



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
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LIVES

WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

November 2025



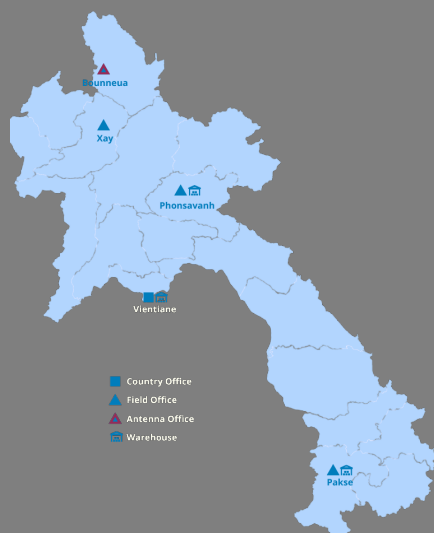
Blind tasting of fortified rice shows no difference to normal rice.
Photo: WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth

Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed landlocked country, with one of the lowest population densities in Asia. Eighteen percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (USD 2.15/day), with a GDP per capita of USD 2,067 (World Bank 2023). The country is ranked 89th out of 146 countries in the 2024 Gender Inequality Index. While the poverty rate in Lao PDR more than halved in the past two decades, the 2024 Global Hunger Index rates hunger levels as “moderate”.

Climate change is a key challenge facing the rural population, and the country is vulnerable due to its low adaptability and high dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources. Changing climate patterns, combined with poor access to both markets and diverse livelihoods, further worsen the situation in remote upland areas, where over 20 percent of households are food insecure.

WFP has been present in Lao PDR since 1976.



Population: 7.5 million

2022 Human Development Index:
147 out of 193 countries

Income Level: Lower middle

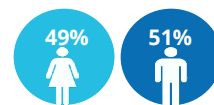
Chronic malnutrition: 33% of children
between 6-59 months

In Numbers

528 mt of food dispatched, **USD 387,000** cash distributed

USD 2.7 million six-month (December 2025 – May 2026) net funding requirement

129,953 people assisted



Operational Updates

- The Asian Development Bank conducted an assessment on the nutrition component of the Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management Sector Project in Xiengkhouang and Houaphan provinces. The assessment found strong community engagement and positive impacts from nutrition awareness and home gardening activities. Improved food diversity and health for women and children was noted, with effective gender integration and strong collaboration among government, WFP, its implementing partner SNV, and local communities.
- The National Centre of Nutrition, with WFP's technical support, convened the Rice Fortification Technical Working Group to develop a legal framework and standards to advance rice fortification in Lao PDR. Representatives from key ministries and institutions participated, reflecting strong multi-sectoral collaboration. During World Food Day celebrations in the capital Vientiane, WFP organised an interactive session to raise awareness of rice fortification, including a blind tasting activity (see photo above).
- Under the Agriculture for Nutrition phase 2 project, WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, in partnership with Maeying Huamjai Phattana, a local non-profit association that empowers women and ethnic communities in rural Laos, conducted master trainings on the Gender Action Learning System methodology for 32 government district officers in Oudomxay and Attapeu provinces. These trainers will deliver the trainings to communities to promote gender equality, women's economic empowerment, and improved livelihoods.
- WFP introduced a creative approach to promote nutrition, hygiene, and health by incorporating live theatre into Village Nutrition Day events in two villages of Sekong province. Khao Niew, a local theatre, performed a culturally adapted show emphasising healthy practices, while participants engaged in interactive booths on cooking, hygiene, nutrition, and health screenings. This approach combined storytelling with local traditions and hands-on activities to encourage behavioural change.
- WFP and local communities co-financed the construction of 158 kitchens to improve cooking facilities for school meals programmes. These kitchens, located across five provinces, are currently under construction and are expected to be completed by early 2026.

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Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Lao

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirement (in USD)
116.4 m	117.4 m	2.7 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Schoolchildren in vulnerable areas have improved food security, nutrition and learning results through a sustainable national school meals programme by 2026.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide direct support and technical assistance to the Government to strengthen and complement the national school meals programme and to facilitate a sustainable handover of the programme to the Government.

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable people at risk of any form of malnutrition, in particular women and girls of reproductive age, children under 5 and school-age children, have improved nutrition outcomes in line with national targets by 2026.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide universally accessible nutrition support services for targeted populations and nutrition-related technical assistance, advocacy and evidence-based advice to the Government and other stakeholders, including in the private sector.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable people in disaster-affected or at-risk areas have enhanced food and nutrition security all year round and increased capacity to mitigate and manage risks associated with climate and other shocks by 2026.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide assistance and technical support to targeted communities and government entities to build communities' resilience to climate and other shocks through strengthened capacity in disaster and climate risk management and social protection.

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 4: Crisis-affected populations in the Lao People's Democratic Republic are able to meet their food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after disasters.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide nutrition-sensitive cash-based transfers or food assistance to help meet the essential needs of crisis-affected people.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 5: The Government of Lao PDR, humanitarian and development partners have access to reliable common services on demand.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide coordination and on-demand services to the Government of Lao PDR, humanitarian and development partners.

- WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Lao Red Cross, distributed USD 165,000 for the recovery of 7,200 people affected by the Wipha storm in Houaphan and Xiengkhuang provinces in July this year.
- WFP provided USD 222,000 to 16,700 community members as payments for their work on 29 community assets including bridges, small roads, and water systems etc. to enhance community resilience, improve food security, and reduce disaster risks.
- In collaboration with the Lao Disabled People's Association, WFP organised a workshop with persons with disabilities from rural Vientiane to strengthen inclusive early warning systems. The dialogue provided guidance to ensure emergency preparedness and response efforts prioritise persons with disabilities, advancing the UN's commitment to Leaving No One Behind.
- WFP, alongside UN agencies and the Lao Women's Union, commemorated the 16 Days of Activism in Vientiane and field offices, reaffirming WFP's commitment to ending digital violence and creating safe, healthy communities for all, especially women and children.

Story from the field



Villagers join hands to build a new bridge for safer access after the rainy season. Photo: WFP/Syvongxay Sulivong

Moktonh village lies in northern Oudomxay province of Lao PDR. The rainy season, from May to October, often brings rivers and streams to their peak. Without proper bridges, life in the community can come to a standstill, cutting it off from the outside world.

Under WFP's Food for Assets initiative, the community worked on a bridge construction this November. Now, a new bridge stands completed - built entirely by the villagers with their own hands and determination.

"The new bridge helps us stay connected. We can reach the market to sell our produce, and our children can go to school as normal," Somphone, the village chief, says proudly.

Donors

Asian Development Bank (ADB), Australia, European Union, France, Germany, Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, India, Ireland, Japan, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, Russia, United States of America, Switzerland and private donors.