

HR Strategic Plan

2019-2022

National University of Laos

Executive Summary

In the broad sense of human asset, university is considered to produce human resources (HR) and it is integrated part of higher education, and the higher education fulfils its promise of accessible and quality education, basic and applied research, economic development, and public service through the efforts of its faculty members and staff. In Laos universities remain as places of academic training and providing academic services to society and university's HR strategy always means the success and growth as it makes up the human resources at university. In addition, undergraduate and graduate students of universities in Laos today constitute another sizeable part of the workforce. Human resources services and programs support the efforts of all these people, the university's full human resources. The totality of knowledge, skills, talent and other characteristics of the National University of Laos' human resources are viewed as the human asset and it is thought as the most critical asset to the university's success. From all levels of university management, it is now therefore required to take initiatives and actions in human resources development in many possible ways as to build the strong foundation for university.

In mid-December 2018, the HR team of National University of Laos (NUOL), in coordination with and supported by the HR4Asia project, has drafted the HR Strategic Plan (2019 - 2022), and the draft plan aims to identify and support the NUOL's HR management in the process of implementing the university's five-year development plan. Under the HR4Asia project, the NUOL's project team has been formed to carry out the entire implementation during the project timeline. The NUOL's HR team is consisted of Vice President in charge of research and HR as team leader, and assigned HR team members are senior directors and staff members from the Office of Personnel Affairs, Office of Academic Affairs, Office of International Relations and some other faculties and departments within the NUOL. These team members are assigned with their roles and functions specified under supervision of the NUOL's President. The HR strategic plan is carefully designed and reviewed by the NUOL's HR team, senior members and representatives from Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) who are in charge of personnel affairs and HR policy. The draft HR strategic plan is expected to be approved by the NUOL's President by the end of 2019 which covers the main sections on NUOL's HR overview, operating context (internal and external environment), vision, mission, value, strategic objectives, and

action plans.

HRM: Overview of the Current state

HR division Overview:

The National University of Laos (NUOL) employs approximately 1900 staff across a wide range of functional groups, namely academic, research, teaching, management, administrative, technical and services. The reputation for research and teaching is mentioned as the issues for both academics and administration and concerning on the academic leaders while the overall success of the institution relies on the contribution of the entire staff and government.

The NUOL is one of Lao public universities, which plays the key roles in providing tertiary education, training and representing the country's higher education. Since its establishment in late 1996, the NUOL has developed to become the leading university in Laos. Since its foundation, the NUOL has a clear vision to be not merely the leading university in Laos, but also to be recognized in the region as well as in the world.

More than two decades the NUOL has established extensive academic exchanges and cooperation with a number of overseas institutions, universities, and agencies, focusing on staff and student exchanges, joint researches and seminars, and exchanges of academics for the purpose of supporting work of university's human resources development. In the part of human resources management, it is highlighted in the university's five year development plan (2016-2020) that the NUOL, in its management process and in line with the government's development policy, is to provide and equipped with high quality professional human resources with strong mind set and ethical standards to support

university's vision. The Office of Personnel Affairs (OPA), NUOL, therefore, is assigned and taken as the key office in charge of university's HR and personnel programs and activities.

The OPA is consisted of four divisions as (1) HR and Personnel, (2) Mass Organization Affairs, (3) Policy and (4) Party Affairs. The four mentioned divisions are designated with roles and responsibilities and functioning as an integrated part or body in HR and personnel tasks of university under supervision by Vice President in charge of personnel affairs. In the operational practices, the office herewith is taken as a division or department of university dealing with administrative functions with the supports and services provided to all levels of university, and such specified details on roles and responsibilities by the office are identified in the manual written in local language (Lao) attached. The office attempts to incorporate best practice in programs and services with feedback from administrators, MOES's senior members, staff and other stakeholders through a vital element of assessment. Apart from the jobs and tasks designated, the office within the roles is described to work on the following:

- proactive support and service to university (personnel)
- communication and information sharing within university
- promoting staff well-being of personnel
- promoting integrity and respect
- taking and promoting ownership and accountability
- supporting professional and personal development
- supporting organisation development
- relationship building
- enabling flexibility and adaptability
- implementing leaner and more efficient HR processes

The operating context: Internal Environment

According to the current situation of Lao social-economic development and the scarcity of the manpower, the NUOL represents the country's higher education. The university has set its own vision, which attempts to become the centre of excellence for higher education and studies in Laos, it functions as a comprehensive higher learning institution with the focus on research towards strengthening capacity building and human resources development with intellectual vitality, potential knowledge and skills, good attitudes, loyalty, dignity, and good health. Upon completion of studies our graduates will be among those of most sought by the regional best employers and expected to become leaders in their communities and accomplishing professionals in their chosen careers. Based on this vision, the university, in a long term, has three key goals set to achieve as (1) NUOL's students to become well-trained and disciplined academicians, professionals with certain level of knowledge and skills possessed, and those trained graduates expected to become specialists and experts in their fields of training committing and contributing to their country's socio-economic development, regionally and internationally linked and recognized with norms and standard of development, (2) to develop university's comprehensive management system with efficiency and transparency guaranteed, and (3) to become a full-fledged university and so-called as clean and green campuses with the developed infrastructure, facilities and resources fully provided for the academic training needed. By attempting with all efforts and resources for university development, more attention is required for university's human resources management and it, in this part of HR planning, is now set to draft the HR strategic plan (2019 – 2022), which aims to support the university's work and practices of HR management.

As part of internal assessment, it is critically important to understand the current situation and pressing challenges faced by the NUOL. Human resources management at the NUOL has been noted as the new issue emerging in the part of university's academic and research development because it is an element and factor impacting the university and it is now mentioned as a core issue and urgently needed for close attention over the past decades since its establishment, and it must play a much more strategic role in the future to contribute to the overall success of the university.

In the current situation, more efforts and resources are importantly needed in the process of development –

both infrastructure and manpower, yet the need for advanced technology is huge. Currently, data is not made viable and easily accessible, it is scattered among multiple systems, and is stored and acquired in varied formats, making it almost impossible to easily provide a clear and accurate picture of our human capital when it comes to the issues of university HR management. Local ways of practices and understanding plus real conditions faced by university in the areas of HR are still mentioned as the factors contributing to progress and development. Also human resources work at the NUOL, to some extent, continues to be loosely managed and largely transactional with more workload and responsibilities. While it would be difficult to eliminate those responsibilities, separating transactional work from strategic work will be an essential step in the human resources transformation. Current practices in human resources management of university need to be reassessed and strengthened.

In the view of new development needs of university and country, it requires us to increase employee diversity at all levels and it is foreseen that the future success relies on the ability to manage a diverse body of talent that can bring innovative ideas, perspectives and views to their work. With the mixture of talents, genders, ages, and lifestyles with social norms, it can be responding to opportunities more rapidly and creatively. In the local context, there are still gaps and perceptions on working life between people working in corporate and public sectors, but it is thought that understanding professional working culture and system is important. Quite a number of staff members at university somehow do not have a clear understanding of their job expectations, have not received regular performance feedback, and do not clearly see the connection between their work and the university's mission. The university's ability to reward and recognize exceptional performance has been limited and in some cases, total compensation is not that of business a like practice, but government oriented approach– it has not kept pace with comparable positions in the respective labour markets somehow.

With the pace of governance, the NUOL is to exercise its full autonomy in academics, financing and international cooperation which it should smoothly function with this full authority, it is however seen that the current practices on human resources management of university is greatly influenced and shaped by MOES as representing government and it has less autonomy to exercise those roles in reality, particularly this is widely seen in the university's staff employment and many aspects of human resources management. It is found out that some changes are currently taking place in administrative framework within which the university must now function, including legal environment with more practical rules and regulations that influence university's people (academic and administrative personnel) and system.

