

# Endline Evaluation of USDA FY2020 McGovern- Dole Award for WFP School Feeding in Laos from 2020 to 2025



Decentralized evaluation

Terms of reference

WFP Lao PDR

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# 1. Introduction

1. These terms of reference (ToR) were prepared by the World Food Programme (WFP) Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) Country Office (CO) based upon an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders and following a standard template. The purpose of these terms of reference is to provide key information to stakeholders about the evaluation, to guide the evaluation team and to specify expectations during the various phases of the evaluation.

2. These terms of reference are for an endline activity evaluation of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Fiscal year (FY)20 project in support of WFP's School Feeding Project (SFP) activities in Lao PDR, to be conducted in the period January to September 2025 (inception phase to submission of the final report), to be able to critically and objectively assess the performance of the project for the purposes of learning and accountability. This evaluation is commissioned by WFP Lao PDR CO and will cover the period from September 2020 to May 2025. The TOR aims to 1) provide key learning themes, project scope, and other key information to guide the evaluation team on conducting the evaluation; and 2) to involve stakeholders early on, keeping them informed of progress, and providing opportunities for inputs to secure their support and commitment.

The endline evaluation will serve several critical purposes: (1) review the project's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, impact, and sustainability, (2) collect performance indicator data for strategic objectives and higher-level results, (3) assess whether or not the project has succeeded in achieving McGovern-Dole's two strategic objectives, (4) investigate the project's overall impact, and (5) identify meaningful lessons learned that MoES, WFP, USDA, and relevant stakeholders can apply to future programming.

3. .

4. The evaluation process within WFP will be managed by an evaluation manager appointed by WFP Lao PDR's Country Director. This evaluation manager will be the main focal point for day-to-day contact during the evaluation period. An external independent firm (evaluation team) will be contracted to carry out the actual evaluation and will appoint their own evaluation team leader and managers.

5. WFP Lao PDR was awarded \$26,019,2656.22 to implement a McGovern-Dole-funded school feeding program in Lao PDR. The five-year project closely aligns with the priorities of the Government of Lao PDR and the US Government on school feeding, nutrition, literacy, and education, and aims to strengthen the capacities of the host government and communities in school feeding. The project, building on the successes and lessons learned in the previous McGovern-Dole-funded programs in Lao PDR, expands school feeding to new schools to enable the Government of Lao PDR to reach the last of its priority districts for education while creating the structures and systems within the Government and communities to ensure sustainability when handed-over to government's National School Lunch Program.

6. The Government's vision of expanding school feeding to the remaining priority districts and integrating them into the School Lunch Program (SLP) are clearly articulated in national development plans and strategies. This project, implemented in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), provides a package of school health and nutrition activities, including school meals, water access, hygiene promotion, literacy, community mobilization, school feeding-related infrastructure investments, agricultural support, policy support, and health and nutrition awareness activities, to reach approximately 64,000 pre-primary and primary school-aged children in 702 (originally 707) schools in 11 provinces, namely Bokeo, Luang Prabang, Xiengkhouang, Vientiane Province, Vientiane Capital, Khammouane, Savannakhet, Salavan, Champasak, Sekong, and Attapeu provinces for the period 2020-2025.

## 2. Reasons for the Evaluation

### 2.1. Rationale

7. The WFP CO is commissioning this activity evaluation as a final assessment for the FY 2020-USDA McGovern-Dole project in support of WFP's School Feeding Program (SFP) activities in Lao PDR, to be evaluated from the period of January 2025 to September 2025 (inception phase to submission of the final report), in order to be able to critically and objectively assess performance of the project for the purposes of learning and accountability.

8. The endline evaluation is being commissioned as the final stage in the evaluation cycle to fulfil USDA McGovern-Dole project requirement to provide information about the project situation at final -point of project implementation, to compare the progress of final points with the baseline and mid-point value and to provide project implementation recommendations for the future school feeding program . As such, it is expected that the methodology and indicators selected for the endline evaluation should enable the analysis that is meaningfully comparable to results of the baseline study and the mid-term evaluation.

### 2.2. Objectives

9. The objective of the end-line (final) evaluation (January – September 2025) is to provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of the performance of the school feeding project to evaluate the project's success, ensure accountability, and generate lessons learned. Specifically, the final evaluation will: (1) review the project's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, impact, sustainability (2) collect performance indicator data for strategic objectives at the higher-level which focuses on literacy performance and health/dietary practices results, (3) measure the project's effectiveness in achieving the strategic objectives, and (4) identify and share critical lessons learned with the Government, USDA, and stakeholders to inform future program design and strategies for program sustainability and institutionalization.

10. Evaluations serve the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning for WFP and partners, including government and other stakeholders, to feed into future project design. Evaluation findings will also be used by the key government counterpart for this project, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES).

- **Accountability** – The evaluation will assess and report on the performance and results of the USDA McGovern-Dole project during the funding period. For accountability, the evaluations assess whether targeted beneficiaries have received services as expected, and if the project has achieved the stated goals and objectives. While this evaluation has slightly more weight on the accountability due to its report obligation to the stakeholders, learning aspects also remain as an important objective
- **Learning** – The evaluation will assess whether implementation unfolded as planned, explore reasons why intended results occurred or did not occur and whether there were any unintended results (positive or negative). The evaluation will draw lessons, derive good practices and provide pointers for learning. It will also provide evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making. Findings will be actively disseminated, and lessons will be incorporated into relevant lesson-sharing systems.

11. This endline evaluation will provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of the results of the project to enable WFP CO, government, and Cooperating Partners (CPs) to demonstrate results and learning to feed into future school feeding initiatives, in particular the government-led and managed National School Lunch Program (NSLP), while also making it possible to quantify the outcome of the project. It is expected that findings from the evaluation will inform the future project design, and that the government may use this information to prioritize aspects of the project to adopt in the national program or to decide how best to allocate national school feeding resources. Considering that the schools covered by the project are operating in part of the country characterized by, remoteness, poverty, food insecurity,

minority language, agro-ecological conditions etc., thus, the endline evaluation of this project is also expected to have a lens to understand the extent to which the project may have contributed to mitigating and compensating for the effect of these vulnerabilities and deprivations in the areas of student progress covered by the interventions, including gender and inclusion aspects.

12. The evaluation will amplify the learning about the handover process to the Government and highlight areas that might need to be improved for a smooth and sustainable transition process to full national ownership.

13. The evaluation also aims to apply a gender and inclusion lens to understand possible different effects and contributions to girls, boys, women, men, and other marginalised or disadvantaged groups through the project.

## **2.3. Key stakeholders**

14. Several internal and external stakeholders are expected to utilize the results of the evaluation, and some will play a role in the evaluation process.

15. Internally the key stakeholders of the evaluations include WFP Lao PDR Country Office (CO), Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific in Bangkok (RBB), and WFP Washington Office, as well as key headquarters Divisions (School Meals and Social Protection Service, the Performance Management and Monitoring Division, and the Office of Evaluation among others).

16. Externally, stakeholders include USDA including the Food Assistance Division in Washington D.C., the regional Agricultural Attaché, and other project partners, including Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the World Bank, U.N. agencies such as UNICEF, the co-Chairs of the Education Sector Working Group, the European Union, and Australia.

17. The evaluation report is of direct interest to the WFP CO, members of the Internal Evaluation Committee (EC), and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), including representation from Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Planning and Investment etc.

18. The expected users of this evaluation will be:

19. The WFP CO and its partners in decision-making, notably related to program implementation, design and partnerships.

- USDA as the donor for the project and the evaluation.
- RBB is expected to use the evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, program support, and oversight.
- WFP HQ may use evaluations for wider organizational learning and accountability as well as program support on school feeding.
- WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEV) may use the evaluation findings, as appropriate, to feed into evaluation syntheses as well as for annual reporting to the Executive Board.

20. The government is expected to take over the management and monitoring of the school feeding program over time, therefore, information on whether the program is yielding the desired results is of primary importance. The MoES will use the evaluation findings to provide inputs for the transition strategy.

- Other partners such as CRS, World Bank and UN agencies such as UNICEF involved in the education sector may also be interested in the results of the evaluation.

21. WFP will ensure timely communication with USDA and key stakeholders throughout the evaluation. The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a broad range of WFP internal and external stakeholders. A number of stakeholders will play a role in the evaluation process in light of their role in the design and implementation of the McGovern-Dole project, their interest in the results of the evaluation and

relative power to influence the design, funding and implementation of the project being evaluated. Table 1 provides a preliminary stakeholder analysis, which should be deepened by the evaluation team as part of the inception phase.

22. Accountability to affected populations, is tied to WFP commitments to include beneficiaries as key stakeholders in WFP work. WFP is committed to ensuring gender equality, equity and inclusion in the evaluation process, with participation and consultation in the evaluation of women, men, boys and girls from different groups (including persons with disabilities, the elderly and persons with other diversities such as ethnic and linguistic).

**Table 1: Preliminary stakeholder analysis**

Stakeholders	Interest and involvement in the evaluation
<b>Internal (WFP) stakeholders</b>	
<b>WFP country office (CO) in Vientiane, Lao PDR</b>	<b>Key informant and primary stakeholder</b> - Responsible for the planning and implementation of WFP interventions at country level. The country office has an interest in learning from experience to inform decision-making. Specifically, the CO School Feeding team will make programmatic decisions on time frame and prioritization of the activity implementation. It is also called upon to account internally as well as to its beneficiaries and partners for performance and results of its programs. The country office will be involved in using evaluation findings for program implementation and/or in deciding on the next program and partnerships.
<b>WFP field office in Pakse</b>	<b>Key informant and primary stakeholder</b> - Responsible for day-to-day program implementation. The field offices/ CO school feeding team liaise with stakeholders at decentralized levels and has direct beneficiary contact. It will be affected by the outcome of the evaluation.
<b>Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific based in Bangkok (RBB)</b>	<b>Key informant and primary stakeholder</b> - Responsible for both oversight of country offices and technical guidance and support, the regional bureau management has an interest in an independent/impartial account of operational performance as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to apply this learning to other country offices. The regional bureau will be involved in the planning of the next program; thus, it is expected to use the evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, program support, and oversight. The regional evaluation officers support country office/regional bureau management to ensure quality, credible and useful decentralized evaluations.
<b>WFP HQ divisions</b>	<b>Key informant and primary stakeholder</b> - WFP headquarters divisions, such as School Meals and Social Protection Service are responsible for issuing and overseeing the rollout of normative guidance on corporate program themes, activities and modalities, as well as of overarching corporate policies and strategies. They also have an interest in the lessons that emerge from evaluations, as many may have relevance beyond the geographical area of focus. Relevant headquarters units should be consulted from the planning phase to ensure that key policy, strategic and programmatic considerations are understood from the onset of the evaluation. They may use the evaluation for wider organizational learning accountability.

<b>WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV)</b>	<b>Primary stakeholder</b> – OEV has a stake in ensuring that decentralized evaluations deliver quality, credible and useful evaluations respecting provisions for impartiality as well as roles and accountabilities of various DE stakeholders as identified in the evaluation policy. It may use the evaluation findings, as appropriate, to feed into centralized evaluations, evaluation syntheses or other learning products.
<b>WFP Executive Board (EB)</b>	<b>Primary stakeholder</b> – the Executive Board provides final oversight of WFP programs and guidance to programs. The WFP governing body has an interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP programs. This evaluation will not be presented to the Executive Board, but its findings may feed into thematic and/or regional syntheses and corporate learning processes.
<b>External stakeholders</b>	
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Key informants and primary/secondary stakeholders</b> - As the ultimate recipients of food assistance, beneficiaries have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective. Among the beneficiaries receiving capacity strengthening are schoolteachers, women and men small-holder farmers and members of Village Education Development Committee. The level of participation in the evaluation of women, men, boys and girls from different groups including disadvantaged or vulnerable groups will be determined and their respective perspectives will be sought.
<b>Government of Lao PDR</b>	<b>Key informants and primary stakeholder</b> - The Government has a direct interest in knowing whether WFP activities in the country are aligned with its priorities, harmonized with the action of other partners and meet the expected results. Issues related to capacity development, the extent to which on readiness to take over by government partners and sustainability will be of particular interest. Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and Ministry of Health (MoH) are partners in the design and implementation of WFP Local Regional Procurement and School Meals activities. Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) are also partner of the project. At sub-national level, Provincial Education and Sports Services (PESS), District Education and Sport Bureau (DESB), Provincial Health Office (PHO), and District Health Office (DHO), Provincial Agriculture and Forestry (PAFO), District Agriculture and Forestry (DAFO), and all of these sub-national government institutions play key roles at implementation level.
<b>United Nations country team (UNCT) - UNICEF, FAO, World Bank (WB)</b>	<b>Secondary stakeholder</b> - The harmonized action of the UNCT should contribute to the realization of the government developmental objectives. It has therefore an interest in ensuring that WFP programs are effective in contributing to the United Nations concerted efforts. Various agencies are also direct partners of WFP at policy and activity level, such as UNICEF, FAO, and the World Bank.
<b>Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) CRS</b>	<b>Key informants and primary stakeholder</b> - NGOs are WFP partners for the implementation of some activities while at the same time having their own interventions. The results of the evaluation might affect future implementation modalities, strategic orientations and partnerships. They will be involved in using evaluation findings for program implementation.



<b>USDA</b>	<b>Secondary stakeholders</b> – USDA is the donor for the McGovern-Dole program; therefore, they should be kept informed throughout each step of the evaluation and consulted for feedback and approval of evaluation products according to the standards planned in the program. USDA will also be a member of the Evaluation Reference Group.
<b>Donors</b> France Embassy, DFAT, JICA, the European Union, BMZ	<b>Primary/secondary stakeholders</b> - WFP interventions are voluntarily funded by several donors. They have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if WFP work has been effective and contributed to their own strategies and programs.
<b>Others</b>	A wide range of actors, such as local suppliers, school administrators and local communities, are involved in the provision of school meals and are expected to benefit from some of the capacity development activities. WFP CO also has established partnerships with the World Bank and Lao Women Union, National Center for Environmental Health and Water Supply (NamSaat), the National Nutrition Centre to achieve project objectives. Their respective perspectives will be sought during the evaluation as the engagement of these actors influences the effectiveness of the program as well as its sustainability.

# 3. Context and subject of the evaluation

## 3.1. Context

23. **Overview:** Lao PDR is a country bordering Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, and China with 7.4 million people (2021). Lao's annual population growth is 1.4% and 58% of the total population is under 25 years old. The country has one of the highest adolescent birth rates in the region with 83 births per 1,000 girls (aged 15-19), with important differences between rural and urban areas (136 and 42 births per 1,000 adolescent girls, respectively).

24. Lao PDR is a multi-ethnic society with 49 ethnic groups, with at least 240 subgroups. The ethnic subgroups can be classified in four broader ethno-linguistic groupings: Lao-Tai (62.4%), Mon-Khmer (23.7%), Hmong-Mien (9.7%) and Chinese-Tibetan (2.9%). Despite the significant part of the population still living in rural areas, the country is experiencing the fastest urbanization rate in the region (3.2% in 2021).

25. Lao PDR is considered a least developed country (LDC) - expected to graduate in 2026 from the LDC category<sup>13</sup> with GDP annual growth rate of only 4.2% in 2023, when the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the already vulnerable economy. Before the pandemic, the country's macroeconomic situation had shown high growth over the previous two decades, with the poverty rate decreasing by 50% towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1 of halving poverty and the proportion of hungry people. Based on the most recent estimates of 2017, 23.1% of the population is multidimensionally poor while an additional 21.2% is classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty.

26. The world economy continues to wrestle with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with global financial tightening, particularly in developed economies, global supply disruptions, and climate-related challenges. In Lao PDR, year-on-year inflation accelerated to a record 40.3 per cent in January 2023. Lao Kip continues to depreciate 37.4 and 32.9 per cent against the USD and Thai Baht respectively.

27. **Agriculture and Climate Change Impacts:** Agriculture is the main sector of employment in the country, with over 70% of the population engaged. Women participate in over half of all agricultural activities. Lao PDR has approximately 5 million hectares of suitable land for cultivation (21% of total landmass).

28. Despite the importance of the sector, agriculture in Lao PDR contributes only 16% to the country's GDP due to factors including low productivity and lack of modernization, among other issues. Traditional farming methods on top of lack of knowledge of new technologies are one of the main obstacles to improve yields, in addition to declining soil fertility and lack of access to irrigation. In recent years, commercial crops have included maize, cassava, banana and vegetables, improving productivity among low-income households. Commercial, market-oriented, farming, has benefited rural communities by stimulating economic growth and poverty reduction. The latter, however, despite creating opportunities for households to boost their income by growing cash crops, has become a disadvantage for non-Lao Thai ethnic groups, especially women, who have limited Lao language and business skills.

29. Although the country is not as exposed to natural hazards as other countries in the region, the country is highly vulnerable to climate change, including cyclones, floods, erratic rains and extended dry seasons. It is expected that temperature in the Mekong Basin in the next 20 to 30 years will increase by 1-2 degrees and some areas are expected to face seasonal droughts while other areas will experience increasing rainfall.

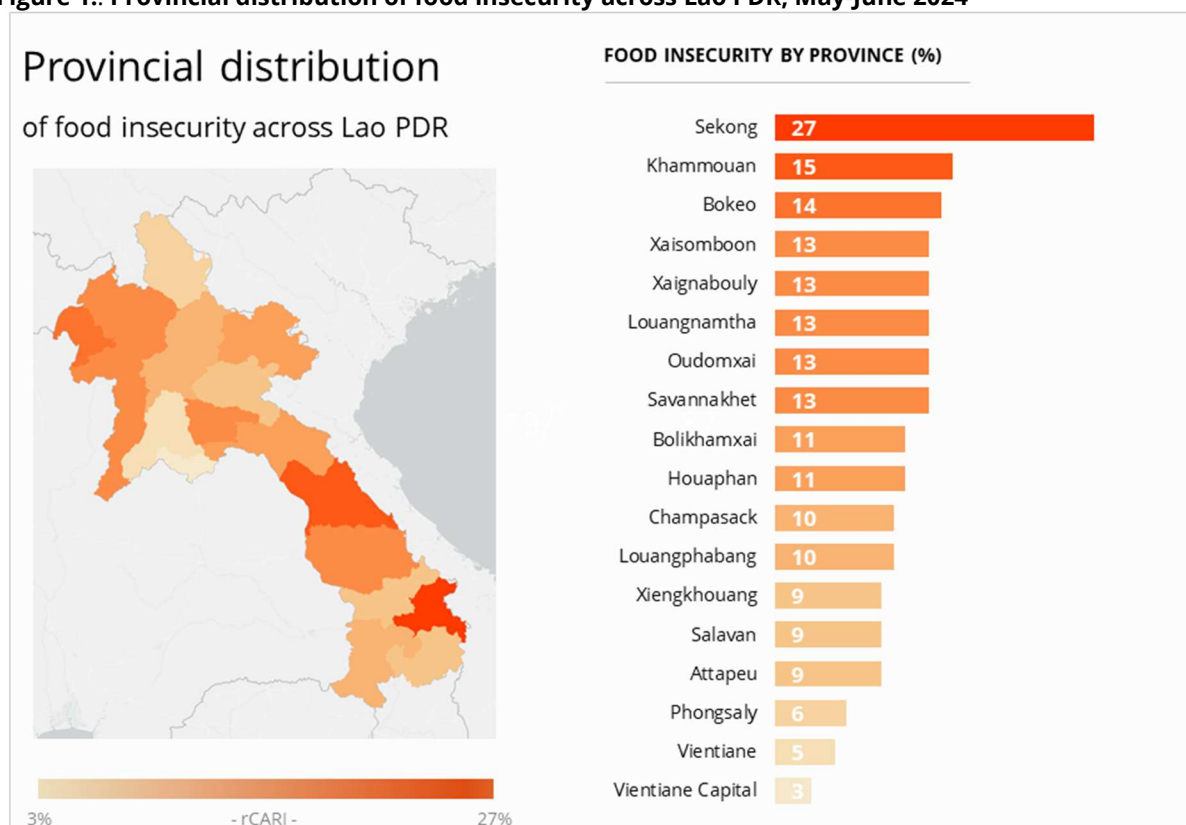
30. Agriculture and rural livelihoods provide income to more than two-thirds of the population in Lao PDR, although only 4 percent of the total area in Laos is arable – the smallest amount of any country in Southeast Asia – due to its mountainous terrain. Most of this land is devoted to paddy production, with glutinous (sticky) rice making up almost 80 percent of rice production.

