



The World Bank

Lao PDR Priority Skills for Growth (P172774)

Lao PDR Priority Skills for Growth Project

Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

Ministry of Education and Sports and Ministry of
Labour and Social Welfare

January 2022

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organization
DOF	Department of Finance
DSDE	Department of Skills Development and Employment
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GOL	Government of Lao PDR
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
LMIS	Labor Market Information System
LMP	Labor Management Procedure
LNCCI	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
LSW	Labor and Social Welfare
LSWDO	Local Social Welfare and Development Officers
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
NPA	Non-Profit Associations (Local NGO)
NTC	National TVET Council
NTC-PO	National Training Council Permanent Office
PCU	Project Coordinating Unit
PES	Public Employment Centers
PESS	Provincial Education and Sports Services
PDO	Project Development Objective
PIM	Project Implementation Manual
PLSW	Provincial Department of Labor and Social Welfare
PO	Permanent Office
POM	Project Operations Manual
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SDC	Skill Development Center
SDED	Skills Development and Employment Department



1. Introduction

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is for the Lao PDR Priority Skills for Growth. The objective of the Project is to increase and improve the acquisition of market-relevant skills and enable successful transition to jobs in Lao PDR, and in case of an Eligible Crisis or Emergency, respond promptly and effectively to it. The project's coverage is nationwide, given its focus on system-level reforms. It will also support specific institutes (Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, Skill Development Centers (SDCs), job centers and so forth) across all 17 provinces, with a focus on the more disadvantaged districts. In that regards, this SEP seeks to provide practical stakeholder engagement in skills development activities, and students (trainees), youth participation implementation in a meaningful, inclusive, consultative and engaging way throughout the life cycle of the project. This SEP is designed proportionate to the nature and scale of the project and its potential risks and impacts, which are likely to be minor because it involves mostly non-physical activities.

The project is likely to involve mostly positive impacts and improvement in skill development and employment opportunity. This is because its activities involve not only improving the quality of technical skills for young people and/or people in the working age but also equipping their training centers with the skills and knowledge to teach and manage effectively, improve training facilities, and provide self-employment promotion activities. However, indirect risks and impacts may occur as the project finances systemic interventions into the national education and human resources management system. Most likely among these are risk of project activities do not to address structural inequality in receipt of youth and prolong poor participation of ethnic groups and remote area communities. Without intervention project activities may also be ignoring social protection risks associated with gender-based and physical violence experienced by women and adolescents.

The SEP includes strategies and information on how the Project will engage with its stakeholders to ensure stakeholders can easily access project information, how to obtain project benefits, provide feedback and recommendations, and express their concerns through project activity-level grievance mechanisms. The SEP promotes constructive and responsive relationships that are important for the successful management of the Project's environmental and social risks. Although direct assessment was limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SEP has been virtually consulted with different stakeholders including key representatives of the implementing department within the Ministry of Education and Sport (MOES) and Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MOLSW) as well as representatives of selected training centres and young agriculture and marketing entrepreneurs as well as students and unemployed people from Xiengkhoung, Houphan, Vientiane, Savannaket and Champasak provinces. The virtual interviews were conducted in mid-October 2021 with the objective to better understand the aspirations of the young people about their future employment opportunities and professional career ambitions as well as the capacity and willingness/readiness of the selected training centres. The interviews also helped to design engagement strategies that are suitable in the Lao local context. The SEP considers the circumstances of vulnerable and marginalized individuals and members of ethnic groups. It is designed as an integral part of early sub-project screening, assessment, decision-making and management and monitoring of the project's environmental and social risks and impacts.

The development of this SEP involved close consultation with the National Agreement on Approval and Enforcement of Guideline on Public Involvement in Project Environmental Impact Assessment Process,

No. 707/MoNRE (2013); the Government Decree on Ethnic Groups No. 207/GoL (2020), Article 17 on the Dissemination of Information, Instruction, Policy, Law and Regulation to Lao multi-ethnic groups; the MoES COVID-19 Response Plan (2020); and the World Bank (WB) Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs)¹, especially ESS10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure. This project relies heavily on the involvement of multi-ethnic groups and communities who may require special engagement, disclosure and consultation processes as set out in ESS1 and ESS7.

2. Objective of the SEP

The objective of the SEP is to establish a systematic approach to stakeholder engagement that will help the Project identify affected and interested stakeholders, especially unemployed youth, and build and maintain meaningful two-way communication with them about project risks and benefits. It will assess the level of stakeholder interest and support for the Project and consider stakeholder views in the Project design and management of potential environmental and social impact. At project-level implementation and management, the SEP aims to promote effective, meaningful and inclusive engagement with the stakeholders including adolescents from rural communities and with diverse ethnic groups, on information that could bring benefits as well as issues that could affect them. The SEP will ensure that appropriate communication and project information on environmental and social risks and impacts is disclosed to all relevant stakeholders in a timely, understandable, accessible and culturally appropriate manner and format.

3. Project description

Th current the macroeconomic downturn coupled with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need for quick actions with big impact as well as deeper structural reform to magnify and sustain. The Project is working on achieving the “quick wins” and it suggests the following three key factors to improve the current situation as well as the necessity of system-level reform.

- **Better skills:** For Lao PDR to benefit from opportunities for economic growth, it needs an adequate number of local workers trained in labor-market relevant skills. Importantly, it needs skilled workers in three priority sectors: agriculture, logistics and ICT.
- **Better intermediation for jobs:** For well-trained individuals to be productively employed in jobs which use their skills effectively, Lao PDR needs strong labor market matching and intermediation services.
- **Better governance:** Effective skills training systems and agile labor market intermediation services depend upon strong coordination mechanisms within the government and with the private sector, strong implementation capacity and better data systems.

Economic analysis suggests few scenarios for achieving the Project objectives and based on the theory of change, it is assumed that the successful will derive from the following factors: (1) the priority sectors flourish and generate broad-based growth and jobs; (2) the Government maintains or increases domestic financing allocation to education, workforce development, and job intermediation; (3) efficient

¹ ESS 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts; ESS 2: Labor and Working Conditions; ESS 3: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management; ESS 4: Community Health and Safety; ESS 5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use, and Involuntary Resettlement; ESS 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; ESS 7: Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities; ESS 8: Cultural Heritage; ESS 9: Financial Intermediaries; ESS 10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure.

spending of financing allocated to education, workforce development and job intermediation; (4) the government facilitates migration (in and out) such that individuals can get the best return on their skills should domestic job creation stagnate; (5) increasing digitization of tasks; (6) relevant national and local authorities have sustained interest and provide dedicated staff and resources; (7) strong governance and fiduciary controls; and (8) implementation fidelity.

Based on the theory of change, the project proposes the following three components:

Component 1: Improving the quality and relevance of TECET system. This component aims to modernize the skills training system in Lao PDR such that it is responsive to labor market needs, agile and equitable. It will do so by supporting system-level reforms and interventions (subcomponent 1.1) as well as institute-level reforms in specific institutes (subcomponent 1.2), which will serve as a model for other institutes. Reforms and interventions will cover both pre-employment and workforce training. Each sub-component will include interventions with immediate impact and those with longer-term impact.

Some main activities under this component include, for instance, capacity building for TVET governance where the project will finance the implementation of trainings with essential competencies in administration, strategic planning, good governance, quality management, autonomy, leadership training for principals, vice principals, heads of departments, head teachers at selected institutions; **modernizing curriculum that addresses updating** curricula (courses and programs) in agriculture/agribusiness, logistics and ICT, and **digital skills and language courses that addresses** online digital curriculum and language courses for government workers. This component will also **support unemployed young people and disadvantage students through scholarships** programme to ensure that no student loses the opportunity to access a TVET college because of insufficient funds for tuition and board. The project will finance scholarships for up to 500 students per year, with priority given to female, rural and ethnic groups students for boarding costs.

Component 2: Enhancing job matching and youth employability. This component aims to support immediate interventions for big impact as well as longer-term reforms. It will support upgrading of the skills training sub-system operated by MoLSW and improve access to training for youth and vulnerable groups, who do not have the prior education or skills needs provided by project TVET colleges. This Component will also include piloting of self-employment promotion activities in rural area. It will place an emphasis on gender, especially unemployed women who are already seeking work to help address the low rate of economic activity among women in Lao PDR as well as employment services; training and stipends for the youth and vulnerable; and support for self-employment (individual or family businesses). Some of the activities include but not limited to: expand coverage and improve the services and capacity of public employment centers; promote provision of high quality and relevant skills through short-term training programs, with a particular emphasis on youth and vulnerable groups with the aim to promote self-employment; and facilitate labor market entry, host jobs fair and job retention.

Component 3: Better Governance, Project Management and M&E Support. This component aims to strengthen the responsiveness, overall capacity and effectiveness of the skills and employability sector in Lao PDR. This will require close collaboration between MoES and MoLSW on the one hand as well as between the government and the private sector to ensure systems and activities are aligned and coherent. Effective management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) support of the project will also contribute to achieving the overall objectives of the project. Through this component, the project will support the improving System Performance, strengthening cross-ministerial coordination through National TVET Council (NTC) and improving the image of skills training programs and job centers such as support mass media campaigns, including on television and social media, to revamp the image of skills training programs and employability services in Lao PDR.

