

Regional Round-Up 2025: Laos

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Introduction

Throughout the year, we have been keeping you up to date on noteworthy developments across the region with our Regional Round-up Publications. As we enter 2026, we are pleased to share with you our *2025 year-in-review of the Regional Round-up* for our Regional Offices in the Rajah & Tann Asia network.

In each jurisdiction, we recount the key milestones in the path that has been travelled in 2025, as well as consider the terrain of the road that lies ahead in 2026. In the "**Looking Back: 2025**" section, we take stock of the past year and highlight the key legal and regulatory developments affecting each jurisdiction in 2025. In the "**Gazing Into: 2026**" section, we look ahead to some key areas of development that you should take note of in the year to come, referencing the legal and business trends shaping up potential legislative and regulatory changes in each jurisdiction.

We hope that this year-in-review edition of the Regional Round-up provides some perspective and insight into the legal landscape of the jurisdictions across the region. As always, please feel free to contact our lawyers in our Regional Offices if you have any queries or for further discussions.

Please click on the links below to access the full collection of our country-specific *2025 year-in-review of the Regional Round-up*:

- [Cambodia](#)
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Looking Back: 2025

The National Assembly has successfully **passed and amended a total of 87 laws during the 2021–2025 period**, achieving 90.62% of its five-year legislative plan. This comprehensive legislative effort, comprising 24 newly drafted laws and 63 amendments, brings the nation's total legal framework to 176 laws.

The results were presented on 17 November 2025 by Ms. Amphaivanh Lorbounphaeng, Secretary General of the National Assembly, during the **10th Ordinary Session of the IX Legislature**, where she highlighted the National Assembly's achievements under the 2021–2025 plan, the 2025 annual review, and key priorities leading into the first session of the

X Legislature. Draft workplans for 2026 and the 2026–2030 period were also introduced.

In 2025, the Assembly **approved 13 laws**, comprising five newly created laws and eight amended ones, and successfully **revised Articles 34 and 38 of the 2018 Law on Social Security**. A major milestone for the term was the adoption of the **revised 2025 Constitution**.

According to the report, the drafting and amendment of laws adhered to the Law on Legislation and remained aligned with Party policy and national governance needs. The resulting legal structure has continued to improve the country's **integration with regional and international frameworks** while strengthening **protections for the rights and interests of the multi-ethnic Lao people**.¹

Summaries of the key laws and regulations highlighted in the report are provided below.

Financial Sector and Currency Management

1. **Decision on the Use of Foreign Currency in Lao PDR No.11/BOL dated 3 January 2025 ("Decision No. 11")**: Decision No. 11 sets out the principles, regulations and measures in relation to the use of foreign currencies in the Lao PDR. It marks a pivotal escalation in the central bank's mission to stabilise the national currency (LAK) and curb the dollarisation of the domestic economy. As a cornerstone of the 2025 economic recovery strategy, Decision No. 11 reinforces the mandatory use of the kip for all domestic transactions while strictly defining the narrow corridors in which foreign currency may legally circulate. For commercial entities, this is not merely a procedural update; it is a strict compliance mandate. It codifies the principles of foreign exchange management, sets rigorous reporting requirements, and grants the Bank of the Lao PDR ("**BOL**") enhanced powers



¹ <https://kpl.gov.la/en/detail.aspx?id=95620>

of oversight to monitor currency flows across both the private and public sectors.

2. **Decision on Amendment of Article 10 of Decision on Management of Foreign Currency Deposit Accounts in the Lao PDR No. 288/BOL dated 3 April 2025 ("Decision No. 288"):** Decision No. 288 amends Article 10 of the Decision on Management of Foreign Currency Deposit Accounts in the Lao PDR No.155/BOL dated 19 February 2025 ("**Article 10**"). The rapid-fire amendment of Article 10 via Decision No. 288 highlights BOL's commitment to dynamic regulation. For investors and enterprises, this means that standard banking procedures are subject to immediate change. Legal departments must ensure that their treasury protocols are agile enough to meet these evolving reporting standards to avoid administrative fines or account freezes.
3. **Decision on Payment Service System No. 511/BOL, dated 19 June 2025 ("Decision No. 511"):** Decision No. 511 provides that a "Payment Service System" involves the provision of payment services and/or money transfers by any payment service provider for the payment of goods, services, debts and other obligations via legal instruments, channels and methods of payment.