31. Changing climate patterns combined with poor access to both markets and diverse livelihoods worsen the situation in remote upland areas, where 25 percent of households are food insecure. In addition, Lao PDR faces limited technical knowledge and know-how in climate-smart agriculture, particularly in climate information management and analysis, technical approaches to agricultural extension with a focus on climate hazards, and community-based approaches for agricultural and rural development.

32. **Food security, nutrition, and health:** In Lao PDR, food security annual trend is currently plateauing affecting 10 percent of the households. This proportion is likely to increase as we reach the peak of the lean season. However, certain parts of the country are still experiencing high prevalence of food insecurity, although improvements in food security have been observed in many areas. This is likely attributed to an increased reliance on locally sourced products, such as vegetables and other wild foods or forest products, which have become more accessible especially during the rainy season. (Figure 1).

33. Rural households in Lao PDR continue to experience higher food insecurity. Food insecurity impacts as many as 13 percent of rural households, in contrast to five percent of urban households. Noteworthy disparities have been noted among different household income groups. Food insecurity appears to be more pronounced among households experiencing income reductions (20 percent for income reduction of < 50 percent and 26 percent for income reduction of > 50 percent), compared to households with steady or increased income (7 percent). Sekong has consistently struggled with a high prevalence of households experiencing food insecurity, with up to 27 percent of the population experiencing moderate food insecurity and one percent suffering severe food insecurity.

**Figure 1: Provincial distribution of food insecurity across Lao PDR, May-June 2024**

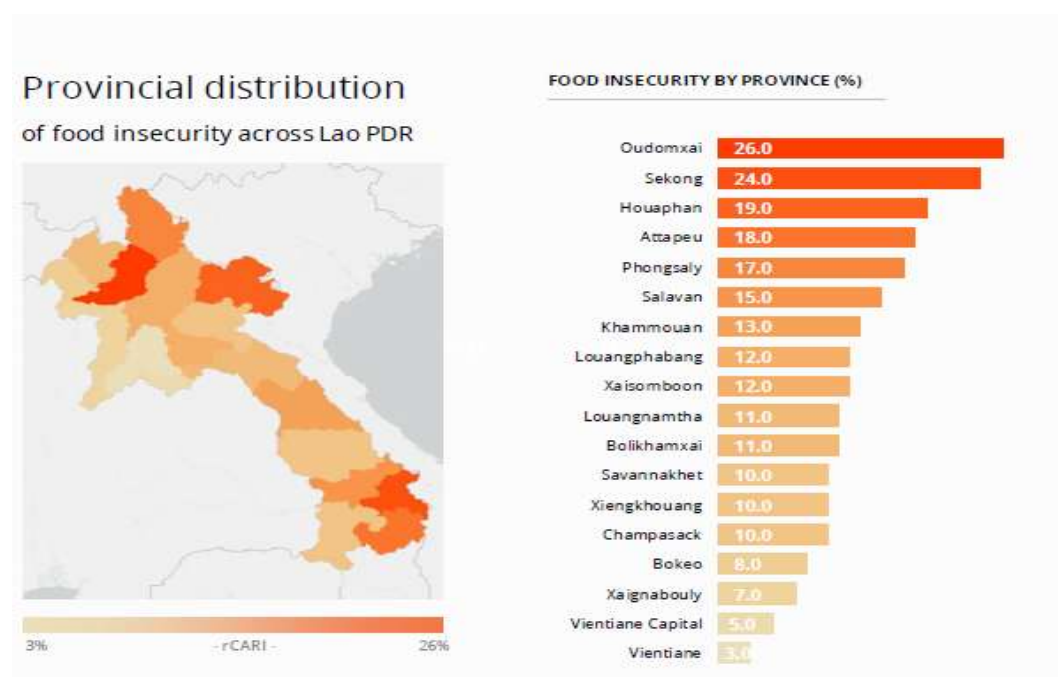


Source: Remote Food Security Monitoring (mVAM), May-June 2024

34. In 2024, food insecurity is expected to remain a concern for some households in Lao PDR. A year-on-year comparison from June/July 2023 to July 2024 shows that the highest prevalence of food insecurity at the national level was recorded at 14 percent in September 2023, with a slight improvement to 12 percent in November 2023, and a more notable improvement to 9 percent in December 2023, while this number reverted to 10 percent by March and June 2024. The slow improvement of the food security situation from the end of 2023 to mid 2024 in Lao PDR mirrors the global trend of persistent food insecurity resulting from

various socio-economic challenges, according to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) findings. At the provincial level, gradual improvements have been observed across some provinces, indicating a positive trend (see Annex 1 for details). There has been a consistent decrease in food insecurity from December of the previous year to mid-2024, particularly pronounced in Phongsaly and Salavan provinces, where the number of food insecure households decreased by two percentage points in March and June 2024 for Phongsaly, and by five and one percentage points respectively for Salavan.

**Figure 2. Provincial distribution of food insecurity across Lao PDR, April-May 2023**



Source: Remote Food Security Monitoring (mVAM), May-June 2024

35. With the economic difficulties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, as expected, households with significant income reduction (over 50%) are more than twice likely to be food insecure. In general, households have been eating less diverse diets. Staple foods, such as rice, and vegetables are primary food category that are most consumed in a week, while dairy and pulses are eaten less than twice a week.

36. Approximately 44% of pregnant and lactating women and girls (aged 15 to 19) achieve the recommended minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W). The prevalence of anemia among children under five in 2018 was 40%, while 33% were affected by stunting in 2019 (which is considered a “high severity prevalence of chronic malnutrition). Additionally, the prevalence of wasting -measured based on a child’s weight relative to their height- increased from 6% in 2012 to 9% in 2019, while overweight and obesity are increasing, with 15.7% of children under five classified as overweight. Only one in four children receive a minimum acceptable diet. With either not adequate nutritious food or a low dietary diversity at home, school feeding is considered a key strategy to address hunger and nutrition. Around 35% of Lao PDR households rely on food-based coping mechanisms such as turning to less desired foods, reducing portion sizes, or skipping adult meals for children. It is estimated that around 19% of adults sacrifice meals so that their children can eat.

37. **Education and investment in education sector:** The 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2021–2025 identifies education as essential for human development, economic growth, and poverty reduction. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4, the Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (ESSDP) 2021–2025 prioritizes equitable access, improved learning outcomes, stronger teaching quality, and increased system efficiency, with a focus on boosting functional literacy among primary school children. The allocation of the education sector budget, both as a share of the national budget and as a percentage of GDP, remains low and has further declined in recent years due to the economic crisis. This level of funding is inadequate to meet the objectives outlined in the Education and Sports Sector

Development Plan (ESSDP). Between 2021 and 2023, annual education budgets fell short of the targets set under the two Development Plan scenarios—Education Quality and Steady State—resulting in significant financing gaps. Consequently, critical programs aimed at improving the quality of education, such as in-service teacher training, pedagogical support, textbook replenishment, and school block grants, have faced substantial budget cuts.

38. **Literacy** remains a critical challenge for many students, with a significant proportion lacking the foundational skills required to fully engage in classroom learning. Over half (57%) of primary school students struggle with reading comprehension. Early-grade students, particularly non-Lao speaking learners, face greater difficulties in developing language and reading skills. This is further compounded by the Government of Lao PDR's policy against native language instruction and the prevalence of teachers originating from Lao-speaking regions. As of 2023, the literacy rate among women aged 15–24 stood at 82%, compared to 86% among men.<sup>1</sup>The table below highlights a girl-to-boy reading ratio of 1.09 and a numeracy ratio of 1.03. However, these disparities are more pronounced among students in grades 2 and 3, where the girl-to-boy reading and numeracy ratios rise to 1.25 and 1.16, respectively.

39. Moreover, the quality of education remains a challenge. Approximately 82% (2017) of enrolled children complete primary education despite compulsory education requirements, which is expected to last nine years. In lower secondary education, dropout rates are also high (46% for boys and 47% for girls). The Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 report shows that 50% of students in Grade 5 were in the lowest Band (2) and are still at the stage of matching single words to an image of a familiar object or concept. Student learning outcomes are very low. The ASLO IV in 2017 found that 42 percent of Grade 3 students had not yet mastered the Lao language skills taught in Grades 1 or 2, with an additional 25 percent working mainly below the Grade 3 skill range. The Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 report shows that 50% of students in Grade 5 were in the lowest Band (2) and are still at the stage of matching single words to an image of a familiar object or concept.

40. **Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH):** Access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene remains a challenge. Inadequate environmental hygiene, such as the use of contaminated water, poor sanitation, and incorrect hygiene practices, including difficulties in access to public health services, is one of the underlying causes of malnutrition. Disparities in this area are also relevant. Based on 2017 available data, while only 18% of urban areas do not have water source at all, the figure is 40.4% in rural areas.

41. Lao PDR has made progress in the representation of women in senior roles in both the public and private sectors: 30-40% in new entrepreneur opportunities are created by women. However, women still constitute most workers in the informal sectors and are often left with the management of the household, including facilitating water supply and energy for cooking, reinforcing traditional and constrictive gender roles. Most unpaid care work is taken up by women, largely due to gender roles and limited educational and productive opportunities. In 2015, 61% of women active in the labour force were unpaid family workers, compared to only 26% of men.

42. Disabilities and gender dynamics significantly shape access to, participation in, and outcomes of food security, often compounding inequalities for vulnerable groups. According to the LSIS 2017, 2.8% of the Lao PDR population has a disability, with functional difficulties assessed in areas such as seeing, hearing, mobility, communication, and cognitive or behavioral control. Children are particularly impacted, with 2% of those aged 2 to 4 experiencing challenges in at least one domain, rising to 3.8% in rural areas lacking road infrastructure. These barriers can restrict access to food, limit participation in agricultural or economic activities, and exacerbate vulnerability to food insecurity, particularly in underserved communities.

43. At the same time, gender inequities further intersect with these challenges. Lao PDR ranks 54th out of 153 countries in the 2023 WEF Global Gender Gap Index, which highlights disparities between men and women in health, education, economic opportunities, and political representation. Women and girls often face systemic inequalities that limit their access to resources, decision-making roles, and economic participation, all of which influence food security outcomes. Together, these overlapping dimensions of

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<sup>1</sup> Lao Statistics Bureau. 2024. [Lao Social Indicator Survey 2023 – Key Indicators Report](#). Accessed on 21 February 2024.

disability and gender inequity create compounded barriers to achieving equitable and sustainable food security for all.

44. **Government policies and strategies:** The 9th Lao National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED), aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) governs sectoral policies and strategies. Under NSED, the GoL has addressed food insecurity and nutrition through various school related policies and strategies, such as Policy on Promoting School Lunch, the School Meals Action Plan, the National Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (NNSPA) establish school meals as one of the 22 priorities. The plan outlines a strategic framework for the next decade aimed at reducing maternal and child malnutrition rates while enhancing the nutritional status and food security of the country's diverse population, aligning with SDGs 2, 4, and 17.

45. In response to critical country needs, Lao PDR has made progress on two notable SDGs: End Hunger (SDG 2) and Quality Education (SDG 4).<sup>2</sup> The prevalence of undernourishment in Lao PDR has declined from 25.9 percent in 2006 to 16.5 percent in 2018 and stunting in children under 5 years has decreased from 44.4 percent in 2013 to 33.0 percent in 2018. Children in rural areas, and poorer households are more likely to be stunted.<sup>3</sup>

46. Despite progress made towards SDG 4 through ensuring universal access for primary education and achieving a 98 percent gross enrolment ratio and 100 percent completion rate in primary education, learning outcomes and other contributing factors require greater attention in Lao PDR.<sup>4</sup> In 2019, 2.5 percent of children achieved at least a minimum proficiency level in reading, 49.6 percent were unable to perform basic reading, and 51.9 percent had limited ability to articulate ideas in writing. Government financing for education has decreased; education spending to GDP has been declining steadily since 2017, from 2.7% to 2.1% in 2021 and 1.7% in 2023 Budget.

47. In 2015, the GoL approved its National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action, which laid out the key drivers of malnutrition in Lao PDR and outlined a strategic framework for the next 10 years that aims to reduce maternal and child malnutrition rates while improving the nutritional status and food security of the country's multi-ethnic population.

48. Lao PDR is also party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which requires governments to protect economic, social, and cultural rights, including the rights to employment, food, health, and participation in cultural activities, and to conduct recurring reviews of the situation by the UN Expert Committee.

49. School Feeding Project in Lao PDR: The school feeding project can directly and indirectly address some of the interconnected factors leading to malnutrition and food security. School lunches are likely to improve nutrient intake and dietary diversity while also alleviating the economic burden for vulnerable families by reducing household's food expenditure. These savings can then be allocated towards other households' essential needs, such as access to health care, soap and detergent, and other items that can contribute to a more sanitary environment. WASH activities are intended to address the poor environmental hygiene that leads to food, water, and vector-borne diseases, in addition it is intended to provide dignity to the students. Furthermore, gender-responsive nutrition campaigns can reduce the unpaid burden of care of women and girls.

50. As per the terms of reference, high level policy support and capacity strengthening form the backbone of the transition to the NSMP under full government ownership in 2021. Through support to national legislation and guidelines, the strengthening of technical capacity, and the facilitation of knowledge sharing, GoL has taken over management of school feeding of 515 schools in 2019, and another 915 schools in 2021 in the 31 target districts in the 8 targeted provinces. According to MoES, in school years 2019-2020, the total number of schools in Lao PDR was 8,518, so the McGD17 covers 17% of all primary schools in Laos.

51. Today in Lao PDR, nearly 32 percent of all primary and pre-primary school children (approximately 280,000 children in 2,789 schools) receive school lunch through SFPs implemented by the GoL (through the NSMP), WFP and CRS. WFP provides supports for over 35,000 pre-primary and primary school students in 355 schools across 9 districts in 4 provinces, while partnering with CRS to support 249 schools in Savannakhet and Khammouane provinces. MoES supports over 174,000 students in 1,736 schools in 10 districts through the NSMP. The third phase of CRS' Learning and Engaging All in Primary School (LEAPS III) program supports



school meals for over 30,000 students in six districts of Savannakhet province.

52. WFP and CRS are members of the Education Sector Work Groups chaired by Minister of Education and co-chaired by Australia and EU. CRS and WFP co-chair the School Meals Technical Working Group with MOES' Inclusive Education Promotion Center (IEPC). These subgroups ensure coordination among all stakeholders on delivering inclusive education. In addition, WFP and CRS are member of the Disability Inclusive Development Working group, chaired by UNDP and CBM, a subgroup to ensure coordination with local organizations representing people with disabilities.

53. Among other prominent programs in the country, WFP partners with FAO and MoES for a pilot on integrating nutrition and school gardens as part of the curriculum. This initiative seeks to enhance knowledge among students, teachers and the community on improved agricultural techniques. Further, WFP, MoES, JICA and UNICEF support workshops on understanding causes for high drop-out and repetition rates among the non-Lao speaking children. The Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL) program is the largest single donor funded education program in the country. Besides providing textbooks, teacher guides, and reading materials, it advocates for increased remuneration for teachers in remote and rural areas. Finally, MGD21 finance by USDA and implemented by CRS (LEAPS III) in collaboration with MOES, continues to provide school meals, improve literacy rates, increase access to clean water, and promote healthy hygiene and dietary practices in 302 schools of Savannakhet province.

54. Of MoES' 40 priority districts, 22 received school feeding through WFP, CRS or the GoL prior to this FY 2020 project. McGovern-Dole funding is being used to support the GoL's priorities in reaching the remaining 18 priority districts that do not receive school feeding and to leverage experience on capacity strengthening and handover to maximise their readiness to be integrated into the SLP.

55. As outlined in the GoL's Policy on Promoting School Lunch, school feeding requires not only the provision of safe and nutritious school meals to enhance learning and improve resistance to infections, but also the promotion of local ownership and capacity, and provision of safe access to water. The project is a collaboration between WFP, leading the school feeding activities in nine districts, CRS – leading the literacy and WASH activities along with the community mobilization components in five districts – and MoES facilitating the provision of school feeding in the four northern districts.

56. In 2015, the GoL approved its National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016–2020. The Government laid out the key drivers of malnutrition in Lao PDR and outlined a strategic framework for the next 10 years that aimed to reduce maternal and child malnutrition rates while improving the nutritional status and food security of the country's multi-ethnic population.

57. The school feeding project can directly and indirectly address some of the interconnected factors leading to malnutrition. School lunch is intended to improve nutrient intake and dietary diversity while also alleviating the economic burden for vulnerable families by reducing household spending on food. These savings can then be allocated towards other costs, such as access to health care, soap and detergent, and other items that can contribute to a more sanitary environment. WASH activities are intended to address the poor environmental hygiene that leads to food, water, and vector-borne diseases.

58. WFP's experience implementing nutrition awareness campaigns showed that villagers were engaged when learning in their own language. By leveraging the lessons learned from its previous nutrition interventions as part of broader nutrition awareness raising, this project has an opportunity to have an impact on maternal and child health and nutrition.

59. High level policy support and capacity strengthening form the backbone of the transition to the NSMP under full government ownership in 2025. Through support to national legislation and guidelines, the strengthening of technical capacity, and the facilitation of knowledge sharing, WFP aims to build on work completed under the previous McGovern-Dole FY20 award to equip the Government with the means to take over the target schools by the end of the project period.

## 3.2. Subject of the evaluation

60. The subject of endline evaluation is the FY20 USDA McGovern-Dole School Feeding Project (2020-2025), which is the third cycle of the McGovern-Dole award in Lao PDR.