4. Project Implementation

The project will be implemented through the existing Government structures by two line ministries; the MoES and the MoLSW. Component 1: Improving the quality and relevance of skills training programs will be implemented by Technical and Vocational Education Department (TVED) within MoES. Component 2: Enhancing job-matching and youth employability will be implemented by Skills Development and Employment Department (SDED) within MoLSW. Component 3: Better governance, project management and M&E support will be collaboratively implemented by TVED and SDED. Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC zero component) will provide immediate response to an eligible crisis or emergency, as needed. In the event of an eligible crisis or emergency this component will be determined by MoF with the World Bank, depending on the nature of the emergency. For Components 1, 2 and 3 MoES and MoLSW will assign their own team of staff responsible for technical design and implementation, FM, procurement, M&E, environmental and social risk and impact management, and administrative support. The project implementation structures will comprise a mix of government-assigned personnel as well as consultants and technical assistance. The project will finance necessary training for the teams to undertake their respective responsibilities. The implementing departments will monitor project progress against the agreed performance indicators and produce periodic progress reports. Some specific tasks include:

- **The MoES** will be in charge of the overall project on planning and execution, citizen engagement, financial management, procurement, internal and external audit, environmental and social risk management, supervision and reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. Specifically, the main activities will include: (a) capacity building for project staff; (b) provision for logistics and operational costs; and (c) strengthening the M&E framework and data use.
- **The MoLSW** in the implementation of Component 2, including for planning and execution, citizen engagement, financial management, procurement, internal and external audit, environmental and social risk management, supervision and reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. Specifically, the main activities will include: (a) capacity building for project staff; (b) provision for logistics and operational costs; and (c) strengthening the M&E framework and data use. This component will also finance tracer studies on satisfaction with trainings, intermediation services, and employment outcomes of project beneficiaries.

Since the MoES is responsible for the overall coordination and management of the project, TVED/MoES will undertake routine project-related coordination and communication with other line ministries for project implementation activities and with Ministry of Finance MoF and compile all project performance reports (financial and non-financial) from both ministries for timely submission to the World Bank. The project implementation will be guided by a Project Steering Committee, comprising relevant departments from MoES, MoLSW and other concerned agencies.

5. Regulatory frameworks

National regulatory frameworks

National frameworks contain instructions on stakeholder engagement and community consultation. A number of decrees and instructions are provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) to assist with environmental and social impact assessment and management. The more recently developed frameworks are outlined here.

The Agreement on the Approval and Enforcement of Guidelines on Public Involvement in Project Environmental Impact Assessment Process 707/MoNRE (05 February 2013): Defines processes and opportunities for communities to participate in planning and decision-making related to investment projects, raise issues related to project implementation including a process to resolve social and environmental impacts that may arise (and do this in a fair and conflict-free manner). The Agreement outlines two main objectives:

- To ensure project implementation is in accordance with the rules and regulations, is transparent and involves everyone (particularly those affected by investment projects)
- To ensure affected people receive fair and reasonable treatment and compensation from the impact that arises from investment projects.

Ministerial Instruction on the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment for the Investment Projects and Activities No. 8030/MoNRE (17 December 2013): Article 2.14 on Public Involvement of the Project and Article 2.15 on Public Involvement Process provide instructions on how project-affected persons (PAP) and other stakeholders can participate and receive information on the development plan of the investment projects and activities. The project has an obligation to cooperate and provide information on local social environmental and natural environment status. It must report to stakeholders on the progress of environmental and social management and monitoring measures in the local area and nearby locations. In addition, key stakeholders have the right to participate in field inspections, monitoring activities and consultation meetings at all levels to give comment on project preparation and review related environmental and social impact assessment reports. The public involvement process requires that MoNRE, local administrations, investment groups and the project owner have joint duty and responsibility for conducting the process of public involvement with PAP and other stakeholders during the social and environmental impact assessment. The affected persons have the right to be involved in various stages of assessment, implementation and reporting. All reports, communications and dissemination of environmental and social impact assessment reports, including PAP and other stakeholder feedback, should be conducted in Lao and local languages. The local authority of the village/district and district/province should be informed of and invited to join and provide feedback on project activities in their local areas. PAP and other stakeholders must have access to information about the project activities.

Law on Handling of Petitions No. 012/NA (2015): Provides objectives, principles and processes for applying and handling different types of grievances, petitions and complaints that may be raised by citizens. The guideline instructs that all complaints and petitions are to be filed by their line authorities at the local level up to the national level. The grievance redress processes are divided into three stages:

- Proposals are to be applied to and resolved by direct concerned authorities
- If the issue is not solved, then the grievance is to be applied to and resolved by judicial institutions at the district level
- If the complainant is still not satisfied with the result, the petition is to be applied to and resolved by the provincial assembly.

Government Decree on Ethnic Groups No. 207/GoL (20 March 2020): Article 17 Dissemination of Information, Instruction, Policy, Law and Regulation to Lao multi-ethnic groups, point 1, requires that information be presented via a translator, newspaper and digital or electronic tools. Point 2 requires that the expansion of the communication network and media to the entire country be accessed by all ethnic groups. Point 3 requires the development and improvement of communication systems in the countryside, with the objective to improve quality and training to increase ethnic groups' access to information. Article 18, Access to Legal Information and Justice, point 2, promotes helping poor,

vulnerable and disabled ethnic people access legal information and justice – ethnic groups can pursue justice procedures and official documentation and administration without incurring a fee.

Guideline on Ethnic Group Consultation (2012): Issued by the Lao Front for National Development, it provides guidelines for consultation with ethnic groups. It aims to ensure *all* ethnic groups who benefit from or are adversely affected by a development project, regardless of the funding source, are fully engaged in meaningful consultation at all stages – from project preparation to implementation. The guide also aims to ensure that potentially affected ethnic groups are fully informed of project objectives, including positive and adverse impacts on their livelihood and environment. Ethnic groups must be provided with opportunities to articulate their concerns. The guidelines provide principles and processes to assist with facilitating meaningful consultations to obtain free, prior and informed consent of all ethnic groups affected by development projects in a culturally sensitive manner.

World Bank requirements for stakeholder engagement

The World Bank ESSs recognize the importance of open and transparent engagement between the borrower and project stakeholders. This is an essential element of good international practice. It states that effective stakeholder engagement can improve the environmental and social sustainability of projects, enhance project acceptance and make a significant contribution to successful project design and implementation. ESS 10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure requires that a project:

- Engages with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle and that the engagement must be as early as possible in the project development process and in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultation with stakeholders on project design
- Provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation
- Maintain and disclose a documented record of stakeholder engagement, including a description of the stakeholders consulted, a summary of the feedback received and a brief explanation of how the feedback was taken into account, or the reasons why it was not.

The process of stakeholder engagement required by ESSs include the following:

- Stakeholder identification and analysis
- Engagement planning or how the engagement with stakeholders will take place
- Disclosure of information consultation with stakeholders
- Addressing and responding to grievances
- Reporting to stakeholders.

6. Stakeholder identification and analysis

There are many different organizations and actors involved in promoting and improving issues related to skills improvement and employment opportunity, especially addressing youth and/or young entrepreneurs. While these stakeholders and actors have the same objective, they come from different backgrounds. **Table 1** to **Table 6** in this section identify and summarize key stakeholders and categorizes them into groups based on their background and nature of work and provide an analysis of their current involvement in education and skill improvement.

Table 1 Stakeholder identification: International Support for Knowledge, Skills, Education Development

Stakeholders	Project relevance: International support for knowledge, skills, and education development
World Bank Group	The most recent WBG-supported education and skill improvement projects are ECE and GPE II. The ECE project presently supports the expansion of quality ECE services, with the objective of improving the overall development, school readiness and learning outcomes of children in disadvantaged communities. This project promoted coordination and established collaboration among government departments, especially those related to health and nutrition; other development partners (World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children, Plan International); and the community, typically including the involvement of VEDCs and the private sector. ECE interventions have been shown to decrease dropout and repetition rates, increase graduation rates in post-secondary education, and improve the labor-force’s productivity and ability to earn higher wages.
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA):	JICA is working in cooperation with the Government of Lao PDR in four priority areas: • Economic and social infrastructure development • Development of agriculture and conservation of forests • Development of educational environment and training of human resources • Improvement of healthcare services. For many years, JICA has actively supported education sector development, including the construction and improvement of primary and secondary school buildings. For technical/vocational school and higher education. JICA has long history of supporting young people through scholarship programmes either sending them to local technical school in Lao DR and/or sending them to Japan.
Australian Government (DFAT) and the Basic Education Quality and Access in the Lao PDR (BEQUAL)	The Australian Government (DFAT) also has long history of supporting knowledge and skill development through higher education and strengthening professional career of those who are already been employed as well as addressing leadership skills of those who are at a senior position. Through its scholarship programmes, DFAT continues to sponsor youth students, targeting women, rural and ethnic groups through local universities: Champasack University, Chao Anouvong University, Luang Prabang and National University of Laos, Vientiane Capital. Lead by the Government of Lao PDR, MoES, DFAT and the European Union (EU), BEQUAL is directly supporting the education priorities of the Government of Lao PDR described in the Education Sector Development Plan and is consistent with the strategic directions set out in Australia’s Education Delivery Strategy 2013–2018. Phase I will run from 2015 to 2020 and Phase II, while still under development, is expected to run from 2021 to 2025. Through BEQUAL, it is estimated that about 740,000 children will receive better quality education, with a particular focus on children who traditionally experience poorer education outcomes, e.g. girls, children with disability and children from remote communities. BEQUAL priorities 66 of the most educationally disadvantaged districts to: • Increase student participation • Promote the availability of quality teaching (e.g. by providing professional development to existing primary school teachers and teacher educators, and training 520 ethnic males and females to become teachers)

