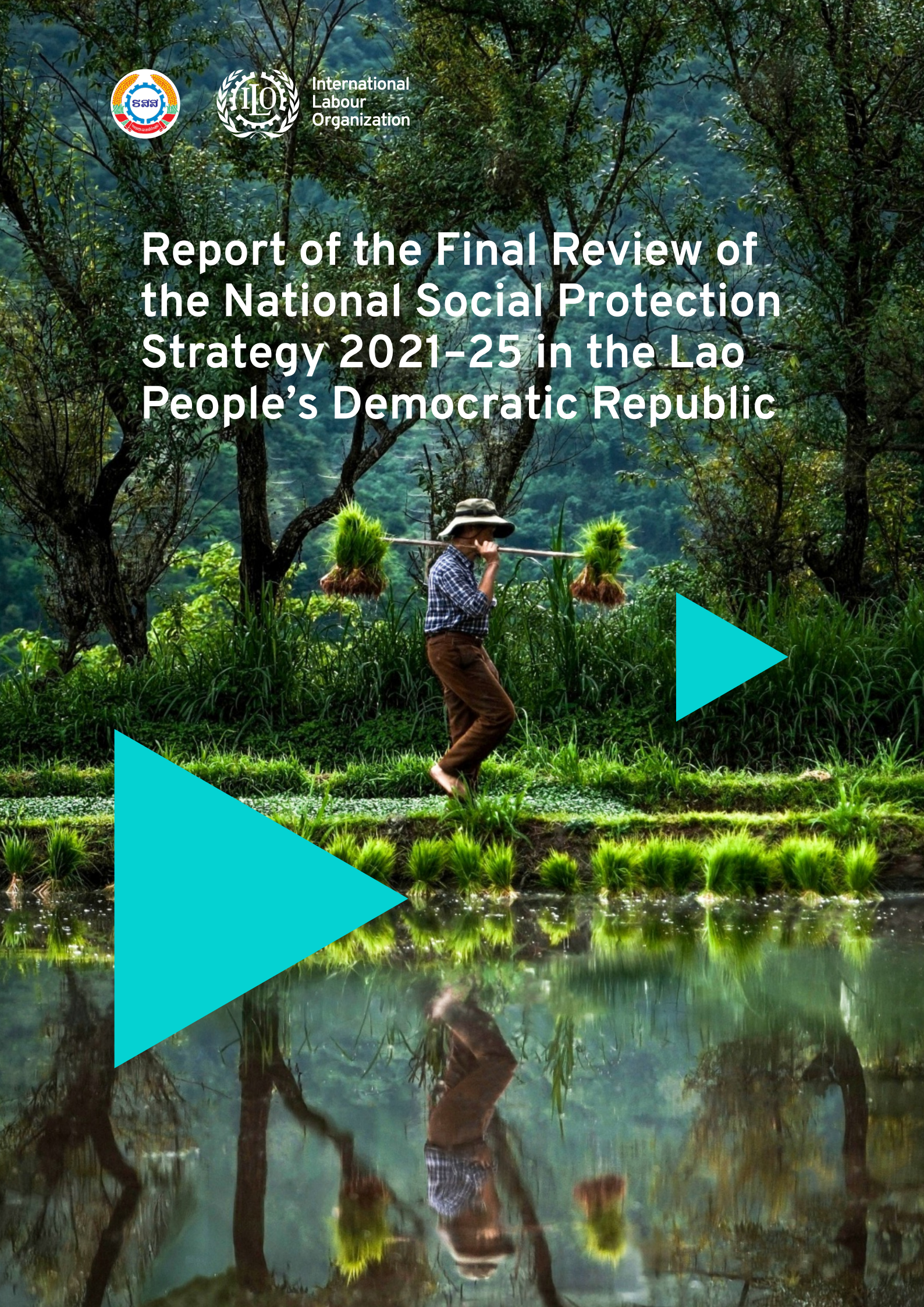




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Report of the Final Review of the National Social Protection Strategy 2021–25 in the Lao People's Democratic Republic





► **Report of the Final Review of the National Social Protection Strategy 2021–25 in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

Jean Marc Thomé, Chanhsy Samavong, Loveleen De

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► Contents

► Acknowledgments	5
► Contents	6
► Acronyms and abbreviations	8
► Executive summary	10
1. Introduction	14
2. Methodology	18
3. Socio-economic context and evolution over 2021–25	22
4. Key findings	24
4.1. Assessing NSPS implementation	25
4.1.1. Health insurance	29
4.1.2. Social security	30
4.1.3. Social welfare	32
4.2. Monitoring NSPS implementation based on KPIs (impact)	36
4.3. Analytical NSPS assessment	39
4.3.1. General assessment based on OECD evaluation criteria	39
4.3.2. Social protection policy design, implementation and organizational structure	45
4.3.3. Social protection delivery chain	52
4.3.4. Social protection funding	56
4.4. Assessment of NSPS governance	57
4.4.1. Strengths	57
4.4.2. Bottlenecks	57
4.4.3. NSPS monitoring and reporting function	58
5. Good practices and lessons from other countries	60
5.1. Comparative review of NSPS in selected countries	61
5.1.1. Cambodia	61
5.1.2. Indonesia	62
5.1.3. Viet Nam	63
5.1.4. Thailand	64
5.2. Some good practices and lessons learned	64
5.3. Social protection funding	66

6. Recommendations for NSPS 2026–30	68
6.1. Socio-economic forecast	69
6.2. General recommendations for NSPS 2026–30	69
6.3. Recommendations on health insurance	70
6.4. Recommendations on social security	72
6.5. Recommendations on social welfare	74
6.6. Recommendations on governance	74
▶ Annex 1. NSPS implementation status by activity	78
▶ Annex 2. Progress of NSPS road map outputs	117
▶ Annex 3. Delivery chain	167
▶ Annex 4. Family Package benefits in Cambodia	170
▶ Annex 5. List of documents reviewed	171
▶ Annex 6. Final review tools	174
▶ Annex 7. Mission schedule	176
▶ End notes	180

► Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
API	application programming interface
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCEL	Banque Pour Le Commerce Exterieur Lao Public
CCT	conditional cash transfer
CRVS	civil registration and vital statistics
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
GGHE-D	domestic general government health expenditure
HEF	Health Equity Fund
IEC	information, education and communication
KPI	key performance indicator
LFTU	Lao Federation of Trade Unions
LSB	Lao Statistics Bureau
LSSO	Lao Social Security Organization
LWU	Lao Women's Union
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MAE	Ministry of Agriculture and Environment
MECG	Mother and Early Childhood Grant
MIS	management information system
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOF	Ministry of Finance

MOH	Ministry of Health
MOIC	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
NGO	non-governmental organization
NHI	National Health Insurance
NHIB	National Health Insurance Bureau
NSEDP	NSEDP National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NSPC	National Social Protection Committee
NSPPF	National Social Protection Policy Framework (Cambodia)
NSPS	National Social Protection Strategy
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
OOP	out-of-pocket
PPM	provider payment mechanism
RRPM	Rural Poverty and Malnutrition Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOP	standard operating procedure
SRC	Swiss Red Cross
TOR	terms of reference
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UHC	universal health coverage
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UXO	unexploded ordnance
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

► Executive summary

Progress under NSPS 2021–25

The progress of implementation of the NSPS 2021–25 documented in this final review report has to be read with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent macro-economic crises faced by the Lao People's Democratic Republic in mind.

During 2021–25, the country accomplished significant legal and institutional milestones, such as the establishment of the National Social Protection Committee (NSPC) and Provincial Social Protection Committees.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic made steady progress towards universal health coverage (UHC) through the development of legal and regulatory frameworks. The country is currently in the process of revising its Law on Health Insurance and Law on Social Security. The National Health Insurance Bureau (NHIB) expanded its outreach to 17 provinces and initiated training on electronic claims processing and financial management. However, given current fiscal constraints and insufficient government subsidies, the expansion of services for informal workers has remained limited. The implementation of quality standards across remote districts has also been inconsistent.

The Lao Social Security Organization (LSSO) has persisted in increasing social security coverage among formal enterprises and self-employed workers, reaching a total of 397,584 insured workers as of 31 December 2025. They have made substantial strides in modernizing collection and payment procedures through the use of digital platforms. Despite these achievements, there is a need for strengthened law enforcement through greater political will and by providing a clearer mandate and specifying the actions that inspectors can take. Social security coverage remains predominantly concentrated in urban areas, and more focus is needed to enhance service delivery in rural and remote areas.

Social welfare encompasses a wide range of initiatives involving several line ministries. The results under NSPS 2021–25 include:

- **Maternal and children:** Under the Reducing Rural Poverty and Malnutrition Project (RRPM) implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) and World Bank, a conditional cash transfer (CCT) scheme with integrated community nutrition sessions reached 64,723 beneficiaries as of December 2025, with 49,536 beneficiaries covered under RRPM Phase I (2019–24) and 15,187 new beneficiaries under Phase II (2024–28). Phase II is expected to reach 85,000 new beneficiaries at completion.
- **Disabilities and unexploded ordnance (UXO):** A total of 1,783 UXO survivors received assistance, while a child disability grant pilot supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reached 496 children in Xiengkhouang Province.
- **School meals:** The School Meals Programme serves over 200,000 children in 41 districts across the country. In 2024, the Lao People's Democratic Republic joined the Global School Meals Coalition, committing to further expansion.

Programmes depend heavily on funding from external donors. The allocation of state budgets for programmes addressing disabilities and the older persons is limited, and collaboration between ministries remains fragmented.

Impacts of NSPS 2021–25

Coverage has expanded across all areas, but the level of protection provided remains inadequate. Service quality varies widely across provinces, benefits are small and uneven, and programmes continue to rely heavily on donor-funded pilots, limiting scale and sustainability. The legal coverage of health insurance is high, while utilization is low. The share of out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditures in current health expenditures remains high (44.8 per cent in 2023), despite years of decrease following the introduction of the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme and its subsidization policy for the population in the informal economy. In the social security pillar of the NSPS 2021–25, the number of registered workers has increased gradually in the formal sector, while constant but limited progress has been made in the informal sector. Under the social welfare pillar, beneficiaries have increased among children, persons with disabilities, UXO survivors and disaster victims. However, the number is still low when compared to the population's needs.

Key takeaways

1. The tangible accomplishments of the NSPS are undeniable. However, the protection it provides remains somewhat limited and not entirely uniform.
2. The informal sector remains largely uncharted.
3. Social welfare outreach is restricted and not yet well coordinated.
4. Public finance reform is necessary to achieve sustained implementation and growth of the social protection system.

Challenges

While the policy direction is clear, to function as an integrated system, the NSPC is facing major obstacles such as limited capacity, fragmented delivery systems and insufficient funding.

Institutional and governance

1. The NSPC Secretariat is overstretched with limited staff, budget and authority.
2. Coordination between central and provincial levels remains weak.
3. The roles of committees and focal points are not always clear, while meetings are irregular.
4. The NSPS is not yet widely understood at the provincial and district levels.

Fragmented service delivery

5. There is no unified registry at present, and multiple databases operate separately. There is limited digital interoperability between various databases like Social Registry, health insurance, LSSO, civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS), and Lao ID.
6. Paper-based workflows slow down implementation and reduce accuracy.

Financing challenges

7. The public investment in social protection in the Lao People's Democratic Republic is still largely below the lower-middle-income country benchmark (3–6 per cent of GDP), while domestic financing for social protection has been declining.
8. There is high donor dependence, which affects sustainability.
9. NHI funding is insufficient, resulting in significant deficits.
10. There is a policy budget mismatch, as policies are sometimes adopted without a complete financing and expenditure plan.
11. There is no comprehensive medium-term social protection financing and costing framework.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

12. The M&E system is not functional, with indicators and reporting schedules not being used regularly.
13. There is no central analytical function to track performance or results.
14. The evidence base for planning, budgeting and policy adjustments is weak.

Regional comparison

Some experiences from Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, read in conjunction with the progress and challenges identified above, could offer lessons for the new NSPS 2026–30.

1. Implement a comprehensive approach to **protection throughout individuals' life cycles**.
2. Develop a **unified policy framework to integrate fragmented schemes**, and strengthen the effective integration of health insurance, social security and welfare. The **integration of social welfare programmes into a single delivery mechanism**, such as Cambodia's Family Package, could reduce administrative costs and makes it easier for citizens to understand and access their benefits. Instead of focusing only on disaster relief (floods or droughts), the Lao People's Democratic Republic could strengthen its maternal and child conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme as a foundational pillar for human capital, rather than as an isolated project.
3. Invest in **digital systems** – learning from Thailand on monitoring and delivery, and from Viet Nam on electronic management and electronic delivery mechanisms – to improve transparency and efficiency.

4. **Progressively expand coverage of living allowances for older persons starting with high eligibility criteria** as in Viet Nam, such as 80 years old for the non-poor and 75 years old for the poor, and progressively decrease the eligibility age when the macroeconomic situation and improvement in fiscal space allows.
5. Social assistance benefits could be linked to economic empowerment, as in Indonesia, such as by providing a **cash grant plus vocational training**, so families eventually become more self-reliant.
6. Ensure **sustainable adequate funding for the health insurance covering all the poor and vulnerable** populations through a unified targeted system, such as the Health Equity Funds in Cambodia and Viet Nam. This is critical to prevent households from falling back into poverty due to medical costs.
7. Obtain **safe and long-term funding** through contributions, innovative taxes and sustainable financing strategies, and reduce reliance on external financing.

Recommendations for NSPS 2026–30

The Lao People's Democratic Republic needs to move away from fragmented, pilot-driven programmes towards a fully integrated, digital and fiscally sustainable social protection system. Key recommendations include:

1. Increase predictable domestic financing, conduct detailed costing of priority interventions to guide realistic budgeting, shift away from fragmented donor-funded pilots towards pooled financing arrangements, and align programme targets and benefit packages with the country's actual fiscal space. This will strengthen the financial foundation for social protection.
2. Integrate overlapping programmes and align all schemes under a unified NSPS policy framework. This will strengthen cross-pillar connections between Health Insurance, Social Security, and Social Welfare. Additionally, implement integrated service delivery mechanisms for registration, payments and grievance redress.
3. Improve the administrative efficiency of social protection systems by greater use of digital technology. Create a unified digital environment by establishing a Social Registry that is linked to Lao ID, CRVS, NHI and LSSO. Develop an interoperable digital exchange platform for secure data sharing and policy decision-making. Strengthen digital payments, M&E and case management systems. Enforce robust data governance, privacy and accountability standards.
4. Expand social protection coverage to underserved and vulnerable groups, including children, persons with disabilities, UXO survivors, older persons and ethnic communities. This can be done through the application of progressive universalism, which scales first to the poorest. Benefit packages should be standardized for fairness and transparency. Shock-responsive mechanisms should also be strengthened to ensure rapid support during disasters and emergencies.
5. Position the National Social Protection Committee and its Secretariat at a higher strategic level within the Government's organizational structure, in order to strengthen decision-making in a manner that is consistent with the intersectoral nature of their agenda.



Introduction

01



The National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) envisions that by 2030, Lao people have access to basic social protection services, consisting of health insurance, social security and social welfare, in an equitable, adequate, effective and sustainable way.

Adopted and promulgated in April 2020, the Lao People's Democratic Republic's first National Social Protection Strategy is guided by the principles of equity, adequacy, effectiveness, universality, progressivity and sustainability. The concept of universality states that all Lao people will have equal access to social protection benefits, regardless of factors such as age, gender, geographic location or socio-economic status.

The Lao Government recognizes that social protection can reduce poverty and inequality, redistribute the benefits of economic growth, build resilience to shocks and disasters, promote human capital development, and foster social harmony and cohesion. The NSPS is built on the concept of a social protection floor, ensuring universal and effective access to social protection benefits and services, with higher levels of benefits for those in greater need. This approach reflects the principle of progressive universalism; whereby basic protection is expanded to all while prioritizing higher levels of support for those facing the greatest vulnerabilities.

By 2025, the Strategy aimed to provide progressively higher protection to those who need it most, delivering services of a reasonable standard everywhere.

The NSPS defines three overarching goals, and under each of these, it defines strategic objectives and activities to achieve these goals. These three goals correspond to the three pillars: health insurance, social security and social welfare.

- ▶ **Goal 1. The health insurance system** is further developed and strengthened, to ensure effective access to quality healthcare for all Lao people, without financial hardship and reaching universal health coverage (UHC) by 2025, through tax-based funding.
- ▶ **Goal 2. The social security system** is further developed and strengthened, to be more systematic and effective in collecting contributions and providing benefits and services to civil servants and workers in formal enterprises and those in informal employment – and their eligible family members – while increasing coverage and ensuring the sustainability of the National Social Security Fund.
- ▶ **Goal 3. Social welfare schemes** are implemented, expanded and strengthened in a systematic and effective manner so that the disadvantaged, the poor and victims of disaster have better access to social welfare services or other benefits for human resource development, and meet the needs of target groups.

For the purposes of the NSPS, social protection interventions include both cash and in-kind benefits, as well as selected services that function as income support, risk mitigation and access facilitation for poor and vulnerable populations. This includes benefits and services for pregnant women, children, people with disabilities, unexploded ordnance (UXO) survivors, older persons, disaster victims, as well as select education- and skills-related benefits that support accessibility and human capital development among vulnerable groups, and support for the development of production groups. Education- and skills-related measures as well as labour market policies are included under the social welfare pillar only where they serve a social assistance function (such as stipends, school meals and allowances targeting disadvantaged groups).

Following the adoption of the Strategy in 2020, a National Social Protection Committee (NSPC) was established through PM Decree No. 655 in December 2021. The NSPC oversees, coordinates, monitors and evaluates the implementation of the NSPS across the relevant ministries and subnational levels. The Committee Secretariat is based at the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW).

The NSPS is supported by an implementation road map and a monitoring tool with indicators for tracking progress towards achieving its goals and those of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 1.3. Table 1 summarizes the structure of the NSPS in light of its overall social objectives and pillars.

► **Table 1. Structure of the NSPS**

Objectives	Pillars	NSPS Pillars		Schemes
Prevention	Social Insurance	Health Insurance	1.1	Health insurance
		Social Security	2.1 2.2	Healthcare benefits, sickness benefits, maternity benefits, loss of working capacity benefits, employment injury and occupational disease benefits, unemployment benefits, death grant, survivor benefits, old-age pensions
Protection	Social Assistance	Social Welfare	3.1	Pregnant women and children
			3.2	People with disabilities and UXO survivors
			3.3	Older adults
			3.4	Victims of natural and man-made disasters
			3.5	School Meal Programme
			3.6	Allowance to students at the lower secondary level
			3.7	Budget to education
			3.8	Allowances for vocational training
Promotion	Labour Market		3.8	Skills development and technical training
			3.9	Production organizations and public services

Note: Activities listed under “Promotion” are included in the NSPS where they support social protection objectives, such as improving employability, resilience and income security among poor and vulnerable populations. They do not represent the full scope of labour market and education sector policies.





Methodology

02



The NSPS 2021–25 states in its monitoring and evaluation section that the NSPC Secretariat has to conduct both a mid-term review and a final review. This final review is a strategy-level evaluative assessment combining monitoring evidence, qualitative inquiry and analytic frameworks, rather than a programme-level impact evaluation.

The final review follows the mid-term review that was completed at the end of 2023, also supported by the ILO–UNDESA Project “Accelerating universal social protection for achieving the SDGs and ending poverty through strengthened governance and digital transformation”.

The NSPC Secretariat officially requested the ILO–UNDESA project to provide technical support in conducting the final review. This assessment uses a hybrid methodology like the mid-term review, combining qualitative and quantitative data. It unfolded in three stages:

- 1. Inception stage:** This stage involved desk-based examination of relevant documentation, such as the NSPS implementation road map, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, strategies, legislation, and reports from ministries, provincial authorities and projects (see Annex 5 for the complete list). The NSPC Secretariat and ILO collaborated to prepare an inception report defining the scope of the review, detailed methodology, questionnaires and work plan.
- 2. Data and information collection stage:** The evaluation team conducted key informant interviews with stakeholders from the national, provincial and district levels. The team visited three provinces – Champasak, Vientiane Province and Xiengkhouang – to capture a representative range of activities across the three NSPS pillars. The selected provinces reflect different geographic regions, socio-economic conditions and implementation contexts, allowing for a purposive and illustrative assessment of NSPS implementation across the three pillars.
- 3. Analysis and report-writing stage:** Data was analysed and triangulated where feasible. The analysis evaluated progress, strengths, weaknesses and challenges relative to NSPS goals, objectives and activities. It also reviewed the effectiveness of the NSPC, provincial committees and the Secretariat in leading the process. Based on the analysis, the report was drafted.

The draft report was submitted to the NSPC Secretariat. The results were discussed and confirmed during several bilateral meetings and two validation workshops organized by the NSPC Secretariat and ILO, with participation of relevant national organizations and development partners: (i) a workshop to present and review the preliminary findings on 28 November 2025 in Vientiane Capital, and (ii) a workshop to present the report and receive final feedback on 16 January 2026 in Vientiane Capital. These workshops, along with the final review report, served as inputs for a high-level NSPC meeting in the first half of 2026.

The complexity of assessing three crucial foundations with 20 distinct fields of work, involving numerous stakeholders at both the national and provincial levels, was exacerbated by the fact that different ministries use separate monitoring systems. Data exchange with the NSPC Secretariat is neither automatic nor consistent. To lessen these limitations, data triangulation was applied by cross-checking administrative records, stakeholder interviews and secondary sources where available. During the interviews with key informants, constructive suggestions for improving governance systems were gathered and included in this report.

In this document, the evaluation analysis consists of four complementary components:

- 1.** a monitoring of NSPS progress based on the activity progress matrix and road map;
- 2.** a monitoring of NSPS progress based on NSPS key performance indicators;

3. an analytic monitoring of NSPS progress using four different foci: OECD criteria,
 - ▶ policy design, implementation and organizational structure,
 - ▶ social protection delivery chain,
 - ▶ social protection funding; and
4. an assessment of the governance of the NSPS.

The report also includes a socio-economic contextualization to provide a background to the assessment, and a comparative analysis of regional strategies from Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia, to extract good practices and benchmark the NSPS against global standards and peers. The report ultimately provides a set of recommendations. It also contains details about the progress of activities and milestones reached in the Annexes.

Given the NSPS's role as a coordination and policy framework rather than a single implementing programme, the review does not establish causal attribution between NSPS implementation and sector-level and population-level outcomes. Findings are based on contribution analysis, assessing how NSPS-supported coordination, policy direction and delivery arrangements enabled observed results.





Socio-economic context and evolution over 2021–25

03



The Lao People's Democratic Republic has an estimated population of 7.87 million, spread across some 8,400 villages in 148 districts in 18 provinces, with over 65 per cent residing in rural areas. Population density is low and uneven, making the delivery of services and infrastructure a challenge. It has a developing economy driven by agriculture, hydropower, mining and tourism. The Lao economy remains vulnerable to external shocks, including commodity price fluctuations, and to climate risks.¹

The country has substantially reduced poverty over the past two decades, with 21 per cent of households classified as poor by the Government and a poverty rate standing at 31 per cent based on the low-income country poverty line of US\$3.65 per day. Rural poverty is most persistent in isolated highland areas. Inequality persists, particularly between the lowland urban centres and the diverse ethnic communities in the highlands, where access to markets and essential services remains limited.

The 2021–25 period was characterized by a distinct transition from acute volatility to emerging stabilization. The COVID-19 pandemic period and following years were marked by severe macroeconomic imbalances and debt distress, but recent data indicates that the Lao economy demonstrated a notable pivot towards recovery and stability in 2025.

Economic growth remained resilient, averaging approximately 4.2 per cent over the five-year period. By late 2025, gross domestic product (GDP) growth reached an estimated 4.5 per cent, supported by robust electricity exports, a revitalized tourism sector and the logistics integration provided by the Lao–China Railway. A critical milestone was achieved in price control: after headline inflation spiralled to over 31 per cent in 2023, strict exchange rate controls and monetary tightening successfully brought it down to 7.7 per cent by Q4 2025.²

The Lao People's Democratic Republic achieved a landmark fiscal surplus in 2025, estimated at 2.3 per cent of GDP. This fiscal turnaround was driven by more efficient tax collection processes and the restoration of the VAT rate to 10 per cent. Market confidence also improved in November 2025, when the country regained access to international bond markets, facilitating a more manageable debt repayment schedule.

Nevertheless, debt burden remains the country's primary structural vulnerability. While public debt fell to roughly 82 per cent of GDP by the end of 2025, facilitated by currency stabilization, the reliance on external debt service deferrals persists. The temporary nature of these arrangements means that the Lao People's Democratic Republic faces a substantial refinancing risk, necessitating a continued commitment to fiscal discipline.



Key findings

04

4.1. Assessing NSPS implementation

Annex 1 of this report provides a comprehensive summary of the progress of the NSPS activities (N=20). Spanning over 40 pages, it offers a thorough account of the progress of the NSPS, detailing the progress of planned activities, pending steps, challenges, milestones and outputs, impact, and comments. This valuable resource serves as a comprehensive guide to understanding the implementation process and current status of any particular activity included in the NSPS.

To provide a concise summary of the progress, the evaluation has also been converted into scores. These scores have been assigned at the output level (N=126) and then consolidated at the milestone, activity, specific objective and goal levels. Table 2 shows the results at the milestone level (N=61). The implementation scores reflect progress in establishing planned legal, institutional, and operational milestones, rather than the achievement of population-level coverage, service quality and impact.

► **Table 2. Overview analysis of progress of actions in the NSPS road map**

Goal	Progress	Strategic Objective	Progress	Activity	Progress
Goal 1. The health insurance system is further developed and strengthened.	Good	SO 1.1: Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.	Good	H.I.1. Develop and implement a legal framework for universal health coverage.	Good
				H.I.2. Develop systems and build capacities of the National Health Insurance authority.	Good
				H.I.3. Develop and comply with minimum standards for healthcare facilities.	Moderate

Goal	Progress	Strategic Objective	Progress	Activity	Progress
				H.I.4. Increase access to healthcare services in rural areas.	Moderate
				H.I.5. Ensure sufficient and timely government budget allocation to health.	Low
Goal 2. The social security system is further developed and strengthened.	Good	SO 2.1: All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.	Moderate	S.S.1. Expansion of social security coverage for all formal economy workers.	Good
				S.S.2. Enforce regular inspections at registered enterprises.	Good
				S.S.3. Promote enrolment in social security.	Moderate
				S.S.4. Ensure robust actuarial design and sufficient fund reserves.	Good
				S.S.5. Improve the social security collection system.	Good
		SO 2.2: Social security covers more workers in the informal sector.	Moderate	S.S.6. Adapt current scheme design to the characteristics of workers in non-standard forms of employment.	Good

Goal	Progress	Strategic Objective	Progress	Activity	Progress
Goal 3. The social welfare system is further developed and strengthened.	Moderate	SO 3.1: Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.	Moderate	S.W.1. Provide services and benefits to pregnant women and children.	Moderate
				S.W.2. Provide services and benefits to persons with disabilities and UXO survivors.	Low
				S.W.3. Provide services and benefits for older adults.	Moderate
				S.W.4. Provide services and benefits to victims of natural and man-made disasters.	Low
				S.W.5. Expand the National School Meal Programme to all state kindergarten, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in villages of poor districts throughout the country.	Moderate
				S.W.6. Increase allowances to students at the lower secondary level, prioritizing students from poor families and vulnerable groups.	Good

Goal	Progress	Strategic Objective	Progress	Activity	Progress
				S.W.7. Allocate national budget to education on time and expand coverage.	Moderate
				S.W.8. Provide allowances for vocational training, skills development and technical training to the poor and to working-age people in vulnerable situations to enable them to access decent employment opportunities.	Moderate
				S.W.9. Develop production organizations and public services, and facilitate access to decent work.	Good
		Implementing Measures	Moderate	Implementing Measure 1. Coordination and multi-sector unity.	Moderate

Colour code

High	Good	Moderate	Limited	Low
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A closer look at the implementation of each goal provides more information on key progress. Across all three pillars, higher scores are observed for policy and legal reforms, while lower scores persist for financing, service delivery and system sustainability.

4.1.1. Health insurance

The Ministry of Health (MOH) and the National Health Insurance Bureau (NHIB) have been working on the legal side, including revising the National Health Insurance (NHI) policy in 2024 and drafting a new NHI Law. They have clarified the NHI benefits, increased the NHIB's capacity, used the social registry developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) to target impoverished households, issued NHI cards to these households, and provided them with free healthcare. Many development partners have supported this goal, including the ILO, World Health Organization (WHO), Swiss Red Cross (SRC), World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Korea Foundation for International Healthcare (KOFIH) and Fred Hollows Foundation (FHF). The NHI informal system has been put at risk due to a mismatch between funding and policy, as well as insufficient government subsidies. Indeed, even though the NHI budget to subsidize benefits for the population in the informal sector increased from 180 billion kip in 2021 to 280 billion kip in 2025, it is still insufficient and falls short of the budget needed. This reflects a structural gap between policy ambition and fiscal space, rather than implementation weaknesses, and poses a medium-term risk to the sustainability of NHI expansion.

► **Table 3. Analysis of progress of actions in the NSPS road map for the Health Insurance pillar**

Goal 1: The health insurance system is further developed and strengthened. Strategic Objective 1.1: Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.		
Activity	Progress	Key progress actions
H.I.1. Develop and implement a legal framework for universal health coverage.	Good	– Draft amended NHI Law (adoption expected in 2026). – NHI Fund Strategy 2021–25 endorsed. – Financial Management Guidelines revised. – NHI revised policy – benefits, provider payment mechanism (PPM) rates, co-payments (Notice 824/MOH dated August 2024). – Decision to hand over management and administration of NSSF's health benefits sub-fund to LSSO in early 2026.
H.I.2. Develop systems and build capacities of the National Health Insurance authority.	Good	– Capacity-building through pre-training, short courses, on the job coaching. – E-claim tools designed and piloted, verification and inspection routines institutionalized. – Costing of health facilities (2021) and central hospitals (2025) done.
H.I.3. Develop and comply with minimum standards for healthcare facilities.	Moderate	– MOH's Essential Health Services Package updated. – Lists of essential medicines and surgery types completed in 2024. – Quality assurance and hospital autonomy consultations held with 17 provinces.

