



## 1 THE FACTS: Business in Laos for EU Companies

SIZE of Market  
Key INDUSTRY SECTORS

## 2 IPR in Laos for SMEs: BACKGROUND

Intellectual Property Rights for SMEs: Why is this RELEVANT to you?  
How does Laos' IP legal framework compare to INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS?

## 3 IP Rights in Laos: THE BASICS

- A. Copyrights
- B. Patents and Petty Patents
- C. Industrial Designs
- D. Trade Marks
- E. Geographical Indications
- F. Trade Secrets

## 4 Using CUSTOMS to Block Counterfeits

Customs in Laos: What you need to know

## 5 ENFORCING your IP

Forms of Dispute Resolution  
Civil Enforcement  
Criminal Prosecution

## 6 RELATED LINKS and Additional Information

## 1. THE FACTS: Business in Laos for EU Companies

SIZE of Market (source: [DG Trade](#)) :

- EU exports in total goods to Laos in 2015: **EUR 123** million
- EU imports in total goods from Laos in 2015: **EUR 238** million
- Total trade in goods in 2015: **EUR 361** million
- EU exports in services to Laos in 2014: **EUR 83** million
- EU imports in services from Laos in 2014: **EUR 93** million
- Total trade in services in 2014: **EUR 176** million

Laos' GDP in 2015 was **EUR 11.3** billion (source: [DG Trade](#))

Laos' GDP growth in 2015 was **7.0%** (source: [DG Trade](#))

- > Laos is the EU's 141<sup>st</sup> largest trade partner in 2015 (source: [DG Trade](#))
- > The EU is Laos' 4<sup>th</sup> largest trade partner after Thailand, China and Vietnam (source: [DG Trade](#))

Key INDUSTRY SECTORS - 2015 (source: [DG Trade](#)) :

- > The EU's main exports to Laos are dominated by (i) machinery and appliances (25.1%); (ii) products of the chemical or allied industries (12.3%); (iii) pearls, precious metals, and articles thereof (12.1%); and (iv) transport equipment (11.0%).
- > The EU's imports from Laos are dominated by (i) textiles and textile articles (67.1%); and (ii) vegetable products (18.0%).

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## 2. IPR in Laos for SMEs: BACKGROUND

### Intellectual Property Rights for SMEs: Why is this RELEVANT to you?

Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), as intangible assets, are a key factor in the **competitiveness of businesses in the global economy**. IPRs are a primary method for securing a **return on investment in innovation** and are particularly relevant to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) as they internationalise their business to areas such as South-East Asia. Although SMEs often have limited time and resources, it is important to be aware of how IPRs can be valuable to businesses. Not only a way to help **protect innovations from competitors**, IPR assets can also be **an important source of cash-flow** for SMEs through licensing deals or the selling of IPRs, as well as a significant pull-factor **when attracting investors**.

SMEs are businesses that have **fewer than 250 employees** and a **turnover of less than EUR 50 million** or a **balance sheet total of less than EUR 43 million**.

SMEs represent **99% of all enterprises in the EU** and account for about **70% of jobs**. Their **flexibility and growth potential** are seen as major drivers of future **innovation and job creation**, which is pivotal for the prosperity and economic competitiveness of Europe as a whole.

IPR **infringement** is one of the most common concerns for businesses when dealing with countries in South-East Asia, and its impact on companies could be substantial. It can lead to **loss of business, revenue, reputation, and competitive advantage**, which affects SMEs both in South-East Asia and in their core domestic markets. The inadequate protection of inventions and creations can also jeopardise prospects for maintaining a competitive advantage.

### How does Laos' IP legal framework compare to INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS?

Laos's IPR legal framework is being developed according to international standards but it is still at its infancy.

Prior to Laos's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on February 2, 2013, the country's intellectual property laws went through considerable amendments. IPRs in Laos are governed by the Law on Intellectual Property No. 01/NA of December 20, 2011 (IP Law), **protecting copyright and related rights, patents, petty patents, industrial designs, trade marks, trade names, layout designs of integrated circuits, geographical indications, trade secrets, and plant varieties**. The IP Law is based on the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) model law and the requirements of the Trade-Related Aspects of International Property Rights (TRIPs) Agreement. Following the promulgation of the Law on Intellectual Property in 2011, the Decision of the Minister of Science and Technology on the Implementation of Law on Intellectual Property concerning Trade marks and Trade Names was issued in September 2012.

Major IPR treaties signed by Laos include the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, the Patent Cooperation Treaty, and the Convention Establishing WIPO. Laos also became party to the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works effective from March 14, 2012.

On December 7, 2015, Laos notified its accession to the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks effective from March 7, 2016, enabling businesses to enjoy international trade mark registration from that date.

While the **Laos IPR legal framework is still in the early stages of development**, with guiding decrees on the implementation and interpretation of the IP Law yet to be passed, the protection and enforcement of IPRs in Laos is still relatively weak. However, the law offers a fairly efficient system for registration of most major IPRs.



### IP TIPS and WATCH-OUTS in Laos

- Laos IPRs framework is still vague and under development, but things are improving for rights-holders. Laos only joined the WTO in February 2013, including the related Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). TRIPS is an international agreement administered by the WTO that sets down minimum standards for many forms of intellectual property regulations, as applied to nationals of other WTO Members.
- A comprehensive intellectual property law was approved by the National Assembly of Lao in 2011 and promulgated in 2012 covering most areas of IPRs. Currently, many of the provisions in the IP Law are general and/or vaguely drafted, and guiding decrees are needed to clarify such provisions. Overall, however, the new IP Law significantly strengthens the protection of the major IPRs in Laos.
- The Decision of the Minister of Science and Technology on the Implementation of Law on Intellectual Property concerning Trade marks and Trade Names was issued in September 2012 and the Decision of the Minister of Science and Technology on the Implementation of Geographical Indications under the Law on Intellectual Property was issued in October 2016.

*IPR infringement is one of the most common concerns for businesses when dealing with countries in South-East Asia, and its impact on companies could be substantial.*

### 3. IP Rights in Laos: THE BASICS

#### A. Copyrights

##### WHAT are Copyrights?

Copyrights are rights that protect creations of the mind. The IP Law grants the exclusive legal right to copyright owners to exploit their “creative works in the domains of art and literature, including scientific works” (IP Law Article 3.25). Specifically, the following subject matters may be granted copyright protection under the IP Law:

##### *Artistic works* including:

- Paintings and drawings, carvings, lithography, cloth patterns, and other works of fine art;
- Sculptures, engravings, and other works of sculpture;
- Designs of buildings or constructions, designs of interior and exterior decoration, and other works of architecture;
- Photographs;
- Illustrations, maps, plans, sketches, and three-dimensional figures relating to geography, topography, architecture, or science;
- Music composed for drama, show or stage performances, dance choreography, and other kinds of works composed for performances;
- Musical works with or without lyrics, including arranged and transcribed musical notes;
- Sound and image recordings (phonograms);
- Works of applied art; and
- Cinematographic works.

