

Decentralized Evaluation

Mid-Term Evaluation of McGovern-Dole-supported School Feeding Programme in Lao PDR (FFE-439-2014/049-00) September 2015 – September 2016 Evaluation Report

12 June 2017 (final)
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Evaluation Team expresses its gratitude to all informants, including school children, teachers, parents, government officials at national, provincial and local levels, as well as to staff of international development agencies, who kindly took the time to meet us and give us their view of the school feeding programme in Lao PDR. Special thanks go to the staff of the WFP Lao PDR Country Office, for assisting with the planning of and facilitating the evaluation mission, and for supplying documentation, especially to Ms Nanna Skau, Mr Utomo Tjipto and the heads of the Pakse and Udomxay sub-offices, Mr Air Sensomphone and Ms Bouavone Phasouk.

Thank you also to Clare Mbizule, former Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor at the Regional Bureau in Bangkok (RBB), and to WFP's Evaluation Manager, Denise Brennan, for their roles in mobilising the evaluation and facilitating the evaluation process.

Finally, we wish to thank Mokoro's Technical Evaluation Manager, Stephen Lister, for this professional oversight, and Nick Maunder for the additional Quality Support.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This is the mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the school feeding programme (SFP) implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Lao PDR with the support of the McGovern-Dole (MGD) Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The value is US\$27 million for a three-year period starting from September 2015. Commissioned by the WFP Lao Country Office (CO), this MTE covers the period from September 2015 to September 2016 and was undertaken in parallel with similar MTEs of MGD operations in Bangladesh and Nepal.
2. The objective of the evaluation was to assess performance of the programme interventions for the specific purposes of accountability and learning. The primary users of this Evaluation Report (ER) are stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of the programme. These include the WFP CO and its main implementing partners, wider stakeholders in education, nutrition and related services, other agencies involved in support to the sector, and the NGOs and other bodies at national, provincial and village level involved in the delivery of the programme. Government stakeholders include the Ministry of Education and Sport (MOES), including its provincial and district offices, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) in the context of their shared interest in school feeding (SF) and the larger link to the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS).
3. In collaboration with the Government of Lao PDR, WFP first introduced a SFP in Laos in 2002. USDA first donated funds for the SFP in 2008. In 2014 USDA signed the McGovern-Dole commitment letter and allocated US\$27 million for donations of commodities, transportation and financial assistance for a three-year period. The arrival of the first tranche of commodities was delayed and project implementation started a year late in September 2015. School feeding activities fall under component 3 of the WFP Lao Country Programme (CP 200242). An overall budget revision to the CP was approved in September 2015 and describes SF as a two-tiered approach in alignment with national interventions and policies, involving the transition from mid-morning snacks to providing lunches and to a gradual hand over of a home-grown SFP to the Government. The subject of this evaluation was the MGD-funded programme only. However, the evaluation team (ET) had an interest to understand the overall picture and how SFP fits into WFP's CP.
4. The MGD-funded SFP has two overarching strategic objectives (SOs): Improved School Literacy of School-Age Children (SO1) and Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices (SO2). These are to be achieved by the core school feeding activity combined with: (a) supporting and implementing activities that promote education, literacy and health among pre-primary and primary school children at the national, regional, and local levels; (b) building the capacity of the Government to implement and expand its National School Meals Programme (NSMP), which currently operates in five of sixteen provinces and is funded through a World Bank-managed trust fund, and to eventually take over the SFP.
5. Laos has made substantial economic and social progress, but is still a least-developed country and lags behind several of its neighbours on economic and social indicators. Although near-universal primary education has been achieved, the quality of education is poor and there are substantial problems of dropout. The SFP's geographical focus is on peripheral provinces in the north and south of Laos, where Lao is not the most common first language,¹ poverty is above the national average and nutrition indicators (notably stunting) are among the worst in the country.

¹ The fact that ethnic minority pupils do not speak the national language at home is important in addressing the literacy objectives of the programme.

Methodology

6. The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining desk review and analysis of documents and data with semi-structured interviews and focus groups and observations during the field visits. At the heart of it is an analysis of the theory of change (ToC) underlying the design of the MGD programme (the project documents included a results framework, but not a full-fledged ToC, which was developed by the evaluation team at the inception stage). Evaluation questions (EQs) were developed and cross-referenced to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness (and potential impact), efficiency, sustainability and coherence (internal and external). Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) was mainstreamed throughout. During December 2016, the MTE team visited 10 schools in Salavan Province (in the South) and 6 in Oudomxay Province (in the North) and conducted interviews with various other stakeholders at national and local levels.

7. The principal focus of the field mission was to gather qualitative data rather than extensive visits. Interviews were conducted with head teachers, teachers, school management committees, cooks, storekeepers, parents, pupils. Where possible, men/boys and women/girls were interviewed separately. The supply chain including storage and distribution of food was inspected, as well as kitchens, school gardens, latrines and other sanitation and hygiene facilities. Meetings also took place with education authorities at national, provincial, and district levels, NGO staff, other UN agencies and donors.

8. The most serious limitation on the MTE concerned the availability of adequate data to assess quantitative performance. It is early anyway to assess outcomes, but even basic data on outputs are problematic, and accordingly the MTE's assessment of results is the section for which evidence is weakest.

Key findings

9. **Appropriateness:** In most respects the MGD-funded operation meets the criteria of relevance and appropriateness, but there are some caveats. It is generally coherent with national policies on education, food security, nutrition and gender. It is moving towards consistency with the national policy on school lunches, but it is not consistent with trends towards local procurement and away from in-kind modalities of SF. The project has deliberately focused geographically on provinces where the needs are among the greatest in the country, and the baseline survey indicates the scope for improvements on the key outcomes the project addresses. Gender dimensions are factored into the project design, and it conforms with national gender commitments and policies.

10. The various elements and objectives of the project are supported by global evidence about school feeding. A key finding from global evidence is that the various benefits of SF are not automatic: they depend on context and on complementary inputs. This is recognised in principle in the MGD design. Both in design and in implementation there has been explicit attention to ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication with related programmes. This has included systematic liaison with other United Nations agencies, and partnerships with a range of Government and NGO bodies. It is broadly in line with WFP policy on school feeding, and with WFP's country strategy and programme. Continuing MOES/Government of Lao PDR policy and institutional developments require commensurate adaptation by the project. This applies currently for example, to improving project alignment with the new National Nutrition Strategy and the new structure of Village Education Development Committees (VEDCs).

11. **Results:** The evidence-base on results (and especially for capacity development and literacy – the main objectives) is limited: this reflects the short duration of the project so far, but also weaknesses in reporting against the rather large (and sometimes changing) set of performance indicators specified. Findings are therefore based on the team's qualitative

assessments and also draw on evidence from related operations where relevant. No significant unintended outcomes were identified.

12. The numbers of schools and beneficiaries reached (including their gender balance) are only slightly short of target, and the WFP's logistic arrangements are regarded as efficient. However, the reported number of meals served is only around two-thirds of the target. Assuming the data are reliable, this indicates problems in ensuring that children are fed every school day (this finding is consistent with the observation that food is not served when cooks fail to show up). In turn this compromises many of the potential benefits of the programme.

13. Children's families and teachers clearly regard the SF benefits as positive, referring directly or indirectly to its benefits as income support for poor families, an incentive for attendance, an aid to attentiveness, and a support to good health. Lunch is consistently regarded as superior to a snack. The potential for school gardens to provide significant quantities of food for SF appears overestimated, and the guidelines for school gardens seem to be paying little attention to their potential role in education about nutrition. Wider outcomes such as improved literacy, nutritional knowledge and hygiene depend on complementary inputs, but these have been delivered only to a small fraction of the participating schools. There is evidence from Laos that such benefits can be achieved, but at present they are not being pursued at scale.

14. **Factors affecting results:** A clearly positive factor has been the responsiveness to experience of the project design. On the other hand, deficiencies in M&E will limit its ability to learn and adjust from experience. WFP's logistic capacity helps ensure effective delivery to schools, although there are problems in ensuring regularity of meals. The importance of capacity development, at both national and local levels, is recognised, but WFP's human resourcing has yet to catch up with capacity development objectives., and the optimal model for technical support and monitoring has not yet been attained. Implementation has been facilitated by good relationships with partners, but feelings of lack of ownership by MOES have meant a sub-optimal partnership with government. The national policy context has been generally favourable but Government faces significant difficulties in rolling out national policies to, and developing capacity at, local level.

15. The biggest inhibitor of potential results is the small scale of complementary activities within the project, and the lack of adequate funding for complementary inputs anticipated from outside the project, such as support to WASH and school health activities and the attention paid to the issue of learners' first language. The MTE finds that many of the theory of change assumptions on which programme success depends are not being met.

16. **Sustainability:** in the long run, sustainability of school feeding programmes and their benefits depends on the development of capacities to maintain and operate such programmes at both national and local levels. There is on-going collaboration, supported by the World Bank, WFP and others, to strengthen national school feeding capacities, but MOES' SF strategy development will be incomplete unless it is matched by sufficient budget allocations. At local level, prospects for sustainability would be enhanced by stronger relationships with MOES staff and more effective engagement with VEDCs, as well as stronger links between national and local levels of government on SF and related policy implementation. The project design, and WFP's approach to monitoring and implementation have shown substantial attention to gender issues; sustained effects will depend on continuing to mainstream a gender focus.

Summary conclusions

17. The MTE's overall assessment is that the MGD-funded SF operation has many positive and promising features. SF is clearly valued by beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Positive features, which can be further built on, include: (a) the quality of many partnerships, including cross-sector and cross-agency coordination at national level; (b) the potential for

sustainable locally-owned approaches to SF if the planned VEDC improvements take root strongly. At the same time the MTE has highlighted a number of significant concerns, including: (a) the quality of results reporting; (b) the discrepancy between reported numbers of beneficiaries and reported numbers of meals consumed; (c) the inconsistency between a SF modality based on international in-kind food donations and the long-term objective of a nationally managed and resourced SFP; and (d) the challenges facing WFP and MOES collaboration at provincial and district level. Many key assumptions of the theory of change are (currently) either invalid or problematic, and this is likely to undermine progress towards the (very ambitious) wider outcomes that the programme seeks.

