

OPERATION EVALUATION

Lao People's Democratic Republic: CP 200242

A Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's Country Programme 2012-2015

Evaluation Report

July 2014

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World Food Programme



THE KONTERRA GROUP

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A full list of acronyms used is included as Annex 1.

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Operational Factsheet			
Type / Number / Title		Lao PDR – Country Programme – CP 200242 – (2012-2015)	
Approval		The operation was approved by the Executive Board in November 2011	
Amendments		There have been four Budget Revisions to the initial project document to increase the LTSH rates, to change the DSC component, and to include emergency response modality. [See para 23 for details and dates].	
Duration		Initial: Four year period Jan 2012 – December 2015	Revised: No change
Planned beneficiaries		Initial: 751,000	Revised: 894,514
Planned food requirements		Initial: In-kind food: 37,140 mt Cash & vouchers: US\$1.2 million	Revised: In-kind food: 41,827 mt
US\$ requirements		Initial: US\$68.9 million	Revised: US\$76.8 million
OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES			
	Corporate Strategic objectives	Operation specific objectives¹	Activities
The country programme is in line with the Government's 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (20112015) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (20122015), and supports the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.	Strategic Objective 2	Component 1: Early warning systems, contingency plans and food security monitoring systems are in place and enhanced with WFP capacity development support²	- Capacity development of the Government in disaster preparedness and response - General food distribution and supplemental feeding as emergency response
	Strategic Objective 4	Component 2 and 3: Improved nutritional status of target groups of women, girls and boys	- Provision of rice incentive for pregnant/lactating women at health centres - Provision of <i>Plumpy'Doz</i> for children 6-23 months and <i>Nutributter</i> for pregnant/ lactating women at the village level - Provision of mid-morning snack for children aged 3-10 at pre- and primary schools with nutrition-related messages - Provision of take-home rations for informal border students (primary and secondary schools) - Home-grown school feeding programme - Purchase for Progress (P4P) activities - Product development
		Component 3: Increased access to education and human capital development in targeted schools	
		Component 4: Adequate food consumption reached over assistance period for targeted households	
		Component 5: Increased production capacity for fortified foods, including complementary foods and special nutritional products	

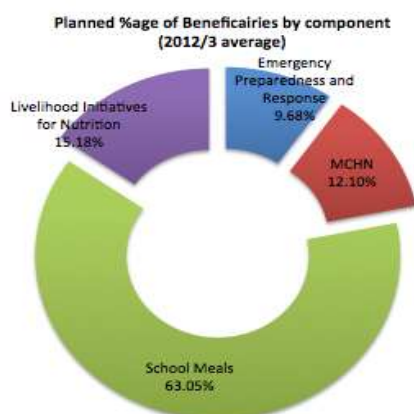
¹ Outcomes as listed in the Programme Document Logical Framework

² Extended to include emergency response modality under Budget Revision 2

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (cont'd.)																																							
As above	Strategic Objective 5	Component 3: Progress made toward nationally owned hunger solutions	- Develop a handover strategy of the school meals programme to the government - Develop market linkages																																				
		Component 4: Increased marketing opportunities with cost-effective WFP local purchases																																					
PARTNERS																																							
Government of Lao PDR		Ministry of Planning and Investment; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education and Sports; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment; Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare; Lao Women's Union; Lao Youth Union; Lao Front for National Construction; Post Office; Ministry of Industries																																					
United Nations		UNICEF, IFAD, FAO, WHO, World Bank and UNDP																																					
NGOs		World Vision, Save the Children International, Lao Red Cross, Oxfam, CARE International, Plan International, ADRA, Norwegian Church Aid																																					
RESOURCES (INPUTS)																																							
<p>Contributions received (by June 2014):</p> <p>The operation has received US\$36,899,797 to date</p> <p>% against appeal:</p> <p>48% of the total project requirements received to date</p> <p>Top 5 donors:</p> <table><tr><td>Australia:</td><td>US\$12,647,602</td></tr><tr><td>USA:</td><td>US\$7,330,414</td></tr><tr><td>Japan</td><td>US\$3,938,296</td></tr><tr><td>Luxembourg:</td><td>US\$3,163,787</td></tr><tr><td>Multilateral:</td><td>US\$2,326,789</td></tr><tr><td>Private donors:</td><td>US\$1,614,447</td></tr></table>		Australia:	US\$12,647,602	USA:	US\$7,330,414	Japan	US\$3,938,296	Luxembourg:	US\$3,163,787	Multilateral:	US\$2,326,789	Private donors:	US\$1,614,447	<div><p>Contributions by Donor/Source (June 2014)</p><table><thead><tr><th>Donor/Source</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Australia</td><td>38%</td></tr><tr><td>USA</td><td>22%</td></tr><tr><td>Carry over from previous operations</td><td>13%</td></tr><tr><td>Luxembourg</td><td>9%</td></tr><tr><td>Multilateral</td><td>7%</td></tr><tr><td>Japan</td><td>3%</td></tr><tr><td>Private Donors</td><td>5%</td></tr><tr><td>EC</td><td>1%</td></tr><tr><td>France</td><td>1%</td></tr><tr><td>ASEAN</td><td>1%</td></tr><tr><td>Miscellaneous income</td><td>0%</td></tr></tbody></table></div> <p>Source: Resource situation 03.06.14 – WFP website</p>		Donor/Source	Percentage	Australia	38%	USA	22%	Carry over from previous operations	13%	Luxembourg	9%	Multilateral	7%	Japan	3%	Private Donors	5%	EC	1%	France	1%	ASEAN	1%	Miscellaneous income	0%
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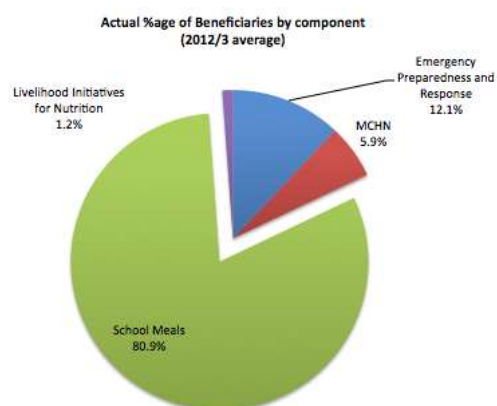
OUTPUTS

Planned



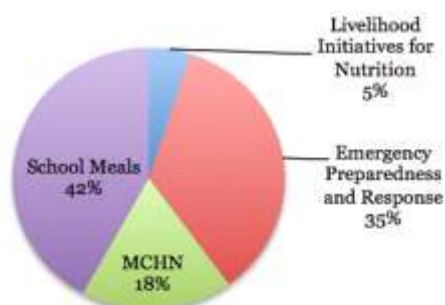
Source: CP document 2011 with BR to EPR

Actual



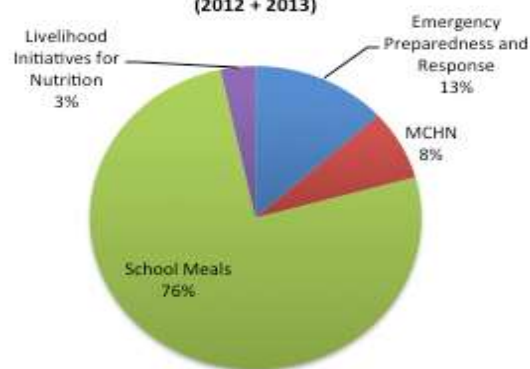
Source: SPR document 2013

Revised annual plans - percentage of food requirements by component (2012/13 average)



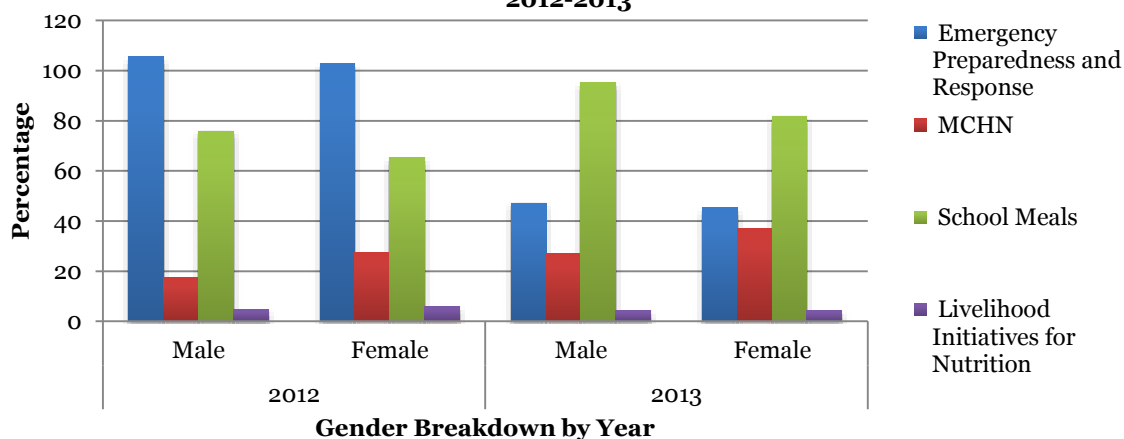
Source: SPR 2012 and SPR 2013

Commodity Distribution per component (2012 + 2013)



Source: WFP SPRs 2012 and 2013

Actual Beneficiaries as percentage of Planned 2012-2013



Source: WFP SPRs 2012-2013 (developed for the Inception Package)

Table 1: Timeline of Recent Events in Lao PDR

Timeline of Recent Key Events - Lao PDR							
	1990s to present	1997-2005	2008/9	2010	2011	2012	2013
External Events	Stable communist government since 1975 Rapid economic growth - 6-7%	Joined ASEAN (1997)			Government launches 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015)		Accession to WTO
Food Security and Humanitarian Situation		WFP started work in Lao PDR (2000) Avian Influenza detected (2003)	Mekong flooding (2008) and Typhoon Ketsana (2009) WFP portfolio evaluation (2009)	Global Acute Malnutrition assessed as 19% (critical) in Attapeu province Drought affected harvest	Tropical storms Haima and Nock-Ten affect northern and central provinces New WFP 2011-2015 Country Strategy	WFP 200242 CP concentrating on undernutrition (2012-2015)	June and September Floods affect about twelve provinces

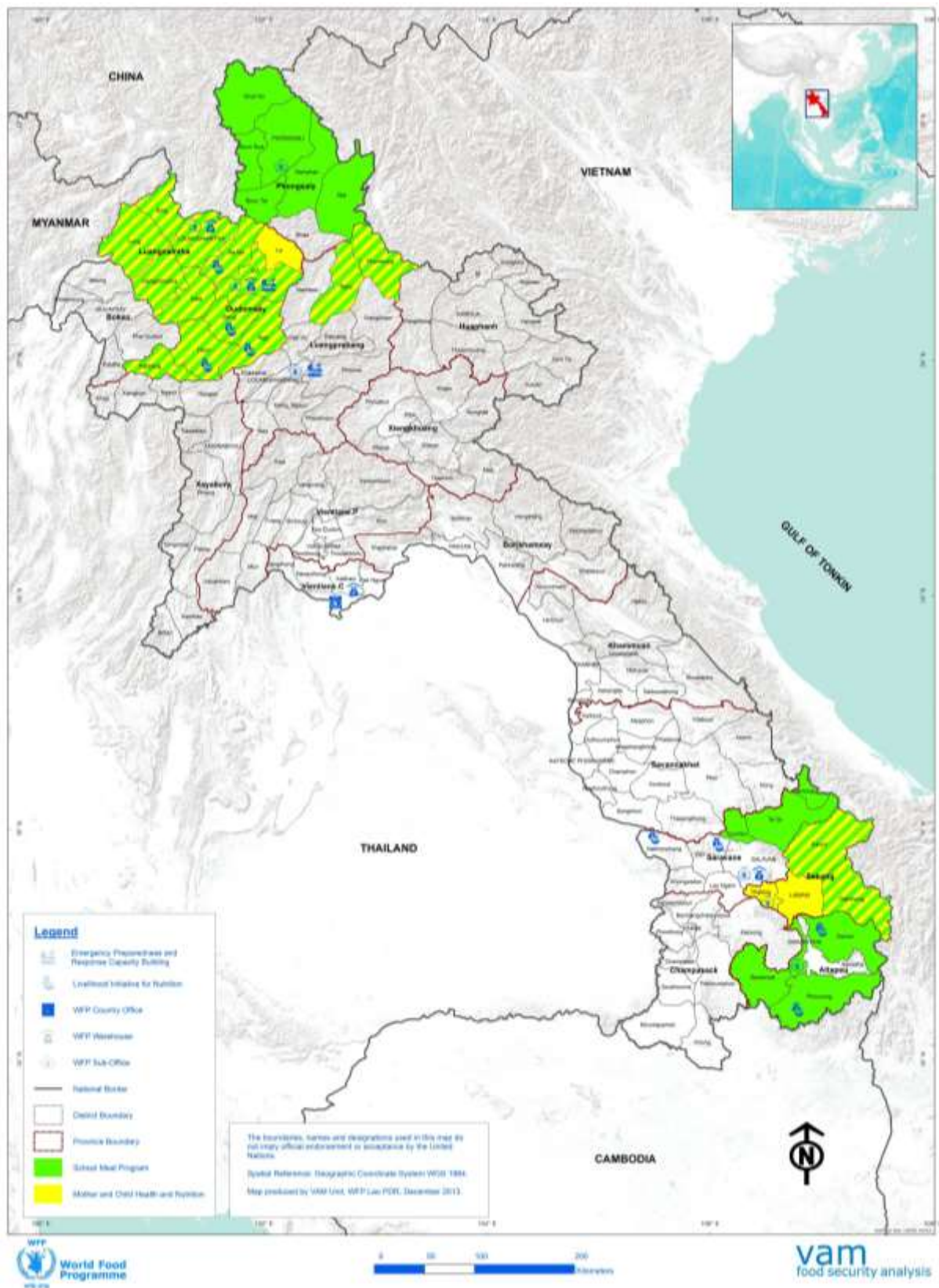
Developed for the Inception Package

The following **National indicators** relevant to the evaluation include the following:

- Population 6,695,166 (July 2013 est.)
- Median age total: 21.6 years, (male: 21.4, female: 21.9) (2013 est.)
- Rate of stunting (low height-for-age) among children under 5: 44% (LSIS, 2011/2012)
- Rate of wasting (low weight-for-height) among children under 5: 6% (LSIS, 2011/2012)
- Rate of underweight (low weight-for-age) among children under 5: 27% (LSIS, 2011/2012)
- Rate of anaemia (Hemoglobin <11g/dL) among children under 2: 64%; CU5- 41% (NNS, 2006)
- Global Hunger Index 18.7 (2013)
- Percentage of the population undernourished 26.7% (FAO, 2013)
- UNDP Human Development Index (2013) rank: 138th of 187 countries
- Gender equality; Rank 107th out of 146 countries (UNDP 2011)
- Enrolment in primary education 64%, urban 81.2 % and rural 60 %. Genders equal (2012)
- Enrolment in secondary education only 23 % of adult women, 37 % of adult men.

Operational Map

Lao PDR: Current areas of WFP programme focus



Executive Summary

Introduction

1. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a landlocked country with a population of 6.5 million people. Lao PDR has the lowest population density in Asia and villages are scattered, remote and cut-off from essential services. More than one quarter of the population lives under the national poverty line. In 1986, Lao PDR began moving from a centrally planned to a market oriented economy and has enjoyed GDP growth of eight percent in recent years. However, this expansion has not led to a commensurate decline in stunting: prevalence exceeds critical levels of 40 percent in much of the country. These rates are particularly high in remote areas and among certain ethnic groups.
2. Lao PDR is prone to recurrent natural disasters, including floods, storms, droughts and pests, in part as a result of climate change. On average the country faces serious floods and droughts every 18 months. These natural disasters represent shocks that can lead to a rapid deterioration in the nutrition situation.
3. The government has set ambitious targets for transitioning Lao PDR from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2020. While substantial progress has been made towards achieving targets set under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the high rates of stunting and low enrolment of girls in secondary education is an impediment to achieving LDC status. WFP seeks to support the Government of Lao PDR in its aim to reduce stunting and increase enrolment in education.

The Country Programme (CP)

4. The current CP runs from January 2012 until December 2015 and it is expected that there will be a one-year extension. The initial budget for the programme was US\$68.9 million, revised to US\$76.8 million through a series of budget revisions.
5. The CP comprises five components: 1) Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR); 2) Mother and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN); 3) School Meals (SM); 4) Livelihoods Initiatives for Nutrition (LIN) and 5) Food Fortification and Marketing (FFM).

This Mid-Term Evaluation

6. This evaluation was undertaken in line with the objectives of WFP's Office of Evaluation, and assessed the performance and results of the Country Programme in the Lao PDR. It was timed to enable its findings, conclusions and recommendations to be of use for the second half of the implementation period and also to feed the planning process for future programmes. The scope of the evaluation was the full CP from the mid-2011 planning phase through to the period of the evaluation (April 2014) and was carried out by three external, independent consultants and included a three-week mission to Lao PDR during April and early May 2014. The Evaluation Team (ET) used mixed methods consisting of documentary research (WFP, government and other sources) and interviews with WFP, government, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Field visits to target communities incorporating Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as well as discussions with individuals.

Key Findings

7. The evaluation concluded that the CP has met the stated objectives to an acceptable extent and supported the identified priority beneficiary needs of vulnerable communities

and individuals, with activities designed and implemented in an appropriate fashion. The main drawback has been the slow progress due to lack of funding, particularly in establishing the EPR and LIN components.

8. The quality of the work carried out by WFP has generally been highly appreciated by beneficiaries, other development partners and government. In terms of quality the programme is having a positive effect on the health, nutrition and livelihoods of the target populations.

Appropriateness

9. The CP is the first of its kind in Laos with the previous individual programmes now being combined into a single development programme. The CP is well aligned with central government policies. Targeting, based on government statistics and on special surveys, has enabled the programme to reach the appropriate target groups. WFP has also considered the need for coordination, avoidance of duplication, government priorities and internal resource restrictions in its targeting decisions at province and local level.

10. The **EPR** activities, designed to increase the capacity of central and local government to provide early warning systems and respond rapidly to emergencies, are highly relevant while the emergency responses have been carefully targeted to provide the maximum value to the most affected populations. Follow up with longer term resilience-building measures would improve the sustainability of these actions.

11. The **MCHN** component seeks to address stunting through the direct provision of nutrient dense ready to use supplements from conception to two years. Lipid nutrient supplement is provided to pregnant and lactating women (PLWs). Children aged 6 to 23 months receive a ready to use supplementary food. Targeting and intervention is both highly appropriate and relevant and in line with WFP and government priorities to address stunting. The use of these two specific products for the prevention of stunting in these target groups is not proven and requires close monitoring to demonstrate impact and cost effectiveness.

12. The **SM** component aims to increase school enrolment through the provision of a morning snack. Whilst considerable progress has been made in Lao towards meeting the MDG 2 universal net enrolment targets, there remain disparities in school enrolment and survival rates between provinces and districts within provinces. Thus WFP school feeding in remote districts with relatively low enrolment rates and high levels of poverty is highly appropriate. A shift in government policy will require WFP to align with the national school lunch programme.

13. The **LIN** component targets improved resilience and food security for the most vulnerable communities through livelihood development and the creation of community assets. The LIN programme seems highly appropriate but it is still too small to comment in detail on the targeting and the selection of activities. Reducing poverty and food insecurity will have a long-term effect on stunting. P4P aims to increase the use of domestic food in WFP interventions in line with government policy and at the same time develop the capacity of farmers and millers to produce high quality rice and access markets. The **FFM** activities would be relevant but no cost-effective, appropriate opportunity has been identified so far.

Gender analysis

14. Gender is not specifically noted in the CP documents, although gender is an implicit part of programme design and implementation for all components. Women are targeted in

MCHN programming for food distributions in line with WFP principles. The SM programme seeks to achieve gender parity in enrolment at primary school and to break the cycle of inter-generational stunting through the education of girls. However, whilst these are stated outcomes, there is little specific focus on girls' education in the current WFP programme. Thus considerable focus on girls' education after primary school is paramount to ensure women are fully engaged in the decision making process.

Coordination and Coherence with Internal and External Policies and Partners

15. The programme is aligned with the relevant UNDAF indicator and contributes to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly MDG 1: the eradication of poverty and extreme hunger. The programme is aligned with the government's 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPP), which provides clear government targets for the reduction in the prevalence of stunting by 2015 through lowering the prevalence of wasting to four percent, the prevalence of stunting to 34 percent and the prevalence of anaemia to 30 percent in children under five years old and 25 percent for women of reproductive age. Each component is well aligned with ministry level policies and strategies. The CP is coherent with the Strategic Objectives of the 2008/13 and 2014/17 WFP Strategic Plans.

Results of the operation

16. WFP has responded to three emergencies since 2012 and supplied around 72,000 beneficiaries with rice, oil and Ready to Use Supplementary Food (RUSF). Affected communities appreciate the assistance but some remain vulnerable to further crises. The EPR component is starting a capacity building programme for disaster risk reduction/management (DRR/DRM) with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE) and with provincial, district and community participation. WFP is also working with the government and other partners to create national strategic reserves for basic commodities and RUSF.

17. After a delayed start, the scale-up of the MCHN has been rapid, and geographical reach is highly impressive. In 95 percent of villages in target districts, Village Health Workers (VHWs) provide Plumpy'Doz to children aged 6-23 months. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is positively affecting the overall health and development of young children. Nutributter also seems to positively impact on the health and nutritional status of PLWs. Uptake of ante-natal care and assisted deliveries has markedly increased over the course of the WFP intervention suggesting the rice ration and Nutributter is acting as an incentive.

18. The SM component has reached 1,735 schools in seven provinces. The corn soy blend (CSB), sugar and oil ration is used to provide a morning snack for pre-primary and primary students and a Take Home Ration has been included for informal boarders at secondary schools. Enrolment has been improved but the survival rate (the proportion of pupils remaining in schooling until the end of grade five) has not increased significantly. There has been limited hand-over to government to date.

19. The P4P programme has fostered linkages between farmer organizations and millers and made some progress in the production of higher quality rice although it has been costly to produce. WFP is not currently buying rice and millers have few other markets so the future commercial development is unclear. Under the FFM component a study was carried out to identify opportunities for local fortification. Cooking oil, salt and

rice were potential target commodities but none was found to be practical or economic so the programme has not progressed.

Factors affecting the results

20. Staffing has proved a major issue in the last year. A WFP CO staffing and structural review led to the loss of several posts and affected staff morale. Several additional staff decided to leave WFP at the same time and have proved difficult to replace. The planned move of some provincial offices to district level may prove difficult to implement as suitably trained staff with sufficient local connections and willingness to work at district level may be difficult to find. The Lao labour market is characterized by a limited availability of qualified staff both in the private and public sector. This affects WFP staff recruitment.

21. The programme has faced serious funding shortages causing major delays in the start-up of EPR and MCHN, and the LIN component has not been well supported, reaching only five percent of the planned beneficiaries, with only 16 FFA schemes carried out so far. The MCHN programme also suffered from funding constraints. The reduced food deliveries have increased the direct support costs of the programme.

22. Whilst supportive of WFP activities, the government places constraints on operations with delays in planning and weak implementing partners at local level. Changes in government policies as well as delays in finalising a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Health (MoH) has forced WFP to amend and postpone planned activities.

Overall assessment/conclusions

23. The **relevance** of each of the components is good although the use of Plumpy'Doz for 6-23 month children is not internationally recommended for this purpose. The programme is well aligned with government policies, the UNDAF Outcomes and contributes to MDGs 1, 3, 4 and 5. The **efficiency** of the operations has been good with logistics and targeting being widely praised but funding shortfalls and increased LTSH costs have resulted in much higher DSC costs than planned. In terms of **effectiveness** considerable progress has been made with SM and MCHN, but the LIN and EPR components have not met their expected targets. The **impact** on stunting takes many years to become apparent but most intermediate indicators and anecdotal evidence are positive. The emergency responses have high but short-term impact while the benefits of other elements will only be seen in the longer term. The expected **sustainability** is variable with strong positive effect at the individual level but with issues to be addressed on nutrition education, transition to school lunches and markets for P4P production for maximum long term benefit.

Recommendations

- i. The WFP CO needs to continue investing time and energy in improving the **monitoring functions** it undertakes to ensure that programme data is collected and used and impact and outcomes can be assessed to inform future programming. More feasible and locally appropriate indicators are needed and WFP should investigate the true effect of MCHN programmes on stunting and improve standard reporting procedures.
- ii. The CO needs to close the **gap between funding availability and programme needs** and also to increase the flexibility of funding between components. Funding constraints are perhaps the most important factors affecting the successful

implementation of programmes. Senior management and HQ should step up efforts to ensure firm commitments from donors before launching future programmes and improve the flexibility of funding. At a corporate level WFP might consider planning programmes that are more closely linked to the expected level of available funding.

- iii. A key role in each of the components of the programme is **capacity building** to enable handover to government. The CO needs to reassess the current resources and commitments and invest in additional technical staff capacity as required, particularly in health and nutrition where WFP programming is not matched by its capacity.
 - iv. The CO needs to work with other United Nations agencies to achieve greater transparency regarding the role of each organisation and greater coordination of activities, including more joint programmes. The CO should lead development partners and government towards a common approach in health care and nutrition and carry out pilot studies with other agencies to improve linkages between schools and communities.
 - v. Two elements of the current CP are not sustainable under the current market conditions, despite investment and support being invested to find appropriate outcomes. Apart from policy advice, the CO should consider discontinuing **P4P and FFM**.
 - vi. **The effectiveness of the current CP** should be improved by: clarifying the objectives of the SM programme and moving to a locally produced school lunch, improving protocols and outreach in the MCHN programme, improving the effectiveness of nutrition education, promoting school gardens and expanding the FFA/CFA programme with a focus on assets of value to the whole community. Some of these have already been started.
 - vii. Regarding **future programming**, stunting should remain the major focus for WFP programming. MCHN provides for short term needs while for longer-term impact LIN activities and nutrition education should be included. SM affects stunting at an inter-generational level and in the shorter term through education of the community. EPR should be included in future programming both as short term crisis relief and capacity building of government, the ultimate goal of this activity being to enable the government to take full responsibility for EPR actions except for major disasters. Given sufficient funds, FFA/CFA activities should support MCHN, SM and emergency response operations.
-

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation Features

1. This Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) has assessed the performance and results of WFP's Lao PDR Country Programme (CP) at its current halfway stage. The evaluation set out to determine why programmatic objectives have been achieved or not, and to identify good practice and weaknesses, and was undertaken in line with the WFP Office of Evaluation's (OEV) objectives of accountability and learning and in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToRs, see Annex 2). The MTE was timed to enable its findings, conclusions and recommendations to be of use for the second half of the implementation period and also to feed the planning process for future programmes³.

