



## Living Standards

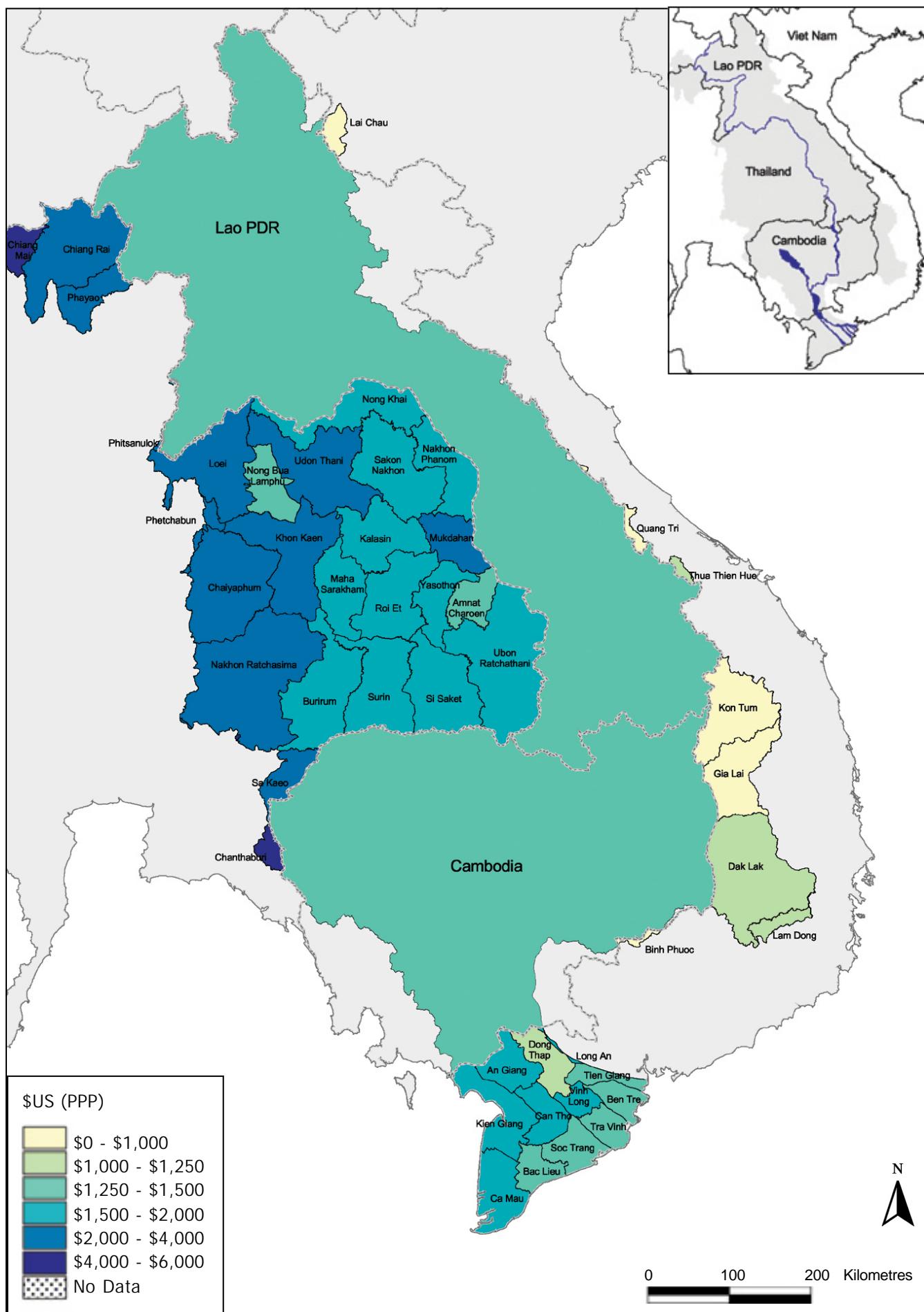
## Living Standards Maps

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## Map 26: Income - GDP Per Capita (\$PPP)

Gross domestic product per person (Purchasing Power Parity)



Note: Province names and boundaries are not shown where national or regional data are used

## Map 26: Income - GDP Per Capita (\$PPP)

### Gross domestic product per person (Purchasing Power Parity)

GDP per capita represents the total value of a province or country's economic production, divided by the population. This figure is used as an estimate of average income. Stating GDP per capita in terms of purchasing power parity involves adjusting the data by the local cost of living to arrive at a figure that is internationally comparable. If two countries have per capita GDP incomes that are the same in \$PPP, this means that the average income in each country could buy approximately the same amount of goods and services at local prices, even if the absolute values of the average incomes were different.