18. This overall assessment is reflected in the practical recommendations summarised below. Several of the recommendations seek to reinforce actions the CO has already embarked upon, while, overall, they align with WFP's forthcoming Country Strategic Plan.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Specific action and timing ²	Responsible
R1. Improve the monitoring and evaluation function and in particular the table used for reporting against plans and targets	Revise the reporting formats, reducing the number of indicators, and providing more meaningful information on those that are retained. (before next 6 monthly report)	WFP CO, USDA
R2. Investigate the discrepancy between the number of beneficiaries reached and the number of school meals provided.	Check the validity of the data on number of meals provided. If it is confirmed that substantially fewer meals than planned are being provided, investigate the reasons for this and take action to resolve the underlying issues. Report and recommended actions to be submitted within 6 months.	WFP CO
R3. Work with other partners to advocate for and assist the strengthening of Government monitoring systems	(ongoing) Continue to engage with the TWG and the Donor Coordination Group to support a shared approach with MOES to strengthen monitoring and support their attention to gender.	WFP – CO support from RBB
R4. Create a model to strengthen current community capacity development activities, principally targeting schools and VEDCs, to facilitate the growth of local ownership of school feeding and related activities and improved functionality to play a stronger role with school staff.	Work with 3-4 of the strongest VEDCs as pilots. Strengthen the relevant skills of Monitoring Agents. Collaborate with the National Nutrition Secretariat to improve district and village level monitoring of the National Nutrition Strategy. (pilots running within 12 months)	WFP – CO (with close links to leading INGOS doing community development), RBB (FAO may assist) liaison with NNS secretariat
R5. Adapt WFP's deployment of local-level personnel so as to provide more effective support to meaningful capacity development at community level	Using the best international resources, conduct a strategic review of human resources (by October 2017) and design a workplan (end 2017) to reengineer HR; build on the community capacity development training pilot suggested in R4 above.	WFP – CO, RBB and HQ

² The main report includes expanded guidance on specific actions and timing.

Recommendation	Specific action and timing²	Responsible
R6. Experiment with cash-based, local procurement models of school feeding.	Drawing on studies completed so far, develop a plan to test alternative approaches that are appropriately tailored to the context and promote school and community empowerment. (over next 12-18 months)	WFP CO, RBB, Government of Lao PDR TWG
R7. In the next phase of MGD support, reconsider WFP's direct role in supporting complementary activities that are not linked to its core competences.	To be taken into account in the design of and review of any continuation of the present MGD operation.	WFP USDA
R8. In the context of the SF programme, and the convergent approach of the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS), collaborate with MOES, MOH and MAF to review experience and seek a better balance between using school gardens a) for educational purposes and b) to provide ingredients for schools meals	Advocate with all concerned parties for a review of experience with school gardens and the strengthening of guidelines for their use. A review should be jointly commissioned by the Government and its development partners and commenced within 12 months. WFP CO could help with developing appropriate ToR and seeking funding for the review.	WFP CO; MOES; NNS and District officials
R9. Strengthen nutrition education activities.	Conduct a more detailed assessment of nutrition education in schools, and develop a strategy to strengthen nutrition education across the programme. (12 months to develop strategy)	WFP CO in collaboration with other partners (e.g. UNICEF , NNS secretariat)
R10. Collaborate with partners to further mainstream gender into field-level activities	Building on the solid gender focus that already exists, examine activities to sharpen the gender focus further (continuing).	WFP CO and partners

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the evaluation

1. This Evaluation Report (ER) presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the school feeding programme (SFP) implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Laos with the support of the McGovern-Dole (MGD) Food for Education Programme of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). It covers the period from September 2015 to September 2016.

2. The evaluation was commissioned by the WFP Country Office (CO) for the Lao PDR. Its timing and approach are designed to meet USDA requirements for interim evaluations of MGD operations (USDA, 2013) while also complying with WFP evaluation policies. WFP is rolling out a new corporate approach to decentralised evaluations, and this MTE has been conducted alongside similar MTEs of MGD operations in Bangladesh and Nepal. WFP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok (RBB) coordinated this process. USDA has already invited, and WFP has submitted, a proposal for a further phase of MGD support to school feeding in Lao PDR (WFP, 2016q).

3. The main objective of the evaluation, as presented in the Terms of Reference (TOR, in Annex A) is to assess and report on the performance of the programme and associated interventions, serving the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning, providing evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making as well as ongoing and subsequent operations. For USDA the evaluation is also an opportunity to critically review the project and discuss necessary modifications or mid-course corrections in order to effectively and efficiently meet the stated goals and objectives (TOR, ¶7).

4. The primary users of this ER are stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of the programme. These include the WFP CO and its main implementing partners, wider stakeholders in education, nutrition and related services, other agencies involved in support to the sector, and the NGOs and other bodies at national, provincial and village level involved in the delivery of the programme (see ¶12 below). See Figure 7 in Annex F for an overview of stakeholders. The ER will be of direct interest to the participants in the Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC) and External Reference Group (ERG); their membership is shown in Table 28 and Table 29 of Annex L.

1.2 Overview of the evaluation subject³

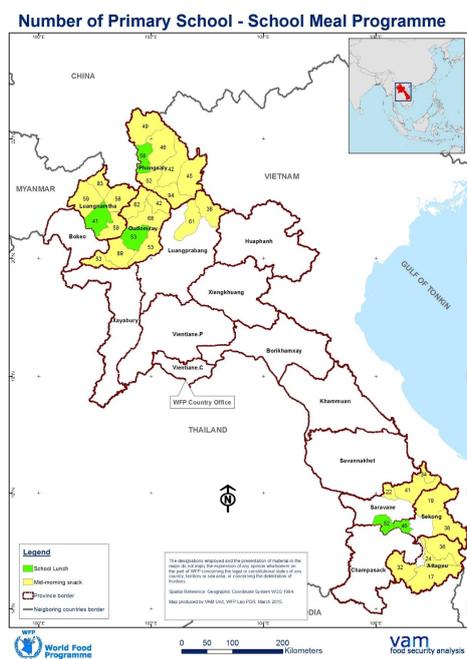
5. In collaboration with the Government of Lao PDR, WFP first introduced an SFP in Laos in 2002. USDA first donated funds for the SFP in 2008. In 2014 USDA signed the McGovern-Dole commitment letter and allocated US\$27 million for donations of commodities, transportation and financial assistance for a three-year period. The arrival of the first tranche of commodities was delayed and project implementation started a year late in September 2015. School feeding activities fall under component 3 of the WFP Lao Country Programme (CP) 200242 (WFP, 2011b). An overall budget revision to the CP was approved in September 2015 and describes school feeding (SF) as a two-tiered approach in alignment with national interventions and policies, involving the transition from mid-morning snacks to providing lunches and gradually handing over a home-grown SFP to the Government. The subject of this evaluation was the MGD-funded programme only. However, the evaluation team (ET) had an interest to understand the overall picture and how the SFP fits into WFP's CP.

³ For a more detailed description see Annex B.

6. The main donors for the CP School Meals Programme are USDA (72 percent) and Australia (26 percent), with much smaller contributions from Cuba, Japan Association for the World Food Programme and Yum! Brands Inc.(see Annex B for details).

7. The MGD programme was designed to provide school feeding assistance⁴ to pre-primary and primary school children in 1,510 schools in 32 districts of seven of the most vulnerable and food-insecure provinces (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Luang Prabang, Saravane, Sekong, and Attapeu – see map at Annex D and a small version in Figure 1 below), and to support a critical phase of the handover of school feeding to the Government over the next eight years .

Figure 1 Location of SFP



8. An amendment to the MGD grant was approved on October 12, 2016. It includes the following changes: providing lunch instead of mid-morning snacks (MMS), changing commodities from Corn-Soya Blend (CSB) to lentils, stopping take-home rations for informal boarders at secondary schools, strengthening the literacy approach through new partners, enhancing community strengthening activities, suspending enrolment campaigns, and updating performance indicators and the results framework (USDA, 2016).

9. In addition, WFP is involved in the implementation of two pilot projects: 1) WFP and FAO are piloting education material in three WFP-assisted schools in Luangnamtha (see ¶78) and 2) WFP and the World Bank are piloting the use of clean cook stoves that reduce smoke exposure and the risk of lung disease (see ¶104).⁵

10. The MGD-funded SFP has two overarching strategic objectives (SOs): Improved School Literacy of School-Age Children (SO1) and Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices (SO2). These are to be achieved by the core school feeding activity combined with: (a) supporting and implementing activities that promote education, literacy and health among pre-primary and primary school children at the national, regional, and local levels; (b) building the capacity of the Government of Lao PDR to implement and expand its National

⁴ Food assistance: 1) provision of mid-morning snacks throughout the school year (=166 days per year) consisting of 80g of CSB, 15 g of vitamin A fortified vegetable oil and 15g of sugar (sugar provided through funds from Australia). The snack provides 493kcal which is 27 percent of the total daily caloric requirements. 2) transition from MMS to lunch: including 100g of rice; 3) take-home rations for informal boarders. (see MGD commitment letters from 26 September 2014 and from October 2016).

⁵ There is also a recently-commenced pilot for local and Regional Procurement (LRP) as described in Annex J.