61. The project, implemented by WFP in collaboration with CRS and the MoES, focuses on enhancing school health, literacy, and nutrition for approximately 64,000 pre-primary and primary school children in 702 schools across 17 priority districts in 10 provinces and Vientiane Capital. With a budget of over \$26 million, the project delivers school meals, water access, hygiene promotion, literacy support, community engagement, infrastructure development, agricultural support, and health and nutrition awareness. Over its cycle, the project will provide more than 43 million meals to improve the health, literacy, and dietary practices of over 31,000 girls and 33,000 boys. The precise outputs to date and targets for USDA assistance are shown below.

**Table 2: Number of students enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance.**

Output Indicator	Baseline	2022	2023	Life of Project Target
Number of students enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance	64,156	66,998	61,772	102,650

Source: the mid-term evaluation Mid-Term Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for School Feeding in Lao PDR from 2020 to 2025

62. The project provides mid-day school meals, including fortified rice, canned fish, lentils, and fortified cooking oil, across 17 targeted districts in Lao PDR.<sup>2</sup>

Table below illustrates the mid-term distribution of commodities, highlighting the alignment with project goals to address short-term hunger and promote dietary diversity.

**Table 3: Commodity distribution at midterm**

Commodity	Expected Distribution (MT)	Actual Distribution (MT)
<b>Year 2 - FY22</b>		
<b>01 Oct 2021 - 31 Mar 2022</b>		
Rice	277.2	61.733
Lentils	55.44	12.618
Vegetable Oil	27.72	5.033
Canned Fish	35.64	12.183
<b>01 Apr 2022 - 30 Sept 2022</b>		
Rice	575.270	579.542
Lentils	103.950	42.463
Vegetable Oil	50.160	16.716
Canned Fish	61.380	31.539
<b>Year 3 - FY23</b>		
<b>01 Oct 2022 - 31 Mar 2023</b>		
Rice	984.43	984.43
Lentils	135.849	135.849
Vegetable Oil	86.414	86.391
Canned Fish	81.157	81.136
<b>01 Apr 2023 - 30 Sept 2023</b>		
Rice	352.539	324.763

<sup>2</sup> Target Districts: Meung (Bokeo), Park Ou (Luangprabang), Nonghed (Xiengkhouang), Feuang (Vientiane), Sangthong (Vientiane Capital), Bualapha, Mahaxay, Nhommalath, and Xaybuathong (Khammouane), Xonbully (Savannakhet), Lakhonepheng (Salavan), Bachiangchaleunsook, Khong, Moonlapamok, and Sukhuma (Champasack), Lamarm (Xekong), and Xaysetha (Attapeu).



Commodity	Expected Distribution (MT)	Actual Distribution (MT)
Lentils	71.436	88.826
Vegetable Oil	35.254	22.09
Canned Fish	40.82	27.197

Source: The Mid-Term Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for School Feeding in Lao PDR from 2020 to 2025

63. The program also includes interventions in WASH, community development, infrastructure, literacy, agricultural support, policy strengthening, and health and nutrition. These activities aim to equip the government, schools, parents, and communities with the resources and knowledge needed to improve children's literacy and promote better health, nutrition, and dietary practices.

64. The project uses McGovern-Dole commodities and cash funding to contribute directly towards the McGovern-Dole project's highest-level Strategic Objectives,

- **SO1:** Improved Literacy of School-Aged Children;
- **SO2:** Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices; and
- **LRP SO1:** Improved Effectiveness of Food Assistance through Local and Regional Procurement.

65. The project **Theory of Change** is: If children receive quality learning materials, teachers use formative assessments, district staff provide coaching, schools have better infrastructure, and children access nutritious food and health interventions, then schools will see improved literacy, attendance, and health outcomes, as school feeding programs in Laos show that such a comprehensive approach boosts student participation. The detailed **project result framework** is in **Annex 8**. Also, refer to **Annex 9** for the **detailed project indicators** and performance management target.

66. The following activities support SO1: literacy, school meals, agriculture support, and community mobilization and infrastructure investments. SO2 is supported by WASH, health and nutrition, and community mobilization and infrastructure investments. WFP emphasizes capacity strengthening for sustainability, targeting McGovern-Dole Foundational Results: enhanced government capacity, improved policy and regulatory frameworks, increased government support, and greater engagement of local organizations and communities. Activities contributing to these results include policy support, government capacity strengthening, health and nutrition, community mobilization, and agriculture support. Key activities are summarized in Table 4 below.

67. The project offers a tailored literacy package for high-need schools in Khammouane Province, focusing on 90 schools with low education indicators, no additional literacy support, and a high percentage of ethnic minority students who speak languages other than Lao. The activities, targeting emergent literacy skills in the first two years of primary school, emphasize non-Lao-speaking children and use context-specific materials. Designed to support teachers and complement the national curriculum, the project aligns with the USAID Reading MATTERS framework. It trains administrators to mentor teachers, helps teachers assess reading progress and provide remedial instruction, offers high-quality materials for extra practice, and prepares pre-primary children for school to reduce dropout rates and grade repetition. The project also strengthens the national curriculum rollout and complements other literacy initiatives like USAID's Learn to Read and BEQUAL.

**Table 4: Project activities**

Activity and Objective	Implementer(s)	Location	Partners
1 <b>School Meals:</b> To increase enrolment, reduce dropout, alleviate short-term hunger and improve student learning, concentration and access to nutritious food by providing on-site, hot school meals.	WFP, CRS, MoES	All project districts	
2 <b>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):</b> To increase the use of healthy practices by providing increased access to clean water and improved knowledge on hygiene practices.	CRS	130 schools across Khammouane, Savannakhet and Champasak Province	MoES, NamSaat
3 <b>Community Mobilization and Infrastructure Investments:</b> To ensure communities are fully engaged and equipped with adequate infrastructure, management and problem-solving skills to gradually take ownership of the SFP	WFP, CRS, MoES	All project districts	MoH, Lao Women's Union, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao Front for National Development
4 <b>Literacy:</b> To improve students' emergent literacy skills in the early primary years through increased access to learning materials, targeted teacher support, and community engagement.	CRS	90 schools in Khammouane Province	MoES
5 <b>Agriculture Support:</b> To enhance capacities of farmers in producing sufficient nutritious foods for the School Feeding Program, while also improving household food security and nutrition	WFP, MoES	All project districts	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
6 <b>Policy Support &amp; Government Capacity Strengthening:</b> To strengthen the capacity of the Government in delivering the school feeding program, with a view to transitioning to national ownership.	WFP, MoES	National	
7 <b>Health and Nutrition:</b> To promote the adoption of healthy dietary and hygiene practice through social behaviour change communication (SBCC)	WFP	All project districts	MoES, MoH (National Nutrition Center)

## 4. Evaluation scope, criteria and questions

68. The end-line evaluation is part of an evaluation plan that includes three key products: a baseline study, a mid-term evaluation, and a final evaluation.

69. Commissioned by the WFP Lao PDR Country Office, the endline evaluation will cover all activities implemented through the McGovern-Dole FY20 project in all geographical areas, including the formulation, implementation, resourcing, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting relevant to answer the evaluation questions. The inception period will establish and confirm appropriate sampling frames, sampling strategy and survey instruments for the endline evaluation. This will cover the entire project implementation period in 2025.

70. The evaluation should analyse how gender, equity and wider inclusion objectives and GEWE mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design, and whether the evaluation subject has been guided by WFP and system-wide objectives on GEWE. The gender, equity and wider inclusion dimensions, cultural and social norms that hinder or promote gender equality, including intersectionality (age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc.), should be integrated into all evaluation criteria as appropriate.

71. The end-line evaluation will build upon the baseline study and the mid-term evaluation to assess the project's success in achieving McGovern-Dole's two strategic objectives (Improved Literacy and Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices), including its best practice.

72. The questions are summarised in **Table 5** and will be further developed and tailored by the evaluation team in a detailed evaluation matrix during the inception phase. Collectively, the questions aim at highlighting the key lessons (learning) and performance of the endline of evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 (accountability), with a view to informing future strategic and operational decisions.

**Table 5: Evaluation questions and criteria**

Evaluation questions - Endline		Criteria
<b>EQ1</b> – How relevant and influential has the project design been with regard the Government of Laos' current and future plans in school feedings as well as responded to beneficiaries' needs and priorities?		Relevance
1.1	To what extent does the design of the McGovern-Dole FY20 School Feeding Project contribute to the achievement of the Government of Laos' policies and strategies on school feeding, as well as the objectives outlined in WFP's Country Strategic Plan for 2022–2026?	Relevance
1.2	To what extent were WFP's capacity strengthening activities designed based on needs assessments/analyses of national capacity in all five SABER-SF policy goals, and to what extent did they align with government plans, strategies and priorities for school feeding, school health and nutrition, sector specific and national-level development commitments?	Relevance
1.3	To what extent does the intervention, as designed, respond to the needs and priorities of the direct beneficiaries and well as that of the communities it supports?	Relevance

<b>EQ2 – How efficient was the project in adapting to circumstances and meeting its stated goals?</b>		<b>Efficiency</b>
2.1	How efficient was WFP's approach to strengthen the national capacities vis-à-vis the National School Lunch Program? To what extent was WFP able to mobilize the required human and technical resources to provide support to national actors (at technical, project management and advocacy levels) in a timely manner?	Efficiency
2.2	How cost-efficient was the implementation of the project?	Efficiency
2.3	What external obstacles were encountered during implementation, and how efficiently were they addressed to minimize delays or resource inefficiencies?	Efficiency
<b>EQ3 – How effective was the project in adapting to circumstances and meeting its stated goals?</b>		<b>Effectiveness</b>
3.1	How effective was the capacity strengthening work to build national capacity in the National School Lunch Program and to what extent were capacity strengthening activities carried out as planned?	Effectiveness
3.2	How have the combined project interventions (e.g., school meals, health promotion activities, and community engagement) contributed to improved student attendance, retention, and participation compared to baseline data?	Effectiveness
3.3	To what extent have project interventions, such as access to high-quality learning materials and improved teaching practices, resulted in measurable improvements in literacy outcomes for boys and girls?	Effectiveness
<b>EQ4 – How significant are the changes brought about by the project since the baseline, measured in terms of impacts?</b>		<b>Impact</b>
4.1	What significant changes in children's health, nutrition knowledge, and dietary practices have been observed as a result of access to diversified, nutritious food and preventative health interventions?	Impact
4.2	To what extent has the project contributed to equitable impacts across gender and ethnic groups in literacy, attendance, and health outcomes?	Impact
4.3	To what extent have the combined project interventions improved literacy instruction, student attentiveness, and attendance, and how do these changes reflect alignment with the project's Theory of Change?	Impact
<b>EQ5 – To what extent are McGovern-Dole School Feeding project results, benefits, and outcomes likely to continue after the program concludes?</b>		<b>Sustainability</b>
5.1	How likely are WFP's efforts to increase financial and human capital contributions from other stakeholders to the WFP-supported schools to be sustained over time?	Sustainability
5.2	To what extent has the government committed to continuing or supporting school feeding activities beyond WFP's involvement, and how has WFP contributed to this long-term support?	Sustainability

5.3	Which interventions have been most effective in securing ongoing community, local, or national government investment in school feeding programs, and what are the key barriers to sustaining this investment?	Sustainability
5.4	How is the community involved in maintaining key school infrastructure to ensure the continued success of the project, and how does this involvement differ between men and women?	Sustainability
<b>EQ6 – Additional Questions that are part of the USDA-approved evaluation framework for the project.</b>		General
6.1	What are the lessons learned from the project so far?	General

73. **This end-line evaluation team** should, when answering the evaluation questions, review the programmatic response to the following key observations from the **baseline study** (<https://www.wfp.org/publications/lao-pdr-usda-mcgobern-dole-school-feeding-program-2020-2025-evaluations>) and recommendations from the **mid-term evaluation**:

#### Summary of Baseline Key Observation

- a) **New food items introduced by project** : Acceptance of new food items is a gradual process, which could be smoothened by way of undertaking very specific community mobilization activities around it.
- b) **Regular trainings to mitigate turnover**: It essential that regular trainings of implementation team and district staff are held to ensure mitigate the effect of frequent transfers.
- c) **Increase farmer income**: It is essential that farmers' participation in the program and contribution towards school meals, largely depend on the chances of the program increasing their incomes.
- d) **Farmer-Market linkages**: The program would benefit by establishing linkages between farmers and the market and traders, to facilitate sale of their produce on a sustained basis.
- e) **Customised approach in line with vulnerabilities**: The project should adopt a more intensified and customized approach, responding to their unique cultural contexts and challenges.
- f) **Manage overburdening of teachers** Baseline findings point that teachers are overburdened with teaching as-well-as non-teaching, administrative responsibilities. In light of this, it is essential to identify individuals from the community who could be trained along with teachers and student around development and maintenance of school gardens.
- g) **Energising VEDCs** There is, thus a need to energize VEDCs by way of increasing their engagement within the village, that is, with other village institutions and community members, and with stakeholders outside their village.
- h) **VEDC Competitions**: One of the potential ways of increasing VEDC's engagement could be undertake competitions among multiple VEDCs within a particular geographical cluster.

#### Summary of mid-term evaluation recommendation

1. Continue to strengthen the Technical Working Group for School Meals to foster inter-ministerial collaboration,
2. Strengthen the agricultural component and market linkage of the project by learning from similar initiatives within the WFP Lao PDR portfolio. Set the foundations for strong agriculture-focused work in future initiatives,
3. Update Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each activity component based on experience and reflections from implementation.
4. Strengthen district-level capacity for monitoring and community engagement.

5. Strengthen the monitoring system of the project, and ensure information is shared to the SLP.
6. Ensure key lessons and good practices on project processes and results are efficiently and effectively documented to shape future initiatives in school feeding and catalyze innovation in the national School Lunch Program:
7. Document all modalities of capacity strengthening provided to Village Education Development Committees.
8. Work with project schools to develop a continuation plan for school meals under the national program.
9. Set the scope of work for the end-line evaluation to include methodological considerations proposed at midterm: (i) recalculate baseline values, (ii) align sampling approach, (iii) include a cost-analysis of the project.

# 5. Methodological approach and ethical considerations

## 5.1. Evaluation approach

74. The evaluation methodology for the endline evaluation will be further defined by the Evaluation Team in alignment with the WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) and the USDA's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Drawing insights from the previous evaluations and other analysis and consultations with key stakeholders, the Evaluation Team will be required to formulate the evaluation design, sampling strategy, and methodological approach which will be outlined in an inception report. The methodology should:

- Be relevant for answering the evaluation questions along the relevant evaluation criteria in Table 5 above.
- Be summarised in an evaluation matrix geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions, taking into account any data availability challenges and budget and timing constraints.
- Ensure through the use of appropriate methods that women, girls, men and boys from different stakeholder's groups participate and that their different voices are heard and used. Ensure that cultural and political sensitivities are addressed and that the data collection teams have the local language expertise to elicit the needed information from beneficiaries and others;

75. The methodology chosen should demonstrate attention to impartiality and reduction of bias by relying on mixed methods (quantitative, qualitative, participatory etc.) and different primary and secondary data sources that are systematically triangulated such as documents from different sources; a range of stakeholder groups, including pre-primary (5 years) and primary school students (6-11 years), teachers, parents, cooks, storekeepers, marginalized groups, members of the Village Education Development Committees and village leaders; direct observation in different locations; across evaluators; across methods etc..It will consider any challenges to data availability, validity or reliability, as well as any budget and timing constraints. The evaluation questions, lines of inquiry, indicators, data sources and data collection methods will be brought together in an evaluation matrix, which will form the basis of the sampling approach and data collection and analysis instruments (desk review, interview and observation).

76. **Gender and inclusion** aspects will also be considered and is an important variable for WFP's gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) agenda. The methodology and sampling frame should be sensitive in terms of GEWE, equity and inclusion, indicating how the perspectives and voices of diverse groups (men and women, boys, girls, the elderly, people living with disabilities and other marginalized groups) will be sought and considered. The methodology should ensure that primary data collected is disaggregated by sex and age; an explanation should be provided if this is not possible. Looking for explicit consideration of gender and equity/inclusion in the data after fieldwork is too late; the evaluation team must have a clear and detailed plan for collecting data from women and men in gender and equity-sensitive ways before fieldwork begins.

77. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect gender and equity analysis as appropriate within the context of the subject of evaluation. The findings should include a discussion on intended and unintended effects of the intervention, including along gender equality and equity dimensions. The report should provide lessons/ challenges/recommendations for conducting gender and equity-responsive evaluations in the future.

78. **Independence and impartiality:** The methodology chosen should demonstrate attention to impartiality and reduction of bias by relying on **mixed methods** (quantitative, qualitative, participatory etc.)

and different primary and secondary data sources that are systematically triangulated (documents from different sources; a range of stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries; direct observation in different locations; across evaluators; across methods etc.). The following mechanisms for independence and impartiality will be employed: the evaluation team will work independently in the design and implementation of the evaluation, final decisions on and approval of evaluation products will be made by the evaluation committee; and an evaluation reference group will review and provide feedback, in relation to data collection and the methodology. Quantitative methods will be utilized to mainly collect data on the performance indicators for McGovern-Dole Strategic Objectives.

79. **The Evaluations:** will collect both quantitative and qualitative data through primary data collection such as surveys as well as a comprehensive and systematic review of secondary data sources. A representative sampling based on the Baseline Study as well as Mid-Term Evaluation and available data sets will be employed. Given the sampling strategy for the baseline (multi-stage sampling (selection of schools [2 schools per district], stratification at the grades, stratification for boys and girls within the grades, etc.) and the Midterm (stratified sampling- four strata based on the program design) the required standardisation for this endline is specified in the methodology section.

80. The applicability **quasi-experimental research methods** to certain components of the project (e.g. literacy) will be explored during the inception phase and will depend on the feasibility of collecting data from adequate comparison schools. Performance contribution analysis might provide the Government with concrete information on the benefits of school feeding projects for students. However, the exact methodology will further be refined. The evaluation team will be expected to collect representative data from the 17 education priority districts, with a detailed sampling strategy including a sampling method, a well-defined comparison group, and sample size calculations. In addition, collected data will be triangulated using the secondary data like the SABER and previous evaluations to ensure validity and reliability of emerging findings. Variables, such as socio-demographic factors, quality of implementation and other external factors, will be comprehensively and systematically reviewed using multiple data sources to explain the variation in results between cohorts. The analysis will further be enhanced by disaggregation of all relevant indicators by gender and age to evaluate whether the project addresses the needs of boys, girls, men, women and other vulnerable or marginalised groups.

81. Under the quantitative approach, **surveys** are expected to be conducted with children, students' parents as well as teachers for this endline evaluation.

82. The sample size will be determined based on the degree of change that is expected amongst the performance indicators, levels of statistical significance desired and acceptable levels of statistical error. The sample size calculations will be the responsibility of the Evaluation Team in consultation with the WFP CO. Considering the diversified conditions and interventions of the projects in Lao PDR, the Evaluation Team, in consultation with WFP, shall consider the weighting of sampling.

