



ASEAN
AUSTRALIA
SMART CITIES
TRUST FUND
Asian Development Bank



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Implementation Partner:



Photo: ADB

KAYSONE PHOMVIHANE

Improving the employability and soft skills of a growing workforce through smart tools

In Kaysone Phomvihane, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), the ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF) has been helping to conceptualize an employment service platform and develop an educational mobile application to address the skills supply-demand gap in the city. The trust fund – financed by the Australian Government and managed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) – supports the school to work transition of Kaysone’s youth and tertiary graduates so that Kaysone can become a competitive and smart livable city.

KAYSONE PHOMVIHANE – A NEW STRATEGIC INDUSTRIAL HUB

Kaysone is one of the fastest growing urban centers in Lao PDR. As the capital of Savannakhet Province, which has the country’s first special economic zone, the city is an ideal location and trading hub for international and local investors.

Companies in the city, however, are facing difficulties attracting quality employees. Many firms have indicated that the labor market often lacks essential soft skills and have limited knowledge of job application processes, office environment settings, and workplace etiquette. To address these challenges, the AASCTF delivered a project in two phases, providing technical and financial support respectively, to help Kaysone realize its economic potential.



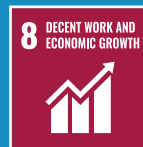
SCAN CODE FOR
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<https://bit.ly/KPflyer>

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all – The project helps provide tertiary graduates with the relevant skills required for employment and become more knowledgeable on job application, negotiation, and onboarding processes. Teachers are also provided with training related to mainstreaming these skills.



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all – The pre-feasibility study and interventions promote securing decent work and productive employment, and also supports Kaysone in achieving economic growth.



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation – Using smart tools promotes innovation and inclusivity as it ensures that the e-learning and proposed smart learning platform are accessible and contribute to better human resources needed by industries in the city.



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable – Increasing chances for employment opportunities and supporting the growth of a young workforce enables sustainable and inclusive urbanization.

PHASE 1

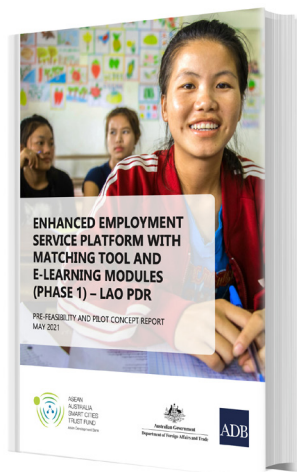
PREPARING A PRE-FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR AN ENHANCED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PLATFORM WITH E-LEARNING MODULES

From October 2020 to May 2021, the AASCTF (with Ramboll as main implementing partner) worked closely with the local government, employers, skills providers, and jobseekers on the Enhanced Employment Service Platform with Matching Tool and E-Learning Modules Project. The project had two main objectives: (i) conduct a needs assessment for an employment service platform and e-learning modules, and (ii) conceptualize a potential pilot project for a future intervention.

Various [workshops](#), interviews, and dialogues were held to thoroughly understand the supply side (jobseekers) and demand side (private sector) and to determine the factors that contribute to the skills gap. Findings from the dialogues and demonstration formed the baseline assessment and [pre-feasibility study](#). This was also used to formulate the potential pilot project, a smart learning platform with e-learning modules on the job application and onboarding process, which could be linked to the Public Employment Service website deployed by the government.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCT

SCAN CODE TO DOWNLOAD THE PRE-FEASIBILITY STUDY



PHASE 2

DEVELOPING A MOBILE APPLICATION AND PROVIDING TRAINING TO IMPROVE THE YOUTH'S SOFT SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Building on the pre-feasibility study, ADB (with AASCTF funding) developed e-learning modules, videos, and other supplementary materials to guide tertiary graduates with the soft skills required by companies in Kaysone. This second phase, which commenced in August 2022, aims to support the youth with their school-to-work transition, as well as enable employers to hire competent staff for their businesses.

Materials developed focus on four essential skills: how to prepare job applications and ace interviews, negotiation skills, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving skills. All the content are available in Lao and English and have been built into a mobile app called Kaysone Self-Learning, which was launched in July 2023.

Training of the trainers was also conducted in three education institutions (Savannakhet University and two technical and vocational colleges) to further sustain the knowledge roll-out of these skills. The project is still ongoing and there are plans to further assess the app and gather feedback from the youth and employers.

DOWNLOAD THE APP

AVAILABLE IN GOOGLE PLAY STORE AND APPLE APP STORE



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.