School Meals Programme (NSMP), which currently operates in five of sixteen provinces and is funded through a World Bank-managed trust fund, and to eventually take over the SFP. The activities include the training for teachers and the community along with the distribution of school supplies, the establishment of libraries and the installation of school kitchens and sanitary facilities. The detailed **results framework** is included in Annex B, Figure 5. The project documents do not include an explicit theory of change (ToC); the team therefore developed an inferred ToC during the inception phase, and this is reproduced as Figure 9 in Annex F (methodology). Table 1 below summarises the main expected outcomes relating to the MGD school feeding programme. The MGD objectives and foundational results, as shown below, refer specifically to improved literacy and use of health and dietary practices.

Table 1 Summary of MGD Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

MGD Strategic Objective	MGD Expected Outcome
MGD SO 1: Improved Literacy of School-Age Children	MGD 1.1 Improving Quality of Literacy Instruction MGD 1.2 Improving Attentiveness by reducing short-term hunger (MGD 1.2.1) and increased access to nutritious food (MGD 1.2.1.1, 1.3.1.1) MGD 1.3 Improving Student Attendance
SO 1 Foundational Results	MGD 1.4.1 Increased Capacity of Government Institutions MGD 1.4.2 Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework MGD 1.4.3 Increased Government Support MGD 1.4.4 Increased Engagement of Local Organisations and Community Groups
MGD SO 2: Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices	MGD 2.1 – 2.3 Improved Knowledge of Health and Hygiene Practices, Safe Food Prep and Storage Practices, Nutrition MGD 2.4-2.6 Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services, Preventative Health Services, and Requisite Food Prep and Storage Tools and Equipment
SO 2 Foundational Results <i>Note: in the case of SO 2 foundational results, the colour coding on the results diagram (Figure 5 below) indicates that all will be addressed by partners other than WFP Lao PDR.</i>	MGD 2.7.1 Increased Capacity of Government Institutions MGD 2.7.2 Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework MGD 2.7.3 Increased Government Support MGD 2.7.4 Increased Engagement of Local Organisations and Community Groups

11. WFP planned to provide school meals to 150,602 school children (76,355 boys and 74,247 girls) in FY 2015, to 142,204 school children (72,097 boys and 70,107 girls) in FY2016 and to 112,952 school children (57,267 boys and 55,685 girls) in FY 2017, totalling assistance to 405,758 school children. Initially the commodity requirements were therefore 6,000mt of CSB, 5,500mt of rice, and 1,140mt of vegetable oil (WFP, 2015-2016, WFP, 2016m, USDA, 2014). These numbers were revised as shown in Table 2 below. Planned outcomes are tabulated (together with available performance data) in Annex H, Table 21.

Table 2 Planned Outputs

	Initial	Revised
Planned beneficiaries	406,758	369,833
Planned food requirements	In-kind food: 6,000mt of CSB, 1,140mt of vegetable oil, 5,500mt of white rice Cash and vouchers: N/A	In-kind food: 3,880mt of CSB, 940mt of vegetable oil, 6,180mt of white rice and 982mt of lentil Cash and vouchers: N/A
US\$ requirements	US\$27,000,000	US\$27,000,000

12. To achieve the planned goals, WFP Lao partners with government institutions (Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Lao Women's Union, Lao Youth Union, Lao Front for National Construction, and Lao Trade Union), as well as UN agencies (UNICEF, FAO), other donors, and NGOs (GIZ, Plan International, Big Brother Mouse), and private partners (Yum!) (WFP, 2016m). See Annex F, ¶6 and Figure 7 for details on these stakeholders.

13. **Gender dimensions.** The MGD SFP seeks to build on earlier achievements made in the area of gender parity (such as net enrolment rate) and to further promote it whilst still keeping in mind gender disparities in drop-out rates. Together with partners, awareness-raising and community sensitization activities are organized which focus on relevant social issues, such as the importance of girls' education. Women are encouraged to take up leadership roles in school management committees to ensure women's participation in decision-making. The programme's results framework was also designed to measure access using net enrolment rates by gender. Since programme design WFP has updated its Gender Policy (WFP, 2015a) and is working on integrating gender monitoring across all programmes, including the SFP.

14. The MTE took note of relevant **previous evaluations**, several of which are summarized in Annex C, and are referred to as appropriate in explaining findings.

1.3 Context

15. **Poverty, Food Security and Nutrition.** Ranking 141st out of 188 countries/territories on the Human Development Index (HDI) rating (UNDP, 2015a, UNDP, 2015b), Laos remains a least-developed country, lagging behind other countries in the region,⁶ with 30.3 percent of its population living below the global poverty line of 1.25/day (UNDP, 2015a see also section A of Annex I).

16. Since most of Laos is mountainous and thickly forested, significant areas of the country are still inaccessible by road. It is prone to natural disasters such as floods and droughts, and usually experiences a relatively long rainy season (May – November) (cf. CLEAR, 2016), which considering the poor infrastructure and the high dependence on agriculture, poses significant risks.

17. Food insecurity remains widespread throughout the country and is alarmingly high in rural areas. Nearly every second child under five years of age is chronically malnourished (UNDP, 2015b). Rural communities in remote areas, especially children, are particularly vulnerable (WFP, 2013b). The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) rates the hunger levels 'serious', with Laos ranking 76th out of 104 countries (Coombs et al., 2014).

18. Currently, nationally 25.5 percent of children under five are underweight (low weight for age), 9.6 percent are wasted (low weight for height), and 35.6 percent are stunted (low height for age). However, in six out of the seven provinces where WFP's school feeding programme operates, stunting levels still exceed the WHO's 'critical' levels of 40 percent (see Annex I, section B). Micronutrient deficiencies also affect large parts of the population: Coombs et al., 2014 reported the prevalence of anaemia in school-aged children as 'severe' and anaemia in pregnant and lactating women (PLW) at 45.3 percent.

19. **Gender.** According to the 2015 Global Gender Gap Index (WEF, 2015) there have been improvements in gender equality as reflected in the assigned score for Lao PDR (0.699 in 2013 and 0.713 in 2015).⁷ A Country Gender Assessment (World Bank & ADB, 2012) commented that government policies combined with rapid economic modernization have

⁶ A high priority of the 8th NESDP is to graduate the country from LDC status. A useful background review of the criteria for graduation is here: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc_graduation_criteria.pdf.

⁷ 0.00 = inequality, 1.00 = equality.

supported the steady advancement of women’s status in Lao PDR, particularly in urban areas.⁸ However, gender disparities occur amongst ethnic minorities and particularly in relation to education indicators. There is also a need to improve maternal nutrition and reproductive health (¶18 above). The gender analysis prepared by the MTE during the inception phase is reproduced at Annex E.

20. Rural/urban and ethnically based **inequality** in education, income, and life expectancy at birth further lowers the country’s HDI by 25 percent (UNDP, 2015a). Gender inequality is reflected in all three dimensions, particularly in education, e.g. 37 percent of men have at least some secondary education, but only 22.9 of the women do. Only 72.7 percent of the adult population (14 years and over) is literate (UNDP, 2015b).

21. **Education.** Universal access to primary education and a 2015 enrolment target of 100 percent for both sexes was almost achieved, but dropout and repetition rates remain a challenge (UNESCO & Lao PDR, 2014). Challenges are greater in ethnic minority areas: the MGD SFP baseline survey conducted in December 2015 found that primary school literacy levels were extremely poor: only 1.9 percent of students demonstrated at least 75 percent comprehension of the Lao language compared with a target of 25 percent (Kimetrica, 2015). The Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (ESSDP) (2016-2020) of December 2015 (Government of Lao PDR, 2016b) targets reaching 99 percent net enrolment, a survival rate to Grade 5 of 90 percent, and sanitation facilities in 85 percent of all primary schools.

22. The Government school feeding, as specified in the 8th NSEDP (Government of Lao PDR, 2015b). It adopted a school lunch policy in May 2014 and a Plan of Action on Promoting School Lunch to 2020 in April 2016 (Government of Lao PDR, 2016a). This builds on its school feeding experience and points to increased Government responsibility for nation-wide incentives for primary school age children to attend school, prioritizing disadvantaged children such as children from remote areas, and minority ethnic groups, etc. (TOR ¶15). The School Lunch Model provides for community and local participation and contribution.

23. A significant part of **international assistance** to Laos has been programmed into agriculture, rural development and natural resource management, infrastructure, education and health. Some prominent partners in the education and food security sectors are the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), USAID, the World Bank, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and WFP.

24. WFP’s current portfolio in Laos consists of a development operation which aims to support government efforts to reduce wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies through five components: emergency preparedness and response, mother-and-child health and nutrition, school meals, livelihood initiatives for nutrition, and food fortification and marketing (WFP, 2011b).

1.4 Evaluation methodology and limitations

25. The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining desk review and analysis of documents and data with semi-structured interviews and focus groups and observations during the field visits. At the heart of it is an analysis of the inferred theory of change (ToC) underlying the design of the MGD programme (see the detailed description of methodology in Annex F, also see ¶10 above). Rigorous contribution analysis was not practical because of the early stage of implementation and the poor quality of performance data.

⁸ Key government policies that support gender equality include the 8th Five Year Socio-Economic Development Plan, the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (NSAW) 2016-2020 and Action Plan on Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Children in Lao PDR (2014-2020).

26. The scope of the MTE complies with the requirements of the TOR (Annex A, ¶27 - ¶29). The team developed a series of evaluation questions (EQs), guided by (but not restricted to) four key questions from the TOR:

- 1) How appropriate is the operation?
- 2) What are the results of the operation?
- 3) What factors have affected the results? and
- 4) To what extent does the intervention's implementation strategy include considerations for sustainability?⁹

EQs are set out in a full evaluation matrix in Annex G, while Table 16 in Annex F cross-references the questions to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, and coherence. Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) was mainstreamed throughout.¹⁰

27. The IR detailed nine selection criteria¹¹ including geographic variance, visiting older programme areas from 2002, access to modality history – both MMS and lunch, areas where WFP has handed over some schools to the Government and, importantly, ease of access to minimize travel time. In consideration of the above, and in consultation with the CO, a field visit programme was prepared that enabled the team to visit ten schools in Salavan (in the South) and six in Oudomxay (in the North) provinces, as well as to conduct interviews with various other stakeholders (see Annex L). The schools were selected randomly based on sampled schools included in the baseline (Kimetrica, 2015), ensuring coverage of schools falling into different performance categories, with different school feeding modalities, varying ethnicities and socio-economic status, as well as schools that have already been handed over. Given the time constraint, schools within a reasonable distance were chosen for the ET to cover within the time available.

