

# Lao People's Democratic Republic - 3.7

## Waste Management and Recycling

### Infrastructure Assessment

#### Overview

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), the primary responsibility for solid waste management is assigned to province administrations and district offices. The management of rubbish collection is overseen by a publicly owned firm that was established through the delegation of responsibilities to provincial authorities and district offices. Laos lacks a fundamental legislation pertaining to waste management that aligns with the Japanese Waste Disposal Law (Wastes Disposal and Public Cleansing Act). However, the Environmental Protection Law does outline fundamental aspects, and waste in Laos is categorized into two primary types: general waste and hazardous waste.

At the national level, the responsibility for matters pertaining to solid waste management is divided between two primary entities: the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE). Other national government entities that have a vested interest, whether direct or indirect, in the solid waste industry of Lao PDR include the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), and the Ministry of Energy and Mines.

Private enterprises engaged in collection services have the legal authority to directly impose fees upon their clientele. The authority has granted them the permission to impose fees as stipulated by official legislation. Private enterprises are contracted by provincial authorities and district offices through annual agreements, which outline the districts where they are authorized to operate and establish minimum performance criteria. The waste that is collected is thereafter assigned to provincial authorities, district offices, or private companies, which then utilize a fleet of vehicles to transfer it to the designated disposal site. The transfer station solely serves as a location for unloading and reloading, without engaging in compaction or further sorting activities during this phase.

There is a lack of significant recycling industries documented in the country of Lao PDR. Nevertheless, it has been observed that there are small and medium-sized firms engaged in the processing and treatment of recyclable materials. The Lantieng Recycling Company engages in the production of various commodities through the processes of washing, crushing, and fragmenting recyclable materials into smaller fragments. The company's end goods serve as primary inputs for several sectors and are distributed either through direct sales or intermediaries. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), recyclable materials that are collected are typically sent to neighboring countries, such as China and Vietnam, for the purpose of undergoing final processing or treatment.

In recent years, the capacity of final disposal sites in metropolitan areas has become inadequate due to the impact of population growth and the advancement of urbanization. The waste collection rate continues to exhibit a low level. In numerous instances, medical waste and hazardous trash are indiscriminately disposed of in municipal waste disposal facilities and vacant lots without undergoing appropriate treatment procedures.

## Hazardous Waste Disposal

Current Hazardous Waste Administration, The foundation of hazardous waste management policy is established upon environmental protection legislation and chemical management legislation. Deliberations regarding regulatory measures to oversee the illicit transportation of hazardous waste are conducted between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and in accordance with the Basel Convention.

Medical waste and hazardous trash are frequently thrown in municipal waste disposal sites and vacant lots without being properly treated. The industrial sector is required to prevent and decrease the amount of hazardous waste as much as possible, and hazardous waste must not be diluted or contaminated with other waste or substances while being stored, transported, or destroyed. The hazardous waste must be maintained separate and uncontaminated, and it must be disposed of in a designated landfill rather than in a general garbage dump.

## Non-Hazardous Waste Disposal

The gathered waste is disposed of at the city dump. Because a few controls and engineering procedures are believed to exist, the site can be called a semi-controlled landfill rather than an open dump. Province administrations and district offices own and operate the landfill. A weigh bridge exists among the landfill's measures and controls to monitor the quantities of entering rubbish, which also allows the determination of the disposal fee that is charged to each of the private enterprises.

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