



**Lao People's Democratic Republic**  
**Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity**

**Southeast Asia Regional Economic Corridor and Connectivity (SEARECC)**  
**( Project ID No. P176088; IDA Credit No. 7102-LA )**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**  
**For National Environmental Standard Consultant (NESC), Reference No. ICS-024**

## I. INTRODUCTION

### (a) Project Background

1. The proposed SEARECC (the Project) seeks to improve regional and domestic trade and climate resilient transport connectivity along an East-West corridor in Southeast Asia, and to provide immediate and effective response in case of an Eligible Crisis or Emergency, and to provide immediate and effective response in case of an Eligible Crisis or Emergency. The Project consists of 5 Components: Component 1: Lao PDR and Regional connectivity enhancement (US\$106 million IDA; US\$20 million GoL), Component 2: Logistics services development and border-crossing management (US\$11 million IDA), Component 3: Strengthening institutional capacity and regulatory framework in agriculture, transport, and investments planning (US\$9 million IDA), Component 4: Project Management (US\$6.4 million IDA), Component 5: Contingency Emergency Response (US\$0 million). Details of each component are in Annex 1. The Project will be financed by The Government of Lao PDR (GoL), World Bank Group Financing of International Development Association (IDA), and Commercial Financing during 31-May-2022 to 31-May-2028.

2. The Government of Lao PDR (GOL) has requested the assistance of the World Bank, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and other donors for the Improvement and Maintenance of National Road 2 (NR2) West and East, as well as selected feeder roads improving local connectivity and improvement of cross-border facilities. Lao PDR's NR2 is a section of Asian Highway No. 13 (AH13), which is one of the East-West corridors in Southeast Asia. With a total length of 295 km, NR2 consists of NR2-West (NR2W) (145 km) connecting with the Thai border at Huai Kone-Nam Ngeun and NR2-East (NR2E) (150 km) connecting with the Vietnamese border at Panghok-Tay Trang, Dien Bien Phu Province. It bisects the new Lao-China North-South rail corridor in Muang Xai, Oudomxay Province, creating the potential for multimodal transport connectivity for both North-South and East-West routes connecting Lao PDR, Vietnam, Thailand, and China. As part of the Asian Highway No. 13 (1,409 km from Hanoi, Vietnam to Nakhon Sawan, Thailand), NR2 is one of the few remaining sections of the Asian Highway Network, which still falls below the minimum Asian Highway Standards.<sup>1</sup> The development of NR2 provides links to Thailand and Vietnam, which can help achieve Lao PDR's aspiration to become a land-linked country through the development of economic corridors.

3. The improvement of climate resilience and safety of selected local roads about 300 km in 2 feeder roads in the Phongsaly, 2 feeder roads in the Oudomxay, 3 feeder roads in the Luangnamtha, 3 feeder roads in the

<sup>1</sup> Asian Highway Standards refer to the technical design and standards set out in annex B of the 'Ministerial Understanding on the Development of the Asian Highway Network Project' (1999). [https://asean.org/?static\\_post=annex-b-asean-highway-standards](https://asean.org/?static_post=annex-b-asean-highway-standards).

Xayabouly, and 3 feeder roads in the Luangprabang using hybrid performance-based contract (PBC) contracts, which include 18 months for construction and 3 years for maintenance. Climate resilience interventions include elevating flood-prone road sections, paving road sections with steep slopes and sections passing through communities, drainage improvement or construction, and slope improvement and stabilization, as required. Under this component, road safety issues would be considered, such as road furniture and traffic calming options. The project will not finance the construction of new roads.

4. The improvement of border-crossing facilities at Pang Hok in Phongsaly bordering to Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam, and Muang Ngeun in Xayabouly bordering to Nan province are led by the DOR with support from the Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT. Works in Pang Hok will be limited to refurbishment of the existing facilities, whereas works in Muang Ngeun will require full rehabilitation and expansion of the Border crossing.

5. The NR2 is implemented through an Output- and Performance-Based Road Contract<sup>2</sup> (OPBRC) with a 10-year contract life. The OPBRC expands the role of the private sector from a simple execution of works to a management and maintenance of road assets and the contractor is paid through a combination of output payments for defined improvement works along with periodic performance-based lump-sum payments for bringing the road to a certain service level and then maintaining it at that level for a relatively long period. The 10-year OPBRC will comprise the first 3-year construction/periodic maintenance period (called the "Construction Phase") and follow-up operations and maintenance (O&M) which may begin from the start of the contract and extend for 7 or 8 years beyond completion of the Construction Phase.

