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Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

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Operational matters – Country strategic plans
For decision

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Lao People's Democratic Republic country strategic plan (2027–2031)

Duration	1 January 2027–31 December 2031
Total cost to WFP	USD 98 272 124
Framework on accountability for results score	2.1

Draft decision*

The Board approves the Lao People's Democratic Republic country strategic plan for 2027–2031 (WFP/EB.2/2026/7-A/4) at a total cost to WFP of USD 98,272,124.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

Focal points:

Mr M. Hollingworth
Assistant Executive Director
Programme Operations Department
email: matthew.hollingworth@wfp.org

Mr M. A. Prost
Country Director
email: marcandre.prost@wfp.org

This country strategic plan (CSP) is aligned with the WFP strategic plan for 2026–2029 and is guided by humanitarian principles and WFP's approved policy framework.

WFP's strategic programmatic priorities and partnerships

1. In 2025, an estimated 10.3 percent of households in the Lao People's Democratic Republic were food insecure, while a further 56 percent were classified as borderline food insecure.[1]

2. Malnutrition remains a critical public health concern. One third of children under 5 are stunted and 10.7 percent are wasted, both above global critical thresholds.[2] Micronutrient deficiencies are widespread. Anaemia affects a large proportion of children under 5 and women of reproductive age.[3]

3. Nutrition and food security challenges disproportionately affect women and children. These challenges are particularly acute among rural and mountainous populations and minority communities, where language barriers, geographic isolation and livelihood insecurity further limit access to essential services and support.[4]

4. As highlighted by the mid-term review[5] and decentralized evaluations[6] of the CSP for 2022–2026, as well as by other assessments, WFP's ability to combine operational delivery with technical assistance, systems strengthening and policy support constitutes a clear comparative advantage in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. At the same time, those evaluations and assessments underscored challenges related to integration and sustainability at the subnational and community levels. In response the CSP for 2027–2031 adopts a focused, integrated approach by strengthening links between emergency response, nutrition, resilience, school-based programmes and social protection in order to support the development of nationally owned and sustainable solutions for vulnerable communities.

5. The CSP for 2027–2031 supports the country's transition following its scheduled graduation from least developed country status in 2026 by addressing persistent food insecurity, malnutrition and vulnerability to shocks through nationally led systems.[7] Aligned with the tenth national socioeconomic development plan and the Government's strategy for a smooth transition to least developed country graduation, as well as the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for 2027–2031, the CSP balances targeted assistance with systems strengthening. Priorities include strengthening emergency preparedness and response, improving access to healthy diets through resilient and nutrition-sensitive systems, and supporting the further institutionalization of national programmes such as school feeding and shock-responsive social protection with a view to building human capital and resilience.

6. Particular attention will be given to women, young people, minority communities, persons with disabilities and remote populations, who face overlapping barriers to services, information and economic opportunities. The CSP will integrate social and behaviour change

[1] WFP. 2025. *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment* (forthcoming).

[2] Lao Statistics Bureau and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2025. *Lao Social Indicator Survey III, 2023, Survey Findings Report.*

[3] Ibid.

[4] MAGENTA and WFP country office for the Lao People's Democratic Republic. 2026. *Food Systems Behaviours in the Lao People's Democratic Republic: Evidence to Strengthen Nutrition, School Meals, and Climate Resilience* (unpublished report).

[5] WFP country office for the Lao People's Democratic Republic. 2024. *Mid-term review of the country strategic plan for the Lao People's Democratic Republic for 2022–2026* (unpublished).

[6] WFP country office for the Lao People's Democratic Republic. 2024. *Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP School-Feeding Program for USDA McGovern-Dole Grant [FY 2020-25]. Decentralized McGovern-Dole Mid-Term Evaluation Report.*

[7] United Nations. 2026. Lao PDR graduation status | LDC Portal - International Support Measures for Least Developed Countries.

and community participation across interventions while strengthening decentralized capacities to promote equitable access and local ownership and achieve sustainable outcomes.

7. Emergency preparedness and response interventions will be linked to the development of shock-responsive social protection systems, while nutrition interventions will be linked to work on resilient livelihoods and social and behaviour change. Smallholder farmers will be linked to the national school lunch programme through the adoption of a home-grown school feeding approach, creating market opportunities while improving children's access to nutritious diets. Together, these approaches create a coherent pathway towards nationally owned and scalable solutions by connecting crisis response, nutrition, resilience and social protection.

