

## Laos, Vietnam cooperate to improve exported rubber quality

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Chairman of Vietnam Rubber Association Trần Ngọc Thuận and his Lao counterpart Bounthong Buahom signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on boosting the sustainable development of the rubber industry in the two countries.

The two sides also agreed that the Lao Rubber Association should strengthen support and attract more rubber processors to meet export requirements for Vietnam and other countries. Accordingly, the two associations will share experiences and support Vietnamese rubber companies that are operating in Laos to become qualified for sustainable development certifications. They will also boost cooperation in agreed areas for mutual benefit.

Rubber is one of the top foreign currency earners of Laos, bringing in over \$650 million for the country in 2022. To date, Laos has about 300,000ha of rubber, 46 per cent of which is operated by foreign companies under concession agreements, 24 per cent by cooperation agreements with individuals, and 30 per cent by local people. About 85 % of the total rubber trees in the country can be harvested. The main rubber export markets of Laos are China and Vietnam.

In Lao, all rubber produced in the country has been exported in raw form because there is no processing plant. The country does not apply any specific standards for rubber quality as it still has no laboratory to test and certify. Rubber is one of four major projects that the Lao Government included in its national socio-economic development plan for the 2016-21 period and a vision for 2025-30.