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## Energy, mines set to boost Lao revenue

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THE LAO government says the country will earn increased revenues from the energy and mines sector this year on the back of continued growth.

Laos has 53 hydropower plants with installed capacity of 7,082 megawatts (MW) that are able to generate 37,028 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity a year.

"Another 47 plants are under construction or about to start construction and all are expected to be functioning in 2020-2021. Then the country will comprise 100 hydropower plants with an installed capacity of 13,062MW and be able to generate 66,944 million kWh a year," Energy and Mines Minister Dr Khammany Inthirath reported at the annual meeting in Vientiane last week.

"However, around 85 per cent of the total will be exported," he said

As development and the economy expands, Laos still needs more electricity for domestic supply especially in special and specific economic zones, the Laos-China railway project, mining and processing, energy construction projects and SMEs promotion as well as infrastructure development, rural development and communication projects.

In the next five years, the government expects the demand for electricity in the industrial sector to cover about 50-60 per cent of the total demand, Khammany said. The government has also signed cooperation agreements for feasibility studies in electricity trading with neighbouring countries Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and China.

Laos has agreed to sell 9,000MW of electricity to Thailand, and is currently able to export 4,260MW and will supply 7,000MW in 2020 and 9,000MW by 2025, Khammany said.

The country also agreed to sell 100MW of electricity to Malaysia via Thailand and is now able to supply 100 per cent under a model project for other Asean countries which includes plans for sales to Singapore by 2020.