

USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 Mid-Term Evaluation in Lao PDR (October 2017 – September 2021)¹

Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference

WFP CO Lao PDR



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¹ An application for no-cost extension through September 2022 is currently underway.

Terms of Reference

MID TERM EVALUATION of USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 Grant

WFP Lao PDR

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1. Introduction

1. These Terms of Reference (TOR) are for the Mid-Term Evaluation of the FY17 award cycle for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s McGovern-Dole Food for Education (MGD) project supporting school feeding in Lao PDR. This evaluation is commissioned by WFP Lao PDR and will cover the period from April 2018 to March 2021.
2. These TOR were prepared by WFP Lao PDR based upon an initial document review and consultation with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and other stakeholders, following a standard template. The purpose of the TOR is twofold. Firstly, it provides key information to the evaluation team and helps guide them throughout the evaluation process; and secondly, it provides key information to stakeholders about the proposed evaluation.
3. The evaluation process within WFP will be managed by an evaluation manager appointed by the Country Director of WFP Lao PDR. This evaluation manager will be the main focal point for day-to-day contact during the evaluation period. An independent evaluation firm will be contracted to carry out the actual evaluation and will appoint its own evaluation manager in accordance with normal practice. Appropriate safeguards to ensure the impartiality and independence of the evaluation are outlined within these TOR.
4. The mid-term evaluation will provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of the performance of the operation and associated school feeding interventions so that WFP Lao PDR and its project partners can adjust the course as necessary for the remainder of the project term.

2. Reasons for the Evaluation

The reasons for the evaluation being commissioned are presented below.

2.1 Rationale

5. WFP Lao PDR is commissioning this mid-term evaluation of the USDA McGovern Dole FY17 school feeding project in Lao PDR to evaluate the performance of project operations and associated interventions for accountability, to track the progress of achievements after the mid-point of project implementation and to inform future interventions of the current award and future awards. The timeline for the mid-term evaluation has been adjusted according to the planned no-cost extension of the project to September 2022, allowing time for course corrections.
6. The mid-term evaluation is planned within the time frame where WFP Lao PDR has already handed over programmes in 515 schools (before the 2019/2020 academic year) and in preparation for the handover of 918 schools in June 2021.
7. The Mid Term Evaluation will be based primarily on regular monitoring data, a small-sample survey on both the handed-over and the remaining project schools, as well as a desk evaluation of all related documents. The focus will be to see the progress of the school feeding implementation and to give feedback on issues that need improvement.

Evaluating data on already handed-over schools will not only provide evidence for potential further support, but also evidence for learning on handover processes.

8. The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is expected to take 5 months from planning to final recommendations (June to October 2021), to enable WFP Lao PDR to adjust its packages of support to the communities and to ensure swift improvements in programming towards the handover. Also, it will provide us a unique opportunity to compare the status pre-and-post handover at the endline evaluation in about a year. The MTE will use the Development Assistance Committee or DAC criteria to ensure that the project is running smoothly. It will also review the project monitoring system with regard to the recommendations from the baseline. The MTE will take account of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on capacities, resources and readiness for the transition process.
9. The Evaluation Team (ET) will synthesize the quantitative findings with the qualitative findings on school feeding of the Country Strategic Plan Final Evaluation (CSPE), an exercise based on consultations with beneficiaries and stakeholders, to achieve efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the project. The draft findings are now available and the final version is scheduled to be available to the ET during the MTE inception phase.
10. A diagnostic strategic learning study, led by an expert specialist, is being commissioned separately to align the project to WFP's Corporate School Feeding Strategy 2020. It will provide detailed guidance to the CO on support measures to the 515 handed over schools, plus the forthcoming transition process of 918 schools, taking account of the recommendations of the CSPE and this MTE. It will also set a roadmap for the mainstreaming of the findings of the 2020 WFP Strategic Evaluation on School Feeding.
11. In addition to the baseline for this award – conducted in 2018 - a key study that took place during this project cycle was a cost-benefit analysis of school meals programmes in Lao PDR, published in May 2018 in collaboration with MoES and MasterCard.

2.2 Objectives

12. The objective of the MTE is to provide an evidence-based and independent assessment of the performance of the school feeding project so that WFP and its project partners can adjust the course as necessary for the remainder of the project term.
13. Specifically, the midterm evaluation will: (1) review the project's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, impact and sustainability; (2) collect performance indicator data for strategic objectives and higher-level results; (3) assess whether the project is on track to meet the results and targets; (4) evaluate the results framework and theory of change, and (5) identify any necessary mid-course corrections.
14. The mid-term evaluation will rely on the Baseline Study, WFP Lao PDR's monitoring results on all of the USDA's outcome and output indicators selected for this School Feeding and critical contextual information to evaluate the project at the midterm.
15. The mid-term evaluation will be conducted from June to October 2021 to cover all indicators and areas of intervention in the following provinces: Phongsaly, Luangnamtha, Oudomxay, Luangprabang, Khammouane, Saravane, Sekong, and Attapeu.

16. The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to:
- a. Critically and objectively evaluate and take stock of the implementing experience and the implementing environment;
 - b. Assess whether target beneficiaries are receiving services as expected and whether the project is on track to meet its stated goals and objectives;
 - c. Evaluate the results frameworks and assumptions, document initial lessons learned;
 - d. Discuss necessary modifications or mid-course corrections that may be necessary to effectively and efficiently meet the stated goals and objectives.
17. For WFP Lao PDR, the mid-term evaluation will serve the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning.
- **Accountability** – The evaluation will assess and report on the performance and results of the FY17 award performance and results of the USDA MGD school meals implementation in Lao PDR.
 - **Learning** – Drawing on the substantial recent fieldwork of the Country Strategic Plan Evaluation, the MTE will provide evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making. A sample of stakeholders (schoolchildren, teachers, principals, VEDC, student parents, cooks and storekeepers district and provincial education staff) will also be selected from schools to be included in the surveys, to gain insights into the successes and challenges of the previous handover as well as readiness for the forthcoming one. The findings will be incorporated into a diagnostic/strategic learning study on school feeding transition in Laos

2.3 Stakeholders and Users

18. A number of stakeholders both inside and outside WFP have interests in the results of the evaluation and some of them will be asked to play a role in the evaluation process. This list will be used by the evaluation team to create a brief stakeholder analysis as part of the inception phase. The stakeholders and users of the MTE include the WFP Lao PDR Country Office, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific based in Bangkok, WFP HQ Policy and Programme, Office of Evaluation, WFP Executive Board, UN Country Team in Lao PDR and the Government of Lao PDR. They also include NGO partners such as Catholic Relief Services, Plan International, Big Brother Mouse, Educational Development Fund and donors such as the United States Department of Agriculture, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Government of Japan.
19. Accountability to affected populations is tied to WFP's commitments to include beneficiaries as key stakeholders in WFP's work. As such, WFP is committed to ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in the evaluation process, with participation and consultation in the evaluation of women, men, girls and boys from different groups of geographical areas and ethnics.
20. The primary users of this evaluation will be:

- WFP Lao PDR and its partners in decision-making, notably related to programme implementation and/or design and partnerships;
- USDA as funder for the project and the evaluation;
- Given the core functions of WFP's Regional Bureau (RB), the RB is expected to use the evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, programme support, and oversight;
- WFP HQ may use evaluations for wider organizational learning and accountability. The government is expected to take over the management and monitoring of the school feeding programme over time, therefore, information on whether the programme is yielding the desired results is of primary importance. The Lao MoES will use evaluation findings as input for its takeover strategy. Other implementing partners such as CRS and UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNFPA as well as the World Bank will be interested in the results of the evaluation.

3. Context and subject of the Evaluation

3.1. Context

21. Lao PDR has 6.8 million population and is expected to graduate to become a Middle-Income Economy² in the next several years, Poverty rate is 23% and has the Human Development Index rank of 137³. Mortality rates are high (under 5 mortality rate stands at 46 per 1000)⁴ and both life expectancy (65 years for women and 62 years for men). National literacy rates for young men (15 to 24 years) surpass women at 84.6 percent compared to 76.5 percent⁵. According to the 2015 International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Global Hunger Index rates hunger levels for Laos as 'serious' with Laos ranked 76 out of 104 countries⁶. Currently, 21 percent of children are underweight, 33 percent of children are stunted, and wasting stands at 9 percent. Micronutrient deficiencies also affect large parts of the population with IFPRI (2014) reporting the prevalence of anaemia in school-aged children as 'severe' and anaemia in pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLW/G) at 45.3 percent⁷. In 2017 the level of Anaemia among Women and Girls of Reproductive Age is 39.8 percent.⁸

22. In relation to GEWE, Lao PDR ranked 106 out of 159 countries on the Gender Inequality Index⁹ in 2015. In 2016, United Nations confirmed Lao PDR has one of the highest rates of Child, Early, and Forced Marriages (CEFM) in the region¹⁰. One-third of women were

² Lao PDR GDP per capita 2,353 (2016), and GNI per capita USD 5,920 (2016), the fastest growing economies in the East Asia and Pacific region and the 13th fastest growing economy globally.

³ Human Development Report 2017

⁴ Lao Social Indicator Survey, 2017

⁵ Lao Social Indicator Survey, 2017

⁶ Ministry of Health 2013

⁷ Ministry of Health, Lao Statistics Bureau, UNICEF and WFP, 2015

⁸ Lao Social Indicator Survey, 2017

⁹ Gender Inequality Index (GII) can be interpreted as the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in the three dimensions, i.e. female seats in parliament, population with at least some secondary education, labor force participation rate.

¹⁰ World Vision report on situational analysis of child, early, and forced marriages on Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia (2016).

married before age 18, while one-tenth were married before age 15. Lao PDR is more rural in character than any other country in South East Asia. More than three-quarters of the total population live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and natural resources for survival¹¹. Geographical isolation fosters a persistent cultural environment effectively contributing to the continuation of CEFM. A UNPFA report¹² noted that young girls growing up in isolated minority communities that were not integrated into a wider society saw marriage as their only option, partly because they were not aware of other options, and were not able to speak Lao-Thai, the national language, to effectively communicate with people outside of their isolated community. This shows the important linkages between achieving SDG 2, 4, and 5.

23. In 2015, the Government of Laos (GoL) committed to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including the fourth goal, which focuses on universal access to quality education. Lao PDR has made significant progress toward the achievement of SDG 4. As of the 2006- 2007 school year, 86.4% of all children and 84.5% of girls 6-10 years of age were enrolled in primary school and as of the 2019-2020 school year, that rate has increased to 99% of all children and 98.8% of girls. However, the survival rate in primary remains low at around 79.80% in 2019/2020¹³.

24. The COVID-19 pandemic will likely roll back the gains made in health, education, and poverty reduction and exacerbate the disparities across provinces. According to the World Bank, approximately 9 percent of households in Lao PDR – predominantly in the South – receive remittances from abroad, which constitute 60 percent of their household income. Already, more than 100,000 migrant workers have returned from abroad, resulting in an estimated reduction of up to 0.7 percent of GDP from remittances in 2020. The widespread school closures due to the pandemic have also affected the most vulnerable and marginalized in Lao PDR. In response to the school closures, WFP and partners have provided take-home rations under the current program, as well as home-learning kits for home-based learning. The distributions themselves adopted safety measures including physical distancing to prevent any risk of disease transmission. WASH interventions – including additional hygiene messaging and the provision of hygiene kits – are also scheduled to be rolled out for further prevention and mitigation measures.

25. Given the high level of enrolment, the country as a whole is on track to meet SDG 4. For 2019-2020, the overall enrollment rate is 99%, most of the target provinces like Phongsaly province has a net enrollment rate (NER) of 97.60% and Luangnamtha province has a net enrollment rate of 97.2% and Luangprabang has a net enrollment of 99.30%¹⁴. These figures suggest that overall enrolment continues to rise in order to meet the SDG 4 target and particular provinces and districts require special attention. The challenge in Lao PDR is no longer the enrolment rates but the retention rates, absenteeism, and drop-out rates,

¹¹ www.ruralpovertyportal.org/country/home/tags/laos.

¹² <http://ecca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Child> Marriage EECA Regional Overview.pdf

¹³ SDG 4 education working group 2017. There is no sex breakdown on this value, fact-check with Ministry of Education and Sports revealed they do not have the breakdown, and they do not have updated data.

¹⁴ Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Information and Sports Statistics 2019-2021

as well as poor quality of education. Part of the causes of the challenges of retention includes lack of adequate infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, and household poverty that forced students to work for the household. The previous paragraph shows the situation of the early marriage in Lao, and this also leads to drop-out.

26. Further, the baseline survey FY17 that was conducted in December 2018 by NRMCC across the eight target provinces (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Luangprabang, Saravane, Sekong, and Attapeu) found that student literacy levels were extremely poor, with only 1.9 percent of students demonstrating at least 75 percent comprehension compared with a target of 25 percent. Part of the causes of low literacy and comprehension percentages due to the implementation of progressive promotion policy from the Ministry of Education and Sports¹⁵.
27. The GoL strongly supports the WFP-Lao PDR School Meals Program, which is helping the government address educational challenges such as access, quality, and financing. In May 2014, the Government adopted a Policy on Promoting School Lunch, laying the foundations of a nation-wide approach of the Government offering school lunches as an incentive for children in primary school age to attend school prioritizing for children from disadvantaged groups, such as children from remote areas, areas where low enrolment rate, minority ethnic groups, girls, etc. The policy encourages and promotes the implementation of 5 aspects of education¹⁶.

3.2. The subject of the Evaluation

28. The World Food Programme (WFP) received US\$ 27.4 million to implement a school feeding project in Lao PDR, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) McGovern-Dole program on improving literacy of school-age children (McGovern-Dole's SO1); increasing use of health and dietary practices ((McGovern-Dole's SO2). The McGovern-Dole support contributes to the Strategic Outcome 1 of WFP Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021: *school children in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021*. The McGovern-Dole award is for four years through FY21 and covered 8 provinces, including Phongsaly, Luangnamtha, Oudomxay, Luangprabang, Khammouane, Attapeu, Saravane, and Sekong. The project activities to achieve the strategic outcome are, amongst others, provision of school meals to children in Lao PDR, provision of support packages to communities such as literacy strengthening, improving water and sanitation and strengthening the capacity of communities to take and lead the implementation of school feeding (hand over).
29. The support reaches around 140,000 children, 13,000 school administrators and officials including teachers, 10,000 VEDC members, 3,000 cooks and 1,500 storekeepers, in 31

¹⁵ "Progressive promotion" – dropout issue in Lao primary education and the misplaced policy (Elsevier journal, study by Itthida Gnanngouvong for Keio University – Japan, 2015)

¹⁶ 5 aspects of education: (1) Contribute to gradual attainment of the goal of Education For All (EFA); (2) Increase Net Enrolment Rate, Class Progression, Completion Rate, Reduce Repetition and Drop Out rate; (3) Mobilize resources to ensure program institutionalization and sustainability; (4) Contribute to food security through school based food production integrated with local food production system; (5) Develop and upgrade capacity for effective management of school meals operations (source: MOES policy on promoting school lunch, 2014)

districts in 8 Provinces. This includes areas directly supported by WFP and 15 schools in the Nakai district in Khamouane province supported by an NGO partner. The schools in Khamouane province are supported by the Education Development Fund (EDF-Lao). WFP has also been working with three other partners to support the promotion of literacy, namely Plan International, Big Brother Mouse (BBM), and Room To Read (RtR). These three organizations provide books, community engagement, and teacher training to target schools and conduct targeted literacy activities for children in these schools. WFP has been working with World Education to strengthen Big Brother Mouse (BBM)'s capacity to deliver literacy promotion activities. WFP has also been working with the Department of Water (Namsaat) of the Ministry of Health (MoH) to improve health and hygiene practices. Also, WFP has been worked in partnership with two other NGOs – LWF and CCL to support the review and follow-up of the handed over schools in Viengphoukha, Nalae and Bountai.

