



World Food Programme

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

January 2025

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



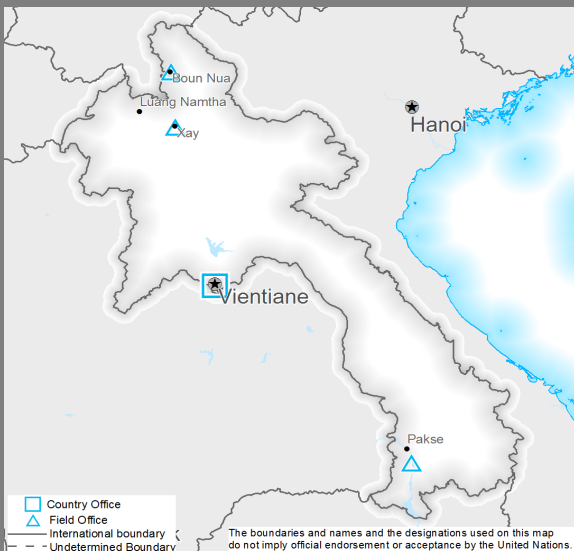
A district officer engages in a gender-inclusive consultation with villagers in Sekong province. ©WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

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\$2.15/day), with a GDP per capita of US\$2,067 (World Bank 2023). 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 2024 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

91 mt of food dispatched to schools

63,900 people assisted in January



Operational Updates

- WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports, conducted a workshop to review the McGovern Dole 2020-supported school meals programme implemented in Bokeo, Luang Prabang, and Xieng Khouang provinces. The workshop identified areas for improvement in strengthening the capacity of administration committee members to mobilize community engagement and contributions to the school meals programme.
- WFP Washington office organized a McGovern-Dole 2024 award management workshop for the regional countries in Vientiane. The workshop covered the legal agreement, grants management, financial reporting and administrative provision for new project recipients. Best practices and lessons learnt were shared among regional offices.
- WFP completed the assessment and identified targeted schools for constructing or rehabilitating water systems and kitchens in six districts in Oudomxay province. This initiative is supported by the Government of Switzerland.
- WFP, in collaboration with the Division of Food Processing and Nutrition Promotion under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, organized master trainings on food processing in Phongsaly and Xieng Khouang provinces. Through the trainings, participants from provincial and district government offices, and district Lao Women’s Union learned processing techniques. Based on a prior survey, 12 products were identified for processing, both for household consumption and supply to local markets. The trained participants will further train village nutrition facilitators, who will then pass on their knowledge to 375 villages. This activity is a key component of the Agriculture for Nutrition Project 2, which aims to improve household nutritional status, particularly among vulnerable groups, while also creating diverse income sources.
- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, organized a workshop on shock-responsive social protection in Sekong province. The goal was to design a programme to strengthen national systems for addressing seasonal food insecurity and climate risks. The workshop gathered 34 participants from national, provincial, and district governments. Topics covered included social protection targeting mechanisms, disaster risk

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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	112.03 m	0 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), Australia, European Union, France, Germany, Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, Ireland, Japan, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, Russia, United States of America, Switzerland and private donors

financing, and scalable delivery models to enhance the resilience of social protection systems in Lao PDR. Following the workshop, gender-inclusive community consultations were held to identify critical gaps in food security, resilience, and financial inclusion. These insights helped shape the programme to better support vulnerable households.

- WFP supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in organising the annual National Disaster Management Committee meeting. One hundred forty-six government officers from 18 provinces and technical departments of line ministries attended the meeting. It provided an opportunity to reflect on the disaster events in 2024 and discuss priorities for disaster preparedness and response measures for 2025.
- Before conducting registration for cash assistance to flood-affected communities in 19 villages of Luang Namtha province, WFP organized meetings to provide information on protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, anti-fraud anti-corruption measures, and the community feedback mechanism to its staff, government partners and target recipients. The key messages offered guidance on conducting registration process and cash distribution ethically, while also empowering individuals to confidently assert their rights.

Story from the field



Jer happily returns home with her vaccinated duck. ©WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

In Katanya village, in northern Oudomxay province, villagers gathered in the community hall for a training on livestock health. The training equipped farmers with essential knowledge about common livestock diseases - how to identify, prevent and treat them.

"Before, I didn't understand why my chickens would suddenly get sick. It made me sad when they died. In this farmer training, I have learnt how to vaccinate my poultry, so that my chickens and ducks stay healthy. We also learned to build coops, so our animals won't get lost and can stay safe from predators and bad weather," Jer, a local farmer, says happily.

This training is just one part of a broader effort to strengthen the resilience of the Katanya community. Villagers also receive training on nutrition, establish small gardens to grow healthy vegetables, learn how to raise small animals and improve community infrastructure. Through these initiatives, Katanya village is steadily building a better future.