Goal 1: The health insurance system is further developed and strengthened.

Strategic Objective 1.1: Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.

Activity	Progress	Key progress actions
H.I.4. Increase access to healthcare services in rural areas.	Moderate	– Nationwide legal healthcare coverage reached 94.5 per cent. – Memorandum of understanding between NHIB and MAE for integration with Social Registry drafted and signed. – Health insurance cards distributed to poor families. – Food and transportation referrals supported for poor. – Hotline 1509 operationalized countrywide. – Information, education and communication (IEC) materials and communication campaigns implemented nationwide.
H.I.5. Ensure sufficient and timely government budget allocation to health.	Low	– Government funding of 180–220 billion kip reimbursed to health facilities under the NHI subsidization policy and approximately 150 billion kip for LSSO members over the period 2021–2025. – Largely insufficient funding under the NHI subsidization policy leads to health facilities being in debt and underservicing. Notice 824/MOH implemented from August 2024 limits hospital debts.

Colour code

Good

Moderate

Low

Overall, the health insurance pillar demonstrates strong progress in policy and system development, while facing persistent challenges in financing, adequacy and effective service delivery, particularly for rural and vulnerable populations.

4.1.2. Social security

There has been a gradual increase in coverage in the formal sector, as well as pilot initiatives in the informal sector, such as outreach by mobile teams, digital registration and digital payment trials. While these initiatives represent important pilots and system innovations, they have not yet been scaled into a fully institutionalized mechanism for informal sector coverage. Efforts have been made in actuarial assessments, database exchanges and capacity-building (development partners support includes ILO and Oxfam). However, registering private companies remains a challenge, and the enforcement of compliance measures, including penalties, remains particularly challenging. A revision to the Social Security Law is anticipated in 2026. Coverage of informal sector workers remains limited and largely voluntary, with current efforts focused on testing delivery and contribution models rather than achieving broad-based enrolment.

► Table 4. Analysis of progress of actions in the NSPS road map for the Social Security pillar

Goal 2: The social security system is further developed and strengthened. Strategic Objective 2.1: All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.		
Activity	Progress	Key progress actions
S.S.1. Expansion of social security coverage for all formal economy workers.	Good	– 397,584 active insured members (formal and informal) as of December 2025. 921,995 total insured, including dependants. – 6,227 registered enterprises as of December 2025, with 4,518 newly registered between 2021 and 2025. – 83,755 social security cards issued. – 94,436 people received sickness and unemployment benefits during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis.
S.S.2. Enforce regular inspections at registered enterprises.	Good	– Social security inspection guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) finalized. – 13 central-level inspectors trained and pilot inspections conducted in late 2025. – Draft amended Social Security Law revises articles to clarify inspectors' mandates and facilitate enforcement (adoption expected in 2026).
S.S.3. Promote enrolment in social security.	Moderate	– Public awareness campaigns launched via radio, print and digital platforms. – 15 radio spots, 12 videos, 1,097 TV broadcasts, 82,520 digital screen advertisements, 68 online news items and 136 newspaper articles. – 50,000 brochures and 20,000 posters distributed nationwide. – Mobile offices for on-the-spot registration in rural areas and Worker Information Centres to disseminate information to rural workers piloted and implemented in select provinces. – 20,590 calls received via hotline in 2024.
S.S.4. Ensure robust actuarial design and sufficient fund reserves.	Good	– National Actuarial Working Committee established. – Actuarial valuation of the NSSF completed and published, forming the analytical basis for reform discussions on qualifying conditions, contribution rates and benefit calculation rules. – 13 hands-on training sessions by international experts conducted. – A technical review of the Social Security Law (based on principles and benchmarks in international labour standards) and a study on investment diversification were completed and published. – Actuarial valuation and legal review findings incorporated into the draft amendment of the Social Security Law.
S.S.5. Improve the social security collection system.	Good	– LSSO's first mobile app launched on 12 December 2025, available on Android and iOS stores. It currently allows voluntary members to pay monthly contributions and all members to access information and check entitlements. – Integration with BCEL, LaoVietBank and other banking apps completed for easy payment of monthly contributions. – Data integration (through APIs) between LSSO and select public databases in process. – Registration processing time reduced from 30 days to 2 working days.

Goal 2: The social security system is further developed and strengthened.

Strategic Objective 2.2: Social security covers an increasing number of workers in the informal sector.

Activity	Progress	Key progress actions
S.S.6. Adapt current scheme design to the characteristics of workers in non-standard forms of employment.	Good	– Detailed qualitative and quantitative study on informality and social security coverage expansion conducted. – Voluntary membership expanded from 12,446 in 2019 to 43,329 in 2025 due to operational innovations like the mobile office. – 2,801 agricultural workers reached through LSSO's outreach campaigns, while an additional 39,000 reached through development projects.

Colour code

Good

Moderate

Low

Implementation progress is strongest in technical and preparatory areas, such as actuarial analysis, upgrading data systems and platform development, while enforcement and compliance remain key bottlenecks. Overall, the social security pillar has made meaningful progress in system preparation and formal sector administration, while structural challenges related to informality, compliance and enforcement continue to constrain coverage expansion.

One point of note is that, during the key informant interviews with some organizations, it was suggested to allow voluntary NSSF members to choose certain benefits (for example, healthcare, old-age pension) based on their own assessed needs and financial capabilities. While this policy option may offer lower costs for informal workers, it has various drawbacks. This approach does not provide comprehensive and adequate protection, as stipulated in the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). NSSF members would not be protected against all risks when they occur if they are allowed to choose between benefits. While on paper such a policy may lead to an increase in membership, the actual protection would not be comprehensive, and therefore the enrolment figures would not represent the reality of protection. A choice of benefits approach would also affect the risk pool, as those who expect to benefit may be more likely to consider joining, causing adverse selection and ultimately having a negative impact on the sustainability of the funds. Therefore, this policy option is not recommended in this report. Rather, alternative financing approaches, such as contribution subsidies depending on the available fiscal space, worker welfare funds and sectoral levies, as applied in countries with significant informality, should be explored.

4.1.3. Social welfare

Several initiatives have been launched to support vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, children and older persons. Development partners such as the World Bank, World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Oxfam, World Vision, Red Cross and several others are involved in these efforts. However, the initiatives remain fragmented. While coverage has expanded across multiple target groups, social welfare delivery remains largely programme-based, with limited horizontal integration across schemes and uneven institutionalization within government systems. The social welfare pillar remains heavily dependent on external financing and project-based delivery, raising concerns regarding sustainability, scale-up and alignment with national systems.

► Table 5. Analysis of progress of actions in the NSPS road map for the Social Welfare pillar

Goal 3: The social welfare system is further developed and strengthened. Strategic Objective 3.1: Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.		
Activity	Progress	Key progress actions
S.W.1. Provide services and benefits to pregnant women and children.	Moderate	– The CCT programme of the RRPMP Project reached 64,723 beneficiaries as of December 2025 (49,536 beneficiaries across 4 provinces in Phase I and 15,187 new beneficiaries under Phase II). Phase II is expected to reach 85,000 new beneficiaries across 7 provinces at completion (2028). – 99 per cent participation in monthly community nutrition sessions. – 99 per cent of children under two years of age received regular growth monitoring. – Adaptive social protection framework is under development and expected to be integrated into the CCT by 2026. – Social registry linked with Health Insurance database and Poverty Evaluation Data and Information System for more effective targeting. – Mother and Early Childhood Grant piloted in three districts, testing the management information system (MIS) and payment systems used for the child disability grant.
S.W.2. Provide services and benefits to persons with disabilities and UXO survivors.	Low	– 1,783 UXO survivors and families received support during 2022–25. – Child disability grant pilot reached 496 beneficiaries in Xiengkhouang Province during 2023–25. – National Action Plan on Disability during 2023–27 endorsed. – 3 provincial rehabilitation centres operationalized. – Over 200 social workers and local focal points trained on case management and referrals.
S.W.3. Provide services and benefits for older adults.	Moderate	– Draft National Action Plan on Ageing 2024–30 prepared. – Around 15,000 older persons, including veterans, receive regular assistance through veteran-focused and MOLSW schemes.
S.W.4. Provide services and benefits to victims of natural and man-made disasters.	Low	– 1 central, 14 provincial and 80 district disaster funds operational. – Over 81,000 beneficiaries assisted, valued at 4.2 billion kip. – 12,992 tons of rice distributed. – 59 schools rehabilitated. – 37,100 farmers supported.
S.W.5. Expand the National School Meal Programme to all state kindergarten, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in the villages of poor districts throughout the country.	Moderate	– 200,000+ students in 41 districts benefit from daily nutritious meals. – Minimum food basket, with additional mineral-enriched options, costed and assessed at 6,800–9,500 kip per meal. – 1,200 schools upgraded with kitchens, dining halls, and gardens. – Home-grown school feeding model piloted in 28 districts. – Nutrition education integrated into the national school curriculum.

Goal 3: The social welfare system is further developed and strengthened.

Strategic Objective 3.1: Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.

Activity	Progress	Key progress actions
S.W.6. Increase allowances to students at the lower secondary level, prioritizing students from poor families and vulnerable groups.	Good	– 827 state and ethnic boarding schools supported. – 8,469 students received monthly stipends. – 26 boarding schools for children with disabilities included in the scheme. – 19.46 billion kip allocated for 2023–24. – School dropout rate reduced to 4.8 per cent, primary education completion at 93 per cent. – Targeting criteria harmonized with NSPS vulnerability indicators.
S.W.7. Allocate national budget to education on time and expand coverage.	Moderate	– Education budget execution rate maintained at over 90 per cent annually during 2022–24. – Ministry of Education and Sports budget integrated into the Medium-Term Budget Plan and Public Finance Development Strategy 2025 implementation. – 29.25 billion kip disbursed to the School Meals Programme and on-time releases verified in ten provinces. – Draft Medium-term Expenditure Framework 2026–30 developed, with NSPS-aligned cost projections.
S.W.8. Provide allowances for vocational training, skills development and technical training to the poor and to working-age people in vulnerable situations to enable them to access decent employment opportunities.	Moderate	– Over 20,000 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) trainees received training allowances during 2022–24. – 98,879 learners participated in short-term and basic vocational courses. – 14,000 graduates from certified TVET institutions, including 2,000 trained through enterprise-linked Dual Cooperative Training programmes. – 30 TVET institutions upgraded with improved facilities, teaching equipment and digital learning labs. – TVET Scholarship and Allowance Decree 2024 drafted. – 807 young and vulnerable trainees were provided stipends by MOLSW to participate in skills training courses under the World Bank supported Priority Skills for Growth Project in 2025.
S.W.9. Develop production organizations and public services, and facilitate access to decent work.	Good	– 4,193 production groups and 35 cooperatives exist nationwide as of 2024. – Over 35,000 tons of seeds and agricultural inputs distributed. – 59 district-level farmer service centres established. – Decree No. 348 under review for adoption. – National Rural Employment Framework 2025 drafted. – At least 200,000 rural workers benefited from producer group and cooperative support programmes.

Colour code

Good

Moderate

Low

Note: The scores indicate progress in implementing planned activities and milestones, not the proportion of the vulnerable population covered. Education- and skills-related measures are included under the social welfare pillar where they function as social assistance and access-support mechanisms for poor and vulnerable groups, rather than as sector-wide education and labour market policies.

Implementation progress under the social welfare pillar reflects, so far, an expansion in programme reach and service provision, rather than the establishment of a unified social welfare system with standardized eligibility, benefit adequacy and delivery mechanisms.

According to Table 5, lower implementation scores reflect challenges in financing predictability, coordination across ministries, and the absence of a common social welfare registry and delivery platform, rather than a lack of activity and partner engagement.

Overall, the social welfare pillar demonstrates meaningful reach to vulnerable populations, but progress towards a coherent, government-led social welfare system remains limited, highlighting the need for consolidation, integration and sustainable financing in the next strategy phase.

The NSPS implementation monitoring measures the effectiveness of the NSPS implementation process.

► **Table 6. Analysis of progress of actions in the NSPS road map for steering and coordination**

Implementing measures		
Activity	Progress	Key progress actions
Implementing measure 1. Coordination and multi-sector unity.	Moderate	– National Social Protection Committee, NSPC Secretariat, and Provincial Social Protection Committees established in all 18 provinces. Steering structure exists but not fully functional due to limited capacity, financing and clarity of mandates. – Some ad hoc meetings have taken place. – M&E is underdeveloped and not regularly used. – No integrated MIS yet.

Colour code

Good	Moderate	Low
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Note: The score reflects progress in operationalizing coordination mechanisms rather than the existence of formal structures.

The lack of a unified NSPS monitoring and information system has limited the NSPC Secretariat's ability to track progress across pillars, consolidate data and support evidence-based decision-making.

The low score of the steering reflects structural and capacity constraints in coordination, data integration and mandate clarity, rather than a lack of institutional commitment and policy intent.

While coordination structures exist at the central and provincial levels, their effectiveness has been constrained by limited dedicated staffing, unclear division of responsibilities across ministries and the absence of an integrated monitoring and information system.

4.2. Monitoring NSPS implementation based on KPIs (impact)

This section presents outcome-level indicators drawn from the NSPS monitoring framework and available administrative and survey data. These indicators reflect broader system performance and population-level trends influenced by multiple policies, programmes, and external factors. They should therefore be interpreted as indicative of progress towards NSPS objectives, rather than as impacts directly attributable to NSPS implementation.

The NSPS is bolstered by an implementation road map and a monitoring tool that uses indicators to gauge progress towards the NSPS objectives and the SDGs. Table 7 presents the results for each key performance indicator (KPI) compared to the baseline (2020) and the expected outcome (2025) that has been determined.

Regarding the objective of **health insurance**, the outcomes indicators suggest that gains in enrolment have not yet translated into commensurate improvements in effective coverage and financial protection. Although legal coverage is robust at 94.5 per cent, the effectiveness of insurance is hindered by trust, quality and accessibility concerns. Financial protection has made modest progress, with high remaining out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure at 45 per cent of current health expenditure.³

Social security coverage (membership) for the working-age population is moderate at 7.9 per cent (397,584 people). Coverage in the formal private sector stands at 35 per cent of workers, and 72 per cent of workers are covered across the combined formal private and public sectors, including defence. Despite recent increases, coverage in the informal economy remains low, at 2.8 per cent (43,329 people). The low level of overall coverage reflects the predominance of informal employment and the voluntary nature of the existing scheme, rather than recent declines in system performance.

For **social welfare**, outcome indicators are heterogeneous and reflect programme-specific coverage, service reach or budget allocations rather than a single comparable population-level metric. Population coverage indicators are less straightforward to measure, with different results by period:

1. During the NSPS period, 64,723 individuals benefited from regular social welfare cash transfers. Despite this expansion, overall coverage remains modest in relation to the scale of vulnerability.
2. This includes 6.5 per cent of target women (20,900) receiving maternity cash benefits, 3.2 per cent of children (32,000) receiving social protection benefits, 9 per cent of persons with disabilities (3,360) and 18.5 per cent of poor persons with disabilities who cannot work and are unable to care for themselves (2,800) receiving cash benefits.
3. 25 per cent of those who reported being gender-based violence survivors (1,200) received services and benefits to restore their livelihoods and ensure they are referred to health services when needed.
4. 0.5 per cent of older persons (4,300) and 2.2 per cent of poor older persons (4,300) received a non-contributory pension.
5. 2.25 per cent of natural and man-made disaster victims (27,000) received emergency services and benefits.
6. 98 per cent of the target districts (39/40) for the National School Meal Programme are covered.
7. 4,800 lower secondary school students received scholarships.
8. The national budget allocated 95,000 kip per student per year to education.
9. 21,000 annual enrolments in TVET programmes.
10. 80 rural districts with at least one productive organization for low-income rural workers.

KPI results indicate that, while NSPS implementation has supported gradual improvements in system coverage and service reach, population-level outcomes remain constrained by structural factors such as informality, financing limitations and fragmented delivery systems.

► Table 7. NSPS key performance Indicators

Pillar	Goals and activities	Indicator	Baseline (2020)	Achieved (2025)	Target (2025)
Pillar 1. Health Insurance	Goal 1. The health insurance system is further developed and strengthened.	% population covered by health insurance	94%	94.5%	94.5%
	SO 1.1. Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic and effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.	% of health expenditure <u>not</u> financed by out-of-pocket payments	62%	55%	65%
Pillar 2. Social Security	Goal 2. The social security system is further developed and strengthened.	% working-age population covered by social security	6.8% (314 753 / 4 619 600)	7.9% (397 584 / 5 050 000)	15%
		% employed population covered by social security	13%	15%	
	SO 2.1. All the workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.	% Formal economy workers covered by social security (private sector)	24.8% (121 698 / 490 373)	35.6% (190 683/ 535 844)	48%
		% formal economy workers covered by social security (private and public sector)	65%	72%	74%
	SO 2.2. Social security covers an increasing number of workers in the informal sector.	% informal economy workers who contributed to NSSF for at least 6 months in the last 1 year	0.9% (12 446 / 1 438 567)	2.8% (43 329 / 1 540 829)	1.8%
Pillar 3. Social Welfare	Goal 3. The social welfare system is further developed and strengthened.	% vulnerable population receiving social welfare services or benefits	–	9.9% (52 936 / 524 118)	TBD
	SO 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.				

Pillar	Goals and activities	Indicator	Baseline (2020)	Achieved (2025)	Target (2025)
Pillar 3. Social Welfare	S.W.1. Provide services and benefits to pregnant women and children.	% children covered by social protection benefits	–	3.2% (32 000 / 1 000 000)	TBD
		% women receiving cash maternity benefits	–	6.5% (20 900 / 321 5000)	TBD
	S.W.2. Provide services and benefits to persons with disabilities and UXO survivors.	% persons with disabilities receiving cash benefits	–	9% (3 360 / 37 000)	TBD
		% persons with disabilities who are poor, cannot work, unable to take care of themselves receiving benefits	–	18.5% (2 600 / 14 000)	TBD
		% gender-based violence survivors receiving services and benefits to restore their livelihoods and ensure they are referred to health services when needed	TBD	25% (1 200 / 4 800)	TBD
	S.W.3. Provide services and benefits to older adults.	% older persons receiving a non-contributory pension	–	0.5% (4 300 / 850 000)	TBD
		% poor older persons receiving a non-contributory pension	–	2.2% (4 300 / 195 000)	TBD
	S.W.4 Provide services and benefits to victims of natural and man-made disasters.	% natural and man-made disaster victims receiving emergency services and benefits	TBD	2.25% (27 000 / 1 200 000)	TBD
	S.W.5. Expand the National School Meal Programme to all state kindergarten, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in the villages of poor districts throughout the country.	Number of poor districts covered by the National School Meal Programme	10	39	40
	S.W.6. Increase allowances to students at lower secondary level, prioritizing students from poor families and vulnerable groups.	Number of lower secondary level students receiving scholarships	2 000	4 800	5 000

Pillar	Goals and activities	Indicator	Baseline (2020)	Achieved (2025)	Target (2025)
Pillar 3. Social Welfare	S.W.7. Allocate national budget to education on time and expand coverage.	Cost in kip per student per year	70 000 kip	95 000 kip	100 000 kip
	S.W.8. Provide allowances for vocational training, skills development, and technical training to the poor and working-age people in vulnerable situations	Number of annual enrolment (preferably from poor and working-age population in vulnerable situations) into TVET programmes	15 707	21 000	>20 000
	S.W.9. Develop production organizations and public services and facilitate access to decent work.	Number of rural districts with at least one productive organization for low-income rural workers	–	80	TBD

– = nil; TBD = to be determined.

4.3. Analytical NSPS assessment

4.3.1. General assessment based on OECD evaluation criteria

The OECD has defined six evaluation criteria—relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability—and two principles for their use. These criteria provide a normative framework used to determine the merit or worth of a development intervention (policy, strategy, programme, project or activity). They serve as the basis upon which evaluative judgements are made.⁴

In this context, “impact” and “effectiveness” are assessed at the level of system contribution and strategic alignment, rather than causal attribution to NSPS implementation. The criteria are explained in brief as follows:

Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right things?

Coherence: How well does the intervention fit?

Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

Efficiency: How well are resources being used?

Impact: What difference does the intervention make?

Sustainability: Will the benefits last?

Table 8 summarizes the assessment of the NSPS, its goals and its strategic objectives using the OECD evaluation criteria, while Table 9 summarizes the same for activities. This assessment highlights some key strengths and challenges.

While the NSPS has high relevance and impact across all components and a strong alignment with equity and the SDGs, its effectiveness and efficiency are only moderate due to implementation gaps and sustainability concerns tied to fiscal space and donor reliance.

► Table 8. Evaluation of the NSPS, its goals and strategic objectives based on the OECD evaluation criteria

NSPS	Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability
Overall NSPS Strategy	Is NSPS addressing the right issues, needs and priorities?	How well does NSPS align with other efforts, policies and systems?	Is NSPS achieving its intended objectives and outcomes?	Are resources (time, money, effort) being used optimally to achieve results?	What broader changes (+/-) has NSPS contributed to?	Will the benefits of NSPS endure over time?
Pillar 1. Health Insurance	Addresses high OOP spending and informal sector gaps	Aligned with UHC road map and MOH reforms	High theoretic population coverage, issues with effective coverage (incomplete service, increasing OOP spending, mistrust, low utilization)	NHI reimbursements below hospital costs. New payment reforms in 2024 improved cost recovery and reduced facility debt	Improved access and (potential) reduced financial hardship jeopardized by insufficient funding and its consequences	Fiscal space and low government subsidies for the informal sector pose major risks to effectiveness of the NHI system
Pillar 2. Social Security	Responds to ageing, informality, and income insecurity	Linked to Labour Law, ASEAN and international frameworks	Registration improving. Enforcement insufficient and uneven	Digital payment and MIS systems in pilot phase with planned roll out	Enhanced protection for civil servants and workers of private companies covered. Still limited progress for informal sector	Reserve adequacy and legal mandates evolving
Pillar 3. Social Welfare	Targets vulnerable groups and poverty; key for livelihoods	Integrated with education, disaster risk management, labour development and poverty programmes	School meals and cash transfers for pregnant women and children being scaled up	Fragmented service delivery, targeting challenges, resource intensive, promising systems (Social Registry, digital payments)	Inclusion and resilience gains evident	Budget constraints and donor transition planning needed. Market linkages needed

NSPS	Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability
Overall NSPS Strategy	Is NSPS addressing the right issues, needs and priorities?	How well does NSPS align with other efforts, policies and systems?	Is NSPS achieving its intended objectives and outcomes?	Are resources (time, money, effort) being used optimally to achieve results?	What broader changes (+/-) has NSPS contributed to?	Will the benefits of NSPS endure over time?
SO 1.1. Health Insurance Schemes	Strong equity focus and national priority	Linked to health financing and MOH systems	Legal and institutional reforms underway	IT and payment systems improving	Providing funding, potential for expanded access and reduced OOP spending	Dependent on fiscal commitment and system integration
SO 2.1. Social Security (Formal)	Addresses formal sector gaps and compliance	Aligned with labour and pension policies	Enforcement and enrolment improving	Collection systems being modernized	Income protection strengthened	Requires actuarial stability and legal enforcement
SO 2.2. Social Security (Informal)	Critical for equity and coverage expansion	Needs better integration with employment policies	Pilot models emerging, low scale-up as in many lower-middle-income countries	Administrative and package adaptation needed	Potential for major inclusion gains	Long-term viability depends on tailored scheme design and implementation
SO 3.1. Social Welfare Expansion	Responds to multi-dimensional vulnerability	Coherent with education, labour and disaster risk management sectors	Services reaching more groups	Delivery mechanisms improving, but need to be unified	Nutrition, education and resilience outcomes evident	Budget execution and donor exit strategies essential

Colour code

High

Good

Moderate

Limited

Low

► Table 9. Evaluation of the NSPS activities based on the OECD criteria

Activity	Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability
SO 1.1. Health Insurance						
Legal framework for UHC	Foundational for equity and system-wide reform	Foundational for equity and system-wide reform	Drafting underway, implementation pending	Legal clarity improving	Enables universal access	Requires political will and fiscal backing
NHIB systems and capacity	Essential for operational delivery	Linked to MOH and financing reforms	Capacity-building in progress	HR and IT gaps remain	Supports scheme expansion	Institutional resilience still developing
Facility standards	Supports service quality and equity	Coherent with MOH accreditation efforts	Compliance varies across regions	Resource-intensive upgrades	Improves patient safety and trust	Needs sustained investment and monitoring
Rural access	High priority for underserved populations	Linked to health equity and infrastructure plans	Outreach and mobile services expanding	Logistics and staffing challenges	High priority for underserved populations	Dependent on long-term health workforce strategy
Budget allocation to health	Critical for system sustainability	Requires coordination with Ministry of Finance (MOF) and planning cycles	Budget execution delays noted	Allocation mechanisms improving	Enables service continuity	Fiscal discipline and prioritization needed
SO 2.1. Social Security (Formal)						
Expand formal sector coverage	Addresses legal gaps and worker protection	Aligned with labour registration systems	Coverage increasing slowly	Enforcement and incentives needed	Reduces vulnerability for formal workers	Requires legal mandates and compliance systems
Enforce inspections	Supports compliance and accountability	Linked to Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC) and Labour Law	Inspection capacity varies	Resource constraints limit reach	Improves scheme integrity	Needs institutional strengthening

Activity	Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability
SO 2.1. Social Security (Formal)						
Promote enrolment	Enhances awareness and uptake	Coherent with outreach and HR policies	Campaigns underway, mixed results	Cost-effective if scaled up	Boosts participation and coverage	Requires sustained engagement and trust
Actuarial design and reserves	Ensures financial viability	Linked to fiscal and pension reforms	Technical progress ongoing	Data systems improving	Strengthens long-term solvency	Needs periodic review and legal enforcement
Improve collection	Essential for scheme sustainability	Coherent with tax and payroll systems	Compliance uneven, systems evolving	Admin costs being reduced	Stabilizes fund inflows	Dependent on digitalization and enforcement
SO 2.2. Social Security (Informal)						
Adapt for non-formal workers	Critical for equity and inclusion	Needs better integration with labour and social policies	Pilots emerging, national scale pending	Under study	Expands protection to underserved groups	Long-term viability depends on tailored financing and delivery
SO 3.1. Social Welfare						
Pregnant women and children	High priority for early development	Linked to maternal health and nutrition programmes	Services expanding	Delivery varies by region	Improves health and education outcomes	Needs budget continuity and local capacity
Persons with disabilities and UXO survivors	Strong equity and justice focus	Coherent with disability law and UXO response	Services improving, gaps remain	Specialized delivery needed	Enhances dignity and inclusion	Requires sustained funding and coordination
Older adults	Responds to demographic shifts	Linked to pension and ageing policies	Coverage expanding slowly	Delivery mechanisms evolving	Reduces isolation and poverty	Needs integration with long-term care systems

Activity	Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability
SO 3.1. Social Welfare						
Disaster victims	Urgent and life-saving relevance	Coherent with disaster risk management and emergency response	Timeliness improving	Logistics and coordination challenges	Builds resilience and recovery	Requires contingency planning and funding buffers
School meal programme	Proven nutrition and education impact	Integrated with education and poverty programmes	Coverage expanding in poor districts	Delivery improving, budget execution key	Boosts attendance and health	Needs stable funding and local ownership
Student allowances	Supports retention and equity	Linked to education and social targeting	Uptake increasing	Targeting mechanisms evolving	Reduces dropout rates	Requires fiscal commitment and monitoring
Education budget allocation	Enables service continuity	Coherent with MOF and planning cycles	Execution delays noted	Budget systems improving	Supports national education goals	Needs stronger fiscal discipline
Vocational training allowances	Promotes employability and inclusion	Linked to labour and skills development	Uptake growing among vulnerable groups	Delivery varies by region	Improves access to decent work	Requires coordination and long-term funding
Decent work access for producer groups	Strategic for livelihoods	Coherent with labour and enterprise development	Implementation capacity varies	Resource-intensive	Expands economic opportunity	Needs institutional support and market linkages

Colour code

High	Good	Moderate	Limited	Low
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4.3.2. Social protection policy design, implementation and organizational structure

Evaluating progress by examining the policy design, implementation and organizational structure provides a comprehensive understanding of how an action plan operates in reality. This framework enhances the monitoring of activities and KPIs by examining the legal and institutional frameworks and governance structures that facilitate effective delivery. It helps clarify the interplay between strategic choices, implementation processes and organizational capacities that lead to outcomes. This complementary approach sheds light on the complex relationships that shape outcomes, leading to a more refined understanding of progress.

More specifically, the **policy design** review assesses the clarity, coherence and relevance of the strategy's goals and mechanisms. The **implementation** review evaluates the practical steps and processes for delivering the programmes outlined in the strategy. The **organizational structure and governance** review focuses on the institutional framework, coordination and capacity needed to manage the strategy.

Table 10 provides an analysis of the strengths and challenges using these lenses. The most binding constraints relate to financing flows, information systems and organizational authority, particularly within the health insurance pillar. Some key findings are described below.

One of the challenges in the health insurance policy design, especially in relation to coverage of the informal sector, is the attempt to enrol the informally employed population through voluntary schemes.ⁱ Voluntary schemes have never covered more than 1–4 per cent of the target population in the informal sector, despite attempts to subsidize premiums, mainly as a result of adverse selection and collection issues.