- 30. WFP handed over 515 schools in mid-2019 and will hand over the remaining 925 in mid-2021. Capacity strengthening activities have been implemented at all levels to lead and drive school meals implementation forward. Awareness raising and support to central levels were also provided including the Prime Minister’s Office, National Assembly and the Ministry of Education, so as to increase the knowledge about school meals as an important element in social safety-net policies and to ensure government’s budget allocation for taking over school meals. In this regard, study visits for the government official responsible for school meals were organized to neighbouring countries (Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia) where school feeding programmes are government-funded. At the community level, peer-to-peer exchange visits have also been organized.
- 31. In 2018, the baseline study for the McGovern-Dole FY17 project was conducted and found that the USDA McGovern-Dole school feeding project was well-positioned to continue with the school meal activities carried out under the FY14 award and for a smooth handover to MoES at the end of the project in 2021. The McGovern-Dole FY17 project proposal had clearly specified the way forward. This included engagement with the Ministries and Departments of the Government of Lao PDR, collaboration with other UN agencies and ODA actors, partnerships with NGOs and close coordination with communities and village level institutions.

4. Evaluation Approach

4.1. Scope

- 32. This mid-term evaluation, commissioned by the WFP Lao PDR Country Office, is expected to provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of the performance of the operation so that WFP and programme partners can adjust course as necessary for the remainder of the program term and to inform any future program design. It will be carried out in the areas of intervention.

The table below shows the scope for the Mid-Term evaluation for the MGD FY17

S/N		Mid-Term evaluation USDA MGD FY17
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1	MTE Scope	The evaluation will cover the WFP Lao School Feeding USDA McGovern-Dole FY17, including all activities and processes related to its formulation, implementation, resourcing, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting relevant to answer the evaluation questions.
2	Expectation	Expected to provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of the performance of the operation so that WFP and program partners can adjust course as necessary for the remainder of the program term and to inform any future program design.
3	Areas to be covered during Evaluation	Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Luangprabang, Khammouane, Saravane, Sekong and Attapeu
4	Sample size	A representative sample of 515 schools handed-over in 2019 plus project/control schools from the baseline survey and 918 schools with on-going implementation of school feeding through WFP support. Five per cent of each type of school will be selected representing a 90% confidence level, reflecting the fact that this is a MTR checking for tendencies and trends rather than definitive measurement of results.
5	Focus of evaluation	<p>The MTE features standard evaluation questions, based upon the collection and analysis of results on all the baseline indicators shown in Annex 1.</p> <p>A sub-sample of local stakeholders will be selected for a semi-structured interview designed to validate the findings of the CSPE on the school handover process.</p>
6	Results Framework (see Annex 6)	<p>McGovern-Dole's SO 1: Improved literacy of school-age children Results level: 1.1 (Improved Quality of Literacy Instruction), 1.2 (Improved Attentiveness), and 1.3 (Improved Student Attendance).</p> <p>The activities are designed to achieve results 1.1.2 (Better Access to School Supplies & Materials), 1.1.3 (Improved Literacy Instructional Materials), 1.1.4 (Increased Skills & Knowledge of Teachers), 1.1.5 (Increased Skills and Knowledge of School Administrators), 1.2.1 (Reduced Short Term Hunger), and 1.2.1.1 (Increased Access to Food). While result 1.1.1 (Consistent Teacher Attendance) achieved through partners.</p> <p>In addition, the project will contribute towards achieving results 1.3.1 (Increased Economic & Cultural Incentives), 1.3.2 (Reduced Health Related Absences), 1.3.3 (Improved School Infrastructure), 1.3.4 (Increased Student Enrolment), and 1.3.5 (Increased Community Understanding of Benefits of Education)</p>

		As well as the foundational results 1.4.1 (Increased Capacity of Government Institutions), 1.4.2 (Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework), 1.4.3 (Increased Government Support), and 1.4.4 (Increased Engagement of Local and Community Groups).
		McGovern-Dole's SO 2: Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices Results level: 2.1 (Improved Knowledge of Health and Hygiene Practices), 2.2 (Increased Knowledge of Safe Food Prep and Storage Practices), 2.3 (Increased Knowledge of Nutrition), 2.4 (Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services), and 2.6 (Increased Access to Requisite Food Preparation and Storage Tools and Equipment).
		Intermediate result 2.5 (Increased Access to Preventative Health interventions) is addressed by partners.
7	Partnership to achieve MGD results	Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Plan International, Room to Read, Big Brother Mouse, , UNICEF,
8	Baseline	Baseline conducted in April 2018

4.2. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

33. The following evaluation questions have been drawn from the evaluation plan and baseline for the project. They have been augmented to include evaluation of cover schools handed over in 2019, supporting measurement of the effectiveness of that process.

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	To what extent was the design of the School feeding programme contributing to realizing the Government of Lao's National School Meal Policy and WFP's Country Strategic Plan 2017-21?
	To what extent is the School feeding programme in line with the needs of the most vulnerable groups (women, men, girls and boys)?
	To what extent was the School Lunch programme based on a sound gender analysis?
	To what extent was the design and implementation of the School feeding programme gender-responsive?
	To what extent was the School Lunch programme implementation maintained healthy operation and environment at schools in the time of COVID-19?
Effectiveness	To what extend has the project contributed to increased enrolment of school-age children (girls and boys) in handed over schools, WFP covered schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces

	To what extent has the project contributed to increased attendance and participation of activities after lunch of school-age children (girls and boys) in handed over schools, WFP covered schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces
	How do literacy outcomes compare across the handed over schools, WFP covered schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces?
	Is there evidence of a positive impact of the project on literacy and literacy instruction, in handed over schools, WFP covered schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces
	Is there evidence of girl and boy students who demonstrate the use of new child health and nutrition practices in handed over schools, WFP covered schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces
	How do health-related illnesses causing students (girls and boys) absence at handed over schools, WFP covered schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces
	What are the initial intended and unintended outcomes of school gardens in handed over schools and WFP covered schools in these 8 provinces?
	Do stakeholders view school gardens as a learning tool on agriculture and nutrition in handed over schools and WFP covered schools in these 8 provinces?
	How often are schools utilizing produce from their school gardens, to supplement USDA donated food, in handed over schools and WFP covered schools in these 8 provinces?
Efficiency	Was the School feeding programme implemented in the most efficient way compared to other alternatives or non-school lunch programmes?
	Did the targeting of the School Lunch programme mean that resources were allocated efficiently?
	How is school meal programme implemented in the time of restriction as of COVID-19?
Impact	Is there evidence that school gardens are effective at increasing knowledge of nutrition in WFP covered schools in these 8 provinces
	Is there evidence of girl and boy students who demonstrate the use of new child health and nutrition practices in the handed over schools, WFP covered schools and the comparison schools in these 8 provinces

	What were the gender-specific impacts of school lunch and the related activities on girl and boy students? Did the School Lunch programme influence the gender context?
Sustainability	What's the progress of handing over school meals in terms of planning and capacity building?
	Based on the communities' profile, has the package of assistance suited local needs? <u>What are the socio-economic impacts of COVID 19, if any, on capacities, resources and readiness for the transition process.</u>

4.3. Data Sources

34. A key source of qualitative information will be the Country Strategic Plan Evaluation 2017-2021 conducted in 2020, which will be provided to the evaluation team during the course of the inception phase.
35. A semi-structured interview format will be designed to validate these findings and recommendations with a sample of stakeholders (school children, teachers, principals, cooks, storekeepers, VEDC, student parents, government education officials at central and provincial and district levels as well as UN and NGO cooperating partners) to triangulate with the findings and feed into the strategic diagnostic study on transition to government implementation of school meals.
36. Other main sources of information available to the evaluation team include the following:
- a. USDA MGD FY17-21 project documents
 - b. USDA MGDFY17-21 project results frameworks
 - c. Annual Country Reports 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020
 - d. Semi-Annual Reports to USDA 2018, 2019, and 2020
 - e. School feeding beneficiary contact monitoring (BCM) results 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020
 - f. CSP 2017-2021 Evaluation – draft report
 - g. Cost-Benefit Analysis of the school meal programme in Lao PDR (2018)
 - h. Community Capacity Assessments
 - i. Meeting minutes from school meals technical working group meetings, relevant Education Sector Working Group meetings as well as other relevant meetings;
 - j. Primary data collection during inception phase
 - k. USDA FY17 Baseline report 2018
37. Concerning the quality of data and information, the evaluation team should:
- a. assess data availability and reliability as part of the inception phase expanding on the information provided in Section 4.3. This assessment will inform the data collection.

- b. Systematically check the accuracy, consistency and validity of collected data and information and acknowledge any limitations/caveats in drawing conclusions using the data.

4.4. Methodology

38. WFP proposes a midterm evaluation that will be designed in accordance with both the WFP Evaluation quality checklist and USDA's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. The evaluation will draw on the data and information collected in the baseline study, the performance data regularly collected through the project's monitoring system, as well as on the reports submitted by partners. The government of Lao PDR school meals policy has been receiving many supports and partnerships. Progress feedback from these partnerships will contribute to the mid-term evaluation.
39. The key components of the midterm evaluation will be desk evaluation supported by the WFP Lao monitoring team on USDA output and outcome indicators, a small sample survey to fact-check the monitoring validity, progress feedback from the various partnerships supporting the Lao PDR government national school meals policy, and the progress of the handover of the school meals. The mid-term evaluation will draw on regular monitoring data. Relating to the survey sample, the focus will be on schools with support from partners and schools that have been handed over. The sample size utilized will not be as large as the baseline study, but baseline information and regular monitoring data from all schools will be used to compare with the findings from the mid-term evaluation sampled schools. The survey sample size will be smaller, 5% of the different categories of schools for 90% confidence level rather than 10% for 95% confidence level.
40. The MTE will be carried out through a representative sample of schools in all areas of intervention. The schools will be selected by the Evaluation Teams in close collaboration considering overlap and unique characteristics and indicators.
41. The data collection will only be switched to electronic surveys/telephone surveys as a last resort, if the outbreak is on together with the lockdown measure, and the MTR cannot be delayed any further. If this is inevitable WFP and the ET will work to minimise the constraints of remote data collection which have been observed in other countries during the pandemic.
42. The methodology will be designed by the evaluation team during the inception phase. It should:
 - Employ the relevant evaluation criteria above (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability).
 - Focus mainly upon drawing findings and analysis from the primary quantitative data collected from a sample survey.
 - Demonstrate impartiality and lack of biases by relying on a cross-section of information sources (stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries, etc.) The selection of field visit sites will also need to demonstrate impartiality.
 - Apply an evaluation matrix geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions taking into account the data availability challenges, the budget and timing constraints.

- Make an assessment of any improvements in the quality of monitoring data since the baseline.

Table : Requested methodology for mid-term evaluation FY17 USDA MGD SF Programme.

S/N	Methodology	Mid-Term Evaluation FY17 USDA MGD SF
1	Approach	Quasi-experimental
2	Theory of Change	Using USDA MGD SF FY17 Results Framework
3	Evaluation Methods	If possible evaluators to use either Difference in Difference (DiD), Propensity Score Matching (PSM), or Instrumental variables, or Regression discontinuity design, or other evaluation methods. WFP requests evaluators to use multiple and mixed methods of the above methods.
4	Data Collection Method	Quantitative and Qualitative
5	The sample size on Quantitative data	Cluster or random. A representative sample of a) handed over schools b) project schools and c) control schools will be selected using the same criteria for selection used in the baseline.
6	The sample size on qualitative data	Purposive, to be determined by the evaluation team and clearly described during the Inception Report
7	Ethical safeguard	As much as possible to have informed consent from respondents. Evaluators have to conform to UNEG ethics norms, and they are expected to manage and safeguard ethics throughout the evaluation.

43. The methodology should be GEWE-responsive, indicating what data collection methods are employed to seek information on GEWE issues and to ensure the inclusion of women and marginalised groups. The methodology should ensure that data collected is disaggregated by sex and age; an explanation should be provided if this is not possible. Triangulation of data should ensure that diverse perspectives and voices of women, men, girls and boys are heard and taken into account.
44. Looking for explicit consideration of gender in the data after fieldwork is too late; the evaluation team must have a clear and detailed plan for collecting data from women, men, girls and boys in gender-responsive ways before fieldwork begins.
45. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect gender analysis, and the report should provide lessons/ challenges/ recommendations for conducting gender-responsive evaluation in the future. The following mechanisms for independence and impartiality will be employed Quality Assurance and Quality Assessment

5. Organization of the Evaluation & Ethics

5.1. Evaluation Conduct

46. The evaluation team will evaluate the direction of its team leader and in close communication with Sengarun Budcharern, the WFP Lao PDR evaluation manager. The team will be hired following the agreement with WFP on its composition.
47. The evaluation team will not have been involved in the design or implementation of the subject of evaluation or have any other conflicts of interest. Further, they will act impartially and respect the [code of conduct of the evaluation profession](#).
48. Refer to the evaluation schedule in Annex 2

1) Inception phase: the timeline is from 01 June to 15 July 2021.

The Inception report of the MTE should include the methodology of the evaluation, sample size and locations of villages/schools to be visited during field data collection or remote data collection via phone calls or other means due to domestic travel restriction or lockdown due to COVID-19, review and analysis of secondary data.

Deliverables: Workplan, Quality Assurance Plan, and Inception Report.

2) Data collection phase: the timeline is from 16 July to 11 August 2021. The evaluation team is required to collect sufficient reliable data to enable evaluation questions to be answered, by conducting field visits or remote data collection (in case of domestic travel restriction or lockdown as COVID-19) to collect primary data collection, Key Informant Information, etc. In addition, the ET is required to prepare a plan B option for primary data collection in case of travel- restrictions or lock-downs in which all data collection may only be possible remotely for all sampled communities/schools. The evaluation team is also expected to conduct an end fieldwork debriefing in the form of a Word document and PowerPoint presentation.

Deliverables: Data Collection Tools, Clean Datasets, and debriefing powerpoint presentation.

3) Analyse data and report phase: timeline is from 12 August to 15 October 2021. The evaluation team has to finalize the analysis of data gathered, produce draft evaluation reports, which presents the main, evidence-based findings, conclusions and recommendations in an accessible manner with a 2-3 page stand-alone brief describing the evaluation design, key findings and other relevant considerations. The evaluation team is expected to produce a final report by 25 June 2021. All final versions of international food assistance evaluation reports will be made publicly available. Evaluators shall provide a copy of the evaluation reports that is free of personally identifiable information (PII) and proprietary information. Final versions of evaluation reports ready for publication should be accessible to persons with disabilities. For guidance on creating documents accessible to persons with disabilities, please see the following resources: <https://www.section508.gov/create/documents>
<https://www.section508.gov/create/pdfs>

Deliverables: Draft Evaluation Report (with performance indicators annex), Final Evaluation Report, Presentation of Evaluation.

5.2. Team composition and competencies

49. The evaluation team is expected to include one team leader, one or two national officers, and 3 field enumerators. It is expected that national officers and field data enumerators are Lao nationals, whereas the Team Leader may be international or Lao national. To the extent possible, the evaluation will be conducted by a gender-balanced, geographically and culturally diverse team with appropriate skills to assess gender dimensions of the subject as specified in the scope, approach and methodology sections of the ToR. At least one team member should have WFP experience.
50. The team will be multi-disciplinary and include members who together include an appropriate balance of expertise and practical knowledge in the following areas:
 - a. School Feeding
 - b. Education and early grade literacy
 - c. Nutrition and food security
 - d. Agro-economics/rural development
 - e. Gender expertise / good knowledge of gender equality and women's empowerment issues.
 - f. Institutional capacity development (with a focus on the handover process, cost-efficiency analysis, supply chain management).
51. All team members should have strong analytical and communication skills, evaluation experience and familiarity with Lao PDR or other ASEAN countries.
52. All team members should be proficient in both oral and written English and at least 3 members of the team should be able to speak Lao to conduct interviews.
53. The Team leader will have technical expertise in one of the technical areas listed above as well as expertise in designing methodology and data collection tools and demonstrated experience in leading similar evaluations. She/he will also have leadership, analytical and communication skills, including a track record of excellent English writing and presentation skills.
54. Her/his primary responsibilities will be: i) defining the evaluation approach and methodology; ii) guiding and managing the team; iii) leading the evaluation mission and representing the evaluation team; iv) drafting and revising, as required, the inception report, the end of fieldwork (i.e. exit) debriefing presentation and evaluation report in line with DEQAS.
55. The team members will bring together a complementary combination of the technical expertise required and have a track record of written work on similar assignments.
56. Team members will: i) contribute to the methodology in their area of expertise based on a document evaluation; ii) conduct fieldwork; iii) participate in team meetings and

meetings with stakeholders; iv) contribute to the drafting and revision of the evaluation products in their technical area(s).