##### *Literary works* including:

- Books, theses, brochures, magazines, printed matter and other written works;
- Lectures, speeches, sermons and addresses and other recorded oral works;
- Plays and stories; and
- Computer programs and data compilations, whether in source or object code.

*There is no registration requirement for copyright protection in Laos: copyright is an automatic protection that arises when the work has been created.*

##### Copyrights in Laos: What you need to know

A draft copyright law was introduced in 2005, but it has not yet been enacted. However, the IP Law in 2011 contains a section on copyright which clarifies that **copyright in Laos is an automatic protection, which arises immediately when the work is created without registration requirements**. In addition, a Decision of the Ministry of Science and Technology on the Implementation of Law on Intellectual Property concerning Copy right was issued in 2012.

However, a notification of rights **can be voluntarily recorded** with the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST). In addition, Laos became a party to the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works on March 14, 2012.

The Berne Convention is based on three basic principles, as follows:

- Each of the contracting parties must give works originating in another contracting party the same protection as the works of its own nationals.
- Protection is automatic. No compliance with any formality is required.
- Protection does not depend on the existence of protection in the country of origin of the work, with limited exceptions.

The IP Law grants a copyright owner the **exclusive right to exploit his or her work, including the moral and economic rights to the work**. The **moral rights** include the exclusive right for the copyright owner to **disclose and publish the work first**; to have his or her name attached to the work; and to prevent misattribution, distortion, mutilation, or other modification of the work or any action that would be prejudicial to the copyright owner’s honor or integrity.

The **economic rights** include, in sum, the exclusive right for the copyright owner to exploit his or her work through the **making of collections, reproduction, distribution, translation, broadcasting, and communication of the work to the public by wire or wireless means**. The IP Law further provides a long list of exclusive rights granted to the copyright owner, which vary depending on the type of work. For example, the copyright owner of a literary work is, in addition to the above-mentioned rights, granted the exclusive right to recite the work to the public, translate the recitation, and communicate the recitation to the public. **An owner of a copyrighted dramatic or musical work is granted the exclusive right to perform the work to the public, translate the work, and communicate the performance of the work to the public**. (For the full list of a copyright owner’s economic rights, please see Article 98 of the IP Law).

**How LONG does legal protection last?**

Copyright protection lasts for the life of the author plus 50 years, or for a work of joint authorship, 50 years after the date of death of the last surviving author. For anonymous or pseudonymous works, the term of copyright is 50 years from the date the work was lawfully made available to the public. For a cinematographic work, the term of copyright is 50 years from the date the work was made available to the public with the consent of the author. For applied art, the term of copyright is 25 years from the date the work was created.

**HOW do I register?**

As mentioned above, there is no registration requirement for copyright protection in Laos: Copyright is an automatic protection that arises when the work has been created. However, a copyright owner can voluntarily inform the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) about the creation of the work. An application to inform MOST that a copyright exists must contain the following:

- 1) A formal request to inform MOST of the copyright;
- 2) A picture or sample of the work and/or title of the work and the date of its creation; and
- 3) A copy of the copyright owner's ID card, company registration documents, authorisation documents, and other relevant identification documents.

Provided that correct documentation and receipt of payment is submitted, MOST will issue a receipt or a "Certificate of Information" that it has entered the notification into the records, which will serve as evidence in future administrative or judicial proceedings and can, therefore, prove extremely useful.

**Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST)**

P. O. Box 2279  
Nahaidiou Rd  
LA - Vientiane  
Tel: +85 621 213470 (Extension Number 148), 217706  
Fax: +85 6213472

**WHO can register?**

Any copyright owner, including but not limited to, joint authors, persons, or organisations hiring an author, assignees, successors, and states, can voluntarily register their copyrights.

**Which LANGUAGES can I use?**

The application may be filed in Lao or English.

*The IP Law does not state the fees that apply with respect to information/registration of IPRs in Laos.*

**How much does it COST?**

The IP Law does not state the fees that apply with respect to information/registration of IPRs in Laos. According to the Regulation on Notification of Copyright Information of 2007, however, the fees for copyright information are as follows: Application fee of LAK 5,000 (approximately EUR 0.5); notification of copyright information fee of LAK 20,000 (approximately EUR 2); and the fee for a search of information is LAK 10,000 (approximately EUR 1). Therefore, the total approximate fee is EUR 3.50. It should be noted, however, that these fees are subject to change by decrees/regulations following promulgation of the new IP Law.

 **Copyrights TIPS and WATCH-OUTS in Laos**

While there is no system to formally register copyright in Laos and protection arises automatically, you can obtain a "Certificate of Information," which legally documents the existence of the copyright and ownership. This is recommended for EU SMEs because the Certificate can be used as evidence in enforcement proceedings.

*For more information on copyright protection in Laos, please check out our South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk Guide to Copyright Protection in South-East Asia, which is available for download from our website - [http://www.southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/publications/Copyright\\_english.pdf](http://www.southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/publications/Copyright_english.pdf)*

**B. Patents and Petty Patents****WHAT are Patents and Petty Patents?**

Patents are the set of exclusive rights granted to inventors or their assignees to exploit an invention for a limited period of time. Patenting an invention publicly discloses information concerning it but also gives the patent holder the right to protect it. The IP Law defines patents as the "official certificate from the state Organisation issued to protect inventions that are new, involve an inventive step, and are capable of industrial application" (Article 3.4 of the IP Law).

An invention is considered *new* if it has not existed and has not been disclosed to the public by publication or by use (or by any other means) in Laos or any other country prior to the filing date of the patent application, or prior to the priority date (if priority is claimed). An invention has an *inventive step* when the invention is not obvious to a person having ordinary knowledge in the invention's field of technology. An invention is considered *industrially applicable* if it has use in an industry.

The IP Law excludes certain types of inventions from patent protection, including:

- Discoveries, scientific theories, and mathematical methods.
- Schemes, rules, or methods for doing business, performing mental acts or playing games.
- Methods for the treatment of the human or animal body.
- Inventions contrary to public order or national cultural morality.