As a response, the Ministry of Health launched the National Health Insurance scheme in 2017 by expanding to the whole informal sector through tax-based subsidies with low co-payments and free care for poor households. The scheme managed to cover most of the target population with an affordable package. However, mostly due to substantial underfunding, the NHI can hardly cover the costs of drugs and supplies provided at facilities. This financial imbalance, together with various implementation challenges, has created disincentives for health facilities, leading to a vicious cycle with several coping mechanisms among health facilities (such as certain drugs not being provided, additional fees and payments being charged at the point of service, and low quality of services), as well as low trust and limited utilization by the population.

Other challenges regarding health insurance implementation and organization include:

1. provider payment mechanism rates are very low and have not been adjusted to currency depreciation, especially at the hospital level;
2. funding for NHI is on-budget through the national treasury, causing delays in the release of government subsidies and reimbursement to health facilities, creating liquidity constraints at the facility level;
3. there is no purchaser–provider split, which affects efficiency, cost-effectiveness and service quality;
4. limitations in the MIS, lack of outreach and enrolment, weak beneficiary management and very low operation costs further constrain efficient claims processing, supervision and financial management, weakening trust by members and providers and contributing to lower utilization in some areas; and
5. NHI for the informal sector has not been expanded to Vientiane Capital, leading to high OOP expenditures for a vast majority of the population.

ⁱ Namely, Community-Based Health Insurance (between 2000 and 2017 in provinces and still currently in Vientiane Capital) and the LSSO voluntary social security, including health insurance benefits (since 2014).

► Table 10. Social protection assessment based on policy design, implementation, and organizational structure

Pillar	Specific Objectives and Activities		Policy design		Implementation		Organizational structure	
			Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap
Health Insurance	1.1	Formal	Comprehensive legislation	PPM rates too low, especially at hospital level	– Basic system – Ad hoc training – NHI poor card – Automatic registration with limited administrative requirements – Costing of facilities (2021) and central hospitals (2025)	– Delay in release of funds by NHIB – MIS – Very low operation costs – Decreasing trust by members	– NHIB progressive capacity-building – Decision to move the NHI management to LSSO from 2026	– No purchasing provider split – On-budget funding through national treasury – Limited NHIB capacity
		Informal	– Simple, cheap, non-contributory system in place allowing for high population coverage – Simple PPM – Temporary updated NHI policy – NHI poor card	No clear policy stand between non-contributory or contributory, insufficient subsidies, mismatch between policy and funding, vicious cycle trap		– Delay in release of government subsidies – No expansion to Vientiane Capital, which is mainly OOP – Registration MIS – Limited link to social registry – Very low operation costs – No trust of population – Limited utilization		

Pillar	Specific Objectives and Activities		Policy design		Implementation		Organizational structure	
			Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap
Social Security	2.1	Formal	Comprehensive legislation	– Legislative penalties and sanctions in updated Social Security Law – Enforcement	– Promotion – Capacity-building and tools on compliance	– Routine inspection – Automatic smooth exchange among databases – Enforcement against violators	– Semi-autonomous agency with off-budget funds – Own staffing	Limited cost-effective expansion potential of LSSO network
	2.2	Informal	– Streamlined package with formal sector – Affordable premium	No specific package for the informal sector	– Piloted outreach, promotion, digital enrolment/ payment app	Roll-out of digital apps		

Pillar	Specific Objectives and Activities		Policy design		Implementation		Organizational structure	
			Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap
Social Welfare	3.1	Pregnant women and children	– Legislation drafted (Social Welfare Law 2025) – Benefit package defined – Target group clearly defined – RRPM1 and RRPM2 policy frameworks – Evidence base strengthened through monitoring and verification systems	– Endorsement pending – National scaling policy missing – No clear budget commitment for scale-up	– Strong delivery mechanisms (social registry) – Digital registration – Digital payments – Pilot in 7 districts, strong uptake – Community outreach (Village Facilitators/ Lao Women's Union) – Results-based financing to MOH facilities improving RMNCH – Community-level platforms used to reinforce behaviour change in nutrition and healthcare	– Digital payment not rolled out – MIS not integrated with Social Registry/ NHI – Expansion not funded – Limited interoperability between RRPM verification systems and Mother and Early Childhood Grant (MECG) beneficiary databases – RRPM platforms not yet used for MECG payment and tracking	– MECG pilot team at MOLSW – District and village facilitators active – UNICEF technical support – RRPM platforms strengthen (i) DHIS2 data systems; (ii) district health management teams; (iii) Maternal, newborn, and child health service delivery structures at district level	– No formal MECG division in MOLSW – Project-based staffing – Weak training/ training-of-trainers system – No formalized RRPM-MECG coordination mechanism – No integrated operational unit for digital payments + verification + grievance redress

Pillar	Specific Objectives and Activities		Policy design		Implementation		Organizational structure	
			Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap
Social Welfare	3.2	persons with disabilities and UXO survivors	– Disability law (2018) – UXO victim entitlement provisions – Guidelines for rehabilitation and assistance	– No sub-legislation for benefits – Lack of harmonization with Social Welfare Law – No unified targeting mechanism	– Some rehabilitation programmes in place – UXO Secretariat cooperation – Training materials developed	– Coverage uneven across provinces – Cash benefits not standardized – Limited coordination with MOH facilities	– UXO Secretariat and MOLSW joint coordination – Disability associations active	– No integrated case management – Weak multisectoral coordination – Donor dependence – Insufficient operational budget
	3.3	Older adults	– Policy direction in Social Welfare Law draft – Localized assistance schemes	– No national old-age social assistance – No benefit formula or eligibility criteria	– Community-based care initiatives (limited) – Local allowances (ad hoc)	– No nationwide programme – No targeting and delivery system – Dependent on national budgets	– MOLSW departments responsible – Committees involved	– No dedicated older persons unit – Weak monitoring system – No standard MIS
	3.4	Victims of disasters	– Disaster assistance under Social Welfare mandate – Existing guidelines for emergency support	– No harmonized cash assistance framework – Lack of risk financing strategy	– Local response teams active – Distribution of in-kind relief	– Cash transfers not systematized – Coordination gaps during emergencies – No real-time data system	– Disaster response committees exist – MOLSW emergency units functioning	– Budget unpredictable – Structure largely ad hoc – Weak link to early warning systems

Pillar	Specific Objectives and Activities		Policy design		Implementation		Organizational structure	
			Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap
Social Welfare	3.5	School meals	– WFP-supported School Meal Programme – Policy direction included in education sector	– No long-term domestic funding model – No national nutrition standards formalized	– Strong delivery mechanisms and procedures – WFP and Government co-implementation – Local food sourcing pilots	– Coverage limited – Transition to government funding slow – No unified monitoring system	– MOES + WFP joint management – Village committees active	– No dedicated national unit – Project-based staffing
	3.6	Student allowances	– Allowances defined under education support policies	– No standard benefit level – No clear eligibility and targeting	– Some lower secondary allowance schemes exist	– Limited budget – Weak targeting – No delivery system	– Subnational education offices implement allowances	– No national framework – No MIS and tracking system
	3.8	Vocational Training	– Skills development policies mention allowances	– No clear social assistance definition – No national financing model	– TVET schools and skills development institutions provide some training support	– Fragmented pilot projects – No unified allowance delivery – No link to labour market targeting	– MOLSW and TVET institutions exist and have some coordination on data linkages and job matching	– Limited coordination mechanism with MOLSW – No integrated skills/welfare system

Pillar	Specific Objectives and Activities		Policy design		Implementation		Organizational structure	
			Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap	Existing	Gap
Social Welfare	3.9	Production organizations	– Cooperative Law (2018) – Production group decree – Agricultural extension, value chain support – Farmer groups, cooperatives, producer clusters	– No social assistance package – No clear targeting of poor/vulnerable producers – Weak social protection integration with NSPS – No defined benefit levels and eligibility	– Active cooperatives across agriculture/ livestock/ handicrafts – MAE extension services, training – Donor projects supporting farmer groups	– Mostly project-based, not institutionalized – No delivery mechanism for cash/benefits – No digital registry for cooperative members – Weak linkage to poverty targeting/ social registry	– MAE Cooperative Promotion Department (central– province) – Province/ district offices supporting producer groups – Existing cooperative networks	– No formal coordination between MAE and MOLSW – No dedicate team for welfare support – Budget constraints for national rollout – Limited monitoring/ MIS capacity

Colour code

High	Good	Moderate	Limited	Low
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4.3.3. Social protection delivery chain

According to a World Bank study on the foundations of social protection delivery systems,⁵ all social protection programmes pass through similar phases along the implementation and delivery chain. The following are insights from an analysis of the delivery chain:

1. There is a need for some form of outreach to promote awareness and understanding among the intended population.
2. This outreach should involve registration efforts to collect data on people's characteristics, requirements and conditions.
3. An assessment should then be undertaken to summarize these characteristics, needs and conditions.
4. The resulting profiles can be used to assess eligibility, assign benefit levels, make enrolment decisions, and notify and enrol beneficiaries.
5. Once enrolled, beneficiaries should be provided with the intervention, which may include cash payments or service provision. The nature of the service can vary based on its specific requirements.
6. Data on beneficiaries must be managed to ensure that their information is accurate and up to date, and to ensure that beneficiaries comply with any co-responsibilities, that grievances and appeals are addressed, and that reassessments can be undertaken. It is also important to keep records of beneficiaries exiting the programme(s).

A complete illustration of the social protection value chain framework is available as Annex 3. Table 11 is a summary of an assessment of the social protection delivery chain applied to the NSPS strategic objectives.

The strengths that emerge are the strong legal and actuarial basis for social security eligibility (in the formal sector) and benefit provision, alongside effective outreach and onboarding in school-based programmes.

Major weaknesses include weak onboarding and beneficiary management in health insurance; weak outreach and grievance systems in the informal sector; fragmented delivery; and the absence of exit tracking in disability and older adult schemes.

These delivery chain weaknesses help explain the gap between relatively strong implementation progress (see section 4.1 above) and more modest outcome indicators (see section 4.2 above).

Key system-level implications emerging from the delivery chain analysis include:

1. Accelerate MIS integration across all schemes.
2. Expand outreach and incentives for voluntary enrolment.
3. Develop national registry and onboarding protocols.
4. Introduce a unified complaint tracking system.
5. Standardize case closure and transition pathways.

► Table 11. Assessment of the NSPS strategic objectives based on the social protection delivery chain framework

Pillar	Strategic Objective		Assess			Enrol	Provide		Manage	
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
			Outreach	Intake and registration	Assessment	Enrolment	Payment of benefits	Provision of services	Monitoring and GRMs	Exits
1. Health Insurance	1.1	Health Insurance	Moderate public campaigns; low rural reach	Automatic registration for informal; LSSO and NHI poor cards	Limited; actuarial data improving	Clear for formal sector; unclear for informal	Defined packages; underfunded; delays	Low utilization; under-serving; low awareness	Weak grievance tracking; limited updates	Universal rights; no structured exit protocols
2. Social Security	2.1	Formal sector	Strong employer-based outreach	Employer-led registration; digital upgrades	Basic income verification	Clear statutory criteria	Defined by law; actuarial basis	Formal onboarding via employers	Compliance via inspections; weak grievance redress	Defined eligibility criteria, all people should be insured
	2.2	Informal sector	Low-scale outreach; pilot programmes	Voluntary registration; low uptake	Limited profiling; pilot targeting	Unclear; voluntary basis	Basic package; low incentives	Minimal onboarding	Weak grievance system; no update protocols	Defined eligibility criteria, all people should be insured

Pillar	Strategic Objective		Assess			Enrol	Provide		Manage	
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
			Outreach	Intake and registration	Assessment	Enrolment	Payment of benefits	Provision of services	Monitoring and GRMs	Exits
3. Social Welfare	3.1	Pregnant women and children	Donor-led outreach; limited national scale	Manual registration; local admin have narrow role	Basic demographic checks; no profiling	Social registry targeting	Cash transfers; donor-defined; delays	Local onboarding;	MIS; grievances ad hoc	Exit not tracked
	3.2	Persons with disabilities and UXO survivors	NGO and health sector outreach; fragmented	Health-based registration; no unified registry	Disability assessments vary	Eligibility unclear; no national registry	Limited services; pilot schemes	Weak onboarding; small-scale pilots	No grievance or update system	No formal exit protocols
	3.3	Older adults	Limited outreach; no universal pension	No registration system	Age-based; no income checks	No national scheme	No defined benefits	No onboarding	No MIS and grievance or update system	No exit process
	3.4	Victims of natural and man-made disasters	Reactive outreach via local authorities	Emergency registration	Rapid needs assessment	Ad hoc eligibility	Relief-based benefits; unpredictable resources	Local onboarding depending on district disaster risk management committees	Weak MIS; grievances informal	Case closure not tracked

Pillar	Strategic Objective		Assess			Enrol	Provide		Manage	
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
			Outreach	Intake and registration	Assessment	Enrolment	Payment of benefits	Provision of services	Monitoring and GRMs	Exits
3. Social Welfare	3.5	School Meal Programme	School-based outreach	School enrolment = intake	Geographic targeting; clear criteria	School-based eligibility	Defined meal package; predictable delivery	School onboarding	No grievance system	Exit via school transition
	3.6	Allowance to students at the lower secondary level	School-led outreach	Manual registration	Age and school level check; no social registry link	School-based enrolment; dependent on lists	Fixed allowance	School onboarding	No grievance system	Exit via graduation/ dropout
	3.8	Allowances for vocational training, skills development and technical training	TVET and skills development outreach; donor support	Manual registration	Age and school level check; no social registry link	Ad hoc targeting	Fixed allowance	Local onboarding	No grievance system	Exit via graduation/ dropout
	3.9	Production organizations and public services	Sectoral outreach	Group-based registration	Sector-based needs assessment; limited verification	Group eligibility	Support packages (inputs, equipment)	Local onboarding	No grievance system	Exit not tracked

Colour code

High	Good	Moderate	Limited	Low
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4.3.4. Social protection funding

This subsection assesses social protection financing as a structural enabling condition for NSPS implementation, rather than as a judgement on sectoral performance. Recent analytical work highlights that:

Expanding the scope and scale of social protection goes hand in hand with increasing the fiscal resources allocated to it. Yet, according to the latest available data, the government solely allocates 1.6 per cent of GDP to social protection, of which 0.9 per cent is spent on health. This is the lowest level of expenditure when compared to the region, and among one of the lowest in the world. Consequently, social protection coverage is low and especially the most vulnerable – such as informal workers, women, youth, and children – are severely impacted by this.⁶

These figures should be interpreted in light of the macro-fiscal consolidation and debt constraints in the Lao People's Democratic Republic over the period, which have limited discretionary social spending.

Besides, healthcare accounts for a significant portion of social protection funding requirements for a nation committed to enhancing equity in the provision of its citizens' essential needs. Equity objectives under the NSPS depend heavily on public financing, making government expenditure levels a critical indicator of the State's redistributive capacity. The best indicators of the Government's efforts in health financing are domestic government health spending (GGHE-D) as a share of GDP and as a share of the general government expenditure (GGE). According to the latest data available from the National Health Accounts, GGHE-D in the Lao People's Democratic Republic stands at a very modest 0.53 per cent of GDP (see Table 13 in Section 5.3 below for comparison with other countries).

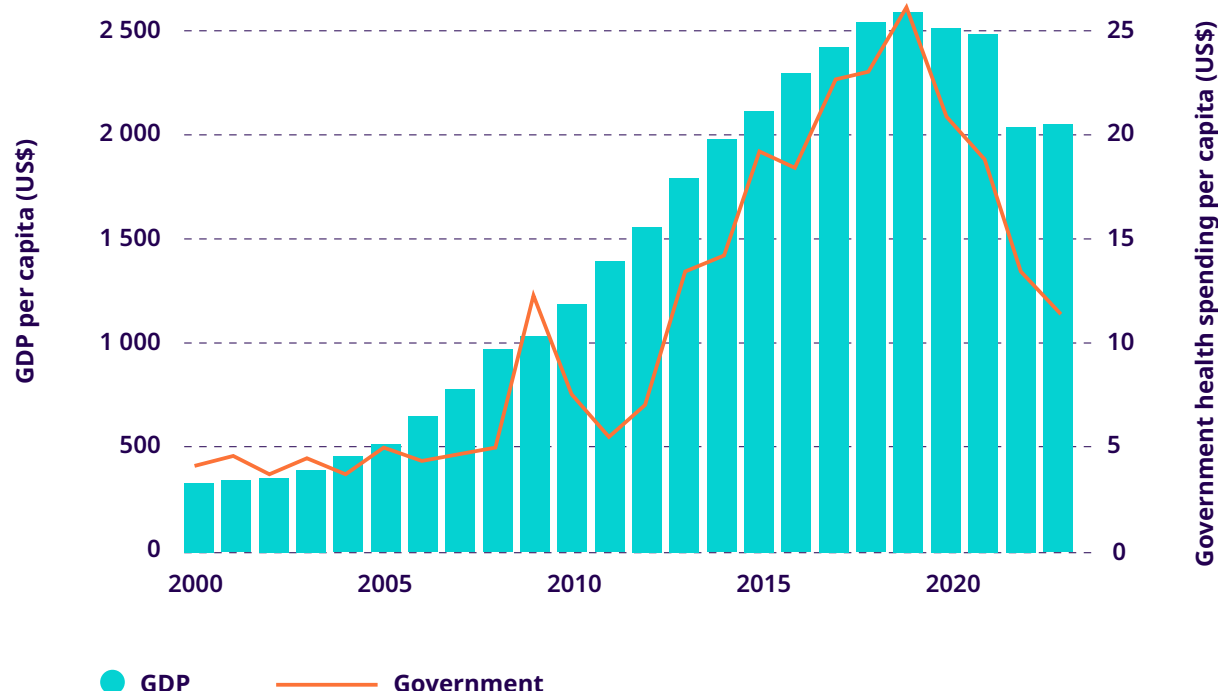
Table 12. Overview of domestic general government health expenditure (GGHE-D) in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 2019–23⁷

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Trend
GGHE-D in US\$ per capita	25	20	18	13	11	↓
GGHE-D as share of GDP (%)	0.96	0.79	0.72	0.63	0.53	↓
GGHE-D as share of GGE (%)	5.16	4.31	4.58	4.25	3.21	↓

Note: Declines reflect both fiscal consolidation and exchange rate effects over the period.

The historical trend in Table 13 of GGHE-D per capita and GDP per capita shows that their ratio declined between 2019 and 2023.

GDP and government health spending (GGHE-D) per capita (US\$)⁸



The figure above illustrates divergence between economic growth and domestic public health spending per capita. These funding trends help explain challenges observed across all three NSPS pillars, including shallow benefit adequacy, fragmented service delivery and limited sustainability.

4.4. Assessment of NSPS governance

4.4.1. Strengths

The legal and institutional foundations have been strengthened with the establishment of the NSPC, its Secretariat and the provincial committees. Decrees define their roles and responsibilities as well as include a dedicated unit for social protection statistics.

The governance architecture appears largely appropriate and aligned with international good practice; however, formal structures have not yet translated into consistent operational authority or decision-making power.

4.4.2. Bottlenecks

The NSPS steering is done by the National Social Protection Committee and its Secretariat, as well as by the Provincial Social Protection Committees. The steering performance is constrained by several factors.

1. The NSPS Secretariat is overstretched with limited staff, budget and authority, relying partly on development partner support. This results in delayed decision-making and fragmented programme implementation. The Secretariat, being based in MOLSW, has limited convening power over other line ministries.
2. Coordination across ministries and between central and provincial levels is limited and uneven, with some line ministries not familiar with the NSPC and their roles and functions. Provincial Committees are also not always functional and may be unclear about membership, which limits the NSPC's ability to prioritize, sequence and implement reforms. Terms of reference are not sufficiently descriptive and meetings irregular.
3. Awareness of the NSPS at the provincial and district level is low, and decentralization challenges are affecting implementation.

Consequently, the steering structure exists but it is not fully functional due to limited capacity, financing and clarity of mandates. NSPS steering would benefit from clearer delegated authority and budget predictability, better coordination mechanisms and clearer terms of reference to guide implementation more effectively.

4.4.3. NSPS monitoring and reporting function

The NSPS came along with a complete implementation road map containing general directions for implementation and a matrix with detailed actions, milestones and timeframes. The accompanying monitoring tool with a set of overall key performance indicators and core performance indicators to track progress towards the achievement of the NSPS goals and SDG target 1.3 provided a strong basis to compile the data. However, the actual data management system suffers from many shortcomings.

The main limitation is not only the absence of an integrated MIS, but the limited use of monitoring data for decision-making, prioritization and course correction. Reporting remains largely compliance-oriented, with limited feedback loops to policy and budget.

Regarding cross-cutting governance, while the NSPS has established an appropriate governance architecture and monitoring framework, implementation effectiveness is constrained by limited delegated authority, fragmented information systems and insufficient integration between monitoring, budgeting and decision-making processes.





Good practices and lessons from other countries

05



5.1. Comparative review of NSPS in selected countries

By conducting a brief review of the social protection strategies of other countries, especially those with similar socio-economic, political or cultural backgrounds, it is possible to identify best and worst practices that can inform the development of the new NSPS for 2026–30. In the following pages, we consider and compare the situations of Social Protection strategies in Cambodia, Viet Nam, Indonesia and Thailand.

5.1.1. Cambodia

After establishing a National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) for 2016–25, Cambodia has developed a ten-year NSP strategy for 2024–35 based on a cyclical risk approach, together with a National Road Map for UHC 2024–35, a National Strategy for the Development of the Informal Economy 2023–28 and a Strategic Plan for Digital Transformation in Social Protection 2024–28. The NSPPF 2024–35 marks a shift from a fragmented, resource-based approach to a risk-based life-cycle approach. The NSPPF 2024–2035 strategy focuses on:

- 1. Shift to life-cycle approach:** The strategy moves away from classic social security and assistance pillars towards addressing seven life-cycle risks: maternity/childhood, health, occupational risks, disability, unemployment, homelessness and old age.
- 2. Expansion of coverage:** The social protection system covers a large portion of the population (~7.5 million people, or approximately 43 per cent). The goal is to reach nearly the entire population by 2035.
- 3. Standardized targeting:** The Identification of Poor Households (IDPoor) approach managed and implemented by the Ministry of Planning classifies each household according to one of four categories: IDPoor 1, IDPoor 2, at-risk or non-poor. Only IDPoor 1 and 2 households are eligible for free access to healthcare services through the Health Equity Fund and to social assistance from the Family Package.
- 4. Integration:** Various social assistance programmes have been consolidated under a unified “Family Package” umbrella that provides cash transfers for pregnant women, young children aged 0–2 years, school-aged children in primary and secondary school, persons with disabilities, older persons aged 60+ years and those living with HIV/AIDS. It is to be complemented by shock-responsive elements to strengthen household resilience, productivity and prosperity. The Family Package is implemented by the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) with rigorous monitoring and impact evaluation.⁹
- 5. Universal health coverage (UHC):** The UHC Road Map is the “health arm” of Cambodia’s social protection strategy, focusing on: (i) financial risk protection (80 per cent population coverage under the social health protection system by 2035, together with OOP spending reduced to 35 per cent); and (ii) service quality (essential health service package ensuring 80 per cent coverage of essential services across the country). Financing combines: (i) supply-side tax-based funding (including drugs and supplies allocations to facilities); (ii) demand-side tax-based funding for the poor and vulnerable populations through the Health Equity Fund; and (iii) contributory health insurance for formal and informal workers through the NSSF.
- 6. Formalization:** A major focus is on bringing informal workers and the self-employed into the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) through voluntary and incentive-based registration.
- 7. Digitalization as the backbone** of the NSPPF strategy with:
 - i.** a unified social registry based on IDPoor and beyond using on-demand identification, to move from periodic surveys every three years to a real-time, on-demand digital system, with full interoperability across all social programmes (Health Equity Fund, pensions, cash transfers) to ensure data harmonization and to prevent overlapping benefits;

- ii. a digital payment ecosystem with mobile digital applications;
- iii. integrated information systems with a beneficiary management system and digital M&E using real-time dashboards;
- iv. shock-responsive digital infrastructure allowing for rapid deployment and automatic activation of emergency cash transfers; and
- v. roll out of digital literacy training.

8. Strong social protection leadership: The whole social protection programme is driven by and led by the National Social Protection Council and its General Secretariat, under the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

5.1.2. Indonesia

Indonesia's social protection system is split into two massive pillars: (i) the insurance system; and (ii) social assistance programmes targeting poor and vulnerable households.

1. Insurance (BPJS duo)

- ▶ BPJS Kesehatan (Health) is the world's largest single-payer near-universal health insurance scheme. It covers 96.7 million poor and economically vulnerable individuals for free through central government subsidies and 47.4 million through provincial government subsidies, while formal and informal workers pay tiered premiums. There are a total of 222.7 million active members, equivalent to around 78 per cent of the population.
- ▶ BPJS Ketenagakerjaan (Employment) had 45 million active members in 2024 (70 million including inactive members). It covers five benefits: work accident, death, old-age savings, pensions and the newly added unemployment insurance. Non-wage earners in the informal economy, such as farmers, Grab drivers and freelancers are allowed to enrol with extremely low premiums (starting at approx. US\$1.10 per month) for accident and death coverage.

2. Social assistance

- ▶ Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH): A conditional cash transfer programme that provides financial aid to poor families who meet health and education requirements (such as school attendance, vaccinations).
- ▶ Sembako (Food Assistance): A transition from physical rice distribution to electronic vouchers used at local micro-merchants, boosting the local economy while providing nutrition.
- ▶ "Sekolah Rakyat" and Free Meals: New for 2026, the Government has launched a massive Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) programme for over 80 million children to combat stunting and break the cycle of poverty.

Indonesia's strategy emphasizes adaptive financing, digital integration and institutional maturity, focusing on:

- ▶ **Adaptive social protection including:** (i) a design that responds to shocks such as pandemics, climate disasters and economic crises; (ii) emergency cash transfers, disaster pooling funds and flexible financing mechanisms; and (iii) anticipatory action, where social transfers are triggered before a predicted disaster (like a flood) hits.
- ▶ **Digital integration:** Unified social registry and ID-linked delivery. Indonesia replaced paper vouchers with the “JMO” mobile app and the National Socio-Economic Single Data (DTSEN).
- ▶ **Life-cycle approach:** Guaranteed minimum protection throughout all life stages.
- ▶ **Sustainability:** Gradually raising the retirement age and contribution rates for those who can afford it.

5.1.3. Viet Nam

Viet Nam's social protection strategy (Vision 2030) builds on a multi-pillar architecture designed to cover citizens from birth to old age with:

1. **Social insurance:** managed by Viet Nam Social Security (VSS). It includes compulsory insurance (for formal employees) and voluntary insurance (for the informal sector). It covers five main benefits: sickness, maternity, occupational accident, retirement and survivor benefits.
2. **Health insurance:** Viet Nam has achieved near-universal coverage (over 90 per cent) by subsidizing premiums for the poor, ethnic minorities and children under six. It has attracted the so-called “missing middle” of the informally employed non-poor population through a mix of:
 - ▶ subsidies – discounts in household premiums for large families of up to 60 per cent;
 - ▶ tiered subsidies in premiums by local provincial budgets, ranging from 10 per cent to up to 95 per cent reimbursement for the near poor;
 - ▶ administrative efficiency – digital enrolment and “zero-paper” barriers; digital card accepted at all hospitals; and
 - ▶ free annual screenings.
3. **Social assistance:** Provides regular cash transfers to vulnerable groups who cannot work, such as older persons (75+ or 80+ depending on the pillar), people with severe disabilities, and orphans, shifting from emergency relief to life-cycle protection.
4. **Poverty reduction programmes:** National target programmes that provide infrastructure, vocational training and credit to the poorest districts and to ethnic minority groups.

The strategy focuses on:

- ▶ **Integrated delivery:** Moving away from silos to a more integrated system where social insurance and social assistance work together.
- ▶ **Digitalization:** Implementation of a national digital ID system to track beneficiaries and reduce inclusion/exclusion errors.

- ▶ **Informal sector focus:** Reaching informal workers (farmers, street vendors and gig workers) who are not poor enough to benefit from social welfare but also not formal enough for standard insurance. State subsidies are used to encourage them to join voluntary social insurance schemes.
- ▶ **Synchronized reforms:** Viet Nam is not just raising benefits, it is simultaneously raising the minimum wage, lowering the pension age and digitizing the database. Lowering the age of eligibility for older persons and digitizing the beneficiary registry appear to be the two most effective ways to see an immediate leap in social protection coverage.

5.1.4. Thailand

Thailand's social protection policy framework comprises the following:

- ▶ **Universal health coverage:** Universal Coverage Scheme (UCS).
- ▶ **Social insurance:** Managed by the Social Security Office and covering pensions, invalidity, maternity, sickness and unemployment.
- ▶ **Non-contributory programmes:** A total of 44 social assistance initiatives cater to various age groups, including the Universal Child Grant (2015).

Thailand has also used large-scale implementation of wage subsidies and cash transfers to informal workers during crises such as COVID-19 and economic downturns.

In Thailand, the foundation of social protection is built on all-encompassing programmes that strive for universality. As Thailand has entered an aged society, sustaining these universal schemes is perhaps the foremost issue moving into the future.

5.2 Some good practices and lessons learned

Cambodia's practices highlight the significance of enhancing cross-departmental collaboration and systemic integration. Cambodia also demonstrates the importance of a well-designed social protection implementation and service delivery system.

Viet Nam has made substantial efforts in targeting the expansion phases of social protection, gradually transitioning towards universality and efficiency through integration.

Digital distribution and unified databases have enhanced efficiency in Indonesia, leading to substantial progress in healthcare, education and poverty alleviation.

