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Country Paper: Lao People's Democratic Republic

This paper, prepared by Mr Thipsavanh Intharack, Acting Chief of Survey Division, National Statistical Centre (NSC), Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic, has been reproduced as submitted. It has been issued without formal editing.

Country Paper

of the

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Prepared for

**“Workshop on Assessing and Improving Statistical Quality:
Measuring the Non-observed economy”
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Introduction

I. Background

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a landlocked country and located in the middle of the South - East Asia region, with an area of 236,800 square kilometers. With borders linking with neighboring countries of People's Republic of China to the North, Myanmar to the Northern West, Royal Thailand to the West, Royal Cambodia to the South and Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the East.

The main land about 80 percent of the country's area is covered by hills and mountains, making communications and land transport difficult, about 60 percent of the country's areas are covered by forests.

The administrative system of Lao PDR is divided into 17 provinces and 1 Special region; 142 districts. The distribution of population was 83 percent of households living in rural areas, with a focus on agriculture and raising animals, and 17 percent of households in urban areas.

Lao PDR is classified as a least developed country, with a per capita income of about 350 US\$ in 1999. Lao PDR has become an ASEAN member country in 1997.

II. Population and Economic

The population of Lao PDR had a total of 4.57 million persons in March 1995. Out of these 2.26 million (49.4 percent) were males and 2.31 million (50.6 percent) were females. The population density for the country is still low compared to countries in the region. However, the population density has increased from 15 persons per square km in 1985 to 19 in 1995 and is estimated to be 21 in 2000. The last census in 1995 revealed that 44 percent of the total population is under the age of 15. About one-fifth of the population live in urban areas. With a current population growth rate of 2.4 percent per annum in 1995, the country's population will grow to 6.8 million in the year 2001 and 8.6 million by the year 2020. Total fertility rate is 5.6 and infant mortality rate is 104 per 1,000 live births in 1995 and child mortality rate is 170. The dominant religion is Buddhism.

The country is characterized by subsistence agriculture, it remains predominantly rural, with agriculture accounting for 56 percent of GDP and industry's share has risen from 14 to 17 percent of GDP.

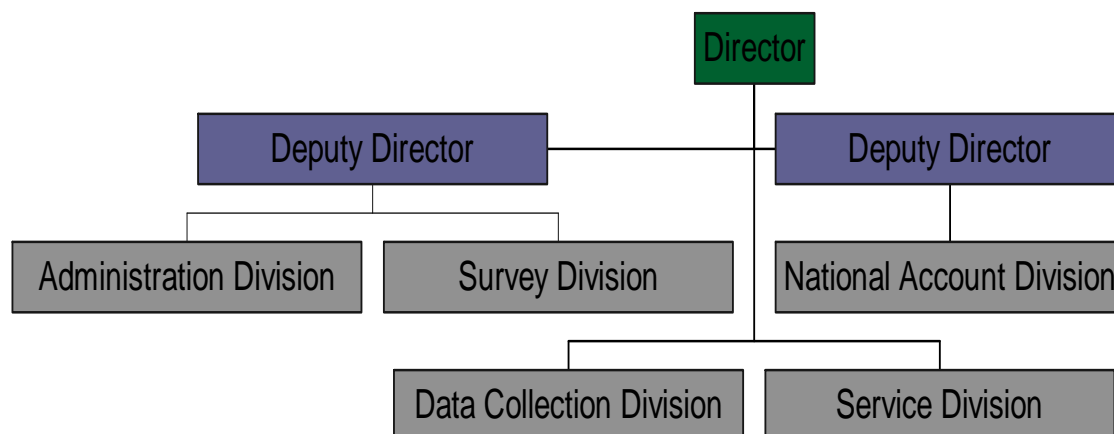
The Government of Lao PDR resolved to raise the country's growth rate, the Government initiated economic reforms under the New Economic Mechanism (NEM), and in 1988 began to implement extensive market liberalization measures. Throughout the 1990s, the growth rate has been increased annually:

Gross domestic product (unit Mill. Kips)	2002	2003
Agricultural income		
Industries income		
Services income		
Import duties		

III. National Statistical Center

National statistical center (NSC) is located in Vientiane Municipality, responsible for collection, processing and analysis social - economic data, supply data to Government and other organizations, and publication of official statistics. Its also undertakes training courses for the statistical manpower development. In addition, the NSC is also provided technical assistance for surveys done by others. Human sources the NSC has 43 staff.