The operating context: External Environment

[External Assessment: Technology, regulatory environment, etc]

The National University of Laos (NUOL) is posing as the key university, it is strategically focused and required to serve as the country's top university providing high quality training in higher education and it is a member of different regional and international university agencies and organizations, and that position makes the NUOL a university moving towards those top universities in the region, while it is struggling to thrive as those high performing universities with a number of factors, and HR is one set to pave the way toward the top ones in a long term. In this context, the goal of university's HR is to create a more strategic- focused human resources organization that is accountable, adds value, is aligned, and delivers good services to the organization. It is to be accomplished by providing effective, cost-efficient, and consistent programs and services that are reflective of the complex needs of the NUOL and its stakeholders.

It is clearly noted now that national and regional trends influence the climate of human resources in higher education and encompass a wide range of university and stakeholder interests. In addition, society and government's needs in high quality higher educational training are getting higher and creating forces in social-academic and political framework in which HR is key to the internal management process of universities as they are required to produce quality manpower to supply labour market. This combination of rapidly changing factors directly affects HR and the need to actively monitor and respond appropriately to be compliant as well as to effectively design for the future. Wwithin the current context of university management and conditions increasingly influenced by external factors, it is also required to go further and adjust for its HR practical approaches/ strategy.

The NUOL mainly relies on government's funding support and the trend is that subsidy revenue is about to increase in Laos based on the higher education development plan, but in comparison it is expected much more than that to cover the increasing costs needed by university due to different reasons. The trend of subsidy revenue in the region has declined in recent years and there is continued

pressure on government revenue sources to improve infrastructure and facilities which are important part of university in the way to maintain total quality. In comparison with the ASEAN countries' top universities, the NUOL is named as a university with a huge lack of good facilities and infrastructure and that means the huge cost of investment needed by university now.

In digital age, universities need to have ICT and such technology based management, and in term of technology mentioned herewith, information is a key resource for all kinds of organizations and enterprises. From the time data is created and shared to when it is required, technology plays a significant role. Due to the volume of personal and institutional data managed by universities, not unlike other industries, higher education is susceptible to data breaches, phishing attempts, scams and threats that pose risk to consistently securing data. The needs for advanced technology and streamlined systems that can be agile and responsive to changing operating needs along with incident response plans are crucial to combat potential threats. Knowledge and improvements to the data infrastructure will streamline processing improving processes/ operations to be more efficient, and improve reporting capabilities university-wide to influence data-driven decisions. Importantly, technology has the ability to revolutionize and improve the staff experience through the transformation of operating processes that ensure policy adherence and data quality. In the regional context, the need to provide leadership and support to key organizational initiatives to transform the way the universities conducting business in HR is critical. In the HR4asia project, the member universities having learned various Asian and European universities' HR models, and by adjusting and modifying the particular processes and structure to make it more reliable, responsive and increasingly strategic, it means good sharing and dissemination of knowledge and good practices.

Vision, Mission and Values

The strategic plan should be communicated to all relevant individuals, including stakeholders. It should include the following:

Vision statement

To be a centre of excellence in providing high quality professional human resource with strong mind set and ethical standards to support university vision.

Mission statement

- To provide and promote short and long term professional development which meet regional and international stand to fulfil university's vision.
- To foster university core value in preserving Lao culture and ethical practices.
- To strongly promote creativity, innovation, and talent, and value high performance culture.

MISSION Formulation: Answer each of these questions.

What services and/ or products will the HR division offer?

Human Resource Division/Office of Personnel Affairs (OPA), National University of Laos (NUOL) is in charge in all processes which relate to human resource management system of the university. Processes vary from recruitment, retraining, promotion, and retirement as well as reward, punishment, and welfare system of all academic and support staff are under control of the OPA. The OPA monitors and manages profiles all academic and support staff, including individual pay rate, ranking, and personal history records. The OPA also deals with staff and their families' wellbeing. The OPA provides financial support and counselling to staff and their family members in case of birthing, sickness, decease, and other personal and professional issues. In addition, the OPA works closely with Ministry of Education and Sports as well as other government agencies to provide services to society and other stakeholders.

