



KEY FACTS

Population: 7.1 million

Urban Population: 33%

Population Density: 27 people/ km²

Age Structure:



■ Age0-14 ■ Age15-64 ■ Age 65+

✈ International Airports: 4

➔ Points of Entry (PoEs): 107

**all border checkpoints remain closed*

Migration Status

No. of Foreigners in country: 48,275

No. of Laotians abroad: 483,021

Remittances

International remittances as a receiving country: USD 285 million

International remittances as a sending country: USD 124 million

COVID-19 Situation in Lao PDR:

19 confirmed, 14 recovered, 0 death.

Quarantine & Isolation Facilities: 95

People in Quarantine facilities: 3,690



SITUATION OVERVIEW

With more than 5 million confirmed cases, and about 65,000 deaths around the globe; the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEICC) on 30 January 2020, and characterized it as a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

Lao People's Democratic Republic confirmed its first case on 24 March 2020. Since that announcement, there have been 19 confirmed cases, with the last reported case on the 11th of April, Lao People's Democratic Republic is still able to contain the outbreak, as all cases are either travel-related or linked to confirmed cases. To date, there have been no confirmed cases among the recent influx of foreign worker returnees.

In Thailand, the announcement of wide-ranging business closures by the Governor of Bangkok on Saturday, 21 March 2020 and subsequent announcement of the State of Emergency by the Prime Minister on 26 March 2020 triggered mass movements of migrants from Bangkok and other provinces, in Thailand to migrant home provinces, as well as across borders to home countries in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (the) and Myanmar.

Migrant and mobile populations bear a high risk of infection as well as broader social and economic impacts of COVID-19 due to several factors and barriers such as lack or inadequate access to proper information on prevention; limitations in or exclusions from accessing diagnostic and treatment services; cramped and crowded living and working conditions; stigma and discrimination; and other factors.

IOM LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC'S STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR COVID-19

IOM aims to contribute to the overall objective of the IOM COVID-19 Global Preparedness and Response Plan to halt further transmission and mitigate the impact of the outbreak. IOM believes that preparedness and response plans need to be responsive to population mobility and cross-border dynamics, and that inclusive approaches which take into account migrants, travelers, displaced populations, and local communities, and counter misinformation that can lead to anti-migrant sentiment and xenophobia are essential in the event of an outbreak.

Efforts are initially focused on response and preparedness for a second wave, but IOM keeps the need for recovery in mind through incorporating elements of social cohesion and programming throughout. With this Preparedness and Response Plan IOM Lao People's Democratic Republic aims to contribute to the government of Lao People's Democratic Republic and national partners preparedness and response efforts for COVID-19 to reduce and delay the transmission of COVID-19 and prepare for and address the crosscutting humanitarian needs of migrants impacted by COVID-19.

PROPOSED RESPONSE AND ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED AS OF MAY, 2020

IOM has proposed strategic actions to support coordinated prevention, mitigation and response efforts with relevant actors at global, regional, central and national levels to control the transmission and mitigate the negative impact in the society and reduce a huge strain in the health care system, aligned with the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan and Joint UN Country Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 Pandemics in Lao People's Democratic Republic:

The proposed actions are divided across 4 pillars:

Pillar 1 — COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

- Liaised and coordinated with relevant stakeholders to develop recommendations for the inclusion of migrants into national preparedness plans.
- Ongoing monitoring and sharing on the situation of migrant workers returning from neighbouring countries.
- Handed over PPE and basic sanitary supplies to support vulnerable groups under the Counselling and Protection Centre for Women and Children (CPCWC), Lao Women's Union (LWU) in Vientiane Capital and Luang Namtha province, supporting 18 victims of human trafficking through this support.

Pillar 2 — RISK COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Produced two infosheets for migrant workers in Lao PDR and Thailand. 3,000 copies were shared with MOLSW, 2,000 copies with the International Labour Organization (ILO) for distributing to their Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), and 500 with a private recruitment agency responsible for sending migrant workers abroad.
- A 3-minute animation video on safe migration and COVID-19 produced by IOM was translated into Lao language and shared through IOM's Facebook and communication channels, the video can be accessed here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNLUaLes6Wk>
- A NO stigma radio script was developed and broadcast through UNDP's community radio and Lao National Radio. The mass broadcasting began on 6 April and has reached approximately 300,000 people across five provinces including Oudomxay, Sekong, Salavan, Xayabouly, and Xieng Khouang.

Pillar 3 — SURVEILLANCE

- IOM supported the Skills Development and Employment Department (SDED), Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) with developing its rapid assessment of returned migrant workers which is being conducted by SDED across all 18 provinces of Lao PDR – migrants can register their information here - <http://www.lmi.gov.la/COVID19/iframe.php>

Pillar 4 — POINTS OF ENTRY (POE)

- IOM contributed to the global Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)/ Points of Entry (PoE) mapping exercise through providing weekly updates on mobility restrictions – can be accessed here - migration.iom.int
- IOM participated in a border visit with SDED MOLSW and Recruitment Agencies on March 26 to provide direct assistance to returned Lao migrants. 3,000 copies of Information Education Communication (IEC) materials were printed and distributed at the Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge, along with food and bottled water for 500 migrants.

IOM Lao PDR

iomlaoscovidtaskforce@iom.int



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

3rd Floor UN House,
Lane Xang Avenue, P.O. Box 345
Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR

