

## MID-TERM EVALUATION

### Building climate and disaster resilience capacities of vulnerable small towns in Lao PDR

A mid-term evaluation report for Adaptation Fund funded project

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## List of Abbreviations

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| AF    | Adaptation Fund  |
| DoNRE | Department of Natural Resources and Environment        |
| DPWT  | Department of Public Works and Transport               |
| EE    | Executing Entity                                       |
| IE    | Implementing Entity                                    |
| LWU   | Lao Women's Union                                      |
| LYU   | Lao Youth Union  |
| MoNRE | Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment          |
| MPWT  | Ministry of Public Works and Transport                 |
| NPSE  | Nam Papa State-owned Enterprise                        |
| O&M   | Operation and Maintenance                              |
| PoNRE | Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment |
| SDGs  | Sustainable Development Goals                          |
| TNA   | Training Need Assessment                               |

## Basic Project Information

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Category:</b>              | Regular  |
| <b>Country:</b>                       | Lao PDR  |
| <b>Title of Project:</b>              | Building climate and disaster resilience capacities of vulnerable small towns in Lao PDR   |
| <b>Type of Implementing Entity:</b>   | Multilateral Implementing Entity   |
| <b>Implementing Entity:</b>           | United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)  |
| <b>Executing Entities:</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ministry of Public Works and Transport</li><li>• Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment</li><li>• Provincial Department of Public Works and Transport in Savannakhet Province</li><li>• Department of Natural Resources and Environment in Savannakhet Province</li></ul> |
| <b>Amount of Financing Requested:</b> | US\$ 5,500,000   |

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND CONTEXTS

The project was initiated in June 2020. The midterm evaluation is performed as planned in February 2023. This evaluation is to provide the donor, Adaptation Fund, and implementing partners with an assessment of the project so far. The objective is:

- Assess the implementation progress towards achieving the planned results
- Assess the continued relevance, effectiveness and impact of the project
- Provide recommendations for the remaining continuation of the project

The evaluation revolves around:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Sustainability

### 1.1 Project Overview

The project's main objective is to build climate resilience in small towns along the East-West economic corridor in the central region of Lao PDR. The objective will be achieved through the provision of climate resilient water infrastructure and the mainstreaming of climate change into urban planning. The two target towns of Sayphouthong and Sethamouak in Savannakhet province were selected in consultation with stakeholders, considering their high levels of vulnerability and lack of basic services. The target towns also aligned with the government strategy to promote economic growth and build infrastructure in emerging and small towns.

The project consists of three components:

- **Plans and capacity building**, which includes developing two town level master plans integrating climate resilience building into land-use, water management and infrastructure.
- **Physical infrastructure**, which includes the development and construction of a climate resilient water supply system.
- **Advocacy and Knowledge Management**, which includes building capacity in government authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

### 1.2 Project Background and Context

#### 1.2.1 Climate change in Savannakhet

Based on UN-Habitat's analysis of 30-year weather station data from Savannakhet, extreme temperature increase has been observed in the province. The mean annual average temperature has increased by almost 1.4°C in the last 30 years. The monthly average maximum temperatures are very high, with the highest recorded temperature in April, the hottest month of 42°C. Mean annual minimum temperatures are now 1.6°C higher, on average, compared to 1989, a very rapid change.

There is also evidence that variability is increasing in annual average rainfall. The driest and wettest years in the dataset, which recorded 1,030 millimeters and 2,059 millimeters of rain, occurred in 2015 and 2017 respectively. While there was overall a small increase in rainfall in Savannakhet, there is evidence that this is more concentrated over a shorter rainy season, meaning people who rely on open water sources or ground water are likely to face increased water shortages in the dry season, exacerbated by higher temperatures that increase evaporation. In further support of a shortening of the rainy season, the number of rainy days has declined sharply. Savannakhet now gets 101 rainy days per year, 20 fewer than it would have been expected at the start of the dataset in 1989.

It is not only the projected increase in rainfall that is of concern in Lao PDR, but the projected increase in the intensity of rainfall whereby more rain is expected to fall over a shorter time period, leading to an increased risk of flooding. The increased intensity of rainfall is also resulting in long, dry spells and this is predicted to result in increased droughts. As shown above, there is evidence of a shortening of the rainy season with more intense rainfall and an increasingly intense dry season in Savannakhet. Drought-prone areas have already suffered severe impacts such as the unavailability of water and loss of crops leading to widespread food insecurity. External assistance has been required to distribute emergency food aid during severe droughts.

### **1.2.2 Impacts**

In recent years, floods and droughts have caused substantial loss of life, economic loss, and damage to infrastructure in Lao PDR. In 2013, a series of flood events caused by different weather systems occurred in different locations from July till October. Twelve of the seventeen provinces were affected with an estimated 395,000 people affected, and the reported loss of over 20 lives.

The most severe secondary hazard associated with extreme weather events is epidemics. In a study of natural disasters from 1970 to 2009, it was shown that the type of disaster causing the greatest loss of life was epidemics. Transmission of communicable diseases, particularly faecal-oral diseases, increases in flooded conditions. The decline in sanitary conditions and lack of access to safe drinking water, which commonly occurs in a flood event, contribute significantly to the spread of disease.

Climate change related flooding concerns also impact land use. Although the government aims to “ensure sustainable development with harmonization among the economic development and socio-cultural development and environmental protection,” there has already been major alteration to eco-systems which have aggravated the impacts of extreme weather. Without enforced land use planning, it is likely that there will be both increased flooding because of eco-system changes, and more severe human and economic impacts from the flooding.

Projected increases in flooding and droughts are expected to impact livelihoods, health, physical infrastructure, and the economy of Savannakhet. It is imperative that Lao PDR builds resilience to natural disasters so that it can protect its people and environment and continue on its development trajectory.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Approaches**

- Desk Review:
  - The evaluation project began with a comprehensive desk review of relevant documents, reports, and existing data on the program being evaluated. This included reviewing project documents, implementation plans, monitoring reports, and any other relevant materials.
  - The purpose of the desk review was to gain a deep understanding of the program’s objectives, activities, outputs, and outcomes, as well as to identify any potential gaps or challenges.
- Stakeholder Identification:
  - Key stakeholders were identified at both the national and provincial levels. These stakeholders included government officials, representatives from implementing agencies, partner organizations, and community leaders.

- The selection of stakeholders was based on their direct involvement in the program, their knowledge and expertise, and their potential to provide valuable insights and feedback.
- Stakeholder Engagement:
  - Consultants conducted meetings with identified stakeholders to gather their perspectives, insights, and feedback on the program. These meetings took place through face-to-face interactions, virtual meetings, and teleconferences, depending on the availability and preferences of the stakeholders. Open-ended interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to allow stakeholders to express their views, share experiences, and provide recommendations for program improvement.
  - The meetings were structured to cover various thematic areas, including program design, implementation strategies, coordination mechanisms, and the program's overall impact on the target communities.
- Community Engagement:
  - In addition to engaging with stakeholders at the national and provincial levels, consultants conducted direct interactions with the target communities. These engagements involved visiting project sites, holding community meetings, and conducting surveys or interviews with community members.
  - Community engagement aimed to understand the on-the-ground realities, assess the program's effectiveness in meeting community needs, and gather feedback directly from the beneficiaries.
- Data Analysis:
  - All gathered data, including information from the desk review, stakeholder meetings, and community engagements, were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods.
  - The analysis aimed to provide evidence-based recommendations for program adjustments and improvements.
- Reporting:
  - The findings, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from the evaluation were compiled into a comprehensive report. The report included an executive summary, an overview of the evaluation objectives and methodology, a detailed analysis of the findings, and a set of actionable recommendations.
  - The report is to be shared with the relevant stakeholders, including program managers, government officials, and other relevant parties, to support evidence-based decision-making and program improvement.

