IASC

(Inter-Agency Standing Committee)

INTER-AGENCY CONTINGENCY PLAN

Lao People's Democratic Republic
South East Asia

**Endorsed by the IASC
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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN AHA	Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CMG	Crisis Management Group
CRA	Common Rapid Assessment
DDMC	District Disaster Management Committee
DDMCC	Department of Disaster Management and Climate Control
DG EU/ECHO	Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
DMH	Department of Meteorology and Hydrology
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
ECG	Emergency Cash Grant
ECT	Emergency Communications Team
EHI	Essential Household Items
ETF	Emergency Task Force
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
GDACS	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction
GIS	Geographic Information Mapping
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IACP	Inter-Agency Contingency Plan
IACP-TWG	Inter-Agency Contingency Plan Technical Working Group
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordination Group
IMN	Information Management Network
IMO	Information Management Officer
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
INGO DMWG	INGO Disaster Management Working Group
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LRC	Lao Red Cross
MIRA	Multi Cluster/Initial Rapid Assessment
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoICT	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOSS	Minimum Operating Safety Standards
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NDMC	National Disaster Management Committee
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office

NFI	Non Food Item
NPA	Not for Profit Associations
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCHA ROAP	OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
OFDA	Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance
PDMC	Provincial Disaster Management Committee
PDNA	Post Disaster Needs Assessment
PI	Public Information
PSD	Preliminary Scenario Definition
RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
RCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office
RCRC	Red Cross/Red Crescent
SA	Security Advisor
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SMT	Security Management Team
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNOSAT	United Nations Operational Satellite Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNSMS	United Nations Security Management System
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VAM	Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping Unit
VDPU	Village Disaster Protection Unit
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Executive Summary

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is prone to a number of hazards; in particular storms and flooding that occur frequently and leave in their wake a significant social and economic impact. In the past five wet seasons, Lao PDR has experienced serious storms and flooding each year with the exception of 2012. Based on this high risk and the recommendation from the After Action Review of the Mekong flooding in 2008 and tropical storm Ketsana in 2009, the IASC decided to enhance common preparedness for potential future disasters and develop an Inter-Agency Contingency Plan (IACP), to improve coordination among the Lao Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) members, and between the IASC and the Government.

Under the leadership of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), the IACP Technical Working Group (IACP TWG) was established in October 2011. The IACP TWG, comprised of the United Nations (UN), International Non Governmental Organizations (INGO), and NDMO emergency technical staff, conducted internal meetings and extensive consultations with humanitarian actors in and outside Lao PDR over a six-month period to develop the first draft IACP, with support from the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (OCHA ROAP).

The contingency plan will support the Government to lead and ensure an effective, timely and coordinated response to mitigate the risk and reduce the impact of natural disasters on Lao communities, through a clear response coordination mechanism and strategy, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all IASC members.

The IACP acknowledges the role of the Government as the overall lead in all aspects of disaster response and the role of the IASC in supporting the Government emergency response structures and capacities. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) outlined in this plan are aimed at guiding a rapid onset disaster response, based on the clearly outlined roles and responsibilities of key actors.

The IACP is based on a scenario of a storm and flooding affecting 250,000 people across five provinces, with 75,000 of the affected population requiring immediate humanitarian assistance. The IACP is, however, equally applicable to any smaller scale responses.

The IACP is intended to be a dynamic document, adaptable to changing local, national and international contexts. The current IACP and its SOPs are in effect as of 13 February 2013, the date of its final endorsement by the IASC. The plan will be reviewed each year prior to the rainy season, and revised according to lessons learnt in future emergency responses.

2. Hazard and Risk Analysis

2.1 Situation Analysis of Natural Disasters and Epidemics in Lao PDR

Lao PDR is prone to a number of natural hazards. The National Risk Profile of Lao PDR identified seven major natural hazards: floods, storms, drought, landslides, disease outbreaks and epidemics, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and earthquakes.[1] In the past ten years, flooding and storms have occurred more frequently, caused greater loss of life, affected most people and resulted in the greater economic losses than all other hazards.[2]

Floods
Seasonal flooding occurs each year in Lao PDR during the southwest monsoon season from August to September. Recently, major floods have occurred in 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2013. The most significant and prolonged flooding tends to occur in the central and southern provinces, when rivers and tributaries fill with normal or exceptional precipitation in their respective catchment basins, and are then prone to overflowing as the waters from the flooded Mekong advance downstream. Flooding in the low land areas can last for weeks; destroying crops, causing population displacement and increasing the risk of water borne, vector borne and other disease outbreaks.

Tropical Storms
Tropical Storms are a major hazard in Lao PDR, occurring each year during the monsoon season, with peaks generally in August and September. In recent years significant storms have made landfall in 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2011. Historical analysis indicates that the impact of tropical storms is significant, however usually localized. The main consequences will usually be flash floods, landslides, destruction of agricultural land, harvests, livestock and houses, and in rare cases injury and deaths. The impacts of tropical storms are generally within national coping capacities, however, when coupled with other factors such as a heavy rainy season and a late monsoon, may trigger floods in the Mekong corridor.[3] As an example, the tropical storm Kammuri contributed to the 2008 Mekong Flooding and tropical storm Ketsana caused major flooding in 2009.

Drought
In the past decades, the Mekong river basin has experienced several hydrological droughts, mostly affecting the lowland areas of southern Lao PDR. Historical analysis shows that the droughts of 1977 and 1988 are Lao's largest disasters documented to date, affecting 3,500,000 and 730,000 people respectively.[4] The effect is felt primarily in the agricultural sector, causing losses to livelihoods and increasing food insecurity. Drought is particularly damaging in contexts such as Lao PDR, where the population is primarily rural and dependent on subsistence farming.

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[1] Disaster Preparedness Center. Developing a national risk profile of Lao PDR. 2010
[2] OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database (EM-DAT). Accessed 16 April 2012.
[3] IFRC/ADB. Legal Preparedness for Responding to Disasters and Communicable Disease Emergencies in Lao PDR (2009). Asian
[4] OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database (EM-DAT). Accessed 16 April 2012.

Disease Outbreaks and Epidemics
Outbreaks of major communicable diseases have been reported after disasters in Lao PDR, including malaria, dengue fever, influenza, typhoid, acute watery diarrhea, fever and rash. In 2006, a co-ordination office and mechanism was established in Lao PDR under the Office of the Prime Minister to respond to Avian Influenza. In 2009, national and provincial pandemic influenza preparedness plans were developed. In 2010 the Ministry of Health (MoH), with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), drafted a National Health Emergency Response Plan 2012-2015 to guide the national health emergency response, including response to disease outbreaks and epidemics.[5]   And in 2013, there was the rise of a new health hazard: dengue fever. The number of dengue fever cases recorded by July 2013 was four times the number of cases reported by the same time in 2010 and nine times the number of cases recorded by the same time in 2012. Dengue cases had been reported in all 17 provinces of the country with 15 out of 17 provinces reporting epidemic levels of dengue. WHO, under the coordination of RCO, and Ministry of Health were actively involved. ECG and CERF were also requested and approved.

Earthquakes
Lao PDR has witnessed several small and moderate scale earthquakes in the northern and western areas of the country, with only one registering a magnitude greater than seven, in 1988.

2.2 Main Challenges to Emergency Response in Lao PDR

This contingency plan aims to address the following challenges, identified in previous emergency responses:
- Unclear roles and responsibilities of the IASC members and the Government
- Unclear mechanisms and processes for coordination at the inter-agency levels and with the Government
- Unclear cluster system arrangements, and varied levels of cluster response planning
- Unclear procedure of government requesting international assistance and the difference between formal and informal government request
- Weak systems and tools for planning, implementing and analyzing common needs assessments
- Lack of clear response SOPs for IASC members
- Delays to the response caused by unclear or slow coordination and decision making processes
- Delays in information collection, collation and sharing caused mainly by the lack of a common approach and clear definitions and/or agreement on information management responsibilities and tasks
- Delays in humanitarian financing mobilization, including delays due to weak or unavailable data and slow decision making processes.

In addition, the contingency plan aims to facilitate progress towards improving the following systemic challenges:
- Unclear or delayed Government approval mechanisms for response
- The current lack of a Government led Emergency Operations Center

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[5] Ministry of Health Lao PDR. National Health Emergency Response Plan 2012-2015. Draft, 2010.

- Delays to INGO emergency response due to the lack of a common standing agreement with the Government for emergency response activities.[6]
- The need for improved procedures for importation/customs clearance of relief goods and specialist human resources in a disaster.[7]
- The need for specific legal frameworks such as a Disaster Response Law
- The need for improved Government and inter agency capacity on a number of issues, including information management at the district, provincial and central levels
- The need for improved dissemination of early warning information from the central to the sub national levels
- The need to establish improved mechanisms for more predictable funding within the Government for emergency response.

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[6] INGO MoUs are development project based and do not cover emergency response. IASC level consultations are required to better facilitate rapid emergency mobilization and refocusing of INGO interventions in the case of a disaster.

[7] Currently, there is no Government SOP for custom waivers in the context of an emergency. IASC level consultations and advocacy with the Government is required to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that the humanitarian response is not delayed.

3. Scenario and Planning Assumptions

Through consultations and review of national hazard risk analysis documents and past disasters in Lao PDR, the IACP TWG has agreed that for the purpose of planning for disaster response in Lao PDR the following scenario and planning assumptions should be adopted. [8]

3.1 Scenario

> *A storm hits central and southern Lao PDR, causing flooding and infrastructure damage across five provinces and directly affecting 250,000 people.*
>
> *A total of 75,000 persons are estimated to require immediate humanitarian assistance.*

The scale of the damage of the scenario is likely to trigger a Government request for assistance from international partners (please refer to planning assumptions below).

The preparedness measures undertaken for the scenario would also enable a rapid response for storms and floods of a smaller magnitude, and also for different hazards such as earthquake, drought and outbreaks.[9]

3.2 Planning Assumptions

Humanitarian Consequences and Priority Needs

- A large proportion of the affected population lives in hard to access areas, with limited access to health care. The population is mostly poor, largely reliant on subsistence farming and vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition. The communities are prone to storms, flooding and drought.
- The immediate humanitarian consequences of the storm include damage to housing, infrastructure and livelihoods, transport and communication networks, disruption of water systems and sanitation facilities, contamination of water sources, destroyed food stocks, disrupted education and health care services, and disruption to the eco-system and access to natural resources and food sources.
- As a result of destroyed crops and livelihoods and possible increases in disease incidence, a rise in acute malnutrition is forecast, peaking in the following lean season.

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[8] The scenario and planning assumptions are based on the experience of the Mekong Flooding in 2008, tropical storm Ketsana in 2009 and Haima flooding in 2011, with the view of adopting a realistic, yet major disaster scenario that will warrant a major response by the humanitarian actors in Lao PDR to support the Government response.

[9] This contingency plan does not extend to pandemics. The MoH is currently conducting extensive pandemic preparedness planning and further consultation on how international partners can support pandemic response is suggested when the Government processes are finalized.

