MODERNISING THE LAO PDR URBAN PLANNING GUIDELINES

Summary of Work Undertaken, Draft 0 review, and Priorities for Activation

Working Report

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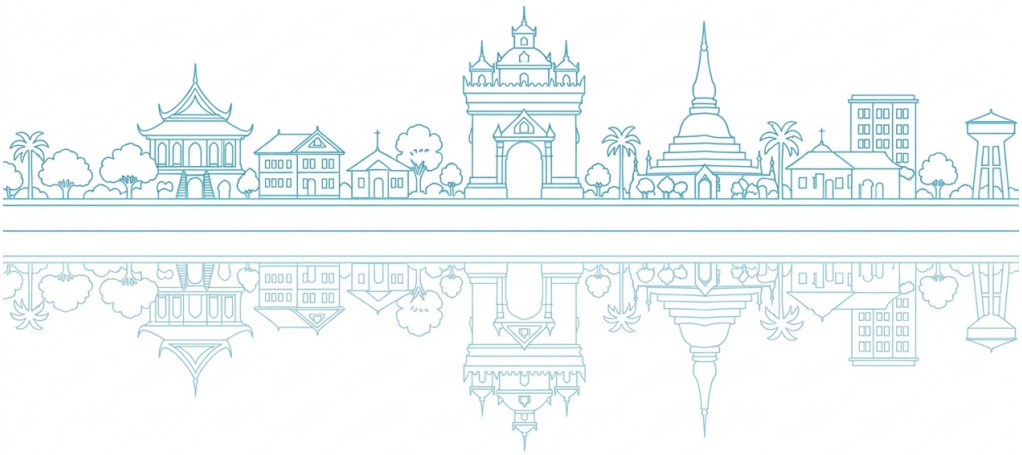

Review basis: consolidated Draft 0 package dated 20 May 2026, the national legal, policy and strategic framework, including the Law on Urban Planning (Amended) 2017 and the working Draft Ministerial Decision, and records of the update process from June 2025 to June 2026.

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1. Executive Summary

Over the period from June 2025 to June 2026, the Lao PDR Urban Planning Guidelines were substantially updated and reorganised. The work established a clearer national planning methodology that is administratively usable, responsive to present and future urban conditions, and better able to guide implementation. The central modernisation focus was to **integrate water-related, climate-adaptive and risk-informed planning considerations** into the normal urban planning process, adopting specific, appropriate principles of the specialised approach "Water-sensitive Urban Planning".

Through this urban water-related focus, the update reflects relevant international and regional good practice as well as key national strategic directions on sustainable urban development, green growth, climate resilience, disaster-risk reduction, environmental protection, infrastructure coordination and public investment. It strengthens the treatment of baseline data, GIS, hazard and environmental overlay maps, water-related infrastructure, green-blue infrastructure, catchment considerations, participation, cross-sector coordination, action planning, implementation, monitoring and environmental review.

The update also aligns the Guidelines more closely with the Law on Urban Planning (Amended) 2017 and with the working Draft Ministerial Decision on Urban Planning. This legal and administrative alignment provides the foundation for integrating the new content into the national planning system, including urban hierarchy, plan types, required planning documents, approval responsibilities, environmental assessment, land reservation, risk-sensitive land use, infrastructure planning, public presentation, official handover, monitoring and institutional responsibilities.

This report provides a concise account of:

1. the work undertaken to update the Guidelines, and
2. an assessment of what is still needed to make the updated Guidelines workable in practice.

Overall conclusion:
Draft 0 represents a major and necessary modernisation of the Guidelines.

The next phase should focus on ensuring legal validation, implementability and usability, institutional ownership.

Recommendations: Consider option for provincial and district capacity development (Training of Trainers); awareness raising at appropriate levels and where possible, ongoing technical support.

Key changes introduced in Draft 0

- The Guidelines have been restructured from five Parts (A-E) into seven chapters and annexes, with a clearer progression from legal framework and required plan content to plan preparation, implementation and supporting tools.

