

Evaluation of FY2024 USDA funded McGovern- Dole project School Feeding program in Lao PDR from 2025 to 2029



Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference
WFP Laos Country Office

DE/LACO/2024/032 (Baseline)

DE/LACO/2026/012 (Mid-term)

DE/LACO/2028/003 (End-line)

May 2025

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1. Introduction

1. These terms of reference (ToR) were prepared by the WFP Lao People's Democratic Republic Country Office (CO) based upon an initial document review 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 ToR are to guide an evaluation process comprising three distinct evaluation exercises (baseline study, midterm evaluation, and end-line evaluation), with each exercise having multiple deliverables, including inception and evaluation reports. These activity evaluations, which will take place over a five-year period from April 2025 to September 2029, are commissioned by the WFP Lao PDR CO for the School Feeding Program activities in Lao PDR supported by United States Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole (USDA McGovern-Dole) International Food for Education and Child Nutrition for fiscal years (FY) 2024 - 2029 under the grant (USDA McGovern-Dole Grants FFE-439-2024/006-00). The TOR covers three deliverables: 1. a **baseline study**, 2. a **mid-term evaluation** and 3. an **end-line evaluation** for USDA McGovern-Dole. All deliverables will, preferably, be undertaken in a single assignment/contract. The specific deliverables (timeframes mentioned are subject to change within reason) are outlined in **Error! Reference source not found.**

Table 1: Evaluation Exercise for McGovern-Dole

Evaluation exercises for USDA-McGovern-Dole project	Planned Timeline
Baseline Study	June - November 2025
Mid-term Evaluation	January – September 2027
End line Evaluation (including dissemination)	January – September 2029

*Timeline may be subject to slight shift

3. This TOR was prepared by the WFP CO based upon an initial document review. It outlines the evaluation requirements for USDA McGovern-Dole (US\$27.5 million budget) grant supporting implementation of a School Feeding program in 702 schools in 11 provinces, namely Bokeo, Luang Prabang, Xiengkhouang, Vientiane Province, Vientiane Capital, Khammouane, Savannakhet, Salavan, Champasak, Sekong, and Attapeu provinces for the period 2025-2029. The TOR aims to 1) provide project scope, learning themes and other key information to guide the evaluation team conducting the evaluations; and 2) to involve stakeholders early on, keeping them informed of progress, and providing opportunities for inputs to secure their support and commitment.
4. This evaluation will provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of the results of and learning from the USDA McGovern-Dole supported activities, while also making it possible to quantify the outcome of the program. Where feasible and applicable, it will also aim at providing meaningful learning to contribute to the government's national school lunch program.

2. Reasons for the evaluation

2.1. Rationale

5. The baseline study, mid-term evaluation and endline evaluation for the USDA funded McGovern-Dole FY 2024-2029 (FY24) project (the project) for WFP's School Feeding Program (SFP) activities in Lao PDR is commissioned by WFP CO. The evaluations will cover the entire McGovern-Dole project period from October 2024 to September 2029.

6. The evaluation is expected to critically and objectively assess performance and progress of the project and associated interventions for the purposes of accountability and learning, and to provide project implementation recommendations for necessary course correction.

7. The USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program 2024-2029 (FY24) builds on the ongoing project funded by the USDA McGovern-Dole 2020-2025 (FY20) Award, with similar beneficiaries, activities, and scope. The FY2024-2029 McGovern-Dole program targets the same schools with continuing activities from the FY2020-2025 award; with a strong focus on institutionalization and transition of the program to government ownership. The number of schools receiving support has decreased slightly from the start of the FY2020 due to schools merging; otherwise, project schools from FY2020-2025 will continue to be the same supported by the FY2024-2029 award.

8. Therefore, the three evaluations will build on the 2020-2025 evaluation results, rather than be conducted in isolation, to capture change over the course of the two programs. The evaluation design will need to reflect this continuation, especially in the baseline study. The aim is to enable the evaluation to produce a more insightful understanding on the project's progress and results as it tracks a longer timeframe of change.

9. At the same time, each evaluation deliverable for the FY24 project shall be treated as a stand-alone document, while paying attention to continuity aspects as mentioned above.

2.2. Objectives

10. Evaluations serve the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning. Considering the USDA requirement to report on all project indicators as per the project's project monitoring plan, the evaluations have slightly more weight on accountability. However, this will not undermine the aspect of learning to feed into future project design. They will also further the knowledge base with the USDA Learning Agenda in mind, as indicated in Section 4.

- **Accountability** – The evaluation processes 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 is on track to meet the stated goals and objectives aligned with the results frameworks and assumptions.
- **Learning** – The evaluation will assess whether implementation unfolded as was 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 evaluation series 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 learnings 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 program 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.

12. The evaluations also aim to understand possible different effects and contributions the activities provide to girls, boys, women, men, and other stakeholder groups.

2.3. Key stakeholders

13. Several internal and external stakeholders are expected to utilize the results of the evaluations and some will be asked to play a role in the evaluation process.

14. Internally the key stakeholders of the evaluations include WFP 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 (PPGS), the Performance Management and Monitoring Division, and the Office of Evaluation among others).

15. 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.

16. 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), and the Ministry of Planning and Investment, among others.

17. Various stakeholders are expected to use these evaluations:

- The WFP CO and its partners in decision-making, notably related to program implementation and 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 for 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.
- 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 evaluation findings as input for its take-over 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.

18. 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 program being evaluated. Table 2 provides a preliminary stakeholder analysis, which should be deepened by the evaluation team as part of the inception phase.

19. Accountability to affected populations, is tied to WFP commitments to include beneficiaries as key stakeholders in WFP work. WFP is committed to ensuring parity of people involved in the evaluation process, with participation and consultation in the evaluation of men, women, boys and girls from different groups including WFP's corporate disaggregation standards.).

Table 2: Preliminary stakeholder analysis

Stakeholders	Interest and involvement in the evaluation
Internal (WFP) stakeholders	
WFP country office (CO) in Lao	Key informant and primary stakeholder - Responsible for the planning and implementation of WFP interventions at country level. The country office has an

PDR	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 on the basis of the MTE. 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 from this mid-term evaluation for program implementation adjustment and/or in deciding on the next program and partnerships.
WFP field office in Pakse	Key informant and primary stakeholder - 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.
Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific based in Bangkok (RBB)	Key informant and primary stakeholder - 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.
WFP HQ divisions	Key informant and primary stakeholder - WFP headquarters divisions 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 and accountability.
WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV)	Primary stakeholder - The Office of Evaluation 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 decentralized evaluation 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.
WFP Executive Board (EB)	Primary stakeholder - 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.
External stakeholders	
Beneficiaries	Key informants and primary/secondary stakeholders - 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 women and men 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.
Government of Lao PDR	Key informants and primary stakeholder - 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

	<p>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.</p> <p>Ministry of Planning and Investment, and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) are also partner of the project.</p> <p>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.</p>
United Nations country team (UNCT) and International Organizations - UNICEF, FAO, WB	Secondary stakeholder - 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, World Bank.
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) CRS	Key informants and primary stakeholder - 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 from this baseline study for program implementation.
USDA	Key stakeholder – USDA is the main 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 also has an interest in leveraging lessons learned across the projects and will be invited to serve as member of the Evaluation Reference Group.
Other donors for WFP school-based programmes	Primary/secondary stakeholders - 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.
Others	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

20. 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).

21. 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).

22. Lao PDR is considered a least developed country (LDC) - expected to graduate in 2026 from the LDC category¹³ with a GDP growth of only 0.5% since 2020, 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.

23. 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 challenges with long-term weather patterns. In Lao PDR, inflation averaged at around 23 percent between January 2024 and January 2025. During the same period, the official Kip rate has decreased in value by 5.71 percent and 4.56 percent against the USD and Thai Baht respectively¹.

24. **Agriculture 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).

25. 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.

26. Although the country is not as exposed to natural hazards as other countries in the region, the country is highly vulnerable to 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, potentially affecting

1 BANK OF THE LAO P.D.R. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/5c2594a0cc6846465fe3bafda50ad993-0070062024/related/LEM-October-2024-Final.pdf> <https://www.bol.gov.la/en/inflation>

the availability of farmable land.

27. 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.

28. Changing weather 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 adaptive agriculture, particularly regarding necessary information management and analysis, technical approaches to agricultural extension with a focus on these hazards, and community-based approaches for agricultural and rural development

29. **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).

30. **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, Oct-Dec 2024

Source: Remote Food Security Monitoring (mVAM), Oct-Dec 2024.

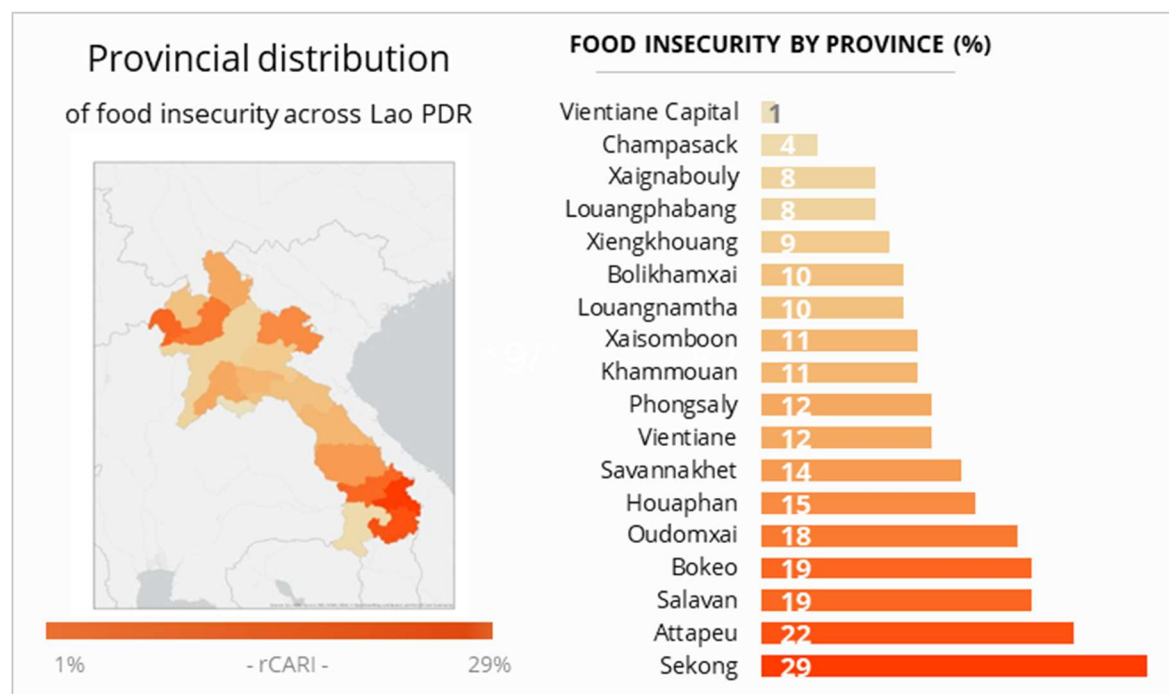
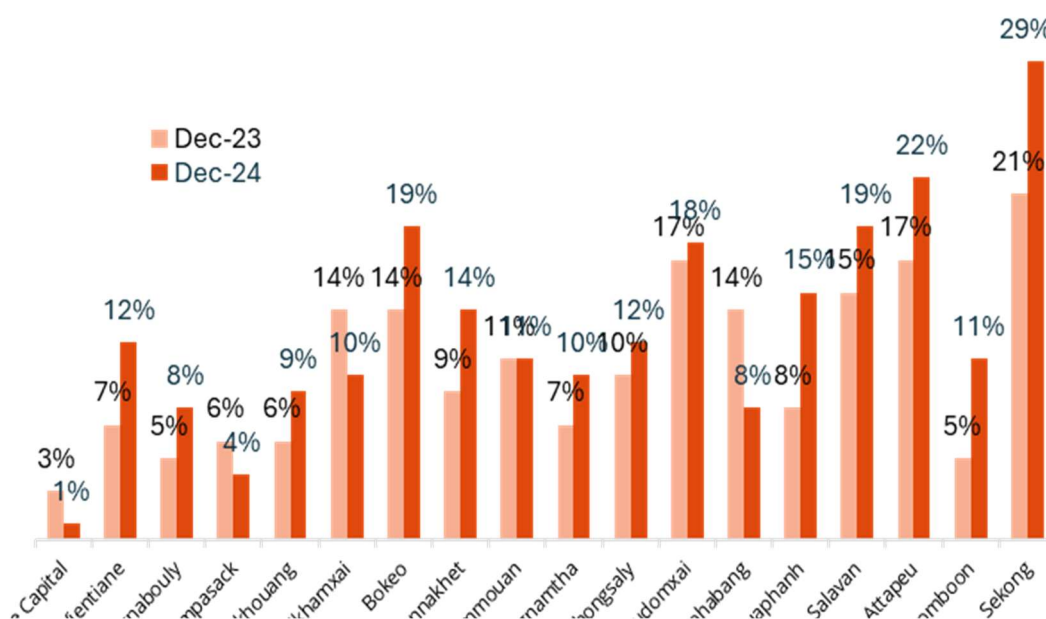


Figure 2. Provincial distribution of food insecurity across Lao PDR, Oct-Dec 2024



A year-on-year comparison from DEC 2023 to DEC 2024 shows that the highest prevalence of food insecurity at the national level was recorded at 13 percent in June and September 2024, with a slight improvement to 11 percent by December 2024. The slow improvement of the food security situation from the end of 2023 to 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). The food insecurity is on an overall downward trend, with some fluctuations from December of the previous year to the end of 2024, particularly pronounced in in Luang Prabang Province where the number of food insecure households decreased by 6% compared to December 2023.

31. With the economic difficulties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, as expected, households with significant income reduction (over 50%) are more than twice as 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.

