

Laos BTA/WTO

Project Objectives:

Support early accession of Lao PDR to the World Trade Organization as called for in the ASEAN-US Enhanced Partnership Plan of Action.

Support the implementation of the U.S.-Lao PDR Bilateral Trade Agreement and Lao PDR's commitments under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint.

Key Work Areas:

Trade Resource Center Focus:

- Establishment of a Trade Resource Center providing information on the Lao PDR trade regime to the public.
- Translation of Laws, Regulations and Agreements.
- A Foreign Trade Policy Department sub-website to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce's website.
- Training on writing fact sheets.

Legal and Economic Analysis Focus:

- Assessment on Trade in Telecommunication Services.

Awareness Raising Focus:

- Trade in Services Workshop for trade negotiators and regulators.

The Laos BTA/WTO project operates under the five-year US State Department/US Agency for International Development-funded ASEAN Development Vision to Advance National Cooperation for Economic Integration (ADVANCE) indefinite quantity contract.

The objective of the Laos BTA/WTO project is to support the Government of Lao PDR (GOL) in implementing reforms necessary to gain accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO); implement the U.S.-Lao PDR Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA); and fulfill its commitments to achieve an ASEAN Economic Community by 2015 as outlined in the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint. These three agreements – multilateral, bilateral, and regional – have a core of common commitments, providing the Laos BTA/WTO project an opportunity to deliver one technical assistance package to help Laos realize progress on all three, as well as accomplish goals related to its overall economic growth and poverty reduction strategy.

Three key activities frame the program:

- (1) Creating a **Trade Resource Center** to help build a transparent trade regime, informing and engaging key stakeholders in the private sector, National Assembly, academia, civil society, and business associations.
- (2) Providing targeted **legal and economic analysis** to increase understanding of domestic reforms needed for WTO accession, US-Lao PDR BTA compliance, and ASEAN integration, with initial focus on trade in services, intellectual property rights, and standards.
- (3) Raising **awareness and understanding** of trade issues, including obligations and opportunities associated with trade agreements, with the private sector, line Ministries and regulatory authorities, and the National Assembly with a view to develop an interactive dialogue during negotiations – an approach that can help sustain domestic reform efforts.

Contacts

USAID Cognizant Technical Officer

Geoff Parish
Office of General Development
USAID Regional Development Mission/Asia
GPF Witthayu Tower A, 10th Floor
93/1 Wireless Road
Bangkok, Thailand 10330
(66-2) 263-7462
Gparish@usaid.gov

Lao BTA/WTO Project Lead

Victoria Waite
Managing Associate
Nathan Associates Inc.
2101 Wilson Blvd. Suite 1200
Arlington, VA 22201
(703) 516-7700
vwaite@nathaninc.com