5.3. Security Considerations

Security considerations will vary depending upon the nature of the context and the nature of the contracting arrangements with WFP. Include/delete the following standard text provided in the below bullet points as relevant depending on whether the team will be hired through a service provider or as individual consultants.

57. **Security clearance** where required is to be obtained from the Lao PDR duty station.

- As an ‘independent supplier’ of evaluation services to WFP, the evaluation company is responsible for ensuring the security of all persons contracted, including adequate arrangements for evacuation for medical or situational reasons. The consultants contracted by the evaluation company do not fall under the UN Department of Safety & Security (UNDSS) system for UN personnel.

58. However, to avoid any security incidents, the Evaluation Manager is requested to ensure that:

- The WFP CO registers the team members with the Security Officer on arrival in the country and arranges a security briefing for them to gain an understanding of the security situation on the ground.
- The team members observe applicable UN security rules and regulations – e.g. curfews.

59. Potential COVID related limitations. Depending on the prevailing circumstances at the time of the evaluation the evaluation team may be requested to mitigate the following potential limitations if adopting remote data collection:

- The lack of visual cues (that ease communication), loss of non-verbal visual data and the inability of the evaluator to use body language for probing were limitations
- Poor mobile connectivity also leading to dropping of some sample points and re-sampling new respondents.
- Limited time and complexity of questions: While the tools used during a baseline face-to-face study can be more detailed, phone surveys are unavoidably constrained by time and hence, require shorter and concise tools.
- Selection bias of respondents: using remote data collection mechanisms can limit the reach to the vulnerable population of the study regions.
- Also, the protracted timelines and delay caused in conducting a study owing to the pandemic can add to the challenge of finding relevant and up to date data.
- Lack of observation data: Key outcome indicators (skills of teachers, administrators, cooks; personal hygiene; sanitation behavior by students) could not be reported due to lack of observation data.

6.4 Ethics

60. WFP's decentralised evaluations must conform to WFP and UNEG ethical standards and norms. The contractors undertaking the evaluations are responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle (preparation and design, data collection, data analysis, reporting and dissemination). This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially marginalized groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.
61. Contractors are responsible for managing any potential ethical risks and issues and must put in place in consultation with the Evaluation Manager, processes and systems to identify, report and resolve any ethical issues that might arise during the implementation of the evaluation. Ethical approvals and evaluations by relevant national and institutional evaluation boards must be sought where required.
62. Potential ethical issues are the consultants and the field data enumerators are also working for similar projects under WFP Lao PDR or had implemented the USDA Local Regional Procurement project on district Nalae. WFP tries to minimize these issues by vetting during the recruitment of the evaluation company/consultants. The evaluation team is expected to reflect on these and propose mitigating/safeguarding measures in their proposal.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

63. WFP Lao PDR

- a) The WFP Lao PDR **Management (Deputy Country Director)** will take responsibility to:
 - o Assign an Evaluation Manager for the evaluation: Sengarun Budcharern, M&E Officer as an impartial figure in the country office, and never been a part of programme implementation.
 - o Compose the internal evaluation committee and the evaluation reference group.
 - o Together with USDA, approve the final ToR, inception and evaluation reports.
 - o Ensure the independence and impartiality of the evaluation at all stages, including the establishment of an Evaluation Committee and of a Reference Group (see below and [TN on Independence and Impartiality](#)).
 - o Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and the evaluation subject, its performance and results with the Evaluation Manager and the evaluation team.
 - o Organise and participate in two separate debriefings, one internal and one with external stakeholders.
- Oversee dissemination and follow-up processes, including the preparation of a Management Response to the evaluation recommendations, in line with WFP's Evaluation Policy 2016-2021, and to enhance the utility of the evaluation, findings from the evaluation to be actively disseminated as planned in the Communication and Learning Plan. The plan sets out who is responsible for each dissemination

activity, what material is to be disseminated (e.g. the full evaluation report, the Executive Summary only, or an Evaluation Brief), who to, how, when and why.

b) The **Evaluation Manager – WFP Laos CO:**

- Manages the evaluation process through all phases including drafting this TOR
- Ensures quality assurance mechanisms are operational.
- Consolidates and shares comments on draft TOR, inception and evaluation reports with the evaluation team.
- Ensures expected use of quality assurance mechanisms (checklists, quality support).
- Ensures that the team has access to all documentation and information necessary to the evaluation; facilitates the team's contacts with local stakeholders; sets up meetings, field visits; provides logistic support during the fieldwork; and arranges for interpretation, if required.
- Organises security briefings for the evaluation team and provides any materials as required.

c) An internal **Evaluation Committee** has been formed as part of ensuring the independence and impartiality of the evaluation.

d) **An Evaluation Reference Group** has been formed, as appropriate, with representation from related government institutions, donors, WFP regional bureau, and the WFP Washington office. The ERG members will review and comment on the draft evaluation products and act as key informants in order to further safeguard against bias and influence.

64. **The Regional Bureau:** (When not the Commissioning Office), the RB will take responsibility to:

- Advise the Evaluation Manager and provide support to the evaluation process where appropriate.
- Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and on the evaluation subject as required.
- Provide comments on the draft TOR, Inception and Evaluation reports.
- Support the Management Response to the evaluation and track the implementation of the recommendations.

While the Regional Evaluation Officer Yumiko Kanemitsu will perform most of the above responsibilities, other RB relevant technical staff may participate in the evaluation reference group and/or comment on evaluation products as appropriate.

65. **Relevant WFP Headquarters divisions** will take responsibility to:

- Discuss WFP strategies, policies or systems in their area of responsibility and subject of evaluation. Comment on the evaluation TOR, inception and evaluation reports, as required.

6. Communication and budget

6.1. Communication

66. To ensure a smooth and efficient process and enhance the learning from this evaluation, the evaluation team should place emphasis on transparent and open communication with key stakeholders. These will be achieved by ensuring a clear agreement on channels and frequency of communication with and between key stakeholders:

- a. The evaluation firm will deliver the USDA MGD SF FY17 MTR report. USDA comments on the final draft reports will be taken into consideration by the evaluation team in addition to comments from external stakeholders in the evaluation reference group. The evaluation team will produce an excel file indicating all comments received and how these were addressed. Exit debriefings will follow all field visits. A final presentation on the overall findings will be delivered to the Evaluation Committee and the RBB representatives.
- b. The Evaluation Manager will submit all final deliverables to the Evaluation Committee and Evaluation Reference Group for pre-approval. Upon pre-approval of deliverables, the Evaluation Manager will forward the deliverables to WFP's Washington Office with the Bangkok Regional Bureau in copy. WFP's Washington Office will transmit deliverables to the USDA MGD for comments and inputs. All communication with USDA will be transmitted via WFP's Washington Office including invitations to the USDA MGD programme staff to participate in teleconferences to discuss CO management responses to evaluation findings and recommendations.
- c. The Communication and Learning Plan should include a GEWE-responsive dissemination strategy, indicating how findings including GEWE will be disseminated and how stakeholders interested or those affected by gender inequality will be engaged.
- d. As part of the international standards for evaluation, WFP requires that all evaluations are made publicly available. Following the approval of the final evaluation report, WFP Lao PDR will share evaluation Inception Reports, Debriefing presentations, Evaluation Reports, Evaluation Briefs and Recommendations, WFP Lao management responses, and lessons learnt and good practices. These products will be shared through debriefing meetings; email; onto the WFP-Go evaluation website and WFP Evaluation extranet; media broadcast; panel presentation.

6.2. Budget

67. For the purpose of this evaluation:

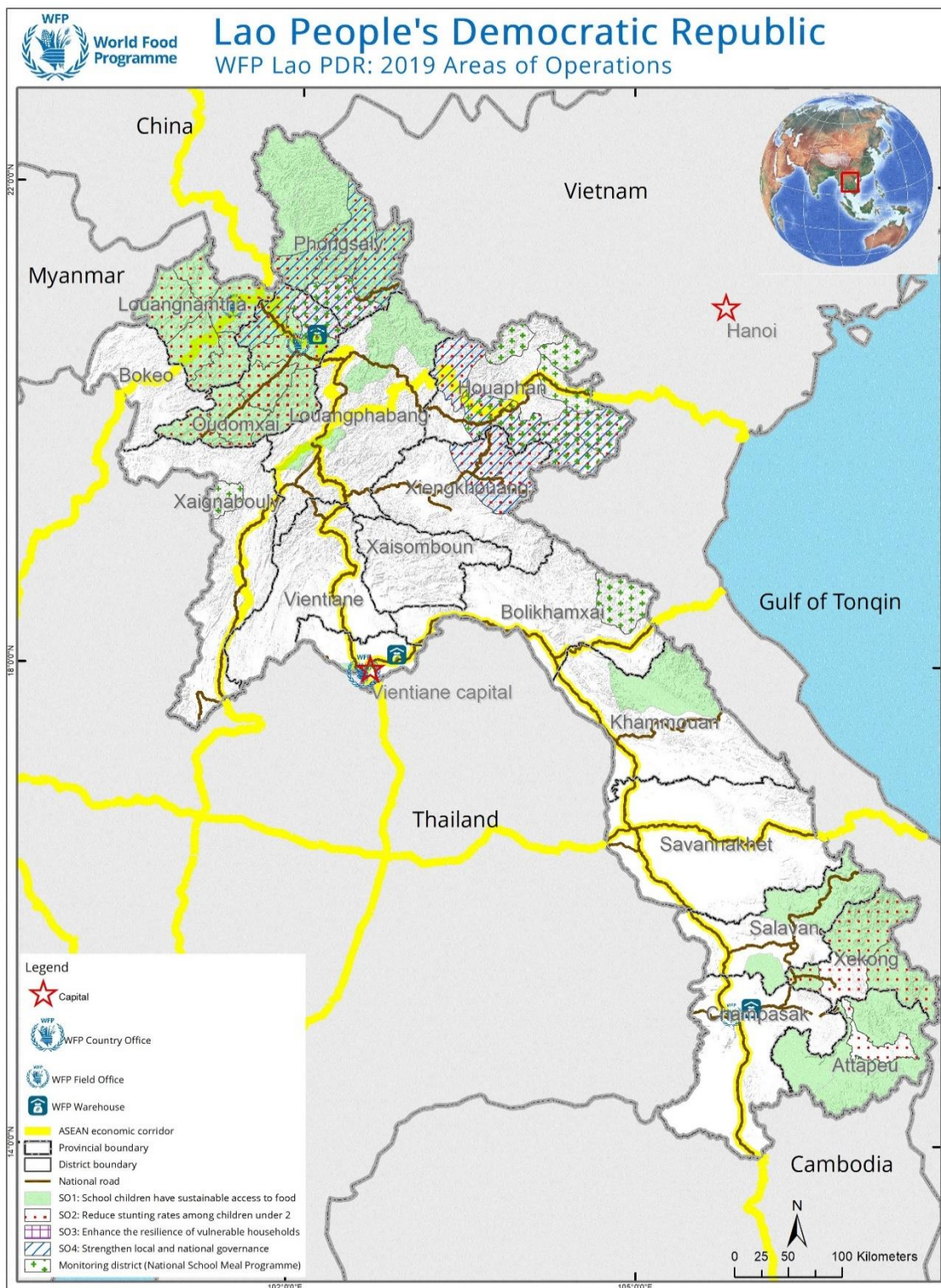
- The proposed budget is based on procurement through Long-Term Agreements, based on pre-agreed rates as per decentralized evaluation guidelines and the subsequent technical note on options for contracting evaluation teams. The final budget and handling, will be determined by the option of contracting that will be used and the rates that will apply at the time of contracting.
- The funding source: The USDA McGovern-Dole SF FY17 MTR will be funded by the WFP Lao PDR Country Office using the School Feeding Programme budget allocated for evaluation.

68. The selected evaluation firm will outline their budget in a financial proposal to WFP as part of their response to the RfP (Request for Proposal). For the purpose of this evaluation the company will:

- Include a budget for domestic travel and for all relevant in-country data collection
- Hire and supervise any and all technical and administrative assistance required (including in-country)
- Not exceed a budget of USD 80,000 – this should include any foreseen primary data collection and analysis.

Please send any queries to Sengarun BUDCHARERN, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, at sengarun.budcharern@wfp.org

Annex 1 Map WFP Lao PDR: 2019 Areas of Operations



Date Created: 12 May 2019
 Contact: wfp.lao@wfp.org
 Website: www.wfp.org

The boundaries and names and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Data Sources:
 - Lao Department of Statistics
 - Lao National Geographical Department
 - WFP Lao PDR

Information: Khotkey, P. D., All Map WFP Lao PDR 2019 Areas of Operations. A 1/32 multiple color. 1/10/19

Annex 2 Evaluation Schedule

	Phases, Deliverables and Timeline	Key Dates
Phase 1 - Preparation		Up to 9 weeks
	Desk evaluation, draft of TOR and quality assurance (QA) using ToR QC	18 Feb 2021
	Sharing of draft ToR with outsourced quality support service (DE QS)	NA
	Evaluation draft ToR based on DE QS feedback	NA
	Circulation of TOR for evaluation and comments to ERG, RB and other stakeholders (list key stakeholders)	30 Mar – 25 April 2021
	Evaluation draft ToR based on comments received	28-30 April 2021
	Submits the final TOR to the internal evaluation committee for approval	10 May 2021
	Sharing final TOR with key stakeholders	15 May 2021
	Selection and recruitment of evaluation team	15-30 May 2021
Phase 2 - Inception		Up to 7 weeks
	Briefing core team	1 June 2021
	Desk evaluation of key documents by evaluation team	2-9 June 2021
	Inception mission in the country (if applicable)	NA
	Draft inception report	15 June 2021
	Sharing of draft IR with outsourced quality support service (DE QS) and quality assurance of draft IR by EM using the QC	NA
	Revise draft IR based on feedback received by DE QS and EM	NA
	Submission of revised IR based on DE QS and EM QA	NA
	Circulate draft IR for evaluation and comments to ERG, RB and other stakeholders (list key stakeholders)	17 June 2021
	Consolidate comments	28 June 2021
	Revise draft IR based on stakeholder comments received	1-7 July 2021
	Submission of final revised IR	12 July 2021
	Submits the final IR to the internal evaluation committee for approval	13 July 2021
	Sharing of final inception report with key stakeholders for information	15 July 2021
Phase 3 - Data collection		Up to 3 weeks
	Briefing evaluation team at CO	16 July 2021
	Data collection	17 July – 10 August 2021

	In-country Debriefing (s)	11 August 2021
Phase 4 - Analyze data and report		Up to 7 weeks
	Draft evaluation report	12 August -11 September 2021
	Sharing of draft ER with outsourced quality support service (DE QS) and quality assurance of draft ER by EM using the QC	NA
	Revise draft ER based on feedback received by DE QS and EM QA	NA
	Submission of revised ER based on DE QS and EM QA	NA
	Circulate draft ER for evaluation and comments to ERG, RB and other stakeholders (list key stakeholders)	13 September 2021
	Consolidate comments	14-15 September 2021
	Revise draft ER based on stakeholder comments received	15-30 September 2021
	Submission of final revised ER	01 October 2021
	Submits the final ER to the internal evaluation committee for approval	04-08 October 2021
	Sharing of final evaluation report with key stakeholders for information	15 October 2021
Phase 5 - Dissemination and follow-up		Up to 4 weeks
	Prepare management response	15-25 October 2021
	Share final evaluation report and management response with OEV for publication	29 October vg2021

