



2017–2018 Minerals Yearbook

LAOS [ADVANCE RELEASE]

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF LAOS

By Ji Won Moon

In 2017 and 2018, the production of mineral commodities— notably coal, copper, gold, limestone, potash, and silver— represented only a minor part of the economy of Laos (Bank of the Lao PDR, 2019, p. 20; Lao Statistics Bureau, 2019, p. 78, 79, 85, 142–144; Xinhua News Agency, 2019). The legislative framework for the mineral sector in Laos is provided by the Law on Minerals (No. 04/NA), which was enacted in 2008 and amended in 2012 (No. 02/NA) and 2017. Data on mineral production are in table 1. Table 2 is a list of major mineral industry facilities. More-extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Laos can be found in previous editions of the U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook, volume III,

Area Reports—International—Asia and the Pacific, which are available at <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nmic/asia-and-pacific>.

References Cited

- Bank of the Lao PDR, 2019, Annual economic report 2018: Vientiane, Laos, Bank of the Lao PDR, May 20, 38 p. (Accessed January 13, 2020, at https://www.bol.gov.la/en/fileupload/20-05-2019_1558320515.pdf.)
- Lao Statistics Bureau, 2019, Statistical yearbook 2018: Vientiane, Laos, Ministry of Planning and Investment, July, 174 p. (Accessed April 22, 2020, at https://seadelt.net/Asset/Source/Document_ID-454_No-01.pdf.)
- Xinhua News Agency, 2019, Laos' mineral output rises despite world commodity price drop: Beijing, China, Xinhua News Agency, June 11. (Accessed January 13, 2020, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-06/11/c_138133639.htm.)

TABLE 1
LAOS: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

(Metric tons, gross weight, unless otherwise specified)

Commodity ²	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
METALS						
Antimony, mine, Sb content	620	1,166	242	320	340 ^e	
Bismuth, refinery	670 ^{r,e}	1,300 ^{r,e}	2,013 ^r	2,743	3,009	
Copper:						
Mine:						
Concentrates, Cu content	71,155	78,449	89,187	90,363	83,680	
Solvent extraction ³	88,541	89,253	78,492	62,941	68,200	
Refinery, electrowon	88,541	89,253	78,492	62,941	68,200	
Gold, mine, Au content	kilograms	5,265	6,893	6,764 ^r	5,988	5,579
Iron ore, mine:						
Gross weight	1,148,571	234,745 ^r	115,065 ^r	250,000	99,196	
Fe content	712,114	145,542 ^r	71,340 ^r	155,000	61,502	
Lead, mine, Pb content ⁴	--	--	210 ^{r,e}	660 ^e	330 ^e	
Silicon, metal	9,503	5,673	6,836 ^r	1,042	8,900	
Silver, mine, Ag content	kilograms	39,806	51,763	50,904	42,841	37,465
Tin, mine, Sn content	869 ^r	512 ^r	1,117 ^r	1,083	1,551	
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS						
Barite ^e	45,000 ^r	90,000 ^r	80,000	75,000	230,000	
Cement, hydraulic	thousand metric tons	2,201 ^r	3,099 ^r	3,407 ^r	3,938	4,800
Clay, common	738,512 ^r	123,093 ^r	778,030 ^r	309,000	60,800	
Gypsum, mine	707,908	989,516 ^r	469,436 ^r	463,039	618,783	
Potash, K ₂ O content	210,983	250,000 ^r	195,000 ^r	300,000	335,000	
Salt, rock salt	8,706	1,733 ^r	118 ^r	6,697	1,000 ^e	
Stone, crushed:						
Limestone	1,148,571 ^r	1,184,093 ^r	1,348,096 ^r	2,622,992	1,066,611	
Sandstone	1,132,567 ^r	314,462 ^r	1,357,199 ^r	1,660,000	1,660,000 ^e	
MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS						
Coal:						
Anthracite	110,317	106,028 ^r	138,809 ^r	133,284	142,994	
Lignite	99,144	4,464,068 ^r	13,097,121 ^r	13,439,492	15,903,277	

^eEstimated. ^rRevised. -- Zero.