**Petty patents** are the official certificates issued to protect utility innovations. The IP Law defines utility innovations as “new innovative work[s] derived through technical improvements, which involve simpler [inventive] steps than with inventions” (Article 3.7 of the IP Law). In order to receive a petty patent, the utility innovation must be *new* in the sense that it has not been previously known or used in Laos within one year prior to the date of the application or the priority date (if priority is claimed). The requirement as to the **inventive step** means that **the utility innovation must involve a new technical improvement, but the level of the inventive step may be simpler than for patents**. Finally, the innovative work must be *industrially applicable*, having the same definition as for patents set out above.

#### Patents and Petty Patents in Laos: What you need to know

Laos applies the **first-to-file principle**, meaning that priority is determined by whoever files the patent or petty patent application first, or if priority is claimed, the earliest priority date. An application may contain a declaration claiming priority based on one or more earlier national, regional, or international applications filed by the applicant, either in Laos or in another country, which is a party to the Paris Convention (or another international treaty to which Laos is a signatory). Therefore, **applications from convention countries will be granted the same priority date in Laos**. In the case of such international applications, the relevant Lao authority only conducts a **formal examination of the patent application**. While the authority does not conduct a substantive examination, it recognises and accepts search and examination reports from other IP offices around the world.

The time from the filing date to the granting date is approximately 4 to 5 years (as for patents) and two to three years (as for petty patents). Owners of petty patents, like the ones of ordinary patents, will have exclusive rights to exploit their inventions and grant licenses to others.

An SME may not apply for both a patent and a petty patent for the same invention. However, in either case, SMEs are allowed to change the type of right applied for, from petty patent to patent and vice versa. Be mindful that this must be done before registering the invention and the issuance of the petty patent or before publication of the patent application.

#### How LONG does legal protection last?

A **patent lasts for 20 years** after the filing date of the application. A **petty patent lasts 10 years** from the filing date of the application.

In order to maintain a patent or a petty patent registration, an

**annual fee, pursuant to the IP Law, must be paid in advance by the rights-holder.**

Payment of the annuity fee can be made yearly at the anniversary date of the application or paid on an accumulated basis four times, timed as follows:

- First annuity payment (1<sup>st</sup> year to 4<sup>th</sup> year)
- Second annuity payment (5<sup>th</sup> year to 9<sup>th</sup> year)
- Third annuity payment (10<sup>th</sup> year to 14<sup>th</sup> year)
- Fourth annuity payment (15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> year)

#### HOW do I register?

**Patents and petty patents** are registered with MOST (please see address above).

**The application for either a patent or a petty patent must contain the following:**

- 1) A request for a patent or petty patent;
- 2) The name and other personal data of the applicant/inventor and the title of the invention;
- 3) A notarised Power of Attorney, and if the application is filed through an agency, then the agent's name and address in Laos must be included;
- 4) A notarised Deed of Assignment, transferring rights of the invention from the inventors to the applicant;
- 5) A description of the patent or petty patent;
- 6) One or more clearly defined claims;
- 7) Drawings, if required, to understand the invention;
- 8) An abstract outlining technical information; and
- 9) Receipt of payment of official fees.

As mentioned above, **an application for a patent, petty patent, or industrial design (industrial designs are discussed in the following section) may also contain a claim for priority**. If priority is claimed, the applicant must submit a copy of the application on which the priority claim is based, **certified as correct by the authority that received the application** and showing the filing date. Such documents do not require any authentication, and can be filed, without fee, at any time **within three months of the filing of the application in Laos**.

Upon receiving an application for a patent, petty patent, or industrial design, MOST will conduct a formal examination to ensure that the application is complete and meets the requirements. If the application is incomplete, MOST will notify the applicant, who will then have **60 days from the date of the notification to complete the application**.



After the formality examination, MOST will conduct a **substantive examination** of the application to determine whether it meets the requirements for patentability or for obtaining a patent or petty patent. The substantive examination for patents and petty patents is **based on a search of existing technical knowledge**. In the case where the application had previously been subject to a search or examination by another authority (in another country), the applicant can submit a copy of that report and request that it be accepted in lieu of conducting a search in Laos. If there are no previous examination reports (or the applicant is otherwise unable to provide such report), the applicant must request MOST to examine the application as to its substance. Notably, **MOST is required by law to undertake this examination within 32 months for an invention (patent) and 12 months for a utility innovation (petty patent) from the filing date of the application or the priority date (if priority is claimed)**. All of MOST's **expenses to examine the invention or utility innovation are charged to the applicant**.

After consideration and examination of the registration for a patent, petty patent, or industrial design application, if it is considered to meet the requirements provided by the IP Law, **MOST will issue a patent, petty patent, or industrial design certificate**.

#### WHO can register?

Any person, legal entity, or organisation can apply for a patent or petty patent. **A person, legal entity, or organisation residing in a foreign country, however, must be represented by an authorised representative in Laos (i.e., an IP agent)**.

#### Which LANGUAGES can I use?

The application **can be filed in either English or Lao**. However, application documents submitted in English must be **translated into Lao within 90 days from the application filing date**. The translation must be certified to be a correct translation.

#### How much does it COST?

The IP Law does not state the fees that apply with respect to information/registration of IPRs in Laos. According to the Prime Minister's Regulation No. 22/STEA-PMO of 2003 on the implementation of the Decree on Patent, Petty Patent, and Industrial Design, the official fees for filing an application for patents, petty patents, and industrial designs are as below. Notably, however, these fees are subject to change by decrees and regulations following promulgation of the new IP Law.

The governmental fee for filing a **patent** registration in Laos is LAK 164,000 (approximately EUR 15) in filing fees; **LAK 82,000** (approximately EUR 8) for the formality examination; and LAK 246,000 (approximately EUR 22) for grant of the patent.

Therefore, the **total basic governmental fee is approximately LAK 492,000 or EUR 45**. If a request for opposition is required, there will be an additional fee of LAK 164,000 (approximately EUR 15). If the application must be amended, the **amendment fee** is LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8). Assignment or licensing of patent rights is USD 10 (approximately EUR 8) and duplication of a patent is LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8).