Income based on per capita GDP (\$PPP) may underestimate actual living standards in the LMB. Large numbers of people farm primarily for household consumption or work in the informal sector, and are not part of the market economies of their countries.

Comparison of per capita GDP (\$PPP) shows that incomes vary widely across the LMB. At the national level, per capita PPP income in Thailand in 1999 was around \$6,000, compared with \$1,860 in Viet Nam, \$1,471 for Lao PDR and \$1,361 for Cambodia (UNDP 2002). Provincial-level data are not available for Cambodia and Lao PDR, but in Thailand and Viet Nam it is clear that people living in provinces in the LMB often have income levels well below the national averages.

Most people in the LMB earn income in the agricultural sector. At the same time, income from non-farm activities (self-employment and salaried jobs) is increasing. Remittances are also an important source of income for many rural households.

In Northeast Thailand, farmers in the more rural eastern provinces tend to have lower income levels. In the western provinces of the Korat Plateau and in the North Region, particularly in highly urbanised Chiang Mai, there is a greater mixture of farm and non-farm economic activities. The latter tend to provide people with higher incomes.

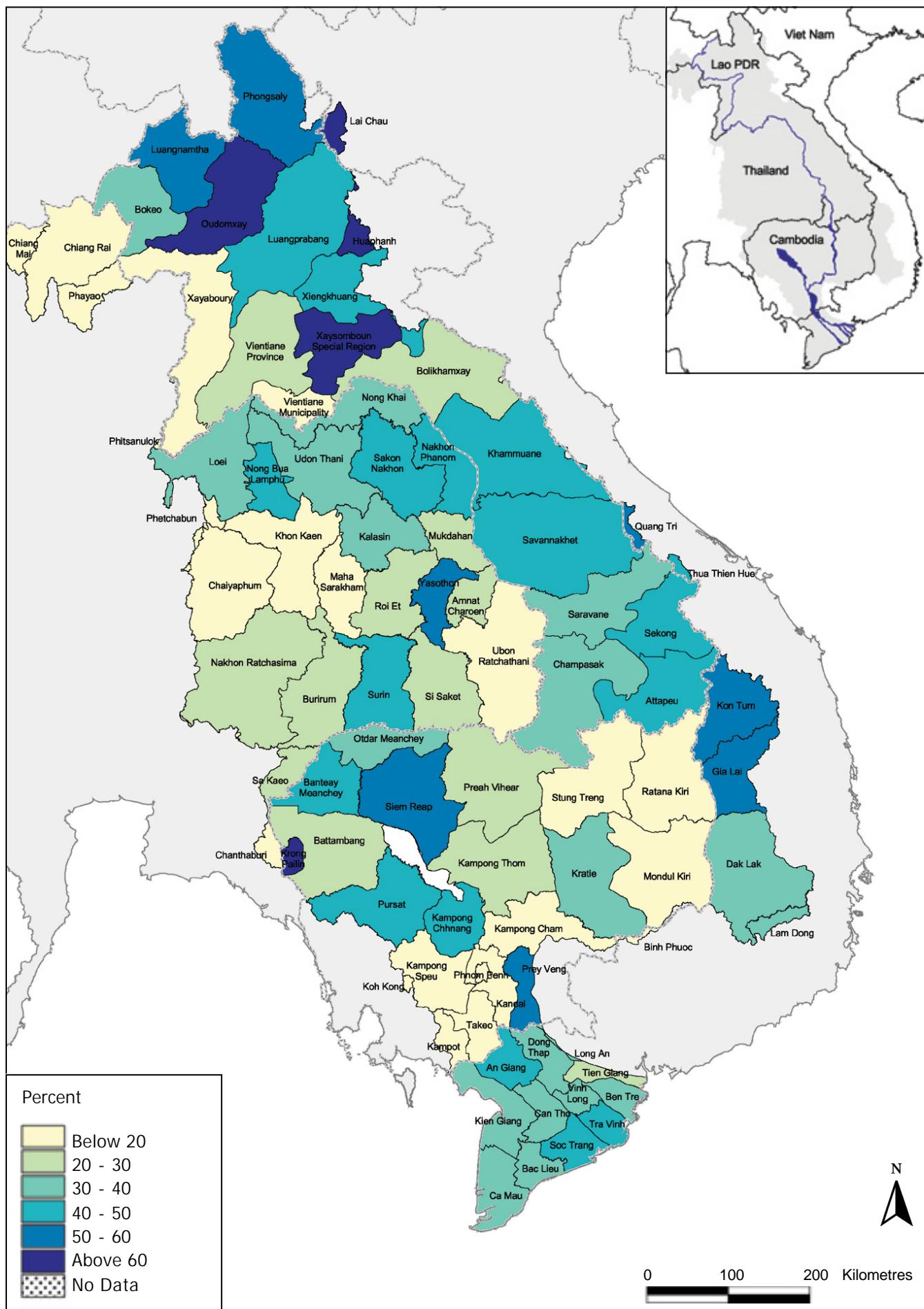
In Viet Nam, income levels in much of the Mekong Delta approach the national average. This reflects the productivity of rice cultivation in the region, and contrasts with much lower incomes in the Central Highlands. In the eastern provinces of the Delta, however, high population densities tend to result in lower per capita GDP.