Thailand demonstrates the power of investment in social protection, with adequate funding, policy alignment, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as demonstrating the challenges of sustaining universal schemes in an ageing society.

On the specific aspect of social health protection, the above international experiences provide overall lessons on extension of coverage to the non-poor informal sector¹⁰ – the so-called “missing middle” – especially for countries with a large informal economy:

- ▶ Voluntary contributory insurance without subsidies usually does not work due to a combination of factors, including adverse selection and collection, leading to low uptake.*
- ▶ Voluntary contributory insurance with substantial subsidies is very difficult to achieve.
- ▶ Mandatory contributory insurance with substantial subsidies is challenging, but could work under some conditions: large subsidies, active intermediaries, compulsory (not voluntary) and an enabling political context (China, Rwanda, Viet Nam).
- ▶ Non-contributory systems are usually favoured and are more efficient for countries with a large informal sector, but require adequate funding.
- ▶ User fees and private health insurance are not equitable, nor are they efficient.

***Note:** Cambodia has, in recent years, seen an interesting increase in voluntary health insurance within the informal sector with an apparently non-subsidized premium. However, the Government is providing large subsidies to the supply side, including drug allocations, covering a major share of needs.

From this benchmarking, the Lao People's Democratic Republic can learn and possibly adapt the following:

1. Implement a comprehensive approach to protection throughout individuals' life cycles.
2. Develop a unified policy framework to integrate fragmented schemes, and strengthen the effective integration of health insurance, social security and social welfare. The integration of social welfare programmes into a single delivery mechanism, such as Cambodia's Family Package, could reduce administrative costs and makes it easier for citizens to understand and access their benefits. Instead of focusing only on disaster relief (floods or droughts), the Lao People's Democratic Republic could strengthen its maternal and child CCT programme as a foundational pillar for human capital, rather than keeping it as an isolated project.
3. Invest in digital systems to improve transparency and efficiency, drawing on learnings from Thailand on monitoring and delivery and from Viet Nam on electronic management and electronic delivery mechanisms.
4. Progressively expand coverage of older persons' living allowances starting with high eligibility criteria, as in Viet Nam, such as 80 years old for the non-poor and 75 years old for the poor, and progressively decrease the eligibility age when the macroeconomic situation and improvement in fiscal space allows.
5. Social assistance benefits could be linked to economic empowerment, as in Indonesia – for example, by providing a cash grant plus vocational training so families eventually become more self-reliant.
6. Ensure sustainable and adequate funding for health insurance covering all poor and vulnerable populations through a unified targeted system, such as the Health Equity Funds in Cambodia and Viet Nam. This is critical to prevent households from falling back into poverty due to medical costs.
7. Obtain safe and long-term funding through contributions, innovative taxes and sustainable financing strategies, and reduce reliance on external financing.

5.3. Social protection funding

Table 13 shows a tentative comparison of government spending on social protection in a selection of South-East Asian countries and globally by country income group.

► **Table 13. Comparison of public investment in social protection as percentage of GDP and as percentage of GGE¹¹**

Income group / country	% of GDP	% of GGE
High-income countries (HICs)	16–20%	30–40%
Upper-middle-income countries (UMICs)	8–12%	20–30%
Lower-middle-income countries (LMICs)	3–6%	10–20%
Low-income countries (LICs)	1–2%	5–10%
Thailand (UMIC)	~4.9%	~15–20%
Indonesia (LMIC/UMIC)	~2–3%	~12–19%
Viet Nam (LMIC/UMIC transition)	~6–7%	~18–22%
Cambodia (LMIC)	~1.5–2%	~8–12%
Lao People's Democratic Republic (LIC/LMIC)	~1–2%	~5–10%

Source: ILO 2024; Asian Development Bank 2023; World Bank.

In Cambodia, spending is modest, aligned with LIC/LMIC benchmarks. COVID-19 cash transfers alone temporarily raised expenditure to around 1 per cent of GDP, highlighting fiscal vulnerability. Cambodia needs sustainable financing and integration of assistance with insurance.

In Indonesia, despite larger fiscal space, spending is low compared to UMIC benchmarks. Social protection peaked at 3.2 per cent of GDP in 2020 (COVID response) but is projected to fall to around 2.1 per cent by 2025. Coverage gaps remain, especially for informal workers.

Thailand and Viet Nam both outperform the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia, although Thailand under-invests relative to UMIC benchmarks. Viet Nam is closer to benchmark levels and shows stronger integration.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic currently invests around 1–2 per cent of GDP in social protection¹², which is below the LMIC benchmark (3–6 per cent)¹³ and far behind Thailand (around 4.9 per cent of GDP) and Viet Nam (around 6–7 per cent). To align with regional peers and global standards, the Lao People's Democratic Republic would need to scale investment towards 3–5 per cent of GDP by 2030, while strengthening institutional capacity and financing mechanisms. The current situation results in declining public expenditures, fragmented budgeting and unsustainable NHI financing.





Recommendations for NSPS 2026–30

06



6.1. Socio-economic forecast

The outlook for the 10th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) period marks a critical transition from “crisis management” towards “sustainable, quality growth”. As the country nears its scheduled graduation from least developed country (LDC) status, the focus has shifted towards consolidating recent macroeconomic gains while addressing deep-seated structural vulnerabilities.¹⁴

GDP growth is projected to stabilize between 4.5 and 5.0 per cent during this period.¹⁵ The strategy for the late 2020s moves away from a heavy reliance on capital-intensive resource extraction towards labour-intensive and service-oriented sectors. A central pillar of this outlook is the maturation of the “land-linked” strategy, utilizing the Lao–China Railway and enhanced regional connectivity to position the country as a regional logistics and transit hub. Tourism is expected to remain a primary driver of foreign exchange, supported by a strategic pivot towards “Green Tourism” and high-value services.

The medium-term outlook is challenged by a concentrated maturity profile, as the expiration of temporary debt service deferrals creates a significant debt servicing peak between 2026 and 2028. Maintaining the fiscal surplus achieved in 2025 is a priority, with the Government targeting a reduction in the public debt-to-GDP ratio towards more manageable levels by 2030 through sustained revenue mobilization.

A major challenge for the 10th NSED is to translate macroeconomic stabilization into inclusive development, reversing the long-term socio-economic erosion caused by the recent currency crisis prompted by the high inflation of the early 2020s. To ensure a smooth LDC graduation, the outlook prioritizes: (i) reinvesting in social sectors by increasing the share of the budget dedicated to education, healthcare and social welfare to improve human capital indicators; and (ii) investing in climate resilience.

6.2. General recommendations for NSPS 2026–30

The next NSPS should place a high degree of emphasis on collaboration, digital integration and consistent funding, while modernizing both the social protection system and the capacity to manage it and expanding coverage. Vision 2030 could be structured around the following areas:

1. The cornerstones of social protection, which are prevention, protection and promotion.
2. Significant long-term investment in social protection.
3. A social protection system that is responsive to shocks, disasters and crises.
4. A fair social protection system sensitive to nutrition, gender and cultural background.
5. A digitally enhanced, interconnected operational system.
6. A strong emphasis on serving the poor and vulnerable populations.

In light of the initial NSPS evaluation, the new strategy could consider the following foundations:

1. **Financing:** Discuss and agree on an NSPS financing strategy based on detailed costing for priority interventions. Increase the predictability of domestic financing. Move away from fragmented, donor-funded pilots towards pooled financing arrangements.

- 2. Consolidation and efficiency:** Reduce fragmentation by consolidating overlapping programmes under a single NSPS policy framework. Also, strengthen the cross-pillar links, between NHI, social security and social welfare, through linked databases. Expand the reach of integrated service delivery systems, encompassing the Social Registry, digital identification and payment solutions, and a unified grievance/IEC platform.
- 3. Standardization:** Standardize the definition and bundle of services for each pillar in the digital ecosystem. Create a unified, interoperable digital ecosystem by establishing a Social Registry connected to Lao ID, CRVS, NHI, and LSSO, facilitating safe data exchange and informed policymaking.
- 4. Information sharing:** Enhance the data management, privacy and accountability frameworks to ensure safe and responsible information sharing.
- 5. Expanded coverage:** Expand coverage to underserved groups (children, persons with disabilities, older persons) using a “progressive universalism” approach, scaling first to the poorest and standardizing benefit packages. Align targets and packages with the available funding.
- 6. Labour market promotion:** Progressively introduce enhancing labour market promotion interventions that serve as a bridge between social assistance and sustainable livelihoods, addressing underemployment and the informal economy by building human capital and creating opportunities, offering job search assistance and matching, and supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship.

6.3. Recommendations on health insurance

Evaluation findings suggest that the effectiveness of NHI is mainly constrained by financing adequacy and administrative integration, rather than by legal population coverage. Recommendations include:

A. For health services to both formal and informal populations

- ▶ Smoothly transition the shift in responsibilities between the NHIB and LSSO.
- ▶ Continue standardizing the benefit package of services offered and the PPMs across all schemes.
- ▶ Agree between NHI Informal and NHI Formal on the responsibility for financing for the unregistered formal sector.
- ▶ Consider increasing domestic budgets for health service delivery for specific line items on the supply side, such as drugs, to limit the cost of contributions/premiums by members on the demand side.
- ▶ Leverage hospital autonomy and health insurance together to create synergies and avoid conflicting effects. Hospital autonomy and the drive towards financial self-sufficiency must be paired with and go hand-in-hand with increased financing from prepaid protection mechanisms, through tax-based subsidies and/or contributory health insurance schemes. Otherwise, hospital autonomy will inevitably lead to increasing reliance on out-of-pocket user fees, which have been widely documented as inherently inequitable and regressive. Failing to align these two policies risks undermining universal health coverage goals.

B. For health services to people in the informal sector

- Increase domestic financing for health insurance, offering tiered subsidies based on population segments and align NHI goals and the informal sector package with predictable government-guaranteed funding.

For poor and vulnerable households

- Ensure that adequate and sustainable funding to NHI effectively covers all of the poorest households, but also vulnerable and near poor households, through a unified and targeted system. NHI could provide medical services and food/transport fully free-of-charge for the poorⁱⁱ and provide free access to medical admissions and discounts for consultations for vulnerable householdsⁱⁱⁱ and all people living with disabilities and HIV/AIDS.
- Continue and improve the harmonization of the use of the social registry (based on Decree 348) to provide the free-of-charge access to health services for the NHI poor and vulnerable households mentioned above (use of latest social registry data, automatic access).
- Extend NHI coverage to provide subsidized access to the poor and vulnerable households in Vientiane Capital.
- Foster harmonization with social welfare initiatives that intersect with health by ensuring that individuals with disabilities, UXO survivors and disaster victims get the same free-of-charge, subsidized health services as the poor under NHI.

For non-poor informal population

- Carefully analyse the pros and cons of reversing to a contributory scheme for the informally employed non-poor and to full user fees for the non-covered based on international lessons, namely, mandatory registration is difficult; limited uptake means fewer people covered by social health protection schemes; it requires subsidies, a strong collection system and full digitalization; and it is less efficient than a non-contributory scheme.
- If the option to return to a contributory system for the “missing middle” informal population is chosen, a study to determine the adequate design^{iv} should be performed, followed by a progressive launch, initially on a small scale. Registration should be household-based only, with a digressive premium per capita and a discount for larger families, such as in Viet Nam^v to ensure the enrolment of everyone and to reduce adverse selection, while incentivizing large rural or multi-generational households to join. Government subsidies could be provided by the Central Government (for example, 50 per cent as per Decree 470 on National Health Insurance Fund (2012)) with possible top-up subsidies by some local governments, like in Viet Nam. In addition, a decisive state commitment and mobilization would be required, utilizing both social pressure and administrative bundling requirements to transform health insurance from a voluntary choice into a civic “obligation”. Because a mandatory system is unlikely to reach full compliance in the medium term, shifting to a contributory model – whether mandatory or voluntary – would slash legal health coverage from 94.5 per cent to between 25 per cent and 50 per cent in the initial years.

ⁱⁱ For example, households meeting fewer than four development criteria.

ⁱⁱⁱ For example, households meeting four or five development criteria.

^{iv} Including cost, premium level, funding, financial mechanisms, provider payment rates and so on.

^v For example, the fifth family member onwards only pays 40 per cent of what the first member pays.

C. For health services to people in the formal sector

- ▶ At first, significantly adjust the PPM rates calculated a decade ago to adapt to the consumer price index and kip depreciation based on recent costing exercises¹⁶ for the national hospitals as well as for provincial and district facilities,
- ▶ After a certain period, decide on possible adjustments to the PPMs.

6.4. Recommendations on social security

- ▶ **Expand NSSF coverage to more workers in formal private enterprises as well as non-compliant enterprises by strengthening implementation and enforcement mechanisms.**

Strengthen inspections for social security compliance.

- ▶ Clarify the inspectors' mandates and schedule of sanctions and incentives in the appropriate legislation.
- ▶ Priority could be given to covering large, non-compliant enterprises while the Social Security Law is under review.
- ▶ Further expansion can be achieved through outreach to enterprises in export-oriented sectors, enterprises with fixed operating premises, and those that are easiest to reach and with greatest (financial) potential to participate.
- ▶ Provide clear directions and set targets for social security inspectors at the central and provincial levels.
- ▶ Conduct regular training on the inspection SOPs, guidelines, schedule of sanctions and incentives, and facilitate bottom-up feedback.

Enhanced coordination and interoperability

- ▶ Enhance coordination and cooperation across government sectors involved in enterprise formalization and social security provision by linking relevant databases to ensure a seamless digital exchange of data (for example, NSSF, LMIS, NED) and by conditioning business operating license renewals on social security participation.
- ▶ Strengthen partnerships with the Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU), Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) and sectoral associations to conduct outreach to their members. Popularize the use of the LSSO mobile app and linked digital applications (such as BCEL Onepay, LaoViet Bank's DigiBank).
- ▶ Clarify ambiguities in existing legislation with regard to certain types of employment contracts (such as for domestic workers) and business models (such as franchises); develop sub-legislation across government sectors to guide implementation of the Social Security Law.

► **Expand NSSF coverage to workers in the informal economy and subsistence agriculture.**

Systematic and sustained outreach

- Implement the mobile social security service periodically, predictably and systematically (for example, visiting every village once in 1–3 months).
- Continue to invest in upgrading and/or expanding LSSO provincial and district branch offices, to provide in-person service in rural areas.
- Complement the two above-mentioned approaches by utilizing the network of district-level labour and social welfare officers.
- Expand partnerships with local stakeholders such as village chiefs, cooperative and group leaders, and civil society organizations to effectively identify and engage with informal workers and rural populations.
- Explore and pilot innovative approaches such as model households and incentives to local figureheads.

Use of digital tools

- Publicize the use of the LSSO mobile app during mobile services and with the engagement of civil society and mass organizations.

Affordability

- Study and explore the feasibility of alternative financing approaches, such as subsidizing the contributions of low-income groups or establishing worker welfare funds and sectoral levies.

► **Develop a Social Security Strategy in alignment with the overall objectives and framework of the NSPS and invest in sustained system development.**

Social Security Strategy

- Develop a five-year Social Security Strategy in alignment with the overall objectives and framework of the NSPS and other relevant strategies (such as health financing, nutrition, poverty reduction and disaster risk management).
- Explore developing sub-strategies or chapters for specific areas, such as investment, digital transformation, coverage expansion and formalization.

NSSF investments diversification and financial management

- Adopt an Investment Policy Statement and Investment Governance Framework, including capacity-building of internal staff and hiring of external experts.
- Update Decree on National Social Security Fund Management to require timely and accurate quarterly reporting, among other matters.
- Update Investment Committee's terms of reference and review administration of the NSSF (such as appointing an independent fund administrator and greater separation of accounting practices, among others).

- ▶ As part of development of an Investment Diversification Strategy, clarify the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders; agree on risk appetite and investment objectives; and conduct capacity-building on risk management, due diligence and monitoring.

6.5. Recommendations on social welfare

- ▶ Institutionalize an integrated, interoperable social registry that is connected to the Lao ID and sectoral databases. This will guarantee accurate targeting and prevent duplication, along with a unified digital payment and IEC system.
- ▶ Modernize procedures by implementing digital registration, digital payments and case management. This will enhance transparency, minimize fraud and alleviate administrative burdens at the provincial and district levels.
- ▶ Intertwine social welfare programmes with the national disaster response system. This integration will facilitate instant, streamlined and digitized aid during emergencies, transitioning from haphazard responses to structured, rules-based emergency assistance.
- ▶ Create a unified set of social welfare services that are essential and have a significant impact. These services should correspond to the available financial resources and progressively improve benefit adequacy towards a meaningful share of basic household needs, subject to fiscal space and costing analysis.
- ▶ National Committee for the Disabled and the Elderly should be given a stronger role in regulating and monitoring disability inclusion by incorporating disability-specific indicators into all ministerial reporting systems.
- ▶ Social welfare coverage should be expanded in a phased and fiscally responsible manner. The most vulnerable groups should be the initial priority, with services scaled based on available budget and development partner support to strike a balance between ambition and fiscal discipline and to ensure sustainable implementation.

6.6. Recommendations on governance

Institutional leadership and coordination

- ▶ Elevate the NSPS steering committee to a central authority, such as the Prime Minister's Office, to ensure full cross-ministerial coordination, like in Cambodia.
- ▶ Establish clear mandates for the NSPS Secretariat and line agencies.
- ▶ Enhance the NSPS Secretariat's leadership role in planning, monitoring, analysing and reporting.
- ▶ Assign NSPS focal points in provinces where implementation is underway.

Systems integration, digitalization and M&E

- ▶ Strengthen the integration of the NHI, social security and social welfare systems.
- ▶ Expand and unify the use of the Social Registry, digital ID, digital payments and grievance systems across social protection programmes and activities.
- ▶ Ensure interoperability through the digital exchange platform.
- ▶ Revamp MIS tools and designate an M&E contact person in each ministry.
- ▶ Introduce a functional M&E system for the NSPS, with quarterly/biannual reporting.

Financing

- ▶ Focus on a manageable set of high-impact priorities that are financially realistic.
- ▶ Conduct detailed costing of priority interventions and use the results to discuss and agree on an NSPS financing strategy.
- ▶ Ensure that targets, benefit packages and reforms are aligned with available fiscal space.
- ▶ Advocate for increased domestic funding for social protection and promote pooled development partner support using macro costing and medium-term funding plans.

The responsibilities, boundaries and essential components of the NSPS Secretariat could be as follows:

- ▶ **Key functions:** Policy development, financing advocacy, progress monitoring, policy analysis and evaluation and coordination. The Secretariat should not be involved in implementation and primary supervision and monitoring.
- ▶ **Level:** Focus on the overall strengthening of the Secretariat at the national level, while ensuring adequate regular data collection and reporting from the provincial level.
- ▶ **Minimum deliverables:** Quarterly reports, annual reviews and plans, and five-year strategies.
- ▶ **Key tools:** Secondary data, implementation reports, analysis and assessments, costing studies, funding plans, multisectoral exchanges.





► Annex 1. NSPS implementation status by activity

Activity 1

Pillar 1	Health Insurance				
Objective	Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic and effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.				
Activity 1	Develop and implement a legal framework for universal health coverage.				
Organizations responsible	NHIB, WHO, ILO, development partners				
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Lao People's Democratic Republic has made steady progress towards achieving UHC through the continuous development of the legal, regulatory and operational framework of the NHI system. The revision of the NHI Law is underway and has been submitted to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) for technical review before submission to the National Assembly, with endorsement expected by 2026. The law revision builds on the NHI Funding Strategy 2021–25 and aims to strengthen institutional coordination, financial accountability and integration with the NSSF.	Finalization and approval of the revised NHI Law and its subordinate regulations; completion of the revised Ministerial Directives on co-payment and pricing; and expansion of IEC activities to all provinces, particularly to improve enrolment of informal sector workers and vulnerable groups.	Fiscal constraints and limited government subsidies continue to restrict expansion to informal workers. Institutional overlaps between NHIB and LSSO, and the absence of an integrated membership database delay full implementation. Awareness of voluntary contribution mechanisms remains low despite ongoing campaigns.	– Draft NHI Law submitted to MOJ (endorsement expected in 2026). – NHI Funding Strategy 2021–25 endorsed. – Financial Management Guidelines revised – Ministerial Directive 0476/MOH under revision (pricing and co-payments).	The strengthened legal and operational framework has improved transparency and responsiveness in NHI fund management and enhanced public awareness of benefits and entitlements. The hotline and outreach campaigns increased citizen engagement and accountability.	The NSPS 2026–30 should prioritize completion of the legal reform process; harmonization of NHI and NSSF benefit packages; a tiered financing approach for vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups; and full digital integration through the planned Social Protection Information System.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– In line with Decree No. 470, the draft NHI Financial Management Guidelines were revised to improve reimbursement, auditing and expenditure controls, and piloted in Xiengkhouang and Houaphan provinces with KOFIH support. The Directives of the Minister of Health No. 0476/MOH (2018) are being reviewed to update co-payment obligations and price structures for general and specialized services. – Implementation efforts included nationwide IEC activities; radio, television and social media campaigns; creation of the dedicated hotline 1509; and information seminars in Champasak and Luang Prabang to disseminate the NHI Strategy 2021–25. The NHI website and multimedia materials have strengthened public awareness and service utilization. Multisectoral collaboration between MOH, NHIB and NSSF also advanced integration of the social insurance and health protection systems.			– IEC materials, website and hotline 1509 launched and operational. – Provincial seminars conducted in Champasak and Luang Prabang.		

Activity 2

Pillar 1	Health Insurance				
Objective	Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic and effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.				
Activity 2	Develop systems and build capacities of the National Health Insurance authority.				
Organizations responsible	NHIB, WHO, ILO, development partners				
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
- NHIB strengthened its organizational and subnational footprint (17 provinces, Vientiane Capital; 147 districts) and staffed central divisions (Administration and Planning; Auditing and Health Insurance Development; Health Insurance Management; Finance and Accounting). Leadership/ structure adjustments and staff upskilling were completed in 2024. - Capacity-building delivered across provinces on admission, transfer and discharge (ATD), e-claims, reporting, verification, and financial management; e-claims forms and training rolled out in Houaphan and Xiengkhouang.	Full national rollout and stabilization of e-claims and online dashboards; completion of modernized NHI database and integrated beneficiary registry (interoperable with NSSF).	Budget rigidity and arrears: 2024 revenues ~369 bn kip (Ch.63 + NSSF) vs expenditures ~158 bn kip, with ~121 bn kip outstanding debt; reimbursements still do not fully cover public-facility costs despite improvement post-Notice 824.	- Leadership training completed; provincial/regional strengthening missions implemented. - E-claims tools designed and piloted; verification/ inspection routines institutionalized.	Strengthened operational capacity, reporting and reimbursement controls; improved cost-recovery trajectory after Notice 824 with measurable 63% reduction in hospital debt burden; increased citizen engagement and accountability via 1509/ IEC.	Priorities for 2026–30: (i) complete e-claims nationalization and integrate NHIB and NSSF data; (ii) standardize copayment fund management at facilities; (iii) finance a sustainable IT/O&M line; (iv) accelerate registration/card issuance for the poor (link to forthcoming social registry).

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Costing study data collected from 5 central hospitals to inform reimbursement redesign; inspection/ verification of third quarter reimbursements completed nationwide. – Hotline 1509 manuals produced; 24/7 operations handled 8,746 calls in 2024; IEC materials (posters, billboards, brochures) disseminated nationwide. – Policy Notice 824/MOH dated 28 June 2024 on co-payments implemented; after rollout (Aug–Dec 2024), co-payment collections rose and hospitals reduced outstanding debt by 63 per cent (from 67.8 billion kip to 25.1 billion kip). – NHIB coordinated with MOH departments to draft essential medicines lists and surgery classifications; summary meetings with 17 provinces and central hospitals completed.	– Finalization of co-payment pricing directives (linked to law revision) and routine guidance for usage/co-tracking co-payment funds at the facility level.	– Fragmented governance/data with NSSF; uneven provincial IT capacity; incomplete national registration and card issuance for poor/ eligible groups.	– Costing dataset (5 central hospitals) compiled to calibrate reimbursement. – National seminars and video calls with provinces and NSSF; IEC package and Hotline 1509 fully operational.		

Activity 3

Pillar 1	Health Insurance				
Objective	Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic and effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.				
Activity 3	Develop and comply with minimum standards for healthcare facilities.				
Organizations responsible	NHIB, development partners				
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– MOH, through its Department of Healthcare and Rehabilitation and the NHIB, has advanced quality assurance and standardization initiatives to strengthen compliance with minimum healthcare facility standards. In 2024, efforts focused on developing legislation under the Law on Health Insurance to define the list of essential medicines, surgery classifications, and minimum service standards for public facilities. MOH, in collaboration with WHO, JICA, ADB and the World Bank, supported quality improvement projects aimed at upgrading hospital and primary healthcare standards. These include the Health and Nutrition Services Access Project (2020–2029) and the Improving the Quality of Health Care Project (2023–2028), both of which target service readiness, financial management and infrastructure rehabilitation in district hospitals and health centres.	– Finalization of the decree and guidelines on hospital autonomy and quality standards enforcement; completion of the review of national treatment guidelines and facility accreditation framework; institutionalization of provider licensing and quality-linked payment mechanisms within the revised Health Insurance Law.	– Implementation of quality standards remains uneven, particularly in remote districts with limited staffing, diagnostic capacity and essential medicines. Financial and human resource constraints hinder consistent supervision and compliance monitoring. Hospital autonomy and provider accreditation frameworks are still in draft form, and cross-department coordination between the Department of Healthcare and Rehabilitation, NHIB, and the Department of Planning and Finance remains fragmented.	– Draft lists of essential medicines and surgery types completed (2024). – Quality assurance and hospital-autonomy consultations held with 17 provinces. – Implementation of Decree No. 349 on staff performance incentives underway. – ADB, JICA and World Bank-supported projects launched to strengthen provincial and district hospital standards. – Nationwide healthcare coverage reached 94.5 per cent.	Strengthened governance and quality assurance mechanisms have improved the consistency of healthcare service delivery and reduced disparities in access, especially among ethnic and rural populations. Enhanced staff motivation and clearer performance standards have contributed to reductions in maternal and child mortality and improved patient satisfaction	The next NSPS 2026–30 should consolidate the quality standards framework, establish a national facility accreditation system and embed quality-linked financing within the NHI reimbursement model to ensure sustainability and accountability.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– In parallel, the NHIB implemented quality assurance activities linked to the 5Gs 1S policy (Dok Champa) and convened national consultations to draft a decree on hospital autonomy. Several training sessions were held on supervision, verification and implementation of Decree No. 349, linking staff performance incentives to quality outcomes. Healthcare coverage expanded to 94.5% of the population, reflecting improvement in access and service quality.					

Activity 4

Pillar 1	Health Insurance				
Objective	Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic and effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.				
Activity 4	Increase access to healthcare services in rural areas.				
Organizations responsible	NHIB, development partners				
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Access to healthcare services in rural and hard-to-reach areas continued to expand through multi-sectoral collaboration and targeted initiatives under the NHI system. Based on Decree 348/GOL on well-being and development criteria, the NHI continued to provide free healthcare to NHI patients on the list of poor households, together with food and transport in case of admission, supported by the MOH-CUHC project funded by the Swiss Red Cross and from 2025 by the MOH-HANSA2 project. From 2024, the NHIB and Ministry of Agriculture and Environment jointly utilized the social registry to identify and support poor and unemployed households, initiating an MOU to institutionalize joint targeting and health insurance card distribution. Health insurance cards were distributed to poor families in all provinces based on decree 348/GOL criteria pre-identification round 2022, improving access to subsidized healthcare services and ensuring that vulnerable populations possess the necessary documentation for service utilization.	Nationwide rollout of the social registry-linked NHI card system; expansion of primary care and referral networks in mountainous and remote districts; and strengthening of service delivery readiness (infrastructure, transport and medical supplies) at rural health centres.	Persistent shortages of health workers and medical supplies in rural areas; geographic barriers and limited transport infrastructure constrain service utilization; delays in interministerial data-sharing for poor household identification; and reliance on external donor funding for outreach and community engagement.	– MOU between NHIB and MAE drafted and signed for social registry integration. – Health insurance cards distributed to poor families in Xiengkhouang and Houaphan. – Hotline 1509 operationalized and scaled to nationwide use (8,746 calls handled in 2024).	Expanded insurance coverage and reduced OOP spending for rural households, particularly among ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups. Strengthened inter-sectoral coordination between MOH, NHIB and MAE has improved targeting efficiency and accountability. Enhanced public awareness and communication systems have increased service utilization in rural health facilities.	The next NSPS should prioritize full operationalization of the integrated social registry and NHI card issuance system, sustainable financing for rural healthcare, deployment of mobile outreach teams and linking performance-based incentives to rural service coverage improvements.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Outreach efforts were reinforced through dissemination of IEC materials, manuals, brochures and posters, across health facilities. The NHI hotline (1509) was strengthened, operating 24 hours, providing real-time guidance on entitlement and grievance redress. Integration with ongoing programmes such as the HANSA Project and the Rural Poverty Reduction and Nutrition Project (World Bank) enabled resource mobilization for rural health facilities and community-based service delivery. – Nationwide, healthcare service coverage reached 94.5% of the population, with significant improvements in maternal and child health access among ethnic and remote communities.			– IEC materials and communication campaigns implemented nationally. – Collaboration with HANSA and World Bank-supported rural health initiatives established.		

