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# National Air Quality Awareness Raising Workshop And Stakeholder Mapping For Clean Air Plan Development

## CONCEPT NOTE

**Date:** 27-28 August 2024
**Location:** Souphattra Hotel Luang Prabang, Luang Prabang City, Luang Prabang Province
**Co-Organizers:** Natural Resource and Environment Research Institute - Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (NRERI-MoNRE), Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)
**Language:** English, Lao and Thai.

**Introduction**

Air pollution is a growing global concern with far-reaching impacts on public health, the environment, and socio-economic development. In Lao PDR, rapid urbanization and industrial growth have intensified air pollution, posing significant challenges to sustainable development. To address these issues effectively, it is crucial to raise awareness and enhance the capacity of government officials and stakeholders to mitigate the harmful effects of air pollution and ensure community well-being.

In Lao PDR, level of awareness of air pollution is rising, driven by the impacts of seasonal haze typically observed during the dry season. In regions like Luang Prabang, air pollution often reaches unhealthy levels during the burning season, which can affect people's health, among others. Four provinces in the north—Bokeo, Phongsaly, Oudomxay, and Luangprabang—and Savannakhet in the south have been identified as pollution hotspots. The country experiences a significant number of forest fires, particularly in the northern regions. Additionally, Savannakhet and Oudomxay, along with Xayabury and Vientiane, have been identified as cropland fire hotspots[1]. This haze not only affects local community but also deters tourists due to poor air quality[2]. A 2023 study by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) identified agricultural fires and forest burning as the main contributors to air pollution in Lao PDR, particularly during the dry season. Despite the increased visibility of the problem, there is still scope to have a more comprehensive understanding of air pollution and its sources.

To support the development of the clean air plan in Lao PDR to be initiated by NRERI, this stakeholder mapping activity is being conducted to help identify key stakeholders, assess their interests and needs, and analyze their potential contribution to the clean air plan's viability. By effectively engaging with these groups, the development team can ensure a more consultative and effective implementation of the clean air plan. The stakeholder mapping and consultation will also help identify opportunities for city-to-city cooperation and potential common urban air quality mitigation measures within urban airsheds in Lao PDR. This awareness-raising workshop is an initial step towards providing a better understanding of the current situation regarding data and information related to air pollution in Lao PDR, and seeking solutions for improved air quality management among government agencies and other key stakeholders.

[1]Tattaris, M., Yasmin, N., Khiewvongphachan, X., Jonckheere, I., Ferrand, P. & Henry, M. 2023. Spatio-temporal dynamics of air pollution and the delineation of hotspots in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc4231en
[2]Delgado, A. and Siviero, B. 2023. Extreme levels of burning haze in Laos threaten public health, tourism. https://southeastasiaglobe.com/smog-in-laos-threatens-tourism-public-health/#:~:text=The%20orange%20haze%20that%20engulfed,popular%20tourist%20destination%20in%20Laos. (accessed July 2024)

**Objectives**

This workshop aims to empower and raise awareness of the key stakeholders in Lao PDR with the knowledge and tools necessary to tackle air pollution effectively.

1. **Increase Understanding**: Enhance the knowledge of government officials and stakeholders about the sources, impacts, and current status of air pollution in Lao PDR.
2. **Promote Best Practices**: Share best practices and successful strategies from other countries on reducing air pollution.
3. **Engage Stakeholders**: Facilitate collaboration between government agencies in addressing air pollution.

**Expected Outcomes**

1. **Enhanced knowledge and awareness**: Participants will have a deeper understanding of air pollution issues, impacts, and management strategies.
2. **Action-oriented**: Recommended actions tailored to local contexts to mitigate air pollution which could feed into the clean air plan development process.
3. **Strengthened collaboration**: Identified different stakeholders working on air quality and related issues, their potential roles and responsibilities in air quality management, and opportunities for collaboration.

**Logistics**

- **Participants**: Approximately 30 participants from different government agencies.
- **Facilities**: Conference hall with audio-visual equipment, breakout rooms for group discussions, and interpretation.