- Children, women and older people, the disabled and chronically ill will experience increased vulnerability.
- Additional humanitarian needs are likely to emerge later as a consequence of the disaster, such as increased malnutrition rates following destruction of a harvest, requiring longer term monitoring and actions after the initial emergency response has concluded.
- The priority needs are potable water, rehabilitation of water sources, food assistance, medical services, temporary shelter and search and rescue services.

Coping Mechanisms

- The affected communities have experience in coping with hazards. Community cohesion is strong, volunteers are mobilized quickly and there is sharing and redistribution of resources and food within and between communities.
- Alternate housing is usually sought from relatives and other community members, and the reconstruction of houses is possible from natural resources available from the immediate surroundings.

Government Response

- There is strong capacity for the immediate response, through existing systems at the provincial, district and village levels. The assistance is limited by access to financial resources rather than human resources, which is relatively strong.
- Assistance is provided to the most affected villages, but international resources are necessary to meet the needs of 75,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance in a timely and effective manner.
- The Military and Line Ministries have resources including air transport, food stocks, medical resources, communication devices, and provincial and national warehouses.
- The Government can request assistance from the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (ASEAN AHA)[10] for mobilization of equipment, human and financial resources to respond to disasters. Assistance may also be requested bilaterally with ASEAN Member States.
- The Government can also access the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) for emergency rice to cover the humanitarian need during an emergency. In 2013, the Government requested 222 million tons of rice from APTERR to cover the rice need of 5,000 out of 50,000 people in need of food assistance for three months.

Government Request

- A formal Government request is, where issued, likely to only follow once a rapid assessment that has been conducted by the Government in the affected areas. As such, this request may not be issued within the immediate humanitarian phase.
- Local authorities are more likely to accept support through joint work on response plans or through sign off as part of IASC meetings, rather than issuing a formal and official request for support.
- To ensure that the Government of Lao PDR is supported to provide the necessary lifesaving humanitarian response in the first days and weeks of a disaster, the contingency plan acknowledges that international partners must coordinate to offer

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[10] http://www.ahacentre.org/

appropriate assistance to complement the Government's emergency response prior to or even in the absence of a traditional official request for support.

- A Government request for support will therefore be considered as an 'official and formal Government request' or the approval by the Government of the Flash appeal or CERF, allowing the clusters to begin implementing priority actions immediately.
- Most donors are likely to require at least the explicit sign off by the Government on the Flash Appeal/CERF to be able to release funds.
- The individual Clusters, the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)[11] will commence response *planning* at the request of the UNRC or Humanitarian Coordinator.

Gaps and Constraints

- The response will be constrained by difficulties in accessing the affected population, which will affect the timeliness of the response.
- Government systems for emergency response are in place, however there is limited capacity for timely data collection, analysis and transmission of information from the local to the national level and vice versa.
- There is no linked communication system for MONRE, MoLSW, the police and the military, and mobile phone networks are unreliable, especially in an emergency. The UN agencies have the capacity to communicate through emergency mobile satellite phones and VHF radio, however this system that is not connected to the INGOs and Lao Red Cross (LRC) who are operating in the field. There is no emergency operation centre that can coordinate and receive information that is being communicated from the affected areas.
- In absence of a formal request from the Government, will international humanitarian partners respond to the apparent emergency needs?

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[11] Please refer to section 5.3.3 and 5.3.5

4. Response Objectives, Strategies and Guiding Principles

The overall objective of this contingency plan is to support the Government to lead and ensure an effective, timely and coordinated response that will mitigate the impact of natural disasters on communities in Lao PDR.

The objective will be achieved through a clear response coordination mechanism and strategy, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all relevant national and international partners.

The response of the international community in support of the Government will be guided by the following principles:

- *Response efforts will build on the principle of early recovery; understanding response efforts as a continuum of disaster preparation, response, and recovery, ensuring that the response efforts do not undermine or weaken community resilience and long term development.*

- *The humanitarian community will strive towards the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, the Sphere Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards, and the Red Cross Code of Conduct and quality and accountability in aid delivery will be considered and implemented to the extent possible.*

- *Emergency response will ensure consideration of vulnerabilities and special needs associated with gender, age, disabilities, HIV and other cross-cutting issues.*

- *Strategic and operational responses will be based on the principle of Government leadership and ownership.*

5. Lao PDR System for Emergency Response

This chapter outlines the role of the main actors, coordination platforms and functions that serve to ensure the collective response is coordinated and effective. The next chapter outlines the responsibilities and specific actions taken in an emergency response.

In accordance with the tenets of international law, the Government of Lao PDR has the overall responsibility for leading the emergency response. UN agencies, INGOs, Red Cross Societies and Development Partners, coordinated through the IASC, support the Government response.

The UN agencies, the Lao Red Cross (LRC), and Development Partners have standing agreements with the Government that enable humanitarian activities in the event of a disaster. INGOs sign MoUs with the relevant Line Ministries for development activities, and separate agreements are required at the national and provincial level to conduct emergency response activities.

5.1 The Government of Lao PDR

The Government of Lao PDR coordinates disaster preparedness and response activities through two key entities: the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC) chaired by the Vice Prime Minister, and the Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change (DDMCC) within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), which also acts as secretariat to the NDMC. Disaster management committees are established at the provincial and district levels, and Village Disaster Management Committees (VDMCs) at the village level, to inform and implement preparedness, assessment, and response efforts of the Government.

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Figure 1: Lao PDR National Disaster Management Organization Chart
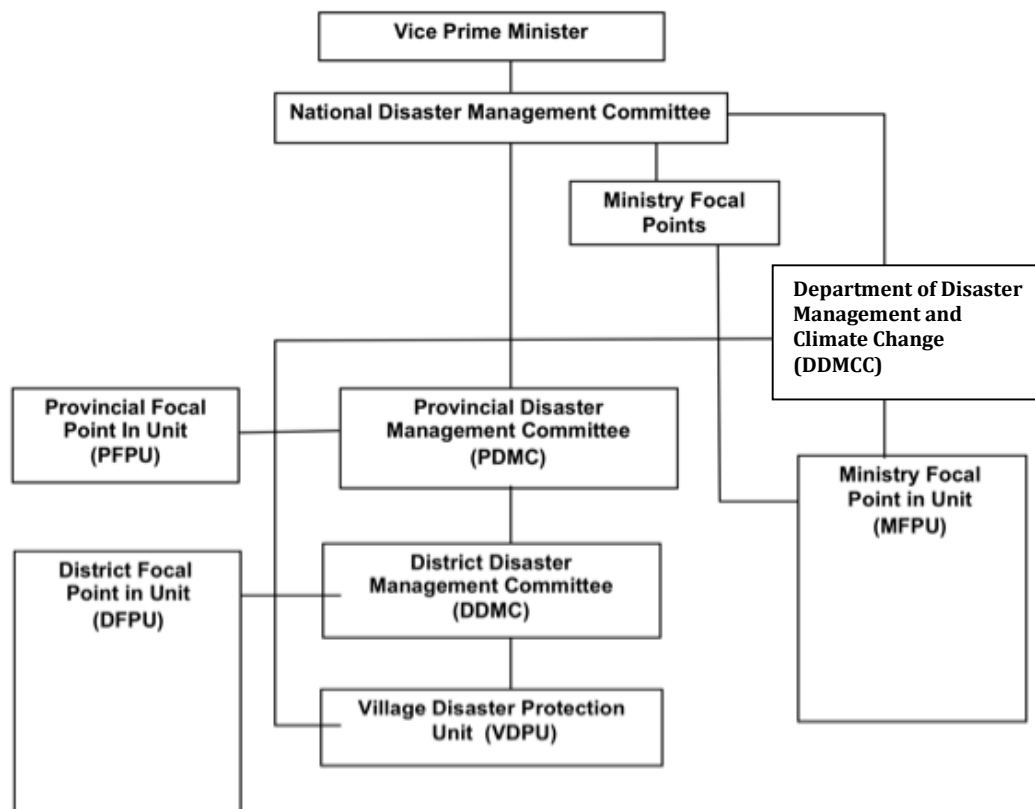
5.1.1 National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC)

Disaster management is overseen and coordinated by the Government of Lao PDR through the NDMC; comprised of Ministers and other senior representatives of Government bodies, as well as the Lao Red Cross, and chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense.[12] The NDMC has the following responsibilities:

- Overall coordination of disaster management, including recommendations to the Prime Minister to declare a state of emergency, and the request of regional or international humanitarian assistance.
- Coordination of emergency response, including development of a master plan for response based on line ministry response plans
- Mobilization of resources for disaster management
- Coordination of disaster risk reduction activities and integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) issues into national and sectoral work plans;
- Development of policies and regulations related to disaster management and provision of overall direction for provincial and district level disaster plans.

5.1.2 Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change (DDMCC)

The DDMCC, within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), serves as the Secretariat to the NDMC and is responsible for preparation of national disaster preparedness and emergency response plans, as well as strategic policy coordination of all

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[12] Please refer to annex 2 for the NDMC decree, 21 November 2011.

disaster relief operations, including data collection and assessments. The DDMCC has a key communication role in reporting the disaster situation, planned emergency response and recovery activities to line ministries, including through the NDMC, and in coordinating with the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) in disseminating early warning information to the Provincial Disaster Management Committees (PDMCs). The DDMCC is responsible for providing technical and capacity building support to provincial, district and village level initiatives.

At the discretion of the Prime Minister's Office, the DDMCC serves as the lead agency for the Government of Lao PDR in relevant regional bodies including the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and in international disaster management cooperation's. Currently, DDMCC is the focal point for the ASEAN Disaster Management Committee and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction on monitoring and implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action.

The DDMCC co-chairs the IASC, the Emergency Task Force and the Information Management Network.

5.1.3 Provincial and District Disaster Management Committees (PDMC and DDMC)

The PDMCs are comprised of provincial departments and the Lao Red Cross, and are chaired by the Vice Governor. The PDMCs are the pivotal point for the implementation of disaster management resources in the province, and serve as a channel for information and disaster management resources.

The PDMCs are responsible for coordinating the provincial emergency response, including the actions of organizations in the field, leading assessments and/or participating in assessments supported by INGOs, Not for Profit Associations (NPAs), LRC and Red Cross Societies and the UN, and informing the DDMCC of assistance required for the response. The PDMCs will coordinate with DDMCC to disseminate early warning information to the districts.

The District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs) are comprised of a chairman and members of all district level department heads. The DDMCs will participate in assessments coordinated by the PDMC or INGO/UN/Red Cross, and report to the PDMC if assistance is required. The DDMCs may also request assistance, through the NDMC, from NPAs, INGOs and private entities that are present at the district level.

5.1.4 Village Disaster Management Committees (VDMC)

The VDMCs are part of the NDMC structure with the responsibility to prepare for, and take rapid action in the event of an emergency and ensure that support is provided to affected households. The VDMCs also mobilize resources for disaster management at the village level and establish volunteer groups for relief operations.

5.1.5 Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH)

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH), located within MoNRE, is responsible for weather related early warning information, including weather forecasts, precipitation levels and flood risk. The DMH provides hydro-meteorological and forecasting information including warning bulletins to NDMC, DDMCC and to sub national government

structures and the public. During the wet season, daily updates are issued to DDMCC, via email, fax or phone. Upon receipt of a serious early warning, the DDMCC will contact the PDMC directly to share this information. .

