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**Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity**

Government of Lao PDR

No. 330/GOL  
Vientiane Capital, 18.9.2014

**Decree  
On Surveying, Aerial Photography and Mapping**

- Pursuant to the Law on The Government of The Lao People's Democratic Republic No. 02/NA, dated on May 6, 2003;
- Pursuant to the Proposal of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 09/HA, dated on May 15, 2014.

**The Government of Lao PDR Decrees:**

**Part I  
General Provisions**

**Article 1 Purpose of the Decree**

This Decree determines principles, regulations and measures on operations and management of surveying, aerial photography and mapping for public administration, promotion of implementation and

using advanced techniques, science-technology into those mentioned activities for high effectiveness and to be in harmony in the whole country, aiming to serve the socio-economic development, national defense, public security and preservation of the natural environment.

## **Article 2 Surveying, Aerial photography and Mapping**

Surveying is one of the scientific sectors for researching, collecting and gathering detailed data on the ground surface by surveying and calculating based on the datum system to create sketch plans and maps for work performances, studies and research on the shape and size of the earth.

Aerial photography is a process of recording data on the ground surface by taking photos from an aircraft or satellites to create sketch plans, maps and aerial photo maps in different scales.

Mapping is a technical process that includes collecting and compiling data and designing, decorating and plotting of maps.

## **Article 3 Definitions of Terminology**

Terminology used in this Decree has following meanings:

1. **Maps** are tools that represent the features of the surface of the earth and other objects on the grounds by displaying symbols, calculated in according to scales and datum;
2. **Horizontal Datum** refers to the ground control system related to the feature of the earth that displays and indicates locations of different points on the surface of the ground by latitude and longitude coordinates;
3. **Vertical Datum** refers to the elevation levelling of the points determined on the surface of the ground by comparing to the average sea level;
4. **Topographic maps** refers to maps displaying details of topographic features, elevations, resettlement areas,

rivers, transportation and communication networks, natural and built-up objects by a legend system in accordance with scales and any ground control points on the surface;

5. **Thematic maps** refers to maps displaying specific characteristics of particular sessions such as administration maps, geography maps, socio-economic maps, forestry maps, transportation and communication maps, geological maps, land use maps, water source maps, tourism maps and other maps;
6. **Digital maps** are the maps that present the detail features of the ground surface, natural and social aspects by indicating codes and ground control coordinate system;
7. **Geographic Information System (GIS)** refers to a system that gathers information from different sources and performs systematically electronic analysis that can find and improve the data;
8. **Map Scales** refers to the ratio of distances displayed on the maps compared to the actual ground surface. This is based on the scale calculation formula  $= \frac{1}{M}$

As: 1 is a numerator of the ratio, equaled to a measured unit on the maps. And M is a denominator of the ratio, equivalent to the actual distance on the ground surface.

Determination of map scales in the Lao PDR is:

- Large scales are the maps with scale up to 10,000 such as 1/10,000; 1/5,000; 1/200 ...;
- Medium scales are the maps with scales between 10,000 and 250,000;
- Small scales are the maps with scales above 250,000.

## **Article 4 Scope of Use**

This Decree applies to individual persons, juristic entities, government organizations and private organizations which operate activities related to surveys, aerial photography and mapping within the territory of Lao PDR.

## **Article 5 Government Policies on Surveying, Aerial Photography and Mapping**

The Government supports development of surveying, aerial photography and mapping in terms of funding, technique equipment base, technology and personnel within the entire country as appropriate.

The Government promotes regional and international internal and external cooperation on surveying, aerial photography and mapping by exchange of lessons, information, sciences, technology, training and professional upgrading of staff, generating of assistant funding, implementation of conventions and international agreements that Lao PDR has been a member.

## **Part II**

### **Activities of Surveying, Aerial photography and Mapping**

#### **Article 6 Activities of Surveying**

Activities of Surveying include:

- Planning, survey, construction and measuring of the national ground control points such as survey and measure the national geodetic network, levelling points and gravity points;
- Survey and creation of topographic maps and other relevant activities;
- Survey and determination of locations for national boundary benchmarks and administrative boundaries.



## **Article 7 Activities of Aerial Photography**

Activities of Aerial photography include:

- Planning and perform flights for taking photos;
- Building and measurement the control points for aerial photography;
- Codifying, data filing and creation of topographic maps by using aerial photos.

## **Article 8 Activities of Mapping**

Activities of mapping include:

- Gathering, compiling and creating data for the mapping process;
- Designing, drawing, decorating and printing the maps and atlases;
- Creating the digital geographic database.

