GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President BOUNNYANG Vorachit
Head of Government
Prime Minister THONGLOUN Sisoulit
Government Type
communist state
Capital
Vientiane (Viangchan)
Legislature
unicameral National Assembly or Sapha Heng Xat (149 seats; 5-year terms)
Judiciary
People’s Supreme Court (consists of the court president and organized into criminal, civil, administrative, commercial, family, and juvenile chambers, each with a vice president and several judges)
Ambassador to US
Ambassador MAI Xaignavong
US Ambassador
Ambassador Rena BITTER

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
began decentralizing control of the economy and encouraging private enterprise in 1986 and has experienced strong growth—more than 7% annually—over the past decade; heavily dependent on capital-intensive natural resource exports; suffers from underdeveloped infrastructure, particularly in rural areas
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity)
$49.34 billion (2017 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity)
$7,400 (2017 est.)
Exports
$3.65 billion (2018 est.)
partners: Thailand 42.6%, China 28.7%, Vietnam 10.4%, India 4.4% (2017 est.)
Imports
$4.98 billion (2017 est.)
partners: Thailand 59.1%, China 21.5%, Vietnam 9.8% (2017 est.)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
7.2 million (July 2018 est.)
Population Growth
1.48% (2018 est.)
Ethnicity
Lao 53.2%, Khmou 11%, Hmong 9.2%, Phoutheay 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: 35.6% of total population (2019)
rate of urbanization: 3.28% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)
Literacy
84.7% (2015)

as of December 2019