1. General Information

The International Conference of the 4th MRC Summit will be organized in the charming and vibrant capital city of Lao PDR, Vientiane. The conference will be 1.5 days and will start from 08:30 to 17:10 hours on 2 April 2023 and 08:30 to 12:40 hours on 3 April 2023 at the Lao National Convention Hall. The conference hall, called “Dok Champa Room” is located on the ground floor, where all sessions will be held, including the buffet lunch and tea/coffee break.

Language: English will be the sole communication medium of the conference.
Dress code: Business casual

2. Entering Lao PDR

The Lao Government has announced that travellers entering Lao PDR will no longer show any Covid-19 vaccination certificate or undergo any test or quarantine upon arrival in the country.

Travellers only need to hold a valid visa to enter the country. (If you are required for a visa, there may be a requirement to have a medical or travel insurance with a minimum coverage of USD 10,000 for Covid-19 treatment).

Do you need a visa to enter Lao PDR?

In entering Lao PDR, one of the first questions you may need to ask yourself is whether you need a visa. The answer in most cases is “Yes” you need a visa unless you are from a visa-exempt country. For example, if you are from the ASEAN countries, you do not need a visa to enter Lao PDR.

Please check with the nearest Lao Embassy or your travel agent to see if you need a visa, or what requirements you may need to fulfill. Participants are responsible for arranging their visas. Useful information about visas is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information about Visa on Arrival</th>
<th>Information about e-Visa</th>
<th>Information about Visa exemption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
3. Conference Venue

Where will the International Conference take place in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR?

Lao National Convention Centre – this is where we will host the conference.

How can you find the conference venue?

Address: K.M. 6, Kaysone Phomvihane Avenue, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR
On Google Map: [https://www.google.com/maps/place/National+Convention+Centre](https://www.google.com/maps/place/National+Convention+Centre)
Scan the QR Code here:

4. Flight arrangements

We strongly recommend that all speakers arrange their own tickets. The MRC Secretariat team will make a reimbursement at the conference, if you are sponsored by the Secretariat.

If you are our sponsored speaker, you should follow the following criteria when making flight booking:

- **Flight class**: Economy
- **Type of ticket**: 1-month valid ticket or a minimum period of ticket based on airline’s regulation

5. How to get reimbursement

Please bring the following documents to the International Conference venue on 2 April to get reimbursed:

- Boarding pass (original)
- Ticket itinerary
- Receipt of the ticket (original)
6. Transportation

The MRC Secretariat’s Organizing Team will arrange ground transportation from Wattay International Airport to the designated hotel(s) where all the speakers will be staying throughout the conference period, as well as on the departure day from designated hotel(s) to the airport.

An MRC Information Counter will be located inside the airport terminal building where you can have more information on getting into the arranged bus/van. Please identify yourself as an MRC International Conference speaker to the Information Counter to have a fast track service.

During the conference day, the Organizing Team will arrange a roundtrip transportation service from your hotel to the conference venue and vice versa, per the following schedules:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Pick-up Time</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 April 2023</td>
<td>07:00 AM</td>
<td>• First come, first served (to get into the bus).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 April 2023</td>
<td>07:00 AM</td>
<td>• It would take around 45-60 mins to the venue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A police escort car will accompany the bus/van of the speakers who stay at the designated hotel (Eastin Hotel Vientiane), in order to facilitate the traffic and ensure adequate arrival time to the venue.

We strongly encourage that you join the bus.

If by any chance you missed the bus, you will need to arrange your own travel. Local transportation options are available via the application, called “Loca”. You will need to download the App to use the service.

We strongly encourage that you join the bus.

7. Accommodation

All MRC International Conference’s funded speakers will be provided with an accommodation throughout the conference period (check in: 1 April 2023 and check out: 4 April 2023, totalling 3 nights). The hotel is a brand new hotel with an excellent location, facing the mighty Mekong River.

Name of arranged hotel: Eastin Hotel Vientiane
Room type: (subject to availability) from Superior City View to Deluxe Balcony River View (Single room)
Address: Unit 11, Khaemkhong Road, Oupmoung village, Sikhottabong District, Vientiane
Phone number: +856 21 219 999
E-mail: sales@eastinvientiane.com, Cc: rsvn@eastinvientiane.com
Website: www.eastinhotelesresidences.com/eastinvientianelaos
On Google map: https://goo.gl/maps/eastinhotelvientiane

We strongly encourage other speakers (although not funded by the MRC Secretariat) to stay at the same hotel (Eastin Hotel) for a better logistical arrangement and for ensuring that all the speakers will arrive at the conference venue on time. This will also be a lot easier for you.