Stakeholders	Project relevance: International support for knowledge, skills, and education development
	Improve learning environments (e.g. by providing quality teaching and learning materials and upgrading school infrastructure).
Partnership to Strengthen the Education System (PSES):	Jointly funded by the EU and UNICEF, this program aims to support the objectives of the Education Sector Development Plan, in accordance with the National Socio-Economic Development Plan and Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality of Education. It is designed to complement the EU Budget Support Program to Education which focuses on basic education quality improvement for disadvantaged children, and reforms in teacher management, education planning and financing. PSES is designed to complement other ongoing support to the education sector by development partners, including international and bilateral organizations and CSOs. The program focuses on: - Strengthening education sector governance, planning and budgeting - Enhancing teacher management and quality - Promoting evidence-based sector analysis and policy dialogue. PSES works through CSOs to strengthen policy-based planning and implementation at province, district, and village level, specifically the 40 priority poor districts.
Room to Read Laos Literacy Program:	Develops literacy skills and reading habits, especially to support girls to finish secondary school, and works with government stakeholders to advocate for girls' education. Room to Read operates in government schools in Salavan, Savannakhet, Vientiane, Xayabouly and Oudomxay to help the government address obstacles and improve educational opportunities for children. It has established school libraries and reading rooms in some schools. Room to Read Laos could be a very source of connection to engage young students who either dropped out and/or not continue to higher education and unable to find job.

Table 2 Stakeholder Identification: International Support for Youth Development and Child Protection

Stakeholders	Project relevance: international support for youth development and child protection
UNICEF	Has a long history in supporting the Government of Lao PDR in the areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, child protection, education and social inclusion. UNICEF is one of the key actors working in partnership with MoES and line government agencies on health and education of young students, support few adolescents related programmes, especially in the areas of women and child health, early married and human trafficking of women and children.. UNICEF works to promote and protect the rights of children and women in the Lao PDR. Presently, UNICEF is providing capacity building programme to the para-legal workers in Lao PDR (under the Ministry of Justice) to provide support to children victims of violence and in conflict with the law.
GIZ, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)	GIZ, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is supporting the national Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system to provide young graduates with the skills required by the Lao labour market. This support is provided through Dual-Cooperative Training (DCT) courses for relevant professions have been established in dynamic economic centres in the Lao PDR to better meet the needs of the country's labour market.

Table 3 Stakeholder Identification: National Women and Youth Development and Women and Child Protection

Stakeholders	Project relevance: national women and youth development and child protection
Lao Women's Union (LWU)	Is a mass organization with a mandate to enhance women's capacity for self-development and promote women's role in society to implement related policies and plans. LWU is mandated to provide preventive activities on violence against women and children; protect and support victims by offering counseling, healthcare, free legal support and victim witness protection during prosecution by providing victims safe temporary shelters, vocational training and reintegration through the woman and child counseling and protection network at the central level, Vientiane capital, provincial, district and village level.
National Assembly Women's Caucus, known as the Commission's Secretariat	Mandated to assist in research strategies, action plans, laws and projects on gender equality; implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; promote women's empowerment; and carry out training. It also focuses on improving coordination with national and international organizations, monitoring and reporting. Female members of the NA act as the think tank to the NA Standing Committee and look after the promotion of gender and women's advancement efforts at the national level. The Women's Caucus works for women parliamentarians under the direct supervision of the NA Standing Committee. It assists the NA in mainstreaming gender into laws; overseeing the implementation of the Constitution and laws and policies related to gender equality, women's advancement and mother and child health; promoting development; and protecting the interests of women and children.
National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (NCAWMC)	Supports the government in researching policies and strategies for women's advancement, and coordinates the implementation of policies on gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women with national and international stakeholders.
Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union	Is a mass organization dedicated to mobilizing young people throughout the country with a view to contributing to national development. It operates at central, provincial, municipal, district and village levels. Members work to enhance the Government's four-aspect advancements competition ideology: • Training and studies • Organizational activities and nation-building • Vocational training (e.g. foreign language skills, technology skills) Job creation through economic activities.
Ministry of Health	Responsible for establishing and implementing activities related to health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and more recently awareness campaigns related to COVID-19. It is also responsible for providing one-stop crisis centers, emergency services and long-term physical and mental treatment for women and children who are survivors of violence.
Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare	It plays a crucial role in promoting vocational training, occupational skills development, finding jobs for women, supporting children at risk and supporting the families of child victims. It also responsible for eliminating child labor and coordinating child protection and providing assistance for child victims.

Table 4 Stakeholder Identification: National Ethnic Group Development

Stakeholders	Project relevance: national ethnic group development
The Lao Front for National Development	Is the main organization overseeing issues related to ethnic groups. However, it receives limited recognition from national and international organizations and therefore receives limited resources. Despite thorough research, the assessment was unable to identify any activity by the Lao Front for National Development in the development sector. In addition, the Government Decree on Ethnic Groups No. 207/GoL (20 March 2020) has allocated roles and responsibility of all ethnic groups to the Ministry of Home Affairs.
National Assembly Ethnic Groups Committee	Part of the NA Standing Committee representing ethnic groups, its role is to oversee regulations related to ethnic and poor and vulnerable groups, by providing recommendations related to the rights and benefits of all ethnic women, and monitoring the enforcement of laws and policies related to ethnic groups. It is charged with drafting and evaluating proposed legislation concerning ethnic groups and lobbying for its implementation, as well as the implementation of socioeconomic development plans. Ethnic group research is the responsibility of the Institute for Cultural Research under the Ministry of Information and Culture. The lead institution for ethnic affairs is the mass political organization, the Lao National Front for Development, which has an Ethnic Affairs Department.
District and school cluster education administration officials	Whilst not directly employed by the project a range of administrative roles support project implementation and need to be aware of the risks associated with barriers to inclusion in the benefits for ethnic groups and remote area communities, and potential need for social protection measures for women and children. District and school cluster education administration officials are the effective people to pass on information about the project as well as encourage youth people to pursue technical knowledge, skills and hinger education.

Table 5 Stakeholder Identification: Skill Development and Environmental Education

Stakeholder	Project relevance: environmental education
The National TVET Council (NTC)	The NTC operates and is funded under the MoES and chaired by the Minister of Education and Sport with two vice-chairs: the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare and the President of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI). Its responsibilities are: (i) development of and recommendations on TVET policy; (ii) coordination between public and private sectors in skills training; (iii) establishment, support and monitoring of TWG for identifying priority occupational/skills areas; and (iv) development of occupational standards.
Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI)	LNCCI established in 1989 is an independent body which represents the business community in Lao PDR. It is the nexus between state and private enterprises and represents employers, groups and joint ventures across all agencies that have been established under the laws of Lao PDR. It currently has more than 4000 members represented through Chambers of Commerce in 17 provinces plus Vientiane Capital City and business associations and groups. That makes LNCCI the largest and most representative business community in Lao PDR. LNCCI represents the business community of Lao PDR undertaking business negotiations and dealing with trade and labor issues at both regional and international levels with a view to expanding trade and investment. LNCCI works to strengthen Provincial CCIs, Vientiane CCI, Business Associations and Groups by upgrading services and management. As national economic development requires a pool of knowledge and skills, LNCCI seeks to build capacity through seminars, business meetings, and exhibitions where views can be exchanged and experiences and skills shared

Stakeholder	Project relevance: environmental education
Trade Working Groups (TWG)	The TWG is established by the NTC and are meant to play the role of technical units in charge of advising the Council on the development of training standards, assessment and certification, curriculum development and evaluation of skills development programs. The president of the relevant business association serves as the chair of the TWG, and a representative from a higher education or TVET institute is the vice-chair. Currently, twelve TWG are operational in the following sectors: hotels, restaurants, furniture, handicrafts, garments, ICT, construction, automotive, basic business skills, mining, and electricity/power. Evidence suggests that many TWGs are inactive, characterized by a lack of clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and structure of authority (LNCCI-ILO 2016; GIZ 2020).
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	Together with UNEP, the Department of Environment in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has developed teaching material on biodiversity and air for pre-school and primary school classes with funding from Hans Scheidel Foundation. Together with the National Education Research Institute, the Department is developing a toolbox for teaching on environment.

