

1.1 Laos Humanitarian Background

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Disasters, Conflicts and Migration

Natural Hazards		
Type	Occurs	Comments / Details
Drought	Yes	Localised drought occurs every year. 5 major droughts occurred in the last 40 years. Laos experienced two considerable droughts in 2003 to 2007. In 2003, extreme drought conditions in the norther and central regions of Laos. Recently in 2019, dryer climate conditions have also led to prolonged drought affecting people living along the Mekong River and its tributaries who rely on ecosystem and its services for their day to day living.
Earthquakes	Yes	One fourth of the area of Lao PDR is considered to be a high-risk zone for earthquakes, and more than 30% of the country is located in a moderate earthquake hazard zone (NDMC, 2010). However, no significant earthquake related disasters have been reported in the past (JICA, 2015).
Epidemics	Yes	Common epidemics in Laos is the dengue outbreak. Aftermath of flooding events. Outbreaks of diseases such as acute diarrheal diseases, respiratory infections, dengue fever, hepatitis, malaria, typhoid fever and measles are prevalent in the country. Recently outbreak happened in 2013 which more than 43,000 cases and 95 mortalities.
Extreme Temperatures	No	N/A
Flooding	Yes	Since the mid 1960's Lao has experience 25 floods ranging in magnitude, economic loss, and mortality rates. Most vulnerable areas of the country are the low-lying flood plains along the Mekong River and its major tributaries in the central and southern parts of Lao PDR (Government of the Lao PDR, 2011).
Insect Infestation	Yes	Lao experienced thousands of crops (corn, job-tear, and upland rice) destroyed in the Northern provinces due to the yellow-spined bamboo locust outbreaks in the country and major outbreak that began in 2014.
Mudslides	No	N/A
Volcanic Eruptions	No	N/A
High Waves / Surges	No	N/A
Wildfires	No	N/A
High Winds	No	N/A
Other Comments		<p>Climate-related disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity across the globe. In Laos, flooding severely affected 12 provinces in 2013, resulting in 25 deaths, impacting over 350,000 people and causing millions of dollars in damages (IOM, 2016).</p> <p>The major natural hazards in Lao PDR include: floods, drought, storms, disease outbreaks and epidemics, and agricultural pests and rodent infestations. In the last five years, the country has experienced a number of hazards, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floods in 2008, 2009, and 2011 which affected approximately 241,190 people; • Flash flooding in 2011 which affected 430,000 people; • Rodent infestations in Northern Laos in 2008, estimated to have affected 85,000 - 140,000 people; and • Tropical storm Ketsana in 2009 which affected approximately 128,890 people across four provinces. <p>Other potential hazards include forest and land fires and earthquakes. According to the National Economic Research Institute, more than 30 earthquakes occurred in Northern Laos between 2009 and 2011, although the number of affected persons is not known. (Risk and Vulnerability Survey 2012/13 Analysis Report, May 2013, http://www.fao.org/3/a-at537e.pdf)</p>
Man-Made Issues		
Civil Strife	No	N/A

International Conflict	No	N/A
Internally Displaced Persons	No	N/A
Refugees Present	No	N/A
Landmines / UXO Present	Yes	Unexploded ordnance (UXOs) continue to remain in the ground, maiming and killing people, and hindering socio-economic development and food security. According to statistics of UXO Lao, there are around a hundred UXO victims a year. See the UXO Lao website: www.uxolao.org
Other Comments	Man-made hazards include unexploded ordinances (UXOs), deforestation, hazards related to commercial and industrial growth, and economic shocks such as price fluctuations or market access.	

For a more detailed database on disasters by country, please see the [Centre for Research on Epidemiology of Disasters Country Profile](#).