In order to maintain the patent, **an annual fee must be paid by the owner of the invention from the 5<sup>th</sup> year onward until the patent expires, as follows:**

5 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 410,000 (approximately EUR 37)
6 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 492,000 (approximately EUR 45)
7 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 574,000 (approximately EUR 52)
8 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 820,000 (approximately EUR 75)
9 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 1,148,000 (approximately EUR 105)
10 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 1,476,000 (approximately EUR 134)
11 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 1,968,000 (approximately EUR 179)
12 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 2,460,000 (approximately EUR 225)
13 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 3,116,000 (approximately EUR 284)
14 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 3,772,000 (approximately EUR 344)
15 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 4,518,200 (approximately EUR 412)
16 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 5,338,200 (approximately EUR 486)
17 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 6,150,000 (approximately EUR 560)
18 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 7,052,000 (approximately EUR 643)
19 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 7,954,000 (approximately EUR 725)
20 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 9,020,000 (approximately EUR 822)

The governmental fee for filing a **petty patent** registration in Laos is LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8); LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8) for the formality examination; and LAK 246,000 (approximately EUR 22) for grant of the patent. Therefore, the total basic governmental fee is approximately **LAK 389,500 or EUR 38**. If a request for opposition is required, there will be an additional fee of LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8). If the application must be amended, the amendment fee is LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8). Assignment or licensing of petty patent rights is LAK 328,000 (approximately EUR 30) and duplication of a petty patent is LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8).

In order to maintain the petty patent, **an annual official fee must be paid by the owner of the utility innovation from the 2<sup>nd</sup> year**

onward until the petty patent expires, as follows:

2 <sup>nd</sup> year	LAK 205,000 (approximately EUR 19)
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	LAK 287,000 (approximately EUR 26)
4 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 410,000 (approximately EUR 37)
5 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 533,000 (approximately EUR 49)
6 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 656,000 (approximately EUR 60)
7 <sup>th</sup> year	LAK 861,000 (approximately EUR 78)



#### Patents and Petty Patents WATCH-OUTS in Laos

- The time from filing a registration to the granting of a patent or petty patent could be relatively long. Therefore, you should plan in advance to register your patents or petty patents in Laos. After having conducted a formal examination of the application, the authorities will proceed with the substantive examination, based on a search of existing technical knowledge. If the application has previously been subject to a search or examination by another authority (in another country), a copy of such search or examination may be submitted by the applicant and requested to be accepted in lieu of conducting a search in Lao. If no such previous search/examination has been conducted (or is submitted), the Lao authorities will undertake an examination within 32 months for inventions (patent applications) and 12 months for utility innovations (petty patent applications) from the filing date or priority date. The applicant bears the costs for such search or examination.
- You are allowed to change the type of rights for which you apply from petty patent to patent and vice versa. Be mindful that this must be done before registering the invention and the issuance of the petty patent or before the publication of the patent application.

For more information on patent protection in Laos, check out our *South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk Guide to Patent Protection in South-East Asia*, which is available for download from our website - [http://www.southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EN\\_patent.pdf](http://www.southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EN_patent.pdf)

*Upon receiving an application for a patent, petty patent or industrial design, MOST will conduct a formality examination to ensure that the application is complete and meets the formal requirements.*

### C. Industrial Designs

#### WHAT are Industrial Designs?

An industrial design certificate protects a product's special appearance (i.e., the combination of applied art and applied science of product). In order to obtain an industrial design certificate, the design must meet the following requirements: (1) it must be new in the sense that it has not been disclosed to the public by publication, display, or some other means in Laos or internationally prior to the filing date, or priority date (if priority is claimed); and (2) it must be ornamental. An industrial design is considered ornamental if "it gives a special appearance to the object to which the design is applied or in which it is embodied" (Article 15.2 of the IP Law).

#### Industrial Designs in Laos: What you need to know

In Laos, industrial designs are a type of patent, and therefore, their protection follows a similar principle. Laos applies the first-to-file principle, meaning that priority is determined by whoever files the industrial design application first, or if priority is claimed, the earliest priority date. An application may contain a declaration claiming priority based on one or more earlier national, regional or international applications filed by the applicant, either in Laos or in another country, which is a party to the Paris Convention (or another international treaty to which Laos is a signatory). Therefore, applications from Convention countries will be granted the same priority date in Laos. In the case of such international applications, the relevant Lao authority only conducts a formal examination of the patent application. While the authority does not make a substantive examination, it recognises and accepts search and examination reports from other IP offices around the world.

The time frame from the filing to granting date of a design application is approximately 6 to 12 months.

#### How LONG does legal protection last?

An industrial design shall expire five years after the filing date of the application and may be renewed for two continuous periods, with each period taking five years and where the application for renewal shall apply during 90 days before the expiry date [Article 35]. In order to maintain an industrial design registration, an annual fee, pursuant to the IP Law, must be paid in advance by the rights-holder. The IP Law, however, does not specify the annual fees. The maintenance fees and registration fees are expected to be established by guiding decrees/regulations following the promulgation of the IP Law.

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document granting the e  
protected

**HOW do I register?**

**Industrial designs** are registered with MOST (please see the address above).

The application for an **industrial design** must contain the following:

1. A request for registration of the industrial design;
2. The name and other personal data of the applicant/inventor;
3. A notarised power of attorney, and if the application is filed through an agency, the agent's name and address in Laos must be included;
4. A notarised deed of assignment, transferring rights from the inventors to the applicants;
5. Drawings or photographs of the industrial design;
6. A statement of the type of goods to which the industrial design relates; and
7. Receipt of payment of official fees.

As mentioned above, an application for an industrial design may also contain a claim for priority. If priority is claimed, the applicant must submit a copy of the application on which the priority claim is based, certified as correct by the authority which received the application and showing the filing date. Such documents do not require any authentication, and may be filed, without fee, at any time within three months of the filing date of the application in Laos.

Upon receiving an application for an industrial design, MOST will conduct a formality examination to ensure that the application is complete and meets the requirements. If the application is incomplete, MOST will notify the applicant, who will then have 60 days from the date of the notification to complete the application.

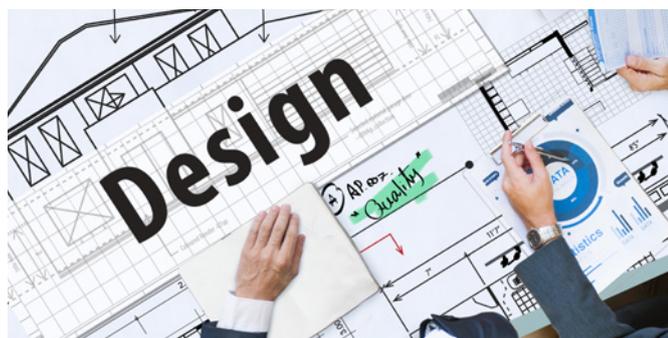
Applications for industrial designs are not examined as to substance.