5.1.6 Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)

The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), in coordination with other line Ministries, leads post disaster assessments to identify the scale of damages and loss of the affected sectors as regards recovery needs. Although MPI is not directly tasked to work on emergency response and humanitarian relief, it is tasked to oversee recovery activities, including post disaster assessments. Ensuring successful early recovery measures will require coordination and the active early participation from MPI in response planning.

5.1.7 Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)

MoFA is a member of the NDMC and in a disaster is responsible for leading broader resource mobilization efforts and issuing requests for assistance to the international community to support the national disaster response efforts. MoFA approves MoUs for emergency response, between organizations and Line Ministries, and is a core member of the IASC.

5.1.8 The Lao Red Cross (LRC) and Red Cross/Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) is the world's largest humanitarian network, established in 1863. The Movement is made up of three main components: 187 National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). There are a number of characteristics that distinguish the Movement from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the UN and other elements of civil society. Neutral and impartial, guided by seven Fundamental Principles, the Movement endeavours to prevent and alleviate human suffering – in particular during times of disasters and conflicts.

The LRC, established in 1955, remains very close to the government as a "civil organization auxiliary to the government in humanitarian services". The Government continues to support the LRC including in terms of resources. The LRC responds to the needs of the most vulnerable people nationwide through its core programmes and services, which focus on disaster preparedness, risk reduction and emergency response at the community level. The LRC communicates early warning information, provides emergency relief supplies including food and medical kits, and conducts village level rapid assessments in coordination with the DDMCs in times of emergency.

The LRC structure in Lao PDR consists of a national office, 17 provincial branches and 47 district chapters. The president of the LRC is a member of the NDMC, and the LRC national office communicates directly with the DDMCC. The provincial branch coordinates with the PDMC, and the LRC district coordinator is a member of the DDMC. Since 2004, LRC community activities have been implemented through the VDMCs, and other volunteer members. The Austrian, Australian, Danish, French, Luxemburg, German and Swiss Red Cross Partner National Societies support the LRC.

Over the past years, the Movement has responded to all major floods that occurred in the country, while conducting the 'International Disaster Response Law[13] study that revealed gaps in the national legal framework for managing international relief.

5.2 Inter-Agency Actors

5.2.1 UN Agencies

UN agencies will respond to an emergency according to their humanitarian mandate and in support of their respective Line Ministry's response efforts. The UN agencies participate in the cluster coordination mechanisms and ensure that response activities are in line with the cluster priorities and reported to the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG). [14]

5.2.2 International Non Governmental Organizations (INGOs)

INGOs are present in all 17 provinces of Lao PDR. As of 2012, twelve INGOs are implementing disaster risk reduction and disaster management activities in 16 provinces. The INGOs work in close collaboration with the PDMCs for emergency preparedness and response activities.

The INGO Network[15] serves as a focal point for communication and collaboration between INGOs, other development partners and the Government. In times of emergency, the INGO Disaster Management Working Group (INGO DMWG) convenes to coordinate and share information on the emergency activities being implemented by INGOs. INGO DMWG consists of some main NGOs, whose mandates are humanitarian and are the most active humanitarian actors like CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children, etc. As part of preparedness, the INGO DMWG coordinates a range of preparedness activities.

INGOs with humanitarian mandates are members of the Lao PDR IASC, the Humanitarian Country Team and the cluster system. Save the Children is co-lead of the Protection and Education Cluster. The INGO Network nominates one person to represent INGOs in the Emergency Task Force (ETF).[16]

5.2.3 Donors

Humanitarian donors[17] are members of the Lao IASC and play a central role in supporting the emergency response, either through direct support to the Government or via UN agencies or INGOs.

5.2.4 International Financial Institutions (IFI)

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

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[13] Legal Preparedness For Responding to Disasters and Communicable Disease Emergencies: study report'
(IFRC/French Red Cross/Lao Red Cross - 2009)
[14] Please refer to section 5.3.5 for more information on the ICCG
[15] http://www.directoryofngos.org
[16] Currently this role is assigned to the Oxfam Country Director. Please refer to section 5.3.6 for ETF information
[17] Please refer to annex 3 for detailed information on humanitarian donors in Lao PDR

The ADB has an integrated policy for managing its disaster and emergency assistance, which links the phases of the disaster management cycle, from prevention and mitigation through preparedness and recovery. The policy emphasizes not only responding after the disaster strikes but also supporting activities that anticipate and mitigate the likely impact of disasters that might occur. ADB's mandate does not allow the institution to engage in humanitarian relief, peacekeeping and peacemaking.

World Bank (WB)

The World Bank, together with the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR) has been working with the Government of Lao PDR on disaster risk management since 2009 after the Typhoon Ketsana, by supporting the preparation of the damage loss and needs assessment to quantify the amount of financial assistance needed to restore and rehabilitate the key typhoon affected sectors. Since then, the World Bank has supported the Government in disaster reduction and preparedness at the national and sub-national levels, and in recovery and reconstruction. The World Bank is not involved in humanitarian relief, however assistance provided to the Government is linked and complementary to emergency response and short to long term disaster recovery and preparedness activities conducted by other partners.

5.3 Coordination Platforms and Functions

5.3.1 The United Nations Resident Coordinator and Office (RC and RCO)

Under the overall lead of the Government, the RC is responsible for leading and coordinating the international emergency response in Lao PDR. In very large scale emergencies the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) may consider the designation of a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). The RC co-chairs the IASC, and Chairs the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG).

The RCO is the Secretariat to the RC and the IASC, as well as the HCT and the ICCG.

5.3.2 The Lao PDR Inter-Agency Standing Committee (Lao IASC)

The Lao IASC is the mechanism for overall coordination of humanitarian actions amongst the Government and resident international actors. The Lao IASC is co-chaired by the Director General of DDMCC[18], and the RC. The World Food Programme (WFP) currently acts as deputy co-chair for the UN.

In Lao PDR, IASC membership is extended to the United Nations agencies, relevant government Line Ministries, state owned enterprises, Red Cross Societies, INGOs, NPAs and donors. Please refer to annex 5 for the Lao IASC TOR.

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[18] DDMCC is the secretariat to the NDMC

5.3.3 Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)

The HCT is the platform for strategic decisions concerning the inter-agency response, in support of the Government and allows for UN agencies and INGOs to formulate common positions or raise issues of common concern before discussion with Government partners.

The HCT is chaired by the RC and is comprised of Heads of UN Agencies and Country Directors of INGOs with humanitarian mandates and representatives from the Red Cross partner societies[19]

The Humanitarian Country Team will meet[20] as required during an emergency response to agree on strategic issues and ensure timely decisions are made on the response outputs of the ICCG.

On decisions and agreements that require discussion with the broader IASC members, the RC will be responsible for reporting on HCT agreements with the IASC meeting forum. Please refer to annex 6 for the HCT TOR.

5.3.4 The Lao PDR Clusters

Clusters are formalized groups of humanitarian organizations (UN and non-UN) working in the main sectors of humanitarian action. They are created when clear humanitarian needs exist within a sector, when there are numerous actors within sectors and when national authorities require coordination support.

Clusters provide a clear point of contact and are accountable for adequate and appropriate humanitarian assistance. Clusters create partnerships between international humanitarian actors, national and local authorities, and civil society.

The Lao IASC has established ten clusters. Each cluster lead agency is tasked with ensuring a coordinated, timely and inclusive response among partners in their respective sectors, in close collaboration with the relevant line ministries and in support of the Government's response plan. Informal arrangements for collaboration between or joint work across two or more clusters may be agreed upon on an ad hoc and case-by-case basis depending on the context and where appropriate.[21]

Each cluster should in principle be co-chaired by a Line Ministry and the cluster lead agencies are responsible for promoting strong coordination between the Line Ministry and the cluster members.

The cluster lead agency focal point is designated by the cluster lead agency and is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and facilitation of the clusters work. The cluster lead agency focal point should at all times be designated staff whose contact details should be communicated to the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). Any changes to the focal point should be immediately communicated to the RCO.

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[19] ICCG members may participate in the HCT, however organizations should be represented by the most senior level

[20] The HCT may reach agreement over email in some circumstances

[21] During the Haima response in 2011, Food Security and Nutrition were mobilized as a joint cluster.

The RC will activate the clusters, based on the recommendations of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group meeting. Likewise, the RC will decide when the clusters and the coordination structures should return to standby/preparedness mode. Clusters may be activated and de-activated at different times, depending on the need for coordination in the particular sector. The decision will be based on the humanitarian needs in a particular sector, and the existence, capacity and willingness of national counterparts to lead the sectoral coordination. [22]

In a context of a disaster where one or more clusters were activated at the global level, the decision to officially de-activate the cluster will be made at the level of the Lao IASC, and the RC will formally notify the Emergency Relief Coordinator[23]. The ICCG and the ETF will return to standby mode when there is no longer a need for inter-cluster coordination, and the ETF will continue its early warning monitoring function.

Table 2: Lao IASC Clusters in 2014

Cluster	Cluster Lead Agency	Government Linkage
Health	WHO	Ministry of Health
WASH	UNICEF	Ministry of Health
Food Security	FAO and WFP	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
Nutrition	UNICEF	Ministry of Health
Education	UNICEF and Save the Children	Ministry of Education
Shelter	UN-HABITAT/IFRC[24]	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Protection	UNICEF and Save the Children	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
Early Recovery	UNDP	Ministry of Planning and Investment
Logistics	WFP	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
Information, Communications and Technology (ICT)	WFP	Ministry of Post, Telecommunications and Communications

Please refer to annex 1 for Cluster Lead Agency Focal Point contact details and annex 4 for the Cluster Leads TOR. The Cluster Response Plans are attached in annex 11.

5.3.5 Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG)

The ICCG is the platform for coordination amongst actors who have a key operational and technical role in disaster preparedness and response. The Government is represented in the ICCG by DDMCC.

The ICCG ensures that there is a clearly articulated operational response based on individual cluster needs and response plans. The ICCG is tasked with developing the key response outcomes including strategic response plans, situation reports and funding documents and providing operational recommendations and concerns to the HCT.

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[22] IASC. Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level. 2012.
[23] The Emergency Relief Coordinator, based in Geneva, is responsible for the oversight of all emergencies requiring United Nations humanitarian assistance. The ERC also acts as the central focal point for governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental relief activities, and leads the IASC at the global level.
[24] As IFRC has no presence in Lao PDR, they would be called in as needed

The ICCG is activated and chaired by the RC.[25] The Emergency Task Force (ETF) acts a secretariat to the ICCG. Please refer to annex 7 for the draft ICCG TOR.

5.3.6 Emergency Task Force (ETF)

The ETF is a technical coordination body for disaster preparedness and response between the UN, INGOs and MONRE.

The ETF is co-chaired by DDMCC and the RCO, and the members include a representative from the UN agency that is appointed as deputy co-chair of the IASC[26], a representative from the INGO Network, and a representative from the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS).

The ETF has two main responsibilities: monitoring and communicating early warning information prior to a disaster, and when the ICCG is activated, acting as the secretariat and facilitator of ICCG outputs (as part of the ICCG). Please refer to annex 8 for the ETF TOR

5.5.7 Information Management Network (IMN)

The purpose of the IMN is to ensure that information before and during a disaster is appropriately collated from various sources and transmitted to the ETF and the ICCG.

