



Enhanced implementation of human rights obligations and the rule of law in Lao PDR

Citizen Engagement for Good Governance, Accountability and Rule of Law

Background

The CEGGA programme is a joint initiative of the European Union, Germany, Switzerland and the Government of Lao PDR and part of the European Joint Programming in alignment with the National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016-2020. The programme aims to strengthen Citizen Engagement, Good Governance, Accountability and the Rule of Law in Lao PDR. It was launched in 2017.

Title	Citizen Engagement for Good Governance, Accountability and Rule of Law (CEGGA)
Co-funded by	European Union, Germany, Switzerland
Partners	Ministry of Home Affairs, National Assembly, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Volume	18,500,000 EUR
Duration	January 2017 - March 2022

The third component of the CEGGA programme aims to enhance the implementation of human rights obligations and the rule of law for a more inclusive national development process in Lao PDR.

The legal framework for the rule of law in Lao PDR is evolving and the state is intensifying its efforts to close the gap between “law in the books” and “law in action”. CEGGA cooperates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to facilitate the integration of international human rights obligations into the domestic legal framework, and supports the MoJ in creating an enabling environment for the rule of law, citizens’ awareness of their rights and laws, and citizens’ access to justice.

Key area of CEGGA support

Improving the legal and policy framework for the rule of law: CEGGA provides extensive technical input to high-level policy processes aiming to strengthen the actual implementation of rule of law. To that end, international experiences with the practical implementation of the rule of law in nine countries was examined and presented to a high-level audience with representatives of various state institutions and academics of Lao PDR. A rule of law con-

ference in December 2019 provided the platform to discuss the findings of a joint MoJ-CEGGA comparative research project and the current challenges of Lao PDR to put policy into practice.

In terms of the legislative framework, CEGGA provided extensive support, among other legislative processes, to the drafting of the Prime Minister’s Decree on Law Dissemination, that has been approved in the meantime, and of the Law on State Compensation, that is expected to be tabled to the Ordinary Session of the National Assembly in its 9th Legislature for deliberation and adoption. The legislative products largely address legal awareness-raising and the accountability of civil servants. Furthermore, CEGGA supports the further improvement of the legislation-making process in Lao PDR.



Workshop on drafting laws and sub-laws – Photo: @GIZ/eh

Strengthening capacities of targeted legal practitioners and civil servants: CEGGA supports the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in further strengthening and refining methodologies for curriculum development, teaching and research, with the aim of enhancing the capacities of legal professionals and targeted civil servants all over the country. GIZ facilitates cooperation between the NIJ and the Law Faculty of the Phayao University of Thailand with whom respective training events are organised and implemented. The programme further supports the participation of MoJ key staff in international events to offer exposure to good practices and provide opportunity to connect to existing regional networks.

Improving citizens' awareness of rights and access to legal aid and mediation mechanisms: In cooperation with Bridges Across Borders South East Asia Clinical Legal Education (BABSEACLE), CEGGA supports the establishment of Clinical Legal Education (CLE) programmes within the NIJ. These emphasise technical skills and the ethical character of legal service provision, especially towards marginalised or poor communities. They are designed to further develop the capacities of the faculty and students through engaging them in actual legal awareness-raising efforts and provision of legal aid services. Furthermore, the MoJ and CEGGA cooperate in developing guidelines and related implementation instruments aimed at improving the access to justice and legal awareness from the “supply side”. This technical cooperation includes efforts to strengthen approaches to communicate laws as well as to improve the access to and management of data for information-based policy-making. CEGGA efforts to support the MoJ in its goal to enhance village mediation of disputes pay particular attention to gender-sensitive approaches.



Panel discussion at high-level national rule of law conference – Photo: @GIZ/Petter Svensson

Improving the basis for the domestication of and/or respect for human rights obligations: To enhance a deeper understanding of Lao PDR’s international human rights obligations, workshops, training measures and other events have been organised with CEGGA key stakeholders, including the National Assembly and Provincial People’s Assemblies, the NIJ, and local civil society organisations (CSOs), utilising synergies with other CEGGA components. A range of topics were addressed as part of the technical cooperation, including human trafficking, money laundering, freedom of expression, and human rights obligations of the private sector. So far, more than 380 public officials gained knowledge and understanding of international human rights commitments, with CEGGA assistance.

GIZ supported MoFA with the mapping of gaps between international human rights obligations and domestic legislation. Additionally, CEGGA provided support to national

consultations for the National Report under the 3rd Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle and the subsequent representation of Government and CSO representatives at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Various technical products have been developed to further aid the integration of international human rights into the legal domestic framework of the Lao PDR.

Key achievements of CEGGA

- engaged more than 200 high-level public officials in a Rule of Law Conference to discuss findings of a comparative research project on rule of law practices in seven country cases and related challenges in Lao PDR;
- technical inputs for the development of key legislation on state compensation and legal awareness-raising;
- improved and scaled-up teaching content and methodologies of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ);
- strategic approach to gender-responsive mediation outlined
- more than 380 public officials gained knowledge and understanding of international human rights commitments;
- provided five analyses of gaps in the domestic legal framework vis-à-vis human rights commitments to inform further efforts of MoFA to facilitate addressing these.

Complementing the Lao PDR – EU Human Rights Dialogue:

Lao PDR and the European Union engage in a regular political Dialogue on Human Rights. At the technical level, MoFA’s Department of Treaties and Law in cooperation with GIZ organises side events, such as panel discussions and exchange forums with a variety of public officials, experts and stakeholders on selected human rights topics that complement the Lao PDR – EU Dialogue. In this regard, CEGGA organised a study trip to European and international institutions, such as the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, as well as an exchange forum with European non-governmental organisations on the role of civil society to stop all forms of violence, gender-based violence in particular, as side event for the Lao Delegation to the Dialogue meeting in Brussels, Belgium in 2018. In 2019, a panel discussion with the Ambassador of Lao PDR to the ASEAN, representatives of MoFA, of a German political foundation, of academia and a journalist was organised on the freedom of expression and the challenges posed by disinformation and fake news in Vientiane Capital, thereby raising awareness of a large audience with participants from Lao state institutions, the international community, university students, and the media.

About GIZ Laos

GIZ, as part of German Development Cooperation, has been active in Lao PDR since 1993 and is currently supporting numerous projects in two priority areas: sustainable economic development and rural development in poor regions. Moreover, GIZ Laos engages in good governance and participates in regional programmes, e.g. with ASEAN and the Mekong River Commission. Please visit www.giz.de/laos for further information for GIZ’s work in Laos and worldwide.

Published by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Registered offices in Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
GIZ CEGGA Programme Office Watnak Noy Village, Sisattanak District, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.
P.O. Box 9233
T: +856 21 316 653
www.giz.de/laos (EN); www.giz.de/laos-la (LAO)
Contact person: Dr Pamela Jawad
As of: April 2021

On behalf of: European Union (EU)
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union, BMZ and SDC. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of GIZ and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union, BMZ and/or SDC.