Organization Chart of National Statistical Center



Different function of those division:

1. Administration division; main task is:

- Administrative reception,
- Financial management and
- Administrative duty.

2. Survey division: Main task is :

- Survey Plan
- Sampling Design
- Design questionnaire
- Training
- Field work
 - Organize and prepare field work
 - Supervise, instruct and train enumerators
 - Monitoring data collection
 - Carry out interviews
- Make statistics
 - Process data (to code etc)
 - Data Entry
 - Analysis and evaluation data
 - Report

3. Data collection division:

- Collecting Statistical data from administrative record with line ministries and provincial level.
- Publishing annually report, Quarterly and Monthly report and improved Village Statistics.
- CPI estimation by monthly.

4. Data service division:

- Provide and supply Data to user by book, Diskette and CDROM
- Basic Statistics training

5. National accounting division:

- Calculate yearly estimate of GDP
- National Account

IV. Statistics report System:

- Administrative report :
Every year, NSC are getting report from Statistical Unit in each provinces. Then compare all data in each sector to with line ministries before public year book statistics.
- Surveys and Censuses:
NSC is mainly conducting the surveys for Socio-economics such as:
 - Population Census (Every 10 years last census is 1995)
 - Agricultural Census (Every 10 years last census is 1999)
 - Reproductive Health Survey (Every 5 years last survey is 2000)
 - MICS survey (Every 5 years last survey is 2000)
 - LECS survey (Every 5 years last survey is 2002/03)
 - Annual Household Survey last survey is 2002
 - Annual Establishment survey last survey is 2002

V. LAO CONSUMPTION AND EXPENDITURE SURVEY

The third Lao consumption and Expenditure Survey was undertaken from March 2002 to February 2003. The objective of LECS are basically to provide :

- Macro estimates for National Accounts, both private consumption and household investment and income from agriculture and household businesses
- The consumption structure (weighing system) for the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- Estimates on labor force.
- Statistics on access to services.
- Statistics on nutrition.
- Statistics on poverty, income distribution.
- Education indicators
- Health indicators

Organization

- *People involve in the survey*
- *NSC Central 12 Supervisors*
- *Province 36, 2 per province*
- *Enumerators 180, 2 per team*

Time survey

- *12 months period starting in February 2002 to March 2003.*
- *average 45 village per months*
- *Each village sample selected 15 household by LSS*

Questionnaire

- *Village*
- *Price*
- *School*
- *Household*
 - *Diary*
 - *Time use*

Stratification of PSUs

- *Primary stratification: Urban/rural * province*
- *Secondary stratification in rural areas: according to access/no access to road*

Primary Sampling Units

- *LECS-II used EAs. EA boundaries then still well known to the local authorities.*
- *People are no longer aware of the EA boundaries.*
- *Villages are very well defined, no problems with fuzzy boundaries.*
- *Villages have larger variation in size*

Stratification of PSUs

- *Primary stratification: Urban/rural * province*
- *Secondary stratification in rural areas: according to access/no access to road*
- *Implicit geographical stratification within explicit strata*

Sample design

- *Two-stage sample. PSU=villages (540), SSU=households (15 hh per PSU).*
- *Total sample 8100 households*

Stratified on 18 provinces and within provinces on urban/rural sector. Further stratified on villages with “access to road” and “no access to road”.

- *Sample allocated to provinces prop. to the square root of population size according to population census.*
- *The PSUs are selected with a systematic probability proportionate to size (PPS).*
- *15 households were selected with systematic sampling in each village.*