In Numbers

- **US$ 0.49 million** six-month (May – Oct 2021) net funding requirements
- **314.8 mt** of food distributed
- **91,376 people** assisted

Following community transmissions of COVID-19 cases due to border violations, the Government of Lao PDR instated a lockdown in the capital Vientiane on 22 April which has subsequently expanded to cover all provinces. The lockdown is currently announced to last until 20 May.

WFP is adapting to the situation through a direct COVID-19 response of food support for quarantine centres. WFP is also adjusting its programmes accordingly, such as planning for the distribution of take-home rations to families of pre-primary and primary school students in schools that receive WFP’s school feeding support. Since village visits are currently not possible, all field-level activities are temporarily suspended. WFP is seeking funding to continue its support consisting of three nutritious meals daily to 11 strategically important quarantine centres around the country.

Operational Updates

- WFP received funding from the French Alimentary Aid program in the amount of EUR 500,000 (US$ 606,690) to implement a food and nutrition security project in the northern province of Phongsaly. The project will include Farmer Nutrition Schools, which provide vital nutrition and agriculture education, and skills-based training, using a variety of media and community engagement strategies.
- The WFP-coordinated Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network facilitated a study visit of 17 Lao Government technical staff from the Ministry of Health to a rice milling enterprise with Good Manufacturing Practice. Discussions revolved around the potential for rice fortification.
- In April, WFP continued providing unconditional food assistance to returning migrant labourers in 11 quarantine centres across five provinces in Lao PDR through partnerships with World Vision International and the Swiss Red Cross. In April, WFP provided 113,320 nutritious meals to 4,560 beneficiaries (2,202 women) at a cost of US$ 196,384.
- Together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, WFP completed a consultation process in 35 communities in Sekong and Attapeu Provinces with regards to a change from asset creation activities to the provision of technical knowledge.

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.

Contact info: ildiko.hamos@wfp.org / Partnerships and Communications Coordinator
Country Director: Jan Delbaere
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/lao-peoples-democratic-republic
**Operational Updates, continued**

This shift is due to a high risk of contamination with unexploded ordnance (UXO) in target villages. Communities requested training sessions on climate smart and nutrition sensitive agriculture. Additionally, increased understanding on UXO risks, climate change adaptation and natural disasters, as well as nutrition education will also be part of the training programme, which is expected to start in June-July 2021.

- WFP jointly organized a field mission to monitor and evaluate the overall progress of rice banks in 40 villages with the district agriculture and forestry offices in Sanamxai and Kaluem districts of southern Lao PDR. The mission found that the rice banks are well managed by village committees and bring benefits for 2,150 vulnerable households (12,800 people) who are facing food insecurity in the lean season. WFP will continue to work closely with district authorities and communities to ensure sustainability of this activity.

- Following a national orientation and planning workshop, WFP, in partnership with Catholic Relief Services, began the rollout of district orientation workshops and village consultations in the 18 target districts under the new U.S. Department of Agriculture financed school feeding project. The orientations and consultations aim to obtain buy-in and support from all stakeholders in the planned activities during the course of five years. Due to the surge of COVID-19 cases nationwide in Laos in mid-April and the resulting lockdown, the activity has been suspended and will resume once the lockdown is lifted.

**Image from the field**

In Songkhone Quarantine Centre in Savannakhet Province, scanning of QR codes makes food distributions safer. Migrant workers who are returning to their home from neighboring countries spend up to 14 days in mandatory quarantine. WFP, since June 2020, has supported major quarantine centres across Laos with three daily meals. Photo: © WFP/Phiengphaneth Chanthalangsy

---

**Donors**

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