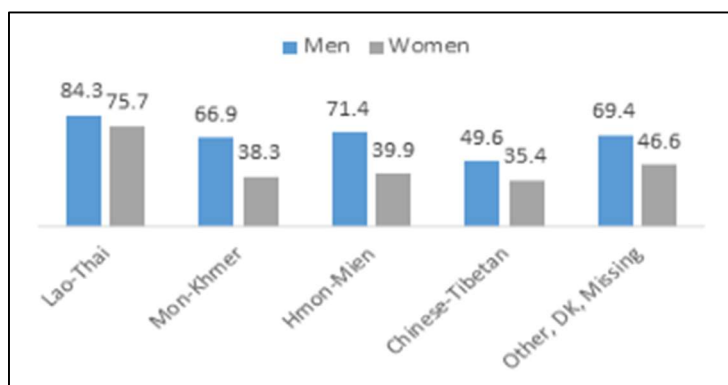
32. Approximately 44% of pregnant and lactating women and girls (aged 15 to 19) achieve the recommended minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W). The prevalence of anemia among children under five in 2018 was 40%, while 33% were affected by stunting in 2019 (which is considered a “high severity prevalence 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.

33. **Education and Literacy:** Lao PDR has some of the poorest education indicators in the region. Lack of access and dropout from schools and education in general are two of the main problems. Although net enrollment in primary education was 98.6% by 2024, only 84.7% of 5-year-old children were enrolled in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs (children typically attend pre-primary school from ages 3-5) as those in the most rural areas and poor families are excluded. Many ethnic groups do not speak the Lao language, which is a challenge considering that it is the official language of education.

34. As such, literacy rates vary significantly when comparing urban and rural areas. 91% of men in urban

areas are literate, while only 72% in rural areas are. For women, the difference is even higher with 84.6% of women in urban areas compared to only 51.9% in rural areas. In the aggregate, the literacy rate is 78% for men and 62.9% for women. Moreover, disparities are also considerable among ethno-linguistic groups (Figure 3). Also students from ethnic indigenous groups were significantly more likely to lack basic literacy and numeracy skills than those whose mother tongue is Lao-Tai. These difficulties further compound learning in other subjects.²

Figure 2: Literacy rate (%) disaggregated by ethno-linguistic groups and sex (2017)



35. 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.

36. **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.

37. **Social dynamics:** 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 roles. Most unpaid care work is taken up by women, largely due to traditional roles and limited educational and productive opportunities. In 2015, 61% of women active in the labor force were unpaid family workers, compared to only 26% of men.

38. Although there is limited information on the status and number of people living with disabilities, according to the most recent national survey, 2.8% of the population has a disability. As per the 2017 Indicator Survey, disability is measured in the following domains: seeing, hearing, walking, fine motor skills, communicating, learning, playing, controlling behaviour. Overall, 2% of children aged 2 to 4 have functional difficulty in at least one domain, while 3.8%, children in rural areas without roads also have difficulty in at least one domain.

39. The Lao-Tai ethnic group sees better welfare outcomes compared to other ethnic groups in the

² The Global Partnership for Education website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/results/country-journeys/lao-pdr-helping-youngest-children-read-and-continue-learning>

country. Indigenous people lagged behind the majority Lao-Tai group at all economic levels including limited access to healthcare, lower rates of education and less access to clean water and sanitation.³ Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Mien ethnic groups generally have larger household sizes made up of more dependents than workers. The larger number of dependents in turn causes school dropouts due to financial constraints and early marriages and teenage pregnancies which drive up fertility rates. Among non-Lao Tai ethnic groups, a smaller number of household members have at least a secondary education; fewer economic opportunities translate to a lower likelihood of owning a business and access to markets and electricity.⁴

40. According to the Lao United Nations Country Team (UNCT) country analysis the groups that are left behind in-country includes women, particularly pregnant women, ethnic groups (particularly the Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Mien who live in remote areas), children and adolescents, *and* older persons, among others.

41. **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 population, aligning with SDGs 2, 4, and 17.

42. In response to critical country needs, Lao PDR has made progress on two notable SDGs: End Hunger (SDG 2) and Quality Education (SDG 4).⁵ 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.⁶

43. 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.⁷ 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. Between 2013 and 2018, general government expenditure on education decreased from 4 percent of GDP to 2.9 percent of GDP, respectively.

44. 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.

45. 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.

46. **School Feeding Program in Lao PDR:** The school feeding program 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

³ IFAD. 2022. [Country Technical Note on Indigenous Peoples' Issues: Lao PDR](#).

⁴ World Bank. 2017. [Lao Poverty Policy Brief: Why Are Ethnic Minorities Poor?](#)

⁵ United Nations. 2021. Lao People's Democratic Republic: Voluntary National Review on the 2023 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ United Nations. 2021. Lao People's Democratic Republic: Voluntary National Review on the 2023 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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, demographically adapted nutrition campaigns can reduce the unpaid burden of care of women and girls.

47. As per the terms of reference, high level policy support and capacity strengthening form the backbone of the transition to the The National School Lunch Program 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.

48. The National School Lunch Programme, implemented by the Government, provides daily hot lunches in schools to pre-primary and primary children in disadvantaged communities with high prevalence of malnutrition and poor education performance. The programme operates throughout the 175 school days in a typical school year (September to June). Coverage of the programme has expanded over time, with the Government taking over the management of school lunches from development partners.

49. Since 2020, the Government has embedded a budget line for the National School Lunch Programme in the education sector budget, with an allocation in 2024 of approximately 26.4 billion LAK (US\$2.1 million). The national model is cash-based, with funds provided directly to schools by the Ministry of Education and Sports to purchase food locally. The state allocation for food purchases is 1,000 LAK (US\$0.047) per student per day. Since 2023, the Global Partnership for Education and World Bank have funded the National School Lunch Programme in 450 schools with a 2,000 LAK (US\$0.094) per child per day allocation.

50. The progress on the National School Lunch Programme management and the remaining capacity gaps are evident thanks to participatory exercise carried out by the Government in 2023, with support from WFP, using the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results – School Feeding (SABER). The findings support the FY17 project endline evaluation (2023) finding that capacity gaps continue to impede the full transition of the programme. Transition to national ownership is a long process that requires long-term support and resources to establish all required capacities considering the five policy goals assessed through the SABER exercise (2023), the level of current capacities towards achieving Policy goal 1: policy and regulatory framework is established, while other SABER policy goals (financial capacity, institutional capacity and coordination, programme design and implementation, and the role of non-state actors) are emerging. Economic constraints have further slowed down the development of national capacities to fund and manage the National School Lunch Programme, including the Government's ability to take over the 702 schools supported by the FY20 McGovern-Dole project which is currently implemented by WFP with CRS and the Ministry of Education and Sports which will end in September 2025. With the further support from USDA WFP and CRS will be able to continue implementing activities including school lunch distributions in the 702 schools.

51. As Lao PDR establishes the necessary reforms to address the economic situation, this continuing McGovern-Dole assistance remains essential to consolidate the National School Lunch Programme and build on the food security, nutrition, and education gains, particularly in vulnerable communities targeted by the FY20 project. In addition, continued support is crucial to protect the ten years of investments made by the Government and USDA to set up and consolidate a National School Lunch Programme till September 2029.

52. As of 2024, 245,000 pre-primary and primary schoolchildren – or 25 percent – receive daily school meals in 2,760 schools across 65 districts where social needs are the highest. The Government manages the National School Lunch Programme for 165,000 children in 1,859 schools across 44 districts in the country. Through USDA McGovern-Dole projects, WFP and CRS deliver meals to 80,000 students in 901 schools in 21 districts.

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, McGovern-Dole 2021 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. 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.

55. 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.

56. WFP's experience in 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.

57. High level policy support and capacity strengthening form the backbone of the transition to the NSLP under full government ownership by the end of project cycle. 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 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

58. The USDA McGovern-Dole FY24 project (**US\$27.5 million**) will be implemented by WFP in partnership with CRS providing a package of school health, education, and nutrition activities, including school meals, water access, hygiene promotion, literacy, community mobilization, school feeding-related infrastructure investments, policy support, and health and nutrition awareness activities, to reach approximately **65,000 pre-primary and primary school-aged children in 17 education priority districts** previously under the FFE-439-2024/006-00 award in 11 provinces (Vientiane, Bokeo, Luang Prabang, Xienghuang, Salavan, Champasak, Sekong, Khammouan, Savannakhet, and Attapeu provinces and Vientiane Capital). The project targets 702 primary schools, including primary schools with preschool programs attached.

59. The agreement between the Foreign Agricultural Service and The World Food Programme for The Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-439-2024/006-00) was signed in September 2024. The agreement starts on 30 September 2024 and the project ends on **30 September 2029**.

60. The 17 targeted districts in Lao PDR are: Meung District in Bokeo Province, Park ou District in Luangprabang Province, Nonghed District in Xiengkhouang Province, Feuang District in Vientiane Province, Sangthong District in Vientiane Capital, Bualapha, Mahaxay, Nhommalath and Xaybuathong Districts in Khammouane Province, Xonbully District in Savannakhet Province, Lakhonepheng District in Salavan Province, Bachiangchaleunsook, Khong, Moonlapamok and Sukhuma Districts in Champasack Province, Lamarm District in Xekong Province, and Xaysetha District in Attapeu Province.

61. The project focuses on achieving the following objectives:

- To increase school enrollment and attendance, alleviate short term hunger and improve student learning, concentration and access to nutritious food by providing daily on-site school meals;
- To increase the use of healthy practices by providing increased access to clean water;
- Strengthen the Government of Laos's capacities to finance, manage, and sustainably deliver the National School Lunch Program;

- Ensure communities are fully engaged and equipped with adequate infrastructure, management and problem-solving skills and enhance their capacities to support the program by encouraging innovative solutions for sustainable implementation; and
- Improve students' emergent literacy skills in the early primary years through increased access to learning materials, targeted teacher support, and community engagement.

62. These objectives are in line with the McGovern-Dole project's highest-level Strategic Objectives (SO). The project result framework that summarized the project's intervention theory (Theory of Change - TOC) is attached in Annex 7.

- **SO1:** Improved Literacy of School-Aged children;
- **SO2:** Increased Use of Health, Nutrition and Dietary practices;
- **LRP SO1:** Improved Effectiveness of Food Assistance through Local and Regional Procurement; and
- **Foundational Results** of local and institutional capacity strengthening.

63. A key element of the USDA 2024-2029 McGovern-Dole program is that it is a continuation of the previous McGovern-Dole award (2020-2024) in the same target schools with a similar set of activities. This is the fourth cycle of assistance through the McGovern Dole grant, following the 2020-2024 cycle, 2017-2020 cycle and 2015-2017 cycle. The key features of the 2020-2024 and 2017-2020 cycles are attached in Annex 11.

64. The planned outcome and outputs are reflected in the McGovern-Dole Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) in Annex 6.

65. The project target number for the schools are as follows.

Table 3: Target number of project schools and students

Target number of project schools and students	FY 2025 Target	FY 2026 Target	FY 2027 Target	FY 2028 Target	FY 2029 Target	Life of Project Target
# of Schools	702	702	702	702	702	702
# of students enrolled in target schools	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	117,000

*sex disaggregation of boys and girls to be determined, depending on the current situation.

66. The planned amount of food commodities to assist the project are as follows:

Table 4: The planned amount of food assistance

Commodities to be donated from the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service: Vegetable Oil	200 MT
Commodities to be donated from the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service: Fortified Rice	3,820 MT
Locally or Regionally Procured Commodities: Canned Fish	860 MT

67. The following activities are planned to achieve the objectives:

Table 5: Planned table of activities and planned budget

Activity 1	Strengthen Government's capacities to finance and sustainably manage the NSLP	USD 943,435
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of a Financing Strategy: • Support mechanisms for multi-sectoral coordination • Strengthen institutional capacities • Support the Development of Program Minimum Standards and Operational Guidelines • Strengthen national planning, M&E and reporting capacities • Establish a tripartite transition plan 		

- Assess progress in national capacities to manage the NSLP:

Activity 2	Generate Evidence and Advocate for improved and Inclusive National School Lunch Models	USD 326,091
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- Generate evidence on the effectiveness of the current NSLP model and investigate benefits for communities, parents, and children
- Convene stakeholders to disseminate global and national evidence on school meals
- Advocate for increased investment in the most vulnerable communities: Operational research to generate evidence on new program models

Activity 3	Empower communities to take ownership of health and nutrition programs for schoolchildren	USD 3,374,968
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Partner: CRS

- Provide Technical Support to Village Education Development Committees (VEDC)
- Promote recognition and learning through exchange of experience and best practices:
- Trainings of School Implementers
- Promote school-level income generation schemes

Activity 4	Provide Nutritious Daily School Meals	USD 2,022,980
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- P in 702 schools in 17 districts in 11 provinces.⁸
- The daily cooked lunch will consist of:

Amount	Commodity	Source	Frequency
100 g	fortified rice	USDA donation	5 days a week
5g	fortified vegetable oil	USDA donation	5 days a week
25g	canned fish	USDA procured regionally	Approx. 4 days a week
N/A	fresh vegetables, fruits, and animal proteins	Community contributions	As available

- The ration is based on a 150 day school year
- Training of school principals: Oversee delivery and required documentation.
- Working with District facilitators: emphasize parity of roles for women and men in VEDC and school director trainings and school visits to promote balanced cook and storekeeper selection.
- Cooks training: Cooking with hygiene and food safety principles with cookbooks. Cooks and storekeepers will receive a monthly 10 kg fortified rice take-home ration (THR) as compensation for their labor and as an incentive.

