



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRANTS IN THAILAND SITUATION REPORT

JULY 2022



COVID-19 vaccination campaign in a mall (© IOM 2022)

Background

South-East Asia is comprised of source, transit and destination countries and is characterized by migration inflows and outflows. Due to its unparalleled economic growth in the last decade, Thailand is a lucrative destination for labour migrants, mainly from South-East Asia. According to the Thailand Migration Report in 2019, the number of migrants in Thailand reached 4.9 million. The majority of the migrant population are from bordering countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and containment measures put in place across Thailand, migrant communities have faced an array of challenges. For many, it has resulted in loss of employment, as well as limited access to services and facilities.

Highlights

- In Thailand, BA.4/BA.5 sub-variants of the Omicron variant took the lead with 84 per cent prevalence of all samples. Towards the end of July, the average number of new cases per million population increased slightly with most provinces (74) reported an average rate of less than 50 new cases per million population. Bangkok continues to maintain the highest average rate at 200 cases per million.
- By the end of July, Thailand administered 141,573,519 doses, with a second dose coverage of 76.9 per cent, and a third dose coverage of 44.2 per cent (the target is 60%).
- At the end of July 5.35 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been administered to foreign nationals in Thailand, of which 2.17 million were to Cambodia, Lao and Myanmar (CLM) nationals.
- On July 8, 2022, Cambodia announced the removal of quarantine requirements for all travellers not yet vaccinated or partially vaccinated against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- All Quarantine and Treatment Centres in Cambodia have been closed.

THAILAND

COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATES

On 31 July Thailand’s Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) reported that the cumulative number of cases had reached 4,590,176 (+67,261) with 31,385 (+737) fatalities.

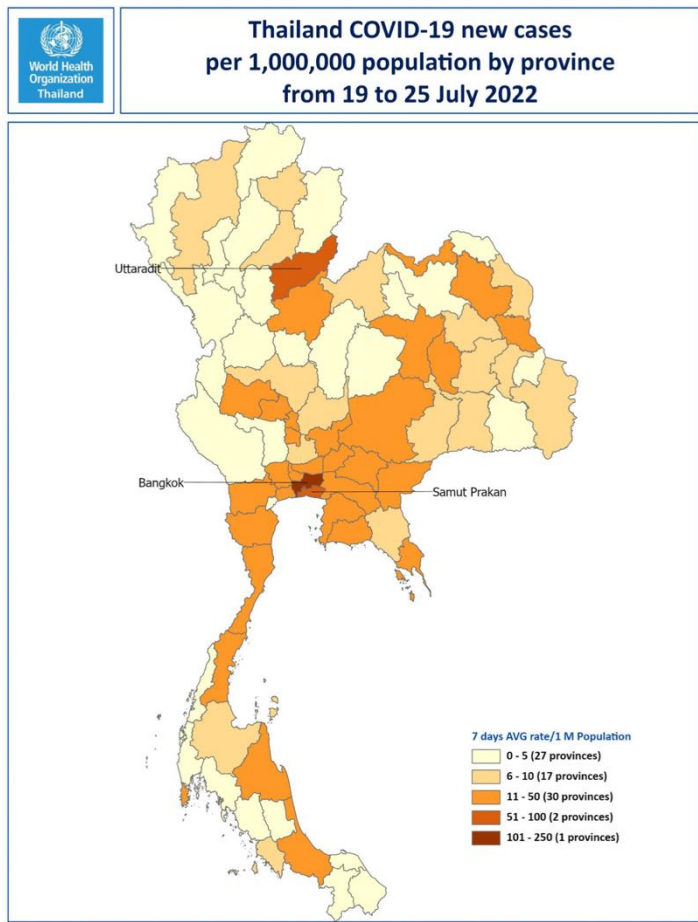


Figure 1: Distribution of new COVID-19 cases per million population by province (WHO)

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), while in July the average number of new cases per million population slightly increased across provinces from 12.76 to 14.83, with lower average rates being reported far more widely across the country. On 24 July, most provinces (74) reported an average rate of less than 50 new cases per million population, while the rate in Bangkok rose to 200 cases per million population, marking the highest national average rate. The policy of not confirming all probable cases by PCR testing, as well as the widespread use of rapid antigen tests, continues to make it difficult to accurately monitor actual case counts.