The IMN membership includes IM focal points from DDMCC, each cluster and other relevant organizations and Line Ministries, who have the necessary technical skills to professionally manage information.

The IMN co-chairs and the ETF will advise the RC to request Information Management Officer (IMO) surge capacity from OCHA, when required. Please refer to annex 9 for the IMN TOR.

5.3.8 Emergency Communications Team (ECT)

The ECT is responsible for developing and coordinating public information products that enable the international actors, in partnership with the Government, to advocate to the Government, media, donors and public on the needs of affected populations, to encourage appropriate resource mobilization and action.

The ECT is composed of public information and communication staff from the UN agencies and INGOs[27]. Each cluster should be represented in the ECT with one focal point. The ECT is led by the ECT coordinator, a designated staff who is appointed by and reports directly to the RC/RCO. In the event of a large-scale disaster, the ECT coordinator role may be appointed to seconded personnel from an emergency roster of staff deployed by OCHA. The

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[25] The RC may designate the RCO to chair the ICCG
[26] Currently the World Food Programme
[27] The ECT will be established in early 2013. It is anticipated that the ECT Strategy and Work-Plan will be finalized by April 2013.

ECT Coordinator will be supported directly by one deputy coordinator, nominated by the ECT and preferably a Lao national.

Linkages will be established with relevant Government media and communications staff, including but not limited to staff from the MOFA and the Ministry of Information, Communication and Tourism (MoICT).
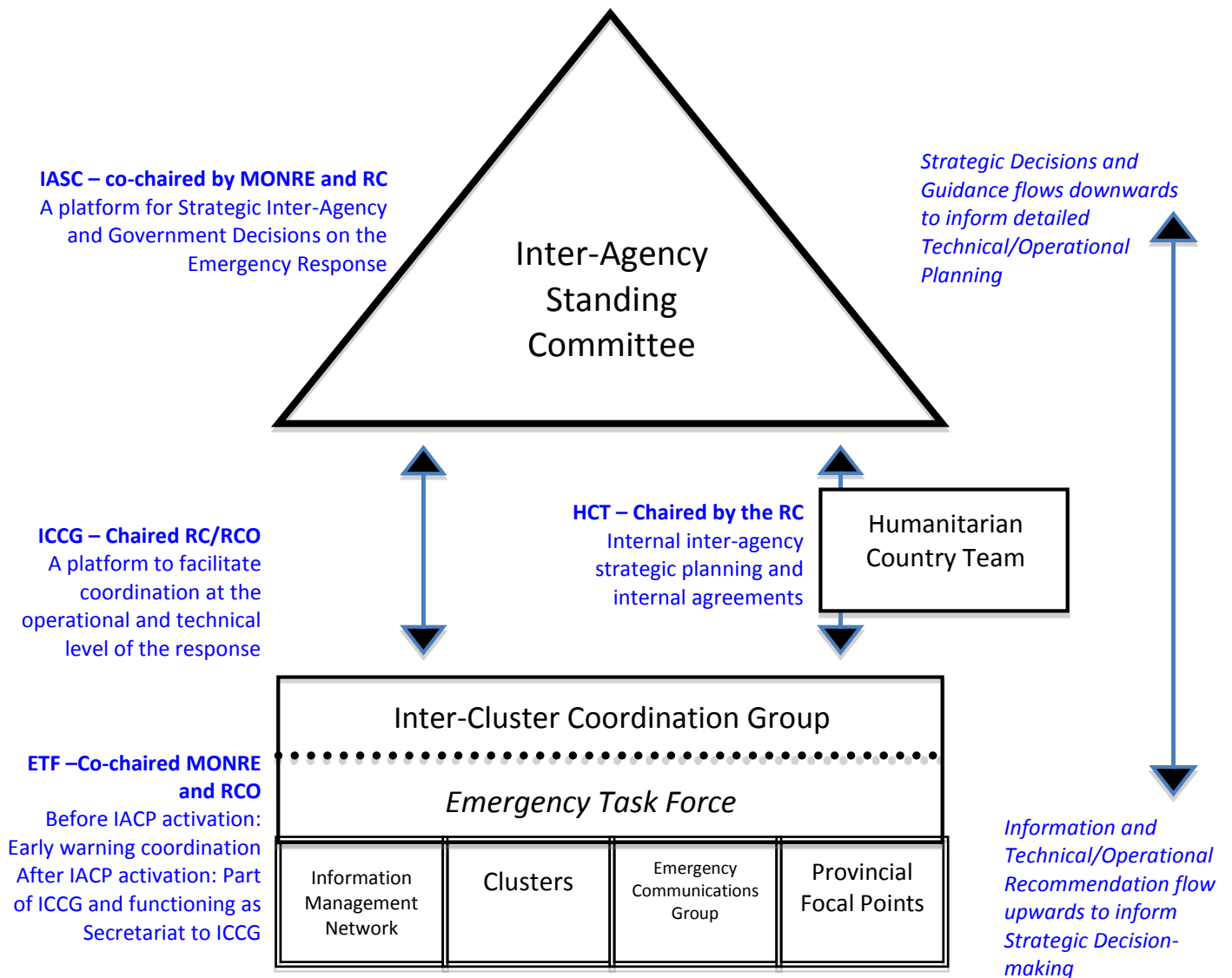
5.3.9 Provincial Focal Points (PFP)

To facilitate linkages between the central level and the international organizations that are present at the provincial and district levels, a PFP for emergency preparedness and response has been identified for each of Lao PDR's 17 provinces. The PFP is a nominated staff member from an INGO, Red Cross or a UN agency who has a presence in the province. The PFP communicates directly with the INGO focal point in the Emergency Task Force. Please refer to annex 10 for the TOR and annex 1 for the PFP contact list.

5.3.10 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (OCHA-ROAP)

The OCHA-ROAP will provide support to the RC, as needed, in coordination with regional offices of other agencies and may deploy staff to support the RCO as required and requested. At the onset of a disaster/emergency and following consultations with and request from the RC, OCHA ROAP can provide the following technical support to the RCO:

- Deployment of initial surge to strengthen the RCO in overall response coordination,
- Provision of support to the application of humanitarian financing tools - Emergency Cash Grant (ECG), CERF, flash appeal and its launch
- Provision of additional specific support for information management, reporting, media and communications, and civil military coordination
- Facilitation of the Deployment of an UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to assist the Government and the IASC in disaster response, specialized in inter-cluster coordination, humanitarian financing, assessments, mapping, media and communications, reporting, information management and civil military coordination.

Figure 3: Lao PDR Coordination Platforms

IASC – co-chaired by MONRE and RC
A platform for Strategic Inter-Agency and Government Decisions on the Emergency Response

Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Strategic Decisions and Guidance flows downwards to inform detailed Technical/Operational Planning

ICCG – Chaired RC/RCO
A platform to facilitate coordination at the operational and technical level of the response

HCT – Chaired by the RC
Internal inter-agency strategic planning and internal agreements

Humanitarian Country Team

ETF –Co-chaired MONRE and RCO
Before IACP activation: Early warning coordination
After IACP activation: Part of ICCG and functioning as Secretariat to ICCG

Inter-Cluster Coordination Group

Emergency Task Force

| Information Management Network | Clusters | Emergency Communications Group | Provincial Focal Points |

Information and Technical/Operational Recommendation flow upwards to inform Strategic Decision-making

IMN – data management/ **Clusters -** operations/ **ECT** - communications / **PFP**- field level information

6. Overall Management and Coordination

This section outlines the coordination both within the international community, and between the Government and the international community, including clearly defined actions and coordination mechanisms during the emergency response.

6.1 Responsibilities and Actions

6.1.1 Government of Lao PDR

The Government leads and coordinates national disaster preparedness and response activities through the disaster management committees at the district, provincial and central levels. The overall structure of the Government disaster management system is presented in chapter five.

NDMC will:

- Receive initial information from the PDMCs/DDMCC and mobilize a response. The NDMC may meet to task ministries for response.

DDMCC will:

- Upon receipt of early warning information from the DMH, or other sources, contact the RCO and the PDMCs
- Coordinate with, and update the PDMCs to collect and summarize initial information
- Report PDMC information to the NDMC and the RCO
- Share information with the ETF
- Participate in the ICCG, as part of the ETF as required in the first 24 hours of disaster[28] or prior to the event; and as required thereafter
- Co-chair IASC meetings as required
- Provide support as required to the PDMCs to gather initial information and conduct rapid assessments.

PDMCs will:

- Disseminate early warning information to the DDMCs
- Mobilize the initial response, including financial resources
- Coordinate with NPAs, INGOs and UN agencies in the affected areas
- Collect initial information, through DDMCs and VDMCs from the affected areas and transmit this information to DDMCC and NDMC
- Conduct a common rapid assessment, where necessary with support from the ICCG and local partners
- Transmit data from the common rapid assessment to the DDMCC, with support from local partners as required.

MoFA will:

- Participate in IASC meetings
- Lead Government resource mobilization efforts
- Request or accept the assistance of the IASC members, where required
- Issue official request for international assistance

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[28] The timeframe will be different for disasters with a slower onset, e.g. floods and droughts

Other Line Ministries will play a key role in defining the needs and response plans for each other sectors and will be closely consulted by relevant clusters in defining sectoral needs and response plans, to ensure the inter-agency support is closely aligned with and supportive of the Government response across sectors. All relevant Line Ministries will also be integral parts of the IASC and participate in IASC meeting.

6.1.2 Inter-Agency Actors

6.1.2.1 UN Agencies

The UN agencies will:

- Respond to the emergency according to respective organizational mandates and contingency plans.
- Coordinate as cluster members and provide input into cluster situation reports
- Inform the ICCG and the HCT on interventions and ensure they comply with and are part of cluster response plans
- Report on activities as part of the CERF and Flash appeal
- Provide additional information to the ICCG and HCT as it becomes available through response activities
- Align response plans with agreed strategic priorities and assessment results

6.1.2.2 International Non Governmental Organizations

The INGOs will:

- Respond to the emergency according to respective organizational mandates and contingency plans.
- Coordinate as cluster members and provide input into cluster situation reports
- Ensure the capacity and geographical reach of the INGOs is communicated to the clusters as active members.
- Inform the ICCG and the HCT on interventions and ensure they comply with and are part of cluster response plans
- Report on activities as part of the CERF and Flash Appeal
- Provide additional information to the ICCG and HCT as it becomes available through response activities
- Align response plans with agreed strategic priorities and assessment results

6.1.2.3 Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement

The Red Cross Movement will:

- Respond to the emergency according to its respective mandate and contingency plans
- Ensure the capacity and geographical reach of the Red Cross Movement is communicated to the HCT and through the RCO or INGO Network to the ICCG
- Provide additional information to the ICCG and HCT as it becomes available through response activities
- Align response plans with agreed strategic priorities and assessment results
- Coordinate as cluster members and provide input into cluster situation reports

- Collect fund or in-kind donations in-country and activate Red Cross Movement funding mechanisms (bilateral donation, Disaster Relief Emergency Funds, Appeal)