Decision No. 511 serves as the definitive legal framework for the modernisation of Lao PDR's financial sector. By clearly defining "Payment Service Systems," BOL is effectively asserting its jurisdiction over the rapidly expanding FinTech sector, including mobile wallets, quick response (QR) payment gateways, and electronic remittance services. It transforms "money transfers" from a general commercial activity into a strictly regulated financial service, requiring providers to adhere to rigorous standards of transparency, security, and anti-money laundering (AML) protocols.

4. **Decision on the Increase of Registered Capital and Investment Capital of Commercial Banks and Branches of Foreign Commercial Banks No. 45/PM, dated 11 April 2025 ("Decision No. 45")** which seeks to implement Article 13 of Law on Commercial Bank No.39/NA, dated 17 July 2023: Decision No. 45 mandates commercial banks and branches of foreign commercial banks incorporated prior to the coming into operation of the Law on Commercial Bank to increase their (i) registered capital to more than LAK1 trillion; and (ii)

investment capital to branches of foreign commercial banks to at least LAK600 billion, within 10 years from 2 June 2025. It is further mandated that within the first five years of this period, affected commercial banks and branches of foreign commercial banks must raise at least 30% of the required registered capital and investment capital increase.

Decision No. 45 also serves as a compliance roadmap for corporate restructuring. It forces boards of directors and foreign parent banks to make immediate strategic decisions regarding capital injection, potential mergers, or equity partnerships to meet these aggressive thresholds.

Digital Economy and Technology

1. **Decision on Digital Technology Business Operations No. 3643/MOTC, dated 29 September 2025 ("Decision No. 3643"):** Decision No. 3643 provides the principles and measures for managing digital technology business operations, aiming to promote efficient service and maintain order, safety, and fairness. It covers activities like information services, database management, and information exchange through communication networks.

It marks a watershed moment in Lao PDR's transition to a formal digital economy. By establishing rigorous principles and measures, the Ministry of Technology and Communication (MOTC) is moving beyond passive observation to active governance of the technology sector. Decision No. 3643 also defines the perimeter of digital legality, categorising what constitutes a legitimate digital service and who is authorised to manage the nation's data. It ensures that efficiency does not come at the cost of order, effectively mandating that the digital frontier be safe, transparent, and legally accountable.

2. **Decision on Digital Platform No. 3648/MOTC, dated 29 September 2025 ("Decision No. 3648"):** Decision No. 3648 stipulates the principles and measures for managing digital platforms that provide electronic transaction services. These platforms act as intermediaries, managing data and facilitating transactions between service providers and users.

Decision No. 3648 serves as a critical regulatory framework for the Intermediary Economy. In the

past, digital platforms often operated in a legal grey area between service providers and users. This decision clarifies that role, mandating that any platform facilitating electronic transactions – whether a local delivery app, a social commerce marketplace, or a digital service aggregator – is now a regulated entity with specific oversight obligations. This is a liability and data-governance mandate. It establishes that platforms are responsible for the integrity of the transactions they facilitate and the security of the massive data flows they manage.

3. **Decision on Fining and Using other Measures Against the Violators of Decree and Regulations related to the Electronic Commerce No.**

2828/MOIC, dated 11 November 2025 ("Decision No. 2828"): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce ("MOIC") has issued Decision No. 2828 to establish the principles, regulations and measures relating to the imposition of fines and other measures for violations of electronic commerce regulations. Decision No. 2828 serves as a nationwide legal reference to ensure that the enforcement is carried out strictly and consistently across the nation, with the aim of promoting electronic commerce activities that are compliant with laws and regulations, protecting the rights and legitimate interests of the State, business operators and users.

Some examples of fines provided under Decision No. 2828 are as follows:

- Conducting trading business through a trader's electronic commerce channel without informing the electronic commerce authority will result in a fine of LAK3 million per violation, in addition to a warning, education and record of the violation.
- Conducting trading business in an electronic marketplace without notifying the electronic commerce authority will result in a fine of LAK5 million per violation, in addition to a warning, education and record of the violation.
- Conducting trading business without obtaining approval to provide Trading in Electronic Marketplace will result in a fine of LAK5 million per violation, in addition to a warning, education and record of the violation.

Decision No. 2828 also represents a shift from administrative guidance to mandatory compliance. For years, the Lao e-commerce sector operated with a high degree of informality. This Decision introduces a graduated sanctioning model designed to protect the triad of interests: (i) the State's revenue and regulatory order; (ii) the business operators' fair competition; and (iii) the consumers' legitimate rights. It moves beyond simple fines to include "other measures", such as mandatory education, public records of violations, and potential business suspensions. This means that a violation carries both a financial and a reputational cost.

