



**WFP EVALUATION**



# Evaluation of Lao People's Democratic Republic WFP Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021

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# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1. Evaluation features .....	1
1.2. Country context .....	1
1.3. SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED .....	7
1.4. Methodology, limitations and ethical considerations .....	16
<b>2. Evaluation findings</b> .....	<b>22</b>
2.1. Evaluation Question 1: To what extent is THE strategic position, role and specific contribution OF WFP based on country priorities and people’s needs as well as WFP strengths? .....	22
2.2. Evaluation Question 2: What ARE the extent and quality of THE specific contribution OF WFP to country strategic plan strategic outcomes in THE Country? .....	29
2.3. Evaluation Question 3: To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to country strategic plan outputs and strategic outcomes?.....	55
2.4. Evaluation Question 4: What are the factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the country strategic plan? .....	60
<b>3 Conclusions and recommendations</b> .....	<b>71</b>
3.1 The strategic positioning and role of WFP in Lao PDR .....	71
3.2 Extent and quality of the specific contributions of WFP to Country Strategic Plan Strategic Outcomes .....	72
3.3 Factors that explain WFP performance and strategic shift .....	73
3.4 Recommendations .....	74
<b>Acronyms</b> .....	<b>79</b>

# List of figures

Figure 1: Line of sight – Lao People’s Democratic Republic country strategic plan (2017–2021).....	iii
Figure 1: Lao PDR context and WFP activities .....	10
Figure 2: Total actual food distribution by metric tons (mt) by strategic outcome, year (2017-2019) .....	13
Figure 3: Planned versus actual food distribution (mt) (2017-2019) .....	13
Figure 4: Total actual cash-based transfer and commodity voucher distribution (USD) by strategic outcome, year (2017-2019) .....	13
Figure 5: Planned versus actual cash-based transfer and commodity voucher distribution (USD) (2017-2019) .....	14
Figure 6: WFP Lao PDR – 2019 operational map .....	15
Figure 7: 2017-2030 goals – strategic shifts .....	16
Figure 8: Reconstructed theory of change diagram .....	19
Figure 9: Available resources against needs-based plan .....	61
Figure 10: Funding composition for the country strategic plan.....	62
Figure 11: Available resources for needs-based plan .....	63
Figure 12: Needs-based plan, financial allocation and expenditure for government level capacity strengthening/technical assistance activities .....	64

# List of tables

Table 1: Nutritional status of children under age 5 by ethnicity (2017) (Total 2SD and 3SD) .....	3
Table 2: Sex-disaggregated education indicators in Lao PDR .....	4
Table 3: Strategic outcomes and activities of the country strategic plan (USD) .....	11
Table 4: Total country strategic plan beneficiaries by age group, 2017-2019.....	12
Table 5: Total country strategic plan beneficiaries by gender, 2017-2019 .....	12
Table 6: Budget versus expenditure by strategic outcome (USD) .....	12
Table 7: Evaluation questions and subquestions .....	16
Table 8: Number of data responses by remote, in-person and focus group discussion method .	20
Table 9: WFP operations in the government-priority poor districts (2015–2020) .....	25
Table 10: Numbers of provinces, districts and villages reached by WFP (2017–2020). .....	25
Table 11: United Nations agencies whose programmes overlap with the country strategic plan objectives.....	28

Table 12: An overall assessment of the performance on delivery of output indicators and outcomes indicators against each strategic outcome.....	31
Table 13: Total number of calls received through the hotline by year and by gender (%) .....	47
Table 14: WFP gender and age marker .....	48
Table 15: Arrangements for ongoing support to school to be handed over. ....	52
Table 16: Food delivery (mt) to schools by month for school feeding activity.....	56
Table 17: Coverage and targeting of interventions .....	56
Table 18: Reported food loss by year .....	57
Table 19: Food distribution and losses for school feeding activities by year.....	57
Table 20: The cost of food distribution for school feeding.....	58

