, an international conference on preventing and responding to Violence Against Women (VAW) in the ASEAN region was held, involving 181 participants and highlighting eight international best practices. Three practices were integrated into the justice response framework, demonstrating a commitment to evidence-based practices.



International Conference on Prevention and Response to Violence Against Women in ASEAN Report, 23 September 2022

UNDP's role in enhancing the institutional capacity of the LWU has led to legislative reforms for women's empowerment. Advocacy efforts proposed amendments to key laws, which are set for deliberation during the National Assembly's 2024 session.

Overall, these achievements reflect a commitment to a more inclusive society, ensuring legal frameworks protect women's rights and promote gender equality.

The localization of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The localization of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the groundbreaking launch of the inaugural Parallel Report by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) represent significant milestones in strengthening the policy framework for Gender Equality and Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW). The support from UNDP has played an instrumental role in this evolution.

Moreover, the Joint Programme's support extended to nine Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), empowering them to produce the first Parallel Report on CEDAW implementation. This initiative began with strategic workshops to identify key priorities, followed by capacity-building sessions to equip CSOs with critical skills and international best practices. This collaboration led to thorough discussions and data analysis, refining the report's content and recommendations.

UNDP's technical assistance improved CSOs' skills in data collection, analysis, and forming recommendations, enabling them to effectively engage with government counterparts and advocate for policy reforms in line with CEDAW standards. This effort has significantly advanced gender equality and EVAW initiatives in Laos PDR.

The debut of Lao CSOs in crafting and submitting a parallel report to the CEDAW Committee marked a significant milestone. It highlighted the importance of strengthening civil society's role in localizing CEDAW implementation and advancing gender equality in Lao PDR.

Sub-Output 3, Activity 3.5 Develop strategy and practical guidance/tools for LWU on communications and community outreach based on models of communications for development (C4D) and social and behavioral change and communications (SBCC) to raise awareness on GBV and access to justice.

UNDP has supported the Lao Women's Union (LWU) in developing effective communications and community outreach strategies based on models of Communication for Development (C4D) and Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) to raise awareness about Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and provide access to justice, reaching over 30 villagers through practical exercises, and expanding the pool of trained officers to amplify the reach of GBV awareness campaigns across Laos. This initiative to build the capacity of front-line workers to address and prevent GBV in local communities has set the foundation for further expansion of efforts to address harmful gender norms.

● Qualitative assessment:

The Programme's comprehensive approach has effectively addressed key areas such as policy development, capacity building, and gender-based violence (GBV) response. Notable recommendations include the continued strengthening of institutional frameworks and the enhancement of multi-sectoral coordination to sustain the gains achieved.

Key partnerships have played a pivotal role in driving these achievements, with collaboration between KOICA, UNDP, UNFPA, LWU, NCAWMC, PMC and the justice sector and relevant governments. The

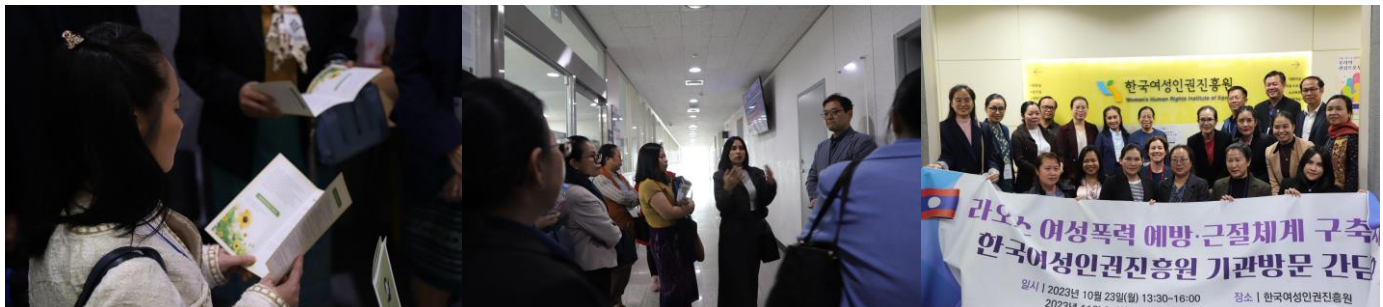
coordinated efforts facilitated by these partnerships have significantly enhanced the institutional capacities and policy frameworks surrounding gender equality and violence prevention and response in Lao PDR.

The 2023 South Korea visit offered a valuable learning-sharing experience to the improvement of social and health sector response to GBV and strengthening GBV coordination. Through the Joint Programme, UNFPA programme applied the gained insights and experience in the management and operation of One Stop Service Center at Mahosot hospital and Counselling and Protection Centre for Women and Children at the provincial level.