28. The principal focus of the field mission was to gather qualitative data rather than repeat the baseline survey approach (see Annex F). Interviews were conducted with head teachers, teachers, school management committees, cooks, storekeepers, parents, pupils. Where possible, men/boys and women/girls were interviewed separately. The supply chain including storage and distribution of food was inspected, as well as kitchens, school gardens, latrines and other sanitation and hygiene facilities. Meetings also took place with education authorities at national, provincial, and district levels, NGO staff, other UN agencies and donors. (Table 26 in Annex L lists interviewees).

29. As spelled out in Annex F, the evaluation complied with all relevant ethical standards, including those concerning contacts with children. Reports have been subjected to Mokoro's internal independent quality checks, as well as the quality reviews undertaken through WFP's Decentralised Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS).

30. **Limitations.** Due to project locations in relatively remote areas, the number of schools that could be visited was limited. The team split in both locations to be able to cover as many schools as possible. No other obstructions (political or weather) were encountered and the evaluation mission went smoothly. Other constraints were the short period of implementation that could be reviewed and data limitations (see Annex H and the discussion in Chapter 2, especially section 2.3).¹² As noted in Annex F, there are concerns about both the reliability, and in some cases the validity, of available data. Findings on EQs where quantitative data are most pertinent are therefore not as strong as for EQs where findings can

⁹ The proposed questions were reviewed and approved by the Evaluation Reference Group.

¹⁰ An extensive gender analysis was included in the Inception Report (Mokoro, 2016b) and is reproduced as Annex E.

¹¹ IR Table 18 Site Selection Criteria

¹² The impracticality of a contribution analysis may also be considered a limitation (cf. ¶25).

rely on more qualitative sources, including project and policy documents, interviews and focus groups. This is reflected in final column of Table 31 in Annex M, where we provide an assessment of the strength of evidence for the findings against each of the 22 EQs.¹³ At the level of the four key questions our assessments are:

- 1) Appropriateness: evidence is generally strong.
- 2) Results of the operation: evidence on outputs and outcomes is more indicative than conclusive, and overall evidence on results ranges from indicative to weak.
- 3) Evidence on factors affecting results is generally satisfactory.
- 4) Evidence on sustainability is also generally satisfactory.

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1 Introduction

31. This chapter focuses on the findings of the evaluation. These are presented around the four key questions posed by the TOR and the 22 sub-questions as elaborated in the evaluation matrix in Annex G. Table 31 of Annex M shows how the findings map to the EQs.

2.2 How appropriate is the operation?

Box 1 Key findings on appropriateness

- In most respects the MGD-funded operation meets the criteria of relevance and appropriateness, but there are some caveats.
- The project has deliberately focused geographically on provinces where the needs are among the greatest in the country, and the baseline survey indicates the scope for improvements on the key outcomes the project addresses.
- It is generally coherent with national policies on education, food security, nutrition and gender. It is moving towards consistency with the national policy on school lunches, but it is not consistent with trends towards local procurement and away from in-kind modalities of SF.
- The various elements and objectives of the project are supported by global evidence about school feeding. A key finding from global evidence is that the various benefits of SF are not automatic: they depend on context and on complementary inputs. This is recognised in principle in the MGD design.
- Both in design and in implementation there has been explicit attention to ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication with related programmes. This has included systematic liaison with other UN agencies and partnerships with a range of Government and NGO bodies.
- It is in line with WFP policy on school feeding, and with WFP's country strategy and programme.
- Continuing policy and institutional developments require commensurate adaptation by the project. This applies for example to alignment with the new National Nutrition Strategy and the new structure of Village Education Development Committees.
- Gender dimensions are factored into the project design, and it conforms with national gender commitments and policies.

Relevance to Poverty and Need in Lao PDR

32. Relevance to the target group is the most direct concern in an analysis of the appropriateness of the operation. The extent of poverty, food insecurity and poor nutrition in Laos is highlighted in ¶15-18 above. The MGD is deliberately focused geographically on

¹³ Based on a simple scale from 1 to 4: 1 (strong), 2 (more than satisfactory), 3 (indicative, not conclusive), and 4 (weak).

provinces where the needs are among the greatest in the country. Data on stunting prevalence (see Annex I, section B) demonstrate that the target provinces are amongst those with the worst indicators for stunting. The baseline survey confirmed that initial key indicators such as those for dietary diversity and knowledge of hygiene, as well as educational indicators, are low (Kimetrica, 2015, summarised in Annex C), indicating the relevance of the programme's objectives. MTE informants at community and local government level, as well as other stakeholders, confirmed that the programme is addressing important needs.

Coherence with Government policies

33. The MGD-funded operation is in most respects coherent with relevant national policies and strategies, notably the 8th National Social and Economic Development Plan (NSEDP, Government of Lao PDR, 2016b), MOES 2014 Policy on Promoting School Lunch (Government of Lao PDR, 2014) and the National Nutrition Strategy 2015-2025 (Government of Lao PDR, 2015a).

34. **With regard to the 8th NSEDP**, the Government reports it “has placed significant importance on human resources development and has allocated increased budget to education and sports which covers 17 percent of the total government expenditures to improve and develop education infrastructure and improve teaching-learning from nursery, kindergarten, and primary school to university. Many interventions have been localized, namely the development of quality education project, accelerated education for all, basic education development, dormitory buildings for students, school lunch and food supplements projects have been implemented in 30 districts in six target provinces contributing to increased attendance rate (and the) reduced drop-out rates” (Government of Lao PDR, 2016b, section 5.2). Our review of the SF activities shows that the project objectives are very much in line with the 8th NSEDP policy.

35. The **MOES Policy on Promoting School Lunch** (Government of Lao PDR, 2014) is a national strategy on school feeding which is fully supported by the objectives of the MGD grant and by WFP. According to the MOES, initial discussions were entered into in 2002 but the Ministry did not have a well-developed institutional idea about their own future in school feeding. In addition they had a high level of trust in WFP based on its global reputation, to create and manage a school feeding project in a highly professional way. As the relationship with WFP got under way and the original design was discussed, the Ministry wanted to use the WFP school feeding programme in the targeted areas as a way to increase enrolment and especially to keep children in school after the noon break when they would typically return home. At that time there was no particular interest in, or approach towards, related nutrition and poverty issues which have developed with exposure to related interests within Government. However, National Education for All (EFA) Action Plan (Government of Lao PDR, 2005c) linked the Government’s policy and strategic framework for action for basic education as well as cross-cutting themes such as gender, inclusive education and specific programmes for children with special needs and socio-economically challenged children, school health and HIV/AIDS prevention. The Plan integrated goals and targets of the 2004 National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES),¹⁴ the Millennium Development Goals and all donor projects.

36. More recently (and in parallel with the design of the MGD operation, MOES has articulated its **2014 Policy on Promoting School Lunch**. Significantly, the Policy gives “emphasis [...] to providing children’s school lunch to promote access to education as well as for proper nutrition, good health and to improve learning ability” (Government of Lao PDR, 2014, p1). However, although MGD objectives are entirely consistent with the Government’s, interviews suggest that the MOES prefers budgets provided to and managed by the schools

¹⁴ NGPES noted “MOE promotes primary school participation of poor and vulnerable children, especially girls, in food-insecure areas through a school feeding Programme ... supported by the United Nations World Food Programme.”

over the commodity support, as exemplified by the NSMP, and has also accelerated efforts to provide full lunches rather than MMS. The policy calls for investments to support sustainability and scaling up.

37. The third area of national policy with which the MOES is substantially involved is the **National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 (NNS)**:

“This strategy emphasizes multi-sectoral unity with common efforts, goals, and timeframes with 22 common priority interventions to be implemented in areas with high malnutrition rates and numbers, areas of food insecurity, poor localities, and GoL priority focus points with a focus on tackling nutrition problems rapidly and in a sustainable manner through the involvement of multiple sectors while improving existing nutrition and food security (NFS) services and interventions nationwide”. (Government of Lao PDR, 2015a).¹⁵

38. With regard to activities covered in the MGD grant, of 22 priority interventions (PI) in the NNS designed to reduce stunting and wasting and achieve MDGs and SDGs, the MOES is tasked with four that are also mentioned in the Policy on Promoting School Feeding. Two have direct relevance to the SF support provided by WFP (PI 19: Provide food in schools, and PI 20: Promote vegetable gardens in schools), and the other two are also supported by the SFP (PI 21: Integrate nutrition into curricula; PI 2.: Distribute deworming tablets and iron supplements in schools).

39. With regard to the **areas targeted**, the 2014 Policy on Promoting School Lunch identifies “remote areas, ethnic communities, governments focus areas and areas with lower socio-economic indicators countries standard”. As already noted, the MGD-funded operation reaches seven of the most vulnerable and food-insecure provinces (see section 1.2 and Annex B). During the drafting of the NNS¹⁶ it was the provinces of Sekong, Houaphan, Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Saravane, Luangnamtha, Xiengkhouang, which had the most severe problems in rates of stunting and wasting of children under five, a reflection of the issues of poverty, food insecurity and under nutrition. The current SFP targets five of the above seven, indicating good alignment with national policy and need.