- Legal and administrative responsibilities have been updated and made more explicit; urban planning is emphasised as a cyclical process that continues beyond plan approval through implementation, monitoring, evaluation, review and adjustment.

- The update strengthens a proactive planning approach, so that risks are considered early, urban expansion is guided toward safer and more suitable areas, and important green spaces, open spaces, natural waterways, drainage corridors and, where relevant, agricultural areas are reserved and protected as part of the urban structure.

- The update integrates water-focused, climate and risk considerations into the normal planning process. This includes stronger attention to drainage, wastewater, water supply, solid waste, green-blue infrastructure, hazard and environmental overlays, catchment conditions, and locally appropriate solutions (engineered, nature-based or combined).

- The update strengthens participation, consultation and cross-sectoral collaboration by encouraging the involvement of appropriate stakeholders at key points in the planning process, in line with national procedures. This includes relevant technical departments, specialist agencies, sector authorities and utilities, local authorities, communities, property and land-related interests, private developers, investors and other urban development actors where their input is needed.

- New practical tools connect baseline assessment with analysis, planning options, area planning, action planning and implementation follow-up.

2. Overall Character of the Update

2.1 Modern, integrated national guidelines

The update changes the character of the document. The earlier material was strongly oriented toward the procedural and technical production of urban plans. Draft 0 retains that foundation and practical language, but expands it into a more integrated national planning framework. It links land use, key infrastructure and services, environmental protection, public participation, implementation and monitoring within one planning process, and gives the Guidelines a stronger role in translating national development, environmental, climate and infrastructure directions into practical urban planning decisions.

2.2 Stronger grounding in present legal, administrative and strategic arrangements

The update replaces or corrects outdated references and reorganises the Guidelines around the amended 2017 Law and design and administrative provisions contained in the working Ministerial Decision. It clarifies required plan documents, planning stages, approval routes, responsibilities and the relationship between Urban Master Plans and Urban Detailed Plans. It also links the planning framework more clearly to wider national strategies and sector-policy directions.

2.3 Integration of water-related, climate and risk considerations into normal planning

Water-related planning, climate considerations and risk-informed planning are integrated into the ordinary steps of defining the planning area, collecting data, analysing trends, preparing land-use and infrastructure plans, consulting stakeholders, prioritising projects, preparing regulations and monitoring implementation. This brings climate, disaster-risk, environmental and water-related priorities into the normal workflow of urban planning.

2.4 Stronger practical link - translating results from analysis into action/ implementation

The updated annexes create a practical chain from data collection to DPSIR analysis, cross-sector planning options, an Area Planning Matrix, an Action Planning Matrix and implementation follow-up. This is an important shift toward plans that can guide budgeting, investment, coordination and phased action, and helps connect broader policy objectives with implementation at provincial, district and local levels.

2.5 User-oriented

Draft 0 repeatedly recognises the need for locally appropriate methods, available data, maintenance capacity, affordability and specialist support. At the same time, the document has become more ambitious, therefore the Technical Committee should ensure viability of new requirements.

3. Process and Timeline

The update has been iterative and collaborative, combining practice-oriented research, legal review, technical drafting, institutional consultation and document restructuring. The following timeline records the main completed milestones from June 2025 to June 2026, together with indicative next steps after June 2026.