The Department of Medical Science at the Ministry of Public Health continues to monitor variants among positive cases. On 4 July, it was forecasted that the BA.4 and BA.5 will soon become the dominant sub-variants of COVID-19 in Thailand, and indeed there was a rapid increase in the prevalence of this sub-variant in

July. Between 1-8 August, from a sample of 382 cases, 322 (84%) were reported as the BA.4/BA.5 sub-variant of Omicron, 1 case of BA.1 and 58 (15%) were BA.2.75.



COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

By 31 July, 141,573,519 doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been administered in Thailand. Fifty-three out of seventy-seven provinces (+3) in Thailand reported more than 70 per cent second dose vaccination coverage by 24 July. Narathiwat and Pattani provinces continue to report less than 50 percent second dose coverage (see Figure 2). A second dose coverage stands at 76.9 percent, and a third dose coverage is 44.2 per cent (the target is 60%).

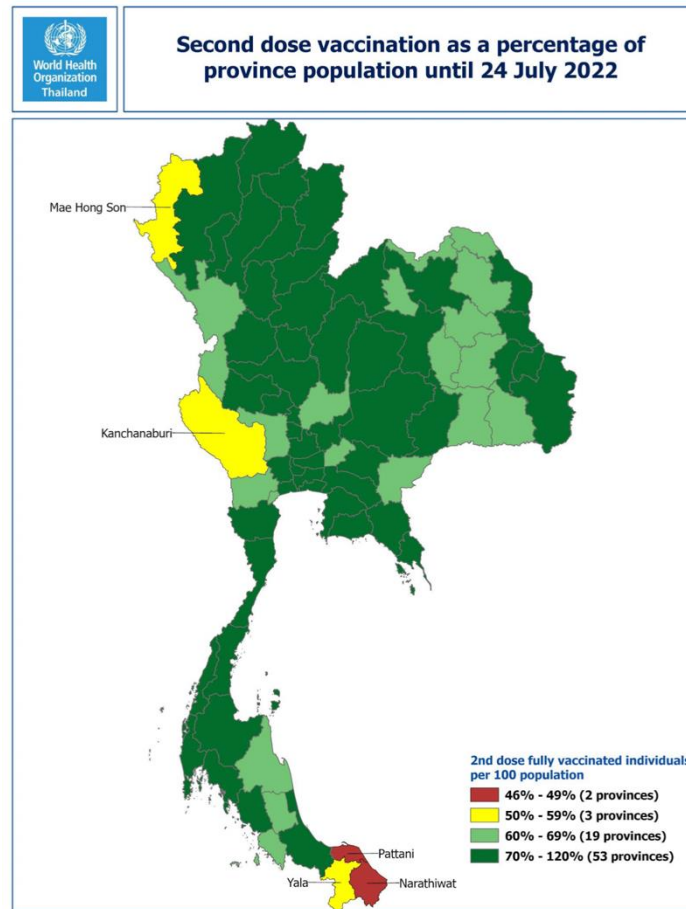
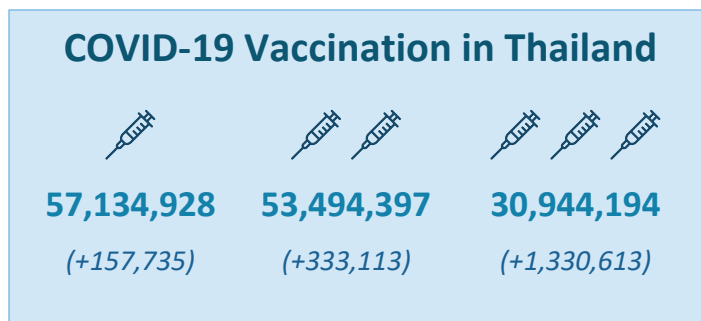
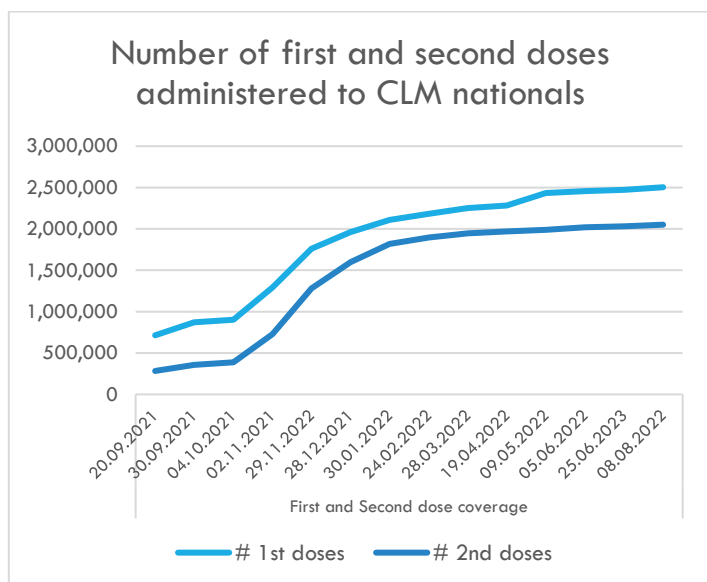