## 2.2 Set up of the evaluation

The evaluation team consisting of:

- Juan Torres
- Phengphone Khamseansouk

The set-up of the evaluation is:

- Introduction of the project by the project team members to the evaluation team (30 November 2022).
- The project team members being:
  - Mr. Buahom Sengkhomyong, Project Manager
  - Mr. Thatsanee Sanouban, Information Management Specialist



- Ms. Vilaysouk Ounvongsay, Finance and Admin Specialist
- Ms. Kumiko Hino, Project Management Specialist

The executing entities of the project including,

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE)
- Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)
- Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment (PoNRE) in Savannakhet Province
- Department of Public Works and Transport (DPWT) in Savannakhet Province

Other key stakeholders including;

- Nam Papa State-owned Enterprise (NPSE) Savannakhet
- Lao Women's Union (LWU)
- Local district officials
- Local communities

Desk review of project documents, like:

- Timeframe and Implementation Schedule Progress
- Training provided to district, provincial and national government staff on climate action mainstreamed urban planning and resilient infrastructure design
- Town level master plans of Sethamouak and Sayphouthong which integrate climate change adaptation into socially inclusive infrastructure, spatial planning and land-use management in and beyond the project area
- Engineering survey, investigations of water source, details design, bill of quantities (BoQ), bidding documents and Operation and Maintenance (O&M) manual for the water supply system in consultation with communities

Meetings with officials and communities:

- Mr. Khamtsy Boulom, Deputy Director DPWT Savannakhet (19 December 2022).
- Mr. Phandola Khouanmeuangchanh, deputy Director NPSE-Savannakhet (19 December 2022)
- Mr. Somsanouk Phetsomphou, Vice District Governor of Sethamouak (Phin) (20 December 2022)
- Mr. Phern Thamonthi, Vice District Governor of Sayphouthong (21 December 2022)
- Field visits to villages in Savannakhet province (20-21 December 2022)
- Tasks during visit to Sayphouthong (21 December 2022) and Sethamouak (20 December 2022)

| No | Name                     | Village Name | Position                     |
|----|--------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| 1  | Mr.Somsanouk Phetsomphou | -            | Vice Governor Phine District |
| 2  | Mr. Viengvilay           | Oudomxay     | Head of Village              |
| 3  | Mr. Daophet Sayaphet     | Xesavang     | Head of Village              |
| 4  | Mr. Bounthavy Thanousone | Sanaxay      | Head of Village              |
| 5  | Mr. Khamyork Lienvongkot | Xaysomboun   | Head of Village              |
| 6  | Mr. Bounkong Vongnady    | Sybounhueng  | Head of Village              |
| 7  | Mr. Phongsavath          | Phalek       | Head of Village              |
| 8  | Mr. Bounta               | Nonxay       | Head of Village              |

Table 01: Names of village, Sethamouak

| No | Name                        | Village Name | Position                      |
|----|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Mr. Phern Thamonthi         | -            | Vice Governor of Sayphouthong |
| 2  | Mr. Ek Phomsopha            | Thadan       | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 3  | Mr. Khamkeo Dengnapha       | Phoumjady    | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 4  | Mr. Bounleum Southivong     | Phonthad     | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 5  | Mr. Bounloun Vonghachak     | Nakham       | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 6  | Mr. Syvilai Phommakeo       | Nalaong      | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 7  | Mr., Phoukhong Voribut      | Thakdead     | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 8  | Mr. Vang Homsombut          | Phounsomhong | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 9  | Mr. Somphou Soulinephao     | Donewai      | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 10 | Mr. Ou Phengkanya           | Khanthachan  | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 11 | Mr. Bounphasert Keovandala  | Vernkhoun    | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 12 | Mr. Amkha                   | Namarkkhue   | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 13 | Mr. Somvang Phomsopha       | Naphan       | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 14 | Mr. Souphi Chomsivilay      | Moungkhai    | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 15 | Mr. Mone Chanthalangsy      | Namphou      | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 16 | Mr. Kongmany Onsy           | Donethum     | Head of Cluster Village       |
| 17 | Mr. Bounnom Singkhaonouvong | Dongmarkfai  | Head of Cluster Village       |

Table 02: Names of village, Sayphouthong

### 3. PROGRESS



#### 3.1 Overview of the progress in the Project Results Framework

This evaluation report covers the implementation period of the project between 05 June 2020 to 31 December 2022.

The original Project Result Framework in the approved proposal was used for this section. The revisions on schedule and/or activities have been justified by Project Team, approved by the Project Management Committee, and informed to Provincial Execution Unit and respectful stakeholders through the day-to-day communications and/or annual Project Performance Report (PPR).




### 3.1.1 Component 1

- Develop town level master plans which integrate climate change adaptation into socially inclusive infrastructure, spatial planning and land-use management in and beyond the project area.
- Capacity built at District, Provincial and National level to plan for climate-resilient infrastructure development and to maintain and manage infrastructure.

| Expected Result  | Indicators   | Baseline data   | Targets  | Data collection method           | Status   | Evaluation Metrics  |
|--|--|---|--|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Outcome 1.1<br>40 government staff, at least 15 of whom female, have increased capacity to design climate resilient urban infrastructure in small towns                  | Level of capacity at the subnational level increased     | Capacity to autonomously plan adaptation projects at the sub-national level is limited      | 5 New adaptation projects prepared by sub-national staff | Review of new projects developed | In progress. 2 project documents <sup>1</sup> developed and financing secured, and 2 project documents <sup>2</sup> are under development. |  |
| Output 1.1.1<br>Training provided to district, provincial and national government staff on resilient infrastructure design. Female government staff must be represented. | Number of government staff trained, disaggregated by sex | There is constrained capacity for government staff to plan for new resilient infrastructure | 40 government staff trained, 15 of whom are female.      | Training reports                 | Completed.   |  |

<sup>1</sup> (i) "Technical and institutional capacity building interventions for the reduction of climate change induced flooding under the Building resilience of urban populations with ecosystem-based solutions in Lao PDR project" funded by UNEP and the Green Climate Fund, and (ii) "Project Name/Title: National Assessment of Multi-Hazard Risk and Critical Infrastructure under Climate Change and Development and Pilot-Testing of Lao PDR Hospital Safety Index" proposed to the World Bank.



