In Numbers

879 mt of food assistance distributed

US$ 1.10 million six-month (Jul - Dec 2021) net funding requirements

72,755 people assisted

48.7% 51.3%

Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 140 out of 189 countries in the 2018 Human Development Index. Around 23 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (US$ 1.25/day), with a gross national income per capita of US$ 2,270 (World Bank 2017). While Lao PDR has managed to reduce the proportion of hungry people to 23 percent, the 2017 Global Hunger Index still rates its hunger levels as “serious”.

Climate change is a key challenge facing rural population, and the country is vulnerable to climate change due to its low adaptability and high dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources. Changing climate patterns, combined with poor access to both markets and diverse livelihoods, further worsen the situation in remote upland areas, where 25 percent of households are food insecure.

WFP has been present in Lao PDR since 1975.

Operational Updates

• Movement restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic were gradually being lifted across the country, which allowed WFP to resume its field activities. In the northern provinces, WFP’s field offices in Phongsaly and Oudomsay organised joint problem-solving missions with the government to a total of 67 villages, providing technical assistance to schools participating in WFP’s school-feeding programmes. WFP also facilitated peer-to-peer exchanges between 17 villages to enhance learning and sharing of good practices and lessons learned. Through WFP’s partner Plan International, 80 schools were assisted with monitoring and coaching visits to support literacy activities. These activities are all part of the preparation for a hand over to the Government of 916 schools by August 2021.

• In preparation for the new schools that will become part of the school feeding programme, WFP started district orientation and village consultation workshops.

• Following the closure of educational institutes since late April, WFP worked with the Ministry of Education and Sports to distribute take-home rations to students. The distribution started in May and was completed in June, reaching a total of 81,212 students.

• The National Nutrition Action Plan (NPAN) 2022-2026 was endorsed on 9 June during a meeting attended by over 200 participants from ministries and development partners online and in-person. The plan was developed with technical assistance from WFP, in particular on the agriculture and education components.

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>88.53 m</td>
<td>92.11 m</td>
<td>1.10 m</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Schoolchildren in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:
- Provide policy support, technical assistance and transfer of capacities
- Accelerate the implementation of the Government's plan of action of the school meals programme
- Support a national process for community and Government hand-over of the schools.

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Stunting levels among children under 2 in provinces with high levels of malnutrition meet national levels by 2025.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:
- Provide technical assistance for evidence-based policy dialogue
- Stimulate access to local specialized nutritious food for children aged 6 to 23 months
- Develop a social behaviour change communication and establish farmer nutrition schools.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable households in climate-sensitive districts are more resilient to seasonal and long-term shocks and stresses.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:
- Build community resilience through the creation of productive assets and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 4: National and local governance institutions are strengthened to improve service delivery, especially in hard-to-reach areas, by 2025.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:
- Invest in national capacity for food and nutrition security governance
- Enable communities to lead and own their food and nutrition security solutions
- Enhance government capacity at all levels to prepare for and efficiently respond to natural disasters.

Donors

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

Operational Updates, continued

- On 2 June, the National Food Systems Summit Dialogues were held. The fully online meeting, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, was attended by over 100 persons from the Government, UN, NGO, Financial Institutions and private sector. WFP was involved in all pillars of the National Dialogues, and co-chaired the pillar on ensuring safe and nutritious food for all.

- WFP continued providing unconditional food assistance to returning migrant laborers in 14 quarantine centres across five provinces in Lao PDR through partnerships with World Vision International and the Swiss Red Cross. In June 2021, WFP provided a total of 168,806 nutritious meals to 3,803 beneficiaries (1,900 women). To date, WFP has distributed over 1.1 million meals to returning migrant labourers.

- In June 2021, WFP received 1,320 mt of rice, worth USD 1.26 million, from the Republic of Korea. This stock will be used as a strategic food reserve to be used in case of emergency, and also for WFP food security programmes.

- WFP disbursed cash as an incentive to 1,220 village facilitators and a fee for the cooking demonstration of the farmer nutrition school in 400 villages, as part of WFP’s Agriculture for Nutrition project, which is being implemented in four Northern provinces.

- WFP completed the educational materials and tools for the SUN Business Network (SBN) workforce nutrition programme. These materials were developed by WFP with support from the National Nutrition Centre.

Image from the field

Food preparation for returnee migrant workers in quarantine centres in Savannakhet Province. Photo by WFP Lao PDR.