2. The evaluation covers the initial period of the CP running from the design phase in mid-2011 through to the start of this evaluation mission in April 2014. The programme was split into five components:

- **Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)**, aiming to enhance disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management through institutional technical support, and to provide emergency response when called upon by the government;
- **Mother and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN)**, aiming to prevent and reduce stunting in children less than two years of age and increase uptake of antenatal and postnatal care for pregnant and lactating women (PLW) at health facilities;
- **School Meals (SM)**, aiming to increase primary school enrolment and encourage children to stay in school through the provision of a mid-morning snack. Take home rations (THRs) are provided to informal borders at primary and secondary level;
- **Livelihood Initiatives for Nutrition (LIN)** focuses on food security and rural development. WFP's planned interventions include Food for Assets (FFA) and Cash for Assets (CFA) activities in food deficit areas and Purchase for Progress (P4P) in food surplus areas;
- **Food Fortification and Marketing (FFM)** is aimed at developing the production of locally produced fortified foods.

Some activities during early 2014 have been included (for instance, the EPR action in Saravane in January 2014) and the latest available monitoring data and resources information has been incorporated. WFP does not currently have any other programmes operating in the country.

3. The evaluation set out to answer the following key questions:

- i. How appropriate is the operation?
- ii. What are the results of the operation?
- iii. Why and how has the operation produced the observed results?

The evaluation considered a broad range of internal factors under WFP's own control, and the external operating context in the Lao PDR. This report will also feed into a synthesis of WFP's operations for the Office of Evaluation (OEV), the Regional Bureau and WFP's Executive Board.

4. The scope of the evaluation was set to cover all of CP 200242 with the exception of the preliminary response to the floods that occurred in Khammouanne province in 2011 as

³ The Country Office (CO) expects the Country Programme (CP) to be extended by one year to December 2016 to finish concurrently with the extended United National Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The next CP and UNDAF will then be aligned with the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan of Lao PDR.

this action occurred before the beginning of the CP. A second distribution occurred in 2012 under the CP (authorised by a budget revision) and the key data on that distribution and beneficiary numbers are included in the findings as they are included in the 2012 Standard Project Report (SPR) and other reports.

1.2. Evaluation Methodology

5. Three external, independent consultants (Team Leader, a Nutritionist and a Capacity Development and Institutional Strengthening Specialist) undertook the evaluation, including a three-week mission to Lao PDR during April and early May 2014. The mission included a ten-day trip to visit field activities in four provinces – Oudomxay and Luang Prabang in the north of the country and Sekong and Saravane in the south. A schedule of the visits is included in Annex 3, with a list of people met in Annex 4. The mission schedule included visits to remote communities in Luang Prabang and Sekong, which allowed the team to understand some of the difficulties of access both for WFP logistics and for beneficiaries. It also gave an insight into the diversity of ethnic groups and the challenges that this brings to the programme. Fuller details of the methodologies employed are given in Annex 5.

6. Information gathering techniques included:

- Desk review of relevant documentation:
 - Individual and consolidated project proposals and progress reports;
 - National government strategic planning and policy documents;
 - WFP and United Nations Strategic Plans, Strategic Results frameworks, Policies, normative guidance;
 - Donor reports;
 - Programme documents including reports related to operations, human resources, commodity resourcing, logistics;
 - Assessments including monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports and baseline survey data, where available;
 - Strategic and Annual plans and reports;
 - Implementing partner agreements and reports;
- Briefings with relevant WFP staff both in the CO in Vientiane and the sub-offices in Oudomxay and Sekong;
- Key stakeholder interviews were identified and conducted by the evaluation team, including with national government representatives and their provincial and district representatives: the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Lao Women's Union (LWU), Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC) and with relevant United Nations agencies, donors and other organisations;
- Field visits to target communities incorporating Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as well as discussions with individuals. Wherever possible, separate discussions were held with female members of the community to hear their perspectives.

7. As part of a detailed Inception Package developed prior to the fieldwork, the evaluation team in consultation with the Lao CO and OEI developed an evaluation matrix (see Annex 6) to guide the team towards addressing the questions raised in the ToRs, expressing detailed questions to enable a thorough line of inquiry. These questions were then broken down into relevant sub-questions to be addressed to each stakeholder group (for instance, the participants of Food for Assets (FFA) programmes, local authority staff, WFP staff etc.).

8. The ET's initial findings and observations were discussed at sub-offices in Oudomxay and Sekong, with the management and technical staff at the CO and at two stakeholder meetings (one internal and one external). An Aide Memoire was prepared based on the Vientiane meetings and left with management. The initial findings were discussed with the CO and further developed for incorporation into this final evaluation report.

9. In all interviews, discussions and data collecting the team placed particular emphasis on obtaining gender and age disaggregated data and understanding how the programme has addressed the issue of gender during the design, targeting, implementation and reporting of the programme activities.

10. An evaluation manager from the KonTerra Group supported the evaluation team and provided quality assurance throughout the evaluation.

11. The team hired two independent, external professional interpreters to work with the non-Lao specialists for the field mission and during meetings with government representatives in Vientiane. It was anticipated that double translation from English through Lao to local languages might be needed in some areas, though in practice most beneficiary groups were able to understand Lao and no serious problems were encountered at local level.

Limitations of the evaluation

12. In the limited in-country time available it was not possible to visit all provinces where WFP is (or has been) working: three provinces (Luang Namtha, Phongsaly and Attapeu) were not visited, although all the activities running in these provinces were visited elsewhere (except the Joint Food and Security Package involving several United Nations agencies in Luang Namtha).

13. A revised log frame has been introduced very recently to align the CP to the WFP 2014-2017 strategic plan. The guidance notes are still being prepared, and the CO's M&E unit is in the process of revising indicators to fit the new log frame. To date there are no output targets for the new log frame and as all the reporting so far is based on the original log frame this evaluation report is also based on the original version (attached as Annex 7).

1.3. Lao PDR Country context

14. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a **least developed (LDC) and low-income food-deficit country**, ranking 138th out of 187 in the 2013 UNDP Human Development Index⁴. It is a landlocked country, with a population of 6.5 million and comprising 49 officially recognized ethnic groups. It has one of the lowest population densities in Asia (26 people per square kilometre - with only 15-20 people per km² in more remote provinces) and villages are scattered, remote and cut-off from essential services. More than one quarter of the population lives under the national poverty line.

15. In 1986, Lao PDR began moving from a centrally planned to a market oriented economy. As a result, **the economy** has grown rapidly over the last two decades. From 1990 to 2002, the average annual GDP growth rate was 6.3 percent; in recent years, it has reached eight percent. However, this expansion has not led to a commensurate decline in undernutrition in rural areas. The economy is still agriculturally based with over 80 percent of the population working in the sector and producing 45 percent of the GNP. Economic growth has been driven, especially in recent years, by gold and copper mining,

⁴ Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/LAO.pdf>

hydroelectric dam projects, and logging and rubber agribusiness concessions, especially to China and Vietnam. These economic activities have brought opportunities for rural populations, but have also sometimes hindered existing livelihood activities centred on agriculture.

16. Over the last 30 years, Lao PDR has experienced recurrent natural disasters, including floods, storms, droughts and pests, in part as a result of climate change. On average the country faces serious floods and droughts every 18 months. In 2011, tropical storms Haima and Nock-Ten affected agriculture and infrastructure in northern and central provinces and most recently, in June and September 2013, floods affected Borkhamxay and four southern provinces. At other times droughts and rodent infestations have severely damaged the rice crop. These natural disasters represent shocks that can lead to a rapid deterioration in the nutrition situation.

17. Lao PDR has two **seasons**, the rainy season beginning in May or June and lasting typically until September, and the dry season that spans October to April. The main harvest of rain-fed lowland and upland rice occurs between October and December, while the harvest of lowland irrigated rice falls largely in the month of April. The peak lean season for rice therefore usually occurs in between August and the end of October as households await the new rice harvest. A second lean season occurs in March, prior to the harvest of irrigated rice.

18. The government has set ambitious targets for **transitioning Lao PDR from its Least Developed Country status by 2020** while aiming for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015⁵. In many ways, the country is making substantial progress: apart from the rapid economic expansion, the MDGs for reducing child mortality and halting the spread of malaria and tuberculosis (TB) are likely to be met, though the MDG for nutrition remains far from its target.

19. Lao PDR is the **world's most heavily bombed country** (per capita). Two thirds of the country is still contaminated with unexploded ordnance that continues to cause death and injury and prevents the use of land for agriculture or animal husbandry, having a direct impact on food security.

20. **Malnutrition** remains a significant challenge for the country. Lao PDR continues to have very high chronic malnutrition rates: nearly every second child under the age of five in the country is stunted and one in every five rural children is severely stunted. These rates are even worse among ethnic groups living in remote areas. In addition, micronutrient deficiencies affect large parts of the population, with over 40 percent of children under five and 63 percent of children under two suffering from anaemia, and almost 45 percent of children under five and 23 percent of women between 12 and 49 years of age affected by vitamin A deficiency.

21. Food insecurity affects 13 percent of the population⁶ and an additional 50 percent of rural households are at risk of becoming food insecure in case of loss of access to natural resources, flood, drought or/and sudden increases in rice prices. Drought is the biggest threat with 46 percent of the rural population being vulnerable.

22. In order to enhance its emergency preparedness and response the Government of Laos developed a National Disaster Management Plan 2012 – 2015. The Plan reflects the DRR initiatives since the creation of the National Disaster Management Committee in

⁵ 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2011-2015

⁶ Lao PDR: Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA), December 2007, WFP Lao PDR, Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Branch

1999. The planning and management committee are both government priorities but require strengthening and capacity building to enable them to take the lead on these issues.

23. **WFP's and the government's vision** for Lao PDR is a country that is free from undernutrition and its debilitating impacts on human potential and national development. Through its four year CP, WFP continues to support the Government of Lao PDR to prevent and reduce wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies. In 2013, WFP assistance reached more than 229,000 people in the country. Several other United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) are also present. There are, however, few national NGOs.

1.4. WFP's Operational Overview for the Lao PDR CP 200242⁷

24. The CP was approved on 15th November 2011 with a start date of 1st January 2012 and has a planned end date of 31st December 2015. It targeted 750,514 beneficiaries (404,882 women and girls and 345,632 men and boys).

25. The initial budget for the programme was US\$68.9 million. This has been revised to US\$76.8 million through a series of budget revisions, as Table 2 indicates.

Table 2: Budget Revisions - CP 200242

Budget revision	Date	Additional sum (US\$)	Revised total (US\$)	Reason for revision
1	19/01/2012	726,444	69,672,047	Additional LTSH costs
2	02/07/2012	5,366,850	75,038,796	Emergency response actions added
3	13/05/2013	1,589,207	76,628,103	Additional direct support costs
4	03/12/2013	190,412	76,818,515	Additional LTSH costs

Source: CP Budget revision documents

26. Following the four budget revisions the total food requirement was increased from 37,140 mt to 41,827 mt with the addition of 4,687 mt for emergency responses under the EPR component. The breakdown is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Total Food and Cash requirements by component (mt)

Commodity type/ Cash and voucher	Comp. 1: EPR	Comp. 2: MCHN	Comp. 3: School meals	Component 4: LIN		Total (in mt)
				FFA	CFA	
Corn-soya blend	79		10,238			10,317
Vegetable oil	288		1,920	588		2,796
Sugar			1,920			1,920
Glutinous or non-glutinous rice	4,320	4,407	7,858	7,631		24,216
Plumpy'Doz®		2,351				2,351
Nutributter®		227				227
Total food requirements	4,687	6,985	21,936	8,219		41,827
Cash (US\$)					US\$1,197,433	US\$1,197,433

Source: Lao CP Guidelines 2012 (from Programme Unit of WFP CO)

27. The CP 200242 focuses on fighting undernutrition in the Lao PDR through five components, taking a life-cycle approach. The first component of Emergency

⁷ Source: CP document 2011

Preparedness and Response (EPR) covers two areas of activity: the capacity building section aims to build the capacity of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE) to enhance disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management through institutional technical support at central, provincial and district levels. A DRR/DRM programme in Oudomxay and Luang Prabang provinces will be carried out in partnership with Save the Children, ChildFund and Plan International. The main elements of the programme are contingency planning and early warning systems. The humanitarian response section was introduced via the budget revision of July 2012 in order to be able to respond to the floods in Khammouanne province in 2011 and subsequent crises, with a maximum beneficiary count of up to 35,000 people per year. The responses include supporting local authorities and communities to carry out rapid needs assessments and gender appropriate beneficiary targeting. Two further responses have been carried out in Luang Prabang and Saravane provinces.

28. The objective of the Mother and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) component is to prevent stunting in children under two years of age by focusing on the first 1,000 days of life. WFP ensures that children receive essential macro- and micronutrients during this period, when the impact is most significant. Additionally, through the provision of a rice incentive, WFP encourages women to access ante-natal and post-natal services allowing them to progress through a healthy pregnancy and give birth to healthy children. The scope of the MCHN programme was reduced substantially at the beginning of the CP due to potential overlapping interventions from UNICEF. Operational targets have been reduced accordingly.

29. WFP is providing support to the government to implement its School Meals (SM) programme throughout the country, by providing children from three to 10 years of age with mid-morning snacks, as well as by providing take-home rations (THRs) for informal boarders. WFP provides messages to improve students' knowledge and awareness of nutrition, health and hygiene practices. The programme is implemented in seven provinces and is managed through School Meals Committees trained by WFP at the village level and monitored and supervised by the District Education Offices. Simultaneously, WFP is working closely with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) with a view to handing over the programme.

30. WFP's Livelihood Initiatives for Nutrition (LIN) component focuses on food security and rural development, including strengthening the communities' resilience capacity to external shocks. WFP is intervening with Food for Assets (FFA) and Cash for Assets (CFA) activities in food deficit areas although the latter have not yet started, and Purchase for Progress (P4P) in food surplus areas. Through FFA/CFA activities, WFP provides food or cash in exchange of villagers' participation in the creation of community-based productive assets and infrastructure. Through its P4P initiative, WFP works to enhance the productivity of smallholder farmers and the output of high quality rice by local millers. It also aims to enhance the organisational and technical capacities of both groups and strengthen linkages between them. Funding has been a major constraint for the LIN component.

31. Under its Food Fortification and Marketing (FFM) component WFP aimed to work closely with the government and the private sector to fortify locally produced foods (including a nutritive supplementary food) to be marketed across the country and used in WFP interventions. Studies carried out for the FFM component have not identified any realistic, commercial opportunities so far.

2. Evaluation Findings

This chapter presents findings addressing the various questions posed in the ToRs, and covers the wider areas of related to the appropriateness of the operation, the degree of external coherence with government and WFP's other partners, internal coherence, and targeting and gender questions. Evidence is provided from data analysis and information received from various stakeholders that substantiate the conclusions of the evaluation team.

2.1. Appropriateness

2.1.1. Overall Appropriateness of the Operation

32. The CP design in 2010/2011 was based on stakeholder consultation and in accordance with government's policies including the 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2011-2015 and the WFP country strategy 2011-2015. It also took into account the lessons learnt from the 2009 country portfolio evaluation⁸, the 2008 mid-term review (MTR) of the PRRO 105660⁹ and a 2009 review of the school feeding project¹⁰. The CP is designed to be in alignment with UNDAF 2012-2015 and contributes to the MDGs, particularly MDG 1, the eradication of poverty and extreme hunger.

33. The design was based largely on data available from the 2007 'WFP Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis'. This has been updated with results of the 2012-2013 Risk and Vulnerability Survey 2012-2013 and the 2013 Food and Nutrition Security Atlas.

34. At the outset of the planning process stunting, anaemia and undernutrition were identified as major problems in many provinces, particularly the remote and mountainous northern and southern provinces. The problems were confounded by lack of education, cultural diversity (more than 49 ethnic groups), lack of access during the rainy season and frequent flooding events arising from tropical storms. In many areas the poor diet consisted largely of rice with meat, fat and dairy products rarely consumed and green vegetables only available seasonally. The medium and long-term reduction of stunting was the major focus of the programme and remains highly appropriate to the needs of the target groups

35. During the design process WFP balanced appropriately the requirements of wide coverage for maximum result, integration of the three components (MCHN, SM and LIN) to achieve long-term impact, while at the same time working within the capabilities of the organization and the likely funding availability. It was also important to provide continuity to programmes already running. Eight relevant priority provinces were identified based on needs, government priorities, partner complementarity/overlap and logistical practicality; six were ultimately chosen to best concentrate geographical impact.

36. It was the clear intention of the programme to coordinate these three components. The SM programme was already active in five of the provinces and MCHN and LIN needed to be scaled up to all the target areas. The EPR and FFM components have different priorities and do not necessarily work in the same provinces. With the later introduction of emergency response operations the EPR had to operate wherever it was needed but it was also recognized that LIN activities should be initiated after an

⁸ WFP 2009, "Summary Evaluation Report Lao People's Democratic Republic Country Portfolio" (WFP/EB.2/2009/6-F).

⁹ WFP Lao PDR PRRO 105660 "Assistance to Food-Insecure Households affected by Multiple Livelihood Shocks", Vientiane, Mid-term Review 2008

¹⁰ REACH, 2009, REACH Stocktaking Analysis Lao PDR.

immediate response to improve the longer-term outcome and resilience of the affected communities. It was recognized that scale-up plans were subject to many factors such as funding shortfalls, unexpected conflicts with other programmes or lack of partners. For this reason it was considered important to remain flexible in approach and be prepared to scale-up faster in some areas and in some years to make up for delays in others. The total annual beneficiary number by component was seen as the most important figure in the CP.¹¹ The overall intention of achieving synergies and improved efficiency through applying multiple components in a limited number of target provinces remains appropriate.

37. For the LIN component the target provinces and districts were carefully chosen and these choices clearly reflected the needs of the population. The choice of activity was made on the basis of previous experience and was chosen for sound reasons, for example, access to markets, schools and health services are particularly important for remote communities so road improvement has been a popular choice of activity.

38. The CP strategy as a whole and the mix of activity are both well aligned with the needs of the population, given the context and the programmes of others development partners. The actions of WFP are generally complementary to those of other development partners though it would be good to see more joint programmes if possible.

39. The programme uses food as the major means of transfer in each of the components. Although some beneficiaries did not favour this, in general it is believed by the ET to have been the best choice given the remoteness of many of the communities and the food deficiency of most of the areas where WFP is working. The choice of commodity is complicated in Lao PDR by varying preferences for sticky or white rice, as discussed elsewhere. For the SM component WFP is committed to moving to local produce for school lunches. This will still be appropriate but will pose new supply chain and funding challenges. The cash transfer element of the LIN component could also be appropriate if used in food surplus areas, but this has not yet been tested.

Appropriateness: Beneficiary targeting

40. Under **EPR**, the Government of the Lao PDR has a National Disaster Management Committee but coordination of response to emergencies is weak and capacity for planning is low. There is no real-time early warning of tropical storms at the Department Meteorology and Hydrology within MoNRE. A cluster system exists for the coordination of responses among United Nations agencies and government but coordination between ministries is difficult. There is little strategic reserve of food in case of emergency although it is now being planned. The emergency preparedness element of Component 1 is highly relevant to the needs of the country in terms of enabling the government to take greater responsibility for addressing short-term emergency food needs in disaster-hit regions. The programme is designed to work at national, provincial and district levels.

41. At the central level, responsibility for disaster management has recently been moved from Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) to MoNRE. Staff with experience in emergency response have not been moved to the new ministry, so MoNRE needs to build capacity in this area. At the same time, funding, human resources and financial capacity are the main concern for the government. There has been a lack of investment in capacity development and institution building from the government side

¹¹ Lao PDR Country Programme Guidelines CP 2012-2015

42. Emergency response actions were not part of the original CP proposal but were added following government requests. WFP is recognized by the government and other stakeholders as the leading international organization with the capability to mobilize an emergency response so it is sensible for the CP to include this contingency fund. Lao PDR suffers from frequent tropical storms with resultant floods and landslides and the consequent loss of crops, livestock, household goods and infrastructure. While the immediate loss of life may be relatively low, the effects of the crises are serious and long-lasting for the affected communities and include acute malnutrition and loss of livelihoods. Besides floods, Lao PDR also suffers from seasonal droughts that affect upland rice crops – these can be equally damaging.

43. The **MCHN** focus on the prevention of stunting in high prevalence areas is highly relevant and appropriate. The reduction of stunting is central to meeting MDG1 targets and remains a key challenge for the Government in graduating from LDC status by 2020.¹²

44. WFP's focus on children under 24 months and pregnant women is highly relevant and appropriate in Lao PDR, where around 20 percent of infants less than six months of age already suffer from stunting. Between 6-23 months, the proportion of children who are stunted increases to over 40 percent.¹³ A mother's nutritional status largely determines whether the unborn child will suffer *in utero* growth faltering. The high rates of stunting in Lao are directly correlated with the restricted monotonous diet of mothers and children, particularly the limited source of fat and animal source foods such as milk in the diets of small children.¹⁴ Thus the first 1,000 days (between conception and two years) is a critical time window in which to prevent stunting, and the use of lipid based micronutrient rich products containing milk is highly appropriate.¹⁵

45. High rates of stunting are directly correlated with the educational level of mothers.¹⁶ Thus WFP's strategy for school meals aims to complement the MCHN component (in the longer term) by encouraging girls' attendance at school. MCHN also links, albeit weakly, to nutrition education, food fortification and food for work/assets. In relation to the **School Meals** component, progress towards meeting the MDG 2 Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) target of 98 percent should be met by 2015 but there remain disparities in school enrolment and survival rates between provinces and between districts within provinces. Implementation of school feeding in remote districts with low enrolment rates and high levels of poverty is highly appropriate and assists government meet MDG targets.

46. The **LIN** component provides longer-term resilience to food insecure communities through the provision of community assets where undernutrition is a major problem. The programme envisaged a mix of cash and food transfers based on an analysis of food surplus/deficit in the area and on local preference. This is a reasonable approach although in practice due to the restricted scale-up of the LIN programme there have been no cash transfers so far – the location of activities to date have been in rice deficit areas where food transfers are more appropriate. The assets created by the programme included farm roads, paddy extension, irrigation renovation and extension, vegetable gardens and livestock.

¹² The Human Assets Index (HAI) is one of three criteria used to determine LDC status. The HAI is a composite index comprising four indicators; Percentage of population undernourished, U5MR, secondary school enrolment and adult literacy rate.

¹³ Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) 2011.

¹⁴ The UNICEF Nutrition tag-on survey to LSIS in 2012 in Saravane, Sekong, Attapeu and Luang Namtha found that rates of timely introduction and age appropriate feeding are extremely low. Amongst children under five in these provinces, less than 5 percent receive a minimal acceptable diet.

¹⁵ A lipid base is important for conveyance of Essential Fatty Acids (EFA) and fat soluble vitamins. Milk has been found to be of key importance in the growth and development of young children. Thus the fat and milk content of Nutributter has proven to be particularly essential in achieving impact on stunting. Micronutrient powders (sprinkles) are missing these two critical ingredients.

¹⁶ Source: LSIS, 2011

Fishponds were also considered in the CP as they were strongly requested by communities, despite being criticised in the PRRO MTR 2008 as not having a strong effect on food security.

47. The choice of asset is important for the long-term benefit of the community and the selection was largely made at the village level. While it is important to allow the community to be involved in the process and meet real local needs, WFP also aims to ensure that the asset has a potential impact on the strategic goals of the programme (SO4; adequate food production) and benefits the whole community or those most at risk (also discussed later).

48. Strategic Objective 5 of WFP's Strategic Plan (2008–2013) aims to 'Strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger, including through handover strategies and local purchase'. This was the basis for the Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative that ran as a pilot programme in 20 countries from 2008 to 2013. In Lao PDR SO 5 was implemented under this initiative. WFP buys locally when its criteria of price, quality and quantity can be met. P4P is a logical continuation of this local procurement with the intent to achieve a higher developmental gain by buying increasingly direct from the rice producers. Through P4P, WFP's demand aims to provide smallholder farmers with a greater incentive to invest in their production, as they have the possibility to sell to a reliable buyer and receive a fair price for their crops.

49. The P4P action in Saravane province has been located in an area of rice surplus but where there are many food insecure farmers growing lowland rainfed crops. The farmers are not well organised into associations and apart from partial coverage during previous projects¹⁷ they lack technical support. The P4P attempts to build the capacity of millers by technical training together with some small items of equipment, by linking millers to farmer groups to increase the supply of high quality paddy to the mills and by supplying a market (WFP's distribution programmes) for the miller's produce.

50. Much of the rural population lives on a monotonous diet of rice with occasional meat and seasonal green vegetables. The aim of the **FFM** component was to identify one or more commodities that are being (or could be) produced in Lao that could be fortified with vitamins and minerals and widely distributed at a reasonable cost. This is in line with government policies of national and personal food security and nutrition targets and if a suitable product could be found there is considerable potential to improve the nutrition of the rural poor. There is little food processing in Lao at present – coffee is the major agro-industry together with local rice milling – so it was expected to be a challenge to find a likely product and commercially viable value chain. In practice this was found to be the case.