Activity 5	Expand schools' access to safe water and clean cooking technologies	USD 1,963,773
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Partner: National Center for Environmental Health and Water Supply (NamSaat)

- Equip schools with the basic infrastructure and cooking equipment needed for sustainable school meals management.
- Construct new water systems in approximately 100 schools
- Support the establishment of water management committees at village level,
- Facilitate smaller upgrades to existing water points, such as kitchens and handwashing stations, in approximately 300 additional schools.
- Provide low-cost point-of-use water treatment materials (ceramic filters) in all schools.

WFP will identify to provide improved energy-efficient cooking stoves to approximately **200 schools**

Activity 6	Expand school-based social behaviour change interventions to establish healthy hygiene and dietary habits	USD 1,550,064
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⁸ Target districts are: Meung District in Bokeo Province, Park ou District in Luangprabang Province, Nonghed District in Xiengkhouang Province, Feuang District in Vientiane Province, Sangthong District in Vientiane Capital, Bualapha, Mahaxay, Nhommalath and Xaybuathong Districts in Khammouane Province, Xonbuly District in Savannakhet Province, Lakhonepheng District in Salavan Province, Bachiachaleunsook, Khong, Moonlapamok and Sukhuma Districts in Champasack Province and Lamarm District in Xekong Province, Xaysetha District in Attapeu Province.

- Partner:
CRS
- Roll out of the Social and Behavioral Change (SBC) campaign for health and nutrition focused interventions in all 17 districts.
 - encourage the use of Green Boxes, a nutrition and school gardens toolkit, which has been distributed to all schools under prior McGovern-Dole funding
 - Healthy School Environment Policy: work with the MoES and UN partners to establish a healthy school environment working group

Activity 7 Train Teachers and Administrators USD 1,239,482

- Partner:
CRS
- Provide Professional Development and Capacity Building: equip teachers with knowledge and skills for effective formative assessment techniques.
 - Enhancing Monitoring and Data Integration: Aligning with Reading MATTERS Regular Assessment and Standards, conduct yearly reading using a contextualized Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) that includes the Receptive and Expressive Learning Module (RELM).

Activity 8: Provide inclusive complementary literacy activities USD 1,656,935

- Partner:
CRS
- Provide Learning Resources in Schools and for Home Learning Support: WFP, through subrecipient CRS, will establish reading corner libraries in approximately 200 schools.
 - CRS will select and procure reading sets comprised of approximately 40 books and materials for schools.
 - CRS will support at-home learning by providing reading materials for Grades 1 and 2 and reading supplies for Grades 3 through 5.
 - Provide Inclusive School Readiness opportunities
 - Organize community-led reading activities

68. On literacy, the project provides a package of literacy activities in supporting all children to learn to read by cultivating literacy-rich environments, supported by caregivers' and communities', and by expanding inclusive school readiness opportunities for pre-primary aged children. The literacy package activities include:

69. **Learning Resources in Schools and for Home Learning Support** - CRS enhances access to learning resources in schools and homes to support the availability of books and learning resource inside and out of the classroom. Functional reading corner libraries will be established in 200 schools, benefiting over 14,000 primary-grade students. In collaboration with school administrators and teachers, CRS will evaluate existing resources and procure age-appropriate books and materials in the local language. Each school will receive a curated set of approximately 40 books and materials aligned with Universal Design for Learning principles to meet student needs and uphold the All Children Reading initiative. CRS will train district authorities and support schools in effectively utilizing these resources to enhance learning. Additionally, CRS will promote literacy development at home by providing 8,000 reading sets for Grades 1–2 and 12,000 for Grades 3–5.

70. **Integrating technology into the classroom** - Building on previous successes in integrating technology into classrooms, CRS advances the expansion of digital literacy resources and accessible learning materials. This includes the development of digital reading booklets and the exploration of portable projectors, televisions, and tablets preloaded with eBooks, audiobooks, videos, and educational games. The approach to digital expansion is determined in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports, incorporating insights and best practices and tailoring them to the Lao context. All literacy materials developed are shared under open creative licenses to facilitate adoption and adaptation by other organizations.

71. **Inclusive School Readiness opportunities** - Provide Inclusive School Readiness opportunities: To ensure that all children entering Grade 1 are equally prepared for success, CRS enhances readiness and literacy skills for two specific groups: children from households with languages distinct from Lao-Tai and children with disabilities.

72. **School Readiness Camp** - CRS supports School Readiness Camps (SRC), a 12-week programme using an age-appropriate and play-oriented curriculum developed in partnership with the Research Institute for Educational Sciences. The camps focus on improving the oral Lao language skills of pre-primary and incoming Grade 1 students while familiarizing them with classroom dynamics in a safe and nurturing space. They provide early exposure to a classroom environment, reading materials, writing activities, and printing

materials, all of which contribute to long-term literacy improvement. CRS monitors outcomes by assessing children's ability to speak and understand the language of instruction – a key building block for reading comprehension – using appropriate modules of the EGRA.

73. **Disability screening:** At the start of the school year, CRS facilitates disability screenings to identify children with disabilities or additional pedagogical requirements, enabling the provision of appropriate learning support. Screenings are performed by district health staff with support from the Lao Disabled Persons Association to identify children who exhibit impairments or encounter challenges in independently performing routine tasks. If a child is identified as potentially having an impairment and/or requirement for learning support, he/she will be supported through an established referral pathway and a dedicated budget for reasonable accommodations to facilitate their participation in school, such as modified instructional materials and assistive devices.

74. **Community-led reading activities** - Organize community-led reading activities: CRS fosters extra literacy development practices for all children through community-led reading activities outside of school, which align. CRS envisions a range of activity formats, including community story hours, peer reading buddy programmes, book clubs, storytelling theatres, and reading festivals. To ensure the smooth execution of community reading initiatives, CRS and VEDC will be appointed, trained, and equipped dedicated Community Reading Facilitators in each community. They will be recruited in the second year of the project and will assume responsibility for implementing the activities. They will undergo comprehensive training and will be provided with essential resources like books and learning materials. Furthermore, they will be guided to organize regular activities outside school hours. While CRS will support by developing materials and providing, the implementation of these initiatives will be driven by the community for flexibility and adaptability to the unique needs and preferences of each community.

75. Cross-cutting themes emphasizing differing vulnerabilities of certain demographics is important in WFP. While associated lenses shall be incorporated in all activities, including:

- Under Activity 1, In 2025, WFP, in cooperation with WFP's cooperating partner, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), will support the development of, and updates, to the NSLP operational guidelines to ensure clear program management processes. WFP will mainstream approaches to ensuring girls, boys, women and men are sensitively reached in the operational guidelines to support balanced roles and workloads in NSLP communities. Under Activity 3, Provide Technical Support to VEDCs: WFP and CRS will provide annual trainings to Village Education Development Committees (VEDC) through provincial and district authorities on the management of health and nutrition programs. As part of the training, WFP and CRS will raise awareness on social issues, their consequences, and actions the community can take to adjust. At the same time, no dedicated analysis on vulnerable populations was conducted during the design phase. Therefore, the baseline study for FY24 shall explore how this lens can be adequately incorporated in the evaluation processes (baseline, mid-term and end-line) during its inception phase.

4. Evaluation scope and questions

76. Commissioned by the WFP Lao PDR Country Office, the evaluation will cover all activities implemented through the McGovern-Dole funding (FFE-439-2024/006-00) in all project 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 baseline, midterm, and final evaluations. The baseline will focus on collecting the latest values for all indicators before commencement of the activities. For those indicators whose source is secondary (from monitoring data, government, or other partners), the baseline will use the latest available figures at the time of the baseline study in 2025. The evaluation team should refer to the Performance Indicators under Annex 6 and Annex 7: Project level Result Framework for more information on the MGD program's indicators to be informed by the baseline. The mid-term evaluation will cover approximately 2.5 years of program implementation in 2027. The final evaluation will cover entire program implementation period in 2029, as detailed below.

77. The timing of the baseline of the McGovern-Dole FY24 evaluation will be synchronized, or, back-to-back with the end-line evaluation of the McGovern-Dole FY20. Most of the quantitative data collected during the evaluation of the McGovern-Dole FY20 will serve as baseline data. Since the two projects will be implemented in the same schools this is to avoid respondent fatigue and unnecessary duplication of effort.

78. Considering this timing, the McGovern-Dole FY24 baseline will not collect primary quantitative data for indicators that remain the same with the previous award and measure change from the same groups. These indicators mainly include education, health, nutrition outcomes of school-going children in the targeted schools, such as the attentiveness, attendance, and literacy rate, etc. The baseline study of FY24 will present the updated values for these indicators gathered through the previous cycle (FY20) of endline evaluation, which will constitute as the baseline values for the new award. Also considering the target areas of the FY20 cycle and FY24 are mostly the same, the FY24 evaluation series will consider FY20 indicator values and results to show, and consider implications of, changes happening over the whole 2020 to 2029 period where and when applicable and feasible, even though FY24 will be treated as an independent cycle of the award.

79. The benefit of using primary quantitative data of FY20 Endline Evaluation for FY24 baseline and exploring the project-related change measurement starting from the FY20 values are the following:

1) Evaluation fatigue of stakeholders can be reduced as the quantitative baseline value can be established primarily through desk review. The baseline will be established through desk review and primary data collection from the FY20 endline evaluation, supplemented by primary qualitative data. Conducting primary quantitative data collection through the baseline study would cause beneficiaries to be surveyed twice in rapid succession; once for the FY20 endline evaluation and again for the FY24 baseline study, whose data collection are both in the first quarter of 2025. This approach would expend additional resources without the benefit of new insights (i.e., values are unlikely to have changed in a matter of months).

2) Data collected in 2025 for FY24 may show the raised value because of the effects of the implementation from the previous award. The FY20 endline evaluation values are closer to the 'true baseline' or the pre-intervention state of the outcomes.

80. The **baseline study (June 2025 – November 2025)** is the first product of the evaluation plan and will serve several critical purposes:

81. The Baseline Study aims to collect and validate the performance indicators specified in the Performance indicators (Annex 6), which encompass both standard USDA indicators and customized indicators as indicated in the McGovern-Dole indicators. The custom indicators will be tailored to the context and will be used to measure the program's unique aspects, therefore complimenting the standard

indicators. Results from the baseline will be used to re-evaluate indicators, targets, and future evaluation questions, and may contribute to updating the results framework to better reflect the project context.

- The Baseline Study will be used to establish baseline values for all performance indicators and baseline statuses for all evaluation questions. The Baseline Study will be critical for confirming the appropriateness of indicator selection and targets, relevance of evaluation questions for midterm and endline evaluations. They will also be reviewed during baseline based on evaluability and relevance.
- The Baseline Study will provide the essential data points against which to measure progress on key performance indicators throughout the project. The baselines established will be used to review the project targets for 2029 and the relevance of evaluation questions.
- The baseline report will systematically reflect the progress made from FY20 cycle to explain the background contexts of Baseline status, where and when applicable and appropriate, so that the upcoming evaluations from this project will be able to present results in continuum with coherence. However, the baseline study and questions should NOT attempt to evaluate the previous cycle, i.e. FY20.

82. The baseline study will also be used to inform a comprehensive situational analysis before project initiation. The baseline study will present the situation at the point of baseline, which may reflect the changes made from the FY20 cycle project to present, supplemented by primary qualitative data, and framed in the evaluation questions of the FY24 award to establish assumptions, perspectives and expectations of the stakeholders for the project period ending in 2029.

83. At the baseline inception stage, the overall evaluation design will be finalized with the full set of evaluation questions, methodology, and sampling frame for mid-term and final evaluations. The baseline study may identify areas of further improvements to be considered for the quantitative data collection for the following evaluations. In such case, appropriate suggestions will be reflected during the baseline process considering the up-to-date context.

84. Many evaluation questions are expected to have sufficient evidence to answer using desk review of previous evaluation reports of the program, especially the FY20 McGovern-Dole endline findings. Areas in need of further qualitative data collection or further data validation will be identified at inception by the evaluation team.

85. The **midterm evaluation (January – September 2027)** will be conducted at the midway point of the project to assess the progress towards project objectives and targets and inform course correction for the remainder of the project, as necessary. The mid-term evaluation's objective will be to provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of performance of the school feeding project so that WFP and its project partners can adjust course as necessary for the rest of the project term.

86. Specifically, the mid-term evaluation will (1) review the project's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and sustainability and coherence, (2) collect performance indicator data for strategic objectives and higher-level results, this will include assessment of early grade reading outcomes, health/nutrition/dietary practices (3) assess whether the project is on track to meet the results and targets, (4) review the results frameworks and theory of change, and (5) identify any necessary mid-course corrections as the midterm provides us with an opportunity to learn and adapt, particularly in alignment with the country office's key learning objectives. For instance, considerations in adjustments to the timing and approach of school transitions and the number of schools to be handed over.

87. The mid-term evaluation's inception report will set out the detailed evaluation questions the evaluation will address, describe detailed methodology used to answer these questions, and specify how the Learning Agenda research questions will be addressed. WFP will formulate a well-structured management response to follow up the mid-term evaluation recommendations.

88. The objective of **the end-line (final) evaluation (January – September 2029)** is to provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of the overall performance of the school feeding project to evaluate the project's success, ensure accountability, and generate lessons learned. Specifically, the end-line evaluation will: (1) review the project's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence, (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.

89. The end-line evaluation will build upon the baseline study and the mid-term evaluation to assess the project's success regarding McGovern-Dole's two strategic objectives (SO1: Improved Literacy of School-Age Children and SO2: Increased Use of Health, Nutrition and Dietary Practices), as well as the LRP SO: Improved Effectiveness of Food Assistance through Local and Regional Procurement including its best practice. The endline evaluation findings will inform the McGovern-Dole USDA learning agenda for WFP, USDA, and relevant stakeholders through providing key learnings for a smooth transition of McGovern-Dole schools into the national school lunch program.

