



BAF II Case Study No. 6
March 2022

57BYTES

Website:
<https://57bytes.com>

Sector:
ICT

BDS activity:
ISO/IEC 29110-4-1 certification

BDS providers:
PK Service Co. Ltd.
and
ISEM Co. Ltd.



Preparing to scale up for greater service offerings

About the company

Established in 2018, 57BYTES is an ICT company, based in Vientiane. It is led by a young entrepreneur, Chitpaseuth Somphet (aka 'Loma'), who previously spent several years working and learning about ICT provision in Singapore. The company has been a first-mover in Laos in offering software as a service (SaaS), including its proprietary 'bansi.la' online accounting service for SMEs. Bansi.la allows subscribers to manage their income and expenses, their payroll, inventory and other accounting requirements, including tax reporting. 57BYTES has also been working to develop 'CheckBill' -- an open source point of sales (PoS) service for subscribers. The company also provides a range of more common ICT services found in Laos, including consultancy, training, and the development of bespoke website and mobile applications for clients. In 2020, 57BYTES won first prize at the Lao Start-Up Awards.



57BYTES Sole Company Limited



What growth challenges did the company face ?

57BYTES's recent success means that the business has been growing, and that brings with it new challenges if the quality of service provision is to be maintained. All successful SMEs face growing pains, and the challenge then becomes how to manage that process in a sustainable manner, while not compromising on the integrity of the product or service provided to customers (ie. the very thing that brought success in the first place). 57BYTES knew that they needed to become more systematic in some parts of their business, and that scaling up meant being less ad hoc in the way they managed projects. This included the need for a proper documenting system, both for clients and for themselves.

57BYTES also wanted to break into the market of larger companies, foreign-owned firms, government agencies and international NGOs, all of which tend to require a higher degree of robustness from their service providers. These kinds of clients tend to bring larger projects for a company like 57BYTES to work on, but they also require additional comfort that the chosen service provider has the capacity to take on the project and complete it successfully. They also tend to be more discerning in the way they go about hiring a service provider, often conducting competitive tenders for the procurement of such services. For this, bidders need to display the kinds of technical capacity they can bring to the project, should they win the tender.





“Software development is one of the fastest-growing industries, and many software companies are competing to provide the best solutions for their customers. 57BYTES is one of the local software companies in Laos that prides ourselves in adopting industry-standard practices. BAF II supported us to meet the ISO29110 standard, to improve our software development processes, and help ensure that we develop the right solution for our customers.”

Mr Chitpaseuth Somphet,
CEO of 57BYTES.



“57Bytes has been another impressive company for BAF II to work with. Mr. Loma, the founder, is a genuine entrepreneur at a relatively young age.. He is talented, and has been consistently pro-active in pursuing new technology solutions, and other means of improving the company’s performance. I am looking forward to seeing his company grow in the coming years.”

Mrs. May, Deputy Team Leader.

BAF II support provided

BAF II provided a matching grant to 57BYTES to support them in attaining ISO/IEC 29110-4-1 certification, or to give it its full name: Systems and Software Life Cycle Profiles and Guidelines for Very Small Entities (VSEs). This is a relatively new certification specifically designed for SMEs working in the ICT sector, where ISO/IEC/IEEE 12207 (the general standard for software development by medium and large companies) is less appropriate.

Part 4 of the ISO/IEC 29110 certification, which is what 57BYTES went for, pertains to the ‘generic profile group’ and is suitable for SMEs that do not develop critical software products. For more details, please refer to: <https://www.iso.org/standard/67223.html>

Two BDS providers were retained by 57BYTES to conduct this work. First, PK Service Co. in Laos was used to help 57BYTES prepare for the certification process, and then ISEM (the Institute of Software Engineering) of Thailand was the accredited organization to actually perform and approve the certification.

We believe that 57BYTES is one of the first software development companies in Laos to gain this certification.



Mr Loma of 57Bytes winning first prize at the Lao Start-Up Awards in 2020.

Some useful lessons

Not only does 57BYTES believe that having ISO 29110-4 will help win, and then manage, more clients and bigger projects, but it will also help in other areas of scaling up the business. For example, ‘on-boarding’ new staff, and clearly defining the specific roles of all staff, will be made more systematic and generally easier if a robust documentation system is in place. A documentation system will also help protect the company in cases where clients seek to make numerous changes that must be tracked and costed for.

Want to learn more about BAF II, and explore whether we can help your business to grow ? Go to www.baflaos.com and let’s start a conversation.