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REPORT OF THE ARISE Plus LAO PDR PROJECT

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Acronyms

AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
ARISE Plus	ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ATIGA	ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement
DFTP	Department of Foreign Trade Policy
DIMEX	Department for Import and Export
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DoF	Department of Forestry
DoIH	Department of Industry and Handicraft
DoSM	Department of Science and Metrology
DPC	Department of Planning and Cooperation
DTP	Department for Trade Promotion
EBA	Everything But Arms
ER	Expected Result
ERIIT	Economic Research Institute for Industry and Trade
EU	European Union
FDD	Food and Drug Department
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit
GoL	Government of Lao PDR
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	International Trade Centre
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LDC	Least Developed Country
LNCCI	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MoIC	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
NIU	National Implementation Unit
PCO	Project Coordination Office
PPC	Plant Protection Centre, MAF
PRC	Project Review Committee
QCs	Quality Champions
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
SME	Small and Medium-sized enterprises
SPS	Sanitary and phytosanitary measures
SYMST	Systematic Mechanism for Safer Trade project
TBT	Technical barriers to trade
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
WTO	World Trade Organization

I. Introduction

Since the beginning of 2022, Lao PDR is experiencing a difficult economic situation with the depreciation of the kip, an increased inflation and shortages in the provision of fuel, resulting in social tensions. At the same time, the country was operating a full re-opening of its borders (May 2022) and was releasing all measures related to COVID-19 protection. The growth was projected to recover to 3.8 percent in 2022, depending on the result of debt renegotiations, according to the World Bank's Lao Economic Monitor, published in April 2022.

This economic crisis has shown the level of vulnerability of the economy. It stresses even more the importance of developing sustainable, diversified value chains through competitiveness, export diversification and taking advantage of trade opportunities and preferences. This can be done through a strong capacity-building strategy, giving to public sector officials the keys to understand, negotiate and implement crucial policy instruments, and empowering private sector representatives with skills to develop high value added, export-oriented products.

This is what the ARISE Plus project has strived to achieve during the reporting period. The efforts were recognized by the independent Mid-Term Evaluation of the project, which emphasized the comprehensiveness and consultative aspects of the activities, and their potential for policy and financial sustainability. Based on the recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation, a no-cost extension was granted to the project. The yearly reporting periods now apply as follows:

- **Year 1 – inception phase:** 1 November 2018 – 4 January 2020
- **Year 2:** 5 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
- **Year 3:** 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021
- **Year 4:** 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022
- **Final year – Year 5:** 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2023

This report is covering the period from **1 January to 30 June 2022**¹. It summarizes key achievements, reflects on challenges encountered, including due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, and highlights priorities for the upcoming reporting period (1 July to 31 December 2022).

¹ This report has been drafted in June 2022. The events not yet organized at the date of reporting are described in future tense.

II. Achievements January to June 2022: overview

During the period 1 January – 30 June 2022, the project reported 704 participations to trainings and capacity-building activities, including those of at least 248 women. These figures are slightly above the trends from the year 2021 (when in total 906 individuals including 300 women were trained).

Budget performance

The overall budget performance of the ARISE Plus Lao PDR project reached approximately 78% of the available budget from its inception until 30 June 2022. This reveals the budget utilization of the project: how much the project has made use of the funds available to date.

Table 1: Expenditures by Expected Results (ER) between November 2018 and June 2022

Pillars	Expenditures (= total expenditures 1 November 2018 - 30 June 2022)	Budget (=total budget released 1 November 2018 - 30 June 2022)	Difference	% of available budget spent
E.R. 1 Regional Economic Integration	592,809	918,087	325,278	65%
E.R. 2 Trade Preferences for Exports	709,625	875,346	165,722	81%
E.R. 3 Value Chain Development	1,052,974	1,261,274	208,300	83%
Project Coordination, Partnerships and Communication	1,007,483	1,249,365	241,882	81%
Total	3,362,891	4,304,072	941,181	78%

Source: ITC calculations, based on ITC Project Portal – 27 June 2022².

This shows a stable trend in comparison with the previous reporting period of July – December 2021 (81% of released budget spent in November 2021).

Summary of key achievements for the period January – June 2022

The work plan as presented and approved during the fifth Project Review Committee (PRC) meeting (30 November 2021) and the Programme Executive Committee (PEC) meeting (14 December 2021) was implemented as much as possible, with continued adaptations to the evolving situation.

Below is a summary of the key achievements during the reporting period:

- Standard Operating Procedures for the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) National Enquiry Point (NEP) ready
- Standard Operating Procedures for the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) National Notification Authority (NNA) ready
- Terms of Reference (TORs) for Lao PDR's National Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee ready
- Terms of Reference (TORs) for Lao PDR's Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Committee ready
- Technical training series for FDD inspectors (method validation in chemical analysis; codex hygiene and HACCP; uncertainty measurement; ISO/IEC17025:2017 Requirements)
- Training series on specialty coffee – practical and theory
- Training on organic coffee farming and coaching support to prepare for international certification
- Launch of the regulatory assessment on transports
- SME Clinic activities: coaching of 5 companies to optimize and streamline production and processes

² This table is not a financial certified statement.

- Finalization of the training series of the Quality Champions (12 workshops), additional training workshops and start of the company improvement processes (8 companies to be coached by 2 Quality Champions each)
- Regulatory Assessment for the Transport Services Sector finalized and validated
- Training workshop on EBA for the European Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lao PDR
- Market linkages and enhanced market knowledge for 5 companies having participated in the World of Coffee fair
- Training for wood processing stakeholders and coaching companies to prepare for EU requirements

Table 2: Summary of activities completed in the first half of 2022

Expected Results	workshops and events	consultations	documents
E.R. 1 Regional Economic Integration	14	13	1
E.R. 2 Trade Preferences for Exports	7	11	-
E.R. 3 Value Chain Development	12	12	-
Project Management, Partnerships and Coordination	-	15	2
January - June 2022	33	51	3

Source: ITC, June 2022

This table also shows a stable trend in activity organization (33 workshop and events compared to 30 in the previous reporting period).

Summary of key project coordination and management results

In terms of project coordination and management, the project has made several important steps during the reporting period.

First, the Mid-Term Evaluation was completed and the final report received at the end of April. Nine recommendations were made by the Team Leader, based on direct interviews and secondary data review. The recommendations are categorized by their time horizon: short-term and medium-term. The final report outlined that the project was relevant, coherent, cost-efficient, effective, and with good potential for sustainability. Some areas can be further improved (e.g. in cross-cutting areas). At the end of preparing the present report, ITC is preparing a comprehensive management's response to the recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation.

Second, the project team has worked in close cooperation with the EU Delegation and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to reach consensus on a no-cost extension of the project. The extension was granted until 31 December 2023. This allows a smooth implementation of planned activities and the design of a selected number of new ones, based inter alia on the counterparts' requests and on the recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation report.

Third, the project management team supported the first international on-site missions to Vientiane, with the travel of international experts, as of June. At the time of preparing this report, the project management team is preparing a mission to Vientiane to participate in the sixth Project review Committee meeting.

Fourth, a number of activities and participations related to partnerships and cooperation were organized during the reporting period:

- Following a recommendation made by H.E. Dr. Khampheng Saysompheng, Minister of Industry and Commerce during the PEC meeting, and after consultations with the NIU, an information and dissemination session between the Quality Champions groups and

responsibles of the BAF programme was organized in May 2022. The purpose was to share information about the BAF facility, so the companies benefitting from the QC support could possibly see the BAF mechanism as an opportunity.

- The project coordination team continued to participate into consultations and participatory processes with the UN Country Team, on the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and on cross-cutting topics such as the Call to Action for Human Rights.

- The project participated in two regional meetings of the ARISE Plus programme: one meeting organized by the EU Delegation in Jakarta in April for general coordination purposes; and one meeting organized by the regional ARISE Plus project implementation team to discuss cooperation specifically with the teams of ARISE Plus Lao PDR and ARISE Plus Myanmar.

III. Achievements January to June 2022: Expected Result 1

ER1: Increased regional economic integration by addressing specific constraints in targeted sectors through support for the implementation of measures contained in the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) and other commitments under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025.

Summary of key results under E.R. 1

Thanks to activities under this E.R., Lao PDR has a **regulatory assessment on transport services. The structuration of the country's response to Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)** has improved thanks to the formalization of Standard Operating Procedures for the National Enquiry Point (NEP) and the National Notification Authority (NNA); and the finalization of the ToRs for the TBT Committee and the SPS Committee. A **series of training on food quality and safety** was organized.

The sections below provide a short description of activities implemented during the reporting period. For more information, activity reports can be provided upon request.

Activity 1.1 – Gap analysis of ATIGA implementation in Lao PDR

Completed – please refer to previous reports.

Activity 1.2 – Review of the gap analysis results with GoL, and the private sector and agree on specific trade measures to be addressed (with a focus on targeted sectors)

Meeting obligations under the ATIGA is essential to support Lao PDR and its businesses to take advantage of the trade facilitation potential, legal certainty, and transparency – and leverage the benefits of the regional partnership, generate more trade within the region, and strengthen the regional trade integration.

To facilitate implementation of policy reforms based on the diagnostic assessment study (activity 1.1), ITC organized further technical sessions in collaboration with DFTP in December 2021. At these sessions, ITC's Experts presented the findings of the study and the roadmap to officials from the DFTP (who will be taking the lead in facilitating implementation) and discussed challenges faced in implementation and technical assistance needs. Based on these discussions, ITC developed a more detailed workplan for the specific technical assistance activities that can be undertaken under the scope of the ARISE Plus Lao PDR project and shared with DFTP for review and validation. This covers activities relating to:

- i. Monitoring implementation of the ATIGA
- ii. Strengthening compliance with ATIGA notification requirements
- iii. Identifying barriers in exporting to ASEAN countries (by way of a Business Process Analysis study)

ITC received validation of these activities end February 2022 and is in the process of commencing implementation of certain activities (Details provided in Activity 1.3).

Activity 1.3 - Technical assistance and capacity building in the area of policy definition, regulations and procedures, product and environmental standard adoption

Activity 1.3 consists of several sub-activities:

Sub-activity: Monitoring implementation of the ATIGA

The proposed support is to strengthen capacity within Lao PDR to effectively implement the ATIGA. It is related to activities 1.1 and 1.2.