90. The evaluation series carried out over the next 5 years contribute to many **USDA Learning Agenda questions**. The WFP Lao PDR Country Office places specific emphasis on the following two Learning Agenda questions:

- What community-level systems of governance and management are required for the successful implementation and sustainability of school meal programs?
- What variables impact the resilience of school meal program community support systems and in what ways?

91. The Learning Agenda questions shall be integrated into the evaluations. The precise nature of how the evaluations contribute to answering these questions is expected to be detailed in the Inception Report of the baseline study and mid-term evaluation and end-line evaluations.

92. The evaluation will apply the international evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact and coherence. Findings under impact and sustainability criteria will contribute to the planning of transitioning the interventions to the NSMP, which is one of the FY24 project's key focus.

93. The evaluations should analyse objectives to ensure nuances for vulnerable demographics and related mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design, and whether the evaluation subject has been guided by WFP and system-wide objectives on these matters. These dimensions should be integrated into all evaluation criteria as appropriate. They may include the analysis of: the effect of tackling stereo-typical, negative social norms in the target areas, such as cooking and domestic work, ensuring parity of opportunities to men and women as well as disadvantaged groups in the participation of the projects, and encouraging equal representation of men and women in decision-making opportunities of relevant groups, such as VEDC or relevant project committees. It will also include the analysis of the level of integration of approaches for **transformative** change for boys and girls and men and women across the school feeding programme cycle.

94. In the Lao PDR context, the implementation of key activities across the school feeding supply chain relies heavily on the contributions of women (providing food, cooking, serving), which adds to their already heavy workload. Incentives (e.g., fair wages) would increase recognition of their hard work and ensure sustainability. It would be beneficial for the evaluations to provide evidence to;

- understand what kind of incentives men and women would be interested in, and how the community can contribute to the school lunch program in a sustainable way.
- analyze the occupational safety of female and male cook's influence within the program and challenge social and cultural norms ("cooking is the job of mothers, voluntary work") and be aware of intersectionality and leave no one behind.
- analyze paid and unpaid work of men and women, access barriers and opportunities for men and women and measure shift in empowered participation, leadership and decision-making power in schools and VEDCs.

95. The questions are summarised in Table 6 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 project (accountability), with a view to informing future strategic and operational decisions.

Table 6 - Preliminary Key Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions		Possible data collection methods
	Baseline Study	Mid Term/End-line Evaluation	
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does the design of the WFP supported School Feeding program contribute to realizing the Government of Lao PDR's policies and strategies related to school feeding and WFP's Country Strategic Plan 2022-2026? To what extent will the design of the School Feeding program be likely to contribute and enable institutional capacity strengthening of government to take over and integrate into the National School Lunch Program at the pre-implementation stage? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the design of the School Feeding program contributing to realizing the Government of Lao PDR's policies and strategies related to school feeding? To what extent does the design of the School Feeding Program contribute to institutional capacity strengthening of government to take over and integration into the National School Lunch Program at the end of the program timeframe? To what extent are WFP's capacity strengthening activities designed based on needs assessments/ analyses of national capacity in all five SABER policy goals? To what extent are the design and implementation of the WFP-supported School Feeding program responsive to community needs, taking the different needs of women, men, boys, and girls into consideration? 	<p>Document review</p> <p>Quantitative survey</p> <p>Focus groups (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII)</p>
Coherence		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the changes to the alignment with school feeding national policy, national need, WFP school feeding policy and guidance and with donor and partner school feeding strategies since the baseline/midterm? How well integrated is the project in practice with other projects, activities and Outcomes in the WFP CSP 2022-2026 and the project timeline? 	<p>Document review, KIIs</p> <p>Qualitative analysis</p>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the current knowledge, attitudes, and practices around healthy diets among students, teachers, school cooks, and parents.? To what extent are the intended results, indicators and monitoring systems designed to inform the analysis of the different needs of women, men, boys, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent do the interventions achieve the expected results and outcomes reaching the target? Were all the program activities carried out as planned? To what extent and which aspect has the implementation of the School Feeding Program to date facilitated the readiness of all stakeholders for the handover of the SFP to GoL and integration into the national School Lunch Program at the end of the program timeframe? How effective is the capacity strengthening work at building national capacity in school feeding? Does it include work across the five SABER-SF 	<p>Quantitative survey</p> <p>Project implementation records</p> <p>FDGs and KIIs</p>

	and girls at baseline stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy goals? Were the capacity strengthening and/or handover activities carried out as per plans? How did the project's WASH interventions contribute to changes in the use of health and hygiene practice? What factors are causing affecting students to be absent at targeted schools, including health-related illnesses? Has sufficient attention been given to sex, disability and human rights issues in the implementation of the project and has this produced any results? 	
Efficiency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How efficient is/was the program in ensuring service delivery as well as preparing the Government and communities for the hand over? To what extent does the project as designed (including partnerships with CRS) includes measures of efficiency in service delivery and handover? Has WFP been able to timely mobilize the required skills, personnel, and technical support to be able to provide the right support to national actors (at technical, project management and advocacy levels)? How efficient is WFP's approach to strengthening national capacity in school feeding? Has WFP been able to timely mobilize the required skills/personnel/technical support to be able to provide the right support to the government (at technical, project management and advocacy levels)? 	Document Review Project implementation records FGDs and KIIs
Impact		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What progress has the Government made toward developing and implementing a nationally owned school feeding programme? What intended and unintended changes have been observed particularly in education, WASH and literacy outcomes and home literacy environment and what are the possible contribution of the project to the observed impacts? What internal and external factors affected the program's ability to deliver impact? 	Quantitative survey Project implementation records FGDs and KIIs

Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking forward over the lifetime of the project, which aspects of the SFP are most/least resource intensive and which will or require the most capacity to implement? To what extent is it likely that the nutritional content of the school meals will be sustained after the handover? To what extent is the program on track for handover and integration into the NSMP and what is the likelihood of sustainability by achieving the relevant community-level milestones? To what extent does the project as designed promotes the local farmers/communities' contribution of diverse and nutrition crops to the SFP? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key gaps and priority areas for institutionalization moving forward? What is the status of VEDC and community members' capacity and school infrastructure to support the National School Lunch Programme through cash, infrastructure, labour, and other forms of support? To what extent is the production of diverse and nutritious crops in the communities, and is fresh produce being contributed for the SFP? To what extent has the WFP implementation model been adapted to align with the national school feeding model in preparation for handover? To what extent has the package of capacity strengthening activities within WFP-supported programme been institutionalized into the Government's policies, strategies, systems, and implementation arrangements so that they are more likely to be sustainable beyond WFP's support (within all five policy goals)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Policy Goal 1: Is the government convinced of the benefits of school feeding and made commitment to implement and manage a national school feeding programme? ➤ Policy Goal 2: Does the government contribute financially to school feeding? ➤ Policy Goal 3: To what extent do school and governance and coordination structures have the capacity to implement a national school feeding programme¹⁰? What needs to be improved? ➤ Policy Goal 4: Is there a national school feeding programme (or design for one?) What are the key gaps and priority areas to improve its quality and/or coverage? Is there an M&E system for the national programme? ➤ Policy Goal 5: Are communities and other non-state actors engaged with school feeding? 	Quantitative survey, Organization Performance Index, FGDs and KIIs
General		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What interventions were the most effective at securing community, local or national government investment into the SFP? What are the barriers and challenges in securing investment? What are lessons learned from the project? 	Document review, Quantitative surveys, Key stakeholder focus groups

5. Methodological approach and ethical considerations

5.1 Evaluation approach

101. The evaluation methodology for the three deliverables 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 6 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.

102. The methodology and sampling frame should be sensitive to and , indicate how the perspectives and voices of men and women, boys, girls, the elderly, people living with disabilities and other 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.

103. Looking for explicit consideration of vulnerable groups 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 sensitive ways before fieldwork begins. Sensitive data collection plan will address intersectionality by analysing social and demographic factors together. .

104. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect **demographic-based vulnerability analysis** that lead to the outcomes and findings, 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 within these vulnerable demographics. The report should provide lessons/ challenges/recommendations for conducting evaluations sensitive to these demographics in the future. The baseline study could benefit from including a demographically sensitive analysis of the existing data to ensure that these considerations are adequately incorporated into the baseline.

105. **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.

106. The use of **quasi-experimental research methods** will be explored during the inception phase and will depend on the feasibility of collecting data from adequate comparison schools, and also bearing in mind complications of comparison of non-intervention schools with project schools that had at least one previous

cycle of intervention.⁹ 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, and sample size calculations. Consideration can be given to continuation of the sampling strategy adopted in the midline and endline of the 2020 to 2024 evaluation cycle. 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. The analysis will further be enhanced by disaggregation of all relevant indicators by sex to evaluate whether the project addresses the needs of boys, girls, men, women and other groups.

107. Under the quantitative approach, **surveys** are expected to be conducted with children as well as teachers, and VECD members for Mid-Term and End-Line evaluations.

108. 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. The evaluations will be representative at district level. 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.

109. 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 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.

110. **Baseline Study:** As mentioned in the Scope, the FY24 Baseline Study expects to utilize primary quantitative data collected through FY20 Endline Evaluation to avoid evaluation fatigue of the stakeholders. Hence, quantitative methods in the Baseline Study does not expect to include executing surveys with statistically representative samples. To ensure maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use, the evaluation team will ensure triangulation of the various data sources such as FY20 Endline datasets. In case any area of further improvement of quantitative methodology in a dynamic context are identified during the quantitative data analysis, the Evaluation Team will make constructive methodological proposal towards the Mid-Term Evaluation data collection. The methodology proposed for the FY20 Endline is attached in the Annex 9.

111. **Mid-term and End-line (Final) 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 and available data sets will be employed.

112. A **comparison design** between different types of schools being supported by the project was employed for the FY20 McGovern-Dole project study and evaluations, seeking evidence on if and how results of different types of schools vary within the project according to various characteristics which were prioritized. The FY20 project evaluation cycle proceeded with a “treatment arms” comparison approach, i.e. four strata based on the following intervention categories: **school meals only, school meals and WASH school meals, WASH, and literacy, school meals and Literacy**. To enable comparison analysis, the FY24 study and evaluations will also consider the comparison design. the Quasi-experimental techniques will be considered by breaking up the schools according to categories and then randomly selecting within these (i.e. stratified random sampling).

113. 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

⁹ Whatever the differences between comparison and treatment, it will be impossible to disentangle the effects of the current project from the previous one in producing those differences. E.g. It could be argued that intervention schools already have superior teacher and parent motivation left over from the previous phase.

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.

114. The main limitation of the evaluation includes the challenge of measuring attribution of project activities towards impact as there is no pure control group with the counterfactual.

115. 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. The FY20 End-line 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 schools to represent the best approach to detecting the effect of the intervention.

116. The evaluation team will expand on the methodology presented above and develop a detailed evaluation matrix in the inception report. The Evaluation Team will assess possible challenges and limitations mentioned above including the absence of a pure control group and issues with data comparability. The Evaluation Team will propose innovative methods and mitigation strategies to address them such as a comparison between different arms to evaluate the project's contribution to the results.

5.2 Preliminary considerations on evaluability and methodological implications

51. Main sources of information available to the evaluation team are the following:

- USDA McGovern-Dole FY2024 – Project Proposal – Approved.
- USDA McGovern-Dole FY2024 – 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
- USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 End-Line Data Set
- Revised Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and Project Annual Target
- Semi-annual report from the previous cycle of USDA McGovern-Dole FY20 2021 and 2022, and 2023.
- 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.
- Lao PDR – Lao Social Indicators Survey III, 2023 (LSIS III, 2023), Survey Finding Reports

117. 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.
- Assess the data collection plan that enables operational feasibility and resource optimization at baseline stage for mid-term and end-line evaluations, to assess efficiency criterion.

118. 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.
- While schools have received intervention from previous McGovern Dole project cycles and it is expected the progress of interventions since previous cycles, where appropriate, are weaved into the analysis and background of the current cycle, the FY24 projects' evaluation series will be presented as a new stand-alone cycle. Hence, clear data presentation and wording shall be considered to avoid confusion.
- Some data only available in Lao language.
- Availability and quality of sex-disaggregated data, including data related to demographic-specific outcomes.
- Very limited data on disability inclusion.
- Evaluation fatigue by the stakeholders
- High government staff turnover – limited institutional memory
- Possible timeline overlap with FY20 Endline evaluation.
- Remoteness and access to some project sites and schools.

119. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will be expected 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 as well as the sampling. 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.

120. Disaggregated data is crucial for understanding **demographic-sensitive dimensions** in the project outcomes, ensuring that the program is equipped to capture these nuances as it progresses. Hence, the availability of disaggregated data will also be assessed by the Evaluation Team during the inception phase of each study /evaluation.

5.3 Ethical considerations

121. The evaluation must conform to [UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation](#) (Integrity, Accountability, Respect, Beneficence¹⁰). 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 other stakeholder 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.

122. 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.

123. 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

¹⁰ Beneficence means striving to do good for people and planet while minimizing harms arising from evaluation as an intervention.

Inspection and Investigation (OIGI) through WFP hotline (<http://www.wfp hotline.ethicspoint.com>).¹¹ At the same time, commission office management and the Regional Evaluation Unit (REU) should also be informed.

124. 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 WFP school feeding projects and related activities, have no vested interest, nor have any other potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

125. **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.

126. 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 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.¹² These templates will be provided by the country office when signing the contract.

5.4 Quality assurance

127. 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.

128. 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.

129. 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.

130. 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

¹¹ 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](#).

¹² 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.

systematic assessment of their quality from an evaluation perspective, along with recommendations.

131. 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](#),¹³ a rationale should be provided for comments that the team does not take into account when finalizing the report.

132. 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.

133. 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](#).

134. 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.

