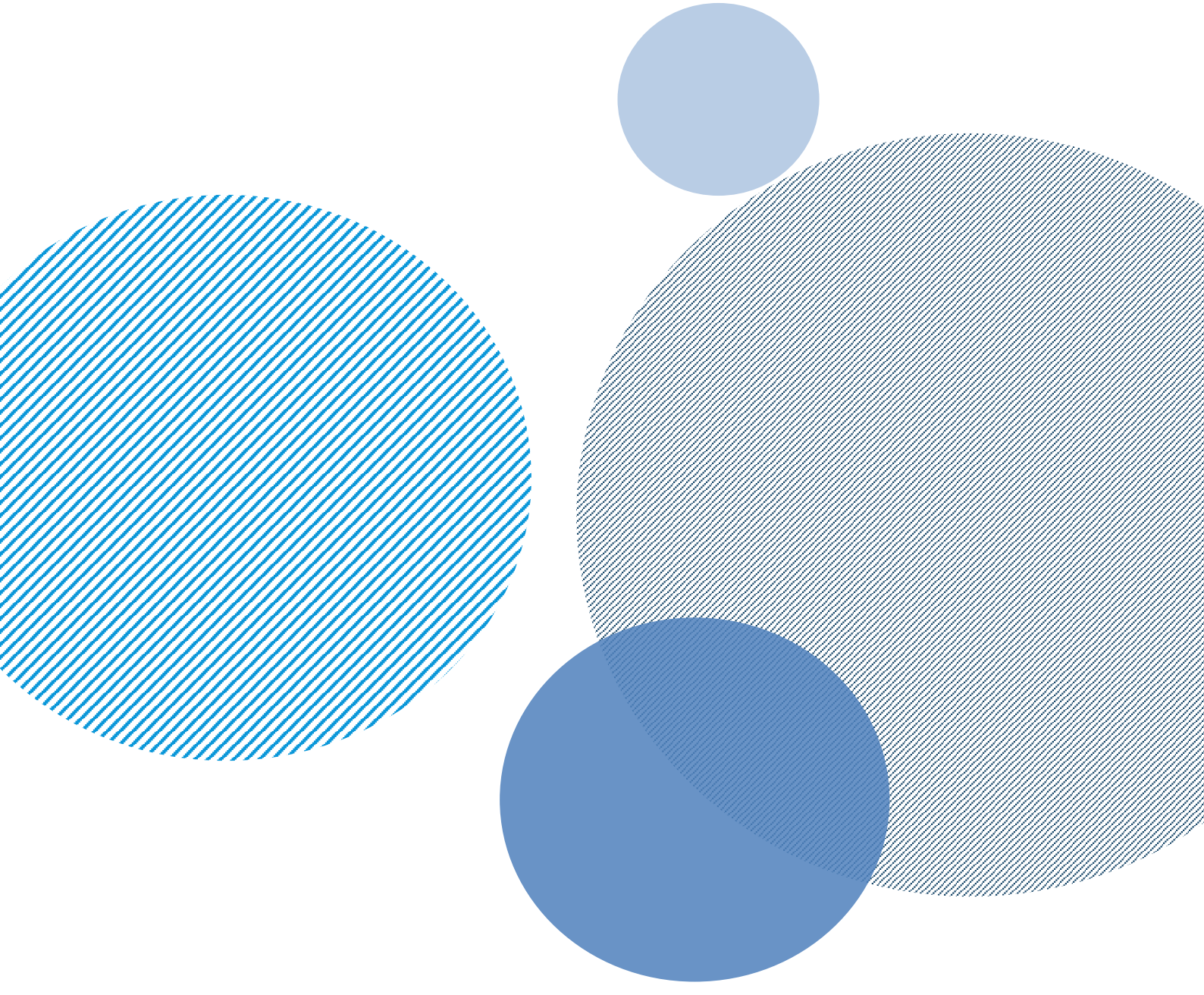
ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Evaluation of the project on Improvement of Driver Licensing System in Lao People's Democratic Republic

Evaluation report | December 2024



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Commissioned by
ESCAP

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List of acronyms

AITD	Asian Institute of Transport Development
DoT	Department of Transport
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCAP TD	ESCAP Transport Division
EU	European Union
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
KII	Key Informant Interview
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MIROS	Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research
MPWT	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
RSF	UN Road Safety Fund
ToT	Training of trainers
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

Executive summary

BACKGROUND

In August 2020, ESCAP launched a new project entitled, *Improvement of Driver Licensing System in the Lao People's Democratic Republic* (Lao PDR). The project aimed to assist Lao PDR in improving road safety through increased awareness and an online driver licensing system. Piloted in the Savannakhet province, the project developed a new driver licensing curriculum, regulations, and online application and testing systems, alongside training and workshops. To implement the project, ESCAP partnered with the Lao's Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), which acted as the primary implementing agency. ESCAP supported the project design and implementation by sharing its expertise and fulfilling communication, overseeing, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation functions. The project's overall budget was USD570,000, which was fully funded by the UN Road Safety Fund (RSF). Of this total amount, ESCAP allocated USD500,000 to the MPWT to implement project interventions. The project ended in June 2024, following three no-cost extensions from its initial end date of January 2022.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The main purpose of this evaluation was to assess the project activities and achievements against planned outcomes, examining relevance, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues (gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion). The evaluation included all phases of the project's lifecycle, including planning, design, and implementation. It covered the entire project duration from its inception in August 2020 to its end in June 2024.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation findings were based on a mixed-methods approach to ensure robust data triangulation. Data was collected through a desk review, remote semi-structured interviews, and an online survey. The evaluator interviewed 15 individuals (3 female and 12 male), who represented an entire community of the project stakeholders, including ESCAP staff, representatives of MPWT, the end beneficiaries (novice drivers), and cooperating agencies. An online survey was undertaken with project beneficiaries as well as participants in trainings and workshops. The survey was sent to 35 individuals, and 27 responded (77.14% response rate).

MAIN FINDINGS

Relevance: The project responded to the significant demand of the Laos government to improve the driving licensing system and cultivate safer driving practices among novice drivers. The project intended to enhance the road safety practices and knowledge of new drivers through the new curriculum, streamlined regulations, and providing access to digital knowledge. The creation of an online application system for driver licensing (Dot Smart App) and an online driving license testing system (E-driving) was particularly relevant to Lao PDR due to the ineffectiveness of the national testing and licensing systems. The Dot Smart App and E-driving also met the digitalization priorities of the Laos government. In terms of policy documents, the project was pertinent to the 2021-2030 Road Safety Strategy of Laos PDR, the UN Second Decade of Action on Improving Global Road Safety, and the 2021-2030 UN Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

Efficiency: The partnership between ESCAP and the MPWT played a crucial role in facilitating the implementation of the project. Cooperating agencies – the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (MIROS) and the Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD) based in India, contributed to enhancing awareness of Laos stakeholders about road safety management practices. The project implementation was delayed for 2,5 years, leading to three extensions under a no-cost scheme**.** The initial project period was for 18 months, commencing on August 1, 2020, and ending on January 31, 2022. However, the project was delayed due to the protracted process of finalizing and signing the Letter of Agreement between

ESCAP and the MPWT, ESCAP's due diligence requirements for contracts involving large amounts, COVID-19, and lengthy internal clearance process in the Laos government.

Effectiveness: The project succeeded in achieving all of its outputs, with the first outcome largely achieved and the second outcome fully attained. At the output level, the project developed a new driver licensing training curriculum, consisting of 8 courses, and implemented it in the pilot province of Savannakhet. The project also elaborated new driving licensing regulations, which were approved by the MPWT and introduced nationwide. The evaluation results indicate that the first project outcome – enhancing road safety awareness of new drivers through a new driving school curriculum and improved driver licensing regulations - was largely met, with novice drivers reporting an increase in their knowledge. The project succeeded in achieving its second outcome by creating and launching the Dot Smart App and E-driving. The Dot Smart App offers quick access to digital knowledge and information regarding driving lessening at no cost. It has quickly gained recognition, achieving over 1,000 downloads within just two months, from mid-August to mid-October 2024. The E-driving tool was installed in a type B vehicle in Savanakhet, and the MPWT is now seeking funding for its replication to other vehicle types and provinces. The project also increased the capacity of the MPWT staff to use the Dot Smart App and E-driving.

Impact: Although it is too early to evaluate the project's impact on reducing road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities, there were immediate effects generated by the project**.** First, the Dot Smart App and E-driving contributed to the digital transformation of the driving license and testing systems in Lao PDR. The Dot Smart App offers drivers quick access to knowledge, which can potentially lead to greater adherence to traffic rules. Moreover, the Dot Smart App provides financial advantages for users, as it is available at no cost, unlike the purchase of driver's handbooks. E-driving fosters transparency and minimizes corrupt practices in the driving licensing process. The project also increased the awareness of the MPW's staff of effective approaches to road safety management.

Sustainability: Without further support, the sustainability of several deliverables developed by the project is questionable. In particular, the replication of E-driving and the new curriculum requires additional government resources to ensure sustainability. Small financial inputs are essential from the MPWT to provide technical support for the Dot Smart App starting from August 2025. The MPWT is working to secure funding for rollout and continued use of the project products. This reflects the commitment and ownership of the MPWT, which are essential for the sustainability. The most sustainable elements of this pilot project are the driving regulations and the increased awareness among the MPWT's staff.

Cross-cutting issues: The project was not designed to promote gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion. Consequently, these considerations were not integrated into the project design and implementation. Additionally, the RSF's project proposal template did not require any separate section addressing these cross-cutting issues. Hence, the project document contained no indicators or strategies designed to mainstream them. Despite these factors, the MPWT encouraged female participation in the workshops, resulting in about 30% of the participants being women. The project's support for the implementation of SDGs 3.6 and 11.2 inherently advanced the realization of human rights to life and health.

LESSONS LEARNED

The evaluation identified the following two key lessons learned

1. **To engage higher-level policymakers in the project implementation to facilitate and/or accelerate the approval process for project deliverables**

Project deliverables often require the endorsement of senior officials in target countries (e.g., ministers). It is essential to involve these decision-makers in the project implementation from the outset to secure their backing, which is critical for achieving the project results. Their involvement will also bolster government ownership of the project. Therefore, ESCAP projects need to prioritize engagement with higher-level government officials throughout the lifecycle of nationally executed projects. It is necessary

to identify different opportunities for their engagement (e.g., participation in opening ceremonies, regular updates, workshops, meetings, and collaborative discussions), subject to the availability of the budget.

2. To identify a realistic timeline for the project implementation

The capacity of government counterparts varies, often requiring more time to implement interventions. This especially concerns nationally executed projects, where decision-making in some Member States involves lengthy bureaucratic processes. Overall, a well-defined timeline is essential for effective project management and efficient resource allocation. Therefore, it is important to develop a realistic and sufficient timeline for project implementation. Conducting a feasibility study before the project launch can be instrumental in identifying an accurate timeline. It examines local contexts, regulatory requirements, and timelines for approvals, helping to identify potential schedules and delays, leading to a more realistic timeline. Additionally, the feasibility study outlines all project components and tasks, facilitating the identification of a more achievable timeline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation offers the following action-oriented recommendations addressed to the ESCAP Transport Division and ESCAP management as a whole. They are proposed to improve the design and implementation of future projects.

1. To encourage beneficiary government agencies to develop a post-pilot vision and strategy

It is recommended that ESCAP projects encourage beneficiary agencies to develop a vision and strategy for the post-pilot phase, particularly for nationally executed projects. The sustainability of these projects, including the replication of project deliverables, depends on the actions taken by government agencies after the project's completion. Therefore, it is crucial that target countries are adequately prepared to implement these post-pilot strategies. ESCAP can facilitate this process by offering examples (e.g., case studies, frameworks, or methodologies) of what a successful post-pilot strategy might look like. This can guide government agencies in their planning. The ESCAP Transport Division can apply this strategy to its driving licensing projects being currently implemented in Iran and Nepal.

2. To specify cross-cutting issues and strategies for mainstreaming them in the prodoc

It is recommended that the prodoc templates provided by the donor include a separate section on gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion. It is also crucial to specify tactics for mainstreaming these considerations, which is also relevant to all future ESCAP projects. Besides, gender-disaggregated indicators need to be integrated into the project design and reporting. These efforts will help to advance cross-cutting issues within the project.

3. To budget for interpretation and translation services in future evaluations

It is recommended that ESCAP projects consider the language requirements of future evaluations and budget accordingly. This is particularly important for nationally executed projects, where project documents and deliverables—such as policies, regulations, and curricula—are often available in local languages. Access to accurate translation and interpretation will significantly improve data quality for evaluations. Although there are online translation services, they are not always accurate and support all local languages.

1. Introduction

To assist the Lao PDR in improving the behavior of drivers to drive safely and reduce road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities, ESCAP launched a project entitled, *Improvement of Driver Licensing System in Lao PDR.* The project aimed to reduce road traffic crashes and fatalities by improving road safety awareness and introducing an online driver licensing system. The project key activities included the development of a new driver licensing training curriculum, the improvement of driving licensing system regulations, as well as the creation and launch of an online application system for driver licensing and an online driving license testing system. The project also planned to organize workshops and training of trainers (ToT).

The project started in August 2020 and ended in June 2024. The project was implemented by the Department of Transport of Lao's Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) in close cooperation with the ESCAP Transport Division. The MPWT was a primary implementing agency. The project's overall budget was USD570,000 and it was fully funded by the UN Road Safety Fund (RSF).

This evaluation was conducted to support accountability for results and to enable learning to inform the design and implementation of future ESCAP projects. The evaluation assessed the project performance in terms of its *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability*, and *cross-cutting issues.* The evaluation took place from mid-August to late October 2024. The key users of the evaluation results will be ESCAP and the MPWT. Other main users include the donor (RSF).

2. Description of the Project

2.1 Background

According to the government data of the Lao PDR, the number of motor vehicles, including cargo and passenger cars, increases by 10-15% per year.[1] The number of registered motor vehicles increased nearly 2.7 times from 768,000 in 2008 to 2.1 million in 2018.[2] At the same time, the country saw a surge in deaths and serious injuries caused by motor vehicle crashes. In 2019, there were 6,616 accidents across the country, when 1,516 people were injured and 1,134 people died.[3] The same trend was seen earlier in 2016 when some 1,120 people were killed (equivalent to 16.6 deaths per 100,000 population) on the roads, as estimated by the World Health Organization.[4] On a daily average, there are 15-17 car accidents in the country, resulting in 3-4 fatalities, 4-5 injuries, and 24 car damages.[5]

Road traffic injury was the leading cause of death in Lao PDR for 5-14-year-old children and the second highest cause of death for the 15-49-year-old age group. Road traffic injury is also the leading cause of disability in the country.