**WHO can register?**

Any person, legal entity, or organisation may apply for an industrial design. A person, legal entity, or organisation residing in a foreign country, however, must be represented by an authorised representative in Laos (i.e., an IP agent).

**Which LANGUAGES can I use?**

The application can be filed in either English or Lao. However, application documents submitted in English must be translated into Lao within 90 days from the application filing date. The translation must be certified to be a correct translation.

**How much does it COST?**

The IP Law does not state the fees that apply with respect to information/registration of IPRs in Laos. According to the Prime Minister's Regulation No. 22/STEA-PMO of 2003 on the implementation of the Decree on Patent, Petty Patent, and Industrial Design, the official fees for filing an application for industrial designs are as below. Notably, however, these fees are subject to change by decrees and regulations following promulgation of the new IP Law.

The governmental fee for filing an industrial design registration in Laos is LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8) in filing fees; LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8) for the formality examination; and LAK 164,000 (approximately EUR 15) for grant of the industrial design. Therefore, the total basic governmental fee is approximately **LAK 317,750** or **EUR 31**. If a request against registration is required, there will be an additional fee of LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8). If the application must be amended, the amendment fee is LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8). Assignment or licensing of rights of industrial designs is LAK 328,000 (approximately USD EUR 30) and duplication of industrial designs is LAK 82,000 (approximately EUR 8).

In order to maintain the industrial design, an annual official fee must be paid by the owner of the design from the 2<sup>nd</sup> year onward until the industrial design certificate expires, as follows:

Year	Fee (LAK)	Service fee (LAK)	Total (LAK)
2 <sup>nd</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup>	500,000 (approximately EUR 57)	200,000 (approximately EUR 23)	700,000 (approximately EUR 81)
5 <sup>th</sup> - 9 <sup>th</sup>	800,000 (approximately EUR 92)	200,000 (approximately EUR 23)	1,000,000 (approximately EUR 115)
10 <sup>th</sup> - 14 <sup>th</sup>	1,000,000 (approximately EUR 115)	200,000 (approximately EUR 23)	1,200,000 (approximately EUR 138)

**Industrial Designs TIPS and WATCH-OUTS in Laos**

- In Laos, industrial designs are a type of patent, and therefore, their protection follows a similar principle.
- In order to maintain an industrial design registration, pursuant to the IP Law, an annual fee must be paid in advance by the rights-holder. Prescribed fees for annuity payments are specified in the **Ordinances of the President of the Republic on Fees and Charges No.003 on December 16, 2012**.

For more information on patent and design protection in Laos, check out our *South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk Guide to Patent Protection in South-East Asia*, which is available for download from our website - [http://www.southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EN\\_patent.pdf](http://www.southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EN_patent.pdf)

## D. Trade Marks

### WHAT are Trade Marks?

A trade mark is a sign, such as a word, device, brand, shape, colour, sound, or a combination of these elements, which is capable of being graphically represented and used by a person in the course of trade to distinguish his or her goods or services from another person's. The IP Law provides trade mark owners with the right to prevent others from using identical or confusingly similar marks for their goods and services.

### Trade Marks in Laos: What you need to know

Laos became a member of the Madrid Protocol in December 2015, and the Protocol entered into force in March 2016. The Madrid Protocol is administered by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). It provides a cost-effective and efficient means for trademark owners to obtain protection for their marks in multiple countries through filing one application, called an "international application," at a single Trade mark Office, in one language, and with one set of fees.

Currently, the Ministerial Regulation concerning the implementation of the Madrid Protocol is not yet available.

Trade mark protection may be granted for any sign or combination of signs capable of distinguishing the goods or services of one undertaking from those of other undertakings. That is, the sign, or combination of signs, must have distinctive character. Signs eligible for protection include:

- Words, including personal names, letters, numerals, figurative elements, and combinations of colors, as well as any combination of such signs;
- Signs not identical to a previously registered mark for the same goods or services;
- Signs not similar to a previously registered mark for the same, similar, or related goods and services, where the use of the later mark would cause confusion as to the source of the goods or services or create a false impression that they are connected or associated with another party; and
- Signs not having any of the prohibited characteristics under the IP Law (prohibited characteristics include, *inter alia*, non-distinctive marks, imitative or counterfeit marks, marks confusingly similar to already registered marks, marks contrary to the national security, social order, rules, laws, culture, and tradition).

### How LONG does legal protection last?

Trade mark protection lasts for ten years from the filing date, and at the end of the initial ten-year period, the mark can be further renewed for ten years each time. A renewal fee applies, which must be paid in advance for ten years.

### HOW do I register?

The application for trade mark registration is submitted to MOST (at the address given above) and must contain the following information/documents:

- a. A request for registration of the trademark;
- b. The name and other personal data of the applicant;
- c. A notarised power of attorney, and if the application is filed through an agency, the agent's name and address in Laos must be included;
- d. Drawings or a specimen of the mark;
- e. A description of the goods/services to which the mark will be applied/used in connection with; and
- f. Receipt of payment of official fees.

Although not a signatory, Laos applies the Nice Agreement for classification of goods and services. One registration application is valid for only one trade mark but may apply to more than one class of goods/services.

Laos applies the first-to-file system for trade marks. Moreover, the same priority requirements apply to trade mark applications. If the applicant wishes to claim its priority rights from a foreign application, the national application must be filed with MOST within 6 months after the filing date of the foreign application. Furthermore, the same registration procedure as for industrial designs set out above applies to trade mark applications. Therefore, MOST conducts a formal examination of the trade mark application but does not examine it as to its substance. Trade mark applicants do not have to show prior use of the trade mark. Once registered, however, the trade mark must be used in Laos for the registration to be maintained. Rights in a trade mark can be lost through the action or inaction of the trade mark's owner. Trade mark rights can also be lost unintentionally by SMEs if a continuous period of non-use exceeds 5 years. The period of non-use required to show abandonment of a mark in Laos is five years.

The requirements for trade mark registrations are prescribed by the Decision of the Minister of Science and Technology on the Implementation of Law on Intellectual Property concerning Trademarks and Trade Names was issued in September 2012.



### WHO can register?

Any person, legal entity, or organisation may apply for a trade mark certificate. A person, legal entity, or organisation residing in a foreign country, however, must be represented by an authorised representative in Laos (i.e., an IP agent).

