



LAOS



INTRODUCTION

Modern-day Laos has its roots in the ancient Lao kingdom of Lan Xang. Laos came under the domination of Siam (Thailand) from the late 18th century until the late 19th century, when it became part of French Indochina. In 1975, the communist Pathet Lao took control of the government. A gradual, limited return to private enterprise and the liberalization of foreign investment laws began in 1988.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President THONGLOUN Sisoulit

Head of Government

Prime Minister PHANKHAM Viphavan

Government Type

communist state

Capital

Vientiane (Viangchan)

Legislature

unicameral National Assembly or Sapha Heng Xat (164 seats; 5-year terms)

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 236,800 sq km

Land: 230,800 sq km

Water: 6,000 sq km

Climate

tropical monsoon; rainy season (May to November); dry season (December to April)

Natural Resources

timber, hydropower, gypsum, tin, gold, gemstones

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

lower middle-income, socialist Southeast Asian economy; one of the fastest growing economies; declining but still high poverty; natural resource rich; new anticorruption efforts; already high and growing public debt; service sector hit hard by COVID-19

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$56.79 billion (2020 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$7,800 (2020 est.)

Industries - mining (copper, tin, gold, gypsum), timber, electric power, agricultural processing, rubber, construction, garments, cement, tourism

Agricultural products - rice, roots/tubers, cassava, sugarcane, vegetables, bananas, maize, watermelons, coffee, taro

Exports \$3.654 billion (2017 est.)

electricity, copper, rubber, gold, flavored water (2019)

partners: Thailand 36%, China 28%, Vietnam 16% (2019)

Imports \$4.976 billion (2017 est.)

refined petroleum, cars, cattle, iron structures, steel products (2019)

partners: Thailand 53%, China 26%, Vietnam 10% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

7.57 million (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

1.46% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

Lao 53.2%, Khmou 11%,

Hmong 9.2%, Phouthay

3.4%, Tai 3.1%, Makong 2.5%, Katong 2.2%, Lue 2%, Akha

1.8%, other 11.6% (2015 est.)

Language

Lao (official), French, English, various ethnic languages

Religion

Buddhist 64.7%, Christian 1.7%, none 31.4%, other/not stated 2.1% (2015 est.)

Urbanization

urban population: 36.9% of total population (2021)

rate of urbanization: 2.99% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)