#### (b) Environment and Social Conditions

6. The NR2 will be implemented from a total length of 295 km, NR2 consists of NR2-West (NR2W) (145 km) connecting with the Thai border at Huai Kone-Nam Ngeun and NR2-East (NR2E) (150 km) connecting with the Vietnamese border at Panghok-Tay Trang, Dien Bien Phu Province. While the existing width (6m) will be maintained except in some specific areas where the existing width of 6 m will be extended to 8 m to improve road safety. Furthermore, the improvement of climate resilience and safety of selected 10 feeder roads about 300 km in the Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Xayabouly, Luangprabang using hybrid performance-based contract (PBC) contracts. Implementation of the Project will require full clearance of all structures and vegetation within this boundary. The Project will pass through semi-urbanized areas and may impact a substantial number of land parcels and roadside commercial operations. Communities, facilities and other receptors located along the road sections could potentially be disrupted by road construction and operations. There are also the ethnic communities located alongside the project road. These communities would be affected primarily by labor influx, dust, noise, vehicle emissions, and other forms of pollution from construction, drainage blockage, traffic interruption, removal of vegetation, and impacts to temples during construction, as well as increased traffic flow, speed and noise during operations.

#### (c) Environmental standard Requirements

7. MPWT is the implementing agency for the proposed project. The project is being supported by financing from the World Bank, and as such requires compliance with the WB's Environment and Social Framework (ESF) (see: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework/brief/environmental-and-social-standards>). MPWT prepared and disclosed in March 2022 an Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF, including LMP and a Preliminary ESIA for NR2W), a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), an Ethnic Groups Engagement Framework (EGEF), an Environment and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and a SEP. These documents will form the basis of further studies. A Consultant

<sup>2</sup> Request for Bids - Works - Roads: Output- and Performance-Based Road Contracts, World Bank, October 2017. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/brief/procurement-new-framework>

team has been working since early 2022 in conducting an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for NR2. These consultants are also identifying the selected feeder roads that the project will support, and conduct the required IEE documentation. A separate ESIA is also being conducted for the two border crossing facilities. Based on detailed design and identification of impacts, MPWT has required the consultant team to prepare necessary Environment and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) and other management plans as needed (RAPs, etc.) in line with WB requirements. At this stage MPWT is therefore looking for an individual consultant (ESC) to work with MPWT to ensure project implementation is conducted in line with agreed management plans and WB requirements.

8. E&S reports being prepared by the team of consultants include an (ESMP), a (RAP) or Abbreviated Resettlement Action Plan (A-RAP), an (EGEP), a (SEP), a Gender Action Plan (GAP), and a Labor Management Procedure (LMP). The ESMP will also incorporate the Environmental Code of Practice (ESCOP), the Environmental and Social Health and Safety (ESHS), and the Code of Conduct (COC) to prevent and address Sexual Exploitation Abuse (SEA), Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Children (VAC) to be applied by Contractors. The ESCOP will also cover the WB requirements regarding "Chance Finds Procedure".

9. MPWT is the Project Implementing Agency. MPWT's Department of Roads (DoR) is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the Project. DoR has appointed a Project Manager to lead the Project Management Unit (PMU) with responsibilities for day-to-day implementation in close coordination with other agencies of MPWT and DPWT. The Environmental Research and Disaster Prevention Division (EDPD) of the Public Works and Transport Institute (EDPD/PTI) of MPWT will lead all aspects of safeguards preparation, implementation, supervision and reporting as required by WB. EDPD/PTI is also responsible for fulfilling the IEE requirements and ensuring timely issuance of the environment and certificate (ECC) for the Project. The PMU/DOR with supported by EDPD/PTI oversees the implementation of ESCP, SEP, RAP, EGEP, ESMP, and other safeguard measures.

10. To implement ESCP, SEP, RAP, EGEP, ESMP, five project resettlement committees (PRCs) have been established (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Xayabouly, Luangprabang). The Vice-Governor from each five provinces will chair the resettlement committee. The PRCs including representatives of the DPWT, district Lao Front for National Development (LFND), district Lao Women's Union (LWU), district Agriculture and Forestry (DAFO), and district natural resources and environment offices (DONRE) will oversee and facilitate the implementation of RAP, the Ethnic Group Engagement Plan (EGEP) including Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), ESCP, SEP, ESMP, and management plans.

