



WFP Lao PDR Country Brief

September 2020

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

Lao PDR is a least developed country, ranking 140 out of 189 countries in the 2018 Human Development Index. It has one of the lowest population densities in Asia. 23 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (USD 1.25/day), with a GDP per capita of USD 2,542 (World Bank 2018). The country is ranked 110 out of 162 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2018. While Lao PDR has managed to reduce the proportion of hungry poor to 23 percent, the 2019 Global Hunger Index still rates hunger levels as “serious”.

Climate change is a key challenge facing rural livelihoods, and the country is 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.

WFP has been present in Lao PDR since 1975.



Population: **6.5 million**

Human Development Index: **140 out of 189 [inconsistent with ranking above]**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

In Numbers

US\$ 2.8 million six-month (Oct 2020 – Mar 2021) net funding requirements

184.7 mt of food distributed

90,145 people assisted

49%



51%



Operational Updates

- As part of the COVID-19 response, WFP is providing unconditional food assistance to returning migrant labourers in six quarantine centres in Lao PDR through implementing partners World Vision International and the Swiss Red Cross. In September, WFP provided over 82,671 nutritious meals and basic dignity kits to 5,589 beneficiaries (2,738 women and girls) at US\$ 138,695.
- With the academic year starting on 1 September, WFP resumed school feeding in approximately 792 schools in 22 districts across 7 provinces. In September, WFP distributed 165 mt of food for 76,992 pre-primary and primary schoolchildren.
- WFP transferred US\$ 69,810 to 2,116 participants (11,215 total beneficiaries; 5,495 women) as conditional cash-based transfers to bridge immediate food insecurities in 35 communities in Attapeu and Sekong Provinces through food assistance-for-assets activities. Participants built water reservoirs and roads, amongst others. WFP provided each participating household with US\$ 33 to cover their rice needs for an estimated 18 days.
- In northern Lao PDR, 50 communities in Phongsali are working together to establish 45 integrated community reservoirs and five roads to productive areas through food assistance-for-assets activities. WFP provided over 3,300 participating households (21,800 beneficiaries) with a total of 36 mt of sunflower oil in exchange for their labour in constructing these assets.
- Phongsali is also the site of five climate-smart villages, in which WFP is implementing climate-resilient agricultural practices in partnership with the Institute for Rural Reconstruction. In two of the five villages (31 households in Asue village and 24 households in Phouxay village) new Labour and None varieties of upland rice have been tested since June and are now ready for harvest. The varieties performed well and were tillering more than local varieties, offering a potentially more resilient and productive rice variety for their communities.
- In September, WFP launched the Lao School Meals App, a monitoring application for 148 model schools across 30 districts. The app allows monitoring of indicators such as the number of students that receive lunches, the number of days that they are offered lunch, the quantity and frequency of fresh food contributions from the communities, etc.

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Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/lao-peoples-democratic-republic

Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Oct 2020 – Mar 2021 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
88.5 m	55.2 m	2.8 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Schoolchildren in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide policy support, technical assistance and transfer of capacities
- Accelerate the implementation of the Government's plan of action of the school meals programme
- Support a national process for community and Government hand-over of the schools.

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.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance for evidence-based policy dialogue
- Stimulate access to local specialized nutritious food for children aged 6 to 23 months
- Develop a social behaviour change communication and establish farmer nutrition schools.

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.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Build community resilience through the creation of productive assets and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

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.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Invest in national capacity for food and nutrition security governance
- Enable communities to lead and own their food and nutrition security solutions
- Enhance government capacity at all levels to prepare for and efficiently respond to natural disasters.

Donors

USA, Australia, Japan, France, Russia, Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, Government of Lao PDR, Private Donors

Operational Updates (continued)

- WFP has received an additional US\$ 2.3 million from the World Bank's Global Agriculture and Food Security Program for its Agriculture for Nutrition project, to mitigate COVID-19's socio-economic impact on rural villages of northern provinces through participatory nutrition and agriculture-related activities.
- WFP and the Government jointly delivered a Farmer Nutrition School refresher training and shared new tools, such as guidelines for home garden exchange visits, cooking instructions and additional posters with 1,200 village nutrition facilitators in 400 villages.

Story from the field



Food distribution at the KM27 quarantine center in Vientiane capital. Photo: © WFP/ Vilakhone Sipaseuth

To date, Lao PDR has managed to keep the official number of people infected by COVID-19 to only 23 people, in part due to the strict implementation of quarantine measures for all people entering the country. WFP received an official request from the Ministry of Health to support the food needs of returning migrant labourers in the key quarantine centres in four provinces. The KM27 quarantine center in Lao PDR's capital Vientiane is one of around 50 quarantine centers around the country. An average of 350 people stay at this quarantine center daily, mostly migrant workers returning from neighboring Thailand, who have lost their jobs.

In partnership with the Swiss Red Cross and the Lao Red Cross, WFP is distributing three daily meals, drinking water and a basic hygiene kit. Every day, about 1,000 meals are distributed with the help of Red Cross volunteers.