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

¹³ [UNEG](#) Norm #7 states “that transparency is an essential element that establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability”

6 Organization of the evaluation

6.1 Phases and deliverables

136. All phases (baseline, midterm and endline) of the evaluation shall be conducted by the same evaluation firm, contingent upon satisfactory performance of previous evaluations under this Terms of Reference. The company will be contracted for the baseline and midterm on a test/probationary basis. Provided the company meets the standards during baseline and midterm the PO will be increased and addendum issued to include the midterm and endline evaluations.

137. All final versions of USDA International Food Assistance evaluation reports (baseline study, midline and end-line evaluation reports) will be made publicly available. Evaluators 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>

138. Table 7 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. Considering the dynamic nature of the project and the evaluations, there may be possibilities of adjusting timelines or deliverables as needed. The Evaluation Team will be consulted in such occasion.

Table 7: Summary timeline – key evaluation milestones

Main phases	Indicative timeline	Tasks and deliverables	Responsible
1. Preparation phase for overall evaluation	January - June 2025	Preparation of ToR Selection of the evaluation team & contracting	CO Evaluation manager
Baseline Evaluation			
2. Inception	June - August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review/ briefing • Inception mission [in person or remote] • Inception report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Field Data Collection Workplan – Quality Assurance Plan – Data collection tools 	Evaluation Team With support from CO Evaluation Manager
3. Data collection	September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldwork • Exit debriefing including power-point presentation 	Evaluation Team CO
4. Reporting	September – November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis and report drafting • Comments process (completed ERG and DEQS comments matrix) • Draft Evaluation Report with performance indicators annex • Feedback from USDA and the subsequent adjustments to the report • Final Evaluation Report Presentation of Evaluation • Clean datasets of both quantitative and qualitative data with data notes 	Evaluation Team WFP Evaluation Manager USDA Evaluation reference Group

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 pages brief • Learning workshop (online) • Virtual findings presentation to USDA 	
5. Dissemination and follow-up	November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management response • Dissemination of the evaluation report 	WFP Evaluation Manager/WFP CO Program and Management Team
Midterm Evaluation			
6. Inception phase for midterm evaluation	January – February 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review/ briefing • Inception mission [in person or remote] • Inception report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Field Data Collection Workplan – Quality Assurance Plan – Data collection tools 	Evaluation Team With support from CO Evaluation Manager
7. Data collection	March 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldwork • Exit debriefing including power-point presentation 	Evaluation Team CO
8. Reporting	April – July 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis and report drafting • Comments process (completed ERG and DEQS comments matrix) • Draft Evaluation Report with performance indicators annex • Feedback from USDA and the subsequent adjustments to the report • Final Evaluation Report • Final Evaluation Report Presentation of Evaluation • Clean datasets of both quantitative and qualitative data with data notes • 2-3 pages brief • Learning workshop (online) • Virtual findings presentation to USDA 	Evaluation Team WFP Evaluation Manager USDA Evaluation reference Group
9. Dissemination and follow-up	August - September 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management response • Dissemination of the evaluation report 	WFP Evaluation Manager/WFP CO Program and Management Team
End-line Evaluation			
10. Inception phase for midterm evaluation	January – February 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review/ briefing • Inception mission [in person or remote] • Inception report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Field Data Collection Workplan – Quality Assurance Plan – Data collection tools 	Evaluation Team With support from CO Evaluation Manager
11. Data collection	March 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldwork Exit debriefing including power-point presentation	Evaluation Team CO
12. Reporting	April – September 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis and report drafting • Comments process (completed ERG and DEQS comments matrix) • Draft Evaluation Report with performance indicators annex 	Evaluation Team WFP Evaluation Manager USDA

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from USDA and the subsequent adjustments to the report Final Evaluation Report Final Evaluation Report Presentation of Evaluation Clean datasets of both quantitative and qualitative data with data notes 2-3 pages brief Learning workshop (online) Virtual findings presentation to USDA 	Evaluation reference Group
13. Dissemination and follow-up	September 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management response Dissemination of the evaluation report 	WFP Evaluation Manager/WFP CO Program and Management Team

52. The evaluation team is expected to produce a final report **considering USDA commenting and approval process consideration in its timeline for USDA's comments (several rounds) to be received, revision requests, and approval.** All final versions of the evaluation reports will be made publicly available. Evaluators shall provide a copy of the evaluation reports that is free of personally identifiable information (PII) and proprietary information. The ET is expected to share de-identified data with WFP. Final versions of evaluation reports ready for publication should be accessible to persons with disabilities.

53. 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>

6.2 Evaluation team composition

139. 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 geographically, culturally and linguistically diverse and balanced team of both men and women who can effectively cover the areas of evaluation. The evaluation team should have good knowledge of cross-cutting issues affecting vulnerable populations and, to the extent possible, power dynamics. 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.

140. The team will be multi-disciplinary and include members who, together, include an appropriate balance of technical expertise and practical knowledge as summarized in the Table 8.

Table 8: Summary of evaluation team and areas of expertise required

	Expertise required
Team Leadership (Senior level evaluator)	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent team management skills (coordination, planning, ability to resolve problems and deliver on time). Strong experience in leading evaluations at country level. 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. Strong presentation skills and excellent writing and synthesis skills in English. Excellent inter-personal skills with cultural sensitivity. Experience facilitating in-person and hybrid meetings and workshops. Experience in McGovern-Dole projects evaluations. Expertise in one or more of the technical areas below.

	Expertise required
	DESIRABLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with WFP programs and modalities of intervention. • Good knowledge of country context, proved by previous experience in the country. • Previous experience leading or conducting WFP evaluation(s), particularly McGovern Dole project evaluations. • Good knowledge of cross-cutting issues affecting vulnerable populations and, to the extent possible, power dynamics
Thematic expertise-Evaluator	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency and excellent writing skills in English. • The national team member(s) should have strong skills in oral and written Lao. • Demonstrable analytical skills relevant to School feeding and education project related evaluations particularly in similar contexts to Lao PDR. • 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. • Strong quantitative and qualitative analytical skills. • Familiarity with Lao PDR and/or the region. • Strong communication skills in oral and written English. • A team member or a back-office supporter should have strong data management and analysis skills to check data quality and compatibility DESIRABLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with WFP programs and modalities of intervention. • Previous experience leading or conducting WFP evaluation(s). • Previous experience in engaging in McGovern Dole project evaluations. • Good knowledge of country context, proved by previous experience in the country. • Good knowledge of cross-cutting issues affecting vulnerable populations issues and, to the extent possible, power dynamics. • Administrative and logistical experience
Quality assurance Evaluator	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in quality assurance of evaluations. DESIRABLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with WFP programs and modalities of intervention. • Previous experience with WFP evaluation(s).

141. 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.

142. 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).

143. 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.

144. 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.

145. 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

146. 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. Baseline, midterm, and endline evaluation reports:
 - 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 EM will review the 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.
 - 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 for baseline, midterm, and endline
 - 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 EM will review the 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.

147. The **WFP Lao PDR CO management** (Director or Deputy Director) will take responsibility to:

- Assign an evaluation manager for the evaluation
- Establish the internal evaluation committee (EC) and the evaluation reference group (ERG)
- Approve the final ToR, inception and evaluation reports
- Approve the evaluation team selection
- Ensure the independence and impartiality of the evaluation at all stages through EC and ERG
- Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and the evaluation subject, its performance and results with the evaluation manager and the evaluation team

- Organize and participate in debriefings with internal and external stakeholders
- Oversee dissemination and follow-up processes, including the preparation of a management response to the evaluation recommendations.

148. The **evaluation manager** manages the evaluation process through all phases including.

- Acting as the main interlocutor between the evaluation team, represented by the team leader and, if appropriate, the firm's focal point, and WFP counterparts to ensure a smooth implementation process
- Drafting this evaluation Terms of Reference in consultation with key stakeholders
- Identifying and contracting the evaluation team and preparing and managing the evaluation budget;
- Preparing the terms of reference and schedule of engagement for the EC and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) ;
- Ensuring quality assurance mechanisms are operational and effectively used;
- Consolidating and sharing comments on draft inception and evaluation reports with the evaluation team;
- Ensuring that the team has access to all documentation and information necessary to the evaluation; facilitating the team's contacts with local stakeholders;
- Supporting the preparation of the field mission by setting up meetings and field visits, providing logistic support during the fieldwork and arranging for interpretation, if required;
- Organizing security briefings for the evaluation team and providing any materials as required;
- Ensuring EC and ERG are kept informed on progress, and escalating issues to the EC as appropriate
- Conducting the first level quality assurance of the evaluation products.
- Submit all drafts to the REU for second level quality assurance before submission for approval

149. An **internal Evaluation Committee (EC)** is formed to steer the evaluation process and ensure it is independent and impartial. [The roles and responsibilities of the EC include overseeing the evaluation process, making key decisions and reviewing evaluation products. Annex 3 provides further information on the membership/composition of the evaluation committee and roles and responsibilities.

150. An **Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)** is formed as an advisory body with representation from key stakeholders. The evaluation reference group members will review and comment on the draft evaluation products and act as key informants in order to contribute to the relevance, impartiality and credibility of the evaluation by offering a range of viewpoints and ensuring a transparent process. Annex 4 provides more details on the composition and roles and responsibilities of the ERG.

151. The **regional bureau** will take responsibility to:

Advise the evaluation manager and provide technical support to the evaluation throughout the process through the REU.

Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and on the evaluation subject as required.

Provide comments on the draft ToR, inception and evaluation reports from a subject-contents perspective.

Provide second level quality assurance of all evaluation products through the regional evaluation unit before they are approved.

Support the preparation of a management response to the evaluation and track the implementation of the recommendations.

While the Regional Evaluation Officer is the RB focal person for this DE and will perform most of the above responsibilities, other regional bureau-relevant technical staff may participate in the ERG and/or comment on evaluation products as appropriate.

152. **Relevant WFP Headquarters divisions**, including the School Meals and Social Protection Service (PPGS), will take responsibility to:

Discuss WFP strategies, policies or systems in their area of responsibility and subject of evaluation.

Comment on the evaluation TOR, inception and evaluation reports, as required.

The SBP evaluation officer will provide feedback on the ToR, inception reports, baseline report, and evaluation reports, reviewing deliverables for quality and adherence to USDA requirements.

153. **The Office of Evaluation (OEV).** OEV is responsible for overseeing WFP DE function, defining evaluation norms and standards, managing the outsourced quality support service, publishing as well as submitting the final evaluation report to the PHQA. OEV also ensures a help desk function and advises the REU, EM and Evaluation teams when required. Internal and external stakeholders and/or the evaluators are encouraged to reach out to the REU and the Office of Evaluation helpdesk (wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org) in case of potential impartiality breaches or non-adherence to UNEG ethical guidelines or other risks to the credibility of the evaluation process.

154. **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** will be involved in the evaluation throughout all phases. Relevant staff members of USDA (Program Analyst and M&E Lead) review and approve the Evaluation Plan, Terms of Reference, and Evaluation Reports, serve as a member of the Evaluation Reference Group, and participate in stakeholder meetings as needed. They may be interviewed as key informants and participate in the presentation of the evaluation findings.

155. The **WFP Partnerships Officer - Washington Office (WAS)** will work closely with the WFP CO, SBP Evaluation Officer, RB, and OEV to ensure smooth communication and submission of key evaluation deliverables to USDA, according to project timelines. The Partnerships Officer will review evaluation deliverables for adherence to USDA policy, facilitate communication with USDA, and coordinate with USDA to seek feedback of TORs and evaluation reports.

156. **Beneficiaries** - Beneficiaries and communities are participating in the evaluation mainly through data collection (e.g., surveys, interviews) so that the evaluations will reflect their views and voices.

6.4 Security considerations

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

158. 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.

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

160. Based on the stakeholder analysis, the draft communication and knowledge management plan (in Annex 6) 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 issues affecting various vulnerable populations will be disseminated and how stakeholders interested in, or affected by **these** issues will be engaged.

161. 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.

162. 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

163. These series of baseline study, mid-term evaluation and endline evaluations will be financed from the WFP Laos Country Office using the M&E budget allocation in the USDA McGovern-Dole grant.

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

165. The evaluation team conducting the baseline study will only be contracted for the mid-term and final evaluations based upon satisfactory performance in previous exercises.