11. Need for this TOR. For NR2, Feeder roads, dry ports and 2 border crossing points, EDPD/PTI is responsible for ensuring effective and timely implementation of safeguard measures including providing training and capacity building to key agencies and DPWTs and submitting monitoring reports to WB. EDPD/PTI will also responsible for working closely on the development and implementation of the ES reports and training of MPWT and DPWT staff.

The EDPD/PTI assisted by the above consultants and field engineers will be responsible for review and approval of the C-ESMP prepared by the contractors and ensuring their effective implementation. Close supervision of the work contracts and the mitigation measures by local authorities and/or communities will also be required. The Project activities also have to be conducted according to GOL laws and regulations especially those related to environment and social standards. Consultation with GOL suggested that to comply with GOL's EIA regulation, the Project will follow an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for each five Province and thus preparation of five Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) reports will be required and followed. EDPD/PTI will facilitate the issuance of the ECCs. EDPD/PTI will also be responsible for the overall guidance, supervision, and coordination of the E&S activities of the Project including provision of training on E&S requirements of the WB.

EDPD/PTRI will mobilize one full-time national senior environmental and social standard consultant (NSESSC) to be responsible for forging timely and effective implementation of ESCP, SEP, RAP, EGEP, LMP and ESMP

and one full time environment standard consultant (ESC) and one full time national social standard consultant (NSSC) to be responsible for management, monitoring, and reporting on the implementation of the ESMP and other Environmental and Social Standards measures, especially those related to performance of contractor. This TOR is for the ESC.

## II. OBJECTIVE OF ASSIGNMENT

12. The objective of this assignment is to provide technical and managerial support to EDPD/PTI in management, monitoring, and reporting on the implementation progress of ESCP, SEP, RAP, EGEP, ESMP, and other environmental aspects for ensuring successful and timely completion of the activities. Main responsibilities will include, but not limited to, the following:

- i) Assist the team leader of National Senior ES consultant to supervise and monitor ESCP, SEP, RAP, EGEP, ESMP report preparation and implementation, with a particular focus on environmental standard aspects.
- ii) Assist the EDPD/PTI Director and/or main coordinator responsible for SEARECC project to plan, manage, monitor, and report on the implementation of ESCP, SEP, RAP, EGEP, ESMP, and other environmental aspects, safeguard issues including ensuring close coordination and consultation with the PMU of DOR, DOT responsible for SEARECC, the WB, EIB, and other agencies on issues related to ESCP, SEP, RAP, EGEP, ESMP, and other environmental standard aspects.
- iii) Provide implementation support to the PRCs, DPWT, PONRE/DONRE, and local authorities during the implementation of ESCP, SEP, RAP, EGEP, ESMP and assist in addressing other environmental safeguard requirements and monitoring including consultation and GRM monitoring of contractor performance especially on environmental compliance and consultation with local community. It is important to ensure that compensation is completed before works can begin.
- iv) Work closely with one full time national social consultant and other consultants/staff of EDPD/PTI, PONRE/DONRE, local authorities, and the site engineers of the supervision consulting firm (ISWS) and the contractors hired for SEARECC project implementation to supervise environmental performance of civil work and monitor safeguards (ESCP, SEP, RAP, EGEP, ESMP, and other environmental requirements) compliance.

13. Results, lessons learnt, and recommendations from the services will be incorporated into the progress reports which will be submitted to EDPD/PTI as part of the contract.

## III. SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENT

14. The Consultant (ESC) will report to the Director of EDPD/PTI and/or the main coordinator responsible for safeguard implementation and monitoring of SEARECC project. The main objective is to support the NSESSC and EDPD/PTI in supervision and monitoring of the implementation of site-specific RAPs, EGEPs, ESMPs, LMPs, SEP and ESCP. The Consultant is expected to also liaise and work with concerned government agencies including (but not limited to) MONRE and their local offices (PONREs, DONREs), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and its local offices (PAFOs and DAFOs), local authorities, Project Resettlement Committees (PRCs) and concerned project committees or technical teams assigned from the ministries and five provinces.

