



ASEAN  
AUSTRALIA  
SMART CITIES  
TRUST FUND  
Asian Development Bank



Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Implementation Partner:

RAMBOLL

# LUANG PRABANG

Supporting Luang Prabang's  
ambition to become a more  
livable heritage city for all

Photo: Adobe Stock

Luang Prabang City, home to the first World Heritage Site in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and a renowned tourist destination, seeks to achieve a long-term, sustainable urban growth trajectory that protects its built, natural, and intangible cultural heritage. The Luang Prabang Smart and Integrated Urban Strategy outlines specific strategies and smart city projects to realize this ambition and create a more livable heritage city for all.

## CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

Infused with local Buddhist culture and traditions, Luang Prabang's heritage boasts a unique mix of distinctive vernacular, Buddhist, and French colonial architecture set in a tropical riverine landscape. Since Luang Prabang's inclusion on the World Heritage List in 1995, its tourism and population growth has triggered outward city expansion and new economic opportunities. Growth has also brought urban challenges like traffic congestion, littering, crowded tourism sites, and loss of wetlands, all of which affect the city's livability and heritage. As the population and visitor numbers continue growing, these challenges may worsen, exacerbated by structural issues such as funding shortages, fragmented decision-making, and weak coordination between urban management agencies.

## DEVELOPING THE SMART AND INTEGRATED URBAN STRATEGY

The Luang Prabang Provincial Government led the preparation of the strategy following a three-stage process, with support from the Australian Government-financed and ADB-managed ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF). Ramboll was engaged as the main implementing partner. First, in the [urban assessment](#) stage, existing plans, documents, and data were analyzed to identify the city's current challenges and opportunities. Second, in the [urban scenario](#) stage, population and visitor projections were prepared, along with estimates of the land required for housing, tourist accommodations, and other supporting amenities considering the city's likely growth scenarios. Third, the [integrated strategy](#) was formulated based on the information and analysis produced in previous stages, including prioritization of smart city solutions. Every step of the process involved broad stakeholder engagement to ensure local ownership and mainstream gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) perspectives.



SCAN CODE FOR  
DIGITAL VERSION

<https://bit.ly/AASCTFLuangPrabang>

## ASPIRING TO BECOME A LIVABLE HERITAGE CITY FOR ALL

Three strategic pillars guide the specific strategies that will help Luang Prabang realize its livable heritage city ambition: (i) integrated tourism and heritage destination, (ii) clean and safe environment, and (iii) sustainable villages and a 15-minute city. Each pillar includes strategic objectives and smart city projects, supported by integrated spatial planning, a data management and governance framework, and crosscutting GEDSI considerations. The strategy prioritizes 50 projects, out of which six have been selected as pilots. Two sanitation improvement pilots – smart gross pollutant traps and smart septic tanks – are included in the ADB-financed Urban Environment Improvement Investment Project, which was approved by the ADB Board in December 2023.

The strategy will be implemented under the supervision of a steering committee chaired by the provincial governor and supported by multisector working groups, each overseeing one of the three strategic pillars.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all** – The strategy's Clean and Safe Environment pillar aims to provide clean water and safe sanitation and includes the smart gross pollutant trap and smart septic tank pilots.



**Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation** – The strategy will empower urban and tourism management agencies to promote sustainable and resilient infrastructure, while fostering innovative urban, heritage, and tourism management approaches.

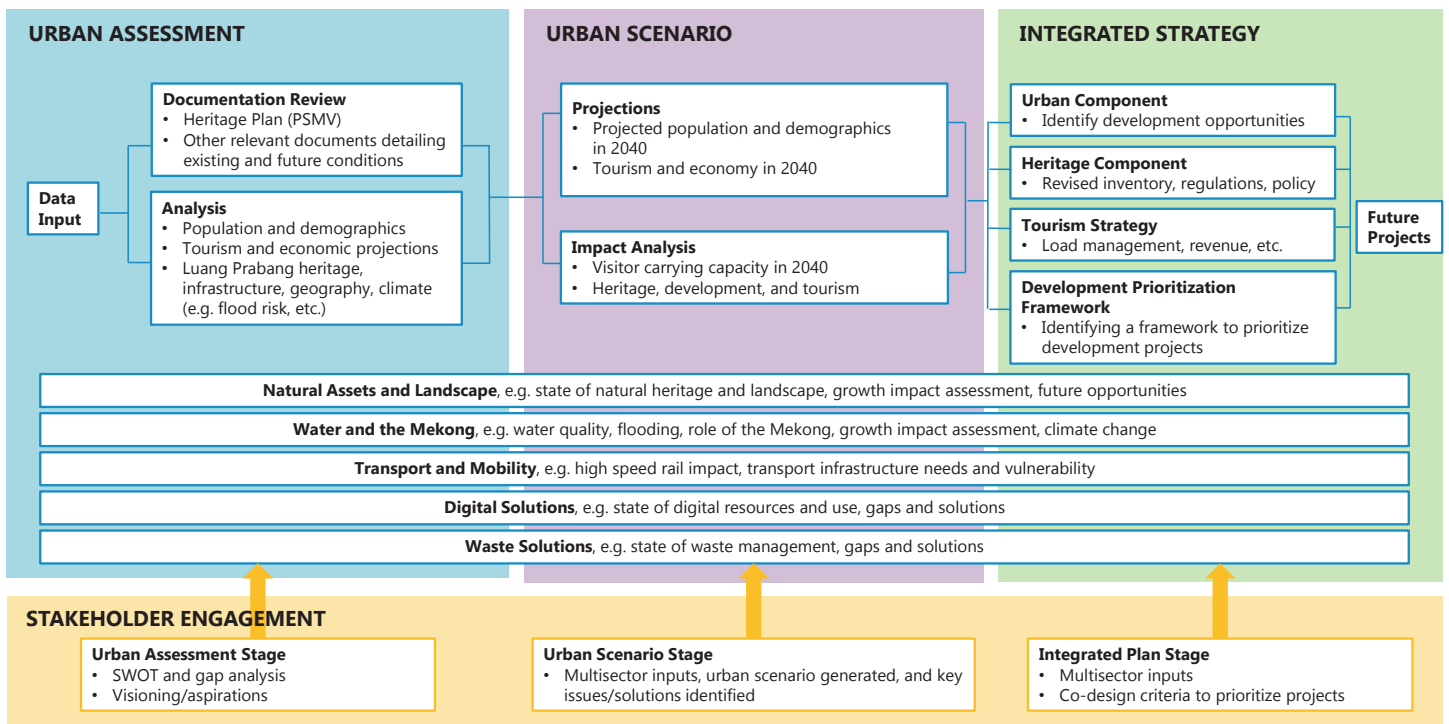


**Reduce inequality within and among countries** – Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion considerations are embedded in the strategy to ensure development benefits the marginalized.



**Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable** – The strategy protects built, intangible, and natural heritage, promotes sustainable transport and urban services, and strengthens disaster preparedness as a means of making Luang Prabang a livable city for all.

## STRATEGY METHODOLOGY



PSMV = Plan de Sauvegarde et de Mise en Valeur, SWOT = strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Source: Ramboll, 2023.

## ABOUT THE ASEAN AUSTRALIA SMART CITIES TRUST FUND

The ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF) assists ASEAN cities in enhancing their planning systems, service delivery, and financial management by developing and testing appropriate digital urban solutions and systems. By working with cities, AASCTF facilitates their transformation to become more livable, resilient, and inclusive, while in the process identifying scalable best and next practices to be replicated across cities in Asia and the Pacific. The Trust Fund is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, managed by the Asian Development Bank, and implemented by Ramboll.