Highlights

- In February, a consultative meeting was held with the Food and Drug Department, Ministry of Health, as part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Laos (MoLSW)’s ongoing initiative to map relevant national and international actors on importation and customs clearance of humanitarian relief items and streamline relevant mechanisms and processes.

- In March, MoLSW, with support from the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Global Logistics Cluster Field-Based Preparedness Project (FBPP), conducted a biannual National Logistics Preparedness Working Group (NLPWG) Meeting to discuss progress, challenges, and actions implemented by relevant stakeholders in relations to the National Logistics Preparedness Action Plan as well as key logistics preparedness priorities in 2023.

Background

Based on risk indices and national-level logistics performance and capacity indicators, in 2018, Laos was identified as one of 24 country candidates for the Global Logistics Cluster’s Field-Based Preparedness Project. The project’s primary aim is to support and empower national actors to strengthen their capacity to autonomously prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises. A vital element of this is the facilitation of a coordinated approach towards improving the resilience of local humanitarian supply chains and supporting effective information exchange between the government, national actors, and the private sector to ensure all actors are well prepared for joint humanitarian logistics responses. In a large-scale disaster event, should the Government of Laos request international humanitarian assistance, the Global Logistics Cluster capacities can support national actors in facilitating a coordinated response.

From June to November 2019, a Preparedness Expert was deployed to Laos to commence the process of mapping national logistics capacities and stakeholders. She worked with national responders to augment information sharing and exchange and to assist in organising a simulation-based logistics gap analysis workshop and other capacity-strengthening initiatives based on identified partner needs. In  

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2019, Laos experienced its largest flood response in 50 years, with over 600,000 affected people across six Provinces, reaffirming the need for coordinated logistics preparedness actions across multiple national actors.

In September 2019, a national Preparedness Officer was deployed to continue the project’s activities, including a series of trainings and training of trainers on the topics identified by partners during 2019-2020. In addition, as a result of workshops conducted between 2019-2020, a draft National Logistics Preparedness Action Plan was also put forward for further endorsement by humanitarian partners.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, follow-up meetings and discussions continued in 2021 on the formalisation of the NLPWG membership focal points and the Logistics Preparedness Action Plan for endorsement by the NLPWG members and other relevant FBPP activities, such as planning for district-level Warehouse Trainings with MoLSW.

In 2022, MoLSW continued its logistics preparedness activities as outlined in the National Logistics Preparedness Action Plan. As part of the project transition, the FBPP, with support from the WFP Laos Country Office, continues to advocate for and support the implementation of these activities, where and when required.

**Coordination**

- Following the initial consultation with the Customs Department, Ministry of Finance in December 2022 on the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for humanitarian relief items importation and customs clearance led by MoLSW, on 28 February 2023, the Preparedness Officer and the WFP Country Office in Laos held a consultative meeting with the Food and Drug Department, Ministry of Health. The meeting was part of continued efforts in mapping humanitarian cargo importation processes in Laos with different line ministries to take stock of different government authorities’ practices and to streamline national regulatory mechanisms for effective humanitarian coordination and response.

- On 29 March 2023, a biannual NLPWG meeting was organised by MoLSW and co-chaired by WFP Laos Country Office to discuss updated logistics actions in accordance with the National Logistics Preparedness Action Plan and key 2023 logistics preparedness priorities, including national Emergency Logistics Training of Trainers (ELTT) and development of national SOPs for humanitarian cargo importation and customs clearance. A training needs survey was conducted at the meeting to identify potential learning topics to be included in the training curriculum. The ELTT will target humanitarian responders at the national level to learn about humanitarian logistics principles and operation and coordination mechanisms. It is expected that similar trainings can be further expanded and replicated at the provincial level.

[https://logcluster.org/preparedness/laopdr19](https://logcluster.org/preparedness/laopdr19)
Information management

- The quarterly report and infographic between October and December 2022 have been published on the Lao PDR Preparedness webpage.

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