ITC developed and shared a detailed methodology and workplan setting out the stages of this activity. The methodology tentatively adopted covers:

- Undertaking a background study to understand existing structures in place for coordinating negotiations and implementation of trade agreements and proposal for monitoring structure;
- Consultations with relevant agencies responsible for contributing to implementation of the ATIGA – to seek buy-in and ensure good coordination;
- Developing standard operating protocols/guidelines and capacity building for the TiG Division to keep track of implementation of the ATIGA provisions; and
- Support to organize and conduct a monitoring meeting with technical guidance from ITC – with the objective of enabling the TiG Division to conduct such meetings in the future.

The methodology and workplan was approved by DFTP in June 2022; and ITC is currently engaging with experts to commence implementation of this activity.

Sub-activity: Compliance with ATIGA Notification Requirements

Article 11 and 13 of the ATIGA provides for notification requirements – in relation to trade related measures which needs to be notified prior to adoption; and in relation to submission of adopted measures on trade and customs issues to the ASEAN Trade Repository. The ATIGA gap assessment noted that key transparency and notification requirements still lacked full implementation. Support to strengthen compliance of notifications requirements will enable Lao PDR to better meet its regional commitments and signal strengthened efforts by Lao PDR to enhance transparency and certainty for trade within the regional framework.

Accordingly, to support Lao PDR to better comply with notification requirements under the ATIGA, during the reporting period ITC has designed the following activities and has consulted with relevant counterparts for their implementation:

- Develop a Handbook on ATIGA Notifications. The Handbook will detail the relevant notifications required under the ATIGA; detail information required to be submitted under each of these notifications; identify the relevant agencies responsible for submitting the notifications and frequency for submitting the notifications; and detail the process of submitting the notifications. The information will be contextualised to the Lao framework and provide examples/illustrations to guide the focal points and relevant agencies on preparing these notifications. The Handbook will be made available in Lao and English language.
- Organize simulation trainings for relevant agencies – Following development of the Handbook, ITC will organize simulation trainings for all the relevant agencies which will include practical examples of drafting the notifications and seek to strengthen the coordination among the various agencies in this regard.

Sub-activity: Identifying barriers in exporting to ASEAN countries (by way of a Business Process Analysis study)

Support was requested to help identify and understand the implications of non-tariff measures (NTMs) in selected value chains to enable formulation and implementation of effective trade related policy, regulatory and procedural reforms. Through these efforts, the objective is to help officials understand the mechanisms in identifying trade barriers faced when exporting to ASEAN member states, prioritize areas for improvement, and utilize the ATIGA provisions as the framework from which to design strategies and policy/regulatory reforms to eliminate these barriers. Based on this request, ITC proposed to undertake a Business Process Analysis (BPA) study for a selected sectors, identified in consultation with DFTP, focusing on those products exported to target ASEAN markets.

The BPA study essentially describes a sequence of steps to move goods across borders and studies the businesses processes within one or across several organizations in facilitating this movement of goods. More specifically, the BPA studies are based on a simple methodology to elicit, document, and analyze the existing “as-is” business processes involved in international trade, and will support to develop recommendations for further improvement.

For Lao PDR, ITC has proposed to focus on a selected product being exported from Lao PDR to a selected ASEAN country. The study will focus on the domestic procedures along the selected value chain; and review the importing country requirements (as available for review) that need to be complied with by traders/exporters to place products in the importing country market. Based on the results of the study, ITC will formulate recommendations on crafting trade policy/regulatory reforms drawing from the ATIGA and contextualized to Lao's framework.

ITC has shared a detailed concept note on the BPA study for DFTP's consideration in June 2022; and will take the next steps for implementation based on feedback received.

Sub-Activity: Lao PDR's Foreign Trade Negotiations Roadmap (FTNR)

Following completion of the FTNR in 2021, ITC organized technical sessions in collaboration with DFTP to discuss implementation of the FTNR.

Based on these discussions, ITC formulated a concept note and detailed workplan for further technical assistance that can be provided in this regard. The activities identified are as follows:

- i. Strengthening trade negotiation capacity in Lao PDR – Through a training programme on 'New Trends in FTAs', technical briefs on trade policy issues raised in negotiations, and development of a trade negotiations toolkit for Lao PDR (see the next sub-activity for more details)
- ii. Strengthening services trade – This includes the regulatory assessments for selected services sectors (transport and tourism); targeted training programme on trade in services and evolving trends; and technical support about the WTO domestic services regulation and related provisions in the ASEAN FTAs and RCEP.
- iii. Support for Lao PDR's graduation efforts – This involves advisory support for Lao PDR's access to the EU market; and targeted workshops for the private sector on Lao PDR's graduation and expected policy reforms.

These activities were validated by DFTP in February 2022; and ITC is now in the process of commencing implementation of these activities.

Further, to ensure that there is increased awareness and knowledge among stakeholders in Lao PDR of Lao's trade negotiations and relevance of the trade agreements, DFTP has also requested for support from ITC to organize workshops in provinces outside Vientiane to present the foreign trade negotiations roadmap. ITC will consult with DFTP to further discuss the scope, target audience and modalities of these workshops.

Sub-Activity: Strengthening trade negotiation capacity in Lao PDR

The Foreign Trade Negotiations Roadmap (FTNR) has set out the key negotiating priorities in terms of markets and products for Lao PDR and provides guidance on key topics/issues to be followed up on in future negotiations. Support is being provided to strengthen Lao PDR's trade negotiation capacity as it the country will be engaged in further trade negotiations.

The following activities were proposed for implementation under this sub-activity:

- Training Programme on 'New Trends in FTAs' – ITC is organizing a training programme for Lao PDR's stakeholders to stay up to date on the latest trends and be better capacitated to engage in trade negotiations and policy formulation. The training programme is being developed to cover matters relating to how FTAs have evolved over time, new topics/issues being covered in FTAs, and impact on Lao PDR. ITC will also develop a brief guide on "New Trends in FTAs" to be made available in English and Lao language, which can be used as a tool in future training engagements by DFTP.

This activity will build on ITC's previous training programme undertaken in collaboration with IIT (previously known as ERIIT) from January to April 2021 on 'Multilateral and Regional Trading Arrangements'.

- Trade Negotiations Toolkit for Lao PDR – ITC has proposed to develop a trade negotiations toolkit for Lao PDR. The objective of the toolkit is to support the technical capacity of trade negotiations as they have a critical role to play in ensuring that Lao PDR's trade and economic interests are translated, as far as possible, into the negotiating text. The toolkit will cover elements on establishing the institutional foundation and establishing a competent negotiating team, managing stakeholder involvement, designing a trade negotiation strategy, tactics that can be used at the negotiating table, ensuring sustainability of negotiations, and reviewing implementation and impact of trade agreements.

The toolkit will be contextualised to the specific Lao context; and training sessions will be organized for trade negotiators on utilising the Toolkit.

- Technical notes on Trade Policy Issues – Complementing the training on 'New Trends in FTAs' and the 'Trade Negotiations Toolkit', ITC has also proposed to develop a series of technical notes on trade policy topics identified as priorities for Lao PDR. The topics will be drawn from the World Bank's 52 trade policy categories identified as common provisions/issues being raised in trade negotiations – and include issues such as tariffs on industrial and agricultural goods, GATS, technical barriers to trade, TRIPS, public procurement, intellectual property rights, investment, competition policy, consumer protection, SMEs, etc. ITC will develop technical notes on 15 – 20 topics identified by DFTP as priorities. Each technical note (approximately 4 pages each) will cover key issues governing the topic; commitments undertaken by Lao PDR on the multilateral/regional and sub-regional levels (with a focus on commitments under the ASEAN, including RCEP); and existing legislation (as accessible and available online). The technical notes will be made available in Lao and English language.

Sub-activity: Strengthening Services Trade: Regulatory Assessments for Transport and Tourism Services Sectors

Based on a request received from the Trade in Services division of DFTP, regulatory assessments were undertaken for the transport and tourism services sectors in Lao PDR. A regulatory assessment is an in-depth assessment of horizontal laws, regulations and policies affecting the relevant service sector.

The regulatory assessment for the transport sector covers four specific sub-sectors, namely air transport, rail transport, road transport, and internal water ways transport (As directed by DFTP – MoIC). The final draft was shared with DFTP for review and the validation workshop was held in April 2022 with the participation of the key stakeholders DFTP, and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, including officials representing the Department of Transport and Department of Railways.

ITC commenced research on the tourism services sector in 2021. Online consultations were held with officials from the Tourism Management Department to clarify pertinent questions relating to the applicability of existing laws and regulations, understand amendments coming up or already in place in relation to the existing regulations, and future reforms in this regard. Further follow-ups with the relevant officials also resulted in ITC being able to access certain regulations and related amendments in Lao language. These were translated into English language to help with the analysis. ITC is working on the draft of the regulatory assessment and plans to share with DFTP in the next quarter for review and finalization.

Sub-Activity: Strengthening Services Trade - Training programmes on 'Trade in Services – and developments'

Lao PDR needs to prepare for the move under the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA) as well as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement from a positive to negative list approach. Lao PDR needs to be well capacitated to undertake the necessary services policy reforms to meet its regional commitments and strengthen trade in the region. Given the complexity of trade in services, it is important for officials engaged in trade negotiations, and policy formulation/implementation are well versed in the various modes of services, its impact on trade in goods, multilateral and regional commitments, and the services context in Lao PDR.

Accordingly, ITC has proposed to undertake a detailed training for trade officials based in the Trade in Services division of DFTP as well as other related agencies to understand the scope of services trade, and better prepare the officials to engage in services related negotiations and undertake the necessary domestic reforms required to strengthen the services sector in Lao PDR

Linkages will be built with the trainings on ‘New Trends in FTAs’ and the technical briefs on trade policy issues developed as relevant; and the regulatory assessments being undertaken.

Sub-Activity: E-Commerce Guides

Lao PDR has undertaken e-commerce related commitments on a regional level, including signing on to the ASEAN E-commerce Agreement in 2018 which sets the platform for a robust e-commerce framework in the ASEAN region. However, e-commerce in Lao PDR continue to remain within the realm of informal trade and is not widely used – which may stem from the lack of trust and awareness in the e-commerce marketplace, and limited capacity of public sector officials to undertake necessary measures to develop the e-commerce framework in Lao PDR. Complying with the regional e-commerce commitments is important for Lao PDR to strengthen its integration into the regional framework, as under ER1. Accordingly, support is being provided through these e-commerce guides, to enhance awareness and understanding, and build capacity within the public and private sectors, and academia, on e-commerce issues – so as to better capacitate officials to develop and implement the e-commerce frameworks as needed.

ITC is developing a series of guides on selected e-commerce topics for Lao PDR. The objective of these guides is to build capacity among the public, private and academic sectors in Lao PDR on e-commerce trade and thereby build up knowledge and understanding on e-commerce and enable stakeholders to be better prepared to support and engage in activities in this regard.

