

# Construction of largest wind power project in Southeast Asia now under way in Laos

The plant will export electricity to Vietnam and is the country's latest power venture.

By RFA Lao

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*The groundbreaking ceremony for the Monsoon Wind Power project in Sekong and Attapeu provinces, Laos, April 2023.*

The largest wind power project in Southeast Asia is now under construction in southern Laos, the latest power generation project in the impoverished, landlocked country.

Laos' government has an ambitious goal of becoming the “battery of Southeast Asia” by generating electricity and selling it to neighboring countries. The plant in Sekong and Attapeu provinces will have a generation capacity of 600 megawatts and will export electricity to Vietnam.

Dam projects in Laos – two have already been built on the Mekong River and several more have been proposed – have engendered controversy because of their environmental impacts and effect on villagers.

But the wind project likely won't result in any relocations of villagers, an official with the Monsoon Wind Power Lao Company Ltd. told Radio Free Asia.

“It looks like there won't be too much of an impact on local people,” she said. “They can still live there.”

The company broke ground on the U.S.\$950 million project in late April. The project covers a concession area of around 1,000 hectares (2,500 acres) and will have 133 wind turbines.

Some land affecting 340 families in 18 villages has already been taken, including land for electrical transmission lines. Sekong provincial authorities have finished the process of survey and data collection and are expected to pay out compensation to villagers soon, the official said.

### **Basic infrastructure for villages**

The project site is located in a hilly area with limited forest and limited land use, some 1,200-1,600 meters above sea level, according to Monsoon Wind Power.

“Only some parts of agricultural land will be lost to the project,” a provincial environmental official said. “No houses and buildings will be affected. There will be some trees that need to be cut down.”

Villagers are still waiting for what they call “fair” compensation and also expect project owners to develop basic infrastructure for the affected villages, a villager in Sekong province's Dak Cheung district told RFA.

“The relevant authorities have to keep their eye on this matter,” he said. “Once the project owners construct the fence along their project site, we will not be able to raise our livestock in that area and we will not make our living as we used to. We ask that our interests be protected.”

Monsoon Wind Power is a joint venture with Impact Energy Asia Development Limited, where it is registered as a corporation in Thailand. Another investor is Power Construction Corporation of China, a Chinese state enterprise.

*Translated by Phouvong. Edited by Matt Reed.*