6.1.3 Coordination Platforms and Functions

6.1.3.1 The Resident Coordinator and Resident Coordinator Office

The RC will, in consultation with the Government and under its overall lead:

- Chair or designate the RCO to chair an ICCG meeting in the first 24 hours of a rapid onset disaster or serious early warning
- Chair Humanitarian Country Team and IASC meetings as required
- Facilitate agreement on the establishment of clusters and the designation of cluster leads
- Ensure that clusters function efficiently, and make resourcing requirements known to the Emergency Relief Coordinator where required
- Activate and de-activate clusters as required
- Lead the development of a strategic response plan for humanitarian action in-country, ensuring that cross-cutting issues (gender, age, human rights, HIV/AIDS, the environment) and activities in support of early recovery are integrated
- Coordinate implementation of the humanitarian response plan by establishing mechanisms for inter-sector/cluster coordination, including for needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation, and communications strategies
- Lead inclusive resource mobilization efforts, ensuring that they reflect assessed and documented priority needs
- Oversee monitoring of and reporting on projects funded by Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), ECG and Flash Appeal
- Advocate with relevant actors, including the Government, regional organizations (and their military forces), UN entities, civil society, the private sector and the media on issues of humanitarian concern and requirements to facilitate a smooth response.
- Advocate with all relevant parties, including non-state actors, for compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law
- Ensure that appropriate linkages are made between relief, recovery, transition and development activities, and promote prevention strategies in national development plans

The RCO will:

- Support the RC, including in his/her role as HC if and when the RC is so appointed, in line with the roles and responsibilities of the RC as outlined above
- Coordinate directly with MONRE
- Mobilize the ETF, in agreement with MONRE
- Co-chair the ETF meetings and coordinate ETF activities when acting as a secretariat and facilitator of the ICCG outputs
- Where appropriate, coordinate information flow from and between the IASC members, the Humanitarian Country Team, the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group and the MONRE, as well as information sharing among humanitarian and donor communities within and external to Lao PDR.

- Ensure the donors and other international members of the IASC are informed of the situation and evolutions of the emergency situation
- Coordinate with non-resident agencies relevant to the response, including OCHA
- Chair the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group meetings, when appointed by the RC
- Support the IASC meetings and facilitate decision-making processes
- Disseminate situation reports
- Draft the Flash Appeal, Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) and other fundraising documents with support from the WFP and UNICEF Deputies[29]

6.1.3.2 The Lao PDR Inter-Agency Standing Committee

The IASC will:

- Ensure coherence at the strategic level between the Government and the international actors responding to an emergency
- Meet as required to share information and decide on actions for supporting the Government response.
- Reach a decision on IASC support for the common rapid assessment, sector specific and post disaster needs assessments
- Agree on resource mobilization applications, such as the Flash Appeal
- Discuss solutions to any bottle-necks to an efficient response

6.1.3.3 The Humanitarian Country Team

The HCT will:

- Meet as required during an emergency response to make strategic decisions in terms of the inter-agency support to the Government, based on the recommendations and outputs from the ICCG[30]
- Approve the final CERF application
- Approve the Flash appeal for discussion at the IASC meeting
- Approve the Common Rapid Assessment plan for final approval at the IASC meeting
- Discuss any bottle-necks to the response, prior to raising issues with Government at the IASC meeting
- Communicate decisions to the IASC for information, discussion and validation

6.1.3.4 The Lao PDR Clusters

The clusters will:

- Commence response planning based on the request from the UNRC or Humanitarian Coordinator
- Ensure coherence at the technical/operational level between the Government and the inter-agency partners emergency response

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[29] WFP and UNICEF are currently lead agencies for seven of the ten clusters in Lao PDR, and therefore undertake a large responsibility in cluster coordination. The involvement of the WFP and UNICEF deputies in the ICCG may be re-evaluated by the RC should the cluster arrangement in Lao PDR change.

[30] During an emergency response, the ICCG shares broad operational priorities and concerns with the HCT, but takes guidance on strategic and policy issues from the HCT. The ICCG is tasked with developing key strategic products including preliminary scenario definitions, strategic response plans, situation reports and cluster project matrix for resource mobilization efforts such as the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF).

- Cluster Leads will participate in Inter-Cluster Coordination Group meetings during the emergency response, as required
- Provide cluster situation report inputs, as requested by the RCO
- Nominate one person to act as the information management focal point, who will participate in the IM Network
- Nominate a member of the cluster to participate in the Emergency Communications Team, or a cluster organization will appoint a communications focal point to represent the cluster.
- Review the cluster response plan and who does what and where (3W) matrix based on the particular disaster and provide input into funding appeals
- Support common rapid and other assessments as requested by the Government and in accordance with the common rapid assessment (CRA) and other assessment plans developed by the ICCG
- Ensure adequate minimum preparedness for emergency response, through identification of a Line Ministry and cluster members, mapping of capacities[31] establishment of cluster coordination mechanisms and development of a response plan.[32]
- The cluster lead agency will be responsible for the provision of assistance or services as a last resort[33]

6.1.3.5 Inter-Cluster Coordination Group

The ICCG will:

- Meet within the first 24 hours at the request of the RC to agree on the draft PSD developed by the ETF, recommendations for cluster arrangements, early strategic planning and initial response requirements, including surge support and resource mobilization.
- Commence coordination of response planning based on the request from the UNRC or Humanitarian Coordinator
- Provide regular briefings and updates on operational response and prioritization to the HCT to ensure timely resource mobilization and advocacy.
- Under the leadership of the IMN co-chairs, review and update the consolidated 'Who does What Where' (3W's) matrix from each cluster, prepositioned emergency stock list and other relevant information management products.
- Develop a common rapid assessment plan and provide assistance to the Government to conduct, analyze and report on common rapid assessments, and any other assessments that may be required
- Identify surge capacity needs across clusters and maintain communication with the RC on met and unmet surge support needs
- Facilitate cluster preparedness

6.1.3.6 The Emergency Task Force

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[31] The mapping of cluster capacity does not necessarily include the Line Ministry
[32] Please refer to section 6.2 and annex 11 for the cluster response plans.
[33] As agreed by the IASC Principals, Cluster leads are responsible for acting as the provider of last resort (subject to access, security and availability of funding) to meet the agreed priority needs and will be supported by the HC and the ERC in their efforts in this regard

The ETF will:

- Monitor and communicate early warning information to all disaster actors, following the ETF call tree framework and guided by the ETF communication guidance document[34]
- Collect information on the emergency situation, as per the ETF call tree and coordinate with the IMN to conduct analysis of initial information and secondary/baseline information sets
- Develop and disseminate timely situation reports
- Call a meeting of ICCG members[35] to agree on the Preliminary Scenario Definition (PSD), recommendations for cluster arrangement, strategic planning and initial response requirements including surge support and resource mobilization
- Present to the HCT the PSD and recommendations from the preliminary ICCG meeting
- When the ICCG is activated by the RC/HCT, support the RC coordination of the ICCG and facilitate its outputs[36]
- Support coordination with the Provincial Focal Points[37], DDMCC and the ICCG members to develop a plan for supporting the PDMC led CRA, where required.
- Support the preparedness activities of the ICCG
- Ensure that all preparedness documents and data are compiled, updated as required and accessible from the RCO and MONRE

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[34] Please refer to the Guidelines for Emergency Task Force Communication – annex 8
[35] In agreement with the RC
[36] Please refer to the ICCG TOR for a list of outputs expected in an emergency response – annex 7
[37] Please refer to the PFP TOR – annex 10

6.1.3.7 The Information Management Network

The IMN will:

- Ensure baseline data/common operational datasets (CODs) are disaggregated and prioritized
- Support clusters to review and update fundamental operational datasets (FODs)
- Review appropriate means of communication, information storage, messaging systems, databases, software tools, as well as accompanying procedures prior to each rainy season
- Ensure CODs and FODs are reviewed and updated prior to the rainy season, and agreements for data sharing between Line Ministries and Clusters are in place as required
- Participate in the ICCG meetings, as required
- In the first day of a disaster, select and analyze relevant CODs and provide the ICCG with the agreed COD dataset
- Collate and analyze other secondary information and share relevant information to the ICCG
- Collate and analyze initial information received by the DDMCC from the sub national level and share with the ICCG
- Provide support to the Emergency Task Force and ICCG to manage and update inter agency tools including contact directories, Who What and Where (3W) matrix, and other IM tools
- Provide support to the ICCG for analysis and reporting of common rapid assessment data

6.1.3.8 The Emergency Communications Team

The ECT will:

- Liaise with the public information stakeholders[38] to ensure that accurate facts and relevant information are collected, properly analyzed and disseminated in a timely manner to the targeted audiences
- Draft outputs such as press releases and prepare key messages, based on updates from clusters, in line with national Situation Reports
- Organize regular media updates/briefings/interviews/field trips, as required
- Support the RC/HC, ETF and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) members in their communications with the media, donor communities and international humanitarian communities
- Maintain a centralized log of media coverage to help balance outreach (subject/angle/language/type of media/etc)
- Monitor the news or any reports on the humanitarian works being carried out and be considerate of and deal with possible negative implications for the humanitarian response, as a result of controversial, inaccurate or false media reports
- Provide guidance to the RCO on content posted to the UN Lao Disaster Web Page
- Assist in building the capacities of the national counterparts, when necessary.

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[38] The public information stakeholders include the government agencies, IASC member organizations, Cluster leads, information management focal points, UN regional offices/headquarters, the media, and donors.

- The ECT coordinator will report directly to the RC. The ECT PI products including key messages, press releases, content posted on the website will be communicated to the RCO prior to release and before being finally agreed by the RC.
- The ECT coordinator will participate in ICCG meetings as required during the emergency response phase, to ensure that the ECT is closely integrated into the inter-cluster coordination forum.
- Information from clusters will be channeled to the ECT through the ECT cluster PI focal points.

6.1.3.9 Provincial Level Focal Points

The Provincial Focal Points will:

- Maintain a basic contact list for all relevant government agencies, UN agencies, INGO, Red Cross and NPAs present in the province. This contact list will be updated every year in May, coordinated by the INGO ETF focal point[39]
- Communicate early warning information to the INGO focal point within the ETF, either proactively or on the request of the INGO ETF focal point, in the event of a potential or likely emergency.[40] Similarly, dispatch early warning information received from the ETF focal point to agencies in the province.
- Provide information as detailed in the Initial Information Guidance Note[41] during the first 72 hours of an emergency.
- Be responsible for directly communicating with the PDMC on the plans and progress for implementation of a common rapid assessment (CRA) in the event of an emergency, and communicate this information to the ETF.
- Where the IASC or the PDMC has identified a need for the CRA to be initiated, support the PDMC to carry out the CRA where requested and/or relay to the ETF any need for the ICCG to mobilize central level resources to support the CRA.
- Communicate if a rapid assessment has already been conducted by an INGO in the affected area
- In collaboration with DDMCC and present INGOs and agencies, provide training to PDMCs to use the CRA tool.[42] Communicate with the ETF any need for additional funds for this task, where the PFP organization/agency is unable to carry the costs.
- Disseminate the CRA review template[43] to Provincial and District actors who implement the CRA tool, and collect and send the completed review templates to the RCO.[44]

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[39] In the case where a UN agency would serve as PFP the contact list would be sent to the RCO ETF focal point
[40] Including small scale local emergencies
[41] Annex 12
[42] This support in times of preparedness should include training for district level staff on the implementation of the assessment, including data entry and assessment methodology.
[43] Refer to annex 13 for CRA review template
[44] oneun_info.la@one.un.org

6.2. Cluster Response Plans

Each cluster has developed a cluster preparedness and response plan in consultation with cluster members including Government counterparts, based on the contingency plan scenario. The clusters will undertake a review of the plan prior to each rainy season, and be responsible for updating and improving plans at regular intervals. Please refer to annex 11 for the detailed cluster plans.