## **Article 9 Database**

The Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for gathering, constructing, editing, maintaining, and developing the data received from different ministries, organizations, departments, units, local authorities, corporations and international organizations related to surveying, aerial photography and mapping to become the national database.

## **Article 10 Data Service**

In services, using of data and products of surveys, aerial photography and maps that concerned sector shall submit a letter of proposal to the Ministry of Home Affairs are:

- Data of ground control points, gravity data, astronomy points and national levelling points;

- Data of aerial photography and satellite images in all scales taken within the territory of Lao PDR;
- Any data related to the national boundary and administrative boundaries of the provinces, districts and villages;
- Any data of digital maps, GIS and topographic maps scaled from 1:200,000, 1:100,000, 1:50,000,.....to 1:500.

### **Article 11 Handover of Documents and Data**

Persons, juristic entity of both domestic and foreign countries, after completing the projects related to the survey, gravity data, coordinates, levelling of the first to the fourth orders and creation of different scaled maps in areas larger than 20 km<sup>2</sup> shall handover documents and base data of surveying, international boundary lines, administrative boundaries, aerial photography, satellite images and maps with any scales to the Ministry of Home Affairs for management, maintenance and filling of social services.

### **Article 12 Import or Export of Data, Mapping Products and Relevant Equipment**

Persons, juristic entity or domestic and international organizations which need to export data and other products determined in Articles 9 and 10 of this Decree shall obtain a permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs and shall perform in accordance with the agreement terms described in the permission letter.

For import and export of tools and equipment for surveying, aerial photography and mapping permission shall be obtained from the Ministry of Home Affairs prior to the import-export process.

## **Article 13 Copyright**

The Ministry of Home Affairs owns copyright of data and other products within the aspect of surveying, aerial photography and mapping in accordance with the rules and laws of the Lao PDR.

## **Part III Principles and Operations of Surveying, Aerial Photography and Mapping**

### **Article 14 Basic principles for Surveying, Aerial Photography and Mapping**

Operations of surveying, aerial photography and mapping shall be according to the following basic principles:

1. Ensuring the central management in order to maintain a unity for the whole country;
2. Ensuring confidentiality, security and entire territory of the nation;
3. Corresponding to the technical aspects, technical standards and scientifically.

### **Article 15 Use of the National Geodetic Datum**

Persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organizations, operating surveys, aerial photography and mapping, shall use the national geodetic datum and the technical regulations officially promulgated by the Government.

### **Article 16 Operations of Surveying, Aerial Photography and Mapping**

Operations of surveying, aerial photography and mapping are as following:

1. Planning, negotiation and signing contracts with persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organizations in regarding to surveying, aerial photography and mapping in accordance with rules and regulations;
2. Studies, research and preparation of terms and conditions and advanced technology to serve the operations of surveying, aerial photography and mapping;
3. Survey, construction, renovations and measurements of surveying geodetic network, levelling points, astronomy points and gravity points for the whole country;
4. Survey, aerial photography and gathering of data for creating topographic maps, thematic maps in different scales in order to contribute to the missions of socio-economic development, national defense, public security and scientific research for the whole country;
5. Development, improvement, editing and providing data on surveying, aerial photography and mapping;
6. Researches, design and arranging the plotting and printing out of topographic maps, thematic maps, atlases in order to serve the need of society.

## **Part IV**

### **Doing Businesses on Surveying, Aerial Photography and Mapping**

#### **Article 17 Doing Businesses**

Persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organizations, who intend to do businesses on surveying, aerial photography and mapping in Lao PDR, shall follow the laws on domestic and foreign investment promotion of Lao PDR, shall obtain technical permissions from the Ministry of Home Affairs, and properly perform in accordance with terms and conditions, rules and

technical regulations on operations of surveying, aerial photography and mapping.

### **Article 18 Conditions for Doing Business**

Conditions for doing business on surveying, aerial photography and mapping are:

- Except persons who are not permitted by laws, persons, juristic entities who are living in Lao PDR are entitled to legally do or involve in businesses on surveying, aerial photography and mapping;
- Persons, juristic entities who intend to do such business shall have complete organizational conditions, location, personnel, technical tools and equipment, funding and professional capacities;
- Foreigners shall obtain approvals from the Foreign Investment Management Committee according to the Law on Foreign Investment Promotion in Lao PDR.

### **Article 19 Submitting Applications for Doing Business**

Persons, juristic entities or any organizations, who intend to do business on surveys, aerial photography and mapping within the territory of Lao PDR, shall submit their applications to the Ministry of Home Affairs for researching, considering and proposing to relevant authorities and the Government for considering and approving in accordance with regulations.