15. The Environmental Standard Consultant will assist the team leader of E&S consultant provide technical and management support to EDPD/PTI to carry out the following tasks:

### Task 1. Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP)

- Assist to Develop the Alignment Sheet of environmental aspects for the SEARECC Project

- Develop Implementation Work Plan for environmental aspects in the ESCP with a clear timeframe, roles and responsibilities of agencies involved, organizational chart, weekly and monthly milestones monitorable indicators of the ESCP implementation, a mechanism to deal with delays, development of a database, documentation process. The Workplan must be prepared and updated in line with the Project's construction timelines, Result Framework and Annual Work Plan of the project;
- Supervise and work closely with EDPD/PTI to provide ESCP implementation support and report back to the Director of EDPD;
- Ensure the achievement of milestones specified in the workplan and recommend immediate corrective actions if milestones are not met or are not on track;
- To work with concerned government agencies including (but not limited to) MONRE and their local offices (PONREs, DONREs), MAF and its local offices (PAOs and DAFOs), MOCI and its local offices (POCI and DOCI), local authorities, PRCs and concerned project committees or teams assigned from the ministries and five provinces (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Xayabouly, Luangprabang) to obtain required information, approval and follow the ECCs for the IEE report for feeder roads and the ESIA report for NR2 as required by the relevant national legislation.
- Assist EDPD/PTI to prepare progress reports on ESCP implementation and completion report for submission to the donors (the World Bank, EIB, and other agencies)
- Undertake other related tasks that may be assigned and agreed with the EDPD/PTI Director.

#### Task 2. Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).

- Assist to Develop the environmental standard aspects for the SEARECC Project
- Develop Implementation Work Plan for the SEP, and ESMP Reports with a focus on environmental aspects with a clear timeframe, roles and responsibilities of agencies involved, organizational chart, weekly and monthly milestones monitorable indicators of the SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation, a mechanism to deal with delays, development of a database, documentation process and financial flow system to ensure timely processing of payments. The Workplan must be prepared and updated in line with the Project's construction timelines, Result Framework and Annual Work Plan of the project;
- Supervise and work closely with EDPD/PTI to provide SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation support and report back to the Director of EDPD;
- Ensure the achievement of milestones specified in the workplan and recommend immediate corrective actions if milestones are not met or are not on track;
- Monitor GRM with the PRCs, concerned local authorities and village level grievance/resettlement committee (locally known as village mediation unit) established and trained to handle project related grievances that may be received from PAPs/PAHs and who believe they are PAPs/PAHs with respect to resettlement process.
- Conduct regular visit to the project sites and PAPs/PAHs to review the ESMP implementation progress and provide advisory and guidance to address issues and grievance that may be raised and identified during the site visit. Special attention shall be paid to the vulnerable, ethnic and female headed PAHs to ensure that they have been provided with compensation and entitlements and that their livelihood will not get worse than that of pre-project level.
- To work with concerned government agencies including (but not limited to) MONRE and their local offices (PONREs, DONREs), MAF and its local offices (PAOs and DAFOs), MOCI and its local offices (POCI and DOCI), local authorities, PRCs and concerned project committees or teams assigned from the ministries and five provinces (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Xayabouly, Luangprabang)

to obtain required information, approval and follow the ECCs for the IEE report for feeder roads and the ESIA report for NR2 as required by the relevant national legislation.

- Ensure that IT monitoring and tracking system developed by the implementation support consulting firm is institutionalized into the EDPD/PTI and that the system is functioning and maintained with data on grievances entered and processed with assistance from the junior staff or junior consultants on a regular basis.
- Assist EDPD/PTI to prepare progress reports on SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation and completion report for submission to the donors (the World Bank, EIB, and other agencies);
- Provide advice and mentoring support for EDPD/PTI including its junior staff, support staff, and junior consultants (young graduated students) mobilized and hired under the Project to build its in-house capacity on SEP, and ESMP Reports, resettlement management, planning, monitoring and reporting for this Project as well as for other similar types of road projects.
- Undertake other related tasks that may be assigned and agreed with the EDPD/PTI Director.

