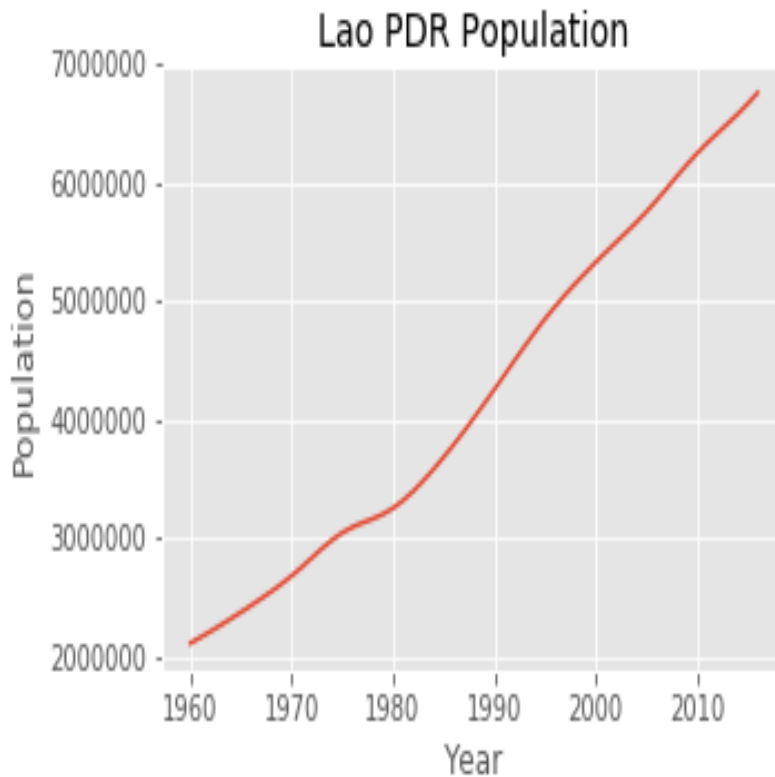


Lao PDR



Coordinates: $18^{\circ}\text{N } 105^{\circ}\text{E}$ / $18^{\circ}\text{N } 105^{\circ}\text{E}$ / 18; 105 in ASEAN (dark grey) –
 [Legend] 7,096,376 Laos (/lɑːˈoʊs/ (listen), /lɑːs, ˈlɑːs, ˈleɪs/; Lao: ລາວ, Lao pronunciation: [láw], Lǎo; French: Laos), officially the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao: ສາທາລະນະລັດ ປະຊາທິປະໄຕ ປາກສັນ ລາວ, Sathalanalat Paxathipatai Paxaxon Lao; French: République démocratique populaire lao), commonly referred to by its colloquial name of Muang Lao (Lao: ມຸງລາວ, Muang Lao), is a landlocked country in the heart of the Indochinese peninsula of Mainland Southeast Asia, bordered by Myanmar (Burma) and China to the northwest, Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the southwest and Thailand to the west and southwest. Present-day Laos traces its historic and cultural identity to the kingdom of Lan Xang Hom Khao (Kingdom of a Million Elephants Under the White Parasol), which existed for four centuries as one of the largest kingdoms in Southeast Asia. Due to Lan Xang's central geographical location in Southeast Asia, the kingdom was able to become a popular hub for overland trade, becoming wealthy economically as well as culturally.