



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

February 2024



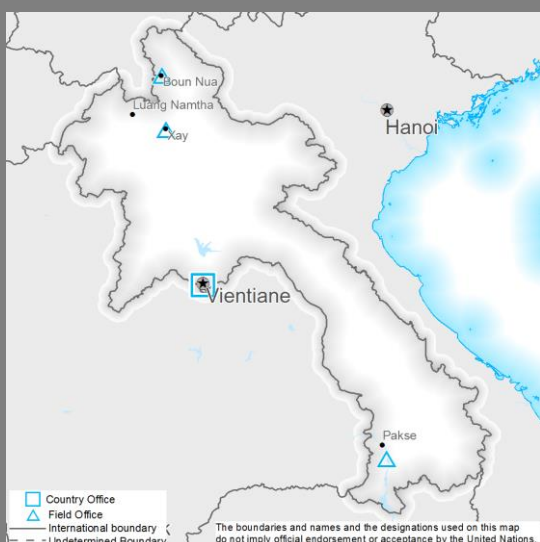
Ambassador of Japan to Laos and Deputy Governor of Luang Prabang Province plant coffee seedlings. ©WFP/Lee Sipaseuth

Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, with one of the lowest population densities in Asia. Eighteen percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (US\$1.25/day), with a GDP per capita of US\$ 2,088.40 (World Bank 2022). The country is ranked 120 out of 177 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2021. While the poverty rate in Lao PDR more than halved in the past two decades, the 2022 Global Hunger Index rates hunger levels as “moderate”.

Climate change is a key challenge facing the rural population, and the country is vulnerable 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 over 20 percent of households are food insecure.

WFP has been present in Lao PDR since 1975.



Population: **7.5 million**

2021/2022 Human Development Index:
140 out of 191 countries

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

In Numbers

124 mt of food dispatched to schools

US\$1.25 million six-month (March-August 2024)
net funding requirements

62,563 people assisted in February



Operational Updates

- WFP, together with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), co-led a regional workshop on integrating nutrition and climate resilience into agriculture, food systems, nature-based solutions, and resilience projects in the Mekong sub-region.
- The construction of 32 school greenhouses was completed in Oudomxay Province, this home-grown school feeding project was supported by the Russian government.
- 15 February marked the launch of the *Cocreation of Food Security for Farmers with Economic Empowerment with Japan* (COFFEE-JAPAN) project. The project is funded by the Government of Japan and is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, WFP, and the private sector (Saka no Tochu, and Saffron Coffee). The project launch was attended by the Ambassador of Japan, WFP Country Director and key stakeholders. The WFP Country Director presented the project on 28 February in Japan.
- The Department of Social Welfare and WFP facilitated two workshops in February: 1) the Rapid Emergency Assessment Validation Workshop, to validate and finalize the updated assessment forms, and introduce key stakeholders to the digital data collection methods; 2) the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Humanitarian Relief Item Importation Workshop, to finalize the SOP and facilitate the import of relief items in case of a disaster.
- On 13 February, the Government of Laos, under the leadership of the Ministry of Planning and Investment, held its annual round table meeting with development partners, including WFP, to take stock of progress on the implementation of the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan. WFP is ready to support the Government in achieving the priorities in the last two years of the implementation of the plan.

Contact info: Ildiko Hamos (Ildiko.hamos@wfp.org)

Country Director: Marc-André Prost

Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Lao

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
85.93 m	76.86 m	1.25 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

Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Union, France, Germany, Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, Ireland, Japan, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, Russia, United States of America and private donors

- The Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) improvement was tested in 5 villages of Xaysetha district, Attapeu Province. Feedbacks and suggestions were collected from project beneficiaries including people with disabilities, to ensure the production of awareness raising material relevant to social and cultural norms.
- On 23 February, at WFP's request, the Social and Behavior Change (SBC) task force of the Ministry of Health (MoH) organised a meeting with multi-sectoral partners. WFP briefed partners on WFP's upcoming plans to develop a new, cross-cutting SBC strategy, and suggested that other key governmental partners join the task force. All attendees agreed on this expansion and WFP will work closely with MoH to send the Letter of Agreement to the mentioned ministries to formalize the decision.

Story from the field



©WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

In Lao PDR's northern province of Oudomxay, Namphouan Primary School buzzes with excitement. Today, a greenhouse is being constructed. The school used to have a garden, that teachers and children jointly took care of, growing leafy greens and herbs to land on the students' lunch plates – a healthy addition to the daily meals children receive in Namphouan.

"The school gardens are often ravaged by strong rains and too much sunlight, so here in Namphouan, as in many other locations around Laos, villagers were relying on wild forest vegetables more than the garden yields, especially also since the next market is far away," WFP's Field Staff Sengaloun Phanyakhan explained.

The school community hopes that with the greenhouse, they will be able to grow vegetables more consistently, throughout the year.

"We are so happy about this greenhouse," says Teacher Phailin Keosomphone. "Not only do we get healthy greens for our students, but they learn about gardening, - skills which they can pass on to their family members as well – while also understanding more about the link between what they eat and how healthy they are."