The cluster preparedness and response plans include a cluster 3W matrix and a pre-positioned supply list. The consolidated 3W matrix and pre-positioned supply list are held by the RCO, and will be circulated to the cluster leads for updating in May of each year, prior to the rainy season.

Health Cluster
The goal of the health cluster is to ensure effective, efficient and timely response to public health emergency coordinated by all health sector partners in Lao PDR under the leadership of the Ministry of Health (MOH).

WASH Cluster
The goal of the WASH cluster is to ensure an effective, efficient and timely response to emergency for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene coordinated by all sector partners in Lao PDR.

Nutrition Cluster
The goal of the nutrition cluster is to reduce mortality and to prevent deterioration of nutritional status among the most vulnerable population groups, such as children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers who constitute 17 percent of the total affected population.

Education Cluster
The goal of the education cluster is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies including the early recovery phase, and for ensuring greater predictability and more effective inter-agency responses in education, in the main areas of standards and policy setting, building response capacity, and operational support.

Shelter Cluster
The goal of the shelter cluster is to reduce the vulnerabilities related to Shelter, Settlement and Essential Household Items (EHI) of the disaster-affected population in Lao PDR.

Protection Cluster
The goal of the protection cluster is to ensure that the most vulnerable families and children affected by the disaster are protected from violence, abuse, and exploitation (and extended trauma) and the risks of UXO[45] in line with international human rights legislation, global standards and norms of humanitarian action.

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[45] When the disaster occurs in provinces affected by UXO

Early Recovery Cluster
The goal of the early recovery cluster is to support coordinated assessment of needs and response to ensure effective and rapid long-term recovery.

Food Security Cluster
The goal of the food security cluster in an emergency is to support the Government of Lao PDR to meet the humanitarian food security needs of affected populations in a timely, effective, and accountable manner.

Logistics Cluster
The goal of the logistics cluster is to establish and maintain an appropriate humanitarian preparedness and response mechanism that would ensure efficient and effective response to humanitarian emergencies in the country.

ICT Cluster
The goal of the information, communication and technology cluster is to establish and maintain an appropriate humanitarian preparedness and response mechanism that would ensure efficient and effective response to humanitarian emergencies in the country.

6.3 Standard Operating Procedures for Emergency Response

Smaller scale emergencies or disasters

Small and medium scale disasters occur frequently in Lao PDR. It is acknowledged that the Government will not request, nor require, international actors to be mobilized for small scale emergencies that are within the capacity of the Government to respond to adequately.[46] However, coordination processes as outlined in the SOPs remain relevant to ensure that there is a common understanding of the emergency situation between the IASC members, and between the Government and the IASC, as well as a plan for potential next steps in the response.

Therefore, the SOP for contingency plan activation should be followed for *all* hazard events, including small-scale disasters where the contingency plan may not be activated where the Emergency Task Force (ETF) will still function as an early warning coordination body between the Government and the international actors.

It is anticipated that the ETF will meet/consult frequently throughout the wet season, to assess early warning information and make a decision to either remain on watch or on alert, or propose the activation of the contingency plan, pending the go ahead of the RC or Humanitarian Coordinator, and call a preliminary Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) meeting in the event of serious early warning information. Factors deciding levels of ETF mobilization and activation of the IACP will include the severity of the early warning, the geographical area affected, the specific impacts on different sectors, the number of agencies expected to be involved and the Government's capacity to respond quickly and adequately will be taken into consideration.

In situations where it is agreed that there is no need to activate the contingency plan, the ETF will, facilitated by the RCO, be required to continue to monitor the situation, provide updates to all partners and support the DDMCC as required.

> For smaller scale disasters where the contingency plan has been activated, the SOPs from hour zero to month two will be followed as far as is appropriate in the given context

Contingency Plan Activation SOP

It is expected that there will be some degree of early warning of a severe storm or flood risk in Lao PDR, from national sources and regional sources, such as the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS).[47]

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[46] With the assistance of INGOs/Red Cross working in cooperation with the PDMCs at the sub national level.
[47] www.gdacs.org

SOP One – Early Warning Information and Contingency Plan Activation

Timeframe	Action and [lead]
Prior to/within first 24 hours	**INFORMATION SHARING** ☐ The early warning or initial information from a hazard is transmitted from the DMH, local authorities or other sources to the DDMCC/UNRCO/other [all]
	INFORMATION SHARING ☐ The information is shared amongst the ETF members and the RCO and DDMCC, in consultation with ETF members, decides on the phase of ETF operation[48] and the next steps [all ETF]
	ETF ANALYSIS ☐ The ETF meets via skype, teleconference or in person to assess the hazard risk/initial information and will make an assessment of the risk/magnitude of the hazard [all ETF]
	If the hazard risk/event is serious[49]: ☐ The ETF will recommend to the RC to call a preliminary Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) meeting and to formally activate the IACP [RCO] ☐ Based on the available initial information, prepare a draft preliminary scenario definition. [ETF} ☐ The preliminary scenario definition will be communicated to a contact list[50] of humanitarian actors, donors and OCHA, as per the ETF call tree [RCO and DDMCC] **(IACP ACTIVATED)**
Ongoing	**If the hazard risk/event is moderate:** ☐ The ETF will continue to monitor the potential hazard/event closely [ETF On Alert] ☐ The RCO will ensure that all partners are aware of the hazard risk or event [RCO] ☐ The RCO will update the RC, documenting the evolving situation and disseminate information on the situation to all partners as per the ETF call tree as required [RCO and DDMCC] **(IACP NOT ACTIVATED/ETF On Alert)**

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[48] The four phases of ETF mobilization are 1. On standby; 2. On Watch; 3. On Alert and 4. Activated and subsumed under the ICCG. Please refer to the ETF TOR for more information on the different phases – annex 8

[49] The ETF will review the initial information and based on the following criteria will determine if the risk or situation is moderate or serious: the estimated risk of the hazard affecting Lao PDR, the expected magnitude of the disaster, the number of provinces and districts that may be/are affected, the vulnerability of the affected/potentially affected areas, the capacity of the Government to respond to the affected/potentially areas, and the capacity of local partners in the affected/potentially affected areas to support the Government response.

[50] The contact list will be based within and regularly updated by the RCO.

SOP Two – Zero to 72 Hours
The SOP for the first 72 hours of a rapid onset disaster is outlined in chronological order. All actions included in the SOP may not be relevant or required depending on the specific context of the disaster.

1. ETF formulation of the Preliminary Scenario Definition (PSD)

DAY	Action [lead]	Response Outcome [lead]
Prior or 0-24 hours	**The IMN**: ☐ Provides existing baseline information, 3W matrix and other information products relevant to the affected areas to the ETF [IMN co-chairs] **The ETF:** ☐ Requests disaster information from all partners, as per the ETF call tree [all ETF members on alert] ☐ Meets to analyze information and develops the first preliminary scenario definition [all ETF] ☐ Shares the preliminary scenario definition with HCT and OCHA [RCO] and the Government [DDMCC] ☐ Decision to call a preliminary ICCG meeting [RC/RCO]	☐ Baseline data is available on the affected area [IMN] ☐ First preliminary scenario definition is issued [ETF]

2. RC/RCO convenes a preliminary ICCG meeting

DAY	Action [lead]	Response Outcome [lead]
Prior or 0-24 hours	☐ The ETF/RCO presents the initial preliminary scenario definition **The ICCG determines the expected needs for:** ☐ Cluster activation ☐ Surge support requirements ☐ Public Information and communication products ☐ ECG and CERF **The ICCG agrees on:** ☐ Preliminary strategic response priorities	☐ Recommendations for the HCT meeting

3. The RC convenes a Humanitarian Country Team meeting to make quick decisions

DAY	Action [lead]	Response Outcome [lead]
24-48 hours	☐ The RC/RCO presents the preliminary scenario definition and the recommendations of the preliminary ICCG meeting ☐ The ECT coordinator presents the initial public information products (key messages etc) **Key decisions of the HCT meeting:** ☐ Cluster activation and level of activation ☐ Activation of the ICCG for response ☐ Need for specific critical public information products (press releases etc) ☐ Approval of key messages ☐ Resource mobilization, including Emergency Cash Grant (ECG), Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Flash appeal requirements ☐ Surge support requirements ☐ UNDAC deployment requirements	☐ The RC shares a decision in email of which clusters have been activated. If global level activation is necessary[51], the RC informs the ERC. ☐ The RC informs OCHA of the situation, intention to apply for ECG, CERF, Flash appeal, and of surge support requirements including UNDAC. ☐ The RC/RCO schedules and sends an invitation for the ICCG meeting

4. The RC/RCO convenes an ICCG meeting to establish strategic priorities

DAY	Action [lead]	Response Outcome
24-48 hours	☐ The RC/RCO presents the decisions of the HCT **The meeting reviews and updates the following:** ☐ Preliminary scenario definition ☐ Initial assistance delivered and planned, by Government and IASC members ☐ Security issues and logistical challenges ☐ Urgent gaps and priority needs ☐ Cluster response plans **The meeting decides on key tasks, leads and timeframes:** ☐ Final 3W matrix ☐ Updated list of pre-positioned emergency supplies in country ☐ Resource mobilization priorities (ECG/CERF/Flash/other) ☐ First cluster sit-rep inputs ☐ First consolidated sit-rep (to be issued by day 3) ☐ Updated key messages and other information products, as required ☐ Mapping of the need to conduct a CRA and inter-agency required support ☐ Logistics plan aligned with response plans	☐ Strategic response priorities agreed ☐ A key task list and timeframes is developed by the ECT ☐ The preliminary scenario definition is updated and issued as a situation report of zero to 48 hours [RCO]

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[51] In the event of activating the clusters at the global level is required, the RC will raise recommendation to the IASC

5. The clusters coordinate the response

DAY	Action [lead]	Response Outcome [lead]
0-48 hours	Cluster Leads begin coordinating the sectoral response in collaboration with the government cluster co-chair	☐ The cluster response plans are updated and projects are developed for the CERF application

6. The RC convenes the second Humanitarian Country Team meeting

DAY	Action [lead]	Response Outcome [lead]
48-72 hours	☐ The ICCG Chair presents the preliminary scenario definition and strategic plan, for agreement [RC/RCO] ☐ The ICCG Chair presents the ECG proposal/CERF project matrix/Flash appeal outline for agreement or next steps for completion [RC/RCO] ☐ The ECT coordinator presents PI products (key messages etc)	☐ Strategic plan agreed ☐ Project matrix agreed for CERF/Flash, or next steps decided on for completion ☐ The RC submits the ECG[52] to OCHA ROAP ☐ The RC submits the initial CERF, if ready

7. The RC and DDMCC convene an IASC meeting

DAY	Action [lead]	Response Outcome [lead]
48-72 hours	☐ The HCT Chair presents the PSD, strategic plan and situation reports [RC/HC] ☐ The HCT Chair presents the ECG proposal/CERF project matrix/Flash appeal outline [RC/HC] ☐ MoFA confirms if a Flash appeal will be required to assist the Government response [MoFA] ☐ The ETF presents the inter-agency plan for supporting the PDMC to conduct a common rapid assessment, for agreement [ETF]	☐ The RC notifies OCHA that a flash appeal will be submitted ☐ The CRA plan is agreed

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[52] The ECG must be allocated by OCHA ROAP by day 10

8. The ETF facilitates the coordination of ICCG Outputs

DAY	Action [lead]	Response Outcome [lead]
48-72 hours	☐ The clusters provide second cluster sit-rep [CLs] ☐ The second consolidated sit-rep is developed (day 3) [RCO with support from IMN and UN Deputies[53]] ☐ The UN Deputies and RCO continue working with CLs to finalize the CERF project matrix ☐ The ECT produces key public information products [ECT]	☐ Consolidated day 3 sit-rep is issued [RCO] ☐ CERF/Flash project matrix draft [RC/RCO with support from UN Deputies] ☐ Public Information products [ECT]

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[53] The UN Deputies will be the Deputies of agencies responsible for 3 or more clusters. As the time of endorsement of the IACP these are WFP and UNICEF.