### **Article 20 Documents Comprised with Submitting Applications**

Documents to be comprised with applications for doing business on surveys, aerial photography and mapping are:

- An application for permission;
- An analysis of economic-technique;

- A certificate, documents and other relevant information;
- Complete documents in accordance with Article 18 of this Decree.

## **Article 21 Consideration of Permission**

The Ministry of Home Affairs, upon receiving applications for doing business on surveying, aerial photography and mapping, shall check if the required documents are complete and correct, take the applications for consideration and issue technical permissions within one month. In a case that the application is not completed or not in accordance with defined regulations, the Ministry shall inform the concerned applicants in writing within appropriate time.

Persons, juristic entities or organizations, who intend to implement surveying, aerial photography and mapping within the territory of Lao PDR, shall submit their proposals to the National Geographic Department, the Ministry of Home Affairs for approval considerations in accordance with regulations.

## **Article 22 Registration**

- Persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organizations who intend to do business in surveying, aerial photography and mapping shall submit their business proposals to relevant industrial and trading sectors as defined in the Enterprise Law, Investment Promotion Law and other relevant rules and regulations

- Persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organizations, upon obtaining enterprise certificates from the industrial and trading sector, shall submit their applications for doing activities of surveying, aerial photography and mapping to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

## **Part V**

### **Management and Inspection**

#### **Article 23 Organizations Responsible for Management and Inspection**

The Government unitarily controls and inspects the operations of surveying, aerial photography and mapping for the whole country by assigning the Ministry of Home Affairs as the core actor to coordinate and collaborate with other ministries, ministry-equivalent organizations and local administrative organizations in implementation, management, monitoring and inspection.

Organizations responsible for management and inspection are:

- The Ministry of Home Affairs;
- The Home Affairs Departments of the provinces and of the Capital;
- The Home Affairs Office of the districts;
- Other relevant authorities.

#### **Article 24 Rights and Duties of the Ministry of Home Affairs**

The Ministry of Home Affairs has rights and duties as following:

1. Researches, makes policies and strategies on surveying, aerial photography and mapping in each period of time in order to present to the concerned authority and the Government for consideration;
2. Applies the policies and strategies into action plans, programs and projects, and provides directions on implementation of this Decree;
3. Considers for authorizations or proposes to the concerned authority and the Government for consideration of authorizations for operations related to

- surveying, aerial photography and mapping, includes importing and exporting of data, products and other equipment;
4. Studies, constructs and improves the data for promulgation or proposes to the Government for consideration and approval the technical standards on surveying, aerial photography and mapping, including monitoring, supervising, inspection the implementing units and implementing persons in order to ensure the rightness;
  5. Constructs, controls and uses database, as well as provides national geographic information to persons, juristic entities and organizations in order to serve the development of economic, culture and social as well as national defense, public security, scientific research and others;
  6. Researches new scientific techniques and summarizes the results of achievements on high-effective and good quality scientific technology of both domestic and international, and proposes to the Government for consideration and official promulgation and disseminate to other sectors for acknowledgement and implementation;
  7. Controls and makes list of the enterprise units, survey equipment and technical personnel who perform activities related to surveying, aerial photography and mapping;
  8. Coordinates with relevant sectors to implement duties on national boundary and administrative boundaries and controlling of geodetic datum on surveying, aerial photography and mapping;
  9. Regularly summarizes and reports to the Government on the operations of surveying, aerial photography and mapping;



10. Obtains rights and other duties as determined in the rules and laws, and as assignment.

### **Article 25 Rights and Duties of the Home Affairs Departments of the Province and the Capital**

In management and inspection of operations of surveying, aerial photography and mapping, the Departments of Home Affairs of the provinces and the Capital have rights and duties as following:

1. Act as aides and assist the leaderships of the provincial administrative authorizations in management of operations of surveying and basic mapping and administrative boundary mapping between provinces and the Capital and with the neighboring countries;
2. Manages data system of survey and aerial photography in accordance with their responsibilities, regulations and laws;
3. Retain the national ground control points, levelling points, national gravity points as well as performing management, printing and selling of mapping products according to the determined regulations;
4. Coordinates with relevant sectors in implementation of works on national boundary and administrative boundaries, controlling of the geodetic datum on surveying, aerial photography and mapping;
5. Regularly summaries and reports to the Ministry of Home Affairs on surveying, aerial photography and mapping;
6. Obtains rights and other duties as determined in the rules and laws, and as assignment.