Appropriateness: Gender analysis

51. Despite the fact that the word 'gender' was not used once in the CP document (written in 2011) it is clear that gender has been a prominent focus of the programming and monitoring procedures. Each of the components has taken gender into account in the planning and implementation stages. Gender analysis and targeting has been particularly important in the MCHN and SM components where women's nutrition is vital in the prevention of stunting, so effective feeding and education programmes are vital. At the same time, PLWs need the support of ante- and post-natal care to ensure that they and their babies receive the necessary care and food supplements for themselves and their children. Monitoring systems and surveys have been designed to collect gender-

¹⁷ Swiss funded extension project - "LEAP" and EU funded "Enhancing Milled Rice Production – EMRIP" project

disaggregated data. Data collection largely complies with the increased gender reporting requirements of SRF 2014-17.

52. In the education component, better results in this area would have been achieved if the CP had focused more strongly on targeting girls, but this has not been prioritised during implementation. Under the EPR and LIN components there has been an effort to design programmes using gender sensitive approaches. While this has been achieved for beneficiaries it has not been as easy to achieve gender parity for the indicators of women monitors and cardholders in some provinces due to long-established cultural practices. Although the monitors are selected by the counterpart WFP needs to continue to work with the counterpart towards gender parity. WFP CO reports that in cases where efforts have been undertaken to provide incentives to girls, this has led to frictions between beneficiaries.

53. WFP in Lao PDR has several women in management roles both in the country office and in the provinces. This sets a good example for partner organisations. Government departments, particularly in the provinces, have few women in senior roles.

2.1.2. Coherence with External Policies and Actors (Government Policies, UNDAF and Partners)

54. The CP design was coordinated with stakeholders and aims to be coherent with the policies of central government policy as well as the policies of individual ministries. The programme is aligned with the UNDAF indicator: 'by 2015, vulnerable people are more food secure and have improved nutrition'. It also contributes to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly MDG 1, the eradication of poverty and extreme hunger. The government aims to reduce stunting from the current national average of 44 percent to 34 percent by 2015. WFP concurs with government priorities laid out in the NPAN 2010-15, which promotes high impact interventions to reduce stunting in provinces with a high prevalence of stunting exceeding 50 percent.¹⁸

55. The National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) is the principal framework outlining the Government's development priorities. The 7th NSED 2011-2015 identifies specific directions and targets and is focused on: rural development and poverty reduction, economic development, social and cultural development and sustainable development among others. The section on Social and Cultural Development contains a sub-section on health and nutrition and provides clear government targets for the reduction of undernutrition by 2015 through lowering the prevalence of wasting to four percent, the prevalence of stunting to 34 percent and the prevalence of anaemia to 30 percent in children under five years old and 25 percent for women of reproductive age.

56. The **EPR** component is well aligned with the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) 2012 – 2015. The NDMP reflects the disaster risk reduction initiatives since the creation of the National Disaster Management Committee in 1999 in line with the policy shift in disaster management from conventional response and relief to a more comprehensive risk reduction culture. It seeks to address the current disaster risk threats facing the government and people in the Lao PDR as well as bringing other important issues, such as risk reduction/mitigation, capacity building, climate change adaptation, livelihood security and gender mainstreaming as well as response and recovery management, into a four-year action plan. The plan also acts as a basic guideline for all

¹⁸ Stunting prevalence is high in rural remote areas and among certain ethnic groups. Provinces exceeding 50 percent stunting prevalence include Sekong, Phongsaly, Huaphanh, Oudomxay, Saravane and Luang Namtha (LSIS 2011). The MCHN component targets three of these provinces.

relevant agencies in strengthening better working relations and enhancing mutual cooperation.

57. The government recognises that disaster management is part of its overall responsibility and that it needs to ensure the best possible outcome given the available resources. A decree established the National Disaster Management Committee, giving it responsibility for disaster preparedness and management and as a centre for coordination. The CP is supporting this committee and other institutional arrangements and staff capacity to maximise its effectiveness.

58. The **MCHN** component is aligned with the Lao government strategy of Nutrition policy. The Government of Lao PDR has two key documents that provide a framework for action on nutrition: the National Nutrition Policy (NNP) and the National Nutrition Strategy and National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NNS/NPAN). These documents promote high impact interventions to reduce stunting in provinces where its prevalence exceeds 50 percent. The National Nutrition Policy was endorsed by the Prime Minister in 2008 and provides the political direction for the engagement of governmental agencies and developmental partners around nutrition issues.

59. Component 2 operates directly with UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA under a United Nations Joint Programme (UNJP) in Luang Namtha. Under this plan a full package of specific health and nutrition interventions is complementary to the supplement based inputs and conditional food transfer provided by WFP. Informal partnerships exist with IFAD on delivery of Feeding the Future and ADRA on gender sensitive nutrition education using the 'Linking Agriculture, Natural Resource Management and Nutrition' (LAAN) package.

60. The **SM** programme is operated in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). The MoES has placed considerable focus on achieving the MDG universal education targets and laid out in the National Plan of Action under the Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF 2009-15). The 7th NSEDP and Poverty Eradication Strategy emphasize the role of education in meeting MDG 2 and in achieving LDC graduation in 2020. This has resulted in a significant increase in spending on education.¹⁹ In the National Inclusive Education Strategy and Plan of Action 2011-2015, school meals are also seen as a key element in overcoming barriers associated with remoteness and isolation and in providing school health and malnutrition reduction. The Ministry has indicated its strong interest in creating a national school meals programme and has established a unit to focus on this effort. The National School Meals Programme Policy outlines the government's strategic priorities for school feeding. This includes local procurement and a home-grown SM programme that emphasizes a subsidized school lunch programme and community contribution. WFP agreed with the government to use imported corn soya blend (CSB) in the school meals programme with the caveat that the programme would transition to a lunch-based programme over time in line with current government policy.

61. School feeding links to the MCHN component, which aims to improve the nutritional status of young children before entering school. There is clear coordination and complementarity between school feeding and UNICEF's WASH interventions to ensure safe water at schools and WHO/MoH national de-worming programme. Other links include JICA's teacher training, World Bank mobile teachers, Plan International's teacher capacity building and Save the Children's literacy boost campaign.

¹⁹ Education spending is 13 percent of total national expenditure in 2013. Primary education (for five years) is free and compulsory in Lao PDR (1996)

62. The LIN FFA activities coordinate with MAF and jointly work thorough co-funding agreements with IFAD and UNODC. They are partnered with DPI in Oudomxay and IFAD in Attapeu. The P4P component is aligned with the MAF objectives outlined above for public private partnerships and access to markets for smallholder farmers. There was no indication of partnership with FAO, Netherlands Development Agency or Helvetas as foreseen in the project document. The P4P work in Saravane province has been coordinated with the Department of Industry and Commerce (DIC) and the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) although recently this has been insufficient.

63. The MAF has recently finalized the Agriculture Development Strategy for Lao PDR. Both the P4P and the FFM components are aligned with the strategy as it focuses on improving the quantity and diversity of foods being produced. MAF supports the creation and legalization of smallholder farmer organizations and engages in a network of public/private partnerships (PPPs) that will facilitate the integration of smallholder farmers and their organizations into domestic, regional and global 'pro-poor and green value chains'. In particular, the decrees on non-profit associations (NPAs) and cooperatives provide a legal framework for farmers' organizations to flourish. These organisations are appropriate as the basis for the development of P4P activities.

2.1.4. Internal Coherence (with WFP Strategic Plan, Policies, CO Country Strategy, Coherence within the CP)

64. The current WFP country programme is the first in Lao PDR. Previous interventions have been through individual emergency, PRRO and development programmes. The change to a CP was clearly appropriate as it met the WFP aim for country programmes of 'assisting marginalized population groups that encounter sustained socio-economic disparities that result in chronic problems, such as persistently high levels of undernutrition and low food consumption'²⁰. At the same time the programme does not need to 're-establish and stabilize livelihoods' as expected of a PRRO.

65. The CP is coherent with WFP Strategic Objective 2: 'Prevent acute hunger and invest in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures', Strategic Objective 4: 'Reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition' and Strategic Objective 5: 'Strengthen capacities of countries to reduce hunger, including through hand-over strategies and local purchase'.

66. At the time when the CP was planned²¹ the budget was believed to be 'challenging but reasonable'. Donors were involved in the planning process and there was good reason to believe that funding would cover most of the planned activities. Approval of the budget plan does not guarantee funding and if there is a significant funding shortfall then direct support costs²² (DSC) must be cut back. In practice, donations to the CP have been sporadic and unevenly distributed across the components and this has resulted in an uneven implementation of activities. At the time of the evaluation visit (mid-March 2014 – 56 percent of time elapsed) the CP funding stood at 44 percent of the appeal target. A sizeable new donation is currently being finalized and will take the total funding to 60 percent of the appeal target. This highlights a considerable difficulty for WFP programming and planning as the CO must ensure that it has the resources (staff, facilities etc.) available for a fully funded programme but at the same time there is a clear recognition that most programmes remain underfunded compared with their appeal

²⁰ Source: Operation Guide for Evaluation Companies: Key facts about WFP and its operations, 2013

²¹ Programme Review Committee meeting, "note for the record", 11 Feb 2011

²² Direct support costs (DSC) are those costs, generally at the country office level, that "can be directly linked with the provision of support to an operation and which would not be incurred should the activity cease". The DSC requirements are funded as a pro-rated share of the amount budgeted for a project, based on tonnage. Source: WFP/EB.2/2010/5-A/1: Financial Framework Review

target. The shortfall inevitably impacts directly on WFP's ability to reach the targets set in its own programme documents.

67. In provinces or districts where stunting prevalence is at least 30 percent, WFP recommends all children aged 6-23 months and all PLWs in affected areas receive a nutritious dietary supplement (20g of a lipid based nutrient dense product, such as Lipid Nutrient Supplement (LNS), or micronutrient power).²³ Thus the MCHN component follows WFP global policy. In provinces or districts where stunting prevalence is at least 30 percent, WFP recommends all children aged 6-23 months and all PLWs in affected areas receive a nutritious dietary supplement (20g of a lipid based nutrient dense product, such as Lipid Nutrient Supplement (LNS), or micronutrient power).²⁴ Thus the MCHN component follows WFP global policy. The use of Plumpy'Doz for the prevention of stunting in children aged 6-23 months for a long duration is currently untested. Nevertheless, evidence has shown that LNS can successfully increase weight and length when given in 50g daily doses.²⁵ WFP seeks to test the use of plumpydoz for this purpose and as such close monitoring of impact was written into the programme design.

68. Whilst LNS has proven effective, the use of specialized products to prevent stunting has not yet been deemed a highly cost effective nutrition specific action and is not included in Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) or the National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN) as a priority action. Ration levels used in the MCHN programme are in line with international standards and WFP guidelines.

69. WFP's strategy to increase uptake of ante- and post-natal visits and safe delivery is in line with the Strategic Plan for the Integrated Package of Maternal Neonatal and Child Health Services (2009-15) which aims to accelerate progress towards the MDG 5 target of reducing maternal mortality and MDG 4 of reducing neo-natal deaths. Key strategies include increasing the number of births attended by trained health personnel and ensuring at least one ante-natal visit by trained health staff. MoH strategy has to date focused on encouraging women into health facilities rather than expanding outreach services.²⁶ The CP design aimed to implement this programme component in provinces with low uptake of ante- and post-natal visits as well as to overlap with the use of specialized products to prevent stunting. A conditional food transfer (CFT) rice ration of 10kg per facility based on ante- or post-natal visits and for assisted delivery is intended to act as an incentive to increase uptake of visits. Since the design of the CP, the MoH issued a Free Health Care Directive (2012) making the health care of pregnant women and children under five free at any health facility. In some certain areas such as Oudomxay, the WFP intervention runs concurrently with the GAVI/Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) programme. The government also provides a conditional cash transfer (CCT) at some health centres. There are issues of duplication and possible redundancy that were not foreseen during the planning stage of the CP²⁷. The NPAN lists conditional cash transfers

²³ WHO Nutrition Landscape Information System ((NLIS) classifies stunting prevalence >40 percent as "critical" and recommends blanket coverage.

²⁴ WHO Nutrition Landscape Information System ((NLIS) classifies stunting prevalence >40 percent as "critical" and recommends blanket coverage.

²⁵ The evidence base on the use of LNS and MNP is well documented on the LNS website: www.ilns.org. The WFP rationale for using Plumpydoz is based on a study in Malawi which found better weight and linear length outcomes with a dose of 50g compared to 25g LNS provided to children 6-18 months. These outcomes were sustained over time. Phuka, J. Post intervention growth of Malawian children who received 12-months dietary complementation of lipid-based supplement (LNS) or maize-soy flour. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2009; 89:382-90.

²⁶ Reduction of MMR from 357/100,000 live births in 2009 to 260 in 2015. IMR from 68 in 2011 to a target of 45 in 2015. The current reduction of >4 percent a year suggests that the IMR MDG target will be met. Most deaths are neonatal. MoH targets safe delivery rate from 42 percent in 2009 to 50 percent in 2015 and increase of at least one ante-natal care visit to 60 percent in 2015.

²⁷ Where GAVI has cash incentives in Oudamxay for instance, WFP is not doing food transfers (three districts). The government cash incentives for ante-natal care are ad hoc and came in after the CP was designed, when the free health directive was launched by MOH in

but not conditional food transfers as a priority action to incentivize ante- and post- natal visits and facility based delivery.

70. The school meals programme is in line with WFP global policy.²⁸ In addition to helping achieve education targets, school feeding can (in theory) support progress towards the MDG goals on hunger alleviation (MDG 1) and gender parity (MDG 3) and is therefore in line with government priority targets as well as key donor objectives.²⁹ The CP intent to provide a fortified blended cereal to primary school children seeks to alleviate hunger, provide a nutritious supplement and enable learning and is therefore both relevant and appropriate. Encouraging girls to enrol and stay in school indirectly contributes to reduction in stunting in the long term through the education of girls. School feeding operates as a platform for health interventions including de-worming and nutrition education that result in better health and nutrition outcomes.

71. The CFA and FFA programmes of the LIN component are coherent with WFP Strategic Objective 4: 'Reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition' through the additional production of food by increasing paddies, improved irrigation and fishponds. The creation of community assets such as roads have a less direct linkage with SO4 except where they enable improved access to markets. P4P and FFM are both coherent with WFP Strategic Objective 5: 'Strengthen capacities of countries to reduce hunger, including through hand-over strategies and local purchase'. Both were aimed at increasing the local production and purchase of food in Lao PDR. The P4P programme is coherent with the WFP global pilot study.

Summary: Appropriateness and Coherence of the Operation

The Country Programme is the first of its kind in Lao with the previous individual programmes now being combined into a single development programme. The programme is generally well aligned with central and ministerial government policies, and addresses the major long-term problems of stunting, anaemia and undernutrition through feeding programmes for pregnant and lactating women, babies and school children and through FFA and CFA activities to build community assets. Six provinces, most affected by stunting and low ante- and post-natal care uptake were selected. In addition, emergency response was added to the programme to complement the DRR capacity building component.

Targeting decisions, based on government statistics and on special surveys, have well identified the most appropriate provinces and districts for interventions and resulted in appropriate criteria for the selection of beneficiaries. WFP has also considered the need for coordination, avoidance of duplication, government priorities and internal resource restrictions in its targeting decisions at province and local level.

EPR activities designed to increase the capacity of central and local government to provide early warning systems and respond rapidly to emergencies are highly relevant while the emergency responses have been carefully targeted to provide the maximum value to the most affected populations. Follow up with longer term resilience-building measures would improve the sustainability of these actions.

2012/13. So in some health centres there is a government cash incentive and WFP food transfer - thus the existing possible redundancy. GAVI cash incentives are working well and cash is much preferred.

²⁸ WFP, UNICEF, UNESCO. Nourishing Bodies, Nourishing Minds. Partnering for the child's well-being and equity in education, January 24, 2013. www.wfp.org/nourishing-bodies

²⁹ CSB is provided by the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, which aims to reduce hunger and improve primary education especially for girls. www.fas.usda.gov/programs/mcgoverndole

The MCHN component addresses stunting directly through the provision of highly nutritious food supplements. The programme also aims to increase the uptake of ante- and post-natal care. Plumpy'Doz is used as the supplement for 6-23 month old children although it is not internationally recommended for this purpose. The SM component aims to increase school enrolment in remote areas through the provision of morning snacks. This is highly relevant and important but government policy has shifted towards the provision of lunches from locally produced foods. The WFP is committed to transition to a lunch-based programme. The effect on stunting is likely to be long-term through the improved education of girls. The SM component aims to reach all rural districts in the target districts.

The LIN component aims to improve resilience and food security for the most vulnerable communities through livelihood development and the creation of community assets. The LIN programme seems highly appropriate but it is still too small to comment in detail on the targeting and the selection of actions. Reducing poverty and food insecurity will have a long-term effect on stunting. P4P aims to increase the use of domestic food in WFP interventions in line with government policy and at the same time develop the capacity of farmers and millers to produce high quality rice and access markets. FFM would be relevant but no cost-effective, appropriate opportunity has been identified so far.

2.2. Results

72. The results of each component are presented below. Overall the objectives are being met by the emergency response part of EPR and MCHN and SM components but not for the DRR/DRM part of EPR, LIN and FFM.

73. Results are reported against both the CP document indicators and targets and, where these have been amended, against the new indicators. SPR data is based on the original CP indicators and targets. In particular the emergency response actions were not included in the original document but introduced via a later budget revision, and the scope of the MCHN programme was substantially scaled back to avoid duplication with UNICEF programmes. In these cases it is indicated in the following paragraphs and tables where revised targets and indicators are used.

Component 1: Emergency Preparedness and Response

74. A two-year capacity building programme covering national government, two provinces, eight districts and 40 communities is just starting its implementation period. The regional coverage is designed to be a pilot activity in some of the most disaster vulnerable areas for later scaling-up. There was a one-year delay in start up due to lack of funding. The programme was designed with MoLSW (then responsible for disaster planning) as partner, but suffered a further year's delay following the change of responsible ministry from MoLSW to MoNRE. No capacity building was able to start until 2014 – more than halfway through the four year CP. The training element will be implemented by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, with funding provided by the Australian Aid Programme. Although the main activities have not yet started there has been a workshop for central and provincial government stakeholders to raise awareness of DRR/DRM issues and to agree the content of the upcoming programme.

75. The Nutrition Cluster developed a response plan that aims to respond to a disaster affecting 250,000 people within 72 hours and with phased activities over the subsequent one to eight weeks. Under this response plan, WFP is responsible for ensuring a

contingency stock of ready to use supplementary/therapeutic food (RUSF/RUTF) for up to 45,000 children under five and pregnant and lactating women can be mobilized.

76. At present there is no national strategic reserve of food for rapid distribution in the event of a crisis or for other purposes such as price stabilization. The WFP has secured a donation of canned fish from Japan and is working to increase the speed of availability of the Asian Plus Three Rice Reserve (APTERR) during emergencies. In the longer term WFP is in discussion with the government to promote the establishment of a national strategic storage facility and food reserve, and despite this resource being an identified government policy its implementation is slow.

77. Three emergency responses have been organized so far. After the initial response in Khammouanne the second WFP response was to drought-hit communities in Luang Prabang following crop losses due to drought and pest damage during the 2012 growing season. The third response followed a series of severe storms during the second half of 2013. In Khammouane in 2012 an Emergency Food Security Assessment was conducted jointly with Government and NGOs, in Luang Prabang a Joint Multi-Sectoral Emergency Response Assessment was conducted (health, WASH, Nutrition and Food Security) while in Saravane the government data from 13 provinces was used to analyze and map the most affected communities. In each case the areas with the highest risk of malnutrition were chosen for targeting. Data on distributions for Khammouanne in 2012 and Luang Prabang in 2013 is shown in Table 4, indicating the numbers of beneficiaries disaggregated by gender, age and year together with the rations distributed. It should be noted that since the emergency operations were not included in the CP logical framework the planned figures shown are those from the initial assessment after the crisis.

Table 4: Emergency response beneficiaries, planned vs actual

Beneficiary Category	Planned			Actual			Actual vs. Planned		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2012 (Khammouanne)									
No. of children <5y	3,377	3,351	6,728	2,841	3,030	5,871	84%	90%	87%
No. of children 5-18	3,050	3,080	6,130	7,780	7,586	15,366	255%	246%	250%
No. of adults	12,802	13,340	26,142	9,706	9,733	19,439	76%	73%	74%
Total number of beneficiaries	19,229	19,771	39,000	20,327	20,349	40,676	106%	103%	104%
2013 (Luang Prabang)									
No. of children <5y	3,031	3,007	6,038	1,357	1,350	2,707	45%	45%	45%
No. of children 5-18	2,737	2,764	5,501	2,927	2,662	5,589	107%	96%	102%
Number of adults	11,489	11,972	23,461	3,862	4,042	7,904	34%	34%	34%
Total number of beneficiaries	17,257	17,743	35,000	8,146	8,054	16,200	47%	45%	46%
The total number of beneficiaries includes all targeted persons who were provided with WFP food during the reporting period - either as a recipient/participant in one or more of the following groups, or from a household food ration distributed to one of these recipients/participants.									

Source: WFP SPRs 2012 and 2013

78. Table 5 shows the commodity quantities distributed in the emergency operations. Although the post-distribution monitoring report was not available for the January 2014 intervention in Saravane, the goal was to supply 223 mt rice and 13 mt oil to 14,866 people in 53 villages of Khonxedong district. During the evaluation the Provincial Department of Labour and Social Welfare (PLSW) reported that these targets had largely been achieved.

In 2012 the initial planning figures underestimated the number of beneficiaries; the number of children aged 5-18 receiving rice was more than twice the plan while the ration size was decreased to compensate. In 2013 the emergency food security assessment (EFSA) determined that the target groups were not at high risk of moderate acute malnutrition so the distribution was reduced to a two-month general food distribution of rice and oil which resulted in the actual adult beneficiary numbers being lower than planned.

Table 5: EPR Component, commodities planned vs actual (mt)

Commodity (mt)	2012		2013	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Rice	1,170	806	1,049	243
Oil	78	42	70	4
Ready to use supplementary food (RUSF)	21	16	22	0
Total	1,269	864	1,141	247

Source: WFP SPRs 2012 and 2013 and MoU with PLSW Saravane

79. The main gender indicators used for the emergency responses are shown in Table 6 below. It can be seen that in 2012 (Khammouanne) the results for men and women were almost identical, whereas in 2013 (Luang Prabang) there were strong differences. It was noted that local government staff (food monitors) were predominantly men. It was reported during the ET's field mission that due to the travel distances men were also predominantly the beneficiary cardholders. WFP CO does not believe that travel distances usually limit women's participation. It is clear that there are strong differences in gender equality between the cultural groups in the two regions. WFP must always adjust their programmes to each ethnic group in order to be able to set realistic indicators and to achieve the greatest possible gender effect.

Table 6: Gender breakdown in emergency distributions

General Gender Indicators	2012 (Khammouanne)	2013 (Luang Prabang)
Number of food monitors – men		9
Number of food monitors – women		1
General Food Distribution		
Number of household food entitlements (on ration cards or distribution list) issued in men's name	7,392	2,635
Number of household food entitlements (on ration cards or distribution list) issued in women's name	7,392	125
Number of men in leadership positions on food, cash, voucher management committees	298	2,703
Number of women in leadership positions on food, cash, voucher management committees	249	1,213

Source: WFP SPRs 2012 and 2013

80. It was noted by local authorities and by stakeholders that the responses were slow. In the case of Khammouanne there was an initial emergency distribution in 2011 before the start of this CP. Since the floods heavily damaged the crops a follow-up assessment was carried out after the harvest. The study was conducted in February-March 2012 and distribution of food took place in August - a delay of five months from the time the assessment was conducted. In Luang Prabang the drought was a slow onset disaster and took several months to be acknowledged by the local authority (March 2013) and by the

national government (August). Food distribution followed quickly thereafter. In Saravane the response was four months after the flooding. The three cases are quite different but it can be seen that recognition of the disaster and authorization by the government for WFP surveys and distributions was an important factor in Luang Prabang. Once the assessments were carried out and food deliveries authorised, and the distributions took place one to five months later. It was also noted by WFP and government that the lack of prepositioned commodities has been a cause of delay. Both these issues are being addressed separately under the capacity building of this EPR component.

81. During the post distribution monitoring in 2012 and 2013 and during the evaluation it was clear that the immediate crisis had passed and that WFP had been important to the recovery. In Khammouanne the number of households with an acceptable Food Consumption Scores (FCS) rose from 67 percent before the distribution to 80 percent after the distribution. No data was available for the other distributions. However, both communities remain very vulnerable and in need of further assistance. Interventions with a longer-term impact such as LIN or localised DRR/DRM are needed to assist the communities with preparing for future emergencies and to improve their resilience to shocks.

82. Beneficiaries and government officials stated that the pre-distribution training and the distributions themselves were well managed, and that targeting at the local level was fair. In Saravane, there were many communities where the initial assessment found that 20 percent of the population were not in serious need and therefore did not receive rations. This caused some misunderstandings in the communities and difficulties for the village heads. In practice it was said that in some communities the non-beneficiaries received support from distribution from other agencies while in other communities they shared the available commodities amongst all its members. This is a culturally acceptable solution but will have reduced the effectiveness for the most affected households.

83. Government officials at provincial and central level emphasized the need for WFP to follow official procedures and keep all levels of government informed of actions. It was particularly noted that during the Luang Prabang emergency response there was a lack of communication between government agencies and WFP. It is clearly difficult for WFP to satisfy all levels of government simultaneously and at the same time achieve a timely response for the affected population.

84. Many stakeholders and beneficiaries mentioned during the field mission the type of rice that was supplied in distributions by WFP. Most people in Laos prefer glutinous (or sticky) rice but some upland populations in the north prefer white rice. In areas where there is an ethnic mix, both types may be used within the same village. The two forms of rice are cooked quite differently and milled sticky rice has a short shelf life of about four months, after which the flavour deteriorates. Beneficiaries of emergency responses were content to receive any form of rice – “any rice is better than no rice” – but in the more remote areas rice is a major part of the culture and changing habits is not easy. For routine distributions under Components 2, 3 and 4 it is important to try to supply the type of rice that is normally consumed. This puts considerable strains on the logistics section as sticky rice is less available and cannot be stockpiled. During the evaluation there was no suggestion that rice was refused because it was the wrong type.