Making your reservation at the hotel

To make a reservation, please send an email to Eastin Hotel Vientiane and ask them for an MRC special rate. We have a contract with them for discounted rates (as MRC speakers).

![Eastin Hotel Vientiane](image)

Picture: Eastin Hotel Vientiane, 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Room Type</th>
<th>Room Rate (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Superior City</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Superior Balcony</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Superior Balcony City</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Superior Balcony River</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Deluxe Balcony</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Deluxe Balcony City View</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Suite River View</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 70 rooms
All room rates below come with daily breakfast

8. Contact Information

Can’t find what you’re looking for? Do let us know, we’re here to help.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Santi Baran</td>
<td><a href="mailto:santi@mrcmekong.org">santi@mrcmekong.org</a></td>
<td>Programme Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Sopheak Meas</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sopheak@mrcmekong.org">sopheak@mrcmekong.org</a></td>
<td>Programme Co-lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Phouthamath Sayyaboun</td>
<td><a href="mailto:phouthamath@mrcmekong.org">phouthamath@mrcmekong.org</a></td>
<td>Programme Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Malinya Phetsikhiaw</td>
<td><a href="mailto:malinya@mrcmekong.org">malinya@mrcmekong.org</a></td>
<td>Logistics Coordinator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Or scan QR code below for information inquiries.

We can’t wait to welcome you all to the International Conference and to Lao PDR. Thank you for joining us.
Lao PDR – General Information

About Lao PDR

Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), also known as Laos, is a landlocked country, situated in Southeast Asia, and surrounded by Thailand, Myanmar, China, Viet Nam, and Cambodia. Lao PDR also shares the Mekong River with all its neighbours, with the river flowing through a full length of the country from north to south along its western border with Thailand.

Population: 7.8 million (est. 2009), with 49 ethnic groups
Country area: 236,800 sq km
Administrative divisions: 17 provinces and 1 capital (Vientiane Capital)

Small and lightly populated, Lao PDR is known for its breathtaking array of stunning scenery, natural attractions, adventure, history, culture, great food, and easy going people.

Language

The official Language of Lao PDR is Lao. Like many languages, the Lao language is read from left to right, and it has an alphabet with 28 vowel sounds, 26 consonant symbols, and 18 vowel symbols.

Lao Culture

One of the beloved characteristics of Laos is its cultural diversity. There are 49 distinct ethnic groups and each of them preserves its dialect, customs, culture, and tradition. In Vientiane Capital and other main cities like Luang Prabang, the culture, tradition, or ways of life of the locals are similar shown in lifestyle and clothing. An example is Sinh (Lao skirt), the traditional skirt worn by women across the country, and it is now an addition to Luang Prabang’s vibrant cultural tourism scene. Tourists can rent traditional clothing including Sinh (Skirt), blouses, trousers, sashes, jewelry, and accessories for a few hours or a full-day wear for a photo session.

Lao Food

Lao food is distinct from other Asian cuisines, although it is somewhat similar to the food found in some of its neighbors especially Thailand and Viet Nam. Lao food is uniquely tasty, with great odor, a bit salty, spicy, and herbaceous.

One of the staples of Lao food is sticky rice. A traditional everyday Lao meal is normally consisting of sticky rice served in small bamboo baskets, eaten by hand, some natural vegetables, and some kind of spicy sauce to dip the sticky rice into, plus some fish or meat.

Lao cuisine also has some French influences, so it is normal to see French baguettes with paté sold in street food stalls apart from sticky rice with grilled pork/chicken and spicy sauce.

Dining and Restaurant

Vientiane has plenty to offer when it comes to dining and restaurants. There are a lot, ranging from cheap street food to fine but affordable to top-notch dining, including Lao, Thai, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, and European.
In the Num Phu (fountain) area and the street along the Mekong River is where visitors can find plenty of eateries. Most mid-range to high-price restaurants are located in the fountain area, whereas, more affordable street food can be found along the Fa Ngum road along the Mekong River. These are within walking distance from most hotels in the city.