Annex 3 Membership of Evaluation Committee

Internal Evaluation Committee for USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 School Feeding – Mid-Term Evaluation

No.	Core member	Alternate
1	Jacqueline de Groot (Deputy Country Director)	
2	Fumitsugu Tosu (Head of Programme)	Outhai Sihalath
3	Yangxia Lee	Air Sensomphone
4	Phouthasinh Khamvongsa	Sengphet Laopaoher
5	Joelle Dahm	
6	Sengarun Budcharern (Evaluation Manager)	Khammon Phommakeo

Annex 4 Membership of the Evaluation Reference Group

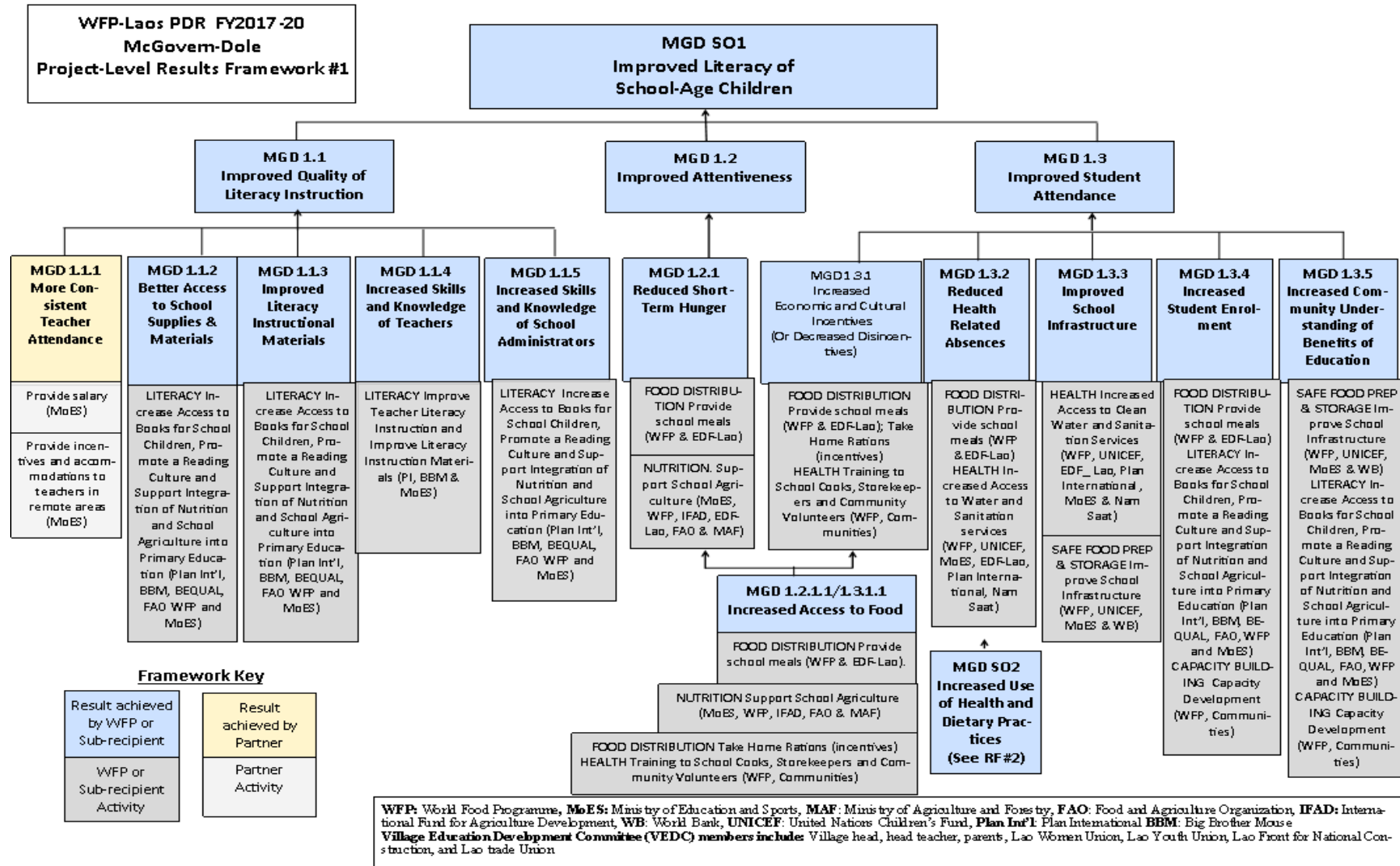
External Reference Group for USDA MGD FY17 – Mid-Term Evaluation

Core members	
Yumiko Kanemitsu (Regional Evaluation Advisor)	Anna Inzeo (Partnership Officer WFP Washington)
Niamh O’Grady (HQ Evaluation Officer, School Based Programmes)	Luna Kim (Regional Monitoring Advisor)
Nadya Frank (RBB School Feeding)	Mr. Maaly Vourabouth, Deputy Director of Planning Department, and Director General of EMIS, Ministry of Education and Sports
Mrs. Dala Khiemthammakhone, Acting Director Inclusive Education Center, Ministry of Education and Sports	Mr. Houmphanh Keo Ounkham Deputy Director of Inclusive Education Center – Ministry of Education and Sports
Mamie Clarke, USDA Analyst	Katherine McBride, TFAA-FAS, Washington, DC
Sengarun Budcharern (Evaluation Manager, M&E Officer)	Khammon Phommakeo (M&E Assistant)

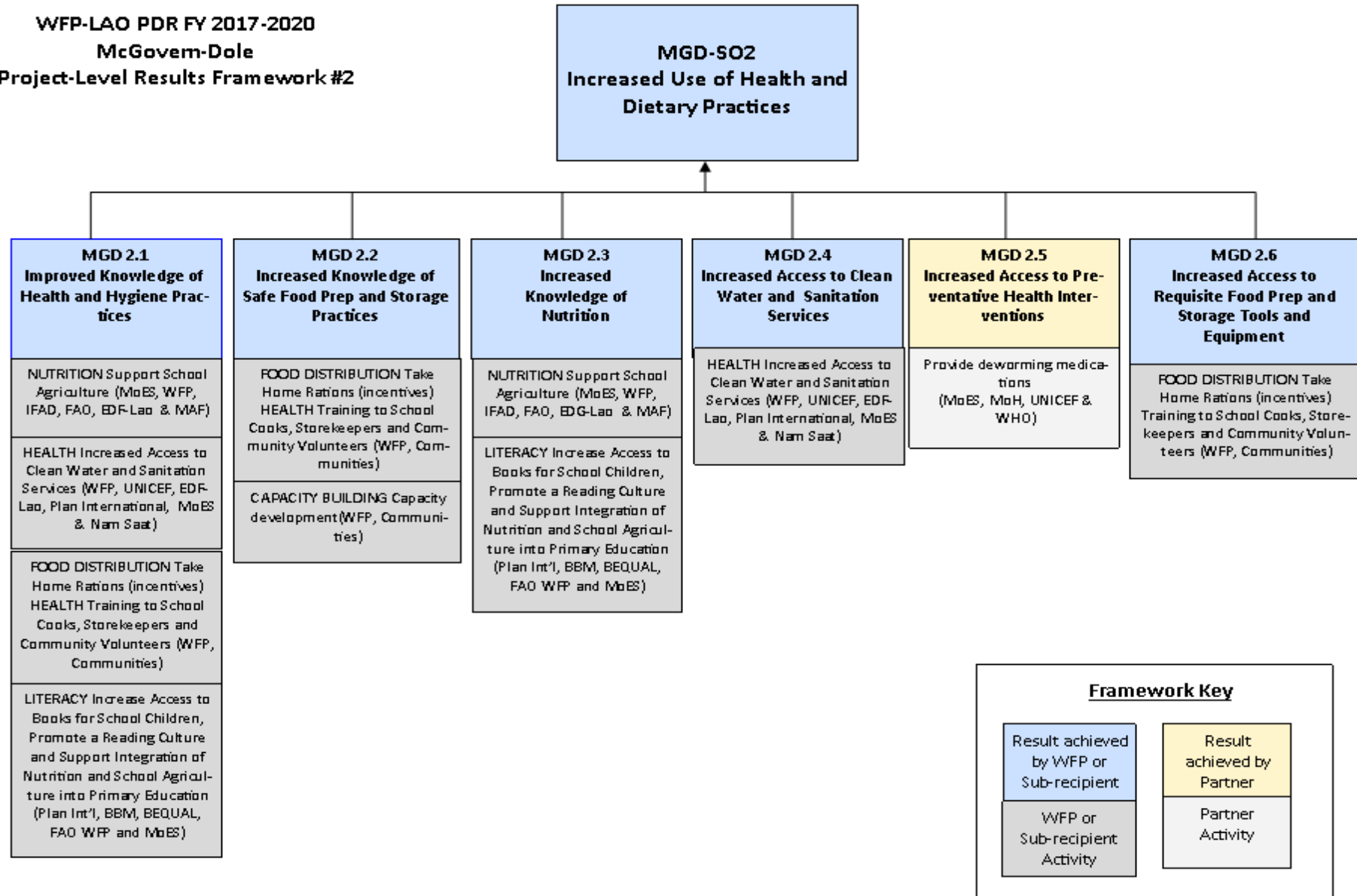
Annex 5 Acronyms

ASEAN	Associate of Southeast Asian Nations
CD	Country Director
CO	Country Office
DEQAS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
DESB	District Education and Sports Bureau
EDF	Education for Development Foundation
EM	Evaluation Manager
EMIS	Education Management and Information System
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FAD	Food Assistance Division
FFE	Food for Education
GGI	Gender Gap Index
HQ	Headquarters
IEC	Internal Evaluation Committee
LDC	Least Developed Country
LMIC	Lower Middle Income Country
LRP	Local and Regional Procurement
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoH	Ministry of Health
NSMP	National School Meal Program
OEV	Office of Evaluation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VEDC	Village Education Development Committee
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Annex 6 A: Result Framework for USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 School Feeding



WFP-LAO PDR FY 2017-2020
McGovern-Dole
Project-Level Results Framework #2



Foundational Results

Critical Assumptions

- The government continues to will take over WFP's program into the National School Meals Program (NSMP).
- The government allocates budget line items for NSMP.
- The community resumes implementation of NSMP.

MGD 1.4.1/2.7.1
Increased Capacity of Government Institutions

LITERACY Increase Access to Books for School Children, Promote a Reading Culture and Support Integration of Nutrition and School Agriculture into Primary Education (Plan Int'l, BBM, BEQUAL, FAO WFP and MoES)

CAPACITY BUILDING Capacity Development (WFP, MoES, Lao Women Union, MAF, Provincial & District governments, CRS, EDF-Lao, Plan International, UNICEF, Big Brother Mouse)

MGD 1.4.2/2.7.2
Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework

LITERACY Increase Access to Books for School Children, Promote a Reading Culture and Support Integration of Nutrition and School Agriculture into Primary Education (Plan Int'l, BBM, BEQUAL, FAO WFP and MoES)

CAPACITY BUILDING Capacity Development (WFP, MoES, Lao Women Union, MAF, Provincial & District governments, CRS, EDF-Lao, Plan International, UNICEF, Big Brother Mouse)

MGD 1.4.3/2.7.3
Increased Government Support

CAPACITY BUILDING Capacity Development (WFP, MoES, Lao Women Union, MAF, Provincial & District governments, CRS, EDF-Lao, Plan International, UNICEF, Big Brother Mouse)

MGD 1.4.4/2.7.4
Increased Engagement of Local Organizations and Community Groups

NUTRITION Support School Agriculture (MoES, WFP, IFAD, FAO, EDF-Lao, & MAF)

SAFE FOOD PREP & STORAGE Improve School Infrastructure (WFP, UNICEF, MoES & WB)

CAPACITY BUILDING Capacity Development (WFP, MoES, Lao Women Union, MAF, Provincial & District governments, CRS, EDF-Lao, Plan International, UNICEF, Big Brother Mouse)

LITERACY Increase Access to Books for School Children, Promote a Reading Culture and Support Integration of Nutrition and School Agriculture into Primary Education (Plan Int'l, BBM, BEQUAL, FAO WFP and MoES)

Framework Key

Result achieved by WFP or Sub-recipient	Result achieved by Partner
WFP or Sub-recipient Activity	Partner Activity

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) provides comprehensive technical support to the MoES to implement the GoL's education policy framework. GPE is a WB managed trust fund and AusAID and UNICEF are the coordinating agencies. The GoL's National School Meals Program is funded by the Early Childhood Education fund/WB under GPE until August 2019. The new ESDP II (2016-2020) is to be approved by the National Assembly. WFP is an active member of the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) co-chaired by AusAID/UNICEF. WFP, together with CRS is the co-chair of School Meals Technical Working Group under ESWG.

* **School Meals Committee (SMC) members include:** MoES, MAF, MoH, MoF, MPI, Lao Women's Union, Lao Youth Union, Lao Front for National Construction, and Lao

Annex 6 B: Performance Indicator Targets for USDA McGovern-Dole FY17 School Feeding

USDA Standard Indicator Number	Results Framework	Performance Indicator	Targets				Life of project
			Year 1 FY18	Year 2 FY19	Year 3 FY20	Year 4 FY21	
1	MGD 1.3	Number of students regularly (80%) attending USDA supported classrooms/schools	116,784	116,784	116,784	116,784	116,784
2	MGD 1.1.2	Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance	11,314	11,314	10,314	10,314	43,256
3	MGD 1.1.5	Number of school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate the use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	10,411	10,411	10,411	10,411	10,411
4	MGD 1.1.5	Number of school administrators and officials trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	13,014	13,014	13,014	13,014	13,014
5	MGD 1.1.4	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate the use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	56	88	48	48	240
6	MGD 1.1.4	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	70	110	60	60	300
7	MGD 1.3.3	Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	940	1,040	500	30	2,510
8	MGD 1.3.4	Number of students enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance	145,980	145,980	145,980	145,980	583,920
9	MGD 1.4.4	Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar “school” governance structures supported as a result of USDA assistance	1,446	1,446	1,446	1,446	5,784
10	MGD 1.4.4	Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance	289	289	289	289	1,156

USDA Standard Indicator Number	Results Framework	Performance Indicator	Targets				Life of project
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
			FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	
11	MGD 1.4.3 & 1.4.4	Value of new public and private sector investments leveraged as a result of USDA assistance	638,313	1,328,312	2,553,250	3,829,875	8,349,750
12	MGD 1.4.2	Number of educational policies, regulations and/or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance: Stage 1: Analysed Stage 2: Drafted and presented for public/stakeholder consultation Stage 3: Presented for legislation/decreed Stage 4: Passed/Approved Stage 5: Passed for which implementation has begun	1	1	1	1	4
13	MGD 1.2.1.1	Number of take-home rations provided as a result of USDA assistance	1,098,230	923,230	573,230		1,098,230
14	MGD 1.2.1.1	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	12,441	11,441	9,442		33,324
15	MGD 1.2.1.1	Number of daily school lunch provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	25,546,500	16,359,000	8,684,900	175,000	50,765,400
16	MGD 1.2.1.1	Number of school-age children receiving daily school lunch as a result of USDA assistance	145,980	93,480	49,628	1,000	145,980
17	MGD 1.2.1.1 & 1.3.1.1 & 2.5	Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance	158,421	104,921	59,070	1,000	158,421
18	MGD 2.3	Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	5,160	5,160	4,520	2,000	16,840
19	MGD SO2	Number of individuals who demonstrate the use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance	4,128	4,128	4,128	1,600	13,984
20	MGD 2.2	Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance	5,500	5,500	4,892		15,892