In addition, the quarterly steering committee meetings and monthly meetings, jointly convened by UNFPA and UNDP, with participation from PMC and KOICA, were regularly organized to share updates on programme implementation and discuss collaborative actions. These meetings ensured both horizontal and vertical coordination were undertaken.



The initial funding from the MPTF/JP has played a pivotal role in showcasing the Programme's viability and effectiveness in addressing GBV and promoting gender equality in Lao PDR. The success of the initial funding phase has highlighted the need for continued support and expansion. To build on this foundation, it is recommended that stakeholders focus on scaling up the Programme's activities, enhancing coordination among partners, and increasing community engagement. By prioritizing these actions, the Programme can maximize its impact and ensure more sustainable outcomes.



*Knowledge sharing on One Stop Service Center for Gender-Based Violence Survivors during the Study Tour to Republic of Korea
23-26 October 2023*

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Using the **Programme Results Framework from the Project Document / AWP**s - provide details of the achievement of indicators at both the output and outcome level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, clear explanation should be given explaining why.

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<p>6</p> <p>Outcome 1: Strengthened national capacity for the effective, systematic and accountable prevention of and response to VAW in Lao PDR</p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>1. Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-49 years subject to physical and/or sexual violence by any partner in the last 12 months by type and five-year age group (Linked with 5.2.1)</p> <p>2. Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subject to physical violence, sexual violence and emotional violence who have access to services (health, social services and justice): - by someone else who is not their partner (Linked with 5.2.2)</p> <p>3. Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex (Linked with 5.1.1) Baseline: 6.4% (2014)</p> <p>Planned Target: To be identified based on the assessment</p>	NA	These indicators can be reported after the Second National Survey is conducted	NA

⁶ Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlines in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.

Sub-Output 1. Improved institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of gender-based violence against women and promoting women's participation			
Indicator 1.1: 5-year National Strategic Plan on ERAW developed Baseline: N/A Planned Target: Yes	Achieved ERAW Plan was developed with UNFPA technical support, finalized, endorsed, disseminated and being implemented.		Project report
National Action Plan on ERAW integrated into sectors' plans at national and subnational levels Baseline: N/A Planned Target: Not yet	Achieved The ERAW Plan has been integrated into 18 provincial and 17 sectoral plans		Project report
Indicator 1.3: 5-year National Strategic Plan on Gender Equality developed Baseline: N/A Planned Target: Not yet	Achieved The 5-year GE Plan was developed with UNFPA technical support, finalized, endorsed, disseminated and being implemented.		Project report
Indicator 1.4: National Action Plan on Gender Equality integrated into sectors' plans and subnational levels Baseline: N/A Planned Target: Not yet	Achieved The GE Plan has been integrated into 18 provincial and 17 sectoral plans.		Project report

<p>pathway for GBV Indicators of below outputs in the GE NPA:</p> <p>Output 2.4: Women's economic empowerment</p> <p>Baseline: NA</p> <p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 100 females from selected provinces trained in food and clothing businesses. <p>Output: 2.7: Increase number of women in management and leadership position in each level from central to village levels</p> <p>Baseline: N/A</p> <p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's leadership training manual developed • At least 200 government officials, LWU and relevant ministries staff at central, provincial and district levels as well as females in the selected provinces trained on women's leadership. <p>Output 3.2: Implementing obligations under regional and international treaties, CEDAW, ICPD, SDGs and Beijing Platform for Actions.</p> <p>Baseline: NA</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>107 survivors and vulnerable women and girls trained in food, clothing and income generating businesses.</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>226 government officials, LWU and relevant ministries staff at central, provincial and district levels trained on Women's Leadership</p>		<p>Project report</p>
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<p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The 10th periodic CEDAW report of Lao PDR approved by the Lao government and submitted to the CEDAW Committee in Geneva	<p>Achieved</p> <p>The 10th periodic CEDAW report of Lao PDR was approved by the Lao government and submitted to the CEDAW Committee in Geneva in March 2023.</p>		
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<p>Indicator 1.6: Number of international knowledge and experience exchange programmes promoting T/SSC</p> <p>Baseline: N/A</p> <p>Planned Target: Not yet</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Four (4)</p> <p>Two (2) - Supported LWU to host the regional exchange through ASEAN Sectoral Body's Session of the 25th ACWC Meeting and participated and organized speakers for the regional meeting to share SOPs for GBV response development process.</p> <p>Two (2)- Exchange visits to Korea and Mongolia conducted to exchange knowledge on One-Stop Service establishment and operationalization and GBV admin data collection system development and utilization.</p>		
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Sub-Output 2. The Implementation guideline & M&E Plan of the 5-year National Strategic Plan on EVAW (2021–2025) developed