Table 6 Stakeholder Identification: Project Affected Person or Beneficiary

Stakeholders	Project relevance: project affected person or beneficiary
Remote area communities and speakers of Lao as a second language	Laos is a multi-ethnic society with 50 officially recognized ethnic groups and a broad diversity of subgroups. The project activities will be dispersed nationwide across all 18 provinces (including Vientiane Capital) and 148 districts of the country. Many of the students, unemployed youth that will be supported by the project are likely to be located in rural districts and comprise young students from ethnic populations that speak Lao as a second language. Some of these districts and populations could be more sensitive to adverse impacts or inability to receive the benefits of the project than others.
Trainees and Young Graduates with priority given to those in disadvantaged districts, and rural remote ethnic communities.	There are young people seeking to acquire and upgrade their skills and job opportunities particularly those who have to drop out of primary, secondary and high schools and those unable to pursue higher education (after graduation from high school).
Job seekers and unemployed with priority given to those in disadvantaged districts, and rural remote ethnic communities.	These stakeholders include: - Workers and job seekers equipped with certain type and level of skill or skilled labours (including those from neighbouring countries due to the COVID-19 outbreak) who are seeking employment opportunities in the home country; - Workers and job seekers equipped with certain type and level of skill or skilled labours (including those from neighbouring countries due to the COVID-19 outbreak) seeking to upgrade the existing skills or acquire new skills in response to the labour market demand and dynamic, and - Unskilled Workers who may need to acquire vocational skills to be able

Stakeholders	Project relevance: project affected person or beneficiary
	apply for jobs matching their skills acquired.

Stakeholder categorization and analysis

Project stakeholders can be further divided into the following core categories:

- Implementing agency:** MoES (Education Coordination Unit (ECU), Planning and Finance Department), and MoLSW (Skill Improvement Department). Defined in the Prime Minister's Decree No. 036/PM on TVET from 2010, formal, non-formal and informal pre-employment TVET, both public and private, is administered by MoES, while labour skills development, notably further training of the workforce, is under the responsibility of MoLSW. There are 23 TVET institutions under MoES, with student intake at approximately 15,700 in 2019-20, and approximately 67 private TVET institutes, with student intake at 26,000 in 2019-20. MoLSW operates 11 Skills Development Centers (SDC) with a total of 5,585 full-time and part-time students. While SDCs focus on short-term courses (up to a year) for workers in the labour market, TVET colleges offer short and long-term training (up to 3 years), typically for new labour market entrants. MoES remains the key ministry for skills development in Lao PDR combining responsibility for a larger share of the country's training provision with key coordination and policy development functions. In MoES, the TVET Department is the key body overseeing public and private TVET institutes. In the MoLSW, the Department of Skills Development and Employment (DSDE) has far-reaching responsibilities in policy and strategic development, management and support of labour skills development.
- Government agencies:** All government line agencies or ministries and their implementing and reporting administrative management and systems – from the national level to provincial and district levels. For instance, MoES, PESS, DESB, and community/cluster/village TVET centers, all have the responsibility to oversee education matters.
- Project beneficiaries and PAP:** Persons, groups and other entities within the project area of influence who are directly or indirectly influenced (actually or potentially) by the project and have been identified as most susceptible to change associated with the project, and need to be closely engaged in identifying impacts and their significance, as well as in decision-making on mitigation and management measures, e.g. students, youth/adolescents, employed people, teachers, principals, Training Centres and project staff. In the context of this project, direct or indirect beneficiaries and affected persons should refer to the responsible office of MoES and MoLSW.
- Development partners:** In this context, it refers to international organizations working in partnership on education and technical skills improvement with MoES, such as WB, ADB, DFAT, GIZ, UNICEF, EU and JICA.
- CSOs (NPAs and INGOs):** Save the Children, Room to Read, World Education, Community Learning International, International focal village agency, Santi Volunteer Association, Friends International, Action With Lao Children.
- Mass media:** LWU, Lao Front for National Development, Youth Union, Lao Youth Radio, Lao Women's Union, Lao Positive Health Association, Lao Life Skill Association, Lao Red Cross Society, Young Entrepreneurs Association of Lao PDR.

- **Other interested parties:** Individuals, groups and entities who may not experience direct benefits and impacts from the project but who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the project or could affect implementation of the project in some way.
- **Key beneficiaries:** Youth/adolescents, college students, teachers, principals, women, including rural ethnic groups (i.e. Lao multi-ethnic people who speak Lao as a second language) and disadvantaged or vulnerable groups (i.e. those who may be more likely to be adversely affected by project impacts or are more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of a project's benefits). Such an individual or group is also more likely to be excluded from or be unable to participate fully in the mainstream consultation process and may require specific measures or assistance to do so. This will take into account considerations relating to age (e.g. the elderly and minors) and circumstances where they may be separated from their family, the community or other individuals upon whom they depend.²

Stakeholder engagement during project preparation: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated precautionary measures, fieldwork and in-person communication with stakeholders was not possible. Communication is conducted via digital tools and online systems. Based on this experience, adopting modes of communication using modern technology and internet access are crucial. Therefore, this SEP is designed to be sensitive, technology responsive and flexible to different stakeholders in order to maximize stakeholder engagement. While the home office has become a central part of coordination and communication, direct contact requires special measures in regards to social distancing and using self-protection tools (e.g. masks, gloves and antibacterial products). Communication methods applied for the project preparation included:

- Digital visual and verbal communication: used tools such as WhatsApp, SMS, phone, Webex and Zoom
- Email communication.

Lessons learned suggest that at the individual level the need for constant access to internet and proper tools such as a computer, mobile phone and online storage of documents is crucial for stakeholder engagement. This factor alone might pose engagement challenges during project implementation. At the institutional level, stakeholder engagement proceeds at a very slow pace because it involves official requests, permission and meeting arrangement takes about a week or two to get a confirmation. At the provincial level, due to restrictions, stakeholder engagement is only possible via online tools.

Despite limitations, the project preparation and assessment team managed to engage and consult with various stakeholders and will continue to engage and undertake meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including training principals, teachers, youth and ethnic groups in Vientiane Capital as well as some provinces (See list of consulted persons). This will encourage their informed participation in designing, implementing and monitoring measures to avoid adverse impacts on them and to maximize benefits by tailoring project activities that accrue to them in a culturally appropriate manner.

Engagement with identified stakeholders will help ensure the greatest possible contribution from the stakeholder parties toward successful implementation of the project and will enable the project to draw on their pre-existing expertise, networks and agendas. It will also facilitate community and institutional

² The World Bank Environmental and Social Framework, 2018, <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/383011492423734099/pdf/114278-WP-REVISED-PUBLIC-Environmental-and-Social-Framework.pdf>, accessed 4 July 2020.

endorsement of the project by various parties. Access to local knowledge and experience also becomes possible through the active involvement of stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

The basic principle that underpins the stakeholder engagement of the Priority Skills for Growth Project is that engaging with stakeholders must be done with intelligence, respect and openness. Engagement should be planned and conducted to create an atmosphere of openness and respect among people – making room for people’s intelligence to work out problems and finding solutions. Although useful and in a project setting necessary, having plans, rules and procedures for stakeholder engagement is no guarantee for a successful outcome. Therefore, stakeholder engagement plans must never become closed rigid structures, there has to be a certain flexibility because to a large extent, we will not know what works until we try it in practice.

Stakeholder engagement is an integrated part of the organization and management of the Priority Skills for Growth Project. The government entities and the people in those entities that lead and manage the project and make decisions on project priorities and implementation of activities are themselves stakeholders and the composition of the project organization and the way the work is organized and coordinated are vital aspects of the Project’s stakeholder engagement process as it directly affects how stakeholders who are not part of the project organization are informed and heard and how they are brought into developing and implementing project activities.

As a nationwide project, coordination at policy level is an important element in the stakeholder engagement process of Project. The Project will utilize the National Roundtable Process for high-level government-development partner coordination. The roundtable process is led by the Ministry of Planning and Investment and it brings government entities, development partners, national development agencies, United Nations bodies, civil society organizations and the private sector together to coordinate funding and development and implementation of activities. The Ministry of Education and Sport chairs the Education Sector Working Group³ with Australia and the European Union as Co-Chairs.

The organisation and management of the Project is designed to support and encourage involvement of stakeholders in decision-making on project activities that may affect them or which they have vested interests in. Thus, the project has a decentralised structure enabling local stakeholders to participate in development of subproject activities to respond to local needs and conditions.

At the implementation level related to skill development, MoLSW has established 18 job centres in all 17 provinces and one municipality. These job centres provide employment support services to jobseekers and employers. They are an integral part of the Section of Skill Development and Employment (SSDE) at the Provincial Department of Labour and Social Welfare (PLSW). Their main functions are the following: (i) coordinate and encourage employers to organize training and skill development for laborers; (ii) act as an employment service point, manage and publish labour market information; (iii) provide employment services and develop skills for and in the province; and (iv) provide job and career counselling services, including self-employment. MoLSW also established the Labour and social welfare (LSW) services and they are delivered through a nationwide network of LSW offices and job centres. There is one LSW office in Vientiane, 17 provincial and 148 district offices across the country to deliver labour and social welfare and these LSW offices will be the key outreach point as well.

³ <https://rtm.org.la/sector-working-groups/education/>

The stakeholder consultation provides recommendation on how to engage stakeholders in a meaningful and inclusive manner. The engagement process will consider youth, rural community, ethnic groups and be gender sensitive and responsive. It will be tailored to the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, as well as incorporate the relevant views of project beneficiaries and affected people and other stakeholders into decision-making on aspects, such as project design, mitigation measures, the sharing of development benefits and opportunities and implementation issues.

Following the recommendations from the assessment, these are the key stakeholder engagement strategies.

