NATIONAL ASSEMBLY STRATEGIC SUPPORT PROJECT (NASSP)

Project ID: 00091022

Project Description

To support Lao PDR in the process of graduating from the ranks of the least developed countries by 2020 and to strengthen the role of the National Assembly, UNDP Lao PDR is implementing the integrated ‘National Assembly Strategic Support Project’. This project will strengthen the National Assembly as an accountable, inclusive and responsive institution. It will also enhance trust in state-society relations, and promote inclusive political processes with a focus on women, youth, and disadvantaged groups. The foundation of this project is on a solid base of understanding the Lao PDR’s context after years of support to the National Assembly by UNDP. Now, processes can be fast-tracked to support national policy and planning for inclusive development.

Main Objectives and Outcomes

The project objective is to strengthen the legislative, oversight and representational role of the National Assembly in order to build and sustain democracy and development in Lao PDR. The project seeks to achieve this objective through the following three outputs:

Output 1: Enhanced capacities of National Assembly committees in fulfilling their legislation-making role, including:

- National Assembly members are better informed about the legislative development process in line with the Legal Sector Master Plan
- Committees have increased capacity in discussing and debating draft laws within their scope
- National Assembly committees interact more with women organisations and marginalised groups in order to better integrate gender and social inclusion issues in the law-making process.

Output 2: Strengthened institutional and human resource capacities for an effective National Assembly support service, including:

- National Assembly capacities better match the needs of committees and members to implement their assigned tasks
- Research and Information provision for the legislation and oversight work of the National Assembly are improved

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• Trainings and skills development activities for National Assembly members and NA staff are well planned and managed.

Output 3: Increased dialogue promoted between the National Assembly and citizens to strengthen citizen participation in decision making, including:

• Constituents are able to access timely information about the legislative work of the National Assembly and participate in public consultations
• National Assembly discussions and deliberations better reflect the points of view and needs of constituents
• National Assembly outreach skills and ability to interact with citizens and stakeholders are strengthened
• Responsiveness by the National Assembly to citizens’ concerns is enhanced
• Capacities of stakeholders and National Assembly committees to engage in substantive issues through provision of technical expertise and flexible funding modalities is increased

Results and Achievements to Date
The capacity of National Assembly committees to successfully and effectively carry out their law-making role has increased, thus strengthening the legislative system in Lao PDR. This increased capacity is the result of several assessments workshops on the implementation of economic laws supported by the project, a review of the Constitution and technical support to the Foreign Affairs Department and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

Importantly, gender and social inclusion components were integrated in the draft law-making manual which was developed by the UNDP Lao PDR Support Project to the Legal Sector Master Plan.

The National Assembly’s institutional and human resource capacities for an effective support service were also strengthened through the work of this project. Specifically, senior staff were trained in strategic planning and institutional performance assessment, resulting in improved staffing patterns and increased staff productivity across the institution.

The project has worked with various National Assembly departments to help develop tools and materials in increasing understanding parliamentary research methods.

Dialogue has been successfully promoted between the National Assembly and the people of Lao PDR to strengthen citizen participation in the government’s decision-making processes. This has been achieved through the provision of support to improve capacities of National Assembly staff in the management of petitions and hotline calls during Ordinary Sessions and in conducting parliamentary outreach activities and public hearings and consultations. The project also supported the review of the Petitions Law and various activities were conducted regarding the participation of constituents in National Assembly public engagement tools.

The project designed various capacity assessments and priority areas consistent with the policies of the National Assembly to formulate its future strategic plans.

The project has also made a number of cross-cutting achievements. These key achievements include extensive contribution to the National Assembly Women’s Parliamentarian Caucus, development partner coordination, response to parliamentary program requests, gender awareness raising and capacity building for women National Assembly members.

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