Activity 5

Pillar 1	Health Insurance				
Objective	Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic and effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.				
Activity 5	Ensure sufficient and timely government budget allocation to health.				
Organizations responsible	MOF, NHIB, LSSO, development partners				
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Significant progress was made in mobilizing, pooling and executing financial resources for health insurance and social protection. The annual NHI budget plan under the HANSA project was finalized and implemented for the 2022–24 period, ensuring sustained budget support through both domestic and external funding. In 2024, over 200 billion kip was reimbursed to health facilities and 159 billion kip to the social security sector under Ch 63, contributing to reduced hospital debt and improved liquidity. – The Notice 824/MOH (June 2024) on revised reimbursement and co-payment policy significantly enhanced cost recovery, leading to a 63% reduction in health facility debt between January and December 2024. A total of 369 billion kip was mobilized for NHI operations (200 billion from Ch 63 and 169 billion from the NSSF).	Institutionalization of a dedicated health insurance fund mechanism within MOF to ensure predictable cash flow and timely disbursement; integration of NHI and NSSF financial frameworks; and establishment of a budget code for social protection to improve expenditure tracking.	Delayed fund transfers due to reliance on state budget channels; outstanding debt of approximately 105 billion kip by end-2024; absence of a formal mechanism for co-payment fund utilization and reporting; and limited fiscal space for expanding health insurance subsidies for informal and near-poor populations.	– Over 200 billion kip reimbursed to health facilities under Ch 63. – 159 billion kip disbursed to the social security sector – Notice 824/MOH implemented, 63% reduction in hospital debt – Health financing strategy and UHC-3 plan aligned with NSPS objectives – Decree No. 3 (October 2023) enacted, raising health-related excise taxes. – JLN learning exchange and HANSA DLI-B budget fully executed.	Strengthened budget execution and improved financial stability of health facilities, ensuring continuity of service delivery and progress towards UHC. Enhanced policy coherence between NHIB, MOH and MOF has laid the groundwork for a more sustainable and transparent health financing system.	The next NSPS should institutionalize a dedicated health insurance fund, formalize the earmarking of health taxes, accelerate integration of NHI-NSSF financing, and ensure timely fund release through the national treasury system. Expanding the fiscal envelope for social protection will be essential for sustaining progress towards UHC.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– NHIB, MOH, and MOF continued collaboration under the Health Financing Strategy 2021–25 and the third phase of the UHC-3 plan to align expenditure frameworks with UHC targets. Joint capacity-building was conducted through the Joint Learning Network (JLN) on pooling, purchasing and health-financing sustainability. The government also finalized the Official Appointment of the Coordinating Committee on Health Taxation (February 2023), leading to Presidential Decree No. 3 (October 2023) increasing excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco and sugar-sweetened beverages, with earmarked allocations for health financing. – Partnerships with the SRC and KOFIH advanced institutional financing, particularly in auditing, reimbursement oversight and financial management under the NHI system.					

Activity 6

Pillar 2	Social Security				
Objective	All the workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.				
Activity 6	Expansion of social security coverage for all formal economy workers.				
Organizations responsible	LSSO, ILO				
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
– LSSO has continued to expand coverage among formal enterprises and workers, achieving significant progress between 2021 and 2025 despite the economic downturn. As of December 2025, LSSO covers 397,584 insured members, of whom 191,547 are women, representing 15.6% of the employed population (based on 2017 Labour Force Survey data) and 7.9% of the working-age population (LAOSIS estimates 2025). When dependants are included, total beneficiaries reach 921,995 people (11.9% of the national population), and when military and police schemes are included, coverage reaches approximately 24% of the population. – Coverage among formal employees is estimated at 80–85% in key urban provinces such as Vientiane, Champasak and Savannakhet. From 2021 to 2025, 4,518 business units newly registered under LSSO, accounting for 4.4% of total businesses nationwide, and covering 187,674 workers (35% of total employees). The registration process has been streamlined from 30 days to just 2 working days, increasing efficiency and compliance.	Completion of the amendment to the Social Security Law to clearly state benefits and eligibility criteria in alignment with international standards; clarify inspectors' mandates to strengthen enforcement; expand enterprise registration among small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and provincial industries; and integrate the NSSF and NHI databases to ensure cross-sectoral coverage and reporting.	Enforcement capacity remains limited due to the absence of legal authority for social security inspectors to impose sanctions. Coverage remains concentrated in urban areas, with rural and micro enterprises underrepresented. Contribution compliance is inconsistent, and coordination between MOLSW, MOIC, and tax authorities is still weak.	– 397,548 active insured workers, of whom 191,547 are women. – 4,518 enterprises newly registered. – 921,995 total beneficiaries including dependants. – 83,755 social security cards issued.	Coverage expansion among formal enterprises has enhanced financial security for over 390,000 workers and their families, reducing vulnerability to income shocks. Streamlined registration and improved public awareness have strengthened system transparency and compliance.	The next milestones should be amendment of the Social Security Law, enforcement of employer compliance through inspections and digital systems interoperability, and to expand coverage to SMEs and Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Integration of LSSO and NHIB databases and exploring targeted subsidies for low-income contributors will be key to achieving universal contributory protection.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
– A total of 83,755 social security cards were issued, including 4,575 retirement cards, along with the registration of 385 employees with disabilities and 72 retirees from the security forces. – Enforcement has improved through stronger collaboration between LSSO, MOLSW and tax authorities, while Presidential Decree No. 3 (2023) introduced increased excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco and sugary drinks, indirectly supporting social protection financing. – 94,436 insured persons received sickness and unemployment benefits during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, with compensation amounting to 98.22 billion kip (20.3 billion kip in sickness benefits and 67.92 billion kip in unemployment benefits).			– Registration processing time reduced from 30 days to 2 working days. – 94,436 insured members received benefits as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.		

Activity 7

Pillar 2		Social Security			
Objective		All the workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.			
Activity 7		Enforce regular inspections at enterprises registered with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.			
Organizations responsible		LSSO, ILO			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– LSSO has taken important steps towards strengthening the social security inspection mechanism to ensure employer compliance with the Social Security Law. In 2024, inspection guidelines, SOPs and training curriculum were prepared, defining procedures, reporting templates and coordination mechanisms between the LSSO and MOIC. Central-level inspectors were appointed, and provincial-level training was conducted to standardize inspection practices. A pilot inspection training was organized in Vientiane Capital involving 21 participants (9 women) and two pilot enterprises, while 9 provinces (Vientiane Capital, Luangnamtha, Bokeo, Houaphan, Sayabury, Khammouane, Savannakhet, Sekong and Xaysomboun) completed the verification of long-term beneficiary data and registration of 12-digit social security codes.	Adoption of the amended Social Security Law and related regulations to legally empower inspectors to issue penalties and enforce compliance; establishment of a digital MIS to enable real-time data exchange between LSSO, MOIC and tax authorities; capacity-building of the central and newly appointed provincial inspectors; and full rollout of inspections nationwide.	Inspection mandates remain limited under current legislation; inspectors cannot yet impose fines or corrective orders. Financial and human resource constraints at provincial levels hinder regular inspection visits. Data integration between LSSO and MOIC databases is incomplete, and reporting remains partially manual.	– Comprehensive Social Security Inspection Guidelines and SOPs finalized. – Central-level inspectors appointed and trained. – Pilot inspection training in Vientiane Capital completed for 21 participants.	The strengthened inspection framework and capacity-building have improved LSSO's ability to monitor employer compliance, identify non-contributing enterprises and update beneficiary records. The introduction of standardized inspection procedures and templates marks a significant step towards ensuring accountability and compliance among formal enterprises.	The next NSPS should prioritize legal enforcement mechanisms under the revised Social Security Law, institutionalize digital inspection reporting through the upcoming LSSO–MOIC MIS interface, and allocate dedicated budget lines for routine inspections.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– With funding support from Luxembourg and China, ILO provided technical assistance to prepare the inspection guidelines, SOPs, training curriculum, inspection information systems, inspection forms and monitoring templates. Collaborative work on the amendment of the Social Security Law is expected to clarify the legal mandate and define schedules for LSSO inspectors to impose sanctions and levy penalties on non-compliant enterprises. Efforts are ongoing to develop a digital MIS for coordination and information sharing with labour inspectors.			– Verification and registration of 12-digit social security codes completed in 9 provinces. – Draft amendment to Social Security Law includes legal provisions for inspection enforcement and has been submitted to MOJ (endorsement expected in 2026).		

Activity 8

Pillar 2		Social Security			
Objective		All the workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.			
Activity 8		Promote enrolment in social security.			
Organizations responsible		LSSO, ILO, Oxfam, civil society			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– LSSO intensified efforts to promote enrolment in social security through large-scale IEC campaigns targeting employers, enterprise and self-employed workers. Public relations activities used diverse media such as radio, television, newspapers, community loudspeakers, billboards, Facebook and TikTok. In 2024 alone, the outreach campaigns produced 15 radio spots, 12 short videos, 2 interviews, 136 newspaper articles, 1,097 TV broadcasts, 82,520 LCD ads, and 68 web news items. Over 50,000 brochures, 20,000 posters, and 46 signage materials were distributed nationwide, while the hotline handled over 20,590 calls. – Mobile registration services were deployed in 12 provinces and Vientiane Capital, allowing 1,767 people (835 women) in remote areas to register voluntarily. – A new district office in Paksong was opened. Construction of new branch offices in Salavan, Sekong and Vang Vieng reached over 30% completion, with additional offices in Xaysomboun, Khammouane, and Phongsaly under development.	Expansion of registration and awareness campaigns to remaining provinces; operationalization of new Social Security Offices; and sustained funding for continuous nationwide IEC initiatives.	Limited resources for consistent outreach in remote areas; low awareness among informal and self-employed workers; and difficulties maintaining follow-up with registered but inactive members. Communication materials still need localization for ethnic-language accessibility.	– Mobile services in 12 provinces and Vientiane Capital led to 1,767 new registrations (835 women). – 4 Worker Information Centres established on the Bolaven Plateau. – 53 local LSSO staff and authorities in 34 villages trained as promoters under the SOLAR project. – 15 radio spots, 12 short videos, 1,097 TV broadcasts, 82,520 LCD screen ads, 68 online news items, 136 newspaper articles, 50,000 brochures and 20,000 posters distributed nationwide. – Hotline received 20,590 calls in 2024.	Increased enrolment among both formal and informal workers through multi-channel outreach and improved accessibility. Public understanding of social security rights and benefits has strengthened, resulting in higher voluntary registration and greater gender balance in new enrolments.	The next NSPS should emphasize a national social security communication strategy with reliable and sustainable funding lines, integrated media tracking and provincial outreach targets. Expansion of digital registration tools and multilingual IEC materials will be key to achieving inclusive enrolment, particularly among informal and rural workers.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Under the European Union-funded SOLAR Project implemented by ILO and Oxfam, LSSO expanded outreach, conducted barrier studies on worker participation, and launched capacity-building efforts in Salavan, Sekong, and Champasak provinces. 53 local LSSO staff and authorities in 34 villages were trained in social security administration and awareness-raising. LSSO also carried out public information campaigns via radio, Facebook and face-to-face meetings in collaboration with LFTU and civil society organizations. Four Worker Information Centres were established on the Bolaven Plateau to inform farming households on their rights and entitlements. These initiatives collectively increased understanding of social security, occupational safety and health, and labour rights.					

Activity 9

Pillar 2		Social Security			
Objective		All the workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.			
Activity 9		Ensure robust actuarial design and sufficient fund reserves.			
Organizations responsible		LSSO, ILO			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– In response to an official request from LSSO, ILO conducted an actuarial valuation of the NSSF during 2022–24 (using data from 31 December 2021), providing analytical evidence for reform of the Social Security Law. The valuation findings formed the basis for reform discussions and decisions on qualifying conditions, contribution rates and benefit calculation rules, aiming to contribute to improved financial sustainability of the NSSF and the improvement of governance, management and administration processes. – A National Actuarial Working Committee was established within the LSSO.	Finalization and adoption of the amended Social Security Law by the National Assembly, including policy adjustments based on the actuarial and legal review findings.	Limited in-country actuarial expertise, including in LSSO; high reliance on ILO and external consultants; insufficiently developed domestic financial markets allowing limited investment pathways; high inflation and macroeconomic risks post-pandemic.	– Actuarial valuation of the NSSF completed and published in 2024. – National Actuarial Working Committee established. – 13 training sessions conducted with 498 participants (37% women). – Actuarial findings incorporated into draft amended Social Security Law.	Strengthened actuarial and financial management capacity at LSSO enhances the Fund's long-term sustainability and management. Evidence-based policy reforms lays the foundation for a sustainable and transparent social security financing system.	Going forward, the next NSPS should embed regular actuarial valuations within the NSSF governance framework, complemented by a structured national capacity development programme. Establishment of an independent fund oversight mechanism will be critical to ensure long-term financial sustainability and transparency.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Hands-on capacity-building by ILO experts and specialized consultants was done, through 13 training sessions for 498 participants (312 men, 186 women) on topics such as actuarial modelling, financial management and risk management. – In parallel, ILO supported LSSO to conduct a review of the Social Security Law, offering observations and recommendations to guide the amendment of its articles and formulation of the new draft Law, based on principles and benchmarks in international labour standards. – Complementary to these initiatives, ILO also conducted a study and capacity-building sessions to support LSSO to develop its investment governance model and investment diversification strategy, offering options and explaining factors to consider in diversifying investments while managing risks.					

Activity 10

Pillar 2		Social Security			
Objective		All the workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.			
Activity 10		Improve collection of social security contributions and benefits.			
Organizations responsible		LSSO, ILO, Oxfam, civil society			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– LSSO developed its first mobile application, which was officially launched on 12 December 2025 and was made available on Android and iOS stores. The app expands access and improves service delivery to members nationwide. It allows members to check information and benefit eligibility and for voluntary members to pay monthly contributions. – This is supported by ongoing modernization efforts through the integration of contributions and benefits data into a single online system with interoperability (APIs) connecting the social security database with select other public sector systems such as enterprise registration, health insurance and tax.	The mobile app will be expanded to offer more services in future. Interoperability needs to be further expanded to ensure automatic and regular data sharing between LSSO and the public databases. Further integration of NSSF with popular banking apps, such as BCEL and BFL, is planned.	Infrastructure limitations in the country; partial connectivity in rural areas; geographical challenges; limited capacities of provincial and district staff to use the LSSO software; limited digital literacy among people especially in rural areas; irregular contribution payments by small enterprises and voluntary members.	– Lao PDR's first social security mobile app launched. – Digital contribution and payment platform launched (M Money, U Money). – Social security payments integrated with some banking apps. – Data integration completed between LSSO and civil servants database. – MySQL database integrated with enterprise registry.	Mobile app and APIs have great potential to increase accessibility and monitor compliance. Digitalization of collection and benefit payment systems improved transparency, reduced delays and increased accessibility in rural areas. Enhanced verification strengthened governance and fund management.	Strengthening digital transformation under the next NSPS should focus on upscaling digital payment platforms; introducing automated compliance tracking through API development, with regular interoperability reviews between LSSO and other information systems; monitoring app usage and feedback, making app upgrades and improvements continuously; publicizing the app; and integrating LSSO systems with the Social Registry.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– LSSO made progress in modernizing collection and payment mechanisms through the use of digital platforms and enhanced data verification systems. In collaboration with local mobile money providers (M Money and U Money), a digital payment solution was launched to streamline contribution collection and benefit payment. This improved efficiency, reduced transaction time and expanded access for members. – Data integration was strengthened through cross-ministerial collaboration, such as by linking the civil servant contributions database with the Ministry of Home Affairs' personnel registry, and verifying beneficiary data to prevent duplication. LSSO conducted data comparisons between registration and contribution databases to validate long-term beneficiaries. – Provincial monitoring missions were conducted in Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Houaphan, Xiengkhouang, Attapeu, and Sekong, addressing payment discrepancies and ensuring accountability. – A centralized registration and contribution database (MySQL platform) was developed and linked to the existing enterprise system, allowing seamless transfer of data and digital registration for informal workers. – Implementation of real-time payment monitoring dashboards for transparency.					

Activity 11

Pillar	Social Security				
Objective	Social Security covers an increasing number of workers in the informal sector.				
Activity 11	Adapt the current scheme design to the characteristics of workers in non-standard forms of employment.				
Organizations responsible	LSSO, ILO, Oxfam, civil society				
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– LSSO, in collaboration with ILO and other partners, made progress in extending coverage to workers in informal and non-standard forms of employment through field research, digital and physical outreach campaigns. A detailed qualitative and quantitative study on informality was conducted analysing the drivers, barriers, and trends affecting such workers, to inform the development of tailored policy measures in future. – Voluntary membership expanded from 12,446 in 2019 to 43,329 in 2025 due to operational innovations like the mobile office and awareness campaigns. – 2,801 agricultural workers reached through LSSO's outreach campaigns while an additional 39,000 reached through development projects supported by ILO, Oxfam and civil society organizations. – The LSSO website was redesigned to improve accessibility and communication with voluntary members.	Expansion of tailored measures for agricultural, domestic, and platform economy workers; full integration of informal sector data into the Social Registry; design of a long-term subsidy framework to sustain voluntary enrolment.	Low and irregular income among informal workers limiting contribution capacity; weak awareness of entitlements; data fragmentation between sectors; need for continuous incentives (especially matching contributions or subsidies) to maintain participation.	– ILO-supported national informality study completed. – Voluntary membership expanded from 12,446 in 2019 to 43,329 in 2025. – 2,801 agricultural workers (46% women) reached through awareness campaigns.	Expanded access to social security for workers in informal and non-standard forms of employment, contributing to greater inclusion and resilience of vulnerable groups. Digital innovations and new partnership models have laid the foundation for a more gender-responsive, and inclusive system.	Future initiatives should explore and develop simplified, flexible contribution modalities for informal workers; strengthening digital literacy and expanding partnerships with worker associations and civil society organizations.

Activity 12

Pillar 3		Social Welfare			
Objective		Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.			
Activity 12		Provide services and benefits to pregnant women and children.			
Organizations responsible		MAE, MOLSW, MOH, MOES, World Bank, UNICEF, supported by development partners			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– The Reducing Rural Poverty and Malnutrition Project implemented the CCT with World Bank support, delivering cash transfers conditional on participation in community nutrition sessions, growth monitoring, antenatal care visits, child scorecard monitoring, and social and behaviour change communication activities. The Project is implemented by MAE in coordination with MOH and MOES. – An Adaptive Social Protection framework was developed, enabling shock-responsive delivery. The Helping Hand operations manual has been revised to include crisis response protocols. Interoperability between the Social Registry, PEDIS-MIS and NHI databases was piloted.	Scale-up of RRPM Phase II to cover additional districts with high levels of stunting; expansion of digital payment coverage (currently under 5% adoption); full integration of the Adaptive Social Protection guidelines; and consolidation of nutrition and social and behaviour change communication messages across all partner programmes.	Limited digital payment infrastructure in rural areas; delays in data interoperability and registry updates; fragmented coordination among line ministries and development partners; dependency on donor funding for programme continuity.	– RRPM Phase I reached 49,536 pregnant women and children under 2 years of age across 4 provinces. – RRPM Phase II (2024–28) reaches 59,000 beneficiaries in 1,665 villages in 114 districts across 7 provinces. – As of May 2025, 99.07% of beneficiaries attended monthly community nutrition sessions, and 99.28% of children under two years receive growth monitoring as per MOH schedules.	– CCT and convergence programmes have improved maternal and child health outcomes and strengthened household nutrition behaviours in target districts.	Future efforts should focus on upscaling social transfers nationwide, digitalizing payment and monitoring systems, and institutionalizing adaptive social protection mechanisms. Stronger coordination between RRPM II, HANSA II and UNICEF child welfare initiatives will be essential to ensure a fully integrated and resilient social welfare system prioritizing the most vulnerable.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Complementary efforts by HANSA II, UNICEF and WFP have reinforced nutrition and early childhood interventions. HANSA II supported maternal and child health services in convergence districts, improving access to integrated health and nutrition packages. WFP expanded the school feeding and maternal nutrition programmes in rural areas, and UNICEF continued piloting child grant schemes for children with disabilities and social welfare case management tools at district level. Together, these programmes have created a coherent platform for child-sensitive and nutrition-focused social protection system. – Mother and Early Childhood Grant piloted in three districts of Attapeu and Savannakhet provinces during 2021–22, reaching 2,596 households and testing the MIS and payment systems used for the child disability grant. The programme was an unconditional cash transfer for children in the first 1,000 days of life, piloted by MOLSW with support from UNICEF, Australia and the Joint SDG Fund.			– Integration of an Adaptive Social Protection framework into the programme implementation is a significant step towards a unified and shock-responsive social welfare delivery model in Lao PDR. – Social registry linked with NHIB and PEDIS-MIS databases for targeting.		

Activity 13

Pillar 3		Social Welfare			
Objective		Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.			
Activity 13		Provide services and benefits to persons with disabilities and UXO survivors.			
Organizations responsible		UXO Secretariat, supported by development partners			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Progress made in strengthening the social welfare system for UXO survivors and persons with disabilities through closer coordination between MOLSW's Department of Social Welfare, the National Regulatory Authority, partners under the Safe Path Forward III, and UNICEF Child Disability Grant initiatives. – Under Safe Path Forward III implementation 2021–25, approximately 1,783 UXO survivors and their families benefited from victim assistance, rehabilitation and livelihood programmes across 15 provinces. The Survivor Assistance Coordination Committee was reactivated under the leadership of MOLSW's Department of Social Welfare, with SOPs for survivor assistance and referral pathways updated to align with the National Action Plan on Disability 2023–27 and Decree No. 137/GoL on Persons with Disabilities.	The pilot ended in 2025 with no nationwide scale-up of the child disability grant and case management programme; integration of UXO survivor and disability databases into the Social Registry; and establishment of sustainable national financing for rehabilitation and survivor assistance services.	Coordination across ministries remains fragmented; limited national budget allocation for disability and UXO survivor programmes; inadequate number of trained social workers at provincial and district levels; and weak data systems for tracking service delivery and outcomes.	– 1,783 UXO survivors and families received support through Safe Path Forward III. – UNICEF child disability grant pilot reached 496 beneficiaries. – Survivor Assistance Coordination Committee revitalized and SOPs for survivor assistance updated. – National Action Plan on Disability (2023–27) endorsed.	Strengthened coordination between MOLSW's Department of Social Welfare, National Regulatory Authority, and development partners has expanded access to integrated assistance, rehabilitation and social support for vulnerable and UXO-affected populations. The child disability pilot in Xiengkhouang demonstrates a model for inclusive, community-based social protection that could be adapted nationwide.	Building on these results, the next NSPS should institutionalize survivor and disability support within the national social welfare system, scale-up the child disability grant model, and establish sustainable domestic financing for rehabilitation and assistive devices. Strengthening the Social Registry, case management systems and coordination across the Department of Social Welfare, the National Regulatory Authority and the MOH will be critical to achieving a comprehensive and inclusive social protection system.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Complementing these efforts, UNICEF's Child Disability Support Programme in Xiengkhouang Province (2023–25) reached 496 children with disabilities and their families, combining unconditional cash transfers with social case management. It strengthened local capacity through the deployment of trained district social workers and village-level focal points, improving identification, registration and support for children with special needs. Lessons from this pilot are informing the design of a national child disability grant model and integration into the Social Registry. – Rehabilitation and inclusion services were further expanded through WHO and Handicap International support for the operation of three provincial rehabilitation centres (Vientiane, Savannakhet and Champasak), providing physical therapy, assistive devices and vocational training. Department of Social Welfare and UXO Lao jointly promoted inclusive community-based rehabilitation approaches and awareness campaigns on disability rights and UXO risk prevention.			– Three provincial rehabilitation centres operational (Vientiane, Savannakhet, Champasak). – Over 200 social workers and local focal points trained on case management and referral.		

Activity 14

Pillar 3		Social Welfare			
Objective		Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.			
Activity 14		Provide services and benefits to older adults.			
Organizations responsible		MOLSW, supported by development partners			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– MOLSW's Department of Policy for Devotees, People with Disabilities and Elderly has continued efforts to improve the well-being, health and social inclusion of older adults. With technical assistance from UNESCAP and UNFPA, a National Action Plan on Ageing 2024–30 is being finalized to operationalize the Decree on Elderly Persons No. 473/GOL, 2021. The plan introduces a framework for healthy ageing, feasibility of social pensions, and long-term care at the community level. – Existing support includes monthly cash and in-kind benefits for older veterans and selected vulnerable older persons, administered through the veteran authority and local MOLSW offices. Approximately 15,000 older adults currently receive regular social transfers or assistance under various schemes, with benefit levels ranging from 1.2 to 2 million kip per month.	Completion and adoption of the National Action Plan on Ageing 2024–30; establishment of a national registry of older persons; and development of a unified social pension framework for older persons not covered by contributory schemes.	Limited national financing for non-contributory social pensions; absence of a unified database to track older persons' socio-economic status; gaps in inter-ministerial coordination between MOLSW, MOH and local authorities; and weak institutional capacity for delivering long-term care, especially in rural areas.	– Around 15,000 older persons receive regular assistance through veteran and MOLSW schemes. – 14 provinces have active Older People's Associations with over 8,000 members. – Integration of geriatric care modules in primary healthcare services. – Local development funds for older persons operational in several districts.	Improved recognition of older adults within the national social welfare framework and increased access to basic assistance and community participation. The introduction of Older People's Associations and age-friendly health centres demonstrates effective models for linking social protection, health and community engagement.	Moving forward, the NSPS should study the design and implementation of a social pension for vulnerable older persons, expand community-based long-term care and ensure that Older People's Associations are formally recognized and resourced under MOLSW's structure. Integration of data on older persons within the Social Registry and alignment with the Health Insurance Law will be essential.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– UNFPA and WHO have supported the integration of geriatric health services within the primary healthcare system in Savannakhet and Champasak, introducing age-friendly health centres that combine preventive screening with social welfare referrals. HelpAge International has piloted Older People's Associations in 14 provinces, reaching over 8,000 members who engage in peer support, income-generating activities and health awareness campaigns. They are increasingly recognized by MOLSW as community-based structures for implementing local social welfare and care programmes. – Several local authorities have also established development funds for older persons at the village and district levels, providing small grants for self-help groups and community support activities.					

Activity 15

Pillar 3		Social Welfare			
Objective		Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.			
Activity 15		Provide services and benefits to victims of natural and man-made disasters.			
Organizations responsible		MOLSW, WFP, Red Cross, World Bank, ADB, FAO, supported by development partners			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
– MOLSW's Department of Social Welfare played a central role in coordinating relief, rehabilitation and emergency assistance for disaster-affected populations. It established a multi-tiered Disaster Relief Fund system, including 1 central fund, 14 provincial funds and 80 district funds, aimed at financing rapid response, livelihood recovery and disaster rehabilitation. – During 2021–24, the Department of Social Welfare and provincial authorities provided emergency assistance to households affected by floods, landslides and droughts through the distribution of rice, consumer goods and construction materials. In total, over 81,000 people received assistance valued at 4.2 billion kip, while 59 damaged schools were repaired and re-equipped. The social welfare system also supported post-disaster livelihood recovery, with FAO providing agricultural inputs, livestock and technical training to 37,100 farmers in 55 villages, focusing on climate-resilient agriculture and recovery from flood and drought impacts.	Integration of the shock-responsive social protection mechanism into the regular budgeting cycle; development of an interoperable information system for disaster beneficiary tracking; and formal adoption of a national Adaptive Social Protection road map under MOLSW–MAE coordination.	Limited fiscal space and unpredictable budget allocations for emergency operations; capacity constraints at district level; inadequate early-warning data linkage between MAE and MOLSW; and partial overlap in responsibilities between MOLSW's Department of Social Welfare, MAE's Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change, and the Red Cross during field deployment.	– 1 central, 14 provincial, and 80 district disaster funds established and operational. – Over 81,000 beneficiaries assisted, valued at 4.2 billion kip. – 12,992 tons of rice distributed; 59 schools rehabilitated. – 37,100 farmers supported with livelihood rehabilitation. – Shock-responsive social protection mechanism piloted.	Strengthened institutional resilience and improved responsiveness of social welfare systems to natural and man-made disasters. Integration of humanitarian response with livelihood recovery and social protection has reduced vulnerability and supported early recovery across disaster-prone provinces.	To consolidate achievements, the next NSPS should focus on institutionalizing shock-responsive financing within the social protection framework, strengthening MOLSW–MAE coordination, and expanding community-level early recovery and livelihood rehabilitation mechanisms. The establishment of a national contingency fund and digital disaster payment platform, linked to the Social Registry, would significantly enhance accountability, speed and targeting efficiency in future response efforts.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
– In collaboration with WFP, the Department of Social Welfare and local authorities distributed 12,992 tons of rice and launched emergency cash transfers for vulnerable households in high risk provinces, while UNDP and MAE's Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change supported adaptive planning under the shock-responsive social protection framework. These efforts were complemented by Lao Red Cross emergency operations in nine provinces, delivering food and hygiene kits to over 239,000 individuals. – Overall, the establishment of the social welfare disaster fund system represents a major institutional advancement under the NSPS. Department of Social Welfare reports improved coordination among central, provincial, and district levels, though gaps remain in data integration and budget predictability for sustained response.					