<sup>2</sup> (i), "Enhancing climate-resilient, low-emission urban development in Lao PDR through improved flood management in Vientiane Capital" proposed to the Green Climate Fund and (ii) "Enhancing adaptive capacity in Lao PDR provinces, and building resilient housing in vulnerable communities" proposed to the Adaptation Fund.

| Expected Result  | Indicators   | Baseline data  | Targets   | Data collection method  | Status     | Evaluation Metrics  |
|--|--|--|---|---|------------|---|
| Outcome 1.2<br>60 government staff, at least 20 of whom are female, have capacity to develop climate resilient town master plans and two master plans approved, that support the development of resilient infrastructure, serving 57,144 people, 53.5% of whom are female.   | Comprehensive adaptation action plans in place for Sayphouthong and Sethamouak Towns | No such plans developed or in place  | Sayphouthong and Sethamouak Towns have comprehensive adaptation action plans in place that consider infrastructure, as well as economic, social and environmental adaptation actions beyond the life of this project. | Upon completion of plans  | Completed. |    |
| Output 1.2.1<br>Training provided to district, provincial and national government staff on climate action mainstreamed urban planning. Female government staff must be represented.  | No. of staff trained disaggregated by sex  | There is very limited capacity at all levels to plan for climate change adaptation actions         | 60 staff, 20 of whom are female, trained  | Training reports  | Completed. |    |
| Output 1.3.1<br>Two master plans developed, using knowledge generated by the project, to both provide sustainable adaptation benefits to the infrastructure designed under this project and to enable the government to better plan for adaptation in other infrastructure, beyond that in the project area. The master plans will include specific provisions for the development and climate change resilience of women. | Developed adaptation plans   | There are currently no adaptation plans and no training has been provided on developing such plans | 60 staff trained, 20 of whom female. 2 masterplans developed. The master plans will include specific provisions for the development and climate change resilience of women.   | Training and workshop reports relating to the development of the master plans | Completed. |  |

| Activities  |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1.1 Define trainee group</li> <li>1.1.2 Baseline knowledge/training needs assessment</li> <li>1.1.3 Prepare the exact nature of the training materials based on the specific requirements of the trainee group</li> <li>1.1.4 Provide the trainings and mentorship of the trainee group through a mixture of training workshops and 'on the job' type training</li> <li>1.1.5 Monitor the achievement of the output of the training</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.2.1 Define trainee group (note that this is a different group from that trained under Output 1.1)</li> <li>1.2.2 Baseline knowledge/training needs assessment</li> <li>1.2.3 Prepare the exact nature of the training materials based on the specific requirements of the trainee group</li> <li>1.2.4 Provide the trainings and mentorship of the trainee group through a mixture of training workshops and 'on the job' type training</li> <li>1.2.5 Monitor the achievement of the output of the training</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.3.1 Identify key vulnerabilities by re-confirming those presented in this proposal</li> <li>1.3.2 Define objectives for the planning process</li> <li>1.3.3 Define shortlist of proposed future adaptation actions through further multi-criteria analysis, cost-benefit analysis and applying environmental and social safeguards, considering the specific needs of women and indigenous people</li> <li>1.3.4 Write up draft plans for review and approval</li> <li>1.3.5 Approve draft plans</li> </ul> |

### 3.1.2 Component 2

- Socially inclusive infrastructure built in target towns that protects people from climate change related impacts and provides continuous services despite current and anticipated future changes in the climate




| Expected Result  | Indicators  | Baseline data   | Targets   | Data collection method                               | Status  | Evaluation Metrics  |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Outcome 2<br>57,144 people, 53.5% of whom are female, who currently have inadequate water and/or protective infrastructure, have access to year-round, clean water and protective infrastructure despite current climate hazards and future changes in climate | The target population has access to clean year-round water supply, which is able to withstand current and anticipated future climate extremes | Neither town has access to reliable water supply, nor capacity to adapt to future changes in climate conditions | 57,144 people, 53.5% of whom are female, have access to affordable, clean and climate-resilient water supply                    | Site visits, photographs, testimony from communities | In progress. Engineer design completed. Bidding completed. Construction started.                |  |
| Output 2.1.1<br>New resilient infrastructure constructed in response to climate change impacts, including variability.   | Physical infrastructures and connections in place   | There is no adaptive water supply infrastructure in place at present in the two towns                           | 2 water supply systems constructed that are able to continue functionality in present and anticipated future climate conditions | Plans, site visits, photos                           | Sub-project in progress. Engineering design completed. Bidding completed. Construction started. |  |

#### Activities

- Re-confirm designs by engineer
- Further public consultation, including consultations with women and indigenous people
- Procure materials
- Hire local communities through the People's Process
- Begin construction
- Establish NPSE offices and management structure in the two districts
- Monitor (including under ESMP)
- Complete

### 3.1.3 Component 3:

- Knowledge and awareness enhanced from national to local economic corridor wide levels, ensuring sustainability and influencing policy changes at the national level.
- This knowledge and awareness targets both local people and national level policy makers.

| Expected Result   | Indicators   | Baseline data   | Targets  | Data collection method | Status   | Evaluation Metrics  |
|---|--|---|--|------------------------|--|---|
| Outcome 3<br>Project implementation is fully transparent. All stakeholders, including women, are informed of products and results and have access to these for replication.   | Level of awareness at the local and national level of climate change adaptation actions and potential for replication                                | Awareness of the need to take adaptation actions and the potential for replication remains very low aside from specialists in climate change adaptation | At least 100, including at least 35 women, government staff are aware of the project's activities and have improved knowledge and capacity to replicate its benefits | Training reports       | In progress.   |    |
| Output 3.1.1<br>Project activities and results are captured and disseminated through appropriate information for the beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders and the public in general.  | No. of knowledge products generated by the project (knowledge products could be newspaper articles, published case studies and tools or guidelines). | Information sharing is typically limited, and there is no institutionalised mechanism to capture project results  | At least 20 knowledge products generated by the project by its end (see indicators column)   | Knowledge products     | In progress. 7 knowledge products have been generated, |    |
| Output 3.2.1<br>Climate policy-especially the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and post-Paris agreement reporting - influenced to reflect the challenges of climate change adaptation in basic service and protective infrastructure, including the provision of infrastructure in a way that benefits women. | NAP and post Paris climate policies and reporting reflect urban adaptation and basic service provision priorities, and issues relating to women      | National Climate change related policies show some consideration of urban infrastructure adaptation   | NAP and all post Paris climate policy thoroughly reflects urban and basic service adaptation priorities  | Policy documents, NAP  | On going.  |  |

| Activities   |
|--|
| <p>3.1.1 Develop case studies, and other appropriate good practice documentation.</p> <p>3.1.2 Establish contact with national newspapers and write semi-regular articles about project successes</p> <p>3.1.3 Based on training, develop local language guidance and tools. Where guidance is produced for communities it should be usable as oral materials, for the benefit of indigenous and illiterate sections of the community.</p> <p>3.1.4 Develop video, fliers and other KM products, as appropriate and under the guidance of the PMC</p> <p>3.2.1 Engage in regular dialogue with NAP stakeholders and those engaged in Post Paris work</p> <p>3.2.2. Conduct alignment workshops with NAP Stakeholders</p> <p>3.2.3 Provide support to NAP team and other stakeholders involved in Post-Paris policy work to integrate urban and basic service adaptation considerations</p> |





## 3.2 Relevance

### 3.2.1 Rationale of the project and its objectives

The objectives of the project have not changed. The rationale is still valid. Sethamouak and Sayphouthong demonstrate low levels of resilience based on high levels of poverty, high exposure to severe climatic events and low institutional capacity and preparation.

