



WFP Lao PDR Country Brief August 2020

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



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 GDP per capita of USD 2,542 (World Bank 2018). The country is ranked 110 out of 162 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2018. While Lao PDR has managed to reduce the proportion of hungry poor to 23 percent, the 2019 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**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

In Numbers

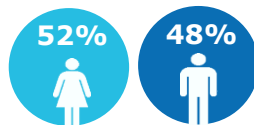
US\$ 4.8 million six-month (September 2020 – February 2021) net funding requirements

2.479 mt of food distributed

5,911 people assisted

52%

48%



Operational Updates

- As part of the COVID response, in partnership with the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) and World Vision International, WFP provided over 73,022 meals to 3,827 beneficiaries across six quarantine centres in Lao PDR at a cash-based transfer commodity voucher value of USD 131,854. In two quarantine centres, WFP and SRC are also providing water and basic WASH/hygiene items to the returnees.
- Participants from 3,400 households (15,653 beneficiaries) started to build community assets such as fish ponds and field access roads to improve their resilience to climate and other related shocks and stresses. During August, WFP therefore started the distribution of cash and sunflower oil to participating households from 49 communities in Phongsaly Province.
- Through support from WFP, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry approved and published the updated Disaster Risk Management in Agriculture Guidelines. These guidelines were presented at two provincial meetings held in Savannakhet and Khammuane during August, and will help local authorities plan for disasters.
- In partnership with the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction, WFP has developed several training videos to support strengthening capacity of government extension workers in climate-smart approaches to agriculture and rural development. These training videos include targeted videos on climate-smart villages; establishing community gardens; land preparation; transporting and transplanting fruit tree seedlings.
- Together with the Ministry of Education and Sports, WFP completed a series of workshops on the establishment of 148 school feeding model schools and farmer groups. The schools and groups will be resource centres for learning and exchange visits across and within districts and provinces regarding management and delivery of school lunches.
- WFP supported the National Nutrition Center of the Ministry of Health in organizing a workshop on social behaviour change communication, with the aim of developing tools and guidelines for nutrition workforce.
- WFP supported the Ministry of Health in developing food fortification standards and related visibility, led by the National Nutrition Center.

Contact info: ildiko.hamos@wfp.org / Partnerships and Communications Coordinator

Country Director: Jan Delbaere

Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/lao-peoples-democratic-republic

Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Sept 2020 – February 2021 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
78.7 m	55.1 m	4.8 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.

- To emphasize and memorize the lessons on nutrition topics shared during WFP-supported Farmer Nutrition School learning sessions, local speakers have been installed in 60 villages where Farmer Nutrition Schools are present. WFP supports 400 village authorities in creating and managing village development plans, including nutrition-sensitive agriculture practices. To this aim, WFP has developed and tested tools in one village before sharing them with all 400 villages.
- In support of the Government’s disaster preparedness, the Logistics Cluster, coordinated by WFP, organized a warehouse management training for provincial staff of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in Luangprabang and Savannakhet provinces.

Story from the field



The villagers of Houay Waii village have just finished building a road that connects their homes with their fields./Photo: WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

Access to production sources is very important for people in remote rural areas. In the past, people in Houay Waii Village, Phongsaly Province had to walk for 2-3 hours to reach the production area, but now it takes only 15 minutes by motorbike and hand tractor to reach the hilltop farmland. The villagers themselves build the 3 km access road which connects their community to the production area. For their labour, they will receive in-kind food assistance and cash through a food-assistance-for-assets activity. The activity helps villagers meet their immediate food needs, as well as improving their agricultural production and livelihood diversification long-term. This type of assistance, called community asset creation, is being implemented around the world in hard-to-reach communities, and has been very successful in Lao PDR.

Donors

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