SOP Three- Day 4 to Month 2

The follow SOP outlines the key tasks to be undertaken in specific timeframes up to and beyond the second month.

DAYS/Month	Action and [lead]
All	**Sit-reps** ☐ Clusters provide sit-rep inputs ☐ UN Deputies provide support to consolidating the sit-rep ☐ Consolidated sit-reps are issued daily or as required [RCO]
Days 5-10	**Flash Appeal** ☐ Clusters Leads vet projects within their cluster and provide priority projects to the ICCG ☐ The ICCG, under the lead of RCO with support from the UN Deputies, consolidate the Flash Appeal ☐ The HCT approves the Flash Appeal to progress to the IASC ☐ The IASC approves the Flash Appeal ☐ The RC submits the Flash Appeal to OCHA Geneva[54]
By day 7	**Common Rapid Assessment Plan** ☐ The ETF Focal Point maps the need for support for the PDMCs to conduct a CRA and leads the development of a CRA support plan The ICCG identifies the human, financial and other resources required to support the CRA ☐ The plan, including resource requirements is sent to the HCT ☐ The HCT approves the CRA plan and confirms allocation of resources ☐ The IASC approves the CRA plan.
Days 8-14	**Common Rapid Assessment is conducted** ☐ A common rapid assessment is conducted in affected provinces [PDMC with support from UN and INGOs as required]
Days 14-21	**Common Rapid Assessment data entry, analysis and reporting** ☐ The CRA data is entered into the CRA database [PDMCs with support from DDMCC, local INGOs and the ICCG as required] ☐ The CRA data is analyzed [PDMCs with support from DDMCC, local INGOs and the ICCG as required] ☐ The data is sent to the DDMCC and the RCO [PDMCs] ☐ A report is generated [DDMCC and the RCO, with support from the ICCG as required]
Days 21-28	**Revised Flash Appeal** ☐ Following the common rapid assessment, the Flash Appeal is revised by the RCO, in consultation with the Cluster Leads, ICCG and OCHA ROAP [RCO with support from UN Deputies] ☐ The HCT approves the changes to the Appeal [HCT Chair] ☐ The IASC approves the final revised Appeal [IASC Chairs, MoFA] ☐ The RC submits the revised Appeal to OCHA Geneva [RC]

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[54] Revised Guidelines for Flash Appeal, March 2009.

Days 21-28	**Sector Specific Assessments (If required)** ☐ The need for sector-specific assessments is raised and discussed in the ICCG, and assessments planning and implementation is harmonized to the greatest possible extent [CL's and the RC/RCO] ☐ Assessments are conducted and data is shared with the ICCG [Agencies/Organizations]
Month 2	**PDNA (if required)** ☐ PDNA planning is communicated to the IASC [Ministry of Planning and Investment] ☐ The PDNA is conducted and reported [MPI]

6.4 Common Service Areas

6.4.1 Safety and Security

The primary responsibility for the security and protection of international personnel, dependents and property of international organizations rests with the Government. In the case of the UN, the host Government has a special responsibility under the Charter of the UN, as well as relevant agreements with individual United Nations organizations. The UN and other international organizations have a duty as an employer to reinforce and, where necessary, supplement the capacity of the Government to fulfill these obligations.

The UN Security Management System (UNSMS) applies to all UN employees and dependents. The primary management tools of the UNSMS are the Security Plan and the Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS), which the Designated Official (DO) for Lao PDR, the RC, is responsible, in consultation with the Security Management Team, for preparing and maintaining. The Security Plan contains various security procedures and guidelines including a Natural Disaster Plan[55], identifying preparedness and response guidelines for UN staff in the event of a flood. The UN security level in Lao PDR is currently Level One. Travel is permitted to all areas of the country, with the exception of Phoun and Xaisomboun districts in Vientiane Province, which require the approval of the DO.

During a security emergency,[56] the DO will consult with the SMT to activate a Crisis Coordination Centre (CCC) and mobilize the Crisis Management Group (CMG), which will be responsible to coordinate security response to the emergency. The composition, role and logistical arrangements for the CMG are detailed in the Security Plan.

The UN security system does not extend to the INGO actors. However security arrangements between the UN and INGOs stipulate collaboration and the role of UN to provide assistance where possible. To promote sharing of security information and coordination between the UN and the INGOs, the UNDSS Security Advisor is a member of the ETF.

6.4.2 Communications

Vientiane is serviced by an emergency Very High Frequency (VHF) network that will be utilized as the primary means of communication should the telecommunication networks collapse. Three VHF channels exist in Vientiane. Communication with UN staff in the field will be maintained through the sat-phones as per current UN Lao PDR MOSS.

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[55] Annex F, Security Plan for the United Nations System in Lao PDR.
[56] Security emergencies and crisis situations are defined as actions, circumstances, incidents, or events that present an exceptional and imminent threat to the safety and security of United Nations system personnel, assets and operations.

7. Data and Information Flow

To promote timely and effective information management and flow in a disaster, the following resources, tools, reporting and coordination mechanism have been identified.

7.1 Information Flow

Emergency Task Force
The Emergency Task Force members have a key role in collecting early warning and preliminary information on a hazard event. This pathway is outlined in the ETF call tree in figure 1, annex 8

The RCO
The RCO[57] will disseminate initial information during an early warning, and important information during the emergency phase to all relevant international actors in the. This pathway is outlined in figure 2, annex 8.

The call tree pathways have been developed to avoid both confusion, and loss of time that can result from duplicate messages being shared by numerous partners.

7.2 Information Management Tools

Satellite imagery
Limited capacity exists in Lao PDR to process and analyze satellite imagery, however UNOSAT can provide satellite imagery services, upon request. These services are free of charge, as are the satellite images that can be accessed through the International Space Charter. All requests for satellite images and derived products should be coordinated through the RCO.

Pre-disaster information database
The *Common Operational Datasets* are predictable, core sets of data needed to support operations and decision-making for all actors in a humanitarian response. The CODs include; population statistics, administrative units/boundaries, location and name of populated places, transportation network, and hydrology (rivers). The IMN is tasked with identifying the best available data and making it available to the ETF as needed. The CODs are stored in the RCO, DDMCC and WFP offices.

The *Fundamental Operational Datasets* are datasets required to support multiple cluster/sector operations and complement the common operational datasets. The FODs are characterized by thematic areas (such as education facilities) and are made available as soon as possible after the onset of an emergency given availability. These datasets are maintained by the IM focal point in the appropriate cluster. [58]

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[57] DDMCC will transmit the information/message within the Government system
[58] The fundamental datasets will be organized by each cluster and regularly updated. The datasets will be housed at DDMCC, UNRCO and WFP

Geographic Information Mapping (GIS)
WFP's Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM) Unit has GIS capacity. The OCHA regional office can provide additional remote or GIS surge support, upon request of the RCO. If a large amount of mapping is needed, MapAction can deploy dedicated mapping staff.

Emergency Response Website and Internal Communication Platform
A webpage has been established on the UN Lao website, which will be a depository of critical public information relating to the disaster response. The webpage will be maintained by the RCO, with assistance from the UNDP Communications Officer and the Emergency Communications Team. The page can be found at the following link: http://www.la.one.un.org/what-we-do/humanitarian-response

An internal communications platform for emergency response is yet to be developed.

Contact Lists
A contact list of key actors can be found in annex 1. IM focal points are expected to ensure that the contact lists are up-to-date, and reported to the RCO.

Who does What and Where Matrix (3W matrix)
The 3W matrix tool is housed by the RCO, and should be updated by each cluster IM focal point, under the lead of the IMN co-chairs at minimum twice per year or more frequently during an emergency.

7.3 Reporting

Cluster Situation Reports
Each cluster lead is tasked with coordination of the collection, collation and reporting of sector specific information on the humanitarian needs, response, gaps and constraints in the emergency response. This information is documented in the situation report input template and emailed to the RCO at time intervals specified by the RCO and the SOPs outlined in chapter six. Please refer to annex 15 for the situation report input template.

Overall Situation Report
Within the forum of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, the UN deputies lead the development of the situation report and the RCO is responsible for the dissemination of the overall situation report. Please refer to annex 16 for the overall situation report template.

7.4 Needs Assessments

Needs assessments in Lao PDR will follow the Multi Cluster/Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) approach of four emergency phases. The procedure for assessments in 2013 is outlined below. Further consultations are required to reach an agreement on a more harmonized and standardized approach to needs assessment methodologies, and to build the requisite national capacity.

7.4.1 Initial Information/Preliminary Scenario Definition

Information in the first 72 hours of an emergency is critical to inform the initial response priorities, and enable organizations and agencies to access humanitarian funding in the first days of an emergency.

In Lao PDR the main sources of information in the first 72 hours are:
- Pre-disaster demographic data (compiled in common operational datasets)
- Communication by phone and fax from local authorities in the affected areas to the PDMCs and DDMCC
- Communication from INGOs, Red Cross and UN agencies who are present in the affected provinces and direct communication to the Provincial Focal Points.
- Satellite imagery
- Media reports

The ETF is tasked with the collation and analysis of initial information and the development of the preliminary scenario definition (PSD). The IM Network is responsible for identification of relevant pre-disaster baseline information and other data sets to support the ETF.[59]

The priority information in the first 72 hours of a sudden onset disaster has been identified and compiled into the Initial Information Guidance Note. Actors who are present in the affected areas will collect this priority information and email/communicate by phone to the ETF each day in the first 72 hours, to facilitate the coordination of the initial information and the development of a PSD. Please refer to annex 12 for the Initial Information Guidance Note Template.

