



▶ Building Social Protection Floors for All: Extension of Social Health Protection in Asia

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▶ At a glance



Partners

Governments, workers and employers' organizations, academia, community based organizations



Donor

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg



Duration

March 2022 – December 2025



Target beneficiaries

Women, men and children in Asia



Geographical focus

Asia, with a primary focus on Lao People's Democratic Republic

▶ Background

1.6 billion people across Asia and the Pacific still lack access to social health protection. In South-East Asia, the percentage of the population impoverished by out-of-pocket spending at relative poverty line increased continuously since the year 2000, and the sick and their families continue to shoulder almost half of the costs of care. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed severe gaps in both legal and effective sickness benefit coverage, leaving the majority of the workforce in South-East Asia to have to make a choice between health and livelihood. Overall financial protection is deteriorating and the COVID-19 pandemic put severe strain on the most vulnerable.

Strong and responsive Social Health Protection systems, including sickness and maternity benefits, are at the forefront of global and national responses to protect the health and income of the population. They are also essential to support productivity and fair and inclusive economic growth. While much progress has been achieved in the Asia region on social health protection population coverage and systems development, much remains to be done. In the context of the global pandemic, countries in the region, including Lao People's Democratic Republic, are seeking new approaches and additional support to overcome challenges they face in ensuring universal health coverage (UHC) for their populations and extending, deepening and broadening social health protection, while ensuring the financial sustainability of the system overall.



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► Project outcomes

The project aims at increasing financial health protection in the target country of Lao People's Democratic Republic, and supporting efforts for expansion of coverage in the region through South-South collaboration, under the overall umbrella of national strategies towards UHC.






- Effective, efficient, accountable and sustainable gender sensitive social health protection delivered with an increased coverage in Lao People's Democratic Republic
 - The management and administration of the National health insurance is strengthened and translate into enhanced institutional capacity and operational effectiveness and efficiency at all levels
- Relevant policy reforms on medical care, sickness and maternity benefits are prepared, with a focus on extending coverage and financing, informed by evidence
- Foundations for building a culture of social health protection, including medical care, sickness and maternity, are developed
- CONNECT, a regional network of public and non-for-profit institutions working on social health protection in the Asia-Pacific region contributes to the extension of social health protection through joint research, collaborative and gender responsive capacity building opportunities and advocacy efforts
- Technical support is provided to other countries from the region, based on demand, and South-South knowledge exchanges on social health protection is promoted across regions

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► Contact details:

ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Building, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200, Thailand
E: BANGKOK@ilo.org
W: ilo.org/asiapacific

Marielle Phe Goursat
Programme Manager
E: goursat@ilo.org

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 ILOAsiaPacific
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 ILOAsiaPacific
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