ITC has completed development of four e-commerce guides covering the following topics:

- (i) E-commerce transactions (e-contracts, e-payments, and e-signatures) - Guide exploring the types of e-commerce transactions, including the concepts of electronic payments and electronic signatures and how these are applied; efforts being taken at the multilateral level for rules on e-commerce transactions; steps taken by other countries, and key lessons for developing countries.
- (ii) Data Protection and Privacy for Developing Countries - Guide assessing the importance of data protection legislation; developments at an international level and data protection regulations developed by other countries; as well as recommendations for regulations on data protection in developing countries.
- (iii) Consumer Protection - Guide exploring aspects relevant for consumers and traders engaged in online trading in comparison to in-person trading; outlines the importance of having relevant provisions governing such online trading; and presenting international guidelines/best practices for such regulations.
- (iv) International Trade Aspects of E-Commerce - Guide unpacking recent developments in the cross-cutting area of e-commerce and trade negotiations, with focus on specific e-commerce issues at the heart of ongoing multilateral and regional negotiations, including the WTO JSI on E-commerce. The Guide will focus on perspectives of developing countries/least-developed countries (LDCs), and the potential implications of these developments for such countries, including how it can benefit from/leverage upon such multilateral and regional cooperation. Priority will be given to those negotiations/agreements that Lao PDR is party to, such as the ASEAN agreements.

Lao specific legislation, guidelines and policies have been incorporated into these Guides, and wherever relevant, specific aspects relating to LDCs is discussed.

The guides were reviewed by DFTP and tentatively validated. Discussions are now underway to organize the training engagements based on each of the guides. The tentative plan is to organize a training for each of the guides – to be delivered online or in-person (still being worked out based on schedules). The audience will comprise of officials from the public sector, private sector, and academia. Following delivery of these trainings, ITC will finalize the guides incorporating any further questions/clarifications raised by participants of the trainings. The guides will be made available in Lao language; and infographics will be developed for each of the guides – to support DFTP’s awareness-raising activities in this regard.

Sub-activity 1.3.5: Conformity Assessment

From January – June 2022, ITC conducted the following activities under the following recommendations:

Recommendation # 1 - Strengthening Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) National Enquiry Point (NEP) (extended to TBT SPS and National Notification Authorities - NNA)

There are obligations on behalf of Lao PDR to comply with the obligations and commitments under the WTO SPS and TBT Agreements as well as ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement. In this regard, it is critical that there is effective coordination between stakeholders in the public and private sectors to implement these agreements.

Through the development of Standard Operating Procedures, Terms of Reference, Private Sector Sensitization Events, and development of practical handbooks, the project is reinforcing the capacities of the SPS and TBT National Enquiry Points and National Notification Authority of Lao PDR in the areas of policy definition, regulations and procedures.

- 1) Virtual validation meeting of Lao PDR’s Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) National Enquiry Point (NEP) draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

This online activity was conducted on January 10th, 2022, with the aim of a line-by-line review of the draft SOPs by the focal point stakeholders in order to move ahead with validation and finalization. Stakeholders were requested to review the draft TORs in advance of the meetings and submit written comments. The meeting was attended primarily by select members of the Department of Standardization and Metrology (DOSM), who is the TBT NEP. The validated TBT NEP SOP was then translated and shared with relevant stakeholders.

- 2) Virtual validation meeting of Lao PDR’s Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) National Enquiry Point (NEP) draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

This online activity was conducted on January 11th, 2022, with the aim of a line-by-line review of the draft SOPs by the focal point stakeholders in order to move ahead with validation and finalization. There were 28 total participants to this training. The validated SPS NEP SOP was then translated and shared with relevant stakeholders.

- 3) Virtual validation meeting of draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Lao PDR’s Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) National Notification Authority (NNA)

This online activity was conducted on January 12th, 2022, with the aim of a line-by-line review of the draft SOPs by the focal point stakeholders in order to move ahead with validation and finalization. Stakeholders were requested to review the draft TORs in advance of the meetings and submit written comments. There were 25 total participants to this training, 15 male, 10 female. The validated SPS/TBT NNA SOP was then translated and shared with relevant stakeholders.

- 4) Virtual validation meeting to validate draft Terms of Reference (TORs) for Lao PDR’s National Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee

This online activity was conducted on January 17th, 2022, with the aim of a line-by-line review of the draft TORs by the TBT Committee in order to move ahead with validation and finalization. Stakeholders were requested to review the draft TORs in advance of the meetings and submit written comments. There were 20 total participants to this training, 11 male, 9 female, 12 participants aged 35 or younger. The validated TBT Committee TOR was then translated and shared with relevant stakeholders.

- 5) Virtual validation meeting to validate draft Terms of Reference (TORs) for Lao PDR's Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Committee

This online activity was conducted on January 18th, 2022, with the aim of a line-by-line review of the draft TORs by the SPS Committee in order to move ahead with validation and finalization. Stakeholders were requested to review the draft TORs in advance of the meetings and submit written comments. There were 23 total participants to this training, 17 male, 6 female, 13 participants aged 35 or younger. The validated SPS Committee TOR was then translated and shared with relevant stakeholders.

For these five activities, follow-up with stakeholders will be undertaken to ensure that validated and translated documents are finalized, incorporated into operations and utilized accordingly.

- 6) Virtual training for SPS & TBT NEPs and NNA officials on notification procedures, information retrieval and dissemination, SPS and TBT Notification Submission Systems (SPS NSS and TBT NSS), and functioning of NEPs and NNA

The online training workshop was conducted from 26 – 27 January 2022. The objectives of the training were to: 1) build capacity of Lao PDR SPS and TBT NNA, NEPs and contact points officials, including officials from ministries and departments directly responsible for drafting SPS and TBT measures, in initiating, preparing and submitting SPS and TBT notifications, and 2) train Lao PDR NNA, NEPs and contact points officials, including officials from ministries and departments directly responsible for drafting SPS and TBT measures, on online submission of notifications using the SPS and TBT Notification Submission Systems (SPS NSS and TBT NSS).

Stakeholders who attended the training were drawn from Lao PDR SPS and TBT NNA, NEPs and contact points; and government ministries and departments responsible for the implementation and administration of the SPS and TBT Agreements.

Over the course of the two days, there were 33 total participants to this training, 20 male, 13 female.

The training covered the following topics:

- SPS Notification Submission System (SPS NSS);
- TBT Notification Submission System (TBT NSS);
- How to prepare and submit SPS notifications using SPS NSS;
- How to prepare and submit TBT notifications using TBT NSS; and
- Preparation and submission of actual SPS and TBT notifications using SPS NSS and TBT NSS.

For the next steps, a follow up will be undertaken for ensuring that the SPS/TBT notification system is being used by the key focal point stakeholders.

As part of this effort, as a follow-up recommendation, a short step-by step handbook was developed and is currently being finalized in June 2022. (see activity 8 below)

- 7) WTO TBT and SPS Issues – Importance to SMEs in Lao PDR: A Private Sector virtual online training and sensitization workshop

A key recommendation outcome from an October 2021 training and sensitization workshop for the public sector was to offer a similar follow-up training specifically for private sector actors in Lao PDR,

in order to also strengthen their knowledge of SPS and TBT related issues within the Lao PDR context, and how these issues can impact SMEs.

This online training workshop was conducted on 31 March 2022. The objectives of this training were to enhance, consolidate and deepen SME and private sector knowledge of the importance of TBT and SPS related issues and how they can impact trade at the SME level.

The training included key inputs from national TBT and SPS focal point institutions including the Department of Standardization and Metrology (DOSM), the Department of Foreign Trade Policy (DFTP), Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC) and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) providing valuable insights on the Lao PDR context.

In total, 56 participants were trained, 36 male and 20 female.

One key recommendation coming out of this training was that Ministries and departments responsible for enforcement of SPS and TBT measures including SPS & TBT NEPs, NNA and contact points should take the lead to create awareness and introduce the new ePing SPS&TBT platform to stakeholders in the private sector.

- 8) Step-by-step Handbook for Drafting and Submission of SPS and TBT Regular Notifications using the WTO new ePing SPS&TBT Platform

In reference to Activity 6 above, a training was held for SPS TBT NEPs, NNA and contact points' officials on how to prepare and submit SPS and TBT notification using the SPS NSS and TBT NSS. At the time, the WTO Secretariat was at advanced stage in consolidating and integrating the SPS and TBT eTools.

A key recommendation coming out of this training was to develop a step-by-step handbook that will be used by the SPS and TBT NEPs, NNA and contact points to prepare and submit SPS and TBT notifications using the new ePing SPS&TBT Platform component designed for drafting and submission of SPS and TBT notifications to WTO.

The draft of the handbook has been created, feedback has been received from stakeholders, and proposed design changes have been made.

The next steps for this activity concern finalization, printing, and dissemination to key stakeholders.

Recommendations # 2 & 3 on Standardization and # 10 on Standardization for coffee and # 10A on standardization for crop products

This activity includes actions to prepare DoSM for participation to ISO General Assembly (GA) and DEVCO (Development Countries Committee) Meetings; to assist DoSM to set up the Technical Committees (TC) on Management Systems (MSS) and Conformity Assessment (CA); to strengthen national capacity to develop and promote standards; to review the current procedure on development of standards – including those related to coffee and agricultural crops.

The main activities and results include:

- Continued collaboration with ISO Secretariat for enhancing participation of Lao PDR in standardization work for priority sectors (i.e. TCs 34 on food and subcommittees (3 on F&V, 15 on coffee), and on wood (TC 218)
- Continued follow-up on progress related to National Standardization Strategy (NSS)
- Engagement of DOSM management in planning standardization activities.

The next steps include:

- Continue, in partnership with ISO, the support to strengthen LAO 's standardization capacity. This includes potentially becoming member of coffee technical committee as well as other sectors. Follow up with DOSM on setting up the TC on MSS and on CA.

- Along with ISO counterparts, continued follow up on the progress of the national standardization strategy its link to the target sectors of the Arise Plus project.
- Organise consultations with stakeholders with ISO and Chairs / members of selected TC. Organise ISO/ITC tailored made and joint workshops on development and promotion for the specific standards (Coffee/Wood/F&V) by also building on the project with Singapore. Facilitate the networking and mentoring approach with other neighbouring countries (i.e. Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore)
- SOP development: Support to formulate a DOSM/DOA policy /SOP for development of standards for agricultural crops and develop a SOP for this and provide support for implementing the policy and SOP.