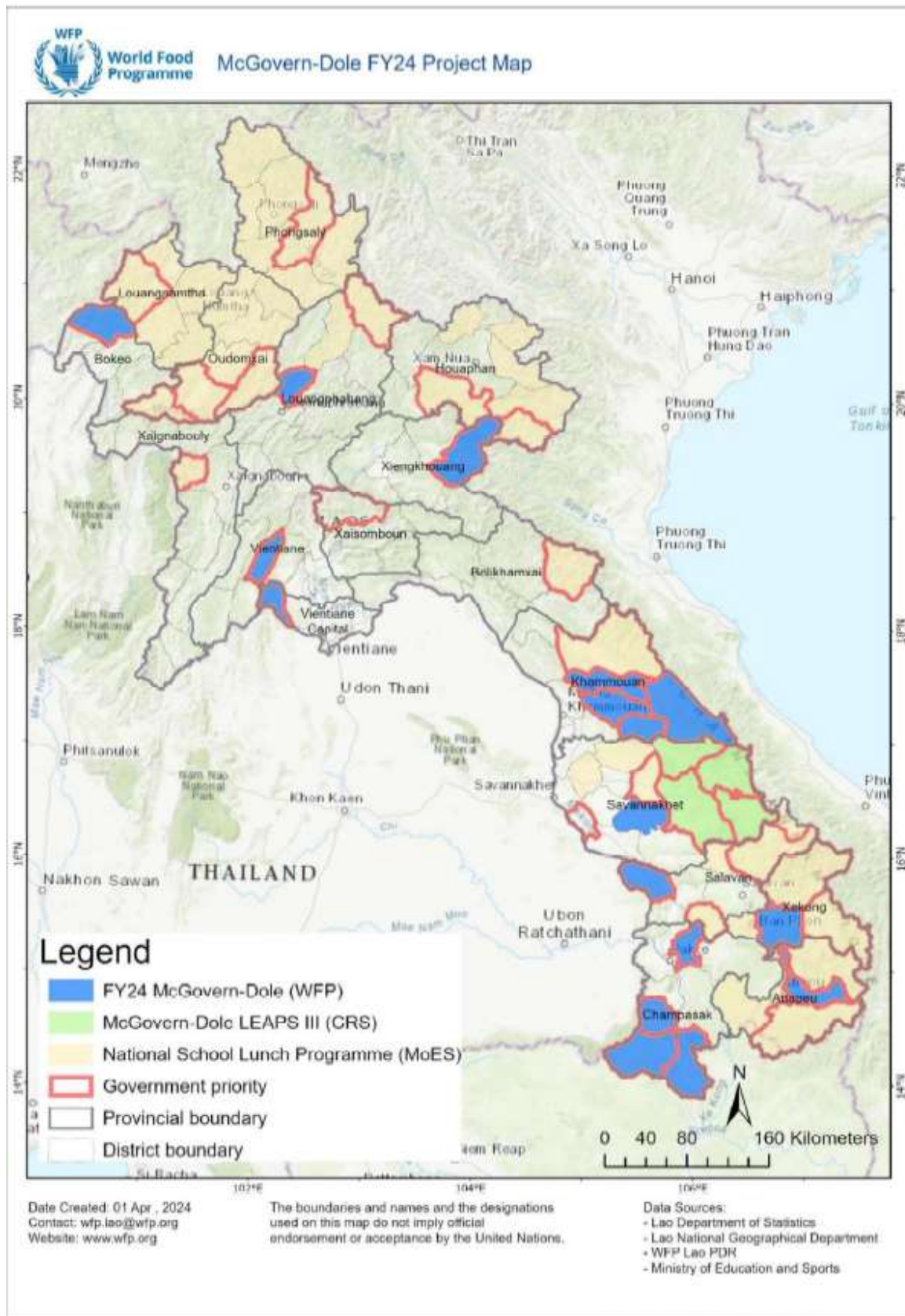
166. The offer will include a detailed budget for the evaluation using the provided template, including consultant fees, travel costs and other costs (interpreters, etc.). The budget should be submitted as excel file separate from the technical proposal document. For this evaluation, the evaluation service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

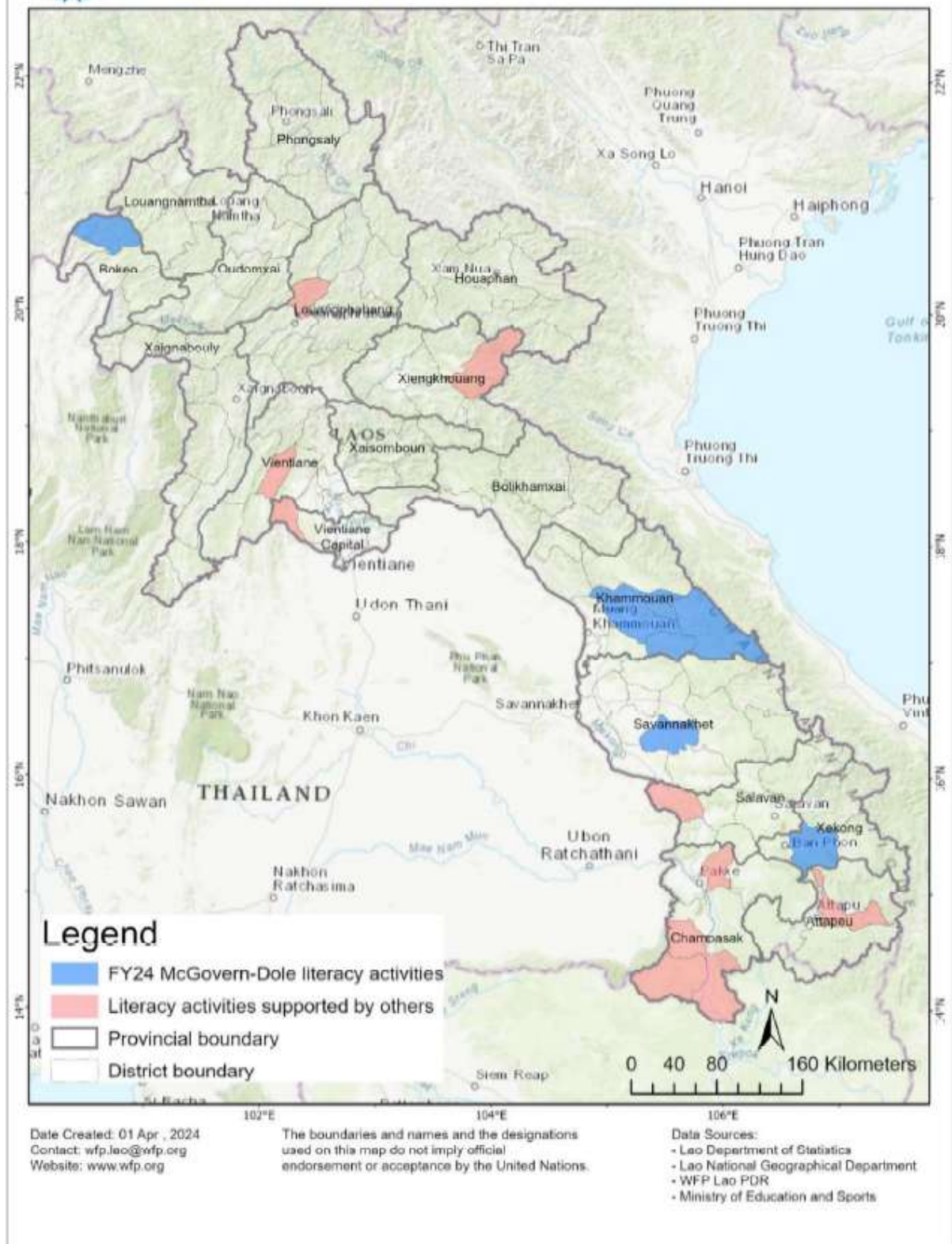
- Include budget for travel for all relevant in-country data collection (both qualitative and quantitative)
- Hire and supervise all technical and administrative assistance required (including in-country).
- Follow the agreed terms and rates for decentralized evaluations as provided for in the Long-Term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

167. 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. The purchase order will be increased to include the midterm and endline evaluation deliverables upon satisfactory completion of the baseline and midterm deliverables.

168. Please send any queries to Sengarun BUDCHARERN, M&E Officer, WFP Lao PDR sengarun.budcharern@wfp.org.

Annex 1. MGD FY24 Project Map





Annex 2. Standardized (Indicative) Timeline¹⁴

	Phases, deliverables and timeline	Level of effort	Total time required for the step
Phase 1 – Preparation (Baseline Study) (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)
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 and WAS	Review draft ToR based on EC feedback and share with USDA (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
USDA	Review and comment on draft ToR	(10 days)	(2 weeks)
EM and WAS	Update ToR and share with USDA for final approval (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1-8 weeks)
EM	Start recruitment process	(0.5 day)	(0.5 day)
EC Chair and USDA	Approve the final ToR and share with ERG and key stakeholders	(0.5 day)	(1 week)
EM	Assess evaluation proposals/ Conduct interviews and recommend team selection	(2 days)	(1 week)
EC Chair	Approve evaluation team selection	(0.5 day)	(1 week)
EM	Evaluation team contracting and PO issuance	(1 day)	(3 weeks)
Phase 2 – Inception (Baseline) (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)

¹⁴ Please note that this is the corporate WFP Standardized (Indicative) timeline which all WFP McGovern-Dole COs are required to include in the ToR. WFP will work with the selected firm to ensure that all USDA deadlines are properly met.

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	Approve final IR and share with ERG for information. WAS representative shares the IR with USDA	(1 week)	(1 week)
Phase 3 – Data collection (Baseline Study) (total duration: Recommended – 0.75 months; Average: 1 month)			
ET	Data collection	(3 weeks)	(3 weeks)
ET	In-country debriefing (s)	(1.5 day)	(1 week)
Phase 4 – Reporting (Baseline study) (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	Presentation of the baseline results to the ERG	(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 WAS	Review draft ER based on EC feedback and share with USDA (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
USDA	Review and comment on draft ER	(10 days)	(3 weeks)
ET	Virtual Findings Presentation to USDA	(1 day)	(1 day)
EM and WAS	Update ER and share with USDA for final approval (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
ET	Prepare a 2-3 pages evaluation brief for USDA submission	(1 day)	(1 day)
EC Chair	Approve final evaluation report and share with key stakeholders	(1 day)	(1 week)
Phase 5 – Dissemination (Baseline Study) (total duration: Recommended – 1 month; Average: 1.9 months)			
EC Chair	Prepare management response	(5 days)	(4 weeks)
EM	Share final evaluation report and management response with the REU and OEV for publication and participate in end-of-evaluation lessons learned call	(0.5 day)	(3 weeks)
Phase 6 - Inception (Midterm evaluation)			Up to 7 weeks
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	Approve final IR and share with ERG for information. WAS representative shares the IR with USDA¹⁵	(1 week)	(1 week)
Phase 7 – Data collection (Midterm evaluation)			Up to 3 weeks
ET	Data collection	(3 weeks)	(3 weeks)
ET	In-country debriefing (s)	(1.5 day)	(1 week)
Phase 8 – Reporting (Midterm evaluation)			Up to 20 weeks
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	Presentation of the midterm results to the ERG	(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 WAS	Review draft ER based on EC feedback and share with USDA (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
USDA	Review and comment on draft ER	(10 days)	(3-8 weeks)
ET	Virtual Findings Presentation to USDA	(1 day)	(1 day)
EM and WAS	Update ER and share with USDA for final approval (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
ET	Prepare a 2-3 pages evaluation brief for USDA submission	(1 day)	(1 day)
EC Chair	Approve final evaluation report and share with key stakeholders	(1 day)	(1 week)
Phase 9 - Dissemination and follow-up (Midterm evaluation)			Up to 4 weeks
EC Chair	Prepare management response	(5 days)	(4 weeks)
EM	Share final evaluation report and management response with the REU and OEV for publication and participate in end-of-evaluation lessons learned call	(0.5 day)	(3 weeks)
Phase 10 - Inception – (Endline evaluation)			Up to 7 weeks
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)

15 The CO/Evaluation team may not proceed with beginning data collection until after USDA approves these changes.

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	Approve final IR and share with ERG for information. WAS representative shares the IR with USDA¹⁶	(1 week)	(1 week)
Phase 11 – Data collection (Endline evaluation)			Up to 3 weeks
EC Chair	Prepare management response	(5 days)	(4 weeks)
EM	Share final evaluation report and management response with the REU and OEV for publication and participate in end-of-evaluation lessons learned call	(0.5 day)	(3 weeks)
Phase 12 – Reporting (Endline evaluation)			Up to 20 weeks
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	Presentation of the endline results to the ERG	(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 WAS	Review draft ER based on EC feedback and share with USDA (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
USDA	Review and comment on draft ER	(10 days)	(3-8 weeks)
ET	Virtual Findings Presentation to USDA	(1 day)	(1 day)
EM and WAS	Update ER and share with USDA for final approval (via WAS team)	(2-3 days)	(1 week)
ET	Prepare a 2-3 pages evaluation brief for USDA submission	(1 day)	(1 day)
EC Chair	Approve final evaluation report and share with key stakeholders	(1 day)	(1 week)
Phase 13 – Dissemination and follow-up (Endline evaluation)			Up to 4 weeks
EC Chair	Prepare management response	(5 days)	(4 weeks)

16 The CO/Evaluation team may not proceed with beginning data collection until after USDA approves these changes.

EM	Share final evaluation report and management response with the REU and OEV for publication and participate in end-of-evaluation lessons learned call	(0.5 day)	(3 weeks)
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Annex 3. Role and composition of the evaluation committee

169. **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.

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

- The Country Director or Deputy Country Director (Chair of the Evaluation Committee)
- Evaluation manager (Evaluation Committee Secretariat)
- Head of program or alternate Deputy Head of program
- CO School Feeding program manager
- Regional evaluation officer (REO)
- Head of RAM
- Country office procurement officer
- Protection officer

Schedule of EC engagement and Time commitments

[Below is a typical schedule for engaging the EC. EM should adjust the estimated level of effort to suit the context of the specific evaluation]

Evaluation Phase and engagement task	Estimate level of effort in days	Tentative Dates
Preparation Phase		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and establish ERG membership. • Reviews the revised draft ToR prepared by the EM • Approves the final TOR • Approves the final evaluation team and budget 	1 day	Jan-Apr/2025
Inception Phase		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief the evaluation team on the subject of the evaluation. • Inform evaluation design through discussions with the evaluators. • Support identifying field visit sites on the basis of selection criteria • Review the revised draft IR • Approve the final IR 	2 days	Apr/May 2025
Data Collection Phase	2 days	May/June 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as key informants: responds to interview questions • Facilitate access to sources of contextual information and data, and to stakeholders • Attend the end of field work debriefing(s) meeting • Support the team in clarifying emerging issues/gaps how to fill them 		
Analysis and Reporting Phase	2 days	June/Aug 2025

- Review final evaluation report after quality assurance by ET + EM
- Approve the final ER

Dissemination and Follow-up Phase

2 days

Aug/Sep 2025

- Decide whether management agrees, partially agrees or does not agree with the recommendations and provides justification
- Lead preparation of the management response to the evaluation recommendations

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

- **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.