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<p>Indicator 2.1: Practical implementation guideline and M&E Plan developed</p> <p>Baseline: N/A</p> <p>Planned Target: Yes</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>The M & E framework for EVAW and GE Plans were developed and utilized.</p>		Project report
<p>Indicator 2.2: Monitoring and reporting system set up</p> <p>Baseline: N/A</p> <p>Planned Target: 1</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Paper-based and digital system for GBV admin data collection developed and set up for enhancing monitoring and reporting systems.</p>		Project report

<p>Indicator 2.3: A National Guideline for Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) developed and effectively implemented</p> <p>Baseline: N/A</p> <p>Planned Target: Yes</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Health and Social SOPs finalized and endorsed, implementation and roll out commenced</p>		<p>Project report</p>
<p>NPA Output 2.1: Provision of essential health services for survivors of violence</p> <p>Baseline: N/A</p> <p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of health professionals trained on provision of health services ● Number of survivors received essential health services 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>246 health professionals trained, including 143 women and 103 men, from central and target provinces trained on provision of health services. In addition, 76 health professionals were sensitized on using health SOP for provision of health services for GBV survivors.</p> <p>192 survivors of violence were provided with healthcare and referral</p>		<p>Project report</p>
<p>NPA Output 2.3: Provision of social services for survivors of violence</p> <p>Baseline: N/A</p>	<p>Achieved</p>		<p>Project report</p>

Target:

- Number of social service providers trained on provision of health services

431 social service providers, 281 women and 150 men, from central and target provinces trained on provision of social services. In addition, 120 social service providers were sensitized on using social SOP for provision of social service for GBV survivors.

- Number of survivors received essential social services

187 survivors received essential social services from the protection centers in Vientiane central, Attapue, Champasak, Savannakhet and Bilikhamxay provinces.

<p>Indicator 2.4: Annual monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of national Action plans on Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children conducted</p> <p>Baseline: N/A</p> <p>Planned Target: Yes</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Mid-term evaluation of the National Action plans on Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children conducted and being used to monitor the implementation of EVAW NPA</p>		<p>Project report</p>
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Sub-Output 3: Strengthened capacity of the justice sector for GBV response and prevention through implementation of the NAPEVAW			
	<u>Achieved Indicator Targets</u>	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<p>Indicator 3.1: Development of a capacity needs assessment report</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Planned Target: 1</p>	<p>Achieved – 1 CNA report was endorsed, launched, and published</p> <p>A Capacity Development Plan was also developed and endorsed by key Justice Partners</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project report ● Link to CNA report