USDA Standard Indicator Number	Results Framework	Performance Indicator	Targets				Life of project
			Year 1 FY18	Year 2 FY19	Year 3 FY20	Year 4 FY21	
21	MGD SO2	Number of individuals who demonstrate the use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	4,400	4,400	3,914		12,714
22	MGD 2.4	Number of schools using an improved water source	250	300	150	30	730
23	MGD 2.4	Number of schools with improved sanitation facilities	250	300	150	30	730
25	MGD 2.7.2	Number of child health and nutrition policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance: - Stage 1: Analysed - Stage 2: Drafted and presented for public/stakeholder consultation - Stage 3: Presented for legislation/decreed - Stage 4: Passed/Approved - Stage 5: Passed for which implementation has begun	1	1	1		3
26	MGD SO1	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text		10%	12%	12%	12%
27	MGD SO1	Number of individuals benefiting directly from USDA-funded interventions	182,954	181,954	179,347	165,013	652,169
28	MGD SO1	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	274,364	274,364	274,364	244,600	274,364
Project specific activities indicators							
1	MGD 1.3.1&1.3.3	Percent of students having reduced absenteeism due to USDA support	77	79	81	83	85
2	MGD 2.1 &2.2	Number of school garden able to contribute with food for lunch at least 2 times harvest to school lunch in a month	433	506	578	650	723

USDA Standard Indicator Number	Results Framework	Performance Indicator	Targets				Life of project
			Year 1 FY18	Year 2 FY19	Year 3 FY20	Year 4 FY21	
3	MGD 2.1 &2.3	Number of climate change installations (green houses, irrigation systems etc.) established	0	100	100	100	300
4	MGD 2.1 &2.4	Number of fishponds/ livestock schemes supported	100		100		200
5	MGD 1.3.3 &2.4	Percentages of schools with access to water for school gardens, cooking and wash purposes	250	300	150	30	730
6	MGD 1.3.1 &1.2.1.1 & 1.3.1.1	Number of Community Volunteers supporting SFP	7,441	7,441	7,442		22,324
7	MGD 1.3.5 &1.4.4 & 2.7.4	Number of schools have well-functioning and clean dining facility	344	344	688	688	688
8	MGD 1.1.2 & 1.1.3 & 1.1.5 & 1.3.5 & 2.1&2.3	Number of children (boys and girls, 10 years +) benefitting from literacy campaigns, books, and new teaching material	7,850	7,850	6,600	6,400	28,700
9	MGD 1.1.2 & 1.1.3 & 1.1.5, 1.3.5 & 2.1&2.3	Number of schools where Nutrition and School Agriculture teaching (curriculum) material is being applied	50	50	50	50	200
10	MGD 1.1.6	Number of teacher instruction sets/manuals, guidance's, teaching material and books	11,314	11,314	10,314	10,314	43,256
11	MGD 1.4.1 & 1.4.2 &1.4.3 & 1.4.4 & 2,7.1 & 2.7.2 & 2.7.3 & 2.7.5	Number of platforms established to track WFP community package implementation.	1	1	1	1	1
12	MGD 1.4.1 & 1.4.2 &1.4.3 & 1.4.4 & 2,7.1 & 2.7.2 & 2.7.3 & 2.7.6	Degree (in %) of WFP's Community Strength Assessment Tool (CST) being adopted, included and implemented by MoES monitoring system: - MoES agrees to adopt - MoES include and apply into their monitoring system - CST data in MoES monitoring system is being collected	0%	33%	66%	100%	100%

USDA Standard Indicator Number	Results Framework	Performance Indicator	Targets				Life of project
			Year 1 FY18	Year 2 FY19	Year 3 FY20	Year 4 FY21	
13	MGD 1.4.1 & 1.4.2 & 1.4.3 & 1.4.4 & 2.7.1 & 2.7.2 & 2.7.3 & 2.7.8	Number of community mobilisation activities in village	8,676	8,676	8,676	4,338	8,676
14	MGD 1.4.1 & 1.4.2 & 1.4.3 & 1.4.4 & 2.7.1 & 2.7.2 & 2.7.3 & 2.7.9	Number of exchange visits between communities (peer to peer)	20	20	20	20	80
15	MGD 1.4.1 & 1.4.2 & 1.4.3 & 1.4.4 & 2.7.1 & 2.7.2 & 2.7.3 & 2.7.10	Number of Government people trained on governance, roles, and responsibilities.	14,859	14,859	14,859	14,859	59,436
16	MGD 1.4.1 & 1.4.2 & 1.4.3 & 1.4.4 & 2.7.1 & 2.7.2 & 2.7.3 & 2.7.11	Number of representatives from government institutions that facilitate training of VEDC.	6	6	8	6	26
17	MGD 1.4.1 & 1.4.2 & 1.4.3 & 1.4.4 & 2.7.1 & 2.7.2 & 2.7.3 & 2.7.13	Number of study visits organised to learn about the handover from WFP to Government and how to expand school meals nationwide	1	1			2
18	MGD 1.4.1 & 1.4.2 & 1.4.3 & 1.4.4 & 2.7.1 & 2.7.2 & 2.7.3 & 2.7.14	Number of Advocacy activities aimed at decision makers promoting school meals	2	2	2	2	8
19	MGD 1.4.1 & 1.4.2 & 1.4.3 & 1.4.4 & 2.7.1 & 2.7.2 & 2.7.3 & 2.7.15	Number of schools providing school lunch every day for the past 2 weeks	867	939	1,012	723	1,012

Annex 7

Baseline: Findings

MGD SO1: Improved Literacy of School-age Children

Children's background

- 1 Lao population has four broad ethno-linguistic families¹⁷ namely, Lao-Tai (67%), Mon-Khmer (21%), Hmong-Lu Mien (8%) and Sino-Tibetan (3%)¹⁸. Interestingly, MoES categorises language based on three topological groups; "*Lao Loum*", or "Lowland Lao", "*Lao Theung*", or "Upland Lao" or "Midland Lao" and "*Lao Soung*", or "Highland Lao"¹⁹. About 66 percent of the population reside in Lowland areas (<200 metres above mean sea level) and speak Lao. About 20 percent of the population reside in Midland Lao (mountain slopes in the range 200 – 800 metres) and speak different tribal languages with Khmu spoken by 11 percent of the people. About 14 percent of the population resides in Highland Lao (upper mountain slopes, typically above 800 metres) and speak Hmong and Chinese.
- 2 From the primary study, similar patterns emerge among the sampled children. While Mon-Khmer emerges as the predominant ethnic group in Northern regions (45%), its presence is comparatively lower in the South (34%). Lao-Tai is the most predominant ethnic group in the South (and control areas) with around 60 percent students belonging to it. Children belonging to Lao-Tai ethnic group speak Lao at home and therefore, are less likely to face problems in school in terms of medium of instruction. However, those belonging to other ethnic groups are learning to read in a second language. Further, student belonging to ethnic groups Hmong-Lu Mien and Sino-Tibetan were only found in the Northern provinces (7% and 16%, respectively), its presence in the South is negligible. Thus, we see that higher proportion of students in the southern provinces are comfortable with Lao as compared to those in the Northern provinces (non Lao-Tai ethnic groups).
- 3 With respect to socio-economic characteristics, no statistically significant differences were found between girls and boys across both geographies and intervention type.

¹⁷ As defined by the Lao Census 1995 and the classification of ethnic minorities based on Ethno-linguistic Family by LFNC

¹⁸ King, Elizabeth M., *Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Development*, 2010

¹⁹ *Gender and Ethnicity in the Context of Equality and Access in Lao Education*, UNESCO

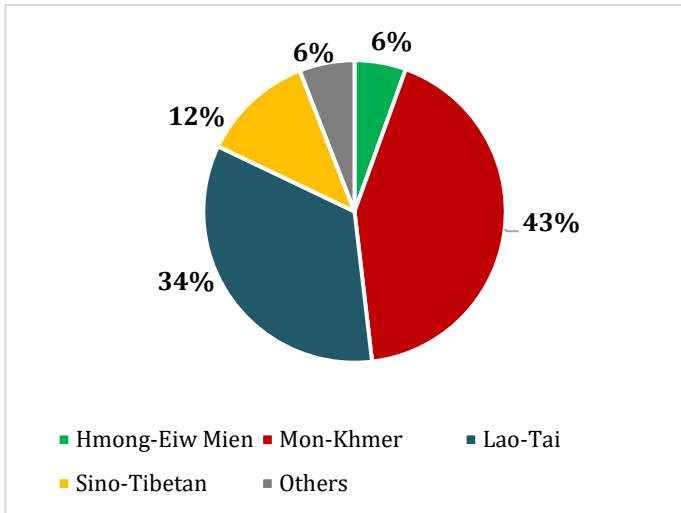


Figure 1: Student ethnicity, Project schools
N=1155

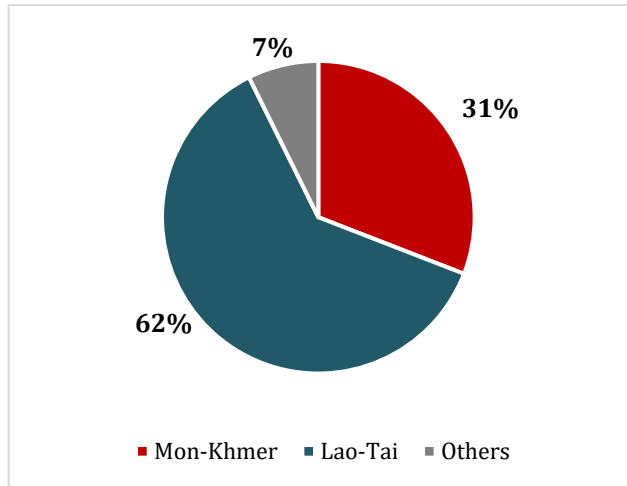


Figure 2: Student ethnicity, Control schools
N=1155

Children’s home literacy background

4 With respect to proportion of students taking extra classes, a significantly (statistically) higher proportion of students in project schools in southern provinces reported ‘Yes’ (64.1 %) as compared to 47.8 percent in northern provinces.

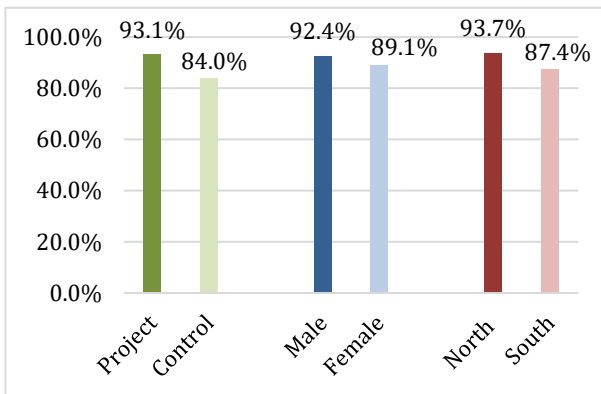


Figure 3: Proportion of students reporting having someone at home (not private teachers) to help them with reading and writing
N=1155

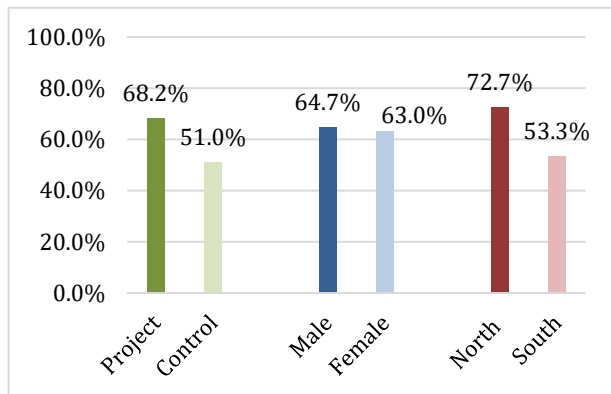


Figure 4: Proportion of students reported reading any kind of extracurricular book
N=1155

5 Similar trend exists between the home literacy environments available to girls and boys across the provinces. Therefore, it is likely that they would have similar literacy levels (**Error! Reference source not found. & Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Percentage of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text.

6 Teaching materials and methodologies used at school in Lao PDR follows Lao language. However, given the wide ethnic and linguistic diversity in the country, exposure to Lao language at home is limited for vast majority of children in the country. The pace of

learning for such children is thus challenged. WFP, with support from partners PI and BBM have been providing assistance to remote rural areas with diverse ethnic composition where Lao language is not spoken at home under the MGD-SFP programme to improving learning abilities among school-age children.

7 Secondary literature²⁰ suggests that of students who speak Lao at home, 30 percent of 2nd graders could not read one word. This proportion was as high as 54 percent for students who do not speak Lao at home. To assess learning levels among Grade-2 students, EGRA tool was administered to 175 in project schools and another 76 children in control schools. Additionally, a sample of 148 Grade 3 students in project schools and 66 students from the same Grade in control schools were covered. The EGRA tool used Lao as the language for reading and writing. The tool used six sub-tests for assessing the learning levels among children, namely, letter recognition, familiar word recognition, decoding words (invented word reading), fluency, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension.

8 On one hand, it was found that only 6.9 percent students in project schools were able to demonstrate at least 75 percent reading comprehension of the Lao language compared with a target of 25 percent²¹. On the other hand, 12.4 percent students in control schools demonstrated similar comprehension level of Lao language. While schools in control area were found to perform better, however, there is no statistically significant difference.

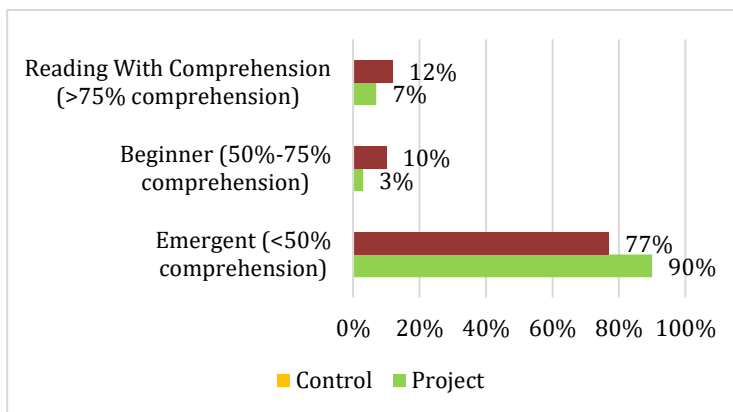


Figure 5: Reading comprehension categorisation based on EGRA

The findings for reading comprehension disaggregated by sex and geographical location (northern vs southern provinces) do not reveal any statistically significant difference (refer [Figure 16](#) and **Error! Reference source not found.**).

9 With respect to ethnic variations, findings from EGRA shows that literacy among Lao-Tai children in project schools is considerably higher (statistically significant) as compared to children from other non Lao-Tai ethnic groups, based on their reading comprehension ability.

10 An interesting aspect emerges if we examine the EGRA findings for both Grade 2 and Grade 3 students together. Across project and control schools it differs widely from those among only Grade 2 students. With Grade 3 included, the proportion of students who demonstrated at least 75 percent reading comprehension of Lao language is high (15.8 percent in project schools and 26.8 percent in control schools). Therefore, this indicates that Grade 3 is doing better in this respect. It further highlights that it does take some time for children to grasp a new language. Moreover, there emerges statistically significant difference between the findings across intervention type (project and control), sex, or geographical location (northern vs southern provinces) with respect to Grade 3. Overall,

²⁰ Save the Children (2013). Literacy Boost Lao PDR: Baseline report

²¹ June 2018. Semi-Annual report for MGD-SFP

students from control schools have significantly high literacy levels with respect to reading Lao- overtaking the national target of 25 percent. Moreover, level of literacy among boys was found to be higher (statistically significant) than that among girls.

MGD 1.1: Improved quality of literacy instruction

MGD 1.1.1: More Consistent Teacher Attendance

Indicator: Average teacher attendance rates

11 Teacher attendance was assessed using monthly school records of every teacher's attendance and comparing this data against the number of school days per month in the academic semester September 2017-February 2018.