Period	Milestone	Main work or result
June 2025	**Update support process launched**	Initial scope established to update the national Guidelines and regulatory framework using PolyUrbanWaters practice-oriented findings
June-August 2025	**Initial diagnostic and drafting recommendations**	Existing structure, technical, policy, legal references and operational gaps reviewed. First recommendations prepared for water-sensitive, climate-adaptive, risk-informed and participatory planning.
23 September 2025	**Introductory meeting with DHUP**	Update objectives, institutional process and relationship to the evolving urban planning regulation discussed.
25-26 September 2025	**Technical workshop in Vientiane**	DHUP, PTI, BORDA Laos, TU Berlin, PolyUrbanWaters and technical experts agreed a DHUP-led iterative process, two-column review format and use of annexes for tools and examples.
October-December 2025	**First full revision round**	Legal references, institutional terminology, planning steps, water-related infrastructure, risk, participation, tools, checklists and graphics developed across the document.
January-February 2026	**Restructuring and consolidation**	Chapter architecture, headings, cross-references, legal notes, technical plan content and annex-tool structure refined. 3 column format - including additional column for reasoning of each recommendation.
18 March 2026	**Workshop 2**	Government Technical Committee and project partners reviewed the proposed update direction and confirmed continued consolidation and technical review.
Late March-May 2026	**Draft 0 compilation**	Table of contents and numbering revised; chapters and annexes aligned to the new structure; legal, technical and participatory additions integrated; supporting graphics assembled.
20 May 2026	**Consolidated Draft 0 package**	Front material, Chapters 1-7, eight annexes and graphics compiled as the first complete working draft.
June 2026, indicative	**Technical Committee review**	Current phase: legal, technical, administrative, editorial and usability review of Draft 0 by DHUP, Technical Committee members and relevant project partners.

Period	Milestone	Main work or result
POST JUNE 2026		
June-July 2026, indicative	**Planned: Central government and internal consultation**	Government/internal consultation with relevant central-level divisions and departments; inter-departmental feedback consolidated and key legal, technical and administrative issues identified.
After central consultation, indicative	**Submission for agreement to wider consultation**	Summary of the consultation process and main issues submitted through DHUP/MPWT to request agreement to proceed with broader consultation.
Second half of 2026, indicative	**Broader provincial and stakeholder consultation**	Review and validate the Guidelines with provincial and district users, relevant sectors, consultants, technical institutions and other stakeholders; consolidate final consultation feedback.
Second half of 2026 / 2027, **recommendation/ optional (See 7. 0 below)**	**Capacity development programme preparation**	Develop the concept, training materials and possible Training of Trainers structure for DHUP and PTI, subject to partner priorities, available time and resources.
Beginning / first half of 2027, indicative	**Final revisions and approval process**	Final revisions, summary report, ministerial approval page and departmental foreword prepared; final version submitted for approval and signature.
2027, **recommendation/ optional (See 7. 0 below)**	**Training, awareness raising and dissemination**	Begin practical activation through Training of Trainers, provincial and district capacity development, decision-maker orientation, awareness raising and dissemination of the approved Guidelines.

3.1 Summary of the update process

1. Diagnosed the existing document: review outdated legal references, structure, gaps, duplication and weak links between planning and implementation.
2. Established the legal and administrative baseline: use the amended 2017 Law and the working Ministerial Decision to clarify plan types, documents, procedures, responsibilities and approval routes.
3. Restructured the Guidelines: created a more coherent sequence from introduction and legal framework through Master Plan and Detailed Plan preparation to implementation and supporting tools.
4. Integrated cross-cutting planning themes: insert water, climate, disaster risk, environmental protection, participation and implementation requirements into the existing official tasks and steps.
5. Developed practical tools and annexes: expand data forms, analytical methods, workshop formats, action planning, overlays, checklists and references.
6. Reviewed with government and technical partners: use workshops, committee review and iterative drafting to align content with national procedures and local realities.
7. Compiled Draft 0: assembled the first complete working version, including front material, chapters, annexes and graphics.
8. Validate and activate: legal sign-off, formal approval and ongoing implementation support.
9. Prepare and conduct optional training, awareness raising

4. Chapter-by-Chapter Summary

Front material, structure and glossary

- The front material now presents the Guidelines as the standard national framework for preparing, revising and implementing Urban Master Plans and Urban Detailed Plans. It explains the integrated purpose of the document and adds an expanded glossary covering key planning, GIS, water, environmental, climate-risk and participation terms. The contents have been reorganised into seven chapters and eight annexes.
- Significance: the expanded glossary and clearer opening statement help create a shared professional vocabulary. Before finalisation, institutional abbreviations, ministry names, definitions and the use of the terms city, town, municipality, district and urban community should be checked consistently against the Lao legal text.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

- Chapter 1 has been substantially rewritten. It establishes the amended 2017 Law and the Ministerial Decision as the legal basis, identifies the main users, explains the importance of proactive planning and introduces Water-Sensitive Urban Planning as an integrated principle. It adds explicit attention to rapid growth, flooding, drought, landslides, water quality, green and open space, agricultural land, natural drainage, catchments and locally appropriate solutions.
- The objectives and expected results now emphasise legal consistency, coordination, usability, local conditions, implementation and resilience. The scope also recognises the Guidelines as a training and capacity-development resource and reframes planning as a cycle continuing through implementation, monitoring, evaluation, review and adjustment.