Recommendations n # 4 – Product Certification and #7 System certification

The following activities are linked to E.R.1. DOSM has a plan to be a future certification body (CB) for providing ISO 9001: 2015 QMS certification services to Lao industry and eventually for other management systems and requested assistance on strengthening product certification capacity (ISO/IEC 17011, ISO/IEC 17021 and ISO/IEC 17065). It was agreed with DOSM to conduct audit of the system by a Regional Accreditation Body (i.e. Vietnam). As a next step, ITC will conduct a call for proposals by various bodies upon suggestions by DOSM on the bodies to contact. Based on the audit, follow up assistance will be provided.

Recommendation # 12 – Accreditation of food lab

The National Centre for Food and Drug Analysis (NCFDA) of the Ministry of Health has obtained accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 for a limited scope within its food microbiology lab, it requires support for extending the scope of accreditation and the implementation of ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Quality System into NCFDA covering the analysis of metals in water and mycotoxins for various food matrices. Support includes training on development of SOPs, method validation and measurement uncertainty for which TA is being provided. Implementation of activities in agreed action plan is ongoing.

Extending the scope of accreditation of NCFDA laboratory assists to develop, harmonize and promote national standards and reinforces the support being offered for standardization, national inspection, testing and certification. It also helps enterprises demonstrate compliance with international standards. The main activities during the reporting period included:

- Training on Method validation in chemical analysis (mycotoxins in peanut and corn and metals in water), 2-3 February 2022. Training was conducted online with 11 participants, including 4 males and 7 females. Pre and post evaluation forms captured knowledge uptake.
- Training on Measurement Uncertainty, 11-12 May 2022. Online training was attended by 8 participants including 6 females and 2 males.
- Training on ISO/IEC 17025:2017 requirements, Statement of Conformity and Decision Rule, June 7th -8th 2022. Training was conducted online in a hybrid format, 43 participants attended, 37 from NCFDA joined in person, 2 from Plant Protection Center (PPC) and 4 participants from CBF Pharma Company joined online. Pre and post elevation forms were used to capture knowledge uptake.

The next steps include:

- Training on analysis of mycotoxins – September 2022
- Training on analysis of metals – September 2022

- Training on risk management in laboratory according to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 - September 2022
- Internal audit or pre-audit of NCFDA: Quality Management system – October 2022

Recommendations # 14 A - Training of FDD inspectors

During the validation process of the recommendations, it was suggested by FDD that ARISE Plus Project should also provide training on Food Safety (GMP, GHP, HACCP etc) to Food Inspectors (8 persons) of FDD and to coffee collectors and processing plants. After a series of meetings with FDD the scope of the training was defined and a concept note on the training was finalized. Training commenced in January.

The training programme focuses on strengthening the technical knowledge and capacity of food Inspectors in conducting Food Hygiene and HACCP inspections in food businesses. The training assists to develop, harmonize and promote national standards and reinforces the support being offered for standardization, national inspection, testing and certification. It also helps enterprises demonstrate compliance with international standards.

The main activities include:

- Training for FDD Food Inspectors on Food Safety, 17-21 January, attended by 10 participants, 4 males and 6 females. Training was delivered online in a hybrid format. Pre and post evaluation forms were used to measure knowledge update.
- Training for FDD inspectors on HACCP - 15, 16, 21, 22 March 2022, training was delivered online in hybrid format, 23 participants, 7 males and 16 females attended the training. Pre and post evaluation forms were used to measure knowledge update. Results will be presented in final report from the expert in July.

The next steps include mock audits in related enterprises that will take place in July with FDD food inspectors; and a concept note on training for Lao exporters to meet requirements of Thailand's MoPh FDA 'good hygiene practice' and training on ASEAN MRA Agreement to be developed.

This is linked to a follow-up request from FDD which asked for follow up support to provide awareness training on the ASEAN MRA Agreement; and to further disseminate HACCP, CODEX, GHP/GMP, support FDD to provide specific training for Lao exporters to meet requirements of Thailand's MoPh FDA 'good hygiene practice' and the requirements under No. 386 BE 2560 (2017) on GHP Implementation.

Recommendation # 14 B - Development of COVID related guidelines and posters for food industry

The main activities and results include Six posters designed, finalized and translated for FDD for reproduction; and a distribution plan submitted by FDD to ITC for target audience (approx. 13000 posters to 19 provinces). The next steps include to print and distribute identified materials via the identified distribution plan (ITC to support printing and initial shipping costs to provincial offices); and to develop and implement with FDD a plan for additional sensitisation events (i.e. awareness webinars to present posters and sensitise on food safety).

IV. Achievements January to June 2022: Expected Result 2

ER2: Increased awareness on trade preferences for exports, including to the European Union, with greater use of Everything But Arms (EBA), and on the requirements for placing products on the EU market; advanced preparation of Lao PDR to shift to a new trade preference scheme (post-EBA).

Summary of key results under E.R. 2

Under this E.R. during the reporting period, the **EBA Business Guides have been made available** in Lao and on the national website. **ECCIL officials** have been trained on the EBA scheme, and the awareness-raising campaign pursued its efforts. The **Quality Champions are now fully trained** and started their coaching to companies. 7 courses for exporters have been finalized.

Activity 2.1

Completed – please refer to previous reports.

Activity 2.2 – Awareness raising about EBA Preferences

Under the scope of ER2, ITC is also undertaking activities to raise awareness of the preferential trading schemes available in the EU and build up knowledge and understanding of the potential for Lao traders to export to the EU, particularly under the EBA scheme. Lao PDR has been recommended for graduation in 2026, which indicates that exporters in the country will be able to benefit from EBA access to the EU at least until 2029.

Thereafter, Lao PDR will be able to access the EU market under the Standard GSP scheme, which is applicable to all low and lower-middle income countries or may wish to negotiate for access under the GSP+ scheme, which is a special incentive arrangement available upon implementation of certain conventions relating to labour, human rights, environmental protection and good governance.

In this context, the following activities are underway:

Sub-activity 2.2.1 – EU EBA Business Guide

The EU EBA Business Guide for Lao PDR - a consolidated business guide on Lao PDR's preferential market access to the EU under the Everything But Arms initiative (EBA) – was officially launched in 2021. The objective of the Guide is to provide a tool from which businesses in Lao PDR are able to understand the conditions for accessing the EU market under the EBA scheme and related opportunities for businesses in Lao PDR, with a view to improving export performance to the EU. Given the technical nature of the guide, efforts were taken to make the guide as user-friendly and accessible as possible for the Lao beneficiaries. Therefore, in addition to the general consolidated guide, a series of sector specific guides were also developed (i.e. the product specific sections in the general guide were reflected as sector-specific guides as well) – so that exporters who want to only review matters relevant to their sector, could refer to these targeted guides.

The guides have now been finalized; and are available in English and Lao language on the Lao PDR's Department of Trade Promotion website: <https://dtp.moic.gov.la/home/eu-eba-business-guide/>, linking to the Lao Trade Portal.

Sub-activity 2.2.2: Assessment of the impact of tariff changes on Lao PDR's trade opportunities

Completed – please refer to previous reports.

Sub-activity 2.2.3: Capacity-building for officials

Under this activity, the embedded trade map tool was developed. In many countries, detailed trade statistics are not accessible on web sites of organizations in charge of trade development. For these organizations, it is often not sustainable to create, host and maintain a web application on trade statistics. ITC Trade Map is capable of enhancing the accessibility of trade statistics to partner institutions, and ensures thereby their awareness of trade-related issues (ER2). ITC has prepared Trade Map to be embedded into the Lao Trade Portal website. Web usage statistics will be available.

A launch event will be organised during the PRC meeting in July. The activity is linked to **activity 3.2. Review of quality and availability of statistical data**, as the embedded tool will benefit from high-quality trade statistics from Lao PDR.

The next steps include to advertise the tool among Lao PDR potential users through social media as well as presentations during national trade data related events.

Sub-activity 2.2.4 – Awareness raising campaign on the EBA Scheme

Activities are being implemented to increase reach of the EU EBA Business Guide and strengthen knowledge and understanding in Lao PDR on EU preferential trading schemes, its applicability to Lao PDR and opportunities available, and to be better prepared for future developments in this regard.

The main activities during the reporting period include:

- *Training of Trainer Session for officials from the European Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECCIL):* Based on a request received from ECCIL, ITC delivered a ToT session for selected officials from ECCIL. The objective of this training session was to capacitate officials from ECCIL to be able to provide advice/guidance for exporters who may contact them as a first point of reference on matters relating to accessing the EU market. The session was organized from 09 to 11 March in a hybrid format, with ITC’s Expert delivering the training virtually, and the participants joining online from the ECCIL office. 18 participants, including 9 women, participated.
- *Awareness-raising campaign:* The awareness-raising campaign noted above continued during the period covered by this report with more video clips, infographics, insights published in newspapers, a radio clip, and social media posts.

Details are summarised in the table below:

Activities	Details
(1) Insights/Articles	<p>Four insights were developed in the period up to date. The insights covered the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Duty Free Access to the EU: Incentivising Lao Traders to Utilise the EBA This insight introduced the concept of the EU GSP, and particularly the EU EBA and its relevance for Lao PDR, and highlighted opportunities available for Lao PDR in the EU market. <p><i>Links:</i> Lao Daily - First Insights Vientiane Times - First Insights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Choosing the ‘right’ products to export to the EU under the EBA tariff free scheme This insight explored the three tariff regimes under which Lao exporters currently export to the EU, and provided recommendations on how Lao can effectively make use of the EU EBA scheme.

