



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief July 2020



Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 140 out of 189 countries in the 2018 Human Development Index. Around 23 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (US\$ 1.25/day), with a gross national income per capita of US\$ 2,270 (World Bank 2017). While Lao PDR has managed to reduce the proportion of hungry people to 23 percent, the 2017 Global Hunger Index still rates its hunger levels as “serious”.

Climate change is a key challenge facing rural population, and the country is vulnerable to climate change due to its low adaptability and high 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 with ranking above]**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

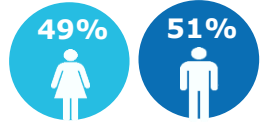
Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

US\$ 1.16 million six months (August 2020 – January 2021) net funding requirements

3.476 mt of food distributed

2,694 people assisted



Operational Updates

- Through a donation from the Government of France, WFP will create 40 productive assets across 35 targeted communities in Sekong and Attapeu, benefitting 16,500 people through cash-based transfers for their labour. From 6 to 19 July, WFP held community-based participatory discussions in the communities to help them identify the sustainable livelihood assets that matched their needs. For the first time in Laos, WFP registered 2,433 beneficiaries in [SCOPE](#), WFP's beneficiary information and transfer management platform. The use of this platform will increase personal data protection and privacy, and improve WFP's accountability to the beneficiaries.
- Building on recent experiences supporting quarantine centers in other parts of the country, WFP started, on 25 July, in collaboration with the Swiss Red Cross, another round of food distributions to returning migrants in quarantine centres in Xayaboury and Vientiane. WFP is providing three meals a day to these migrants during their government-regulated quarantine periods. WFP also extended its partnership with World Vision, who had been providing meals to quarantined returning migrants in Savannaketh.
- In Phongsaly, WFP delivered 3,600 fruit trees to five pilot “climate-smart” villages in partnership with the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR). The five villages are on track to becoming climate-smart by adapting resilient agroforestry practices and diversifying their agricultural production. WFP and IIRR are taking into account the specific situations of each of the villages to provide information and tools to brace communities against future climate risks and shocks, while creating sustainable livelihoods.
- WFP is supporting the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry with the implementation of their Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Agriculture project, developing new guidelines on disaster risk management in agriculture. Earlier this month, the Ministry organized training and village-level planning for disaster risk reduction in four districts in the provinces of Savannaketh and Khammouane. Furthermore, the Government approved and published the guidelines for this project, which will strengthen the disaster readiness of the country.

As part of the school meal programme hand-over plan, WFP provided 11,980 fruit trees to 515 target schools, which have now been delivered and planted.

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Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Aug 2020 – Jan 2021 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
78.7 m	55.1 m	1.16 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 years of age 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 is supporting the Government to develop a nutrient-dense food crops list to promote nutritious food production and consumption. The list will be used for social and behavioural change activities regarding infant and young child feeding practices, illustrating “quick wins” for nutritious diets. The endorsement meeting was held on 29 July in Vientiane, attended by a delegation from the ministries, the private sector and development partners.
- WFP conducted a two-day workshop on social and behavioural change communication strategy development for workforce nutrition in support of the implementation of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network. WFP, together with stakeholders, drafted messages and tools and identified target audiences during the workshop.
- In partnership with Big Brother Mouse, WFP distributed 38,675 books to 91 schools in Samphan and Bountai districts in Phongsaly Province, benefitting 5,438 students. WFP also trained 374 teachers, school administrators and villagers on using and maintaining the books.
- WFP approved and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Plan International and Room to Read for literacy activities.

Story from the field



Community rice bank at Kaluem District, Sekong Province. Photo © WFP/ Vilakhone Sipaseuth

Since the establishment of community rice banks in 2019, beneficiaries have become more aware of the importance of these community rice banks that enable them to borrow, repay, and manage funds smoothly. This has been particularly important during the outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown period. These community rice banks, which are managed by the communities themselves, have helped many communities access food supplies and get through this difficult time.

Donors

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