Chapter 2 - Review of related documents and urban planning framework

- Chapter 2 is now the central legal and institutional chapter. It summarises the amended 2017 Law, including the five-level urban hierarchy, the two types of urban plan and the required preparation and approval process. It updates the wider legal references to include water resources, environment, EIA, land, construction and disaster prevention legislation, and advises users to consult current national policies and official sector frameworks.
- The working draft Ministerial Decision is used to explain the operational sequence: project proposal, data collection and analysis, design concepts, public presentation, planning documents, review, approval and official announcement. This chapter now provides a much stronger bridge between the Law and the practical steps in later chapters.

Chapter 3 - Components of the Urban Master Plan

- Chapter 3 aligns the required Urban Master Plan components with Articles 19-27 of the amended Law. It clarifies the report, land-use regulations, base maps and technical plans, and the model or three-dimensional image. Environmental impact assessment is integrated as a statutory component that should influence zoning, infrastructure, mitigation and monitoring.
- The chapter expands the meaning of technical plans to include hydrology, hazards, infrastructure systems (which include water-related infrastructure) and proposed future networks. It adds hazard and environmental overlays and makes clearer that maps, regulations and infrastructure plans must operate together as an implementation and development-control package.

Chapter 4 - Steps for preparing the Urban Master Plan

- Chapter 4 contains the largest body of new work and is the operational core of the update. The existing task-and-step structure has been retained, but the contents have been extensively expanded and connected.
- Scoping and preliminary survey now cover environmental conditions, infrastructure, water, drainage, hazards, sensitive areas, catchments and precautionary boundary decisions.
- Base mapping and topographic survey guidance now clarifies the roles of GIS, remote sensing where possible, field verification, spatial reference systems.
- Field surveys are linked to 22 annexed data collection forms “Questionnaires” covering physical, demographic, institutional, water, infrastructure, environmental and risk topics.
- Data analysis now supports cross-checking of sources and introduces DPSIR for complex issues, while retaining SWOT as a simpler option for smaller or less complex planning situations.
- Planning options must address vision, development pressures, infrastructure, environmental conditions, risk, land reservation, responsibilities, indicative timeframes and budgets.
- Consultation is strengthened through field-based and participatory methods, clearer documentation and attention to communities, service providers, private actors and technical agencies.
- Road, land-use and infrastructure planning are explicitly coordinated with natural drainage, hazards, water services, public transport, utilities, green-blue systems and catchment conditions.
- Hazard Zone Maps and Environmental Protection Area Maps are introduced as overlays to guide restriction, conditions, protective measures and safer development.
- Detailed checklists are added for stormwater, wastewater, water supply, solid waste, public transport, power and telecommunications, green-blue areas and catchment management.
- An Action Planning Matrix is introduced to connect priority projects with goals, agencies, sequencing, benefits and implementation needs.
- Approval, official handover and awareness raising are updated to reflect the responsible authorities and wider distribution of approved plans.
- Significance: Chapter 4 now provides a far stronger method for producing implementable, cross-sector plans. Its main challenge is scale and complexity. The checklists should be retained as light planning and review tools, with clear statements that they do not replace engineering design, sector standards or specialist approval.

Chapter 5 - Components of the Urban Detailed Plan

- Chapter 5 has been aligned with Articles 40, 41 and 47 of the amended Law. It replaces the earlier three-type structure with five Detailed Plan types and explains the relationship between Detailed Plans and the Urban Master Plan. It emphasises that detailed planning should occur before major development where possible and should convert strategic directions into site-specific layouts and controls.
- The revised chapter adds risk-sensitive land use, hazard and environmental overlays, infrastructure reservation, drainage, wastewater, water supply, solid waste, green-blue infrastructure, road drainage, building controls, setbacks, tree planting, land acquisition and compensation. It also strengthens the relationship between local design decisions and long-term operation, maintenance and public safety.