- **Climate / Weather**

Lao PDR has a tropical climate, with a rainy season from May through October, a cool dry season from November through February, and a hot dry season from March through April.

In April, the warmest month, is around 35-40°C. Temperatures in the upland plateau and the mountains are usually lower than on the plains around Vientiane.

- **Money**

Lao Currency is Lao Kip (Code: LAK), or just Kip is used to refer to the currency in everyday life.

Bank notes are available in 500, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000, and 100,000.

There are no coins in use.

Exchange rate: 1US$ ≈ LAK16,783 (March 2023)

**Where to exchange your money for Lao Kip?**

The first point is on your arrival, whether you arrive by air or by land, currency exchange booths are usually located prominently nearby the arrival channel. Once you are in the city, you can find exchange booths scatter almost everywhere in touristy areas, in banks, in shopping malls, and even at some high-end hotels though the exchange rates might not be in your favor.

**Note:** Before your departure make sure you convert your left-over Lao Kip back to USD or to a currency you can use elsewhere unless you want to keep the notes as a souvenir because you will not be able to exchange them outside Lao PDR.

**Credit/debit cards**

Credit/debit cards are accepted at some high-end restaurants, hotels, and big merchants with a 3% fee. You can also use your credit/debit cards to withdraw cash in the banks or through ATMs with a 3% fee. If you do it at the counter you can choose to have cash in US dollars or LAK, but if you withdraw it through ATMs machines, you can only have LAK.

- **Voltage and Local time**

The standard voltage in Lao PDR is 230 V and 50 Hz electricity, with A/B/C/E/F plug type.

The time zone in Lao PDR is (GMT+7).

- **Tourist Attractions**

Lao PDR, a small and relaxed country, has a lot to offer when it comes to tourist attractions including historical, cultural, natural, adventure, and UNESCO World Heritage sites.
- **That Luang Stupa (Vientiane Capital)**

The golden stupa is one of the most famous cultural landmarks and the national symbol of Laos. The original stupa was built in the 3rd century and has undergone many iterations and reconstructions since then. The stupa is one of the top tourist attractions and features some of the oldest archaeology in Vientiane and the country. It is also a place to hold an annual festival (known as That Luang Festival) where people all around the country come together to make merit.

- **Patuxai (Vientiane Capital)**

Situated on Lanexang Avenue, the memorial monument, Patuxai (also known as the Victory Gate of Laos) resembles the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. It is probably the most prominent landmark in the city. It was built between 1957 and 1968 to commemorate those that fought for freedom from the French. The monument is adorned with many beautiful frescos and reliefs, while the surrounding gardens display a magical fountain show at night. It is During the day tourists can go up to the observation deck for bird's-eye views of the capital.

  *Open: daily from 08:00 am - 17:00 pm*

- **Hor Phra Keo Museum (Vientiane Capital)**

Located in the center of the city next door to the Precedential Palace, originally this ancient temple was built in 1565 by King Xayasetthathilath to house the Emerald Buddha 1565-1779 (lost to the Siamese in 1828) as his place of worship. It was reconstructed in 1936, and during the 1970s, the temple was converted from a place of worship into a museum and now houses the finest national collection of Buddhist sculptures and artifacts.

  *Open: daily from 08:00 am - 12:00 pm and 13:00 pm - 16:00 pm*

- **Sisaket Temple (Vientiane Capital)**

Located in the center of the city (on the other side of the road from Hor Phra Keo Museum), Sisaket was built in 1818 by King Anouvong and is said to be the only ancient temple remaining intact in its original form after the destruction of the Siamese in 1828. Inside the main hall, the courtyard walls house hundreds of little niches and shelves containing a total of 6,840 Buddha images.

  *Open: daily from 08:00 am - 12:00 pm and 13:00 pm - 17:00 pm (except on public holidays)*

- **Kaysone Phomvihane (National) Museum (Vientiane Capital)**

Located at KM 6, National Highway No.13 close to the National Convention Centre.

Kaysone Phomvihane museum was established in 2000 to give honor Lao’s great revolutionary leader and former president Kaysone Phomvihane. The museum features revolutionary history, it is worth a visit if one is interested in the history and wants to get a deeper understanding.