	<p><i>Links:</i> Vientiane Times - Second Insights Laoedaily - Second Insights Vientiane Mai - Second Insights</p> <p>iii. Mastering the Rules of Origin Requirements to the EU This insight explained the concept of rules of origin and the challenges faced by exporters in complying with requirements; and the mechanisms under the EU GSP scheme to facilitate compliance with rules of origin requirements to access the duty-free benefits.</p> <p>iv. Accessing the EU Market after Lao PDR’s graduation from LDC status This insight explored the future applicability of the EU GSP regime, allowing Laotian traders access to the EU market on preferential terms in light of upcoming events – the LDC graduation, changes in the EU GSP rules in 2024, and relevant regional developments.</p> <p>These articles were translated into Lao language – and then formatted into brochures that could be circulated online.</p> <p>The first two insights have been published in local newspapers (print and online) versions – namely in Vientiane Times (English), Paxason (Lao) and the Lao Daily Economic (Lao). (<i>Images of the newspaper publications are given below</i>). The third and fourth insight are in the process of being published.</p> <p>These insights will be further circulated to ITC’s networks under the project + disseminated during future training workshops on the EBA and related dialogues on the EU GSP scheme.</p>
<p>(2) Video Clips</p>	<p>Three videos were developed up to date. The videos were on the following themes:</p> <p>i. Introductory video on the EU EBA scheme Video introducing the concept of the EU GSP scheme; applicability of the Standard GSP, GSP+ and EBA; status of Lao PDR in this regard; and the tools produced under the ARISE Plus Lao PDR project – namely the Guides.</p> <p>ii. How to Export under the EBA scheme This video takes the viewer through selected key technical and regulatory requirements to be complied with in order to export to the EU under the EBA scheme. <i>Links:</i> https://www.facebook.com/100000483306084/videos/722294365644451/ https://www.facebook.com/EuroChamLaos/videos/749678542713557</p> <p>iii. Interview with Mascot International – Garment Exporter This video presents an interview with a representative of Mascot International – a successful garment exporter from Lao PDR to the EU, benefitting from the EBA scheme. The representative explains the importance of the EBA scheme for the garment industry. <i>Links:</i> https://www.facebook.com/100000483306084/videos/695878134853212/ https://www.facebook.com/EuroChamLaos/videos/3293063044256662</p>
<p>(3) Radio Interview</p>	<p>A radio interview was organized with a representative from ECCIL to explain the relevance of the EBA scheme – and how exporters can benefit from this scheme.</p> <p>The radio interview was also subsequently published as a podcast to increase awareness of the interview. <i>Links:</i> - https://www.facebook.com/EuroChamLaos/videos/4873330966119825 - https://www.facebook.com/ren.sison023/videos/1043245276291103</p>

(4) In-fographics	41 infographics were prepared for social media posts up to date. <i>(Refer below for images of selected infographics)</i>
(5) Social media posts	Regular social media content was developed for publication on social media pages – including the ARISE Plus FB Group page; and third party platforms such as LNCCI. Advertising campaigns were run to reach a broader audience.

Figure 1: Selected infographics developed for social media posts on the EU EBA scheme



Further awareness-raising engagements will be planned out based on the future training events and future engagements under sub-activity 2.2.5 on preparation from Lao PDR’s graduation from LDC status.

Sub-activity 2.2.5 – Organisation of awareness-raising activities for preparation of Lao PDR’s graduation from LDC status

These activities relate to preparing Lao PDR for the shifts envisaged after LDC graduation, including with respect to a new trade preference scheme in the post-EBA climate, as set out in ER2. In this context, the following activities were proposed:

- *Technical briefs on Lao PDR’s access to the EU market:* ITC has proposed to develop technical briefs on the upcoming reforms to the EU GSP scheme and the potential implications for Lao PDR when it eventually graduates from the EBA scheme (three years after graduation from LDC status), and relevant preparations in this regard. In addition, ITC has also

proposed to develop technical briefs for Lao PDR on increasingly relevant sustainable development measures which will have an impact on exporters access to the EU market – such as the due diligence regulation, proposed deforestation regulation, etc.

- *Targeted workshops for private sector on LDC graduation:* ITC has also proposed to organize a series of workshops for public and private sector stakeholders on the various elements that Lao PDR needs to be prepared for in terms of graduation from LDC status – including loss of unilateral preferential tariff concessions, loss of special and differential treatment under WTO rules and regional trading agreements (where applicable), and the impact on development assistance. ITC will commence development of a training programme on LDC graduation targeting the period of the fourth quarter of 2022; and prepare for sessions in the build up to LDC5 Conference scheduled to take place in March 2023.

Activity 2.3: Development of awareness raising materials and online tools on EU quality related mandatory market requirements, standards and other market driven requirements for the coffee and wood processing sector and related dissemination.

This activity aims at raising awareness on quality requirements via an easy-to-understand online tool for priority products and markets identified under the project.

The main activities and results include:

- Development of beta translation feature for the Platform to make content available in Lao language.
- Development of beta version of two of four tools of a mobile application (IOS and Android), the Quality Compass and Quality Connect.
- Further development of selected features of the Lao Quality for Trade Platform including completion of research of quality requirements (mandatory requirements, standards and quality related market preferences for the fourth product-market combinations (Lao coffee to Vietnam)
- Collaboration on national ownership with the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) and the decentralized tools available to increase sustainability of platform beyond project timelines.

The next steps include:

- Final deployment of translation function to production server.
- Deployment of final mobile application, once remaining tools are developed and hosted on OS storefronts.
- Complete research for additional product-market combinations (identification of processed wood products to the EU and priority ASEAN markets) as well as mapping coffee to the Chinese market
- Continued discussions with LNCCI surrounding concept of national ownership to increase platform's sustainability and outreach, including training on tools
- Short courses around and involving the Lao Quality for Trade Platform and related implications for SMEs could be developed and rolled out.

Activity 2.4: Development and qualification of pool of national Quality Champions and sensitization events organized in co-operation with local institutions

This activity involves the development and qualification of a team of Quality Champions (QCs) committed to functioning as trainers and advisers on a long-term basis through the Lao National Chamber

of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI). QCs will develop and guide SMEs improve the quality of products and build excellence into processes. All materials and tools used to develop and qualify the QCs will be handed over to LNCCI for adaptation, translation and long term use with the expectation the LNCCI will continue to function as a QC HUB beyond the project.

The final part of the group training, a 10-day course in half day format on Lean Green Belt training, was completed. It was attended by 16 Quality Champion aspirants, including five women. These two weeks of **Lean Green Belt training** equipped Quality Champions to provide training and coaching in the principles and practices of Lean and Continuous Improvement. Lean is a management system for improving the performance of processes by empowering employees to continuously improve their work. Participants were trained to understand and apply Lean and Continuous Improvement thinking and tools to a variety of problems and processes. Quality Champions are expected to teach, facilitate and coach companies and other organizations to build the capacity of their employees and improve the performance of their processes. The course included a number of practical applications for subsequent use in enterprises.

An earlier postponed **field visit to an ISO9001 certified company** took place on 25 May 2022 when COVID restrictions had been lifted. QCs were able to understand and exchange knowledge with Toyo's quality specialists and the company's management. The meeting covered most of the key elements and challenges regarding obtaining ISO 9001:2015 certification including the management of product quality to meet international standards requirements. QCs also learnt how Toyo Pipe Factory set up their operations by investing in modern technology and how its operating system is managed by professional teams in compliance with the ISO 9001:2015 standard. The field visit provided valuable insights regarding the implementation of ISO9001 which QCs will apply when they start guiding enterprises in Lao PDR to implement this important standard.

Figure 2: pictures of the field visit



A field visit to BeerLao, a HACCP certified company will take place on 23 June 2022. This will complete the field visits for the Lao QCs.

Three online webinar sessions on EU organic requirements were attended by 10 QCs, including 4 women.

After the last part of the group training, QCs started to prepare for the enterprise training and support that they will be offering to enterprise as part of their qualification. Weekly online webinars with technical experts took place during the period covered by this report.

The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) continued to act as QC HUB and host for the QC programme in Lao PDR. As written statement to this effect is expected to be signed in the near future. All materials and tools will soon be transferred to LNCCI for long term use and adaptation in Lao PDR. QCs will operate through LNCCI and are expected to soon also sign contracts with LNCCI regarding this. The details of these agreements are being developed.

QCs will complete the training and quality improvement projects in enterprises (see 3.5 below) after which they will graduate as Quality Champions. They will continue to serve though LNCCI on a part-time basis, offering training and coaching to SMEs. Agreements between QCs and LNCCI will be

signed to this effect and an alumni group or similar structure will be created. QC will also be involved in awareness events and outreach activities related to the Lao Quality for Trade Platform.

Some new developments to this activity are also linked to counterparts' involvement. LNCCI proposes to develop a national quality award in order to contribute to developing a national quality culture. Such awards exist in many countries but not in Lao PDR. LNCCI is also keen on starting support to enterprises to implement ISO9001. QCs have been trained on ISO9001 and could be coached while assisting a first group of enterprises to implement ISO9001. This would complement the planned support to DOSM on the ISO certification and international accreditation side.

It would be valuable for LNCCI to acquire that capability of developing and qualifying new QCs over time to LNCCI, including the development and qualification of Lean Green Belts. As part of outreach, promotional and awareness related activities, It would be valuable to develop short videos and e-books for wide dissemination on specific areas of quality, including Lean, for better understanding and introductory learning and in order to promote QC based services. Some of these initiatives could focus specifically on CEOs.

Process improvement, waste reduction and cost savings as a results of Lean improvement projects by QCs could be highlighted and used as part of efforts to make Lao products competitive vs imported products.

The Faculty of Forest Science of the National University of Laos is interested in also becoming a QC Hub. Two QCs are already attached to NUOL and elements of the QC programme could potentially be included at the University.

The QC programme could be expanded with a focus on other sectors. LNCCI is keen to widen the programme.

Activity 2.5 – Development of a practical online export curriculum to support private sector exports

In partnership with LNCCI, ITC is developing an online interactive electronic learning (e-learning) course on cross border procedures to benefit Lao PDR traders. The e-learning course is to support Lao PDR's enterprises to comply with cross-border procedural and regulatory requirements for export transactions, including to the EU and ASEAN markets.

Thus far, a detailed course mapping has been undertaken and validated by LNCCI. The course mapping outlined 11 sessions to be covered in the e-learning course, and the content to be covered in each session in the form of course skeletons. These course skeletons were subject to extensive reviews and validated. The validated course skeletons are now being developed into fully developed sessions to be covered into online versions. Thus far, 7 course sessions have been completed; and migrated into the online format. The remaining 4 sessions are under development. The remaining course sessions will be finalised, and then converted into the online format; following which the material will also be translated into Lao language.

Once the course sessions are developed, a brief guide will be prepared for LNCCI to support their role as administrators of the e-learning course. Support will also be provided to LNCCI to develop promotional material based for the e-learning course; and training session(s) will be undertaken for LNCCI based on the content covered in the e-learning course and other technical aspects of the course.

V. Achievements January to June 2022: Expected Result 3

ER3: Strengthened support services (especially for smallholders and SMEs, with a focus on women), reduction of supply-side constraints, and trade and investment promotion in targeted sectors (e.g. wood processing and agro-based products)

Summary of key results under E.R. 3

Under E.R.3, a group of Lao coffees entrepreneurs is now **qualified by the Specialty Coffee Association**. 5 of them, having been awarded during the Lao Coffee Competition co-organized by the project, have **gained market exposure and customer knowledge** thanks to their participation in the World of Coffee fair in Milan. Dozens of new participants have been trained on organic coffee farms; and on sustainable sourcing for the wood processing sector. The project has also supported the development of **an embedded trade map** for Lao PDR.