Trade, Investment, and Enterprise Management

1. **Decision on the Enterprise's Registered Capital No. 2025/MOIC, dated 9 September 2025 ("Decision No. 2025"):**

Decision No. 2025 sets out the principles and regulations for managing registered capital of enterprises in the Lao PDR. The Decision outlines the capital formation process for different types of enterprises, including personal enterprises, joint stock companies, and limited partnerships. It details the capitalisation process for financial and material enterprises, emphasising the need for accurate and complete capital declarations.

Decision No. 2025 represents a significant shift in Lao corporate law, moving away from the flexible "honor system" of the past toward a rigorous, verifiable capitalisation model. The most striking change is the exclusion of "workforce" or "future labor" as a valid form of registered capital. From this point forward, MOIC will only recognise cash and tangible assets as legitimate contributions. This is a strategic move to sanitise the investment climate. By mandating that capital must be the clear ownership of shareholders and not derived from loans taken by the new enterprise itself, the Government is closing a long-standing loophole used to create debt-heavy and unstable corporate structures.

2. **Decision on the Content of Goods Advertising No. 0285/MOIC dated 20 February 2025 ("Decision No. 0285"):**

Decision No. 0285 applies to individuals, entities or organisations, both domestic and foreign, that advertise goods through media in various forms in the Lao PDR. It does not cover the advertising of food products, drugs and

medical products that are managed by the Public Health Sector Authorities.

The Decision brings much-needed clarity to the diverse landscape of commercial promotion in the Lao PDR. By defining principles and regulations for advertising content, MOIC is moving to eliminate deceptive marketing practices and ensuring that competition remains fair. This Decision serves as a compliance filter: every marketing campaign – whether a physical billboard in Vientiane or a targeted social media ad – must now pass a "truth-in-advertising" test. This regulation specifically excludes specialised sectors like food and pharmaceuticals. This creates a dual-track regulatory system: MOIC handles general consumer goods, while the Ministry of Health (MOH) maintains its stricter, specialised oversight of products that directly impact public health and safety.

3. **Notification on the Renewal of the Certificate of Importer-Exporter Registration of Goods and Services No.1284/DOFT dated 13 March 2025 ("Notification No. 1284"):** Notification No. 1284 states that an enterprise whose Certificate of Importer-Exporter Registration of Goods and Services has expired must renew the same as soon as practicable.

Notification No. 1284 is an urgent administrative mandate targeting the core of the nation's logistics and trade sector. In the Lao PDR, the Importer-Exporter Registration Certificate is the master key for cross-border commerce. Without it, an enterprise is legally invisible at the border. By issuing Notification No. 1284, the Department of Foreign Trade (DOFT) is initiating a nationwide cleanup of the trade registry – separating active, legitimate operators from dormant entities that may be skewing national trade data or facilitating unregulated currency leakage.

Medical Healthcare and Agricultural Sector

1. **Law on Medicine and Medical Product No. 85/NA, dated 25 June 2025 ("Law No. 85"):** Published in the Lao Official Gazette on 30 October 2025 the Law replaces the Law No. 85 on Medicine and Medical Product No.07/Na, dated 21 December 2011.

Law No. 85 sets defined the principles, regulations, and measures related to the management, monitoring and inspection of medicine and medical products, ensuring that these are carried out efficiently and effectively. This is to ensure that medicine and medical products meet the required standards, maintain quality and efficacy, maintain reasonable pricing, and safeguard the health and safety of the public.

Article 82 of Law No. 85 also sets out the business types related to medicine and medical products:

- production;
- processing;
- import and export;
- distribution;
- research and experimentation;
- maintenance; and
- other businesses related to medicine and medical products.

Law No. 85 represents a complete overhaul of the pharmaceutical and medical device regulatory framework in the Lao PDR. After 14 years, the previous 2011 law was deemed insufficient to manage modern challenges like the rise of counterfeit digital health products and the rapid importation of sophisticated medical equipment. The Law is the ultimate compliance anchor for healthcare investments. It introduces stricter quality control mechanisms and expands the State's oversight to include modern categories like household chemicals and cosmetic products, ensuring that safety is not just a goal but a measurable legal requirement.

2. **Draft Decree on Fertiliser ("Draft Decree"):** Published in the Lao Official Gazette on 14 October 2025 for public comments, the Draft Decree categorises fertilisers into three types: (i) organic fertiliser, (ii) biofertiliser, and (iii) inorganic fertiliser. It also provides that the production, import, export, and distribution of fertilisers must undergo a registration process with the Department of Agriculture ("DOA"), Ministry Agriculture and Environment, in accordance with the Draft Decree.