  *Open: Tuesday-Sunday, 08:00 am - 12:00 pm and 13:00 pm - 16:00 pm*

- **Xieng Khouan Buddha Park (Vientiane Capital)**

Built-in 1958, the park is home to hundreds of Buddhist and Hindu sculptures, the most impressive being the huge reclining Buddha. This well-known park is a 30-minute drive from Vientiane city center en route to the Friendship Bridge. It is a great place to spend roaming outdoors and taking pictures.
Night Market (Vientiane Capital)

The night market is located on the Mekong Riverside promenade. Sellers start to set up their stalls early in the afternoon, and by 5 pm the whole riverside area is alive with colorful red-roof stalls full of clothes, souvenirs, paintings, and knickknacks that are geared towards tourists. Locals also take advantage of the cool evening breeze, taking their walk or joining an aerobics class that takes place in an open-air area just a few steps away from the market. It is a good place for last-minute souvenir shopping, or just for lazily strolling around to kill time or observe the local way of life.

Nam Pien Yor la Pa – The protected forest area along Nam Pien River

Located at XiengLae Thar village, ParkNgeum district, Vientiane capital, Nam Pien Yorla Pa is a new tourist site around 1.5 hour’s drive outside of Vientiane. The site is spread over 140 hectares in the protected area, and it offers several adventures and non-adventure activities including zip lining, quad bike riding, sightseeing, and trekking in the protected forest area, enjoying the spider web net above the river or just enjoying the natural view and waterfall.

It is a perfect destination for adventure seekers, as well as those with a desire for a relaxing place in the natural atmosphere. There is accommodation inside the site for those who want to stay the night too.

Luang Prabang - UNESCO World Heritage City (Luang Prabang Province)

Once the royal capital, the UNESCO World Heritage Luang Prabang is considered the tourism hub of Lao PDR. It is situated in the northern part of the country with a natural beauty, surrounded by mountains, and is 700 meters above sea level at the confluence of the Nam Khan and Mekong Rivers. Even though it is the most visited city in Lao PDR, it is an unspoiled destination, its religion, culture, and tradition still tenacious, plus the old-world charm that is made up of over 2,000 saffron-clad monks living in 33 gilded Buddhist temples and monasteries, and breath-taking scenery made it popular.

With the new Laos – China railway in service, this World Heritage city is even more popular among tourists both Lao and foreigners. From Vientiane Capital it takes only about 2 hours by train to Luang Prabang, one can get on the train in Vientiane to have lunch in Luang Prabang two hours later. In the past it is only possible by air, traveling by car took around 7 hours.

Vang Vieng (Vientiane Province)

Vang Vieng is a small tourist town situated between Vientiane capital and the UNESCO World Heritage Luang Prabang. Despite being a small town, it has a lot to offer, with its natural beauty and breath-taking view of limestone cliffs, paddy fields dotting its landscape, plus a river with crystal-clear water running through, it is undoubtedly a charming and relaxing little town. As for activities, there are lots ranging from kayaking, tubing (inner tubes floating downstream), swimming, zip lining, exploring caves, and rock climbing.

Getting there is a breeze now as there are more options, the Laos – China railway is the most popular at the moment. The expressway also makes traveling by car or bus a lot faster. Whether you travel by train or by land transport through the expressway, the journey takes 1 hour at most. Traveling on the
ordinary road from Vientiane to Vang Vieng is also faster than in the past as the road has been upgraded.

- **Wat Phu – UNESCO World Heritage (Champasak Province)**

Wat Phu in the southern Champasak province is a Khmer temple complex dating back to the 5th century. It was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2001. The site is a small version of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, though it is no less impressive. The temple is adorned with many carvings and reliefs that are excellent examples of classic Khmer architecture. Even though it is situated in quite a remote location, it never lacks visitors. It is one of the must-see places in Champasak province.

- **Plain of Jars - UNESCO World Heritage (Xiengkhoung Province)**

Plain of Jars – the recently granted World Heritage Site the most popular in Xiengkung province. The plain of jars consists of three sites with hundreds of large stone jars spread across hills. These prehistoric stone megaliths attract thousands of tourists to the province each year. Some say this is a national wonder, it is as mysterious as it looks though there is a story about it.

Getting there by plane and by land transport only, the Laos – China railway is not in the direction.

**Have a pleasant trip to and in Lao PDR!**

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