Chapter 6 - Steps for preparing the Urban Detailed Plan

- Chapter 6 has been simplified and brought into closer alignment with the Master Plan process. It uses cross-references to Chapter 4 while identifying the additional site-specific detail required for plots, roads, infrastructure, development controls and consultation. It includes the two main cases: a Detailed Plan implementing an approved Master Plan and a Detailed Plan initiated for a specific area where no approved Master Plan yet exists.
- The chapter strengthens imagery, site survey, stakeholder consultation, technical infrastructure plans, revision and approval.

Chapter 7 - Ways to strengthen urban planning

- Chapter 7 expands the Guidelines beyond plan preparation. The community-engagement section now covers information, consultation and active participation; inclusive representation; local knowledge; transect walks; participatory mapping; community forums; cross-sector workshops; documentation and feedback. Practical sheets support village-level information collection and reporting.
- Implementation, monitoring and evaluation are strengthened through clearer responsibilities, annual reporting concepts, GIS-linked data management and indicators across land use, water, drainage, wastewater, green-blue infrastructure, settlements, solid waste, hazards, participation and awareness.
- The environmental section links the Guidelines to the amended Law, environmental legislation, the SDGs and Strategic Environmental Assessment. It includes a proportionate rapid environmental review for cases where a full SEA is not feasible.

Annexes - Practical tools and reference material

Annex	Title	Main contribution
Annex 1	Data Collection Forms	Twenty-two forms covering project location, geography, statistics, sectors, services, water, environment, hazards, stormwater, wastewater, catchment, land use, settlements and green-blue infrastructure.
Annex 2	DPSIR Analysis Framework	A structured method linking drivers, pressures, state, impacts and responses, with guidance to focus on priority issues rather than complete a large table for every topic.
Annex 3	Cross-Sector Participatory Workshop	A facilitated process translating baseline and analysis findings into development goals, strategies, planning options and an Area Planning Matrix.
Annex 4	Action Planning Matrix	A tool for turning agreed options into concrete actions with locations, lead agencies, support roles, beneficiaries, timing, priority, benefits and next steps.
Annex 5	Hazard and Environmental Overlays	Guidance for compiling, classifying and applying hazard and environmental information using a precautionary and proportionate approach, with specialist verification where required.
Annex 6	Supporting Information	Selected planning, resilience, infrastructure, mapping and technical references and useful websites.
Annex 7	Documents Used	Legal, regulatory, technical and research documents used in preparing the Guidelines, including the amended Law and working Draft Ministerial Decision.
Annex 8	Vientiane Capital Maps	Reference mapping material retained within the Guidelines package.

5. Legal and Administrative Alignment

5.1 Alignment with the Law on Urban Planning (Amended) 2017

The update uses Law No. 40/NA of 18 November 2017, publicized by Presidential Decree No. 327/CP of 26 December 2017, as the principal legal foundation. The main alignments include:

- objectives and principles for systematic, safe, hygienic, environmentally responsible and transparent urban planning;
- the five-level urban hierarchy and the definitions of relevant urban areas;
- Urban Master Plans and Urban Detailed Plans as the two principal plan types;
- required plan documents: report, land-use regulations, base maps and technical plans, and models or three-dimensional images;
- Master Plan contents, vision periods, infrastructure systems, priority programmes and environmental impact assessment;
- base maps covering topography, hydraulics, hydrology, geology, hazards, land use, population and infrastructure;
- restricted areas, infrastructure planning, road networks and coordination across sectors and levels of government;
- five types of Urban Detailed Plan and their more site-specific content;
- central, provincial and district responsibilities for preparation and approval;
- review and evaluation of Master Plan implementation every five years;
- state reservation and acquisition of land for infrastructure, environmental protection and public safety; and
- special treatment of land in risky areas.

