



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

## COUNTRY PROFILE

Laos sits at the heart of mainland Southeast Asia, bordering Burma, Cambodia, China, Thailand and Vietnam. As it seeks to play a more prominent role in global affairs, including in ASEAN, Laos faces significant challenges stemming from its low-skilled workforce and economic vulnerability. The United States partners with Laos to support informed decision-making that leverages its youthful population and contributes to a rules-based, resilient Indo-Pacific.

USAID partners with Laos to advance economic reforms, strengthen the rule of law, and improve health and education outcomes for all Laotians – all of which help build Laos' self-reliance while elevating its role on the global stage.

### **OUR WORK**

Laos is one of the poorest countries in Asia. Despite steady economic growth, development challenges stifle progress. USAID partners with the Government of Laos, civil society and an emerging private sector to drive sustainable development in economic growth, the rule of law, health and education.

**ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Despite steady economic growth driven by large-scale mining and hydropower, limited private sector investment and outdated trade laws and regulations threaten long-term economic prospects. To bolster diversified and inclusive economic growth, USAID works with the government and the private sector to modernize trade policies that will help strengthen Laos’ role in ASEAN and the World Trade Organization and will open the doors to foreign investment and American businesses.

**RULE OF LAW**

Weak institutional capacity and a lack of transparency undermine government accountability and the rule of law. USAID partners with the Government of Laos to ensure justice is fair and transparent. To combat trafficking-in-persons and to prevent wildlife trafficking, USAID works to reduce the vulnerability of at-risk populations and wildlife by streamlining communication within Laos and across Southeast Asia.

**HEALTH AND EDUCATION**

In addition to being vulnerable to transboundary health threats, Laos has some of Southeast Asia’s highest rates of child and maternal mortality and malnutrition. To improve health outcomes and prevent child stunting, USAID strengthens the nutritional status of women and children by expanding access to clean water and encouraging best practices in sanitation and hygiene. USAID also partners to fight infectious diseases, including HIV and AIDS, as well as pandemic threats like avian influenza. Recognizing that health and also education are key to accelerating Laos’ self-reliance, USAID is helping to strengthen the primary education system, giving Laos’ future leaders the skills needed to lead healthy, productive lives.



USAID helps persons with disabilities gain free access to disability services and helps improve their well-being and livelihoods.

PHOTO CREDIT: RICHARD NYBERG/USAID



Over the last few years, USAID has helped 156 local entrepreneurs, including 90 women, build their businesses and secure a steady income.

PHOTO CREDIT: ATHIT CHANTHALATH/USAID

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