



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Lao PDR Country Brief December 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 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 [inconsistent]**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

## In Numbers

**US\$ 1.86 million** six-month (January – June 2021) net funding requirements

**343.5 mt** of food assistance distributed

**90,646 people** assisted

**49%**

**51%**



## Operational Updates

- WFP is working with financial institutions to set up cash-based transfers to Farmer Nutrition School facilitators across 400 villages in 12 districts of four provinces. The cash constitutes a monthly incentive for village volunteers who act as facilitators. It also contributes to buying supplies for the cooking demonstrations that are part of Farmer Nutrition School sessions.
- WFP is supporting the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in developing their five year National Plan of Action on Nutrition. The plan is expected to be submitted for endorsement at the end of March 2021.
- WFP is working on signing an agreement with the Government of Lao PDR to formalize arrangements for the new McGovern-Dole school feeding project which is starting in 2021. The signing ceremony between WFP and the Ministry of Education and Sports is expected to take place in late January 2021.
- Commissioned by WFP, the Aquatic Development Company (ADC) completed their assessment on WFP's support to establishing fishponds. ADC recorded the aquaculture condition in nine schools in the north and eight in the south, presenting a diverse variety of fish production potential across the two regions. Based on these findings, the assessment report made recommendations for WFP to optimize the fishpond support to target schools, covering human resources, technical, operational and financial aspects of fishpond management.
- WFP organised a three-day training of trainers workshop in Hoon District, Oudomxay Province for 50 provincial and district government officials from Oudomxay and Luangprabang Provinces on strengthening capacities of Village Education Development Committees. The training at the village level will cover the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the community-owned school feeding programmes. In partnership with Room-to-Read, WFP delivered books and materials to 16 target schools in Phouvong District, Attapeu Province, to set up classroom libraries in December. The provision of books was accompanied by training on classroom libraries for 47 people, including school principals, teachers and Village Education Development Committee members.

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

## Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jan – Jun 2021 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>88.53 m</b>	<b>85.76 m</b>	<b>1.86 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.

## Donors

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

## Operational Updates (continued)

- Jointly with UNICEF, WFP is working on a project submission to the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), to improve nutrition outcomes for children under 5 in Lao PDR. The project aims to provide treatment for children that are acutely or severely malnourished through setting up a continuum of care as a systematic national service. UNICEF will concentrate on training of health workers and ensuring services and supplies are in place, while WFP will focus on incentivization of families to enroll and keep their children in treatment, as well as prevention of malnourishment via Farmer Nutrition Schools, garden and livestock grants and behavior change communication. Currently, a feasibility study is being conducted by an independent Korean expert team to review the five-year project plan due for submission to KOICA at the end of January.

## Story from the field



WFP staff showing a cook at Somphone school the supplies donated by Japan. Photo: © WFP/Jingfu Chen

WFP has been supporting the school feeding programme in Somphone village school in Hoon District of Oudomxay Province since 2014. A rotating committee of parents are cooking daily lunches for the 170 children studying at the school. Rice and lentils are supplied by the United States, cooking oil from Russia and canned fish from Japan.

For the purpose of teaching students about healthy nutrition and growing vegetables, WFP has supported the establishment of a school garden. A fishpond supplies additional protein for the daily lunches. The school is now raising funds to build a chicken coop, where community members will supply chickens to raise on the school grounds. During the dry season, water supply from the school bore well is problematic.