8. WFP will work closely with relevant government institutions at the national and subnational levels while strengthening collaboration with other United Nations entities, international financial institutions, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector. In collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WFP will enhance integrated approaches to food systems transformation and school feeding, while engagement with international financial institutions will strengthen alignment between humanitarian, development and financing streams, thereby enhancing the sustainability and scale of interventions. Through localization, South–South cooperation and coordinated financing, WFP will gradually transition from direct implementation to an enabling role in support of stronger national ownership and leadership.

9. For all CSP outcomes, the cross-cutting priorities of inclusion, protection and accountability to affected people will be integrated throughout implementation. WFP will ensure that assistance remains nutritionally adequate, equitable and accessible by using transparent targeting, community validation processes and people-centred approaches. Particular attention will be given to the needs of women, children, persons with disabilities and minority communities to minimize the risk of exclusion and ensure equitable access to assistance and services. Operational learning, evidence generation and community engagement will support continuous improvement in programme quality and accountability.

10. Drawing on the common country analysis, the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for 2027–2031 (UNSDCF) identifies three interconnected priorities: strengthening resilience to shocks and environmental risks, investing in human capital and access to quality services, and advancing governance and sustainable economic development. The CSP is fully aligned with the UNSDCF, contributing to two of its three outcomes, specifically in the areas the environment and sustainable growth, and people’s well-being.

Country strategic plan outcome 1: Crisis-affected people are able to meet their essential needs before, during and after shocks, including through strengthened national shock-responsive systems

11. WFP will support crisis-affected populations in meeting their essential needs before, during and after shocks while strengthening national and subnational capacity for emergency preparedness and response. WFP will provide time-bound life-saving assistance when required and support a transition to nationally led preparedness and response systems. The systems, capacity and evidence generated under outcome 1 will provide the foundation for expanding, operationalizing and scaling up nationally led shock-responsive social protection under outcome 3.

12. Through activity 1, where shocks exceed national capacity, WFP will complement government-led responses through in-kind food assistance and cash-based transfers to crisis-affected people. At the same time, under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with other relevant stakeholders, WFP will strengthen core emergency preparedness and response functions, including early warning, needs assessment, targeting, logistics coordination and last-mile delivery, while supporting the institutionalization of these functions within government systems.[8]

13. To address bottlenecks, WFP will provide technical assistance to refine needs assessment protocols and data integration, support for enhancing targeting accuracy through strengthened social registries and vulnerability analysis, and operational support for the piloting and scale-up of nationally led delivery models, drawing on mechanisms such as the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve and government-managed cash transfer systems.

14. Activities under outcome 1 will advance WFP's cross-cutting priorities, in particular localization, by strengthening nationally led systems for emergency preparedness and response. Particular attention will be given to women and children, persons with disabilities and minority communities. WFP will ensure that food assistance remains nutritionally adequate and equitable by using transparent targeting and community validation processes and integrating, people-centred approaches, protection and accountability to affected people in all its operations.

Country strategic plan outcome 2: Food-insecure people and those at risk of malnutrition are able to access healthy, nutritious diets all year round and build enhanced resilience to stressors and shocks

15. Under outcome 2, WFP aims to reduce humanitarian needs through two mutually reinforcing pathways, in line with WFP's mandate, comparative advantage and strategic plan. Activity 2 focuses on improving nutrition outcomes among vulnerable populations through nutrition-sensitive interventions and social and behaviour change initiatives. Activity 3 focuses on strengthening resilient livelihoods and local market capacity in order to enhance household and community access to healthy and nutritious diets. Together, the two activities will contribute to improved dietary diversity, enhanced resilience and reduced vulnerability to shocks in areas experiencing recurrent acute food insecurity.

16. Through activity 2, WFP will seek to prevent malnutrition using an integrated community-, household- and policy-level approach that prioritizes nutritionally vulnerable population groups, particularly pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, caregivers and children under 5. The package of nutrition assistance will combine conditional cash transfers and social and behaviour change interventions aimed at improving dietary quality, care practices and healthy food consumption. At the policy level, WFP will support the implementation of the forthcoming national nutrition strategy for 2026–2035 and the national plan of action on nutrition for 2026–2030 while strengthening multisectoral coordination, food fortification, regulatory frameworks and national and subnational capacity for implementation, monitoring and accountability.

17. Through activity 3, and in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, other relevant line ministries and other stakeholders, WFP will support food-insecure households and communities vulnerable to weather-related, environmental and other shocks by implementing integrated livelihood and resilience-building interventions designed to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience over time. Targeted interventions

[8] Activity 1 is aligned with national priorities adopted by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, including those set out in the national strategy on disaster risk reduction for 2021–2030 and the action plan for 2025–2030, as well as with outcome 4 of the Government's tenth national socioeconomic development plan.

for women and other vulnerable population groups will include tailored livelihood support, capacity strengthening activities and access to assets and services, taking into account their specific needs, roles and constraints.