Component 2: Mother and Child Nutrition and Health

85. The CP design intended the MCHN component to be implemented at scale in five provinces alongside school feeding and FFA components, but this was reduced to three as

stated earlier. The MCHN component began implementation in Luang Namtha under a UNJP in 2011, with a rapid scale up beginning in Oudomxay in early 2012 and in Sekong in late 2012. A study to assess impact is planned in Luang Prabang. Implementation is direct through government staff at health facilities and Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) at the community level. The programme is monitored and supervised by the District Health Team (DHT) and the Provincial Health Office (PHO). A nutrition education package (designed by WFP: 'Feeding the Future' (FTF)) is implemented in selected districts by partners, aiming to improve the nutritional status of rural populations.

86. The CP targets for stunting reduction were revised in 2013 from the initial 10 percent, using the data from the LSIS 2011 as baseline, and based on an estimated annual reduction of two percent per annum, in line with government targets. There is no district specific baseline for reduction of iron deficiency anaemia (IDA) by 10 percent. Available data suggests 22 percent of women 15-49 years and 63 percent of children under two years have iodine deficiency.³⁰ It is unclear how WFP will accurately measure progress against this indicator in the absence of district specific baseline data.

87. Performance indicators are standard (100 percent of beneficiaries receiving food/non-food items and tonnage and quantity of food/non-food items as percentage of planned). Further output indicators (Table 7) are included in the Standard Project Reports (SPRs), MCHN reports and coverage surveys although they were not included in the CP document logical framework.

Table 7: Performance indicators for Component 2

Objective	Output indicators (numbers of ..)
Reduce stunting in children under 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites assisted (villages where VHV is distributing Plumpy'Doz) - Enrolment coverage (children registered in programme) - Programme coverage (children receiving Plumpy'Doz for at least 6 months) - Uptake and compliance (amount of ration received by beneficiary and consumed)
Nutritional status of PLW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites assisted (health facilities where NB is distributed) - Uptake and compliance (amount of NB received by beneficiary and consumed)
Increase uptake of ante- and post-natal care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sites assisted (health facilities where rice is distributed) - Coverage (at least one visit to health facility) - Frequency of ANC/PNC visits and deliveries attended by SBA
Nutrition messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nutrition messages on specialized foods and IYCF received
Nutrition education (Feeding the Future)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TOT trained (pre and post training test) - Participants trained (pre and post training test)

Source: WFP SPRs

88. The MCHN component was slow to start, in part due to financial constraints faced by WFP and the reduction of target provinces from five to three, although since 2012 the scale up to all target districts has been rapid. Thus while progress against CP targets in terms of beneficiaries appears to be poor, as shown in Table 8, this is in fact a reflection of the transfer of responsibility for two populous provinces to UNICEF.

³⁰ MICS 2006 and Nutrition Strategy Action Plan (citing MoH data, 2009)

Table 8: MCHN beneficiaries: planned and actual against CP targets

Planned (in CP)	2012		2013	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Beneficiaries (CP)				
391,870	33,150	7,876	59,364	19,838
Of target:		23.8%		33.4%
Commodities (Operational Plan)				
Rice (mt)	148	89	203	244
Nutributter (mt)	8.3	4.8	44	29
Plumpy'Doz (mt)	5.2	4.3	158.53	133.32

Source: WFP CP data

89. Table 9 below indicates that progress against targets for the 6-23 months age group has been good, with 100 percent of the number of planned target sites for distribution of Plumpy'Doz at the village level being reached in the three operational provinces. The actual number of children aged 6-23 months reached was 88 percent of the overall target in 2013. This suggests that either the registration coverage and/or the population calculations of children in the target group may not be accurate. There is a lot of confusion about the rations in WFP: ration levels and distribution mechanisms in use in Lao PDR can be found in Annex 8 for clarification since these are not easily available at present.

Table 9: MCHN sites and 6-23 mo beneficiaries: planned vs. actual

Province	Planned 2013			Actual 2013			Plan vs actual	
	Sites	Benefcs. 6-23 mo.	Plumpy'Doz (pots)	Sites	Benefcs. 6-23 mo.	Plumpy'Doz (pots)	Benefcs. 6-23 mo.	Plumpy'Doz
Luang Namtha	3,918	45,646	182,200	3,918	42,481	164,433	93%	90%
Oudomxay	3,158	56,727	226,908	3,158	50,219	189,951	89%	84%
Sekong	1,158	19,672	78,688	1,158	14,710	55,822	75%	71%
Total	8,234	122,045	487,796	8,234	107,410	410,206	88%	84%

Source: WFP monitoring data 2013 (analyzed by evaluation team)

90. The numbers of pregnant and lactating women (PLW) attending ante-natal care shows an upward trend from 2012 and exceeds targets in Luang Namtha (109 percent) where programming has been implemented for a longer duration (Table 10 on next page). The number of ante- and post-natal visits mostly falls short of targets, particularly in Sekong where implementation is relatively recent. The number of deliveries at health facilities shows a significant upward trend over 2012. The increase in PLW beneficiaries in 2013 led to increased use of rice over planned targets. Nutributter was supplied to more beneficiaries than planned although total distribution was lower, reflecting the fact that few women receive the maximum ration.

91. WFP monitors uptake of services and frequency of ante- and post-natal visits for individual women. The data (Table 10) indicates that there has been significant increase in uptake of services since start up in 2012. The number of women in the target group who attended at least one ante-natal visit was found to have increased by 75 percent in Luang Namtha, 77 percent in Sekong and 30 percent in Oudomxay. The lower numbers in Oudomxay reflect the concurrent GAVI/HSS initiative operating in three of the seven districts.³¹ The absolute numbers of women visiting health facilities, and the number of assisted deliveries within them, has increased as programme implementation has

³¹ Namoor district in Oudomxay showed a 60 percent decline of visits in the data due to a shift to GAVI/HSS.

expanded. The data indicate that the rice ration is contributing towards meeting MDG targets for ante-natal visits and safe delivery.³²

Table 10: MCHN sites and beneficiary targets (PLWs): planned vs. actual, 2013

2013	Planned					Actual					Plan vs Actual
Province	Hlth Cntrs	ANC visits	Dist	PNC visits	Total	HC	ANC	Dist.	PNC	Total	%
Luang Namtha	501	8,218	0	2,154	10,372	501	9,054	618	1,597	11,269	109
Oudomxay	466	14,424	0	6,810	21,234	466	12,324	981	2,554	15,859	75
Sekong	95	2,312	0	1,470	3,782	95	2,358	143	778	3,279	87
Total	1,062	24,954	0	10,434	35,388	1,062	23,736	1,742	4,929	30,407	86

Source: WFP monitoring data, 2013

92. The maximum number of clinic visits is four ante- and two post-natal visits per mother. There are substantial differences between provinces and districts with a low overall attendance. Frequency of visits averages three per woman in Luang Namtha where the programme has been operating for three years, 2.5 years in Oudomxay and 1.5 years in Sekong. There is a substantial drop off after the second ante-natal visit, which together account for over 75 percent. Frequency of post-natal visits is particularly low (<11 percent for the first and <6 percent for the second).³³

93. The distribution of Nutributter (NB) from the health facility is limiting its potential impact, as many pregnant women do not attend the health facility for more than two visits, so the amount of NB received is not optimal. The distribution mechanism for NB is unclear and many staff were found to be confused about how many sachets to give and when, usually resulting in a shortfall. In some cases, NB was given during outreach visits and during home-based deliveries. However, this was erratic.

94. The programme covers 75 percent of health facilities at district level. In 2013, 112 of 120 health facilities were assisted (93 percent), thus the reach is extremely good. Programme coverage is determined as the number of women in the target population who attend a health facility at least once. WFP defines the target group as 25 percent of all pregnant women, but actual programme coverage is estimated to be between 40-75 percent.³⁴

95. The availability of rice and NB at the health facility level was found to be good (>90 percent of sites) with few pipeline breaks and minor loss due to storage and infestation. This reflects good planning, timely distributions and effective pre-positioning. Currently, PLWs must attend the health facility in order to receive the rice ration and NB. Since many women attend only one or two visits, the ration uptake is lower than planned. There are also issues regarding the protocol for distribution. Analysis by the team found that the average uptake of NB was about 50 percent of the planned ration although there was considerable variation (a range of 30-80 percent³⁵) between provinces and districts. Most of the ration received by PLWs was consumed appropriately. The majority of women understood the requirement to consume one sachet/day and understood it was good for them and their baby. The sachets were 'protected' by women and little sharing was

³² MDG target of 60 percent pregnant women having at least one ante-natal visit and 50 percent of deliveries attended by a skilled birth attendant.

³³ MCHN Programme Report, 2012 and WFP monitoring data 2013/14.

³⁴ MCHN Programme Report, 2012 and WFP monitoring data, 2012-2013 and preliminary 2014 figures.

³⁵ MCHN Programme Report 2012; 56 WFP PLW ration cards and Health Centre records in Oudomxay and Sekong, collected April/May '14.

reported by PLWs in focus groups, nor observed. Uptake of the rice ration is also linked to number of visits, but was found to be on average 60 percent (range 10-100 percent) of the full possible ration.³⁶

96. WFP has not monitored any outcome measures such as pregnancy weight gain and birth outcomes (weight and length). Thus it is not possible to determine the impact of NB and progress towards the objective of improving maternal nutritional status, and reduction in stunting is impossible to quantify. The lack of monitoring data needs to be addressed, although considerable data is available at the health facility level. Data collected by the evaluation team at six health facilities in Oudomxay and Sekong showed that women consuming NB had babies with birth weights near to 3kg, at least 300g above the average of 2.6kg (before the programme start up). Where scans were used at district hospitals, staff reported increased uterine growth as measured by femur length. Thus, it appears that NB is impacting on low birth weight and stunting in infants less than six months. These findings are only indicative and suggest the need for more effective monitoring of outcomes.³⁷

97. The data show that there has been considerable increase in the numbers of PLWs attending health facilities in WFP operational areas. However, the extent to which the rice ration is acting as the major pull factor is unclear as government initiatives and the GAVI/HSS programme have also resulted in significant increases in uptake and frequency of visits.³⁸ The contextual factors that impact significantly on uptake of services include access, traditional beliefs among certain ethnic groups, and communication issues with health staff, which were all beyond the scope of the CP's direct interventions.

98. Quality of services was also repeatedly found to be a major factor affecting uptake.³⁹ Thus where staff were available and quality of services was high, uptake was found to be noticeably increased irrespective of the rice ration, together with uptake of other services such as family planning and compliance with iron/folate supplementation. Outreach to remote villages by health centre staff is limited by lack of transport and MoH restrictions on outreach visits. In some remote areas pregnant women were found to have never accessed a health facility.⁴⁰ In these areas the need for community based health workers trained in safe delivery and timely referral is paramount.

99. The stated objective of reducing IDA is not monitored. Whilst NB contains some iron, it is insufficient. Few women reported receiving the recommended level of tablets containing iron/folate during pregnancy. Blood samples are not taken as part of routine ante- and post-natal care and no simple hematocrit test is available at health centre level. Thus progress towards the reduction of IDA cannot be determined.

100. The intervention for children 6-23 months operates at the village level. Distribution of Plumpy'Doz is through the VHV's. The programme operates at scale in target districts and coverage is very high with more than 95 percent of villages reached in target districts. Of children in the target age group (6-23 months), approximately 90 percent are enrolled in the programme. Programme coverage (defined as children receiving Plumpy'Doz for

³⁶ WFP does not assume the full ration in planning so this accounts for the accurate availability and minimal waste.

³⁷ These findings concur with those of ongoing studies in Malawi that have found increased inter-uterine growth and increased birth weights in women consuming 20g/day of LNS. Micronutrient deficiencies (iron, zinc and folic acid) are linked to poor foetal growth and birth outcomes. LNS appears to address these, limiting nutrient deficiencies resulting in foetal weight gain and growth in length. www.ilns.org

³⁸ Lao PDR, Ministry of Health. Progress Report, GAVI Alliance Health System Strengthening Support, April 2012.

³⁹ The quality of ANC services was found to be extremely poor. Less than 10 percent of women received the three ante-natal care services recommended by WHO (blood pressure, urine sample and blood sample). No women received calcium supplementation as per WHO recommendations. Safe delivery and minimal emergency obstetric requirements variable /non-existent.

⁴⁰ Katou ethnic group areas of Sekong.

more than six months) is currently between 60 and 90 percent - the variation being due to late start up in Sekong.⁴¹ WFP does not monitor individual children but assumes that an average child has an average length of stay (LOS) in the programme of 12 months (of 18 months maximum). The team found that the average LOS is approximately 12 months and average number of Plumpy'Doz pots per child enrolled is 48 pots (66 percent of total available ration). This marks a significant increase over 2012 due in large part to scale up in Sekong and improved awareness of the programme through word of mouth.

101. Availability of Plumpy'Doz at village level is extremely good, again reflecting accurate planning, effective distribution and pre-positioning. Some minor loss of Plumpy'Doz due to leakage at provincial and site level was reported, though this has since been rectified. Plumpy'Doz is widely shared between children at the household level, thus the amount of ration consumed is not optimal. For the most part, the dosing was given correctly. In some cases the monthly rations were consumed by children in the family within a week. Some beneficiaries and health staff reported that the Plumpy'Doz was too oily, and that overdosing caused diarrhoea. The VHVs stored the commodity correctly, often in their house or in a box provided by WFP; at household level, it was found to be stored adequately in a dry place above the floor. No sale or bartering of Plumpy'Doz was found.

102. The distribution of Plumpy'Doz is de-facto a food distribution and there is no monitoring of outcomes. Anthropometric measures (weight, height, MUAC⁴²) are not collected or monitored, and at this time it is not possible to assess any impact on stunting. Health facilities supported by JICA and GAVI/HSS in Sekong collect data on MUAC as part of the MCH package and routine health care of children under five. Analysis of these data indicates that prevalence of acute malnutrition (MUAC < 12.5cm) is extremely low in WFP areas: Plumpy'Doz is known to be effective in preventing acute malnutrition.⁴³ Numerous reports from communities suggested that Plumpy'Doz made children heavier, brighter and healthier. Health staff reported that children who had received Plumpy'Doz for more than six months had better motor skills and were more developmentally advanced compared to older children who had not received it. Teachers of pre-school children reported that children who had received Plumpy'Doz were more 'school ready'. Again, these findings are indicative and highlight the importance of effective monitoring of outcomes.

103. Village Health Volunteers, health staff and communities understood the correct ration amount and dosage for Plumpy'Doz. However, none had any idea of its intended purpose or understood the concept of 1,000 days and stunting prevention. There is currently no messaging or practical action around infant and young child feeding (IYCF) at the time of distribution or at the community level. Thus, the current intervention is not currently supported by other effective interventions that could produce sustainable behavioural change.

104. Regarding nutrition education, WFP trained over 20 partners working in northern and southern provinces on the Feeding the Future (FTF) programme. This took the format of training of trainers (TOT) workshops with a focus on essential nutrition concepts and practices. In turn the trainers train village participants. Impact of the training is assessed by acquisition of knowledge before and after training, and on these criteria, the training can be said to be successful.⁴⁴ However, FTF training had been conducted in three districts

⁴¹ WFP VAM Analysis Unit. MCHN Nutrition Indicator and Programme Coverage Survey. Nalae District, Luang Namtha, October 2013

⁴² Mid-Upper Arm Circumference

⁴³ Acute malnutrition defined as MUAC <12.5cm and/or bilateral pitting oedema.

⁴⁴ WFP, Feeding the Future. Report to Yumi Brands, April 2012.

of Oudomxay visited by the team and no evidence of impact in terms of changes in knowledge or behaviour at community level could be found. Thus while FTF may be useful in raising awareness about nutrition more broadly, it is not practical or useful as a tool to facilitate behaviour change in IYCF practice.

105. Breastfeeding practices were found to be relatively good, although the use of other foods and liquids is still commonplace and exclusive breastfeeding to six months is rare. Introduction of complementary foods was found to be poor. Despite the availability of a wide range of suitable foods and in many instances, home gardens, most mothers reported very little diversity in the food provided to children between 6-24 months. Thus WFP interventions are not leading to changed practices and increase dietary diversity, which is an extremely weak point in the MCHN programme but also reflects a wider issue. There is not, as yet, any cadre of community health workers in Lao with basic training in primary health care and nutrition, so the delivery of high impact nutrition specific actions through proven effective mechanisms such as mother to mother groups is a challenge.

Component 3: School meals

106. The school meals programme does not provide meals. The CSB, sugar and oil ration is used to provide a morning snack for pre-primary and primary students. The snack is well-liked by students and consumed without waste. It was frequently reported that the snack was an incentive to increased enrolment but did not keep students at school for the whole day. Students frequently leave school to go home for lunch and do not return, so the programme does not meet the stated objective of increasing attendance. Parents, teachers and village education committees would prefer a mid-day lunch programme as it is believed that it would help to keep children in school for the whole day, and thereby keep children safe and eliminate the need to provide child care or a lunch meal at home.

107. The school meals component has made considerable progress towards targets. Table 11 below shows that WFP assisted 1,735 schools in 2013, more than 90 percent of all schools in 30 districts of the seven target provinces. Thus the programme has impressive reach. A pipeline break meant that the number of feeding days had to be reduced and this accounts for the lower number of beneficiaries and commodities used in 2013. The number of children reached in the pre-primary category (2-5 years) exceeded planned targets (12,252/13,315) in 2013. Whilst a relatively small proportion of overall beneficiaries, it reflects the increasing enrolment in this group.

Table 11: School feeding: Progress against beneficiary and delivery targets

Beneficiary category	Planned	Actual	Actual vs. Planned
Total 2012	228,306	202,341	88%
Total 2013	253,881	179,297	71%
Children receiving snack (2013)	182,192	164,273	90%
Children receiving THR (2013)	44,520	32,091	72%
Girls in secondary schools receiving THR	19,864	11,119	56%
Schools assisted by WFP (2013)	1,763	1,735	98%
Cooks/Storekeepers assisted	3,725	3,550	95%
Feeding days as percentage of school days	100%	88%	88%
Commodities CSB, rice, oil and sugar (2013)	5,859 mt	4,154 mt	71%

Source: WFP SPRs 2012 and 2013

108. The CSB snack in some cases has become a breakfast replacement. Over half the students interviewed during school visits reported that they did not eat any breakfast or

only a small amount of rice before school and were very hungry at snack time. Thus there is evidence that snack may alleviate short-term hunger and help students concentrate. Teachers noted that the snack increased children's attentiveness and interest in school and thereby corroborated this finding. The snack does provide nutritional benefit in terms of providing a significant contribution towards meeting the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) of energy, protein, vitamin A, iron and other micronutrients. Qualitative analysis found that snack was the most nutritious 'meal' of the day with most primary school children eating only sticky rice at other meals. However this nutritional input cannot be effectively measured using the current outcome indicator; reduction in stunting among children 2-5 years. Stunting takes place in children under two years of age, whilst the WFP programme targets older children. The presumed impact of school feeding on stunting is found in WFP documents and repeated by government officials at all levels, but requires clarification.⁴⁵

109. WFP has made limited progress toward handover to government. At the present time, 66 schools in two districts (La in Oudomxay and Khua in Phongsaly) have been handed over. The stalled handover is related to limited scale up of the government programme and the decision by MoES to initiate programming in other provinces. The government focus on school lunch and preferred local commodities has also been an issue as there is disconnect currently between the approaches. Nevertheless, a hand over strategy has been developed and is in place according to the stated objective despite not having been implemented at scale.

110. The school meals programme is associated with significant increase in enrolment in WFP assisted schools. There has been greater growth rate in NER compared to the national average. This is primarily because WFP target provinces are in areas that have had low enrolment rates over time. The NER in WFP assisted schools has increased 5.5 percentage points for boys and five points for girls over the CP baseline and exceeds the national average of 95.2 percent.⁴⁶ It is reasonable to deduce that the WFP school feeding programme contributes to closing the gap in the disparity in NER between provinces.⁴⁷ Progress reported to date against outcome indicators is shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12: School feeding: Progress against indicators

Outcome indicators	Baseline		2012		2013		Targets*
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Male/female							
NER (primary) <i>Children enrolled who belong to age group corresponding to primary schooling divided by total population of same age group</i>	91.6	90.3	94.8	92.1	97.1	95.3	98%
Attendance rate	-	-	-	-	-	-	80%
Survival rate (primary) <i>Proportion of students in Grade 1 who complete Grade 5</i>	60.3	58.8	62.6	60.9	66.2	66.3	90%
Pass rate <i>Passing standard tests</i>	72.1	71.2	87.2	88.5	79.2	80.6	
Reduction in stunting (aged 2-5)	-		-		-		10%/year
Reduction in IDA (aged 2-5)	-		-		-		10%/year
Gender ratio (boys to girls)	0.95		0.93		0.95		1

Source: WFP CP M&E Plan; SPRs 2012 and 2013. * Targets are based on MoES MDG targets for 2015

111. No specific data on attendance has been collected or reported in the SPR. Data on survival rates and pass rates is collected and is indicative of attendance (Table 12).

⁴⁵ The education of girls particularly to secondary school level impacts on stunting in the long term by breaking the inter-generational cycle. The correlation between education level of mothers and stunting of children under two is well established.

⁴⁶ MoES Education Management Information System (EMIS) 2012.

⁴⁷ WFP trends in NER 2002-2012, School Meals Report 2012.

Progress towards the objective of improved nutritional status as measured by the outcome indicators (reduction in stunting and IDA) cannot be determined at this point.

112. The number of children enrolling in the first grade of primary school (Grade 1) is very good in WFP assisted schools (>95 percent of the total eligible population group). However, the proportion of children who go on to reach Grade 5 (survival rate) remains relatively low with only minor improvements made to date. The national average survival rate is 70 percent (2012), but analysis conducted by the ET found that attrition at the end of first grade was high, although the children often have to repeat Grade 1. Indeed, in nine schools in Oudomxay and Sekong, the evaluators found that 12-18 percent of children who attend Grade 1 did not progress to Grade 2. Drop out thereafter is approximately four percent per grade with a slight peak in Grade 3. Of the children who reach Grade 5, most graduate from that level.

113. The team found that there were several factors affecting survival rates in WFP assisted primary schools, including the strength of the parent-teacher associations, the motivation of teachers and student/teacher ratios. Whilst the coverage of government primary schools has increased, making access less of an issue, the quality of education provided has not kept up. Interviews with parents, teachers and students revealed that key reasons for dropping out are migratory families, girls leaving for marriage and lack of interest in school largely determined by a limited chance of success and preference for a traditional life. The benefits of school feeding cannot be easily separated from the larger context of the learning environment, nutrition security and family support. In isolation, the WFP snack intervention cannot meet the objective of well-educated children and must take better account of the social, economic and cultural constraints.

114. School feeding appears to be linked to a higher pass rate in WFP assisted schools. However, little direct relationship could be found between the school feeding programme *per se* and the pass rate.

115. The school meals programme has fostered gender equity, at least in enrolment, and the gender ratio of children receiving school snacks at primary school almost reaches parity (0.95). Nevertheless, the drop-out rate for girls is significantly higher than for boys in remote rural areas, particularly in the South and among certain ethnic groups. The proportion of secondary age girls receiving take home rations (THRs) is considerably lower than boys. This reflects a wider issue of girls' transition to secondary school, and in some areas visited in the south, the transition rate was found to be almost a third less for girls.

116. The outcome of reduction of iron deficiency anaemia (IDA) is also problematic and there is no defined baseline or target. Moreover, the assumption that the inputs of a fortified food and reducing helminthic load through de-worming campaigns will result in significant reduction of IDA in children aged 2-5 years is flawed. Without tangible inputs such as micronutrient supplementation and sustained nutrition education to increase the intake of iron rich foods, this is unlikely. Whilst creating nutrition awareness is a programme objective, the team did not find any nutrition or health education provided to teachers or students at primary or secondary level.

117. The school meals programme includes pre-primary children aged 2-5 years. This group represents less than eight percent of all beneficiaries and is included by default rather than design. Some schools have a pre-school class and many others do not. The team found that schools with pre-school classes with an assigned teacher had very low attrition from first grade, thus good pre-school enables children to be much more 'school

ready' and stay in school longer. Moreover, those children who had received Plumpy'Doz through the MCHN programme were also reported by their teachers to be noticeably more 'school ready' as defined by advanced verbal and social skills.⁴⁸ Thus significant opportunities exist to link MCHN and early childhood development (ECD) and create a programme continuum. In some schools enrolment in the pre-school class was very high. Parents reported that a safe and stimulating pre-school environment allowed them to work and take care of their youngest children. A nutritious snack for pre-school children could be extremely appropriate.

118. Women from the Lao Women's Union or other volunteers who have been trained in storekeeping, measuring and preparing the food, generally prepare the snack. However, in many cases the rice incentive of a 30kg ration/semester was found to be inadequate by volunteers who found other cash jobs, and in some schools teachers had to prepare the snack. Nevertheless in all schools visited children received their snack almost daily, although the lack of firewood and water were found to be issues at some schools.

119. The purpose of the THR for primary and secondary school informal boarders is unclear. Broadly speaking, the provision of the 20kg rice ration/semester is intended to act as an incentive to encourage children to stay in school. It does not appear to increase enrolment at the secondary level, particularly of girls. The number of girls receiving the THR is considerably less than boys. On the whole, the school meals component is not promoting girls' education at the secondary level, nor is it providing 'girl friendly' environments. Whilst the ration was found to be beneficial to students in helping them stay at school during the week, it is insufficient in quantity and quality. Many students have little diversity in their diets other than foods they can bring from home at weekends. Schools that have productive school gardens and teacher support were able to provide students with considerably better diets. Few of the students interviewed knew how to cook varied types of food even when available.

120. The school meals programme creates a viable platform for the delivery of other programmes. The national de-worming programme supported by WHO has achieved almost universal coverage of primary schools. Through the WASH programme, UNICEF has ensured provision of water pumps and latrines at over half of schools visited. WFP has successfully linked to partners and programmes aimed to improve school quality and build teacher capacity.

