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National experience on International Standardization, Recent Year's Experience, Current Status Issues

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National ICT Policy on Standardization and Localization

The adoption new technology necessary requires the adoption of national and international standards to ensure network interoperability within and without t the country; the preservation of language and culture; and increased productivity through rapid adaptation.

1.1   The Government of Lao PDR (GOL) shall promote software, hardware, and protocol standards, including telecommunications equipment and service, to ensure interoperability and harmonization with international, regional, sub-regional standards.

1.2   To promote digital interchange in the Lao language, the GOL shall adopt the Unicode standards for the Lao script.

1.3   The GOL shall establish a network, including nation and international exports, academia, government, and the private sector to advise on all issues relating to the localization of ICTs – this include Open Source and proprietary software.

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1.4   The GOL shall establish a set of standards for data information storage, exchange, and access for all government bodies and agencies, in line with international data standards, The GOL shall adopt Open Standards for all government data/information systems over proprietary standards, wherever possible, to minimize technological lock-in

Lao character set for digital information interchange

The policy paper also addresses the lack of compatibility of the Lao language fonts. Non-compatibility of Lao character sets with Unicode makes exchange of tax texts via Internet impossible.

- Like all other forms of information stored on computers, text is stored as a sequence of binary numbers.

- A Character Set is an ordered enumeration of characters (alpha/numeric and symbolic)

- Computing systems must use identical Character Sets for the exchange of textual data;

- There are many different standards

- STEA, in co-operation with General System Co. Ltd, developed the IBM ISO-8 Code Page 01033 to use as their official Code Page for the Lao character set.

Existing Lao Character Sets

- Among the older systems available in Lao PDR are the IBM <u>ISO-8 Code Page</u> 01033 and <u>EBCDIC Code</u> <u>Page</u> <u>01032</u> developed by STEA,

- <u>Lao Script for Windows</u> was developed in 1993 by Dr. John Durdin, an international consultant who was then working in Lao.

- <u>Lao Linux</u> is used mostly by the academia for educational purposes, for example in computer software and programming.

- Lao Word is a Lao enhancement to Word. It is aimed to ease typing text in Lao, as well as offer a platform for further research in Lao computational linguistics.

  In addition, Lao fonts have to be standardized. Although Lao fonts have been developed locally, each of these fonts uses a different code page.

Thank you