Engagement during the time of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the Lao labour/employment, services, markets, education and sports sectors with nationwide closures impacting large number people, including youth, migrants and students. The Education COVID-19 Response Plan was developed by MoES with the support of UNICEF. It will be implemented through the collaboration with the Education Cluster, network of LSW offices and job centres. The intent is to use this plan as a key reference for interventions by MoES and development partners to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the education sector and ensure the health and well-being of young people, students and education staff, as well as support continuity of learning. COVID-19 measures have been included in the ESMF and this SEP will strictly follow the instructions provided under the Education COVID-19 Response Plan to:

- Support learners, educators, caregivers and parents and their communities to prevent the transmission and spread of COVID-19 in accordance with national public health guidance, and ensure the well-being of learnings and education staff
- Ensure continuity of stakeholder engagement in an inclusive manner
- Ensure the health and safety of project stakeholders and youth and students' health.

Inclusive and early stakeholder engagement

The assessment also suggests that the project should engage stakeholders in the early stages of the project planning process to gather initial views on sub-project proposals and inform project design. The consultation must be carried out in an inclusive manner that takes into account equity, youth, gender, disability and ethnic groups.

Meaningful consultation

The project will ensure meaningful consultation and quality of engagement at all levels during project preparation and other project activities. Meaningful consultation is a two-way process that:

- Begins early in the project planning process to gather initial views on the project proposal and inform project design
- Encourages stakeholder feedback, particularly as a way of informing project design and engagement by stakeholders in the identification and mitigation of environmental and social risks and impacts
- Continues on an ongoing basis as risks and impacts arise
- Is based on the prior disclosure and dissemination of relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful and easily accessible information in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders in a culturally appropriate format and in relevant ethnic languages and is understandable to stakeholders

- Considers and responds to feedback
- Supports active and inclusive engagement with project affected parties
- Is free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation
- Is documented and disclosed by the project.

The project will provide adequate information as well as engage with and seek the support of those who could be affected by project activities, including the improvement of TVET and other related facilities, and a selection of community teachers and caregivers, prior to decisions being taken and responding to any contributions made. This should include taking into consideration existing traditional knowledge offered by the different ethnic groups and villagers and ensuring active, free, effective, meaningful and informed participation of individuals and groups in TVET improvement processes.

Women inclusion and citizen engagement

The project is proposed to be gender tagged and will address gender gaps that should contribute toward improvements in women's skills development, and participation in the labour force. There are notable gender gaps, starting from a lower participation in the labour market, occupational segregation with women working more frequently in farming sectors, and wage gaps. The project will address these gaps by providing training, stipends and promote self-employment to incentivize women's skills development and participation in the labour market. Indicators would be reported segregated by gender. The project will also contribute to enhance women empowerment.

Citizen engagement activities will be carried out to engage with potential beneficiaries of the project and key stakeholders, including the Lao Women's Union, Lao Youth Union, Lao Federation of Trade Unions, CSOs (NPAs and INGOs) who work with youth employment, with migrants and vulnerable groups. A specific beneficiary engagement survey will be designed and rolled out regularly with beneficiaries to collect lessons learned, feedback on risks and opportunities to improve project implementations. In a first phase, if COVID-19 related travel restrictions continue, citizen engagement will be conducted virtually. Virtual consultations with existing trainees, employment services beneficiaries as well as with potential individual and family (agriculture related) small business-owners—representatives of the beneficiaries and/or vulnerable groups (women, youth)—have been conducted during the project preparation phase to strengthen the design.

Sexual exploitation and abuses

The project will inform stakeholders about sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harm risks, child abuse and child protection and reporting mechanisms. The project will also ensure equal rights for all ethnic groups, women and men, while acknowledging differences between women and men and taking specific measures aimed at accelerating equality when necessary.

Communication in languages that are understood by key stakeholders

- Although Lao is the official language, where needed project activities must provide access to information in appropriate ethnic languages by providing a translator for meetings, especially at the local job centres and the labour and social welfare (LSW) services.
- Any information dissemination must be clear and in simple local language to support comprehension by those who are less literate.
- Where needed, ethnic interpreters will be used to address the language barrier to avoid misunderstandings and enhance cooperation and participation in activities.

Respect and recognize the rights of those who are of ethnic groups

- The social and ethnic group expert is to implement a communication strategy to ensure the engagement of ethnic groups. The strategy can be a field guide that incorporates the concept of sensitivity to ethnic groups (cultural responsiveness) and inclusive consultation and social inclusion.
- The expert will provide advise to project staff on the ethnic group communication strategy so they know how to be culturally sensitive during project implementation such at the job fair and outreach media.
- Pay special attention to ethnic and gender sensitivity by taking into account ethnic groups' gender perspectives and incorporating them into the communication strategy. All management strategies, including Codes of Conduct and training material development, must include consultation and engagement with ethnic groups and with men's and women's viewpoints.

Ensure fair distribution of knowledge and project benefits

- Ensure all people especially, women, rural ethnic groups, small individual and family businesses have access to and gain benefits from piloting self-employment opportunities and activities through developing and implementing a Technical Guideline.
- The Technical Guideline should ensure that all beneficiaries have equal access to project information and benefits, especially, youth women, ethnic groups and other vulnerable people in the rural areas. Where ethnic and gender gaps are identified (e.g. language, culture, social structure, geographic isolation and infrastructure), provide special mitigation measures to close those gaps. Special measures may include extra effort and budget to address and engage women and ethnic groups in activities related job centres and the Labour and social welfare services. Risks of inequitable participation and benefits can be neutralized when all ethnic group students have equitable access to and benefit from the project's vocational and skill development training programs and employment opportunities. Poor families or young students are among the most risk-averse, have less threshold for trailing new activities, and are more likely to be disadvantaged in terms of access to government or project services due to access issues (e.g. distance, poverty, language and educational attainment).
- Ensure fair distribution of knowledge and improve inclusion through an engagement strategy that incorporates special measures for poorer and more vulnerable youth in the implementation plan to promote equal access to project benefits.
- Ensure fair representation of ethnic groups, women and men in the process of promoting better knowledge and skills improvement, and labor management.
- Ensure reaching disadvantage students, especially through scholarships (up to 500 students per year), and ensure that no student loses the opportunity to access a TVET college because of insufficient funds for tuition and board, with priority given to female students for boarding costs.
- Where possible and necessary, recruit and provide training for at least one ethnic trainer and counsellor who can speak one of non-Lao Tai (Mon-Khmer, Hmong-Iewmien and Chino-Tibet) languages in each participating TVET college and counselling service center to help facilitate and represent ethnic trainees and job seekers,
- Measures are also provided in the Labour Management Procedures (LMP) prepared as part of the ESMF and applied to address and manage risks and issues associated with discrimination in workplaces availing of project piloting self-employment activities.

Disclosed project information and keep track of records

All information is documented, stored and disclosed by the project. The prior disclosure and dissemination of relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful and easily accessible information in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders (in a culturally appropriate format and in relevant local languages) is understandable to stakeholders.

7. Stakeholder engagement methods

A broad spectrum of stakeholder engagement techniques will be used by the project. As the stakeholder identification and analysis shows, the labour, social welfare, and education sectors is comprised of stakeholders coming from diverse backgrounds and development objectives (just as the Lao PDR is comprised of diverse ethnic groups), therefore no single approach will suit the project. Instead, the preferred method is to address simple communication and engagement processes, i.e. easy access to information and to provide feedback and recommendations at the project activity level.

Some simple techniques to support continuity of communication and engagement include:

- Direct contact: where possible, attend meetings and group interviews and discussions using social distancing measures and self-protection tools.
- Digital visual and verbal communication: use tools such as WhatsApp, Team, Telegram, Facebook, SMS, phone, Webex, Zoom, and other online tools.
- Direct communication.
- Email communication.
- Sharing tools, drive: Google, Office/Team, Dropbox,
- Public media: TV, YouTube, radio, local newspaper, brochures and other online platforms.
- Ensure the inclusion of vulnerable people, people with disability and disadvantaged people within the project areas. They should be informed, consulted and engaged through dedicated means.
- Ethnic interpreters.
- Workshop with local communities for in-depth consultations.
- Where possible and appropriate, use project press releases and press conferences.

The SEP is a live document for the entire period of project and will be updated on a regular basis as the project progresses through its various phases, to ensure timely identification of any new stakeholders and interested parties and their involvement in the process of collaboration with the project. The methods of engagement will also be revised periodically to maintain their effectiveness and relevance to the project's evolving environment.

8. Stakeholder Engagement Programme

To carry out more effective stakeholder engagement, the Project will work closely with existing networks such as, education clusters, job centres and the Labour and social welfare services as well as the National Training Council Permanent Office (NTC-PO) and TWGs as they are organizations responsible for promoting public-private partnership in skills development.

In line with other existing WB's funded projects under MoES, this stakeholder engagement programme is divided into two main components:

1. Stakeholder engagement activities mainly aiming at encouraging active involvement of the stakeholders in issues that may affect them or issues that they would like to influence
2. Communication activities mainly aiming at providing the stakeholders with project relevant information and news

However, there is not a hard divide between these two approaches. In practice and whenever the opportunity arises, communication activities may also include active engagement of the people involved, and similarly, engagement activities will often include dissemination of information.

The stakeholder engagement programme is summarized in **Table 7**. The methods of engagement are likely to change over time, indeed, the stakeholders themselves may suggest other methods and may also take the lead on certain arrangements.