Activity 3.1 - Development of sectoral export strategies to identify supply-side constraints and remedial actions

As a follow-up on the development of the sectoral export strategies on wood processing and coffee (both launched in 2021), bilateral consultations held with Ministry of Commerce's Department of Trade Promotion and Department of Industry and Handicrafts with the following objectives: for wood processing: gain understanding on the changes of roles and responsibilities of MOIC and MAF regarding the management of Wood Processing sector; for coffee: discuss type of support needed from DTP on implementation management of the roadmap. Bilateral consultations were held with the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Forestry with the objective of discussing their new role on the management of the wood processing sector and implications on the management of the relevant sector roadmap. Bilateral discussions were also held with development partners including ProFEB FLEGT and GIZ to update on activities and identify potential synergies.

A recruitment process was opened and finalized to engage a national consultant to provide direct support to DTP on the implementation management of the coffee sector roadmap.

Regarding the Strategy Implementation Management Tool (SIMT), in addition to being customized to the Lao PDR's Wood processing and Coffee sector roadmaps, the SIMT now includes the Lao PDR Arise profile and details contributions of the project to implementation of the plans of action.

As for visibility, a social media contest was organized during International Day of Forest 2022 to raise visibility of the Wood processing roadmap.

The change in mandate between the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce have caused considerable delays in activities related to implementation management for the Wood Processing Roadmap. A re-connection with DOF on implementation management of the wood processing roadmap was operated and there is now a clear way forward on the next steps to support DOF.

The next steps will include supporting the operations of the steering committee with human resources, tailored trainings / presentations on best practices in strategy implementation, along with support for monitoring implementation. Identification of priority interventions by stakeholders and possible support for the design or implementation of micro projects could be undertaken.

Activity 3.2 - Review of quality and availability of statistical data (trade and investment statistics, including gender indicators) and work with the relevant authorities to strengthen data collection and statistical production capacities.

The last workshop of this training series is entitled “Database management and trade data querying“. In order to orient the strategic decisions, it is critical that national statistics offices efficiently provide economic quantitative information. It is also essential to provide a strong level of quality control in order to turn customs data into practical trade information. This training on SQL and Access builds national capacity on database and trade data quality management, leading to strengthened support services, reduction of supply-side constraints, and trade and investment promotion in targeted sectors (ER 3).

The workshop will be organized in July 2022. This event concludes the series of 3 workshops on trade data quality. Participants can use their acquired skills to prepare high-quality trade statistics that will feed into the embedded Trade Map (2.2), the customized Export Potential Map (2.2.3) and the update of the LDC graduation study (2.2.2 and 2.2.5). Quick tests will be performed during the workshop. Results of the satisfaction surveys will be reported.

Activity 3.3: Promotion of predictable legal timber supply to incentivize sustainable land management and establish a clear rule set

Under this activity, the following activities have been organized during the reporting period:

- SME Clinic targeted to 5 companies (March 2022)
- Wood Products - Building sustainable sourcing and new markets training, online training on material accounting and management (considering national legal requirements on input output monitoring); and basics of technical timber drying for 40 participants including 11 women (April 2022)

New activities focusing on legal sources of wooden materials and enhancement of export capacities have also been designed.

Activity 3.4 Technical assistance to SMEs in targeted sectors to enhance production and develop market linkages with regional and European markets, including trade fair participation, market missions and B2B activities

This activity supports SMEs to improve market linkages for SMEs in specialty agri-food products with a special focus on coffee. It provides technical training on the marketing of agri-food products regionally and internationally. Activities 3.4 and 3.7 were merged in 2021. The rationale for this is that compliance with “environmental and social standards” is an integral part of “enhancing production and develop market linkages” and thus it would be effective and efficient to plan these activities as part on one whole.

Organic Coffee (3.4 and 3.7)

A new basic course on how to start organic coffee farms was offered in January 2022, with 28 participants including 11 women. The intermediate course was delivered in February 2022 with 33 participants including 7 women.

Specialty Coffee (3.4 and 3.7)

The course on Improving sensory and cupping skills - Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) certification, intermediate level was given in April and May for two groups and comprising 2 sessions each – theory and practice. A certificate ceremony was organized in June 2022.

Figure 3: Ms. Phetanong Mounlamay receiving her certificate from Ms. Khankeo Moonvong and Mr. Natt Muangsiri, certified SCA trainer, in June 2022



The project also took part in the the 2nd annual Lao Green Coffee Competition – Taste of Laos. This year's competition saw a total of 16 companies participated with 35 entry samples received in specialty arabica and fine robusta. The competition aimed to promote Laos specialty coffee to the global audience. It was organized in partnership with the CLEAN project implemented by Winrock International, that is working to improve the agricultural sector with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), the Lao Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Laos Coffee Association (LCA).

This year, the competition culminates with the selection of 5 of the winners to participate in the World of Coffee fair in Milan, Italy (23 – 25 June 2022; 5 representatives of companies including 1 woman); and in an on-line auction to connect owners of the top lots with international green buyers (to be organized in July 2022).

Activity 3.5 National training and advisory support capacities in quality management

This activity will be implemented by the Quality Champions (QCs) developed under Activity 2.4 above and attached to LNCCI to serve on a long-term basis.

As part of their qualification, QCs will implement quality improvement projects in enterprises. In order to identify beneficiary enterprises, and open expression of interest was launched. Eight enterprises were selected and matched with QCs. An introductory meeting took place on 3 June at LNCCI for the selected enterprises. Five companies attended this introductory meeting in person and 3 companies joined via Zoom. This was the first meeting between the Quality Champions and the selected companies.

Four lead QC coaches presented the Quality Improvement Programme and 13 QCs introduced themselves and their professional background. The next steps were outlined and agreed.

The first two action workshops implemented by QCs in enterprises took place on 16-18 June 2022. The training focused on how to improve work processes and work flow, ensuring resource efficiency and reducing waste. The Action Workshops included a series of practical applications over a three-day period. Initial results and reactions were very positive.

Figure 4: Consultation between QC and company for quality improvement programme



Other teams will start the week of 20 June and further training and coaching will be rolled out to same enterprises over the next 4-5 months.

The next steps include a first round quality improvement projects which will be fully implemented in the first eight enterprises, including 6 days of Action Workshops per enterprise followed by the implementation of initiatives to improve quality based on Lean management principles. This activity will then run until the end of the project and beyond as a long term service offered by QCs attached to LNCCI. In addition, QCs will guide selected enterprises to implement ISO9001 and food safety and implement short courses for example on the Quality Compass and related international quality requirements and implications for SMEs. Support may be expanded to additional sectors and additional events may be implemented on specific quality aspects such as the new EU organic requirements and other quality-related priorities.

Activity 3.6 – Investment Promotion in the Targeted Sectors

Sub-Activity 3.6.1 Investment potential analysis

Completed – please refer to previous reports.

Sub-Activity 3.6.2: Investment Profiles

ITC has developed two investment profiles for the Coffee and Wood Processing sectors in Lao PDR. For each of these sectors, ITC has developed a main profile (approximately 40 pages), and a summary brochure (approximately 6 pages). The objective of the investment profiles is to enable foreign investors to identify investment opportunities, understand the investment climate, and obtain access to the latest research and market insights; and function as a tool for public and private representatives to promote investment within the target sectors of the Lao PDR economy.

The two profiles were presented to stakeholders and validated at workshops organized in collaboration with the Department of Trade Promotion and Department of Industry and Handicraft in 2021. At the validation workshops, stakeholders made requests for specific information to be added to the profiles particularly in relation to land availability, plantation areas, etc. Efforts were then taken to locate this information to finalize the profiles – but this proved to be extremely challenging, as the information was not easily available or in an accessible format. During this time, ITC also reached out to sector experts to present the finalized profiles and obtain specific inputs for the profiles as well.

Given that it took time to address the comments/feedback required – ITC is proposing to release the profiles with updated information (as some of the information on export data, etc. can be revised).

Further, another challenge identified during the research process for the profiles was the process for investors to set up businesses in Lao PDR and obtain investment incentives etc. Therefore, to complement the profiles, ITC is also proposing to develop investment guides for the coffee and wood processing sectors – which will essentially function as step-by-step guides for investors seeking to understand the process through which they can set up and run operations in Lao PDR. These materials can support Lao PDR’s investment promotion efforts, and potentially help officials to develop similar guides for other sectors as well.

As for the next steps, ITC will prepare a concept note on the investment guides and proposed updates to the existing investment profiles; and consult with Department of Trade Promotion and Department of Industry and Handicraft in this regard. The updated investment profiles will be targeted for release together with the investment guides early in 2023.

Activity 3.7 Promote increased adoption of environmental and social standards to SMEs in targeted sectors

This activity was merged with 3.4 – see above.

VI. Communication and visibility

Communication is a powerful tool to explain and promote the work and achievements of the ARISE Plus Lao PDR project. Communication activities implemented under the project are guided by the Communication and Visibility Plan (Annex VI) in the Contribution Agreement ACA/2019/407-542. ITC, as an implementing agency, manages the overall project communication and visibility strategy. ITC is the intermediary for all communication between implementing partners and the EU as well as with the media. ITC will also ensure the EU's support is highlighted in all project communication outputs. Here are some activities undertaken from 1st January 2022 to June 2022:

Website

In April 2022, ITC has revamped the design and structure of its website to make it more user-friendly. The website adopted new features including an interactive map of where we work, country pages, funding data visualization and events calendar. As a result, the project website has an updated page whilst maintaining the same link (www.intracen.org/arise-plus-laos); new features are added accordingly.

Over the past six months, the website has seen 410 new individual visitors.

Social media

Despite the increasing popularity of other social media platforms, Facebook is still being widely used in Lao PDR due to its suitable tools to communicate amongst audience across all ages. The project Facebook group (www.facebook.com/groups/ariseplus) was first established in October 2020 - as a sub-group of the ITC's corporate Facebook. It has been closely monitored and administrated by the project's Communication Consultant. The following numbers indicate the progress and activities of the project on Facebook since January 2022.