5.2 Alignment with the working Draft Ministerial Decision

The working Draft Ministerial Decision provides the operational detail used throughout Draft 0. The update incorporates its survey-design sequence, public presentation requirements, printed and electronic plan documents, land-use zoning and regulation criteria, road hierarchy and road components, technical infrastructure along roads, public transport, stormwater, sewerage, water supply, green areas, and the rights and duties of DHUP, DPWT and OPWT.

The Decision also gives an explicit administrative basis for dissemination and awareness raising, annual budget planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and cooperation with village administrations and community organisations. These functions are reflected in Chapters 4 and 7.

5.3 Relationship with other laws and sector requirements

The revised Guidelines recognise that urban planning also depends on water resources, environmental protection, EIA, land, construction and disaster-prevention legislation. This is necessary because many technical plans and controls require data, standards or approval from sector agencies outside the urban planning administration.

5.4 Legal issues requiring resolution before finalisation

Before finalisation, the legal and administrative alignment of the Guidelines should be checked in a systematic way. This should include consistency with the amended Urban Planning Law 2017, the relevant Ministerial Decision and any other current regulations, procedures or institutional mandates.

A responsible technical/legal review team will be assigned to check the document for legal accuracy, correct terminology, institutional responsibilities, approval procedures, plan types, required documents, and the distinction between mandatory requirements and technical guidance.

This review should also check whether all references to laws, decrees, decisions, regulations and standards are current, correctly named and consistently used throughout the Guidelines and annexes.

6. Draft 0 Implementability and Viability Review

Draft 0 has attempted to make the updated Guidelines more practical and implementable by recognising that planning teams work under different local conditions, capacities and resource constraints. The update therefore tries to balance a more ambitious planning approach with the realities of staff time, data availability, budgets, institutional coordination, technical support and long-term operation and maintenance.
The next stage should review whether this balance has been achieved. This means checking whether planning teams at national, provincial and district levels can understand, finance, apply and maintain the process in practice, and whether the Guidelines are realistic enough to be used in different types of towns.

6.1 Ground realities as the starting point

Draft 0 has attempted to strengthen the Guidelines by making the planning process more closely grounded in actual local conditions. The intention is that planning should begin with the real scale and function of each town, the most important local problems, available data, staff capacity, budget, time, technical support and operation-and-maintenance realities.
This approach recognises that smaller towns should not be expected to apply the same level of analytical depth as Vientiane Capital or large provincial centres. Further refinement is still needed to ensure that the final Guidelines clearly distinguish what is essential for all towns and what should be added only where the town context, risks and available capacity justify it.

6.2 Proportionate approach

Draft 0 has attempted to introduce a more proportionate approach to the Guidelines by distinguishing between essential planning requirements and more advanced technical requirements. The intention is to keep the planning process legally complete, while avoiding unnecessary complexity for smaller towns or lower-capacity settings.

This includes separating core requirements from enhanced or specialist requirements, so that additional analysis, overlays, technical studies or specialist inputs are applied where they are justified by the town context, risk level, available data, technical capacity or planning issue.

6.3 Language, tone and usability

Draft 0 has attempted to make the Guidelines clearer and more usable by focusing the main chapters on the required workflow, responsibilities, decision points and outputs. Detailed technical guidance has been

placed, where possible, in annexes, checklists or supporting tools, so that the main text does not become too dense.
Further review is still needed to improve consistency, and ensure that instructions are short, direct and practical. This should include checking terminology, action verbs, institutional responsibilities, graphics, flowcharts, sample maps and examples, especially in the Lao version with practitioners who will apply the Guidelines in real planning work.

7. Activation: Capacity Development and Training

It is recommended that the update be accompanied by a structured capacity development programme that builds national ownership, strengthens provincial and district competence, and provides access to specialist support. Training should use real or realistic Lao planning cases and should produce outputs that participants can use in their work.

The table below indicates possible audiences and learning needs for a broader activation programme, while Section 7.2 focuses on the proposed first step: a Training of Trainers for DHUP and PTI.