Activity 16

Pillar 3		Social Welfare			
Objective		Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.			
Activity 16		Expand the National School Meal Programme to all state kindergarten, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in the villages of poor districts throughout the country.			
Organizations responsible		MOES, WFP, supported by development partners			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
- The National School Meal Programme has evolved into a central pillar of Lao PDR's nutrition-sensitive social protection and human capital development framework. Led by MOES with cross-sectoral support from MAE, MOLSW and MOH, the programme now covers over 200,000 children across 41 districts in 10 provinces, providing one nutritious meal per day to pupils in pre-primary and primary schools located in poor and food-insecure areas. - The Government's commitment to school meals was reinforced when Lao PDR joined the global School Meals Coalition in 2024, submitting its national commitment in 2025 to expand to all state schools in poor districts by 2030. At the Second Global School Meals Coalition Summit (Fortaleza, Brazil in September 2025), Lao PDR presented progress on institutionalizing school meals as part of the country's social protection system and linking them to local agricultural production and nutrition outcomes.	Expansion of the School Meal Programme to cover all pre-primary and lower secondary schools in poor districts; inclusion of the School Meal Programme as a permanent budget line in the national education and nutrition budget; and operationalization of a unified School Meals Information and Monitoring System under MOES for real-time reporting.	Heavy reliance on donor funding (WFP, EU, JICA) and limited government fiscal space; infrastructure gaps in remote areas; weak local food supply chains in mountainous districts; and coordination challenges between MOES, MAE and local authorities in procurement and quality assurance.	200,000+ students in 41 districts benefit from daily nutritious meals. - Lao PDR joined the School Meals Coalition in 2024 and presented national commitment at the Global School Meals Coalition Summit in 2025.	The National School Meal Programme has become a cornerstone of nutrition-sensitive and human capital development, improving children's health, cognitive performance and school attendance. The integration of local agriculture into school meal procurement has enhanced community resilience, supported smallholder farmers and strengthened national food systems.	To build on current progress, the next NSPS should institutionalize the School Meal Programme as a core component of the national social protection framework, supported by domestic financing and decentralized implementation. Expansion of the Home-Grown School Feeding model, stronger MOES–MAE coordination, and a dedicated School Meals Policy and M&E system will be critical for achieving equitable, sustainable and nutrition-sensitive coverage across all poor districts.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
– With technical support from FAO and WFP, MOES finalized the national school lunch food basket standards in 2024, featuring three meal models costing at 6,800 kip, 8,200 kip and 9,500 kip per child per day, ensuring each meal meets ≥30% of daily nutrition requirements for energy, protein and essential micronutrients. The Home-Grown School Feeding approach was adopted to strengthen linkages between schools and local farmers, promoting community ownership, dietary diversity and local economic development. – In collaboration with WFP, European Union, and JICA, more than 1,200 schools have been equipped with kitchens, storage areas, dining halls and handwashing facilities. The one school–one nutrition model supports community gardens and school-level food production, while nutrition education modules have been integrated into the primary curriculum. – FAO's Strengthening Local Food Systems for Nutrition initiative has enabled farmer producer groups in 28 districts to supply vegetables, eggs and poultry to nearby schools, improving diet diversity. The National School Meal Programme also contributed to improving attendance and retention rates, especially for girls, and to reducing short-term hunger and malnutrition among school-age children.			– National School Lunch Food Basket standards (6,800–9,500 kip per meal) finalized and adopted. – 1,200 schools upgraded with kitchens, dining halls and gardens. – Home-Grown School Feeding model piloted in 28 districts. – Nutrition education integrated into the national school curriculum.		

Activity 17

Pillar 3		Social Welfare			
Objective		Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.			
Activity 17		Increase allowance to students at the lower secondary level, prioritizing students from poor families and vulnerable groups.			
Organizations responsible		MOES, MOF			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– MOES has prioritized support for poor, ethnic and disadvantaged students at the lower secondary level through a mix of scholarships, stipends and in-kind support, integrated within the education equity and school meals framework. As of 2024, 827 state boarding and ethnic schools are covered by the Government's student allowance programme, reaching 8,469 students (4,739 girls), including learners with disabilities and those from remote areas. Each beneficiary receives a monthly allowance of 200,000 kip to cover food, uniforms, learning materials and basic living expenses.	– Legislative revision to formalize the lower secondary allowance scheme under the Education Law and the national social protection system. – Integration of stipend disbursement into a digital payment system, in coordination with MOF and BCEL.	– High dependency on donor support and project-based funding. – Limited data on out-of-school adolescents and dropouts, particularly among vulnerable and informal households.	– 827 state and ethnic boarding schools supported. – 8,469 students (4,739 girls) received monthly stipends. – 26 boarding schools for children with disabilities included in the scheme. – 19.46 billion kip allocated during 2023–24.	Allowances and boarding support have improved access, retention and completion rates among poor and disadvantaged students, particularly ethnic minorities and girls. The stipend scheme also complements the school meal programme, contributing to improved nutrition and learning outcomes.	The next NSPS should institutionalize the student allowance as a national programme within the social protection system, with multi-source funding (MOF, donors, local budgets). Integration with digital transfers, stronger data systems, and synergy with school feeding and scholarships will ensure sustainability and equitable access for all lower secondary learners.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Government expenditure on student support in 2023–24 exceeded 19.46 billion kip, complemented by WFP school feeding and UNICEF education equity support. Scholarships for ethnic boarding schools benefited 26 schools across 7 provinces and 36 districts. – Results show improved enrolment and retention: primary completion rose from 88% in 2019 to 93% to 2023, while dropout rates fell from 6.4% to 4.8% during the same period. The support particularly benefited girls and ethnic students in the northern and southern provinces. MOES has also aligned stipend targeting with poverty and vulnerability criteria under the NSPS, and discussions with MOF are ongoing to include lower secondary allowances in the domestic education budget framework.	– Expansion of the scheme to additional remote and ethnic boarding schools (target >10,000 students by 2026).	– Weak coordination between MOES, MOLSW and local authorities for targeting and monitoring. – Stipend value (200,000 kip) remains low compared with actual student living costs.	– Dropout rate reduced to 4.8%; primary completion rate 93%. – Targeting criteria harmonized with NSPS vulnerability indicators.		

Activity 18

Pillar 3		Social Welfare			
Objective		Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.			
Activity 18		Allocate national budget to education on time and expand coverage.			
Organizations responsible		MOES, MOF			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Government has maintained education as a strategic national priority, although fiscal pressures continue to limit expenditure growth. According to the Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (2024), education accounts for approximately 11.3% of total government expenditure (2024) and 3.4% of GDP, slightly below the ASEAN average but demonstrating steady commitment despite debt service constraints. – To strengthen predictability and timeliness of budget releases, MOES and MOF have introduced a Medium-Term Budget Plan and quarterly cash management reviews. MOES is one of three ministries piloting the Medium-Term Budget Plan under the Public Finance Development Strategy 2025, aimed at aligning recurrent and investment spending across central and provincial levels.	– Institutionalize a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework 2026–30 for education with clear costings for School Meal Programme, stipends and inclusive education. – Expand block grants to cover all pre-primary and lower secondary schools in poor and food-insecure districts.	– Declining education budget share due to macro-fiscal constraints and rising debt service.¹⁷ – Late budget releases in the first half of the fiscal year due to cashflow issues. – Fragmented coordination between MOES and MOF for recurrent versus capital planning.	– Education budget execution rate maintained at over 90% annually during 2022–24. – MOES budget integrated into the Medium-Term Budget Plan and Public Finance Development Strategy 2025 implementation. – 29.25 billion kip disbursed to the National School Meals Programme and on-time releases verified in 10 provinces.	Timelier and more predictable budget releases have strengthened school operations, enabling uninterrupted implementation of the School Meal Programme, allowances and classroom resources. The shift towards medium-term and programme-based budgeting enhances fiscal discipline, transparency, and alignment with national social protection priorities. Improved coordination between MOES and MOF has contributed to reduced school-level budget delays and more equitable allocation of resources across provinces.	– The next NSPS should formalize education financing as a core component of the social protection framework, ensuring domestic co-financing for school meals, scholarships and stipends. – Increase the education budget share to ≥15% of total expenditure by 2027 and ≥18% by 2033, in line with the Law on Education and SDG 4 benchmarks.¹⁸ – Institutionalize quarterly cashflow forecasting and a publicly accessible Education Expenditure Dashboard to improve accountability.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Budget execution has improved, with 92.84 billion kip disbursed to 18 provinces and 148 districts (2022) for school operations, and an additional 5.6 billion kip (2023) directed to early childhood and vocational streams. The School Lunch Programme received 129.25 billion kip (2023), while student stipends and teacher allowances were raised to offset inflation (interns: +15,000 kip/day; boarding students: +10,000 kip/day). – Under the Public Expenditure and Institutional Review recommendations, MOES and MOF have improved data reconciliation between education and Treasury accounts through Government Financial Information System+ (GFIS+) integration. Budget preparation now follows the new State Budget Policy Statement process, enabling earlier issuance of expenditure ceilings and improved alignment with NSPS priorities on nutrition, gender equality and inclusion. Development partners continue to co-finance the School Meals Programme, allowances and school block grants through results-based financing and Education Sector Working Group coordination.	– Implement a real-time education expenditure dashboard (linked to GFIS/Financial Management and Reporting System) for quarterly monitoring. – Develop a formula-based allocation system to ensure equity across provinces and link allocations to social protection and poverty data from the Social Registry.	– Dependence on donor funding for non-salary programmes (school meals, scholarships, stipends). – Weak capacity in provincial education offices for expenditure tracking, reporting and audit.	– State Budget Policy Statement operationalized, provincial ceilings issued earlier in the budget calendar; as part of public finance management reforms to improve budget preparation and align spending with national strategies. – Quarterly education expenditure reports produced with MOF. – Draft Medium-Term Expenditure Framework 2026–30 developed with cost projections aligned with the NSPS.		– Integrate donor-funded education programmes within a single Programme-Based Budget structure, including the School Meal Programme, stipends and inclusive education, tracked through GFIS+. – Strengthen capacity for expenditure reporting, internal audit and results-based monitoring at provincial and district levels, ensuring early release and full utilization of funds.

Activity 19

Pillar 3	Social Welfare				
Objective	Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.				
Activity 19	Provide allowances for vocational training, skills development and technical training to the poor and working-age people in vulnerable situations to enable them to access decent employment opportunities.				
Organizations responsible	MOES, supported by development partners				
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Lao TVET and skills ecosystem has strengthened significantly under joint implementation of several national and partner-supported initiatives. – MOLSW, with support from World Bank, is implementing the Priority Skills for Growth Project 2021–27 to provide stipends and skills training opportunities for young and vulnerable people. As of 2025, the project has supported 807 trainees to access TVET aligned with market demand. – In partnership with MOES during 2020–25, LuxDev strengthened TVET institutions in Bolikhamxay, Khammouane and Vientiane provinces, focusing on institutional autonomy, labour market linkages and gender inclusion. Approximately 6,000 trainees have benefited from upgraded training centres, enterprise internships and a scholarship system for poor and female students (averaging 1,200,000 kip/month). LuxDev's TVET school autonomy model is now being scaled under MOES' 2025 reform plan.	– Approve and operationalize the TVET Scholarship and Allowance Decree to ensure predictable, government-financed training support. – Establish a TVET and Skills Development Fund (building on World Bank and ADB grant mechanisms) for long-term domestic financing.	– Fragmented donor projects and weak domestic cofinancing pose risks to sustainability beyond 2026. – Persistent gender and regional inequality in access to technical and higher-level skills training. – Insufficient incentives for enterprise participation and absence of tax and wage subsidies for apprenticeships.	– Over 20,000 TVET trainees received training allowances under ADB, World Bank and LuxDev projects during 2022–24. – 98,879 learners (48,484 women) participated in short-term and basic vocational courses.	The expansion of allowances, enterprise collaboration and targeted training has enhanced employment outcomes and reduced poverty among youth and working-age adults. Post-training employment rates have reached approximately 65% nationally (World Bank and ADB data, 2024), with stronger inclusion of women, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities.	– Integrate TVET stipends and allowances into the new NSPS as part of a unified labour market inclusion strategy. – Scale up the National Skills Development Fund to leverage domestic resources, ensuring fiscal sustainability after donor exit.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/Outputs	Impact	Comments
– ADB's Skills for Employment Project 2022–27 has supported 10 national and provincial TVET institutions through dual cooperative training schemes with over 106 enterprises, aligning curricula with labour market needs. KOICA and GIZ jointly contributed to new competency-based training standards (20 occupational fields) under the Lao Qualifications Framework. – Complementing these, the UNESCO-ILO–UNFPA rapid assessment on youth employment in 2025 indicated that over 98,879 learners (48,484 women) participated in vocational, entrepreneurship or reskilling courses nationwide, including informal workers, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. – MOES is finalizing a TVET Scholarship and Allowance Decree to institutionalize financial support for disadvantaged trainees, while MAE is developing linkages with the Social Registry to identify and target beneficiaries for future stipend programmes.	– Expand enterprise-based Dual Cooperative Training and apprenticeship subsidy schemes to all 18 provinces. – Strengthen data interoperability between MOES, MOLSW and the NSR to track participant profiles, employment outcomes and stipend distribution. – Formalize the Public–Private Skills Council under MOES for co-designing curricula and performance-linked allowance criteria.	– Data systems for labour market demand, trainee follow-up and graduate employment tracking remain underdeveloped. – Limited institutional capacity in provincial TVET centres for financial management and M&E.	– 14,000 graduates from certified TVET institutions, including 2,000 trained through enterprise-linked Dual Cooperative Training programmes. – 20 new occupational standards developed under the Lao Qualifications Framework. – 30 TVET institutions upgraded with improved facilities, teaching equipment and digital learning labs. – Draft TVET Scholarship and Allowance Decree finalized in 2024 for Cabinet submission.	Graduates increasingly find work in local manufacturing, construction, hospitality and service sectors, contributing to improved productivity and social mobility. The integration of TVET within the social protection system positions it as a key enabler for decent work and human capital development.	– Prioritize gender-responsive and inclusive TVET (childcare support, transport stipends, dormitory access) to increase women's participation in technical trades. – Enhance MOES–MOLSW coordination through a Skills and Employment Observatory, linking training supply to sectoral demand. – Establish a results-based financing model for training providers based on employment and income outcomes.

Activity 20

Pillar 3		Social Welfare			
Objective		Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.			
Activity 20		Develop production organizations and public services and facilitate access to decent work.			
Organizations responsible		MAE, supported by development partners			
Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
– MAE has advanced the establishment and formalization of production groups, agricultural cooperatives and community-based service networks to enhance access to decent rural employment and local livelihoods. These actions are guided by the Law on Cooperatives (2024), which provides a strengthened legal and institutional framework for the development of cooperatives and production groups. – Under the Integrated Rural Development Initiative, inspired by the Republic of Korea's Saemaul Undong model and supported by KOICA, MAE facilitated the formation of 4,193 production groups and 35 agricultural cooperatives across 18 provinces by 2024. The programme provides matching grants and in-kind support to rural producer groups, emphasizing community ownership and women's participation. Activities include agricultural extension, seed distribution, livestock promotion, irrigation system improvement and market access facilitation.	– Finalize and endorse the revised Decree on Cooperative Development No. 348 and its implementation guidelines. – Scale up Saemaul Undong modelled community-driven projects to remaining districts, with dedicated budget lines in the MAE 5-year plan for 2026–30.	– Fragmented institutional coordination between MAE, MOLSW and MOF on rural enterprise promotion. – Limited access to credit and markets for smallholder cooperatives, especially in remote districts.	– 4,193 production groups and 35 cooperatives formally established nationwide as of 2024. – Over 35,000 tons of seeds and agricultural inputs distributed under MAE and KOICA-supported initiatives.	The expansion of production groups and rural cooperatives has strengthened community resilience and local economic development, particularly in post-COVID and climate-affected areas. These initiatives have improved income diversification, promoted women's participation in local governance and generated sustainable employment opportunities across agriculture, agro-processing and handicrafts.	– The next NSPS should formally recognize rural producer groups and cooperatives as part of the “productive inclusion” dimension of social protection, linking them to livelihood grants and skills support. – Strengthen inter-ministerial coordination between MAE, MOLSW, MOES and MOF for rural job creation and market-oriented vocational programmes.

Progress	Pending	Challenges	Milestones/ Outputs	Impact	Comments
– Complementing this, MAE and MOLSW collaborated with FAO, ILO and IFAD to pilot decent rural employment and cooperative development projects, linking smallholder farmers to value chains and promoting decent work standards in rural enterprises. FAO supported the development of 59 district-level farmer service centres integrating technical advice, post-harvest services and climate-smart agriculture practices. Meanwhile, ILO assisted with the draft national rural employment framework of 2025, to align cooperative and labour market interventions with social protection. – According to the MAE annual report of 2024, more than 35,000 tons of quality seeds were produced and distributed through production groups, boosting productivity, household income and local employment opportunities. The establishment of producer cooperatives has directly benefited over 200,000 rural workers, 40% of whom are women, contributing to job creation, food security and inclusive economic development.	– Strengthen integration between MAE's rural production programmes and MOLSW's social protection and livelihood interventions, including linkages to cash-for-work and social insurance schemes. – Expand the Rural Employment and Cooperative Database for digital monitoring of group registration, membership and employment creation. – Introduce a sustainability fund for producer cooperatives to ensure access to working capital, market linkages and technical support beyond donor projects.	– Low financial literacy and business management capacity among production group leaders. – Dependence on donor-funded initiatives for training, seed inputs and extension services. – Incomplete legal harmonization between cooperative, labour and social protection regulations.	– 59 district-level farmer service centres established to provide technical, business and employment support. – Decree No. 348 on Cooperative Development finalized and under review for adoption. – National Rural Employment Framework of 2025 drafted with ILO assistance. – At least 200,000 rural workers (40% women) benefited from producer and cooperative support programmes.	The integration of rural employment and cooperative programmes into MAE's core operations has positioned the agriculture sector as a pillar of inclusive and decent work creation.	– Promote gender-responsive cooperative models and inclusive value-chain financing, prioritizing youth, women and ethnic communities. – Establish rural enterprise incubators within district farmer service centres to support entrepreneurship, digital skills and access to finance. – Develop an impact measurement framework for decent rural employment, tracking income, productivity and resilience indicators.

► Annex 2. Progress of NSPS road map outputs

Goal 1. The health insurance system is further developed and strengthened.

Sub-objective	Responsible	Main activities	Milestones/outputs	Progress assessment				
				Fully	Partly	Limited	Not yet	Explanation
Strategic Objective 1.1. Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.								
H.I.1. Develop and implement a legal framework for universal health coverage.	NHIB	A. Develop and revise NHI-related legislative and regulatory frameworks to address challenges and gaps that prevent the expansion of NHI coverage for all.	– Revision of NHI implementation guideline	X				Implementation guidelines revised 2023; Notice 824/MOH 28.06.2024
			– Revision of NHI financial management guideline		X			Draft NHI financial manual (2021); NHI financial flow analysis; Notice 824/MOH (2024); Revised FM guideline finalized with MOF integrated into HANSA-II PBC1 (2024)
			– Develop membership registration regulation		X			NHI poor card countrywide; Digital registration in 14 provinces using NHI MIS platform

Strategic Objective 1.1. Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.								
		B. Implementation, dissemination and enforcement of the law.	– Revise laws and their sublegislations, 2023		X			Draft NHI Law submitted to Ministry of Justice and pending endorsement by the National Assembly; Updated NHIB responsibilities (2022)
			– Develop laws and sub-legislation to attain universal health coverage		X			Notice 824/MOH; Cross-ministerial taskforce (MOH, MOF, NHIB, NSSF) formed
			– Develop IEC guidelines		X			Posters in hospitals; IEC strategy developed; NHI hotline (1509) nationwide
			– NHI information seminars for target groups, for example, policymakers	X				Regular NHI awareness sessions
			– Develop NHI website for information campaign				X	NHI website prototype, but not updated
			– Multi-sectoral collaboration to implement Social Security Law and extend coverage		X			NHI Committee, LSSO Board, multi sectoral meetings; Collaboration NHIB and NSSF to harmonize schemes. Draft MOU on fund integration expected 2026

Strategic Objective 1.1. Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.							
		C. Review NHI benefit package with the objective of ensuring adequate coverage and services.	– Review social health protection benefit package and primary healthcare co-payment obligations	X			Notice 824/MOH (benefit package, PPM and rates); NHI List of drugs/supplies; Classification of surgeries
			– Develop list on general, specialized services and price structure		X		Notice 824/MOH; draft review of decree pricing Tech. Revenues 03; List split surgeries; List drugs/supplies covered
H.I.2. Develop systems and build capacities of the National Health Insurance authority.	NHIB	A. Develop the capacity of the Health Insurance Authority at all levels.	– Establish institutional mechanisms and capacity for the prioritization of essential services		X		MOH updated Essential Health Service Package in 2023. In 2024, MOH and NHIB initiated a Technical Taskforce for Essential Service Prioritization, supported by WHO under the UHC Road Map and HANSA-II technical assistance.
			– Create a unit responsible for primary healthcare at the central to subnational levels		X		MOH's primary healthcare coordination, pending at subnational level
			– Training on admission, transfer and discharge (ATD) system	X			Train on Excel NHI management system; design e-claim and pilot implementation; ATD guidelines revised (2024) and piloted in 7 provinces

Strategic Objective 1.1. Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.							
			– Training on financial management		X		Training and coaching together with training ATD (2020–24); 5 national trainings (2023–25) for 160 NHIB finance and claims officers
			– Training on verification	X			Training and coaching together with training ATD (2020–24); Verification training manual developed and rolled out nationwide (2024)
			– Develop curriculum on health insurance			X	Summary of basic NHI duties (SRC) – not started yet
			– Training on health insurance for staff at each level		X		On-the-job training; Short courses; 130 provincial and district staff trained (training-of-trainers); Master's degree training
		B. Develop an adequate and sustainable financial management system for NHI.	– Improve financial management capacities at all levels (roll out digital financial and insurance MIS)			X	Preparatory activities conducted. No formal implementation or provincial rollout yet
			– Conduct costing study		X		The Costing of Public Health Facilities (2021); Costing Central Hospitals (2025)

Strategic Objective 1.1. Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.							
			– Design provider payment mechanisms.		X		Notice 824/MOH confirms PPM and rates for provincial facilities; Proposed revised PPM and rates transition and new categories included in costing 2025 (ILO)
		C. Develop and implement a unique and integrated monitoring and MIS for the efficient management of the health insurance scheme at all levels.	– Develop/modernize NHI database (membership and ATD)			X	NHI E-claims pilot; Membership NHI Poor Dec 348 based on list 2022
			– NHI members registration system			X	NHI poor (possible under e-claim also)
			– Improve reporting and auditing system			X	Improve reporting in Excel; NHIB audit in provinces 1–2 times/year with semi-digital system
		D. Learn from successful experiences of ASEAN countries and internationally.	– Attend meetings/workshops in country and abroad for exchanges on NHI technical experiences	X			Exchange in ASEAN (mainly Thailand, Viet Nam) and Republic of Korea

Strategic Objective 1.1. Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.								
H.I.3. Develop and comply with minimum standards for healthcare facilities.	MOH, Curative Care Department	A. Define and implement minimum quality standards (staff to population, availability/quality of facilities, medical equipment, essential drugs).	– Include licensing/accreditation as condition for contracting, payment, higher payment, autonomy				X	Hospital Accreditation Framework (2023), Five Goods One Satisfaction” (5G1S) Policy, Quality and Performance Scorecard (QPS) for health centres implemented by MOH’s Department of Healthcare and Rehabilitation since 2022, supported by World Bank; hospital autonomy pilot in 5 central hospitals and 10 provincial hospitals.
			– Quality assurance and hospital autonomy			X		Hospital autonomy in 5 CH, 10 PH pilots
		B. Revise and control compliance with national treatment guidelines.	– Enhance supervision and verification			X		Quarterly supervision (linked to NHIB/PHIB verification/auditing)
		C. Improve quality of health insurance facilities, increase number of health workers, ensure all facilities are stocked with essential drugs and equipment.	– Provide guidelines to implement Decree 349, linking staff incentives to quality improvements				X	Draft Guideline Decree 349 (WHO support); no additional regulations; fragmented implementation based on hospitals

Strategic Objective 1.1. Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.							
			– Provide equipment for the NHIB, PHIB and DHIB		X		Equipment provided mainly by support projects (vehicles, computers, health MIS systems, admin/office furniture). Insufficient routine administration budget from government budgets
H.I.4. Increase access to healthcare services in rural areas.	MOH	A. Extend to rural areas availability/ accessibility of healthcare services (essential services, medical equipment, skilled workers, essential drugs)	– Establish institutional mechanisms and capacity for the prioritization of essential services; Create a unit responsible for primary healthcare at the central to subnational levels		X		MOH primary healthcare coordination unit
		B. Extend health insurance coverage to people in rural areas by providing all Lao people with a health insurance identity card.	– Increase awareness/compliance on entitlements and obligations (e.g., documents) by issuing NHI membership cards (beginning with the poor)			X	NHI Card for poor for whole country (NHI poor card in provinces and Community-Based Health Insurance card in Vientiane Capital)
H.I.5. Ensure sufficient and timely government budget allocation to health.	MOF, MOH	A. Allocate sufficient and timely government budget as contributions to the fund, to support contributions made by insured public employees.	– To facilitate donors' transition, adjust NHI budget to include all essential services within NHI benefits				X Minimal government subsidy increase in kip to NHI for informal sector. Largely insufficient to pay for current benefit package despite revised co-payment (824/MOH)

Strategic Objective 1.1. Strengthen health insurance schemes to be more systematic, effective in ensuring that everyone has access to health services.							
			– Reform health financing towards universal health coverage: increase fund, pool funds, execute fund				X National Health Financing Strategy 2021–2025; NHI strategy 2021–25; NHI funding subsidies decrease in real term; several proposals but no concrete increased nominal NHI funding
		B. Mobilize internal and external resources to ensure healthcare for the poor.	– Work with MOF to increase taxes on tobacco, alcohol, sugar and petrol earmarked for health (and ensure the collected taxes are actually reserved for and transferred to the NHI)		X		Strong emphasis in progress but no major funding results so far during the period
			– Work with MOLSW, MOF, MOIC, Customs, trade unions and private sector to increase SS membership		X		NHI and SRC's Contribution to UHC Project support to food and transportation for the poor.

Goal 2. The social security system is further developed and strengthened.