171. 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

Core members:

- Country Director or Deputy Country Director (Chair)
- Evaluation Manager (Secretariat of Chair)
- Head of Program
- Head of Supply Chain Unit
- Other CO staff with relevant expertise e.g. nutrition, resilience, protection, school feeding, partnerships
- CRS in Lao PDR - Head of Program
- Director/Deputy Director of Center for Educational Research and Evaluation – RIES (MoES)

Regional bureau

Core members:

- Regional Evaluation Officer
- Regional Monitoring Advisor
- Regional Program Officer School Feeding

Headquarters

- HQ School Meals and Social Protection Service (PPGS)
- WASSF School Feeding

Schedule of ERG engagement and Time commitments

Evaluation Phase and engagement task	Estimate level of effort in days	Tentative Dates
Preparation Phase		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and comment on the draft ToR Where appropriate, provide input on the evaluation questions. Identify source documents useful to the evaluation team Attend ERG meeting/conference call etc 	1 day	Jan-Apr 2025
Inception Phase		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with evaluation team to discuss how the evaluation team can design a realistic/practical, relevant and useful evaluation. Identify and facilitate dialogues with key stakeholders for interviews Identify and access documents and data Help identify appropriate field sites according to selection criteria set up by the evaluation team in the inception report. Review and comment on the draft Inception Report 	1 days	Apr/May 2025
Data Collection Phase	2 days	May/June 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act as a key informant: respond to interview questions Provide information sources and facilitate access to data Attend the evaluation team's end of field work debriefing 		
Analysis and Reporting Phase	2 days	June/Aug 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and comment on the draft evaluation report focusing on accuracy, quality and comprehensiveness of findings, and of links to conclusions and recommendations. 		
Dissemination and Follow-up Phase	2 days	Aug/Sep2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate final report internally and externally, as relevant. Share findings within units, organizations, networks and at events. Provide input to management response and its implementation 		

Annex 5. Communication, Learning and Knowledge Management Plan

Communication and Knowledge Management Plan

When Evaluation phase	What Product	To whom Target audience	From whom Creator lead	How: Communication channel	Why: Communication purpose
Preparation	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
Inception	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.
Data collection	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 findings from data	WFP CO and FO program team Implementing Partner – CRS		Validation workshop	To validate the findings and providing inputs on recommendations from the

When Evaluation phase	What Product	To whom Target audience	From whom Creator lead	How: Communication channel	Why: Communication purpose
	analysis	Gov't Partners – IEPC MoES			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.
Reporting	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
Dissemination & Follow-up	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
Dissemination & Follow-up (Associated Content)	Evaluation Brief	WFP Management; WFP employees; donors and partners; National decision-makers	Evaluation manager	WFP.org, WFPgo	To disseminate evaluation findings
	Infographics, posters & data	Donors and partners; Evaluation community; National decision-	Evaluation Team; OEV/RB/CO	WFP.org, WFPgo; Evaluation Network	

When Evaluation phase	What Product	To whom Target audience	From whom Creator lead	How: Communication channel	Why: Communication purpose
	visualisation Video	makers; Affected populations, beneficiaries and communities	Communications/ KM unit Evaluation manager	platforms (e.g. UNEG, ALNAP); space	

Annex 6. Performance Indicators

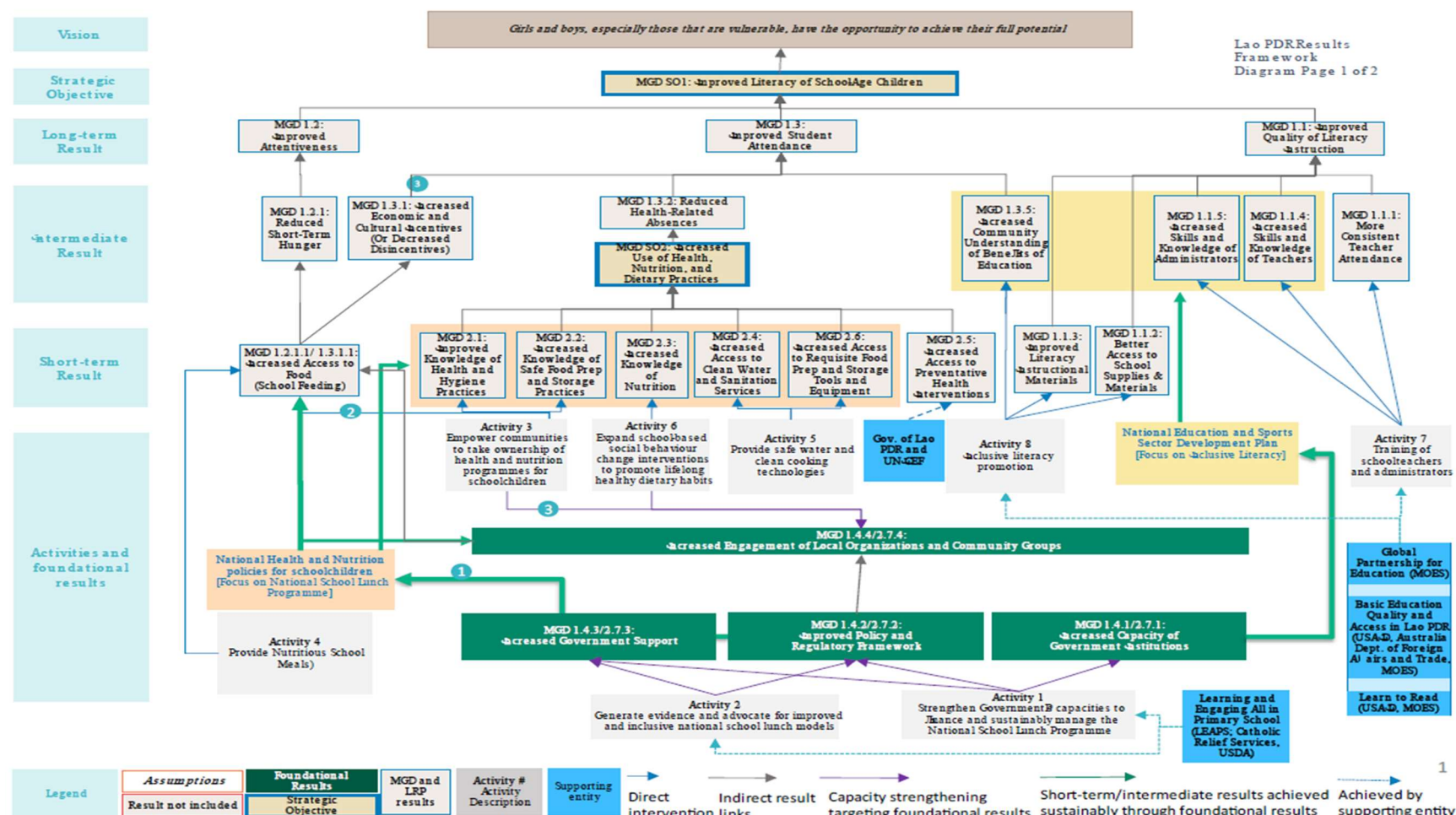
Indicator Number	Indicator Type	Result (s) measured	Indicator	Unit of measurement	Frequency of Reporting	Method	Baseline Value	YR1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	Life of project
MGD Standard 1	Outcome	MGD SO1/MGD 1.2	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Percent	Baseline, Midterm, and Endline	Baseline, Midterm, and Endline Evaluations	3	3	3	10	10	15	15
MGD Standard 2	Outcome	MGD 1.3	Average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools	Percent	Twice per year	DCF collection	74	75	75	80	80	85	85
MGD Standard 3	Output	MGD 1.1.2	Number of teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	0	0	8,000	16,000	8,000	0	32,000
MGD Standard 4	Outcome	MGD1.1/ MGD1.1.4	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	Number	Annual	Project activity report	0	0	0	100	150	200	200
MGD Standard 5	Output	MGD 1.1.4	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	0	0	380	380	380	380	380
MGD Standard 6	Outcome	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	Number	Annual		0	0	0	26	39	39	39
MGD Standard 7	Output	MGD 1.1.5	Number of school administrators and officials trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	0	0	52	52	52	52	52
MGD Standard 8	Output	MGD 2.4	Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, improved water sources, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	0	25	75	50	50	50	250
MGD Standard 9	Outcome	MGD 1.3.4	Number of students enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance	Number	Annual	To be added to AIM	0	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	117,000
MGD Standard	Output/Outcome	MGD 1.4.2/2.7.2, LRP 1.4.2	Number of policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the	Number	Annual	Project activity report	0	1	2	4	5	5	5

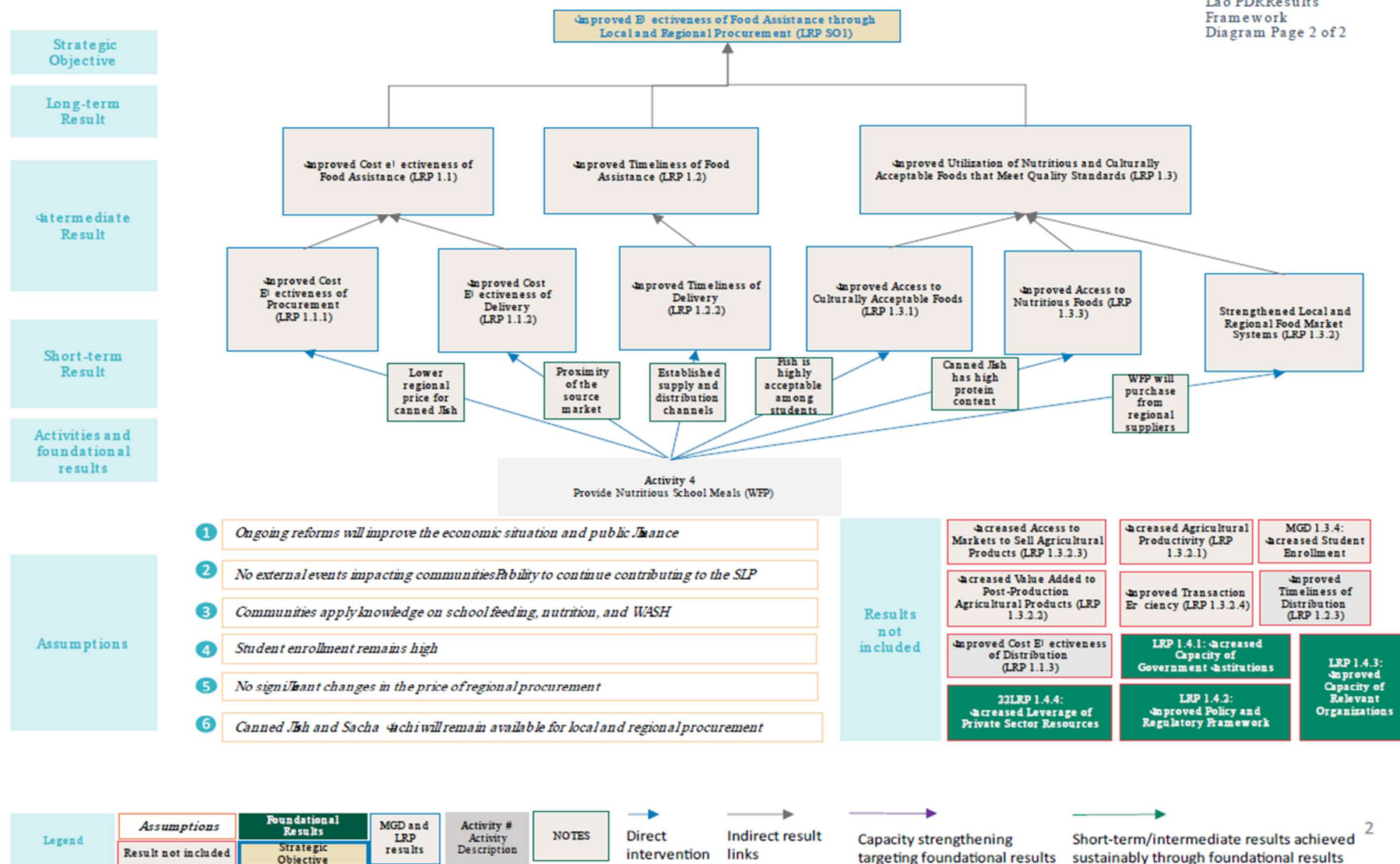
10, LRP Standard 10			following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance										
MGD Standard 11, LRP Standard 15	Output	MGD 1.4.3/1.4.4	Value of new USG commitments, and new public and private sector investments leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition	U.S. Dollars	Annual	Project activity report	0	10,800	10,800	10,800	10,800	10,800	54,000
MGD Standard 13	Output	MGD 1.4.4/MGD 2.7.4	Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar “school” governance structures supported as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	0	702	702	702	702	702	702
MGD Standard 14	Output	MGD 1.2.1/1.3.1/	Quantity of take-home rations provided (in metric tons) as a result of USDA assistance	Metric Tons	Twice per year	Project activity report and MDR	0	221	221	221	221	221	1,105
MGD Standard 15	Output	MGD 1.2.1/1.3.1/	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	0	2,457	2,457	2,457	2,457	2,457	2,457
MGD Standard 16	Output	MGD 1.2.1/1.3.1/ 1.2.1.1/1.3.1.1	Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	DCF collection	0	9,750,000	9,750,000	9,750,000	9,750,000	9,750,000	48,750,000
MGD Standard 17	Output	MGD 1.2.1/1.3.1/ 1.2.1.1/1.3.1.1	Number of school-age children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	DCF collection	0	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	117,000
MGD Standard 18, LRP Standard 3	Output	MGD 1.2.1/1.3.1/ 1.2.1.1/1.3.1.1 and LRP SO1	Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Annual	DCF collection	0	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	117,000
MGD Standard 19	Outcome	MGD SO2	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Annual	Project activity report	0	1,047	1,047	1,047	1,047	1,047	1,047
MGD Standard 20	Outcome	MGD SO2	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Annual	Project activity report	0	1,720	1,720	1,720	1,720	1,720	1,720
MGD Standard 22	Output	MGD 2.2	Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	0	2,457	2,457	2,457	2,457	2,457	3,437
MGD Standard 23	Output	MGD 2.3	Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	0	1,496	1,496	1,496	1,496	1,496	1,496
MGD Standard 27	Output	MGD 2.4	Number of schools using an improved water source	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	300	300	430	561	702	702	702