The communication component is summarized in **Table 8**. The programme will use multiple channels to publish information linked to project activities. These include:

- Disclosure of all relevant studies, assessments and implementation plans on MoES and MoLSW website, project website and WB website, as well as local village administrative notice boards.
- Project-level implementation plan and information will be made available to local authorities, villages and communities in Lao language.
- Publication of posters and public notification in the targeted areas accessible to local communities and relevant key stakeholders.
- Broadcasting notification through local and national media.
- Stakeholder workshops and press release.
- Electronic and free printed copies of the Environmental and Social Management Framework, SEP and GRM in Lao language and made accessible for project beneficiaries, key stakeholders and the general public.



The World Bank

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Table 7: Engagement Programme

What to Engage about	Who to Engage	When to Engage	With whom to Engage	How to Engage
Disclose and consult on draft environmental and social management measures (ESCP, SEP, ESMF)	MoES's and MoLSW e.g. Technical and Vocational Education Department (TVED) within MoES, PCU	- Prior to Appraisal	Representative groups of key interested and affected stakeholders	- Roundtable meetings - (Web) meetings / workshops - Email group exchange and request for feedback response
Policy level coordination of funding and activities in the labour, skill and education sectors	Minister of both MoES, and MoLSW and their reps at the roundtable meetings	- Prior to project effectiveness - Annually prior to preparation of annual work plans and budgets	Policy level reps of ADB, EU, JICA, GIZ, DEFAT, UNICEF, WFP, Private sectors -LNCCI, Training Canters	- Roundtable meetings - Virtual (web) meetings
Implementation level nationwide coordination of activities Project related environmental and social issues Labour management GRM	MoES MoLSW	- Prior to project effectiveness - Annually prior to preparation of annual work plans and budgets - As needed	Project managers / team leaders / chief advisers from WB, ADB, EU, JICA, DEFAT, UNICEF, WFP, Plan International, Save the Children, Lao Women Union, National Front for Development ethnic group representatives,	- (Web) meetings / workshops - One-on-one meetings - Email group exchange
Commitments, division of responsibilities in the	MoES, MoLSW	- Prior to finalization	World Bank, Project managers, coordinators, assistants and consultants	- Distribution by email - Call for comments

What to Engage about	Who to Engage	When to Engage	With whom to Engage	How to Engage
ESCP. Evaluation of compliance		- Annually during implementation	at central and provincial level	- (Web) Workshop - Response to comments
Guidelines, procedures and codes of conduct in the ESMF. Evaluation of what works and what not	MoES, MoLSW	- Prior to finalization - Annually during implementation	World Bank, Project managers, coordinators, assistants and consultants at central and provincial level	- Distribution by email - Call for comments - (Web) Workshop - Response to comments - Feedback to project planning
GRM: Experiences, evaluation, need for changes, feedback to project implementation	MoES, MoLSW	- Prior to finalization - Annually during implementation	World Bank, Project managers, coordinators, assistants and consultants, training centers at central and provincial level	- Questionnaire - (Web) Workshop - Site visits - Distribute summary of comments etc.
National level project planning Evaluation of past implementation of the ESMF	MoES, MoLSW	- Annually as part of preparation of annual workplans and budgets	World Bank, Project managers, coordinators, assistants and consultants, training centres at central and provincial level	- (web) workshops - Email group exchange
Provincial level subproject planning Evaluation of past implementation of the ESMF	Technical and Vocational Education Department (TVED) within MoES consultants at central level	- Annually as part of preparation of annual workplans and budgets	Training centres	- Call for proposals - Meetings/workshops with training centres/schools

Table 8: Communication Programme

Lao PDR Priority Skills for Growth Project (P172774)

What to Communicate	Who to Communicate	When to Communicate	With whom to Communicate	How to Communicate
Project plans, activities and results	MoS, MoLSW	- Annually - When there are important results	The public job counselling service centers (job center) and the Labor and social welfare services	- TV and radio interviews - Facebook postings - Website - Newspaper articles
Project progress	Technical and Vocational Education Department (TVED) within MoES	- 6-monthly	The World Bank MOES Leadership	- Report
Subproject progress	Technical and Vocational Education Department (TVED) within MoES	- 6-monthly	job centers and the Labor and social welfare services	- Report
GRM How it works and how to use it	MoES, MoLS project consultants	- Project effectiveness - Annually	job centers and the Labor and social welfare services, TVET center's directors, teachers, Lao Women Union, National Front for Development, ethnic group representatives, parents	- Training centre, - Collages - Village meetings with translation into ethnic languages - Group by group meetings - Leaflets
ESMF How to implement the ESMF in practice Division of responsibilities	PCU	- Project effectiveness - Annually or in case of any changes	job centres and the Labour and social welfare services, TVET center's directors, teachers, Lao Women Union, National Front for Development, ethnic group representatives, parents	- ESMF explained with translation into ethnic languages - Email distribution - Posters (ethnic languages) - Site visits with explanations

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9. Report and record of consultations on environmental and social management measures

This section provides information on stakeholder consultations during project preparation and appraisal to ensure that appropriate project information on environmental and social risks and impacts and mitigation measures are properly discussed, included, addressed and disclosed to stakeholders in a timely, understandable, accessible and appropriate manner and format. The consultation is to also obtain feedback and suggestions to strengthen the project design and risk management instruments. The project promotes and as presented in **Section 8**, the project will continue promoting and providing means for effective and inclusive engagement with various stakeholders, including potential project affected persons / project beneficiaries throughout the project life cycle on issues that could potentially affect them.

The stakeholders' consultation and ESF planning and development was taking place from late September to early November 2021 (See Table 9 below for more information). The discussions with ethnic groups, young entrepreneurs, (some of them have been supported by Rural Upland Livelihood Development Programme under SDC/FAO funded activities from early 2020 as part of Covid-19 response plan) and unemployed youth, revealed that small agriculture businesses that are aiming at local markets, especially food products are doing very well. All of the consulted young entrepreneurs reported that there is a high demand for food products such poultry, fish/frog, pork, beef, vegetables etc., at the local markets, both in Vientiane Capital and the provinces. In the past two years, the COVID-19 outbreak has prevented people from transporting food between the provinces, this factor has led to food shortage, limited food supply and has created high demands to local producers. It also revealed that agriculture businesses which are aiming at international markets and/or relying on tourists are currently facing major challenges and some have to close their business. For instance, one informant who runs a local fruit jam business is currently closed as the business was unable to attract local Lao people.

The discussion with young unemployed informants suggested that many of them are interested in learning financial and businesses management, IT and English related courses because they want to work in the service industry. Few of them mentioned agriculture and none of them mentioned logistics related courses. Many expressed their desire to learn IT related topics such as basic computer skills, graphic design, short advertisement clips (like advertisements in Facebook or YouTube). All of the consulted participants stated that they are familiar with basic media communication tools such as Facebook and WhatsApp; however, many of them are not familiar with Zoom, MS Team, Google Meet.

When informed of the potential opportunity under this Project, and asked about their potential concerns, the informants expressed the following comments:

- Do not know/unaware of the opportunity because they don't know who and/or where they will get information from.
- They will not get selected if they don't pay money during the selection period
- TVET will only select people they know
- The training facility is too far from their home
- No money to buy food and accommodations during the training period
- No relatives live in the city where "free" trainings are available (rural Lao people often stay with relatives when come to the cities either for a visit or other purposes including education)

Their suggestions for making information available and accessible include:

- Inform the village authority to announce at the village
- Communicate via local schools and collages
- Poste on notice boards
- Individual communication (from person to person, eg. Share Facebook link, passing news)
- Post at the Lao Youth Radio Facebook and Lao Youth Radio FM 90.0 Mhz and other local media
- TVET and MoES and MoLSE's website/Facebook

To address these issues, MoES, MoLSW and the TVETs reported that TVETs are operating under the MoES's guidance, they must meet the minimum requirements set by the government in terms (i) organization structure, (ii) teaching and learning facilities, (iii) learning and teaching curriculum, (iv) students' dormitories, which all of them are reported to have separate males and females dormitories and equipped with all basic facilities and utilities), and other health and safety/emergency procedures. All of the consulted TVETs reported that they have guidelines/manuals on fair student selection process. Some of the Training Centers said that they also have inclusion policy, making sure that rural, ethnic groups, women and other vulnerable students have access to information and facilities, where needed. Some of the consulted TVET such as the Pakpasack , the German Technical Collage, the Vientiane Technical Collage in Vientiane province have informed that health and safely/emergency guidelines have been developed under the ADB funded. The consulted information has been incorporated into the ESMF and the design of the engagement methods in Chapter 6 and 7 above.

Table 9 below illustrates the consultation and disclosure process for the environmental and social (E&S) documents until Project effectiveness.