121. The team reviewed several schools in La district in Oudomxay that had been handed over to the Government School Meals Programme. The government provides 800Kipp/child (approx. US\$0.10) to the Village Education Committee and relies on a 5kg rice contribution from village families towards the school lunch programme. In the schools visited, rice was cooked with other locally available vegetables contributed by families of students or grown in the school garden. The schools visited were 'model' schools and as such benefitted from additional government and community input. Nevertheless, the three schools had 98 percent enrolment rates and high survival rates and the lunch programme was beneficial in keeping children in school. Whilst the government programme appears promising, it is currently operating at a very small scale. The dependence on community contributions and volunteer engagement may prove problematic in some communities and substantial external assistance will probably be required to achieve national scale up.

⁴⁸ Reasons for investing in ECD. World Bank 2013. www.worldbank.org/eecd

Component 4: Livelihoods Initiatives for Nutrition

122. This component of the CP has been substantially underfunded so that many of the activities have been postponed or cancelled. The LIN team at the CO is not staffed at present and other units manage the activities. In 2012 just one FFA scheme took place (a 5 km feeder road serving four villages in Namor district of Oudomxay province). In 2013, activities were carried out in six districts of Oudomxay and Attapeu provinces that were most vulnerable to food insecurity. At the 15 LIN sites, six also had MCHN activities and nine SM. The activities were roads, irrigation, paddy extension and fishponds. In total five hectares (ha) of land benefited from new irrigation schemes while 27 ha benefitted from rehabilitated schemes, six kms of feeder roads were built and 85 fishponds constructed (in Attapeu). These numbers are well below target except for fishponds – which were not included in the plan. There was no land clearance work completed despite a target of 450 ha. The LIN activities were co-funded by IFAD and UNODC and partnered with DPI in Oudomxay and IFAD in Attapeu. IFAD and UNODC provided the physical resources (cement etc.) while WFP provided the food element for the manual labour.

123. Beneficiaries reported very positively about the activity – the assets were those chosen by the community. Community members declared that they would maintain the assets, although in the case of major road damage during rainy seasons they will require outside help. It is too early to tell how well the maintenance programme will be implemented in practice. In a few cases it was reported that the WFP rice was used for alcohol production but this is unlikely to be a serious problem.

124. The data on beneficiaries is given in Table 13 below. As can be seen the activities reached fewer than five percent of the planned number of beneficiaries, although the gender ratio was more or less equal.

Table 13: Component 4 - LIN: Actual vs. planned beneficiaries (2012-2013)

Beneficiary Category	Planned			Actual			Actual vs. Planned		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
No. of children <5y	4,716	4,673	9,389	207	205	412	4%	4%	4%
No. of children 5-18 yrs of age	14,110	13,762	27,872	620	605	1,225	4%	4%	4%
Number of adults	17,729	18,361	36,090	779	807	1,586	4%	4%	4%
Total benefs. 2012	21,289	21,341	42,720	1,031	1,259	2,290	5%	6%	5%
Total benefs. 2013	36,555	36,796	73,351	1,606	1,617	3,223	4%	4%	4%

The total number of beneficiaries includes all targeted persons who were provided with WFP food during the reporting period - either as a recipient/participant in one or more of the following groups, or from a household food ration distributed to one of these recipients/participants.

Source: WFP SPRs 2012 and 2013

125. The quantity of commodities distributed is shown in Table 14 below. Nine percent of the planned commodities were distributed, indicating that more was distributed per beneficiary than planned.

Table 14: Component 4 - LIN: Commodity distributions

	2012			2013		
	Planned	Actual	Act. vs. plan	Planned	Actual	Act. vs plan
Rice (mt)	1,346	73	5%	2,182	200	9%
Oil (mt)	104	0	0%	168	12	7%
Total (mt)	1,450	73	5%	2,350	212	9%

Source: WFP SPRs 2012 and 2013

126. Regarding the gender indicators, there were 14 male food monitors and three female whereas it was planned to achieve equal numbers of males and females. Although the monitors are selected by the counterpart, WFP needs to continue to work with the counterpart to achieve gender parity. As with the EPR component, the explanation given in the field by communities was that travelling on mountainous roads was more suited to men than women although WFP CO does not believe that travel distances usually limit women's participation.

127. Due to the low number of activities in 2012 and 2013 it was decided to postpone follow-up surveys until more data was available so there is no outcome data (such as food consumption scores) available.

128. The evaluation team did not ascertain that the activities would result in greater food production for the whole village. One road was built between two villages that already had access to markets and government services. The main reasons given for wanting the road were cultural links between the villages and access to slash and burn areas. While these are clearly important to the communities they do not clearly serve the strategic objective of WFP. Similarly, the irrigation and paddy extension projects add to the total village farmland and, it might be assumed, to food security, but the main immediate beneficiaries are the nearest landowners.

129. Some 376 mt of milled rice has been purchased by WFP through P4P, representing 29 percent of the LIN rice requirement in 2013. The number of farmer groups supported was larger than planned (35 against nine planned) but the size of each group was much smaller, so the total number of farmers reached was also less (794 against 4,500 planned). No technical training (of 24 planned) was given to government or national partner staff.

130. In general, millers participating in the P4P programme reported that they are now able to produce milled rice with enhanced quality, they have learned to work with the WFP procurement system (described as relatively easy), and they have improved their business planning, management, and mill operations. Millers have provided seed and in some cases other inputs and credit to farmers but still face difficulties collecting sufficient rice volume as many farmers are reluctant to change to new varieties due to their aversion to risk and also they prefer traditional varieties for their own consumption. The millers need to improve their networks by strengthening the relationship with current villages and expanding to new villages. At present millers have few markets for their high quality rice apart from WFP. Millers are aware that they need to expand their markets but have little knowledge or group marketing skills to achieve this. The Department of Industry and Commerce (DIC) is encouraging the millers to improve their connection with the Khammouanne Millers' Association, as the industry is more advanced in that province.

131. The support that farmers have received has been quite variable, depending largely on the enthusiasm and knowledge of the miller. The farmers all received new rice varieties in return for supplying paddy to the miller but some also received further inputs and training. Millers provide the new varieties but even they know little about appropriate varieties and often obtain unproven seed from Thailand as well as from official and unofficial national sources. The District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) does not have the resources to provide technical advice to all villages. An external assessment⁴⁹ was made in January 2014, and found that farmers that were contracted by millers had higher incomes from rice than non-contracted farmers.

⁴⁹ Purchase for Progress Structural Assessment, Final Report, January 2014

132. The sustainability of the action is not clear. The farmers' groups are not strong – and some were formed only for the purpose of working within the P4P project as a producer group for the miller. Farmers need good quality seed and other inputs, they need technical training in planting, growing, harvesting and storage of paddy for high quality production and they need business planning skills. While some farmers' groups have received full support, including a study tour to Khammouanne province, most farmers reported receiving only a small part of this and it is questionable if many of the groups will remain active after WFP stops purchasing their rice. In turn, the millers have few other markets for their high quality rice and some are waiting for the next WFP purchase. WFP has given no indication about future purchases and has not communicated recently with millers or provincial officials.

133. The mid-term review of the global P4P programme⁵⁰ recommended that: 'Farmer Organisations (FOs) should be categorized and P4P should only work with FOs if they have a credible progression strategy'. It is not clear in this Lao case that they have. The same review also recommended: 'Do not engage in a context where potential market development benefits of P4P are unclear, and seriously consider withdrawal from contexts where such benefits are absent'. In the absence of other significant markets for high quality rice and/or the absence of resources to assist the millers to find and build those markets then it seems likely that the benefits described are absent.

134. The cost of P4P rice has been very high – P4P rice costs US\$800/mt while other local purchase costs US\$588/mt and Thai rice (delivered) costs US\$375/mt. A premium of 33 percent over local procurement is too high given the shortage of funding of WFP programmes and the low potential gains from the programme.

Component 5: Food Fortification and Marketing

135. Under Component 5, WFP commissioned a study⁵¹ to look at options for FFM. The study found that Lao PDR does not present a favorable environment for mass market food fortification to reduce the prevalence of micronutrient deficiency. The study identified three potential products that might be introduced (cooking oil, salt and rice), but for each of them the consultants concluded that the possibility of successful production and marketing were too low to make further investment worthwhile. Oil and other processed value-added foods such as noodles are not widely consumed in many rural areas so it was decided that the penetration to the target group would be insufficient.

136. Salt could be double fortified with iodine and iron but the cost of this in a small market such as Lao would make the final product too expensive. Fortification of rice faces numerous challenges, including the method of preparing sticky rice (which leads to leaching of added micronutrients), widespread own-production for consumption, and the small scale and technically unsophisticated milling industry. Again it was decided that development of a viable commercial business would be impractical.

137. The consultants did recommend that pilot production of these products could be started and used to provide fortified products for WFP and other developing partners' distributions. However WFP correctly decided that the cost was too high and the likely sustainability of the pilots was low. With the development of the economy and a stronger food processing industry there may be opportunities for the development of fortification in 5-10 years time.

⁵⁰ Available at: <http://www.wfp.org/content/mid-term-evaluation-wfp-2008-2013-%E2%80%9Cpurchase-progress%E2%80%9D-pilot-project-terms-reference>

⁵¹ Food Fortification Industry, Market and Policy Assessment: Opportunities in Lao PDR – for WFP 2013

138. WFP decided to follow another of the report's recommendations that they should work to build awareness and capacity at government level about food fortification and safety. This is particularly relevant in the light of the likely increase in trade following the recent accession of Lao PDR to the World Trade Organisation and the extension of free trade arrangements within the ASEAN region. It is likely that this will lead to a much greater penetration of fortified products from Thailand, Vietnam and other regional countries. WFP needs to enter discussions with government and other stakeholders about developing an appropriate programme. The awareness raising and capacity building might include regional study tours or training for key government and other stakeholders. WFP has not yet commenced such work.

Summary: Results of the Programme

WFP has responded to three emergencies since 2012 and supplied around 72,000 beneficiaries with rice, oil and RUSF. Delays in distribution resulted from slow recognition of the Luang Prabang crisis by local and central government a lack of readily available food for distribution. Affected communities appreciate the assistance but some remain vulnerable to further crises. The EPR component is starting a capacity building programme for DRR/DRM with MoNRE and with provincial, district and community participation. WFP is also working with the government and other partners to create national strategic reserves for basic commodities and RUTF/RUSF.

The MCHN has been implemented in three provinces instead of the planned five. After a slow start the scale-up has been rapid and distributions are meeting the revised targets. Uptake of ante- and post-natal care has increased substantially but few women attend all six visits. The programme reaches 93 percent of health facilities and the evaluation found that Nutributter is probably having a positive effect on stunting. The programme relies on attendance at the health facilities but in remote areas and in some ethnic groups this remains low and more outreach is needed. Plumpy'Doz is supplied for 6-23 month children. Although lacking firm data, there were many reports of positive effects on growth, health and development. Nutrition education was not having any noticeable effect on the diversity of diets of mothers and young children.

The SM component has reached 1,735 schools in seven provinces and has improved the enrolment in provinces where this has been weak in the past. Keeping children at school has been more difficult and survival rates have increased little. Gender equity has been achieved for enrolment but not for survival as more girls than boys drop out of school – particularly in remote areas and in the south. Snacks are an effective antidote to short-term hunger but do not discourage children from missing afternoon school. Although it may be the most nutritious 'meal' of the day it is unlikely to have any effect on stunting as the school children are too old to benefit. The THR programme for informal boarders does little to promote enrolment or girls' education although it does help to keep children at school.

Due to a lack of funding the LIN programme has only reached five percent of the planned beneficiaries, with only 16 FFA schemes having been carried out. Not all assets benefit the poorest community members. Gender balance was very good amongst beneficiaries. The P4P programme has fostered linkages between farmer organizations and millers and made some progress in the production of higher quality rice although it has been costly to produce. WFP is not buying rice currently and millers have few other markets so the future commercial development is unclear. Under the FFM component a study was carried

out to identify opportunities for local fortification. Potential target commodities were not found to be practical or economic so the programme has not progressed.

2.3. Factors affecting the results

Internal factors

139. During 2013 WFP embarked on a staffing and structure review (SSR). The major objective of the SSR was to balance the ratio of national and international staff and to continue the operations in Lao PDR in a sustainable way. In fact, the results (cost saving or cost increase) will manifest themselves over the medium to longer term. As a result of the review there were some changes to the establishment – mostly reductions – particularly in international staff. The effect on staff morale was not good and several staff left WFP as a result. The overall effect of the SSR reductions and subsequent departures has been that the WFP became substantially understaffed in a number of areas and this has been aggravated by the difficulty in filling a number of technical positions due to an overall shortage in the country. The process of filling the vacancies is still going on. Currently there is very little input into FFM work, and LIN is understaffed. The nutrition and logistics units both reported that they were understaffed at the time of the review and only able to deal with immediate operational needs. Longer-term planning and policy issues cannot be properly addressed with the present staffing levels.

140. WFP is in the process of relocating some provincial offices to districts nearer to the activities. The levels of capacity and skills needed for the posts are high while the living and working conditions at that level are basic. There are likely to be challenges, including finding locally qualified staff or suitable applicants from outside.

141. The M&E system at WFP has several weaknesses. In some cases there is a lack of baseline and target data (such as IDA), in other cases there are no outcome indicators (for example, birth weight and growth measures in the MCHN component). Overall in MCHN a substantial amount of data and information is already collected in the health system that could be useful if collated and analyzed. WFP monitoring and reporting at the health facility level is currently running in parallel to the MoH system, resulting in an increased workload. Although WFP have supplied motorcycles and payments to district officers they are facing issues with timeliness and quality of monitoring data.

142. WFP headquarters has recently introduced a new strategic results framework (SRF) (including logical framework and output and outcome indicators) that is based on the new Strategic Plan. Country office staff had very limited ability to choose indicators and most (except for Component 3) are new either at country or corporate level. Two CO staff were due to be trained in the new SRF indicators after the evaluation mission was completed. The M&E unit may not have the capability to report against the indicators, however, and further training is likely to be required as implementation progresses. The unit is expected to gather baseline data before the end of August 2014 and set targets at the same time. Where targets have been set already, they are either the previous ones or they are corporate targets which may not be appropriate to the local context. It is not clear to CO staff how variations from corporate targets can be incorporated locally although SRF business rule No. 10 states that targets can differ from the SRF target, depending on the context. The process may make corporate reporting at a global level easier and more unified but it would seem more appropriate to have introduced this new system at the time of the new CP, which would be better adapted to Lao conditions.

143. WFP recognises that the current global reporting system of annual standard project reports (SPRs) has weaknesses and has launched an initiative to make improvements. The SPRs give much numerical information about funding, commodities and beneficiaries but contain very little analysis about the programme and discussion about future adaptation. The SPR was designed as a standard document to meet the needs of all donors but it does not do so: for instance, donors indicated they would like a clear description of progress to date together with analysis and discussion about the way forward. WFP might seek ideas from major donors on how to improve the usefulness of this document.

144. The programme has not managed to meet its targets for direct support costs (DSC). While external factors including funding and distribution issues have been difficult (see external factors below) the DSC rate has averaged 200 percent of the CP projections over the first two years of the CP. The costs are shown for 2012 and 2013 in Table 15 below. Although the costs were 246 percent of the plan in 2012 they dropped to 165 percent in 2013. The WFP CO anticipates that they will drop further (to 113 percent of the planned amounts) in 2014.

Table 15: Direct Support Costs for actual vs. planned distributions

Item	US\$ total	Commodities distributed (mt)	DSC Cost / mt (US\$)	DSC cost as % of plan
CP plan	12,691,508	41,827	303	
2012 actual expenditure	2,447,838	3,281	746	246
2013 actual expenditure	2,547,465	5,086	501	165
Cumulative (2012-2013)	4,995,303	8,367	597	197

Source: WFP CO finance department

145. The local transport, storage and handling (LTSH) costs have also been higher than predicted at the design stage due to factors related to limited road transport capacity (see paragraph 146) and due to the number of small and remote deliveries. Some of these factors should have been predicted at the planning stage. The CO is continually looking to improve the efficiency of distribution by bulking deliveries and reducing the need to transport commodities in the rainy season, and such changes are having a positive effect on delivery costs.

146. The timing of applications and the approval process for new LIN projects has not worked well in 2013/4. Although cooperation was reported to be very good between the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) in Oudomxay and WFP, there needs to be a closer liaison to ensure that the process is completed in time for work to be carried out when workers are available and not during the rainy season. It was reported that 16 applications for new projects were lodged with WFP in January 2014 but MPI is still (May) waiting for CO decisions on approval. If this is due to financial constraints then WFP needs to keep in better communication with provincial offices to avoid misunderstandings and frustration.

External factors

147. The major external factor affecting the programme has been funding. This was irregular at the start and reached a critical point in 2013 when there was not enough to pay the staff. In-kind contributions and attributed funding reduce the flexibility of WFP to apply resources as needed and this has led to LIN being seriously underfunded, and both EPR and MCHN being underfunded in 2012. While the CO cannot expect to receive multi-

year funding commitments from donors for a multi-year CP, this would certainly make planning and implementation of the programme easier and more efficient.

148. There are several inherent difficulties in working in Lao PDR including the considerable challenges of travel in the rainy season, the lack of road transport capacity (there are no companies with more than five lorries) and low population densities (making delivery to large numbers of beneficiaries very expensive). Infrastructure (principally the road system) is also weak as well as the availability of skilled, English-speaking staff. Despite these difficulties, the organisation and delivery of commodities and the procedures and training that go with them have been assessed as highly efficient and well appreciated by beneficiaries and partners.

149. Central government and its institutions are generally supportive of the WFP actions but the system does place some constraints on operations. Planning can take a long time (for example, the delayed emergency responses in Luang Prabang), and official permission is required to visit and operate in all provinces. While this is normally forthcoming it can take time. The reassignment of disaster management planning from MoLSW to MoNRE took almost one year to complete and the WFP EPR capacity building work was delayed because of this. The change of policy in MoES towards locally produced lunches has delayed the handover of the SM activity in Phongsaly, and is necessitating a phased change in the SM programme.

150. There is sometimes a disconnect between central government ministries and the corresponding provincial and district offices, with issues of authority and finance occasionally presenting challenges. Local government departments are generally weak in personnel and resources such as transport, which limits their ability to provide strong partnership for WFP activities. An example of this can be seen in the MCHN component where the poor quality of service at many of the local health facilities discourages participation of PLWs and limits nutritional messaging and outreach. It is also seen in a lack of capacity to complete the agreed programme monitoring. The reliance on voluntary Village Health Workers sometimes leads to issues with motivation and attendance.

151. Delays in the finalisation of a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between WFP and the government ministries caused some problems. In particular the MoU with the MoH impacted on delivery times for the importation of food. This delay has also had a knock-on effect at the provincial levels regarding budgeting, staff allocation and coordination.

152. Lack of capacity for food processing in Lao PDR and a sufficient potential internal market for fortified products has prevented the identification of a suitable FFM component.

153. The coordination between United Nations organisations is not always clear to government and NGO stakeholders. Many United Nations agencies are active and there is either overlap or perceived overlap between the activities of WFP, IFAD, UNICEF, WHO, UNODC, UNDP and UNFPA. There needs to be a clearer and more transparent demarcation of the roles and responsibilities of each organisation. Sub-optimal liaison between UNICEF and WFP led to the inclusion of MCHN activities by both organisations in two provinces, so WFP had to cut their programme to avoid duplication. A United Nations Joint Programme combines the efforts of several agencies in Luang Namtha and other provinces, this approach needs to be replicated elsewhere.

Summary: Factors affecting the results

Staffing has proved a major issue in the last year. A staffing and structural review led to the loss of several posts and affected staff morale. Several additional staff decided to leave WFP at the same time and have proved difficult to replace. The planned move of some provincial offices to district level may prove difficult to implement as suitably trained staff with sufficient local connections and willing to work at district level may be difficult to find.

The monitoring system varies from very thorough (for activities such as beneficiary numbers and commodity distributions) to patchy (for baseline surveys and outcome indicators). Overall there is insufficient emphasis on impact (WFP has reduced its emphasis on impact monitoring at global level) so it is difficult for WFP to be sure of the long-term results being achieved. The recent revision of the log frame and indicators in line with the new SRF and new Strategic Plan has been planned by HQ to allow easier global reporting, but not made sufficient allowance for the local context and would have been better introduced at the design stage of the next programme.

The SPR is recognized by WFP as needing revision as it is not a useful document for donors and carries little analysis or forward thinking. The purpose and format of this document needs to be reviewed at central level.

The programme has faced serious funding shortages causing major delays in the start up of EPR and MCHN. The LIN component has not been well supported and has only reached five percent of its target beneficiary number. The reduced activity has caused a significant increase in DSC and LTSH costs which should have been considered in the initial budgeting. Operations in Lao PDR are faced with communication difficulties with a strong rainy season and a poor road system. Low population densities add to delivery costs as does the shortage of commercial transport companies.

Although supportive of WFP activities the government places constraints on operations with delays in planning and weak implementing partners at local level. Changes in government policy (for instance, school meals and responsibility for DRM/DRR) and delays in finalising an MoU with the MoH has forced WFP to amend and postpone planned activities.

Inter-agency United Nations coordination and liaison is not sufficiently strong – this leads to confusion amongst government and other stakeholders regarding the roles of the various agencies.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1. Overall Assessment

154. The programme is the first WFP Country Programme in Lao PDR and integrates several different development interventions. In terms of **relevance**, the CP addresses the major long-term problems of stunting, anaemia and undernutrition. These issues are well aligned with relevant government policies and work towards the WFP country vision. The programme is well aligned with the UNDAF Outcome, with WFP's Strategic Objectives and contributes to the MDGs. Target provinces were appropriately selected, avoided overlaps with other programmes and maintained continuity of WFP activities where possible.

155. The MCHN component addresses stunting directly through the provision of highly nutritious food supplements. The SM component aims to increase school enrolment in remote areas through the provision of morning snacks but while highly relevant, government policy has shifted and WFP is now committed to transition to a lunch-based programme. The link between the SM programme and a reduction in stunting is rather tenuous and long-term.

156. The LIN component targets resilience and food security through livelihood development and the creation of community assets. P4P aims to increase the use of domestic food in WFP interventions in line with government policy and increase production of high quality rice. FFM would be relevant but is not cost-effective, and no appropriate opportunity has been identified so far.

157. The overall **efficiency** of the programme is good although areas for further work are highlighted in the results and recommendations. For each of the components pre-distribution training and the logistics of the distributions themselves were both commended by beneficiaries and partners. In all components, targeting was reported as equitable although in one of the emergency operations distributions caused difficulties for village leaders, as not all villagers were included. This highlights the need for corporate rules to have sufficient flexibility to take local cultural factors into account.

158. High LTSH costs in the first two years of the programme were partly due to the shortage of funding and high transportation costs. The latter should have been foreseen. The lack of strong funding support should have resulted in a more rapid and robust fundraising campaign or a more rapid adjustment in fixed costs within the country. WFP appeals should have a realistic expectation of achieving close to full funding, which would permit more accurate planning and budgeting and lead to more appropriate levels of DSC. With the current system of funding the CO is almost wholly dependent its own fundraising, and the situation is made more difficult as all support is now dependent on a single appeal process for the CP.

159. The cost of P4P rice has been very high in relation to other rice on the market and it is unlikely that its production costs can be reduced substantially. While the programme is stimulating production it is not an efficient use of WFP funds.

160. Regarding **effectiveness**, the funding shortfall has curtailed the achievements of the programme. While considerable progress has been made with SM and MCHN, the LIN and EPR components have been delayed and have not met their expected targets so far. The EPR capacity building component with MoNRE is unlikely to be completed within the CP timeframe and plans need to be made to continue this work in future. WFP has responded to three emergencies and supplied food to 72,000 beneficiaries. Affected communities appreciate the assistance but some remain vulnerable to further crises. LIN activities would be highly appropriate to help achieve greater resilience to future shocks.

161. MCHN could only be implemented in three provinces (of five planned), but after a slow start, scale-up has been rapid and revised distribution targets are being met. The programme is weakened by low attendance at health facilities, particularly in remote areas and among some ethnic groups. Outreach needs to be improved to bring services to the neediest.

162. The SM component has achieved impressive results in coverage and has improved the enrolment in provinces where this has been weak in the past but the programme does not appear to keep children at school and survival rates have increased little and gender equality has not been achieved for survival as more girls than boys drop out of school.

Snacks reduce short-term hunger but do not keep children at school all day and are unlikely to have any effect on stunting. The THR programme helps keep children at school but fails to promote girls' education.

163. Due to a lack of funding the LIN programme has only reached five percent of the planned beneficiaries, with only 16 FFA and no CFA schemes carried out. Projects were chosen and highly valued by the community but some assets do not benefit the landless and those who have lost their land in village removal schemes. The P4P programme has fostered linkages between farmer organizations and millers and made some progress in the production of higher quality rice. Under the FFM component, attempts to identify opportunities for local fortification found no commodity to be practical or economic.

164. The **impact** of the programme as a whole is difficult to assess as the main objective of decreasing stunting will take many years to become apparent, especially through the SM and LIN components where stunting is a secondary effect of the interventions. The impact of the emergency responses was high but short-term while the DRR capacity building and LIN activities are likely to result in longer-term impact on the government's ability to respond to crises and local resilience. MCHN appears to have positive effects on growth, health and development but nutrition education was not having any noticeable effect. Although VHV, health staff and communities understood correct rations and dosages, none understood stunting. Messaging and practical action around IYCF is lacking.

165. The SM programme has achieved a significant increase in enrolment in WFP assisted schools and is probably helping to reduce the disparity in NER between provinces. Enrolment in first grade of primary school is high in WFP assisted schools but there have been only minor reductions in dropouts by grade 5. More general measures will be needed to maximise the benefit of increased enrolment, both by MoES and WFP.

166. **Sustainability** has been considered in the design of each of the components and it is clear that the ultimate goal of the programme is to improve the health, nutrition education and livelihood of the target populations and to improve the capacity of the government to take over responsibility for each component. Full handover is likely to take many years but WFP needs to continue its efforts to achieve this at the same time as implementing a range of programmes to meet shorter-term needs. Emergency responses need to be followed up with DRR-focused activities to improve livelihoods and improve diets through the LIN programme. DRR capacity building programmes are likely to require long-term support to achieve sustainability.