## List of boxes

Box 1: The school feeding handover plan.....	51
Box 2: Good practice actions: Handover process in Luang Namtha Province.....	52
Box 3: Village disaster prevention unit (VDPU): Also known as village disaster prevention and control committees (VDPCC).....	54
Box 4: Examples of the positive influence of government partnerships on results .....	66
Box 5: Example of good practice - partnership with Lao Women’s Union has positively impacted results .....	66

# Executive Summary

## INTRODUCTION

### *Evaluation features*

1. An evaluation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic country strategic plan (CSP) for the period 2017–2021 was conducted between July 2020 and April 2021. Combining accountability and learning objectives, it was timed to inform the design of the next CSP for the country, with fieldwork conducted in October 2020. The main users of the evaluation are the WFP country office, the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and headquarters technical units and other WFP stakeholders.
2. The evaluation scope covers WFP activities implemented under the CSP for 2017–2021, assessing WFP's strategic positioning and the extent to which WFP made the shift expected under the CSP; WFP's effectiveness in contributing to the CSP strategic outcomes; the efficiency with which the CSP was implemented; and factors explaining WFP's performance.
3. An independent external evaluation team undertook the evaluation using mixed methods, drawing on monitoring data, document review and semi-structured interviews with more than 200 stakeholders at the national and local levels. Data collection ended on 30 October 2020. Attention was paid to accountability to affected populations, ethical considerations, and gender equality and women's empowerment. Information was triangulated using various sources to ensure the validity of the findings.
4. Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic were partially compensated for by a hybrid approach to data collection: part of the team collected data in person, particularly in the field, while the other part worked remotely. Limited availability of monitoring data limited the assessment of outcomes and cost-efficiency.
5. The evaluation process was coordinated with three other United Nations evaluations running concurrently for the United Nations Partnership Framework, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund.

### *Context*

6. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a land-locked country with 67.1 percent of the population living in rural areas. It is a lower-middle-income country with a growing economy and increasing socioeconomic disparities among geographic regions, ethnic groups and education levels. The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting labour-intensive sectors of the economy.

TABLE 1: LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS		
Year	Indicator	Value
2020	Total population <sup>a</sup>	7.2 million
2018	Life expectancy <sup>b</sup>	68 years
2018	Gross domestic product per capita <sup>b</sup>	USD 2 460
2018/19	National poverty head count <sup>c</sup>	18.3%
2012	GINI coefficient <sup>b</sup>	36.4
2018	Gender inequality index score <sup>d</sup>	0.604
2017	Prevalence of under 5 stunting <sup>e</sup>	33%
2017	Prevalence of under 5 wasting <sup>e</sup>	9%
2015	Over 15 literacy rate <sup>b</sup>	85%

Sources:

<sup>a</sup> Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data. Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>.

<sup>b</sup> World Bank. World Development Indicators.

<sup>c</sup> Lao Statistics Bureau and World Bank. 2020. *Poverty Profile in Lao PDR: Poverty Report for the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2018–2019*.

<sup>d</sup> United Nations Development Programme. 2019. *Human Development Report 2019*.

<sup>e</sup> Lao Statistics Bureau. 2018. *Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017, Survey Findings Report*.

7. People living in remote regions are more vulnerable to food insecurity, with 11 percent of rural households classified as having “severe” food insecurity compared with 6 percent of urban households.<sup>1</sup> The prevalence of undernutrition remains high overall (see table 1) and varies by geographic location and ethnic group.<sup>2</sup> People with livelihoods dependent on agriculture or natural resources are particularly vulnerable to natural hazards induced by climate change.

8. While primary education net enrolment reached 98.8 percent in 2016, the retention rate at grade 5 is lower, at 81.1 percent in 2017.<sup>3</sup> Gender patterns are highly diverse among the 49 ethnic groups, and the country consistently ranks low in gender equality indices.

9. The Government's 8th Five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016–2020),<sup>4</sup> aims to achieve socioeconomic development, industrialization and modernization and to paving the way to graduation from least-developed country status by 2026. The Government has localized the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and integrated them into its national planning framework.

10. The United Nations Partnership Framework for 2017–2021 for the country supports the Government through action under three thematic pillars: inclusive growth, livelihoods and resilience, and human development and governance.

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