Audience	Core learning needs	Suggested format
DHUP and PTI	Legal interpretation, national methodology, quality assurance, trainer skills, advanced review and support	Structured Training of Trainers; common review checklist; possible legal and technical clinics as follow-up
DPWT and OPWT/UDAA planning staff	Full plan workflow, data collection, GIS, analysis, consultation, plan preparation, approval, implementation and monitoring	Modular practical course using a real or realistic town case
Sector departments and utilities	Inputs to technical plans, standards, data sharing, coordination, project identification and operation and maintenance	Short cross-sector modules and joint planning exercises
Local administrations and village authorities	Planning purpose, local data, participation, plan communication, implementation and local monitoring	Plain-language briefings, facilitated mapping and community-forum practice
Planning consultants and universities	Methodology, legal compliance, specialist analysis, professional standards and teaching integration	Professional orientation, case-based workshops and curriculum materials
Decision-makers and approval bodies	Legal responsibilities, plan quality, risk, implementation and budget implications	Executive briefings and approval-review guide
Community organisations, mass organisations and CSOs	Inclusive engagement, representation, local knowledge, feedback and monitoring	Facilitation and participation modules with simple tools

7.1 Recommended training topics

- Legal, administrative, international/ regional good practice, national strategy foundations, (including roles, plan types, approval and legal hierarchy.)
- The complete Urban Master Plan and Urban Detailed Plan workflow and required outputs.
- Baseline assessment, data quality, the 22 data forms, GIS, topography and spatial databases.
- DPSIR and SWOT analysis, issue prioritisation and development of planning options.
- Hazard and environmental overlays, precautionary planning and triggers for specialist assessment.

- Integrated land-use and infrastructure planning: roads, drainage, wastewater, water supply, solid waste, utilities, public transport, green-blue infrastructure and catchments.
- Community engagement, cross-sector workshops, participatory mapping and inclusive consultation.
- Detailed planning, development controls, land reservation, setbacks, building lines and site-specific infrastructure.
- Action planning, prioritisation, responsibilities, costing pathways, budgeting, phasing and operation and maintenance
- Environmental assessment, rapid environmental review / SEA screening, monitoring, evaluation, GIS-linked reporting and plan review.

7.2 Recommended Delivery Model

The first activation step should be a structured Training of Trainers for DHUP and PTI. This should prepare a small national trainer group to understand, explain and apply the updated Guidelines before wider training is considered. Given the amount of new technical, legal and administrative and strategic material, the ToT should allow enough time to work practically through the updated Guidelines, tools and planning workflow.

A possible format could be a series of ToT blocks, each lasting several days, or another structure agreed with DHUP and PTI if availability requires the training to be spread over a longer period. The training should follow a beginning-to-end planning scenario and use the updated chapters, annex tools, checklists and templates in a practical way.

Indicative ToT structure

Block 1: Understanding the updated Guidelines and planning foundations
This block would cover the overall purpose and structure of the updated Guidelines, the revised legal and administrative linkages, relevant national strategic directions, the planning process, required outputs, baseline data needs and the preparation of a town profile.
Session 1: Orientation to the updated Guidelines
Session 2: Legal, administrative and national strategic framework
Session 3: Planning process and required outputs
Session 4: Baseline data, GIS and town profile

Block 2: Applying the updated technical tools and integrated planning methods
This block would focus on applying the main technical and analytical tools in the Guidelines and annexes, including DPSIR/SWOT, issue prioritisation, climate and risk considerations, environmental overlays, water-related planning requirements, and integrated land-use and infrastructure planning.
Session 5: Analysis, DPSIR/SWOT and prioritisation
Session 6: Risk, climate and environmental integration
Session 7: Water-related and integrated land-use/infrastructure planning

Block 3: Participation, implementation and trainer preparation
This block would focus on how the Guidelines are applied in practice through consultation, cross-sector collaboration, detailed planning, implementation/action planning, monitoring and trainer preparation. It would also prepare DHUP and PTI participants to explain and later deliver the training to others.