#### Task 3. Ethnic Group Engagement Plan (EGEP)

- Implement, monitor and report on the EGEP implementation.
- Conduct ethnic community participation and meaningful consultation with the ethnic groups and PAPs during the preparation of EGEP and project implementation.
- Work closely with PRCs and concerned agencies including Lao Front for National Development to ensure successful implementation of EGEP in line with the government and the World Bank policy of ESS 7.
- Conduct regular site visits to Project sites, particularly the ethnic communities affected by the Project activities, observe and interview ethnic PAPs/PAHs to review the EGEP and RAP implementation progress and provide advisory and technical support to address issues and grievance that may be raised and identified during the site visit.
- Ensure that their grievances and feedback received are reviewed, responded and recorded in the tracking system.

#### Task 4. Assisting EDPD/PTI and Capacity Building.

- Perform activities as agreed with EDPD/PTI.
- Priority will be given to provide training on the ESCP, SEP, ESMP reports and other ES reports, including ESIA, IEE preparation, supervision, and monitoring to junior and support staff and consultants.

### IV. QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

16. The Consultant should have the following qualifications and experiences required to undertake her/his assignment:

- At least Master degree in environmental sciences, environmental development, community or rural development or related field of expertise is preferred. Other disciplines (social science, road and transport engineering), in combination with significant related field of expertise in environment sector can also be considered.
- A minimum of 5 years' experience in environmental impact assessment and resettlement action plans under infrastructure projects.

- Having experience and knowledge on World Bank's ES framework, 10 ES standard, World Bank's ES safeguard requirements (OP4.01, OP4.10, and OP4.12), or safeguards requirements of other international agencies, and GOL environment and social safeguard requirements especially those related to Resettlement and Compensation Decree, ESIA/IEE legislations, and other concerned regulations on environmental safeguards related to water infrastructure will be highly desired.
- Experience in working with government agencies to support and develop their institutional capacity would be an advantage.
- Good spoken and written English with ability to prepare report in English language, and computer literacy (Microsoft Office and Excel) will be necessary.
- Willingness and ability to travel to project site frequently.
- **Undertake other related tasks that may be assigned and agreed with the EDPD/PTI Director.**

## V. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

17. During the course of her/his assignment, the Consultant will deliver the following outputs to the EDPD/PTI working together with the NSCC:

- Updated the Alignment Sheet of Environmental aspects for the SEARECC Project;
- Updated workplan for ESCP, SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation and monitoring with donors, PMU, EDPD/PTI and her/his own comments or suggestions incorporated based on field observations and discussions, (including biweekly meeting with the donors). The workplan should include agreed actions, expected outputs or key milestones, responsibilities and timeframe.
- Monthly progress report on ESCP, SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation to be submitted to the Director of EDPD/PTI no later than 3 working days after the final date of each calendar month. The monthly progress report shall cover overall status of ESCP, SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation including grievances received and addressed and next steps.
- Bi-annual progress report on ESCP, SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation to be submitted to the Director of EDPD/PTI no later than 5 working days after the last date of sixth month. The bi-annual report summarizes ESCP, SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation status and highlight main issues faced, action taken, status of grievances received and addressed and next steps or priorities for the next 6 months.
- Activity proposals and plans for safeguards implementation and supervision and capacity building activities prepared and finalized with support and input from the consultant
- Reports on findings of site visits, training and study or exchange visit finance under the project, minutes of consultations and meetings which could be submitted as annexes to the progress reports.

## VI. DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT:

18. The Consultant (ESC) is expected to start her/his assignment on October 1, 2022 or as soon as her/his contract has been signed. S/he will work totally on 12 months full-time basis for the critical period of the ESCP, SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation from October 2022 to October 2023. The Consultant will sign a contract time-based as agreed with EDPD/PTI. Subject to the further need and her/his performance to be reviewed and discussed at the mid-term and end of this assignment, her/his contract may be renewed.

## VII. REPORTING AND PAYMENT

19. The Consultant will prepare and submit the following reports or deliverables in English to EDPD/PTI with key parts of the documents to be translated into Lao. The report format and content of each report will be agreed

with EDPD/PTI. For each report submitted an electronic copy will be provided. Electronic copies will be in the format used in their preparation will all links, formulas, and fields active. For all reports an executive summary will be included:

- Inception Report: The Consultant will, within two weeks of Commencement of Services or any other date as agreed with EDPD/PTI, submit an Inception Report to EDPD/PTI setting out the activities and work plan to be carried out during the consulting services including the Consultant's manning schedule and other clear inputs and outputs to be provided including a plan for submission of invoices. The report will also provide a section summarizing the existing status of the project activities and implementation progress and environment and social requirements and next steps.
- Environmental standards capacity assessment report and workplan capacity development for EDPD/PTI, DPWT, and PRC of five Provinces (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Xayabouly, Luangprabang) to be delivered 45 days after the Consultant's contract has been signed.
- Progress Reports (Quarterly during the first 6 months): A consultant will assist EDPD/PTI to prepare and submit quarterly progress report to keep the World Bank updated on the status of the safeguard assessment and instrument preparation during the first 6 months of her/his assignment or as required. The progress reports should also include consultant's input provided to the safeguard documents reviewed. After that s/he will assist EDPD/PTI to prepare and submit ESCP, SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation monitoring report required for the World Bank every six month and annually. The Consultant will prepare and submit these compliance monitoring reports to EDPD/PTI at least 14 days before the final submission date as agreed with WB. The report will summarize all progress of ESCP, SEP, and ESMP Reports implementation and records on GRM and other aspects related to road safety, community health and safety and workers, etc.
- Completion Report: At the end of the service, the Consultant will prepare and submit a Completion Report to EDPD/PTI and WB in a manner satisfactory to EDPD/PTI including: a summary of the activities conducted; successes, problems, and lessons learned during the services; extent to which the outputs and targets agreed have been achieved, together with an analysis of any variance from agreed targets; and recommendations for improvement including an estimated budgets, schedules and implementation arrangements, for follow on work to the services.

20. The payment will be made through EDPD/PTI. The Consultants will submit an invoice to claim payments along with the working days, list of deliverables and reports outlining key activities undertaken and outputs to facilitate the payment.

#### VIII. RESOURCES TO BE PROVIDED BY EMPLOYER:

21. EDPD/PTI will provide i) office space and basic office furniture including photocopier and telephone landline, ii) technical counterparts, iii) basic office assistance, iv) transportation for field work, and v) per-diem and allowance and accommodation expenses (when working out of Vientiane Capital)

22. The Consultant will be responsible for other services that may be required and agreed with EDPD/PTI, including: i) translation of the reports in Lao language; ii) international telecommunication arrangement; iii) organization of the workshops, training and study visit; iv) other assignment related work required for performing the services.

## Annex

Annex 1: Detail of 5 component for this SEARECC project.

- Component 1: Lao PDR and Regional connectivity enhancement (US\$106 million IDA; US\$20 million GoL). This Component will support Lao PDR to improve connectivity in the northern part of Lao PDR to provide safe, efficient, climate-resilient, and reliable infrastructure for both international transit routes and domestic connectivity through:
  - (i) Sub-Component 1.1: NR2W climate resilient improvement and maintenance (US\$65 million IDA; US\$17.5million GoL). This sub-component supports the improvement and maintenance of the climate resilience and safety of selected sections of NR2W<sup>3</sup> to meet the Asian Highway Class III standards. This includes widening of the road from 6 meters to 8 meters (6 meters of the carriageway and 2 meters of shoulders-one meter each side to accommodate pedestrian safety) and rest areas. The Output and Performance-Based Road Contracts (OPBRC), with 3 years for construction and 7 years for operations and maintenance will be used. The Department of Road (DOR), MPWT, will be the lead implementing agency for this sub-component.
  - (ii) Sub-Component 1.2: Local Road climate resilient improvement and maintenance (US\$25 million IDA; US\$2.5 million GoL). This sub-component supports the improvement and maintenance of climate resilience and safety of selected local roads in Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luang Namtha, Xayabouly, and Luangprabang. The performance-based contract (PBC) approach will be used for maintenance. The Department of Road (DOR) and the provincial Department of Public Works and Transport (DPWT) will be the lead implementing agency for this sub-component.
  - (iii) Sub-Component 1.3: Improvement of the border crossing facilities (US\$9 million IDA). This sub-component supports the improvement of the border crossing facilities on road NR2 at (a) Pang Hok in Phongsaly bordering Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam and (b) Muang Ngeun in Xayabouly bordering Nan province, Thailand, through the upgrade of the existing facility and provision of goods and equipment for the digitization of cross-border business processes. The cross-border facilities will also include mini SPS labs, customs-bonded warehouse services and related equipment to support the CIQ operations. This subcomponent will also put in place measures to strengthen the preparedness and response to communicable disease. This will also be led by the DOR with support from the Department of Urban Planning (DUP), and MPWT.
  - (iv) Sub-Component 1.4: Implementation support and supervision consultant (US\$7 million IDA). This sub-component will finance (a) implementation support and supervision consulting services for the design and supervision of the NR2, local roads, and cross-border facilities improvement, and (b) improving local road maintenance planning and financing systems, with incorporation of local agriculture potential.