Women have significantly lower income levels than men. In Cambodia, Lao PDR and Thailand, non-agricultural wage levels for women are 75 to 80 percent of the levels for men (MOP-Cambodia 1998, Chagnon 1996, UNDP-Thailand 1999). In Viet Nam, women's overall wages are 72 percent of men's and, in the agricultural sector, 62 percent of men's (AusAID 2002).

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	GDP per capita PPP (1999)	UNDP Human Development Report	Table 11
Lao PDR	GDP per capita PPP (1999)	UNDP Human Development Report	Table 11
Thailand	GDP per capita at current market prices (1999). PPP at 2000 conversion rate of 12.6	Statistical Yearbook 2001	Table 10.10
Viet Nam	GDP \$PPP per capita (1999). PPP at 1999 conversion rate of 2745	Viet Nam Human Development Report 2001	Table 1

## Map 27: Poverty Rate

Proportion of people living below the consumption-based poverty line



## Map 27: Poverty Rate

### Proportion of people living below the consumption-based poverty line

Poverty is measured in terms of people's consumption levels for food and basic necessities. In each country a poverty line has been defined that represents the minimum value of goods and services consumed on a daily basis to adequately sustain an average adult. People whose daily consumption has a value less than this level are considered poor. The estimation of consumption and the construction of poverty lines is complex, and the methodology employed varies between countries, particularly with regard to the inclusion of non-food items. Comparisons between countries should be made with caution. The reader is referred to the source documents for a complete explanation of the methods used for each country.

Aside from consumption, other important dimensions of poverty include lack of access to productive land and insecure land tenure; insufficient and poor quality agricultural inputs; lack of rural credit; and, poor access to transportation, markets, schools and health services.

Poverty is endemic across the LMB. In many provinces, more than 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. In northern Lao PDR, poverty levels in some provinces exceed 60 percent. In general, poverty levels are very high and deeply entrenched in remote, upland rural areas where ethnic minority groups live.

Strong economic growth in the 1990s led to substantial reductions in poverty levels at the national levels, in Lao PDR (from 45 to 39 percent) and Viet Nam (from 58 to 37 percent). Economic growth did not yield similar reductions in Cambodia, however, where levels only declined from 39 to 36 percent. The financial crisis in the late 1990s led to an increase from 11 to 15 percent in Thailand.

Within Thailand, the North and Northeast regions account for nearly 75 percent of national poverty (World Bank 2001). While the North and some provinces in the Northeast have levels below 20 percent (similar to national levels), other provinces have rates up to 50 percent of the population. The poorest regions of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam are, respectively, the Tonle Sap region, the North region, and the Central Highlands.

