

Lao PDR

WBL 2.0 legal frameworks score	WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks score	WBL 2.0 expert opinions score
72.5	41.7	90.0

Women, Business and the Law 2024 (WBL 2024) identifies barriers for women's economic empowerment in three areas: women's legal rights, policy instruments designed to support the implementation of these rights, and how these rights are realized in practice. For that purpose, three new *Women, Business and the Law 2.0* indexes are presented for ten indicators: (1) legal frameworks, (2) supportive frameworks, and (3) expert opinions. For the WBL 2.0 legal frameworks index, 40 questions are scored across the ten indicators for 190 economies. For the WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks index, 30 questions are scored across the ten indicators for 190 economies. Overall economy level legal and supportive frameworks scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. The WBL 2.0 expert opinions index is created for a total of 164 economies. Expert opinion scores are not available for 26 economies due to an insufficient number of responses received from those economies during data collection. Individual responses at the economy level for 15 expert opinions questions across the ten indicators are scored by taking the median value of all responses per question. The economy level expert opinions index is equal to the simple unweighted average of the ten indicator scores.

For Lao PDR, data refer to the legal frameworks, supportive frameworks, and expert opinions that are applicable to the main business city (Vientiane). The scores for Lao PDR are shown in the table below.

Women, Business and the Law 2024 2.0 indicator scores

										
WBL 2.0	Safety	Mobility	Workplace	Pay	Marriage	Parenthood	Childcare	Entrepreneurship	Assets	Pension
Legal frameworks score	50.0	100.0	75.0	75.0	100.0	75.0	25.0	50.0	100.0	75.0
Supportive frameworks score	75.0	66.7	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	25.0	66.7	33.3	50.0
Expert opinions score	75.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	50.0	75.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In summary, the **WBL 2.0 legal frameworks score** for Lao PDR (72.5 out of 100.0) is higher than the global average (64.2) and higher than the East Asia & Pacific regional average (57.8). When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, constraints related to marriage and laws affecting women's property and inheritance, Lao PDR obtains a perfect score (100.0 out of 100.0). As an example, one of the lowest scores for Lao PDR is on the indicator measuring laws affecting childcare. To improve on the Childcare indicator, Lao PDR may wish to consider introducing legislation on any form of support to families for childcare services, putting in place legislation on any form of support to non-state childcare providers and adopting legislation on quality standards for the provision of childcare services in center-based settings.

The **WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks score** for Lao PDR (41.7 out of 100.0) is higher than the global average (39.5) and higher than the East Asia & Pacific regional average (33.9). Lao PDR does not attain a perfect score on any of the WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks indicators. There is room for improvement across all ten indicators. As an example, one of the lowest scores for Lao PDR is on the indicator measuring supportive frameworks affecting women's decisions to work. To improve

on the Workplace indicator, Lao PDR may wish to consider publishing guidelines on non-discrimination based on gender in recruitment, publishing guidelines on flexible work arrangements and establishing a specialized body that receives complaints about gender discrimination in employment.

The **WBL 2.0 expert opinions score** for Lao PDR (90.0 out of 100.0) is higher than the global average (65.7) and higher than the East Asia & Pacific regional average (64.8). When it comes to expert opinions on freedom of movement, expert opinions on women's decisions to work, expert opinions on women's pay, expert opinions on marriage, expert opinions on women starting and running a business, expert opinions on women's property and inheritance and expert opinions on women's pensions, Lao PDR obtains a perfect score (100.0 out of 100.0). As an example, one of the lowest scores for Lao PDR is on the indicator measuring expert opinions on women's work after having children.

WBL 2.0 legal frameworks data

QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Safety		
Does the law address child marriage?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts. 150(1) and 158(1); Penal Law, Art. 269
Does the law address sexual harassment?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Does the law address domestic violence?	Yes	Law on Development and Protection of Women, Arts. 29-32 and 50; Law on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Children, Arts. 10, 42-44, 68, and 79
Does the law address femicide?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Mobility		
Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	Yes	Civil Code, Art. 162; Gender Equality Law, Art. 18
Can a woman travel internationally in the same way as a man?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts. 161 and 162; Law on Gender Equality, Art. 17
Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts. 161-162
Do a woman and a man have equal rights to confer citizenship on their spouses and their children?	Yes	Law on Lao Nationality, Arts. 9, 11 and 14
Workplace		
Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts. 161-162; Law on Development and Protection of Women of 2004, Art. 15
Does the law explicitly prohibit discrimination in recruitment based on marital status, parental status, and age?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	Yes	Labor Law, Arts. 3 and 141; Gender Equality Law, Art. 14
Does the law allow employees to request flexible work?	Yes	Labor Law, Art. 33(1)
Pay		
Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Marriage		
Is the law free of legal provisions that require a married woman to obey her husband?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
Can a woman be "head of household" or "head of family" in the same way as a man?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts. 161; Gender Equality Law, Art. 18
Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts. 171-182
Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	Civil Code, Art. 193
Parenthood		

Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	Yes	Labor Law, Art. 98
Are leave benefits for mothers paid solely by the government?	No	Labor Law, Art. 98; Law on Social Security 2018, Arts. 49 and 72
Is paid leave available to fathers?	Yes	Labor Law, Art. 58(4)
Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	Yes	Labor Law, Art. 100
Childcare		
Does the law establish the provision of center-based childcare services?	Yes	Law on Education 2015, Arts. 10, 12 and 29-31
Does the law establish any form of support for families for childcare services?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Does the law establish any form of support for nonstate childcare providers?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Does the law establish quality standards for the provision of center-based childcare services?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Entrepreneurship		
Can a woman undertake entrepreneurial activities in the same way as a man?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts. 10, 161 and 162; Law on Development and Protection of Women of 2004, Art.15
Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	Yes	Penal Code, Art. 177; Gender Equality Law, Art. 10
Does the law prescribe a gender quota for corporate boards?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Does the law include gender-sensitive procurement provisions for public procurement processes?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Assets		
Do a woman and a man have equal administrative power and ownership rights to immovable property, including land?	Yes	Civil Code, Art. 169; Land Law, Art. 3; Law on Gender Equality, Arts. 3(3) and 10
Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts. 574, 576 and 577; Law on Gender Equality, Art. 18
Do male and female surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts. 574 and 576
Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	Yes	Civil Code, Arts.169 and 181
Pension		
Are the ages at which a woman and a man can retire with full pension benefits the same?	No	Law on Social Security 2018, Arts. 34 and 58
Are the ages at which a woman and a man can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
Is the mandatory retirement age for a woman and a man the same?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	Yes	Law on Social Security 2018, Art. 59; Decree on Social Security System for Enterprise Employees, Art. 79

WBL 2.0 supportive frameworks data

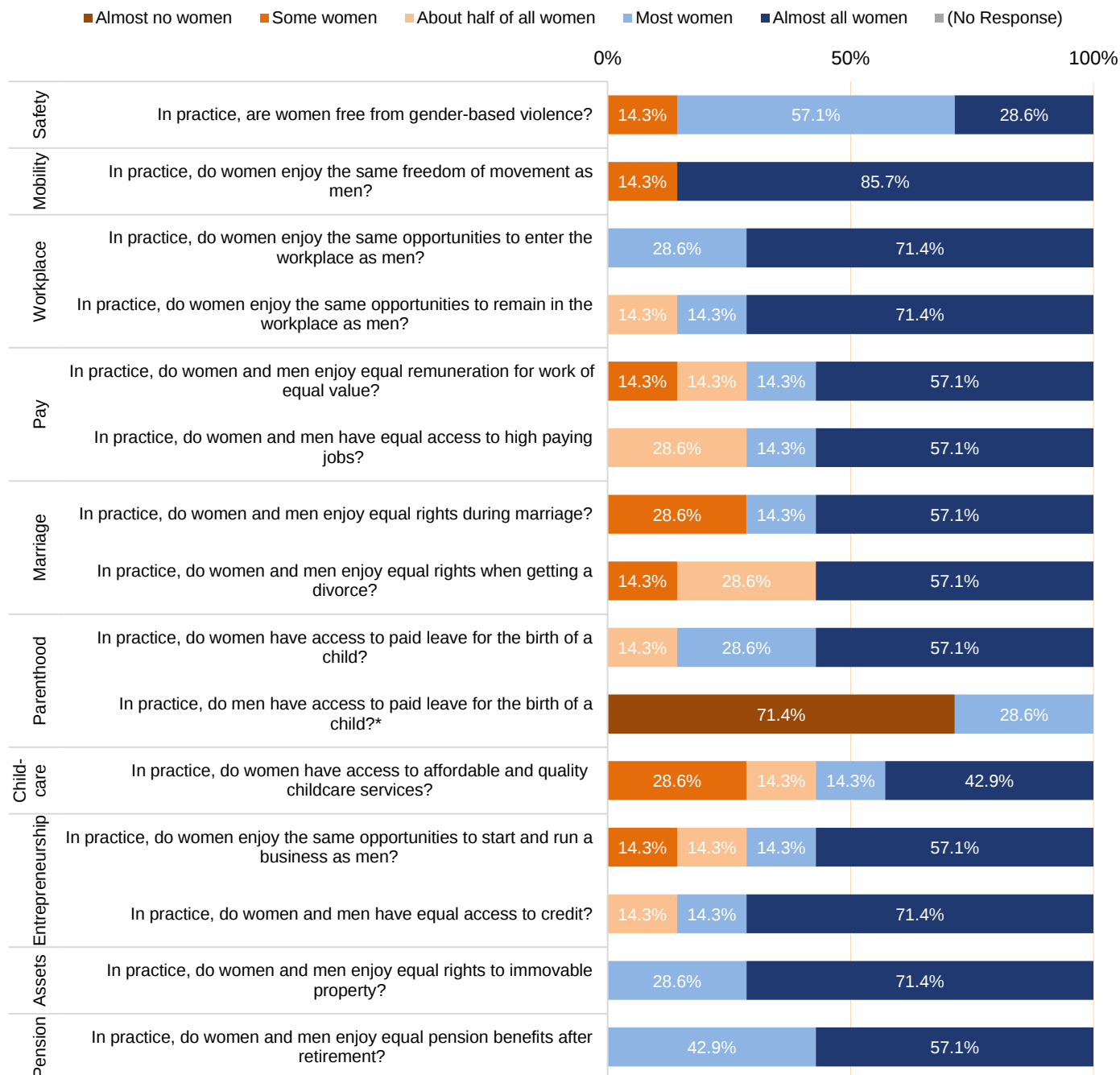
QUESTION	ANSWER	SOURCE
Safety		
Has the government developed comprehensive mechanisms to address violence against women?	Yes	National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022 – 2026); The second Five-Year National Plan of Action on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Violence against Children (2021-2025); The Fourth-Five Year National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025); Counselling and Protection Center for Women and Children; One-Stop Service Unit for Women and Children
Are special procedures in place for cases of sexual harassment?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Is a government entity responsible for monitoring and implementing national services, plans and programs addressing violence against women?	Yes	National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers, and Children (NCAWMC)