167. The positive effects of the MCHN programme on children's development should be sustainable for the individuals but improved nutrition education is needed to improve sustainability at the community level. Transition of the School Meals programme to a lunch-based programme will ease handover and improve sustainability. For the P4P activities, sustainability is doubtful due to the high cost of production and lack of accessible markets. Effective capacity building measures in each of components should be sustainable but this depends on staff turnover rates and government policy changes and reorganisations.

168. Under all programmes **gender issues** have been well considered in the planning process. Gender disaggregated data is compiled in all reports and relevant indicators have been developed. WFP should focus more on girls' education, the mismatch between the stated outcome with regard to gender and the actual programme design needs to be resolved. MCHN activities are, by definition, focused on women thus following WFP's policy to target food distributions to women. While WFP promotes gender parity, it has

not yet succeeded in changing practice as few women are sufficiently educated and empowered to become decision makers. This highlights the long-term nature of the gender issue and the need to continue to find ways to overcome such obstacles.

169. The SM programme has fostered gender equity in enrolment but the dropout rate for girls is high in remote rural areas, particularly in the south and among certain ethnic groups. The proportion of secondary age girls receiving THR rations is considerably lower than boys, reflecting a wider issue of girls' transition to secondary school.

3.2. Recommendations

170. These recommendations are based on the findings of the mission team. They were discussed with WFP staff during the mission and also discussed with the CO at the debriefing sessions. They cover institutional and programmatic issues to be addressed during the current CP and in the preparation of the next CP. Responsibilities are indicated and they are shown in priority order per section.

Recommendation 1: The WFP CO needs to continue to invest time and energy in improving the monitoring, evaluation and reporting functions it undertakes to ensure that programme data is collected and used and impact and outcomes can be assessed to inform future programming. In particular, the M&E Unit (in conjunction with the relevant programme units and senior management) should:

- Establish more feasible and locally appropriate indicators and clear baseline data and targets. Currently the targets and indicators are confused and difficult to interpret and monitor, especially with the introduction of the new SRF. Explore options for joint monitoring systems in the health system with the MoH's HMIS to avoid duplication of workload, and introduce upgraded approaches accordingly.
- Conduct a simplified two-arm cohort study aiming to harmonise WFP's MCHN interventions with the MoH's MCH package to improve impact data on stunting reduction, and to determine the impact of LNS on stunting in a challenging high prevalence province. [Further details of the possible methodology to be followed will be offered directly to WFP Lao.]
- While acknowledging it is a global level recommendation, the current SPR formats need to be revised to make them more reader-friendly and useful documents. At present the annual SPR gives a lot of numerical information about funding, commodities and beneficiaries but contains very little analysis of the programme, lacks a clear description of progress to date or analysis and discussion about the way forward. It would also benefit from including detail about how the programme will respond to the changing needs. The SPR was designed to meet the needs of all donors but it does not do so. The CO could include additional discussion and analysis to cover these gaps while waiting for a new format to be devised centrally.

Recommendation 2: The CO needs to continue to its actions to close the gap between funding availability and programme needs and also to increase the flexibility of funding between components. It is recognised that this is a constant struggle for WFP at national and global level but funding constraints are perhaps the most important factor affecting the successful implementation of the current CP.

- The CO senior management should step up efforts to ensure firm commitments from donors before launching programmes or their components. Earlier launching of the appeal relative to the programme start date may enable the management to make more timely responses to under- or over-funding.

- The CO and HQ must also work with donors towards more flexibility of available funding for programmes to smooth out short-term crises, and multi-year cash contributions should be sought wherever possible. Advocacy with donors regarding the most appropriate support they can offer is important, and in-kind commodity donations should only be accepted where they meet the needs of programme.
- At a corporate level WFP might consider planning programmes that are more closely linked to the expected level of funding. Although there are many uncertainties at the planning stage an expected funding range of 80-120 percent might be appropriate.

Recommendation 3: A key role in each of the components of the programme is capacity building to enable the government to take over responsibility for the programmes at central and local levels. WFP's large scale programming in health and nutrition is not matched by its capacity. Thus, in order to address issues with programme quality the CO needs to reassess the current resources and commitments and invest in additional technical staff capacity as required and in accordance with available resources.

- The CO lacks the capacity to deliver some of its core roles in capacity building and policy development and it needs to develop greater competence in this field. The CO needs to ensure they have the necessary level of technical skills and competencies available within its country team, and/or available to call upon from outside, to guide and amend the current programme activities for best effect.
- The design and implementation of capacity building programmes is a specialized function and the CO should recruit or contract specialist staff to oversee this across all programmes.
- Implement fully the new EPR capacity-building programme and implement emergency actions as necessary. Work with government agencies to reduce the time taken, following crises, to assess the need for external assistance and implement response activities.
- Capacity building should continue to include embedding WFP staff in government ministries and vice versa in order to increase awareness and develop skills of government staff.
- Assess the need for retraining and re-equip cooks and storekeepers with needed skills. While training is repeated in areas where the SM programme is ongoing in some areas it was frequently reported that the equipment was worn out.

Recommendation 4: The number of United Nations organisations operating in Lao PDR is high. The CO needs to work with other agencies to achieve greater transparency regarding the role of each organisation and greater coordination of activities, including more joint programmes such as that already being undertaken. It is recognised that this is the role of the United Nations' Resident Coordinator (RC), but WFP could nevertheless take the lead under the RC.

- WFP should use its competitive advantage in the field of nutrition to work with government to develop an effective forum for the development of a common approach among development partners and government regarding health care and nutrition specific actions.
- Using the SM programme, and in closer collaboration with external partners, WFP should develop innovative programmes and carry out pilot studies to enhance the role of schools as part of the community and to promote linkages between schools

and communities and at the same time increase survival rates for girls in schools. These might include: the creation and maintenance of school gardens (see Recommendation 6); use of schools as a community resource for community training on health, nutrition and cooking education and demonstrations; support for sports in school (engagement in sports has been proven to increase retention, particularly of girls); and the introduction of best practice sharing schemes between schools and districts.

Recommendation 5: Two components of the current CP are not sustainable under the current market conditions, despite investment and support being committed to find appropriate outcomes:

- The P4P programme is not active at the moment and appears unsustainable due to high costs and a lack of markets. Unless these factors can be changed the programme should be closed.
- The FFM component is not active at present because of the lack of an appropriate medium for modification. Efforts in this area should be redirected to provide the government with policy advice and capacity building input on food safety if the relevant resources and technical skills can be found to do so. Otherwise, the component should be dropped.

Recommendation 6: Within the five sub-components of the CP, the following points should be considered for implementation by the relevant programme units during the continuation of the existing CP:

- The objectives of the school meals programme need to be clarified in conjunction with the Ministry of Education. If the main objective is nutrition then a greater input of food is required to make a difference to children's diets. Future programmes must be aligned better to government policy on the provision of lunches made from local produce. This will result in a cessation of external food provision by WFP in the medium to long term.
- Under the MCHN component, continue the use of Nutributter while ensuring that simpler and clearer protocols are available to health staff.
- Develop more effective coordination with MoH and other partners to improve the quality of ante- and post-natal care and delivery services, and support the deployment of newly trained VHVs for remote and marginalised areas. It is recognised that these actions are primarily the responsibility of the MoH but the improvements are vital to ensure successful outcomes.
- In conjunction with government agencies and other stakeholders, explore options to expand outreach and support to mother-to-mother and other peer support groups at village level with the aim of creating high impact, community-based actions to change practice and increase dietary diversity. Pilot actions to encourage these linkages could be set up during the current CP with a view to scaling up during future programmes.
- In conjunction with other development partners, to improve IYCF and maternal dietary practice by identifying best practices among the various approaches that are currently being implemented and by working with partners to produce simple, effective IYCF tools for use with mother support groups and for the mass media.

- In the school meals component, follow up the commitment already made by developing a strategy and implementation plan with the relevant ministry for the transition from a CSB snack intervention to a home grown school feeding programme.
- In collaboration with MoES, UNICEF and the World Bank, WFP should test the provision of the CSB snack or locally-produced fortified biscuits in pre-schools.
- WFP should promote the development of school gardens (particularly in secondary schools with boarders) – with partners (MoE/DAFO/IFAD) - as a FFA activity. This activity could be started at some pilot schools under the present CP and scaled up under the next CP. This activity would provide local food for the school meals and also underpin nutrition education.
- In the LIN programme FFA activities should be expanded if and when funding allows. Assets created must provide value to the whole community and not just landowners.

Recommendation 7: The evaluation team was also asked to supply guidance regarding future programming. The following recommendations should be considered during the design process for the next CP:

- Stunting should remain the major focus for WFP programming in Lao PDR. MCHN provides for short-term needs while for longer-term impact, SM (including nutrition education) and LIN activities should be included.
 - EPR should be included in future programming both as short term crisis relief and capacity building for improved government capacity to plan, deliver and manage emergency preparedness and response. The current programme to support MoNRE and other ministries and provincial and district authorities is funded for two years but the process will take much longer, and this should be reflected in future programming. The ultimate goal of this activity should be to enable the government to take full responsibility for EPR actions in Lao PDR.
 - Review the LIN programme in the light of funding commitments – if funding is likely to be severely restricted as at present then cost efficiency needs to be critically examined. Given sufficient funding, FFA/CFA activities should be aligned with MCHN and SM as now, but also as follow-up operations to increase resilience after EPR distributions.
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Annex 1: List of Acronyms

ANC	Ante-natal care
BR	Budget Revision
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CFA	Cash For Assets
CFT	Conditional Food Transfer
CHW	Community Health Worker
CMAM	Community Management of Acute Malnutrition
CO	Country Office (WFP)
CP	Country Programme
CSB+	Corn Soy Blend (Fortified Blended Cereal)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEO	District Education Officer
DIC	Department of Industry and Commerce
EB	Executive Board (WFP)
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EM	Evaluation Manager
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
ER	Evaluation Report
ESDF	Education Sector Development Framework
ET	Evaluation Team
FFA	Food for Assets
GAVI/HSS	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization/Health Systems Strengthening
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HC	Health Centre
HMIS	Health Management Information System
HQ	Headquarters (WFP)
IDA	Iron Deficiency Anaemia
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IP	Inception Package
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
LAAN	Linking Agriculture, Natural Resource Management and Nutrition
LBW	Low Birth Weight
LDC	Least Developed Country
LFNC	Lao Front for National Construction
LIN	Livelihood Initiatives for Nutrition
LNS	Lipid Nutrient Supplement (<i>of which Nutributter is one brand</i>)
LSIS	Lao Social Indicator Survey
LTA	Long-Term Agreement
LWU	Lao Women's Union
LYU	Lao Youth Union
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCHN	Mother and Child Health and Nutrition

MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MNCH	Maternal Neonatal and Child Health
MNP	Micronutrient powder (<i>sprinkles</i>)
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOH	Ministry of Health
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
mt	metric tonne
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Circumference
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLIS	Nutrition Landscape Information System (WHO, 2010)
NNC	National Nutrition Committee
NNP	National Nutrition Policy
NNS	National Nutrition Strategy
NPAN	Plan of Action on Nutrition
OEV	Office of Evaluation (WFP)
OpEv	Operation Evaluation
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PLSW	Provincial Department of Labour and Social Welfare
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
PNC/V	Post Natal Care/Visit
RB	Regional Bureau (WFP)
RUSF	Ready to Use Supplementary Food (<i>of which Plumpy'Doz is one brand</i>)
SBA	Skilled Birth Attendant
SPR	Standard Project Report
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
THR	Take Home Ration
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNJP	United Nations Joint Programme (UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA, WHO)
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
VHV	Village Health Volunteer
VHW	Village Health Worker
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Annex 2: Terms of Reference



EVALUATION QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Office Of Evaluation
Measuring Results, Sharing Lessons

[FINAL, FEBRUARY 25TH 2014]

TERMS OF REFERENCE MID-TERM OPERATION EVALUATION LAOS – COUNTRY PROGRAMME – 200242 – (2012-2015) TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1. Introduction

1. These Terms of Reference (TOR) are for the evaluation of Country Programme (CP) 200242 2012-2015 in Laos. This evaluation is commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) and will take place from March to July 2014. In line with WFP's outsourced approach for operations evaluations (OpEvs), the evaluation will be managed and conducted by an external evaluation company amongst those having a long-term agreement with WFP for operations evaluations.
2. These TOR were prepared by the OEV focal point based on an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders and following a standard template. The purpose of the TOR is twofold: 1) to provide key information to the company selected for the evaluation and to guide the company's Evaluation Manager and Team throughout the evaluation process; and 2) to provide key information to stakeholders about the proposed evaluation.
3. The TOR will be finalised based on comments received on the draft version and on the agreement reached with the selected company. The evaluation shall be conducted in conformity with the TOR.

2. Reasons for the Evaluation

2.1. Rationale

4. In the context of renewed corporate emphasis on providing evidence and accountability for results, WFP has committed to increase evaluation coverage of operations and mandated OEV to commission 12 Operations Evaluations (OpEvs) in 2013; 24 in 2014 and up to 30 in 2015.
5. Operations to be evaluated are selected based on utility and risk criteria.⁵² From a shortlist of operations meeting these criteria prepared by OEV, the Regional Bureau (RB) has selected, in consultation with the Country Office (CO) CP200242 for an independent evaluation. In particular, the evaluation has been timed to ensure that findings can feed into future decisions related to programme implementation during the remaining duration of the CP, as well as on future programme design.

2.2. Objectives

6. This evaluation serves the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning:
 - **Accountability** – The evaluation will assess and report on the performance and results of the operation. A management response to the evaluation recommendations will be prepared.
 - **Learning** – The evaluation will determine the reasons why certain results occurred or not to draw lessons, derive good practices and pointers for learning. It will provide evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making. Findings will be actively disseminated and lessons will be incorporated into relevant lesson sharing systems.

2.3. Stakeholders and Users

7. **Stakeholders.** A number of stakeholders both inside and outside of WFP have interests in the results of the evaluation and many of these will be asked to play a role in the evaluation process. Table one below provides a preliminary stakeholders' analysis, which will be deepened by the evaluation team in the inception package.

Table 1: Preliminary stakeholders' analysis

Stakeholders	Interest in the evaluation
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⁵² The utility criteria looked both at the timeliness of the evaluation given the operation's cycle and the coverage of recent/planned evaluations. The risk criteria was based on a classification and risk ranking of WFP COs taking into consideration a wide range of risk factors, including operational and external factors as well as COs' internal control self-assessments.

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	
Country Office (CO)	Responsible for the country level planning and operations implementation, the CO is the primary stakeholder of this evaluation. It has a direct stake in the evaluation and an interest in learning from experience to inform decision-making. It is also called upon to account internally as well as to its beneficiaries, partners for the performance and results of its operation.
Regional Bureau (RB) [Bangkok]	Responsible for both oversight of COs and technical guidance and support, the RB management has an interest in an independent account of the operational performance as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to apply this learning to other country offices.
Office of Evaluation (OEV)	OEV is responsible for commissioning OpEvs over 2013-2015. As these evaluations follow a new outsourced approach, OEV has a stake in ensuring that this approach is effective in delivering quality, useful and credible evaluations.
WFP Executive Board (EB)	The WFP governing body has an interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP operations. This evaluation will not be presented to the EB but its findings will feed into an annual synthesis of all OpEvs, which will be presented to the EB at its November session.
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	
Beneficiaries	As the ultimate recipients of food assistance, beneficiaries have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective. As such, the level of participation in the evaluation of women, men, boys and girls from different groups will be determined and their respective perspectives will be sought.
Government	The Government has a direct interest in knowing whether WFP activities in the country are aligned with its priorities, harmonised with the action of other partners and meet the expected results. Issues related to capacity development, handover and sustainability will be of particular interest. WFP Laos is collaborating with the Ministry of Health (MoH); Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES); Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MoAF); Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE); Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW); Lao Women's Union (LWU); Lao Youth Union (LYU); Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC) in this Country Programme.
UN Country team	The UNCT's harmonized action should contribute to the realisation of the government developmental objectives. It has therefore an interest in ensuring that WFP operation is effective in contributing to the UN concerted efforts. Various agencies are also direct partners of WFP at policy and activity level.
NGOs	NGOs are WFP's partners for the implementation of some activities while at the same time having their own interventions. The results of the evaluation might affect future implementation modalities, strategic orientations and partnerships. WFP Laos mainly works with international NGOs as the number of national NGOs is limited. It is to note that international NGOs work under very strict conditions in Lao PDR, i.e. MOUs defining the geographic and thematic focus for their operations, within limited duration (1-2 years, based on actually confirmed funds). Guidelines for NGOs' operations in Lao PDR exist and are currently under review by the Government. The consultation workshop with the NGO community has not taken place but written comments from the NGOs were sent to the Government.
Donors	WFP operations are voluntarily funded by a number of donors. They have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if WFP's work has been effective and contributed to their own strategies and programmes.

8. **Users.** The primary users of this evaluation will be:

- The CO and its partners in decision-making related notably to programme implementation of the remaining CP duration and the design of a new programme (to start in January 2016)
- Given RB's core functions of strategic guidance, programme support and oversight, the RB is also expected to use the evaluation findings as well as the office responsible for support to RBs under the Chief Operating Officer.
- OEV will use the evaluation findings to feed into an annual synthesis report of all OpEvs and will reflect upon the evaluation process to refine its OpEv approach, as required.

3. Subject of the Evaluation

9. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has set ambitious targets of transitioning into a middle-income country by 2020, while achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Although it has experienced strong economic growth over the past two decades, the country is not yet on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals' hunger target or to address more broadly undernutrition. Lao PDR continues to suffer from high levels of undernutrition. The national rate of stunting stands at 44 per cent, which is classified as 'critical' by WHO standards and represents the second highest prevalence in Southeast Asia. The national wasting rate stands at 6 per cent which is not alarmingly high, however due to the poverty level and lack of social safety nets, certain locations can become above the emergency level threshold of 15 per cent at specific times (i.e. periods of emergency or natural disasters).⁵³ The Government has recognized the importance of addressing undernutrition in order to achieve its development goals. National policies and frameworks offer the opportunity to take concerted action. WFP's country strategy (2011-2015) aims to support government efforts to reduce wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies.
10. CP 200242 focuses on fighting undernutrition in Laos by addressing wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies through five components, taking a life-cycle approach:
 1. **Emergency Preparedness and Response:** In the context of increased natural disasters, in part attributable to climate change, Lao PDR will likely continue to face humanitarian emergency situations that can result in high risks of food security and wasting, especially among women and children. WFP Lao PDR therefore has the prevention and reduction of wasting as its first priority. The EPR programme aims to build the capacities of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to enhance disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management (DRR-DRM). To support the government in this endeavour, WFP has adopted a two-tier approach: on the one hand, it provides institutional technical support, at central, provincial and district levels, that includes developing Standard Operating Procedures and Preparedness Plans, establishing provincial level Early Warning Systems, as well as training and creating a pool of national EPR instructors. Through its humanitarian response, WFP also supports the local authorities and communities to do rapid needs assessments and beneficiaries targeting, taking into account gender and age specificities. On the other hand, WFP has budgeted for food and nutritional assistance for up to 35'000 people, in order to rapidly support the government of Lao PDR in case of a humanitarian emergency⁵⁴.
 2. **Mother and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN):** Increased commitment to nutrition by the Government of Lao PDR, including approval of the National Nutrition Policy (NNP), the National Nutrition Strategy and the Plan of Action on Nutrition (NNS/NPAN), the establishment of the multi-sectoral National Nutrition Committee (NNC) and the country's involvement in the Scaling

⁵³ Lao Social Indicators Survey – 2011/2012.

⁵⁴ To a certain extent, and should funding be available forefront, this budgeting acts as an emergency response reserve; in case the humanitarian crisis is more severe, WFP would elaborate and implement an Emergency Operation (EMOP).

Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, have recently resulted in an enabling policy environment that opens up a window of opportunity for WFP to support the Ministry of Health (MOH) to achieve key results in nutrition by 2015 in the targeted provinces. The MCHN programme's objective is to prevent stunting in children under 2 years of age by focussing on the first 1000 days of life. Through the provision of a specialised nutrition products, WFP ensures that children get essential macro and micronutrients in the first 1000 days of their lives, when the impact is most significant. More specifically, Plumpy'Doz is given to women to improve their nutritional status and that of their infant while pregnant or lactating. Additionally, through the provision of a rice incentive at the health facility, WFP enables women to access ante natal and post natal services allowing them to progress through a healthy pregnancy and give birth to healthy children.

3. **School Meals:** WFP is providing support to the Government to implement its School Meal's Programme (SMP) throughout the country, by providing pre-primary (ages 3-5) and primary (ages 6-10) school children with mid-morning snacks (MMS), as well as by providing take-home rations for Informal boarders⁵⁵. Cooks prepare nutritious school meals prior to the start of each school day (CSB, oil, sugar) while the Village School Meal's Committee provides take home rations (rice) to informal boarder students. WFP also passes nutrition-related messages to improve students' knowledge and awareness of nutrition, health and hygiene practices. The overall aim of the WFP SM intervention in Lao PDR is three-fold: i) enhance enrolment and attendance in assisted schools; ii) reduce stunting among children ages 2 to 5 by meeting their immediate energy, vitamin and mineral requirements; and iii) create nutrition awareness among students, especially young girls, to enable students to access the knowledge and means to prevent stunting among their own children in the future (long-term impact). Simultaneously, WFP is working closely with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) to strengthen its institutional and human capacities with a view to hand over the program in the few years to come.
4. **Livelihood Initiatives for Nutrition (LIN):** WFP's LIN programme targets adults and focuses on food security and rural development, including strengthening the communities' resilience capacity to external shocks. WFP is intervening with Food-/Cash-for-Assets (F/CFA) activities in food deficit areas, and Purchase for Progress (P4P) in food surplus areas. Through **F/CFA activities**, WFP provides food or cash in exchange of villagers' participation in creation of community-based productive assets and infrastructures. On the short and medium term, such assets will enable villagers to produce more, diversify their household diet with new vegetable crops or animal-source protein, and gain consistent access to markets and health services. Consequently, the expected outcome is an increase of their income and livelihood, including enhancing their social safety nets. WFP works with governmental structures and/or NGOs that have the technical know-how for building such assets and are already present in the targeted districts. The decision on whether to use the food or cash modality depends on the availability and access of food, including market prices, and the nutritional status of the targeted population. Alongside the assets creation activities, WFP provides community members with nutrition awareness education, in order to improve their understanding on the importance of good nutrition. Through its **P4P initiative**, WFP works to enhance productivity of smallholder farming and their access to market. WFP works directly with the farmers and local millers and supports them to enhance their organisational and technical capacities. While the immediate objectives are to improve productivity and enable smallholder farmers to access larger competitive markets, the overall objective of P4P is to improve smallholder farmers' livelihood and nutrition.
5. **Food Fortification and Marketing:** In its efforts to address micronutrient deficiencies in Lao PDR, WFP works closely with the Government and the private sector to fortify locally produced foods that are marketed across the country and used in WFP interventions. WFP supports the development and production of a cost-effective, locally fortified nutritive supplementary food to replace imported products such as Plumpy'Doz. As a first step, WFP is supporting extensive

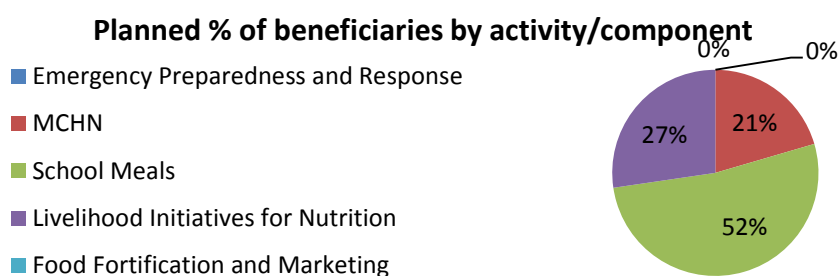
⁵⁵ Informal boarders are students who live in unofficial dormitories at schools far from home.

research on which local product could be used. Accordingly, WFP will liaise and work with the private sector to create the value chain for such a product.