¹Table includes data available through January 3, 2020. All data are reported unless otherwise noted. Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²In addition to the commodities listed, gemstones, steel products, and crude construction materials, such as sand and gravel and other stones, may have been produced, but available information was inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

³The copper content of solvent extraction output at the mine level is the same as electrowon refinery output because copper produced in the solvent extraction and electrowinning process is typically reported only at the refinery level.

⁴Estimate based on export statistics to trading partners. Source: United Nations Comtrade database.

TABLE 2
LAOS: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2018

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	Major operating companies and major equity owners		Location of main facilities	Annual capacity ^c
Barite	Barite Mining Co., Inthavong Mining Co., Lao Development Construction Co., Phethongkham Co., Oravan Barite Co., and Singphoufar Co.		Muongfuong and Sanakham, Vientiane Province	30 ¹
Do.	DMC-VTS Joint Venture Co. (VTS Group of Laos, 40%; PetroVietnam Drilling Mud Corp. (DMC), 30%; Quang Binh export company, 30%)		Vilabouly District, Savannakhet Province	50
Do.	Kia Energy Co. Ltd.		NA	25
Bismuth, refinery, Bi content	5N Plus Inc.		Refinery of imports from Nui Phao Mine, Dai Tu District, Thai Nguyen Province	3
Cement	Khammouane Cement Co. Ltd. (Siam Cement Public Co. Ltd., 100%)		Cement plant in Boualapha District, Khammouane Province	1,800
Do.	Lanexang Cement Lao Co. Ltd. (Yunnan Provincial Energy Investment Group Co. Ltd. of China, and Saythirath Group)		Cement plant in Ban Khounguen, Khounkham District, Khammouane Province	1,000
Do.	Lao Cement Co. Ltd. (China Yunnan Corp. for International Techno-Economic Cooperation, 51%, and Lao State Enterprise for Agriculture-Industry Development Import Export & General Service (DAI), 49%)		Vang Vieng I cement plant, Vientiane Province	100
Do.	do.		Vang Vieng II cement plant, Vientiane Province	245
Do.	do.		Vang Vieng III cement plant, Vientiane Province	1,600
Do.	Lao Cement Industry Co. Ltd.		Thakhek cement plant, Khammouane Province	1,000
Do.	Luang Prabang Cement Co. Ltd.		Luang Prabang cement plant, Phonmany, Nam Bak District, Luang Prabang Province	320
Do.	Vientiane Hongshi Saythirath Cement Co. Ltd. (Hongshi Holding Group of China, 70%, and Saythirath Group 30%)		Cement plant in Phabong, Hinheup District, Vientiane Province	1,650
Do.	Zhongyayici Co.		Saravan cement plant, Saravan Province	450
Coal:				
Anthracite	Agriculture Industry Development Enterprises		Vieng Phoukha, Luangnamtha Province	60
Lignite	Hongsa Power Co. Ltd.		Hongsa and Muang Ngeune Districts, Xayaboury Province	14,300
Do.	Vieng Phoukha Coal Mine Co. Ltd.		Vieng Phoukha, Luangnamtha Province	300
Copper:				
Mine, Cu content	Phu Bia Mining Ltd. (PanAust Ltd., 90%, and Government, 10%)		Phu Kham copper-gold operation, Sana Somboun District, Vientiane Province	90
Metal, refined	Lane Xang Minerals Ltd. (Chifeng Jilong Gold Mining Co. Ltd., 90%, and Government, 10%)		Sepon Mine, Vilabouly District, Savannakhet Province	93
Gemstone ²	thousand carats	Lao Sapphire Corp. Ltd. (Sino Resource Mining Corp. Ltd., 100%)	Bokeo Mine, Houaxay District, Bokeo Province	6,000
Do.	do.	Sapphminco (Sino Resource Mining Corp. Ltd., 100%)	Royal Mekong sapphire mine, Bokeo Province	12,000
Gold, mine, Au content	kilograms	Lane Xang Minerals Ltd. (Chifeng Jilong Gold Mining Co. Ltd., 90%, and Government, 10%)	Sepon Mine, Vilabouly District, Savannakhet Province	7,500
Do.	do.	Lao Cai Gold Joint Stock Co. [Vietnam Minerals Holding Corp. (VIMICO), 46%, and other, 54%]	Minh Luong gold mine, Lao Cai Province	500
Do.	do.	Phu Bia Mining Ltd. (PanAust Ltd., 90%, and Government, 10%)	Ban Houayxai gold-silver operation, 15 kilometers east of Vangvieng, Vientiane Province	3,700
Do.	do.	do.	Phu Kham copper-gold operation, Sana Somboun District, Vientiane Province	2,400