The majority of road traffic accidents are caused by reckless and careless driving. The national road crash statistics reveal that 56% of traffic accidents observed between 2015 and 2018 were a result of speeding, careless, and reckless driving.[6] According to the local road safety experts, drivers were insufficiently educated, trained, and tested for road safety awareness before obtaining their licenses. The testing and licensing requirements and processes were not effective enough to ensure new drivers met essential safety criteria. At the same time, during ten years from 2010 to 2020, no international and national interventions were carried out in the Lao PDR to improve the driver licensing system due to the high costs of development and operation as well as the scarce government budget. With the national population continuing to rise (it increased by 20% from 6.0 million people in 2008 to 7.7 million in 2024), the situation was feared to worsen.

2.2 Link to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The project was closely aligned with the following two SDG targets addressing road safety:

- **SDG target 3.6:** *By 2030, to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030;*
- **SDG target 11.2:** *By 2030, to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems as well as improve road safety for all.*

The project was also in line with the UN Second Decade of Action for Road Safety setting a goal of reducing road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50% from 2021 to 2030. This document was adopted by the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/74/299.

2.3 Project theory of change

In assessing the project results, the evaluator used a theory of change (ToC) approach to understand the actual results attained and the process of achieving those results. The ToC also helped to assess whether the project's interventions contributed to the expected results or not. The project's logical framework (Table 1) and implementation strategies served as the foundation for developing the ToC. A detailed version of the ToC is presented in Annex 2.

[1] The 2021-2030 National Road Safety Strategy and 2021-2025 Action Plan, Lao PDR
[2] Prodoc (project document), Project on Improvement of Driver Licensing System in Lao People's Democratic Republic.
[3] The 2021-2030 National Road Safety Strategy and 2021-2025 Action Plan.
[4] See https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-status-report-on-road-safety-2018
[5] The 2021-2030 National Road Safety Strategy and 2021-2025 Action Plan.
[6] Prodoc, Project on Improvement of Driver Licensing System in Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Table 1. The Project Logical Framework

Objective
To reduce road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in Lao PDR through improved road safety awareness and knowledge of all new drivers and introducing an online driver licensing system.
Expected outcome 1
Outcome 1: New drivers have improved road safety awareness and knowledge through a new driving school curriculum in driver license trainings, and improved regulations for driver licensing
Output 1.1: New driver licensing training curriculum developed and approved by the Department of Transport
Output 1.2: The regulations related to the driving licensing system have been reviewed improved and approved by the Department of Transport
Expected outcome 2
Outcome 2: An online application process for driver licensing and an online driving license testing system is in place, and relevant stakeholders know how to use and implement the new system
Output 2.1: An online application process for driver licensing and an online driver license testing system is in place
Output 2.2: Driver licensing relevant staff in the Department of Transport are trained as trainers (TOT) and become capable of having a trial run of the developed systems in one province (pilot program)
Output 2.3: The newly developed online systems are finalized (based on the pilot) and made available nationwide at the provincial level
Output 2.4: Relevant stakeholders in the driver licensing process are well-informed through knowledge exchange workshops and seminars

Table 1 shows that the project chose two pathways to achieve the intended objective:

1) improving the road safety awareness and knowledge of new drivers (*Outcome 1*);
2) developing and introducing an online driver licensing system (*Outcome 2*).

Outcome 1 was designed to be accomplished through two outputs: a) the creation of a new driver licensing training curriculum, and b) modification of the driving licensing system regulations. *Outcome 2* was expected to be achieved through several outputs: c) development of an online application process for driver licensing (Dot Smart App) and an automated driving test system (E-Driving); d) TOT; e) piloting of two developed online systems; and f) organization of knowledge exchange workshops to inform the relevant stakeholders about the operation of the online driving licensing systems.

The evaluation results showed that there was no deviation from the original results framework in the course of the project implementation. The causal pathways between inputs (activities) and expected results (outputs and outcomes) appeared valid, which is discussed in detail in the Effectiveness Section.

2.4 Project strategies

The project used several key strategies to implement the project. First, the project employed an implementation modality, which differed from many other ESCAP projects. The project was implemented by the Laos government agency, the MPWT, and namely its Department of Transport (DoT). ESCAP transferred USD500,000 to the MPWT to implement activities. The funding was released to the MPWT in three installments upon completion of activities. The MPWT was also in charge of recruitment and contracting personnel and companies, including those involved in the development of the Dot Smart App, E-Driving, and curriculum. The MPWT had previous experience in implementing similar projects. In particular, it ran large-scale transport loan projects funded by the World Bank and other international organizations.

The project was implemented in close cooperation with the ESCAP Transport Division (TD). The TD shared its expertise for the design and implementation of the project, while also managing communication, overseeing, monitoring, and evaluation functions. It coordinated work with the cooperating agencies – the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (MIROS) and the Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD) based in India. ESCAP was also responsible for providing reports to the donor (RSF).

The second strategy was to disseminate the regional best practices on road safety management among stakeholders in the Laos PDR. For this purpose, the project partnered with two regional organizations - MIROS and AITD. They took part in the workshop in the Laos PDR to share their practices. They also provided recommendations to improve the draft report on the UN Road Safety Conventions relevant to Laos PDR. Besides, the MIROS provided recommendations for the trial versions of the E-Driving and Dot Smart App before they were piloted. The expertise of these two institutions was vital to improving the project products.

2.5 Innovative elements

The Dot Smart App and E-driving represented innovative tools that had not previously existed in the Lao PDR. New drivers used to prepare for driving tests from 2-3 handbooks that they purchased. The Dot Smart App is a free mobile application available for download by Android users, providing digital access to curriculum information and traffic rules. The information offered in this mobile app is also accessible to everybody via the website. The E-driving system, which includes various elements like GPS, camera, and monitor, has been installed and successfully tested in one car in the pilot province of Savannakhet. It is also an innovative system providing an accurate and fair assessment of the driving skills of the tested driver. These two automated products contributed to the digitalization of the driving licensing system in the Lao PDR.

2.6 Beneficiaries, target countries, and key partners

The project's target country was the Lao PDR. The end beneficiaries were the novice drivers applying for a driving license/permit in the Laos PDR. Other beneficiaries were the officers of the Vehicle and Driving License Units as well as Driving Schools from Savannakhet and other provinces, who were trained by the project through the ToT, workshops, and seminars.

The Department of Transport (DoT) of the MPWT served as the key implementing agency. The MIROS and AITD acted as cooperating partners.

2.7 Resources

The total project budget was USD 570,000. The RSF fully funded this amount. As of October 1, 2024, ESCAP transferred two installments to the MPWT, and the last remaining installment of USD50,000 was planned to be allocated in November 2024. According to the interview with the ESCAP staff, the project's implementation rate was USD95%.

3. Evaluation Scope and Methodology

3.1 Evaluation scope

The evaluation encompassed all phases of the project's lifecycle, including planning, design, and implementation. It covered the entire project duration from its inception in August 2020 to its end in June 2024. It covered all modes of the project implementation, such as virtual and offline activities.

Geographically, the evaluation focused on the Lao PDR, targeting the implementing agency (the MPWT), end beneficiaries (users of the Dot Smart App and E-Driving), and other beneficiaries (staff of the Vehicle and Driving License Unit and Driving School in Savannakhet Province). The evaluator also interviewed a representative of the sub-contracting company based in Lao PDR, which developed the Dot Smart App, E-driving, and curriculum. Project partners based in Malaysia (MIROS) and India (AITD) were also reached out for the evaluation.

3.2 Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation was structured around six criteria – *relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues (human rights, gender equality, and disability inclusion).* The following evaluation questions were used to assess the project performance. These questions and sub-questions reflected in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 3) were incorporated into the Interview Guides developed for various project stakeholders and the online survey (Annex 4).

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria and Questions

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project designed based on the needs of the target beneficiaries? What adjustments, if any, were made to the project activities and modality, in response to the new priorities of the beneficiary country?
Efficiency	To what extent has partnering between ESCAP and other organizations enabled or enhanced the reaching of results? Was the project implemented on time and according to plan?
Effectiveness	Did the project achieve its objective, outcome, and outputs?
Impact	What have been the most significant achievements or impacts of the project? Describe the project activities/outputs that lead to the impact and present evidence of the project's contribution to the impact.
Sustainability	To what extent can the results of the project be continued without ESCAP's further involvement?
Cross-cutting Issues	To what extent were cross-cutting issues, including human rights, gender mainstreaming, and disability inclusion, integrated into the design and implementation of the project?

3.3 Evaluation approach

The evaluation findings and conclusions were based on sound evidence and analysis. The evaluator employed two evaluation approaches to enhance the depth of the findings.

1) ***a mixed-methods approach*** **to obtain different data sources for triangulation and validation of evaluation results**

The robustness of the evaluation methodology was ensured by triangulation of the information received from different sources. In particular, data from secondary sources (*desk review*) was triangulated with data from primary sources (*key informant interviews and online surveys*).

2) ***a theory of change-based approach*** **to test the validity of the proposed ToC**

In assessing the project results, the evaluation also employed a ToC approach to figure out whether and how interventions contributed to the results. The ToC approach was instrumental in identifying the mechanisms of change, as well as factors and circumstances that facilitated or impeded the attainment of anticipated results. Ultimately, the ToC was crucial in determining the causal links between the intervention outputs and the outcomes. The ToC developed for this evaluation is presented in detail in Annex 2.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

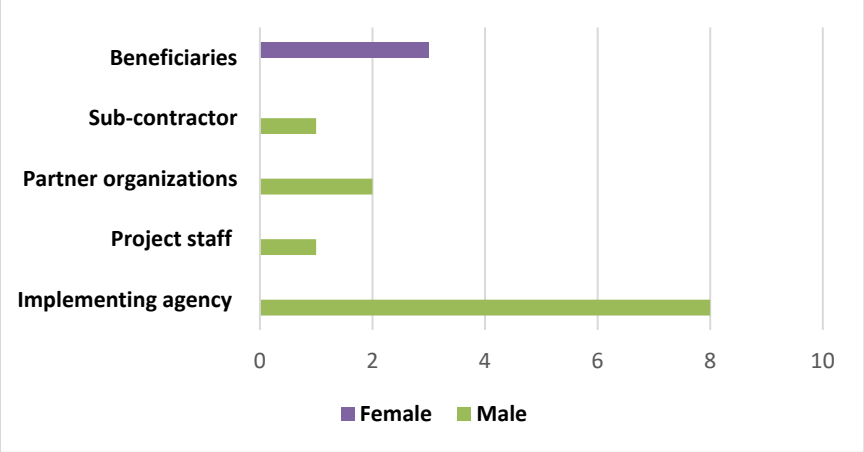
DATA COLLECTION:

The evaluation used the following three data collection tools:

1. Desk review: The evaluator undertook a review of all documents provided by the project (Annex VI). Desk study allowed the evaluator to familiarise with the project context, design, and implementation. It was further refined with additional documents gathered during the data collection phase, including the Letter of Agreement signed between ESCAP and the MPWT, surveys conducted by the MPWT among the workshop participants, and the list of existing and new courses (curriculum) of the driving school in Savannakhet province.

2. Semi-structured interviews (KIIs) were conducted with representatives of all project stakeholders. KIIs were carried out with the implementing agency (MPWT), project staff (ESCAP), partner organizations (MIROS and AITD), IT sub-contracting company, and beneficiaries. KIIs provided a detailed, in-depth understanding of the evaluation questions. In total, the evaluator carried out **15 interviews, including 3 female and 12 male participants**. The number of interviewees by stakeholder group and gender is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Interviews by stakeholder groups and gender



Interviews with English-speaking stakeholders (8 individuals) were conducted online using the Zoom online platform. The interview guide (Annex IV) was used to facilitate the exchange of information between the evaluator and interlocutors. Four interlocutors did not speak English, but only Lao. The evaluator requested them to respond to the interview questions in written form in Lao. The interview questions were translated from English into Lao using Google Translate, an online translation service. The responses of Lao-speaking respondents were also translated using the same online service.

Online survey: A self-guided online questionnaire, allowing participants to fill it out independently through an online platform, was used for the following project's beneficiaries:

- end beneficiaries (users of the Dot Smart App, E-Driving, and new curriculum);
- other beneficiaries (staff of the Vehicle and Driving License Units and Driving Schools from Savannakhet and other provinces);
- participants of ToT and workshops, who were mostly from the MPWT.

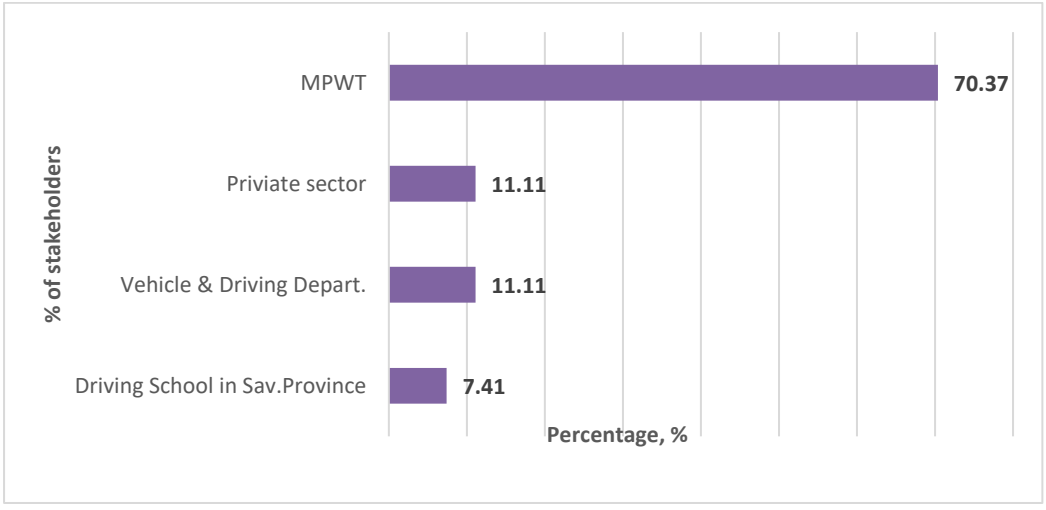
For all of these beneficiaries, one survey was used. The survey primarily consisted of close-ended questions, with the inclusion of multiple-choice options. To prevent respondents from overinterpreting survey questions and drawing inaccurate conclusions, survey questions were clear and plain, with discrete response categories (Annex IV).