Elements of the Programme Design and Relationship to International Experience

40. Through the MGD SFP, WFP seeks to improve literacy instruction, strengthen student attendance and attentiveness, and encourage the use of better health and dietary practices (see results framework Figure 5, Annex B). The WFP School Feeding Policy evaluation (Mokoro, 2011) included a thorough review of the evidence base for the various benefits of school feeding that are commonly proposed: its conclusions are summarised in Annex C, ¶8-12). The WFP policy proposes social protection as an overarching framework for a number of possible outcomes.¹⁷ These can include a direct safety net function (value transfer), educational benefits (through incentives for enrolment and attendance, and by enhancing the ability to learn), and nutritional benefits (by alleviating short-term hunger and improving children’s nutritional status, particularly when food is fortified and accompanied by deworming). It also notes school feeding’s potential to support gender equality, and school feeding as a “platform” for pursuing wider benefits, not the least of which is supporting small-scale agriculture through Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF). Whilst these objectives are similar to the ones under the MGD grant, the MGD results framework does not explicitly frame them through a social protection lens. More importantly, the potential

¹⁵ The draft WFP Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for Laos points to the NNS as a key area of engagement:

“The National Nutrition Strategy provides the overall framework for WFP’s contribution to achieve national food and nutrition security priorities and targets. It was developed with the aim of achieving SDG2 using a multi-sectoral convergent approach with 22 national priority interventions. All four WFP strategic outcomes directly contribute, in an integrated way, to these priorities”. (WFP, 2016o, ¶37)

¹⁶ The ET Team Leader was on the drafting team. The final document was silent on priority among provinces.

¹⁷ This continues to be true of the Revised School Feeding Policy (WFP, 2013g).

benefits are not automatic: in most cases they depend on context and on complementary activities. For example, SF may increase attentiveness by mitigating short-term hunger, but it will not lead to more effective learning if the quality of teaching is poor. The MGD shows awareness of this issue and incorporates various activities and inputs to complement the core school-feeding activity. In that sense it is consistent with international evidence; however, the evaluation returns to this issue of complementarity in considering (section 2.3) whether potential results have been realised in practice, and (section 2.4) the underlying factors that explain performance. In both cases, the assumptions highlighted in the inferred theory of change (see Annex F, Figure 9 and Table 15) are a key point of reference.

41. Annex C also summarises findings from various in-country evaluations. Two careful evaluations of school-feeding pilots in Laos (an SF impact evaluation - Bittenheim et al, 2010) and an HGSF experiment (WFP, 2011a) confirm the point that the complex benefits of SF cannot be taken for granted, and are a reminder that Laos may offer a particularly difficult context (for example, the impact evaluation findings were significantly less positive than for similar programmes in Uganda and Burkina Faso).

Suitability of the commodity-based approach

42. There have also been constraints that the MOES and schools have faced in implementing the SFP by virtue of the constraints provided by the food commodity nature of the support for school feeding through USDA/WFP. There are two related issues: whether the commodities provided have been suitable, and whether, as the Government's preferred strategy implies, local-level procurement of local commodities would be a better approach.

43. During interviews with Government stakeholders and individual schools, there was significant variability of satisfaction with the in-kind commodities that were provided. In addition, objections were raised about the lack of variety of the menu and the choice of a long grain rice as opposed to glutinous/sticky rice which is the staple of the local diet. The ET understands that the local market and its ability to supply local long grain rice are sufficient to meet the needs of the targeted school children, but WFP has objections to both the lack of nutrition and the higher cost of sticky rice. Many informants (in MOES and several individual schools) voiced a preference for cash support for local procurement which could provide a more culturally acceptable menu.

44. As noted above, in 2002 the Ministry did not have well-developed ideas about the future for school feeding. In addition they had a high level of trust in WFP to provide the appropriate support and manage the project in a highly professional way. These were two principal reasons why the Ministry did not at that time engage in more detailed dialogue about in-kind commodity support. The fact that the food was available and free to the country, rated high in MOES' staff minds at the time (MOES informants). By 2007/08 the MOES had begun to develop its own ideas about the in-kind commodity approach (led by the Minister at the time) but the responsibility for school feeding was then housed in the section of the Ministry with very poor English skills and it was not until 2009 when school feeding was transferred back to the Department of Primary and Pre-primary Education that this dialogue was able to be effectively pursued with WFP. The Ministry also found that changes in the Country Director in WFP and the different openness towards dialogue also very much affected their relationship. In order to cater for local supply and at the same time speak to the preferences of different ethnic minorities, the Ministry developed an approach that they call "Buy your parents' rice".

45. MOES informants noted that considerations of sustainability and the need to develop sufficient MOES budgets, local procurement practices and local transport have begun to emerge more strongly now as the question of sustainability and MOES handover is more seriously discussed. This issue is further discussed in section 2.5 below.

Seeking complementarity and coherence with similar programmes

46. Both in design and in implementation there has been explicit attention to ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication with related programmes. The MGD operation is deliberately targeted to areas not served by other SF programmes, and potential duplication has been addressed during implementation. (Notably the decision to cease providing THR was influenced by the risk of overlap with cash grants being funded by ADB – see ¶8 above and USDA, 2016.) The National School Meals Programme (NSMP, World Bank-funded) and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) managed programme (MGD-funded through a separate grant) have similar designs in terms of targeting. The instruments differ since CRS use MGD-supplied commodity aid while the NSMP provides a cash budget to MOES for local procurement of rice. There is consensus and a broad coherence of justification for the approach among these programmes helped by the fact that the stakeholders are all members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) where similar operational challenges faced on the ground are regularly discussed. The WFP schools that are referred to as “handed over” are in fact handed over to the NSMP and the cash budget provided for school feeding is much preferred by the MOES and school itself. A key component of school feeding is meant to be the contributions in kind by parents although the weaknesses of the Village Education Development Committees (VEDCs) in mobilizing consistent community support is a problem (see Box 2 below for an overview of VEDC-related issues).

Box 2 The Role of Village Education Development Committees

VEDCs are a relatively new but important structure in relation to school feeding. Recommendations of a recent study on their functionality and impact (Seel et al., 2015) are summarised in Annex C. The research found much that the ‘basics’ of VEDCs are largely in place, but there is more work to be done to ensure optimal functioning. VEDCs are adding greater weight to the previously-existing parents’ associations and are becoming increasingly effective in supporting enrolment, improving infrastructure and assisting school development. They generally have the ‘right’ members, but these are not necessarily in the ‘right’ roles. VEDCs often do not avail themselves of the existing provision to extend beyond seven members. The ‘status-based’ VEDC structure promotes their authoritative agency but not necessarily their inclusivity or continuity. Support is needed to ensure members are committed to and capacitated for their roles. Most VEDCs do not meet on the recommended monthly basis. In the best examples they were supporting a range of cross-sectoral initiatives to address demand-side barriers to education. The various roles of DEDCs (District Education Development Committees) and their linkages with DESBs (District Education and Sports Bureaux) and VEDCs are not yet fully clear or well-established.

In MOES’ policy, VEDCs occupy a pivotal position in forming a partnership between the school staff and the community to VEDCs have been established in villages and have replaced the parent-teacher associations that previously existed. Their purpose is to support enrolment, improve infrastructure, make various kinds of contribution to school development but their quality is highly variable. The project design does not mention the VEDCs but identifies the Village School Meal Committee consisting of cooks, storekeepers and parents and has provided training in food preparation, food handling and nutrition. VEDCs represent a most important mechanism for improving ownership for quality of education and to link between schools and parents and this recognition by WFP shows an improvement in contextual understanding compared with the project design. However, the type and frequency of contact between WFP (through the newly hired MAs) and VEDCs needs further improvement if capacity is to be significantly raised.

47. Coherence and complementarity are also sought through **partnerships**. The primary partnership is with the Government and MOES at national, provincial and district level: The project document states that “Through the proposed MGD programme, all activities are conducted in partnership with the Government of Lao PDR, non-governmental partners, and

local communities. WFP works closely with national, provincial and district School Meal committees, including community representatives and parents.” (WFP, 2014j, p. 6). Given international best practices in aid management and that imminent handing over to the Government is a key goal of the CP, this seems essential.

48. The design also incorporates **implementing partners**. The MGD grant provides funds for partnering with other organizations operating in the provinces. These partners (and others who are operating in parallel with their own budget resources) bring staff skills and exposure in areas with which WFP is not traditionally familiar which potentially strengthens the Grant implementation but also, of course, brings external dependencies that WFP cannot directly manage. There are several key partnerships to bolster field operations in the areas of water and sanitation, literacy materials, teachers’ training and capacity building of VEDCs.

49. DFAT (Australia) is funding a large and comprehensive project for Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL) with European Union (EU collaboration that also draws many partners into networking and information sharing. They provide technical and financial support to developing the curriculum, teachers and schools needed to ensure children go to and stay in primary school, collaborating with partners like WFP, UNICEF and INGOs including Child Fund, Plan International, Save the Children and World Vision.¹⁸

50. In July and August 2016 WFP signed formal partnerships with a Lao NGO called “Big Brother Mouse” and with Plan International to develop further reading materials and train teachers in their use. Both these organizations and their programmes provide substantial opportunities for improving literacy in the national language. If appropriate materials were developed and published, they could also be used for improving awareness and behaviours around gender discrimination against girls at home and in the schoolyard. Given the key role of VEDCs (see Box 2) it is fitting that the Plan International project will include a rather small US\$500 fund for the use of the VEDCs so that they may practice their improving skills in identifying and implementing locally identified education and related small projects.

51. Working with Plan is particularly apt since Plan’s approach, funded both through their BEQUAL and MGD grants, uses the same operational model. It is also appropriate since their geographical location in Oudomxay overlaps with WFP’s. Plan are also a key player in the current work on VEDCs (see Box 2 above).

