Lao PDR's Journey Toward National Ownership of NIPN

As countries strengthen their nutrition platforms, a critical question remains: what happens when donor support ends?

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), this question became urgent as external funding for NIPN approached its planned conclusion after December 2025 (with a no-cost extension until December 2026). While development partner support was instrumental in establishing NIPN, long-term continuity required domestic ownership and financing.

The endorsement of the NIPN Sustainability Plan marked a decisive shift

Ministries and institutions committed to maintaining NIPN core functions through domestic public resources, with capacity development identified as a priority for transition. **"This was a turning point"**
Translating this commitment into action, the Social Policy Research Institute (SPRI) under the Lao Academy of Social and Economic Sciences (LASES) organized a three-day training for Planning and Analysis Unit (PAU) officials from key ministries. The training covered:

- Research methodology
- Policy brief development
- Application of nutrition markers
- Nutrition advocacy

Crucially, the training was fully financed by the Government, with technical support from the Lao Tropical & Public Health Institute. It was chaired by the Vice President of LASES, signaling high-level political commitment and institutional ownership.

This was one of the first concrete examples of government-financed NIPN capacity development following the Sustainability Plan's endorsement. The significance lay not only in the content delivered, but in the financing model, domestic resources supporting a nationally owned platform.

This milestone was the result of advocacy, continuous engagement, and progressive capacity strengthening. Over time, NIPN evolved in perception from a donor-supported project to a national platform essential for evidence-based planning and programming.

The initiative generated immediate and strategic gains as key results:

- Strengthening technical skills in key areas such as nutrition markers, advocacy, research and writing brief etc.
- Increased confidence in planning and implementing NIPN activities using domestic resources.
- Clear demonstration of government ownership and accountability.

Why This Matters?

Lao PDR's experience demonstrates that:

- Domestic financing of NIPN is feasible, even in resource-constrained contexts.
- Sustainability plans can move from commitment to implementation.
- Political leadership and institutional anchoring are as important as technical capacity.

Building on this progress, the Government aims **to institutionalize NIPN's core functions within existing government systems and routine capacity-building mechanisms.**