



The Embassy of Switzerland in Bangkok and the SDC Cooperation Office in Vientiane call on the Swiss currently traveling in the region – and who live in Switzerland – to return to Switzerland as soon as possible.

Information COVID-19 to the Swiss community in Lao PDR / No. 2 / 20.03.2020

Dear compatriots,

Following our first communication on 10.03.2020, please find below a new update from the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangkok and the SDC Cooperation Office in Vientiane.

1) Operations of the Swiss Embassy in Bangkok and the SDC Cooperation Office in Vientiane:

Given the challenges and growing constraints imposed by the COVID19 situation, the different services offered by the **Embassy** are now reduced:

- The **visa section** of the Regional Consular Center of the Swiss Embassy is closed until further notice. This is a decision of the Swiss authorities implemented worldwide to all Swiss Embassies / Consulates.
- The **consular section** of the Swiss Embassy remains open, but focuses essentially on emergencies related to COVID-19. Thousands of Swiss travelers in Thailand are now affected by the situation, so the Embassy does its best to advise and assist Swiss citizens with its resources available. Not urgent consular requests will be dealt with at a later stage. Thank you for your understanding.

As for the **SDC Office** in Vientiane, it remains operational but will work with a combination of Home Office and reduced teams to ensure minimal business continuity. Should you have a question, we recommend that you contact the office per mail (vientiane@eda.admin.ch) or by phone (021 251 794) rather than by coming physically to the office.

- 2) **Reductions and cancellations of flights** are rapidly increasing every day. It is **urgent for Swiss travelers to return** to Switzerland. From our side, we will make our best to also announce any new flight possibilities we might hear of, and put them on the [Facebook page](#) “Swiss Cooperation Mekong”, and our websites: [Bangkok](#) and [Vientiane](#).

3) Further travel restrictions :

- a. **To enter Switzerland:** On 18 March 2020, the Swiss Federal Council decided, that entry at the Schengen external borders is generally prohibited ([with only few exceptions](#)). **This means, if someone is holding a Schengen visa, this person is not allowed to enter Switzerland.** For additional information, please consult the [webpage of the State Secretariat for Migration SEM](#). Kindly also consult the [webpage of the Embassy of Switzerland](#), where more details on the changes and updates of the above mentioned are published.
- b. **To enter Lao PDR:** As of today 20 March 2020, the Government of Lao PDR has **stopped issuing visa** for all foreign nationals, until 20 April 2020 (visa on arrivals, e-visa, tourist visa). It is thus **not possible anymore for tourists to enter the country**. There are some exceptions for visitors who intended to visit Laos for non-tourist purpose. (See document attached). Information is also available on the [website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) of Lao PDR.

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- c. **To enter Thailand:** As of Sunday 22 March, every foreign national, including Swiss citizens, will have to provide a recent [health certificate](#) (including the result of a COVID test) to enter the country, as well as proof of health insurance with a minimum medical coverage in Thailand of not less than 100'000 USD. Information should be available on the website of the [Department of Disease Control](#), of the Ministry of Health of Thailand. These new requirements make the entry into Thailand almost impossible. Furthermore, you might end in an imposed self-quarantine or isolation scheme.

If any Swiss citizen is currently travelling in Lao PDR or in the region as a tourist or as businessman (this is not meant for Swiss permanent residents in Thailand), please also make sure you are registered on [Itineris](#) so that you can be contacted by the Swiss Embassy if needed.

4) Situation in Lao PDR

Lao PDR is also strengthening its measures to reduce the spread of the coronavirus in the country. If you are in Lao PDR, please comply strictly with these measures imposed by the Laotian authorities.

For further questions please contact: bangkok@eda.admin.ch or +66 2 674 69 00.
Or the Helpline FDFA: +41 800 24-7-365 or +41 58 465 33 33

Please consult regularly the links mentioned in this email.

Stay safe and healthy and with my best wishes and greetings,

Helene Budliger Artieda
Ambassador