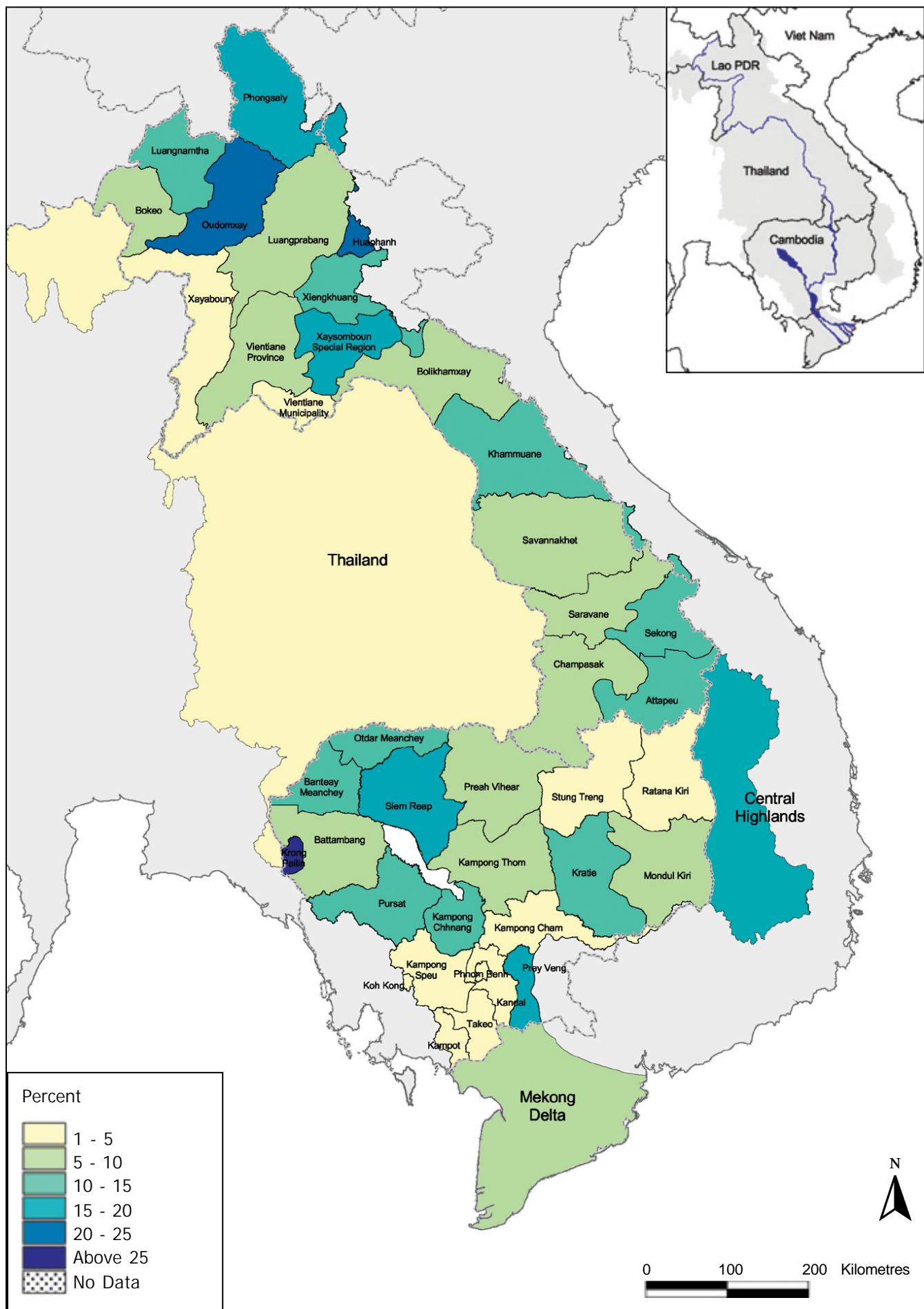
Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Percentage of people living below consumption-based poverty line (1997) See source for details.	MOP/WFP Poverty Estimates 2002	Table 7
Lao PDR	Percentage of people living below consumption-based poverty line (1997/98) See source for details.	Kakwani et al 2002	Table 9
Thailand	Percentage of people living below consumption-based poverty line (2000) See source for details.*	NESDB 2002	
Viet Nam	Percentage of people living below consumption-based poverty line (1998/99) See source for details.**	Minot and Baulch	Table 6

\* Sample size is quite small for some provinces so caution should be used in interpretation

\*\* Poverty Rates calculated by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs of Viet Nam are not used because they are based on income, not consumption.

## Map 28: Poverty Gap

Average distance below the poverty line, as a percentage of the poverty line



Note: Province names and boundaries are not shown where national or regional data are used

## Map 28: Poverty Gap

### Average distance below the poverty line, as a percentage of the poverty line

The poverty gap measures the depth of poverty, that is the average distance poor people are living below the poverty line, expressed as a percentage of the poverty line.

In much of the LMB, the poverty gap is less than 10 percent. The majority of the poor are clustered near the poverty line. Economic growth and policy changes can readily contribute to raising the incomes of the poor above the poverty line. At the same time, many households have consumption levels just above the poverty line. They can easily fall into poverty due economic slowdowns, floods, droughts and other adverse changes.