52. **Coherence with UN Agencies.** The Government of Lao PDR and United Nations agencies have agreed on the Lao PDR-United Nations Partnership Framework 2017–2021 (UNPF) that identifies three pillars and eight outcomes designed to meet the needs of Lao PDR to achieve the SDGs and graduate from LDC status. The UNPF establishes the need for inclusive partnerships with the Government and all key stakeholders, working together as One UN (UNPF, 2016). WFP's programmes are thus an integral part of the UNPF and contribute to 1) social protection, 2) basic education, 3) health water and sanitation, 4) food security and nutrition, as well as 5) institution building aspects of the One UN family agenda. The applicable UNPF outcomes are targeted as shown in Table 3 below.

¹⁸ <http://laos.embassy.gov.au/vtan/MSABEQUAL.html>; also BEQUAL, 2016.

Table 3 United Nations Partnership Framework outcomes

Pillar One – Inclusive Growth, Livelihoods, and Resilience	Pillar Two – Human Development	Pillar Three – Governance
<p>Outcome 2: More people have access to social protection benefits, in particular vulnerable groups and the poor (<i>Social Protection</i>)</p>	<p>Outcome 4: Children and youth enjoy better access to inclusive and equitable quality basic education and vocational skills (<i>Basic Education</i>)</p>	<p>Outcome 7: Institutions and policies at national and local level support the delivery of quality services that better respond to people’s needs (<i>Institution Building</i>)</p>
	<p>Outcome 5: People enjoy improved access to quality health services, and water, sanitation and hygiene (<i>Health, Water and Sanitation</i>)</p>	
	<p>Outcome 6: The most vulnerable people benefit from improved food security and nutrition (<i>Food Security and Nutrition</i>)</p>	

Source: UNPF, 2016

53. **Alignment with WFP corporate SF policy and Laos Country Programme.** WFP’s school feeding policy (WFP, 2013f) is a subject for on-going internal review as it adjusts to its COs’ experience and the wider operating environment. The *Rethinking School Feeding* report (Bundy et al, 2009), published in 2009 in response to government demand for better information about school feeding, confirmed that as countries develop, their capacity to fund and manage school feeding programmes increases and their reliance on external assistance decreases as they progress along the “transition to sustainability”. This prompted WFP to signal a shift its school feeding policy from food aid to food assistance.

54. School meals are a key component of WFP’s Country Programme 2012-2015 – coherent with WFP Strategic Objective 4¹⁹ – (WFP, 2011b) but although the CP states that it will address stunting, it does not mention that it will address micronutrient deficiencies even though this is also a priority of the CP. The CP highlights that the school meals will be based on the provision of MMS but this is now superseded by a drive to become more coherent with Government policies (see ¶33-36 above).

55. The draft Plan of Action of the School Meal Programme (2016-2020) (WFP, 2016o) builds on the previous CSP and the 2014 Policy on Promoting School Lunch in proposing that its support to school lunches contributes to the country’s goal in achieving food security. Hand-over to the Government by 2020 is also a central theme to the school feeding activities stated in the CP and, from key informant interviews, the push to achieve this has become stronger in the last 2 years.

Gender and Ethnicity

56. Ultimately, MOES (and WFP’s support) are guided by the many United Nations Human Rights Treaties and Declarations, and ASEAN Declarations to which the Government of Lao PDR is a signatory (listed in Annex K). In the SF programme, WFP has provided emphasis on girls’ enrolment and attendance as well as quality of education for girls. This is completely consistent with the MOES Development Plan 2016-20 gender policy (Government of Lao PDR, 2016b), which focuses on gender equity in education and gender parity precisely on these issues and especially among vulnerable populations. At that level, WFP SF and its activities are well aligned. There are however, various gender issues that have arisen.

¹⁹ WFP Strategic Objective 4: Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger.

57. At an earlier time in the programme when girls' enrolment and attendance were lower, the take-home ration (THR) was used as a way to encourage families to allow and encourage their girls to attend school.²⁰ The MOES reported that because of WFP targeting at that time, the THR was only going to girls at the beginning of the programme and that MOES had lots of problems with boys' attendance in some areas and had to “push hard” to get THR for the boys as well. In the end WFP agreed but still the boys got 10 kg, 5 kg less than the girls (15 kg). As enrolment rates equalized, THR has been discontinued (see ¶8 above) but MOES say they face significant problems in the South with secondary school boys dropping out in favour of the employment opportunities in agriculture. This affects the age group over 12 or 14 years.

58. At the same time, the MOES Policy on Promoting School Lunch provides very little information to address the continuing challenges facing girls in education, mentioning only that priority will be given to “areas with gender disparity” without further explanation as to what this means or how it might be operationalised. During field visits the ET found no differing practices in the availability of food in the school lunch to girls and boys and observed that the project was benefiting them equally.

59. With regard to promoting inclusiveness across ethnicity, Laos has been facing for some time and continues to face the challenge of pre-school and primary school aged children who do not speak the national language at home. This means that teaching materials and teaching methods as well as the language of teachers put such children at a considerable disadvantage. It typically takes until year two of primary education for children to start to become more fluent in the national language (interviews with teachers/head teachers). Since no direct causal chain regarding the impact of school feeding on literacy is evident,²¹ the emphasis of the programme on trying to promote improvements in literacy is an opportunity to contribute to the evidence base but there has been little direct intervention in the WFP programme to address this. There are at the same time a variety of activities and stakeholders who are trying to address this need and WFP is now moving to link with them more substantially (see the discussion of partnerships above).

2.3 What are the results of the operation?

Box 3 Key findings on results

- The evidence-base on results is limited: this reflects the short duration of the project so far, but also weaknesses in reporting against the rather large (and sometimes changing) set of performance indicators specified. Findings are therefore based on the team's qualitative assessments and also draw on evidence from related operations where relevant.
- The numbers of schools and beneficiaries reached (including their gender balance) are only slightly short of target, and the WFP's logistic arrangements are regarded as efficient.
- However, the reported number of meals served is only around two-thirds of the target. Assuming the data are reliable, this indicates problems in ensuring that children are fed every school day (this finding is consistent with the observation that food is not served when cooks fail to show up). In turn this compromises many of the potential benefits of the programme.
- Children's families and teachers clearly regard the SF benefits as positive, referring directly or indirectly to its benefits as income support for poor families, an incentive for attendance, an aid to attentiveness, and a support to good health.
- Lunch is consistently regarded as superior to a snack.
- Wider outcomes such as improved literacy, nutritional knowledge and hygiene depend on complementary inputs, but these have been delivered only to a small fraction of the participating schools. There is evidence from Laos that such benefits can be achieved, but at present they are not

²⁰ In consultation with MoES in 2015, WFP suspended the THRs (WFP, 2015d, WFP, 2015e)

²¹ See Annex C for a summary of international evidence reported in the evaluation of WFP's School Feeding Policy.

being pursued at scale.

- The potential for school gardens to provide significant quantities of food for SF appears overestimated, and the guidelines for school gardens seem to be paying little attention to their potential role in education about nutrition.
- WFP has strengthened capacity development efforts at national level directed towards handover. Capacity development efforts at provincial level need to be strengthened.
- WFP has developed an implementation plan to complement WFP's corporate gender policy and is making an effort to further integrate gender into programming.
- No significant unintended outcomes were identified.

Sources and quality of evidence

60. The evidence base for reporting on results of the MGD-funded operation is limited. At mid-term there would in any case be limited reporting on outcomes, and this is exacerbated by the delay to the project's commencement. Annex H reviews the M&E framework and presents all the data the MTE was able to collate against the performance indicators specified. However, as is apparent from the summary tables of beneficiaries, outputs and outcomes (Table 19, Table 20, and Table 21 respectively) reporting against the indicators is often problematic. Semi-annual reports by WFP to MGD provide the best source of such data, but there is often no data reported and whilst each report provides data from the previous reporting period, there is little narrative analysis relating this to the targets. There have been changes to indicator-specification during the project's implementation, and there are also variances between the indicators used in the semi-annual reports and in the SPRs. Better cross-tabulation would have been helpful. It should also be noted that WFP relies on others (e.g. the schools and the education system) for much key data and this is often where weaknesses are found.

61. Additional existing or emerging data relating to impact and outcomes are also reviewed in Annex H, drawing particularly on the MGD-funded baseline survey (Kimetrica, 2015) and on the recently-completed Australia-funded impact assessment of school feeding and WASH activities (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016); both studies are summarised in Annex C. Constraints on quantitative data mean that the MTE's interim assessment of results has had to draw strongly on qualitative assessments, drawing on documentary review, and, particularly, on interactions with beneficiaries and other stakeholders during the field visit (as described in Annex L). As shown in Table 31 in Annex M, we consider the strength of evidence for the findings on results to be considerably weaker than the evidences supporting the MTE's findings on the other three main evaluation questions. In this section, we consider in turn the results of school feeding itself, the complementary activities linked to it in this operation, and capacity development; we conclude with additional reflections on gender and protection.

School feeding

Attainment of outputs and beneficiaries reached

62. The proposal to MGD for this phase of the school feeding programme states that funds will support activities in the six most vulnerable and food-insecure provinces in Lao PDR (Phonsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Saravane, Sekong and Attapeu). In actual fact the programmes reaches seven of the most vulnerable and food-insecure provinces (Luang Prabang was added – see map at Annex D). The proposal also states that 1,700 schools will be reached; as of September 2016 1,446 schools were being supported (85 per cent of the target). However, WFP withdrew support from 63 primary schools, due to minimal

commitment to school feeding from those schools and stopped providing take-home rations to 191 secondary schools.²²

63. Table 4 below shows the beneficiary targets (male and female) for each of the three years under the grant and the number of pupils reached as reported in the semi-annual reports (April 2016, September 2016). The number of males reached with school feeding has exceeded the target for 2016, while for females the actual number reached is less than the target (also see Table 21 in Annex H).