- The two cities also have recent exposure to storms, floods, and droughts. The poverty headcount remains high in both districts, at 17.1% below the poverty line in Sayphouthong and over 42.4% in Phine District (including Sethamouak Town). A high percentage of the population, 48% in Sayphouthong and 62% in Phine District, are ethnic minorities.
- Sethamouak town of Phine District is vulnerable to floods, storms, and droughts, while Sayphouthong District is vulnerable to floods and storms. Floods commonly destroy houses and infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water and sanitation facilities, and public buildings including health centers and schools. Common health problems resulting from the consumption of contaminated water include diarrhea, dengue fever and skin conditions.
- Both districts still lack a water supply or sanitation system. This means people are highly sensitive and are suffered by insufficient water access during the dry season, especially in drought periods, and from poor quality water during the rainy season, as rivers and wells can become contaminated. Inadequate sanitation is also a year-round problem, heightened during severe weather events, which in turn causes significant public health problems.

### 3.2.2 Relationship to the SDG's

The purposes of the projects correspond to the implementation of the following SDGs:

- 3 Good health and wellbeing
- 6 Clean water and sanitation
- 11 Sustainable cities and communities
- 13 Climate action

### 3.2.3 Institutional and partner priorities

The results of the Training Need Assessment (TNA) demonstrated partner priorities in the demand for training of officials at central and local levels. The participants identified training priorities of “climate action mainstreamed urban planning,” including training on incorporating climate change into city planning and management, and “resilient infrastructure design” which incorporates training on vulnerability and disaster risk assessment. The priority of “gender mainstreaming” resulted in selection of women trainees to participate in on-the-job training. The specific need for English language improvement was also identified through the TNA.

### 3.2.4 Ownership by national and local stakeholders

It was noted during discussions with national and local stakeholders that active engagement has been established with them. At the onset, it was challenging due to Covid 19 related restrictions, which impacted project delivery and stakeholder engagement. Government officials were consulted as a preliminary step before embarking on capacity building endeavors aimed at addressing specific government institution requirements. Stakeholder gatherings encompass a spectrum of both governmental and non-governmental bodies, fostering the collection of feedback and evaluation of public sentiment. Throughout all project phases, local authorities have been consistently included. The process of defining objectives for planning actions included the execution of vulnerability assessments. In this context, stakeholders were prompted to identify priorities deemed essential for enhancing resilience against climate change impacts.



### 3.3 Effectiveness

#### 3.3.1 Actual and expected achievement

The project is nearing its originally planned duration. Due to delays attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project needs an extension to the end of 2024 for completion. There are 18 months until the completion of the project, considering an extension to the end of 2024. To this end the IE and EE need to proactively reach out to Adaptation Fund Board (AFB) with request for an extension.

Component 1 almost all activities will be completed by March 2023, delay notwithstanding. Final drafts of 2 town-level plans will be presented to the provincial assembly by the end of March 2023. Other outputs are described in three reports. They contain important information that can contribute to the following components of the project. The results are informative and opportunities to use them more broadly warrants investigation, for example, active usage of the findings from the vulnerability assessment in future planning initiatives. Capacity building activities will continue.

Components 2 and 3 are being implemented.

Under Component 2, engineering designs completed. Bidding completed. Construction started.

Under Component 3, total 7 knowledge products have been generated. Out of those, 6 technical manual and guidelines were used in the training held under Component 1 which assured the quality of practical use. The project was broadcasted in the local TV programme that arose the attention of local community.

Despite the progress noted under components 2 and 3, much is still to be done and so both IE and EE need to speed up delivery of the component deliverables.







### **3.3.2 Factors and processes affecting the achievement of results**

#### **3.3.2.1 Planning**

Savannakhet province was subjected to long lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Flexible planning and online communication channels were explored to ensure program progress. Project implementation timelines were impacted and pushed back by almost eighteen months.

Infrastructure interventions-related processes are underway. There were delays due to lockdowns and related measures. It is noted that project implementation schedule is constantly revised with implementing partners to re-arrange activities and make sure that the project implementation continues despite challenges.

#### **3.3.2.2 Budget**

The total budget of the project is 5.5 million USD. Four annual disbursements were planned with 1 upon signing and 3 yearly disbursements. Up to this mid-term evaluation period, one payment has been made: the 1<sup>st</sup> and upon signing disbursement (0.8 million USD / approx. 15% of the total budget).

### **3.3.3 How appropriate and effective are the partnerships and other institutional relationships**

The most important relationships in this project are with the national, provincial and district governments and with NPSE. DPWT/NPSE and PoNRE are effective partners, in line with the Implementation arrangement of the project document, as they know the local circumstances, and are capable of design and maintain the projects. UN-Habitat described the partnership in Agreements of Cooperation. So far, DPWT/NPSE has executed the projects as agreed and to the satisfaction of UN-Habitat.

### **3.3.4 Outcomes to date on the project partners**

The stakeholders involved with the activities conveyed to the evaluators that they are pleased with the results of involved activities; training, support drafting the town-level master plans; knowledge products etc. Under the COVID-19 restriction, the trainings were delivered with a smaller number of participants. However, on the positive side, this became an opportunity to increase the sense of ownership of participants and created high engagement. The project plans to continue its capacity building activities and train more individuals. Despite the overall positive outlook, concerns do remain for the slow delivery due to Covid 19 related lockdown and other challenges.

### **3.3.5 Are vulnerable groups and crosscutting issues of gender, youth, climate change and human rights integrated in the design and implementation and monitoring of the project?**

The review showed that the development of town-level master plans has considered environmental and social safeguards to prevent any adverse permanent impacts on water and land resources and vulnerable peoples. The project focuses on active community participation, thus ensuring effective representation of vulnerable groups – particularly the partnerships with LWU, LYU, and Lao National Front for Construction are effective.

Social precautions include the consideration of resettlement, labor, risk and vulnerability, ethnic groups, women, and youth such as:

- Commit to no relocation of households as a byproduct of construction and the main water supply facilities such as the major part of intake, water treatment plant, and reservoir will be located on public land; the transmission and distribution mains and reticulation pipes will be laid within road rights-of-way.

- Provide opportunity for local unskilled labor, though some of the construction work requires skilled labor not available locally.
- Continue to not propose to use migrant laborers from neighboring countries despite this being widespread practice in privately funded investments in Lao PDR.
- Ensure to keep the situation identified by the Initial Environmental Examination: no evidence of social discrimination or issues was found regarding ethnicity. Regardless, the village authorities have developed a mechanism of reporting discriminatory practices or behavior to the authority through unit heads ('village chiefs').

### 3.4 Efficiency

#### 3.4.1 Action progress compared to plans, budget and overall performance

Project actions were delayed substantially due to the COVID 19 pandemic, which resulted in lockdowns in Savannakhet. Whole activities were pushed back by nine months to a year.

Since June 2021, there were several lockdowns in the project sites in Savannakhet province including the restriction of gathering more than 10 people. Much of the government's resources and capacity of Executing Entity were dedicated to COVID-19 relief efforts. Despite the onset of challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has made progress, rated as 'highly satisfactory' or 'satisfactory' by the implementing and Executing Entities, considering the external challenges.