83. A wealth of **qualitative data** will be collected using methods such as, but not limited to, focus group discussions and key informant interviews from a multitude of stakeholders, students, teachers, parents, cooks, storekeepers, village leaders and a range of government stakeholders at the district, provincial and national level. Qualitative data from implementors, related offices and cooperating partner (CRS) will also be sought. Qualitative data will be crucial to answer numerous important evaluation questions and to explore the reasons behind the numbers, such as the factors that affected the performance of the results.

84. Data on the **Foundational Results** may be largely informed by the participatory Systems Approach to Better Education Results-School Feeding (SABER-SF) exercise in support of governments implementing national school feeding programs. The information drawn from the SABER-SF exercises is expected to be extensively triangulated with monitoring data, quantitative, qualitative primary data for an in-depth evaluation of the Foundational Results. Furthermore, to strengthen the independence and impartiality of SABER results, the evaluation team may consider collecting supplement quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the Foundational Results during the evaluation series.

85. **Sampling:** A comparison design between different types of schools being supported by the project was employed for the evaluation plan of the project. This adaptation of the quasi-experimental survey approach was carried forward in the mid-term and will be considered again in the end-line evaluation. With



the FY 20 McGovern-Dole award, WFP is seeking evidence on if and how results of different types of schools vary within the project according to various characteristics which were prioritized in the baseline and mid-term evaluations. The FY20 project evaluation cycle is therefore proceeding with a “treatment arms” comparison approach so far. Quasi-experimental techniques will be considered by breaking up the schools according to categories and then randomly selecting within these (e.g. stratified random sampling).

86. In the baseline, sub-sampling based on poverty and access to services (types of roads) was conducted with some significantly lower indicator values found for the unimproved roads sample. In practice the baseline used only one comparator, **types of roads (improved vs unimproved)** as a proxy for poverty and access to services. This was because the selection of schools for the different project intervention packages (WASH, literacy etc.) had not yet been done. However, the types of roads comparison was not carried forward in the mid-term. Therefore, evidence of whether the project has had any levelling up effect for the most remote and deprived areas is a priority for this end-line evaluation.

87. The midterm evaluation followed a stratified sample for quantitative data collections to ensure representative samples from all types of implementation package. This is also suggested for end-line surveys, with four strata based on the following intervention categories:

- school meals only,
- school meals and WASH school meals,
- WASH, and literacy,
- school meals and Literacy.

Results were disaggregated according to these finalized criteria. In the mid-term evaluation, data collection covered all 17 districts with random sampling of schools being done at the district level. It was found that there were representative samples of the 4 intervention categories of schools in the overall random sample stratified by district, so no further stratification was required, i.e. it was not necessary to use lists of the schools by intervention category and undertake another round of random selection within each list.

88. Ideally, the variables applied in both baseline (type of roads) and mid-term (school meals only, school meals and WASH school meals, WASH, and literacy, school meals and literacy) will now all be included in a systematic baseline, midline, end-line data analysis in this end-line evaluation. The mid-term evaluation recommends that the **end-line evaluation re-calculate the baseline data values** using the analysis framework used in the mid-term to allow measurement of longitudinal progress due to the difference in estimating the values in the two exercises. This may include retrospective application of the baseline values by tagging which implementation model the baseline schools subsequently fell under. The end-line evaluation team is expected to take this into consideration as well as the time and expertise required to do this recalculation should be factored into the end-line evaluation proposal.

The mid-term evaluation<sup>3</sup> recommendation number 9 to recalculate the baseline values as part of the end-line appears as follows:

- *Revisit how the baseline indicators were calculated under the project's Results Framework. Recalculate indicator values, aligned with the midterm methodology, to ensure accurate measurement of longitudinal progress.*
- *Ensure the end-line evaluation adopts the same sampling stratification as the midterm (i.e. school meals only; school meals, WASH; school meals, WASH, literacy; school meals, literacy), to understand differences between intervention packages.*

89. **Cost efficiency:** The same mid-term evaluation recommendation number 9 also recommends the end-line evaluation to conduct a cost-efficiency analysis for the project. Hence, the end-line evaluation proposal is expected to consider the potential for a cost-efficiency analysis.

90. The sampling methods of baseline study and the mid-term evaluation are attached as **Annex 10**.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/publications/lao-pdr-usda-mcgovern-dole-school-feeding-programme-2020-2025-evaluations>

91. **Literacy Assessment:** Specific to the **literacy indicators**, the Program's cooperating partner, Catholic Relief Service (CRS) will be responsible of collecting the monitoring data. The evaluation team is expected to conduct through **Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)** survey. This endline evaluation plans to explore a new random sample of schools should be drawn for the literacy assessment to overcome the methodological issues encountered during previous evaluations to compare with a new comparison school to represent the best approach to detecting the effect of the intervention. The schools should be a part of the 90 schools receiving literacy support through the McGovern-Dole program. The mid-term evaluation suggested that a new random sample of schools should be drawn for the literacy assessment to overcome the methodological issues encountered in baseline and midline, with the recommendation that comparison with a new set of control schools will represent the best approach to detecting the effect of the intervention. A cross-sectional design was used for the mid-term evaluation's literacy assessment: a random sample of schools were selected from the sampling frame of schools in Khammouane Province, as literacy activities implemented only in this province. A panel design was planned initially by the mid-term evaluation team using the same random sample of schools that were selected in the baseline. However, some of the schools selected in baseline were excluded later for the literacy intervention, so this did not proceed. A technical discussion will be required to assess whether a recalculation of the baseline literacy data is warranted.

92. **Model Schools:** Model schools are an important component of this project which has not so far received attention from the baseline and mid-term evaluations. The Model School were proposed for a quantitative survey sub-sample in the baseline Terms of Reference, but the model schools had not been selected by the time the survey took place. Hence, it is recommended for the end-line evaluation team to consider an assessment of the model schools for a **lesson learning** nested in the end-line evaluation. The project document states that *the model schools aim to provide lessons learned for neighboring communities to strengthen ownership, self-resilience and sustainability of school feeding programs and also provide an example of how school feeding works for members of the Lao National Assembly for greater political buy-in*. However, feasibility and value-addition of including model schools and type(s) of purposive sampling (e.g. maximum variation sampling) can be discussed and agreed with the CO in the inception phase.

93. **The use of quantitative data collected during the end-line evaluation:** Given that a new FY24 cycle of the McGovern-Dole grant was awarded to the CO, the CO plans to commission a baseline study of the FY24 McGovern-Dole project in the coming months. The target schools for the McGovern-Dole project are expected to be same as those in FY20 McGovern-Dole project. Hence, to minimize the survey fatigue of stakeholders, the CO plans to utilize the **quantitative primary data** collected for this end-line evaluation as a baseline value for the next cycle (i.e. FY24) of the McGovern-Dole school feeding project. Therefore, the end-line evaluation team is requested **to share both quantitative and qualitative data sets used for the end-line evaluation as well as the data note** describing the end-line data collection and analysis methods and process in detail in forms that the CO and/or the baseline study team can use the data and the note during the upcoming baseline study.

94. The FY24 McGovern-Dole project baseline study is a separate exercise with different Terms of Reference, and not covered by this end-line evaluation Terms of Reference. Nevertheless, in anticipation of the use of the FY20 data and evaluability requirements in the FY24 evaluation cycle, a quantitative sub-sample of the Model Schools may need to be included in the endline survey for use later on, i.e. to capture the current status of those schools as at the end of FY20 that can be baseline data for this priority area of the FY24 project, since as stated above there is no baseline/midline quantitative data on Model Schools to date).

95. The evaluation team will expand on the methodology presented above and develop a detailed evaluation matrix in the inception report.

## 5.2. Preliminary considerations on evaluability and methodological implications

96. Main sources of information available to the evaluation team are the following:
- USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 – Project Proposal – Approved.
  - USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 – Project Agreement – co-signed
  - WFP and Partnership Agreement – Field Level Agreement with CRS – co-signed
  - USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 Baseline Study Report
  - USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 Mid-Term Evaluation Report
  - Revised Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and Project Annual Target
  - Semi-annual report from the previous cycle of USDA McGovern-Dole FY20
  - WFP Laos CO – monthly mVAM reports
  - WFP Annual Country Report 2021, 2022 and 2023
  - 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021–2025)
  - National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action (2016–2020)
  - National Social Protection Strategy 2030.
97. Concerning the quality of data and information, the evaluation team should:
- assess data availability and reliability as part of the inception phase expanding on the information provided. This assessment will inform the data collection.
  - Assess the data collected during the USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 School Feeding project as well as WFP monitoring data, data collection tools and methods including sampling.
  - systematically check accuracy, consistency and validity of collected data and information and acknowledge any limitations/caveats in drawing conclusions using the data.
  - Assess the data and information in the USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 School Feeding project documents as key data source for designing of this baseline study.
98. The following potential risks and challenges to the methodology have been identified:
- Limited datasets
  - Issues related to comparability of datasets. This includes difference in data sets and calculation methodology from previous cycle to make meaningful comparison and analysis.
  - Some data only available in Lao language.
  - Availability and quality of gender-disaggregated data, including data related to gender-specific outcomes.
  - Very limited data on disability inclusion.
  - Evaluation fatigue by the stakeholders
  - High government staff turnover – limited institutional memory
  - Possible timelines overlap with FY24 baseline evaluation.
  - WFP staff turnover
  - Remoteness and access to some project sites and schools.
99. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will be expected to perform an in-depth evaluability assessment and to critically assess data availability, quality and gaps expanding on the information provided above. This assessment will inform the data collection and the choice of evaluation methods. The evaluation team will need to systematically check accuracy, consistency and validity of collected data and information and acknowledge any limitations/caveats in drawing conclusions using the data during the reporting phase.

### 5.3. Ethical considerations

100. The evaluation must conform to [UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation](#) (Integrity, Accountability, Respect, Beneficence<sup>4</sup>). Accordingly, the evaluation team is responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation process. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of stakeholders (the evaluators have the obligation to safeguard sensitive information that stakeholders do not want to disclose to others), ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of respondents, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups), ensuring appropriate and inclusive representation and treatment of the various stakeholder groups in the evaluation process (and that sufficient resources and time are allocated for it), and ensuring that the evaluation results do no harm to respondents or their communities.

101. The evaluation team will be responsible for managing any potential ethical risks and issues and must put in place, in consultation with the evaluation manager, processes and systems to identify, report and resolve any ethical issues that might arise during the implementation of the evaluation. Ethical approvals and reviews by relevant national and institutional review boards must be sought where required.

102. Should the evaluators uncover allegations of wrongdoing and misconduct in the implementation of a program either by a WFP staff or a partner (including fraud, food diversions, misuse of WFP assets, harassment, sexual harassment, etc), the evaluation team should report those allegations to WFP Office of Inspection and Investigation (OIGI) through WFP hotline (<http://www.wfpHotline.ethicspoint.com>)<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, commission office management and the RBB Regional Evaluation Unit (REU) should also be informed.

103. The commissioning office has ensured that the evaluation team and evaluation manager will not have been and/or are not currently involved in the design, implementation or financial management of the USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 School Feeding projects and related activities implemented by WFP CO in Lao PDR, have no vested interest, nor have any other potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

104. Conflicts of interest are typically identified by a lack of independence or a lack of impartiality. These conflicts occur when a primary interest, such as the objectivity of an evaluation, could be influenced by a secondary interest, such as personal considerations or financial gains (UNEG 2020 Guidelines). There should be no official, professional, personal or financial relationships that might cause, or lead to a perception of bias in terms of what is evaluated, how the evaluation is designed and conducted, and the findings presented. A conflict of interest can also occur when, because of possibilities for future contracts, the evaluator's ability to provide an impartial analysis is compromised. Cases of upstream conflict of interest are those in which consultants could influence the analysis or recommendations so that they are consistent with findings previously stated by themselves. Cases of downstream conflict of interest are those in which evaluators could artificially create favourable conditions for consideration in future assignments (e.g. making recommendations for additional work with aim of being contracted to conduct that work). The potential for bias increases when an evaluator's work is solely focused on one agency. During the evaluation process, the evaluators are not allowed to have another contract with the evaluand/ unit subject to evaluation. To avoid conflicts of interest, particular care should be taken to ensure that independence and impartiality are maintained.

105. The evaluation team shall pay particular attention when they interact with children or minor to do no harm. When engaging in conversations with children or minors, it's crucial to be considerate of their age and attention span, ensuring that the interaction is appropriately timed and doesn't extend for a long period.

106. All members of the evaluation team will abide by the [2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#), including the Pledge of Ethical Conduct, the 2014 Guidelines on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation as well as the [WFP technical note on gender](#). The evaluation team and individuals who participate

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<sup>4</sup> Beneficence means striving to do good for people and planet while minimizing harms arising from evaluation as an intervention.

<sup>5</sup> For further information on how to apply the [UNEG norms and standards](#) in each step of the evaluation, the evaluation team can also consult the [Technical Note on Principles, Norms and Standards for evaluations](#).

directly in the evaluation at the time of issuance of the purchase order ( or individual contracts) are expected to sign a confidentiality agreement and a commitment to ethical conduct.<sup>6</sup> These templates will be provided by the country office when signing the contract.

107. The data collected during this evaluation are the property of the World Food Programme (WFP). However, WFP is committed to ethical data management practices and ensures that all data are handled in compliance with applicable data protection regulations, confidentiality requirements, and ethical standards. Ownership of raw data does not override participants' rights to privacy and confidentiality, which are paramount throughout the evaluation process. Data will be shared or published only in aggregated and anonymized forms to prevent identification of individuals or communities.

## 5.4. Quality assurance

108. The WFP evaluation quality assurance system sets out processes with steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products based on a set of [Quality Assurance Checklists](#). The quality assurance will be systematically applied during this evaluation and relevant documents will be provided to the evaluation team. This includes checklists for feedback on quality for each of the evaluation products. The relevant checklist will be applied at each stage, to ensure the quality of the evaluation process and outputs.

109. The WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) is based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community and aims to ensure that the evaluation process and products conform to best practice. This quality assurance process does not interfere with the views or independence of the evaluation team but ensures that the report provides credible evidence and analysis in a clear and convincing way and draws its conclusions on that basis.

110. The WFP evaluation manager will be responsible for ensuring that the evaluation progresses as per the [DEQAS Process Guide](#) and for conducting a rigorous quality control of the evaluation products ahead of their finalization. There will be several rounds of reviews and feedback until draft deliverables are up to the expected quality. In addition to the quality reviews outlined in the DEQAS Process Guide, the McGovern-Dole evaluation reports and baseline study report will undergo a final review by USDA before approval.

111. To enhance the quality and credibility of DEs, an outsourced quality support (QS) service directly managed by the OEV reviews the draft ToR, the draft inception and evaluation reports, and provides a systematic assessment of their quality from an evaluation perspective, along with recommendations.

112. The evaluation manager will share the assessment and recommendations from the quality support service with the team leader, who will address the recommendations when finalizing the inception and evaluation reports. To ensure transparency and credibility of the process in line with the [UNEG norms and standards](#)<sup>7</sup>, a rationale should be provided for comments that the team does not take into account when finalizing the report.

113. The evaluation team will be required to ensure the quality of data (reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the data collection, synthesis, analysis and reporting phases.

114. The evaluation team should be assured of the accessibility of all relevant documentation within the provisions of the directive on disclosure of information [WFP Directive CP2010/001 on information disclosure](#).

115. WFP expects that all deliverables from the evaluation team are subject to a thorough quality assurance review by the evaluation firm in line with the WFP evaluation quality assurance system prior to submission of the deliverables to WFP. In case evaluators are contracted directly as individuals, the team leader is responsible for thorough QA before submission of drafts.

116. All final evaluation reports will be subject to a post hoc quality assessment (PHQA) by an independent

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<sup>6</sup> If there are changes in the evaluation team or a sub-contracting for some of the planned evaluation activities, the confidentiality agreement and ethics pledge should also be signed by those additional members.

<sup>7</sup> [UNEG](#) Norm #7 states "that transparency is an essential element that establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability"

entity through a process that is managed by the Office of Evaluation. The overall PHQA results will be published on the WFP website alongside the evaluation report.

## 6. Organization of the evaluation

### 6.1. Phases and deliverables

117. The final versions of USDA International Food Assistance evaluation reports will be made publicly available. The Evaluator Team shall provide a copy of the reports that is free of personally identifiable information (PII) and proprietary information. Final versions of reports ready for publication should be accessible to persons with disabilities following section 508 requirements. For guidance on creating documents accessible to persons with disabilities, please see the following resources:

- <https://www.section508.gov/create/documents>
- <https://www.section508.gov/create/pdfs>

118. Table 6 presents the structure of the main phases of the evaluation, along with the deliverables and deadlines for each phase. Annex 2 presents a more detailed timeline.

**Table 3: Summary timeline – key evaluation milestones**

Main phases	Indicative timeline	Tasks and deliverables	Responsible
1. Preparation	December 2024 – March 2025	Preparation of ToR Final ToR Selection of the evaluation team & contracting Library of key documents	CO Evaluation manager
2. Inception	March- April 2025	<input type="checkbox"/> Document review/briefing <input type="checkbox"/> Inception mission [in person or remote] <input type="checkbox"/> Inception report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Field Data Collection Workplan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quality Assurance Plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Data collection tools</li> </ul>	Evaluation Team With support from CO Evaluation Manager
3. Data collection	April- May 2025	<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwork <input type="checkbox"/> Exit debriefing including power-point presentation	Evaluation Team CO
4. Reporting	May – August 2025	<input type="checkbox"/> Data analysis and report drafting <input type="checkbox"/> Comments process (completed ERG and DEQS comments matrix) <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Evaluation Report with performance indicators annex <input type="checkbox"/> Final Evaluation Report <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual presentation of evaluation findings to USDA (about 2 weeks after the report has been shared with USDA for review)	Evaluation Team WFP Evaluation Manager USDA Evaluation reference Group

		<input type="checkbox"/> A 2-3 page stand-alone brief describing the evaluation design, key findings and other relevant considerations. <input type="checkbox"/> Clean datasets of both quantitative and qualitative data with data notes <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 pages brief	
5. Dissemination and follow-up	September 2025	<input type="checkbox"/> Management response <input type="checkbox"/> Dissemination of the evaluation report (Personally Identifiable Information PII removed version of the report.	WFP Evaluation Manager/WFP CO Program and Management Team

## 6.2. Evaluation team composition

119. The evaluation team is expected to include three members, including the team leader, with a mix of national/regional and international evaluator(s) with relevant expertise. To the extent possible, the evaluation will be conducted by a gender, geographically, culturally and linguistically diverse and balanced team who can effectively cover the areas of evaluation. The evaluation team should have good knowledge of gender, equity, wider inclusion issues and, to the extent possible, power dynamics in Lao PDR. It will have strong methodological competencies in designing feasible data collection and analysis as well as synthesis and reporting skills. At least one team member should have demonstrated recent experience with WFP evaluation. At least one team members should have relevant subject matter expertise.