### Which LANGUAGES can I use?

Trademark applications must be made in English and Lao.

### How much does it COST?

The IP Law does not state the fees that apply with respect to registration of IPRs in Laos. According to the Prime Minister's Regulation No. 466/STEA-PMO of 2002 on Registration on Trade marks, the official fees for filing trade mark applications are as below. Notably, however, these fees are subject to change by decrees and regulations following promulgation of the new IP Law.

The basic official fee for a trade mark registration or renewal of a trade mark registration is equivalent to approximately LAK 1,120,000 or EUR 60 per mark. Additional costs are as follows:

Consultation	LAK 40,420 (approximately EUR 4) per mark
Verification of goods/services classification	LAK 40,420 (approximately EUR 4) per mark
Application form for trade mark registration or renewal	LAK 16,168 (approximately EUR 1) per mark
Report of trade mark search	LAK 80,840 (approximately EUR 7) per mark
Amendment of application for trade mark registration	LAK 323,362 (approximately EUR 29) per mark
Cancellation of trade mark registration	LAK 161,680 (approximately EUR 15) per mark
Duplicate of the certificate of registration or renewal	LAK 80,840 (approximately EUR 7) per copy
Issuance of certified document relating to the trade mark registration or renewal	LAK 40,420 (approximately EUR 4) per copy

*Trade mark protection lasts for ten years from the filing date, and at the end of the initial ten-year period, the mark can be further renewed for ten years each time.*



### Trade Marks TIPS and WATCH-OUTS in Laos

- Rights in a trade mark can be lost through the action or inaction of the trade mark's owner. You must use your trade marks in Laos for the registration to be maintained. The minimum period of use to avoid non-use cancellation is five years.
- Be aware of the first-to-file system for trademarks in Laos. You must promptly register your trade mark in Laos to be recognised as the legal rights owner.

For more information on trade mark protection in Laos, check out our *South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk Guide to Trade Mark Protection in Southeast Asia*, which is available to download from our website - <http://www.southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu/?q=en/helpdesk-guides>

## E. Geographical Indications

### WHAT are Geographical Indications (GIs)?

A **Geographical Indication (GI)** is a distinctive sign used to identify a product as originating in the territory of a particular country, region, or locality where its quality, reputation, or other characteristics are linked to its geographical origin. GIs differ from trade marks in the sense that GIs may be used by all producers or traders whose products originate from that place and which share a particular quality, reputation or other characteristics, while trade marks may only be used by the trade mark owner or with the owner's consent. "Champagne" from France, "Parmigiano-Reggiano" from Italy, "Scotch Whisky" from Scotland and "Feta cheese" from Greece are all examples of European GIs.

The general rule is that a GI is a collective right of use and does not belong to one individual or company. This rule, however, has exceptions whereby a single person/legal entity can apply for a GI. This is only applicable in exceptional cases, according to the regulations governing GIs. GIs protect both the producers' interests and the consumers' interests.

### Geographical Indications (GIs) in Laos: What you need to know

In Laos, protection of GIs is devolved to inter-agency cooperation among the following key organisations: (i) the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), which includes the Department of Intellectual Property (DIP), competent for registration and protection, and the Department for Standardisation and Metrology (DoSM), competent for product standards; and (ii) the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

Geographical Indication recognition is undergoing rapid expansion in Laos with 19 potential indications identified at the national level. Two GI products have been selected as priority pilot projects for GI registration: Bolaven plateau coffee from Champasak province and small chicken rice (special sticky rice) from Xiengkhouang and Huaphanh provinces.

The Geographical Indication symbol is used as a sign to indicate goods as originating in the territory of a country or region or locality in that territory, where a given quality and reputation or other characteristics of the goods are essentially attributable to the goods' geographical origin. To date, GI protection is mainly seen as a means to contribute to the local development of agriculture and within ASEAN.

The Decision of the Minister of Science and Technology on the implementation of Geographical Indications under the Law on Intellectual Property (Decision) has finally been enacted. This was the missing piece that enabled the registration of GIs in Laos, and it was finalised only in October 2016.

Regarding the timeframe for the whole process of the registration, for foreign GIs, the duration of the process may not be the same if the GI has been subject to a previous registration in a country with which Laos has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to accelerate the examination process.

To date, Laos has signed MOUs with the following four countries: (i) Japan; (ii) Cambodia; (iii) Vietnam; and (iv) Singapore. According to the government's plan, this list should grow bigger. Accordingly, if an applicant has proof that its GI has been registered in one of the above countries, the issuance of a certificate may progress much quicker.

Officials have stated that in this case, registration may take between 1 to 3 months before the GI certificate is issued. Otherwise, the timeframe for registering a GI will not differ from the registration of a local GI, that is, around 12 months. These timeframes may be subject to change in the future, as the registration process remains untested.

#### How LONG does legal protection last?

There is no specific duration of protection of a GI. Therefore, the GI benefits from an unlimited term of protection. The protection starts as from the filing date, which is when the required documents are approved and the service fees (along with official fees) are paid.

#### HOW do I register for Geographical Indication recognition?

The authority in charge of the registration of GIs in Laos is the Department of Intellectual Property. Accordingly, GI applications should be filed with the DIP. The list of the documents to be submitted to the DIP must include:

- The GI application form, from the Department of Intellectual Property;
- Name of the Geographical Indication;

- Name and address of the applicant;
- Name and address of the representative and a Power of Attorney, if the application is filed through a representative;
- Types of goods covered by the Geographical Indication application;
- Book of Specifications;
- Receipt of payment of fees and service fees; and
- Any other relevant documents in relation to the Geographical Indication application.

Notably, in addition to item 8, the wording contained within the Decision states that "the application for registration of a Geographical Indication shall include at least"—"at least" may cause some confusion as to the list of documents to be submitted. Notably, the application form is currently not yet available at the DIP, as it is still being formulated. However, it may be available shortly.

In the event that the registration concerns a foreign GI, the applicant will have to substantiate and verify that the GI is currently protected in its country of origin. The DIP in Laos will not accept an application regarding a foreign GI that has ceased to be protected or has fallen into disuse in its country of origin.

#### WHO can register?

According to the Decision, "producer groups, operators, institutions, and/or interested persons" are able to file an application to register a GI. However, this will have to be done through an Association, dedicated to registering and protecting the contemplated GI. The Association will also ensure that each member complies with the Book of Specifications to ensure a high standard of quality during the course of the existence of the GI. This Association must be recognised by the DIP.

