



# Improved Environment and Capacities for Civil Society Engagement in Lao PDR

## Citizen Engagement for Good Governance, Accountability and Rule of Law

### Background

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

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

The first of three components of the CEGGA programme aims to improve the enabling environment and the operational capacities for the engagement of civil society for a more inclusive national development process in Lao PDR.

The legal framework for the establishment and operation of civil society organisations (CSOs) is defined by the Prime Minister’s Decrees No. 238 on Non-Profit Associations and No. 149 on Foundations. Presently, the number of registered CSOs in Lao PDR ranges around 200 – most of them established recently and operating at provincial level.

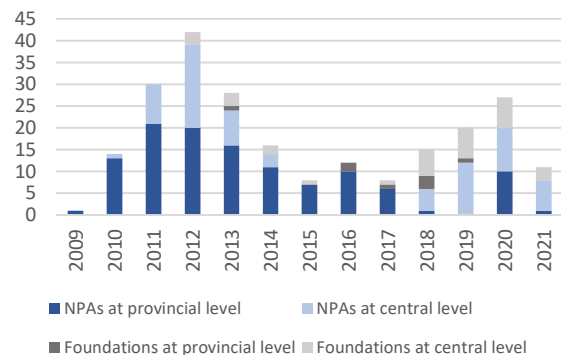
CSOs make important contributions to the development of the country, responding to local community needs by implementing sustainable development projects on a variety of topics. Many are also interested in sharing their practical knowledge and experiences in policy discussions. In order to more effectively implement the wide range of their activities, CSOs wish to further strengthen their conceptual and management capacities as well as their research skills.

### Key areas of CEGGA support

**Assisting Lao Government partners to improve the implementation of an enabling legal framework for CSOs:** CEGGA assisted the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) in developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to help

guide the practical implementation of the CSO establishment and registration processes under Decree 238. The SOP as well as other communication materials were practice-tested with local government representatives and CSOs before their finalisation to ensure a user-friendly design. Subsequently, CEGGA supported MoHA to reach out to all 18 provinces, one by one, with tailored approaches. The outreach included awareness-raising workshops on the CSO regulatory framework for relevant audience of state and non-state actors, and dedicated training on the SOP for CSO focal points in the local public administration.

Another key area of support is aimed at further improving MoHA’s digital services: a new website and corresponding database is expected to simplify communication and facilitate CSO registration processes.



New CSO registrations per year (2009-June 2021), data of the Ministry of Home Affairs, compiled with CEGGA support @GIZ

**Strengthening CSOs’ organisational capacities to implement sustainable development projects:** CEGGA provides integrated capacity development and small grant funding support to Lao CSOs, targeting particularly low-medium capacity level organisations with strong learning needs and promoting CSOs to work together in partnership. In line with this, it was possible for CSOs to apply with project concepts in Lao language before developing full proposals. They received capacity development support to conduct community needs assessments and to develop their project proposals in English. CEGGA funds projects of 37 local CSOs addressing sustainable development needs in five thematic areas, particularly targeting disadvantaged communities. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic,

CEGGA supports a group of CSOs in a joint project addressing immediate needs of local communities.



CEGGA-supported CSO engagement in Xiengkhuang – Photo: @GIZ

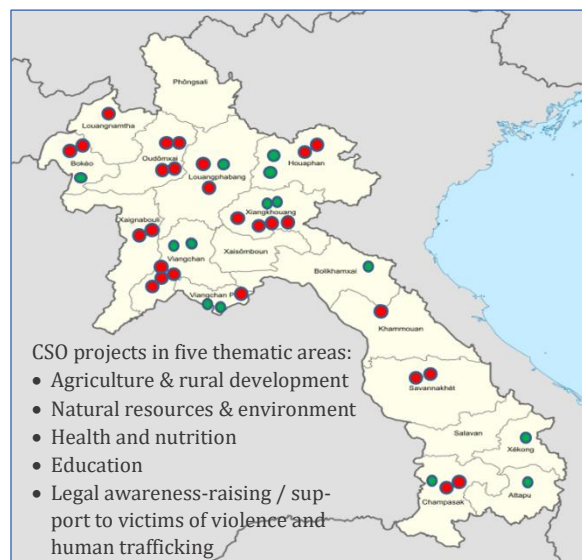
During the implementation of sustainable development projects, CSOs receive continuous organisational development support to enable them to manage their projects more effectively. This support includes tailor-made training and coaching on a variety of topics, defined based on prior capacity assessments and development plans as well as CSO peer learning fora. The capacity development support equips CSOs with the necessary means to effectively implement grant-funded projects. The project work gives them an opportunity to directly apply and practice newly acquired skills in actual engagement.

#### Key CEGGA achievements

- more than 1,260 public officials in all 18 provinces trained in implementing CSO regulatory framework, utilising developed and consulted Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and other communication materials for Decree 238;
- dialogue between GoL and CSOs improved through various exchange platforms at the national and provincial level;
- visibility of CSO work improved through Civil Society Fair;
- 37 CSOs (many with low capacities) enabled to contribute to sustainable development with small grant funding alongside tailored organisational capacity development support.

**Strengthening CSOs' capacities to engage in policy dialogue:** CEGGA works with and supports the LCCC to help CSOs improve their coordination, mutual exchange and structured engagement in relevant policy discussion fora in Lao PDR, such as various Sector Working Groups and the Round Table Meeting. In close coordination with LCCC and in cooperation with other partners, CEGGA also supports Lao CSOs' preparation for and participation in the annual ASEAN Peoples' Forum.

CEGGA supports 14 CSOs in enhancing their research skills with training modules on research design, data collection & analysis, and the presentation of results as well as with mentoring during practice periods.



● Target Provinces of CSO Projects supported under Cycle 1  
 ● Target Provinces of CSO Projects supported under Cycle 2  
 Remark: number of red and green dots refer to number of projects  
 Geographic distribution of CEGGA-supported CSO projects @GIZ

**Fostering dialogue between state and civil society & enhancing awareness of CSOs' valuable contribution to sustainable development:** CEGGA supports formal and informal dialogue events between government agencies and CSOs at the central and local level. Examples include the Annual Meeting between the Government and CSOs as well as biannual exchange and solidarity sports events between MoHA and the Lao Civil Society Coordination Committee (LCCC). These formats were inspired, among other activities, by Ministry and CSO representatives' joint visit of Mongolia to gain common insights and develop joint perspectives on state-society relations as well as the framework for CSOs.

To enhance CSOs' visibility and public dialogue about their work, CEGGA, together with other partners, supports the organisation of the annual Civil Society Fair in Vientiane Capital, which targets both public officials and the general public. Envisaged future support aims at scaling-up CSO Fairs to key provincial hub locations and to produce promotional videos showcasing civil society work.

#### About GIZ Laos:

GIZ, as part of German Development Cooperation, has been active in Lao PDR since 1993 and is currently supporting numerous projects in two priority areas: sustainable economic development and rural development in poor regions. Moreover, GIZ Laos engages in good governance and participates in regional programmes. Please visit [www.giz.de/laos](http://www.giz.de/laos) for further information for GIZ's work in Laos and worldwide.