The online survey was administered by the ESCAP Evaluation Unit through the Alchemer survey platform. The surveys were available in English and Lao. The ESCAP Evaluation Unit assisted in the translation of the survey from English into Lao. The evaluator sent out the survey links to **35 individuals** via WhatsApp. Email is not widely used in the Lao PDR. Moreover, the email addresses of the majority of survey participants were unavailable. Surveys were available in two languages. To increase the response rate, two reminders were sent. In total, **27 responses** (4 in English and 23 in Lao) were received, which is a 77.14% response rate. It is a high response rate.

In terms of gender distribution, 74.07% of the survey participants were men and 25.93% were women.

The majority of the survey respondents represented the implementation agency, the MPWT (70.37%), who attended the project ToT, workshops, and seminars (Figure 3). Representatives of the business sector accounted for 11.11%. However, as the business sector was neither the focus of the project nor engaged in its activities, it seems that users of the E-driving and Dot Smart App identified themselves as part of the business sector. The staff of the Vehicle and Driving Department and Driving School in Savannakhet Province constituted 11.11% and 7,41% respectively.

Figure 3. Survey Participants by Sector, % (N=27)



DATA ANALYSIS:

A summative analysis was used to analyze the data and assess the effects of the project's interventions on its target groups and what the project achieved. Summative analysis helped to assess the project effectiveness, by comparing the project outcomes with the intended objectives.

For KIIs, **a *thematic analysis*** was also used to identify the patterns in meaning across the data to derive the most prevailing themes, issues, and problems. Thematic analysis helped to organize qualitative data into a series of patterns.

3.5 Stakeholder analysis

Based on the desk research, the evaluator identified various groups of stakeholders involved in the project design and implementation. Using **stakeholder mapping,** which organizes people according to their functions, interests, and benefits received from the project, **the evaluator identified 6 groups of project stakeholders.** They were all targeted in the evaluation (Table 4). Specifically, the evaluator identified those stakeholders, who executed the project (i), implemented it (ii), benefited from the project activities (iii), provided consultancy services (iv), funded it (v), and partnered with it (vi).

Table 4: List of Stakeholders

Executing agency (I)	**Implementing agency (II)**
• ESCAP Transport Division (project staff)	• MPWT
Partner organizations (III)	**Beneficiaries (IV)**
• MIROS • AITD	• Vehicle and Driving License Units in Savannakhet and other provinces • Driving School in Savannakhet and other provinces • Participants in ToT and workshops (MPWT) • Users of Dot Smart App and E-Driving
Consultants (V)	**Donor (VI)**
• Software development team • E-driving course development company	• RSF

Representatives of these stakeholders took part in KIIs, except the donor (RSF). The RSF's representative was unavailable for KII. The interviewees were queried about the project implementation and its effectiveness, impact, relevance, efficiency, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues. They were also asked about the factors that facilitated and hindered the attainment of the project results.

Beneficiaries were requested to participate in an online survey. Moreover, users of the Dot Smart App and E-Driving were requested to share the survey links with other users of these two automated systems. Overall, the evaluation gathered the opinions of all types of stakeholders.

3.6 Sampling

Interview: The ESCAP staff provided the list of project stakeholders by offering those interlocutors, who could provide the best information. Due to the project's implementation modality and its scope, the number of individuals involved in the project design and implementation was not large. Consequently, the evaluator used purposive sampling to identify stakeholders for KIIs. The evaluator included at least 1 or 2 representatives from each stakeholder group for KIIs. Overall, 21 people were identified for interviews, of which **15 agreed to take part in KIIs.**

Survey: Since the MPWT just recently conducted its post-training surveys among the ToT and workshop participants, it was decided to survey a small number of training beneficiaries so as not to duplicate the MPWT's efforts. Overall, 35 people, comprising the TOT and workshop participants, as well as users of the Dot Smart App, E-Driving, and curriculum were identified for the survey. Out of 35 persons, 27 responded to the survey questions.

The following table provides a summary of the data collection instruments and sampling techniques used for each data collection method, stakeholder types, and the total number of interviewees/survey participants.

Table 5. Data collection tools, sampling technique, stakeholder type, and number of interview or survey participants

Data collection tool	Sampling technique	Stakeholder type	Number of stakeholders consulted
Desk review	All relevant project documents available in English. A few documents available in Lao were translated into English using Google Translate.	n/a	n/a
KIIs	Purposeful sampling	• Executing agency (ESCAP) • Implementing agency • Partner organizations • Beneficiaries • Sub-contractor	15 (12 – male and 3 - female)
Online survey	Purposeful sampling	• Beneficiaries: (ToT and workshop participants); staff of the Vehicle & Driving License Units and Driving Schools in Savannakhet and other provinces, and users of the Dot Smart App and E-Driving	27 (20 male and 7 female)

3.7 Risks and limitations

Table 6: Risk and Limitations in the Evaluation Process

Limitations to the evaluation	Mitigations measures
Language issues. Not all stakeholders from the Lao PDR spoke English. Moreover, some project documents, such as new driving licensing regulations, were available only in Lao.	Desk review: project documents available only in Lao were translated into English using Google Translate. Surveys: the ESCAP Evaluation Unit assisted in translating the survey from English into Lao. Surveys completed by respondents in Lao were translated into English using Google Translate. Interviews: the evaluator translated interview questions into Lao via Google Translate and requested the interlocutors to fill them out in written form. The received responses were translated back into English via the same online translation service.
A limited number of the survey participants	Since the MPWT recently contacted the TOT and workshop participants to fill out their post-training assessment surveys, the evaluator approached a limited number of beneficiaries to participate in the survey to avoid duplicating the MPWT's efforts. The MPWT's survey findings were integrated into the evaluation and complimented it.
The evaluation interviewed and surveyed a limited number of end beneficiaries (only 3 novice drivers)	The evaluator was given the contact information of a few novice drivers, who used the project products, such as the new curriculum, Dot Smart App, and E-driving. It was not possible to expand the list of novice drivers for the evaluation. To mitigate this, the evaluator sourced data from the three drivers as well as other groups of the project stakeholders, including representatives of the Driving Schools and the MPWT.

4. Evaluation Findings

4.1 Relevance

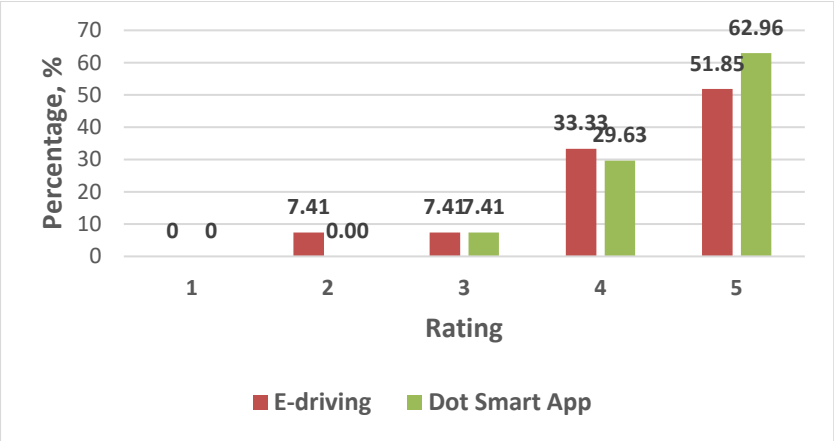
<u>Finding 1</u>: The project was pertinent to the priorities and needs of Lao PDR.

According to the evaluation findings, the project was highly responsive to the needs and priorities of the Lao PDR. The project framework itself was designed by the MPWT to address the compelling local needs of road safety. It was developed in response to the RSF's Call for Proposals when ESCAP invited its Member States to submit project concepts. ESCAP refined a project proposal received from the Lao PDR, which was later approved by the UNRSF secretariat. This indicates that the project was designed using a bottom-up approach reflecting pressing local needs. The project's objective to reduce road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities has been a high priority for the country, particularly in light of the absence of international interventions over the past decade to improve the national driver licensing system.[7]

Second, the project's expected outcomes - *improvement of the road safety knowledge of new drivers and introduction of online driver licensing systems* - were relevant to the national priorities. As stated above, reckless driving has been one of the key reasons for car accidents in the country. Insufficient education of new drivers before obtaining licenses also caused traffic crashes. In addition, the existing testing and licensing processes were not effective enough to ensure new drivers met essential safety criteria.

The high relevance of the Dot Smart App and E-driving was supported by the online survey results. Figure 4 summarises the ratings provided by survey respondents about the relevance of the Dot Smart App and E-driving to local road safety priorities. The survey respondents were requested to grade the relevance on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not relevant and 5 highly relevant. A prevailing majority of respondents (62,96%) indicated a high level of relevance and relevance (29.63%) of the Dot Smart App (total, 92.59%). E-driving was also rated high: 51.85% of respondents found it highly relevant or relevant (33.33%) (in total, 85.18%).

Figure 4. Relevance of the Dot Smart App and E-driving, survey results, % (N = 27)



Third, the new driving curriculum, another expected product of the project, was also responsive to the needs of driving schools in Lao PDR. The previous curriculum had only 5 courses for A, B, C, E, and D types of cars and required new courses for A1, A2, C1, D2, and E types of cars. Road safety education is critical for developing knowledge and skills to enable drivers to use the road safely.

[7] Prodoc, Project "*Improvement of Driver Licensing System in Lao PDR*"

Fourth, the project was closely aligned with the national policies. The project was congruent with the 2021-2030 National Road Safety Strategy of Laos PDR and its 2020-2025 Action Plan. The strategy targets to reduce traffic accidents, the rate of deaths, and serious injuries by 50% by 2030. Moreover, the strategy calls on all domestic and international organizations to financially assist the government in implementing the strategy.

Fifth, the digitalization of public services has been a priority for the Lao government. In this regard, the creation of Dot Smart App and E-driving supports the government's digitalization efforts. Most of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region are still using the manual driving testing system.[8] In this regard, these e-products are innovative for many regional countries and the Lao's experience is of relevance for them.

Finding 2: The project was congruent with the global and ESCAP strategic documents.

The project was aligned with the UN road safety documents. In particular, the project was relevant to the Second Decade of Action on Improving Global Road Safety adopted by the UN Resolution A/RES/74/299. It aims to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by 50% by the end of 2030. This Resolution encourages Member States to ensure political commitment and responsibility for improving road safety. It also calls on Member States to take measures to promote road safety knowledge and awareness through education and training. Moreover, it urges Member States to continue action through 2030 on all the road safety-related targets of the SDGs, including targets 3.6 and 11.2.

The project was pertinent to the 2021-2030 Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety adopted to implement the UN Resolution A/RES/74/299. In particular, the recommendations for safe road use advocate for national and local governments to implement competency-based testing for driver licensing.

The project was also in line with the ESCAP Regional Plan of Action for Asia and the Pacific for the Second fDecade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030. This plan also targets to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50% from 2021 to 2030. The project was also pertinent to the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific 2022–2026. In this program, road safety was identified as one of the priority thematic areas for the region.

4.2 Efficiency

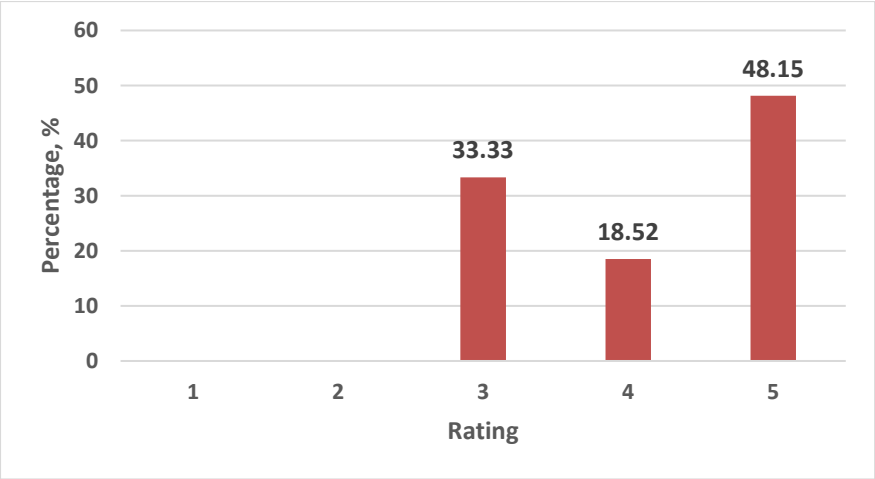
Finding 3: The partnership between ESCAP and the MPWT was pivotal for implementing the project and achieving its results. The project strengthened the existing partnership between them. Cooperating agencies, MIROS and AITD, contributed to raising awareness of Laotion stakeholders of regional road safety management practices.

A partnership between ESCAP and the MPWT played an important role in the project's design and implementation. They worked together closely to develop a project proposal, which resulted in its selection by the UNRSF Secretariat. Although the project was implemented by the MSPW, ESCAP maintained close engagement with it both at the departmental (DoT) and ministerial levels throughout the implementation period. Since it was a pilot project, ESCAP assisted the MPWT in implementing the project by providing guidance and sharing its expertise. The MPWT recognized the valuable support from ESCAP, as noted during the interviews. ESCAP also coordinated efforts with the MPWT to expedite the project implementation. Before this project, ESCAP cooperated with the MPWT on other endeavors such as thematic meetings and seminars. This project marked the first grant intervention between the two counterparts. The project ultimately strengthened this partnership, thereby facilitating the achievement of results.

[8] Interview with one of the project stakeholders, October 8, 2024.