12 The average teacher attendance rate for the previous semester was high at around 97 percent in project schools. For control schools, it was only marginally higher at 97.5 percent. There is statistically significant difference between attendance of female teachers in project (94.6%) and control (100%) schools (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Percent of teachers attending at least 90 percent of the school days

13 Regular teacher attendance has been identified as a critical variable that can potentially affect project outcomes. Regular attendance for teachers, in this case, is defined as those attending school at least 90 percent of the school days. It was found that around 94 percent teachers regularly attend school in project areas. While that is encouraging, the corresponding figure for control schools is at 100 percent, which is (statistically) significantly higher than project schools. There are no significant difference in regular attendance among male and female teachers, across intervention type. (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

MGD 1.1.2: Better Access to School Supplies and Materials and *MGD 1.1.3: Improved Literacy Instruction Materials*

Indicator: Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance

14 For the award cycle 2014-16, 71,536 textbooks and other teaching materials were provided as a result of USDA assistance (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The corresponding figure for FY17-21 is not available yet. In the absence of physical records with school head, primary survey too could not capture this information.

Indicator: Number of children (boys and girls, 10 years+) benefitting from literacy campaigns, books, and new teaching material

15 For the award cycle 2014-16, WFP had partnership with BBM and PI. A total of 9,774 students (8,529 students from BBM & 1,245 students from PI) benefitted from these materials. The new partnership agreement (for FY 17 award) is expected to commence from the academic year 2018-19.

MGD 1.1.4: Increased Skills and Knowledge of Teachers

Indicator: Percent of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified in teaching techniques during the last one year

16 Around 48 percent of teaching staff reported receiving training in teaching techniques over the last one year. There is no significant difference across sex. However, it is encouraging to note that all surveyed schools (57 project schools) reported that at least one teacher has been trained in teaching techniques during the last one year (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Percent of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as identified by their supervisor/mentor/coach

17 For teachers who had completed such trainings in the last one year, responses from the school head was used to assess their demonstration of these teaching techniques. School heads in nearly all schools (56 out of 57 surveyed project schools) reported that teachers were demonstrating use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Number of teacher instruction sets/manuals, guidance, teaching materials and books distributed as a result of USDA assistance

18 As per the current monitoring system, school heads reported that they do not maintain records for these. This information was also not available in the monitoring report.

MGD 1.2: Improved Attentiveness

Indicator: Number of individuals benefitting directly from USDA-funded interventions

19 Until March 2018, 138,790 students of which 70,783 are boys and 68,007 are girls have benefitted directly from USDA funded MGD-SFP (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Another 145, 980 students and 5000 cooks will benefit in 2018-19.

Indicator: Percentage of students in classrooms identified as inattentive by their teachers

20 Around 21 percent students in project schools were classified as inattentive by their teachers while the corresponding figure for control schools is 19 percent (**Error! Reference source not found.**). A higher proportion of female students were classified as inattentive (24%) in project schools as compared to proportion of male students (17%). A similar pattern was also observed in control schools- inattentiveness is more prevalent among females than males.

MGD 1.2.1: Reduced Short-Term Hunger

Indicator: Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance

21 A total of 138,790 social assistance beneficiaries (children) are participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance. This includes 70,783 boys and 68,007 girls. 111,032 beneficiaries are part of continuing schools and 27,758 beneficiaries have been reached out in the new schools (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Provisioning of school lunch enhances the social protection enjoyed by these children with respect to access to food and nutrition.

Indicator: Number of daily school lunch meals provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance

22 According to secondary data (monitoring report for October 2017 to March 2018), a total of 14,323, 128 daily school lunch had been provided to students (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Schools have partial records of lunch meals served which was not found to be reliable and hence has not been considered.

Indicator: Number of school-aged children receiving daily school lunch as a result of USDA assistance

23 According to secondary data (monitoring report for October 2017 to March 2018), 138,790 school-age children have received daily school lunch as a result of USDA assistance between October 2017 to March 2018. 61,581 boys and 59,166 girls have records of receiving it. Majority of the children are in the old (continuing) schools (111,032) while 27,758 children in new schools have been provided with school lunch (**Error! Reference source not found.**). As noted above, schools have partial records for number of children receiving daily school lunch which was not found to be reliable and hence has not been reported. Overall, discussions revealed that all the children in a school receive school lunch on the days it is being served.

Indicator: Number of schools providing school lunch every day for the past two weeks

24 The primary survey findings reveal poor performance of the school lunch programme in terms of regularity. Nearly half of the schools in the sample (52%) reported that they have not been able to provide school lunch every day for the past 2 weeks (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Given that the survey was conducted between end-March to early-May, it is possible that lack of water and availability of vegetables in the school garden may have resulted in the irregularity in provisioning of lunch in these schools. Closure of schools for 2-3 weeks during the Lao New Year may also have contributed to the irregularity. This needs to be addressed in order to ensure effectiveness of the programme as well as continue to maintain interest among students and goodwill among parents and the community at large.

Indicator: Number of take-home rations provided as a result of USDA assistance

25 During the course of evaluation, the evaluation team learnt that there was an amendment to the MGD Grant that was approved on October 12, 2016²². As part of this amendment, take-home rations for informal boarders at secondary school were stopped. Therefore, provision of take-home rations (THR) were limited to cooks and storekeepers for baseline FY17. However, in order not to lose out on the nutrition aspect of the school meals in particular during lean season months, WFP also provided an additional one-off THR (50Kg of rice in each semester) to students, activity supporter and their families.

26 About 345,281 THRs were provided during the programme period, of which 19,854 THRs were provided to the cooks and storekeepers. Discussions with cooks, storekeepers and school authorities revealed that food supply that was left at the end of the semester was distributed among the cooks and storekeepers. According to the programme guidelines, cooks are entitled to receive 50 kilograms of rice per semester. However, this was designed with an understanding of engaging one cook. With cooking groups being formed, there are now multiple cooks in a village and since the prescribed quantity has not been revised, they reported that they received very small proportions of rice as incentive.

²² MGD commitment letter dated 12 October 2016

Indicator: Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance

27 According to the monitoring reports for October 2017 to March 2018, 4,948 individuals are

Box 1: Status on partial absenteeism

Children going back home during lunch was recognised as a security issue for children as they would be crossing roads unescorted while there is high speed moving traffic. Moreover, it also meant that children sometimes would not come back for the latter half of school thus impacting their education. To address both these issues the school lunch programme aimed at retaining children in the school during lunch.

However, the evaluation team observed that children were going back home after having lunch and in few instances the children did not come back. About 40 percent students reported to be absent for post-lunch session at least once in the last week. This resulted a fall in attendance during the afternoon classes. Discussions with parents revealed that since the teachers also go back home during lunch, there is no one to look after the children and hence they are asked to go back home too.

Furthermore, around 64 percent parents overall shared that school lunch was served on all school days in the last one week. For the remaining parents, a very high proportion (90%) shared that children came home

receiving THR as a result of USDA assistance. As per primary survey data, nearly 85 percent of the storekeepers were receiving take-home rations, however, the corresponding figure for cooks is only 50 percent (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Given that cooks are key to the school lunch program, there is a felt need to enhance the incentives for cooks to provide their services. Moreover, storekeepers, being in-charge of food supply, might be securing their ration resulting in cooks not getting their share. In the absence of physical records, it is difficult to monitor this activity.

MGD 1.3: Improved Student Attendance

28 Complete information on monthly student attendance over the last academic year was available from 77 percent of the project schools, and an additional 7 percent of the schools had partial data on attendance. Overall, data for only 690 students in project schools (out of 1162 in the sample) were available for calculating average student attendance and percentage of students attending school regularly. With respect to control schools, complete attendance record for the last academic year was available from 50 percent of the schools, and an additional 20 percent of schools had partial records. Overall, data was available for 208 students in control schools (out of 292 in the sample).

29 Student attendance was measured in two ways:

- a. The monthly school attendance records of fifteen students per school for the last academic semester (September 2017- February 2018). Both average attendance and regular school attendance (defined as greater than or equal to 80 percent attendance) were calculated.
- b. The average school attendance on the day of the survey was computed from the number of students present at school on the day of the survey compared to the number of students enrolled in each school. Although just a snapshot of the day, this indicator can be used to triangulate the reliability of school records.

Indicator: Average student attendance

30 In comparison to 82.9 percent attendance at primary level as reported by Census 2015, average student attendance is high at around 98 percent in project schools. It is similar for both sexes and intervention type (**Error! Reference source not found.**). According to the monitoring report for the period October 2017 to March 2018, 67,952 males and 64,607 female students were attending school regularly (more than 80%) (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Census 2015 observes that about 82.9 percent girls and about 82.8 percent boys are attending school. Census data also reveals an interesting pattern where attendance level peaks at 11 years of age of a student and then tapers down highlighting the high dropouts post primary education.

Indicator: Percent of students regularly attending school (at least 80 percent of the school days)

31 Nearly all students (98% in project and 96% in control), across both project and control schools, were reported attending school regularly. There is no variation in terms of regular attendance among both the sexes (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Student attendance on the day of the survey

32 Student attendance on the day of the survey was slightly lower than the average attendance and regular attendance, at 91 percent in project schools and 80 percent in control schools. There is no significant variation across sex²³ (**Error! Reference source not found.**). It is to be noted that this value is determined from all children at the schools.

33 Poverty is the primary cause for children being out of school as parents cannot afford the education expenses. Further, a lack of interest in studying is a common cause for absenteeism among boys as shared by parents during FGDs. For girls, however, parents shared that they are expected to stay back at home on some days and help with household chores and take care of younger siblings. Further, in certain ethnic groups like Akha and Hmong, girls are married off at a very early age (after grade 5) which results in drop-out after completing primary school.

Indicator: Percent of students having reduced absenteeism due to USDA support

34 Overall, in sample schools, 10.5 percent students were reported to be absent for the whole day in the last one week (from the date of survey). Further, there are statistically significant differences across geography- around seven percent students were reported to be absent in the north while in the south it was around 21 percent. The corresponding figure for this was higher for control areas at 20.7 percent (statistically significant). USDA support may have contributed to the low proportion of absenteeism in project schools as compared to control schools that have not had any activity to promote education and literacy.

35 About 86.5 percent of the students reported taking leave in the last one week. About 43 percent student were absent for a day and another 31 percent were absent for two days. Disaggregating by sex or intervention type did not highlight any variation. However, as presented in Box 3, seasonal absenteeism in the North increases during the harvesting season and also during establishment of new banana plantations.

²³ According to The World Bank (2016) report on “Reducing early grade dropout and low learning achievement in Lao PDR: Root causes and possible interventions”, gender difference in attendance and enrollment starts to be significant after age 14, with early drop out being more common for girls than for boys.

36 While the primary reason for absenteeism was illness, a small proportion of students (around 12.5% in project schools) also reported that they were absent because their parents asked them to stay at home and help out with household chores, farm work, take care of siblings. Disaggregating this by sex does not bring forth any gender-based variation in finding- an equal proportion of boys and girls reported this (12.5%).

MGD 1.3.1: Increased Economic and Cultural Incentives

Indicator: Number of school gardens constructed as a result of USDA assistance

37 A major achievement of the programme is that around 85 percent of parents reported that their household costs on food have reduced after the school lunch programme was started. The proportion of people who reported this positive impact is higher (statistically significant) in the northern region as compared to the southern provinces. This could be attributed to the fact that a significantly higher proportion of parents in the north (95%) are contributing for the school lunch as compared to the south (76%). Therefore, with a higher number of families supporting the school lunch program, the cost for each family has gone down and as a result, their household expenditure on food is perceived to be lower now.

“Involvement in garden activities also improves children’s attitude to the natural environment. They develop practical understanding of the environment and its ecosystem. Given the current scenario around global warming, this understanding is very important”.

-DESB, Thateng, Sekong Province

38 By provisioning school lunch, MGD-SFP aims that children will stay in school during and after lunch. This also acts as an economic incentive for parents. Earlier, parents shared, that somebody (usually mothers) had to be at home during lunch because children would come home to eat. This meant that they would have to come back early from the fields (given that women are mostly engaged in farming activities) which leaves them with comparatively lesser amount of time to engage in economic activities. However, now that children don’t need to come home to eat, they can spend longer hours at work thus enhancing their productivity.

MGD 1.3.2: Reduced Health Related Absences

39 The primary reason for absenteeism among students in the last one week (from the date of survey) was health related (67% in project and 59% in control). The most common illnesses in both project and control schools were reported to be fever, headache, cold and cough. Disaggregating data by geography, a considerably higher proportion of students (statistically significant) reported health related absence in north (83%) as compared to south (53%). This highlights the need for better health, nutrition and hygiene practices in the Northern Province as compared to south.

Indicator: Number of cooks benefitting from training in food preparation and storage practices

40 Only about half of the cooks (55%) in sampled project schools had received training in food preparation and storage practices (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Number of storekeepers benefitting from training in food preparation and storage practices

41 38 out of the 58 storekeepers (65%) interviewed were trained in safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance. Of this, a higher proportion were in the north (70%, i.e. 30 out of 42) as compared to the south (50%, i.e. 8 out of 16) (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

MGD 1.3.3: Improved School Infrastructure

Indicator: Number of kitchens constructed or rehabilitated as a result of USDA assistance

42 Of the sample schools (57), 39 schools (68.4%) reported construction of kitchen as a result of USDA assistance. Of this 30 (out of 42) were in North and 9 in South (out of 16) (Annex Y). From WFP monitoring report it emerges that about 1037 schools (69.1%) have received support for construction or rehabilitation of kitchens against a target of 1500 schools.

43 Additionally, 23 out of 58 schools (39.6%) reported construction of dining facility as a result of USDA assistance- 15 were in North and 8 in South (**Error! Reference source not found.**). This is in line with the monitoring report findings showing 747 out of 1500 schools (49.8%) having received support for construction of dining facility.

Indicator: Number of storerooms constructed or rehabilitated as a result of USDA assistance

44 Of the 57 sample schools, 36 schools (63.1%) reported construction of storerooms (warehouse) with USDA assistance. Of this 25 (out of 42) were in North and 11 in South (out of 16) (**Error! Reference source not found.**). This is slightly higher than the monitoring report figures of 49.8% (748 schools out of 1500 schools).

Indicator: Number of school gardens constructed or rehabilitated as a result of USDA assistance

45 Two-third of the sampled project schools reported having a school garden (**Error! Reference source not found.**). School gardens have been globally recognised as an effective means of promoting good diet, nutrition education, and development of livelihood skills among students. It also has the power to extend this learning to the larger community.

Indicator: Number of school gardens able to contribute at least two times harvest to school lunch in a month

46 About 64 percent of the schools were able to contribute to the school lunch at least twice a month in semester 1. This falls to as low as 36 percent during the second semester. The situation is particularly worse in schools in Northern areas with only about 31 percent reporting ability to contribute twice a month in semester 2 as compared to 50 percent schools in south (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

47 Availability of water is a critical factor in effectiveness and utility of school gardens. It was learnt that majority of the school gardens were non-operational during the dry season, owing to water scarcity. [Figure 6](#) shows that the proportion of school gardens that do not provide vegetables for the school lunch is considerably higher in the second semester, which happens to be the dry season. It follows that nearly half of the school gardens in the Northern provinces (46%), do not provide vegetables at all in the second semester.

While the proportion of school gardens providing vegetables for school lunch during the second semester also goes down in the southern provinces, the decrease is slightly less as compared to the northern schools. Given the mountainous terrain in the North, water scarcity is an even more serious issue with respect to sustaining school gardens during the dry season.