Is an annual budgetary allocation devoted to violence against women risk mitigation, prevention, and response programs?	Yes	Lao Women's Union
Mobility		
Are passport application processes the same for a woman and a man?	Yes	Passport application form
Are the application processes for official identity documents the same for a woman and a man?	Yes	ID application procedures
Does a current policy or plan explicitly consider the specific mobility needs of women in public transportation?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Workplace		
Does a specialized body receive complaints about gender discrimination in employment?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Has the government published guidelines on nondiscrimination based on gender in recruitment?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Has the government published guidelines on flexible work arrangements?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Pay		
Are pay transparency measures or enforcement mechanisms in place to address the pay gap?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Have sex-disaggregated data on employment in different industries or sectors been published?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Marriage		
Is there a fast-track process or procedure for family law disputes?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Are there specialized family courts?	Yes	Civil Procedure Law (Amended), Arts. 44 - 50
Is legal aid available for family law disputes?	Yes	Ministry of Justice
Parenthood		
Is it possible to apply for maternity benefits through a single government application process?	Yes	Website of Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Are incentives in place to encourage fathers to take paternity leave on the birth of a child?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Have sex-disaggregated data on unpaid care work been published?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Childcare		
Is there a publicly available registry or database of childcare providers?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Is there a clearly outlined application procedure to request financial support from the government for childcare services by parents?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Is there a clearly outlined application procedure to request financial support from the government for childcare services by nonstate childcare providers?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Has the government published any reports on the quality of childcare services?	Yes	Ministry of Education and Sports Education and Sports Sector Performance Annual Report 2020-2021, p. 14-18
Entrepreneurship		
Have sex-disaggregated data on business activities, entrepreneurship, or women-owned businesses been published?	Yes	Lao Statistics Bureau
Are government-led programs supporting female entrepreneurs providing access to finance and training, coaching, or business development?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Does a current national government plan or strategy focus on women's access to financial services?	Yes	Financial Inclusion Roadmap (2018 - 2025)
Assets		
Are mechanisms or incentives in place to encourage women to register immovable property (including joint titling)?	Yes	Decision on Determination of Land Register and Land Title, Art. 7 (4.2)
Are awareness measures in place to improve women's access to information about marital and inheritance rights?	No	Insufficient evidence located

Have anonymized sex-disaggregated data on property ownership been published?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Pension		
Are incentives in place to increase women's retirement benefits?	No	Insufficient evidence located
Is a procedure in place for pension beneficiaries to challenge the decisions of the competent authority regarding their benefits?	Yes	Law on Social Security 2018, Arts. 99-104

WBL 2.0 distribution of expert opinion responses



*Note: The response options for the second Parenthood question above are formatted as almost no men, some men, about half of all men, most men, almost all men.