Who are the people who may use or benefit from this services or products?

All academic and support staff benefit directly from the OPA services. Since staff pay rate, ranking, and personal history record have been monitored and updated annually by the OPA, their pay rate and ranking have been proceeded annually. Apart from that all academic and support staff as well as their family members also use services of the OPA welfare system. Staff with outstanding performance and creativity also benefit from rewarding and promotion system of the OPA. Staff who return from Long term study abroad also use the services as they need to upgrade their salaries and ranking upon completion of their studies. Students and other public and private organisations also use the services of the OPA in order to obtain statistics and data related to human resource of the NUOL.

What are the reasons for the service?

The NUOL is public university and all academic and support staff are public servants. Since the NUOL

is the public organisation, the OPA is obliged to provide welfare to staff and their family members, update staff's pay rate and ranking, and apply recruitment, retraining, promotion, retirement, reward, and punishment system. The NUOL is also obliged to cooperate and provide human resource statistics to other stakeholders. The government human resource management system and policies that have been applied across all public organisations aim to ensure that every academic and support staff as well as their family members and other stakeholders are treated fairly and equally under the credible and reliable system. The recruitment policy also considers inclusiveness of people from disadvantaged background such as women, ethnic minority groups, and others. The system and the policies also aim to ensure that all parties involved hold accountable for their action and performance with punishment and reward system.

In addition, the services of the OPA suit and meet the need of our current and future context. The promotion and reward system are vital for motivating academic and support staff across the university to be more productive, creative, and competitive which include increasing number of quality publications, research findings, and other community services. Recruitment and selection process are also crucial for not only admitting the best talent people, but also offering opportunities to people with disadvantaged background, in particular, women and ethnic minority groups to work with the university. In addition, the welfare and retirement system are also significant for retraining staff and supporting their physical and psychological wellbeing which are critical for job performance and loyalty.

Why will the service exist?

The services of the OPA which cover recruitment, retraining, promotion, and retirement as well as reward, punishment, and welfare system will be continuously carried on since they suit local, regional, and international context. Since founding of the National University of Laos (NUOL) in 1996 the numbers of cooperation with other regional and global partnerships of NUOL have been continuously increasing. The services and practices that the OPA provides and carries out are well aligned with regional and international policies. In terms of recruitment and selection process the OPA is obliged to adopt the government policies on human resource management which require females and ethnic

minority groups who are marginalised to be represented in all public organisations. These are well aligned with the regional and international policies and trend in promoting gender equality, diversity, and inclusivity in the workplaces.

In addition, the regional and international cooperation, and the influence of free trade, and labour mobility policies across ASEAN also enhance the current practices and policies of the OPA to continue to exist in order to safeguard qualified staff in high competitive environment. The OPA services and policies on promotion and reward are not only crucial for retraining talent academic staff, but also vital for promoting creativity and excellence among academic and support staff.

Now combine all the answers into one statement of purpose.

The purpose of Office of Personnel Affairs (OPA), National University of Laos (NUOL) is to deal with recruitment, retraining, promotion, retirement, reward, punishment, and welfare of all academic and support staff's performance and commitment to meet local, regional and international standards. The objectives of the OPA are to offer the system and services to promote and support staff wellbeing, creativity and excellence in their fields to align with region and international standards as well as to promote diversity and offer excellent community services with fair, credible, and reliable mechanism.

HRM Values

[Values will guide every major decision making; it embodies the spirit of the org/ dept; revisit Vision and Mission statement.]

