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**Executive Board
Annual Session**

Rome, 6–10 June 2011

REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Agenda item 11

*For information**



Distribution: GENERAL
WFP/EB.A/2011/11-A/2
21 April 2011
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1 JULY–31 DECEMBER 2010) — LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC 200129

Addressing Malnutrition Through Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition Activities

Number of beneficiaries	14,500
Duration of project	18 months (1 July 2010–31 December 2011)
Food tonnage	319 mt
Cost (United States dollars)	
WFP food cost	646,050
Total cost to WFP	1,029,994

* In accordance with the Executive Board's decisions on governance, approved at the Annual and Third Regular Sessions, 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 to the Executive Board for information

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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ABSTRACT

1. WFP's maternal and child health and nutrition development project is a pilot intervention aimed at addressing stunting among children aged 6–23 months. The project follows the country portfolio evaluation conducted in 2009, which recommended that WFP sharpen its focus on nutrition in Lao People's Democratic Republic. Its objective is to contribute to national efforts to reduce maternal, neonatal and child mortality and maternal and child malnutrition in the country,¹ in line with WFP Strategic Objective 4 – Reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition.
2. To break the intergenerational cycle of chronic malnutrition, WFP will assist the Government through an integrated nutrition intervention for women and children. The project will be implemented in six districts across two provinces in the north. It will start in one district of Luang Namtha² Province, expanding to three more districts in Luang Namtha and two in Oudomxay Province after six months.
3. The project will be undertaken in villages and at provincial and district hospitals and at health posts. At the village level, a specialized lipid-based high-nutrient product will be distributed to all children aged 6–23 months, as a preventive approach that provides children with essential micronutrients and supplements their diets with additional calories.
4. In health facilities, pregnant and lactating women (PLW) will receive rice rations as an incentive for attending up to four antenatal and two post-natal care visits³ and for facility-based deliveries. The aim is to ensure that women obtain pre- and post-natal care and have safe deliveries assisted by health staff at a facility rather than in the village. The food ration will contribute to meeting the caloric needs of PLW, but the food basket also requires a nutritious supplement. WFP will therefore provide a lipid-based fortified food to increase the women's micronutrient and caloric intake. This will be introduced on a pilot basis in the last six months of the project.
5. A nutrition education component, delivering culturally appropriate training in local languages, will seek to increase the nutritional knowledge of mothers, children's other carers – including men – and health facility staff. This will involve collaboration with development partners in the target areas to develop health staff capacity. The training will follow a life-skills approach and aim to empower communities with nutritional information, bringing positive changes in their nutrition-related behaviour. The importance of the lipid-based supplements will be emphasized.
6. The main partners for this project will be the Ministry of Health at the central, provincial and district levels, and the Lao Women's Union – a mass social organization with representation down to the village level.

¹ Ministry of Health, Lao People's Democratic Republic. Strategy and Planning Framework for the Integrated Package of Maternal Neonatal and Child Health Services 2009–2015. Vientiane.

² The districts chosen have high levels of chronic malnutrition, according to a WFP comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment in the northern highlands agro-ecological zone.

³ The rice ration will compensate for opportunity costs arising from travel and the loss of labour or income-earning opportunities.