STRATEGIC SUPPORT TO ACHIEVE SDG 5 IN LAO PDR

**Project Description**

Significant accomplishments have been realized towards national development in Lao PDR. However, challenges in poverty, gender inequality and social exclusion need to be addressed more effectively in order to graduate from Least Development Country Status by mid-2020s and achieve the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals.

This project builds on the success of the Republic of Korea’s Saemaul “Initiative Towards Inclusive and Sustainable New Communities” (ISNC) which was launched by UNDP in 2015, followed by this new phase of support since mid-2018. Actions will be further directed and targeted to impact women and the most vulnerable who depend on the informal economy by focusing this support for the enhancement of their livelihoods. Capacities of the main local authorities will be developed to better provide and support services of vocational education and training for poverty alleviation of women and other vulnerable groups including ethnic communities and the youth.

![Women attending the sewing course at the Livelihood Support Centre in Saravan Province. Photo: UNDP Lao PDR/Katia Gruetter](image)

**Project Summary:**
- **Duration:** July 2018 – December 2021
- **Geographic coverage:** Up to 3 provinces (Saravan, Xaysomboun and Houaphan)
- **Focus areas:** Improved livelihoods, poverty reduction and women’s empowerment
- **Implementing partners:** Lao Women’s Union

The Strategic Support to Achieve SDG5 in Lao PDR aims to scale up the achievements and lessons learned made in the first phase. To promote a mindset shift from heavy dependency on external support to a more community self-reliance and self-help focused approach for planning and implementation of local development activities. Ensuring stronger policy linkage at local and national level, by taking the lead in an effective monitoring of the progress and achievement of the SDG 5 “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” target.

**Main Project Objectives and Expected Outcomes**

The overall goal of the project is to help improve livelihood development, increase household incomes, particularly the incomes of the most vulnerable female population, and to ensure food and nutrition security, as well as reduce poverty through participatory and inclusive approach (ISNC model). Community awareness, effective participation, and ownership are established in order to achieve the results and sustainability of the project intervention. Working with Lao Women’s Union (LWU), UNDP will support and promote national policies with district, provincial and central governments to improve rural livelihoods.

**Expected Results**

**Result 1: Increased business opportunities and SME development skills for female entrepreneurs.** A higher number of female entrepreneurs that manage their business effectively and more “One District One Product” female businesses certified by the authority for quality standard. Establishment of a cooperative model on agriculture value
added run by women and more female entrepreneurs managing ecotourism. Greater equity inclusion and access to decent employment contract and self-employment women.

**Result 2: Small farmers have better agricultural productivity and gain income through gender-sensitive advisory service.** Gender-sensitize innovative demand-driven services for female farmers and disadvantaged groups, implying that a greater number of women have access to at least one type of agriculture technology. Further enhancement of the capacities through the livelihood support centers, vocational training center of LWU and agricultural advisory services are delivered to small farmers, particularly to women and ethnic minorities, to achieve better production results.

**Result 3: Knowledge and skills of women and mothers about nutrition and health care are increased and appropriate feeding is practiced.** Building district staff’s and village trainers’ capacities for triggering and maintaining demand for intra-household dietary diversity. Capacities for district staff will also be built for implementing Behavior Change Communication campaigns in the areas of food hygiene, use of safe water, sanitation, hands hygiene and safe disposal of child feces. The intention is to induce behavioral change at intra-household level through communication targeted on the benefits of dietary diversity, nutrition, and agro-biodiversity.

**Result 4: ISNC model is endorsed by the Government of Lao PDR and SDG 5 is effectively monitored.** Scaling-up of the ISNC model based on the experiences of the Republic of Korea in community-based development, as well as a gender-sensitive planning approach integrated ISNC model and monitoring of national action on SDG 5.

**Contact Information**
Ms. Aksonethip Somvorachit
Communications Analyst UNDP
Tel: (856 21) 267778
E-mail: aksonethip.somvorachit@undp.org

Mr. Jerome Dubois-Mercent
Head of Governance, Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction UNDP
Tel: (856 21) 267720
E-mail: jerome.dubois.mercent@undp.org

**Funding:**
- **Total project budget:** USD 1,800,000
- **UNDP (2018/2019):** USD 150,000

The project is expected to conduct the following:
- A gender analysis of the country’s Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) sector;
- Develop gender-responsive SME Development Plan;
- Enhance a network of business development services providers which include those specialized in vocational training and skills development for women’s enterprise;
- Acceleration of decentralized registration of women’s enterprises at the district level;
- Improvement of trade and market information targeted at SMEs run by women.

**Strategic Approach**
The value chains of agribusiness enterprises will be improved to deliver higher-value products and female enterprises will be supported to develop different brand products in the context of One District One Product led by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.