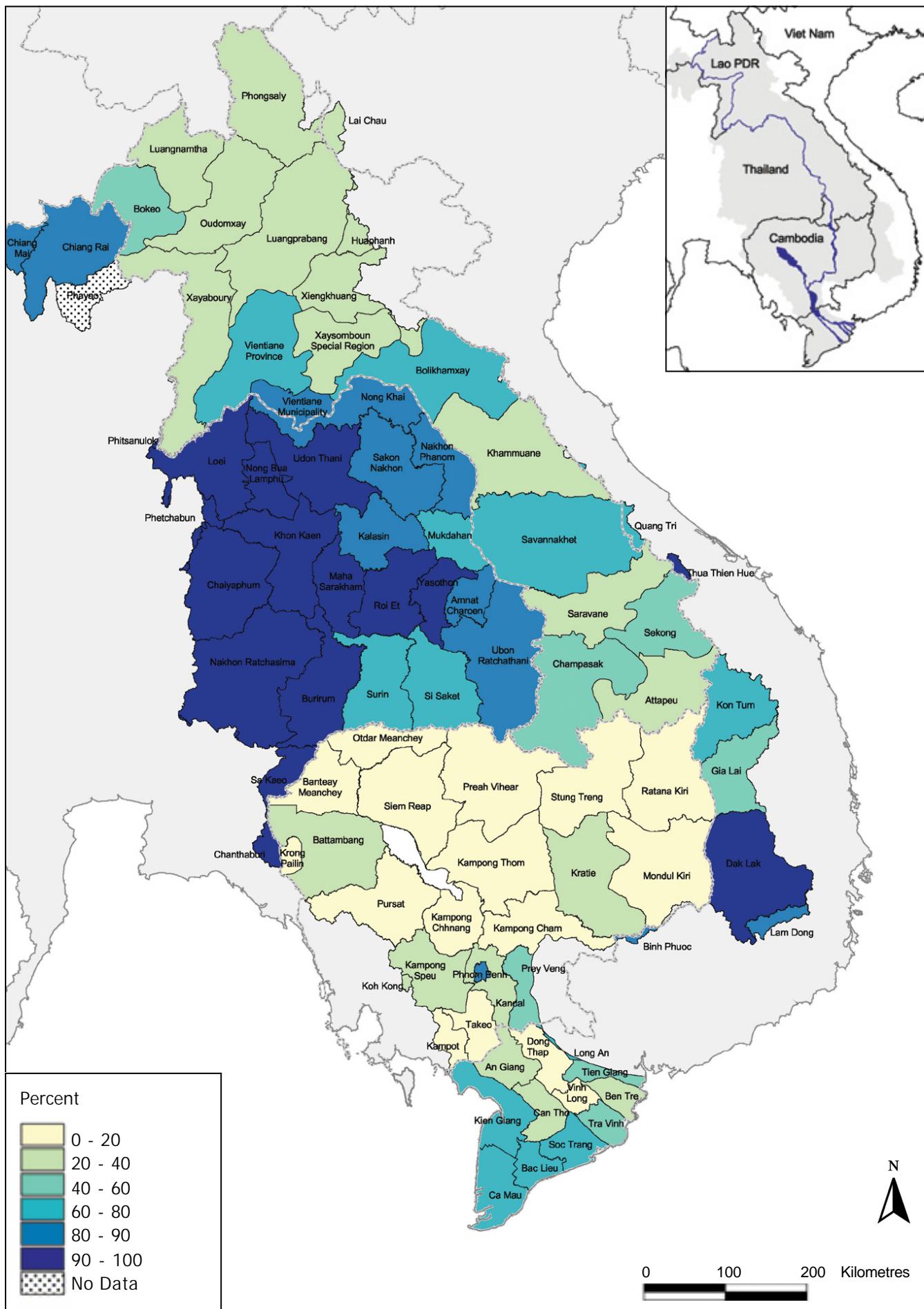
The poverty gap is larger in areas where poverty levels are higher (see Map 27). That is, in the Tonle Sap region, the Northern Region of Lao PDR and the Central Highlands, poverty is greater and more deeply entrenched. Government policies in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam are targeting these areas for special attention because economic growth alone may not be sufficient to reduce poverty levels.

