



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

October 2024



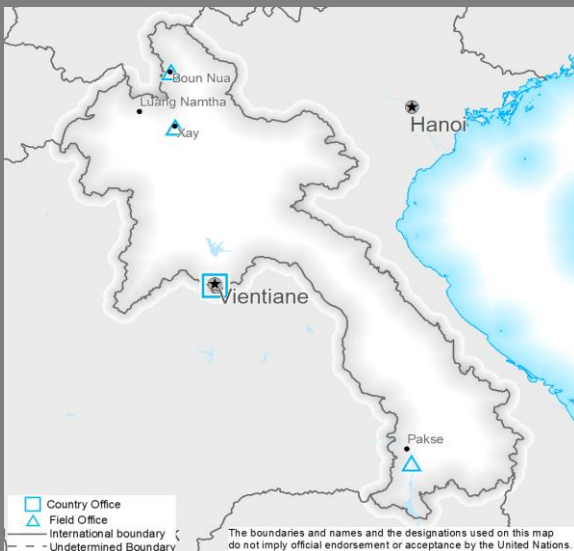
Women receive garden and livestock grants ©WFP/Vongdala Vongphachanh

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**

2022 Human Development Index: **139 out of 193 countries**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

In Numbers

198 mt of food dispatched, **sUS\$121,200** cash distributed

US\$0.27 million six-month (November 2024–April 2025) net funding requirements

66,949 people assisted in October



Operational Updates

- As a next step towards sustainable and nationally-owned school meals, WFP and the Ministry of Education and Sports jointly selected three options for a standardized nutritious food package for school meals, designed to provide 30 percent of student’s daily nutrition requirements. The proposal was submitted to the Minister for final endorsement.
- The Ministry of Education and Sports organized a workshop to review the efficiency of the fund transfer mechanism for the school meals programme. With support from WFP, efforts were made to streamline the process, ensuring that state budgets can reach schools on time.
- The Russian Government handed over 47 mt of cooking oil to the Lao Government. The oil will be used to prepare lunches for primary school students in 12 districts of Luang Namtha and Phongsaly provinces, which are areas impacted by the recent floods. This donation is part of a larger contribution from Russia, which also includes canned fish.
- WFP provided US\$121,200 garden and livestock grants, supporting 1,033 households in Sekong province. These grants, funded by the Government of France, aim to improve the nutrition of vulnerable households with pregnant and breastfeeding women. Additionally, WFP delivered training to help communities prepare for climate hazards.
- WFP delivered 4 mt of rice to an ethnic boarding school in Luang Namtha province, where most students are orphans from remote ethnic communities. The school lost its rice stock during the severe floods in September.
- As part of the Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management Sector Project, WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, completed community consultations and supported the development of investment plans to allocate funds and resources for essential agricultural inputs for 3,101 smallholder farmers across 75 communities in Houaphanh, Xieng Khouang, Xayabouly and Luang Prabang provinces. Based on these plans, each farmer will receive US\$ 300 in cash for agricultural production and increased income.

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Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
100.72 m	108.72 m	0.27 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, completed food assistance for asset activities in 38 communities in Phongsaly and Oudomxay provinces. These activities led to the creation of 38 community assets, including water systems, road repairs to improve access to agricultural areas and animal shelters.
- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Lao Farmer Association, organized several orientation workshops in Xieng Khouang, Houaphanh and Oudomxay provinces to prepare for a new initiative aimed at helping farmers improve their agricultural practices, increase productivity and promote diverse crop cultivation for better income. The workshops focused on forming farmer producer groups for various commodities, including coffee, rice, non-timber forest products, poultry, tea and vegetables.
- WFP participated in the World Food Day celebration in the capital Vientiane, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. At the event, WFP set up a stand to present Lao PDR's recent achievement of joining the School Meal Coalition and to showcase its commitment in helping address malnutrition and food insecurity in Lao PDR.

Story from the field



Yer Xiong shares her new recipe ©WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

Na Village, in Xieng Khouang province of Lao PDR, is home to many Hmong families. Here, women attend the Farmer Nutrition School to learn about nutrition and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene).

This particular session is special, combining a cooking demonstration with an engaging emotional demonstration (Emo-Demo) that focuses on the importance of hygiene. Emo-Demos are interactive learning activities, designed to inspire behavior change among the participants.

"We are learning by doing things ourselves. I want to teach my kids the importance of cleaning their hands, and with this method, I am sure they will never forget what they have learned! I also enjoy the cooking demonstrations, where I learn how to cook healthy dishes that I never thought I could make. I'm sure my family will be surprised and love the new recipes I bring home," Yer Xiong says happily.

The initiative is changing the perspectives of many ethnic women about hygiene standards and helping them shift from intensive farmland work to more sustainable practices like growing vegetables and raising chickens close to their houses. This improves their families' diets and frees up quality time to enjoy with their children.

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