64. However, Table 20 in Annex H shows that the number of meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children falls short of the target, for example in financial year 2016 13.96 million meals were provided, 59 percent of the target. The figures seem to indicate that children have been receiving food substantially fewer days per year than was planned. The MTE's field work suggests this is plausible: in many of the schools visited there were instances where the MMS or lunch had not been provided due to an absence of cooks. The reasons for the absences were generally associated with other work commitments that yielded a higher compensation than the rice allowances provided by the project. Specific examples gathered from field interviews included going to the field for harvest or finding better paid work on a plantation. Clearly, patchy provision of school feeding in some schools and the lack of timely availability of that information to WFP decision makers, compromises the implementation of the programme and the intended benefits (Box 4 below distils the main benefits as perceived by MTE focus groups and informants).

Table 4 Planned and actual beneficiaries

Indicator	Target for FY 2015	Target for FY 2016	Target for FY 2017	Activity Outputs (01/10/15-31/03/16)	Activity Outputs (01/04/16 – 30/09/16)
Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (male)	76,355	72,097	57,267	73,538 95% of FY 2015 target	72,919 100% of FY 2016 target
Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (female)	74,247	70,107	55,685	67,881 91% of FY 2015 target	67,309 96% of FY 2016 target

Source: see full presentation in Annex H, Table 19.

Box 4 Main benefits of school feeding according to key informants

- Children stay at school to eat lunch and therefore more children attend school in the afternoon, with no differences between boys and girls.
- Giving a child one meal a day means a reduced food burden for poor families; it has positive implications for the family budget and means the parent do not have to worry when they are working in the fields.
- It is positive for the health of child.
- Reduced exposure to traffic as children are not walking to and from school as much.
- Opportunity for socialisation amongst children and opportunity to speak a common language.

65. At the same time, the shift from MMS to lunch is perceived as a clear improvement. The semi-annual report (September 2016) notes that *“In total, 503 schools are serving school lunch to schoolchildren as of September 2016 while the rest of 943 schools continue the mid-morning snack. With the recently approved amendment of McGovern Dole support,*

²² In 2015 WFP stopped providing take-home rations to 38 secondary schools which also received a stipend from the ADB (WFP, 2015d), and eventually stopped supporting secondary schools altogether (WFP, 2015e).

it will be possible to shift all schools by September 2017, to implement a lunch modality. The McGovern Dole proposal included a target of 786 schools to be shifted over to lunch, but as a reflection of the Policy on Promoting Lunch (May 2014) as well as WFP's efforts to prepare hand over of school feeding to communities and Government, the shift has been accelerated." Focus Group Discussions with teachers and pupils in the schools which have changed from MMS to lunch, found that the move to lunch is welcome. The children reported that lunch was tastier than the MMS but it is also seen as a strong factor in improving afternoon attendance (see Box 4), although complaints about the lack of variety in the lunch menu were common.

66. Training around food preparation and storage and in commodity management has been shaped by when schools move to a lunch modality rather than the target time frame set out in project documentation. For example, the targets were 4,500 cooks trained in food preparation and storage FY2015, none in FY 2016 and 4,500 trained in FY 2017 while in actual fact 3,113 (69 percent) were trained in FY 2015 and 1,028 trained in FY 2016. The training in 2016 was precipitated by the expansion of school lunch in August 2016 to another 257 schools which meant 514 village heads and 514 principals/teachers in 257 schools were trained in food preparation and storage practices while 514 cooks and 257 village heads were trained in commodity management. The previous September (2015), 1,259 people from the 259 villages implementing school lunch received training (Table 20 in Annex H).

67. The training for the cooks was deemed as largely satisfactory. It was acknowledged by some cooks however, that when the contribution of ingredients by the community is not enough, enhancing the taste is required and they revert to traditional cooking practices, adding mono-sodium glutamate or salt, despite being discouraged to do so in the training.

68. During the evaluation period 348 schools in northern provinces and 38 schools in south received renovation materials while 469 schools received kitchen renovation/reconstruction materials (the target was 396 schools for FY 2016 for both warehouses and kitchens). The communities volunteered to rehabilitate the warehouses and kitchens (WFP semi-annual report 2016). The supply of food to the schools by WFP was reported as working well with the food arriving in a timely manner at the start of each semester. There was some negative feedback around the quality of the rice in some schools as it seemed 'old' and in a few instances became contaminated with weevils or mould (in the rainy season) once in storage. However, schools and communities did not perceive there to be any issues around the practices of food storage.

69. In order to raise the awareness on School Meals, the importance of education and community contribution, six different posters were printed between April and September 2016. 18,000 copies were produced and shared with MOES and other development partners. The distribution is on the way to 1,446 schools under the WFP School Meals Programme.

Attainment of educational outcomes

70. One of the overall impact indicators for the MGD project is the improved literacy of the pupils. This will eventually be measured by a comparison between the baseline and endline surveys commissioned for the project (though the extent to which changes in literacy are attributable to the project will not be simple to assess). However, there are outcome educational indicators that are steps in the change pathway to achieving improved literacy (as illustrated in the inferred Theory of Change – Figure 9 in Annex F). A baseline figure by itself may at least indicate the scope for improvement, while evidence from similar interventions may help in assessing the likelihood of this project's success.

71. Thus the impact assessment which reviewed the period since 2002 (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016) has suggestive findings about attentiveness, enrolment, attendance and dropout:

- a) Pupils were reported as attentive by one or both of their current and prior year teachers at higher rates compared with pupils in control schools (89.1 percent programme, 84.9 percent control). This difference was largely seen among boy pupils although attentiveness rates for girls were higher than boys (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016).
- b) The MGD project target for enrolment that the percentage increase in girls and boys enrolled as a result of USDA assistance are 3 percent for both sexes. The impact assessment found that there was an average increase of 5.3 percent among programme schools and a decrease of 2.0 percent among control schools ($p=0.04$). Among girls, enrolment across all schools increased by an average of 8.1 percent in programme schools and decreased by 2.6 percent in control schools ($p=0.03$), while among boys' enrolment increased by 6.6 percent in programme schools and by 0.2 percent in control schools ($p=0.02$). (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016).
- c) According to the semi-annual reports, as of September 2016 83 percent of girls and 81 percent of boys were regularly attending school. The impact assessment found that there were no statistical differences between programme schools and control schools for absence in the impact survey although pupils in schools receiving lunch were less likely to be absent at both at morning and at afternoon roll calls than pupils in schools that were receiving MMS; which supports the views of respondents. Focus group discussions with teachers for this evaluation showed that in some cases children would eat lunch, go home and return for the afternoon class (if the home was close enough) while others would not go home in the lunch break. It will therefore be interesting to see if the final evaluation for the MGD project supports the finding of the impact assessment.
- d) The above noted impact assessment found that dropout rates over the past six years were low and similar across both groups. Among programme schools the average dropout rate was 0.7 percent compared to 0.6 percent for control schools. Among boys the dropout rate was 0.7 percent in programme schools and 0.8 percent in control schools, while among girls the rate was 0.7 percent in programme schools and 0.5 percent in control schools. Repetition rates were also similar between programme and control schools. Among programme schools the average repetition rate was 8.7 percent and among control schools the rate was 8.9 percent. (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016).

72. The authors concluded it is difficult to say whether school meals has been an effective tool in achieving educational outcomes and suggest that enrolment, dropout and repetition rates may be increasing across all schools in these provinces, due to external factors. Similarly, other than reducing afternoon absenteeism, key informants did not suggest school feeding had any educational benefits.

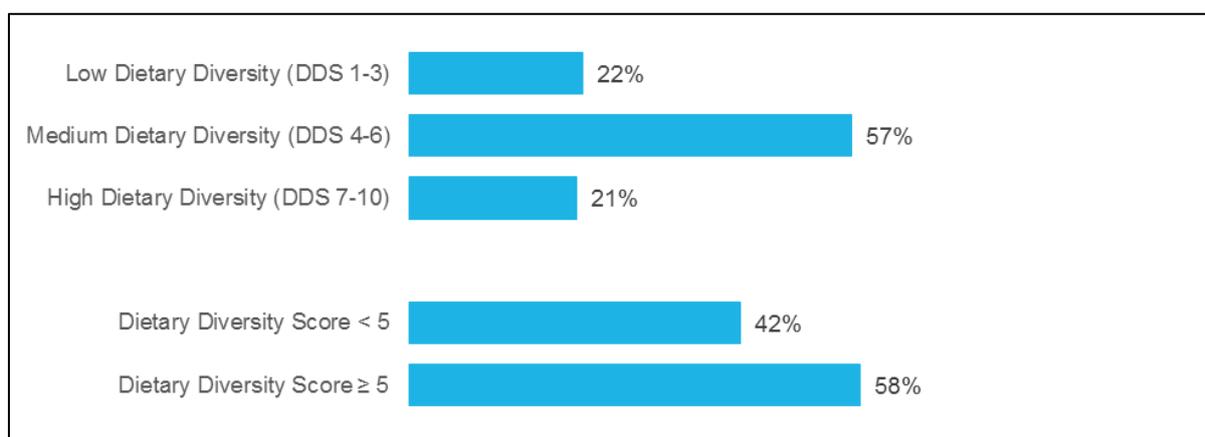
Attainment of health and nutritional outcomes

73. The increased use of health and dietary practices is the second impact indicator of the MGD project. It is intended that this will ultimately be measured by setting a test via the baseline and endline surveys with the target that the number of students in target schools who achieve a passing score (80 percent) on a test of good health and hygiene practices as a result of USDA assistance will be 57,665 females and 67,693 males. However, during the baseline survey none of the students obtained a passing score of 80 percent on a test on good health and hygiene practices (further discussion on nutrition education is presented below).

