



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

March 2024



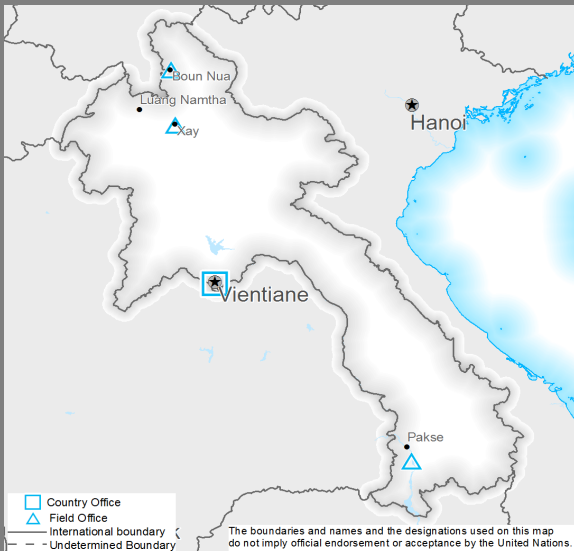
A new large-scale food fortification initiative kicked off in Vientiane. ©WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

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 89 out of 146 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2024. 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**

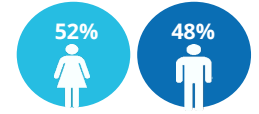
Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

156 mt of food dispatched

US\$1.36 million six-month (April-September 2025) net funding requirements

66,392 people assisted in March



Operational Updates

- WFP signed a new initiative to implement large-scale rice fortification in Lao PDR, using fortified rice as a cost-effective vehicle to tackle malnutrition. The initiative is funded by the Government of India through the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation India-UN Development Partnership Fund and will be implemented jointly by WFP and the Ministry of Health. WFP Lao PDR Country Director Marc-Andre Prost co-authored an [op-ed](#) marking this collaboration.
- WFP and the Ministry of Planning and Investment organised an annual review meeting of WFP’s [2022-2026 Country Strategic Plan](#) in Laos. Implementing partners from line ministries presented the 2024 achievements, lessons learned and priorities for 2025. Subsequently, a high-level field mission, led by the Vice Minister of Planning and Investment, inspected the progress of WFP’s projects in Oudomxay province.
- WFP attended a workshop on social protection strategy and financing, organised by the National Assembly of Lao PDR, and presented the school meals programme, one of the largest protection programmes in the country.
- Kitchen construction in 74 schools and the distribution of seeds and agricultural tools to support smallholder farmers to supply produce to schools started in Attapeu, Sekong, and Salavan provinces.
- WFP and technical staff from the ministries of Education, Health, and Agriculture attended a workshop organized by the WFP Regional Bureau in Bangkok, to support the development of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for the national school meals programme. The workshop focused on the framework’s Theory of Change.
- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, conducted a needs assessment for rice banks in 130 villages across six provinces under the Agriculture for Nutrition Project Phase 2. The assessment aimed to identify gaps in food security and improve local food storage systems. Meanwhile, site assessments for the construction of farmer nutrition schools were completed in 168 villages. These evaluations determine community readiness, infrastructure needs, and the potential impact of nutrition education and agriculture on nutrition practices.
- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, conducted a workshop on adaptive

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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	1.36 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, India, Ireland, Japan, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, Russia, United States of America, Switzerland and private donors

and shock-responsive social protection, attended by staff from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Lao Red Cross. It aimed to enhance capacity to ensure social protection during climate shocks through practical approaches, global lessons, and strengthened inter-ministerial coordination for preparedness, response, and resilience. A second workshop focused on an after-action review of the food distributions to respond to the 2024 lean season in Sekong province. It aimed at capturing lessons learned and best practices and recommending improvements for future emergency preparedness and response.

- To strengthen resilient agricultural value chains, WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Lao Farmer Association, supported the formation of production groups in 12 communities across Xiengkhouang, Houaphan and Oudomxay provinces. 135 farmers received training on production practices, while 21 government staff were trained on group establishment and management.
- WFP held a staff event on International Women's Day to recognise the vital contributions of women working in field offices.
- WFP continued to conduct training on community feedback mechanisms at the field level, focusing on an enhanced reporting system to further strengthen the organization's accountability to affected populations.

Story from the field



Sun collects eggs, some of which are donated to schools for preparing meals. ©WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

Sun, a farmer in Namheang village, Oudomxay province used to forage in the forest for food and practice exhausting upland farming. Nonetheless, she struggled to put enough food on the table.

Life has become easier since she received 50 laying chickens with support from the Republic of Korea, through WFP. Now she raises them in her backyard. "I worked very hard before but was never able to save money. I give a third of the eggs I produce to the local school, the rest I sell. Seeing children at school, including my daughter, eating healthy food makes me proud," Sun says with a confident smile. "I plan to expand my chicken farm with the money I am saving now."

Sun is one of the farmers committed to contributing agricultural products to Namheang primary school. A new initiative supported by the Government of Switzerland is also being integrated into this approach to strengthen the link between farmers and schools, supporting women in particular, and ensuring many more students have access to nutritious meals every day.