<p>Indicator 3.2:</p> <p>(i) Increase in understanding of gender equality and VAW by justice sector trainees</p> <p>(ii) Number of multi-stakeholder consultation workshops</p> <p>(iii) SOP approved</p> <p>(iv) Score of assessment reports conducted by UNDP and justice sector task force on SOP implementation in 3 pilot provinces</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>(i) 56% (pre-test result)</p> <p>(ii) 0</p> <p>(iii) 0</p> <p>(iv) 0</p> <p>Planned Target:</p> <p>(i) 30%</p> <p>(ii) 3</p> <p>(iii) 1</p> <p>(iv) Criteria for scoring and evaluation tools developed</p>	<p>(i) Achieved the above results. There was a 168% increase in understanding on gender equality and VAW by justice sector trainees. These have been measured by applying pre-post trainings evaluation tools.</p> <p>(ii) Achieved. 5 multistakeholder consultation workshops on the SOP were conducted.</p> <p>(iii) SOP approved and published</p> <p>(iv) SOP ToT delivered at the National level between 26th February 2024 and 1st March 2024 and 2 cascade trainings at the provincial levels. 90 Justice Personnels have been trained from 5 different Justice Agencies</p>		<p>(i) Activity report and final M&E report on trainings</p> <p>(ii) Project report</p> <p>(iii) Standard Operating Procedures for the Justice Sector Response to and Prevention of Violence against Women and Children United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)</p> <p>(iv) Project and activity reports</p>
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<p>Indicator 3.3:</p> <p>(i) Number of women participating in research on barriers</p> <p>(ii) Number of men sharing perceptions on GBV</p> <p>(iii) Number of survivors engaged on research on the meaning of justice</p> <p>(iv) Number of men engaged in research on the experiences of abusers</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>(i) 0</p> <p>(ii) 0</p> <p>(iii) 0</p> <p>(iv) 0</p> <p>Planned Target:</p> <p>(i) 150</p> <p>(ii) 150</p> <p>(iii) 10</p> <p>(iv) 10</p>	<p>Achieved. 259 women participated in the research</p> <p>Achieved. 236 men participated in the research</p>		<p>(i) Research report</p> <p>(ii) Research report</p> <p>(iii) Incorporated in research reports</p> <p>(iv) Incorporated in research reports</p>
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<p>Indicator 3.4:</p> <p>(i) Number of discussions through a platform for policy dialogue on gender & VAW</p> <p>(ii) Number of participants disaggregated by gender</p> <p>(iii) Number of international best practices shared</p> <p>(iv) Number of international best practices integrated into the justice response</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>(i) 0</p> <p>(ii) 0</p> <p>(iii) 0</p> <p>(iv) 0</p> <p>Planned Target:</p> <p>(i) 1/year</p> <p>(ii) 150</p> <p>(iii) 3</p> <p>(iv) 3</p>	<p>Achieved, Above targets</p> <p>(i) 1 international conference was organized on VAW Prevention and Response in ASEAN</p> <p>(ii) 181 people participated in the international conference</p> <p>(iii) 8 international best practices were shared</p> <p>(iv) 3 best practices were integrated into the justice response.</p> <p>(v) 1 exchange study tour in ROK achieved in 2023</p> <p>(vi) 6 policy dialogue concluded</p>		<p>(i) Activity report</p> <p>(ii) Activity report</p> <p>(iii) Activity report</p> <p>(iv) Project report</p>
<p>Indicator 3.5:</p> <p>(i) Outreach strategy delivered.</p> <p>(ii) Number of people engaged through new community outreach practice.</p> <p>(iii) Percentage of change in people's understanding of GBV.</p> <p>(i) Baseline:</p> <p>(i) 0</p> <p>(ii) 0</p> <p>(iii) TBD (2022), TBD (2023), TBD(2024)</p> <p>Planned Target:</p> <p>(i) 1</p> <p>(ii) 50</p> <p>(iii) 20% (2023), 20% (2024)</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>(i) 1 communication strategy was delivered.</p> <p>(ii) 50 people (36 F) were engaged through new outreach practices.</p> <p>(iii) 1 communications manual was developed and rolled out in the pilot training in 2023. 50% Percentage of change in people's understanding of GBV.</p> <p>(iv) 1 Communication Manual developed</p> <p>(v) 13 Master Trainers (11 F) were trained in Upgraded TOT and 12 Subnational Trainers (12 F) were trained through the pilot training at the subnational cascading.</p>		<p>(i) Communication strategy</p> <p>(ii) Quarterly report</p> <p>(iii) N/A</p> <p>(iv) Communications Manual.</p> <p>(v) Training Report on Upgraded and Subnational TOT.</p>

ii) **Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned**

During the project, UNDP undertook a mid-term evaluation concluded on 31st July 2023 to assess the progress and contribution of the project, providing insights into results achieved, guide the necessary adjustments in project implementation, inform decision-making, and improve project outcomes. To achieve its objectives, the evaluation followed several criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Additional criteria such as management and monitoring, Leave No One Behind (LNOB), human rights, and gender equity were also considered.

The evaluation findings indicate that the project aligns with Lao PDR's national development priorities and its commitments to SDGs 5 and 16, contributing to gender equality, ending violence against women, inclusivity, and strengthening national capacities and institutions. It was on track to achieve its intended results within the agreed period. Efficiency-wise, the project has been found generally adherent to the work plan and effectively utilized available resources, highlighting flexibility and adaptability. Regarding sustainability, the evaluation report highlights that the project has made considerable progress in enhancing human, institutional, and systemic capacities. It has provided specialized training, improved policy frameworks, and forged partnerships.

However, the project lacked an explicitly defined exit strategy, posing a risk to sustainability. In this regard and as a response to the evaluation findings, UNDP and UNFPA agreed to develop an exit strategy, which has been finalized in March 2024, to ensure that results achieved are sustainable beyond the end of the programme.

A conclusive project evaluation was not conducted due to the Donor's and UNDP's corporate policies, which do not mandate such exercise for projects that do not meet the budget threshold and given that the mid-term evaluation was conducted between Q2 and Q3 of 2023.