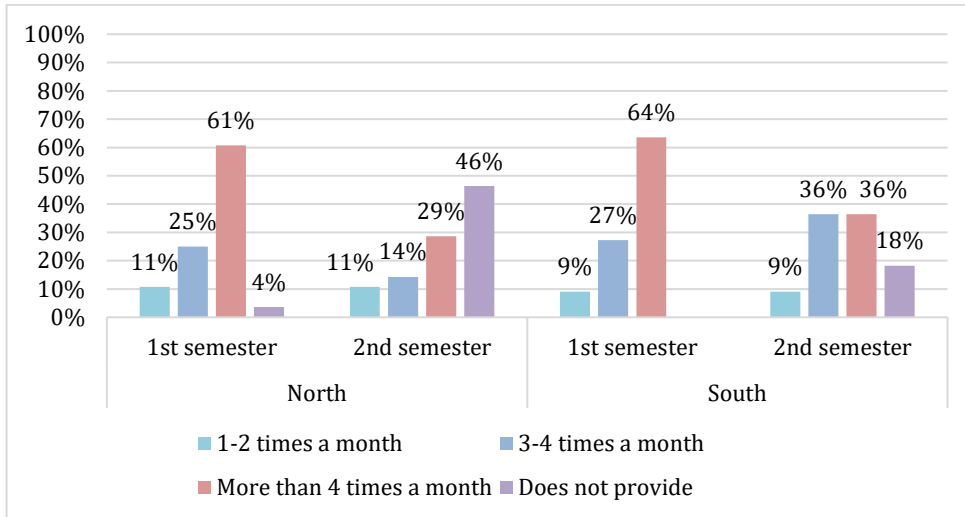


Figure 6: Harvest from school gardens for school lunch in the last one year, by geography

48 Rivers, streams and canals emerge as the most important source of water for irrigating school gardens in the north (32%). The remaining schools have access to either borehole or gravity feed water for irrigation. Availability of water becomes a pressing concern in the winter months when these open sources of water dry up due to low (or no) rainfall. About 72 percent of the school gardens in the south are dependent on borehole for irrigation. About 45 percent of the schools have constructed overhead tanks in which the water is pumped up and then using gravity feed, the water is supplied to the school gardens. This further underlines that majority school gardens in the north are dependent on surface water while in the south, they are dependent on ground water which is a more secure source during dry season. Access to piped water or pond within the school premises is negligible across both the provinces.

49 Given limited access to government irrigation schemes, in few instances (Phongkhom School, Nga district of Oudomxay) schools have also drawn water from individual households. Slightly well-off households have installed bore-wells for personal use; and the school has purchased water from these households during the winter months for irrigation.

50 During the survey (end March to early May), nearly 50 percent of the cooks in sample schools reported that they have not been able to use vegetables from the school garden in the last one month. Due to low moisture content in the soil and lack of irrigation opportunities, the school gardens remained non-operational. Thus, it is clear that availability of water is critical towards utilizing school gardens and ensuring regularity of school lunch.

Indicator: Percentage of schools with access to water for cooking purposes

51 One-fourth of the schools in project areas do not have access to water for cooking (**Error! Reference source not found.**). This raises serious doubts about the regularity and continuity of school lunch programme given that water availability is a very vital aspect of cooking. This may be the case particularly during the second semester (dry season) when the survey was conducted. The numbers do not vary according to geographical location.

Indicator: Percentage of schools with access to water for washing purposes

52 One-third of the schools in project areas reported not having access to water for washing purposes (**Error! Reference source not found.**). This is again a problem with respect to preparing school lunch as well as adhering to the health and hygiene standards mandated by the program.

Indicator: Number of schools having well-functioning and clean dining facilities

53 More than half of the sample schools (55%) had well-functioning and clean dining facilities (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Around 70 percent of the schools in south had access to such facilities while the corresponding figure in the north is quite lower at only 50 percent. The inter-region difference is primarily due to the type of materials used for constructing the dining spaces. While the USDA supported schools had zinc sheets as roofs and iron nets as walls to keep the space dry and airy, the non-USDA schools (mainly in the north) had used biomass for roofs and walls. As a result, during rainy season, water leaked from the roof making it unusable. Also, gusts during monsoon damaged the dining spaces. Few of the non-USDA schools did not have benches and tables in the dining area for children to sit and eat.

MGD 1.3.4: Increased Student Enrolment

54 The baseline survey team aimed to collect enrolment data from school records for the past five academic years in order to examine trends in student enrolment in WFP supported schools. Around two-third (65.5%) of the schools did not maintain enrolment records at the time of the survey. About 40 percent of schools had records for at least one of the years, and 34 percent (20 out of 58 schools) had complete enrolment records for all five years. Similarly, 5 of the 20 control schools (25%) maintained complete enrolment records of all five years.

Indicator: Average percent change in school enrolment

55 Percent change in school enrolment in the current academic year (2017-18²⁴) was calculated by comparing the number of students in 2017-18 to the previous academic year (2016-17²⁵). There has been a minuscule increase in enrolment (1%) in project schools since the last academic year. However, it was noted that there has been a decrease in enrolment of girls by a percentage point over the last one year in project schools. There emerges no statistically significant variation in percent change in enrolment rate in project schools vis-à-vis control schools, as well as that for boys and girls (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Average enrolment ratio of girls to boys at target schools

²⁴ 2914 students from 20 schools

²⁵ 2885 students from 20 schools

56 The female to male enrolment ratio was 0.95 during the last academic year (2016-17), indicating that the number of girls enrolled was five percent less than the number of boys. However, for control schools, the number of girls enrolled was four percent more than number of boys enrolled (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Average student dropout rate

57 The average dropout rate for the last academic year was two percent in both project and control schools showing no variation by intervention type. The dropout rate among boys (2%) and girls (1%), in both project and control schools, were found to be similar (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The primary study figures conforms to the census 2015 figures²⁶ and slightly lower than the MoES figures²⁷.

Indicator: Repetition rate

58 Overall, eight percent students in project schools had to repeat the grade during the last academic year, while the corresponding rate for control schools is around six percent²⁸. This variation is not statistically significant (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The repetition rate is slightly higher among boys (11%) than girls (5%) in project schools, however this difference is not statistically significant.

MGD 1.3.5: Increased Community Understanding of Benefits of Education

Indicator: Percent of parents in programme schools who can name at least three benefits of primary education

59 In the structured interviews conducted with parents, they were asked about the benefits of education. A very high proportion of parents (96%) with children studying in project schools could name at least three benefits of primary education. A slightly higher proportion of parents in control areas (98.1%) could name at least three benefits, however, the difference is not statistically significant. Overall, a lesser proportion of parents of female students could list these benefits, as compared to parents of male students. A similar pattern was observed in control schools (**Error! Reference source not found.**). No significant difference was observed between male and female parents.

60 The three most common responses from parents for benefits of primary education were (i) Helps children's skill development, (ii) Improves literacy rate, and (iii) Improves future opportunities of work for children. Given that low perception about relevance of education and quality among parents have historically played a significant role in keeping children out of school²⁹, this can be construed a positive development.

MGD SO2: Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices

Indicator: Average dietary diversity score (DDS) of school-aged children

61 The quality of students' diets was assessed in terms of dietary diversity. The evaluation team collected detailed information on the food and drinks consumed by each child

²⁶ Dropout rate- 2.84%; Boys- 2.86%; Girls- 2.82%

²⁷ Source: LaoEduInfo database. Dropout rate- 4.4%; Boys- 4.7%; Girls- 4.1%

²⁸ The national average for repetition rate is 6.9 percent (UNESCO, MoES 2014).

²⁹ The World Bank (2016). Reducing early grade dropout and low learning achievement in Lao PDR: Root causes and possible interventions.

during the last 24 hours prior to the interview for 706 school children through interviews with parents.

62 The mean dietary diversity score (DDS) for children in project schools was high at around 6.1 (out of a maximum score of 8³⁰). Although this is higher than the mean dietary diversity score among children in control schools (4.7), it is not statistically significant. Disaggregated by sex, there is no such variation between the dietary diversity scores for male students and female students (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

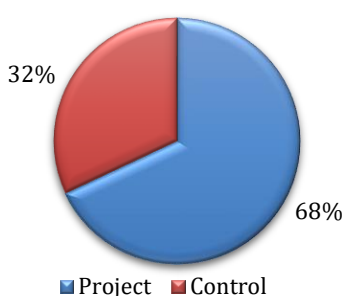


Figure 7: Proportion of respondents with Dietary Diversity Score >=6, by intervention type

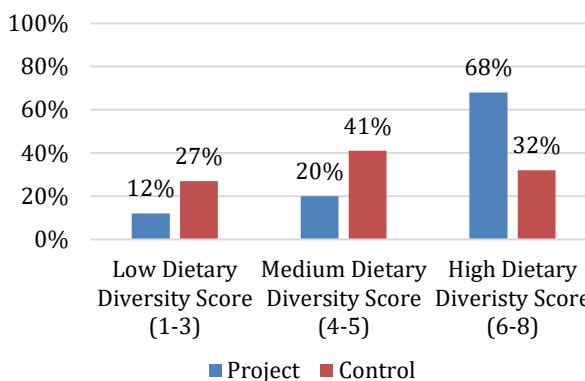


Figure 8: Categorising Dietary Diversity Score, by intervention type

63 **Figure 18** represents that more than two-third (68%) of the students in project schools had a DDS higher than the mean (for project schools). However, in control schools, the corresponding proportion is only about one-third.

64 **Figure 19** shows a significant difference between DDS in project and control areas when disaggregated into categories. Individual DDS were categorised into three classes: high, medium and low. Majority students in project schools (68%) fall in the high DDS category (6-8) while for control school, majority fall in medium DDS (41%) followed by low DDS (27%). This clearly establishes that children in the project schools have a diverse food basket as compared to the control schools.

65 Overall, the food that were commonly consumed by students over the last 24 hours from different food basket includes- (a) grains, roots and tubers (93% (P³¹), 89% (C³²)); (b) flesh food including organ meat and miscellaneous small animal protein (90% (P), 87% (C)); (c) vitamin A rich green leafy vegetables (87% (P), 81% (C)); (d) other vegetables (78% (P), 66% (C)); (e) legumes and beans (67% (P), 17% (C)); (f) nuts and seeds (56% (P) 28% (C)); (g) dairy products (61% (P), 39% (C)), and (h) eggs (79% (P), 68% (C)).

66 Lentils are currently being provided under the programme to address protein deficiencies in the diet. However, the evaluation team observed that the consumption of lentil was rather low. Also, the cooks complained that children were wasting lentils. Moreover, since

³⁰ Feed the Future Guidance (2014) suggests grouping food items into 10 food groups. However, classification of food as “other fruits” and “other vegetable” was not clear during BL FY17. Therefore, the scale of food options is that of 8 in this case.

³¹ (P)- Project schools

³² (C)- Control schools

lentils are not a part of the usual Lao diet, cooks also do not know how to cook it and they generally mix it with the rice and boil it. Children do not like this preparation and end up wasting rice as well.

67 Discussions with WFP-CO highlighted that they recognize that getting the Lao population to increase the intake of protein will take time. However, since animal protein is more expensive than the plant-based protein, the chances of switching dietary practices is high. There has been an increase in access to lentils and beans (including soy beans), and it is expected that with increasing income, better awareness of nutrition, and improved dietary practices will boost the demand for both animal and plant based protein.

68 It was also found that a high proportion of students (55%) reported having consumed dairy products in the last 24 hours, with the proportion being higher in the north (61%) as compared to the south (39%). Although milk from cows and goats is not widely consumed in Laos, soy milk is widely consumed. Condensed milk is also being consumed.

Indicator: Number of individuals who demonstrated the use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance

69 Monitoring reports for October 2017 to March 2018 indicates that 11,200 individuals have demonstrated the use of new child health and nutrition practices. This data point was however not captured in the primary survey (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

MGD 2.1: Improved knowledge of health and hygiene practices

70 The indicator for this result (*Percent of students in target school who achieve a passing score on a test of good health and hygiene practices as a result of USDA assistance*) was not captured through primary survey and no information was available from secondary reports.

MGD 2.2: Increased knowledge of safe food preparation and storage practices

71 According to secondary data from monitoring reports, a total of 10,575 individuals have been trained in safe food preparation and storage practices as result of USDA assistance in the award cycle 2014-16 (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Percent of food preparers in target school who achieve a passing score on a test of safe food preparation and storage practices

72 58 cooks from the sampled project schools were tested on their knowledge and attitude regarding safe food preparation and storage practices. Cooks were tested on whether they practice the following: (i) use of apron or uniform in the kitchen, (ii) clean the kitchen before and after food preparation, (iii) clean pots and utensils before cooking, (iv) clean pots and utensils after cooking, (v) use of soap to wash pots and utensils, (vi) cleaning vegetables and rice before cooking, (vii) washing hands before food preparation, (viii) washing hands before and during food preparation with water and soap, (ix) checking for the following in food before cooking- expiry date, packaging, colour of the food, presence of pests, and (x) storing cooked food in covered cooking pots in a clean, safe place before serving the students.

73 About 88 percent of cooks, mostly women, scored at least 80 percent, indicating a high knowledge about safe food preparation and storage practices (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

74 However, it is to be noted that only around 55 percent of cooks in the sample have been trained in safe food preparation and storage practices. This indicates that there still remains a large proportion of untrained cooks. Training of cooks is critical to ensure hygienically prepared nutritious food to children, as envisaged by the program.

75 Initially the programme had planned for one-to-two cooks per village who were trained in safe food preparation and storage techniques. However, it was soon realised that there was a need for more number of cooks. As a result, a number of cooking groups were formed in the villages with support from the *Naiban* and Lao Women Union. Most women members in a village then started contributing voluntarily towards cooking school meals. With respect to training, the programme envisaged that the cooks that were initially trained in each of these villages would then train these new cooks. However, this did not get implemented as planned which explains why around 45 percent of the cooks in the sample had not received any special training to do their job.

Indicator: Number of storekeepers trained in safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance

76 Against an overall target of 4500 storekeepers to be trained, the monitoring report shows that 3,415 storekeepers (76%) were trained. From the primary study, it emerges that 38 out of the 58 storekeepers (65%) were trained in safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance. Of this, a higher proportion in north were trained (70%) than the south (50%) (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Indicator: Number of teachers trained in safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance

77 Only about 38 percent of the teachers covered in the sample have been trained in safe food preparation and storage practices. A (statistically) significantly higher proportion of teachers in the sample in south (43%) were trained as compared to north (24%), although the overall proportion of trained teachers is low (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

78 Thus, we see that maximum number of cooks have received such training (88%), followed by storekeepers (65%), while a fewer proportion of teachers were trained (38%). Given that storekeepers are in charge of managing the stock and ensuring that it is stored properly, it is suggested that the training coverage needs to be expanded further. It would also be beneficial to increase the awareness among teachers for enhanced sustainability.

MGD 2.3: Increased knowledge of nutrition

79 According to the findings from the primary survey, school gardens had helped in increasing knowledge among students especially around gardening practices. Their involvement in sowing of seeds, watering, harvesting, and overall maintenance of the school gardens had helped in increasing awareness about farming techniques. In an agrarian economy, this is also helping students build their livelihood skills. However, evidence for increased awareness around nutritional value of vegetables was found to be weak among students. Most students did not know the vegetables in the garden well enough.

80 Nutrition education through school gardens has led to increased knowledge among the community at large (teachers, parents, cooks, store keepers and other VEDC members). This in turn has also led to positive changes in dietary practices at the household level.

While comparison of DDS across project and control areas provide evidence to this finding, qualitative discussions with stakeholders bring forth that these changes are at a very preliminary stage and is mainly dependent on water availability and economic background of households.

Indicator: Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance

81 Monitoring reports indicate that 12,578 individuals have been trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance between 2014 and 2016. Primary survey findings reveal that, 40 percent teachers have been trained in child health and nutrition through this assistance. This includes 64 male teachers and 56 female teachers (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

MGD 2.4: Increased access to clean water and sanitation services

Indicator: Number of schools using an improved water source

82 Of the 58 project schools, only 16 schools (28%) were using an improved water source (Annex Y). This emerges as an issue particularly in the north with only 16 percent schools using an improved water source. Whereas around 56 percent schools in south have access to an improved source. In order to improve health and hygiene conditions, it would be important to have access to improved water sources (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The corresponding figure for control schools is lower at 20 percent.

83 Furthermore, 76 percent schools in project areas have access to water for cooking purposes and around 67 percent have access to water for washing (Annex Y). This indicates that there still are some schools that do not have water for cooking and washing. In the absence of this, preparing school lunch can be a problem and the programme is unlikely to be continued for a long time.