7.4.2 Common Rapid Assessment

The common rapid assessment (CRA) is a multi-sectoral initial assessment, conducted in the first two weeks following a disaster. The outputs of the CRA are an initial report and a planning scenario, to refine the planning and implementation of the humanitarian response in the second month and beyond, and define the focus of follow on sector specific assessments, where these are deemed necessary. The CRA findings will be applied to the revised CERF and Flash appeal.

Assessment Planning and Coordination
The PDMC has the overall responsibility for the planning and coordination of the assessment. In provinces where the PDMC does not currently have the capacity to coordinate and implement the assessment, the PDMC can request local INGOs, Red Cross and UN agencies[60], to provide substantial support or lead the CRA. The actors at the local level as much as possible and feasible will support the CRA given the disaster situation.

The Provincial Focal Point oversees coordination of assistance from INGOs, Red Cross and UN agencies for the CRA present in the province to the PDMC[61]. The PFP reports directly to the INGO Focal Point within the ETF.

Within the first 72 hours of the sudden onset disaster, a PDMC request for assistance or draft assessment plan should be provided to DDMCC and the ETF INGO Network Focal Point. In situations where the PDMC is not able to initiate the assessment planning within the first seven days, the PFP in the province can alert the ETF INGO Focal Point that support is required. The final decision for mobilization of human and material resources to support the CRA will be made by the HCT, and communicated to the IASC.

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[59] Refer to SOP One, page 33
[60] In close consultation with the DDMCC
[61] Please refer to the PFP TOR – annex 10 and contact list – annex 1

When required, the HCT, in consultation with DDMCC, will mobilize appropriate resources to support the assessment.[62] The ETF INGO Focal Point is responsible for leading the coordination at the central level of a plan to support the PDMC to conduct the CRA. A roster of trained UN and INGO staff who are familiar with the CRA tool and methodology should be developed.

Assessment Data Collection
The data collection should be completed, using the agreed common rapid assessment tool[63], by day 14 of the disaster. The actors involved in the data collection will include the PDMC, DDMC, INGO, NPA, Red Cross and UN agencies present in the province and where required, international organization staff from the central level.

Assessment Data Entry, Analysis and Initial Report Generation
A common rapid assessment database has been developed by WFP. The data entry is the responsibility of the PDMC, with support where required from INGO, Red Cross and UN agencies.

Where capacity does not currently exist at the PDMC for timely data analysis and report generation, the data can be transmitted by the PDMC or the INGO to the IMN for analysis. The cluster leads and the cluster IMN focal point will be responsible for analysis of each sector.

Data Ownership and Access
The data generated by the CRA is co-owned by the Government and the HCT, and should be made accessible to the RCO and DDMCC simultaneously and in raw format.

Initial Report Dissemination
The initial report[64] of the assessment should be disseminated to the IASC and NDMC by day 21 of the disaster.

Review of the Common Rapid Assessment Tool
The tool format and methodology will require review following implementation in the 2013 rainy season. A tool review template has been developed, for completion by staff who use the tool. The tool review survey should be sent to the RCO by each organization that implements the CRA tool. Please refer to annex 13.

7.4.3 Cluster/Sector Coordinated In-Depth Sectoral Assessment

The in-depth assessment uses harmonized sector specific tools to analyze the situation and trends, inform adjustments to the ongoing response and inform detailed planning for relief and early recovery.

In Lao PDR, some clusters and lead agencies are well prepared to conduct in-depth assessments, however further work is required to define how the sectoral assessments can be harmonized, including agreement on minimum indicators to be assessed. Further work is also required to ensure that cluster/sector assessments, where several sectors are assessed at the same time, can be coordinated or jointly implemented.

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[62] Resources and capacity must be mapped by the IASC
[63] Please refer to annex 14 for the common rapid assessment tool template.
[64] The report format is yet to be developed.

7.4.4 Post Disaster Needs Assessment

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) is a government-led exercise that compiles information into a single, consolidated report detailing information on the physical impacts of a disaster, the economic value of the damages and losses, the human impacts as experienced by affected populations, and related early and long-term recovery needs and priorities.

In 2011, the Government conducted a Joint Damage Loss and Needs Assessment (JDLNA) with support from the World Bank and other UN agencies following the Haima Response[65]. The JDLNA captures some of the aspects required for a PDNA, but needs to be expanded on and revised to become a full-fledged PDNA.

A process of review of the JDLNA has been undertaken in 2011 and 2012, to develop a full PDNA methodology. The finalized PDNA tool, and the process and capacity in country to conduct the PDNA, is expected to be in place in Lao PDR prior to the rainy season of 2014, whereas a first draft of the PDNA tool is expected to be completed prior to the rainy season of 2013.

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[65] Haima JDLNA Final Report 4 November 2011.

8. Resource Mobilization

There are multiple options for resource mobilization in a disaster, and depending on the situation, one or several options may be appropriate.

Resources may be mobilized:

- Internally by the agency or organization. In this situation, the single agency internal emergency funding should be coordinated with inter-agency funding requests where possible;
- Bilaterally from donors present in Lao PDR or the region, in a joint or single agency/organization proposal;
- On an inter-agency basis for example the CERF or Flash appeals, or the OCHA Emergency Cash Grant.

The following section outlines the options for inter-agency resource mobilization and provides information of local/regional donors who fund humanitarian actions in Lao PDR.

In the event of a disaster that is of similar or larger scale to the scenario outlined in this plan, it is anticipated that there will be an ECG proposal, a CERF proposal and a Flash appeal. The Flash appeal will be decided in cooperation with the Government in the IASC meeting forum. The decision to submit a proposal for a ECG and/or CERF will be made by the HCT.

8.1 Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)

The CERF is a humanitarian fund established by the UN that provides seed funds to jump-start critical operations and fund life-saving programmes not yet covered by other donors.

UN agencies and International Organization for Migration (IOM) can apply directly for CERF funding. INGOs, Red Cross and NPAs receive CERF funding when they act as implementing partners of United Nations agencies and IOM.

CERF applications and project matrix are drafted by the ICCG and approved at the level of the HCT. A CERF application includes a cover letter from the RC/HC to the Emergency Relief Coordinator and a completed CERF application template, within the first 7 days of a rapid onset disaster. The CERF Secretariat reviews the request, and the ERC makes the final decision.

All funds should be committed and project activities completed within six months of the date that the funds are disbursed from CERF to the recipient agency headquarters.

In situations where a Flash Appeal is planned, the development of both the Flash Appeal and CERF requests should start immediately and proceed in tandem. CERF funds should be requested for the most time-critical lifesaving elements of the flash appeal and those that have the potential to make the greatest impact within the six-month timeframe of the rapid response window. All CERF-funded projects should be included in the Flash Appeal.

Detailed information can be found at the following site: ochaonline.un.org/cerf

8.2 Flash Appeal

A Flash Appeal presents the *early strategic response plan* and specific projects within five to seven days of the emergency's onset. If major uncertainty exists about the evolution of the crisis, the appeal presents the most likely scenarios and the response strategy for each. Flash appeals are usually revised about a month later, following a common rapid assessment.

The Flash Appeal may serve as the basis for funding applications to the CERF (among other donors). CERF generally provides the initial injection of funds for the most urgent life-saving projects in the Flash appeal to cover the time lag between issuance of the appeal and receipt of commitments and funds from donors. The Government cannot appeal for funds directly in the Flash Appeal, but can be a project partner of a UN agency, INGO or the Red Cross.

Organizations that have been asked to lead and coordinate the response within a given sector or area of activity (i.e. cluster leads) have a key role to collaborate with all relevant partners to develop the response plans and vet project proposals for inclusion in the appeal. Flash appeals should include priority projects from all key-implementing agencies on the ground, including NGOs, and have a maximum duration of six months.

The RC/HC, supported by OCHA, is responsible for producing the appeal, in close collaboration with MoFA, DDMCC and members of the Lao IASC. The RC is responsible for submitting the flash appeal to OCHA by day 5 to 7 of an emergency, and the appeal is usually launched within 10 days of a sudden onset emergency. In 2009, a Flash Appeal was launched for the Ketsana response in Lao PDR[66]. More detailed information about the flash appeal process can be found at on the following site: www.unocha.org

8.3 OCHA Emergency Cash Grant (ECG)

The OCHA ECG is an emergency fund of up to US$100,000 that can be requested by the RC or the Government of Lao PDR for the procurement, locally, and distribution of life-saving assistance. The fund is allocated within ten days of a disaster. A grant request template and more detailed information can be found on the following site: OCHA Emergency Cash Grant

8.4 Local and Regional Donors

The following local and regional donors provide humanitarian funding, and in some cases in kind emergency response materials and human resources. Please refer to annex 3 for detailed information of the donors funding mechanisms.

- Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)
- Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG EU/ECHO) (based in Bangkok)
- The Embassy of the United States of America
- The German Embassy
- The Government of Japan
- The Luxemburg Embassy (based in Hanoi, Viet Nam)
- The Singapore Embassy

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[66] The Flash appeal can be found on the UN Lao PDR website at the following link: www.unlao.org/Disaster

9. Inter-Agency Contingency Planning and Preparedness Activities

The IACP is intended to be a dynamic plan that is adaptable to changing local, national and international contexts.

To ensure the IACP remains a practical and usable tool to guide the inter-agency disaster response in support of the Government, the plan will require regular updating and revisions. The first draft IACP was developed in early 2012, and later reviewed and tested in an inter-agency emergency simulation in December 2012.

The current IACP and its SOPs are in effect as of 13 February 2013, the date of its final endorsement by the IASC. It is envisioned that this plan will be reviewed by the ICCG[67], prior to the rainy season each year.

From 2014 and onwards the IASC should hold an Inter-Agency emergency simulation event in the lead up to the rainy season each year, facilitated by the RCO with support of OCHA ROAP to ensure that all disaster response actors, in particular new staff, are familiar with the plan and the coordination processes outlined within. An emergency simulation event will also encourage cluster preparedness and test interagency-Government coordination prior to the rainy season, when there is increased risk of a serious storm and/or a flooding event.

Following the activation of all or part of the IACP SOPs outlined in the plan, the IASC should hold an after action review of the IACP implementation, and ensure the integration of any review findings and agreed recommendations are integrated into a revised plan.

All clusters are expected to regularly review response plans, member contact lists, 3W matrix, pre-positioned supply list and fundamental operational datasets. At a minimum, the RCO will share with cluster leads the latest prepositioned stock pile consolidated lists and 3W matrix, following which the clusters will revert with the revised cluster response plans, pre-positioned stocks list to the RCO before June 1 of each year.

Likewise, the IMN should meet prior to the rainy season to update the common operational datasets and consolidate the overall contact list, providing updated documents and datasets to the RCO by 1 June of each year.

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[67] As a preparedness activity

Annex List

1. Contact List
2. National Disaster Management Committee Decree
3. Local and Regional Donor Information
4. Cluster Leads TOR
5. IASC TOR
6. Humanitarian Country Team TOR
7. Inter-Cluster Coordination Group TOR
8. Emergency Task Force TOR
9. Information Management Network TOR
10. Provincial Focal Points TOR
11. Cluster Response Plans
12. Initial Information Guidance Note
13. Common Rapid Assessment Tool Review Template
14. Common Rapid Assessment Tool
15. Cluster Situation Report Input Template
16. Overall Situation Report Template