Partnership with AITD and MIROS, which is the ASIAN Road Safety Centre, was instrumental in raising awareness of their Laotian peers on the regional best practices for road safety management. In particular, these two cooperating agencies shared their knowledge and experience during the national workshop held in the Lao PDR. They also provided recommendations to improve the project deliverables such as the report on UN Conventions about road safety pertinent to Lao PDR, E-driving, and the Dot Smart App. AITD and MIROS found these two online systems innovative for the region. Many online survey participants also concurred that these systems were innovative for Lao PDR (Figure 3). In particular, 66,67% of participants selected grades 5 (48,15%) and 4 (18,52%) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest grade.

Figure 3. Dot Smart App and E-driving as Innovative Elements, % (N=27)



MIROS and AITD cooperated with ESCAP before the project and this partnership was further strengthened by this project. ESCAP and MIROS continue their cooperation and are currently working together on a new project.

Finding 4: The project implementation was delayed, leading to three extensions under a no-cost scheme.

Initially, the project was planned for 18 months, commencing on August 1, 2020, and ending on January 31, 2022. Considering the delay in finalizing and signing the Letter of Agreement (LoA) between ESCAP and the MPWT, the project was granted the first extension from the RSF for one year until January 31, 2023. Secondly, the LoA was of a high value (USD500,000) for ESCAP, necessitating an extended period for the ESCAP Grants Committee to apply its due diligence in reviewing the LoA. Thirdly, the European Union (EU), one of the co-sponsors of the RSF, needed additional time to incorporate its special conditions into the LoA mandated by EU rules. Delays were also caused by COVID-19. To accommodate the COVID-19 travel restrictions, the ESCAP and MPWT arranged alternate work modalities, such as virtual meetings.

Later, the project received its second no-cost extension until December 2023, followed by a third extension until July 2024. The project was postponed for a total of 2.5 years. These delays were also attributed to the lengthy clearance process in the MPWT to approve the project-supported products (e.g., the Dot Smart App and curriculum). Moreover, delays were caused by the protracted process of selecting an international joint venture IT company (sub-contractor) by the MPWT. Subsequently, an extensive duration was required to test, pilot, and upgrade these two systems.

As a whole, the evaluation results show that the project timeline was initially insufficient due to the aforementioned reasons, including the time-consuming clearance process in the Laos government.

Additionally, the capacity of government counterparts in developing countries differs, often requiring more time for the implementation of interventions. In this regard, conducting a feasibility study before the project launch is important in identifying a realistic timeline. This study assesses a proposed project for its practicality by analyzing local contexts, regulatory requirements, and timelines for approvals. This process helps identify potential schedules and delays, leading to a more realistic timeline. It also assesses the capacity of local human resources, contributing to more accurate time estimates. Additionally, the feasibility study outlines all project components and tasks, facilitating the identification of a more achievable timeline.

4.3 Effectiveness

The evaluation assessed the achievement of the outcomes and outputs. The annual progress reports provide details on the implementation of project activities.

Finding 5: The project succeeded in achieving its two outputs (Outputs 1.1 and 1.2). Based on the evidence collected from the limited number of users of the new curriculum and new driving regulations, as well as other stakeholders, the preliminary evaluation conclusion is that Outcome 1 was achieved to a larger extent.

Description of Outputs and Outcome	Level of achievement
OUTCOME 1: New drivers have improved road safety awareness and knowledge through a new driving school curriculum in driver license trainings, and improved regulations for driver licensing	**Unable to fully assess, but KIIs and online surveys with a limited number of novice drivers indicate that they increased their knowledge from the courses available in the Dot Smart App and the new curriculum introduced in Savannakhet province**
OUTPUT 1.1: New driver licensing training curriculum developed and approved by the Department of Transport	**Achieved**
OUTPUT 1.2: The regulations related to the driving licensing system have been reviewed, improved and approved by the Department of Transport	**Achieved**

Output 1.1: Based on the evidence collected for this evaluation, the project achieved this output. A new driver licensing training curriculum was developed. A joint Lao-Thai IT venture, selected by the MPWT to create the Dot Smart App and E-driving, also developed new driving courses. They were to be further integrated into the Dot Smart App to make them accessible for novice drivers nationwide.

The previous driver licensing curriculum of Lao PDR consisted of only 5 courses and did not encompass all categories of vehicles operating in the country (Table 7). The project's goal was to develop new courses for the absent vehicle categories. The project created 8 new courses, consisting of 6 new and 2 upgraded courses, as illustrated below.

Table 7: Driving Curriculum, Old and New Courses

Vehicle type	Curriculum Name	Existing courses	New courses
A	A Two-wheel motorcycle engine not exceeding 125 cc	Yes	
A1	A1 Two-wheel motorcycle engine 125 cc and above		**Yes**
A2	A2 Private three-wheel vehicle, passenger vehicle with two-wheels and three-wheels		**Yes**
A3	A3 Two-wheel tractor with trailer and Walk-behind Tractor		
B	B Car with four wheels, total weight not exceeding 3,500 kg, and not more than 9 seats including the driver.	Yes	
C	C Cargo truck, total weight from 3,500 to 7,500 kg	Yes	**Yes**
C1	C1 Cargo truck, total weight exceeds 7,500 kg up to 15,000 kg.		**Yes**
C2	C2 Cargo truck, total weight exceeds 15,000 kg.		**Yes**
D	D Passenger vehicle with 4 wheels or more, not more than 15 seats	Yes	**Yes**
D1	D1 Passenger vehicle from 16 seats to 35 seats		
D2	D2 Passenger vehicle with 36 seats or more		**Yes**
E	Car (B), Cargo truck (C), and Passenger vehicle (D), having trailer total weight not exceeding 750 kg		**Yes**
E1	E1 Cargo truck (C2) having trailer total weight exceeding 750 kg	Yes	

The new courses included grading criteria as well as test questions. They were designed taking into consideration the Thai curriculum and elements of the UN Conventions on road safety. Overall, the project relied on Thai good practices in developing curriculum and online licensing systems. The Thai counterpart in a joint Lao-Thai IT venture shared its expertise in creating these deliverables. Yet, the courses were developed in Word and PDF formats, thereby providing only a text version. The inclusion of educational videos in the course materials would have fostered active learning, as noted by some interviewees. They recommended incorporating educational videos into future driving courses.

The new curriculum was implemented in one province -– Savannakhet. According to the interviews with the MPWT, the new curriculum was approved; however, to implement it across the country, it is needed to deliver workshops for the remaining driving schools. The MWPT intends to organize them next year. The curriculum would then become a national standard for all driving schools. As a pilot, the curriculum was developed and approved by the MPWT, thereby achieving Output 1.

As of mid-October 2024, only 5 previously existing courses were integrated into the Dot Smart App. The MPWT still needs to integrate the newly developed 8 courses into the App. The positive aspect is that there were over 1,000 downloads of the Dot Smart App within just 2 months from mid-August to mid-October 2024. It indicates that the app featuring courses is gaining popularity and recognition in the country. This is a promising beginning, and interviewees expect that this number will grow.

Some interlocutors also noted that the active engagement of higher-level officials in the project, including the Deputy Minister or Minister of the MPWT, would have facilitated and expedited the approval of the project products. Regular discussions and meetings with them would have been vital to secure their backing for the project.

Output 1.2: The project achieved this output by modifying the driving licensing regulations, which were approved by the MPWT. In total, the following four policy documents were developed:

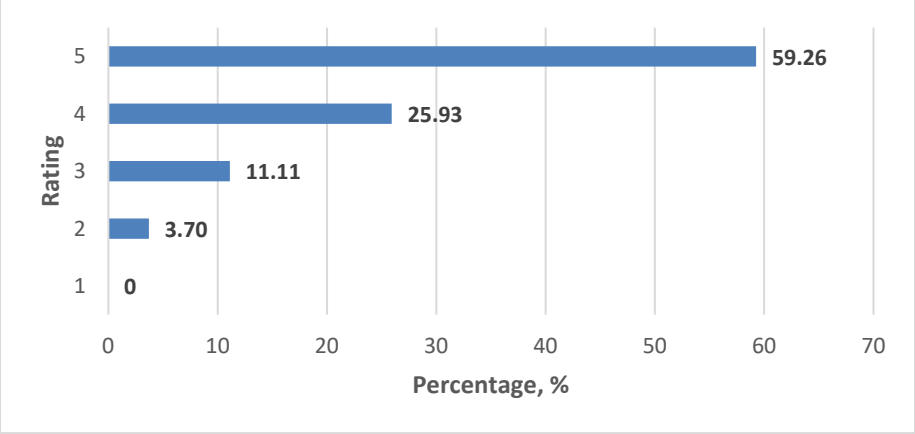
- *Regulations on Driving License Management for Land Transport* (Internal reference #9163/MPWT) dated 11 May 2021 and signed by the Minister of MPWT;
- *Guidelines to Implement Regulations on Driving License Management for Land Transport* (Internal reference #18942/DoT), dated 4 August 2022 and signed by the DoT's Director;
- *Agreement on Driving School Management* (Internal reference #9161/MPWT) dated 11 May 2021 and signed by the Minister of MPWT;
- *Guidelines to Implement the Agreement on Driving School Management* (Internal reference number 18941/DoT), dated 4 August 2022 and signed by the Director-General of DoT.

The purpose of these regulations is to enhance road safety by refining the procedures for issuing driving licenses. They were also issued to enhance the driving test procedures for all categories of vehicles.

OUTCOME 1: The evaluation scope (online interviews, a small number of end beneficiaries involved in KIIs and online surveys, as well as language issues) hindered a comprehensive assessment of this outcome. Nevertheless, interviews with 3 end beneficiaries (novice drivers) indicate that they increased their knowledge through the courses available in the Dot Smart App and the new curriculum introduced in Savankhet Driving School. This judgment was also supported by KIIs with other stakeholders. Moreover, over 1,000 downloads of the Dot Smart App in just 2 months demonstrate that the app facilitates access to knowledge, despite the availability of only old courses there. It is expected that when the new 8 courses are integrated into the app, more drivers will increase their knowledge of the road safety rules.

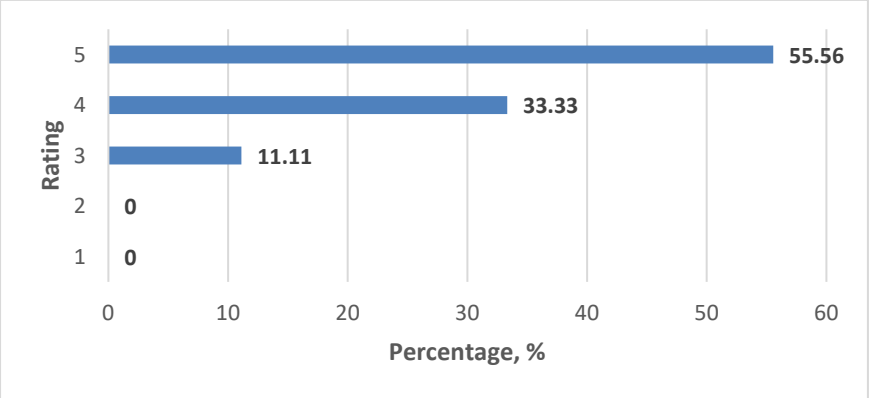
The majority of survey respondents also agreed that the Dot Smart App increases the knowledge of drivers about road safety. In particular, on a scale of 1 to 5, 59.26% of respondents expressed strong agreement (grade 5), while 25.93% indicated agreement (grade 4).

Figure 4. Dot Smart App increases knowledge of drivers on road safety, % (N)



Moreover, most survey participants reported that the new regulations contribute to road safety. Specifically, 55.56% assigned a rating of 5, while 33.33% assigned a rating of 4 on a scale from 1 to 5 (Figure 5).

Figure 5. The new driver's license regulations contribute to road safety, % (N)



Based on the evidence collected from beneficiaries of the new curriculum and new driving regulations, as well as other stakeholders, the preliminary evaluation conclusion is that this outcome was achieved to a larger extent. More evidence needs to be gathered for the long-term impact evaluation if it is conducted in the future.

Finding 6: The project achieved Outcome 2 by creating and launching an online application tool for driver licensing (Dot Smart App) and an online driving license testing system (E-driving). Moreover, ToT, supported by the project, enabled the DoT staff to use these two systems. Laotian workers in the driver licensing sector raised their awareness of the regional good practices in safe road management.

Description of Outputs and Outcome	Level of achievement
OUTCOME 2: An online application tool for driver licensing and an online driving license testing systems are in place, and relevant stakeholders know how to use and implement the new system	**Achieved**
Output 2.1: An online application process for driver licensing and an online driver license testing systems are in place	**Achieved**
Output 2.2: Driver licensing relevant staff in the Department of Transport are trained as trainers (TOT) and become capable of having a trial run of the developed systems in one province (pilot program)	**Achieved**
Output 2.3: The newly developed online systems are finalized (based on the pilot) and made available nationwide at the provincial level	**Achieved**
Output 2.4: Relevant stakeholders in the driver licensing process are well-informed through knowledge exchange workshops and seminars	**Achieved**

Output 2.1: The project reached this output. The project created the Dot Smart App, an online application tool for driving licenses, and E-driving, an online driver license testing system. The Dot Smart App is a self-learning online tool designed for drivers to acquire knowledge about traffic rules and prepare for driving exams. It contains online driving courses and theory test questions to simulate the exam. In addition, it allows users to schedule driving exams, view exam results, and receive news about the driving license system in the Lao PDR.

> "The Dot Smart App is a modern tool that helps drivers to easily access information".
>
> Novice driver, female, Lao PDR

The Dot Smart App has been used nationwide since mid-August 2024. It is available for Android mobile users and can also be accessed through the website. It is unavailable for iOS mobile users. Novice drivers can either purchase the Driver's Handbooks to prepare for the driving exam or download this app at no cost. Many interviewees noted that the Dot Smart App offers quick access to knowledge free of charge, and is user-friendly. At the same time, they recommended adding educational videos and cartoons to the app to boost user engagement and improve learning outcomes. They recommended releasing the iOS version, despite the website version being accessible to all users.

> "I used Dot Smart App to get prepared for my exam".
>
> Novice driver, female, Lao PDR

The E-driving tool was installed in one vehicle of type B in Savanakhet province. The project supplied hardware, including GPS, camera, batteries, and Wi-Fi for it. The E-driving provides automatic scores for driving, thereby increasing transparency. Novice drivers can take their practice exam using either the E-driving or the conventional approach (a car without e-driving technology installed). It is limited to one car and one province. According to the MPWT, it needs funding to replicate E-driving in other provinces and install this system in other vehicle categories (e.g., C or D). The MPWT is planning to seek additional funding from the government. For this purpose, it intends to analyze the E-driving testing results to inform the decision-making process.