**Target Participants:**

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Department of Environment, NRERI, Department of Climate Change, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Inspection);
- Ministry of Health ( Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion);
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Department of Forestry, National Agriculture and Forestry);
- Ministry of Public Work and Transport (Department of Urban Planning and Housing, Department of Transportation, Department of Road);
- Ministry of Industry and Commerce (Department of Industry and Handicraft, Department of SME);
- Ministry of Energy and Mines (Department of Mining, Department of Electricity);
- Ministry of Planning and Investment (National Statistical Bureau);
- Province Natural Resources and Environment Offices (Luang Prabang Province, Vientiane Province, Savannakhet Province);
- National University of Lao (Faculty of Environment Science);
- National Institute for Economic Research (NIER)
- Development partners, such as UN in Lao PDR, WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, GGGI, FAO, GIZ, etc.
- Civil society organizations, such as RECOFTC

## Preliminary Agenda

### Day 1 | Understanding Air Pollution and Data Availability

| Time | Topic/Theme | Speakers |
|---|---|---|
| 08.30-09.00 | Registration | |
| 09.00-09.10 | **Opening Remarks** | DG of NRERI<br>UNEP |
| 09.10-09.30 | **Meeting Objectives and Participant introductions** | AIT |
| 09.30-10:30 | **Session 1. Status of air quality and its health impacts**<br>Air quality status and monitoring<br>Health impact from air pollution<br>Efforts on air quality management in Lao PDR | <br>NRERI<br>Ministry of Health<br>NRERI (Environment Lab Responsibility for AQM in Laos) |
| 10:30-10:50 | Coffee Break | |
| 10:50-12.00 | **Session 2. Overview: Air quality management**<br>Overview: Air quality management, including clean air plan development and stakeholder roles<br>Introduction of Airsheds concept<br>Some lesson learned on action planning to reduce air pollution | <br>AIT<br><br>UNESCAP |
| 12.00-13.30 | Lunch | |
| 13.30-14.50 | **Session 3. Air quality management efforts in Lao PDR**<br>Status of air quality management, challenges and support needed<br>National<br>Province-level: Presentation from the PONRE 3 provinces | <br>TBC<br>Luang Prabang<br>Vientiane<br>Savannakhet |
| 14.50-15.10 | Coffee Break | |
| 15.10-15.50 | **Session 4. Emission Inventory Development (Part 1)**<br>Introduction on emissions inventory and its role for clean air plan<br>Overview of emissions inventory development tools | AIT |
| 15.50-16.00 | Summary of day 1 | NRERI |

### Day 2 | Strategies and Solutions

| Time | Topic/Theme | Speakers |
|---|---|---|
| 08.30-09.00 | Registration | |
| 09.00-09.10 | Recap of the Day 1 | NRERI |
| 09.10-09.40 | **Session 4. Emission Inventory Development (Part 2)**<br>Introduction on emissions inventory and its role for clean air plan<br>Overview of emissions inventory development tools | AIT |
| 09.40-10.10 | **Session 5. Cost of inaction on air pollution**<br>Introduction: Concept of cost of inaction on air pollution and available tools to assess | AIT |
| 10.10-10.30 | Coffee Break | |
| 10.30-12.00 | **Session 6. Sector-led efforts to reduce air pollutant emissions**<br>Ministry of Industry and Commerce<br>Ministry of Public Work and Transport<br>Ministry of Energy and Mines<br>Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry | TBC |
| 12.00-13.30 | Lunch | |
| 13.30-14.30 | **Session 7. Discussion on data availability and improvement** | All participants |
| 14.30-14.50 | Coffee Break | |
| 14.50-15.50 | **Session 7. Discussion on data availability and improvement** | All participants |

| Time | Topic/Theme | Speakers |
|---|---|---|
| | Group presentation | |
| 15.50-16.00 | **Closing Remarks** | NRERI |

**Contact**

For more information, please contact:

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