**Table : Summary of evaluation team and areas of expertise required**

	Expertise required
<b>Team Leadership (Senior level evaluator)</b>	<b>MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent team management skills (coordination, planning, ability to resolve problems and deliver on time).</li> <li>• Strong experience in leading evaluations at country level.</li> <li>• Experience with applying the mixed methods including reconstruction, and use of theories of change in evaluations, if applicable, to assess school feeding transition and capacity strengthening of communities and the government.</li> <li>• Strong presentation skills and excellent writing and synthesis skills.</li> <li>• Excellent inter-personal skills with cultural sensitivity.</li> <li>• Experience facilitating in-person and hybrid meetings and workshops.</li> <li>• Experience in McGovern-Dole projects evaluations.</li> <li>• Expertise in one or more of the technical areas below.</li> </ul>
	<b>DESIRABLE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarity with WFP programs and modalities of intervention.</li> <li>• Good knowledge of country context, proved by previous experience in the country.</li> <li>• Previous experience leading or conducting WFP evaluation(s).</li> <li>• Good knowledge of gender, equity, wider inclusion issues and, to the extent possible, power dynamics</li> </ul>



	Expertise required
Thematic expertise - Evaluator	<b>MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency and excellent writing skills in English.</li> <li>• The national team member(s) should have strong skills in oral and written Lao.</li> <li>• Demonstrable analytical skills relevant to School feeding and education project related evaluations particularly in similar contexts to Lao PDR.</li> <li>• Prior experience in evaluating design, implementation, outputs, and outcomes in school feeding projects and/or institutional capacity development with a focus on establishing national systems.</li> <li>• Strong analytical and communication skills.</li> <li>• The national team member(s) should have strong skills in oral and written Lao</li> <li>• A team member or a back-office supporter should have strong data management and analysis skills to check data quality and compatibility</li> <li>• Familiarity with Lao PDR and/or the region.</li> </ul>
	<b>DESIRABLE</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarity with WFP programs and modalities of intervention.</li> <li>• Cost-efficiency analysis.</li> <li>• Experience and/or expertise in nutrition and food security.</li> <li>• Previous experience leading or conducting WFP evaluation(s).</li> <li>• Good knowledge of country context, proved by previous experience in the country.</li> <li>• Able to communicate in ethnic minority dialects and linguistic languages.</li> <li>• Good knowledge of gender, equity, wider inclusion issues and, to the extent possible, power dynamics</li> <li>• Administrative and logistical experience</li> </ul>
Quality assurance Evaluator	<b>MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience in quality assurance of evaluations.</li> </ul>
	<b>DESIRABLE</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarity with WFP programs and modalities of intervention.</li> <li>• Previous experience with WFP evaluation(s).</li> </ul>

120. The team leader will have expertise in one of the key competencies listed above as well as demonstrated experience in leading similar evaluations, including designing methodology and data collection tools. She/he will also have leadership, analytical and communication skills, including a track record of excellent English writing, synthesis and presentation skills. Her/his primary responsibilities will be: i) defining the evaluation approach and methodology; ii) guiding and managing the team; iii) leading the evaluation mission and representing the evaluation team; and iv) drafting and revising, as required, the inception report, the end of field work (i.e. exit) debriefing presentation and evaluation report in line with DEQAS.

121. Team members will: i) contribute to the methodology in their area of expertise based on a document review; ii) conduct field work; iii) participate in team meetings and meetings with stakeholders; and iv) contribute to the drafting and revision of the evaluation products in their technical area(s).

122. Any changes in the composition of the evaluation team members once the contract is signed, must be approved by the evaluation manager in consultation with the Evaluation Committee. The evaluation service provider will in such circumstances provide the written justification together with the CV of the replacement/additional team member.

123. Prospective applicants should consider Lao PDR current visa policies in their planning and selection of the team members who will travel to the country, bearing in mind that WFP does not take any responsibility



for obtaining visas beyond issuing of support letter.

124. The evaluation team will coordinate, where/as necessary and appropriate, with the FY24 Baseline Study Team, in case the timelines overlap in some evaluation phases.

125. The evaluation team will conduct the evaluation under the direction of its team leader and in close communication with WFP Laos CO evaluation manager. The team will be hired following agreement with WFP on its composition.

### 6.3. Roles and responsibilities

126. The **Evaluation Team** is responsible for responding to all communication from the WFP Evaluation Manager in a timely manner. They are also responsible for revising deliverables and responding to stakeholder comments within the comments matrix in accordance with deadlines agreed upon by the Evaluation Team and WFP. The expected rounds of revision for each deliverable are as follows:

- a. The endline evaluation report:
  - i. Revised report and comment matrix responses in response to Regional Evaluation Unit and Evaluation Manager feedback (first round of comments)
  - ii. Revised report and comment matrix responses in response to DEQS feedback (second round of comments)
  - iii. Revised report and comment matrix responses in response to ERG feedback (third round of comments)
  - iv. Revised report and response to address any feedback that was not adequately addressed in previous revisions (as needed). The WFP Evaluation Manager will review the ET's responses to ERG, DEQS, REU, and WFP EM comments in a combined comment matrix and may request the ET to make additional edits if any comments were not adequately addressed.
  - v. Revision and comment matrix responses in response to USDA feedback (fourth round of comments)
  - vi. Revision and response to address any feedback from USDA that was not adequately addressed in previous revisions.
- b. Inception reports and tools;
  - i. Revised report/tools and comment matrix responses in response to Regional Evaluation Unit and Evaluation Manager feedback (first round of comments)
  - ii. Revised report and comment matrix responses in response to DEQS feedback (second round of comments)
  - iii. Revised report/tools and comment matrix responses in response to ERG feedback (third round of comments)
  - iv. Final revision of report/tools and response to address any feedback that was not adequately addressed in previous revisions (as needed). The WFP Evaluation Manager (EM) will review the evaluation team (ET)'s responses to ERG, DEQS, REU, and EM comments in a combined comment matrix and may request the ET to make additional edits if any comments were not adequately addressed.

127. The **WFP Lao PDR CO management** (Director or Deputy Director) will take responsibility to oversee the evaluation process by assigning an evaluation manager, establishing the EC and ERG, approving key documents and team selection, ensuring independence and impartiality, participating in discussions and debriefings, and managing dissemination and follow-up, including the response to recommendations.

128. The **evaluation manager** oversees the evaluation process, ensuring coordination, stakeholder

engagement, quality assurance, logistics, and effective communication with the EC and ERG.

129. An internal Evaluation Committee (EC) is established to oversee and steer the evaluation process, ensuring its independence and impartiality, with details on its composition and responsibilities outlined in Annex 3.

130. An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), comprising key stakeholders, is established to provide advisory support, review draft evaluation products, offer diverse perspectives, and ensure the evaluation's relevance, impartiality, and credibility, with details on its composition and responsibilities outlined in Annex 4.

131. The **regional bureau**, led by the Regional Evaluation Officer, will provide technical support and quality assurance, advise on evaluation design, review key documents, support management responses, and track recommendation implementation, with input from relevant technical staff as needed.

132. **Relevant WFP Headquarters divisions**, including the School Meals and Social Protection Service, will provide feedback on strategies, policies, and evaluation deliverables, ensuring quality and alignment with USDA requirements.

133. **The Office of Evaluation (OEV)**. OEV oversees WFP's DE function, sets evaluation standards, manages quality support, publishes final reports, and advises stakeholders, while the helpdesk is available for concerns about impartiality or ethical issues in the evaluation process.

134. **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** will review and approve key evaluation documents, serve on the Evaluation Reference Group, participate in meetings, and may be interviewed or involved in presenting evaluation findings. The **WFP Partnerships Officer** (Washington Office) will collaborate with the CO, SBP Evaluation Officer, RB, and OEV to ensure timely submission of evaluation deliverables to USDA, review them for USDA policy adherence, and facilitate communication and feedback with USDA.

## 6.4. Security considerations

135. **Security clearance** where required is to be obtained from WFP Lao PDR CO, through UNDSS.

136. As an "independent supplier" of evaluation services to WFP, the contracted firm will be responsible for ensuring the security of the evaluation team, and adequate arrangements for evacuation for medical or situational reasons. However, to avoid any security incidents, the evaluation manager will ensure that the WFP country office registers the team members with the security officer on arrival in country and arranges a security briefing for them to gain an understanding of the security situation on the ground. The evaluation team must observe applicable United Nations Department of Safety and Security rules and regulations including taking security training (BSAFE & SSAFE), curfews (when applicable) and attending in-country briefings.

## 6.5. Communication

137. To ensure a smooth and efficient evaluation process and enhance the learning from this evaluation, the evaluation team should place emphasis on transparent and open communication with key stakeholders throughout the process. This will be achieved by ensuring a clear agreement on channels and frequency of communication with and between key stakeholders. The evaluation team will propose/explore communication/feedback channels to appropriate audiences (including affected populations as relevant) during the inception phase.

138. It is expected that while this FY20 Endline Evaluation Process is ongoing, the FY24 Baseline study process will start. The FY20 Endline evaluation team will communicate and coordinate, where and when necessary, with the baseline evaluation team in consultation with WFP CO to avoid stakeholder confusion.

139. Should translators be required for fieldwork, the evaluation firm will make arrangements and include the cost in the budget proposal.

140. Based on the stakeholder analysis, the draft communication and knowledge management plan (in

Annex 5) identifies the users of the evaluation to involve in the process and to whom the various products should be disseminated. The communication and knowledge management plan indicates how findings including gender, equity and wider inclusion issues will be disseminated and how stakeholders interested in, or affected by, gender, equity and wider inclusion issues will be engaged.

141. As per norms and standards for evaluation, WFP requires that all evaluations are made publicly available. It is important that evaluation reports are accessible to a wide audience, thereby contributing to the credibility of WFP – through transparent reporting – and the use of evaluation. Following the approval of the final evaluation report, the evaluation will be published in WFP internal and public websites.

142. Evaluators shall provide a copy of the evaluation reports that is free of personally identifiable information (PII) and proprietary information. Final versions of evaluation reports ready for publication should be accessible to persons with disabilities. For guidance on creating documents accessible to persons with disabilities, please see the following resources:

<https://www.section508.gov/create/documents>: <https://www.section508.gov/create/pdfs>

## **6.6. Proposal**

143. This end-line evaluation will be financed from the WFP Laos Country Office using the M&E budget allocation in the McGovern-Dole grant.

144. The TOR may be subject to some minor adjustments pending donor feedback.

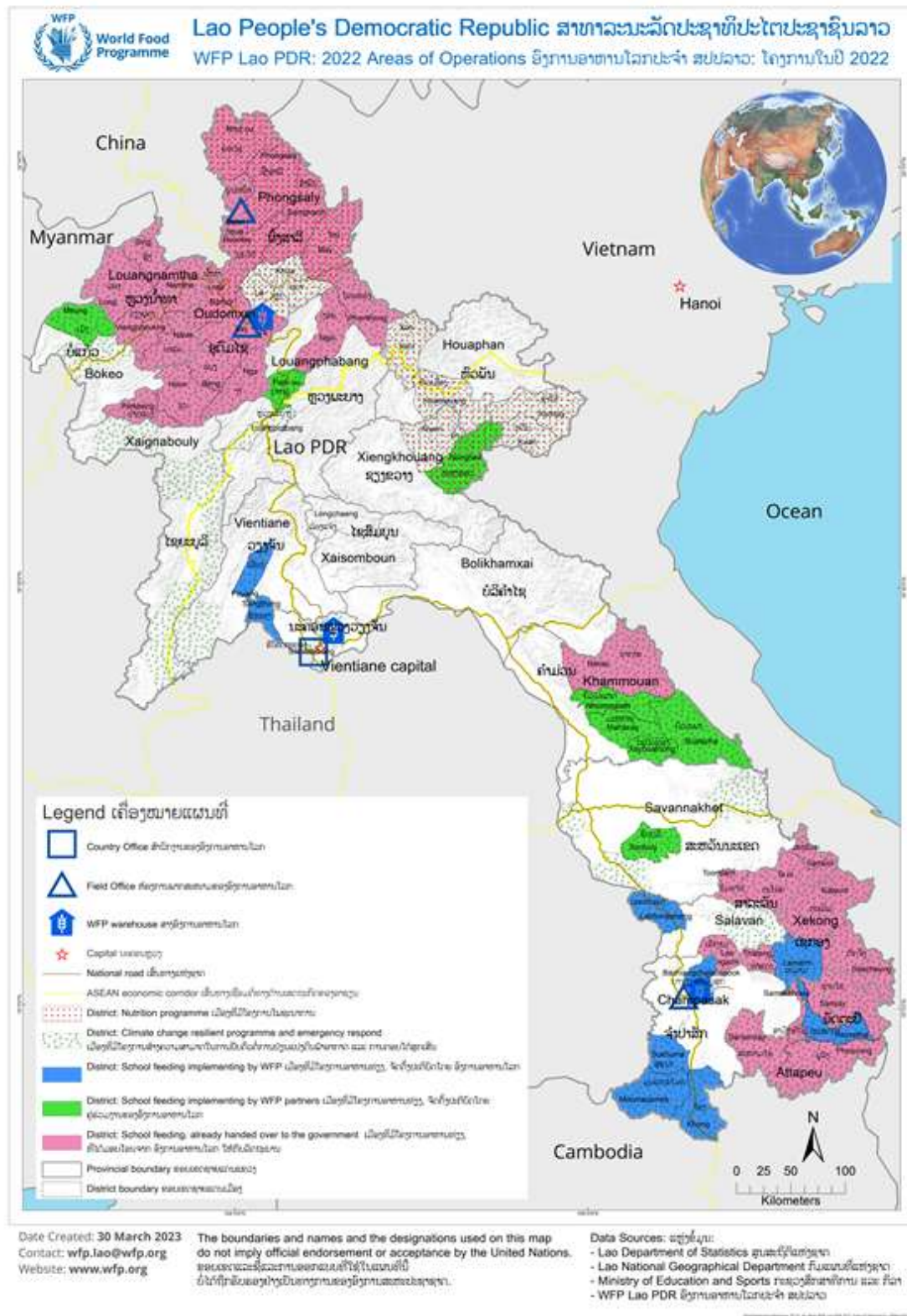
145. The offer will include a detailed budget for the evaluation using the provided template, including consultant fees, travel costs and other costs (interpreters, etc.). The budget should be submitted as excel file separate from the technical proposal document. For this evaluation, the evaluation service provider will:

- Include budget for travel for all relevant in-country data collection (both qualitative and quantitative)
- Hire and supervise all technical and administrative assistance required (including in-country).
- Follow the agreed terms and rates for decentralized evaluations as provided for in the Long-Term Agreement (LTA) with WFP.

146. Following the technical and financial assessment, an improved offer could be requested by WFP to the preferred bid(s) to better respond to the TOR requirements. WFP may conduct reference checks and interviews with proposed team members as part of the decision-making process and selection. Once the offer is accepted by all parties, WFP will issue a purchase order for the baseline study deliverables.

147. Please send any queries to Sengarun BUDCHARERN, M&E Officer, WFP Lao PDR  
[sengarun.budcharern@wfp.org](mailto:sengarun.budcharern@wfp.org).

# Annex 1. Areas of Operation Map



## Annex 2. Timeline

	Phases, deliverables and timeline	Level of effort	Total time required for the step
<b>Phase 1 – Preparation: 25 Nov. 2024 – March 2025</b> (total duration: Recommended – 2.25 months; Average: 4.4 months)			
EM	Desk review, draft ToR and quality assure (QA) using ToR QC	(2 weeks)	(1 month) 25 Nov. – 10 Dec. 2024
REU	Quality assurance by REU		(1 week)
EM	Revise draft ToR based on feedback received	(3 days)	(1 week)
EM	Share draft ToR with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS, if required	N/A	(1 week)
EM	Revise draft ToR based on DEQS and share with ERG	(3 days)	(1 week)
ERG	Review and comment on draft ToR	(1 day)	(2 weeks)
EM	Revise draft ToR based on comments received and submit final ToR to EC Chair	(3 days)	(1 week)
EM	Start recruitment process	(0.5 day)	(0.5 day)
EC Chair and USDA	<b>Approve the final ToR and share with ERG and key stakeholders</b>	(0.5 day)	(1 week)
EM	Assess evaluation proposals/ Conduct interviews and recommend team selection	(2 days)	(1 week)
EC Chair	<b>Approve evaluation team selection</b>	(0.5 day)	(1 week)
EM	Evaluation team contracting and PO issuance	(1 day)	(3 weeks)
<b>Phase 2 – Inception: 15 Mar. 1 April 2025</b> (total duration: Recommended – 1.75 months; Average: 2.1 months)			
ET	Desk review of key documents	(5 days)	(2 weeks)
EM/ET	Inception briefings, with REU support as needed	(1-2 days)	(1-2 days)
ET	Inception mission in the country (if applicable)	(1 week)	(1 week)
ET	Draft inception report	(2 weeks)	(3 weeks)
EM	Quality assure draft IR by EM and REU using QC	(2 days)	(1 week)
ET	Revise draft IR based on feedback received by EM and REU	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
REU	Share draft IR with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS, if required	(0.5 day)	(2 weeks)
ET	Revise draft IR based on feedback received by DEQS	(2 days)	(1 week)
EM	Share revised IR with ERG	(0.5 day)	(0.5 day)
ERG	Review and comment on draft IR	(1 day)	(2 weeks)
EM	Consolidate comments	(0.5 day)	(0.5 day)

ET	Revise draft IR based on feedback received and submit final revised IR	(3 days)	(1 week)
EM	Review final IR and submit to the evaluation committee for approval	(2 days)	(1 week)
EC Chair and WAS	<b>Approve final IR and share with ERG for information. WAS representative shares the IR with USDA.</b>	(1 week)	(1 week)
<b>Phase 3 – Data collection: 2 Apr. 30 Apr. 2025</b> (total duration: Recommended – 0.75 months; Average: 1 month)			
ET	<b>Data collection</b>	(3 weeks)	(3 weeks)
ET	<b>In-country debriefing (s)</b>	(1.5 day)	(1 week)
<b>Phase 4 – Reporting: 24 Apr. – 15 Aug. 2025</b> (total duration: Recommended – 2.75 months; Average: 5.8 months)			
ET	Draft evaluation report	(3 weeks)	(4-5 weeks)
EM	Quality assurance of draft ER by EM and REU using the QC,	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
ET	Revise and submit draft ER based on feedback received by EM and REU	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
EM	Share draft ER with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS, if required	(0.5 day)	(2 weeks)
ET	Revise and submit draft ER based on feedback received by DEQS	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
ERG	Review and comment on draft ER	(0.5 day)	(2 weeks)
ET	Learning workshop	(1 day)	(1 day)
EM	Consolidate comments received	(0.5 day)	(0.5 day)
ET	Revise draft ER based on feedback received	(2-3 days)	(2 weeks)
EM	Review final revised ER and submit to the evaluation committee	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
EM and ET	Review draft ER based on EC feedback and share with USDA (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
ET	Virtual presentation of the evaluation findings to USDA	(1 day)	(1 day)
USDA	Review and comment on draft ER	(1 week)	(3 weeks)
EM and WAS	Update ER and share with USDA for feedback Revise draft ER based on feedback received from USDA Share revised ER with USDA for final approval (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
EC Chair	<b>Approve final evaluation report and share with key stakeholders</b>	(1 day)	(1 week)
<b>Phase 5 – Dissemination: 16 Aug. – 15 Sep. 2025</b> (total duration: Recommended – 1 month; Average: 1.9 months)			
EC Chair	Prepare management response	(5 days)	(4 weeks)
EM	<b>Share final evaluation report and management response with the REU and OEV for publication and participate in end-of-evaluation lessons learned call</b>	(1 week)	(3 weeks)



# Annex 3. Role and composition of the evaluation committee

148. **Purpose and role:** The purpose of the evaluation committee (EC) is to ensure a credible, transparent, impartial and quality evaluation in accordance with WFP evaluation policy. It will achieve this by supporting the evaluation manager in making decisions, reviewing draft deliverables (ToR, inception report and evaluation report) and submitting them for approval by the Country Director/Deputy Country Director (CD/DCD) who will be the chair of the committee. Evaluation products must first be approved by the Evaluation Committee Chair, before the final approval by USDA.