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 2—Continued
LAOS: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2018

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity ^c
Gypsum, mine		Khounxay Gypsum Mining Co. Ltd. (Khounxay Phatthana Group)	Vientiane Province	500
Do.		Lao State Gypsum Mining Co. Ltd.	Champhon District, Savannakhet Province	200
Do.		LAVICO Co. Ltd. (a Laos-Vietnam joint venture)	Xebangfay District, Khammouane Province	100
Do.		Mining Development Economy Corp. (OEDCD)	Thakhek District, Khammouane Province	150
Do.		Savan Gypsum Mining Co. Ltd.	Champhon District, Savannakhet Province	80
Iron ore, gross weight		Lao SPG CMC Mining Co. Ltd. (Gimpex Ltd.)	Houaphanh iron ore mine, Xamneua District, Houaphanh Province	250
Potash		Lao Kaiyuan Mining Sole Co. Ltd.	Longhu, Guangcai, and Wentai Mines, Khammouane and Savannakhet Provinces	500
Do.		Laotian Potash Mining Industry Ltd. Co.	Potassium chloride plant, Vientiane Province	50
Do.		SinoAgri Mineral Resources Exploration Ltd. (a joint venture between Beijing Jiang Zhi Yuan Investment Ltd. and China National Agricultural Means of Production Group Corp.)	Plant in Sakhon Nakon basin in Khammouane Province	200
Salt		Artisanal salt factories, including:		
		Banbor Salt Factory	Valentiane Province	3
Do.		Bosarn Salt Factory	Sayabouly Province	1
Do.		Boten Salt Factory	Luangnamtha Province	1
Do.		Kengkok Salt Factory	Savannakhet Province	3
Do.		Nateui Salt Factory	do.	4
Do.		Khoksaat Salt Factory	Vientiane municipality	5
Do.		Oudomxay Salt Factory	Oudomxay Province	NA
Do.		Saythip Salt Factory	Savannakhet Province	1
Do.		Songkhone Salt Factory	Bolikhambay Province	1
Do.		Veunkham Salt Co.	Xaythany District, Vientiane Province	5
Silver, mine, Ag content	kilograms	Phu Bia Mining Ltd. (PanAust Ltd., 90%, and Government, 10%)	Ban Houayxai gold-silver operation, 15 kilometers east of Vangvieng, Vientiane Province	25,000
Do.	do.	do.	Phu Kham copper-gold operation, Sana Somboun District, Vientiane Province	19,000
Steel, products		Vientiane Capital Steel Industry Co. Ltd.	Vientiane City	150
Stone, limestone		Agriculture Industry Development Enterprises	Vangvieng, Vientiane Province	150
Do.		Laos Cement Co. Ltd.	do.	250
Do.		Phanangnon Co. Ltd.	Thakhek District, Khammouane Province	100
Do.		V.S.K. Co. Ltd.	do.	150
Tin, mine, Sn content	metric tons	Lao-North Korea Tin Mining Co.	Hinboune District, Khammouane Province	120
Do.	do.	S V Mining Co. Ltd.	do.	300

^cEstimated. Do., do. Ditto. NA Not available.

¹Estimated combined capacity of the six local barite-mining companies.

²Gemstones include sapphire, spinel, and zircon.