



WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

WFP Assistance

Country Programme Lao People's Democratic Republic	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
DEV 200242 (Jan 2012 – Feb 2017)**	104 m	70.8 m (68%)	2.1 m (30%)

*March – August 2017
**A new CSP will start in April 2017.

WFP's long-term goal in Lao PDR is to enhance food security and nutrition in the most vulnerable communities by implementing sustainable programmes.

The country programme is in line with the Government's 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020), and other sectoral strategies, including the United Nations Partnership Framework (2014-2018).

In addition to building national capacity, WFP-supported activities address the three elements of food security by: i) increasing food availability, ii) improving households' access to food, and iii) advocating for adequate food utilisation. To achieve this, WFP uses a lifecycle approach.

The mother and child health and nutrition (MCHN) programme provides pregnant women and nursing mothers and children between 6-23 months of age with nutritional support through supplementary foods and food rations. The programme ensures nutritional balance to prevent chronic malnutrition.

For pre-primary and primary school children, the school meals programme provides a nutritious snack or lunch to 140,000 children in 1,500 schools across seven provinces. In line with the Government's School Lunch Policy (2014), WFP supports the transition from snack to lunch.

Highlights

- The Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021) has been approved by the February Executive Board. A Lao delegation, led by the Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment attended the Executive Board session, and reaffirmed their commitment to the Country Strategic Plan (CSP), which will start on 1 April 2017.
- The four strategic outcomes of the CSP will focus on key challenges faced by Lao PDR: food insecurity; malnutrition; low resilience to climate change; and the governance structure that is needed to address these priorities, support the Government to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, and graduate to middle-income country status.

The school meals programme includes setting up school gardens as part of the Government's priority for home-grown school feeding. WFP is working on a hand-over strategy of the programme to the Government.

Through food assistance for assets (FFA), WFP supports communities to build assets for the community, such as access roads or irrigation systems. These activities aim at encouraging self-sufficiency and improving long-term food security in vulnerable communities.

Located in a geographical area prone to natural disasters, Lao PDR is affected by recurring floods, excessive rain or persistent droughts leading to food insecurity. The emergency preparedness and response programme aims to improve resilience to natural disasters in the Government and the communities through capacity development activities. In the event of an emergency, WFP maintains an emergency stock of food, which can be distributed to the affected population.

In Numbers

223,686 people assisted



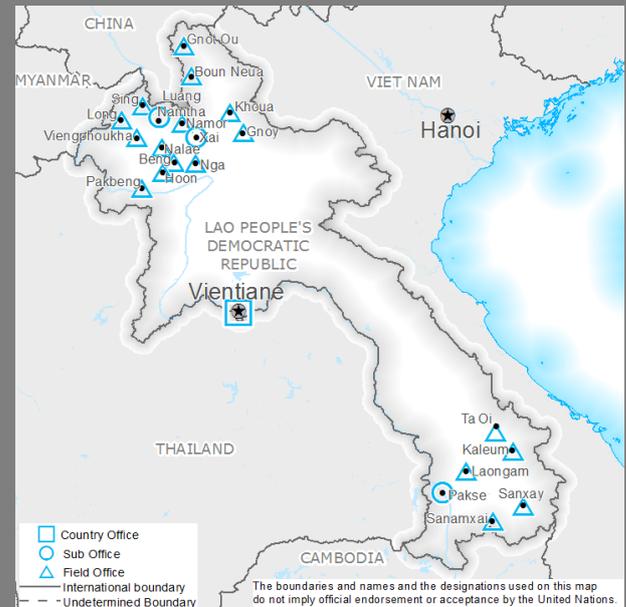
Operational Updates

- The inception workshop for nutrient gap analysis was organized in Vientiane with participants from United Nations agencies, the European Union, the World Bank, World Vision, Care International, Save the Children, Lao Women's Union, as well as national and provincial government officials. The workshop introduced the concept of nutrient gap and the implementation of the analysis. This was followed by a 'cost of diet' data collection in five provinces. Results will be available in April/May.
- Several assets creation projects have been completed in collaboration with the Department of Rural Development and Poverty Eradication. These include the creation of 60 rice banks, 58 km of roads, 22 fishponds, 14 gravity-fed water supply and 4 irrigation systems, which will help communities increase their food production and enhance their food security in the long term. WFP is also discussing joint activities with IFAD under their Community-based Food Security and Economic Opportunities Programme.
- Preparations are underway for the local and regional procurement project funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), through which: i) farmers will receive training on producing and rotating crops, and will learn about the importance of diversified diets and how to grow vegetable gardens, and ii) schools will be provided with cash in order to buy fresh products from these farmers. As a first step, WFP will partner with a local non-profit association to collect baseline data, which will help measure the achievements of the projects.

Partnerships

- Together with Population Services International, the social behaviour change communication campaign has just started. It will cover 400 villages in Oudomxay and Sekong provinces, and will aim to increase awareness of nutrition best practices and complementary feeding among communities. The plan is to expand to an additional 715 villages.
- WFP is finalising a letter of agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on disaster risk reduction and management in agriculture. At a cost of USD 60,000, the project will contribute to increasing the resilience of rural livelihoods to climate-related hazards and disasters.
- In partnership with WFP, the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry started developing tools, which will provide farmers with real-time rainfall forecasts in order to make informed decisions about their crops, and adapt to climate change.
- Together with the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the World Bank and WFP are organizing and funding a workshop "Advancing cleaner cooking solutions for healthier and more efficient households in Lao PDR". WFP will start a pilot programme by providing clean stoves to the school meals programme.

Country Background & Strategy



Lao PDR is one of the world's least developed countries. It is a low income and food deficit country. It has one of the lowest population densities in Asia at 27 people per km² with a third of all villages inaccessible by road during the May to September rainy season, and a further 5.4 percent with no road access at all (Population and Housing Census 2015). Up to 28 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (USD 1.25/day) with a GDP per capita of USD 1,600 (World Bank 2015).

Lao PDR has achieved Millennium Development Goal 1 by having halved the poverty rate in the period 1990-2015. However, 25.5 percent of children are still underweight, and 35.6 percent are stunted. Up to 55 percent of children from ethnic minorities are stunted. The 2015 Global Hunger Index (GHI) rates hunger levels in Lao PDR as 'serious' with a 28.5 GHI Score (on a scale from 0 to 100, 0 being the best score or 'no hunger').

While Lao PDR has experienced a positive development over the past decade (going down 8.4 points on the GHI), undernutrition, wasting and stunting rates remain amongst the highest in the region. WFP supports 40 out of the 49 officially recognized ethnic groups (World Bank 2014).

WFP has been present in the country since 1976.

Population: **6.5 million**

2015 Human Development Index: **141 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **35.6% of children between 6-59 months**

Donors

USA, Australia, Japan, Luxembourg, European Union, Lao PDR, Private Donors