



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief January 2022



Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 137 out of 189 countries in the 2020 Human Development Index. It has one of the lowest population densities in Asia. 23 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (US\$ 1.25/day), with a GDP per capita of USD 2,534.9 (World Bank 2019). The country is ranked 137 out of 162 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2020. While the poverty rate in Lao PDR more than halved in the past two decades, the 2020 Global Hunger Index still rates hunger levels as “serious”.

Climate change is a key challenge facing rural 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.



Population: **6.5 million**

Human Development Index: **137 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

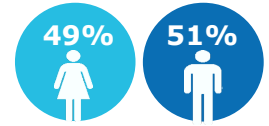
Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

63.5 mt of food distributed

US\$ 0.47 million six-month (Feb 2022 - Jul 2022) net funding requirements

70,321 people assisted
In January 2022



Operational Updates

- On 27 January 2022, WFP launched its new Country Strategic Plan for the period of 2022-2026, with support from the Ministry of Planning and Investment and line ministries. The new Strategic Plan continues to gradually shift WFP’s approach from direct implementation to an advisory role. WFP’s work throughout the five years will aim to expand and strengthen the Government’s school meals programme, support the prevention of malnutrition, enhance community resilience and ensure food security, as well as support the Government’s emergency response efforts.
- Since the handover of school feeding programmes in 915 schools to the Government in September 2021, WFP has been rolling out training to these schools on managing cash-based transfers from the Government for school feeding. After delays due to COVID-19-related restrictions, the training was completed in five target provinces in January 2022. The training taught Village Education Development Committee members, particularly school principals, how to make sound budget plans to maximize the use of the funds to complement community contributions to school feeding. By February 2022, all 915 schools will be well prepared to manage the government transfers.
- WFP completed virtual Training of Trainers workshops on the Green Box, a set of teaching materials on nutrition, health, agriculture and the environment, produced with the support of WFP. The workshops demonstrated to subnational trainers how to use the Green Box in teaching. The trainers will then roll out the training to teachers from the 515 target schools in February 2022. Teachers in these schools are expected to start using the materials in class from March onwards.
- WFP, in partnership with the local NGO Big Brother Mouse, conducted the last follow-up monitoring visit to 280 school feeding target schools in Phongsaly province. This partnership supported literacy promotion activities with reading corners, training, books and learning materials. As part of its capacity strengthening support to local NGOs, WFP collaborated with World Education, an international NGO, to train Big Brother Mouse on data collection, analysis and reporting skills.

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Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
79.16 m	28.59 m	0.47 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Schoolchildren in vulnerable areas have improved food security, nutrition and learning results through a sustainable national school meals programme by 2026

Focus area: *Root causes*

Activities:

- Provide direct support and technical assistance to the Government to strengthen and complement the national school meals programme and to facilitate a sustainable handover of the programme to the Government

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable people at risk of any form of malnutrition, in particular women and girls of reproductive age, children under 5 and school-age children, have improved nutrition outcomes in line with national targets by 2026

Focus area: *Root causes*

Activities:

- Provide universally accessible nutrition support services for targeted populations and nutrition-related technical assistance, advocacy and evidence-based advice to the Government and other stakeholders, including in the private sector

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable people in disaster-affected or at-risk areas have enhanced food and nutrition security all year round and increased capacity to mitigate and manage risks associated with climate and other shocks by 2026

Focus area: *Resilience building*

Activities:

- Provide assistance and technical support to targeted communities and government entities to build communities' resilience to climate and other shocks through strengthened capacity in disaster and climate risk management and social protection

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 4: Crisis-affected populations in the Lao People's Democratic Republic are able to meet their food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after disasters

Focus area: *Crisis response*

Activities:

- Provide nutrition-sensitive cash-based transfers or food assistance to help meet the essential needs of crisis-affected people

Donors

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

- At WFP's Agriculture for Nutrition (AFN) project annual steering committee meeting, chaired by the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the AFN project team reported an improvement in nutrition status in target groups, as well as enhanced community engagement to improve household nutritious food production and consumption, and a reduction in women's workload.
- WFP's initiative to develop locally blended fortified rice continues, as its nutrition staff members meet with potential rice millers across the country.
- In partnership with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre and the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System, WFP has supported relevant line ministries in conducting a readiness assessment on the ability to manage climate risks, undertake impact-based forecasting in Lao PDR, as well as a forecasting analysis for developing drought thresholds and triggers for anticipatory actions in Lao PDR.
- In partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, WFP conducted a warehouse management training in January 2022, supporting 24 Government staff (8 women) from Savannakhet, Khammuane and Champasack Provinces to enhance capacities in emergency logistics preparedness and response.

Story from the field



Sengphet, a successful farmer. Photo: © AFN Laos/Kaying Chandee Vue

Sengphet Maibountee is a farmer from Loung Peau village in Xieng Khouang province, northern Lao PDR. Through the WFP-supported Agriculture for Nutrition project, she received a garden grant US\$ 120, which helped her buy 10 chickens, chicken feed and seeds to start a home garden in 2018. Since then, she has managed to sell over 40 chickens and 200 eggs worth US\$ 420.

Sengphet reinvested her income into growing garlic and raising fish, frogs and crickets. With training support from the Lao PDR Government, she has now set up a hatchery for fish, frogs and chickens which she supplies to farmers in nearby villages.

"With the money I have earned, I can pay for my children's education and build a new house," she says.