Output 2.2: The interview results indicate that this output was achieved by the project. The staff of the DoT from various provinces of the Lao PDR, including the Vehicle and Driving License Unit and Driving School in Savannkhet, were trained as trainers. They were trained on how to operate the E-driving and the Dot Smart App. In total, 200 people attended the ToT. The post-training assessment surveys conducted by the MPWT show that over half of the participants rated the ToT as very useful (41.7%) and useful (45.8%) (Figure 6). In total, it accounts for 87.5% of all respondents, which is a high percentage.

Figure 6. The ToT's Usefulness, Post-Training Assessment, % (N=68)

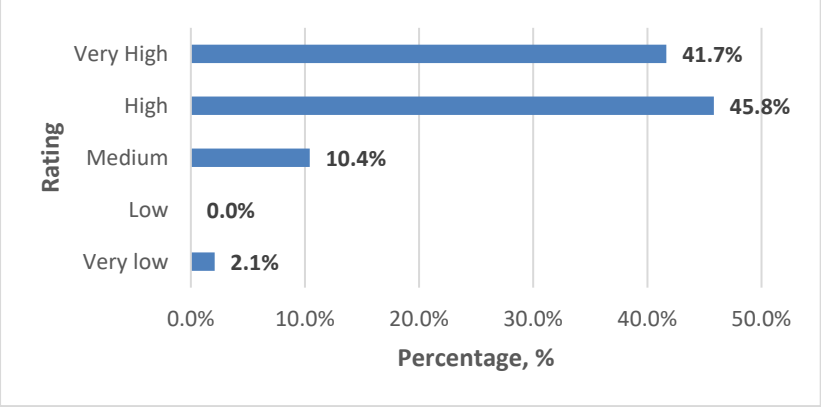
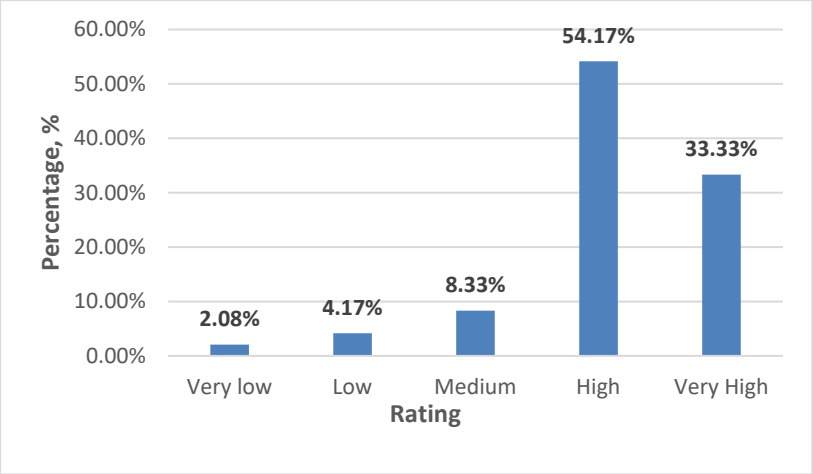


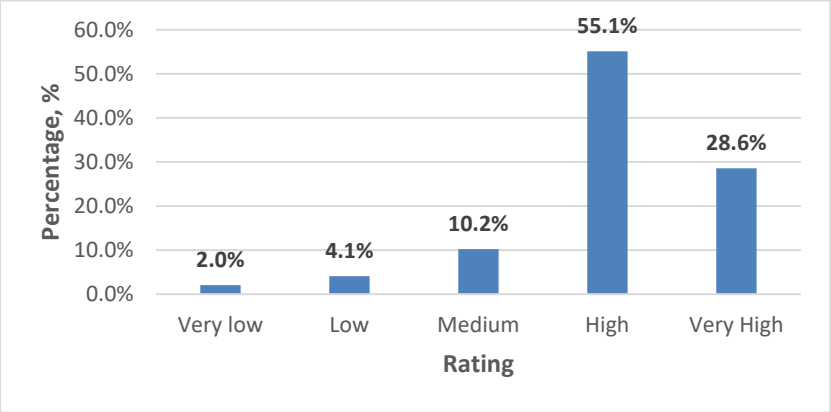
Figure 7 illustrates that the ToT increased the capacity of the trainees. In particular, 33.33% and 54.17% of respondents rated "very high" and "high" the question of whether they gained new knowledge and skills from the ToT.

Figure 7. ToT Increased My Knowledge, Post-Training Assessment, % (N=68)



In addition, 28.6% and 55.1% of participants expressed strong agreement and agreement on their ability to train or guide their colleagues, following the ToT (Figure 8). It accounts for 83.7% of all respondents. It means that the majority of trained participants would be capable of explaining the operation of two tools, should the MPWT mandate them.

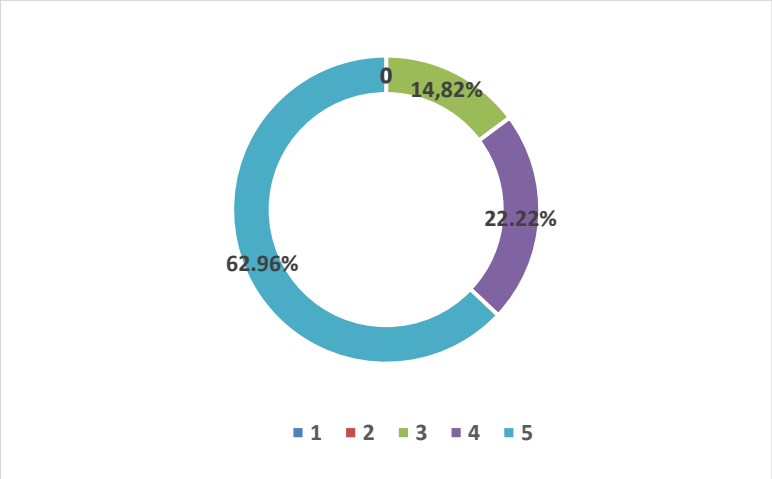
Figure 8. Ability to Train Co-Workers, Post-Training Assessment, % (N=68)



Output 2.3: This output was achieved. Based on the testing results, the newly developed online application system (Dot Smart App) was finalized. It was made available on the website and mobile app, which allowed it to be accessible nationwide.

Output 2.4: This output was attained by the project. The Laotian stakeholders working in the driver licensing sector were well-informed about road safety management good practices. The MIROS, AITD, RSF, and ESCAP TD attended the knowledge exchange workshop held in May 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. They shared their national and regional experiences on effective road safety management with their Lao peers. According to the KIIs and online surveys, the workshop enhanced awareness of Laotian stakeholders. Specifically, 85.15% of respondents either strongly agreed (62.96%, rating 5) or agreed (22.22%, rating 4) that their knowledge had increased (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Workshops raised my awareness, survey results, % (N = 27)



OUTCOME 2: The project attained Outcome 2, which is articulated as an output. The online application tool for driver licensing (Dot Smart App) and the online driving license testing system (E-driving) were developed by the project and are being used in the Lao PDR. The staff of the DoT, such as the personnel of Vehicle and Driving License Units and Driving Schools, know how to use them.

4.4 Impact

Finding 7: The Dot Smart App and E-driving contributed to the digital transformation of the driving license and testing system in Lao PDR. The Dot Smart App provides drivers with easy access to knowledge, which can potentially lead to adherence to traffic rules. The free Dot Smart App provides savings to users by removing the need to purchase handbooks. E-driving fosters transparency in the driving licensing process.

It is still early to assess the project's impact on the reduction of road traffic crashes or injuries since some interventions (e.g., Dot Smart App) were finalized just before the evaluation started in August 2024. Nevertheless, there are immediate effects that the project has generated or is expected to generate in the driving license system.

The first positive effect is that the launch of the Dot Smart App and E-driving contributed to the digitalization of the driving license and testing system in the Lao PDR. For instance, appointments for driving exams and the review of exam results can now be done through the Dot Smart App, but not manually. The Dot Smart App also facilitated drivers' access to information, procedures, and updates on the driving licensing system. In addition, test questions incorporated into the Dot Smart App stimulate active learning among users. All these features can collectively enhance drivers' knowledge, potentially leading to their behavioral change to comply with traffic rules. This, in turn, could potentially contribute to a decrease in road traffic accidents, injuries, and fatalities.

Within just two months, the Dot Smart App has been downloaded more than 1,000 times, suggesting that these users might have enhanced their knowledge. The Dot Smart App also generated financial benefits. Specifically, there is no need for its users to buy handbooks. The Laotian drivers save money as a result. Additionally, exam scheduling has become easier now through the Dot Smart App, thereby helping users overcome bureaucratic procedures.

E-driving and its further replication to new provinces, along with the inclusion of additional vehicle categories, would foster an environment that encourages less corrupt behavior. The E-driving automatically provides scores based on the actual competencies of novice drivers. This helps to avoid corruption (bribery), an issue that continues to occur in the Lao PDR, as reported by interview interlocutors. Thus, E-driving fosters transparency in the driving licensing process.

Furthermore, the project increased the awareness and knowledge of the DoT's staff of innovative technologies and safe road management practices. This knowledge base is crucial in transforming the norms and standards in safe road management.

4.5 Sustainability

Finding 8: The sustainability of some project deliverables is questionable. Specifically, E-driving and the new curriculum necessitate further support from the MPWT for sustainability. However, the MPWT is making efforts to secure funding for their rollout. The Dot Smart App is expected to endure beyond August 2025, when the technical maintenance contract with the current IT company ends. Small financial inputs are necessary from the MPWT to technically support this tool by hiring one IT personnel after August 2025 and making the iOS version available for users. The approved driving regulations and the MPWT staff's enhanced awareness represent the project's most sustainable elements.

The project's design and implementation by the MPWT resulted in the creation of local ownership, which supports the project sustainability. However, since it was a pilot project, its sustainability, including the replication of the project products, largely depends on future actions by the MPWT. Without further and continuous support, the sustainability of some project deliverables is questionable. For instance, the replication of E-driving is dependent on government funding to procure hardware for new vehicles in Savanakhet and other provinces. The MPWT plans to replicate the project deliverables in other provinces and is making efforts to secure funding for rollout. This reflects the commitment and ownership of the MPWT, which are vital for the sustainability.

The Dot Smart App is more sustainable. The IT company, that created it, will provide technical support for one year until August 2025. Upon completion of this period, the MPWT needs to employ at least one IT personnel to provide technical support for the mobile and website versions of the Dot Smart App. The MPWT should also ensure that users have access to the iOS version by paying an annual subscription fee to Apple.

Further actions of the MPWT are also necessary to sustain the new curriculum. To establish the new driving courses as national standards, the MPWT is planning to train the next cohort of instructors from driving schools based in non-pilot provinces, subject to the availability of funds from the Lao Ministry of Finance. Additionally, it is essential for the MPWT to ensure that all new eight courses are accessible via the Dot Smart App. The MPWT is seeking funding for the rollout of the curriculum in other provinces, demonstrating its commitment to sustaining the curriculum's use.

The sustainable part of the project was the enhanced awareness and knowledge of MPWT's staff on new practices in road safety management. This knowledge base will persist and be potentially used by the MPWT to improve road safety management in the Lao PDR. Another sustainable element of the project was the driving regulations approved and implemented by the MPWT. These regulations will remain effective.

The ESCAP Transport Division is currently implementing similar projects in Iran and Nepal. Experience from this pilot project, such as implementation strategies, has been applied by ESCAP to these two projects. It shows that the project management techniques continue to be replicated in new countries. Yet, the sustainability of these projects largely depends on the actions taken by government agencies following the projects' conclusion. In this context, it is essential for target countries to develop and implement post-pilot implementation strategies.

4.6 Cross-cutting Issues

<u>Finding 9:</u> The project framework was not designed to promote gender equality, human rights, or disability inclusion. Consequently, these considerations were not integrated into the project interventions. Meanwhile, the project's support for the implementation of SDGs 3.6 and 11.2 inherently advanced the realization of human rights in life and health.

Gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion were not the focus of the project. Subsequently, these considerations were not incorporated into the project design and implementation. For instance, no specific strategies or gender-disaggregated indicators were designed or used by the project to mainstream these principles. Moreover, the RSF's project proposal template did not require any separate section on gender or human rights. Hence, the prodoc contained no information regarding the interrelationship between the project outcomes and cross-cutting issues. The RSF is advised to consider having a separate section on gender, human rights, and disability inclusion in its future project proposals. This will help to ensure that a human rights-based approach becomes the guiding principle in the design and implementation of projects.

Despite the absence of mainstreaming strategies, the MPWT encouraged female participation in the workshops and ToT. Consequently, the MPWT reported that approximately 30% of the participants in these events were women.

The project, by supporting the achievement of SDG 3.6 and 11.2, was intrinsically linked with human rights. In particular, SDG 3.6 targeting *to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road crashes by 2030* is connected to the human rights to life and health (Articles 3 and 25.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). In addition, SDG 11.2, which aims to *provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems and improve road safety for all,* is associated with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Specifically, SDG 11.2 is aligned with ICESCR's Article 11.1 "*The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living"*. The project, by facilitating the achievement of SDG3.6 and 11.2, has contributed to the advancement of human rights to life and health, as well as the ICESCR.

5. Conclusions

The evaluator rated the performance of each of the six evaluation criteria based on the qualitative standard scale presented in Table 8. The scaling was drawn from the analysis of evidence. The rating results are to be regarded as an indicative evaluation of the level of achieved results. The performance of the six evaluation criteria for this project is rated as follows:

Table 8. Qualitative Scale, Performance of the Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Rating (Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Somehow Satisfactory (SS), Not Satisfactory (NS), Unable to Assess (UA), and Non-Applicable (N/A)
Relevance	HS
Efficiency	S
Effectiveness	S
Impact	S
Sustainability	MS
Cross-cutting issues	N/A

Relevance: The evaluation provided a rating of ***Highly Satisfactory*** for the relevance**.** The project was pertinent to the priorities of the Lao PDR to reduce road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities. The project concept was developed by the MPWT to respond to the critical local needs of road safety management. Improvement of the road safety knowledge of new drivers was the pressing need of the Lao PDR. The project intended to address it through the new curriculum, streamlined regulations, and access to digital knowledge. The creation of an online application system for driver licensing (Dot Smart App) and an online driving license testing system (E-driving) was particularly relevant due to the ineffectiveness of the national testing and licensing systems. The Dot Smart App and E-driving also met the digitalization priorities of the Laos government.