Interestingly, and differently from many other jurisdictions, the Decision leaves the right for a single person, either an individual or a legal person, to register a GI, and therefore, be recognised as a Geographical Indication Association. Two prerequisites must be fulfilled:

- The individual applicant is the only and sole person willing to register such GI; and
- The area of coverage on which the GI depends must possess specific characteristics, differing from those in neighbouring areas or that the products are truly different from those in any neighbouring areas.



The Decision does not make such registration a general rule and clearly states that such a path to GI registration may concern only certain exceptional cases.

#### Which LANGUAGES can I use?

The Decision does not derogate the principle set out by the Law on Intellectual Property of 2011. The application can be filed with documents in English, and the DIP will start processing the application the moment they receive these documents. However, as for any other industrial property, a Lao version of the documents must be submitted to the DIP within 90 days after the main submission of the documents in English. The applicant must, therefore, bear in mind the costs of translation.

#### How much does it COST?

With respect to costs, the situation is still unclear. The official fee and the service fee are governed by another regulation, as set out in the Decision. However, that regulation does not stress any official fee or service fee with respect to the registration of GIs. This is unsatisfactory, as the payment of both the official fee and the service fee is a definitive approach to defining the filing date at which the protection may start. However, the DIP is aware of this pitfall and is actually drafting guidelines to set the official and service fees with respect to GIs.

#### ! Geographical Indications (GIs) TIPS and WATCH-OUTS in Laos

Timeframes for registrations may be subject to change in the future, as the registration process remains untested.

## F. Trade Secrets

### WHAT are Trade Secrets?

A trade secret is a commercially **valuable piece of information that is not known**, or readily ascertainable, and gives the holder an **economic advantage over competitors and customers**.

### Trade Secrets in Laos: What you need to know

The IP Law sets out the conditions for information to be considered a trade secret. In order to be considered a trade secret, information must meet the following requirements:

- 1) The information must be a secret (i.e., not known among or readily accessible to persons that normally deal with the kind of information in question);
- 2) The information must have commercial value; and
- 3) The proprietor of the information must have taken reasonable steps to keep the information secret.

Information incapable of protection as trade secrets includes personal secrets, secrets of the state and state administration, and other non-business-related secret information.

Article 60 of the IP Law grants the proprietor of a trade secret the following rights:

- 1) To prevent the trade secret from being disclosed to, acquired by, or used by others without the proprietor's consent, in a manner that is contrary to honest commercial practices, except:
  - discovery of the information by reverse engineering, laboratory testing, analysis, or other similar means; or
  - acquiring the information without an obligation of confidentiality or trust;
- 2) To protect the trade secret against infringement by initiating court actions and claims damages to compensate for the infringement;
- 3) To prevent the trade secret from being misappropriated;
- 4) To disclose, withdraw or utilise, or transfer the trade secret to other persons; and
- 5) To control any person who is in lawful control of the trade secret from employment or a contract or other agreement. Such obligation of confidentiality shall remain in effect so long as the information remains secret, even where employment, a contract, or another agreement terminates sooner.

No registration is required for trade secrets to enjoy protection.

### How LONG does legal protection last?

Protection of a trade secret lasts until the trade secret has been disclosed.

#### ! Trade Secrets TIPS and WATCH-OUTS in Laos

- Until the IP Law in 2011, trade secrets did not enjoy protection in Laos. Therefore, this is a new concept in the country.
- You can enforce protection of your trade secrets through court actions where you, as the proprietor, may claim damages for an infringement. Trade secrets may also be protected through confidentiality clauses being incorporated into employment contracts, or through a separate contract on the confidentiality of trade secrets or other agreements.

For more information on trade secret protection in Laos, check out our *South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk Guide to Trade Secrets in South-East Asia*, which is available for download from our website - <http://www.southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/publications/Trade-Secrets-English.pdf>



## 4. Using CUSTOMS to block counterfeits

### WHAT are Customs?

An IPRs owner can pursue infringers in different ways, one of which is to apply for border control measures, meaning that the IPRs holder files a request with the Customs authorities to suspend Customs clearance and destroy counterfeit goods.

### Customs in Laos: What you need to know

Currently, Laos has no formal Customs recordation system. However, if the IPRs owner knows of a shipment containing counterfeit goods, he or she may inform Customs and file a motion by submitting an application form provided by Customs and pay a bond or deposit (see below for further information on procedures for initiation actions for suspension of Customs clearance). The IP Law and Instructions on Customs Measures for the Protection on Intellectual Property Rights No. 1970/MOF (Customs Measures Instructions) regulates such "Customs information" measures in Laos. The IP Law allows IPRs owners and/or Customs to initiate actions for suspension of Customs clearance of suspicious counterfeit goods. The tariff officer and other competent officers at the Lao borders have the rights and duties of inspecting the imported goods and seizing and confiscating infringing goods. So far, most counterfeit goods in Laos have involved food and drugs.

### WHAT can be registered?

Counterfeit trademark goods and pirated copyright goods may be referred to the Customs Department.

Counterfeit trademark goods mean goods bearing, without authorisation, a trademark, which is identical to the trademark validly registered in respect of such goods, or which cannot be distinguished in its essential aspects from such a trademark. Such goods thereby infringe the rights of the owner of the trademark in question under the IP Law.

Pirated copyright goods mean any goods that are copied without the consent of the rights-holder or person duly authorised by the rights-holder and which are made directly or indirectly from an article where the making of that copy would have constituted an infringement of a copyright or a related right under the IP Law.

### How LONG does legal protection last?

Customs may maintain the suspension for ten (10) working days. However, suspension may continue if the applicant has provided evidence that judicial action has been initiated. The applicant must initiate judicial action with the Court against the owner of the allegedly infringing goods within ten (10) working days upon receipt of the notice of suspension. Failure to initiate judicial action within the statutory time entitles the customs officer to release

the goods immediately and to compel the applicant to compensate for damages suffered by the owner of the goods.

### HOW do I register?

The IPRs holder must provide the following documents prior to inspection and suspension:

- A motion for inspection and suspension using the standard form issued by the Customs Department;
- Evidence of relevant IPRs and adequate evidence of prima facie infringement of such rights in compliance with the IP Law;
- The names of the relevant checkpoint(s) or place(s) where goods will be imported or exported;
- A detailed description of the goods sufficient enough to make them readily recognizable by the Customs officer;
- Any other information (if any), such as photos of infringing goods or details of the importer or exporter, as information for the Customs officers;
- A security deposit of LAK 10,000,000 (approximately EUR 1,000) deposited in cash, by check or by bank guarantee;
- An execution of a guarantee to cover any expenses of Customs authorities, which may arise from the requested suspension; and
- A receipt of payment of the security deposit.