- Group members: As of June 2022, the group has 1,360 members. We welcomed more than 400 new people to join the group.
- There are total of 84 posts about the project activities shared on Facebook.
- The Facebook group received a total of **21,811 views**. The 3 most popular posts are:
 - o The post about Lao PDR Green Coffee Competition reached over **8.1k** people. It received **55 Likes** and **31 Shares**. www.facebook.com/groups/ariseplus/permalink/959802868231819/.
 - o Intermediate-level Training on Specialty Coffee Association Sensory Skills and Green Coffee reached **6.1k** people and received **52 Likes** and **16 shares**. www.facebook.com/groups/ariseplus/permalink/965188147693291/.
 - o The post announcing an online training on Wood products – Building sustainable sourcing and new markets – were able to reach a total of **7.5k** people. It received **34 Likes** and **25 shares**. www.facebook.com/groups/ariseplus/permalink/943711666507606/.

Communication outputs

Information campaign

Following this year's International Day of Forest, ITC and UNDP joined forces to implement a social media campaign, contributing to the global efforts in celebrating and raising awareness of the importance of all types of forests – with the theme 'forest and sustainable production and consumption'. Led by ITC, the team prepared key messages and questions for a series of pop quizzes. UNDP team supported with the design and sharing the content on their Facebook with a larger audience. Hashtags used in this campaign are: #IDF2022 #IDFPopQuiz2022 #GreenGrowth #LaoForest #SustainableGrowth.

After a month of preparation and two weeks of implementation. The campaign reached **37.8K** people and approximately **400 people** participated/answered the quiz.

Human-interest story

Besides sharing social media posts and news articles, the project's communication is shifting towards creating more human-interest story – with the aim to showcase the project's effectiveness at individual and organisational level. Moreover, the team submit regularly a monthly short human story to the EU Delegation in Lao PDR. Since January 2022, there are a total of four stories published on ITC website:

- From opium to organic coffee: The new hope for Houaphanh farmers: <https://intracen.org/news-and-events/news/from-opium-to-organic-coffee-the-new-hope-for-houaphanh-farmers>
- Fast-growing coffee scene in Vientiane boosts small business: <https://intracen.org/news-and-events/news/fast-growing-coffee-scene-in-vientiane-boosts-small-business>
- Cementing regional integration in the ASEAN: <https://intracen.org/news-and-events/news/cementing-regional-integration-in-the-asean>
- Organic coffee farmers in Lao PDR adapt to climate change, pests through training: <https://intracen.org/news-and-events/news/organic-coffee-farmers-in-lao-pdr-adapt-to-climate-change-pests-through>

Short stories submitted and shared by the European Union Lao PDR Facebook include:

- How organic coffee training helps Lao coffee producers

<https://www.facebook.com/100068822726431/posts/248603980777024/?sfnsn=mo>

- Organic coffee trainee helped her family farms with the knowledge she received.

<https://www.facebook.com/EUinlaos/posts/pfbid02Qph55kMF6omA7DyFi1gVv2uWikCsi9DPR9H7QKNAPeNftyaMutu842jMzsvqYKuCl>

With the consistent efforts, the ARISE Plus Lao PDR's project has been recognised and featured on the global UNSDG website:

<https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/better-way-make-money-farmers-lao-pdr-switch-crops-opium-coffee>

Communications Working Group

The Communication Working Group aims to increase the overall effectiveness of the project's communication activities, ensure consistency, and maintain good collaboration between project partners and the United Nations in Lao PDR. The 5th Communications Working Group meeting was organised in end of February 2022 and the 6th meeting is expected to take place in July 2022.

Media monitoring

Published news articles and stories in the Lao media, featuring the role of ITC and the impact of the ARISE Plus Lao PDR project are monitored and recorded by the ARISE Plus Lao PDR team. Please find some of published articles related to the ARISE Plus Lao PDR project below.

18-Mar "[Choosing the "right" products to export to the EU](#)" Vientiane Times

17-Mar [ການເລືອກ “ຜະລິດຕະພັນທີ່ຖືກຕ້ອງເໝາະສົມ” ເພື່ອສົ່ງອອກໄປສະຫະພາບເອີຣົບ \(EU\) ໂດຍນຳໃຊ້ລະບົບສິດທິພິເສດທາງດ້ານອັດຕາພາສີສຳລັບທຸກສິນຄ້າຍົກເວັ້ນອາວຸດສົງຄາມ EBA](#)

21-Mar [ການເລືອກ “ຜະລິດຕະພັນທີ່ຖືກຕ້ອງເໝາະສົມ” ເພື່ອສົ່ງອອກໄປສະຫະພາບເອີຣົບ \(EU\) ໂດຍນຳໃຊ້ລະບົບສິດທິພິເສດທາງດ້ານອັດຕາພາສີສຳລັບທຸກສິນຄ້າຍົກເວັ້ນອາວຸດສົງຄາມ EBA](#)

31-Mar [LAOS GREEN COFFEE COMPETITION & AUCTION 2022](#)

1-Apr [Coffee News Recap, Mar 28 - Apr 1](#)

4-Apr [May Auction to Follow Second Lao PDR Green Coffee Competition](#)

11-Apr [Competition to publicise high quality of Lao Coffee](#)

19-Apr [Competition to publicise high quality of Lao Coffee](#)

7-Jun [Coffee competition promotes quality of Lao brews:](#) Vientiane Times

VII. [Conclusion: challenges and next steps - reflecting upon the second half of 2021](#)

The current economic situation of Lao PDR has made the topics covered by ARISE Plus Lao PDR and its methodology even more accurate than before. The need for a strong private sector with views on export and value added is crucial. The public sector requires a deep understanding of the many multilateral endeavours which are being discussed at the moment.

The project has the objective and the capacity to support the development of Lao PDR on both aspects, with the final aim of being sustainable and impact-oriented. Thanks to the no-cost extension, which follows a recommendation from the Evaluator, the project has now a longer time horizon to deploy its activities and roadmaps.

The figures show a stability and even a slight increase in the organization of activities and in the number of persons participating in project activities. This demonstrates the degree of maturity of the project implementation, which has reached its full speed and an efficient balance between fully online, hybrid and now some face-to-face activities. The project has solid basis and a committed target audience, some participants having followed several project activities over the years. The consolidation of the results of the project beyond its end date can be discussed.

VIII. Annex I – workplan for the next reporting period July – December 2022

Activities	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
ER 1. Increased regional economic integration by addressing specific constraints in targeted sectors through support for the implementation of measures contained in the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) and other commitments under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025						
Activity 1.1 Gap analysis of ATIGA implementation in Lao PDR						
completed						
Activity 1.2. Review of the gap analysis results with GoL and the private sector and agree specific trade measures to be addressed (with a focus on targeted sectors).						
completed						
Activity 1.3. Technical assistance and capacity building in the area of policy definition, regulations and procedures, product and environmental standard adoption and conformity assessment capacities						
Sub-activity: Lao PDR's Foreign Trade Negotiations Roadmap (FTNR)						
completed						
Task 2: Follow-up on implementation of the FTNR (Ongoing 2022 - 2023) Refer below sub-activities below on 'Trade Negotiation Capacity'.						
Sub-activity: Targeted training programme for trade policy makers - Principles and Utilization of Multilateral and Regional Trading Arrangements						
completed						
Sub-activity: Strengthening Trade Negotiations Capacity in Lao PDR - New Trends in FTA training programme (Follow up from FTNR)						
Task 1: Develop training programme on 'New Trends in FTAs' for validation by DFTP						
Task 2: Develop training materials based on validated training programme						
Task 3: Formulate training guide covering key issues set out in the 'New Trends in FTAs' training programme						
Task 4: Translation of training materials and training guide						
Task 5: Delivery of training programme						
Sub-activity: Strengthening Trade Negotiations Capacity in Lao PDR - Trade Negotiations Toolkit (Follow up from FTNR)						
Task 1: Formulate tentative structure for trade negotiations toolkit for Lao PDR - for validation by MoIC						
Task 2: Develop trade negotiations toolkit based on validated structure for review by MoIC						
Task 3: Finalize trade negotiations toolkit based on feedback received						
Task 4: Translation of trade negotiations toolkit into Lao language						
Task 5: Delivery of trainings/workshops in Lao PDR based on the trade negotiations toolkit and FTNR						

Activities	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sub-activity: Strengthening Trade Negotiations Capacity in Lao PDR - Technical Notes on Trade Policy Issues (Follow up from FTNR)						
To commence in January 2023 (Following the New Trends in FTA Training and Trade Negotiations Toolkit)						
Sub-activity: Regulatory Assessment for Selected Services - Transport and Tourism Sectors						
Phase 1: Regulatory assessment for transport services sectors						
completed						
Phase 2: Regulatory assessment for tourism services sectors						
Task 1: Undertake desk research (to identify relevant legislation, regulations, institutional frameworks, policy measures); and develop/refine questionnaires based on objectives of the regulatory assessment (Completed by June 2022)						
Task 2: Undertake stakeholder consultations, guided by questionnaires (Completed by June 2022)						
Task 3: Produce and submit first draft of the regulatory assessment for the tourism services sector for review						
Task 4: Revise and submit second draft of the regulatory assessment, based on feedback received from MoIC						
Task 5: PPD to present and discuss findings of the regulatory assessment for the tourism services sector						
Task 6: Finalization of the regulatory assessment, incorporating feedback from the PPD and any follow-up consultations						
Task 7: Translation of the regulatory assessment study						
Task 8: Advisory session(s) with TiS division of DFTP (based on demand) - to discuss way forward for reforms						
Sub-activity: Strengthening Trade Negotiations Capacity in Lao PDR - Services Trade Training Programme (Follow up from FTNR)						
Task 1: Develop training programme for services trade training - following up from the 'New Trends in FTAs' training series						
Task 2: Develop training materials based on the validated training programme						
Task 3: Develop technical brief based on training materials - to be made available as a tool for policy officers						
Task 4: Translation of of training material and technical brief						
Task 5: Delivery of trainings/workshops in Lao PDR on services trade (TBD)						
Sub-activity: E-Commerce Guides						
Task 2: Produce first drafts of the 4 guides based on the validated structures for review by MoIC (Completed)						
Task 3: Revise and submit second drafts of the 4 guides based on feedback received from MoIC						
Task 4: Training events organized based on the guides						
Task 5: Translation and finalization of the guides						
Task 6: Dissemination of guides to stakeholders						