At the policy level, the project was in line with the national strategy, the 2021-2030 National Road Safety Strategy of Laos PDR and its 2020-2025 Action Plan. The project was also aligned with the UN road safety documents, such as the Second Decade of Action on Improving Global Road Safety and the 2021-2030 Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety. In addition, the project was congruent with the ESCAP Regional Plan of Action for Asia and the Pacific for the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030.

Efficiency: The project efficiency was rated as ***Satisfactory***. The collaboration between ESCAP and the MPWT supported the project design and implementation. Each of them had a clear set of functions for the project implementation, with the MPWT acting as a primary implementing agency. ESCAP supported the project design and implementation by fulfilling communication, coordination, overseeing, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation functions. The existing partnership between the MPWT and ESCAP was strengthened by this project. Moreover, two regional institutes, AITD and MIROS, acted as cooperating agencies. They contributed to raising awareness among their Laotian peers about the regional best practices in road safety management. Both agencies continue their cooperation with ESCAP, including a new project implemented by MIROS and ESCAP.

The project implementation was delayed for 2,5 years, leading to three extensions under a no-cost scheme**.** The initial project period was for 18 months, commencing on August 1, 2020, and ending on January 31, 2022. However, the project was delayed due to the lengthy process of finalizing and signing the LoA between ESCAP and the MPWT. Second, the LoA was of a high value (USD500,000),

necessitating an extended period for the ESCAP Grants Committee to apply its due diligence in reviewing the LoA. Thirdly, COVID-19 led to delays. Fourth, clearance (approval) procedures within the Laos government slowed down the project implementation. As a whole, the initial period of 18 months proved to be insufficient and unrealistic.

Effectiveness: The project effectiveness was considered ***Satisfactory.*** The project achieved two outputs under Outcome 1 by developing a new driver licensing training curriculum and new driving regulations. A new curriculum, comprising 8 courses for the absent vehicle categories, was introduced in the pilot province of Savannakhet. The project also developed new driving regulations approved by the MPWT. They were issued to improve the national driving test procedures for all categories of vehicles. The evaluation could not comprehensively assess the attainment of Outcome 1 due to a small number of KIIs and online surveys conducted with the end beneficiaries – novice drivers. Nevertheless, the preliminary evaluation results indicate that Outcome 1 was largely met, as both interviewed and surveyed drivers reported an increase in knowledge from the courses offered in the Dot Smart App and the new curriculum launched in Savannakhet.

The project succeeded in achieving Outcome 2 by creating and launching the Dot Smart App and E-driving. The Dot Smart App has quickly gained recognition, achieving over 1,000 downloads within just two months, from mid-August to mid-October 2024. It offers quick access to digital knowledge and information at no cost. The E-driving was installed in a type B vehicle in Savanakhet province, and the MPWT requires funding for its replication to other vehicle types and provinces. Moreover, the project increased the capacity of the MPWT's staff to use these two systems. The Laotian stakeholders in the driver licensing sector were also well-informed by MIROS and AITD about effective road safety management practices.

Impact: It is too early to evaluate the project's impact on reducing road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities, given that several activities were finalized and launched right before the evaluation in August 2024. Nonetheless, there were immediate effects generated by the project that were assessed as ***Satisfactory.*** First, the Dot Smart App and E-driving contributed to the digital transformation of the driving license and testing system in Lao PDR. The Dot Smart App offers drivers quick access to knowledge, which can potentially lead to greater adherence to traffic rules. E-driving fosters transparency and minimizes corrupt practices in the driving licensing process. Moreover, the Dot Smart App provides financial advantages for users, as it is available at no cost, unlike the purchase of Driver's Handbooks.

Sustainability: The project sustainability was rated as ***Moderately Satisfactory.*** However, without further support, the sustainability of some deliverables is questionable. In particular, the replication of E-driving and the new curriculum requires additional government resources to ensure sustainability. Small financial inputs are essential from the MPWT to provide technical support for the Dot Smart App by employing at least one IT specialist starting from August 2025, upon expiration of the current contract. It also needs to make the iOS version accessible to users by paying annual subscription fees. The MPWT is working to secure funding for rollout and continued use of the project products. This reflects the commitment and ownership of the MPWT, essential for ensuring sustainability. The most sustainable elements of this pilot project are the approved driving regulations and the increased awareness among the MPWT's staff.

Cross-cutting issues: The criterion holds no relevance for this evaluation as the project was not intended to promote gender equality, human rights, or disability inclusion. Consequently, these considerations were not integrated into the project design and implementation. Additionally, the RSF's project proposal template did not require any separate section addressing these cross-cutting issues. Hence, the project document contained no indicators or strategies designed to mainstream them. Despite the absence of mainstreaming strategies, the MPWT encouraged female participation in the workshops and ToT. Consequently, about 30% of the participants in these events were women. The project's support for the implementation of SDGs 3.6 and 11.2 inherently advanced the realization of human rights in life and health, alongside the ICESCR.

6. Lessons learned

1. **To engage higher-level policymakers in the project implementation to facilitate and/or accelerate the approval process for project deliverables**

Project deliverables often require the endorsement of senior officials in target countries (e.g., ministers). It is essential to involve these decision-makers in the project implementation from the outset to secure their backing, which is critical for achieving the project results. Their involvement will also bolster ownership of the project. Therefore, ESCAP projects need to prioritize engagement with higher-level government officials throughout the lifecycle of nationally executed projects. It is necessary to identify different opportunities for their engagement (e.g., participation in opening ceremonies, regular updates, workshops, meetings, and collaborative discussions), subject to the availability of the budget.

2. **To identify a realistic timeline for the project implementation**

The capacity of government counterparts varies, often requiring more time to implement interventions. This especially concerns nationally executed projects, where decision-making in some Member States involves lengthy bureaucratic processes. Overall, a well-defined timeline is essential for effective project management and efficient resource allocation. Therefore, it is important to develop a realistic and sufficient timeline for project implementation. Conducting a feasibility study before the project launch is instrumental in identifying an accurate timeline. This study assesses a proposed project for its practicality by analyzing local contexts, regulatory requirements, and timelines for approvals. This process helps identify potential schedules and delays, leading to a more realistic timeline. Additionally, the feasibility study outlines all project components and tasks, contributing to more accurate time estimates.

7. Recommendations

The evaluation offers the following action-oriented recommendations addressed to ESCAP management. They are proposed to improve the design and implementation of future projects.

1. **To encourage beneficiary government agencies to develop a post-pilot vision and strategy (based on Finding 8)**

It is recommended that ESCAP projects encourage beneficiary agencies to develop a vision and strategy for the post-pilot phase, particularly for nationally executed projects. The sustainability of these projects, including the replication of project deliverables, depends on the actions taken by government agencies after the project's completion. Therefore, it is crucial that target countries are adequately prepared to implement these post-pilot strategies. ESCAP can facilitate this process by offering examples (e.g., case studies, frameworks, or methodologies) of what a successful post-pilot strategy might look like. This can guide government agencies in their planning. The ESCAP Transport Division can apply this strategy to its driving licensing projects being currently implemented in Iran and Nepal.

2. **To specify cross-cutting issues and strategies for mainstreaming them in the prodoc (based on Finding 9)**

It is recommended that the prodoc templates provided by the donor include a separate section on gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion. It is also crucial to specify tactics for mainstreaming these considerations, which is also relevant to all future ESCAP projects. Besides, gender-disaggregated indicators need to be integrated into the project design and reporting. These efforts will help to advance cross-cutting issues within the project.

3. **To budget for interpretation and translation services in future evaluations (based on Limitations to the Evaluation)**

It is recommended that ESCAP projects consider the language requirements of future evaluations and budget accordingly. This is particularly important for nationally executed projects, where project documents and deliverables—such as policies, regulations, and curricula—are often available in local languages. Access to accurate translation and interpretation will significantly improve data quality for evaluations. Although there are online translation services, they are not always accurate and support all local languages.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation TORs



Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Extrabudgetary-funded Project

Improvement of driver licensing system in Lao People's Democratic Republic

May 2024
ESCAP

INTRODUCTION

Deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes present a major challenge to sustainable development globally. Over 60 percent of the annual 1.35 million road traffic deaths occur in Asia and the Pacific, with low and middle-income countries being the most affected. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) has experienced a surge in deaths and serious injuries due to road traffic crashes. According to WHO estimates, approximately 1,120 people (equivalent to 16.6 deaths per 100,000 population) died on the roads in 2016. Road traffic injury was the leading cause of death for children aged 5-14 and the second highest cause of death for individuals aged 15-49 in Lao PDR. Additionally, road traffic injury was the leading cause of disability in the country.

The present project aimed to improve the behaviours of drivers to drive safely through better training and testing in the process of licensing. ESCAP, as the Participating UN Organization (PUNO), guided the project's design and coordinated its implementation, providing technical and expert support to the lead implementing partner, the Department of Transport, Ministry of Public Works and Transport of Lao PDR. The Department of Transport collaborated with local stakeholders, while organizations such as the Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD) and the Malaysia Institute of Road Safety Research (MIROS) offered expert and technical input.

ESCAP's evaluation policy requires selected projects funded through extrabudgetary sources to be subject to an independent evaluation. Evaluation is an important function that seeks to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of a project. Recognizing the value of an independent evaluation in guiding efforts to improve ESCAP's overall performance and effectiveness, ESCAP mandates the secretariat to ensure that its programmatic work is evaluated periodically.

EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Evaluation purpose and use

The purpose of the evaluation is to support accountability for results and to enable learning. The evaluation results will be used to improve the design and implementation of future projects facilitated through the formulation of an evaluation management response and follow-up action plan. The main users of the evaluation results will be ESCAP, particularly the implementing division(s). Other expected users include the project participating countries and implementing partners.

Evaluation objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

1) Assess the project performance against the evaluation criteria: impact, effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability and cross-cutting issues, including gender equality, human rights, disability inclusion, as deemed relevant.

2) Formulate lessons learned and action-oriented recommendations to inform management decision- making and improve future project design and implementation.

The evaluation assesses the project's performance by examining its achievement of results, utilizing the project's results framework, its implementation processes, and the contextual factors involved. It aims to establish causal connections as much as possible, guided by the evaluation criteria and questions. The evaluation will be conducted in line with ESCAP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Guidelines and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation.

Evaluation Scope

The evaluation encompasses the project's design, strategy, and implementation throughout its entire duration from August 2020 to June 2024, including all implementation methods such as workshops, training, and additional activities based on consultations with the beneficiary country.

The evaluation will cover the full duration of the project. The geographical area that the evaluation is expected to cover is Lao PDR.

Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The following evaluation criteria and questions to assess the project performance will be considered and further refined following consultations with project management and other stakeholders during the evaluation inception period.

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions
Impact	• What have been the most significant achievements or impacts of the project at the regional and national levels? Describe the project activities/outputs that lead to the impact and present evidence of project's contribution to the impact.
Effectiveness	• How effective were the project's capacity-building activities? Provide evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of capacity building activities.
Relevance	• To what extent was the project designed based on needs of the target beneficiaries? • What adjustments, if any, were made to the project activities and modality, in response to the new priorities/requirements of the beneficiary country?
Efficiency	• To what extent has partnering with other organizations enabled or enhanced reaching of results? • Was the project implemented in a timely manner and according to plan? If not, why?
Sustainability	• To what extent can results of the project be continued without ESCAP's further involvement?
Cross-cutting Issues	• To what extent were cross cutting issues, including gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion, integrated into the design and implementation of the project?

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Over the last decade, Lao PDR has seen a steady rise in its population, which has increased by about 20 percent from 6.0 million in 2008 to 7.2 million in 2018. Concurrently, the number of registered motor vehicles has nearly tripled, escalating from about 768 thousand in 2008 to about 2.1 million in 2018. This increase has been accompanied by a surge in deaths and serious injuries due to motor vehicle crashes.

Most road traffic crashes were attributed to reckless and careless driving, with national data indicating that 56 percent of traffic citations between 2015-2018 were for speeding, careless, and reckless driving. Additionally, drivers were insufficiently educated, trained, and tested for road safety

awareness and skills prior to obtaining their licenses. The testing and licensing requirements were not effective enough to ensure new drivers met essential safety criteria. No interventions had been implemented over the last decade due to high development and operational costs and scarce resources.

In response, the project employed the "safe system approach" to improve the driver licensing system nationwide. This included introducing a new standard curriculum and safety-based training materials for all 30 driving schools across the country, enhancing testing requirements, and implementing an online application and testing system. These measures aimed to significantly reduce reckless driving and improve overall driving behaviors, thereby preventing a substantial number of traffic crashes and deaths. The project aimed to save an estimated 500 lives annually in the long run by educating new drivers on road safety and testing them before they receive a license.

Results Framework per project document

Project Objective	**To reduce road traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities in Lao People's Democratic Republic through improved road safety awareness and knowledge of all new drivers and introducing an online driver licensing system.**
Expected Outcome 1	New drivers have improved road safety awareness and knowledge through a new driving school curriculum in driver license trainings, and improved regulations for driver licensing.
Output 1.1	New driver licensing training curriculum developed and approved by the Department of Transport.
Output 1.2	The regulations related to the driving licensing system have been reviewed and improved and approved by the Department of Transport.
Expected Outcome 2	An online application process for driver licensing and an online driving license testing system are in place, and relevant stakeholders know how to use and implement the new system.
Output 2.1	An online application process for driver licensing and an online driver license testing system are in place.
Output 2.2	Driver licensing relevant staff in the Department of Transport are trained as trainers (TOT) and become capable to have a trial run of the developed systems in one province (pilot programme).
Output 2.3	The newly developed online systems are finalized (based on pilot) and made available nationwide at the provincial level.
Output 2.4	Relevant stakeholders in the driver licensing process are well informed through knowledge exchange workshops and seminars.

The project delivered a new standard curriculum and safety-based training materials to all driving schools across the country, updated testing requirements, and implemented an online application and testing system. The curriculum, materials, and online system were piloted in Savannakhet Province and, based on the outcomes, were applied nationwide. In the short term, new drivers had improved road safety awareness and knowledge through access to a new driving school curriculum and improved regulations for driver licensing. The relevant stakeholders were consulted and trained through knowledge exchange events.