#### 3.4.2 Were the activities and outputs delivered in a cost-efficient manner?

The funds utilization rate by the EE as of June 2022 is 12.84%. EE has requested for immediate disbursement totaling 3.5 million USD for the rescheduled physical construction work. The fund utilization rate is quite low till June 2022. UN-Habitat is working closely with the EE and AFB to speed up the activities. AFB has been requested to release the second and third installments to speed up the pace of delivery.

This project looks to be highly cost efficient when compared with similar physical infrastructure interventions of water and sanitation systems led by other development partners.

|            | Number of direct beneficiaries | Total budget (million USD) | Budget per direct beneficiary (USD) | Efficiency gain/loss (vs. AF project) |
|------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| AF project | 63,000                         | 5.5                        | 87.30                               | 100%                                  |
| Project A  | 61,000                         | 17.93                      | 292.76                              | -235%                                 |
| Project B  | 84,000                         | 32.5                       | 386.90                              | -343%                                 |
| Project C  | 130,000                        | 26.1                       | 201.08                              | -130%                                 |
| Project D  | 200,000                        | 76.6                       | 382.75                              | -338%                                 |

Table 03 : Direct beneficiaries and total budget

#### 3.4.3 Implementation efficiency

The project team is involved in all stages of the process through training and designing the master plans. Project staff communicated regularly by both online and in-person when the

<sup>3</sup> The original budget is 16.95 million EUR. The exchange rate is 1 EUR = 1.0536 USD.

COVID-19 related restrictions allowed. Moreover, 7 knowledge products have been generated that will support the adequate knowledge sharing and efficient implementation of the activities.

### **3.5 Sustainability**

#### **3.5.1 Factors affecting or likely to affect sustainability of the results**

A very important factor to secure the sustainability of building the climate and disaster resilience capacities is the involvement of multiple layers of decision-makers and technical involved in the design of towns. By combining training of the input and output style, such as lectures and "on the job" type training on the master plan where themselves locate, they merit learning and solving the real issues. One of the keys to increasing sustainability is to build solid capability among the government staff to identify issues and find solutions.

#### **3.5.2 Established networks among institutions**

The partnership with DPWT/NPSE, that has been formally written down in the aforementioned Agreements of Cooperation, is very valuable for both parties. UN-Habitat has access to local knowledge and resources for design and construction. DPWT/NPSE gains design knowledge and of course financial support for project execution.

#### **3.5.3 From built capacities to building capacity**

Component 1 focuses on identifying the demands of capacity building and meeting those demands to increase the level of capacity to autonomously plan adaptation projects at the subnational level.

In practice, the district, provincial and national government staff have enhanced their capacity on "climate mainstreamed urban planning". The staff engaged in courses building skills in town planning, development, and management; geographical mapping surveys using GIS software; survey-planning village development in small towns; resilient infrastructure design; vulnerability and disaster risk assessment; and analysis of flood risk areas. The training allows staff members to mainstream climate action into urban development and management to ensure integrated spatial planning to accompany sustainable town development. Through those processes, the project fostered the institutional knowledge of the data-based decision making in urban planning.

#### **3.5.4 Using new knowledge to build up confidence**

The vulnerability assessments have delivered a lot of useful knowledge. The involvement of the local communities, deciding with them about the chosen solutions instead of choosing for them, ensures that the solution is relevant to them, so that they have a higher sense of responsibility for the good use and maintenance of the systems. Meetings with local government leaders, government institutions, and organizations including the LWU revealed general perceptions regarding the proposed project.

#### **3.5.5 Implementing capacity of the cooperation partners to take the activities forward**

The capacity buildings training was customized to meet the specific needs and demands of stakeholders as well as communities and groups based on the result of TNA. The tailored approach was chosen with the objective of sustaining operations in the future. The vulnerability assessment provided support to village WATSANs and communities to enhance their capacities to operate and maintain village infrastructure and their on-site water and sanitation facilities.

The sustainability of this project's outcomes will be examined by finding ways of maintaining the hard and soft outputs for good use in the future despite the lack of a solid budget. The physical infrastructure needs technical maintenance, and knowledge needs to be put into practice and

updated. Both make them very dependent on aid funds and as such very vulnerable to continuation of donor support.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 No-Cost Extension due to COVID-19**

Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the province of Savannakhet, subjected to long lockdowns and a strategic province to handle the incoming migrants, on project implementation timelines, it is recommended to request a no-cost extension for 18 months (about 1 and a half years) to allow for sufficient time to complete the project activities. The project should ideally seek this no-cost extension proactively, and not wait near project completion period, as this project commenced in 2020 at the height of the pandemic.

Engage with project stakeholders, including implementing partners and local communities, to assess the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on project implementation and make informed decisions regarding the duration of the extension.

### **4.2 Project Design and Fund Allocation**

Evaluate the project's allocation of funds per year, particularly considering its focus on physical infrastructure. The project should have ideally allocated the majority of the funds in the first and second years to ensure timely progress in construction and implementation activities, which are crucial for achieving the project's objectives.

Review the project's financial planning, considering potential cost overruns, inflation, and other unforeseen circumstances. Maintaining a realistic budget that accommodates any necessary adjustments throughout the project duration is essential. Based on the findings, explore with Adaptation Fund if an additional budget could be sought, if required.

### **4.3 Additional Recommendations**

Continue with the robust community engagement and participation by ensuring local communities actively participate in decision-making processes and project implementation. This can enhance the project's effectiveness, sustainability, and resilience.

Foster knowledge-sharing and capacity-building initiatives among project stakeholders to promote replicating and scaling up successful adaptation practices beyond the project's scope.

Ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the project implementation, considering women and girls' specific vulnerabilities and capacities in the target communities.



## **ANNEXES**

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Annex 01 | Terms of Reference   |
| Annex 02 | Timeframe and Implementation Schedule Progress (as of February 2023) |

## Project Evaluation

### Terms of Reference

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Title:</b>                 | Mid-Term Evaluation of Adaptation Fund Project Phase II: Building climate and disaster resilience capacities of vulnerable small towns in Lao PDR |
| <b>Organisation:</b>          | UN-Habitat  |
| <b>Duration:</b>              | 4 months (4 weeks per consultant spread over a period of Nov 2022-Feb 2023)   |
| <b>Starting date:</b>         | November 15 <sup>th</sup> 2023  |
| <b>Number of consultants:</b> | 2   |
| <b>Budget:</b>                | UN-Habita   |

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF BUILDING CLIMATE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE CAPACITIES OF VULNERABLE SMALL TOWNS IN LAO PDR PROJECT

### 1. Project

#### 1.1. Background

Climate change is a major impediment to the attainment of national development goals. Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) has been increasingly affected by extreme weather events. This is particularly problematic due to its high sensitivity, resulting from dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources and its low adaptive capacity. The impacts of extreme weather events have been severe to the point that in 2013 Lao PDR was named the 7th most severely affected country in the world by climate change, with 23 deaths and absolute losses of US\$ PPP 263,510,000<sup>1</sup>. Irregularity in rainfall has led to both floods and droughts, with a variation in severity from year to year. Not only does Lao PDR have a high exposure to extreme weather events, particularly floods, but recent reports by the INFORM Global Risk Index show a low ability to cope with these events<sup>2</sup>. In addition to extreme events, variation in the seasons has disrupted cropping, causing food insecurity.