## **Article 26 Rights and Duties of the Home Affairs Offices of the Districts**

In management and inspection of operations of surveying, aerial photography and mapping, the District Home Affairs Offices have rights and duties as following:

1. Act as aides and assist the leaderships of the district administrative authorizations in unitarily management of operations of surveying and basic mapping and the administrative boundary mapping between districts and municipalities in according to their responsibilities;
2. Provide collaborations in survey, aerial photography and mapping in accordance with the allocation of management levels, rules and regulations;
3. Retain the national ground control points, national levelling points and gravity points located within the districts;
4. Control, monitor and inspect the printing of different maps according to scopes of their responsibilities;
5. Coordinate with relevant sectors to implement duties on national boundary and administrative boundaries, controlling of the geodetic datum on surveying, aerial photography and mapping;
6. Regularly summarize and report to the Home Affairs Departments of the provinces and the Capital on surveying, aerial photography and mapping;
7. Obtain rights and other duties as determined in the rules and laws, and as assignment.

## **Part VI**

### **The National Geographic Information System Committee**

#### **Article 27 Status and Role**

The National Geographic Information (GIS) Committee is a committee established under the Ministry of Home Affairs, having a role as an aide to the Ministry of Home Affairs in researching rules, principles and technical standards of the national geographic information.

#### **Article 28 Personnel Structure**

The National Geographic Information (GIS) Committee consists of:

1. The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs as a directing person;
2. The Director General of National Geographic Department as a chairman and standing on duties;
3. Other committee members from line ministries and organizations using geographic information in their work performances.

The Technical Working Group and the Secretariat Unit are assigned by the Minister of Home Affairs. And the Secretariat Unit sits in the National Geographic Department.

#### **Article 29 Rights and Duties of the National Geographic Information Committee**

The National Geographic Information (GIS) Committee has the following rights and duties:

1. Being the coordinating and informing point for geographic information created by different sectors in concern and for further development of that information;

2. Studies, researches and defines principles and technical standards of geographic information;
3. Determines rules and regulations for sharing of geographic information by using different procedures or any appropriate policies;
4. Studies, researches, finds and generates funding sources from other concerned sectors for organizing GIS technical meetings and requests funding and assistances from foreign countries and international organizations;
5. Obtains rights and other duties as determined in the rules and laws, and as assignment.

## **Part VII**

### **Fees and Service Charges**

#### **Article 30 Fees**

Collection of fees for data of surveying, aerial photography and mapping, and for the equipment for surveying, aerial photography, is to be performed in accordance with the procedures determined for each period of time, and the collected fees are to be handed over to the central budget of the Government.

#### **Article 31 Service Charges**

Charging for services in technical inspection of data on surveying, aerial photography, mapping, and the equipment for surveying, aerial photography and mapping are to be performed in accordance with the procedures determined for each period of time. The generated revenues as well as the expenses are to be reported to the Ministry of Finance as defined in the regulations and laws.

## **Part VIII**

### **Awards for Persons with Outstanding Performance and Disciplinary Measures on Persons with Breaches**

#### **Article 32 Awards for Persons with Outstanding Performance**

Persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organizations showing outstanding performances in implementation of this Decree and actively contributing to the development of surveying, aerial photography and mapping in Lao PDR are entitled to obtain admirations or receive other appropriate awards in accordance with the relevant procedures.

#### **Article 33 Prohibitions**

Persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organizations are prohibited to take data of survey, aerial photography, satellite images, maps and other geographical data of the National Geographic Department and use it unlawfully or not correspondingly to the law that affects the national security.

Persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organizations are prohibited to operate surveying, aerial photography and mapping within the areas prohibited by the Government.

#### **Article 34 Disciplinary Measures on Persons with Breaches**

Persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organizations conducting breaches or against this Decree and other rules and regulations related to management and development of surveying, aerial photography and mapping in Lao PDR shall be re-educated, disciplined, fined or put under criminal punishment based on the seriousness of the breach including paying compensations for what they have made.

## **Part IX**

### **Final Provisions**

#### **Article 35 Implementation**

The Ministry of Home Affairs is assigned to play the main role in coordination with other ministries, ministry-equivalent organizations, local administrative authorities and any other concerned sectors in implementation of this Decree for maximum effectiveness.

Persons, juristic entities or domestic and international organization shall acknowledge and strictly implement this Decree.

#### **Article 36 Effectiveness**

This Decree enters into force from the date of signature, and this Decree supersedes the Prime Minister's Decree on Surveying, Aerial photography and Mapping Activities in The Territory of The Lao PDR No. 255/PM, dated on August 16, 2005.

Provisions and terms that conflict with this Decree shall be revoked.

**The Government of Lao PDR**

**The Prime Minister of Lao PDR**

**Mr. Thongsing Thammavong**