Climate resilience interventions will be applied across this component for both NR2W and local roads to adapt to increasing flooding and landslide risks from climate change, include elevating flood-prone road sections, paving road sections with steep slopes and sections passing through large communities, drainage improvement or construction, and slope improvement and stabilization, as required. Details are provided under the technical appraisal section.

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<sup>3</sup> The NR2E sections will be financed by EIB in parallel to this project.

This component will also promote opportunities for women from local communities through improved working environment, such as toilets, separated dormitories for men and women at campsites, and access to information about safety at work. In addition, the project will request contractors to include a minimum quota of female workers in bidding documents and support road authority in the design and implementation of outreach activities to local communities aimed at encouraging women in taking employment opportunities for road and civil works contracts. The sensitization workshops targeting hiring managers of contractors, consultants, and road authorities will be carried out to promote women's hiring and advancement. Local communities including ethnic groups, with a particular focus on increasing women's voice and agency, will participate in the monitoring of the road improvement and maintenance.

➤ Component 2: Logistics services development and border-crossing management (US\$11 million IDA).

This Component will support the operations of cross-border trade and logistic development through:

- (i) Sub-Component 2.1: Logistics facilities development (US\$7 million IDA). This sub-component supports MPWT to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of logistics services in the project provinces through: (a) formulation of policies to improve the enabling environment for competitive logistics services; (b) feasibility studies and PPP transaction advisory for pilot logistics facilities (which could be dry-ports, consolidation locations, truck terminals, and community-based consolidation points to enable access of smallholder producers); (c) the development of the Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for the development of the logistics facilities; and (d) provision of public utilities (access roads, electricity grid, water supply, and some structures for community-based logistics facilities) to the logistics facilities. The logistics facilities will be developed and operated through private sector financing. This sub-component will be led by the DOT and involve agencies concerned at the provincial level.
- (ii) Sub-component 2.2: Regional integration and cross-border transport agreements (US\$1 million IDA). This sub-component will support GoL to improve cross-border transport efficiency. The proposed activities include technical assistance to (a) establish a collaboration platform for the dialogue among Lao PDR, Thailand, and Vietnam; (b) strengthen the capacity to implement cross-border transport agreements and address cross-border transport issues, such as harmonization of heavy vehicle dimensions and standards, permitted axle loads, driver licensing, climate change, road safety, communicable disease control (including multisectoral cooperation for Regional Health Security at boarder check points using the OneHealth<sup>4</sup> approach); and, (c) improve regulatory frameworks to support the implementation of existing cross-border transport agreements.
- (iii) Sub-component 2.3: Strengthening capacity of CIQ and Border Management (US\$3 million IDA). This sub-component covers: (a) financing technical assistance to review and improve secondary legislation in border management; (b) providing training to strengthen the institutional and operational capacity of CIQ, including communicable diseases and human trafficking; (c) providing equipment and software customization of the existing automated systems to optimize efficiency and effectiveness of border clearance; and (d) promoting cross-border cooperation through operational and policy dialogues and training for improved CIQ management, including information sharing. This sub-component will place a particular focus on ensuring equal access to information related to CIQ for women and smallholder

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<sup>4</sup> One Health is a collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach — working at the local, regional, national, and global levels — with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. This should include animal health, human health, and food safety through improved trade of livestock and livestock products.

producers and traders. The Trade Facilitation Secretariat (TFS), MOIC, will be the lead coordinating agency for this sub-component.