Indicator: Number of schools with improved sanitation facilities

84 More than two-third project schools (72%) have access to improved sanitation facilities (**Error! Reference source not found.**). An equal proportion of schools, with no statistically significant variation, in north and south have access to improved sanitation facilities. To give further impetus to behavioural change with respect to sanitation, this coverage needs to be expanded to cover all schools. Availability of water and financial support would be critical towards this.

85 The evaluation team observed separate toilets for boys and girls in nearly all schools. However, availability of water in certain schools is affecting their regular usage by the students.

Handwashing practices

86 Presence of functioning handwashing stations could be observed in only a few sample schools in project areas. Again, water scarcity was affecting the functionality of handwashing units.

87 The evaluation team observed that children were washing their hands before and after meals. However, use of soap was not widespread. Also, children were often washing their hands and utensils by dipping them in a bucket of water. Such practices need to be discouraged to fully achieve the goal of adequate hygiene practices.

MGD 2.5: Increased access to preventive health interventions

88 The MGD-SFP programme is also monitoring the consumption of deworming tablets provided by the health department in project schools. This activity will not be measured as part of MGD-SFP results framework.

MGD 2.6: Increased access to requisite food preparation and storage tools and equipment

89 Smoke reducing stoves were piloted in 2017 to reduce smoke exposure and risk of lung diseases among cooks (mostly women). About five percent of the schools had received smoke reducing stoves for cooking.

90 In terms of infrastructure, nearly all schools (93%) in the sample reported having a dedicated room as a kitchen, with 97 percent schools reporting that the kitchen is well-ventilated. The programme guidelines had specified construction of raised pallets for cooking. Although, in around half of the schools (50%) food was being cooked off the ground, majority of them (83%) were using improvised raised pallets for cooking, adhering to the guidelines.

91 While it is encouraging that 28 percent of the schools had access to piped water for cleaning and cooking food, majority (38%) were dependent on water from river or streams. This being an open source of water gets dried up in the winter months leading to irregularities in cooking school meals due to scarcity of water. Further, non-availability of a nearby water source puts an additional burden on the cooks (who happen to be mostly women) to collect water from a distance source. **Figure 20** shows that lack of water for cooking is an issue for over a fourth of the cooks in the sample (28%).

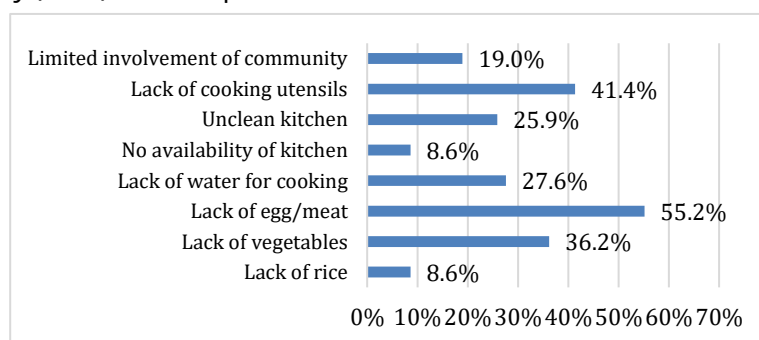


Figure 9: Issues faced by cooks in preparing school lunch

92 Cookbooks (or menu books) had been circulated by WFP recently in the Northern provinces. This provides various detailed recipes for nutritious food that can be cooked in schools. DESB in Oudomxay and LuangNamtha mentioned that they held meetings for cooks where this book was distributed and they were instructed on how to use it. However, its recall among cooks was found to be very low. Only one-fifth (21%) of the cooks in the sample reported receiving this cookbook. With cooks not being adequately trained and not having access to such cookbooks, they are mostly making the same kind of food almost every day which is causing children to reject them. Discussions with parents reveal that the children have complained about this. Parents have even approached the cooks regarding this issue. Also, all the cooks in the sample expressed the desire to have a variety in the menu. Currently, they do not know what else to cook with the same set of ingredients although they understand that it is getting monotonous. Moreover, it is important that nutritious food is served in schools. If the cooks are not made aware about the nutrition content of various food items, there are chances of falling short of achieving the health and nutrition goals.

- 93 Another issue that came up during the FY14 programme was that the recipes in the current cook book were more suited for the local food habits in the southern provinces. Quite a few of the vegetables mentioned in the recipes were not consumed or even produced in the Northern provinces. Therefore, it was feared that this would be difficult to adopt in the Northern provinces and hence, this cookbook has now been sent to GoL for revision based on local food habits across the country.
- 94 As shown in [Figure 20](#), cooks are of the opinion that it would be better if eggs and meat were made available for the school lunch, they feel children would like it better. Lack of cooking utensils is a challenge for 41 percent of the cooks while another 36 percent feel lack of vegetables is an issue that they face.

Foundational Results

MGD 2.7.1: Increased Capacity of Government Institutions

- 95 **Capacity Building:** The MGD programme design ensures capacity building activities at all levels of the governance structure. For building capacity at the national level, WFP has facilitated an exchange programme for MPI, MoES and MAF officials to Brazil. The visit has encouraged the departments in detailing out a clearer oversight of roles and responsibilities at the national, provincial and district level.
- 96 WFP is in discussion with MoES, for setting up of School Meals Centre of Excellence as part of GoL's contribution to Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO). WFP plans to use MGD support for facilitating the setup of the Centre, trainings on school meals implementation, best practices and international exchange visits to countries with similar context. WFP will arrange visits for ministry officials to understand policy level initiatives on school meals, implementation challenges and solutions, best practices and also avenues for funding school meals.
- 97 Using a ToT model, MoES staff will train provincial level officials who in turn will train the MGD supported and NSMP supported communities on school gardening and meaningful engagement with farmer groups for sustaining the supply of raw materials for school meals. WFP will also engage with Provincial governor's office for overseeing the implementation process as well as ensuring efficient use of budgetary resources for communities and schools.
- 98 Understanding that there is a possibility of human resource reforms within MoES for implementation of school meals, WFP has already drawn up plans for building capacities of the personnel at the provincial and district level for smooth institutional coordination. At the district level, WFP will conduct joint trainings to build capacities of MoES, MoH and MAF officials for providing technical assistance to communities on school agriculture and nutrition, education, hand-washing and hygiene.
- 99 **Literacy:** To improve the quality of education in Laos, USAID's five Ts- "Time, Teaching, Text, Mother tongue and Testing" have been identified as important elements of success. WFP will provide support through training of DESB and programme staff on concepts, rationale and approach for community based reading festivals, reading camps and

parenting awareness sessions. This would support in conducting these sessions as part of the MGD-SFP programme.

- 100 PI is envisaged to work with Research Institute of Educational Science (RIES) towards implementing the “Teaching Lao to non-Lao students”. As part of the approach, a master trainer programme will be held at district level to train DESB staff including Pedagogical Advisors (PAs). The Grade 1 teachers of target schools would then be trained on oral Lao teaching methods, introduction of reading corners in classrooms, routine extra-curricular reading activities and child-to-child support in classroom. Teachers, PAs and DESB staff together will ensure the proper implementation of the modules for inculcating the culture of reading and supporting peers in reading. A set of 15 books as guidance materials will be provided to teachers to aid them in using books in school and also appreciate the importance of reading.
- 101 To ensure easy access to reading materials, PI will support establishment of community book banks at community level. The book banks will provide platform for older children and parents to read along with school-going children. BBM will also setup a swap box at school for children to exchange books when they finish reading. The programme has targeted to provide 170,000 age appropriate books to 50,000 children and 30,000 teaching materials to 2,000 teachers.
- 102 With MGD support, Reading and Literacy Needs assessment will be conducted at the beginning of each academic year for Grade 1 students by WFP and PI with support from DESB. DESB staff will be trained to assess the proficiency levels of children using approved tools from DPPE. The exercise will be repeated at the end of the session to measure the progress made by the students and the efficacy of the Literacy activities designed under the programme.

MGD 2.7.2: Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework

- 103 **Capacity Building:** For promoting life-skills and improved nutrition through awareness, WFP is working towards integrating nutrition and school agriculture with curriculum for primary education. Based on the results from a pilot implementation of the integrated curriculum, the revised curriculum will be made for nationwide deployment.
- 104 WFI will support the formulation of SMAP 2016-2020 & 2020-2025, progressing evaluation of NNSAP and provide inputs to the current policy on handover of MGD_SFP and upscaling of school meals cross the country.
- 105 WFP will continue its engagement with Laos National Assembly members as they would be involved with formulation of social safety net policy in which school meals is a tool and thus ensure necessary allocation of resources. As part of this engagement, WFP will facilitate field trips for National Assembly members to both the MGD and NSMP supported schools. These visits along with workshops would help in understanding the nuances of school feeding, school agriculture and nutrition which in turn would support the handover process and upscaling of the school meals to all schools.
- 106 **Literacy:** As noted above, PI is envisaged to work with Research Institute of Educational Science (RIES) towards implementing the “Teaching Lao to non-Lao students”. The modules are part of the Lao speaking course approved by Department of Pre-Primary and Primary education (DPPE) and piloted in six provinces by BEQUAL.

107 Underpinned by SDGs and aligned with National Socio-Economic Development Plan, the Education Sector Development Plan (2016-2020) aims at measuring the progress made by children in becoming proficient in reading. With MGD support, WFP will provide inputs to RIES efforts of measuring reading proficiency of students by conducting Reading and Literacy Needs assessment for Grade 1 children at the beginning and end of the academic year.

MGD 2.7.3: Increased Government Support

108 **Capacity Building:** To assist GoL towards continuation of SFP as part of NSMP, number of capacity development activities has been included as part of the SFP programme design. These activities will be conducted at different levels of the government and would help in instilling confidence among the department staff for supporting the school meals. GoL has ensured that departmental staffs and community level government people also participates in the trainings and workshops. The programme has adopted a cluster level training model. Under this model, trainings will be held at the community level or at within a cluster of 6 villages (*kumban* village clusters) for all 1446 schools and the EDF supported schools also.

109 Different departments (MoES, MPI, MAF) of GoL are involved with NSMP and have expressed support for continuing with school meals programme. GoL has already formed the Education Sector Technical working Group on school meals in 2015. Ministerial staffs are going for exchange visits to understand the community owned school meals in other parts of the world.

110 As part of the handover process, GoL has assured that with gradual decreasing of the MGD financial support, government would increase the spending to meet the financial requirements of school meals. In due course, the financial allocation will be included as part of the country's budget, thus demonstrating the importance accorded to school meals.

MGD 2.7.4: Increased Engagement of Local Organizations and Community Groups

111 **Nutrition:** Under the activity of supporting school agriculture, the SFP envisages for an increased engagement of the community for ensuring functioning of the school gardens and greenhouses. About 54 schools reported that communities have been contributing for school lunch through supply of vegetables, eggs and meat and by giving time for cooking. Building on the achievements of FY14 award, the SFP now intends to continue support to 940 schools during the programme period. 10 more schools will be supported by EDF in Khammuane province for developing school gardens under the current award. Further, to overcome the challenges of flooding and low temperatures in the higher altitude provinces, WFP through SFP funding, will construct greenhouses that will ensure availability of vegetables throughout the year.

112 The school gardens and greenhouses will help in generating knowledge on dietary/ crop-diversity, climate change, low cost agricultural solution among students and communities. To ensure that the school also benefits from the knowledge being transferred to community members on low cost agricultural solutions, people undergoing the training are mandated to provide timber and time for developing the school gardens and greenhouses and also share a part of their surplus produce to the schools. Thus while

the individuals learn and apply the modern agricultural techniques on their own farm, the school also benefits from receiving the surplus from these individuals.

- 113 VEDCs from 45 schools reported to have been trained by WFP under MGD-SFP FY14. Under MGD-SFP FY17, DESB will train up to seven master trainers from each of the VEDCs. Based on the 'School Garden Training Guidelines (SGTG)', these trainings will be conducted on an annual basis. These master trainers will then oversee the construction of school gardens and greenhouses in accordance with SGTG in their respective locations.
- 114 To improve access to animal protein, WFP under FY14 award had supported establishment of fishponds and promotion of small livestock in model schools. Under the current award, the programme envisages to expand this support to other schools. The support will be dependent on the interest shown by communities towards maintaining the fishponds and the livestock for usage and growth.
- 115 **Safe Food Preparation and Storage:** Continuing with approach from FY14 award, the new SFP award will also engage community for construction and rehabilitation of kitchen, dining area, storage and hand washing stations in the schools. VEDC will oversee the construction work to be undertaken by the community. While with community participation, kitchen has been constructed in all 1146 schools under the FY14 award, 860 schools still lacks dining space. For both type of infrastructures, new constructions as well as retrofits, WFP will provide nails, zin sheets and hinges under SFP while community will provide timber and labour. Further, under the programme, WFP will also encourage communities to make savings for meeting expenses of future repairs to these structures. Communities will also be encouraged to participate in school meals programme by contributing vegetables or cash for sustaining the programme.
- 116 From primary study it emerges that about 90 percent parents have contributed for the school meal, either in cash or in kind. The proportion of contributors is higher in north (95%) than in south (76%). The top two contributions were in the form of labour for cooking the school meal (72%) and providing vegetables (68%). Other forms of contribution included labour for constructing kitchen, dining space, storage, school garden, and contributing cash. On an average, household contribution towards school meal range between 27,000 kip (reported by school head) and 33,000 kips (reported by parents).
- 117 **Capacity Building:** With support from SFP, WFP will initiate a multi-level capacity building exercise to enable the stakeholders to continue the school meal programme without external support. The trainings will encompass commodity management, safe cooking and storage, health nutrition, programme management and will be conducted with government (national, provincial and district level) and communities.
- 118 National and international exchange visits for government staff have been carried out. WFP has facilitated an exchange programme for MPI, MoES, and MAF officials to Brazil. This has encouraged the GoL in detailing out a clearer oversight of roles and responsibilities at the national, provincial, and district levels. WFP, in collaboration with MoES, is also attempting to set up a School Meals Centre of Excellence. Joint training programmes are planned to build capacities of GoL officials on school agriculture and nutrition, education, hand-washing, and hygiene, using a ToT model.

- 119 To ensure sustainability of SFP, WFP has drawn up a strategy that focusses on building capacities of VEDCs. To empower the VEDC members, capacity development activities like training, workshops and exchange programmes have been included. Exchange visits for VEDC members have been conducted in the last quarter of 2017 to draw lessons from the challenges encountered and the solutions adopted.
- 120 Towards ensuring a smooth handover of SFP, WFP is adopting a three-step approach: a) assessing the community strength of managing SFP, b) analysis of results, and c) provisioning targeted support package. Discussions with WFP reveal that the community strength assessment for managing SFP are nearly complete for majority schools (1200 of the 1456 schools) till 2017. Further, packages of support have been identified and targeted. WFP will be supported by LWU in the training of women in villages and Lao Front for National Development for monitoring and implementation support for the programme.
- 121 The MGD programme also envisages informal partnerships between schools and farmer groups for ensuring a continuous supply of vegetables. The role of WFP monitoring assistants (MA) will expand and they will become the change agents for the community. The MAs will also be responsible for community mobilisation.
- 122 **Literacy:** Continuing with the idea of promoting culture of reading habits, and expanding reading opportunities beyond the school boundaries, WFO along with BBM and PI plans to organise reading festivals and camps in the villages. Adopting a holistic approach, the aim is to first increase awareness among DESB staff, teachers, and communities on the concepts, rationale and approach about the camps. The community engagement will include both parents and non-parents so as to build ownership about these camps among the community and further engaging interested individuals as community volunteers for taking forward the literacy agenda. These volunteers along with teachers will be provided specialised training so that they can conduct the cluster based training exercises.

To promote reading at home and also to aid parents to support their children with reading at home, parenting awareness sessions will be conducted three times in a year in each community. As a follow-up to the festival and awareness sessions, district wide dissemination workshops would be held to assess the reading progress being made in the communities and action plans will be drawn for the next sessions. To encourage volunteers', incentives will be given to them. The programme will also supply books and other reading materials that would be available at the community and household level.