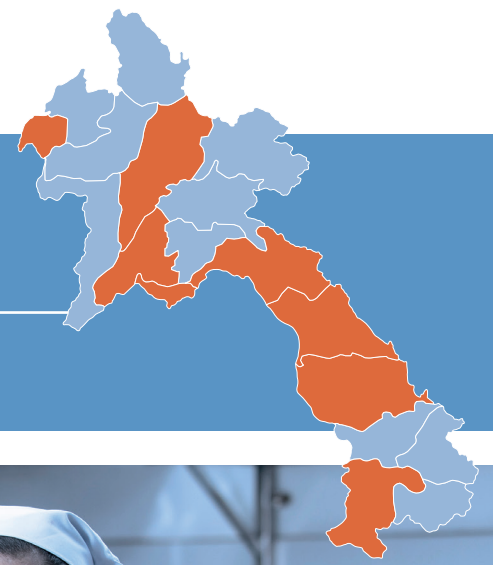




SKILLS FOR TOURISM, AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

LAO/336



SECTOR | Education, vocational training and employment

AGENCY | LuxDev

DURATION | 60 months (January 2023 - December 2027)

TARGET GROUPS

Learners, job seekers and micro/small enterprise entrepreneurs (self-employed), with a specific focus on vulnerable and marginalised young people

INSTITUTIONAL ANCHORAGE

Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)
Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT)
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)

SECTORIAL POLICIES AND REFERENCE STRATEGIES

National, provincial and district socio-economic and sectoral (tourism, agriculture and forestry) development plans, as well as strategies in technical and vocational education and training, and skills development

BUDGET | EUR 25,180,000 (Luxembourg : EUR 10,000,000 – Switzerland: EUR 8,180,000 – European Union: EUR 7,000,000)



Despite significant investment in education and training by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) and its development partners, skill levels lag behind those of neighbouring countries, lowering competitiveness and economic growth prospects. Strengthening human resource capacity is, therefore, a priority under the country's 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021-2025, in terms of both higher quality education and improved labour force capacity. Improving the quality, relevance and accessibility of vocational skills development (VSD) services is critical in this regard. This overall goal also reflects the priorities of the Team Europe Strategy 2021-2025, making this intervention a Team Europe flagship programme, co-financed by the governments of the Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the European Union.

The five-year Skills for Tourism, Agriculture and Forestry (STAF) programme aims to foster and facilitate meaningful change in the VSD sector, thereby increasing the employability of graduates to take advantage of job/income generation opportunities, leaving no one behind in Lao PDR's socio-economic development.

The focus is on two key economic sectors considered to have high and labour-intensive growth potential, and present opportunities for sustainable and technology-enhanced development and innovation:

- tourism and hospitality;
- agriculture and forestry.

The STAF programme strengthens the capacity and performance of a wide range of VSD stakeholders, including public and private training providers, employers and other value chain actors, national and provincial government organisations, including the MoES, MoLSW, MICT and MAF, as well as relevant mass and civil society organisations.

The programme expects to reach 20,000 women and men with enhanced VSD services and labour market insertion support for employment/income generation. Up to 200,000 young women and men should indirectly benefit in terms of improved employability resulting from the availability of better VSD and ancillary services, with a particular focus on those who, for various reasons, are vulnerable and marginalised.



VISION OF CHANGE

If VSD and their delivery are relevant and of good quality, if the demand for quality VSD services is increased amongst employers, job seekers and entrepreneurs, if investment in VSD services is more cost-effective, if the access to VSD is improved and, if secure and decent waged employment and/or income generation opportunities are available, then the employability of Lao people will be increased, leaving no one behind.

The STAF programme works on five key intervention areas for better and more labour-market focused VSD:

- improved relevance and quality of VSD and its delivery which entails greater engagement of industry representatives and other key stakeholders in identifying tourism and hospitality and agriculture and forestry economic growth opportunities/ value chains and collaborating on labour market/skills needs analyses and curriculum development for enhanced and quality-assured VSD provision;
- strengthened demand for VSD amongst employers and job seekers as a result of coordinated and effective promotion by both providers and community influencers to raise awareness and matching of VSD options with employment/income generation opportunities;
- targeted funding to provide greater choice for students and induce performance-oriented incentives for VSD providers to respond to that competitive environment and deliver quality, relevant courses required by students and employers. Private sector capacity and resources are also leveraged through a range of innovative public-private VSD partnerships and support for more commercially oriented VSD models;
- increased access to VSD including the development and delivery of (digitalised where appropriate) non-formal and informal VSD services, and strengthening of provision by public and private providers, including A/F extension services, particularly at district and village level;
- enhanced labour market insertion, including support for more and better career guidance, jobs and further training information, particularly via online platforms, thereby providing more inclusive and transparent access, particularly for disadvantaged job seekers.

The programme is embedded, as far as possible, in the existing institutional framework of the Lao PDR VSD system in order to assure alignment with national strategies, policies and plans, facilitate systemic change and scaling-up, avoid parallel structures and duplication of efforts, and increase the sustainability of the intervention.

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