Activities	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sub-activity: Technical Assistance Projects (possibly 2 projects) - Based on reforms identified in the ATIGA Gap Analysis (To be decided upon finalization of the study)						
Task 1: Identify technical assistance projects based on the validated ATIGA study in consultation with DFTP (Completed - Refer Sub-Activity Below on Monitoring Implementation of the ATIGA and the Notifications Handbook)						
Next tasks to be determined based on Task 1.						
Sub-activity: Monitoring implementation of the ATIGA (Follow-up from ATIGA Gap Analysis)						
Task 1: Background study - to develop methodology for monitoring implementation of the ATIGA in Lao PDR						
Task 2: Development of standard operating protocols and capacity building for DFTP on monitoring framework						
Task 3: Support for DFTP to facilitate a monitoring session (to take place in 2023)						
Sub-activity: Compliance with ATIGA Notification Requirements (Follow-up from ATIGA Gap Analysis)						
Task 1: Undertake mapping of notification requirements under the ATIGA						
Task 2: Develop template for the Notifications Handbook for validation by DFTP						
Task 3: Development of the Notifications Handbook based on validated template for review						
Task 4: Finalization of Notifications Handbook and translation into Lao language						
Task 5: Organization of simulation trainings for relevant agencies(To take place in 2023)						
Sub-activity: Identifying trade barriers in exporting to the ASEAN - Business Process Analysis (Follow-up from ATIGA Gap Analysis)						
Task 1: Finalize workplan based on feedback from DFTP to the detailed concept note shared						
Task 2: Introductory workshop organized to define scope, methodology and specificities of the analysis						
Task 3: Data collection and documentation process (Subject to feedback from introductory workshop in Task 2)						
Task 4: Analysis and formulation of recommendations (Subject to feedback from introductory workshop in Task 2)						

Sub-activity: Conformity Assessment Capacities						
Task 1 - Technical assistance to the Enquiry Point on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)						
Task 2 - Support to DOSM/DOA in the area of standardization (i.e. participation to ISO GA, formation of technical committees for MSS, review of coffee standards, policy and SOP in support of crop national standards, Organic and GAP certification)						
Task 3 - Accreditation of calibration labs, upgrading of calibration equipment (DOSM)						
Task 4 - Accreditation services of DOSM through LNAB --> Providing TA to LNAB for updating its knowledge and system documentation, to the revised ISO/IEC 17011:2018						
Task 4 - Training and capacity building of DOSM to provide ISO System Certification Services and Product Certification Services as certification body						
Task 5 - Gap assessment and support to strengthen food testing laboratories towards a path for ISO 17025 accreditation (link with SYMST project)						
Task 6 - Training of FDD inspectors on GHP, GMP, HACCP (hygiene and food safety) (link to activities 2.4 and 2.5)						
Task 7 - Development of awareness material on hygiene - food safety also linked to COVID-19						

Activities	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
ER 2. Increased awareness on trade preferences for exports, including to the European Union, with greater use of Every-thing But Arms (EBA), and on the requirements for placing products on the EU market; advanced preparation of Lao PDR to shift to a new trade preference scheme (post-EBA)						
Activity 2.1 Review of export potential and existing trade with the EU and the regional market						
completed						
Activity 2.2. Awareness raising about EBA preferences						
Sub-activity 2.2.1 EBA business guide						
completed						
Sub-activity 2.2.2 Background study: analysis of current and future potential exports to the EU and regional markets to enable Lao to take informed trade policy decisions (e.g. graduation from LDC status)						
Background study completed						
Update of study on trade implications of LDC graduation						
Sub-activity 2.2.3 Capacity-building for officials						
Embedded tool Trade Map						
Customized tool Export Potential Map						
Sub-activity 2.2.4 Organisation of awareness raising campaign for businesses presenting and explaining the EBA scheme and findings of the foregone research						
Awareness Raising of the EBA Business Guide (Launch Event and Workshops)						
completed						
Awareness Raising on EU Preferential Trading Schemes - and accessing the EU Market						
Task 1: Awareness-raising workshops on the EU EBA scheme in Lao provinces						
Task 2: Awareness-raising activities on the EBA to be implemented (insights/articles, social media posts, infographics, video clips, radio interviews) (Ongoing)						
2.2.5 Organisation of awareness-raising activities for the preparation of Lao PDR's graduation from LDC status						
Task 1: Technical briefs on Lao PDR's access to the EU market - relating to the EU preferential market access schemes (GSP Reforms, RoO changes, etc.)						
Task 2: Awareness-raising workshops for private sector on LDC graduation						

Activities	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Activity 2.3. Development of awareness raising materials and tools on EU quality-related mandatory and market based requirements including voluntary industrial standards for the priority sectors						
Task 1: Uploading of selected additional resources and information on the Lao Quality for Trade platform, development of translation features and a mobile app version of the Compass						
Task 2: Handover to national focal point (LNCCI) for long-term use and related training and coaching and outreach events						
Activity 2.4 Development of a pool of national Quality Champions and sensitization events organised in cooperation with local institutions						
Task 1: Complete the qualification of Quality Champions and provide support via on site coaching and short webinars as QCs start offering support to enterprises and related outreach activities and results analysis						
Task 2: Implementation of sensitization and outreach initiatives related to different aspects of quality, standards and market requirements in cooperation with LNCCI and other stakeholders						
2.5 Development of a practical online export curriculum to support private sector exports						
Task 5: Convert course material into online interactive sessions (in English language) - Currently ongoing						
Task 6: Translation of course content into Lao language - and online content developed in Lao language						
Task 7: Training/Capacity building sessions for local partner undertaken						
Task 8: Launch of the E-Learning Course (Schedule for first quarter 2023)						

Activities	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
ER 3. Strengthened support services (especially for smallholders and SMEs, with a focus on women), reduction of supply-side constraints, and trade and investment promotion in targeted sectors (e.g. wood processing and agro-based products)						
Activity 3.1. Development of sectoral export strategies to identify supply-side constraints and remedial actions						
Sub-activity 3.1.1. Confirm targeted sectors (such as processed-wood and specialty agro-food products) during the inception phase						
completed						
Sub-activity 3.1.2. Develop in a participative approach sectoral export strategies and set-up an implementation monitoring mechanism						
Support on implementation management of the coffee and wood processing roadmaps						
Support to implement specific activity(ies) of the coffee sector export roadmap (tbc)						
Activity 3.2. Review of quality and availability of statistical data (trade and investment statistics, including gender indicators) and work with the relevant authorities (e.g. MOIC ICT) to strength-en data collection and statistical production capacities.						
Task 3: Workshop 3 on database management and trade data querying						
Activity 3.3. Promotion of predictable legal timber supply to incentivise sustainable land management and establish a clear rule set						
Undertake assessment of selected SME capacity with respect to legal sourcing, waste management and market access						
Build capacity of selected SMEs in accessing legal supply and compliance with relevant market requirements						
Activity 3.4. Technical assistance to SMEs in targeted sectors to enhance production and develop market linkages with regional and European markets, including trade fair participation, market missions and B2B activities						
Implement Specialty coffee market linkages support e.g. auction						
Continue training on cupping						

Activities	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Activity 3.5 National training and advisory support capacities in quality management						
Task 1: Implementation of quality improvement projects in enterprises (by the Quality Champions developed under 2.4) aimed at meeting the required quality related market requirements of the target markets						
Task 2: Anchoring of new services in LNCCI, development of sustainable business model & initiate second round of enterprise support, including support to implementation specific standards						
Activity 3.6. Investment promotion in the targeted sectors						
Sub-activity - Investment Profiles for Selected Sectors						
Investment Profiles - For Wood and Coffee Sectors in Lao PDR (Ongoing)						
Task 1: Update of Investment Profiles and Summary Brochures - For dissemination (Ongoing)						
Investment Guides - For Wood Processing and Coffee Sectors in Lao PDR						
Task 1: Develop concept note and draft structure for investment guides for abovementioned sectors (step-by-step guide for investors seeking to enter the Lao PDR market for wood processing and coffee)						
Task 2: Development of investment guides based on validated structure/concept note						
Task 3: Validation session with relevant stakeholders on draft investment guides						
Task 4: Finalization of investment guides based on feedback received and preparation for dissemination						
Task 5: Launch event for updated investment profiles (Refer above) and investment guides (In first quarter of 2023)						
Activity 3.7 Promote increased adoption of environmental and social standards to SMEs in targeted sectors merged with 3.4						

IX. Annex II – LogFrame reporting additional results for the reporting period

Result chain		Indicator		Baseline	Target	Additional results achieved during reporting period (January - June 2022)
Outputs	1. Increased regional economic integration by addressing specific constraints in targeted sectors through support for the implementation of measures contained in the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) and other commitments under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025.	14	Number of policy makers/private sector representatives reporting increased knowledge on trade policy/trade facilitation/quality related issues	0	At least 300 stakeholders, including a minimum of 25% of women	351 additional participations including at least 152 women
	2. Increased awareness on trade preferences for exports, including to the European Union, with greater use of Everything But Arms (EBA), and on the requirements for placing products on the EU market; advanced preparation of Lao PDR to shift to a new trade preference scheme (post-EBA).	16	Number of national trade policy/negotiation document developed with the support of this Action	0	1	1 EBA Business Guide Series completed
		18	Number of exporters reporting increased knowledge on export management	0	300 (by 2022)	5 coffee exporters including 1 women having participated in an international trade fair
		19	Number of public and private sector stakeholders reporting increased knowledge of the benefits of the EBA scheme	0 stakeholders reached	150 relevant public and private sector stakeholders (of which at least ¼ of stakeholders represented by women)	17 additional participations including 9 women

Result chain		Indicator		Baseline	Target	Additional results achieved during reporting period (January - June 2022)
3. Strengthened support services (especially for smallholders and SMEs, with a focus on women), reduction of supply-side constraints, and trade and investment promotion in targeted sectors (e.g. wood processing and agro-based products).	20	Number of stakeholders confirming understanding of key quality related market requirements and standards for the priority sectors	0 stakeholders aware of EU and regional quality requirements	At least 10 quality champions qualified and trained;	16 Quality Champions fully trained including 5 women	
				10 awareness raising activities for a total of at least 100 individuals on EU and regional quality requirements organised (by 2022)	41 additional participations in 3 new events, including 13 women	
	24	Number of wood processing companies having made changes to their operations after receiving training on Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS), design and technology and quality management (disaggregated by sex of training participant)	0	At least 25 (assuming total number of SMEs the project works with directly is 50) enterprises reporting enhanced competitiveness through TLAS, design and technology training	11 additional (6 companies coached by the Quality Champions and 5 by the SME Clinic); a total of 152 participations, including 37 women, in activities related to competitiveness in the wood processing sector	
	25	Number of agro-based companies and suppliers having made changes to their business operations for increased international competitiveness as a result of training and advisory support in areas such as standards compliance, climate resilience, quality management and marketing (disaggregated by sex of training participant)	0	120 (by 2022)	2 companies coached by the Quality Champions; 21 companies certified on specialty coffee; thus a total of 23 companies	