Session 8: Participation, consultation and cross-sector collaboration
Session 9: Detailed planning, implementation and action planning
Session 10: Trainer preparation and practice

The ToT would need proper preparation of the concept and materials. This could include a small practical trainer guide, slides, exercises, selected case materials, templates and simple reference sheets, so that DHUP and PTI can later deliver the training consistently and support the practical use of the Guidelines.

8. Awareness Raising and Dissemination

Awareness raising should be kept practical and proportionate. The first priority should be to ensure that the institutions directly involved in preparing, reviewing, approving and implementing urban plans understand the updated Guidelines, their roles and the main changes from the previous document.

A realistic dissemination approach could focus on a small number of priority activities: a national orientation for key ministries and provincial representatives; practical briefings for DPWT, OPWT/UDAA and relevant sector departments; short decision-maker notes on approval responsibilities and implementation implications; and simple public summaries of approved plans using clear maps and plain-language explanations.

Community-level communication should be linked to actual plan preparation and approval processes, rather than organised as a broad standalone campaign. Village meetings, public displays or community forums should be used where land-use changes, infrastructure priorities, protected areas or risk-sensitive areas directly affect local communities.

Information for developers, consultants, universities and professional networks can be introduced gradually through existing channels, training events and planning assignments. Awareness raising should therefore support implementation in a manageable way, using simple materials and existing institutional processes rather than creating a large separate dissemination programme.

9. Summary of Recommended Follow-on Tasks

At this stage, the main workstreams with the Technical Committee / DHUP, PTI can be summarised as follows:

Workstream	Main focus
Legal and editorial validation	Check legal alignment, terminology, numbering, cross-references, figures, placeholders and consistency of the Guidelines and annexes.
Implementability review	Review whether the Guidelines are proportionate, practical and usable for different town contexts, capacities and data conditions.
Training of Trainers preparation	Develop a structured ToT package for DHUP and PTI, including trainer materials, exercises, templates and practical examples.
Stakeholder consultation	Discuss the updated Guidelines with provincial, district and sector stakeholders and integrate practical feedback.

Awareness raising and dissemination	Prepare orientation materials for decision-makers, practitioners, developers, consultants, universities and communities.
Institutionalisation	Ensure the Guidelines are used in future planning budgets, consultant briefs, procurement, staff training, plan review, monitoring and professional development.
Ongoing review and updating	Maintain a process for updating tools, references and implementation lessons over time.

10. Conclusion

Draft 0 represents a substantial body of work and has attempted to bring the national Urban Planning Guidelines closer to the amended legal framework, current planning responsibilities and the practical realities of urban growth, infrastructure gaps, environmental pressures, climate and risk concerns, and implementation challenges. It has also sought to strengthen the connection between urban planning practice and **international and regional good practice, national strategic directions, including sustainable development, green growth, climate resilience, disaster-risk reduction, environmental protection and coordinated infrastructure planning.**

The value of the update will depend on whether the Guidelines can be clearly understood, consistently applied and practically supported by the institutions responsible for preparing, reviewing, approving, implementing and monitoring urban plans. The next phase should therefore focus on legal and editorial validation, implementability, usability, training needs, awareness raising and ensuring that the Guidelines are appropriate to different town contexts and capacities.

In their final form, the Guidelines should provide a practical basis for a clearer and more consistent national planning process, supported by legal alignment, trained users, practical tools, institutional coordination, public awareness and a mechanism for ongoing learning and revision.

Source Basis

- Consolidated Lao PDR Urban Planning Guidelines Draft 0 package, dated 20 May 2026:
- Law on Urban Planning (Amended), Law No. 40/NA, 18 November 2017, and Presidential Decree No. 327/CP, 26 December 2017, unofficial English translation.
- Working Draft Ministerial Decision on Urban Planning, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, draft text reviewed during the update process; Draft 0 references a 2026 draft.
- Process records and working discussions from June 2025 to June 2026, including the September 2025 technical mission and workshops and Workshop 2 on 18 March 2026.
- PolyUrbanWaters practice-oriented planning experience and associated work on water-sensitive, participatory and risk-informed urban planning in Lao PDR.