Recommendations from Baseline Study of the Lao Cultural Industries (2012)

This is a non exhaustive list of some preliminary recommendations identified during the baseline study of cultural industries in Lao PDR.

Goal 1: Developing and strengthening communication and networks

The results from the baseline study demonstrate a great need for increased communication, networking and transparency in the cultural industries in Lao PDR.

- Increased participation through consultation with and interaction between stakeholders may allow better responding to the needs of the network. For instance, this could be done through the creation of a “house of culture” where different actors can meet, train/create, produce and disseminate. Predominantly, it would be a source of assistance and a bridge between government and creative industries as well as between Lao cultural industries and regional or international partners.
- Publicly-owned venues and institutions may try to increase their partnerships with private organisations, i.e. cooperation between department of cinema and directors and producers; cooperation between the National Museum and Fine Arts artists).
- Government may position itself as a leader of cultural evolution: it is important and urgent to create links between the public and private sectors in order to avoid complete separation between tradition and modernity, past and present, present and future. Tradition can be modern and alive.
- Opportunities for more networking within sectors of activity and across sectors should be encouraged and promoted.
- The development of an accurate and up-to-date database (who’s who and who’s doing what) would support networking opportunities.
- Simple brochures and websites detailing registration steps and processes, the role of various departments, obligatory insurance, average fees, average time, taxes, would guide people interested in setting up cultural industry organisations.
Goal 2: Creating an enabling environment

Lack of funding and infrastructure is a recurrent issue for the cultural industries and it is important to develop the necessary financial services to accompany every step of the cultural cycle in order to stimulate creativity, production, dissemination and innovation.

- Using a participatory approach by consulting all stakeholders regularly may allow the elaboration of a concrete vision and long term planning for the sector.
- Financial support mechanisms may be developed and made available to all organisations of the sector: tax incentives on cultural products and services such as VAT and import-export tax reductions and tax deductions/exemptions for donors or sponsors, etc.
- National loans for cultural industries may increase their competitiveness against foreign products and improve the quality of their work.
- TV or Radio could position themselves as buyers of local productions in order stimulate creation and production dynamics, thereby improving the quality and diversity of their programming.
- Improved marketing and communication skills may help organisations find their own sources of funding.
- Cooperatives may be created or strengthened to pool various products and market them under a common label (specifically for handicraft and technical fields).

Goal 3: Making legal frameworks & regulatory environments more accessible and user-friendly

Governmental policies need to be set up and strengthened with a view to acknowledge, improve and reinforce the role of cultural industries in the socio-economic development of the country.
- Communication, implementation and enforcement of existing and upcoming laws need to be improved: i.e. communication on IP law.
- Copyright registration may be simplified or clarified, and access to copyright protection tools facilitated.
- The censure regulations and their implications for the artist need to be clarified.
- Collaboration between ministries and departments may be encouraged to ensure consistent policy decisions.
- Compulsory dubbing or subtitles in Lao language prior to movie screening – to be undertaken by cinema operators or movie distributors, may boost the cinema sector and make local production more competitive.
- Tax incentive policies may be developed.
- Protective tax regulation may be established for cultural products coming from abroad (notably films). This increase the visibility and increase the competitiveness of Lao productions (ex: Lao films screened longer; label of authenticity or quality for handicraft, etc.)
- Comprehensive data collection on cultural industries needs to be established and updated on a regular basis.

**Goal 4: Expanding education and training**

One prerequisite for making the cultural industry sectors sustainable and competitive is to develop a curriculum encompassing artistic, technical and entrepreneurial skills.

- A general curriculum on cultural business administration may assist SMEs to increase their capacity in business management, marketing, advertising and networking.
- Technical trainings may be developed in sound & light engineering
- Art School curricula may be expanded to all forms of fine and performing arts to encourage cross creation and stimulate creation.
- Existing courses may be complemented with modern and international curricula in arts such as photography and graphic design at the National
Institute of Fine Arts or contemporary dance at the National School of Dance and Music.

- Programmes may aim to preserve traditional designs and patterns (Lao weaving, drawings on temple, etc.)
- Education may become more relevant for the industry with cursus mixing academic learning and internships.
- Art and culture-related activities could become more frequent and more diverse in primary and secondary schools as well as in extracurricular courses.