



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

June 2024



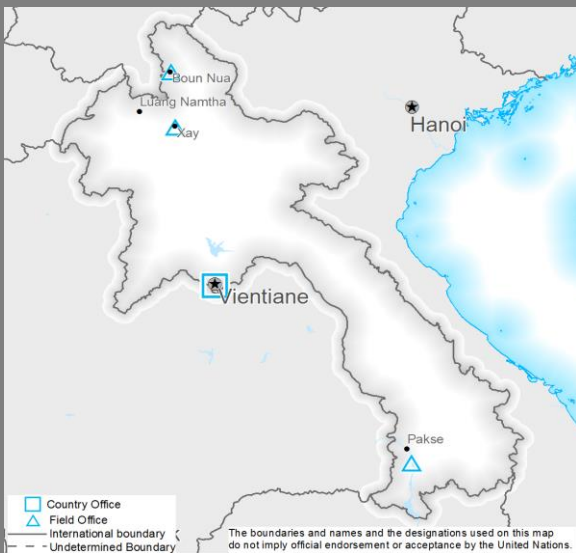
Country strategic plan annual review with the Government of Lao PDR ©WFP/Pelyan Zhang

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 116 out of 166 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2022. 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

8 mt of oil dispatched, **US\$98,182** cash distributed

US\$0.63 million six-month (July – December 2024) net funding requirements

120,752 people assisted in June



Operational Updates

- WFP worked with the Government of Lao PDR to strengthen the school meals programme monitoring system. Programme implementation is monitored through a government-owned digital platform known as the “Lao school meal app”. The application has now been upgraded to an offline version, and a validation workshop was organized to ensure the new version is user friendly.
- WFP supported a workshop organized by the Ministry of Education and Sports on food safety guidelines. The workshop covered a range of practices such as food handling and preparation, food storage, personal hygiene, cleaning, allergen management and emergency procedures to ensure that meals served at schools are safe and nutritious.
- WFP transferred US\$ 98,182 as garden and livestock grants to 818 recipients in Oudomxay Province as part of an initiative funded by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. These grants provide support to vulnerable groups, focusing on households with pregnant and breastfeeding women, aiming to improve the nutritional status of mothers and small children. In addition, non-food items were delivered to 21 communities to support infrastructure development.
- The Ministry of Planning and Investment convened an annual review meeting of WFP’s county strategic plan for the period of 2022-2026. The review provided partners with an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned, share good practices and identify corrective measures. Representatives from various ministries presented updates on project implementation for the first half of 2024 and refined priorities for the remainder of the year. A similar review was conducted in Oudomxay Province to gather recommendations from provincial and district partners from both Oudomxay and Phongsaly provinces.
- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, conducted a master training on community-based disaster management. The training was jointly delivered by technical staff from four divisions: Labor and Social Welfare, Agriculture and Forestry, District Health and District Public Works and Transportation, from Oudomxay and Phongsaly provinces.

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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	80.92 m	0.63 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

- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, held a meeting in Sekong Province to prepare for food distributions during the 2024 lean season (corresponding to the rainy season, July-September). Seventy-five villages across 3 districts were identified for support to address immediate needs during the lean season. A new shock-responsive social protection pilot project was introduced, aimed at enhancing community resilience to disasters and shocks, while improving government capacity to deliver social protection measures.

A New Income Source and Revive the Dream



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Farmers gather in the community hall of Houaykay village, a remote mountainous village in Lao PDR's northern province of Luang Prabang, to learn how to use organic compost to prepare nutritious soil for planting coffee (as pictured).

For the past few months, these farmers have been nursing the coffee seedlings with care. Now, the time has come to plant the seedlings. With the guidance of agriculture experts, the farmers measure the space for the plants to grow, mark their spots, dig holes and plant the seedlings.

"Here in Lao PDR, cutting trees to create farmlands is a common practice. However, after a few seasons, the soil tends to deteriorate. Shade from the trees and rich soil are important factors in growing high quality coffee. Growing coffee brings a new income source for the farmers, while preserving our forest. We believe that in two or three years, the plants will bear fruit and our farmers will have good harvests," says Soulath Phommaly, Assistant Project Manager at Saffron Coffee, a private enterprise, partnering with WFP in the initiative aimed at enhancing coffee farmers' income, coupled with trainings on nutrition and growing healthy food for local families. The initiative is funded by the Government of Japan.

"My parents tried to grow coffee before, but without the right knowledge and market access, they could not keep the business running. Now, we are picking up where our parents left off. With the knowledge and the market connections, I hope we can earn good money to buy healthy food for our families," smiles Kane, a coffee farmer. Find out more in this [video story](#).

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