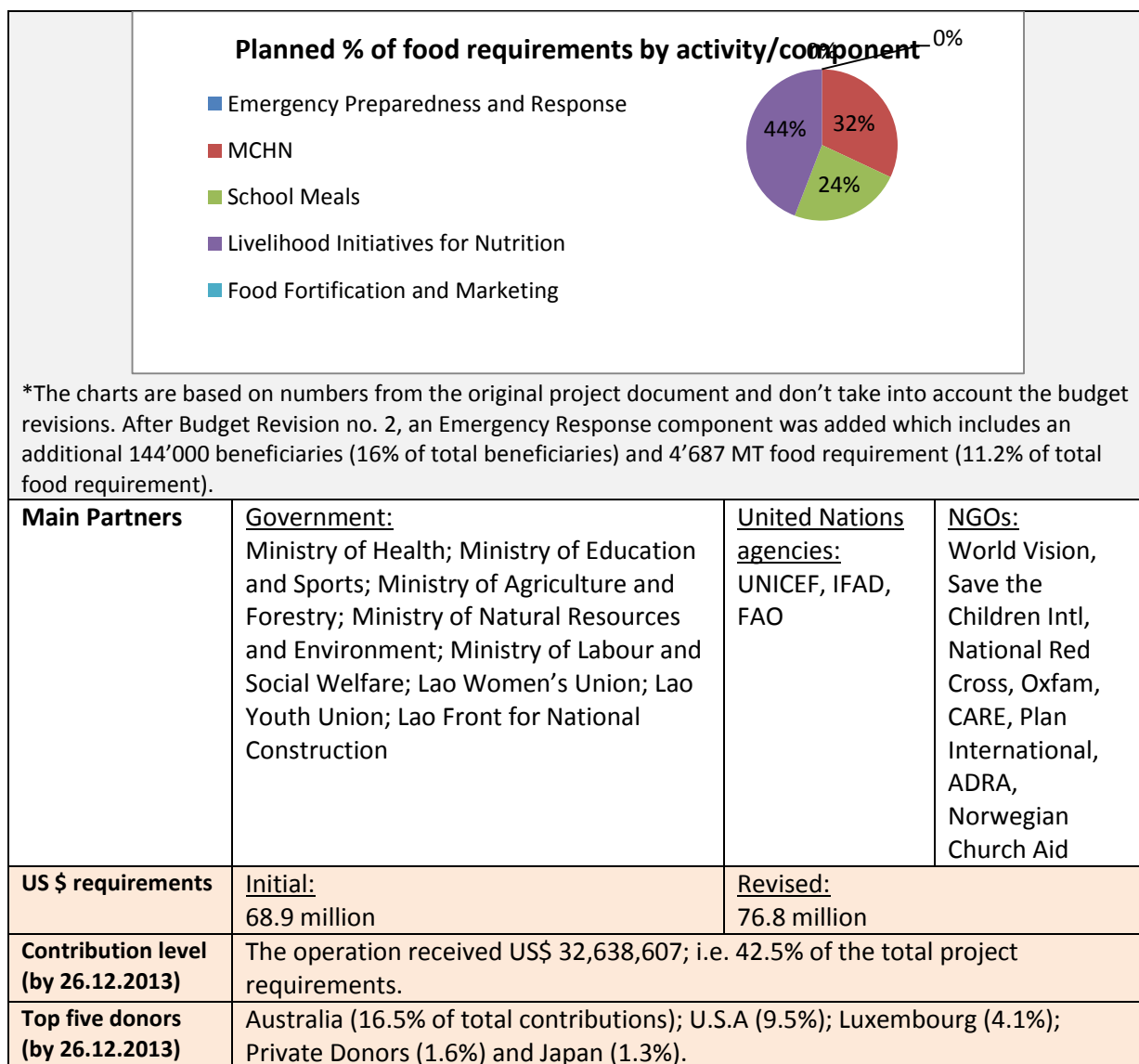
11. The country programme is in line with the Government's Seventh National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2012-2015), and supports the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. It responds to the recommendations of the 2009 country portfolio evaluation and contributes to WFP's Strategic Objective 2, 4 and 5.
12. The project document including the project logframe, related amendments (Budget revisions) and the latest resource situation are available by clicking [here](#).⁵⁶ The newly aligned logframe will be made available to the evaluation team (upon clearance which is currently ongoing). The key characteristics of the operation are outlined in table two below:

Table 2: Key characteristics of the operation

Approval	The operation was approved by the Executive Board in November 2011	
Duration	Initial: 4 year period (2012 – 2015)	Revised: N/A
Amendments	There have been four Budget Revisions to the initial project document to increase the LTSH rates, to change the DSC component, and to include emergency response modality.	
Planned beneficiaries	<u>Initial:</u> 751,000	<u>Revised:</u> 894,514
Planned food requirements	<u>Initial:</u> In-kind food: 37 140 mt of food commodities Cash and vouchers: 1.2 US\$ million	<u>Revised:</u> In-kind food: 41,827



⁵⁶ From WFP.org – Countries – Laos – Operations.



13. Table three below summarizes the operation's specific objectives and corresponding activities:

Table 3: Objectives and activities

	Corporate Strategic objectives	Operation specific objectives	Activities
The country programme is in line with the Government's Seventh National Socio-Economic Development Plan	Strategic Objective 2	Component 1: Early warning systems, contingency plans and food security monitoring systems are in place and enhanced with WFP capacity development support	- Capacity development of the Government in disaster preparedness and response
	Strategic Objective 4	Component 2 and 3: Improved nutritional status of target groups of women, girls and boys	- Provision of Plumpy'Doz for children 6-23 months at the village level
		Component 3: Increased access to education and human capital	- Provision of mid-morning snack for children aged 3-10

		development in targeted schools	at pre/primary schools with nutrition-related messages - Provision of take-home rations for informal border students (primary and secondary schools) - Home-grown school feeding programme - Purchase for Progress (P4P) activities - Product development
		Component 4: Adequate food consumption reached over assistance period for targeted households	
		Component 5: Increased production capacity for fortified foods, including complementary foods and special nutritional products	
	Strategic Objective 5	Component 3: Progress made toward nationally owned hunger solutions	- Develop a handover strategy of the school meals programme to the government - Develop market linkages
		Component 4: Increased marketing opportunities with cost-effective WFP local purchases	

4. Evaluation Approach

4.1. Scope

14. **Scope.** The evaluation will cover CP200242 including all activities and processes related to its formulation, implementation, resourcing, monitoring, evaluation and reporting relevant to answer the evaluation questions. The period covered by this evaluation is Mid-2011 – May 2014, which captures the time from the development of the operation until the start of the evaluation mission.
15. A budget revision in 2012 included a component on emergency response which should be included in the scope, though it was not a part of the original project document.
16. Throughout the evaluation and in making recommendations, the team should make forward considerations to inform project design of a future programme as well as modification of the ongoing CP implementation, giving due consideration to the particular context of Laos, including emerging issues such as the impact of economic development of neighbouring countries, and ongoing initiatives by the CO to refocus its programme in view of the current context. Hence, the CO would benefit from recommendations on how best to position itself as an enabler of long-term, nationally owned food security and nutrition solutions, in order to provide a more sustainable support to the Government and other stakeholders.

4.2. Evaluation Questions

17. The evaluation will address the following three questions:

Question 1: How appropriate is the operation? Areas for analysis will include the extent to which the objectives, targeting, and choice of activities and of transfer modalities:

- Are appropriate to the needs of the food insecure population including the distinct needs of women, men, boys and girls from different groups, as applicable.
- Are coherent with relevant stated national policies, including sector policies and strategies and seek complementarity with the interventions of relevant humanitarian and development partners.
- Are coherent with WFP strategies, policies and normative guidance.

Question 2: What are the results of the operation? While ensuring that differences in benefits between women, men, boys and girls from different groups are considered, the evaluation will analyse:

- the level of attainment of the planned outputs (including the number of beneficiaries served disaggregated by women, girls, men and boys);
- the extent to which the outputs led to the realisation of the operation objectives as well as to unintended effects highlighting, as applicable, differences for different groups, including women, girls, men and boys;
- how different activities of the operation dovetail and are synergetic with other WFP operations and with what other actors are doing to contribute to the overriding WFP objective in the country.
- The efficiency of the operation and the likelihood that the benefits will continue after the end of the operation;

Question 3: Why and how has the operation produced the observed results? The evaluation should generate insights into the main internal and external factors that caused the observed changes and affected how results were achieved. The inquiry is likely to focus, amongst others, on:

- Internally (factors within WFP's control): the processes, systems and tools in place to support the operation design, implementation, monitoring/evaluation and reporting; the governance structure and institutional arrangements (including issues related to staffing, capacity and technical backstopping from RB/HQ); the partnership and coordination arrangements; etc.
- Externally (factors outside WFP's control): the external operating environment; the funding climate; external incentives and pressures; etc.

4.3 Evaluability Assessment

18. Evaluability is the extent to which an activity or a programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. The below provides a preliminary evaluability assessment, which will be deepened by the evaluation team in the inception package. The team will notably critically assess data availability and take evaluability limitations into consideration in its choice of evaluation methods and in doing so, the team will also critically review the evaluability of the gender aspects of the operation, identify related challenges and mitigation measures.
19. In answering question one, the team will be able to rely on assessment reports, minutes from the project review committee, the project document and logframe, M&E data from the CO, as well as documents related to government and interventions from other actors. In addition, the team will review relevant WFP strategies, policies and normative guidance.
20. For question two the operation has been designed in line with the corporate results framework (SRF) and selected outputs, outcomes and targets are recorded in the logframe. Monitoring reports as well as annual standard project reports (SPRs) detail achievement of outputs and outcomes thus making them evaluable against the stated objectives.
21. However, answering question two is likely to pose some challenges owing in part to: i) the absence of baseline data for the activities, which will need to be reconstructed using findings from various assessment reports and ii) data gaps in relation to efficiency.
22. For question three, the team members will have access to some institutional planning documents and is likely to elicit further information from key informant interviews.

4.4. Methodology

23. The methodology will be designed by the evaluation team during the inception phase. It should:

- Employ relevant internationally agreed evaluation criteria including those of relevance, coherence (internal and external), coverage, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability (or connectedness for emergency operations);
- Use applicable standards (e.g. SPHERE standards);
- Demonstrate impartiality and lack of biases by relying on a cross-section of information sources (e.g. stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries, etc.) and using mixed methods (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, participatory) to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means. In particular, the sampling technique to select field visit sites will need to demonstrate impartiality and participatory methods will be emphasised with the main stakeholders, including the CO.
- Be geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions taking into account the evaluability challenges, the budget and timing constraints;
- Be based on an analysis of the logic model of the operation and on a thorough stakeholders analysis;
- Ensure through the use of mixed methods that women, girls, men and boys from different stakeholders groups participate and that their different voices are heard and used;
- Be synthesised in an evaluation matrix, which should be used as the key organizing tool for the evaluation.

4.5. Quality Assurance

24. OEV's Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) defines the quality standards expected from this evaluation and sets out processes with in-built steps for quality assurance, templates for evaluation products and checklists for the review thereof. It is based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (DAC and ALNAP) and aims to ensure that the evaluation process and products conform to best practice and meet OEV's quality standards. EQAS does not interfere with the views and independence of the evaluation team.
25. At the start of the evaluation, OEV will orient the evaluation manager on EQAS and share related documents, including an orientation guide. EQAS should be systematically applied to this evaluation and the evaluation manager will be responsible to ensure that the evaluation progresses in line with its process steps and to conduct a rigorous quality control of the evaluation products ahead of their submission to WFP.
26. The evaluation company is ultimately responsible for the quality of the evaluation products. If the expected standards are not met, the evaluation company will, at its own expense, make the necessary amendments to bring the evaluation products to the required quality level.
27. OEV will also subject the evaluation report to an external post-hoc quality assurance review to report independently on the quality, credibility and utility of the evaluation in line with evaluation norms and standards.

5. Phases and deliverables

28. Table four below highlights the main activities of the evaluation, which will unfold in five phases.

Table 4: Activities, deliverables and timeline by evaluation phase

Entity resp.	Activities	Key dates
	PHASE 1 – PREPARATION	January-March
OEV	Desk review, consultation and preparation of TOR	January -February
CO / RB	Stakeholders comments on TOR	Jan 31 st -Feb 7 th
OEV	❖ Final TOR	February 10 th
OEV	Evaluation company selection and contracting	Feb 10 th -March 7 th

	PHASE 2 – INCEPTION	March/April
OEV	Management hand-over to the EM (including briefing on EQAS, expectations and requirements for the evaluation).	March 17-21 st
EM	Evaluation team briefing on EQAS, expectations and requirements for the evaluation.	
ET	Desk review, initial consultation with the CO/RB, drafting of the Inception Package (including methodology and evaluation mission planning)	March 24 th -April 4 th
EM	Quality Assurance of the Inception Package	April 4 th
EM	❖ Final Inception Package	April 9 th
	PHASE 3 – EVALUATION MISSION	April/May
CO	Preparation of the evaluation mission (including setting up meetings, arranging field visits, etc)	
ET	Introductory briefing	April 21 st
ET	Interviews with key internal and external stakeholders, project site visits, etc	April 21 st -May 9 th
ET	Exit debriefing / workshop	May 9 th
ET	❖ Aide memoire	
	PHASE 4 – REPORTING	May/June/July
ET	Evaluation Report drafting	May 9 th -June 6 th
EM	Quality Assurance of draft Evaluation Report	June 6 th -20 th
EM	❖ Draft Evaluation Report	
CO/RB/OEV	Stakeholders comments on Evaluation Report	June 20 th - July 4 th
EM	❖ Final Evaluation Report + comments matrix	July 18th
	PHASE 5 – FOLLOW-UP	
RB	Coordination of the preparation of the Management Response	
	❖ Management Response	
OEV	Post-hoc Quality Assurance	
OEV	Publication of findings and integration of findings into OEV's lessons learning tools.	
OEV	Preparation of annual synthesis of operations evaluations.	

29. **Deliverables.** The evaluation company will be responsible for producing as per the timeline presented in table 4 above the following deliverables in line with the EQAS guidance and following the required templates:

- **Inception package (IP)** – This package focuses on methodological and planning aspects and will be considered the operational plan of the evaluation. It will present a preliminary analysis of the context and of the operation and present the evaluation methodology articulated around a deepened evaluability and stakeholders' analysis; an evaluation matrix; and the sampling technique and data collection tools. It will also present the division of tasks amongst team members as well as a detailed timeline for stakeholders' consultation.
- **Aide memoire** – This document (powerpoint presentation) will present the initial analysis from the data stemming from the desk review and evaluation mission and will support the exit-debriefing at the end of the evaluation phase.
- **Evaluation report (ER)** – The evaluation report will present the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. Findings should be evidence-based and relevant to the evaluation questions. Data will be disaggregated by sex and the evaluation findings and

conclusions will highlight differences in performance and results of the operation for different beneficiary groups as appropriate. There should be a logical flow from findings to conclusions and from conclusions to recommendations. Recommendations will be provided on what changes can be made to enhance the achievements of objectives. Recommendations will be limited in number, actionable and targeted to the relevant users. These will form the basis of the WFP management response to the evaluation.

- **Evaluation brief** – A two-page brief of the evaluation will summarise the evaluation report and serve to enhance dissemination of its main findings.

30. These deliverables will be drafted in English.

31. The evaluation TOR, report and management response will be public and posted on the WFP External Website (wfp.org/evaluation). The other evaluation products will be kept internal.

6. Organization of the Evaluation

6.1 Outsourced approach

32. Under the outsourced approach to OpEvs, the evaluation is commissioned by OEV but will be managed and conducted by an external evaluation company having a long-term agreement (LTA) with WFP for operations evaluation services.
33. The company will provide an evaluation manager (EM) and an independent evaluation team (ET) in line with the LTA. To ensure a rigorous review of evaluation deliverables, the evaluation manager should in no circumstances be part of the evaluation team.
34. The company, the evaluation manager and the evaluation team members will not have been involved in the design, implementation or M&E of the operation nor have other conflicts of interest or bias on the subject. They will act impartially and respect the code of conduct of the profession.
35. Given the evaluation learning objective, the evaluation manager and team will promote stakeholders' participation throughout the evaluation process. Yet, to safeguard the independence of the evaluation, WFP staff will not be part of the evaluation team or participate in meetings with external stakeholders if the evaluation team deems that their presence could bias the responses.

6.2 Evaluation Management

36. The evaluation will be managed by the company's Evaluation Manager for OpEvs (as per LTA). The EM will be responsible to manage within the given budget the evaluation process in line with EQAS and the expectations spelt out in these TOR and to deliver timely evaluation products meeting the OEV standards. In particular, the EM will:
- Mobilise and hire the evaluation team and provide administrative backstopping (contracts, visas, travel arrangements, consultants' payments, invoices to WFP, etc).
 - Act as the main interlocutor between WFP stakeholders and the ET throughout the evaluation and generally facilitate communication and promote stakeholders' participation throughout the evaluation process.
 - Support the evaluation team by orienting members on WFP, EQAS and the evaluation requirements; providing them with relevant documentation and generally advising on all aspects of the evaluation to ensure that the evaluation team is able to conduct its work.
 - Ensure that the evaluation proceeds in line with EQAS, the norms and standards and code of conduct of the profession and that quality standards and deadlines are met.

- Ensure that a rigorous and objective quality check of all evaluation products is conducted ahead of submission to WFP. This quality check will be documented and an assessment of the extent to which quality standards are met will be provided to WFP.
- Provide feedback on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.

6.3 Evaluation Conduct

37. The evaluation team will conduct the evaluation under the direction of the evaluation manager. The team will be hired by the company following agreement with OEV on its composition.
38. **Team composition.** The evaluation team is expected to include 2-3 members, including the team leader and evaluators. It should include women and men of mixed cultural backgrounds and nationals of Laos. Past WFP experience would be an asset.
39. The estimated number of days is expected to be in the range of 45-55 for the team leader; 25-40 for the evaluators.
40. **Team competencies.** The team will be multi-disciplinary and include members who together include an appropriate balance of expertise and practical knowledge in:
 - a. Capacity development / institutional strengthening
 - b. Nutrition (with focus on preventive malnutrition)
 - c. School Feeding (with focus on home grown school feeding)
 - d. Agriculture/food security
 - e. Gender expertise / good knowledge of gender issues
41. All team members should have strong analytical and communication skills; evaluation experience and familiarity with the country or region.
42. The team members need to be fluent in English, both orally and in writing.
43. **The Team leader** will have technical expertise in one of the technical areas listed above as well as expertise in designing methodology and data collection tools and demonstrated experience in leading similar evaluations. She/he will also have leadership and communication skills, including a track record of excellent English writing and presentation skills.
44. Her/his primary responsibilities will be: i) defining the evaluation approach and methodology; ii) guiding and managing the team during the evaluation process; iii) leading the evaluation mission and representing the evaluation team in meetings with stakeholders; iv) drafting and revising, as required, the inception package, aide memoire and evaluation report in line with EQAS; and v) provide feedback to OEV on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.
45. **The team members** will bring together a complementary combination of the technical expertise required and have a track record of written work on similar assignments.
46. Team members will: i) contribute to the design of the evaluation methodology in their area of expertise based on a document review; ii) conduct field work; iii) participate in team meetings and meetings with stakeholders; iv) contribute to the drafting and revision of the evaluation products in their technical area(s) and v) provide feedback on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.

7. Roles and Responsibilities of WFP Stakeholders

47. **The Country Office.** The CO management will be responsible to:

- Assign a focal point for the evaluation to liaise with the OEV focal point during the preparation phase and with the company evaluation manager thereafter. Ariane Waldvogel, Deputy Country Director will be the CO focal point for this evaluation.
 - Provide the evaluation manager and team with documentation and information necessary to the evaluation; facilitate the team's contacts with local stakeholders; set up meetings, field visits and the exit briefing; provide logistic support during the fieldwork; and arrange for interpretation, if required.
 - Participate in a number of discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and on the operation, its performance and results and in various teleconferences with the evaluation manager and team on the evaluation products.
 - Organise and participate in two separate debriefings, one internal and one with partners and external stakeholders.
 - Comment on the TORs and the evaluation report.
 - Prepare a management response to the evaluation.
 - Provide feedback to OEV on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.
48. **The Regional Bureau.** The RB management will be responsible to:
- Assign a focal point for the evaluation to liaise with the OEV focal point during the preparation phase and with the company evaluation manager thereafter, as required. Yukako Sato, Regional M&E Advisor, will be the RB focal point for this evaluation.
 - Participate in a number of discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and on the operation, its performance and results. In particular, the RB should participate in the evaluation team debriefing (possibly done in the form of a workshop) and in various teleconferences with the evaluation manager and team on the evaluation products.
 - Provide comments on the TORs and the evaluation report.
 - Coordinate the management response to the evaluation and track the implementation of the recommendations.
 - Provide feedback to OEV on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.
49. **Headquarters.** Some HQ divisions might, as relevant, be asked to discuss WFP strategies, policies or systems in their area of responsibility and to comment on the evaluation TOR and report. These include: Operations Department (OS), Policy, Programme and Innovation Division (OSZ), Emergency Preparedness (OME), Procurement Division (OSP), Logistics Division (OSL), Government Partnerships Division (PGG).
50. **The Office of Evaluation.** OEV is responsible for commissioning the evaluation and Anette Wilhelmsen, Evaluation Officer, is the OEV focal point. OEV's responsibilities include to:
- Set up the evaluation including drafting the TOR in consultation with concerned stakeholders; select and contract the external evaluation company; and facilitate the initial communications between the WFP stakeholders and the external evaluation company.
 - Enable the company to deliver a quality process and report by providing them with the EQAS documents including process guidance and quality checklists as well as orient the evaluation manager on WFP policies, strategies, processes and systems as they relate to the operation being evaluated.
 - Comment on, and approve, the evaluation report.
 - Submit the evaluation report to an external post-hoc quality assurance process to independently report on the quality, credibility and utility of the evaluation and provide feedback to the evaluation company accordingly.
 - Publish the final evaluation report on the WFP public website and incorporate findings into an annual synthesis report, which will be presented to WFP's Executive Board for consideration as well as in other lessons-learning platforms, as relevant.
 - Conduct an evaluation feedback e-survey to gather perceptions about the evaluation process and the quality of the report to be used to revise the approach, as required.

8. Communication and budget

8.1. Communication

51. Issues related to language of the evaluation are noted in sections 6.3 and 5, which also specifies which evaluation products will be made public and how and provides the schedule of debriefing with key stakeholders. Section 7 paragraph 50 describes how findings will be disseminated.
52. To enhance the learning from this evaluation, the evaluation manager and team will also emphasize transparent and open communication with WFP stakeholders. Regular teleconferences and one-on-one telephone conversations between the evaluation manager, team and country office focal point will assist in discussing any arising issues and ensuring a participatory process.

8.2. Budget

53. **Funding source:** The evaluation will be funded in line with the WFP special funding mechanism for Operations Evaluations (Executive Director memo dated October 2012). The cost to be borne by the CO, if applicable, will be established by the WFP Budget & Programming Division (RMB).
54. **Budget:** The budget will be prepared by the company (using the rates established in the LTA and the corresponding template) and approved by OEV. For the purpose of this evaluation the company will:
 - Use the management fee corresponding to a small operation.
 - Take into account the planned number of days per function noted in section 6.3.

Please send queries to Anette Wilhelmsen, Evaluation Officer, at anette.wilhelmsen@wfp.org, + 39 06 65 13 30 08.

Annex 3: Evaluation Field Schedule

Day	Date	Who	Activity	Focus	Persons	
In Vientiane						
Sunday	20/4		Consultants' arrival Team meeting			
Monday Tuesday	21/4 22/4	Meetings with WFP	Introductory briefing and logistics discussion with senior staff. Individual meetings with CD, DCD, Programme Officer, Unit heads, logistics, finance and administrative heads	Discussion of design and implementat'n of country programme.	WFP staff	
Weds Thursday Friday	23/4 24/4 25/4	Vientiane Stakeholders High priority meetings set up by CO prior to arrival of ET.	Structured interviews with Government, Partners and Donors	Information and opinion seeking	Senior staff of Ministry, partners and donor organizations	
Field Component						
Saturday	26/4	Oudomxay Sub-office, local partners and beneficiaries	Fly to Oudomxay, local briefing and field visits Discussions with local partners and beneficiaries and observation of programme outputs Provincial staff of WFP, local partners and beneficiaries	Field operations	Provincial staff of WFP, local partners and beneficiaries in Oudomxay provinces.	
Sunday	27/4	As above				
Monday	28/4	As above				
Tuesday	29/4	As above: with DC meeting beneficiaries, partners and local authorities in Luang Prabang	As above	Field operations	As above except DTC visit programme activities and partner institutions in Luang Prabang province	
Weds	30/4					
Thursday	1/5	Public Holiday	CT and TN to VTE DTC to Luang Prabang	\Field operations ad travel		
Friday	2/5	Travel to Pakse / Saravane / Sekong		Field operations	Provincial staff of WFP, local partners and beneficiaries in Saravane and Sekong provinces	
Saturday	3/5	Meetings with beneficiaries, partners and local authorities in Saravane and Sekong	Discussions with local partners and beneficiaries and observation of programme outputs Return to Vientiane			
Sunday	4/5					
Monday	5/5					

Day	Date	Organisation	Activity	Focus	Persons	
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In Vientiane						
Tuesday	6/5		Analysis of field data and preparation for debriefing and any further stakeholder and WFP meetings	Summarizing findings and preparing debriefing presentation including Aide Memoire		
Wednesday	7/5					
Wednesday (afternoon)	7/5	WFP staff	Debriefing with WFP staff (+ RB, OEV and EM via teleconference)	Presentation of findings to WFP staff and discussion.		
Thursday	8/5	WFP representatives and stakeholders (as per the list below)	Stakeholder workshop	Presentation of findings to stakeholders and discussion.	Invitations from WFP to principal external stakeholders who have contributed towards the evaluation	
Thursday/ Friday	9/5 and 10/5		Departure			

Annex 4: List of people met

Date	Person	Position	Organisation
21/04	Bradley Guerrant	Country Director	WFP
	Ariane Waldvogel	Deputy Country Director	WFP
	Senior Team Meeting		
	Ms Wimaly	Head of HR	WFP
	Phasouk Phommavong	Head of Admin and Finance Unit	WFP
	Mio Nozoe	Head of School Meals Unit	WFP
	Aachal Chand	Head of Nutrition Unit	WFP
22/04	Ms Sisomboum Ounavong	Director General DIC	MoPI
	Ghulam M.Sherani	Head of EPR Unit	WFP
	Mr Padeumphone	Director General	MLSW
	Emmanual	Head Logistics, Procurement & ICT Unit	WFP
	Andreas Schmidt and Baas Brimer	Heads of VAM and M&E	WFP
23/04	Stephania Dinia	Country Manager	IFAD
	Sengpaseuth Simmanyvong	Country Programme Officer	IFAD
	Scott Rawson	Programme Director	ADRA
	Dr Jun Gao	Health Systems Development Team Leader	WHO
	Louise Sampson	Health Advocacy/Research Manager	Save the Children
	Mona Girgis	Country Director	Plan Int'l.
24/04	Dr. Nao Boutta	Director General of MoH cabinet	MoH
	Dr. Kaisone Chounramany	Deputy Director General, Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion	
	Dr. Bounthom Phengdy	Director, Nutrition Centre	
	Mrs Phouvong Louangxaisana	Director General, Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion, MoH	MoNRE
	Mr. Syamphone Sengchandala	Divison of Coordination and Management	MoNRE
	Ms Yanxia Lee	Director General, Department of Inclusive Education, MoES	
	Dee Harlow	Development Assistance Coordinator	USAID
	Mathew H. Kustl	Political-Economic Officer	USAID
	Tracy L. Taylor	First Secretary. Chief, Political/economic section	USAID
	Viorica Berdaga	Chief, Health & Nutrition	UNICEF
	Julia Rees	Deputy Representative	
	Emmanuelle Abrioux	Chief, Education	
	Mr. Air Sensomphone	Operational Programme Officer	WFP