In the long run, the project aimed to reduce road traffic crashes and fatalities in Lao PDR due to improved road safety awareness and knowledge among all new drivers through better training and the introduction of an online driver licensing system.

OVERALL EVALUATION APPROACH

In assessing the results achieved, the evaluation will make use of a theory of change approach to understand the actual results achieved and the process of achieving results. The development of the theory of change should be guided by both the project's results framework and the actual implementation strategy and delivery of outputs.

The evaluation will apply a mixed-method approach through a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis to inform findings. The evaluation methodology will rely primarily on desk review and remote data collection methods. The evaluation will apply multiple methods, triangulating information and data from different sources to ensure confidence in the findings. Special care should be taken to ensure that the methods are gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive.

The evaluation process will involve several phases as outlined below:

Phases
a) **Inception and scoping phase** • Preliminary review of documentations • Interviews with members of the reference group and other project stakeholders to understand their expectations and requirements • Preparation of an evaluation inception report detailing the evaluation scope, questions, methodology and workplan • Meeting with the evaluation reference group to present the inception report and seek clearance to proceed • Preparation of questionnaires and interview guides
b) **A desk review of project documents.** The following documentations will be provided to the consultant • Name of the project team members and their respective roles • List of stakeholders to be interviewed • Project publications, research papers, training materials • Press releases • Project meeting information (e.g. attendance lists, minutes/reports, agenda, handouts, questionnaire results) • Mission reports • Project document, including the work and monitoring plan, logical framework and budget • Relevant agreements (e.g. with the project partners) • Project revisions • Progress reports, including documents referred to in the report • Project terminal report
c) **Surveys of project stakeholders (electronic)** • An electronic survey will be administered targeting government officials and implementing partners • Development and administration of the survey by the consultant • Data analyses

d) **In-depth individual interviews (video call)** • Governmental stakeholders • Development partners • Project management
e) **Preparation of the evaluation report and presentation of findings** • Preparation of a brief note containing the preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation • Meeting with the reference group to present (using PowerPoint) and discuss the preliminary evaluation results • Preparation of a draft evaluation report and review of the draft report by the evaluation reference group • Finalization of the evaluation report along with an evaluation brief (3-page summary) following a standard format to be provided by ESCAP

Data will be disaggregated by sex and other relevant social categories. The evaluation will undertake a transparent and participatory evaluation process that will involve male and female stakeholders identified in the stakeholder analysis, including: the reference group, development partners and target beneficiaries in all key evaluation tasks.

In analyzing the data against the selected criteria, the evaluation will use qualitative and quantitative approaches, and provide charts and direct quotes. Disability inclusion, as well as gender and human rights mainstreaming, are essential components of data analysis in all ESCAP evaluations and take place on three levels: 1) project design; 2) project implementations; 3) project outcomes. Data analysis will enable useful, evidence-based findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The evaluation methodology will also take into consideration the ethical principles in evaluation as detailed in the UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Evaluation reference group

To support the independence of the evaluation, the Evaluation Unit, SPMD will manage and oversee the entire evaluation process. An evaluation reference group will be established to support the evaluation and will comprise the following members: the Director and/or Section Chief of the implementing division/office (Chair), project officer, evaluation officer from the Evaluation Unit, SPMD and, optionally, additional members from partner ESCAP division/office (internal) or organization (external).The reference group provides technical and methodological guidance to the evaluation process; reviews and approves the selection of the consultant based on a short list to be provided by the Evaluation Unit/SPMD, terms of reference and inception report; provides quality control of the evaluation report and validation of recommendations; and ensures adherence to ESCAP Evaluation Policy and Guidelines and the use of evaluation outputs, including the formulation of the evaluation management response and follow-up action plan.

Evaluator

ESCAP's evaluation policy requires the selection of qualified evaluators with relevant professional competencies and experience. In accordance with the UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework, ESCAP selects evaluators who have the following profile:

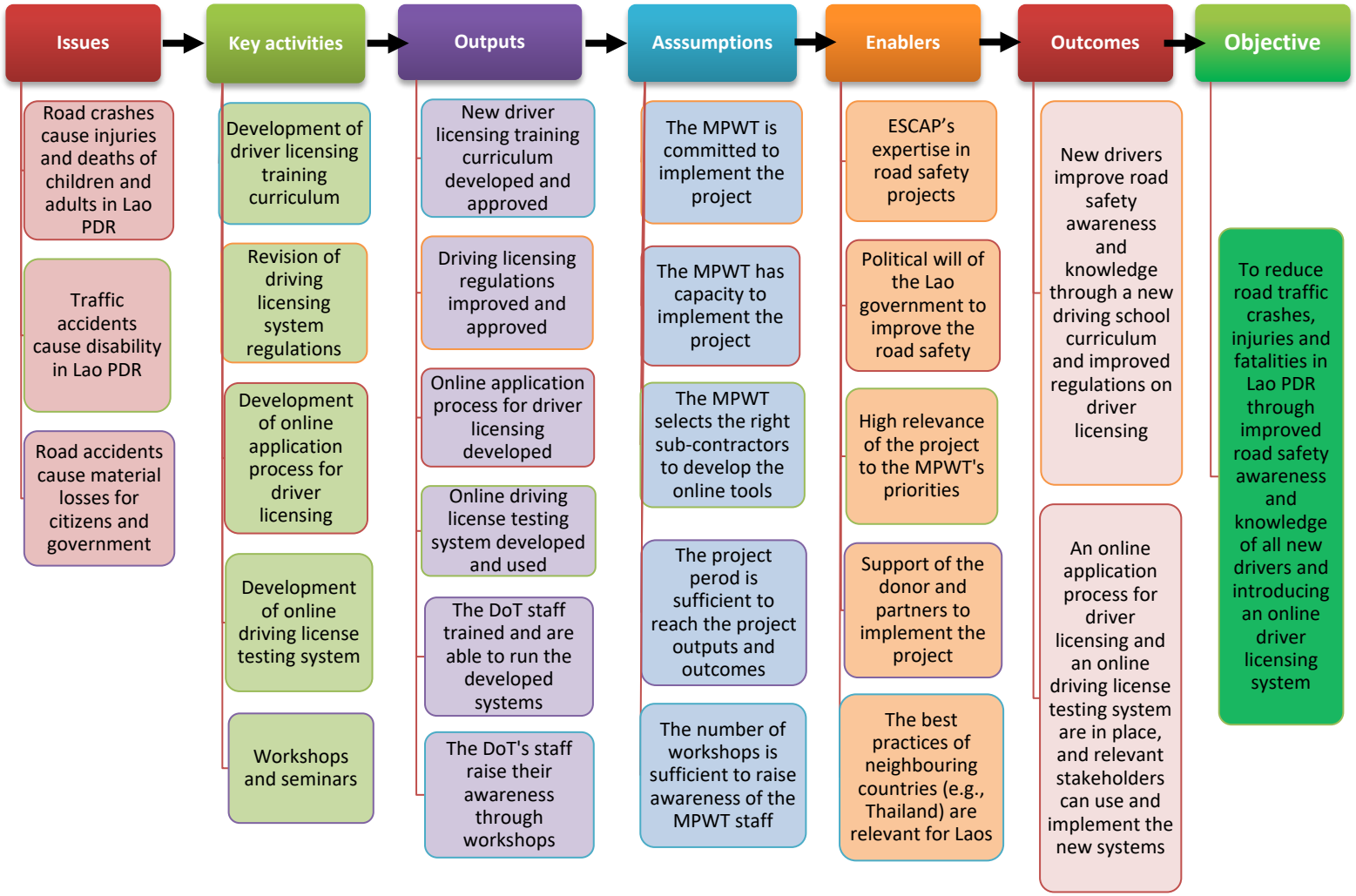
- A strong professional and technical foundation in evaluation, including familiarity with UNEG norms and standards. This includes a robust understanding of evaluation design, approaches,

methods, and analytical skills necessary for interpreting findings and crafting recommendations, demonstrated through years of experience conducting evaluations for both UN entities and other international organizations. The ability to prepare evaluation reports that adhere to UNEG quality standards is a key aspect of this expertise.

- The evaluator must also have knowledge of the United Nations System and its principles, values, goals and approaches. ESCAP also seeks to find evaluators who have some experience in the subject matter being evaluated.
- To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators must not have been involved in the design, management, and implementation of the project being evaluated, nor expect to be in the future.

The evaluator will assume overall responsibility for carrying out the evaluation. This includes, among other activities, managing the work, ensuring the quality of interviews and data collection, preparing the draft report, presenting the draft report and producing the final report after comments have been received in line with standard templates provided by ESCAP.

Annex 2: Project's theory of change



Annex 3: Evaluation matrix

Criteria	Key Question	Sub-Questions	Indicators	Sources of information	Data collection methods
Relevance	**1. To what extent was the project designed based on the needs of the target beneficiaries?**	Was the project design aligned with the national policies of Lao PDR? Was the project design underpinned by a thorough identification of the priorities and needs of Lao PDR? Were the project beneficiaries involved/consulted in the project design process? Were any lessons and best practices from earlier ESCAP projects used to influence the design of this project?	• Evidence showing that the priorities and needs of Lao PDR were identified before or during the project design stage; • # of beneficiaries and other interviewees indicating that the project was relevant to the needs and national policy priorities of Lao PDR; • Evidence showing that lessons learned and best practices from earlier ESCAP projects were used to influence the design of this project	• Project documentation; • KIIs & online survey	Desk review, KIIs, and online survey
	2. What adjustments, if any, were made to the projects' activities and modality, in response to the new priorities/requirements of target beneficiary countries?	Was the project responsive to any new priorities of Lao's MPWT, such as those arising from COVID-19?	• # of stakeholders indicating the change of the project activities due to the new priorities of Lao PDR	• Progress reports • Feedback from beneficiaries and partners	Desk-review, KIIs

Efficiency	**1. To what extent has partnering with other organizations enabled or enhanced the reaching of results?** **2. Was the project implemented on time and according to plan? If not, why?**	Was the partnership b/n ESCAP and Lao's government counterparts successful in the design and implementation of the project? Why/why not? Was it a new partnership or did the project strengthen an existing partnership? Were there any delays in the project implementation? How did the projects address the delays?	• Comparision of the original work plan with the actual project implementation period	• Project documents	Desk review
Effectiveness	**Did the project achieve its objective, outcome, and outputs?**	Did the project develop a new driver licensing training curriculum? Was it approved by the DoT? Did the project revise the driving licensing system regulations? What new aspects did these regulations introduce? Were they approved by the DoT? Did the project develop an online application system for driver licensing (i) and an online driver license testing system (ii)? Were the DoT staff trained as trainers? Did they increase their capacity to run the developed online systems in Savannakhet Province? Did the MPWT staff raise their awareness of safe driving through knowledge exchange workshops and seminars? Did the project activities, specifically the new driving curriculum and revised driver licensing regulations, improve the road safety awareness of new drivers?	• Evidence of the development and approval of the driver lessening training program. • Evidence of the revision and approval of the driving licensing system regulations. • Evidence of the development and operation of an online application system for driver licensing and an online driver license testing system. • # of DoT staff trained as trainers. • Evidence that the DoT staff are capable of running the online application system for driver licensing and an online driver license testing system in Savannakhet Province. • Evidence that the project workshops and seminars raised awareness of the MPWT staff. • Evidence that the project products (the new driving curriculum and improved driver licensing regulations) led to the new drivers improving their road safety awareness.	• KIIs, online survey • Project progress reports • Post-training assessment surveys completed by the implementing agency (MPWT).	Desk review, KIIs, online survey

Impact	**What have been the most significant achievements or impacts of the project at the national level?**	• What has been changed quantitatively and qualitatively as a result of the project? • Did the project contribute to the reduction of road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in Lao PDR? Are there any statistics available to support this? • What other changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended) did the project make as a result of its activities?	• Evidence of any quantitative or qualitative changes that occurred as a result of the project. • Evidence of the reduction of road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in Lao PDR as a result of the project activities? • Any other evidence of the project's impact on road safety in Lao PDR	• Interviews with the MPWT, project staff, and beneficiaries. • Online survey • External reports (statistics and media publications)	KIIs, project documents, online surveys, and external reports
Sustainability	**To what extent can the results of the projects be continued without ESCAP's further involvement?**	• Was the national ownership created by the project? • Which elements of the project are more or less sustainable? • Has the Lao government resources to replicate the project products in other provinces of Lao PDR? • What is still needed to ensure the project's sustainability over the longer term?	• Evidence of the project products being used by the beneficiaries • Evidence that the MPWT has resources both to support the further operation of the online systems and replicate them in other provinces.	• Interviews with the MPWT staff • Desk review of project documents • Online survey	KIIs, project documents, and online survey
Cross-cutting issues	**To what extent were cross-cutting issues, including gender mainstreaming and disability inclusion, integrated into the design and implementation of the projects?**	• Did the project design incorporate gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion into its activities? • Did the project mainstream equal participation and representation of women and vulnerable groups?	• # of gender-disaggregated indicators incorporated into the project design • # of female participants in project activities (trainings, workshops, etc.) • Availability of project information disaggregated by gender and other related vulnerability indicators.	• Interviews • Desk review	KIIs, desk review

Annex 4: Data collection instruments

ONLINE SURVEY

Dear all,

My name is Aida Alymbaeva, and I am an independent consultant evaluating the ESCAP project, which is aimed at reducing road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). The project was implemented from August 2020 to June 2024. The project, among other things, introduced an online driver licensing system (Dot Smart App) and an automated driving test system (E-Driving), improved regulations for driver licensing, and conducted workshops for the staff of Lao's Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT).

