



Annex 3

Enabling Policy and Institutional Support for a Functioning Lao PDR Energy Statistics

1. Introduction

As the Lao PDR has been moving up in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita due to stable economic growth, its energy consumption is also expected to continue to grow. This requires appropriate and effective energy policies for now and into the future.

The Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM), Lao PDR, has been working hard to improve the country's energy policies – in line with the Power Sector Strategy and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Goals – to ensure a stable and affordable supply of primary energy and thus attain sustainable economic development.

MEM recognises that Lao PDR's energy data and statistics require strengthening in terms of procedure, analytical tools, and systematic data collection by concerned agencies and ministries. MEM believes that improving Lao PDR's energy data and statistics will not only serve its policy purpose but will also enhance its energy cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other regional and international bodies such as the ASEAN Centre for Energy and the International Energy Agency that require data from time to time for policy and analyses.

The Department of Energy Policy and Planning (DEPP) under MEM approached the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) for support in the preparation of the 'Lao PDR National Energy Statistics', including the construction of the energy balance table. This national energy statistics will provide a good baseline for the preparation and planning of Lao PDR's energy policy.

MEM wants to see a continued and functioning Lao PDR energy data and statistics, even after ERIA's support for the project has been completed. To achieve this, the goal, objective, structure, and policy support required by an energy statistics unit need to be clarified. Therefore, the Lao Energy Data and Statistics Unit must take on forward-looking roles as follows:

- Lead the development and maintenance of a comprehensive national and sectoral statistics for energy production, transformation, and end use.
- Produce data to advise policymakers and inform investment decisions.
- Share data as a vital input to meeting regional and international reporting obligations.
- Also collect, process, and publish energy statistics to support policy analysis; conduct statistical and economic analyses of energy services sectors and sustainable energy options; and contribute to the development and promulgation of appropriate sustainability indicators and timely and reliable statistics to monitor the energy situation.

2. Review of the Legal Framework for Supporting Energy Data and Statistics

Lao PDR's Statistical Law No. 03/NA dated 30 June 2010 provides the legal framework on all matters relating to the collection, processing, compilation, analysis, publication, and dissemination of the statistical data of the Lao PDR. By law, there are four types of statistics for the Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB) to work with relevant line agencies, ministries, provinces, and districts. These are (i) economic statistics, (ii) social statistics, (iii) environment and natural resources statistics, and (iv) security and stability statistics.

Article 18 of Lao PDR's Statistical Law stipulates that the Prime Minister shall approve the conduct of a census upon the request of the Ministry of Planning and Investment. After approval, the Minister of Planning and Investment shall approve the national sample survey upon the request of LSB, after consultation with line ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies, or sectors concerned. The minister or head of agency, provincial and capital city governor shall approve the sub-national sample survey in their own sector and province upon the request of their respective sectors through the certification and technical approval of the LSB.

Article 19 stipulates that LSB shall execute censuses, national sample surveys, and other specific surveys that are defined in the Strategic Development of National Statistical System. However, the statistics centres based at line ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies, provinces, municipalities, districts, and sub-districts execute the sample surveys and specific surveys/case studies for their respective sectors and local needs through the certification and technical approval of LSB. The economic units from concerned ministries can carry out sample surveys or case studies to produce statistics data for their own need but these are not considered official statistics. International organisations and non-government organisations can carry out statistical surveys but they are required to get approval from line ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies, or local authorities as defined in Article 18 of the Statistical Law.

However, amongst the four types of statistical data defined by the Statistical Law, only economic statistics and environmental and natural resources statistics are relevant to energy data and statistics. Article 10 on ‘socio statistics’ refers to data on population, ethnicity, education, public health, labour, social welfare, information and culture, administrative unit registration, poverty, gender, social security, housing, sports and recreation, social organisation, accident, crime, and other socio-related statistics. Article 11 on ‘environment and natural resources statistics’ refers to data on the country’s geography, mine, hydrology, topology, disaster, pollution, waste and waste management to balance the environment, natural resources, human and human development, and other environment-related statistics.

Therefore, Lao PDR’s Statistical Law provides ample room for line ministries to carry out surveys to get the needed data and information to serve the purposes of their ministries. However, the lack of data coordination and data centre for each ministry and agency has led to inconsistencies in data and data gaps at various levels. Thus, improving data collection and empowering data and statistical centres at each ministry and agency is important for the country.

3. Proposed Actions and Collaboration for Data Collection and Acquisition

There are members in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) that perform energy data collection, analysis, and dissemination that is worth exploring. Some of these countries such as Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, the United States, etc. collect their energy data through their Ministry of Energy. Other APEC economies such as Canada, China, Russia, etc. use their National Statistical Office to collect their energy data.

The Lao PDR Statistical Law provides the legal framework for MEM to have full functioning sectoral statistical units to collect, compile, analyse, publish, and disseminate data and information such as the ‘energy statistics and mineral resources statistics’ to the public in coordination with LSB. However, the current statistical unit within MEM needs support to make it a full-functioning unit. The Lao Energy Data and Statistics Unit within DEPP needs to be empowered with effective coordination, policy, and institutional support including:

- **Institutional and Data Collection Coordination**
 - Work with LSB to issue sub-decrees on regular energy data consumption surveys in household/residential, transportation, industrial, and commercial/building sectors.
 - Collaborate with LSB as it has a well-established structure of administrative data collection with line agencies. The first step is to set up an official meeting with LSB to see how ‘energy data statistics’ can be collected from line agencies. It is very important to define clear and simple types of energy data to be collected. The next step is to have a well-designed energy data collection format for discussion with LSB, together with relevant agencies such as the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Finance, Lao State Fuel Company, Electricité du Laos, etc.
 - Empower the DEPP-designated staff at statistical centres to collect data regularly, and to involve a data supplier. DEPP will need to work with the LSB to acquire data from all involved stakeholders, including the state-owned petroleum import companies and other agencies/sectors using intensive energy.
 - DEPP, in collaboration with the LSB, may work with statistical units in other ministries or any newly established statistical units from related agencies which are also in charge of collecting and publishing energy and mines data.

- **Technical Capacity Building and Budgets**
 - Once data collection has been done, there are capacity constraints to process, analyse, and publish the data to the public. Therefore, there is a need to have capacity building to train staff to handle the energy data and statistics.
 - DEPP may continue to seek support from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) to further strengthen the design of the petroleum product specifications and the downstream legal framework, regulation, policy, and procedures.
 - DEPP may continue to seek ERIA’s technical advice and lead a regular technical and high-level working group on energy statistics.
 - Provide clear financial support and budget for the Energy Statistical Unit for its daily core functions (including surveys, data collection and coordination, and capacity building).
 - Maintain staff and update knowledge and analytical skills. The Energy Statistical Unit may aim for a series of publications (monthly, quarterly, yearly statistics). Furthermore, the unit may aim to produce a Lao PDR energy outlook and other energy-specific papers to support policy formulation.

- **Lao Energy Data and Statistics Unit**

- o DEPP may act as the energy data centre by linking all concerned stakeholders for data sharing as well as data collection and updating.
- o DEPP as an energy data centre would have to be equipped with both hardware and software (computer, software, staff).