The high degree of climate change vulnerability in Lao PDR is due to several factors, including the physical geography, low coping capacity and reliance on the agriculture sector. Geographically, the country can be separated into several regions, each of which is susceptible to different hazards. A trend of increasing rainfall is especially apparent in the south and central regions, leading to widespread flooding<sup>3</sup>. In rural areas, this damages or destroys food crops. In the rapidly growing small and emerging towns, there is significant damage to physical infrastructure, hindering economic development and disrupting livelihoods. Low coping capacity is a result of both the low institutional capability and the infrastructure. Currently, Lao PDR is showing a lower coping capacity than neighbouring countries and also of countries which are at a similar income level.

<sup>1</sup> Global Climate Risk Index, 2015, p.7. Online at <https://germanwatch.org/en/download/10333.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Index for Risk Management (INFORM) Country Risk Profile for Lao PDR, 2018. Online through <http://www.inform-index.org/Countries/Country-Profile-Map>

<sup>3</sup> CLEAR: Consolidated Livelihood Exercise for Analysing Resilience. A special report prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's Department for Disaster Management and Climate Change (DDMCC) and the World Food Programme with technical support from the USAID Mekong ARCC project.

In 2018, unusually heavy rains and flooding caused a dam to break in nearby Attapeu Province, leading to dozens of deaths and thousands of people displaced. Meanwhile, roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure throughout the country has been severely impacted by heavy rainfall, which is, in turn, caused by the early onset of tropical storms in the South China Sea. Such infrastructure damage has affected the provision of basic services such as water supplies. These events have once again heightened the focus in Laos on the impacts of climate change and the serious risks they pose to life, livelihoods, infrastructure and sustainable development.

Looking forward, there is an increasing risk of severe weather events. There is a need for adaptive actions to be taken to mitigate the effects of these events, which have the potential to severely derail the Government's development agenda. There has been a long-term goal of graduating from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2020 with a vision of achieving upper-middle income status by 2030. To achieve this, the 8th National Socioeconomic Development Plan has focused on economic growth, sustainable development and strengthening human resource capacity. Recent indications suggest that Laos will probably miss the 2020 graduation target. It is imperative, therefore, that steps are taken to ensure the predicted climatic changes do not prevent Lao PDR from moving forward according to its development aims. UN-Habitat is already working with the government to this end on the Adaptation Fund-funded project entitled, "Enhancing the climate and disaster resilience of the most vulnerable rural and emerging urban human settlements in Lao PDR." The National Designated Authority has requested UN-Habitat to build on this initial project with a continued focus on small and emerging towns in highly vulnerable provinces. This proposed project is in different provinces than the initial project but caters to the government's ongoing need to build resilience in these small urban settlements.

The project's main objective is to build climate resilience in small towns along the east-west economic corridor in the central region of Lao PDR. This will be achieved through the provision of climate resilient water infrastructure and the mainstreaming of climate change into urban planning. The targeted towns align with the government strategy to promote economic growth and build infrastructure in emerging and small towns.

To achieve the objective, a rapid vulnerability assessment has been carried out in each of the target settlements. This has formed the basis of an action plan. The vulnerability assessment will also feed into master plans which will be developed for each of the two towns. The master plans will demonstrate how to mainstream climate action into urban planning.

The planning and design of resilient systems will be carried out in a participatory manner, with input from all sectors of the community, from government officials to marginalised groups such as women and minority ethnic groups. The process will include capacity building for authorities to work in a participatory and inclusive manner. A key component of the project is the construction of climate and disaster-resilient infrastructure systems. An additional focus is climate action mainstreamed urban planning.

## **1.2. Project Framework**

The project is comprised of 3 components, 3 outcomes:

| Expected Result   | Indicators   | Baseline data   | Targets   | Res-ponsibility                          |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Project component 1:</b> Develop town level master plans which integrate climate change adaptation into socially inclusive infrastructure, spatial planning and land-use management in and beyond the project area.  |  |   |   |  |
| Capacity built at District, Provincial and National level to plan for climate-resilient infrastructure  |  |   |   |  |
| <b>Outcome 1.1</b><br>40 government staff, at least 15 of whom female, have increased capacity to design climate resilient urban infrastructure in small towns  | Level of capacity at the subnational level increased                                 | Capacity to autonomously plan adaptation projects at the sub-national level is limited      | 5 New adaptation projects prepared by sub-national staff  | Executing entities (MPWT)                |
| <b>Output 1.1.1</b> Training provided to district, provincial and national government staff on resilient infrastructure design. Female government staff must be represented   | Number of government staff trained, disaggregated by sex                             | There is constrained capacity for government staff to plan for new resilient infrastructure | 40 government staff trained, 15 of whom are female.   | Executing entities (MPWT)                |
| <b>Outcome 1.2</b><br>60 government staff, at least 20 of whom are female, have capacity to develop climate resilient town master plans and two master plans approved, that support the development of resilient infrastructure, serving 57,144 people, 53.5% of whom are female. | Comprehensive adaptation action plans in place for Sayphouthong and Sethamouak Towns | No such plans developed or in place   | Sayphouthong and Sethamouak Towns have comprehensive adaptation action plans in place that consider infrastructure, as well as economic, social and environmental adaptation actions beyond the life of this project. | Executing Entities (MPWT) and UN-Habitat |
| <b>Outcome 1.2.1</b><br>Training provided to district, provincial and national government staff on climate action mainstreamed urban planning. Female government staff must be represented  | No. of staff trained disaggregated by sex  | There is very limited capacity at all levels to plan for climate change adaptation actions  | 60 staff, 20 of whom female, trained  | Executing entities (MPWT)                |

| Expected Result  | Indicators                 | Baseline data  | Targets  | Res-ponsibility           |
|--|----------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Outcome 1.3.1</b><br>Two master plans developed, using knowledge generated by the project, to both provide sustainable adaptation benefits to the infrastructure designed under this project and to enable the government to better plan for adaptation in other infrastructure, beyond that in the project area  | Developed adaptation plans | There are currently no adaptation plans and no training has been provided on developing such plans | 60 staff trained, 20 of whom female. 2 masterplans developed. The master plans will include specific provisions for the development and climate change resilience of women | Executing entities (MPWT) |
| <b>Activities</b><br><br>1.1.1 Define trainee group<br>1.1.2 Baseline knowledge/training needs assessment<br>1.1.3 Prepare the exact nature of the training materials based on the specific requirements of the trainee group<br>1.1.4 Provide the trainings and mentorship of the trainee group through a mixture of training workshops and ‘on the job’ type training<br><br>1.1.5 Monitor the achievement of the output of the training<br>1.2.1 Define trainee group (note that this is a different group from that trained under Output 1.1)<br>1.2.2 Baseline knowledge/training needs assessment<br>1.2.3 Prepare the exact nature of the training materials based on the specific requirements of the trainee group<br>1.2.4 Provide the trainings and mentorship of the trainee group through a mixture of training workshops and ‘on the job’ type training<br>1.2.5 Monitor the achievement of the output of the training<br>1.3.1 Identify key vulnerabilities by re-confirming those presented in this proposal<br>1.3.2 Define objectives for the planning process<br>1.3.3 Define shortlist of proposed future adaptation actions through further multi-criteria analysis, cost-benefit analysis and applying environmental and social safeguards, considering the specific needs of women and indigenous people<br>1.3.4 Write up draft plans for review and approval<br>1.3.5 Approve draft plans |                            |  | <b>Milestones</b><br><br>Activities begin by month 6<br>All trainings complete by month 24<br>Plans developed by month 30 Complete by month 36                             |                           |
| Project Component 2: Socially inclusive infrastructure built in target towns that protects people from climate change related impacts and provides continuous services despite current and anticipated future changes in the climate   |                            |  |  |                           |