Although poverty has declined throughout much of the LMB, there is increasing inequality in the distribution of income between the rich and the poor, and between urban and rural areas. In Thailand, the incomes of the richest 20 percent of the population are 9 times greater than those of the poorest 20 percent. In other LMB countries, the richest 20 percent have incomes 4 to 6 times greater than the poorest (ADB 2002). In Viet Nam, 96 percent of the increase in inequality is due to a widening gap between urban and rural incomes (ADB 2000). The substantial declines in poverty levels in Viet Nam have been due to economic growth in urban areas, not to a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Average distance people are living below the poverty line, as a percentage of the poverty line (1997)	MOP/WFP Poverty Estimates 2002	Table 7
Lao PDR	Mean distance below the poverty line as a proportion of the poverty line (1997/98)	Kakwani et al 2002	Table 10
Thailand	Poverty gap (1999)	Thailand Social Monitor	
Viet Nam	Average distance people are living below the poverty line, as a percentage of the poverty line (1998)	Viet Nam: Attacking Poverty	Table 1.4

## Map 29: Access to Safe Water

Proportion of population with access to safe water



## Map 29: Access to Safe Water

### Proportion of population with access to safe water

The quality of water supply varies widely across the LMB. In most provinces in Northeast Thailand, over 90 percent of the population has access to safe water. In the majority of Cambodian provinces, the proportion is less than 25 percent; in Lao PDR, it is between 25 and 50 percent.

Access to safe water may be more common in Lao PDR than in Cambodia because of greater numbers of people living in remote upland areas with access to unpolluted mountain streams. Also, during the dry season in Cambodia, the number of households with access to safe water declines in both urban and rural areas.

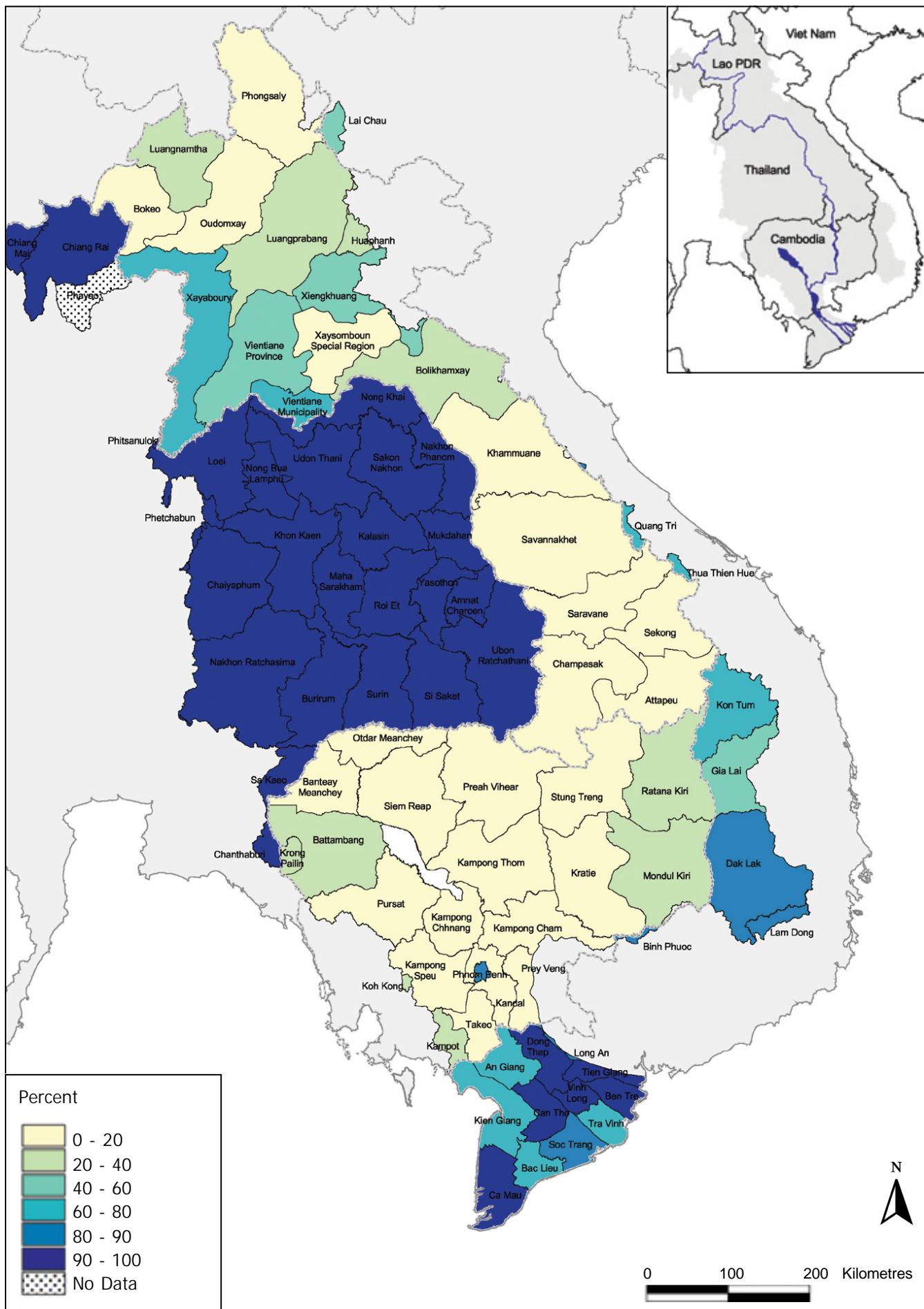
The Mekong Delta, in Viet Nam, has many households that lack access to safe water. Throughout the delta, people rely on shallow wells and irrigation canals (often contaminated by pollutants or salt-water intrusion), streams and rainwater collection. In the northern part of the delta, acid-sulphate soils often contaminate ground and surface water.

