



Ms. Shareen Tuladhar, Chief of Mission, IOM Lao PDR co-signing the Cooperation Agreement with Mr. Phoxay Khaykhamphithoune, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

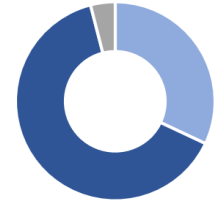
KEY FACTS

Population: 7.3 million

Urban Population: 35.7%

Population Density: 32 people/ km²

Age Structure:



■ Age 0-14 ■ Age 15-64 ■ Age 65+

✈ International Airports: 5

➔ Points of Entry (PoEs): 29

**all border checkpoints remain closed*

Migration Status

No. of Foreigners in country: 48,275

No. of Laotians abroad: 198,841

No. of Lao migrants who returned from Thailand: 284,180*

*Source: The official statistics of the Immigration Bureau of Thailand (As of May 2021).

COVID-19 Situation in Lao PDR:

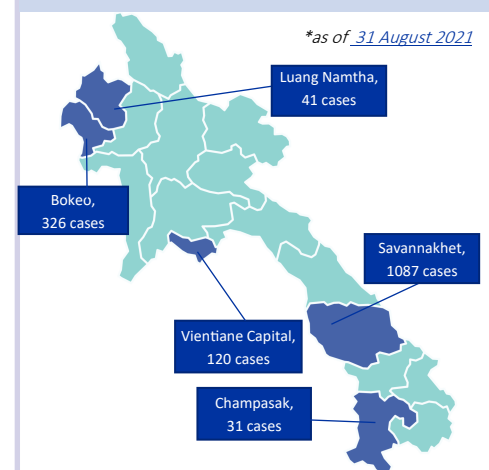
16,365 confirmed, 11,330 recovered, 16 deaths

Quarantine & Isolation Facilities: 93

People in Quarantine facilities: 8,649

Source: [Center of Information and Education for Health](#)

TOP 5 PROVINCES WITH COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION



Source: [Center of Information and Education for Health](#)

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused more than 221 million confirmed cases and over 4.5 million deaths around the globe since 16 January 2020. The outbreak has caused unprecedented impacts on human mobility, leaving migrants and mobile populations among the most vulnerable.

Lao People's Democratic Republic has been faced with a second wave of COVID-19 outbreak in April 2021. The influx of returnees from the neighbouring countries has been the main source of the nation-wide increase in COVID-19 cases. In addition, the inter-provincial travelling of Lao residents has caused the rise of community cases. As of August 2021, the number of COVID-19 community transmission cases have fluctuated. However, the community transmission cases remain high in Lao PDR's neighbouring countries which caused a high number of returning migrant workers, and some of the recently imported cases containing the COVID-19 Delta variant. Therefore, the Lao government have extended the [lockdown restrictions](#) from 1 to 15 September, while easing some measures.

International, local and traditional Points of Entry (PoEs) nation-wide remain closed, except for designated PoEs that are approved to open for logistics purposes. Lao migrant workers and nationals are allowed to return via international PoEs and there will be no penalty for returnees with irregular status if they return through official 29 PoEs and 93 Quarantine Centres (QC).

Since 27 January, the country's COVID-19 vaccines has been rolled out to priority groups and the general population. As of 31 August, over 2.4 million people have received the first dose of vaccine against COVID-19, while almost 1.8 million people have been fully vaccinated with two doses.

COMING HOME DURING COVID-19: The Story of a Returning Migrant

Xai (Alias), 36, a returned migrant, talked about his journey from Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic:

"I was working as a Barista at a coffee shop in Bangkok for almost two years. During the pandemic, the coffee shop was open for only three days a week, which lowered my salary by 60 to 70 percent. Since my job was affected, I decided to return to Lao PDR where it is safer and there are fewer cases compared to Thailand. [Read more here.](#)



IOM staff introducing safe migration to AVRR beneficiaries, Vientiane Capital.

COVID-19 RESPONSE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN AUGUST, 2021

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP



IOM and SDED visiting Skills Development Centre, Vientiane Capital.

- Signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Government of the Lao PDR to strengthen good relations between the two parties. IOM is granted the [Privileges and Immunities](#) from the government in implementing its migration programmes across the country.
- Collaborated with Skills Development and Employment Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to conduct the two-week skills development training on industrial sewing for 200 returnee migrant workers affected by COVID-19 at five Skills Development Centres in Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet Province and Champasak Province.
- Supported voluntary return and reintegration of eight Lao migrant workers who were stranded in Malaysia to return to Lao PDR, and provided counselling, travel assistance, and reintegration cash grant to migrants.

RISK COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



IOM with SDED handing over NFI to QC management, Champasak Province.

- Provided 2,600 direct assistance packs to returned migrants in Quarantine Centres (QC) in Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet and Champasak Province. The packs were distributed to each QC on a weekly basis which includes PPE, emergency toiletries, folding beds, mattresses, pillows, blankets, and mosquito nets, Information Education, and Communication (IEC) materials on safe migration, COVID-19 preventative measures and vaccination.
- Continued to provide Safe Migration Training via loudspeakers for returned migrants at QCs in Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet, Attapeu and Champasak Province, with an estimated reach of 52,521 migrants (24,471 women, 28,050 men).
- Continued to provide monthly cleaning supplies to QCs in Vientiane Capital and Savannakhet Province.

SURVEILLANCE



IOM staffs interviewing returned migrant at 27KM QC, Vientiane Capital.

Continued to collect data for the Socio-economic Impacts of COVID-19 on Migrant Workers Survey in Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet and Champasak Province:

- Quantitative survey was through phone calls and in person. A total of 409 interviews were conducted.
- Qualitative Survey was conducted via phone calls and in person at the 27KM QC.

POINTS OF ENTRY (PoEs)



IOM staff handing over SOP and IEC materials to DOI, Wattay International Airport.

- Planned for Term of Reference (TOR) with IOM Thailand to pilot the bilateral cooperation to facilitate cross-border coordination at priority PoEs to respond to public health emergency, security and data collection during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Handed over 300 copies of [Standard Operating Procedure](#) (SOP) for frontline officials managing PoEs during health emergencies to the Department of Immigration. It formalizes the process for frontline officials to facilitate returned migrant's travel from PoE to QC.
- Handed over 6500 pieces of IEC materials in Lao and English with information on the latest border measures, the COVID-19 vaccine, and important contacts to the Department of Immigration to be distributed to immigration officials and migrants travelling through PoEs.

IOM'S COVID-19 RESPONSE IS SUPPORTED BY...