| Expected Result  | Indicators   | Baseline data   | Targets  | Res-ponsibility              |
|--|--|---|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Outcome 2</b><br>57,144 people, 53.5% of whom are female, who currently have inadequate water and/or protective infrastructure, have access to year-round, clean water and protective infrastructure despite current climate hazards and future changes in climate  | The target population has access to clean, year-round water supply, which is able to withstand current and anticipated future climate extremes | Neither town has access to reliable water supply, nor capacity to adapt to future changes in climate conditions   | 57,144 people, 53.5% of whom are female, have access to affordable, clean and climate-resilient water supply   | UN-Habitat, NPSE Savannakhet |
| <b>Output 2.1.</b> New resilient infrastructure constructed in response to climate change impacts, including variability   | Physical infrastructures and connections in place  | There is no adaptive water supply infrastructure in place at present in the two towns   | 2 water supply systems constructed that are able to continue functionality in present and anticipated future climate conditions                                      | UN-Habitat, NPSE Savannakhet |
| <b>Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Re-confirm designs by engineer</li><li>• Further public consultation, including consultations with women and indigenous people</li><li>• Procure materials</li><li>• Hire local communities through the People’s Process</li><li>• Begin construction</li><li>• Establish NPSE offices and management structure in the two districts</li><li>• Monitor (including under ESMP)</li><li>• Complete</li></ul> |  |   | <b>Milestones</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Construction underway by Month 9</li><li>• Complete by month 42</li></ul>                                  |                              |
| <b>Project component 3:</b> Knowledge and awareness enhanced from national to local levels along the economic corridor, ensuring sustainability and potentially leading to policy changes at the national level  |  |   |  |                              |
| <b>Outcome 3</b><br>Project implementation is fully transparent. All stakeholders, including women, are informed of products and results and have access to these for replication.   | Level of awareness at the local and national level of climate change adaptation actions and potential for replication                          | Awareness of the need to take adaptation actions and the potential for replication remains very low aside from specialists in climate change adaptation | At least 100, including at least 35 women, government staff are aware of the project’s activities and have improved knowledge and capacity to replicate its benefits | UN-Habitat, NPSE Savannakhet |

| Expected Result   | Indicators   | Baseline data  | Targets   | Res-ponsibility |
|---|--|--|---|-----------------|
| <b>Output 3.1.</b><br>Project activities and results are captured and disseminated through appropriate information for the beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders and the public in general.  | No. of knowledge products generated by the project (knowledge products could be newspaper articles, published case studies and tools or guidelines). | Information-sharing is typically limited, and there is no institutionalised mechanism to capture project results | At least 20 knowledge products generated by the project by its end (see indicators column)  | MoNRE           |
| <b>Output 3.2</b><br>Climate policy – especially the National Adaptation Plan and post-Paris agreement reporting – influenced to reflect the challenges of climate change adaptation in basic service and protective infrastructure, including the provision of infrastructure in a way that benefits women   | NAP and post-Paris climate policies and reporting reflect urban adaptation and basic service provision priorities, and issues relating to women      | National Climate change related policies show some consideration of urban infrastructure adaptation              | NAP and all post-Paris climate policy thoroughly reflects urban and basic service adaptation priorities   | MoNRE           |
| <b>Activities</b><br><br>3.1.1 Develop case studies, and other appropriate good practice documentation.<br>3.1.2 Establish contact with national newspapers and write semi-regular articles about project successes<br>3.1.3 Based on training, develop local language guidance and tools. Where guidance is produced for communities it should be usable as oral materials, for the benefit of indigenous and illiterate sections of the community.<br>3.1.4 Develop video, fliers and other KM products, as appropriate and under the guidance of the PMC<br><br>3.2.1 Engage in regular dialogue with NAP stakeholders and those engaged in Post- Paris work<br>3.2.2. Conduct alignment workshops with NAP Stakeholders<br>3.2.3 Provide support to NAP team and other stakeholders involved in Post-Paris policy work to integrate urban and basic service adaptation considerations |  |  | <b>Milestones</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities under 3.1 will be implanted regularly throughout the project</li> <li>• Activities under output 3.2 will be implemented on-demand, in alignment with the NAP and climate policy process</li> </ul> |                 |

## 2. Mid-term Evaluation

### 2.1 Mandate of the Mid-term Evaluation

This mid-term evaluation of the ‘Building climate and disaster resilience capacities of vulnerable small towns in Lao PDR’ project (“the project” hereafter) is mandated by the donor, Adaptation Fund. UN-Habitat

traditionally undertakes evaluation through the intervention of internal staff with expertise in evaluating programmes and who are not involved in the implementation of the project. It is also in-line with the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy (2013) and the Revised UN-Habitat Evaluation Framework (2016).

## 2.2 Purpose and Objectives of the Mid-term Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation is to provide the donor, Adaptation Fund, and implementing partners with an assessment of the performance of the project so far and based on the agreement, log frame, activities and budget. The mid-term will identify key lessons and propose practical recommendations for follow-up during the remaining period of the project. This report will also provide inputs for terminal evaluation to be conducted at the end of the project in 2024.

The overall objective of the mid-term evaluation is to make an appraisal of the performance of the project. The specific objectives for undertaking the mid-term evaluation of the project are:

- a) Assess implementation progress made in activities towards achieving the planned results;
- b) Assess the continued relevance, effectiveness and impact of the project in supporting local governments/settlements in building resilience and engagement of stakeholder groups in implementing actions;
- c) Recommend strategic, programmatic and management considerations for implementing the remaining part of the project.

## 2.2. Scope and Focus

The mid-term evaluation is expected to assess achievements made so far, performance, risks/challenges and opportunities through an in-depth evaluation of completed and on-going activities of the project. This evaluation will be based on **Theory of Change** of the project and will outline the results chain and pathways as well as assumptions.

## 2.3 Evaluation Questions based on Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation will consider, for each result (1-5):

**A. *Relevance:*** Are the project's adopted strategies pertaining to each Result and overall objective still valid?

- Rationale of the Result and its objectives
- Relationship to the SDGs, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda and 'Next Steps'
- Changes in Result context during implementation
- Institutional and partner priorities
- Ownership by national and local stakeholders

**B. *Effectiveness:*** Are the delivery of activities and outputs contributing to the achievement of the Results and overall objective?