- Component 3: Strengthening institutional capacity and regulatory framework in agriculture, transport, and investments planning (US\$9 million IDA). This component will support strengthening institutional and operational capacity in agricultural development, transport sector, and investment management at national and provincial levels.
  - (i) Sub-Component 3.1: Support on agricultural trade and SPS Management (US\$6 million IDA). This sub-component will be led by the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and include the following:
    - a) Capacity development to improve the efficiency of agricultural trade will focus on improving the enabling environment for agricultural trade activities. The key activities include: (i) financing technical assistance to review and improve business process for cross border trade for agriculture products through streamlining of export and import permits, raising awareness of traders' compliance with SPS requirements, and simplifying the registration of farm inputs; (ii) providing training to strengthen operational capacity for the MAF, Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFOs), District Agriculture and Forestry Offices (DAFOs) and smallholder producer organizations including ethnic groups in agricultural trade promotion; and (iii) capacity development to address key gender gaps in agricultural trade including unequal access to information for women, barriers registering businesses, accessing financial credit, technology and market.
    - b) Capacity building for SPS management will focus on capacity building of MAF, Ministry of Health (MOH), PAFOs, DAFOs, border checkpoints and smallholder producer organizations for compliance of SPS requirements and reduce trade barriers in the targeted provinces and districts. Mainly, the activities cover (i) financing technical assistance to review and improve legislation relevant to SPS and develop a generic automated system in SPS certification<sup>5</sup>; (ii) providing training to strengthen institutional and operational capacity in SPS management including border controls and its coordination between the mini labs at the border and the central and regional SPS labs; and (iii) financing technical assistance to carry out a laboratory assessment of the existing SPS labs for laboratory equipment upgrade, accreditation and testing services.
  - (ii) Sub-Component 3.2: Institutional capacity development for transport sector (US\$3 million IDA). This sub-component, led by DPF, MPWT, includes training, office equipment, and technical assistance:
    - a) Multi-modal transport technical assistance includes: (i) update the Transport Sector Strategy to include multi-modal transport, logistics development, disaster risk management, climate change, public transportation, gender and social inclusion, and public-private partnerships; (ii) develop a multi-modal transport framework, including prioritisation and monitoring tools; (iii) develop a public transportation plan; and (iv) develop regulations and guidelines to support strategy implementation.
    - b) Supporting the implementation of road safety action plan will focus on two areas: (i) road safety engineering, such as conducting road safety audits and safe system assessments; (ii) road safety data,

<sup>5</sup> Support to SPS activities under this subcomponent is building on some ongoing and past experiences and success under the Lao PDR Agriculture Competitiveness Project (LACP), Lao PDR Competitiveness and Trade Project (LCTP) and Second Trade Development Facility (TDF2).

services, and management, which support activities to maintain the road safety database; (iii) road safety campaigning and enforcement; and (iv) post-crash response capacity improvement.

- c) Strategic Capacity Building Program (SCBP) will focus on (i) strengthening the institutional and organisational capacity necessary to deliver the above plans and actions and identify further steps necessary to develop guidelines, tools, processes and modernised ways of working that can be transferable to other corridors and can be embedded in the mainstream activities of MPWT and Provinces, (ii) enhancing the skills and capabilities required to implement the above multi-modal transport framework and strategy, (iii) strengthening capacity to address the gender gaps in the transport sector, including integrating gender and social inclusion (GESI) considerations in developing regulations and guidelines to support the implementation of the sector strategy, including developing and rolling out annual advocacy and social and behaviour change communication campaigns to support necessary changes for raising women's agency and voice, changing social norms to increase women's mobility and access to transport.
- Component 4: Project Management (US\$6.4 million IDA). This Component will provide technical and operational assistance for strengthening the environmental and social capacity of agencies concerned at national and local levels, the day-to-day management, monitoring, and evaluation of the project; digitized tool to support business processes and M&E (particularly on contract management); and the carrying out of technical and financial audits. In addition, this component will provide support for compliance monitoring for environmental and social aspects. The sub-component will also strengthen the resilience of communities living along the project roads against human trafficking, communicable disease, road safety, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment through campaigns, training, and dissemination of information. The following documents, which will also be prepared as part of the project requirement, include the Project Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD), including a procurement plan, and Project Implementation Manual (PIM)—containing detailed information on the project implementation arrangements and processes, including coordination mechanisms, project management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), reporting arrangement, procurement, financial management, disbursements, and safeguards.
  - Component 5: Contingency Emergency Response (US\$0 million). This component will provide an immediate response to an eligible crisis or emergency, as needed. In the event of an eligible crisis or emergency, the World Bank can re-allocate project funds to support emergency response and recovery.

Annex 2: All documents of Environmental and Social Framework for SEARECC Project. - Download from [https://mpwt.gov.la/en/ongoing-projects#project\\_parent\\_19](https://mpwt.gov.la/en/ongoing-projects#project_parent_19).