In case of an emergency, where the filing of a written application is impossible, the rights-holder may verbally request the Customs authority to take action.

### Customs Department

Ministry of Finance  
Lane Xang Avenue  
Vientiane  
Tel: +85 6 21 217452  
Fax: +85 6 21 217451

### WHO can register?

Any trade mark and copyright holder may inform Customs of counterfeit or pirated goods.

### Which LANGUAGES can I use?

The application and all the supporting documents must be made in Lao.

### How much does it COST?

There is no fee for informing Customs of counterfeit or pirated goods in Laos. However, the applicant must pay a security deposit

of LAK 10,000,000 (approximately EUR 1,000).

This deposit serves as assurance for the suspended goods. **Within ten working days of the suspension, the applicant must initiate judicial action with the competent People's Court.** If the applicant fails to initiate judicial action within the ten day period, customs must immediately release the suspended goods, and the applicant's security deposit will be applied to compensate the owner of the goods for damages suffered. The same applies in cases where Court action is initiated, but the Court rules that the goods are not infringing, e.g., where a decision of the People's Court rules that the suspended goods are not infringing goods, Customs shall apply the **security deposit to pay for any expenses and damages arising from the suspension, in accordance with the Court decision.** (The remainder of the security deposit after such payment shall be returned to the applicant).

### ! Customs TIPS and WATCH-OUTS in Laos

- Currently, Laos has not initiated a formal Customs recordation system. However, if you know of a shipment containing counterfeit goods, you may inform Customs and file a motion by submitting an application form provided by Customs and pay a bond or deposit. Only counterfeit trademark goods and pirated copyright goods may be reported to Customs.
- Prima facie evidence of infringement is required to file such information, therefore, you should be able to collect some documents to support your claims.

## 5. ENFORCING your IP

Besides using Customs to block counterfeit goods (Customs are described separately in Part 4 above), in the case where your IP assets are being infringed in Laos, there are three main avenues of enforcement that can be considered: **dispute resolution, civil litigation, and criminal prosecution.** In many cases, however, **private mediation** via legal professionals is more effective and should be considered as a viable option.

### Forms of Dispute Resolution

The IP Law offers the following settlement measures to resolve an intellectual property dispute:

- Reconciliation (an agreement resulting from reconciliation shall adhere to contracting principles, as provided for in the Law on Contract and Tort);
- Mediation between the IPRs owner and the infringer;
- Administrative settlement;
- Settlement through the Economic Dispute Resolution Committee;
- Bringing the case to the People's Court for judgment; and
- International dispute settlement.

In the case of an intellectual property dispute, the parties may choose any form of dispute resolution set out in points 1-6 above.

### Civil Enforcement

**SMEs may turn to the People's Court** at the district or provincial level **to enforce their rights by means of civil litigation.** Available remedies include:

- A Court order to the effect that the infringer ceases the infringing acts;
- A suspension of customs clearance goods;
- A judgment of infringement;
- Damages – compensation for infringement and legal fees;
- The destruction/disposal of any infringing goods; and
- The disposal of tools, etc., used to create/commit the infringement.

The District/Provincial Court's decision may be appealed to the Appeal Courts and the Supreme People's Court. **Overseas court orders must be recognised and approved by the Lao courts to be effective and executable in Laos.**

In addition, **IPRs owners may request the People's Court to order prompt and effective provisional measures** (injunction orders) to:

- Prevent an infringement from occurring;
- Prevent the entry into the channels of commerce of goods, including imported goods immediately after Customs clearance; and
- Preserve evidence in regard to the alleged infringement.

Moreover, an IPRs owner may apply for ex parte provisional measures with the People's Court, where any delay is likely to cause irreparable harm to the IPRs owner or where there is a demonstrable risk of evidence being destroyed.

### Criminal Prosecution

**Criminal prosecution may be initiated through the Lao police force** (economic division), who refer the case to a public prosecutor for criminal court action. The competent court is the People's Court at the provincial level (and the Appeal Court and the Supreme People's Court for appeals).

**Criminal actions are available for the protection of copyright, patents, industrial designs, geographical indications trade secrets and trademarks.**

Possible penalties include damages, imprisonment for three months up to two years, and fines of between LAK 500,000 and 10,000,000, (approximately EUR 50 and EUR 1,000). The infringer may also be subject to **additional measures**, including suspension or withdrawal of business licenses and seizure of infringing goods and equipment used to commit the infringement.

### ! Enforcement TIPS and WATCH-OUTS in Laos

As Court litigation is generally a costly and time-consuming option for the enforcement of IPRs, other viable and more effective options to enforce your IPRs in Laos could be reconciliation, mediation, administrative settlement, settlement through the Economic Dispute Resolution Committee or international dispute settlement.

## 6. RELATED LINKS and Additional Information

- > Visit the [South-East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk website](#) for further relevant information, such as how to deal with business partners in the South-East Asia region.
- > Visit the Helpdesk blog [www.yourIPinsider.eu](http://www.yourIPinsider.eu) for related articles on IP in Southeast Asia and China.
- > EU Delegation to Laos - [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/laos/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/laos/index_en.htm)
- > World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO): <http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/profile.jsp?code=LA>
- > Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST): <http://www.most.gov.la/index.php/en>
- > The Department of Intellectual Property Standardisation and Metrology: <http://www.stea.la.wipo.net/links/index.html>
- > The National Authority for Science and Technology (NAST) <http://www.nast.gov.la>
- > Laos Customs: <http://laocustoms.laopdr.net/about.htm>



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**Materials:** Helpdesk business-focused guides and training materials on South-East Asia IPR issues are all downloadable from the online portal.

**Online Services:** Our multilingual online portal ([www.ipr-hub.eu](http://www.ipr-hub.eu)) provides easy access to Helpdesk guides, case studies, E-learning modules, event information and webinars.



*For more information please contact the Helpdesk:*

15<sup>th</sup> Floor, The Landmark, 5B Ton Duc Thang Street,  
Ben Nghe Ward, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Tel: +84 8 3825 8116

Fax: +84 8 3827 2743

E-mail: [question@southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu](mailto:question@southeastasia-iprhelpdesk.eu)

Website: [www.ipr-hub.eu](http://www.ipr-hub.eu)

Blog: [www.yourIPinsider.eu](http://www.yourIPinsider.eu)

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