In terms of strengthening capacity in M&E, UNFPA, in collaboration with LWU and MoH, has strengthened monitoring and reporting capacities by enhancing the SOP implementation and GBV admin paper-based and digital data systems at the central and provincial levels. The enhancing SOPs implementation includes monitoring SOP utilization and services aligned with SOPs. Developed and used both GBV admin paper-based and digital data collection system and providing capacity building to LWU and MoH social and health service case management staff on GBV data collection and reporting.

Furthermore, UNFPA, UNDP and government partners, LWU, MoH, NCAWMC and the justice sector, recognize that vulnerable groups face multiple forms of discrimination and violence and require specific support to ensure their access to services and protection. We have included these specific needs and services in all SOPs.

In terms of challenges, UNDP experienced delays and hindrances within sub-output 3, particularly within the Justice Sector, stemming from limited knowledge regarding gender dynamics, gender equality principles, and international legal instruments pertaining to VAW. Persistent normative perceptions condoning VAW further compounded these challenges. Recognizing the imperative for improvement, UNDP formulated targeted strategies to address these hurdles. Conducting focus group discussions with key justice stakeholders emerged as a vital approach to augment their comprehension of gender issues and GBV. Additionally, the development and implementation of a Capacity Development Plan, alongside planned Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in early 2024, signify concerted efforts to bolster frontline service providers' capacities and fortify the GBV response framework comprehensively. Moreover, a specialized module on gender and GBV within the ToT framework aims to rectify normative misconceptions swiftly and promote informed action. Concurrently, UNDP leveraged lessons learned from project experiences to

incorporate capacity-building activities focused on communication for social and behavioral change with the Lao Women's Union (LWU). This initiative seeks to foster open dialogue and create conducive spaces for addressing gender-based violence. Despite encountering challenges during the SOP endorsement process, attributed to delays in feedback receipt from justice sector agencies and internal approval ambiguities within LWU and NCAWMC, UNDP took proactive measures to mitigate these obstacles by engaging high-level management and clarifying procedural intricacies, UNDP facilitated a streamlined approval process, thereby expediting overall progress.

Moreover, a key lesson learned for UNDP, which will be incorporated into the next phase of the project, is the need to invest in capacity building and training initiatives, such as the development of tailored training programs for Village Mediation Committees (VMCs), for enhancing the effectiveness of community-based responses to GBV. By equipping frontline responders with the necessary knowledge and skills, programs can improve GBV prevention and response efforts at the grassroots level.

The initiative to develop tailored training for Village Mediation Committees (VMCs) on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) reflects a strategic response to address critical needs and capitalize on opportunities in combating GBV at the community level. As evidenced by past experiences, enhancing the role of VMCs as first responders within the justice sector is paramount for effective GBV response. Incorporating principles of jurisdiction, human rights, and bias into the training curriculum equips VMCs with essential knowledge and skills to handle GBV cases in alignment with SOP guidelines.

iv) A Specific Story (Optional)

One of the significant achievements of this initiative was the successful coordination and development of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Justice and Policing Sector. The SOPs, launched in August 2023, have established robust procedures and standards for responding to cases of Violence Against Women (VAW). This ensures that quality services are delivered to women and girls in Lao PDR using a victim-centered approach.

The implementation of these SOPs marked a pivotal moment for the justice sector in Lao PDR. It was the first instance where agencies such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Security, Office of Supreme People's Prosecutor, and People's Supreme Court collaborated to work towards the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence. This integrated effort not only improved the justice system's response to GBV but also sent a clear message that violence will not be tolerated, ultimately helping to prevent the increase of VAW cases.

UNDP's support ensured that survivors of GBV have access to quality justice services, including holding perpetrators accountable, providing fair reparations, and most importantly, listening to the victims and survivors. The initiative's sustainability was further reinforced by scaling up the SOPs at the national and sub-national levels within two target provinces, Bokeo and Savannakhet, through a "Training of Trainers" (TOT) approach.

The Justice SOPs serve as an essential guide for justice service providers, including investigation officers and court proceedings across the country. They provide a systematic and coordinated referral pathway, ensuring that victims and survivors can access a range of legal services tailored to their needs and receive effective justice. This comprehensive framework includes key tools and guidance to prevent and respond to violence against women, thereby enhancing the capacity of justice authorities, police officers, prosecutors, and judges to uphold high standards of service delivery.

Overall, the development and implementation of the Justice SOPs represent a significant step forward in improving the justice system's response to GBV in Lao PDR, demonstrating the power of coordinated efforts and the importance of a victim-centered approach.