MGD Standard 28	Output	MGD 2.4	Number of schools with improved sanitation facilities	Number	Twice per year	Project activity report	702	702	702	702	702	702	702
MGD Standard 29	Output	MGD 2.5	Number of students receiving deworming medication(s)	Number	Twice per year	DCF collection	0	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	119,000
MGD Standard 30, LRP Standard 1	Output	MGD SO1, SO2, and LRP SO1	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs	Number	Annual	Project activity report	0	68,705	68,705	68,705	68,705	68,705	137,410
MGD Standard 31, LRP Standard 2	Output	MGD SO1, SO2 and LRP SO1	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	Number	Annual	Project activity report	0	360,000	360,000	360,000	360,000	360,000	525,000
MGD Standard 32, LRP Standard 16	Output	MGD SO1, SO2, and LRP SO1	Number of schools reached as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Twice per year	Data generated from LSM App	0	702	702	702	702	702	702
LRP Standard 4	Output	LRP 1.1	Cost of transport, storage and handling of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity)	U.S. Dollars	Twice per year	Project activity report	0	96,896	96,896	96,896	96,896	0	387,584
LRP Standard 5	Output	LRP 1.1.1	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	U.S. Dollars	Twice per year	Monthly Distribution Report	0	451,500	465,045	479,020	491,492	0	1,887,057
LRP Standard 6	Output	LRP 1.3	Quantity of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	Metric Tons	Twice per year	Monthly Distribution Report	0	215	215	215	215	0	860
MGD Custom 1	Output	MGD SO2/LRP 1.3.3	The percentage of school days where four food groups were provided	Percent	Annual	Based off of the number of school lunches provided	0	50	55	60	70	70	70
MGD Custom 2	Outcome	MGD 2.4	Number of schools where students and staff demonstrate improved WASH practices as a result of USDA assistance.	Number	Baseline, Midterm, and Endline	Baseline, Midterm, and Endline	212	351	351	702	702	702	702
MGD Custom 3	Output	MGD 1.1.3	Number of schools with improved literacy instructional materials as a result of USDA assistance.	Number	Baseline, Midterm, and Endline	Baseline, Midterm, and Endline	0	0	0	150	150	200	200
MGD Custom 4	Outcome	MGD SO1	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate proficiency in identifying letters	Percent	Baseline, Midterm, and Endline	Baseline, Midterm, and Endline	45	45	45	48	48	56	56
MGD Custom 5	Outcome	MGD SO1/ MGD1.2	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that	Percent	Baseline, Midterm,	Baseline, Midterm,	8%	8%	8%	11%	11%	20%	20%

			they can read and understand the meaning of phrase & sentence		and Endline	and Endline							
MGD Custom 6	Outcome	MGD 1.3.4	Percent of students participating in school readiness programs in target communities who successfully enroll in G1.	Percent	Annual	EMIS report	0	0	0	90	90	90	90
MGD Custom 7	Output	MGD 1.3.5	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age) (ESSDP)	Percent	Annual	EMIS report	0	0	70	75	80	90	90
MGD Custom 8	Outcome	MGD 1.1.3/ MGD1.2	Percent of school readiness participants who are able to construct meaning from spoken representations of language and able to recognize written representations of words	Percent	Annual	Project activity report	0	0	50	50	50	50	50
MGD Custom 9	Outcome	MGD 1.1.1	Average teacher attendance rate in USDA supported schools	Percent	Twice per year	DCF collection	75	75	78	82	87	93	93
MGD Custom 10	Outcome	MGD 1.3.5	Percent of VEDC members, teachers, and school administrators satisfied with project support (crosscutting)	Percent	Annual	AIM	0	0	50	60	70	80	80
MGD Custom 11	Outcome	MGD 1.4.4/MGD 2.7.4	Percent of schools with functioning VEDCs (crosscutting)	Percent	Annual	AIM	0	0	50	60	70	80	80
MGD Custom 12	Output	MGD 2.6	Percent of schools with functioning school meals infrastructure	Percent	Annual	AIM	0	0	50	65	80	95	95
MGD Custom 13	Outcome	LRP 1.3	Percent of school-aged children meeting minimum dietary diversity score (DDS)	Percent	Annual	School nutrition survey	42	52	62	72	82	92	92
MGD Custom 14	Output	LRP 1.1.2	Percent of cost saving through LRP delivery	Percent	Annual	School nutrition survey	0	53	53	53	53	0	53
MGD Custom 15	Output/O utcome	MGD 1.3.2	Percent of students in target schools with health-related absences in the last week	Percent	Baseline, Midterm, and Endline	AIM	20	20	20	20	15	10	10
MGD Custom 17	Output	MGD 1.4.1/MGD 2.7.1	Number of government institutions supported through the policies, regulations, or administrative procedures developed as a result of USDA assistance	Number	Annual	Project activity report	0	4	4	5	5	6	6
MGD Custom 18	Outcome	LRP 1.2/ LRP 1.2.2	Number of schools receiving locally-procured food items before the start of the semester	Number	Twice per year		0	702	702	702	702	702	702
MGD Custom 19	Output	LRP 1.3.1	Amount of culturally acceptable food procured through LRP.	Metric Tons	Annual		0	254	254	254	254	0	

Annex 7: Project level Result Framework





Annex 8. Bibliography

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Annex 9: Methodology proposed for FY20 Endline Evaluation

The methodology will be designed by the evaluation team during the inception phase in accordance with the WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) as well as USDA's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy¹⁷. Based on the requirements described in the TORs, further analysis done at inception phase and consultations with key stakeholders, the baseline evaluation team will formulate an appropriate evaluation design, sampling strategy, and methodological approach for each stage of evaluation process. The detailed methodology defined in the Inception Report should be guided by the following principles:

- Be relevant for answering the evaluation questions along the relevant evaluation criteria in Table 6 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.
- Use mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) to ensure information from different methods and sources is triangulated to enhance the validity, reliability and credibility of the findings. Qualitative sampling and data collection methods will be considered where relevant to highlight lessons learned of the interventions.
- 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; and
- 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.

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, stakeholder groups, members of the Village Education Development Committees and village leaders; direct observation in different locations; across evaluators; across methods. 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 guides, survey questionnaires etc.).

The methodology and sampling frame should be sensitive in terms of indicating how the perspectives and voices of men and women, boys, girls, the elderly, people living with disabilities and other 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 vulnerable groups 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 sensitive ways before fieldwork begins.

The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect demographic-based vulnerability analysis. The findings should include a discussion on intended and unintended effects of the intervention on intersectional dimensions. The report should provide lessons/ challenges/recommendations for conducting evaluations sensitive to these demographics in the future.

¹⁷ <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/resources/monitoring-and-evaluation-policy>

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.

The use of **quasi-experimental research methods** 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 sex to evaluate whether the project addresses the needs of boys, girls, men, women and other stakeholder groups.

Under the quantitative approach, **surveys** are expected to be conducted with children as well as teachers, and VECD members for Mid-Term and End-Line evaluations.

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. The evaluations will be representative at district level. 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.

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 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.

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.

The use of **quasi-experimental research methods** 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 sex to evaluate whether the project addresses the needs of boys, girls, men, women and other stakeholder groups.

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

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.

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 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.

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.

A **comparison design** between different types of schools being supported by the project was employed for the baseline study of the McGovern-Dole 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 (i.e. stratified random sampling).

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.

The midterm evaluation (of FY20) followed a stratified sample for quantitative data collections to ensure representative samples from all types of combinations of project intervention, which 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.

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 recalculate 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 evaluation¹⁸ 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.*

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 a cost-efficiency analysis.

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

The main limitation of the evaluation includes the challenge of measuring attribution of project activities towards impact as there is no pure control group with the counterfactual.

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 apart of the 90schools 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 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. It was learned from the project however that some of the schools selected in baseline were excluded later for the literacy intervention, so this did not proceed.

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*. Type(s) of purposive sampling (e.g. maximum variation sampling) can be agreed with the CO in the inception phase to select a suitable number of model schools for this assessment.

Specific data collection methods are expected to include but not limited to: a desk review, quantitative survey, semi-structured interviews and focus groups (to ensure that a cross-section of stakeholders can participate so that a range of views is gathered) and observation during field visits. Participants for focus group discussions will include school principals/teachers, parent-student associations, village education development committee members and community members/small-holder farmers. Participants for (semi-)structured interviews will include district and provincial education officials, relevant local and international NGOs and UN agencies, and central government officials. The survey modules utilized will include household and child questionnaires, suppliers and smallholder farmers as well as school questionnaire (with teachers and school directors). In a sample of schools targeted for literacy activities, the mid-term evaluation will include a full literacy assessment.

¹⁸ <https://www.wfp.org/publications/lao-pdr-usda-mcgovern-dole-school-feeding-programme-2020-2025-evaluations>

For this baseline evaluation, the evaluation team will need to expand on the methodology presented in the ToR and develop a detailed evaluation matrix in the inception report.

The use of quantitative data collected during the end-line evaluation of McGD FY20: 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. To minimize the survey fatigue of stakeholders, the CO plans to utilize the **quantitative data** collected for the FY20 end-line evaluation as a baseline value for the next cycle (i.e. FY24) of the McGovern-Dole school feeding project. The FY24 McGovern-Dole project baseline study is a separate exercise with different Terms of Reference.

172. 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 **Error! Reference source not found.** 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;

173. 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, stakeholder 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).

174. \ The methodology and sampling frame should be sensitive in terms of indicating how the perspectives and voices of men and women, boys, girls, the elderly, people living with disabilities and other stakeholder 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 vulnerable groups 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 sensitive ways before fieldwork begins.

175. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect demographic-based vulnerability 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 these dimensions. The report should provide lessons/ challenges/recommendations for conducting evaluations sensitive to these demographics in the future.

176. **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.

177. **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.

178. The use of **quasi-experimental research methods** 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 sex to evaluate whether the project addresses the needs of boys, girls, men, women and other stakeholder groups.

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

180. 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.

181. 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 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.

182. 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.

183. A **comparison design** between different types of schools being supported by the project was employed for the baseline study of the McGovern-Dole 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 (i.e. stratified random sampling).

184. 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.

185. The midterm evaluation followed a stratified sample for quantitative data collections to ensure representative samples from all types of combinations of project intervention, which 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.

186. 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 recalculate 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 evaluation¹⁹ 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.*

187. **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 a cost-efficiency analysis.

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

189. The main limitation of the evaluation includes the challenge of measuring attribution of project activities towards impact as there is no pure control group with the counterfactual.

190. **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 apart of the 90schools receiving literacy support through the McGovern-Dole pogram. 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 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. It was learned from the project however that some of the schools selected in baseline were excluded later for the literacy intervention, so this did not proceed.

191. **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.

192. **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. 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

¹⁹ <https://www.wfp.org/publications/lao-pdr-usda-mcgovern-dole-school-feeding-programme-2020-2025-evaluations>

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.

193. 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).

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

Annex 10. Acronyms and abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
ASEAN	Associate of Southeast Asian Nations
CD	Country Director
CO	Country Office
DEQAS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
DESB	District Education and Sports Bureau
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
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 Lunch 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

Annex 11: Key Features of previous cycles

Key features of previous cycles

Cycle	Provinces	Key Activities	Evaluation Recommendations
2017 - 2021	8 provinces (Phongsaly, Louangnamtha, Luangprabang, Oudomxay, Khammouane, Saravane, Sekong, and Attapeu)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision - school meals literacy strengthening and support package Improvement of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) Capacities strengthening at community, district, provincial and national levels, including policy support, for takeover of school feeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate causes of declined learning scores for future intervention. Streamline and improve monitoring mechanisms to be manageable and support context-specific learning agendas. Strengthen capacity and collaboration within and between local government entities for ownership Pay specific attention to addressing disparities among ethnic groups, persons with disabilities and differences between status of men and women or boys and girls. Diversify funding sources to mitigate the risks associated with limited budget Promote sustainable agriculture and local procurement to reduce dependence on external sources.
2020 - 2024	11 provinces, (Bokeo, Luang Prabang, Xiengkhouang, Vientiane Province, Vientiane Capital, Khammouane, Savannakhet, Salavan, Champasak, Sekong, and Attapeu)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision - school meals literacy strengthening and support package Improvement of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure investment Capacities strengthening at community, district, provincial and national levels, including policy support, for takeover of school feeding Agriculture support Health and Nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to strengthen the Technical Working Group for School Meals, Strengthen district-level capacity for monitoring and community engagement. Set the foundations for strong agriculture-focused work in future initiatives. Update Standard Operating Procedures for each activity component Strengthen the monitoring system of the project and share information with the National School Lunch Program. Document key lessons and good practices including all modalities of capacity strengthening Work with project schools to develop a continuation plan

*2020-2024 (FY20) cycle's recommendations are from the Mid-Term Evaluation, since FY20 endline evaluation has not been completed.

Laos, USDA MCGovern Dole Grant for WFP School Feeding 2017-2022: Evaluation:
<https://www.wfp.org/publications/laos-usda-mcgovern-dole-grant-wfp-school-feeding-2017-2022-evaluation>

Lao PDR, USDA MCGovern-Dole School Feeding Programme 2020-2025: Evaluations
<https://www.wfp.org/publications/lao-pdr-usda-mcgovern-dole-school-feeding-programme-2020-2025-evaluations>

Laos, School Feeding Programme (2014-2016): an endline evaluation

<https://www.wfp.org/publications/laos-school-feeding-programme-2014-2016-endline-evaluation>