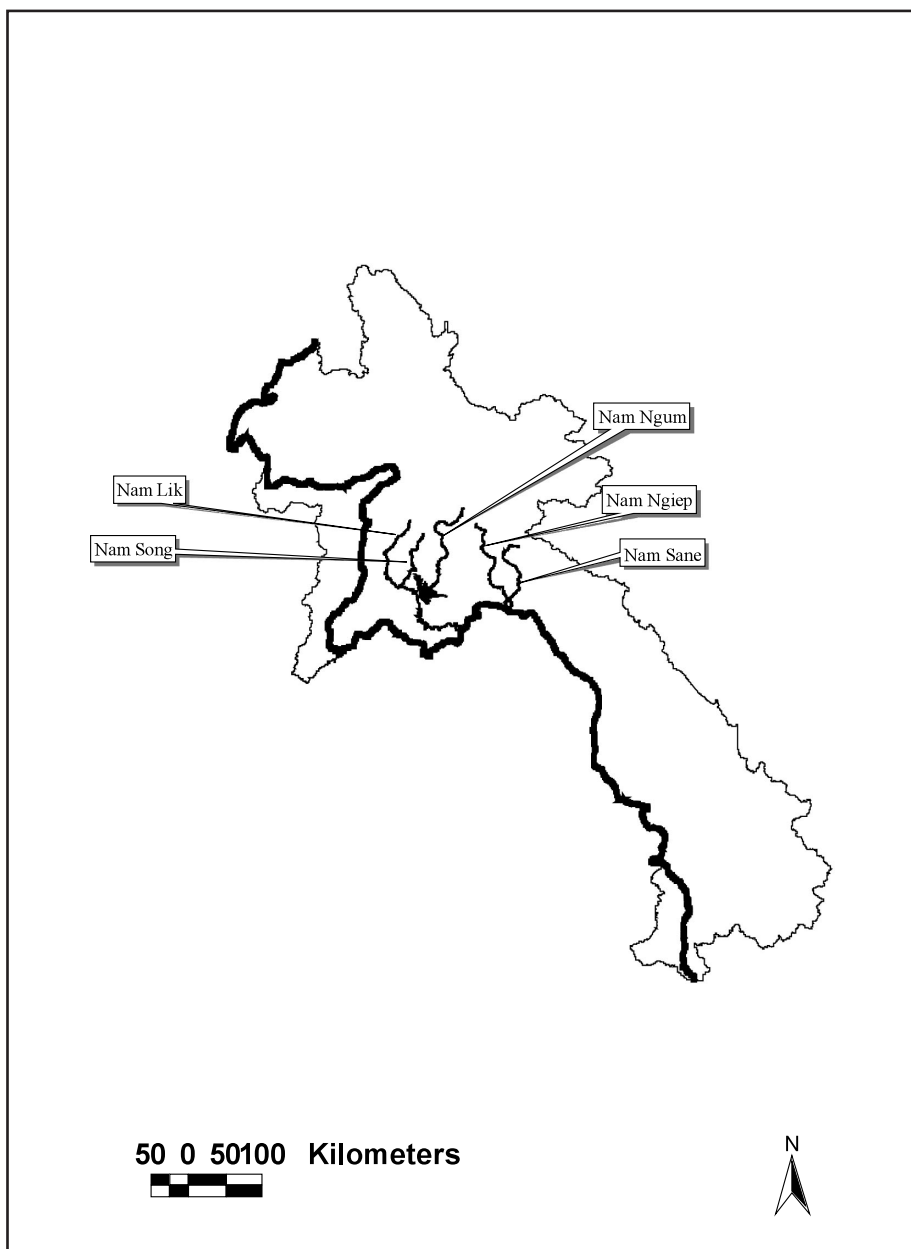


The Lao People's Democratic Republic

Lao-10: Nam Ngiep

Lao-11: Nam Sane

Lao-12: Nam Song



Introduction

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a land locked country situated in Southeast Asia, between the latitudes 13° 50' - 22° 30' N and the longitudes 100° 00' - 107° 45' E with an area of 236,800 km². The axis of the country is in the Northwest-Southwest direction with a length of more than 1,700 km. In the East-West direction the distance varies between 100-400 km. The country is bordered on the North with China along 416 km, on the Northwest with Myanmar along 230 km, on the West with Thailand along 1,730 km, on the East with Vietnam along 1,957 km and on the South with Cambodia along 492 km. The topography is closely related to the geology with watershed highlands of granites and metamorphic rocks, draining down to Jurassic, cretaceous Indonesian sandstone and shale, and finally over piedmont slopes to low flat land with fertile flood plains embracing about 30% of the land along the Mekong River. The forest cover varies from 22% to 70%. 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 1,950 mm with a large variation from 1,300 mm in the northern valleys to 3,500 mm in the southern plateau. The annual runoff is about 600 mm/year or 142 km³/year. The population estimated in 2001 is about 5.377 millions with a even distribution of females and males. Population density is 23 persons/km² and the growth rate is about 2.6% per year.

The three rivers catalogued in this volume are the Nam Ngiep and the Nam Sane which are tributaries of the Mekong River in Bolikhamxay Province, and the Nam Song which is an important tributary of the Nam Lik in the Vangvieng district of Vientiane Province. The Nam Ngiep and the Nam Sane are the medium size of river basins ranging from 2,220 to 4,270 km² and have high forest coverage from 51%-60%. The Nam Song, the smallest among the three basins with a catchment area of 864 km² at the Vangvieng gauging station, has a forest coverage about 40%. The total catchment area of the Nam Song at the confluent with the Nam Lik at Hineheup is about 1,770 km². Between Vangvieng and its outlet near Hineheup there are two important resources development projects: the Nam Mone irrigation project and the Nam Song diversion weir at Ban Vangkhi. Both are completed in 1996.

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