Royalty, honesty, excellence, creativity, Perseverance, diligent, diversity, equality, passion, citizenship, leadership

Strategic Objectives for Human Resources

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE 1 SHORT TERM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

<i>Title action</i>	<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / KPI(s)</i>
<i>Joining the academic workshops within and in the foreign countries</i>	<i>Related offices and faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Annual plan</i> - <i>MOU, MOA</i> - <i>Invitation letters from the host institutes</i> - <i>100 academics and administrative staff from each faculty</i> - <i>Selection criteria</i> - <i>Report after joining each workshop</i> - <i>200.000.000 Kip</i>
<i>Staff exchange - within and in the foreign countries</i>	<i>Related offices – e.g International Relation Office and faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Annual plan</i> - <i>MOU, MOA</i> - <i>Invitation letters from the host institutes</i> - <i>Advertising</i> - <i>100 academics and administrative staff from each faculty</i> - <i>Programme document</i> - <i>Selection criteria</i> - <i>Report after joining each workshop</i> - <i>200.000.000 kip</i>
<i>Providing the English language training for the staff</i>	<i>Personnel office and FLE</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Programme content</i> - <i>Selection criteria</i> - <i>Evaluation</i> - <i>115 academics and administrative staff (2 times/year)</i>

		- 400.000.000 kip
<i>Providing the research training for the academics</i>	<i>Personnel, Research office and related faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Programme content</i> - <i>Selection criteria for the participants from each faculty</i> - <i>Evaluation criteria</i> - <i>115 academics and administrative staff (2 times/year)</i> - <i>200.000.000 kip</i>

OBJECTIVE 2 LONG TERM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

<i>Title action</i>	<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / KPI(s)</i>
<i>Providing the scholarship for MA and PhD courses</i>	<i>Personnel office and related faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Human Resource development plan</i> - <i>Selection Criteria</i> - <i>Monitoring report</i> - <i>40 or more academics</i> - <i>400.000.000 kip</i>
<i>Encouraging the academics to apply for the scholarship abroad</i>	<i>Personnel office and related faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Policy</i> - <i>Orientation</i> - <i>Website, social media</i> - <i>40.000.000 kip</i>

OBJECTIVE 3 Preserving Lao Culture

<i>Title action</i>	<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / KPI(s)</i>
<i>Raising Laos culture awareness</i>	<i>Personnel office and faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 times - Raising plan - 20,480,000 Kip (Lao currency) - Official Announcement

OBJECTIVE 4 Promoting Ethical Practices

<i>Title action</i>	<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / KPI(s)</i>
<i>Legal dissemination</i>	<i>Personnel office and faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 times - Dissemination plan - 20,480,000 Kip (Lao currency) - Official Announcement
<i>Training legal document related to the new staff and graduates from the foreign countries</i>	<i>Personnel office and faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 times - Training plan - 6,880,000 Kip (Lao currency) - Official Announcement
<i>Improving appeal system</i>	<i>Personnel office and faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appeal procedure - Official Announcement - Letterbox

OBJECTIVE 5 DEVELOPING HIGH PERFORMANCE CULTURE

<i>Title action</i>	<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / KPI(s)</i>
<i>Organising training to provide clear models of high-performance work</i>	<i>HR Office and HR of faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Training registration records (160 staff)</i> - <i>Budget plan records</i> - <i>HR Training plan</i> - <i>18.560.000 Kip</i>
<i>Tracking and reviewing performance system</i>	<i>HR Office and HR of faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Role profile</i> - <i>Performance and Development Review</i> - <i>Feedback on performance</i> - <i>Peer review</i> - <i>160</i>

OBJECTIVE 6 Promoting creativity, innovation, and talent

<i>Title action</i>	<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / KPI(s)</i>
<i>Creating related policies</i>	<i>HR Office & Presidential Committee</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Reward and recognition system</i> - <i>Outcome/output based Guidelines</i> -
<i>Policy Dissemination</i>	<i>HR Office and faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Minute meeting</i> - <i>Report</i> - <i>Website</i>
<i>Yearly- Reward and recognition process</i>	<i>HR office and faculties</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Reward and recognition Record</i>