Figure 2: Second dose COVID-19 vaccination coverage by province (WHO)

COVID-19 VACCINATION AMONG MIGRANTS

Data released by the MOPH Department of Disease Control (DDC) on 8 August reported that a total of 5,351,258 (+96,807) doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been administered to foreign nationals residing in Thailand. The chart below shows how the number of doses administered to foreign nationals has progressed since September 2021, with an evident increase between October 2021 and January 2022 following the announcements of the CCSA and MOPH that they were committed to scaling up vaccination coverage among the migrant population in Thailand.



The latest data also indicates that 2,196,054 (+27,278) doses were to CLM nationals, who continue to represent the top three nationalities, as follows:

	Myanmar	Cambodian	Lao
Total	1,526,317	448,302	221,435
Since June	(+22,607)	(+2,828)	(+1,848)

Data from 8 August for CLM nationals shows that:

- First dose coverage is at 56 per cent (2,196,054)
- Second dose coverage is at 46 per cent (1,799,778)
- Third dose coverage is at 15 per cent (588,588)

Coverage is based on a CLM population denominator of 3.9 million as estimated in the 2019 Thailand Migration Report. While there is ongoing discussion regarding the size of the CLM population currently in Thailand, and that considerations need to be made about whether migrants had received a dose prior to their arrival in Thailand, there remains significant scope to scale up vaccination coverage.

NUMBER OF DOCUMENTED MIGRANT WORKERS (as of 31 July 2022)

The Foreign Workers Administration Office of the Department of Employment released updated data of the total number of documented migrant workers in Thailand on 31 July. The total from Myanmar, Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic had increased compared to the last month’s report, and stood at 2,099,097 (+164,163):



POLICY UPDATE

Policy updates: Migrant workers

According to Cabinet resolution 5 July 2022 on the management of migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Vietnam:

- Workers whose work permits expire on February 13, 2023, as well as irregular migrant workers employed by employers, may extend their stay until 13 February 2025.

Updates on border control measures

THAILAND - CAMBODIA BORDER

On 1 July 2022, Ban Khlong Luek Point of Entry (PoE) in Aranyaprathet District, Sa Kaeo Province has re-opened. Tourists can enter Thailand without having to apply for Thailand Pass nor provide proof of health insurance. People who cross the border to Thailand include Cambodians who conduct daily trade at the Rong Kleua Market and Cambodian tourists. There are also Vietnamese tourists crossing at the PoE in tour groups.