25/04	Mr Somphnah Chanthengxay	Deputy Director General	
	Dave Vosen	Deputy Director General	AUSAID
	Rakounna Sisaleumsak	Deputy Director General	AUSAID
	Kaykhoun Khounvisith	Deputy Director General	AUSAID
26/04	Bouvone Phasouk	Head of sub-office	WFP, Oudomxay
	Somchit Siliphong	Field Monitor	WFP, Oudomxay
	MCHN, SM, FFA committee beneficiaries	Ban Houayhok	Hoon, Oudomxay
	Nurses at Houayhok health centre	Ban Houayhok	Hoon, Oudomxay
	Teachers	Ban Houayhok	Hoon, Oudomxay
27/04	MCHN, SM, FFA committee	B. Bong	Beng, Oudomxay
	MCHN, SM and FFA committee	B. Lainoi	Beng, Oudomxay
	Village authority, health nurses and teachers	B. Laiyai	Beng, Oudomxay
28/04	MCHN, SM and FFA committees	B. Houaylai	
	MCHN, SM and FFA committees	Ban Nakok	Nga, Oudomxay
	Nurses at Nakok health centre	Ban Nakok	Nga, Oudomxay
	Teachers	Ban Nakok	Nga, Oudomxay
29/04	Khampheng Chittavong	Vice Governor	Oudomxay
	Mr. Bouna Phetdela	Head of cooperation and planning unit and three staff members	DPI Oudomxay
	Mrs Chansamone Thippahong	Head of Lao Women Union	LWU
	Mr Khamkao Chanthaphanya	Director	Lao Front
	Dr. Sunthone	Deputy Director	PHO Oudomxay
	Dr. Chan Samone	Chief MCH	
30/04	1 School director	Donengeun village, Phonthong district	Donengeun village, Phonthong district, LPB
	1 Deputy of school director		
	1 village chief and EPR		
	2 teachers		
	15 beneficiaries		
	3 teachers	School meal committee	La district Oudomxay
	Mr Arvong	Head of Village	
	Head of the hospital	La District hospital	
01/05	10 EPR beneficiaries	Vangpan village, Phonthong district	Phonthong

	20 School meal beneficiaries	District Education Office	District, LPB
	1 village chief		
	1 store keeper		
	1 School director		
	3 cooks		
	Mr. Khamphoun	Deputy of District Social Welfare Office	
	3 District school meals officers	District Education Office	
02/05	1 deputy district director		Khonsedon district Administration office, Saravane
	3 District Social Welfare		
	1 Lao Front representative		
	3 District Management Committee		
	7 EPR village committees		Tarnpio village, Saravane
	1 Village chief		
	75 EPR beneficiaries		
03/05	Mrs Nang	Health Centre staff	Lamam district, Sekong
	SM committee, teachers	Xiengluang Village	Dakcheung, Sekong
	SM committee, teachers	Dakdouang Village	Dakcheung, Sekong
	5 EPR village committees		Nongkhoulou village
	1 village chief		
	75 EPR beneficiaries		
	6 beneficiaries		
	1 village chief		Nonhintang village
	2 EPR village committees		
	20 beneficiaries		
	Mr. Thongphanh	Mill owner	Lakhonpheng district, Saravanh
	1 village chief	Meeting with farmers' association	
	11 farmers		
04/05	SM and MCHN committees, teachers, beneficiaries	Thamdeng Village	Kaleum, Sekong
	Health staffs	Head of Kaleum hospital	Kaleum, Sekong
	SM and MCHN committees, teachers, beneficiaries	Trak-thavee village	Kaleum, Sekong
	Khonsavanh	Mill owner	Nongsano village, Saravanh

	1 village chief	Meeting with farmer association	Saravanh
	15 farmers		
	Mr Teuy	Mill owner	Salavanh district
	3 farmers		Nathounyai, Saravanh
05/05	Mr Thavone Phammalailoun	Vice-governor	Sekong
	Mr Bounthan Sayavong	Head of PDLSW	Sekong
	Mr. Phaivanh Nanthavong	Vice-Head of PDLSW	Sekong
	Mr. Visane Inthavong	Head of PDoH	Sekong
	Mr Dongphet Phahnon	Head of PES	Sekong
	Mrs. Kianthong Sanaphan	PES project coordinator	Sekong
	Mr. Chantho,	Field monitor	Saravan sub-office
	Mr. Bounyong Phasy,	Director	Provincial Department of Social Welfare
	Mr. Khammai,	Head of Admin	
	Mr. Thongdy	Deputy Director PAFO	PAFO
	Mr. Bounsou Latsamy,	Deputy Director of DIC	PD Industry and Commerce
	Outhai Sihalath	Head of Attapeu Sub Office	WFP Sekong

Annex 5: Evaluation Approach and Methodology

1. The evaluation team consisted of three independent consultants who visited Lao PDR for three weeks to conduct a mid-term Operation Evaluation for WFP Country Programme 200242 (2012-2015). Country Programme activities are concentrated in several northern and southern Provinces as described in the site mapping (Section 4.2 of Inception Package (IP)). More details on the roles of the evaluation team can be found in Section 6.1. of the IP.
2. The evaluation primarily employed quantitative and qualitative methods. Internationally agreed evaluation criteria such as those recommended by the OECD-DAC were used, including relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, connectedness, and coverage.
3. The evaluation team was independent and impartial and endeavoured to crosscheck and triangulate to ensure, to the extent possible, that more than one party, source or method corroborated the information provided. The evaluation team drew their own conclusions about the implementation of WFP's Programme based on discussions with programme stakeholders and direct observation wherever possible of programme outputs.
4. The evaluation was organized according to four main phases.
 - a. The first phase – preparation – completed in Feb/Mar 2014.
 - b. The second phase (inception) was completed with the approval of the Inception Package. The inception phase included a desk review of key programme documents and information received from WFP. Secondary sources of information were also reviewed including key national documents (The Seventh Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan, Lao PDR National Nutrition Policy and its Plan of Action, notes on the Multi-Sectoral Food and Nutrition Action Plan and food security monitoring reports).
 - c. The third phase (the evaluation mission) started in Vientiane with an initial briefing from the WFP Programme Unit, followed by in-depth meetings with WFP programme staff and interviews with key programme stakeholders, including Government ministries, donors and partners. The evaluation team continued with visits to programme sites in four provinces and follow-up meetings with stakeholders in Vientiane as needed.
 - d. The last phase (reporting) began before the evaluation team left the Lao PDR with the preparation of a brief Aide Memoire powerpoint presentation to present initial findings. This was presented to the WFP Country Office (with online participation from WFP Rome's evaluation office and the evaluation manager). A second, formal presentation of findings was made the following day to external stakeholders including Government officials and implementing partners. The team then prepared a draft report detailing their findings and analysis, leading to the conclusions and recommendations. The draft report was submitted to the WFP Country Office (and various stakeholders) for comment. A Final Report will be drafted incorporating or reflecting comments from the CO and main stakeholders as warranted. The timeline is set out in Section 6.2 of the IP.

5. The evaluation maintained a flexible and responsive approach: evaluation is not a static process and it is difficult to anticipate all of the tasks necessary to produce good results. It was important therefore that the process allowed some flexibility so that it could evolve as the situation dictated.

6. An evaluation manager, Martin Fisher, supported the evaluation team remotely and provided quality assurance throughout the process.

5.2. Potential limitations of the methodology

7. Extensive translation was expected to be required for the evaluation team. The evaluation team hired two independent English/Lao translators to work closely with them. For some of the fieldwork, it was thought likely that a number of interviews would need to be translated twice (local language to Lao, then Lao to English etc) for the international staff, but in fact this did not prove to be the case as most interviewees could converse adequately in the main Lao language. This therefore avoided any potential threat to the independence and transparency of the information collected.

8. The evaluation findings are based on the available information. In this regard, WFP was responsible for ensuring the evaluation team had access to up-to-date information and project documentation.

9. The WFP Laos CP began implementation in 2012 with planning initiated in 2010/2011. Staff turnover in WFP and partner organizations has been considerable during the CP and therefore not all potential interviewees could be reached.

10. The time available for fieldwork, and the number of programme sites, stakeholders and implementing partners, meant that the evaluation team was not able to visit all programme sites, and was not able to interview all stakeholders and implementing partners.

5.3. Data collection methods and tools

11. An evaluation matrix (as included in this report) was developed to ensure that evaluation sources and methods provided the information and analysis to answer questions stated in the ToR (See Annex 2).

12. As indicated in the evaluation matrix, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gather the data. Specific interview guides were developed by the team experts and used with partners, implementers and participants in order to inform the questions in the evaluation matrix.

13. The evaluation used a range of data collection methods and employed a number of interview techniques in order to understand the programme and triangulate information. Data collection methods included secondary data review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and group interviews and observation. Sample interview guides for key informant interviews and focus group interviews were also developed in advance and included in the IP.

14. Implementation of these methods will involve:

- a. Ongoing review of key programme documents and data provided to the team by the WFP Lao Office including:
 - i. Country Programme document and Country Strategy
 - ii. Budget and programme revisions since programme inception
 - iii. Programme monitoring and activity reports

- iv. Government policies and strategies
- v. WFP Donor reports
- vi. Relevant secondary information including MCHN reports, Emergency Assessments, regular Crop and Food Security Assessment reports and general context information.

b. Initial briefing and in-depth interviews in-country with the WFP Lao team.

c. A range of interviews with key programme stakeholders conducted including:

- Government of Laos staff in Vientiane and at provincial level who are directly involved in the development or implementation of the programme.
- Interviews with other WFP stakeholders, such as donors, partners and implementing partners including United Nations agencies, international NGOs, national NGOs and national community organizations and the Government of Laos officers at the district and village level.
- Interviews with WFP sub-office teams who are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the programme.
- Implementing partners selected for field visits will be interviewed in the field and/or in Vientiane.
- Small focus groups with programme beneficiaries will be conducted at the selected field sites in order to understand their perspective of the programme's appropriateness, the implementation process, results thus far and how well the programme is working.

15. In keeping with international human subject standards and social science ethics, all interviewees were advised that their statements, comments and opinions would be kept anonymous. The field notes remain confidential and will not be turned over to public or private agencies.

16. The evaluation team concluded that the WFP CP in Lao could be reviewed mid-term based on the information provided by WFP during Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the evaluation, the availability of partners in-country to participate in the evaluation, and the time and resources provided. The team believed that solid findings would be produced by the proposed methodology.

Annex 6: Evaluation Matrix

Key Question 1: How appropriate is the operation? <i>This question concentrates on the relevance and the design of the operation.</i>						
No.	Sub-questions	Measure/ Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
1.1	Programme Objectives					
1.1.1	Are the programme objectives appropriate to the needs of the food insecure population - given local needs and priorities?	Descriptive material of assessed and perceived needs ex-post facto Was a needs assessment done? What is the quality of the assessment process?	Implementing partners and beneficiaries, documents, e.g. (Food and Nutrition Security Atlas, LSIS, VAM, CFSVA)	Document review, key informant interviews, group discussions	Comparison and summary of interviews with documented information – components to be analysed individually and as a whole	Documents to date have been suitable; other data yet to be determined (via interviews)
1.1.2	Are the programme objectives and programme design coherent with relevant national strategies and policies?	Stated National and other agency policies and strategies	Donor Country Strategies and Lao PDR 7 th Five Year National Socio-Economic Development plan	Document review, key informant interviews, group discussions	Qualitative comparison of CP objectives with Donor and Lao PDR Government objectives	Documents to date have been suitable; other data yet to be determined (via interviews)
1.1.3	Are the programme objectives and design coherent and aligned with overall WFP strategies, policies and normative guidance? Are partner objectives coherent and aligned with WFP objectives?	Implementer objectives vs. stated CP objectives	WFP global strategic plan, WFP Laos PDR Country Strategy and WFP normative guidance, WFP Policy documents (eg: Gender Policy) Documents from implementing partners Interviews with implementers and WFP CO staff	Document review, key informant interviews	Qualitative comparison of CP objectives with implementer objectives	WFP policy documents are clear – programme document is clear but more detail to be collected through interviews and implementing partners' documents.

Key Question 1: How appropriate is the operation?						
No.	Sub-questions	Measure/ Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
1.1.4	Is the programme complementary with the interventions of other relevant development and humanitarian partners	Relationship between interventions	Programme documents of WFP and other development and humanitarian partners	Document review and discussion with key informants	Qualitative comparison of CP objectives with those of other partners	Interviews in-country
1.2	Targeting					
1.2.1	Is the targeting of the various interventions appropriate given population needs and capacities? In particular have gender issues been appropriately considered in all components?	Alignment of needs assessment with targeting. Alignment of partner targeting with CP targeting.	Implementer project documents Interviews with implementers and WFP CO personnel	Document review, key informant interviews, group discussions	Qualitative comparison of CP objectives with Implementer objectives	Documents are clear about policy but implementation needs to be assessed.
1.2.2	Is the targeting coherent with national policies and strategies?	Level of alignment or quality of articulated rationale if different.	Stated National and other agency policies and strategies	Document review and discussion with key informants	Qualitative assessment	Documents are clear about policy but implementation needs to be assessed.
1.2.3	Is the targeting coherent with WFP normative guidance?	Level of alignment or quality of articulated rationale if different.	WFP strategic documents and technical guides	Document review and discussion with key informants	Qualitative assessment	Documents are clear about policy but implementation needs to be assessed.

Key Question 1: How appropriate is the operation?						
No.	Sub-questions	Measure/ Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
1.3	Choice of Activities & Transfer Modalities					
1.3.1	<p>Is the range of activities and transfer modalities appropriate given beneficiary needs and capacities?</p> <p>Are the activities, as designed, likely to lead to the achievement of the expected outcomes and strategic objectives?</p> <p>Are the activities appropriate for the needs of women/girls/boys/men?</p>	Level of alignment of activities with needs assessment and beneficiary, implementer perspectives and international guidance.	<p>Implementer project docs, international evidence</p> <p>Interviews with implementers, beneficiaries and WFP CO personnel</p>	Document review, key informant interviews, group discussions	Qualitative assessment; comparison of interventions with international evidence	Documentation is clear but needs to be verified in interviews
1.3.2	Are the selected activities coherent with national policies and strategies?	Level of alignment with various national policies, strategies and programmes.	Lao PDR national strategies, action plans and development plans	<p>Secondary data review</p> <p>Key informant interviews with Lao PDR stakeholders</p>	Qualitative assessment	Documentation is clear but needs to be verified in interviews
1.3.3	Is the range of activities & how they are implemented coherent with WFP normative guidance and strategies?	Level of coherence or quality of articulated rationale if different.	WFP strategic documents, WFP Lao PDR Country Strategy and WFP technical policies and programme guides	Document review and discussion with key informants, including WFP staff	Qualitative assessment	Documentation is clear but needs to be verified in interviews

Key Question 2: What are the results of the operation?

The question targets the effectiveness of the operation (has it achieved the expected results), the impact (what are the benefits of the operation in terms of the expected outcomes and priorities of the country strategy) and the sustainability (what are the prospects for longer-term benefits after the operation has ended).

While ensuring that differences in benefits between women, men, boys and girls from different groups are considered, the evaluation will analyse:

No.	Sub-questions	Measure/Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
2.1	What is the level of attainment of the planned outputs? What are the reasons for the level of coverage?	Number of Beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender and age as appropriate) Planned vs. actual by activity Tonnage of food deliveries planned vs. achieved	CP programme document, Standard Project Reports and Budget Revision documents	Document review	Comparative maths	Suitable. The ET will have to assess the M&E system of WFP and their implementing partners in order to determine the quality and appropriateness of the data in order to accurately answer these questions
2.2	To what extent have the outputs led to the realization of the operation's objectives? Were interventions carried out in a timely manner? What are the unintended effects (positive or negative)?	Hunger alleviation Level of asset restoration/creation Acute malnutrition rates Chronic malnutrition rates Pipeline analysis; Planned vs. actual timeframes for implementation; Events or comments not intended as objectives or outcomes planned; Performance indicators from the Log Frame	Implementers and beneficiaries; Village committees Standard monitoring and periodical reports, databases, nutrition survey reports	Interviews also Group Assessment by NGOs Observation and attention to comments Document review	Qualitative summary of responses Comparison of planned and observed events/outcomes Comparative math assessing all log frame performance indicators	As above Some output and outcome data is missing or not available. Baselines have been estimated, but subsequent survey results are not available in MCHN programme areas so it will not be possible to determine if any progress toward nutrition outcomes have been achieved

Key Question 2: What are the results of the operation?						
No.	Sub-questions	Measure/Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
2.3	Is the CP operation synergistic with WFP's emergency responses and with other actors operations? What impact did the emergency work in Kammouane province in 2012 have on the overall operation of the CP? Will the operation contribute to the overriding WFP objectives in the country?	<p>Activity presence or absence at national and local levels. Integration of WFP activities and WFP's activities with other actors</p> <p>How well the operation builds on previous lessons learned.</p>	WFP Lao PDR Country strategy, emergency response documents, activity reports. Project directors, Project activities by implementers and other donors	Document review and report tabulation	Cross tabulation of quantitative and qualitative information	Very good collection of documents, but needs to be added to, the quality of other reports TBD
2.4	How efficient were WFP interventions in achieving or contributing to the objectives? Did the operation make the best use of the available resources – including human, commodities and material?	<p>Opinions of Implementers and partners</p> <p>Review of logistics pipeline (planned vs. actual)</p> <p>Review of delivery dates compared with periods of famine</p> <p>Awareness of unintended or unexpected connectedness or changes in implementers' plans for follow-on projects</p>	<p>Implementers, Partners, and beneficiaries and their representatives</p> <p>WFP Personnel</p> <p>Dates in delivery manifest records</p> <p>On-site conditions</p>	<p>Key informant Interviews and Group Assessment by implementing Government staff and NGOs</p> <p>Field observation on operation activities</p>	<p>Summary tabulation of opinions</p> <p>Content analysis</p>	<p>The data on cost and coverage has not been seen so the quality is to be determined (TBD).</p> <p>Also TBD – personnel may not have been involved at that time period.</p>

Key Question 2: What are the results of the operation?						
No.	Sub-questions	Measure/Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
2.5	What is the likelihood that the benefits will continue after the end of the operation? Are there clear plans as well as capacity to maintain the targeted community assets? Will the actions have lasting positive effects on the position of women in the target communities?	Opinions of Implementers and partners particularly beneficiaries and provincial and district government agencies	Implementers, Partners, and beneficiaries and their representatives WFP planning documents and operational docs for capacity building. Review of WFP programme progress in capacity building across components On-site conditions	Key informant Interviews and Group Assessment by implementing Government of Lao PDR staff and NGOs Field observation on operation activities	Summary tabulation of opinions Content analysis	Some documentary evidence available for planning sustainability but most evidence will be from field visits and discussions with IP staff.
2.6	How well are these assets protected from future shocks such as natural disasters?	Opinions of Implementers and partners particularly beneficiaries and provincial and district government agencies	Implementers, Partners, and beneficiaries and their representatives WFP planning documents and operational docs for capacity building. On-site conditions	Key informant Interviews & Group Assessment by implementing NGOs and Government of Lao PDR Staff Field observation on operation activities	Summary tabulation of opinions Content analysis	Some documentary evidence available for planning sustainability but most evidence will be from field visits.

Key Question 3: Why and how has the operation produced the observed results?

The evaluation should generate insights into the main internal and external factors that caused the observed changes and affected how results were achieved. The inquiry is likely to focus, amongst others, on:

No.	Sub-questions	Measure/ Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
3.1	To what extent were internally controlled factors managed to achieve the expected results. These include: the processes, systems and tools in place to support the operation design, implementation, monitoring/evaluation and reporting; the governance structure and institutional arrangements (including issues related to staffing, capacity and technical backstopping from RB/HQ); the partnership and coordination arrangements.	Number and location of personnel (of WFP as well as implementing partners) The procedures/ paper work/ approval/process Systematic communication meetings M&E and reporting system	Implementers and Partners, WFP organizational diagram, Regional Bureaux Agreements/ contracts between WFP and Implementers	Interviews and Document reviews, Interviews with WFP M&E Staff Skype or conference call with WFP Regional Office in Bangkok	Qualitative assessment of the way the programme was implemented	Suitable. The ET will have to assess the M&E system of both WFP and the implementing partners in order to determine the quality and appropriateness of the data in order to accurately answer these questions
3.2	To what extent did external factors affect the achievement of the expected results and how were these factors recognised and managed by the operation managers. These factors include: the external operating environment; the funding climate; external incentives and pressures; and changes in partner priorities and government policies and strategies	Cyclical nature of climate Food and land policies State of opportunities for remittances Donor commitment vs. actual	Government Ministries and WFP assessments National food/land policy statements	Interviews with WFP and other stakeholders in Vientiane and at province level. Documents Donor Interviews	Analysis of qualitative findings - summarized	TBD

Annex 7: Original Log Frame for CP

Results	Performance indicators
Component 1: Emergency preparedness and response (EPR)	
Outcome 1 Early warning systems, contingency plans and food security monitoring systems are in place and enhanced with WFP capacity development support	100% of targeted government administrative units and communities have a disaster preparedness index greater than 7 by 2014
Output 1.1 Disaster mitigation measures are in place with WFP capacity development support	100% of targeted government administrative units and communities have a disaster response system in place by 2014
Component 2: Mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN)	
Outcome 2 Improved nutritional status of target groups of women, girls and boys	10% reduction per year in prevalence of stunting in targeted children under 2
	10% reduction per year in prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia in targeted women and children
Output 2.1 Food and non-food items distributed in sufficient quantity and quality to targeted beneficiaries	100% of beneficiaries receiving food and non-food items
	Tonnage of food distributed by type, as percentage of planned distribution
	Quantity of non-food items distributed, by type, as percentage of planned distribution
Component 3: School meals (SM)	
Outcome 3 Increased access to education and human capital development in targeted schools	Average annual rate of increase in enrolment above 3%
	Attendance rate of 80% in assisted schools
	Ratio of girls to boys enrolled equals 0.9 in assisted schools
Output 3.1 Food and non-food items distributed in sufficient quantity and quality to targeted beneficiaries	100% of planned beneficiaries receiving food and non-food items
Outcome 4 Improved nutritional status of target groups of women, girls and boys	10% reduction per year in prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia in pre-primary schoolchildren
Output 4.1 Food and non-food items distributed in sufficient quantity and quality to targeted beneficiaries	100% of beneficiaries receiving food and non-food items
	80% of planned feeding days
Outcome 5 Progress made toward nationally owned hunger solutions	Hand-over strategy developed and implemented
Output 5.1 Agreed hand-over strategies in place	Hand-over strategy for school meals in place
Component 4: Livelihood Initiatives for Nutrition (LIN)	
Outcome 6 Adequate food consumption reached over assistance period for targeted households	100% of assisted households with a food consumption score >35 without food assistance by 2014
Output 6.1 Food and non-food items distributed in sufficient quantity and quality to targeted beneficiaries	100% of beneficiaries receiving food and non-food items
Outcome 7 Increased marketing opportunities with cost-effective WFP local purchases	10% increase in local purchase annually
	10% increase in income of targeted farmers annually
Output 7.1 Food purchased locally	50% of WFP's food purchased locally by 2015

Component 5: Food Fortification and Marketing (FFM)	
Outcome 8 Increased production capacity for fortified foods, including complementary foods and special nutritional products	30% increase in production of fortified foods
Output 8.1 Food and non-food items distributed in sufficient quantity and quality to targeted beneficiaries	40% increase in distribution of locally sourced fortified foods, complementary foods and special nutritional products

Source: CP document 2011

Annex 8: Ration Scales for WFP Lao PDR – Components 2 (MCHN) and 3 (SM)

	MCHN			School Feeding	
Target group	Children 6-23 months	Pregnant women (2 nd trimester – term) and lactating women (infant < 6 months)		Children in primary schools	Informal boarders
Commodity/product	Plumpy'Doz	Nutributter	Glutinous Rice	CSB+ Vegetable oil Sugar	Glutinous rice
Generic term	RUSF	LNS			
g/day	46.3g	20g	388g	CSB 80g Oil 15g Sugar 15 g	120g
Daily dose	3 spoons 3 x day	One sachet/day		110g	
Kcal/day	247	108	1400	497g	432
Fat (g/day)	16g	7g	N/A	15g	
Micronutrient content	Vitamins A, B1, B2, Niacin, Pantothenic acid, C, D, B6, B12, Calcium, Magnesium, Zinc, Iron, Iodine, Copper Phosphorous, Potassium, Manganese, Folic acid	Vitamins A, B1, B2, Niacin, Pantothenic acid, C, D, B6, B12, Calcium, Magnesium, Zinc, Iron, Iodine, Copper Phosphorous, Potassium, Manganese, Folic acid	N/A	Vitamins A, B1, B2, Niacin, Pantothenic acid, C, D, B6, B12, Calcium, Zinc, Iron, Iodine, Folic acid	N/A
Ingredients	Peanut paste, veg oil, sugar, whey, maltodextrin, dried skimmed milk, cocoa	Peanut paste, veg oil, sugar, whey, maltodextrin, dried skimmed milk	N/A	Corn, soya, oil, sugar	N/A
Ration /month	4 pots				
Ration per visit to health facility			10kg		
Ration/3 months		90 sachets			
Conditions of transfer		Provided at ANC/PNC visit	Provided at ANC/PNC visit		Provided once per semester (2 x year)
Estimated feeding days(for planning)	360 (12 months)	180 (6 months)	180	166	166
Maximum time in programme	18 months	12 months	12 months	5 + years	5+ years
Maximum ration	72 pots	360 sachets	70kg	N/A	40kg
Recommended use	Prevention of acute malnutrition (4-6 months)	Prevention of stunting in children 6-24 months (4-6 months)	N/A	Supplementary feeding (children under 5 and PLW)	
WFP CP use	Prevention of stunting	Prevention of stunting in utero	Incentive for uptake of ANC/PNC visits	Mid-morning snack	Take home ration
Shelf life	24 months	24 months	4 months	18 months	

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