Sub-objective	Responsible	Main activities	Milestones/outputs	Progress assessment				
				Fully	Partly	Limited	Not yet	Explanation
Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.								
S.S.1. Expansion of social security coverage for all formal economy workers.	LSSO	A. Expand social protection coverage for workers at enterprises registered with the MOIC at the national and local levels.	– Research on barriers of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) joining social security, including policy options to extend coverage and identification of priority sectors for pilots on coverage extension.		X			Quantitative and qualitative research on understanding informality and expanding social security coverage conducted; priority sectors for coverage expansion pilots identified as logistics, drinking water manufacturing, export crops, hospitality, food processing. Study on government licensing and public bidding processes conducted; recommends strategic points in public tendering where social security registration among bidders could be made mandatory.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.							
			– Project on extension of social security coverage (for example, among workers in registered enterprises) at district level across the country.		X		397,548, formal enterprise workers (public and private) are insured, focusing on high-density urban and industrial areas. Several meetings with private enterprises to clarify technical doubts and address concerns held. Enterprise visits, mobile registration campaigns and digital payment tools helped ease the administrative processes while maintaining in-person client interaction.
			– Project on development and improvement of social security inspection system and applying measures against violators and improvement of social security inspection at local level.			X	Technical documents produced: social security inspection guidelines, inspection SOPs and reporting templates, study on functions, and inspections information system. 13 central-level inspectors appointed and trained in July 2024.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.								
			– Project on improvement of IECs and information campaigns especially the dissemination of social security laws and regulations to the society so that everyone is aware and understand.		X			LSSO launched a nationwide IEC campaign in 2023, producing digital content, posters and short videos reaching over half million views; materials were translated into five ethnic languages and targeted at micro- and small-sized enterprise owners, women entrepreneurs, and informal workers; outreach sessions in 26 districts engaging over 7,800 workers.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.							
		B. Expand social protection coverage for self-employed workers in the formal economy.	– Project on extension of social security coverage among self-employed workers with the capacity to contribute at district level across the country.		X		LSSO piloted and implemented the mobile social security office to enrol self-employed workers in 12 provinces. 43,329 people registered in NSSF voluntarily. A new mobile app on social security launched in Dec 2025, and is available for download on Google Play and iOS stores. It has significant potential to improve accessibility and enhance customer interaction. Integration with digital wallets and mobile banking apps was done, to facilitate contribution payments in urban areas. New approaches (such as local influencers and village/group leaders) is currently under review by LSSO. Interoperability with other public databases and systems are being discussed and developed, prioritizing Labour Market Information Systems, National Enterprise Database, Health systems and Social Registry, to enhance regular, automatic and accurate data sharing, thereby increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.							
			– Project on improvement of IECs and information campaigns especially the dissemination of social security laws and regulations to the society so that everyone is aware and understand.		X		LSSO conducted extensive information and outreach campaigns to promote enrolment. Over 12,000 participants in 15 provinces (64% women) were reached through district and village meetings, mobile office campaigns and radio broadcasts. IEC materials were adapted for market vendors, agricultural workers and home-based producers, with testimonials from registered beneficiaries. Campaigns were coordinated with the Department of Labour Management, Provincial Labour Offices, and local Trade Union offices, integrating practical registration support.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.								
S.S.2. Enforce regular inspections at registered enterprises.	LSSO	A. Build capacity of technical units to inspect social security participation and ability to enforce Social Security Law.	– Project on development and improvement of social security inspection and applying measures against violators and improvement of social security inspection at local level.			X		LSSO conducted 581 enterprise visits nationwide in 2023–24, identifying 198 non-compliant employers and collecting approximately 4.6 billion kip in unpaid contributions. The visits were strengthened with provincial teams supported by ILO projects. The draft Inspections Manual (2024) standardizes procedures for pre-, during and post-inspection activities.
		B. New legal framework and revise existing legislation for inspections and secure needed resources.	– Project on improvement of social security law to be aligned with the actual context.		X			A revised draft Social Security Law has been prepared with ILO support and in alignment with international labour standards, introducing clearer provisions for inspection powers, penalties and contribution recovery mechanisms. The draft law clarifies employer obligations for both permanent and short-term workers and aligns with the Labour Law.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.							
		C. Introduce legal provisions allowing penalties to be collected from non-compliant employers.	– Project on development and amendment of sub-legislations to be tools for the implementation in each period.		X		A draft Decree on Inspection and Penalty Procedures (2024) is under inter-ministerial review. It defines thresholds for penalties (up to 5 million kip for repeated violations) and allows temporary suspension of enterprise registration for non-compliant employers.
		D. Exchange information between labour inspectors and social security inspectors.	– Project on improvement of social security inspections by developing MIS to enable social security inspectors to quickly access and use electronic information for inspections.		X		Development of a Digital Inspection Information System completed in 2024, with modules on inspection scheduling, violation recording and case tracking, linked to the NSSF Information System. Piloted in Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet and Champasak, allowing real-time monitoring and reducing report lag from 30 days to 7 days.
		E. Revise and update records of enterprises registered with the MOIC at the national and local levels.	– Project on improvement of enterprise and voluntary scheme's benefit database to make it modernized and to ensure the accuracy of benefit payments.		X		Employer and Member Registry module was upgraded in 2023 under the LSSO Digital Transformation Plan, integrating 42,000 active enterprise records and 240,000 worker accounts. Data cleaning reduced duplication by 11%.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.							
		F. Perform inspections at private companies registered with the MOIC to verify compliance with social security legislation.	– Project on development and improvement of social security inspection system and applying measures against violators, and improvement of social security inspection at the local level.		X		LSSO introduced a risk-based inspection approach prioritizing high-risk enterprises (construction, manufacturing and hospitality sectors). Inspections now include verification of wage records and contribution transfers. Annual inspection results publicly summarized in NSSF annual report 2024.
S.S.3. Promote enrolment in social security.	LSSO	A. Encourage workers, employers and self-employed to participate in social security system	– Project on improvement of IECs and information campaigns, especially the dissemination of social security laws and regulations to society at large so that everyone is aware and understands.		X		Starting in 2023, LSSO rolled out nationwide “Join Social Security” campaigns and piloted the mobile registration service with support from ILO and local civil society organizations (CSOs). Over 52,000 workers (60% women) were reached across 13 provinces, focusing on agricultural workers, market vendors, home-based workers and transport workers. Multimedia campaigns were disseminated via roadside banners, radio, social media and local fairs, resulting in a 20% increase in voluntary enrolment. Simplified IEC materials and animation videos were produced in Lao and ethnic languages. LSSO staff participated in local festivals to increase outreach. The new LSSO mobile app is expected to enhance accessibility among urban workers and youth, and can increase efficiency during the mobile office campaigns.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.								
		B. Encourage registered enterprises to comply with social security and labour legislation	– Improve compliance by promoting dynamic registration campaigns and other measures.				X	In collaboration with MOLSW and MOIC, LSSO launched enterprise registration drives in industrial zones and service sectors. Between 2023 and 2024, 3,215 new enterprises were registered with the social security system, expanding coverage to approx. 45,000 additional workers. LSSO developed a web-based Employer Registration Module, allowing online submissions and verification with the MOIC Enterprise Registry.
S.S.4. Ensure robust actuarial design and sufficient fund reserves.	LSSO	A. Conduct actuarial studies to assess the financial status of the National Social Security Fund in the short and long terms.	– Project on social security actuarial analysis for the planning and development of sustainable social security system.	– Develop actuarial capacity at the LSSO.		X		An Actuarial and Financial Analytics Unit was established within LSSO in 2023. Ten LSSO officials received tailored, hands-on training from ILO on actuarial modelling, financial forecasting and fund sustainability analysis, while several more staff participated in training workshops and working sessions. LSSO is now able to perform short-term (5-year) projections on contribution inflows, benefit payouts and investment income. A basic actuarial toolkit (Excel-based projection model) was installed in 2024 for internal use.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.								
				– Undertake comprehensive actuarial analysis.	X			A comprehensive actuarial valuation of the NSSF and NHI was completed in 2024 with ILO support. The report and a set of policy briefs in both English and Lao were published. The study projected financial sustainability of the NSSF benefits up to the year 2100 under current parameters and identified long-term fiscal risks due to demographic ageing and low wage growth. Various policy scenarios were developed under: (i) baseline (no reform), and (ii) reform (gradual contribution rate increase, staggered increase in retirement age, and modification of benefits). The results were validated through several technical and high-level workshops. The actuarial valuations were accompanied by reviews of the Law on Social Security and Law on Health Insurance against international standards. These studies were used to inform the drafting of the amended Social Security Law and the upcoming Medium-Term Budget Framework for NSSF.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.									
				- Revise Social Security Law based on analysis results.		X			The draft amended Social Security Law was completed and integrates key recommendations from the actuarial valuation and legal reviews. Reforms include: (i) establishing a mandatory periodic actuarial review cycle, such as every three years, (ii) introducing a reserve ratio monitoring mechanism to ensure fund solvency, (iii) making several modifications to the healthcare benefits and its administration, and (iv) expanding coverage to self-employed and informal workers. The draft law also formalizes the social security policy council, enhancing coordination between MOLSW, MOF and social partners. Draft revisions were endorsed by MOLSW and are under inter-ministerial consultation (MOF, MOJ, Prime Minister’s Office) as of December 2025.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.							
		B. Carry out parametric reforms according to the results of the actuarial assessments to ensure the sustainability of the National Social Security Fund.	– Project on social security actuarial analysis for the planning and development of sustainable social security system.		X		Initial parametric reform scenarios have been developed and discussed as part of the actuarial valuation process conducted by ILO and LSSO. These include: (i) gradual increase of the retirement age, (ii) revision of benefits, and (iii) increase in the contribution rate. The change in contribution rate would depend on the first two policy measures adopted, that is, changes to retirement age and revision of benefit amounts and eligibility. Policy options were presented during several tripartite consultation workshops in 2024–25 and are under national review.

Strategic Objective 2.1. All workers and self-employed workers in the formal sector are covered by social security.							
S.S.5. Improve the social security collection system.	LSSO	A. Perform the necessary arrangements to allow contributions to the National Social Security Fund and benefits paid from the Fund to be collected nationwide through the banking system.	– Projects on improvement of civil servant scheme's payment mechanism at the local level, aiming for payment to be more efficient, quicker, timelier		X		The digital payment pilot for the civil servant scheme was implemented in 2024 across 10 provinces. Payments are now processed through BCEL One platform, reducing average disbursement time from 7 days to 2 days. The LSSO provincial offices report improved accuracy in benefit transfers and reduced reconciliation delays. System supervision is integrated with national treasury oversight.
			– Project on improvement of formal enterprise and voluntary scheme's payment mechanism, aiming for quicker payment processes and reduction of payment by cash at each level.		X		LSSO completed the e-contribution payment rollout for formal enterprises in 12 provinces using BCEL One Corporate and LaoPay systems. Over 4,800 enterprises (60%) now remit contributions digitally, improving transparency and audit traceability. The voluntary contributor module was piloted in Vientiane Capital and Champasak, integrating mobile banking for self-employed members.

Strategic Objective 2.2. Social security covers an increasing number of workers in the informal sector.									
S.S.6. Adapt current scheme design to the characteristics of workers in non-standard forms of employment.	LSSO	A. Establish adequate mechanisms to ensure that workers in the informal sector are encouraged to participate in the social security system voluntarily and are offered benefits appropriate to their specific needs.	– Project on development of applications/ systems for voluntary insured persons so that they can access social security services easily, widely and in more ways.	– Provide more decentralized access points for voluntary insured persons (e.g., via outsourcing access/ enrolment functions to other entities, such as banks).					LSSO signed partnership MOUs with BCEL and LDB in 2024 to facilitate voluntary contribution payments through their nationwide branch networks. By mid-2024, 65 district-level branches in 12 provinces had begun accepting social security contributions. The initiative significantly reduced travel time for rural contributors and improved compliance reporting. A new mobile app on social security was launched in December 2025 and is available for download on Google Play and iOS stores. It can significantly improve accessibility and enhance customer interaction. Application programming interfaces (APIs) or interoperability with other public databases and systems are being developed, prioritizing the Labour Market Information Systems Database, National Enterprise Database, health systems and Social Registry. This is expected to enhance regular, automatic data sharing.

Strategic Objective 2.2. Social security covers an increasing number of workers in the informal sector.									
				– Consider or test digital financial services (e.g., U-Money) for contributions and benefit payments.	X				A feasibility assessment on fiduciary risks and digital payment mechanisms was completed in 2024 with support from ILO under a UN Joint Programme. The study identified village banks and U-Money as the most viable platforms for rural voluntary contributors due to nationwide agent networks and lower transaction costs.
		B. Advocate and encourage informal economy workers to voluntarily contribute to social security, by, for example, allowing them access at a lower/ subsidized cost.	(Not mentioned in current LSSO projects; could potentially fall under revision of Social Security Law.)				X		While affordability is a barrier for informal workers, ILO's Understanding Informality (2024) report found that 52% of workers in Lao People's Democratic Republic have the capacity to pay the minimum NSSF contributions regularly. Since NSSF coverage is well below this level, and due to ongoing financial sustainability problems with the NHI scheme, it is expected that current efforts should focus on expanding coverage to the non-poor and easy-to-reach informal workers first.

Goal 3. The social welfare system is further developed and strengthened.

Sub-objective	Responsible	Main activities	Milestones/outputs	Progress assessment				
				Fully	Partly	Limited	Not yet	Explanation
Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.								
S.W.1. Provide services and benefits to pregnant women and children.	MOLSW, Department of Social Welfare	A. Collect and compile data on pregnant women and children, particularly those who are poor or those belonging to vulnerable populations.	A. Collect district-level data: need, supply side, financial ecosystem, transport infrastructure			X		In 2023, district-level data were collected in 7 pilot districts (Xiengkhouang, Savannakhet, Salavan) with UNICEF support. Data included population, poverty incidence, maternal/child health indicators and health facility coverage. Data were mapped through UNICEF's MEGC baseline and linked to district health statistics. However, data gaps remain for non-pilot districts, and there is still no integrated national system for automatic updating from MOH and Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB).

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
			B. Collect national level data: fiscal space, costs of MCEG (modelling, estimates and so on).			X	A preliminary costing analysis (MOLSW–UNICEF 2024) estimated MCEG cost of 17–19 billion kip for scaling to 15 poorest districts. Fiscal space analysis under NSPS review shows limited domestic funding and continued dependency on external resources. Further fiscal modelling for 2026–30 is required and is not yet integrated into the MOF's Medium-Term Expenditure Framework.
			C. Develop data repository/database to store and manage above mentioned data	X			A Social Registry managed by MAE's Rural Development Dept (support from World Bank) is now operational with 1.1 million households registered.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.									
	MOLSW, Department of Social Welfare	B. Develop and revise relevant legislation regarding social welfare benefits for pregnant women and children under 3 years old in the poorest families and those who need special protection in accordance with conditions and capacity.	A. Short-term legislative changes	A.1. Review and collect all relevant legislation/regulations that need to be revised to be in line/support MECG implementation		X			MOLSW, with UNICEF legal support, conducted a comprehensive review (2024) of existing legislation relevant to MECG implementation, including the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children (No. 05/NA 2006) and related decrees. However, the review has not yet been fully integrated into the consolidated draft Social Welfare Law; certain provisions still need harmonization before submission to MOJ.
				A.2. Consult stakeholders, draft amendments, legally adopt amended legislation.			X		Initial consultations took place during the 2024 national consultation workshop with participation from MOLSW, MOH, MOJ, National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children, and UNICEF. Draft amendments were discussed and incorporated into the draft Social Welfare Law.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.									
			B. Long-term legislative changes	B.1. Discuss/consult, draft and approve a decree (for example, at prime minister level) to legally enshrine the MECG.			X		A complete draft MECG decree was prepared by MOLSW Legal Department (2024) with UNICEF support, outlining eligibility, benefit amounts and payment procedures. It has undergone internal validation with Department of Social Welfare, DPF and the Planning Department and is aligned with the draft Social Welfare Law. However, no formal submission to MOJ or Prime Minister's Office has taken place, and endorsement cannot proceed until the Social Welfare Law is enacted.
				B.2. Establish tripartite committee to initiate and moderate a political discourse on establishing a noncontributory code book				X	Coordination is occurring only informally through cross-agency meetings between MOLSW, UNICEF, ILO and UNDP as part of the MECG scale-up road map.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.									
				B.3. Draft, debate and adopt a social welfare legal code book to enshrine and regulate NSPS Social Welfare Pillar into legislation		X			The draft Social Welfare Law 2025 consolidates nine existing decrees and introduces a comprehensive legal structure for non-contributory social welfare schemes (including MCEG, disability support, benefits for older persons).
	MOLSW, Department of Social Welfare	C. Provide benefits to children under 2 years old in the poorest districts to ensure necessary nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life.	A. MCEG pilot test as conducted by UNICEF in collaboration with MOLSW and non-government implementers.			X			The MCEG pilot was successfully implemented across 7 districts in 3 provinces (Xiengkhouang, Savannakhet, Salavan), reaching approximately 7,800 beneficiaries (pregnant women and children). Monthly transfers of 120,000 kip were delivered during the 1,000-day period. Midline data show improvements in household food security, maternal health-seeking behaviour and regular attendance of antenatal care services.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.										
		D. Provide material (food, vouchers and other in-kind transfers) and emotional support with priority given to pregnant women and children who need special protection – mainly low-income pregnant women; orphan children; abandoned children; children victims of violence; children victims of exploitation or sexual abuse; children victims of human trafficking; and children rescued from hazardous working conditions or labour exploitation.	B. Learning from pilot test	B.1. Design elements (effectiveness)	<i>Using evaluation tools for before/ after and inter-district comparisons; evaluation workshop by UNICEF.</i>	– UNICEF district selection method?	X			Districts were selected using a multi-criteria poverty and vulnerability index combining LSB (2020) poverty and child health indicators (stunting, underweight rates) and accessibility measures.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.										
						– Benefit package relevance and payment level adequacy?		X		The 120,000 kip/month MEG benefit was appropriate and well-accepted in pilot districts. Midline findings show positive effects on maternal health-seeking and food security. However, the adequacy review for national scale-up is pending, particularly adjustments for inflation and regional price variations.
						– Service uptake by target group?	X			Service uptake exceeded pilot expectations: 84% of registered beneficiaries received three consecutive payments, and 67% attended four ANC visits. Community outreach by Village Facilitators, Lao Women's Union (LWU) volunteers and MOLSW officers was effective in increasing awareness and participation.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.										
				B.2. Delivery mechanism (efficiency and appropriateness of processes)	<i>Learning from pilot M&E (that is, routine data) and grievance redress mechanism: Regular debriefings from UNICEF to MOLSW throughout pilot phase.</i>	– Outreach (programme communication, mobilization and sensitization)		X		Outreach activities were conducted through Village Facilitators, LWU volunteers, and MOLSW district officers. Joint MOLSW–UNICEF IEC campaigns were delivered in health centres and village meetings. 93% of beneficiaries reported hearing about MECG through community channels. However, a broader national behaviour change communication strategy has not yet been developed for scale-up.
						– Identification (pregnancy confirmation by healthcare worker and proof of living in district)		X		Pregnant women were effectively identified through health facility ANC registers and verified by village facilitators. Manual verification ensured accuracy.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.										
						– <i>Registration</i> (at health facility using MEGG digital/mobile application)	X			Digital registration using the MEGG App was fully operational in all 7 pilot districts. Data were uploaded via mobile tablets and synced to MEGG dashboards; real-time analysis supported programme monitoring. Remaining gap: weak connectivity in some remote villages.
						– <i>Enrolment</i> (number allocation, MIS entry, print card, enrol in payment and behaviour change communication)		X		Enrolment processes were functional through digital MIS entry and verification by village facilitators. Behaviour-change communication messages were integrated into enrolment sessions. However, enrolment MIS remains separate from the Social Registry and NHI systems; harmonization has not been completed.
						– <i>Payment</i> mechanism (fiduciary risk assessment study)			X	Payments were delivered through Village Facilitators using the mobile cash transfer app, monitored by district MOLSW staff with monthly reconciliation.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.											
				B.3. Organizational set-up	<i>Learning from pilot M&E: monitor task completion rates; monitor time for task completion; ratios of beneficiaries per staff/ social worker; workload analysis; staff satisfaction.</i>	– Responsible agency		X			A national MECG team was formed and coordination improved with UNICEF support. However, no formal MECG unit exists within MOLSW; roles remain ad hoc.
						– District level HR needs and ratios		X			District Social Welfare Offices, village facilitators, and LWU volunteers delivered core functions.
						– Capacity needs			X		Training was delivered to over 120 officials and facilitators with regular supervision. But no standardized training-of-trainers curriculum exists; training remains project-based.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.											
				B.4. Possible replication	Draw lessons from the MCEG pilot and apply to the design and implementation of disability benefits and benefits for older persons in future.				X		Pilot evaluation completed with clear lessons for scale-up. However, national expansion is still pending MOF fiscal space analysis, government budget allocation and system integration (Social Registry + Treasury e-payment). No rollout decision yet.
				C. National scaling up of MCEG in poor/targeted districts							
S.W.2. Provide services and benefits to persons with disabilities and UXO survivors	Secretariat Office for UXO Control Committee.	A. Collect and compile data on persons with disabilities to ensure they are provided with appropriate services and benefits.	Collect and consolidate available data on persons with disabilities and UXO survivors to establish: (i) types, accuracy and correctness of available data on persons with disabilities/UXO survivors; (ii) gaps in data/information needed; and (iii) collect missing data needed in preparation of activities B, C, D and E below.					X			Functional systems exist, but not integrated nationally

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
		B. Develop and revise relevant legislation on the services and benefits provided to persons with disabilities (including UXO survivors with a disability) and gender-based violence survivors, in accordance with conditions and capacity.	Review existing legislation to: (a) establish current status protection/legal entitlements for this target group; and (b) provide advice to NSPC on which revisions/new laws to develop. For example: (i) develop sub-legislation under the Law on Disabled Persons No. 057/NA, dated 10 December 2018, to provide benefits to persons with disability and UXO survivors as indicated in the law; and (ii) develop sub-legislation under the Social Security law (amended version) No. 54/NA, dated 27 June 2018, to ensure the persons with disability and UXO survivors are covered by the LSSO and NHI.		X		Draft review exists, endorsement not yet initiated
		C. Provide services and benefits to different types of persons with disabilities who are not able to work, not able to help themselves, or belong to low-income families, including UXO survivors with a disability and gender-based violence survivors.	Project on provision of assistance and rehabilitation for victims from UXO (MOLSW Workplan 2021–2025)		X		Rehabilitation and livelihood support implemented jointly with UXO Lao and NRA. However, services remain project-based, geographically limited and without a sustained government budget.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.								
			Develop guidelines on provision of benefits to disabled persons and UXO victims who are unable to work and support themselves and that live in low-income households.			X		Draft benefit guideline prepared by MOLSW Department of Disability in 2024. Not validated, not approved, no national mechanism operational yet. Alignment with Social Welfare Law (2025) still pending.
			Provide benefits to disabled persons and UXO victims who are unable to work and support themselves and that live in low-income households.				X	No national benefit scheme exists for persons with disabilities or UXO survivors. Current support remains fragmented, donor-financed and not integrated into Social Registry or national MIS. Targeting and payment system not approved; government financing not secured.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
		D. Support the establishment and strengthen the capacity of associations of persons with disabilities by providing them with training, services, benefits or physical resources, in accordance with conditions and capacity.	Project on training and provision of jobs for UXO victims (MOLSW Workplan 2021–2025).			X	Implemented in several provinces with UNDP/NRA support, but remains project-based and not nationally funded.
			Develop training manuals for associations assisting disabled persons.			X	Some manuals developed with UNDP/UNFPA support, but not yet institutionalized under MOLSW and coverage remains limited
			Provide trainings to associations assisting disabled persons to strengthen their capacities.		X		Trainings delivered by UNDP/UNFPA in multiple provinces, but not sustained or scaled; no formal government programme

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
		E. Mainstream disability concerns in the work of other ministries and their sectoral policies.	Establish multisectoral working group via NSPC Secretariat and define the roles and responsibilities of the working group.			X	Initial consultations held with UNDP and MOLSW, but no formal technical working group established, TOR not endorsed, and coordination with the National Committee for Disabled Persons remains unclear.
			Develop an integrated plan of action for disabled persons that can be linked with other sectoral plans and conduct monitoring and supervision of the implementation of this integrated plan.		X		Draft Disability Inclusion Plan prepared under MOLSW and aligned with the Social Protection Technical Working Group proposal, but not yet approved or financed; requires multi-sector coordination and integration with the Social Welfare Law (2025).
S.W.3. Provide services and benefits for older adults.	Department of Devotees, Disability and Elderly Persons	A. Collect and compile information on older adults – particularly those who are poor, those belonging to vulnerable populations and those living alone	Collect and compile data on older persons from the LSB, LSSO, UNFPA, WHO, NHIB and older persons' associations. Analyse and apply the data for any policy planning related to older persons.		X		Data collection has improved through recent assessments, but standardized national data systems have not been established, limiting evidence-based planning

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
		B. Develop and revise relevant legislation to ensure services are provided to older persons, particularly those who are poor, those belonging to vulnerable populations and those living alone		X			Strategy for older adults drafted and adopted, slow implementation
		C. Assess the feasibility of implementing a social pension for vulnerable older persons who do not benefit from a contributory pension.				X	Early design work has started, but the social pension remains conceptual, lacking fiscal validation and political endorsement
		D. Provide benefits, material support and emotional support to poor older adults and those living alone.			X		Assistance is widespread but fragmented, irregular, and not integrated into a national social welfare system, limiting long-term sustainability
		E. Support the establishment and strengthen the capacity of older adults' associations.	Review the existing legislations related to older persons, especially the Decree on Elderly Persons, No. 473/Gov, dated 12 July 2021. Analyse the gaps and problems that should be clearly identified in that decree, aiming for the better implementation of this decree towards older persons. Propose to the NSPC and concerned sectors on the amendment of this Elderly Persons Decree.	X			No manuals or tools developed; awaiting policy decisions

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
			Develop sub-legislation under the Elderly Persons Decree, including guidelines on implementation of the Decree, aiming for the provision of benefits to poor and vulnerable older persons.	X			Pilot depends on national feasibility and endorsement
			Explore and conduct a feasibility study on the provision of old age benefits to older persons who are not covered by the LSSO and NHI, especially poor and vulnerable older persons without caretakers and those older persons with chronic diseases and/or requiring long-term care. Report the findings of the study to the NSPC and other concerned sectors.			X	No guidelines drafted; legal framework incomplete
			Develop training manuals (including procedure, method, process, mechanism and tools) on old-age benefit provision to older persons who are poor, vulnerable, without caretakers and requiring long-term care, by using the lessons from the MEEG pilot.			X	Training cannot start without manuals and guidelines
			Pilot the provision of old-age benefits to older persons who are poor, vulnerable, without caretakers and requiring long-term care, by using the lessons from the MEEG pilot.			X	No pilot implemented. Work remains project-based with no approved mechanism, and future piloting depends on national feasibility and MOF/ NSPC endorsement.
			Develop training guidelines on capacity-building for older adults' associations.			X	No official guidelines drafted; only initial discussions held. Development depends on legal clarification and institutional roles under the revised Social Welfare Law.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
			Provide training to older adult's associations by using the developed guidelines.			X	No structured training programme exists. Some ad hoc training occurred through partners, but no MOLSW-led institutional training materials.
S.W.4. Provide services and benefits to victims of natural and man-made disasters.	Department of Social Welfare, MOLSW	A. Collect and compile information on victims of natural and man-made disasters to ensure they receive appropriate services and benefits.	Conceptualize and conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on adaptive/shock responsive social protection (SRSP), including collecting and compiling relevant data as well as reviewing the status of legal provisions so far and establishing options and a workplan (to be annexed to the NSPS road map), aiming at rendering the Lao social protection system adaptive (for example, in terms of design and delivery mechanisms of contributory and non-contributory schemes) to natural and man-made (for example, economic) shocks.			X	A feasibility study on adaptive/shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) has been conceptualized, but data integration, compilation systems and operational mechanisms for disaster-affected households are not yet established
		B. Develop and revise relevant legislation on the services to victims of natural and man-made disasters, in accordance with conditions and capacity.					X No updated legislation has been endorsed. Existing frameworks remain fragmented across sectors, and no unified legal provisions for shock-responsive social protection have been drafted under MOLSW/NSPC

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
		C. Provide relief emergency services and benefits to victims of disasters to restore their livelihoods.	Joint project with WFP on the strengthening the rehabilitation after disaster for communities affected by flood in the southern provinces(see MOLSW Workplan 2021–25).		X		Joint WFP–MOLSW rehabilitation support was implemented in southern provinces after floods. However, support remains project-based and not institutionalized or covered by a national budget line
			Develop integrated but flexible social protection payment platform that can channel funds via various payment service providers, if needed.			X	Concept for an integrated social protection payment platform exists, but no operational system or approved financing mechanism is in place to channel emergency funds through multiple payment service providers.
		D. Provide services and benefits to gender-based violence survivors to restore their livelihoods and ensure they are referred to health services when needed.	NSPC Secretariat to fast-track a discussion aiming at developing a proposal for NSPC on how best to place this activity into the social welfare system (for example, including gender-based violence target group either into the MEGC or the Persons with Disabilities and UXO Survivor scheme) to increase likelihood and improve the timeliness of victims of gender-based violence receiving benefits and services, for example, as provided under the NHI.			X	Gender-based violence support remains ad hoc and fragmented. Referral to health services is not systematically integrated into NSPC pillars. No approved proposal on incorporating gender-based violence survivors into MEGC or persons with disabilities/UXO survivors schemes

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
S.W.5. Expand the National School Meal Programme (SMP) to all state kindergarten, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in the villages of poor districts throughout the country.	Department of General Education, MOES	A. Develop and revise relevant legislation on school meal services for children, in accordance with conditions and ability.	MOES members of NSPC Secretariat – jointly with the WFP – to screen current legislation on school meal provision with the perspective of identifying gaps and opportunities to expand the SMP to all state kindergarten, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in the villages of poor districts throughout the country.		X		Initial legislative screening was conducted jointly by MOES and WFP. Gaps and opportunities have been identified, but draft amendments or formal proposals for revising SMP legislation have not yet been developed or submitted. Further technical and financial alignment required for expansion.
		B. Provide one cooked meal per day to all students in all state kindergarten, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in poor districts throughout the country. The weekly menus will be designed to meet the specific nutritional needs of children.	Discuss with MOES representatives in the NSPC Secretariat and the WFP the SMP provisions in the MOES' 5-year Workplan 2021–25 with a perspective to ensuring financing and actual implementation of the SMP's expansion to all districts in the country, starting with the those that are considered to be the poorest.			X	Dialogue between MOES, WFP, and NSPC Secretariat occurred, and SMP provisions are included in the MOES Workplan. However, no secured, long-term government financing or implementation mechanism exists for nationwide roll-out. Expansion remains dependent on donor support (WFP) and is not yet integrated into national budget planning.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
S.W.6. Increase allowances to students at the lower secondary level, prioritizing students from poor families and vulnerable groups.	Department of Early Childhood Education, MOES	A. Develop and revise relevant legislation on the provision of scholarships and allowances to lower secondary students, in accordance with conditions and ability.	MOES members of the NSPC Secretariat to screen current legislation on provision of allowances for lower secondary students with the perspective of increasing the allowance to at least 150,000 kip per month per student for those from poor families and vulnerable groups.		X		MOES and NSPC Secretariat conducted a legislative review and identified gaps in existing allowance provisions. The need to increase the benefit amount and improve targeting was acknowledged, but no draft amendment or formal proposal has yet been submitted. Legislative revision and budget alignment remain pending.
		B. Increase allowance to students at lower secondary education level – prioritizing students from poor families and vulnerable groups (such as, persons with disabilities and disadvantaged ethnic groups) – to cover learning materials, boarding and transportation, as necessary	Discuss with MOES representatives in the NSPC Secretariat opportunities to include the allowance increase for lower secondary level students in the MOES' 5-year Workplan 2021–25 (prioritizing students from poor families and vulnerable groups).			X	Allowance expansion was discussed and reflected in MOES planning, but no national rollout has occurred. Budget for increased allowances has not been secured, targeting criteria remain unclear, and implementation mechanisms are not integrated into national systems. Expansion remains at conceptual and planning stage only.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.								
S.W.7. Allocate national budget to education on time and expand coverage.	Department of Finance and Department of Planning, MOES	A. Ensure enforcement of relevant legislation on funding to schools, in accordance with conditions and ability.	MOES and MOF members of the NSPC to establish subcommittee on social welfare provisions in the public education system, aiming at ensuring and establishing: (a) a regular exchange between the ministries; and (b) timely bottom-up flow of information from schools that have not received their annual allocation of funds via school block grants (BKGs) in time, including feedback from schools and kindergartens on the level of fees they charge families.		X			Regular coordination between MOES and MOF on school financing took place through the NSPS Secretariat and the subcommittee discussions. Data on delays in block grant allocations were raised and discussed; however, enforcement of timely and full budget disbursement remains uneven across provinces. No updated legislation on school financing has been adopted.
		B. Improve coordination mechanisms between MOES and MOF.			X			A subcommittee on social welfare provisions in the education sector was formed under NSPS coordination, enabling periodic exchange between MOF and MOES on planning, budget execution and reporting. While the mechanism improved dialogue, it is not yet formalized or institutionalized, and regular reporting from schools on fees and funding gaps remains inconsistent.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.								
		C. Ensure adequate funding levels and timely funding allocation to schools through block grants with the purpose of eliminating fees charged to families by kindergarten, pre-primary, primary and lower secondary schools across the country.					X	Block grant allocations continue but timeliness and sufficiency vary by district. Funding shortfalls persist, especially for kindergartens and remote schools. Bottom-up reporting on unresolved block grant disbursements is still weak. No updated regulatory framework has been endorsed to guarantee adequate and predictable funding levels
S.W.8. Provide allowances for vocational training, skills development and technical training to the poor and to working-age people in vulnerable situations to enable them to access decent employment opportunities.	Department of Technical and Vocational Training, MOES	A. Develop/revise legislation on provision of scholarships for TVET, so that technical training is provided to the poor and to working-age people in vulnerable situations in accordance with their conditions/abilities.	MOES members of the NSPC Secretariat to screen current legislation on provision of allowances for TVET students from the perspective of identifying opportunities and gaps to enshrine these allowances into law.			X		MOES, through the NSPC Secretariat, reviewed existing legislation on TVET scholarship provision with development partners. Gaps were identified regarding targeting, benefit levels and inclusion of vulnerable groups. Draft legal options were discussed, but no formal amendment and new regulation has yet been submitted for endorsement.