In urban areas, piped water systems increase the availability of safe water. Access to safe water is much more common in Phnom Penh and Vientiane Municipality than in other areas of Cambodia and Lao PDR. Water supplies are also improving in secondary urban centres as a result of government and donor investments.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Percentage of households with access to either piped, tube well, pipe well, or bought drinking water (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Percentage of population with piped water or protected well (1997/98)	Expenditure and Consumption Survey 1997/98	Table 16
Thailand	Percentage of households with access to bottled drinking water, tap water, rain water or private well (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Percentage with access to safe water (1999)	Viet Nam Human Development Report 2001	Table 2

## Map 30: Access to Sanitation

Proportion of population with access to sanitation



## Map 30: Access to Sanitation

### Proportion of population with access to sanitation

Access to adequate sanitation has a greater influence on health and longevity than safe water supply, and as such is an important indicator of socio-economic development. In general, adequate sanitation usually refers to the availability of a latrine in or near the house, or a flush toilet. However, definitions vary between countries, as shown in the table below.

Levels of access to sanitation vary greatly across the basin. The vast majority of households in Thailand and large parts of the Mekong Delta have access to adequate sanitation. In southern Lao and almost all of Cambodia, less than 20 percent of the population have access to such facilities.

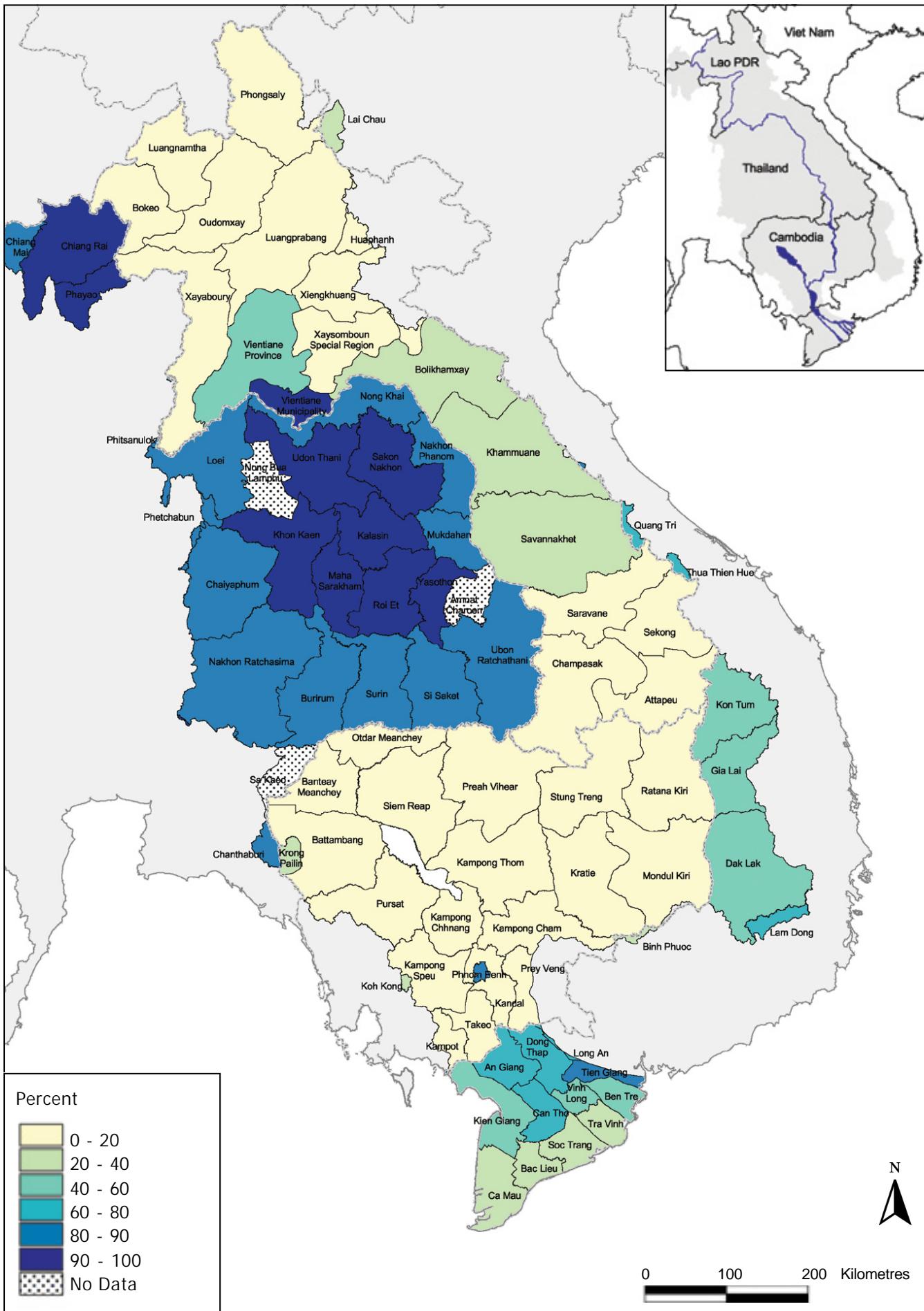
As with other public amenities, access to sanitation is much greater in the cities than in rural areas. The rate for Phnom Penh is 88 percent and for Vientiane Municipality is 70 percent. In many secondary urban centres, donors and governments are increasingly investing in the construction of sewer systems and wastewater treatment plants.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Percentage of people with flush toilets, latrines, and traditional pit latrines, with or without connection to sewer/septic tank (2000)*	Health Survey 2000	Table 14
Lao PDR	Percentage of population with access to toilet of any kind (1995)	Population Census 1995	Table 8.6
Thailand	Percentage of households with flush latrines and moulded bucket latrines (2000)	Population Census 2000	Key Ind.
Viet Nam	Percentage with access to sanitation (1999)	Viet Nam Human Development Report 2001	Table 2