18. Under outcome 2, WFP will implement activities in line with its cross-cutting priorities by prioritizing nutritionally vulnerable populations; promoting equal access to assistance, resources and services; encouraging the participation of women and men in leadership and decision-making; and supporting the equitable sharing of benefits within households and communities.

Country strategic plan outcome 3: National and subnational programmes and systems are strengthened so that they can increasingly meet, at scale, the needs of people at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition

19. WFP will support the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, among other key ministries and stakeholders, in strengthening nationally led safety nets and systems capable of addressing food insecurity and malnutrition at scale. Under outcome 3, WFP will support the institutionalization of the national school lunch programme and the development of shock-responsive social protection systems while strengthening national capacity for programme implementation, coordination and monitoring.[9]

20. Through activity 4, WFP will continue direct implementation of school meals during the first three years of CSP implementation while progressively transitioning programme management and delivery functions to the Government in preparation for the full handover of schools to the national school lunch programme by 2029. To support programme sustainability, WFP will strengthen national systems and capacity while promoting home-grown school feeding in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), FAO, IFAD and other partners.

21. Through activity 5, WFP will provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, among other relevant line ministries and stakeholders, for the design and operationalization of nutrition-sensitive shock-responsive social protection systems and can be scaled up during emergencies. Efforts will focus on strengthening targeting systems, beneficiary management, delivery mechanisms, financing arrangements and interoperable data systems, building on innovations developed through emergency preparedness and response activities. This support will help to improve the Government's ability to protect vulnerable households before, during and after shocks.

22. Through activity 6, WFP will provide on-demand logistics, procurement, storage and transport services to relevant line ministries and other national stakeholders and development partners on a full cost-recovery basis, drawing on its operational footprint and technical expertise.

23. Under outcome 3, WFP will contribute to the cross-cutting priority of improving nutrition and access to healthy diets through home-grown school feeding. Particular attention will also be given to localization by strengthening community engagement as well as promoting women's leadership and participation in decision-making structures and ensuring the equitable participation of women and men in programme planning, management and oversight.

[9] These activities are in line with national priorities, including those set out in the policy and decree on the promotion of school lunches, the national social protection strategy for 2020–2025, as well as a forthcoming updated national social protection strategy and outcomes 2 and 3 of the tenth national socioeconomic development plan.

Prioritization approach

24. WFP is embarking on this CSP with a strong partnership base while operating in an increasingly constrained funding environment. Should funding constraints arise, WFP will prioritize interventions that deliver the greatest impact through nationally led systems. WFP will apply an evidence-based prioritization approach to maximize impact for populations facing the most severe food insecurity and malnutrition. Prioritization will also be guided by sustained government commitment and financing, especially where domestic resources are secured or planned, and by the potential for achieving scalable and sustainable food security and nutrition results.

25. WFP will carefully manage trade-offs between direct assistance and system-strengthening investments, maintaining support for life-saving assistance and surge response capacity while progressively strengthening national ownership and institutional capacity. Addressing humanitarian needs resulting from natural hazards will remain a priority, including through support for systems, capacity and financing arrangements for cash-based transfers and the pre-positioning of food ahead of the monsoon season and large-scale emergency responses. Household selection will be grounded in food security, nutrition, vulnerability and protection analyses, complemented by community engagement and accountability mechanisms, and, where applicable, aligned with the methodologies of relevant national systems.

26. WFP's approach is grounded in partnership, national ownership and localization, with a strong emphasis on sustaining results beyond the CSP period. WFP will seek to protect and expand its donor base, diversify financing through engagement with non-traditional partners, including ASEAN Member States, and through South–South cooperation initiatives, and promote co-financing arrangements with the Government, international financial institutions and climate funds.

Transition strategies

27. Through investments in anticipatory action, early warning, needs assessment, targeting and shock-responsive delivery mechanisms, WFP will gradually transition from direct response to supporting sustainable government ownership through a combination of surge support, quality assurance and technical assistance. To facilitate a long-term transition of programming to government ownership, WFP will help relevant government counterparts to operationalize nationally led shock-responsive social protection mechanisms and expand the national home-grown school feeding programme through strengthened systems, procurement, targeting, monitoring and local supply chains. Transition-related decisions will be guided by agreed readiness criteria, including institutional capacity, domestic financing, coordination effectiveness and the performance of targeting, delivery and monitoring systems.