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
		B. Provide allowances and scholarships for TVET for the poor and for working-age people in vulnerable situations to enable access to decent employment and/or engagement in enterprise development.	Discuss with MOES representatives in the NSPC Secretariat opportunities to include the allowance for poor and vulnerable TVET students into the MOES' 5-year Workplan 2021–25.			X	Discussions between MOES and the NSPC Secretariat explored including TVET allowances in the MOES 5-year Workplan. However, there is no operational programme, dedicated budget allocation, or systematic targeting mechanism. Scholarships remain largely donor-supported and geographically limited, without national rollout plans
S.W.9. Develop production organizations and public services, and facilitate access to decent work.	Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperatives, MAE	A. Develop and revise legislation to promote production organizations and public services for low-income rural workers as well as legislation to facilitate access to decent work, in accordance with conditions and ability.	MAE members of the NSPC Secretariat to screen current legislation on production organizations and public services for low-income rural workers with the perspective of enshrining these organizations and services either into law or into a prime minister decree.		X		Cooperative Promotion Law exists, but no specific legal framework linking rural cooperatives to NSPS goals. Integration across sectors remains limited

Strategic Objective 3.1. Social welfare has expanded its coverage and services to meet the needs of target groups.							
		B. Develop model cooperatives in cooperation with international development partners.	NSPC Secretariat in collaboration with development partners (such as, ILO and FAO) to arrange for identification of international production organizations/cooperative best practices (ideally from the ASEAN region, for example, the Philippines) and arrange for peer-to-peer learning, potentially utilizing resources provided by the Network for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia and the Pacific (NEDAC).		X		Pilots ongoing (Savannakhet, Champasak, Xiengkhouang). Activities remain donor-driven; no national model or government financing mechanism for “social protection-linked” cooperatives.
		C. Promote production organizations and services for poor rural workers to access decent work in accordance with the needs of the labour market or to change professions based on needs of production groups, services and local cooperatives, to increase incomes and reduce poverty	MAE members of the NSPC Secretariat to discuss with development partners and MOF options to include provisions for establishing rural production cooperatives into the MAE 5-Year Plan 2021–25.		X		Promotion exists through ILO/ MOLSW and MAE, but initiatives not formally integrated into MAE planning. Funding is fragmented and rural employment promotion activities remain limited.

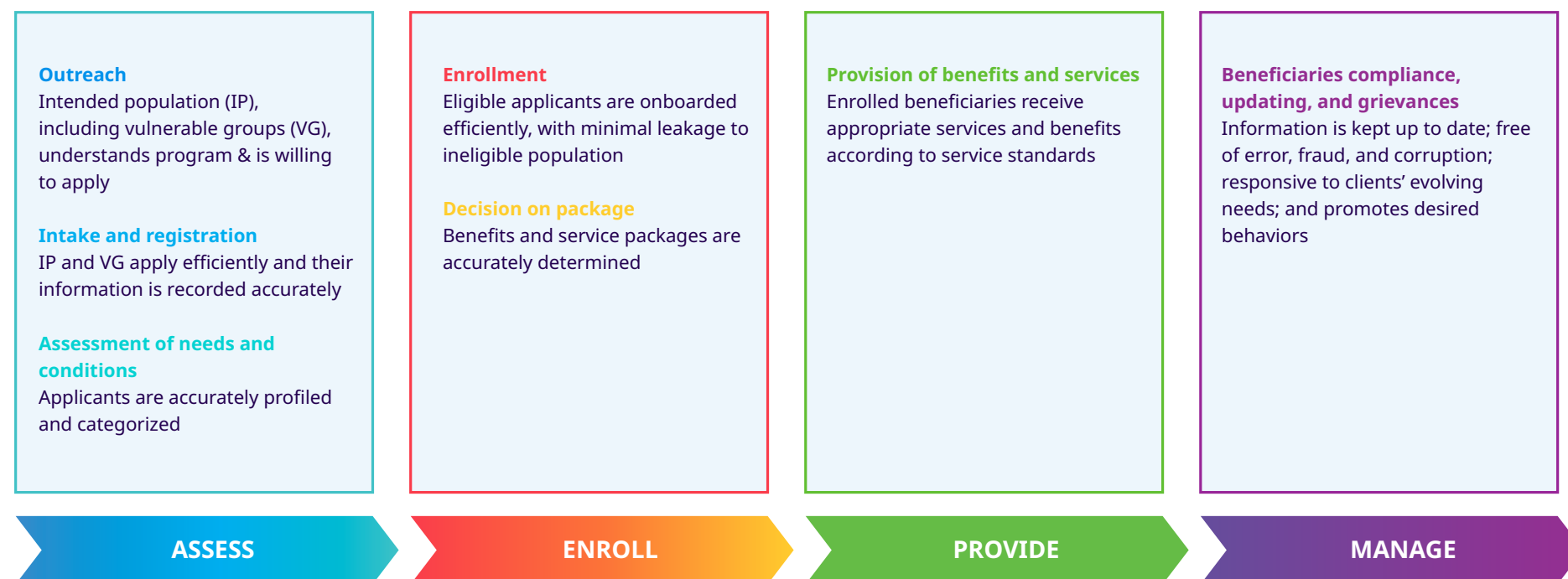
Implementing measures

Sub-objective	Responsible	Main activities	Milestones/outputs	Progress assessment				
				Fully	Partly	Limited	Not yet	Explanation
Implementing Measure 1. Coordination and multi-sector unity.	MOLSW, Department of Planning and Cooperation	I.M.1. Establish a coordination and management structure for NSPS road map implementation	A. Establish National Social Protection Committee and Secretariat as stated in the NSPS.	X				NSPC Decree No. 656/PM (Dec 2021) with Secretariat under MOLSW. Limited institutionalization, ad hoc meetings and coordination with development partner facilitation.
			B. Agree on NHIB and LSSO as the day-to-day NSPS road map discussion and decision-making entities for the Health Insurance and Social Security pillars, respectively.	X				NHIB and LSSO have been officially recognized as lead agencies for their respective pillars. Coordination mechanisms exist through NSPS structures, although decision-making meetings remain irregular
			C. Establish a cross-ministry social welfare technical working group led by the MOLSW, which has the bandwidth and authority to discuss and decide on the various decision points that will come up on different aspects of the Social Welfare Road Map implementation.		X			Although stakeholders were nominated, the Social Welfare Technical Working Group (SW-TWG) is not yet formally established. Work remains ad hoc and dependent on development partner support
	MOLSW, Department of Planning and Cooperation	I.M.2. Develop a management and information system.	A. 1st MIS Training Workshop for Social Welfare Working Group (MIS principles, options, international best practices, TOR for NSPC MIS Masterplan Study/ Development).		X			Workshop conducted in 2023 for NSPC Secretariat and MOLSW. Increased understanding, but did not produce TOR or sustained follow-up.

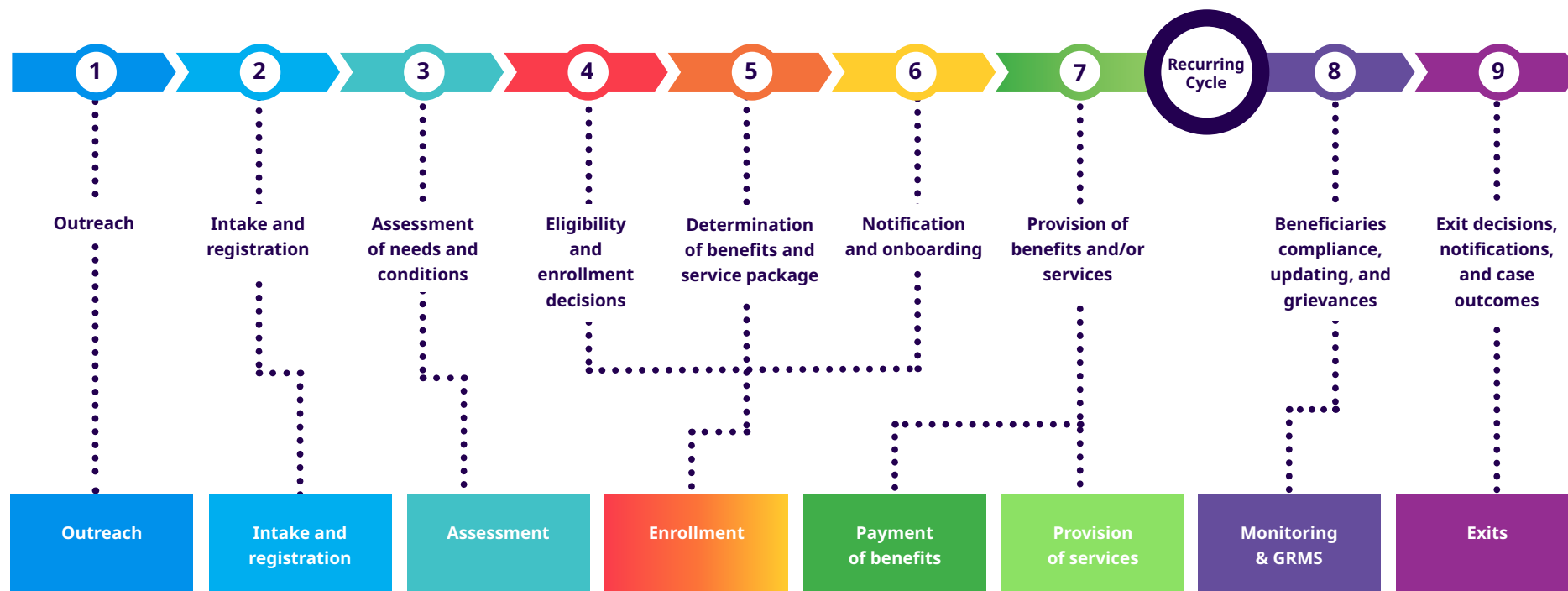
Sub-objective	Responsible	Main activities	Milestones/outputs	Progress assessment				
				Fully	Partly	Limited	Not yet	Explanation
			B. Development and drafting of MIS Masterplan (study on, for example, data needs, levels of integration, interoperability with existing databases like the birth registry, taxes and so on)				X	No consultancy commissioned; no draft prepared. Data integration remains fragmented across MOLSW, NHIB, LSSO, and MOF
			C. 2nd MIS Training Workshop (presentation of MIS Masterplan, including options; decision on most adequate option for NSPC MIS, finalization and approval of MIS Masterplan.				X	Dependent on MIS Masterplan development, which has not begun. Training content and approval steps remain pending
			D. Roll-out of MIS Masterplan.				X	No rollout activity initiated. Implementation expected beyond 2025 after completion and approval of Masterplan

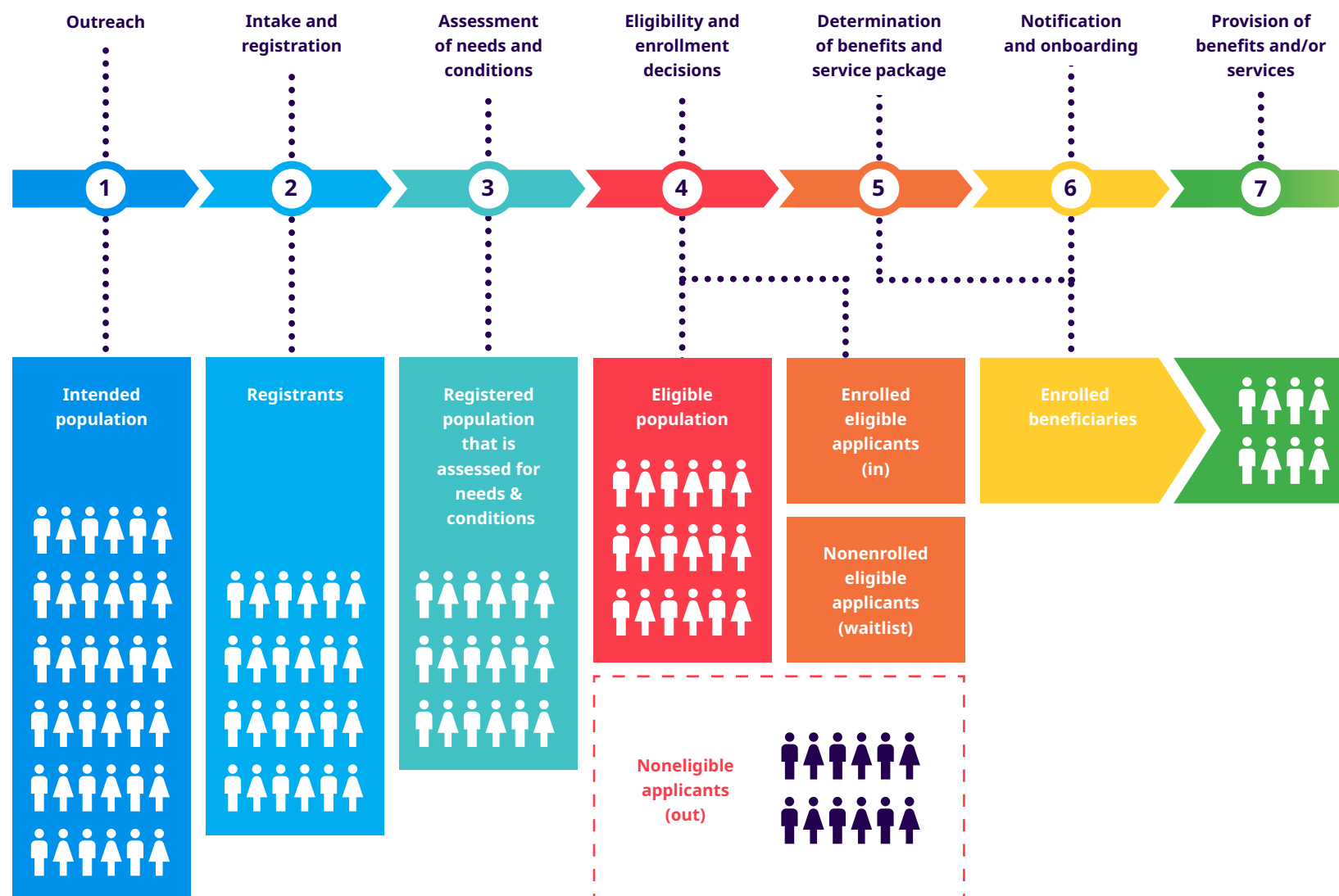
► Annex 3. Delivery chain¹⁹

Enabling factors: Information Systems – Communication & client interface – Institutions



Periodic Reassessment





GRMs = grievance redress mechanisms.

► Annex 4. Family Package benefits in Cambodia

The table below shows the benefit values, frequency and conditions of the Cambodia Family Package, from the UNICEF (2025) report *Impact Evaluation of the Cambodia Family Package Programme: Baseline Report* (p. 12).

► Table 2.1: Family Package benefit values, frequency and conditions⁸

Benefit type	Condition	Payment schedule	Frequency	Amount per transfer (KHR)
Standard benefit	IDPoor status	Monthly benefit	12 p.a. (monthly)	34,000 (US\$ 8.28)
Pregnant women and young children	Pregnancy benefits linked with 4 ANC check-ups	At least 12 weeks, 20–24 weeks, 30–38 weeks and 36–38 weeks	4 over 26 weeks	80,000 (US\$ 19.48)
	Childbirth – delivery bonus	Upon delivery at a health care centre	one-off	400,000 (US\$ 97.41)
	Postnatal benefits linked with 4 PNC check-ups	7 days, 14 days, 1.5 months and 2.5 months after delivery	4 over 2.5 months	80,000 (US\$ 19.48)
	Child benefits linked with vaccination and immunization conditions	In line with the immunization schedule (until 18 months of age)	6 over 15.5 months	80,000 (US\$ 19.48)
Children in school (Grade 1–2)	Child enrolled in primary school (Grade 1–6)	Monthly benefit paid every quarter	12 p.a	20,000 (US\$ 4.87)
	Child enrolled in lower secondary school (Grades 7–9)	Monthly benefit paid every quarter	12 p.a	20,000 (US\$ 4.87)
	Child enrolled in upper secondary school (Grades 10–12)	Monthly benefit paid every quarter	12 p.a	30,000 (US\$ 7.31)
Elderly (60+ years)	Older persons aged 60 years or older	Monthly benefit	12 p.a (monthly)	28,000 (US\$ 6.82)
Persons with disabilities (across life cycle)	Persons living with a disability (certified)	Monthly benefit	12 p.a (monthly)	28,000 (US\$ 6.82)
Person living with HIV/AIDS	Person living with HIV/AIDS	Monthly benefit	12 p.a (monthly)	28,000 (US\$ 6.82)

Source: General Secretariat – National Social Protection Council, *Guidelines for the National Social Assistance Family Package Programme*, GS-NSPC, Phnom Penh, 2023

► Annex 5. List of documents reviewed

Document title	Institution/Source	Year
9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2021–25	Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic	2021
9th NSED Mid-Term Review Report	Ministry of Planning and Investment	2023
Draft 10th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2026–30	Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic	2025
National Social Protection Strategy 2021–25	MOLSW	2021
Report of the Mid-Term Review of the National Social Protection Strategy 2021–25	MOLSW, ILO	2024
Public Financial Management Reform Strategy 2021–2025	Ministry of Finance	2021
Social Security Law (Revised)	National Assembly	2018
Health Insurance Law	National Assembly	2019
Social Welfare Law	National Assembly	2014
Public Procurement Law	National Assembly	2017
Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (Health Sector)	World Bank	2024
Lao People's Democratic Republic Economic Monitor	World Bank	2022–25
International Monetary Fund Article IV Consultation Reports (Lao People's Democratic Republic)	International Monetary Fund	2022–24
Annual Reports of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	MOLSW	2021–24
Annual Reports of the Lao Social Security Organization	LSSO	2021–24

Document title	Institution/Source	Year
Statistical Reports of the National Health Insurance Bureau	NHIB	2021–24
Lao Social Indicator Survey III (LSIS III)	Lao Statistics Bureau, UNICEF	2023
Labour Force Survey	Lao Statistics Bureau	2022
Poverty Profile Report	Lao Statistics Bureau	2023
World Social Protection Report 2024–26	ILO	2024
NSSF Investment Diversification and Governance Report	LSSO/ILO	2024
NSSF Inspections – Current Functioning	LSSO	2024
NSSF Inspections Information System	LSSO	2024
LSSO Digital Transformation Report	LSSO	2024
Informality: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Report	ILO	2024
Home-Based Workers Research Brief	WIEGO, ILO	2023
Central Hospitals Costing Results	Ministry of Health	2024
Assessment of Social Security Law	ILO/Technical Team	2024
Assessment of National Health Insurance (NHI) Law	ILO/Technical Team	2024
Actuarial Valuation of the National Social Security Fund	Actuarial Assessment Team	2024
Actuarial Valuation of the National Health Insurance	Actuarial Assessment Team	2024
SOLAR Project: Report of the Endline Study	ILO, Oxfam, European Union	2024

Document title	Institution/Source	Year
State of Social Protection Report 2025	World Bank	2025
The Foundation of Social Protection Delivery Systems	World Bank	2022
Vision 2030 Social Protection System	Government of Viet Nam	2023
Social Security Legal Reform – Integrated Approach	Government of Viet Nam	2022
Multi-tiered Social Security for Universal Coverage	ILO Viet Nam	2021
Extending Social Insurance for Informal Workers	ILO Viet Nam	2021
Expanding Social Insurance Coverage – Case for Reform	ILO Viet Nam	2022
Adapting Social Insurance to Women – Gender Impact Analysis	ILO Viet Nam	2022
National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016–2025	Government of Cambodia	2017
Law on Social Security Schemes	Government of Cambodia	2019
UHC Road Map	Ministry of Health, Cambodia	2021
Assessment of NSSF Schemes in Cambodia	ILO	2024
Impact Evaluation of the Family Package Programme	ILO Cambodia	2023
Paths to Formalization – Integrated Vision	ILO Cambodia	2023
“SSS Efforts to Increase Informal Worker Coverage” (Presentation)	Social Security System, Philippines	2023
“SSS Coverage for Self-Employed Workers” (Presentation)	Social Security System, Philippines	2023

► Annex 6. Final review tools

A. Progress in NSPS implementation of specific goals/strategic objectives/activities		
1	Role	What are the responsibilities and roles of your Ministry/Department's in the organization and implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy?
2	Progress	What progress has been made in expanding or strengthening social protection programmes under the National Social Protection Strategy framework, in the areas of health insurance, social security, social welfare? What progress has been made under emergency disaster response?
		What has been done?
		Who were the beneficiaries? Identification? How many? Coverage?
		What services were provided?
		How many times? When?
		How much did it cost? Average package costs?
		Who did the work?
		What outcome?
		What has not been done?
3	Challenges	What are the key challenges or constraints you have identified? (e.g. sector capacity, financial constraints, information, legal framework or dissemination of information)
4	Impact	From your perspective, has the implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy had a tangible impact on access? How do you address the needs of vulnerable population groups? (e.g. youth, women, informal workers, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, older persons and poor families)

B. NSPS coordination and management		
5	Coordination status	How effective and efficient is the coordination between ministries and related organizations? (e.g. with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Sports, Social Security Agency and local government)
6	Coordination style	With regards to coordination mechanisms or policy consultation, which type do you find most effective in operation? What are the main challenges?
7	Contribution	How does your Ministry/Department participate or contribute to driving this progress?
8	M&E	How effective is the monitoring and reporting of progress against the goals of the National Social Protection Strategy?
C. NSPS overall progress		
9	Alignment	From your perspective, is the National Social Protection Strategy 2021–25 consistent and strengthen the role of your Ministry/ Department? Is it also aligned with national socio-economic development priorities (such as, National Socio-Economic Development Plan, Sustainable Development Goals)?
10	Policy change	Since 2021, have there been any changes in government priorities? If so, how have those changes affected the organization and Implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy?
11	Financing	Have you seen improvements in budget allocation and expenditure for social protection work? Or how did it change during the implementation of this strategy?
12	Sustainability	Do you consider the current financial allocation model sustainable or not? Are there more financing options available? What reforms could strengthen social protection institutions?
13	Obstacles	What are the main limitations of management or access to social protection? What are the obstacles that remain today?
14	Lessons learned	What important lessons can be learned from the implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy 2021–25 to be used in defining strategies for the next period (2026–30) and Vision 2030?
15	Priorities/ Recommendations	What are the 3 most important priorities that should be emphasized in strengthening social protection?
16	Development partners	How can development partners best support the government in these areas be the most beneficial and most effective?

► Annex 7. Mission schedule

Date and time	Institution and participants	Key area
15 September 2025		
09:30–10:30	World Health Organization	Health Insurance
22 September 2025		
09:30–10:30	UNICEF – Social Policy Unit, Child Protection Unit, Cash Transfer for Persons with Disabilities Project	Social Welfare; Strategy
13:30–16:00	Lao Social Security Organization (Deputy Director; Planning Division; Public Relations Division)	Social Security
23 September 2025		
10:00–12:00	World Food Programme – School Meal Programme; Disaster Response; Social Registry; eCRVS	Social Welfare; Strategy
13:30–14:45	UNDP – Joint Programme on Social Protection; related databases	Social Protection
15:00–16:00	Oxfam – Social security; labour rights; care work	Social Security
24 September 2025		
09:30–10:00	World Bank – RRP/Helping Hand Project and Social Registry	Social Welfare; Database
10:30–11:30	Department of Planning and International Cooperation, MOLSW	Strategy; Governance; Social Welfare
13:30–14:30	Social Welfare Department, MOLSW	Social Welfare
15:30–16:30	Department of Policies towards Devotees and People with Disabilities, MOLSW	Social Welfare
16:30–17:30	International Labour Organization	Social Protection

29 September 2025		
09:00–10:30	Ministry of Education and Sport – Department of Planning and International Cooperation	Social Welfare
10:30–12:00	Lao Women's Union	Social Welfare
13:30–14:30	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry – Department of Rural Development and Cooperatives	Social Welfare
14:45–16:00	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Constituent Engagement
1 October 2025		
09:00–10:30	UXO Office	Social Welfare
10:30–12:00	Labour Protection Department, Lao Federation of Trade Unions	Social Security; Social Welfare
13:30–14:45	State Budget Department, Ministry of Finance	Social Protection Financing
15:00–16:30	Social and Cultural Affairs Commission, National Assembly	Health Insurance; Social Security; Social Welfare
2 October 2025		
09:00–10:30	Statistics Division, Department of Planning and International Cooperation, MOLSW	M&E
13:30–15:00	Asian Development Bank – Conditional Cash Transfer Programme	Social Protection
Field Mission – Xiengkhouang Province		
6 October 2025		
09:00–10:00	Provincial Labour and Social Welfare Office	Social Protection; Social Welfare
10:30–11:30	Provincial Health Insurance Bureau	Health Insurance
13:00–14:00	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (Cooperative schemes; Helping Hand Project)	Social Welfare

Field Mission – Xiengkhouang Province		
6 October 2025		
14:30–15:30	Provincial Education and Sports Office	Social Welfare
15:30–16:30	Provincial Social Security Office	Social Security
7 October 2025		
10:00–11:30	District Labour and Social Welfare Office (including unconditional cash transfer for persons with disabilities)	Social Welfare
13:30–16:00	Key informant interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiary groups (UNICEF-supported initiative)	Beneficiary Consultation
8 October 2025		
10:00–11:00	District Labour and Social Welfare Office	Social Welfare
11:00–12:30	District Agriculture and Forestry Office (Helping Hand Project)	Social Welfare
13:30–16:00	Focus group discussions with beneficiary groups (Helping Hand Programme)	Beneficiary Consultation
Field Mission – Champasak Province		
13 October 2025		
10:30–12:00	Provincial Labour and Social Welfare Office	Social Security; Social Welfare
13:30–14:30	Provincial Social Security Office	Social Security
14:30–15:30	Provincial Health Insurance Bureau	Health Insurance

14 October 2025		
09:30–15:00	Provincial and District Offices (Agriculture; Education; Labour; Social Security; Beneficiary Visits)	Social Welfare; Social Security
Field Mission – Vientiane Province		
20 October 2025		
10:00–15:30	Provincial Labour, Agriculture, Social Security, and Health Insurance Offices	Social Welfare; Social Security; Health Insurance
21 October 2025		
09:30–11:30	District Offices (Hin Herb)	Social Welfare; Social Security
13:30–16:30	District Offices (Fueng) and Beneficiary Visits	Social Welfare; Health Insurance

► Endnotes

¹ AMRO, *Annual Consultation Report on Lao PDR 2025*, November 2025.

² World Bank, *Lao Economic Monitor: Consolidating Recent Reform Momentum for Stability and Growth*, December 2025.

³ WHO Global Health Expenditure Database, accessed 30 December 2025.

⁴ OECD, "Evaluation Criteria".

⁵ Kathy Lindert et al. (eds), *Sourcebook on the Foundations of Social Protection Delivery Systems* (World Bank, 2020).

⁶ UNICEF, *Business Case for Investments in Child-Focused Social Protection in Lao PDR*, 2023.

⁷ WHO Global Health Expenditure Database, accessed 30 December 2025.

⁸ WHO Global Health Expenditure Database, accessed 30 December 2025.

⁹ UNICEF, *Impact Evaluation of the Cambodia Family Package Programme: Baseline Report*, March 2025.

¹⁰ WHO, "Financing for Universal Health Coverage: Dos and Don'ts", Health Financing Guidance Note No. 9, 2019.

¹¹ ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2024–26*, 2024; USP2030, *Annual Report 2023*, 2024; World Bank, *Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity (ASPIRE) Database*.

¹² Based on Ministry of Health, *Summary Report: National Health Insurance Report 2025*, 2025; ILO, *Summary Report: Assessment-Based National Dialogue on Social Protection, Lao People's Democratic Republic*, 2017; UNICEF, *Business Case for Investments in Child-Focused Social Protection in Lao PDR*, 2023; World Bank, *Lao Economic Monitor: Reforms for Stability and Growth*, October 2024.

¹³ According to the ILO's *World Social Protection Report 2024–26*, LMICs currently spend an average of 5.8 per cent of GDP on social protection (including healthcare); According to USP 2030, there is a 3.3 per cent of GDP gap for LMICs to meet SDG target 1.3. According to data from the World Bank's ASPIRE Database, social assistance (safety nets) in LMICs is around 1.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent of GDP, while total social protection (adding contributory insurance) reaches the 4–6 per cent range.

¹⁴ Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, *Draft 10th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2026–2030*, 2025.

¹⁵ Based on Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic 2025; World Bank 2025; AMRO 2025.

¹⁶ ILO, *Costing of Health Services at National Hospitals in Lao PDR*, 2025; ILO, "Technical Note on Policy Recommendations from the Findings of the Costing of Health Services at National Hospitals in Lao PDR", 2025.

¹⁷ World Bank, *Lao Economic Monitor: Reforms for Stability and Growth*, October 2024.

¹⁸ World Bank, *Lao Economic Monitor: Reforms for Stability and Growth*, October 2024.

¹⁹ Kathy Lindert et al. 2020.





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