149. **Composition:** The evaluation committee will be composed of the following staff:

The Country Director or Deputy Country Director (Chair of the Evaluation Committee)  
 CO M&E Officer as Evaluation manager (Evaluation Committee Secretariat)  
 Head of Program  
 Head of Research Assessment and Monitoring  
 CO School Feeding Program Manager  
 Regional evaluation officer (REO)  
 Gender and protection officer  
 CO procurement officer

Evaluation Phase and engagement task	Estimate level of effort in days	Tentative Dates
<b>Preparation Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and establish ERG membership.</li> <li>Reviews the revised draft ToR prepared by the EM</li> <li>Approves the final TOR</li> <li>Approves the final evaluation team and budget</li> </ul>	1 day	Nov-Dec/2024
<b>Inception Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief the evaluation team on the subject of the evaluation.</li> <li>Inform evaluation design through discussions with the evaluators.</li> <li>Support identifying field visit sites on the basis of selection criteria</li> <li>Review the revised draft IR</li> <li>Approve the final IR</li> </ul>	2 days	Feb-Mar/2025
<b>Data Collection Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act as key informants responds to interview questions.</li> <li>Facilitate access to sources of contextual information and data, and to stakeholders.</li> <li>Attend the end of field work debriefing(s) meeting.</li> <li>Support the team in clarifying emerging issues/gaps how to fill them</li> </ul>	2 days	Mar-Apr/2025
<b>Analysis and Reporting Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review final evaluation report after quality assurance by ET + EM.</li> <li>Approve the final ER</li> </ul>	2 days	May-Aug/2025
<b>Dissemination and Follow-up Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide whether management agrees, partially agrees, or does not agree with the recommendations and provides justification.</li> <li>Lead preparation of the management response to the evaluation recommendations</li> </ul>	2 days	Aug-Sep/2025

# Annex 4. Role, composition and schedule of engagement of the evaluation reference group

## [See TN Evaluation Reference Group]

150. **Purpose and role:** The evaluation reference group (ERG) is an advisory group providing advice and feedback to the evaluation manager and the evaluation team at key moments during the evaluation process. It is established during the preparatory stage of the evaluation and is mandatory for all DEs.

151. The overall purpose of the evaluation reference group is to contribute to the credibility, utility and impartiality of the evaluation. For this purpose, its composition and role are guided by the following principles:

**Transparency:** Keeping relevant stakeholders engaged and informed during key steps ensures transparency throughout the evaluation process

**Ownership and Use:** Stakeholders' participation enhances ownership of the evaluation process and products, which in turn may impact on its use

**Accuracy:** Feedback from stakeholders at key steps of the preparatory, data collection and reporting phases contributes to accuracy of the facts and figures reported in the evaluation and of its analysis.

### Composition:

Country office	Name
<b>Core members:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country Director or Deputy Country Director (Chair)</li> <li>Evaluation Manager (secretary or delegated chair)</li> <li>WFP CO Head of Program</li> <li>WFP CO School Feeding Manager</li> <li>Head of Program - CRS in Lao PDR</li> <li>Director/Deputy Director of Center for Educational Research and Evaluation – RIES (MoES)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Naoki Maegawa, (DCD) as Chair of ERG or alternate Marc Andre Prost (CD)</li> <li>Sengarun Budcharern</li> <li>Juan Carlos Martinez Bandera (Head of Program) or alternate Outhai Sihalath (Deputy Head of Program)</li> <li>Saman Kalupahana or alternate Elliot Grantz</li> <li>Robert Green</li> <li>Director of RIES - MoES</li> </ul>
Regional bureau	Name
<b>Core members:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Regional Evaluation Officer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Regional Monitoring Advisor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Regional Program Officer School Feeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mari Honjo or alternate Stuart Coupe (RBB Evaluation Consultant)</li> <li>Nesrin Semen</li> <li>Chitraporn Vanaspongse (RBB)</li> </ul>



Headquarters (optional)	Name
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HQ School Meals and Social Protection Service</li> <li>WASSF School Feeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Julia Kammermeier</li> <li>Valerie Lundeen</li> </ul>

#### Schedule of ERG engagement and Time commitments

Evaluation Phase and engagement task	Estimate level of effort in days	Tentative Dates
<b>Preparation Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and comment on the draft ToR</li> <li>Where appropriate, provide input on the evaluation questions.</li> <li>Identify source documents useful to the evaluation team</li> <li>Attend ERG meeting/conference call etc</li> </ul>	<b>1 day</b>	<b>Nov-Dec/2024</b>
<b>Inception Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with evaluation team to discuss how the evaluation team can design a realistic/practical, relevant and useful evaluation.</li> <li>Identify and facilitate dialogues with key stakeholders for interviews</li> <li>Identify and access documents and data</li> <li>Help identify appropriate field sites according to selection criteria set up by the evaluation team in the inception report.</li> <li>Review and comment on the draft Inception Report</li> </ul>	<b>1 days</b>	<b>Feb-Mar/2025</b>
<b>Data Collection Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act as a key informant: respond to interview questions</li> <li>Provide information sources and facilitate access to data</li> <li>Attend the evaluation team's end of field work debriefing</li> </ul>	<b>2 days</b>	<b>Mar-Apr/2025</b>
<b>Analysis and Reporting Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and comment on the draft evaluation report focusing on accuracy, quality and comprehensiveness of findings, and of links to conclusions and recommendations.</li> </ul>	<b>2 days</b>	<b>May-Aug/2025</b>
<b>Dissemination and Follow-up Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate final report internally and externally, as relevant;</li> <li>Share findings within units, organizations, networks and at events;</li> <li>Provide input to management response and its implementation</li> </ul>	<b>2 days</b>	<b>Aug-Sep/2025</b>

# Annex 5. Communication and knowledge management plan

When Evaluation phase	What Product	To whom Target audience	From whom Creator lead	How: Communication channel	Why: Communication purpose
<b>Preparation</b>	Draft TOR	Evaluation Reference Group	Evaluation manager	Email: ERG meeting if required	To request review of and comments on TOR
	Final TOR	Evaluation Reference Group; WFP Management; Evaluation community; WFP CO Laos - SO1 SF Program Team; USDA McGovern Dole Teams.	Evaluation manager	Email; WFPgo; WFP.org	To inform of the final or agreed upon overall plan, purpose, scope and timing of the evaluation
<b>Inception</b>	Draft Inception report	Evaluation Reference Group	Evaluation manager	Email and Teams meetings	To request review of and comments on IR
	Final Inception Report	Evaluation Reference Group; WFP SO1 SF Program and FO Teams; WFP RBB evaluation unit; WFP WAS and USDA McGovern Dole Teams (for reference)	Evaluation manager	Email and Teams; WFPgo	To inform key stakeholders of the detailed plan for the evaluation, including critical dates and milestones, sites to be visited, stakeholders to be engaged, gov't official informing letter for field work plan and schedule for data collection.
<b>Data collection</b>	Debriefing power-point	WFP CO Laos management and program staff; Evaluation Reference Group	Team leader (may be sent to EM who then forwards to the relevant staff)	Meeting	To invite key stakeholders to discuss the preliminary findings
	Validation of initial	WFP CO and FO program team		Validation workshop	To validate the findings and providing

When Evaluation phase	What Product	To whom Target audience	From whom Creator lead	How: Communication channel	Why: Communication purpose
	findings from data analysis	Implementing Partner – CRS Gov't Partners – Inclusive Education Promotion Center – Ministry of Education and Sports		through evalu-vision method (Including training of communication team/artists)	inputs on recommendations from the relevant stakeholders from the three different models of school feeding implementation: Model 1: WFP directly implemented and managed. Model 2: Gov't partners implemented and managed. Model 3: CRS directly implemented and managed.
<b>Reporting</b>	Draft Evaluation report	Evaluation Reference Group	Evaluation manager	Email	To request review of and comments on ER
	Final Evaluation report	Evaluation Reference Group; WFP Management; donors and partners; Evaluation community; WFP employees; general public	Evaluation manager	Email; WFPgo; WFP.org;	To inform key stakeholders of the final main product from the evaluation and make the report available publicly
<b>Dissemination &amp; Follow-up</b>	Draft Management Response	Evaluation Reference Group; CO Program staff; CO M&E staff; Regional Program Officers	Evaluation manager	Email and/or a webinar	To discuss the commissioning office's actions to address the evaluation recommendations and elicit comments
	Final Management Response	Evaluation Reference Group; WFP Management; WFP employees; general public	Evaluation manager	Email; WFPgo; WFP.org;	To ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the commitments made on taking actions and make the Management Response publicly available

When Evaluation phase	What Product	To whom Target audience	From whom Creator lead	How: Communication channel	Why: Communication purpose
<b>Dissemination &amp; Follow-up (Associated Content)</b>	Evaluation Brief	WFP Management; WFP employees; donors and partners; National decision-makers	Evaluation manager	WFP.org, WFPgo	To disseminate evaluation findings
	Video	Donors and partners; Evaluation community; National decision-makers; Affected populations, beneficiaries and communities	Evaluation Team; OEV/RB/CO Communications/ KM unit	WFP.org, WFPgo; Evaluation Network platforms (e.g. UNEG, ALNAP); space	
			Evaluation manager		

# Annex 6. Bibliography

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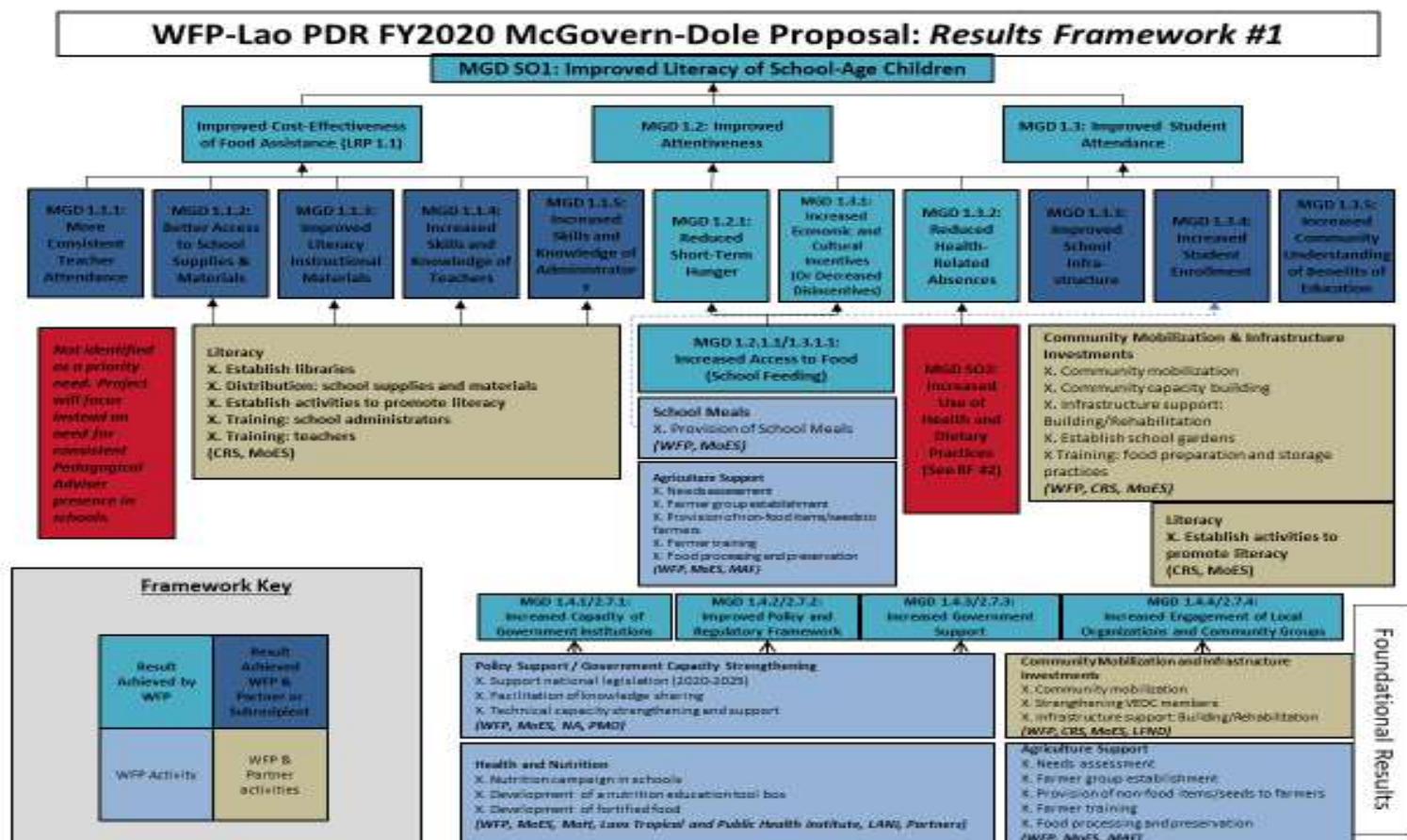
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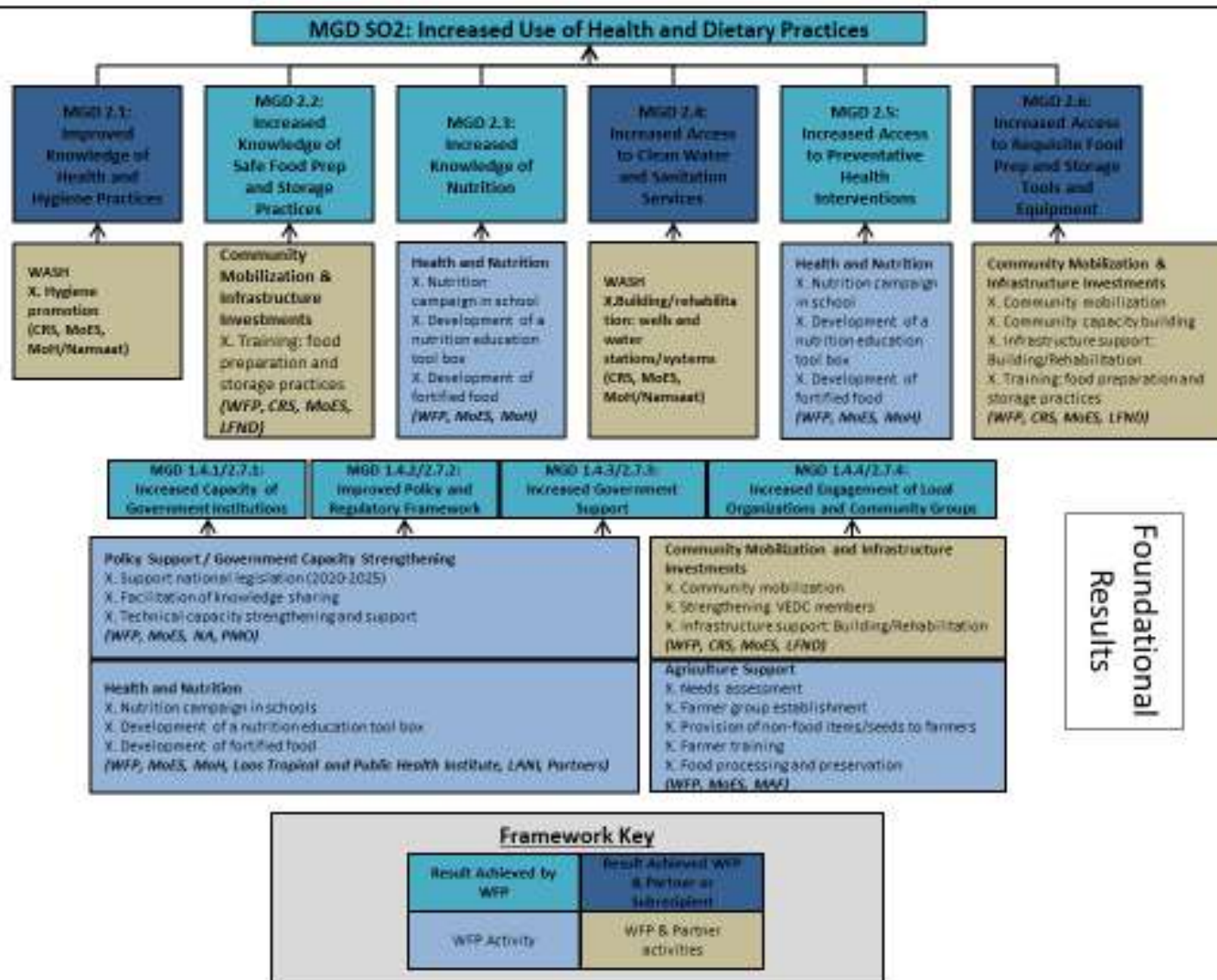
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# Annex 8: USDA McGD FY20 SF Project Result Framework

