In Numbers

- US$ 1.35 million six-month (Mar – Aug 2021) net funding requirements
- 177.2 mt of food assistance distributed
- 83,787 people assisted

Operational Updates

- In February 2021, WFP continued providing food assistance to returning migrant labourers in 11 quarantine centres in Lao PDR, through partnerships with World Vision International and the Swiss Red Cross. During the month, WFP and partners provided 114,465 nutritious meals to 3,288 beneficiaries (including 1,564 women) utilizing USD 196,513 in cash-based transfers. WFP is urgently seeking additional funds to continue this support. Without new contributions, WFP will have to discontinue the provision of meals in quarantine centres from mid-March 2021.

- On February 9, WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Lao PDR for the USDA McGovern-Dole funded 5-year school feeding project. The partnership first commenced in 2008, and will continue in 18 government priority districts of 11 provinces, where 63,000 primary school students will receive daily lunches.

- Following the signing of the MoU, WFP has started preparing for community consultations, jointly with the Ministry of Education and Sports and its partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS). The community consultation is an essential step to determine the target villages and ensure a good collaboration on this 5-year school feeding project. WFP held a training workshop in Vang Vieng for WFP staff and government counterparts in preparation of the consultations.

- WFP and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, organized a logo competition for fortified food. The Food Fortification Technical Working Group evaluated the 148 entries and selected one logo. The winning logo, a visual symbol that enables people to identify that a certain food is fortified with vitamins and/or minerals, will be sent to the Government for endorsement.

- With support from WFP, the SUN Business Network provided a training of trainers to the staff of the National Nutrition Center on Workforce Nutrition.

Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 137 out of 189 countries in the 2020 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 2,534.9 (World Bank 2019). The country is ranked 137 out of 162 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2020. While the poverty rate in Lao PDR more than halved in the past two decades, the 2020 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: 137 out of 189
Income Level: Lower middle
Chronic malnutrition: 33% of children between 6-59 months
Impressions from our work

WFP’s materials around food systems at Lao PDR’s annual National Nutrition Forum. Photo: WFP/Phiengphaneth Chanthalangsy

U.S. Ambassador Peter Haymond’s visit to a WFP-supported school in Sekong province. Photo: WFP/Ildiko Hamos

MoU signing with the Minister of Education and Sports on the cooperation around the next school feeding project. Photo: WFP/Phiengphaneth Chanthalangsy

WFP’s staff retreat gathered 130 team members for work and teambuilding. Photo: WFP/Ildiko Hamos

Operational Updates, continued

- WFP signed a new 2-year project with the Embassy of Japan, supporting flood-affected communities of southern Laos. With the Japanese funds, WFP will purchase rice to cover immediate needs of the affected populations, as well as support the rehabilitation of agricultural infrastructure affected by the floods.

Donors

USA, Japan, France, Russia, Korea, Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, Private Donors