\* The data source amalgamates the provinces of: Battambang and Krong Pailin; Kampot, Kep and Sihanoukville; Preah Vihear, Stung Treng and Kratie; Mondul Kiri and Ratana Kiri; and Siem Reap and Otdar Meanchey.

## Map 31: Access to Electricity

Proportion of population with access to electricity



## Map 31: Access to Electricity

### Proportion of population with access to electricity

Electricity is available in most parts of Thailand, including more than 80 percent of households in provinces in the Thai portion of the LMB. In the provinces of the central Korat Plateau, more than 90 percent of households have electricity, which may be due to the proximity of hydro-power and thermal generating plants.

Across the whole of Viet Nam, more than 75 percent of households have electricity, although the rate in rural areas is significantly lower. Access in the Mekong Delta is below the national average and is lowest in the southern provinces.

In Cambodia and Lao PDR, most households do not yet have access to public electricity service. Access rates are below 10 percent in central Cambodia and the province of Mondul Kiri, as well as northern Lao PDR and the provinces of Sekong and Xaysomboun Special Region. Access to electricity is highest in the municipal areas of Phnom Penh and Vientiane.

Rural households without public electricity service often use generators to produce electricity for lighting and batteries to operate radios and TVs. Provincial and district towns that are not connected to national grids are often supplied by local authorities that operate diesel generators for three to four hours a day.

In central Lao PDR, World Bank rural electrification programmes have increased access to electricity in Vientiane Province and several provinces. The ADB is funding a programme for rural electrification in six northern provinces. In Cambodia, both donors are involved in funding rural electrification programmes.

The data for Lao PDR overestimate the proportion of households with access to electricity. They report the percentage of villages with electricity supply, although there may be households in these villages that do not have access to this service.

Country	Indicator Definition	Source	Table
Cambodia	Percentage of households that have city power, generators, or both as the main source of light (1998)	Population Census 1998	PopMap
Lao PDR	Percentage of villages with electricity (1997/98)	Expenditure and Consumption Survey 1997/98	Table 22
Thailand	Percentage of households with access to electricity (1990)	Population Census 1990	Table 10
Viet Nam	Percentage with access to electricity (1999)	Viet Nam Human Development Report 2001	Table 14