



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

March 2024



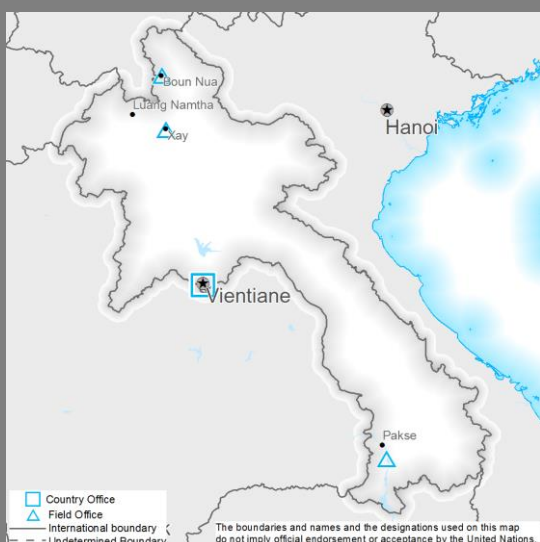
Ministry of Planning and Investment officials observing programme activities in Sekong, Saravan and Champassak provinces.
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Operational Context

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**

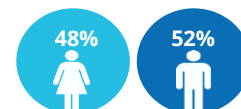
Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children
between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

174 mt of food dispatched to schools

US\$0.96 million six-month (April-September 2024) net funding requirements

63,527 people assisted in March



Operational Updates

- In March, WFP supported the Ministry of Education and Sports in organising three events:
 - a stock taking exercise to review the progress of the school meals programme
 - a training for schoolteachers on promoting nutrition in Luang Namtha Province, and
 - a workshop to develop an action plan based on the recommendations from the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), an assessment of national capacities to run a school meals programme. The objective of the action plan is to support the government in prioritizing activities for the next five years for a sustainable national school meals programme in Lao PDR.
- WFP conducted a training of trainers related to the Agriculture for Nutrition project II. The training focused on improving group facilitation skills and introduced revised Farmer Nutrition School materials, aiming to shift learning sessions to a more participatory and interactive approach. Representatives from six project implementation provinces participated in the training.
- Under the CARES project, with funding from France, WFP rolled out Farmer Nutrition School modules in 20 villages of Xekong Province to provide villagers with basic nutrition knowledge and nutrition-focused dietary and agriculture practices. In Saravan Province, WFP completed beneficiary registration for households to receive cash to help cover their food, nutrition and other essential needs.
- In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, district and village level trainings were held in Oudomxay Province to share information on managing and planning community construction and rehabilitation projects. Participants learnt how to mobilize community contributions, record labour participation, develop sustainability plans, and how to coordinate and report. The community projects, selected with full participation of villagers, aim to restore degraded landscapes, expand the availability and diversity of food and ensure that local food production and income-generating activities can continue through shocks and crises.

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Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
85.93 m	77.88 m	0.96 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

- WFP and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare signed a cooperation agreement focusing on five key areas: resilience and disaster risk reduction, early warning systems and anticipatory action, institutional preparedness, vulnerability and risk data analysis and programme management.
- WFP provided technical assistance to a training organized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in Savannakhet Province, to strengthen government staff capacities on warehouse management, relief item management and to enhance coordination and communication mechanisms.
- Led by the Vice Minister of Planning and Investment, WFP and government officers visited WFP's nutrition and school meals programmes in southern provinces. The mission aimed to promote the implementation of agricultural activities, ensuring food security and nutrition, aligned closely with government objectives.

Story from the field



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In Lao PDR, women have substantial responsibility in agriculture production, and they play vital roles in transforming food systems.

In Naxiendee village of Oudomxay Province, a group of rural women are tilling the soil, building their own business.

Mouan, Kham Phong and Deang talk about the positive changes the garden grants distributed by WFP have brought to their families. "We did not have the capacity to provide for the family by ourselves, nor did we have money to buy food," says Deang.

"The district is vulnerable to natural hazards such as drought. The villagers have to resort to moving to new areas every year, cutting trees to make farmland. WFP is supporting women farmers with garden grants and training in climate-adaptive farming," WFP's Field Staff Sengaloun Phanyakhan explains.

The result, according to Kham Phong: "I stopped upland farming, and focused on my vegetable garden, which helps me steer away from poverty."

"We have become more stable in terms of food and money," Deang adds with a smile.

Learn more in a [video story](#).