



WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

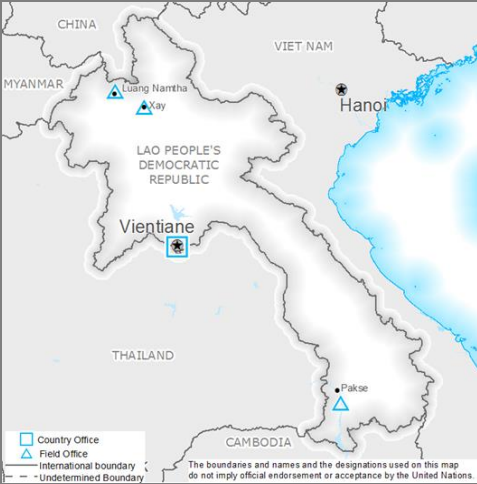
April 2018

Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 138 out of 188 countries in the 2016 Human Development Index. It has one of the lowest population densities in Asia. 28 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (USD 1.25/day), with a gross national income per capita of USD 1,740 (World Bank 2015). The country is ranked 57 out of 145 in the Global Gender Gap Index 2015.

While Lao PDR has managed to reduce the proportion of hungry poor to 23 percent, the 2015 Global Hunger Index still rates hunger levels as "serious". Malnutrition remains a major challenge with stunting affecting 37.6 percent of boys and 33.6 percent of girls (Lao Child Anthropometry Assessment Survey, 2015).

Climate change is a key challenge facing rural livelihoods, and the country is the world's 73rd most vulnerable to climate change due to its low adaptability and its 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 25 percent of households are food insecure.



Population: 6.5 million	2016 Human Development Index: 138 out of 188
Income Level: Lower middle	Chronic malnutrition: 35.6% of children between 6-59 months

In Numbers

1,344 metric tons of food distributed in the first quarter of 2018.

25.5 percent of children aged 24-59 months underweight. 9.6 percent affected by wasting.

US\$8.8 m six-month (May – October 2018) net funding requirement, representing 10.3 percent of total requirements

152,767 people assisted in April 2018



Operational Updates

- Andreas Zurbrugg, Deputy Head of Mission, Australian Embassy in Vientiane travelled to Beng district in Oudomxay province, to observe school meals as well as announce the Government of Australia's renewed funding of AUS\$ 1 million (USD 750,000) to support vulnerable communities in managing their own school feeding programmes and in strengthening their resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and WFP signed an agreement on Disaster Reduction and Management in Agriculture Project. The project aims to strengthen national and provincial capacities in improved disaster reduction and management practices. The project will commence in May 2018.
- A signing ceremony of the partnership agreement between the Lao Front for National Development (LFND) and WFP was held in Vientiane to promote community awareness and local ownership of their own food and nutrition security in rural areas of the country. The initiative aims to reach the most marginalized and vulnerable communities, especially ethnic groups with key messages related to school feeding and nutrition improvements and other relevant topics. The joint effort by LFND and WFP in mobilizing communities and identifying local solutions will focus on improving food and nutrition security for the targeted groups in a sustainable manner.
- WFP is collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Ministry of Health to establish a technical committee for the revision of the designed Social Behavioural Change Communication packages on Agriculture and training materials prior to the expansion of the Farmer Nutrition School in 142 new villages for 2018.

Main Photo Credit: WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseuth
Caption: Students of a WFP-supported school in northern Lao PDR.

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WFP Country Strategy		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Confirmed Contributions (in USD)	May – October 2018 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
Lao PDR Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)		
85 m	39.07 m 46%	8.8 m 10.3%
Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food		
Strategic Outcome 1: Schoolchildren in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021 <i>Focus area: Root causes</i>		
48.4 m	27.97 m 58%	4.3 m 8.8%
Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition		
Strategic Outcome 2: Stunting levels among children under 2 in provinces with high levels of malnutrition meet national levels by 2025 <i>Focus area: Resilience</i>		
23.5 m	7.70 m 33%	2.4 m 10.2%
Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable		
Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable households in climate-sensitive districts are more resilient to seasonal and long-term shocks and stresses <i>Focus area: Resilience</i>		
8.4 m	1.43 m 17%	1.5 m 17.8%
Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs		
Strategic Outcome 4: National and local governance institutions are strengthened to improve service delivery, especially in hard-to-reach areas, by 2025. <i>Focus area: Root causes</i>		
4.7 m	1.98 m 42%	0.6 m

Figures provisional

Monitoring

- **Monitoring coverage:** During April 2018, 68 schools implementing school meals and 26 villages implementing stunting prevention activities were monitored along with community mobilization activities. The community mobilization is an integral part of the handover strategy for school meals seeking to strengthen the community contribution and ownership. The monitoring on school meals programme showed increase in attendances of both girls and boys. Observation on girls and boys with disabilities still shows very low attendance. On school lunch cooking, WFP begins to see the benefits of community mobilization, as lunches are served regularly.
- **Accountability to Affected Populations:** communities in different provinces called the hotline numbers. Most feedback relates to school meals, seeking clarification on non-food items to support the community mobilization activities. On the prevention of stunting programme, village health volunteers requested information on the distributions of supplementary nutritious food to children below 2.
- **Evaluation and Review:** On decentralized evaluation of the combined USDA McGovern Dole end-line evaluation and baseline studies, the independent company submitted the inception report and began their field data collection. The final report should be available in mid-June.

Challenges

For the prevention of stunting activities, the shifted responsibility from district health center personnel to village health volunteer for registration and distributions of supplementary nutritious foods targeting children below 2 remains a challenge due to frequent rotation of volunteers and poor literacy skills. There have been no major challenges in food distribution. Level of beneficiaries is relatively stable at 99 percent for the past four months.

Partnerships

A partnership agreement was signed between the Lao Front for National Development to promote community awareness and local ownership of food and nutrition security in rural areas of the country.

Donors

USA, Australia, Japan, Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP), Government of Lao PDR, Private Donors

GENDER MARKER **2A** 

WFP Lao PDR's Activities

SO 1	1) Provide policy support, technical assistance and transfer of capacities
	2) Accelerate the implementation of the Government's plan of action of the school meals programme
	3) Support a national process for community and Government hand-over of the schools
SO 2	4) Provide technical assistance for evidence-based policy dialogue
	5) Stimulate access to local specialized nutritious food for children aged 6 to 23 months
	6) Develop a social behaviour change communication and establish farmer nutrition schools
SO 3	7) Build community resilience through the creation of productive assets and sustainable livelihood opportunities
SO 4	8) Invest in national capacity for food and nutrition security governance
	9) Enable communities to lead and own their food and nutrition security solutions
	10) Enhance government capacity at all levels to prepare for and efficiently respond to natural disasters