Your insights are crucial to this independent evaluation. This 5-minute survey, as part of an independent evaluation, aims to gather your valuable feedback. The survey is anonymous, and therefore, it does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information. Your participation in the survey will be of great importance and I hope you will consider participating.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

I. Respondent's profile	
Your province	
Type of organization	[ ] MPWT [ ] Other government agency [ ] Private sector [ ] Other, specify
How would you describe your gender?	Male [ ] Female [ ] Prefer not to say [ ] Prefer to self-describe as _____ (please specify)

II. Which project products or activities did you use or attend? Please select all that apply	
1. An online driver licensing system (Dot Smart App)	
2. An automated driving test system (E-Driving)	
3. Improved regulations for driver licensing	
4. The national workshop on Improvement of Driver Licensing System in Lao PDR (13 May 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR)	
5. A training workshop on the Improvement of the Driver Licensing System in Lao PDR, Savannaakhet (January 2024)	
6. Other (please specify)	
7. I don`t remember	

II. Relevance					
Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)	**Lowest (1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**Highest (5)**
1. An online driver licensing system (Dot Smart App, https://dot-smart.mpwt.gov.la/) is					

relevant to Lao PDR's needs and particularly to its road safety					
2. An automated driving test system (E-Driving) is *relevant* to Lao PDR and particularly to its road safety					
3. The training workshops were relevant to the priorities of Lao PDR in improving road safety					

III. Effectiveness					
Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)	Lowest (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Highest (5)
1. An online driver licensing system (Dot Smart App) increases knowledge of drivers on road safety					
2. An automated driving test system (E-Driving) improves the driving practices of new drivers					
3. The new driver licensing regulations contribute to the road safety					
4. The training workshops raised my awareness of possible ways to improve the driving license system					

IV. Impact					
Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)	Lowest (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Highest (5)
1. The Dot Smart App and E-Driving contribute to the reduction of road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in Lao PDR					
2. The new driver licensing regulations revised by the project contribute to the road safety					
V. Efficiency					
Please rate your agreement of the following statements on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)	Lowest (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Highest (5)
1. Dot Smart App and E-Driving are innovative tools for Lao PDR					
2. Dot Smart App and E-Driving are user-friendly tools					
3. Lecturers at training workshops were highly professional					

VI. Sustainability					
Please rate your agreement of the following statements on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)	Lowest (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Highest (5)
1. Dot Smart App and E-Driving are currently being used by new drivers in Savannakhet Province					
2. Dot Smart App and E-Driving are being used by new drivers in other provinces of Lao PDR					
3. I continue applying the knowledge and information gained through the project's workshops in my everyday work					

VII. Comments and recommendations
Provide your comments and recommendations to improve similar projects in the future:

Thank you very much for your responses and comments!

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-structured interview guides by stakeholder groups

ESCAP has commissioned an independent evaluation of its project entitled, *Improvement of Driver Licensing System in Lao PDR*. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the project's performance in terms of its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and gender/human rights/disability inclusion. The evaluation also seeks to identify lessons learned and good practices to inform future ESCAP projects.

The evaluation is carried out by an independent evaluator, Aida Alymbaeva.

This interview is confidential, with all information received to be aggregated and anonymized. No individual will be quoted nor will the organization they represent be identified. The data collected will only be used for evaluation purposes. Your participation in the interview is voluntary and you may withdraw from it at any moment.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview questions for the project staff and supervising manager(s)

Introduction:

- Could you please describe your role in the project and for how long were you a part of this project?

Relevance:

- Can you briefly talk about the project's background? Was the project designed based on evidence (research, lessons learned, and evaluations from past programming)?
- To what extent was the project designed based on the needs of Lao PDR? Please give examples of legislation, strategy, and policy sources where they exist.
- What adjustments, if any, were made to the project activities and modality, in response to the new priorities/requirements of the Lao PDR?

Efficiency:

- Was the partnership of ESCAP with the Lao's government counterparts successful in the design and implementation of the project? Was it a new partnership or did the project strengthen an existing partnership?
- Were there any delays in the implementation of the project? What were the reasons for delays and how were they addressed?
- What was the project implementation rate at the end of the project?

Effectiveness:

- Did the project develop a new driver licensing training curriculum? Was it approved by the MPWT?
- Did the project revise and improve regulations related to the driving licensing system? What new aspects did these regulations introduce? Were they approved by the MPWT?
- Did the project finalize the development of an online application system for driver licensing (i) and an online driver license testing system (ii)?
- Are the DoTs and other relevant staff currently using these two systems, or are they still in a test format?
- Were the DoT staff trained as trainers? Did they increase their capacity and become capable of running the developed online systems in Savannakhet Province?
- Were the newly developed online systems made available nationwide or only in Savannakhet Province?
- Did the MPWT staff raise awareness about safe driving through knowledge exchange workshops and seminars?

- Did the project activities, specifically the new driving curriculum and revised driver licensing regulations, improve the new drivers' road safety awareness and knowledge?
- What were the facilitating and hindering factors in implementing the project?
- In your view, which project results were not achieved? Why?

Impact:

- What has been changed quantitatively and qualitatively as a result of the project?
- Did the project contribute to the reduction of road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in Lao PDR? Are there any statistics available to support the reduction in road traffic crashes?
- What other changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended) did the project make as a result of its activities?

Sustainability:

- Is there any evidence that project products (e.g., Dot Smart App and E-Driving) will function beyond the project support?
- Which elements of the project are more or less sustainable?
- Has the Lao government resources and sufficient knowledge to replicate the project products in other provinces of Lao PDR?
- What is still needed to ensure the project's sustainability over the longer term?
- Is there a plan by ESCAP or other donors to further support this project?

Cross-Cutting Iusses:

- Did the project design incorporate gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion into its activities?
- Did the project implement concrete actions to ensure equal participation and representation of women?

Lessons learned:

- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the project design and implementation?
- What would you change in the project's design and implementation if it were to start now?
- What lessons were learned from the project implementation to improve similar projects in the future?

Other issues:

- Do you have any recommendations for future similar projects?
- Would like to add anything else?

Interview questions for implementing agency (MPWT, DoT, and driving school staff in Savannaket Province)

Introduction:

- Could you please describe your role in the project?

Relevance:

- Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of Lao PDR? In what way?
- Were project activities adjusted, if any, to meet the new needs of Lao PDR or your organization?

Efficiency:

- Was your partnership with ESCAP successful in the design and implementation of the project? Why/why not?

- Was it a new partnership or did the project strengthen an existing partnership?
- Were there any delays in the implementation of the project? What were the reasons for delays and how were they addressed?

Effectiveness:

- Did the project develop a new driver licensing training curriculum? Was it approved by the MPWT?
- Did the project revise and improve regulations related to the driving licensing system? What new things did these regulations introduce? Were they approved by the MPWT?
- Did the project finalize the development of an online application system for driver licensing (i) and an online driver license testing system (ii)?
- Are the DoTs and other relevant staff currently using these two systems, or are they still in a test format?
- Were the DoT staff trained as trainers? Did they increase their capacity and become capable of running the developed online systems in Savannakhet Province?
- Were the newly developed online systems made available nationwide or only in Savannakhet Province?
- Did the MPWT staff raise awareness about safe driving through knowledge exchange workshops and seminars?
- What were the facilitating and hindering factors in implementing the project?
- In your view, which project results were not achieved? Why?

Impact:

- What has been changed quantitatively and qualitatively as a result of the project?
- Did the project contribute to the reduction of road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in Lao PDR? Are there any statistics available to support the reduction in road traffic crashes?
- What other changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended) did the project make as a result of its activities?

Sustainability:

- Does your organization continue using the project products (e.g., Dot Smart App and E-Driving) developed by the project?
- Is there any evidence that the project products will function beyond the project support?
- Has the Lao government resources and sufficient knowledge to replicate the project products in other provinces of Lao PDR? Will the project products be used nationwide?
- What is still needed to ensure the sustainability of the project products over the longer term?

Cross-Cutting Iusses:

- Did the project design incorporate gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion into its activities?
- Did the project implement concrete actions to ensure equal participation and representation of women?

Lessons learned:

- What would you change in the project's design and implementation if it were to start now?
- What lessons were learned from the project implementation to improve similar projects in the future?

Other issues:

- Do you have any recommendations for future similar projects?
- Would like to add anything else?

Interview questions for the project partners and consultants

Introduction:

- Could you please describe your role in the project?

Relevance:

- Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of Lao PDR? In what way?
- Were project activities adjusted, if any, to meet the new needs of Lao PDR or your organization?

Efficiency:

- Was it a new partnership or did the project strengthen an existing partnership?
- Were there any synergies created between the project and your organization (e.g., use of the project's products and/or web utility for your other projects)?
- Were there any delays in the implementation of a project activity in which your organization was involved? What were the reasons for delays and how were they addressed?

Effectiveness:

- Did you successfully deliver your services to the project? What was the result?
- Did you face any issues while providing your services? If so, what were these and were they effectively resolved?
- What were the facilitating and hindering factors in implementing the project activity in which your organization was involved?
- If you know, what were the project's most tangible results?

Impact:

- What has been changed quantitatively and qualitatively as a result of the project?
- Did the project contribute to the reduction of road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in Lao PDR? Are there any statistics available to support the reduction in road traffic accidents?
- What other changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended) did the project make as a result of its activities?

Sustainability:

- Is there any evidence that the project products will function beyond the project support?
- What is still needed to ensure the sustainability of the project products over the longer term?

Cross-Cutting Iusses:

- Did you integrate the principles of human rights, gender equality, and disability inclusion in the project activity you conducted? Please, describe.

Lessons learned:

- In your view, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the project design and implementation?
- What would you change in the project's design and implementation if it were to start now?
- What lessons were learned from the project implementation to improve similar projects in the future?

Other issues:

- Do you have any recommendations for future similar projects?
- Would like to add anything else?

Interview questions for the donor:

Relevance:

- Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of Lao PDR?

Efficiency:

- Was your partnership with ESCAP successful? Why/why not?
- Was it a new partnership or did the project strengthen an existing partnership?
- Were there any delays in the implementation of the project? What were the reasons for delays and how were they addressed?

Effectiveness:

- What are the project's most tangible results?
- In your opinion, which project results were not achieved? What were the reasons for non-achievement?
- What were the facilitating and hindering factors in achieving the project results?

Impact:

- What has been changed quantitatively and qualitatively as a result of the project?
- In your view, did the project contribute to the reduction of road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in Lao PDR?
- What other changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended) did the project make as a result of its activities?

Sustainability:

- Is there any evidence that the project products will function beyond the project support?
- What is still needed to ensure the sustainability of the project products over the longer term?

Cross-Cutting Issues:

- Did the project design incorporate gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion into its activities?

Lessons learned:

- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the project design and implementation?
- What would you change in the project's design and implementation if it were to start now?
- What lessons were learned from the project design and implementation to improve similar projects in the future?

Other issues:

- Do you have any recommendations for future similar projects?
- Would like to add anything else?

Interview questions for beneficiaries (users of the online systems, including drivers):

Relevance:

- Have you ever used the Dot Smart App and E-Driving? If so, do they meet your needs?

Effectiveness:

- How do you find the Dot Smart App and E-Driving? Are they useful tools for increasing the knowledge of drivers on road safety and improving their driving practices? Why/Why not?
- Are these tools innovative?

Efficiency:

- Are the Dot Smart App and E-Driving user-friendly tools?

Impact:

- In your view, do these tools contribute to the reduction of road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities in Lao PDR? If so, in what way?
- What other changes (positive or negative) can these products bring?

Cross-Cutting Iusses:

- Can these tools be easily used by disabled people?

Lessons learned:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of these online products?
- What would you change about these products if their development began now?

Other issues:

- Do you have any recommendations for future similar tools?
- Would like to add anything else?

Annex 5: List of individuals interviewed

Name		Title
1	Mr. Phouthavishet PHOMMANIVONG	Deputy Director of Road Traffic
		Division, DoT, MPWT, Vientiane, Lao PDR
2	Mr. Souksakhone PHANTHAVONE	Technical Staff, Savannakhet Vehicle and Driving License Unit, Lao PDR
3	Mr. Somsak JANGDABOUD	Project Manager (Software Development Team) Datacom Co. Ltd., Vientiane, Lao PDR
4	Ms. Luckanong SOULIYAVONG	User in Savannakhet, Lao PDR
5	Mr. Vethsenhdone TONMANY	Officer in Savannakhet,
6	Ms. Khaimouk Kommamoueng	User in Vientiane, Lao PDR
7	Ms. Manykone PHIMSIPASOM	User in Vientiane, Lao PDR
8	Mr. Oudone MANIVONE	Deputy Head, Savannakhet Vehicle and Driving License Unit, Lao PDR
9	Mohd Khairul Alhapiz bin Ibrahim	Head, Unit Driving Simulation and Psychometric Data Unit, Road User Behavioural Change Research Centre, MIROS Institute of Road Safety Research (MIROS), Malaysia
10	B. N. Puri	Director, Road Safety AITD 20895122Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD)
11	Anousit CHANTHAVONG	Driving School
12	Inthatong KEOSILA	Driving School
13	Detmany ONSOUVANH	DoT, MPWT
14	Inthatong KEOSILA	Driving School (XYBL)
15	Ishtiaque Ahmed	ESCAP, Project Manager

Annex 6: List of documents reviewed

Project Documents
1. Project Document
2. Letter of Agreement No. 2020-0034 between ESCAP and the Department of Transport, Ministry of Public Works Transport, Lao PDR, dated December 2021
3. Project Annual Progress Report for 2020
4. Project Annual Progress Report for 2021
5. Project Annual Progress Report for 2022
6. The 2021-2030 National Road Safety Strategy and 2021-2025 Action Plan, Lao PDR
7. Report on the Seven UN Road Safety Conventions for the Asia-Pacific Region, April 2021
8. Report on Creating and Improving the Driving curricula prepared by Datacom Co., Ltd., sub-contractor
9. List of new courses developed by the project
10. List of previously existed courses
11. MPWT's Post-Training Assessment Surveys
12. PowerPoint Presentation on Online Driving License System (DoT Smart App) and Automated Driving Test System (E-Driving) prepared by Datacom Co., Ltd., sub-contractor
13. Project documents related to the National Workshop in Vientiane PPT "A Glimpse at the Status of Road Safety in the Asia-Pacific Region": i. Workshop agenda ii. PPT "A Glimpse at the Status of Road Safety in the Asia-Pacific Region" iii. PPT "Road Safety Challenges and Opportunities: Malaysia Experience" iv. PPT "Improving Road Safety –Best Practices and Technology" v. List of partcipants
14. Two national seminars-related documents (PPT, list of participants, etc.)
15. Two beneficiaries survey reports
16. Public awareness media reports
17. Videos about the project accomplishments

Annex 7: Management response