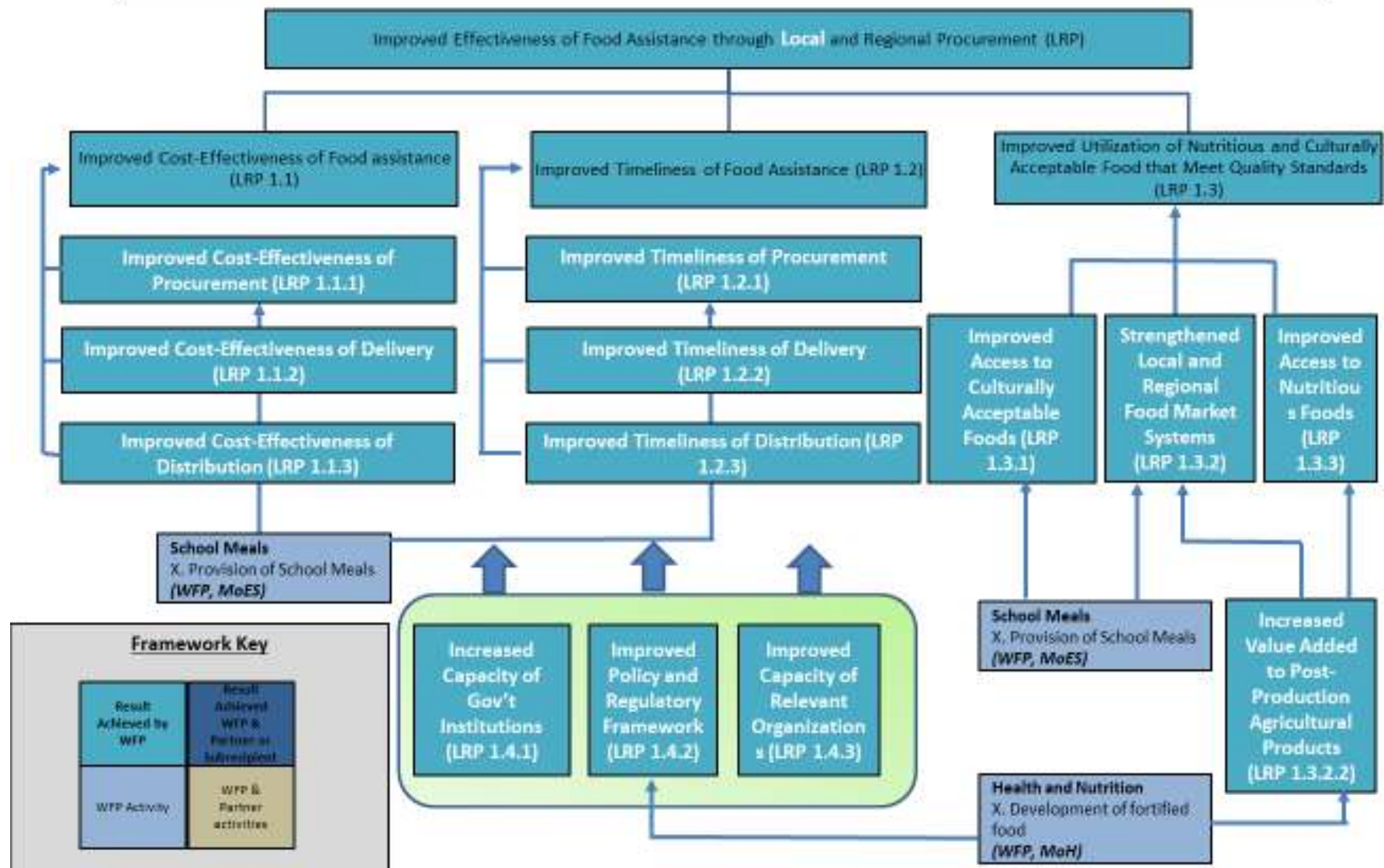


## WFP-Lao PDR FY2020 McGovern-Dole Proposal: Results Framework #2





## WFP-Lao PDR FY2020 McGovern-Dole Proposal: *Results Framework #3 (LRP)*



**Program Theory of Change:**

The project's causal pathway for SOs 1 and 2 considers that *if* children have access to high-quality learning material for extra practice in school and at home; *if* teachers regularly apply methods of formative literacy assessment and remedial instruction in classroom; *if* district staff provide regular coaching and mentoring to early-grade teachers; *if* schools have knowledge and infrastructure that contribute to a healthier environment; *if* children have knowledge of and access to diversified and nutritious food; *if* schools and communities have knowledge of nutrition; *if* children have access to preventative health interventions; *if* communities are engaged in and are aware of the benefits of education; *then* schools will witness improved quality of literacy instruction, student attentiveness, student

# Annex 9: Project Indicators and Target 2021-2025

## McGovern Dole Standard Indicators

USDA Standard Indicator	Results Framework	Performance Indicator	Disaggregation	How results/ progress is monitored	Baseline	FY 22 - FY 23			At midterm (Actual)	LOP Target
						Actual (Oct 21- Sept 22)	Actual (Oct 22 - Sept 23)	Target vs Actual		
MGD Standard 1	MGD SO 1	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Total	Literacy assessment at baseline, mid-line, end- line.	3%	No data	No data	No data	2.1%	11%
			Female		6%	No data	No data	No data	0%	11%
			Male		1%	No data	No data	No data	3.8%	11%
MGD Standard 2	MGD 1.3	Average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools	Total	Attendance data through LSM app	95.09%	98.66%	No data	No data	73.5%	99%
			Female		95.52%	No data	No data	No data	-	99%
			Male		94.66%	No data	No data	No data	-	99%
MGD Standard 3	MGD 1.1.2	Number of teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance	N/A	CRS distribution reports	0	11,787	28,901	207.1%	40,688	19,647
MGD Standard 4	MGD 1.1	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Literacy Techniques Observation Tool	0	-	78	59.1%	78	132
	Female		0		-	32	40.51%	32	79	
	MGD 1.1.4		Male	Literacy Techniques Observation Tool	0	-	46	86.8%	46	53
MGD Standard 5	MGD 1.1.4	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Training Tracking Database / training sign-in sheet	0	195	275	267.1%	470	176
			Female		0	86	128	198.2%	214	108
			Male		0	109	147	355.6%	256	72
MGD Standard 6	MGD 1.1.5	Number of school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	Total	School visits by CRS	0	-	27	270%	27	10
			Female		0	-	5	83.3%	5	6
			Male		0	-	22	550%	22	4

MGD Standard 7	MGD 1.1.5	Number of school administrators and officials trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Training Tracking Database / training sign-in sheet	0	12	13	208.3%	25	12
			Female		0	5	8	216.67%	13	6
			Male		0	7	5	200%	12	6
MGD Standard 8	MGD 1.3.3	Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, improved water sources, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Activity Progress reports – FO/DESB	0	2,052	343	70.1%	2,395	3,419
			Classrooms		0	0	0	0	0	-
			Kitchens/Cook areas		0	636	343	138.5%	979	707
	MGD 2.4		Improved Water Source		0	31	147	25.6%	178	696
			Latrines		0	0	0	0	0	
	MGD 2.6		Dining Room		0	320	102	59.7%	422	707
			School Storage		0	703	174	124.0%	877	707
			Hand Washing Station		0	325	218	77.4%	543	702
MGD Standard 9	MGD 1.3.4	Number of students enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance	Total	Education Management Information System – MoES	64,156	66,998	61,772	-	61,772	102,650
			Pre-Primary Female		2,099	5,143	5,362	-	5,362	3,358
			Pre-Primary Male		2,120	5,092	5,483	-	5,483	3,392
			Primary Female		29,012	28,126	24,824	-	24,824	46,419
			Primary Male		30,925	28,637	26,104	-	26,104	49,480
MGD Standard 10	MGD 1.4.1	Number of policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Meeting Minutes	0	1	4	55.6%	5	9
	MGD 1.4.2		Education (Stage 1-5)		0	1	4	55.6%	5	9
	MGD 2.72		Health (Stage 1-5)		0	0	0	-	0	0
MGD Standard 11	MGD 1.4.3	Value of new USG commitments, and new public and private sector investments leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition	Total (in USD)	Internal records	Total:	\$10,800	\$10,800	19.6%	\$10,800	\$55,000
	MGD 1.4.4		Host Government; Other Public Sector; Private Sector; New USG Commitment		Host Government:	\$10,800	\$10,800	19.6%	\$10,800	\$55,000
MGD Standard 13	MGD 1.4.4	Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar “school” governance structures supported as a result of USDA assistance	N/A	Education Management Information System – MoES School Meals App	0	707	705	199.7%	1,412	707
MGD	MGD 1.2.1.1	Quantity of take-home rations	Commodity Type	Distribution Report	0	117	375.05	60.0%	492.05	820

Standard 14		provided (in metric tons) as a result of USDA assistance	(rice)							
MGD Standard 15	MGD 1.2.1.1	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Distribution Report	0	2,342	7,346	413.7%	9,688	2,342
			New, Other, Female		0	1,706	20	106.3%	1,726	1,624
			Continuing, Other, Female				3,675	226.3%	3,675	1,624
			New, Other, Male		0	636	11	90.1%	647	718
			Continuing, Other, Male				3,640	506.9%	3,640	718
MGD Standard 16	MGD 1.2.1.1	Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	Secondary Female	Education Management Information System – MoES	0	1,502,095	2,411,928	27.3%	8,339,220	44,909,200
MGD Standard 17	MGD 1.2.1	Number of school-age children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Education Management Information System – MoES School Meals App	0	66,998	61,772	125.4%	128,770	102,650
	New, Female		0		33,269	4,528	75.9%	37,797	49,778	
	MGD 1.2.1.1		Continuing, Female	Education Management Information System – MoES School Meals App	0	0	25,657		25,657	
			New, Male		0	33,729	4,738	72.8%	38,467	52,872
			Continuing, Male		0	0	26,849		26,849	
MGD Standard 18	MGD 1.2.1.1	Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Education Management Information System – MoES	0	69,340	65,259	128.2%	134,599	104,992
	MGD 1.3.1.1		Community Assets		0	0	0	-		
			Household Assets		0	0	0	-		
			Human Assets/Capital, Female, New		0	34,975	13,143	93.6%	48,118	51,402
	MGD 2.5		Human Assets/Capital, Female, Continuing		0			-		
			Human Assets/Capital, Male, New		0	34,365	14,708	91.6%	49,073	53,590
			Human		0		14,095	-	14,095	

			Assets/Capital, Male, Continuing							
<b>MGD Standard 19</b>	MGD SO 2	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Education Management Information System – MoES School Meals App Distribution Reports	0	0	605	40.7%	605	1,485
			Female		0	0	441	59.4%	441	742
			Male		0	0	164	22.1%	164	742
<b>MGD Standard 20</b>	MGD SO 2	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Education Management Information System – MoES	0	0	605	36.9%	605	1,639
			Female		0	0	441	38.8%	441	1,137
			Male		0	0	164	32.6%	164	503
<b>MGD Standard 22</b>	MGD 2.2	Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Project activity report	0	2,342	605	125.8%	2,342	2,342
			Female		0	1,706	441	132.2%	2,147	1,624
			Male		0	636	164	111.4%	800	718
<b>MGD Standard 23</b>	MGD 2.3	Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Project activity report	0	0	705	33.2%	705	2,121
			Female		0	0	491	46.3%	491	1,061
			Male		0	0	214	20.2%	214	1,061
<b>MGD Standard 27</b>	MGD 2.4	Number of schools using an improved water source	N/A	Education Management Information System – MoES	0	0	30	6.5%	30	461
<b>MGD Standard 30</b>		Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs	Total	Project activity report	0	69,340	95,456	156.96%	164,796	104,992
			Female		0	34,975	52,543	170.3%	87,518	51,402
			Male		0	34,365	42,913	144.2%	77,278	53,590
<b>MGD Standard 31</b>		Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	N/A	Education Management Information System – MoES	0	170,700	170,700	125.5%	341,400	272,021
<b>MGD Standard 32</b>	MGD SO 1	Number of schools reached as a result of USDA assistance	N/A	Education Management Information System – MoES	0	707	705	100%	705	707
	MGD SO 2									
<b>LRP Indicator 1</b>	LRP 1.3	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs that include an LRP component	Total (age: 5 – 10 yrs)	Education Management Information System – MoES Project Activity Report	0	69,340	95,456	160.5%	164,796	102,650
			Female		0	34,975	52,543	175.8%	87,518	49,778
			Male		0	34,365	42,913	146.2%	77,278	52,872

LRP Indicator 6	LRP 1.3.2	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	Fortified oil (MT), Country of Origin: Malaysia	Logistics Execution Supportive System (LESS)	0	157.10	0	35.7%	157.10	440
			Canned fish (MT) Country of Origin: Thailand	Logistics Execution Supportive System (LESS)	0	197.52	151.929	67.2%	349.45	520
			Fortified rice (MT) Country of Origin: Lao PDR	Logistics Execution Supportive System	0	0	0	0	0	608
LRP Indicator 10	LRP 1.4.2	Number of policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance	Stage and type of policy	WFP meeting minutes	0	1	1	200%	2	1
LRP Indicator 11	MGD 1.4.4/2.7.4	Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance	Total (Type: 3-5-day workshop)	Activity reports	0	0	0	0	0	1,200
			Female		0	0	0	0	0	600
			Male		0	0	0	0	0	600
LRP Indicator 12	MGD 1.2.1.1/1.3.1.1	Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance	Total (small-holder farmer; age: 18 - 60 yrs)	Follow-up and monitoring records	0	0	0	0	0	840
			Female		0	0	0	0	0	420
			Male		0	0	0	0	0	420
LRP Indicator 16	LRP 1	Number of schools reached with LRP activities as a result of USDA assistance	N/A	Education Management Information System - MoES	0	707	705	199.7%	1,412	707

Source: WFP Lao PDR. November. 2024. Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP School-Feeding Program for USDA McGovern-Dole Grant [FY 2020-25]

### Custom indicators

Custom Indicator	Results Framework	Performance Indicator	Disagg.	How results/ progress is monitored	Baseline	FY22	FY23	Target vs Actual	At midterm	LOP Target
1	MGD SO1	Average number of food items recalled by students as measured by the CRS expressive vocabulary test.	G2	Baseline Data MTE Survey	8	N/A	N/A	57.2%	6.3	11



		Average number of animals recalled by students as measured by the CRS expressive vocabulary test.	G2	Baseline Data MTE Survey	16.5	N/A	N/A	50%	9.0	18
2	MGD 1.2.1.1	% of daily key micronutrient requirements met through school meals	N/A	MoDA	0	100%	75%	75%	75%	100%
3	MGD 1.2.1.1	Number of school gardens established and functioning	N/A	Education Management Information System	0	341	628	137.06%	969	707
	MGD 1.3.1.1									
4	MGD SO 2	The percentage of school days where four food groups were provided	N/A	Education Management Information System	0	30%	48%	96%	48%	50%
5	MGD 1.3.5	Percentage of smallholder farmers, including women, supported to produce quality food surplus and contributed to school meals programs	N/A	School Observation Survey	0	0	0	0	-	30%
	MGD SO 2									
6	MGD SO1	Percent of students at the end of two grades of primary schools that show proficiency reading familiar words.	Total	Baseline Data MTE Survey	21%	0	0	204.4%	55.2%	27%
			Female		16%	0	0		52.4%	22%
			Male		26%	0	0	0	58.6%	32%
7	MGD 2.1	Number of individuals trained in improved WASH practices as a result of USDA assistance.	Total	Training tracking database	0	0	245	92.1%		266
			Female		0	0	45	33.1%		136
			Male		0	0	212	163.1%		130
8	MGD 2.1	Number of schools where principals report improved WASH practices as a result of USDA assistance.	N/A	Principal interview form	0	0	0	0	0	104
9	MGD 1.1.3	Number of schools with improved literacy instructional materials as a result of USDA assistance	N/A	Distribution records	0	0	45	50%	45	90

10	MGD 2.3	Number of individuals reached in child health and nutrition campaign as a result of USDA assistance	Total	Project activity report	0	0	0	0		134,006
			Female		0	0	0	0		67,739
			Male		0	0	0	0		66,267
11	MGD 1.2	% of schools where teachers report higher concentration/attention by children during the day	Total	Baseline Data MTE Survey	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	92.1%	70%
			Female		0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	70%
			Male		0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	70%
12	MGD 1.3.1	Drop-out rate	Total	Baseline Data MTE Survey	6%	5.89%	4.4%	-	3%	4%
	Female		6%		5.24%	3.9%	-	-	4%	
	MGD 1.3.5		Male		6%	6.55%	4.8%	-	-	4%
13	MGD 2.3	Proportion of children who have knowledge, believe in and practice the consumption of a diverse and healthy diet, including fruit and vegetable consumption and avoiding unhealthy food and beverages	Knowledge	Validated knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey	77.8%	0	0	64%	54.5%	85%
			Attitudes		16.4%	0	0	103.5%	23.8%	23%
			Behaviours		27.5%	0	0	143.6%	47.4%	33%
14	MDG 2.1	Proportion of children who have knowledge, believe in and practice washing hands before and after meals and washing hands before and after going to the toilet	Knowledge	Validated knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey	81.1%	0	0	2.3%	2.0%	85%
			Attitudes		85%	0	0	110%	93.5%	85%
			Behaviours		82.9%	0	0	106.2%	90.3%	85%
15	MGD 2.3	Proportion of teachers who have knowledge, believe in and practice the importance of a diverse and healthy diet, and avoiding unhealthy foods and beverages, for child growth and development and the impact on child well-being	Knowledge	Validated knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey	88.2%	N/A	N/A	47.4%	45.5%	96%
			Attitudes		25.3%	N/A	N/A	183.6%	65%	35.4%
			Behaviours		78.8%	N/A	N/A	81.9%	65.5%	80.0%
16	MGD 1.3.1	Proportion of caregivers who have knowledge, believe in and practice the provision of a	Knowledge	Validated knowledge, attitudes and	88.2%	N/A	N/A	83%	78.0%	94.0%

		diverse and healthy diet, and avoiding unhealthy foods and beverages, for the growth and development of their children	Attitudes	practices (KAP) survey	25.3%	N/A	N/A	119.5%	42.3%	35.4%
			Behaviours		78.8%	N/A	N/A	101.6%	81.3%	80.0%

Source: WFP Lao PDR. November. 2024. Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP School-Feeding Program for USDA McGovern-Dole Grant [FY 2020-25]

# Annex 10: Sampling for baseline study and mid-term evaluation

## Baseline study<sup>8</sup>

Also see: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/lao-pdr-usda-mcgovern-dole-school-feeding-program-2020-2025-evaluations>

### Research Methodology

- 1 The baseline study will use OECD-DAC to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the program. A mixed method approach will be deployed to answer the evaluation questions under the criteria using quantitative data from structured questionnaires and qualitative data from In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The details of the tools and techniques are provided in ensuing sections.
- 2 For evaluating the outcomes of the program, the ET adopted a purposive-comparison study design. The focus of the study is to understand the intra-intervention variations across different types of schools within the project, based on various characteristics as detailed out in the sampling section ahead. Therefore, within the purposive-comparison design, we deployed quasi-experimental techniques by classifying schools into different categories and then randomly selecting the required number of sample schools within these through stratified random sampling. As a result, instead of including a separate sample for comparison group, we have adopted a methodology which enables us to create multiple categories of intervention sample. The comparison of critical outcome and impact indicators across these categories would enable us determine the efficacy of the program on the said parameters, across different categories of schools (based on their pre-existing socio-economic- cultural-demographic parameters). It is understood the said design would further be emboldened by including the third arm for comparison, at the time of end line evaluation, that is, schools which did not experience the program implementation.
- 3 The usage of secondary sources and monitoring data was critical for supporting the baseline study. In addition to aiding the development and finalization of tools, these sources helped the evaluation team to contextualize the findings from the primary research component. The baseline has established values, which will help in assessing the program during midline and end-line evaluations, with gender equity and inclusion mainstreamed throughout.