28. Over the course of the CSP, WFP will progressively transfer responsibilities to government institutions, particularly the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and subnational authorities, while supporting stronger leadership, standard operating procedures, information systems and financing arrangements. WFP will also support national and local institutions, organizations and community structures in order to strengthen food security, nutrition and resilience while increasing the participation of local actors, including the Lao Red Cross, organizations of persons with disabilities and emerging *taseng* governance structures.[10] These efforts are aligned with the tenth national socioeconomic development plan and relevant sectoral strategies.

[10] The Lao People's Democratic Republic rolled out a major administrative overhaul in 2025, reintroducing the *taseng* (sub-district) as the lowest official tier of local government. This restructuring shifts villages into strictly community-focused roles while centralizing public services, local planning and state policy implementation at the newly established *taseng* level.

ANNEX I

Summary line of sight of Lao People's Democratic Republic country strategic plan

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">TABLE 1: SUMMARY LINE OF SIGHT OF LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN</th></tr>
<tr><th>Focus area</th><th>Crisis response</th><th>Resilience building</th><th>Root causes</th></tr>
<tr><td>CSP outcome</td><td>CSP outcome 1: Crisis-affected people are able to meet their essential needs before, during and after shocks including through strengthened national shock-responsive systems.</td><td>CSP outcome 2: Food-insecure people and those at risk of malnutrition are able to access healthy, nutritious diets all year round and build enhanced resilience to stressors and shocks.</td><td>CSP outcome 3: National and subnational programmes and systems are strengthened so that they can increasingly meet, at scale, the needs of people at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Activity</td><td rowspan="3">Activity 1: Provide timely and nutritionally adequate food assistance to crisis-affected populations, while strengthening national and sub-national capacities to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to shocks including through shock-responsive safety nets.</td><td>Activity 2: Provide households and communities vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition with integrated nutrition interventions delivered through enhanced community platforms to improve dietary adequacy and prevent malnutrition.</td><td>Activity 4: Provide technical assistance and support to national and subnational actors and institutions to implement, scale and sustain school-based systems that improve access to healthy diets and support local food systems.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Activity 3: Support food insecure people and communities vulnerable to weather-related and other shocks with livelihood interventions, including transfers, information, capacity, financial and weather services, to better resist and recover from shocks and adapt to changing weather conditions.</td><td>Activity 5: Strengthen government capacities and systems to establish and operationalise a government-led food security and nutrition-sensitive social protection system.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Activity 6: Provide reliable on-demand services including storage, transport and procurement for development partners and the Government.</td></tr>
</table>

ANNEX II

Country portfolio needs budget and cost breakdown by country strategic plan outcome (*USD*)

TABLE 2: COUNTRY PORTFOLIO NEEDS BUDGET *(USD)*							
CSP outcome	**Activity**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**Total**
1	1	12 799 487	6 062 049	3 826 006	2 104 630	1 206 228	**25 998 399**
2	2	5 384 757	5 459 489	5 490 553	3 028 611	2 662 220	**22 025 630**
	3	2 347 420	1 686 375	1 430 718	1 287 978	1 281 021	**8 033 512**
3	4	10 661 235	8 592 990	7 548 052	4 785 753	3 870 964	**35 458 995**
	5	1 145 374	1 079 249	935 000	652 404	790 549	**4 602 576**
	6	315 951	786 703	329 497	359 942	360 919	**2 153 011**
Total		**32 654 224**	**23 666 855**	**19 559 825**	**12 219 319**	**10 171 901**	**98 272 124**

TABLE 3: INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN BY COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME (*USD*)				
	WFP strategic outcome 1	**WFP strategic outcome 2**	**WFP strategic outcome 3**	**Total**
	CSP outcome 1	**CSP outcome 2**	**CSP outcome 3**	
Focus area	**Crisis response**	**Resilience building**	**Root causes**	
Transfers	19 759 383	21 533 726	30 994 990	**72 288 100**
Implementation	2 057 088	3 196 731	3 937 024	**9 190 843**
Direct support costs	2 595 172	3 494 089	4 837 496	**10 926 756**
Subtotal	**24 411 643**	**28 224 547**	**39 769 510**	**92 405 699**
Indirect support costs	1 586 757	1 834 596	2 445 072	**5 866 425**
Total	**25 998 399**	**30 059 142**	**42 214 582**	**98 272 124**

ANNEX III

Beneficiaries by year

TABLE 4: BENEFICIARIES BY YEAR						
	2027	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**Total**
Total beneficiaries (without overlap)	254 711	211 211	153 331	91 400	78 400	**496 054**

