This document reflects the country context, opportunities, challenges, and priorities developed by FP2020 focal points for Lao PDR in collaboration with the FP2020 Secretariat and other partners during the Asia Focal Point Workshop in Bali, Indonesia in January 2016. FP2020’s focal point representatives are from the government and two donor organizations, usually UNFPA and USAID, and serve as the key representatives of FP2020 in-country. They coordinate with each other, the government, partners and other stakeholders, and the FP2020 Secretariat to drive progress on the country's family planning goals. These opportunities, challenges, and priorities serve as the foundation of the shared agenda of action across the next 12- to 18-month horizon.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

- In 2015, the estimated married women modern contraceptive rate (mCPR) is 48%, growing at 0.9% per annum since 2012 (Lao Social Indicator Survey [LSIS], 2012)
- National family planning (FP) goal is 65% by 2020, with a goal of reaching 70,200 additional users per year
- Unmet need for FP is 20% (LSIS, 2012).
- Adolescent birth rate is at 95/1000 (LSIS, 2012); highest rates of early marriage in the region (1/3 married before the age of 18, 1/10 before the age of 15; 19.4% of women of reproductive age had given birth by age 18, while 3.6% had done so by age 15 (LSIS, 2012).
- Country is mountainous, with large areas being hard to reach
- Inequities exists with access to FP information and services based on age and ethnicity

OPPORTUNITIES

- New reproductive health, maternal, neonatal, and child health (RMNCH) strategy launched with clear annual targets on CPR and unmet need
- New implant program launched, trained provider in 14 of 18 provinces
- New task shifting in midwifery training to increase post-partum FP (curriculum developed, training commenced)

CHALLENGES

- Logistics system needs improving, stock out in facilities remain a challenge
- Budget for commodities is a huge challenge, still relying on donor partners for procurement
- Health information system is a challenge given the lack of disaggregated data
- There is limited staff capacity to provide comprehensive FP services
- Information and services for unmarried young people is limited despite positive policy context
- Involvement of private sectors in FP program is limited
- Services not yet integrated and much of the current programming is still vertical
PRIORITIES

- Ensure key stakeholders understand the new Lao FP2020 country commitment and the 2016 Action Plan developed during the Asia Regional Focal Point Workshop
- Must sort out logistics issue and avoid stock outs at facility level
- Build staff capacity to be able to provide all methods
- Data use and dissemination improvement, with particular focus on improving the LSIS process