



# Lao People's Democratic Republic

Oxygen production capacities in Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) are limited and rely on imports, posing a threat to supply security, which has been aggravated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of 2020, the Lao PDR Ministry of Health, with support from Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and other partners, carried out multiple initiatives to improve reliable supply of oxygen, including:

## ASSESSMENT

- + Completed a **nationwide assessment** of 158 public hospitals:
  - » The assessment findings supported the Ministry of Health and its counterparts in ensuring sufficient provision of oxygen services and incorporating identified oxygen consumable/equipment gaps and needs into the National COVID-19 Logistics Forecast for 2022.
- + Conducted an **oxygen availability gap analysis**, which informed the development of a long-term procurement plan for necessary pressure swing absorption (PSA) oxygen plants in provincial hospitals to reduce dependency on imported supplies from neighboring countries.



## COORDINATION & STRATEGIC PLANNING

- + Currently drafting a **national oxygen roadmap** with engagement across key stakeholders within and outside the government, including CHAI, the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office for Project Services, Korea Foundation of International Healthcare, and the University of Melbourne.
- + Led by the Ministry of Health, coordinates across key partners to streamline oxygen-related supply chains and procurement, which will be formalized into a **Technical Working Group** after the launch of the national oxygen roadmap.



## EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT & REPAIR & CAPACITY-BUILDING

- + Developed a **distribution strategy for oxygen commodities and equipment** procured through WHO, UNICEF, US Agency for International Development, and others for appropriate facilities, based on the BME survey data, eLMIS system, epidemiology data, and the existing COVID-19 situation for an efficient and timely response.
- + To date, **procured**:

280+	4,000+	20+	30K+
concentrators	pulse oximeters	high-flow nasal cannula machines	oxygen cannulas
- + Conducted **site assessments for incoming PSA plants** at four provincial hospitals (Savannakhet, Champasak, Oudomxai, and Luangprabang) to address critical issues—assessing and fixing broken piping at Luangprabang, identifying funding from WHO to fix piping at Champasak and to install piping at new wards in Savannakhet, and identifying additional equipment and human resources capacity at the provincial level (currently ongoing).
- + Planning **equipment maintenance trainings** for PSA operations at provincial hospitals in Savannakhet, Champasak, Oudomxai, and Luangprabang.



COVID-19 has emphasized the importance of oxygen and has constrained already limited oxygen systems and infrastructure in Lao PDR. Advocacy with government authorities and health partners has resulted in significant interventions and is expected to pave the way for strengthened health systems with an emphasis on oxygen.