Under TVED/MoES there will be the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU), whose roles will be to provide coordination for the project and liaise with the World Bank and other relevant agencies as well as in charge of consultation and develop project environmental risk management and monitoring. The main functions of the PCU are to:

- Coordinate the preparation and update of the PIM and obtain approval from the World Bank;
- Ensure that regular policies and strategies as stated in the PIM are followed during project implementation and seek guidance from the PSC on complex implementation issues as needed;
- Ensure that both Implementing Ministries carry out their work on time and according to the agreed operational plans;
- Liaise between the Implementing Ministries, the PSC and the World Bank, and keep them apprised of all important project matters;
- Compile an annual operational plan and budget by each Implementing Ministry, aggregate the plan and budget into an annual operational plan for the project, and secure its approval by the PSC and the World Bank;
- Monitor the implementation of the project, the commitments, and disbursements of the proceeds by each Implementing Ministry;
- Supervise compliance with legal covenants and the fulfilment of the objectives and performance indicators;
- Coordinate the preparation of the six-month progress reports with the Implementing Ministries and transmit them to the decision-making bodies and the World Bank on time;
- Coordinate the preparation of the annual financial audit and project implementation with the Implementing Ministries;

- Coordinate the training on all project management matters to the Implementing Ministries; and
- Assist and coordinate all aspects of the project to ensure that the project will achieve its PDO, be completed on time, and stay within the allocated budget.

Table 9: Environment and Social Documents Consultation and Disclosure until Project Effectiveness

What to Engage About	Who to Engage	When to Engage	With Whom to Engage	How to Engage
Consultation with technical and vocational training centres on: - Organisation and management of training centres - Waste management, hygiene and water and sanitation at the centres - Outreach methods (students, private sector) - Skills training courses and training concept - Typical small civil works expected funded under the Project - Existing procedures and guidelines on procurement, health and safety - Emergency measures - COVID-19 measures	TVED/MOES SDED/MOLSW E&S Consultants	4-12 October 2021 Completed	TVETs (Vientiane Capital, Xineg Khuang, Luang Prabang, Khammuan, Pakxe...)	Online group meeting with all participants Written response to questionnaire
Consultation with other stakeholders on skills development, youth and employment opportunity: - Project purpose, organization, components, planning system, - Environmental and social assessment - Lesson learned from similar projects (promoting/engagement youth in technical knowledge and skill development)	E&S Consultants	25 September to 18 October 2021 Completed	Implementing agency Government agencies Project beneficiaries TVET (eight different canters) Small businesses and young entrepreneurs Students in Vientiane and selected provinces Young unemployed in Vientiane and selected provinces SCOs/Individuals and Media directly	phone interviews. WhatsApp messaging Online meeting one-on-one Email correspondence

What to Engage About	Who to Engage	When to Engage	With Whom to Engage	How to Engage
- Mitigation of risks and impacts, highlighting issues that might affect vulnerable and poor groups - Differentiated measures taken to avoid and minimize risks			working with youth and skill development	
Conducted internal discussion workshop with line departments of MOES on preliminary results and mitigation plans Discussed first draft and obtained comments and feedback	TVED/MOES SDED/MOLSW E&S Consultants	1 Nov 2021 Completed	Implementing agency-TVED Government agencies Project beneficiaries TVET (eight different canters)	Online group meeting
Circulating semi-final draft and to head of departments within MOES and obtain comments/feedback Circulating E&S Summary in Lao language to key Stakeholders and obtain comments/feedback	PCU/TVED/MOES E&S Consultants	1-5 Nov 2021 Completed	TVED/MOES SDED/MOLSW	Zoom Email WhatsApp Phone calls
Final draft ESCP, ESMF and SEP	PCU/TVED/MOES E&S Consultants	8 Nov 2021 Completed	TVED/MOES SDED/MOLSW TVETs Job Centres	Online E&S Dissemination Workshop
Final ESCP, ESMF and SEP	PCU/TVED/MOES		All stakeholders and the general public	Post in MoES Project Website
Final ESCP, ESMF and SEP	PCU/TVED/MOES	After project effective date	Implementing Agencies	Print/copy and send to subject project sites

10. Grievance redress mechanism

Existing GRM will be used across WB funded projects under MoES and MoLSW through the project lifecycle. Prior to project implementation, training on GRM will be provided to relevant stakeholders.

The key objectives of the GRM are to:

- Record, categorize and prioritize the grievances from project-affected stakeholders;

- Settle grievances via consultation with stakeholders (and inform those stakeholders of the resolution)
- Forward unresolved cases to relevant authority or specialist third party service providers

The GRM is presented below to address stakeholder concerns or complaints associated with project social and environmental performance. The purpose of the GRM is to resolve any complaints that may arise during the implementation of the project and to improve operational procedures or measures as appropriate to avoid similar issues to arise in the future. The GRM is intended to address concerns and complaints promptly and transparently at no cost to the complainant and without discrimination for any reports made by project affected people. The GRM works within existing legal frameworks of the Lao PDR and does not preclude or prevent complainants from seeking independent recourse through courts of law in the Lao legal system. The GRM utilizes existing community level, project level and the judiciary level redress mechanisms. The details of each of those components are described as follows.

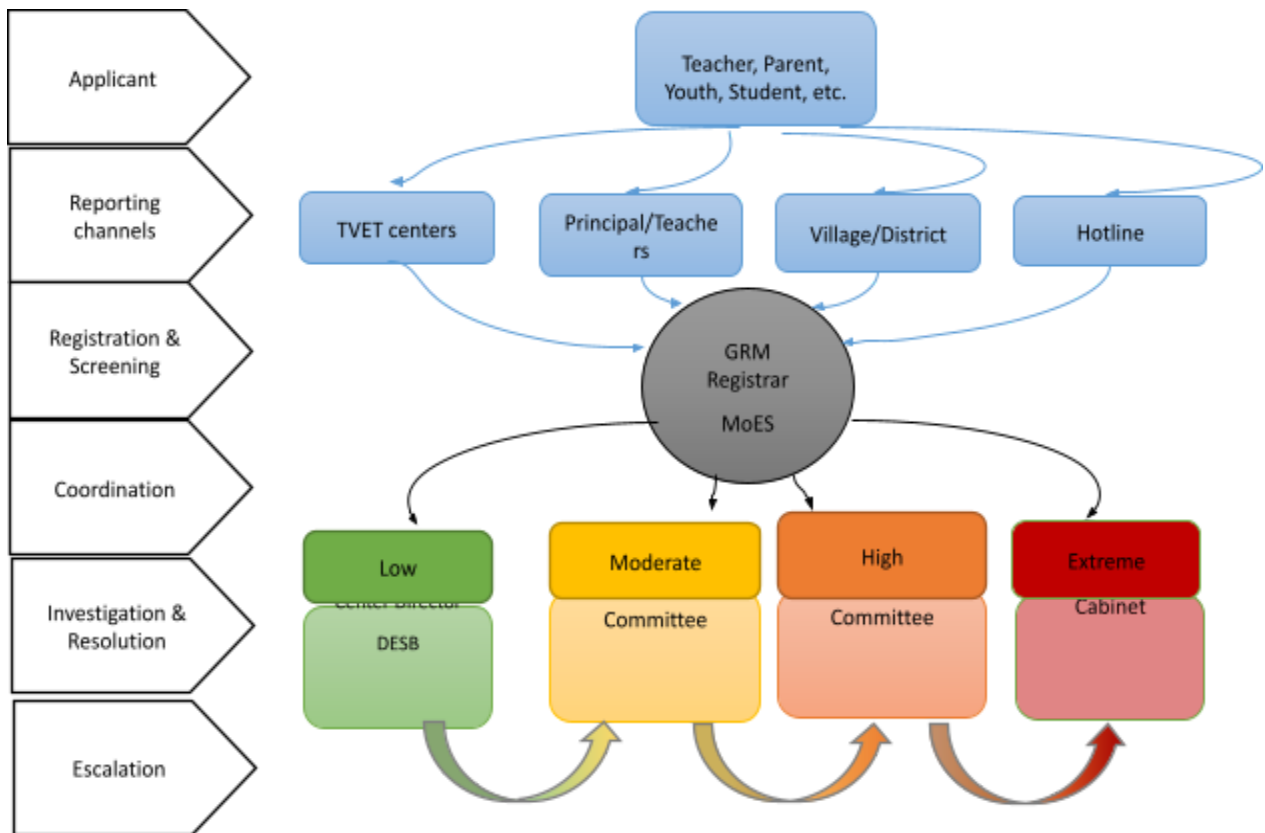
To ensure the GRM is readily accessible to beneficiaries and stakeholders, grievances can be submitted via multiple reporting channels. The Project will develop an appropriate and user-friendly means of GRM to allow stakeholders, especially young students, adolescents and other unemployed young people to file a complaint and/or process their concerns and feedback via medial tools (eg. Facebook, WhatsApp, Line, Telegram, etc....) together with the formal GRM procedures of formal adopted by PCU, TVET centres, job counselling service centers. Each has particular strengths and limitations, but collectively they provide a comprehensive choice of reporting channels suitable for a wide range of situations.

Reporting Channels	Strengths	Limitations
MoES and MoLSW telephone hotline	Readily accessible to anyone with a telephone; offers anonymity if desired	Not accessible to people without access to a phone.
TVET-Training Centers Principal	Readily accessible to teachers by any students/youth	Not suitable if complaint is against TVET center's directors
District Education Office	Has a clear mandate for education sector management	The office may be far from the TVET center/village.
Village Education Development Committee Village Mediation Committee	Readily accessible to parents, including non-Lao speaking ethnic groups and able to organize mediation to resolve concerns and disputes at the village level.	Limited influence over TVET center and education sector management
Public Media Platforms: Facebook, WhatsApp, Line, Telegram, etc...	Readily accessible by all stakeholders Easy to use and can be transparent and a quick way to raise issues, concerns and feedback	The tools maybe unfamiliar by the people in the rural areas where there is no internet access.