### Tools and Techniques

- 4 All the tools administered focused on gathering information about the current situation of the schools with regard to infrastructure status, processes followed and awareness and capacities of key staff as well as students. This was done while keeping in mind the overall objective of the baseline study: to establish baseline values for all performance indicators to be reported on during mid-term and end-term evaluations. The quantitative tools for the baseline study included **structured questionnaires** for:

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<sup>8</sup> Note that this section is extracted from the baseline study report for the reference purpose for this end-line evaluation TORs. Hence, the paragraph number and order of the paragraphs are not necessarily in line with the original report. For the original report, please refer to the publication: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/lao-pdr-usda-mcgovern-dole-school-feeding-program-2020-2025-evaluations>

- a) **Children:** Since the program children are young (in primary and pre-primary classes), it would be difficult for them to articulate their thoughts and share reliable data through direct interviews. Hence, the structured interviews with children were kept extremely simple and brief. The tool catered to their attendance, attentiveness, literacy levels, learning levels, etc. Certain information areas of this tool were further validated via (a) secondary data collected from school attendance registers, (b) from school heads and teachers, (c) from parents and (d) from the school supplies data etc.
  - b) **Parents:** The structured questionnaires administered with the parents included data on (a) social and demographic profiles of the household, (b) questions pertaining to the school-going behaviour of the selected student, (c) pattern of food consumption in school and at home (including information on dietary diversity), (d) composition of meals in school and at home, (e) attitude, belief and practices of the parents towards nutrition, WASH and education, and (f) their contribution/engagement in school meals program (feedback, volunteering, community ownership etc.
  - c) **School Facility Observation Sheet** was filled for all the schools visited. This was an objective observation sheet to understand softer aspects of school capacities, infrastructure and maintenance. This tool included information around presence of toilets and hand-washing facilities in school, status of kitchen and storage rooms, buildings and classroom, status of school gardens etc.
- 5 The qualitative tools included **In-Depth interviews (IDIs)** with School Heads and Teachers, VEDC and LWU members, Parents and Farmer Groups at the community and school levels as well as **Key informant interviews (KII)** with Government officials, NGOs and Cooperating Partners (CPs) and WFP Officials at the at district, province and national levels.
- 6 In context of COVID-19 and consequent norms and mobility restrictions, the team used remote mediums such as video conference platforms, mobile calling etc. for qualitative interactions.

#### Sample Size and Sampling

- 7 **Qualitative Component:** To ensure higher depth and quality of qualitative data, all qualitative interactions (at the community level) were covered by a Vientiane based core team of enumerators skilled and trained especially for in-depth interactions. This would have specific implications on the tools and methodology such as:
- a. **IDI with School Head (1 interview per school):** The existing tool was divided into two parts: (a) first part was administered directly with the school head over telephone, and (b) second part, capturing all secondary data pertaining to enrollment and attendance data for the past four years, was shared before the interview for reference. The school head was requested to compile all the requisite data within a couple of days. This information was captured via a follow-up call by the enumerator.
  - b. **IDIs with School Teacher (1 interview per school):** The qualitative interview with school teacher was adequately covered virtually.
  - c. **FGDs to IDIs with VEDC and/or Parents (2 interviews per school):** Instead of undertaking FGDs therefore, we identified individual parents or VEDC members from each school and undertook IDIs with them. The FGD tools was adapted into an interview guide for smooth administration over the telephone.

- d. **FGD to IDIs with Farmers (1 interview per school):** The tool for farmer group FGDs was adapted into interview guide for smooth administration over the telephone.

### Sample Size Proposed

Table: Sampling protocol and Methodology details		
Target Group	Discussions per unit	Total number of discussions
Total provinces		12
Total districts		18
Total number of schools	2 per district	36
<b>Quantitative Survey</b>		
Students	16 per school (8 boys-8 girls)	576
Parents	5 per school (2-3 men and 2-3 women)	180
Students (Learning Assessment in Khammouane)	10 per school in 20 schools	200
<b>Total</b>		<b>956</b>
<b>Key Informant Interviews</b>		
District Level Officials	1 per district	18
Province Level Officials	3 per province	36
National Level Officials		3
WFP Official at National Level		3
NGOs and CPs	1 per province	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>72</b>
<b>In-Depth Interviews</b>		
School Head	1 per school	36
School Teacher	1 per school	36
Community (PTA and VEDC members)	2 per school	72
Farmers	1 per community	36
Parents	1 per district	36
<b>Total</b>		<b>216</b>

### Data Cleaning

- 8 Quantitative data was collected through Computer Aided Personal Interview (CAPI) using tablets. The software was programd to minimize data entry errors using built-in constraints and skip-pattern logic. Data collection teams were trained to cross-check the data before it is uploaded to the server. Data was uploaded to a central server daily, and the evaluation team conducted range and consistency checks during the duration of the data collection period to identify and address any errors in the data collection process.
- 9 The raw data obtained from the field was checked by the data analyst for consistency errors, duplicity of cases and missing data. Most of these errors are expected to be already minimised at the stage of software development process for CAPI enabled data collection. Moreover, any outliers in the quantitative data were also be triangulated with the qualitative information to assess the validity of the data point in the outlier. These outliers were noted and highlighted during the analysis along with the associated qualitative observations.
- 10 For the qualitative data, field notes along with the transcripts will be attached to add information to the analysis.

## Data Analysis

- 11 A cross-section analysis was applied treating the baseline as a cross-section. This technique helped the ET benchmark the key indicators of the intervention **by comparing the different sub-groups within the intervention group**. Further, it will also help ascertain the overall effectiveness of the intervention by a similar intra-intervention comparison across the sub- groups at the time of end line evaluation. The design will further be emboldened by further adding a comparison arm to it at the time of end line.

The regression specification for the baseline cross-section analysis can be written as follows:

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 T + \beta_2 X_i + \epsilon_i \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where,  $y_i$  is an outcome indicator of the beneficiary studying in school;  $T$  is dummy for variation across the sub-groups;  $X$  is vector of observable social indicators and  $\epsilon_i$  is usual stochastic random error. In equation (1), ' $T$ ' provides the estimates of gains from the program based on position across sub-groups as indicated by the parameter estimates of  $\beta_1$ .

- 12 The data analysis for quantitative data aimed to establish baseline values of key indicators as per the program framework across the comparison sub-groups. These values would be useful in measuring and estimating the extent of change brought across the schools as a result of different program components, during the mid-line and end-line evaluations. The quantitative data analysis included descriptive analysis of sex disaggregated data, setting the benchmark values across each combination sub-groups of remote-non-remote, (model-non model and WASH-Non-WASH schools were not available at the time of the survey), and allow for ensuing mid-term and end-line evaluations to estimate the extent of change that is attributable to the program. Further, through an intra-intervention comparison across each combination sub-groups of remote-non-remote, the analysis aided in identifying key influencing demographic and programmatic factors, along which, future monitoring and evaluations for program impacts would be assessed.
- 13 The data analysis (using baseline values) will also provide descriptive analysis of sex disaggregated data setting the benchmark values in intervention schools across remote and non-remote school groups (with WASH and non-WASH schools and model and non-model schools also being compared during mid-line and end-line). Data obtained for the gender-related questions was analysed comprehensively to report on the gender dimensions of the evaluation.
- 14 Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. The qualitative data from in-depth interviews (IDIs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) was first documented by the researchers, translated, coded and analysed. The coding was based on the set of factors to be assessed under the conceptual framework and the outcomes under the research evaluation approach. The analysis focused on providing the reasons for status of performance on indicators as well as provide insights on the relevance and sustainability of the program by highlighting strategic issues in the program design.
- 15 The analysis of qualitative data intended to fulfil two objectives of explanation and review. Firstly, analysis of qualitative data helped identify and understand the reasons that could contribute to the achievement or lack thereof of the program targets. The qualitative analysis was also used to understand the perceptions of beneficiaries about the services and interventions under the program, the value they view in these services, the nature of changes that could be brought about as a result of the program activities and initiatives, and their overall experience and expectations from it. Perceived enablers and barriers by the VEDCs and school administrators in implementing the program objectives were highlighted through this analysis to draw lessons.
- 16 Secondly, the qualitative analysis enabled the ET to review past experiences, knowledge, perceptions and current and future capacity needs of multiple stakeholders in the community level (VEDC, LWU, Farmers)



as well as program implementation levels (MoES, MAF, MoH, WFP, and CPs), to formatively review the design and logic of the program and provide evidence for relevance of program as well as highlight alternate pathways of impact reflected from the beneficiary levels.

- 17 Data obtained for the gender related questions from the evaluation matrix were analysed comprehensively to report on the gender dimensions of the study. Data on attainment of outputs and outcomes was disaggregated by sex and age. Gender analysis was conducted through assessment of qualitative data on causalities that lead to drop-out or affect attendance of boys and girls in schools. Variables such as ethnicity and distance from the school were also used to contextualise the variations (if any) in evaluation findings for both boys and girls.

## Mid-Term Evaluation <sup>9</sup>

**Also see:** <https://www.wfp.org/publications/laos-mcgovern-dole-food-education-mid-term-evaluation>

### *Literacy assessment*

Student literacy was assessed using an internally developed and customized literacy assessment tool, which tests reading and comprehension skills. Based on a standardized method for measuring changes in reading outcomes, analysis of the literacy assessment data showed changes over time in literacy indicators. Qualitative data informed relationships between the literacy outcomes and other trends.

The national team administered the literacy assessment in-person to 2nd graders in the sample of project schools. During the inception phase for this midterm, it was discussed to involve the lead implementing partner CRS in the development, reviewing and training of the literacy tool. The evaluation team worked closely with CRS to update, and quality assure the literacy tool based on: (i) the original baseline tool, (ii) leading practice from CRS (iii) existing literacy assessments implemented in Lao by CRS. This quality assurance process followed the following sequence:

1. The evaluation team and key CRS staff met virtually to orient on the evaluation and on existing quantitative tools, namely the baseline literacy assessment. It was discussed that a key lesson learned from the baseline was that CRS needed to be more actively and technically engaged in reviewing data collection tools, since they are the lead implementing partner of the project. As a result, there was a consensus and commitment to engage CRS actively during the tool development and training process for the midterm evaluation, for technical input and overall sign-off before tools are submitted to WFP.<sup>10</sup>
2. The evaluation team provided CRS with a draft literacy assessment tool for technical input. CRS conducted a review of all literacy modules and provided suggestions drawn from leading practice and existing literacy tools implemented in Lao by CRS. CRS also reviewed and sense-checked the WASH module, given their familiarity of WASH activities for the program.
3. CRS provided technical sign-off on the quality, relevance and appropriateness of the literacy assessment and WASH module (included in the School Survey).
4. The evaluation team incorporated all feedback on the literacy assessment and WASH module and finalised the remaining quantitative tools.

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<sup>9</sup> Note that this section is extracted from the mid-term evaluation report for the reference purpose for this end-line evaluation TORs, Hence, the paragraph number and order of the paragraphs are not necessarily in line with the original report. For the original report, please refer to the publication:

<sup>10</sup> This was also discussed with WFP during the inception mission; which WFP was supportive and facilitated an initial meeting between TANGO and CRS on 08 Feb 2024.

### ***School survey***

The national team collected statistical secondary data commonly available on-site in school records/ledgers such as gender-disaggregated enrolment and attendance data, teacher-student ratios, number of teachers, number of students, dropout rate, etc. these records questions are part of the school survey, along with questions for school heads. Data was recorded on Android devices loaded with an ODK tool for this purpose. This serves as an additional validation exercise for WFP's own data collection/profiling of a selection of project schools.

The records component of the school survey was sent to school heads ahead of field visits, so the statistical information described above could be prepopulated and collected on arrival. This saved time that was put toward qualitative discussions with school heads, teachers and key staff.

### ***Sampling strategy***

The midterm followed a stratified sample for quantitative activities to ensure representative samples from all types of combinations of project intervention, which is recommended for endline surveys, with four strata based on the following intervention categories:

1. School meals only
2. School meals and WASH
3. School meals, WASH, and literacy
4. School meals and Literacy (exclusive for literacy assessment and school survey)

Results were disaggregated according to the finalised criteria; however, no further explicit stratification for the quantitative methods was proposed according to these criteria. Application of these additional levels of stratification would dramatically increase the required sample size and the complexity of the sample design, which would increase data collection costs. Note that the representation of these subcategories was captured in the overall sample even without further stratification, because the data was collected from all 17 project districts.

A cross-sectional design was proposed for the literacy assessment: a random sample of 20 schools were selected from the sampling frame of 90 schools in Khammouane Province, as literacy activities were only implemented in one province. For endline, it is suggested a new random sample of 20 schools should be drawn. A panel design was planned initially using the same random sample of 20 schools that were selected in the baseline. It was learned from the project that some of the schools selected in baseline were excluded later for the literacy intervention. Therefore, a valid panel sample of 20 schools was not possible for the longitudinal analysis from baseline to mid-term and endline. Although, a panel sample could be generated starting from mid-term to endline, but it would be challenging to obtain significant difference from mid-term to endline. The longitudinal analysis provides significant difference when the comparison is between the starting point (before intervention) to endpoint (after intervention), i.e. baseline to endline. Also, a sample of 20 control schools was proposed initially for the mid-term so that the Difference-in-Difference analysis could be done from midterm to endline from panel datasets to be able to detect true effect of the project intervention. However, the proposed sample of 20 control schools were excluded from the study design due to budget constraints. In this situation, the cross-sectional design was the only option that allowed gauging project intervention effects and the extent of changes (pre and post-tests) from baseline to midterm and endline for the project participating schools only.

It is noted that the proposed sample size of 68 schools for the indicator assessment is double what was considered in the baseline (34 schools). The rationale for this approach is that the larger school sample size ensures the inclusion of diversified groups in well-spread geographic areas. The proposed student sample size per school (10<sup>11</sup> students per school) is lower than the baseline sample (16 per school) to maintain an

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<sup>11</sup> A smaller number of student samples per school minimizes the level of intra-correlation and captures larger variations to detect the statistical significance of the changes from baseline or mid-term to endline.

overall sample size (n=680) similar to the baseline sample size (n=544). The overall minimum required student sample size for the midterm was estimated using the following statistical formula and parameters:

$$\text{Required Sample Size} = D \left[ \frac{[(z_{\alpha} + z_{\beta})^2 * [P_1(1 - P_1) + P_2(1 - P_2)]]}{(P_2 - P_1)^2} \right]$$

Where:

D = Design effect for complex sample design = 2.0

Z<sub>α</sub> = Z value associated with desired significance level for confidence (95%, one-tailed)=1.645

Z<sub>β</sub> = Z value associated with desired significance level for power (80%, one-tailed)= 0.840

P<sub>1</sub> = estimated level of an indicator measured as a proportion at the time of the baseline = 50%<sup>12</sup>

P<sub>2</sub> = expected level of the indicator either at midterm (indicator target at the midterm), where (P<sub>2</sub> - P<sub>1</sub>) is the magnitude of change or difference from baseline to midterm that the sample is powered to detect 20% changes (10% points changes)= 60%

NR= non-response rate = 10%

The 17 schools from each stratum were selected separately using the Probability Proportional to the Size (PPS<sup>13</sup>) statistical sampling procedure. In the PPS sampling procedure, the “size” is referred to as the total number of students in a school. The student samples (n=10 students/school) were selected randomly from the list of students in grade 1 to grade 5 from the selected sample schools. The PPS sampling procedure was applied across all 17 project districts, and number of sample schools per district was selected proportional to the number of schools in a district.

A breakdown of the quantitative survey sample is presented below:

Group/Individual	Proposed for Midterm and Endline					Baseline	Remarks
	Project (Strata)						
	School Meals only (N=570)	School Meals and WASH only (N=47)	School Meals, WASH and Literacy (N=42)	School Meals and Literacy (N=48)	Total		
Indicator Assessment							
# of districts					17	17	All project districts
# of schools	17	17	17	17	68	34	All project districts
# of students (10/school)	170 <sup>14</sup>	170	170	170	680	544 (16/ school)	All project districts
# of parents (5/school)	85	85	85	85	340	170	All project districts
# of school surveys (1/school)	17	17	17	17	68	34	All project districts

<sup>12</sup> P attains maximum sample size when the initial proportion is 50%.

<sup>13</sup> In larger-sized schools (number of students) the chance that any single student will be selected was smaller than the students selected from the smaller-sized schools, but this is offset by the fact that larger-sized schools had a greater chance of being selected in the PPS procedure.

<sup>14</sup> Stratum sample size n<sub>s</sub>=170 is estimated to detect 20% points change with 95% confidence level and 80% statistical power for the indicator values at the stratum level.

Literacy Assessment							
Cross-sectional school sample					20 (17+3) <sup>15</sup>	20	Out of 90 project-supported schools selected in the baseline from Khammouane Province
# of students (10/school)					200	200	

Using the above sampling strategy, a sample frame of 68 schools was drawn. This was submitted to WFP for review, to ensure that all schools in the sample met the following criteria:

- ☐ The school was still open and operating.
- ☐ The school was accessible to visit (i.e. reachable via ground or air transportation).
- ☐ In the case for literacy assessment sample, the school saw literacy interventions.

WFP accepted the initial sample with no substitutions, confirming the above criteria for all 68 schools. The sites visited is presented in [Annex 10: Sites visited](#).

### Qualitative Sampling strategy

The qualitative sample was split into three main groups: (i) national and subnational stakeholders and staff, (ii) deep dives in 14 schools, (iii) sub-national government staff. Key informants were selected primarily based their knowledge of and relevance to the project and the evaluation (particularly regarding the EQs and lines of inquiry)/ The selection criteria also took into consideration the nature of key informants' involvement on the project (i.e. strategic stakeholders, operational stakeholders, supporting staff) and general availability for evaluation activities.

Select key informants were interviewed multiple times during the data collection and analysis phases, to discuss and validate emerging findings and conclusions. The breakdown per stakeholder groups is as follows:

**National and subnational stakeholders and staff.** A total of 21 key informants were interviewed from the following organizations/units:

- WFP Lao PDR Country Office
- WFP Regional Bureau Bangkok
- WFP Headquarters
- Catholic Relief Services
- National Government of Lao PDR

**Deep dives.** Each deep dive school saw an additional 3 qualitative activities per school: 2 KIIs with school heads and teachers, and 1 FGD with VEDCs. Across the 14 deep dive schools, a total of 29 KIIs were conducted (11 F and 18 M). Across the 14 FGDs conducted, 67 participants were consulted (18 F, 49 M).

**Provincial Education and Sports Services (PESS) and District Education and Sports Bureau (DESB) FGDs.** The midterm also conducted FGDS with sub-national government offices at the PESS and DESB level. A total of 17 DESB FGDs (21F, 39M) and 11 PESS FGDs (11 F, 13 M) were held. 84 participants were consulted across these FGDs.

<sup>15</sup> 17 schools from "Meals and Literacy" category and 3 randomly selected schools from the 17 sample schools selected for the category "Meals, WASH and Literacy".

# Annex 11. Acronyms and abbreviations

ASEAN	Associate of Southeast Asian Nations
CD	Country Director
CO	Country Office
DEQAS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
DESB	District Education and Sports Burau
EDF	Education for Development Foundation
EM	Evaluation Manager
EMIS	Education Management and Information System
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FAD	Food Assistance Division
FFE	Food for Education
GGI	Gender Gap Index
HQ	Headquarters
IEC	Internal Evaluation Committee
LDC	Least Developed Country
LMIC	Lower Middle Income Country
LRP	Local and Regional Procurement
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoH	Ministry of Health
NSMP	National School Meal Program
OEV	Office of Evaluation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VEDC	Village Education Development Committee
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

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