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# WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

## February 2020



### Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 140 out of 189 countries in the 2018 Human Development Index. It has one of the lowest population densities in Asia. 23 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (USD 1.25/day), with a gross national income per capita of USD 2,270 (World Bank 2017). The country is ranked 64 out of 144 in the Global Gender Gap Index 2017. While Lao PDR has managed to reduce the proportion of hungry poor to 23 percent, the 2017 Global Hunger Index still rates hunger levels as "serious".

Climate change is a key challenge facing rural livelihoods, and the country is vulnerable to climate change due to its low adaptability and its dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources. Changing climate patterns, combined with poor access to both markets and diverse livelihoods, further worsen the situation in remote upland areas, where 25 percent of households are food insecure.

WFP has been present in Lao PDR since 1975.



Population: 6.5 million

Human Development Index:  
140 out of 189 (inconsistent)

Income Level: Lower middle

Chronic malnutrition: 33% of  
children between 6-59  
months

### In Numbers

**US\$ 1.34 million** six-month (Mar – Aug 2020) net funding requirements

**476.98 mt** of food distributed

**93,437 people** assisted



### Operational Updates

- WFP signed field-level agreements with the local literacy NGO, Big Brother Mouse, and Plan International to roll out reading promotion activities in Luangnamtha, Phongsaly and Saravan Provinces.
- In a new cooperation with WFP, the Centre of Environmental Health and Water Supply (locally known as Nam Saat) completed a preliminary assessment of water needs in Attapeu, Xekong and Saravan Provinces. This will be followed by the design and construction/rehabilitation of boreholes and gravity-fed water systems for WFP-supported schools and villages without sufficient water supply.
- Under the French-supported nutrition project, WFP constructed irrigation systems in three villages in Ngommalath District, Khammoune Province, with 3.5 km of canals which can irrigate 76 ha, benefitting 103 households with food production all year. Two of the villages have already begun using the irrigation systems for this dry season, making up for the lost harvest last year due to the floods.
- Following the completion of the farmer nutrition school modules in Ngommalath, WFP disbursed garden/livestock grants to 435 households. The grants will help beneficiaries implement their household nutrition plans to ensure nutritious crops in their gardens and an increase in protein consumption through small animal raising.
- Also in Ngommalath, WFP set up village loudspeakers in six target villages with training for the village chiefs and village health volunteers through a partnership with Health Poverty Action. Nutrition messages are now being distributed twice a day.
- In partnership with the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction for promoting climate-smart villages and agriculture, WFP ran an inception workshop in Vientiane and a scoping mission in Phongsaly Province to identify target villages and potential activities. The target villages will serve as learning sites for testing and scaling climate-smart and resilient practices, while also supporting community-driven school feeding. These climate-smart practices include developing weather pattern boards to raise awareness on how the changing climate impacts agriculture.
- WFP organized a training on utilization of hermetic bags for grain storage to the staff of the Pakse field office which they will be able to apply in 40 rice bank communities in the southern districts of Sanamxai and

Contact info: [ildiko.hamos@wfp.org](mailto:ildiko.hamos@wfp.org) / Partnerships and Communications

Coordinator

Country Director: Jan Delbaere

Further information: [www.wfp.org/countries/lao-peoples-democratic-republic](http://www.wfp.org/countries/lao-peoples-democratic-republic)

republic

## Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

| Total Requirement<br>(in USD) | Allocated<br>Contributions (in USD) | Mar- Aug 2020 Net<br>Funding Requirements (in<br>USD) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>78.72 m</b>                | <b>54.73 m</b>                      | <b>1.34 m</b>   |

## Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Schoolchildren in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021.

**Focus area:** Root causes

## Activities:

- Provide policy support, technical assistance and transfer of capacities
- Accelerate the implementation of the Government's plan of action of the school meals programme
- Support a national process for community and Government hand-over of the schools.

## Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Stunting levels among children under 2 in provinces with high levels of malnutrition meet national levels by 2025.

**Focus area:** Root causes

## Activities:

- Provide technical assistance for evidence-based policy dialogue
- Stimulate access to local specialized nutritious food for children aged 6 to 23 months
- Develop a social behaviour change communication and establish farmer nutrition schools.

## Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Vulnerable households in climate-sensitive districts are more resilient to seasonal and long-term shocks and stresses.

**Focus area:** Resilience

## Activities:

- Build community resilience through the creation of productive assets and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

## Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs

**Strategic Outcome 4:** National and local governance institutions are strengthened to improve service delivery, especially in hard-to-reach areas, by 2025.

**Focus area:** Root causes

## Activities:

- Invest in national capacity for food and nutrition security governance
- Enable communities to lead and own their food and nutrition security solutions
- Enhance government capacity at all levels to prepare for and efficiently respond to natural disasters.

## Operational Updates (continued)

- WFP held provincial Country Strategic Plan (CSP) annual review workshops in Phongsaly, Attapeu, Xekong and Saravan provinces to review achievements in 2019 and to plan for the year ahead.
- WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) teams in Lao PDR hosted a mid-term review mission for the Agriculture for Nutrition project. The final report is scheduled to be finalized in March.

## Story from the field



Maimon and her garden.

Photo: © World Food Programme/ Vilakhone Sipaseuth

After severe floods that affected all of Lao PDR in 2018, most of Ms. Maimon Lovanhxay's belongings were lost or destroyed. She started attending the Farmer Nutrition School in Ngommalath district of Khammouane Province to learn about rebuilding her livelihood and creating a more sustainable environment for her only child. She started her own garden and began to raise chicken and ducks.

Her submission of a garden grant application was successful, and with the USD 100 received, she boosted her household garden and bought more chicken. In addition, her son receives Nutributter from WFP, a food supplement that grants him important nutrients he needs to be strong and healthy.

"Knowledge from the Farmer Nutrition School, as well as the garden grant and the Nutributter have helped us stand up again. They give me and my family a better variety of food, which makes us stronger and more resilient in the face of future severe weather events," Maimon says.

## Donors

USA, Australia, Japan, France, Russia, Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, Government of Lao PDR, Private Donors