



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

February 2024



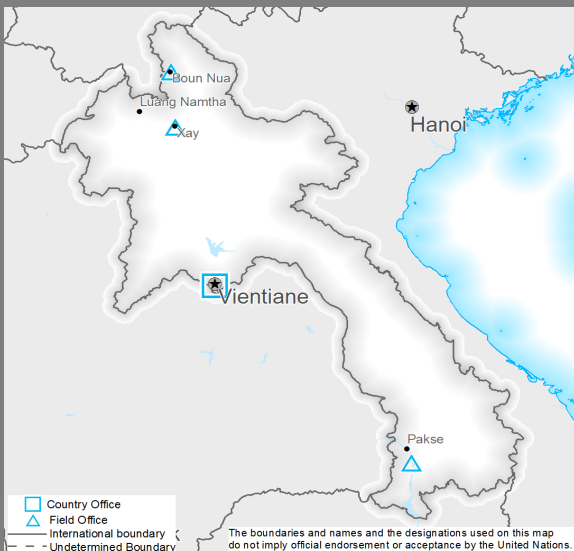
WFP staff discusses protection aspects with Phoula villagers in Luang Namtha province during cash distribution. ©WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

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 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

180 mt of food dispatched

US\$163,607 cash distributed

US\$0.88 million six-month (March 2025– August 2025) net funding requirements

67,496 people assisted in February



Situation Updates

WFP’s mobile food security monitoring from December 2024 revealed:

- Food insecurity decreased from 13 percent in September to 11 percent in December, reflecting positive impact of harvest season.
- 17 percent of households had insufficient food consumption and 47 percent used livelihood- based coping strategies.
- Overall food insecurity worsened compared to December 2023 due to high inflation (24 percent) and depreciation of the Laotian kip. Sekong province has the highest rate of food insecurity (29 percent).
- High debt and limited market remain issues of concern.

Operational Updates

- WFP supported the training for government and school staff on the use of the Lao School Meal App in Salavan, Attapeu, and Sekong provinces to expand digital monitoring and reporting for the national school meals programme.
- WFP collaborated with 15 district authorities in 168 villages across six provinces to help communities identify and prioritize key needs in developing village plans under the second phase of the Agriculture for Nutrition project. The plans, focusing on food security and promoting sustainable solutions, will guide future programme development and implementation.
- WFP held an annual planning meeting for the Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management project in Houaphan province. Seventy-one government participants attended to review project progress, challenges and plans for 2025. WFP and SNV shared lessons from the pilot phase and emphasized the need to expedite scaling up to 110 villages by 2025. Strategies to overcome barriers were also discussed.
- WFP conducted healthy cooking demonstrations and emo-demos (interactive games to promote key nutrition-related behaviours) in eight villages of Luang Prabang province. Participants learned to prepare four nutrition-focused recipes, feeding timelines for young children aged 6 to 23 months and proper handwashing. These activities aim to enhance the community’s knowledge and practices related to nutrition and hygiene.

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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	112.36 m	0.88 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 Program, Ireland, Japan, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, Russia, United States of America, Switzerland and private donors

- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, distributed US\$163,607 to 2,852 flood-affected people across 17 communities in Luang Namtha province. Each person received US\$58 to cover 50 percent of their essential and recovery needs over a three-month period. During the events, WFP conducted a review of protection aspects to reinforce awareness on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse as well as its anti-fraud and anti-corruption measures. WFP also strengthened the community feedback mechanism to ensure feedback is effectively received and addressed.
- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, World Meteorological Organization, and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, organized a validation workshop to present the findings from a joint weather forecast & early warning system perception survey. Participants discussed the preliminary findings to help shape the final report. The workshop was part of the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems Programme and aligned with the Lao PDR Early Warning for All Roadmap 2024-2027.
- Under the Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management Programme's farm-input component, WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, completed the final round of beneficiary registration. An additional 490 households were registered and prepared investment plans for purchasing seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and renting machinery to increase wet season crop production. This brings the total number of eligible households to 3,587, who will receive the grants in May 2025.

Story from the field



Thaokher tending to the vegetables in the garden. ©WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

Thaokher Herkhamsook, a 78-year-old farmer from Phongsaly province, has always dreamed of becoming a farmer. After many years of working as a carpenter, he shifted to farming 20 years ago.

"I've always had a passion for farming. With the garden grant, I'm able to plant a wider variety of vegetables, which helps me earn a more stable income. I also bring vegetables to schools for cooking lunches for children." Thaokher says proudly.

Working in the garden not only brings Thaokher immense joy but also allows him to give back to his community by providing fresh, locally grown produce to school kitchens, ensuring that children enjoy nutritious meals every day.