



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief June 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\$ 2.38 million six-month (July – December 2020) net funding requirements

282.5 mt of food distributed

38,199 people assisted

48%



52%



Operational Updates

- In partnership with Word Vision, WFP provided food to returning migrant workers in the largest quarantine center in Savannakhet province. In total, 9,870 meals were provided to 1,007 returning migrants. This food assistance supports those affected by the Government’s quarantine measures aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- Throughout the month of June, WFP facilitated weekly humanitarian flights to Laos from Kuala Lumpur via Yangon, bringing essential equipment, regular health supplies and humanitarian aid workers into the country for the COVID-19 response. In addition, WFP facilitated the transport of one million doses of measles and rubella vaccines, 39,400 doses of flu vaccines and 230,000 doses of Japanese encephalitis vaccines to Laos, procured by UNICEF.
- WFP has started the construction of ground water supply systems in 10 villages in Sanamxay district as part of a project providing relief for food insecure populations in Attapeu and Khammouane Provinces. The activity will strengthen livelihood opportunities for residents and make them more resilient to climate change. The project is supported by the Government of France.
- WFP’s Logistics Cluster held a warehouse management training of trainers for staff from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The training will strengthen the Government’s capacity in responding to emergencies quickly and effectively. The trained staff will in turn share their newly acquired knowledge with ministry staff on the provincial and local levels.
- WFP held a consultation meeting with the Ministry of Education and Sports on 23 June, sharing the draft proposal for the new cycle of school feeding, to be submitted to the US Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole Program. The Ministry agreed with the concept and its plans to implement school feeding in four northern provinces with echnical and logistical support from WFP.
- WFP held a capacity strengthening workshop on community mobilization for all District Community Facilitators in the southern provinces. The training gave field staff tools to engage with communities in an empowering way.

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Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jul – Dec 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
78.7 m	55.1 m	2.38 m

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 started post distribution monitoring for take home ration distribution completed in June. In total, WFP distributed 574 mt of rice, 292 mt of lentils and 58 mt of fortified cooking oil from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as 18 mt of canned fish from the Government of Japan, to 88,703 students from 925 schools in 8 provinces, to help soften the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on families.

Story from the field



Food distribution at Kaysone quarantine center. Photo: © WFP/Lalangkone Chanhthamaly

The biggest quarantine center in Savannakhet province is installed at the sports stadium of Kaysone, where indoor premises hold a maximum of 160 people. However, over 400 returning migrant workers were staying at the center when the Government of Lao PDR requested the help of WFP. The migrant workers, who are in most cases returning from Thailand, have to bring their families, including small children, to stay with them. Most migrant workers have lost their jobs and have run out of money, leaving them without funds to buy food during their quarantine period. Premises at the center are crowded and lack essential supplies, such as mosquito nets, which increases risk in times of dengue fever season.

In early June, WFP and World Vision started distributing three daily meals to the people in the center. In total, they provided 9,870 meals to 1,007 returning migrants. Since the number of recipients was much higher than initially planned for, WFP applied for and received an advance of US\$ 737,479 from WFP’s Immediate Response Account facility, allowing the WFP to continue the distributions not only at Kaysone quarantine center, but to a total of 28 centers in Savannakhet and Xayabouly provinces.

Donors

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