The grievance mechanism is illustrated in **Figure 1**. All grievances - received by all reporting channels – shall be reported to a GRM Registrar at MOES/TVED. The role of the GRM Registrar is to maintain a centralized register of grievances, ensure grievances are referred to the appropriate authority for action, and to monitor outcomes. Upon receiving a report of a grievance, the GRM Registrar will screen, categorize and prioritize the case. If the initial recipient (see 'reporting channels') has sufficient capacity the case can be managed at that level. Otherwise, the GRM Registrar will refer the case to a Grievance Committee at District, Province or Central level according to the risk, complexity and urgency of the grievance. If the case cannot be resolved, it will be escalated to the next level Grievance Committee until it reaches MoES.

A grievance shall be resolved as soon as practicable and in any case a grievance shall either be resolved or referred to the next level in grievance mechanism within 10 workdays of receipt.

Figure 1: Grievance Mechanism



The GRM needs to be able to respond to potential grievances on a variety of topics concerning different project components. Some issues potentially resulting in a grievance are outlined in **Table 10**.

Table 10: Penitential Grievance

Project Component	Potential Cause of Grievance	Stakeholders
Component 1: Improve the quality and relevance of skills training programs	- Access to skills training programs by Youth/students, rural students - Application related issues - TVET facility - Scholarship selection - Access to information - sharing skills training programs	- MoES: DOF, IFEAD, ESQAC, ECU - TVET, PESS, DESB - TVET principals, teachers and staff - Students, youth, parents
Component 2: Enhancing job matching and youth employability	- Vacancy registration - Job fair/ Job centre/job seeking channel - Social and welfare services - Self-employment/opportunity - Difference in employment terms and conditions applied by employers	- MoLSW - TVET principals, teachers and staff - Parents - NA, LNFC
Component 3: Better governance of the skilling sector and project management, monitoring and evaluation support	- Funds misspent - TVET experiencing discrimination during training/engaging in project activities. - GBV, sexual harassment, exploitation, violation against women and children	- MoES, MoLSW - TVET, principals, teachers and staff - Parents - NA, LNFC
Other Social Issues	- Unfair distribution of project benefits - Ethnic groups discrimination - Gender discrimination - Unfair treatment towards students/vulnerable people/people with disability	- MoES, MoLSW - TVET principals, teachers and staff - Parents - NA, LNFC

Culturally appropriate and sensitive social protection issues

Where complainants are remote area communities and where they may be concerned that language and cultural barriers prevent their lodging a complaint, suitable ethnic interpreters of their choosing from the local area may lodge a complaint on their behalf and advise them throughout the redress process. To overcome language barriers, information on the process should be provided in clear and simple local language to support comprehension. The grievance redress process itself should be described in picture diagram form and relevant contact information be provided to facilitate understanding of the among local communities and accessibility in remote areas. Counselling service will be established during project implementation and operate at the existing Social Labour Welfare services, job centres of the MoLSW and TVET center clusters of the MoES. The Project will refer SEA/VAWC risk issues to Lao

Women's Union who has a role in overseeing social protection related issues and will use TVET networking for sharing teaching techniques and experiences, and supports.

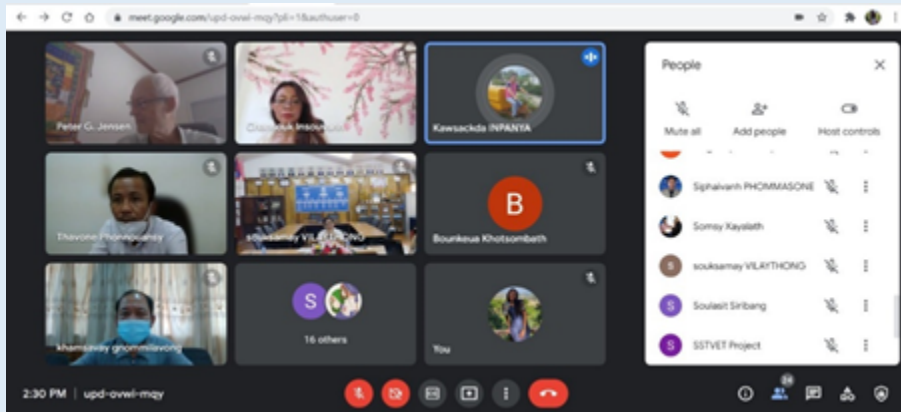
Appropriate and user-friendly means of GRM can be set up in PCU, TVET centres, job counselling service centers and adopted such as hotline call center, WhatsApp, Facebook/Meta for project affected people to raise their concern/grievances and provide feedback to the project.

Grievances management and Reporting System

- A Grievance Coordinator (GC) will be assigned from the two ministries, MoES and MoLSW to be the main point of contact for the Project.
- Training and guidance will be provided to the GCs to conduct grievance related activities and to closely work with the Project Social Specialist.
- Project GC is responsible for screening and prioritizing all grievances as well as providing logistical support to conduct grievance related activities. Be involved in all project related grievance discussion/mediation and involved in proposing resolution to cases.
- Carry out public consultations to help identify needs and solutions to potential problems.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the grievance mechanism.
- Keep the Project informed.
- All forms, related documents and notes made during investigations with regards to a complaint will be made in two copies: one kept in place and another sent to the next level.

Annex a: List of persons Consulted for ESF Development

	Name	Titles	Location
List of Persons Consulted via Telephone Calls.			
Young Ethnic Groups, Young Agriculture Entrepreneurs			
1	Mr. Khamchan Singhalath, Lao Lum, age 27 Tel: 020 99734099	Young Entrepreneur- Fish and Frog farm	Khoun District, Xienkhouang
2	Mr. Lom Soukchalearn, age 25 Tel: 020 98119112	Young Entrepreneur- Fish and Frog farm	Kham District, Xienkhouang
3	Ms. Ned Phetsengthong, age 22, ethnic Khmu Tel: 030 9416509	Young Entrepreneur- Local chickens farm	Phaxay District, Xienkhouang
4	Ms. Sothchai Phommavong, age 23, ethnic Lao Lum Tel: 020 91911715	Young Entrepreneur- Dry food processing and Lao fruit jam	District, Xienkhouang
5	Ms. Yermoa Vakhou, age 23, ethnic Hmong Tel: 020 23539554, 02054977596	Young Entrepreneur- Local pig farm,	District, Xienkhouang
Youth and IT Related Interview			
6	Mr. Bounnam, age 19 Tel: 2095778794	Student, Dong Dok University	Vientiane Capital
7	Ms. Pouna Phommabouth, age 20 Tel: 2054393967	IT and commerce student	Vientiane capital
8	Mr. Somsouk Sydavong, age 21	Unemployed/Unfinished school	Champasack

	Tel 2092349895		
9	Lee Min Yang, age 21 Tel: 2094485646		Houaphan province
Persons Working on Promoting/Engaging youth in Socioeconomic Development			
10	Ms. Nithphaphone Nampanya Tel: 20 56 324 154	Project Coordinator at Helvetas, looking after for Responsible Agriculture Investment-Youth and Women Inclusion	Vientiane (looking after Project in Phongsaly
11	Mr. Bounheng Southichack, Tel: 20 55 400 099	Lao Youth Radio	Vientiane Capital
12	Ms. Phonekeo Vangna, age 26 Tel: 2097048843	Work at Farmer Network, CSO	Savannakhet province Unemployed/Unfinished study Used to be worker in Thailand
List of Participants in Online E&S Consultation, Disclosure of Information and Risk Management Design.			
13	Anousin Bounsouhat	1. E&S Consultation with eight TVET Via MS Team 	
14	Bounseng Khammounty		
15	Bountong Xayavong		
16	Chittakone Sisanonh		
17	Duangdy Siribang (Pakpasak TVET)		
18	Phetchinda Sisomvang		
19	Phoxay Boulom		
20	Saythong Insarn (MOES, Focal Point)		
21	Sengaloon Vongphouthone (Vientiane – Hanoi TVET)	2. E&S consultation with the Implementing Agency, MoES and MoLSW and TVET via Zoom.	
22	Singsavipha Sonephanh		
23	Somsy Xayalath		
24	Thavone Phonnouansy		

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25	Vannakek Levang
26	Thongsa Inthavong
27	Viengsavanh Phatthavong
28	Ajan Bungeua
29	Kawsackda Inpanya
30	Soulasit Siribang



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting in progress. The main video feed features a man with glasses and a headset, identified as 'VANNAKEK LEVANG' in the bottom left corner. Above him is a grid of smaller video feeds for other participants. To the right, a 'Participants (26)' sidebar lists names such as 'Phetchinda SISOMVANG', 'Polytechnic PTC', 'Saythong Insaem', 'Sengaloon vongphouthone', 'Singsavipha Sonephanh', 'STVC Thavone Phonouany', 'TCVP_Lao PDR', 'VEDI Dr. Phoulang Phoumlay', 'viengsavanh', 'ວິເສດສາດສິດສິດສິດສິດສິດສິດ', 'ສອນ ສອນ', and 'Soulasit Siribang'. The bottom of the screen shows the Windows taskbar with a search bar and various application icons. The system clock in the bottom right corner indicates 'ENG 1:37 PM' and 'US 11/1/2021'.