Seasonal Effects on Logistics Capacities

Seasonal Effects on Transport	
Transport Type	Comments / Details
Primary Road Transport	See 2.3 Road Network
Secondary Road Transport	See 2.3 Road Network
Rail Transport	See 2.4 Railway Assessment
Air Transport	Airport can be accessed whole year round (see 2.2 Laos Aviation)
Waterway Transport	See 2.1 Port Assessment

Laos is a land-locked country, and therefore relies on its neighbours Vietnam and Thailand for sea port services. Road transport is the most used mode for freight transport, accounting for more than 86% of total freight transport moved in the country. The total length of the road network reported is 37,552 km, of which 7,019 km is national roads, and 29,468 km is local roads. Urban road amounts to 718 km and around 166 km is Special roads (RMS Statistics, 2016). The rural road network covers around 46% of the total road length and nearly half are not accessible during the rainy seasons.

Seasonal Effects on Storage and Handling		
Activity Type	Time Frame	Comments / Details
Storage	October- November	Harvest season of rice, corn and maize
Handling	October-November	Harvest season of rice, corn and maize
Other		

Rice is the major crop grown in the country and accounts for over 80 percent of the total cultivated areas. The major cultivation season is the wet (rainfed) paddy, which stretches from May to December, and normally accounts for almost 90 percent of the country's annual paddy production. In the peak seasonal of storage and labour required in Laos is there might be some shortage of the labour to work in the loading and unloading areas.

Capacity and Contacts for In-Country Emergency Response

Government

National coordination and key partners

The Centre Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) is shared by Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and membered by representatives from several ministries. The CDMC has its secretariat at the Department for Social Welfare in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The Committee's duties include the following:

1. i) Endorse strategic plans and action plans, and draft various legislation on disaster management;
 2. ii) Lead the coordination for protection and response to disasters across the country;
- iii) Encourage ministries and local authorities to implement plans on disaster management;
1. iv) Urgently inform the Government on the status, severity and losses of lives and assets of the people when a disaster occurs and propose an immediate response plan for funding approval to respond to immediate and urgent needs; and
 2. v) Lead the implementation and cooperation with foreign, international and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) that are able to build capacity in disaster management.

Provincial, district, and village structures

Laos provincial and district Government offices have established Provincial and District Disaster Management Committees (P/DDMC). P/DDMCs implement Disaster Risk Management at sub-national and district levels, as they channel information and resources and establish links between national objectives, provincial priorities and local needs. As the coordinating body for DRM in provinces and districts, the P/DDMCs are responsible for preparing a Provincial or District Disaster Management Plan addressing both DRR and emergency response.

These plans include the identification of a hazards/risk profile for the province/district; the formulation of required resources for preventive and mitigatory action; planning of emergency, recovery and restoration operations; and the production of damage and loss assessments. The PDDMC is further expected to monitor hazards, risks, disaster threats and the conditions of vulnerable populations within their region, and conduct vulnerability analyses on emerging disaster-prone areas. The committees should identify and communicate training needs, conduct trainings and raise public awareness. The committees are also responsible for mobilizing and coordinating all interventions by other agencies in their province to ensure that disaster management fully reflects national priorities and guidelines. At the village level, DRM is employed through Village Disaster Protection Units (VDPU), which have already been established in a small number of communities. The village committee (led by a traditional village leader) is responsible for preparing DRM plans and procedures based on location-specific risk and vulnerability analysis and comprehensive hazard mapping for their respective locations. In case of an emergency, village committees have the operational responsibility to ensure that support is provided to the most affected households.

For more information on government contact details, please see the following link: [4.1 Government Contact List](#).

Humanitarian Community

Various United Nations agencies' country representations play a crucial role in technically and financially supporting the Lao Government in DRM programmes, in addition to responding to humanitarian crises. They participate in several fora, sharing information and experiences and addressing issues such as natural disasters, climate change, food security and environmental protection.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is responsible for ensuring the coordination of activities between various government ministries and the humanitarian agencies working in Lao PDR to prepare for, respond to and mitigate emergencies and disasters. The IASC is employed by several country teams, including UN agencies, international NGOs and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. These teams focus on different components in emergency response actions (Humanitarian Country Team, Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, Emergency Task Force, the Information Management Network and Provincial Focal Points) and cover various thematic areas (Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Food Security, Nutrition, Education, Shelter, Protection, Early Recovery, Logistics, Information, Communications and Technology).

For more information on humanitarian agency contact details, please see the following link: [4.2 Humanitarian Agency Contact List](#).