The Draft Decree serves as the missing link in Lao PDR's agricultural export chain. For agribusinesses and foreign direct investment (FDI) projects, the Draft Decree is a call to action: one can no longer rely on traditional import methods. The move

toward a unified registration system under DOA (and the newly integrated Ministry of Agriculture and Environment framework) means that every bag of fertiliser must now have a verifiable legal "passport". Business operators should use this consultation period to clarify the specific technical dossiers required for registration to avoid future bottlenecks at the border.

Anti-Corruption & Industrial Suspensions

1. **Law on Anti-Corruption (Amended) No. 52/NA dated 28 June 2024:** This law outlines the principles, regulations, and measures on anti-corruption to ensure that the property of the State and the collective, as well as the rights and legitimate interests of citizens are protected from corruption.
2. **Notification on Temporary Suspension the Issuance of License to Operate Vehicle Distribution Business No. 1042/OMOIC:** This notification announces the temporary suspension of the issuance of business operating licences for vehicle distribution businesses to facilitate the implementation of a systematic and standardised vehicle management system.
3. **Notification on Suspension the Consideration of the Various Mineral Projects Nationwide No.1090/PM:** This notification announces the suspension of the review and approval of new proposals for mineral projects, including metal ores and non-metallic ores, as well as stone ores (excluding construction stones mined and supplied domestically). Click [here](#) for more information.

Gazing Into: 2026

Pursuant to the **Draft Plan for Creating and Revising Laws for Five Years** of the 10th National Assembly from 2026 to 2030, the plan for creating and revising laws consists of 90 laws, including 20 new laws and 59 amendments, divided into the following fields:

Administration and Justice (consisting of 10 laws: five new laws and five amendments)

Examples of new laws:

- **Draft Law on Governance:** aimed at streamlining administrative tiers and clarifying the powers of local and central government;
- **Draft Law on Administrative Procedure:** a crucial milestone for foreign and domestic investors that provides a legal framework for challenging administrative decisions and ensuring due process; and



- **Draft Law on Evidence:** essential for judicial transparency, standardising how physical and digital evidence is handled in people's courts.

Examples of amended laws:

- **Law on Criminal Procedure;**
- **Law on Children Procedure;** and
- **Law on People's Courts.**

Economy (consisting of 49 laws: 11 new laws and 38 amendments)

Accounting for over 50% of the legislative plan, this sector is the engine of the 2026–2030 strategy. The goal is to stabilise the economy, manage inflation, and protect the digital trade space.

Examples of new laws:

- **Draft Law on Microfinance Institutions:** elevates previous Decrees to full Laws to formalise the shadow banking sector and increase financial inclusion;
- **Draft Law on Trade Inspection:** strengthens the enforcement powers for market monitors to combat counterfeit goods and unfair pricing; and
- **Draft Law on Information.**

Examples of amended laws:

- **Law on Foreign Exchange Management:** a high-priority revision to address the ongoing currency challenges and reinforce the use of the Lao Kip;
- **Law on Consumer Protection:** updates rules for the era of social media and electronic commerce; and
- **Law on Electronic Data Protection.**

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Socio-cultural (consisting of 25 laws: three new laws and 22 amendments)

This category focuses on the workforce and the Safe Society initiative, ensuring that the 10th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPlan) delivers tangible benefits to citizens.

Examples of new laws:

- **Draft Law on Civil Servants:** codifies the rights, duties, and performance of the nation's bureaucracy;
- **Draft Law on Occupational Safety and Health:** aligns Lao labour sites with International Labor Organisation (ILO) standards to protect the growing industrial workforce; and
- **Draft Law on Blood Donation Promotion and Safe Blood Supply.**

Examples of amended laws:

- **Law on the Control of Alcoholic Beverages;**
- **Law on Labour;** and
- **Law on Social Security.**

National Defence and Security (consisting of six laws: one new law and five amendments)

While smaller in volume, these laws focus on the core security architecture of the state, particularly the digitalisation of the citizenry.

New law:

- **Draft Law on Citizen Identification Cards (Ministry of Public Security):** shift toward a digital ID system to facilitate better public service delivery and secure electronic transactions.

Example of amended laws:

- **Law on Combating Human Trafficking:** strengthens the Law on Combating Human Trafficking to address emerging regional cyber-scam and cross-border crimes;
- **Law on Public Security Forces;** and
- **Law on National Defence.**

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