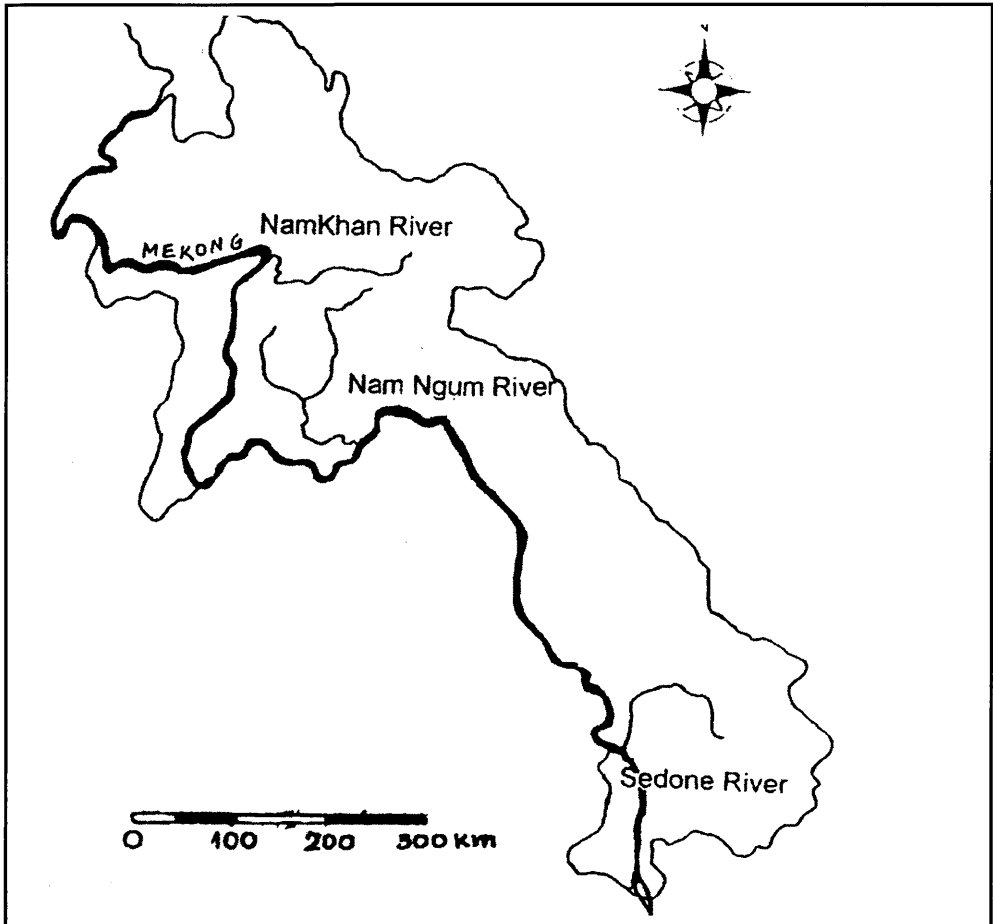


# Lao

Lao-1: Nam Khane

Lao-2: Nam Ngum

Lao-3: Sedone



## Introduction

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a land locked country situated in southeast of Asia, between the latitudes 13° 50' N ~ 22° 30' N and the longitudes 100° 00' ~ 107° 45' E with an area of 236, 800 km<sup>2</sup>. In the northwest - southwest direction, it has a length of more than 1,700 km and in the east-west direction the distance varies between 100-400 km. The topography is closely related to the geology with watershed highlands of granites and metamorphic, draining down to Jurassic, Cretaceous Indonesian sandstone and shale, then over piedmont slopes to low flat lands. Over 47% of the land is covered by forests and the fertile flood plain embraces about 30% of the land along the Mekong river. The climate is tropical monsoon with two distinct seasons: the wet season from mid April to mid October and the dry season from November to March. The average annual precipitation is 1,956 mm but it varies from less than 1,300 mm in the northern valleys to over 3,700 mm in the southern plateaus. The population in March 1995 was 4,581,258 with a distribution of 50.6% female and 49.4% male. The average population density is 19 persons/ km<sup>2</sup> and the growth rate is about 2.6% per year.

The three rivers catalogued in this volume are Nam Khane, Nam Ngum and Sedone. The level of information content is different, especially on the hydrometeorological data, since the collection was started in 1960.

In the central plains there are many rivers. Two important tributaries of the Mekong - Sebangfai and Sebanghieng have streamflow data since 1960. The Namkane basin, which is located in the northern region and stretching from the East, near Luangprabang Huaphan border to the West at the city of Luangprabang is chosen as Lao-1. The basin often experiences floods and droughts. The total drainage area at the confluence with the Mekong river is 7,545 km<sup>2</sup> of which 2,240 km<sup>2</sup> or 30 % is forest covered. Due to the extensive shifting cultivation in recent years, the annual river runoff has shown a gradual decline. The Nam Ngum river, one of the major tributaries of the Mekong which has its origin in the Xiengkhuang Plateau between 1,000m to 1,200m above the sea level and which flows down to the Vientiane Plain through a multipurpose dam constructed in 1971 is chosen as Lao-2. The Sedone which is located in the Southern Provinces where there are abundant water resources originating from the Bolavan Plateau is chosen as Lao-3. Tropical rainforest cover approximately 56% of this river basin.

These three rivers have severe flooding conditions during the monsoon season from June to September.

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