- Actual or expected achievement of Results at the time of the mid-term evaluation
- Factors and processes affecting the achievement of Results
- How appropriate and effective are the partnerships and other institutional relationships, including Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) and other agreements?
- Outcomes to date (positive/negative, foreseen/unforeseen) on the project partners, (including network partners, local governments, and national governments and their related local institutions; and other stakeholders);
- Outcomes/foreseen impact (positive/negative, foreseen/unforeseen) on local collaborating partners, consultants and professionals involved in the implementation of the project



- Are vulnerable groups and crosscutting issues of gender, youth, climate change and human rights integrated in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?

**C. *Efficiency: What is the efficiency of the implementation to date?***

- Action progress compared to plans, budget and overall performance
- Were the activities and outputs delivered in a cost-efficient and timely manner?
- Implementation efficiency

**D. *Sustainability: To what extent are the project effects towards building capacity sustainable?***

- Factors affecting or likely to affect sustainability of the Results
- Established networks among institutions, local authorities; established partnerships
- From “built capacities to building capacity”: utilising programme team, consultants, partners and trained municipal staff as multipliers
- Using new knowledge to build up confidence: owned, further disseminated and applied
- Implementing capacity of the cooperation partners to take the activities forward

The evaluator may expound on the evaluation questions, as necessary, in order to carry out the objectives of the mid-term evaluation.

## **2.4 Stakeholder Involvement**

It is expected that this mid-term evaluation will be participatory and involving key stakeholders.

Stakeholders will be kept informed of the evaluation processes including design, information, collection and evaluation reporting and results dissemination to create a positive attitude towards the evaluation and enhance its utilization. Partners, donor, national government/ local authorities, beneficiaries and other stakeholders may participate through interviews, focus group discussions or survey.

## **3. Mid-term Evaluation Approach and Methodology**

### **3.1 Mid-term Evaluation Approach**

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out by UN-Habitat following the evaluation norms and standards of the United Nations System. The following criteria are meant to guide the evaluation process. The main emphasis is placed on project delivery and results, lessons learned and recommendations for the way forward. Findings in the evaluation should be exemplified with evidence-based data emanating from specific contributions.

### **3.2 Mid-term Evaluation Methods**

A variety of methods will be applied to collect information during the mid-term evaluation. These methods include but not limited to the following elements:

- (i) **Desk review of relevant documents**, including project document, work plans, progress and monitoring reports, cooperation agreements, activity reports, training and capacity building reports and materials, publications, outreach and communication materials, website, etc.
- (ii) **Key informant interviews and consultations**, including open-ended interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including government officials, representatives from implementing agencies, partner organizations, and community leaders and UN-Habitat staff:
- (iii) **Surveys** to obtain quantitative information on stakeholders’ views and perceptions, questionnaires to different target audiences will be deployed as deemed relevant to give views on various evaluation issues.
- (iv) **Field visits to assess selected activities**, as feasible within the budget of the evaluation, should provide insights into the scope (time), depth and range of activities of the project.

The evaluator will describe expected data analysis and instruments methodologies to be used in the inception report. Presentation of the evaluation findings should include: evaluation purpose and objectives, evaluation methodology and approach, findings (achievements and performance rating assessments), conclusions, lessons learned, recommendations.

#### **4. Accountability and Responsibilities**

This mid-term evaluation will be managed the HSO at ROAP and the field office under the guidance of the independent Evaluation Unit of UN-Habitat. Specifically, UN-Habitat commitment to the evaluation process entails:

- Reviewing documentation and briefings
- Engaging key reviewers/informants
- Providing logistical support and travel arrangement for the evaluation
- Providing inputs to the draft report, in consultation with selected partners
- Sharing the results with partners, donors and stakeholders
- Work thoroughly to ensure that contractual requirements are met and approve all deliverables

The donor, Adaptation Fund, will be kept informed of the evaluation process and will receive the main deliverables of the evaluation (inception report, draft report and final report) for comments and endorsement.

The Evaluation team will be responsible for conducting the evaluation and producing the required deliverables. Specifically, the Evaluation team will be responsible for:

- Conducting and delivering results of the evaluation as outlined above
- Demonstrating professional and ethical standards in conducting the task
- Performing the task in line with the allocated time-frame
- Informing the management about progress of the assignment
- Delivering expected deliverables, including high quality final report of the evaluation

#### **5. Evaluator**

The experts selected will prove to have a relevant professional background and well-documented experience of monitoring and evaluation and assessment of projects with similar scope and focus. Furthermore relevant knowledge on climate change adaptation is desirable.

##### **5.1. Competencies of Evaluator**

**Professionalism:** Demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject areas. Good research, analytical and problem-solving skills. Conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results.

**Communication:** Excellent and effective written and oral skills. Ability to convince people through constructive argumentation and to present information in a concise and accurate manner. Negotiating skills and ability to enable good communication and understanding between different interest groups, organizations etc.

**Planning and Organizing:** Proven ability to plan, coordinate and monitor own work and that of others. Ability to work under pressure and use time efficiently. Identifies priority activities and assignments, and adjust priorities as required.

**Teamwork:** Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals. Solicits input by valuing ideas and expertise of others and is willing to learn from others.

## 5.2. Qualifications of Evaluator

### Education

- A post-graduate degree in social sciences, environmental science, engineering, economics, international development or related field.

### Work experience and other requirements

- At least 5 years' experience of monitoring and evaluation
- Proven track record of working on projects in collaboration with government and international development partners
- Experience working in the target provinces would be ideal
- Knowledge of UN agency, the Adaptation Fund or similar internationally funded projects is an asset

## 5.3. Language

- Fluency in English, and knowledge of Lao, if any, will be an asset.

## 5.4. Work Schedule

The work for the evaluation is foreseen for a total of 8 weeks (4 weeks/consultant) over a period of 4 months: February to June 2023. The evaluation will include some travel to meet project partners.

## 5.5. Deliverables

The Evaluation Team will be responsible for delivering the following outputs:

- Draft Evaluation Report on Results (Jan 2023)
- Evaluation Final Report including all Results and overall project evaluation (Feb 2023)

## 6. Provisional Time Frame

| # | Task Description   | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb |
|---|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | Preparation and approval of work plan and methodology of work  | X   |     |     |     |
| 2 | Data collection including document reviews, interviews and group meetings                            | X   | X   |     |     |
| 3 | Analysis of evaluation findings, commence draft report writing and briefings to UN-Habitat           |     | X   |     |     |
| 4 | Presentation of preliminary findings on results  |     |     | X   |     |
| 5 | Draft Evaluation Report  |     |     | X   |     |
| 6 | Review of Evaluation Report  |     |     |     | X   |
| 7 | Production delivery of Final Evaluation Report, including all results and overall Project evaluation |     |     |     | X   |

## **ANNEXES**

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Annex 01 | Terms of Reference   |
| Annex 02 | Timeframe and Implementation Schedule Progress (as of February 2023) |

## ANNEX 1: *Timeframe and Implementation Schedule Progress*

[illegible]



## **MID-TERM EVALUATION**

### **Building climate and disaster resilience capacities of vulnerable small towns in Lao PDR**

**A mid-term evaluation report for Adaptation Fund funded project**

#### **CLIENT**

UN-Habitat

#### **AUTHOR**

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Phengphone Khamseansouk

#### **DATE**

February 2023

#### **STATUS**

Final