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*For information**



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PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 January–30 June 2004) — LAO PDR 10319.0

Recovery Assistance to the Disaster-Prone and Vulnerable Food-Insecure Communities in the Lao PDR

Number of beneficiaries	217,000 (female: 111,000; male: 106,000)
Duration of project	Two years (1 April 2004–31 March 2006)
Cost (United States dollars)	
Total cost to WFP	3,939,829
WFP food cost	1,605,045

* In accordance with the Executive Board's decisions on governance, approved at the Annual and Third Regular Sessions of 2000, items for information should not be discussed unless a Board member specifically requests it, well in advance of the meeting, and the Chair accepts the request on the grounds that it is a proper use of the Board's time.

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for information to the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Supervisor, Meeting Servicing and Distribution Unit (tel.: 066513-2328).



1. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) is frequently affected by natural disasters. In the last nine years, WFP has launched six emergency operations in the country, mainly in response to floods. The latest, emergency operation (EMOP) 6311, was launched in October 2000 in response to serious floods affecting 395,000 people. This emergency assistance was extended in time to assist people affected by subsequent continuing floods in 2001 and 2002, as a result of which some communities lost large proportions of their annual rice harvest over three successive years. Because the communities have few means to overcome these losses, the result has been serious household food insecurity, widespread loss or sale of assets, increased vulnerability to any future shock and increased migration.
2. The Government of the Lao PDR requested WFP to assist these communities, which are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity because of the high risk of recurrent disasters and other factors that threaten livelihoods. The protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) comprises (i) follow-up rehabilitation initiatives in areas affected by floods in recent years and (ii) activities to mitigate the effects of future disasters and other factors that threaten traditional livelihoods. The PRRO will concentrate on food-insecure areas with the greatest proportion of population at risk, particularly the flood-prone food-insecure populations along the Mekong river and people in related remote upland areas.
3. This PRRO will be operational in the five provinces that received assistance through EMOP 6311. Using the food-for-work (FFW) modality, which was well established during EMOP 6311, the project will help to build government and community capacity in disaster mitigation and will provide vital assistance to improve and repair infrastructure such as embankments and drainage channels, and roads for increased access to markets. The two-year project will assist 217,000 beneficiaries with an average food ration of 30 kg.
4. A response to people suffering the effects of a recent serious drought has been added to the operation. Delayed and reduced monsoon rainfall during and after the main rice planting in late 2003 resulted in losses and yield reductions in many parts of the country; both upland and paddy areas were seriously affected. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry reported in early 2004 that 279,000 people in 46 districts had been affected. The Government requested WFP to provide immediate assistance to villagers in the poorest, most vulnerable drought-affected districts.
5. WFP has been working with the Government to identify the highest priority areas for this response. Through a series of assessments and extensive consultation with the Government, WFP has developed criteria to target the most vulnerable and neediest communities likely to be suffering from serious food insecurity during the most critical lean season of 2004.
6. In total, 138,000 drought-affected people living in 42 districts in 10 provinces have been targeted. The distribution will provide households in the targeted villages with 25 kg of white rice per person, covering approximately two months of food needs; the total requirement is 3,500 mt of rice.