ANNEX IV

Monitoring, evaluation, evidence and risk management

Evidence informing this country strategic plan

1. **Evidence:** The mid-term review and decentralized evaluations of the CSP for 2022–2026, together with other assessments, highlighted WFP's strong contribution to institutional capacity development and extensive operational reach, while identifying the need for stronger programme coherence, integration and sustainability, particularly at the subnational and community levels. They also noted challenges associated with community contribution models for school meals and the need for more realistic transition pathways.
    - **CSP design response:** The CSP comprises a focused, integrated portfolio that strengthens links between emergency response, nutrition, resilience, school-based programmes and social protection. It places greater emphasis on transition planning, localization, the strengthening of subnational capacity and the progressive transfer of responsibilities to government institutions.
2. **Evidence:** The 2025 comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment, food security monitoring and other studies have highlighted persistent food insecurity, high malnutrition rates, limited affordability of healthy diets and significant disparities affecting minority communities, women and remote populations.
    - **CSP design response:** WFP will provide timely emergency preparedness and response activities, in addition to implementing integrated nutrition, resilience and livelihood interventions while strengthening national programmes and systems, including school feeding and shock-responsive social protection, to support sustainable reductions in food insecurity and malnutrition.
3. **Evidence:** National consultations and the common country analysis highlighted that the Lao People's Democratic Republic's graduation from least developed country status will occur amid continued macroeconomic pressures, vulnerability to floods and droughts, limited social protection coverage and uneven institutional capacity across sectors and administrative levels. Strengthening nationally owned systems and local capacity emerged as a key requirement for sustainable progress.
    - **CSP design response:** The CSP prioritizes strengthening national and subnational capacity for emergency preparedness and response, school feeding, social protection, nutrition coordination and resilience in order to support a gradual transition of programming from direct implementation by WFP to government ownership.

Monitoring, evaluation and evidence generation arrangements

4. Guided by the Executive Director's 2024 circular on minimum monitoring requirements and the framework for accountability for results, WFP will continue to invest in monitoring, evaluation and evidence generation throughout the CSP period. Using the 2025 comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment as a baseline, WFP will conduct regular food security monitoring through mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping, market price tracking, market functionality index analysis, seasonal monitoring and targeted studies to strengthen understanding of food security, nutrition and resilience trends. Collaboration with key ministries and the Lao Statistics Bureau will support national ownership of data and strengthen evidence-based policy and programme implementation.

5. WFP will implement an integrated monitoring and accountability system that combines activity monitoring, post-distribution monitoring, community feedback mechanisms and third-party monitoring. Accessible feedback channels will enable communities to raise concerns safely and confidentially, including issues related to targeting, protection, programme quality, fraud and sexual exploitation and abuse, through established referral and escalation pathways in line with corporate standards. Evidence generation will include studies on school meals, nutrition, resilience and social protection, alongside a decentralized evaluation of the school meal programme, a centralized CSP evaluation in the fourth year of CSP implementation and ongoing reviews to support learning, adaptation and resource mobilization.

Risk management and mitigation measures

6. Successful implementation of the CSP will depend on sustained government financing and ownership, continued strengthening of national and subnational capacity and the effective operationalization of shock-responsive systems. Key strategic risks include macroeconomic volatility, inflation, currency depreciation, debt pressures, natural disasters and the continued impact of unexploded ordnance. To mitigate these risks, WFP will conduct regular food security and market monitoring, strengthen government emergency preparedness capacity, support contingency planning and pre-positioning arrangements, and continue investing in vulnerability analysis, targeting systems and disaster response mechanisms, including the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve.

7. Operational risks related to limited institutional capacity, protection concerns and partnership performance will be mitigated through embedded technical assistance, joint planning with government counterparts, strengthened oversight systems, third-party monitoring and regular capacity development. Fiduciary risks, including fraud, diversion and corruption, will be addressed through digitalization, strengthened beneficiary identity management, robust internal controls, and continuous compliance oversight. Cooperating partners will undergo vetting through the United Nations Partner Portal, annual performance evaluations and regular oversight visits, while contract management will follow WFP due diligence and assurance standards. Community feedback mechanisms, protection safeguards, measures to protect against sexual exploitation and abuse, and collaboration with actors specialized in unexploded ordnance will further support safe, accountable and inclusive programme implementation.

ANNEX V

Links to technical and related resources

More operational and budgetary information is available through the CSP data portal.[1]

[1] As mandated by the Executive Board-approved "Policy on Country Strategic Plans" (WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/1/Rev.1).