THAILAND - MYANMAR BORDER

Borders along the Thailand-Myanmar side are slowly re-opening. PoEs in Ranong and Kanchanaburi are fully open, while some PoEs in Tak, Chang Rai and Prachap Kiri Khan are partially open (open for trade only).

Province	Point of Entry (PoE)	Status
Tak	Thailand-Myanmar Friendship Bridge I	Closed
	Thailand-Myanmar Friendship Bridge II	Partially open (MoU migrants permitted to enter)
Ranong	Saphan Pla Pier	Open
	Pak Nam Ranong	Open
	Ranong Customs Pier	Open
	Andaman Club Pier	Open
Chiang Rai	Mae Sai Thailand-Myanmar Bridge I	Closed
	Mae Sai Thailand-Myanmar Bridge II:	Partially open
Kanchanaburi	Ban Phu Nam Ron	Open
Prachuap Kiri Khan	Singkhon (temporary checkpoint)	Partially open



THAILAND - LAO BORDER

There has been a continuous increase of border crossings at the Thailand-Lao Friendship Bridge in Nongkhai Province. Travelers' profiles include tourists from Lao People's Democratic Republic on private vehicles, businesspersons travelling to Nongkhai and Udon Thani, and Thai tourists to Lao People's Democratic Republic. On 1 July, the number of arrivals was 3,618, and departures 3,455. In total, since 9 May 2022 when the border was reopened, there have been 113,174 arrivals and 167,712 departures.



IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTERS (IDCs) AND ORGANIZATIONAL QUARANTINES (OQs)

As of 2 August 2022, Border Patrol Police reported that there are 16 Myanmar migrants in the OQ in Mae Sot, Tak (M=11, F=5). This is a significant reduction since June, where there were 83 nationals reported. All tested negative for COVID-19.

CAMBODIA



POLICY UPDATE

On July 8, 2022, Cambodia announced the removal of the quarantine requirement for all travelers not yet vaccinated or partially vaccinated against the COVID-19 pandemic. However, travelers are required to do a rapid test upon arrival in the country. If the test result is negative, they are allowed to continue to their respective destinations without being quarantined. If they test positive for COVID-19, for mild cases, they must be in isolation at their respective accommodations or at a place designated by the Ministry of Health. For serious cases, the patients must be treated at hospital at their own expense.

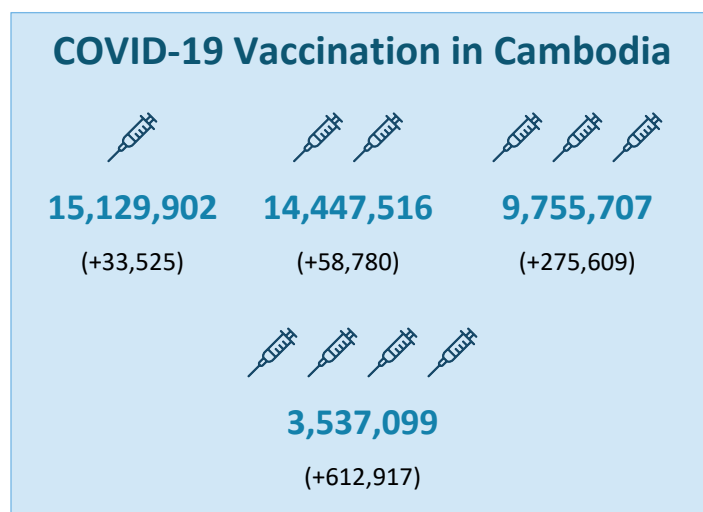
COVID-19 CASES IN CAMBODIA

There has been a steady increase in COVID-19 cases last month with total of 510 cases in July. No casualties were reported. The highest number of cases (47) was reported on 30 July. Cumulative total stands at 136,789.



COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

At the end of July, the Royal Government of Cambodia reported vaccination coverage as follows:



IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTERS (IDCs) AND ORGANIZATIONAL QUARANTINES (OQs)

All Quarantine and Treatment Centers have been closed. Home treatment/quarantine is allowed, however some referral hospitals in the provinces are maintaining some beds in case of emergency.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

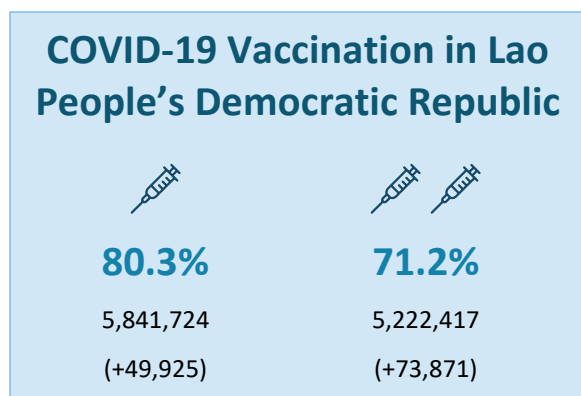
COVID-19 CASES IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The Lao Ministry of Health reported 2151 new COVID-19 cases in July, with one death. The cumulative number of cases reached 212,443 at the end of July, with 758 deaths. Majority of cases are in the capital city of Vientiane, where average positivity rate rapidly increased in July. Local samples sequenced in July were Omicron BA.2, BA.4/5.



COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

The Lao Ministry of Health continues to attain high vaccination coverage in first, second and booster doses among its population from the age of six:



MYANMAR



POLICY UPDATE

No further policy and control measures were updated in July.

COVID-19 CASES IN MYANMAR

In July the Ministry of Health reported 499 confirmed COVID-19 cases and zero deaths, bringing the cumulative totals to 614,092 and 19,434 respectively. Between the first and second quarter of the year, the test positivity rate is 5.0 percent and 0.2 percent in Myanmar. According to the MoH, there are total 116 days with no COVID-19 death cases in Myanmar.

COVID-19 VACCINATION

As of 26 July 2022, a total of 30,072,907 people over 18 years of age and 5,974,187 people under 18 years received a COVID-19 vaccination in Myanmar. This brings the overall total to 36,047,094 (+1,723,103).

ACTIVITY UPDATES FROM UN NETWORK ON MIGRATION MEMBERS



RESPONSE

IOM

IOM Thailand

With funds from WHO and the Australian Government, IOM and its partner World Vision Foundation of Thailand continue to support migrants in four provinces around Bangkok receive a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. By the end of July, activities had achieved the following:

- 227 Migrant Health Volunteers (MHVs) received capacity building training in COVID-19 vaccine safety.
- 7,461 migrant workers participated in outreach activities receiving health education and information regarding COVID-19.
- 2,734 migrant workers received support to access vaccination sites.
- 1,662 migrants were surveyed regarding their perception towards COVID-19.

In addition to IOM's effort in supporting the national COVID-19 1422 hotlines, available in three migrants, four Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were produced in printed brochures/posters, in collaboration with Raks Thai Foundation. The IEC materials consist of information listed below, translated into three migrant languages: Myanmar, Khmer, and Lao:

- Self-protection from COVID-19 transmission
- Where and how to receive COVID-19 vaccine
- Why should we receive vaccine?
- Types of COVID-19 vaccines
- Step to prepare before receiving vaccines
- Possible Adverse events following immunization (AFFI)
- Contact for migrant hotlines

The materials were translated into migrant languages and will be disseminated online and offline. Target recipients include migrants in the communities, as well as employers.

Three videos were also created and shared in migrant languages with subtitle and voiceover. The topics included:

- Why should we vaccinate against COVID-19?
- What type of COVID-19 vaccination is available in Thailand?
- Where can migrants receive vaccinations?
- Six things you should know before receiving a COVID-19 vaccination
- Symptoms to monitor after receiving COVID-19 vaccine



Figure 3: MHVs in Pathum Thani conducting information sessions on COVID-19 prevention and self-care, and vaccine safety

IOM Cambodia

With the support of the Government of Japan, IOM Cambodia is implementing COVID-19 response activities in three provinces along the border with Thailand: Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Oddor Meanchey. This is a UN joint project together with UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF which is targeting returning migrants and local government at POE level, Quarantine and Treatment Centers and areas of return. By the end of July, IOM Cambodia had delivered packages of dry food to 7,657 (F=3,744) returnees, including 358 children. This was done in four POEs (Doung, Ou Beichoan, Osmach, Poipet Transit Center) in three provinces (Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Oddor Meanchey). The packages include crackers, water and noodles.

IOM Cambodia also finished retrofit works at one of the most active POEs, Ou Beichoan, supporting the improvement of waiting areas and roofing.



Figure 5: Distribution of dry food under COVID-19 UN joint project with the kind support of the Government of Japan. Ou Beichoan POE, Banteay Meanchey Province (IOM Cambodia @2022)

UNICEF Thailand

UNICEF and Serpanya Foundation reached more than 1,724 migrant adults and 1,309 children with information about COVID-19 prevention, vaccines, and care through 26 mobile cinema screenings in Tak province in July. During the screenings, hygiene

supplies were distributed to 280 adults and older children in attendance, while 108 younger children were given colouring books about COVID-19 vaccines.

UNICEF continues its work with Raks Thai and World Vision Foundation of Thailand on Health Case Management (screening, tracking, first aid consultation, referral, and follow up) and in July reached 116 migrant children and 247 adults. UNICEF also continues to support Community Mass Rapid Testing in migrant communities and has reached 404 adults and 159 children. UNICEF further worked with partners to distribute essential non-food items and hygiene supplies to 2,591 adults and 160 children in migrant communities

IOM Myanmar

IOM Myanmar reached 2,476 returnees in July 2022 by providing services such as provision of support for testing, provision of food allowance, transportation allowance assistance from POE to quarantine center, distribution of COVID-19 preventive items to migrants and partners, and equipping POEs.

- 2,380 migrants received COVID-19 testing services at the point of entry in Tachileik, Yangon, Muse, Myawaddy, and Kan Pai Ti (Myitkyina).
- 84 COVID-19 positive returnees received emergency health referral support from IOM at Myawaddy, Tachileik, and Yangon.
- The food allowance was provided to a total of 1,254 COVID-19 negative migrants during their quarantine days.
- IOM installed handwashing facilities with the collaboration of the township health department and CBO's volunteers for promoting COVID-19 preventive measures in Tachileik. The two POEs and two quarantine centers were set up with 32 dispensers and 10 refill bottles for handwashing purposes at Tachileik. In terms of COVID-19 prevention, 770 COVID-19 preventive kits (Tachileik 270 kits, Kan Pai Ti 500kits) and 500 COVID-19 test kits (Muse) were distributed to returnees.

UN Women Thailand

UN women has implemented the Gender-Responsive COVID-19 Response and prevention in the Southern Border provinces (SBPs) including Satun, Songkhla, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, in partnership with Fasai Association, the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) and the Coordination Center for Children and Women (CCCW) to prevent and respond to the COVID-19 in vulnerable groups of women, as well as in Mae Sot in partnership with Suwannimit Foundation, to protect women migrant workers from COVID-19 and other forms of violence.

UN Women supports its partners in the SBPs and Mae Sot (Tak province) to strengthen capacity development for service providers, youth, and women, and to support community outreach, health accessibility, and awareness raising. In addition, the COVID-19 prevention kit will be distributed to its key partners networks and beneficiaries.