74. As per the Theory of Change, one of the outcomes in the pathway to achieving improved health and dietary practices is the measurement of dietary diversity. The impact assessment found that pupils in schools receiving a WFP school feeding programme had

higher overall dietary diversity scores and were less likely to have low scores than pupils in control schools. With the lunch modality, the provision of micronutrients is largely dependent on contributions by the community of fruits, vegetables and, if possible, animal source foods such as eggs.²³ Respondents suggested that these contributions are often seasonal, with less offered just before the harvest and in general some communities seem able to contribute more than other ones. Where the contribution is less, it is arguable that the quantities are insufficient to reach an adequate dietary diversity. The findings of the final evaluation are therefore key to assessing this further. Furthermore, the Partnership for Childhood Development operational guidance for menu planning (Bhatia, 2013) states that ‘although the food basket can and should be modified to be home-grown and correspond as much as possible with local and traditional tastes, it needs to maintain minimum nutritional standards’ and offers guidance of achieving the appropriate energy, protein and micronutrient intakes. Since the micronutrient component of the school lunch is patchy, it can be assumed that the global normative guidelines are not being met.²⁴ Figure 2 below shows students’ dietary diversity score at baseline, showing that 77 percent of students have low or medium dietary diversity.

Figure 2 Student dietary diversity scores



Source: Kimetrica, 2015

Social transfers

75. An Assessment-Based National Dialogue on Social Protection (ABND) was carried out under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with technical support by ILO and the joint support of UN agencies to assess existing social protection programmes and develop appropriate recommendations towards the extension of a social protection floor, providing basic income security for all, especially the poor and vulnerable (Theile & Cichon, 2016). This exercise recommended that school meals should be expanded to all schools in disadvantaged districts thereby recognising that school feeding in Laos does have a social protection function. This supports the view from key informants that school feeding can reduce the burden on poor families. Social protection is an overarching theme of WFP’s School Feeding Policy (WFP, 2013f). The MGD grant provides incentives for personnel such as cooks and storekeepers in the form of rice and this is seen as a safety net. The semi-annual report (Sept 2016) cites a final target of 268,638 receiving the incentive while 117,134 were receiving it as of the end of September 2016. Cooks reported that they would continue even if the incentive was withdrawn but further analysis is required to determine its effect as a safety

²³ Fortified foods, such as CSB were not included in the switch from MMS to lunch.

²⁴ In the LRP pilot, the CO will work with a dietician on menu development.

net.²⁵ However, FGDs found that school meals are seen as a safety net in terms of reducing the burden on families to provide one meal for one member of the family (Box 4 above).

76. No unintended consequences of school feeding were detected from the literature or from field visits.

Complementary activities

School gardens

77. According to the semi-annual reports, the target number of school gardens constructed as a result of USDA assistance is 768 and so far 516 (67 percent of target) have been constructed. WFP facilitated a training for 257 schools in eight districts on school garden and lunch in August 2016 prior to transitioning to school lunch.²⁶ The village head, school principal/teacher, a member from the parent association and two members of the village (Lao Women Union) were trained. The construction of school gardens contributes to the outcome indicator ‘Increased Economic and Cultural Incentives or Decreased Disincentives’.

78. The primary purpose of school gardens is generally perceived to be an educational tool for pupils to learn about agriculture, with an additional but lesser purpose of providing ingredients for the school meal. However, there was almost no emphasis on gardens being used to teach about nutrition and the content of the technical handbook recently produced by the MOES in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MOES, 2016), reflects this. The Policy on Promoting School Lunch 2014 does see school gardens as a food pipeline to ‘promote school gardening and small animal raising as a complementary intervention to make sufficient and varied foods available at all times’ and a decree is apparently planned by the MOES. In response, WFP and FAO are currently piloting education material (including nutrition) in three WFP assisted schools in Luangnamtha. However, the mooted partnership with MAF, WFP and FAO seems to be rather ineffectual since the ET was unable to identify a focal point at FAO Laos with whom to speak. This is all the more urgent given the partnership required by the National Nutrition Strategy’s “convergent approach” discussed elsewhere.

79. Common challenges experienced by a significant number of schools include a lack of water supply, particularly during the dry season when it is needed most and a lack of dedicated manpower to manage the garden at weekends and school holidays. These factors meant that at best the garden was only used to grow food for a few months at a time or at worst, was not used at all. Some model school gardens do exist with their success being attributable to a good water supply and enthusiastic staff.²⁷

80. The impact assessment (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016) concluded that “Gardens appear to provide little support to enhancing the sustainability of the programme, and even when conditions are ideal the gardens do not produce enough to fully support the lunch programme.”²⁸ The fact that the forthcoming decree means that every school where there is school lunch will have to cultivate a garden, means that more support may be required for schools to achieve this. District Agriculture Officers do offer some support although schools suggest that more face-to-face contact would be better and someone who is more hands-on can offer more practical technical advice than a desk-based person. The Government may also need to be more realistic about the results which school gardens can yield.

²⁵ Including the effect of income alternatives for example at harvest time and plantation income in some areas as noted elsewhere in this report. Furthermore, given this evaluation has found cooks’ absence to be an issue facing school meals, this sentiment can be assumed to relate to those cooks that do attend and are motivated.

²⁶ Training had already been given for 259 gardens prior to September 2015.

²⁷ Na Huey in Beng is a particularly good example that could be used as a study tour venue.

²⁸ This finding is in line with the review of global evidence in Mokoro, 2011, which found that educational objectives for school gardens are much more feasible than a substantial contribution to food production.

Health and nutrition education (including hygiene)

81. The project aims to target 18,559 males and 13,440 females with training on health and nutrition practices. So far 2,226 males (12 percent) and 1,232 females (9 percent) have been reached. WFP has conducted trainings on health and nutrition for village representatives and cooks as part of the school lunch modality – 259 villages (1,070 men and 589 women) received training which included a package of topics (school garden set up, the lunch modality, hygiene and nutrition messaging) in September 2015 and 257 villages (1,156 men and 643 women) were trained in June and July 2016 (WFP semi-annual report 2016).²⁹

82. The fact that the number of people reached falls short of the target indicates a lack of emphasis on nutrition and health education which was corroborated by findings from interviews. Nutrition education is in the curriculum for primary schools, but there is variable understanding about nutrition amongst teaching staff, with some unable to describe what the curriculum actually includes; refreshers and a deepening of understanding are required, especially with the VEDCs.

83. Overall there is much more scope for a greater emphasis on nutrition education, not only by increasing the understanding and support of teaching staff, but by using school meals and gardens more as tools for learning about nutrition. As such it seems doubtful that the indicator ‘increased knowledge of nutrition’ will be fully achieved. This combined with the insufficient scale of WASH activities, means that the impact indicator within the MGD results framework ‘increased use of health and dietary practices’ will not be fully achieved either.

Literacy activities

84. WFP is partnering with two NGOs to support literacy activities. With Plan International, activities will take place in ten schools in Nga district, Oudomxay for two school years. WFP has also engaged with the local Non-Profit Organization Big Brother Mouse (BBM), to roll out access to books and literacy activities in 99 schools in Ngoy and Phonthong districts, Luang Prabang for one school year. These partnerships have just commenced and therefore it is too early to assess output and outcome data. However, the complementary literacy/reading activities are on a very much smaller scale than the school feeding activity that they are intended to reinforce.

85. Efforts to promote literacy, such as the provision of books and reading rooms, are welcomed by schools. There are examples of children who eat lunch and then stay at school using these resources during the break. There are also anecdotes of teachers reading to children when they are able. The current coverage of literacy activities is a limiting factor in achieving the desired impact on literacy (Improved Literacy of School-Age Children being an impact indicator in the MGD results framework). While the design of the programme provides opportunities for activities to support such organizations, WFP seems to have come late to this kind of partnership and the coverage by NGOs does not reach sufficient scale. WFP could also help to foster and commission new reading materials containing better behaviour, favouring of improved gender relations / boys’ and girls’ behaviours and reducing the vulnerability associated with ethnicity and better suited reading materials for non-Lao speakers. More attention is needed on providing reading materials that cater to boys’ and girls’ interests.

Complementary activities not supported by the MGD grant

86. The provision of hygiene and sanitation and deworming are activities that are highlighted in the results framework as complementary but which are not the responsibility of WFP, hence there are no performance indicators in the reports.

²⁹ Targets were 4867, 6846, 6846 males in FY 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively and 3524, 4958, and 4958 females for FY 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively.

87. Teachers are supportive of hand-washing and there is promotion in schools. This is more emphatic where there is WASH support, such as by GIZ or UNICEF. Where there isn't this support, a lack of soap can constrain efforts but teachers are encouraged by UNICEF to purchase soap from the administrative budget and some do this. One school in Oudamxay uses money that a stall-keeper pays to sell snacks on school premises to buy soap.

88. In non-WASH project areas, a lack of water supply poses a significant constraint in some schools for hygiene and sanitation. In schools where UNICEF has been providing sanitation facilities there is a separate toilet for girls, boys and disabled pupils (even if there aren't any disabled pupils enrolled). Higher rates of diarrhoea in schools without the UNICEF WASH programme were observed (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016).

89. The impact assessment team also concluded that water access is a primary concern for many schools however, whilst WASH activities are striving to address this need, the scale of efforts is not sufficient. UNICEF recently carried out a review with the Ministry of Planning and Investment which showed that 688 schools received a WASH package between 2012–2016. Given there are 8,800 primary schools in Laos this is 8 percent. According to recent data, 69 percent of schools have adequate water, 69 percent have latrines while 60 percent have both, therefore 40 percent (3,520) of schools remain in need of either adequate water or sanitation or both. However, WFP and UNICEF recognise the coverage issue and have developed a joint proposal to seek further funding to increase WASH activities.

90. On the basis of evaluation visits, there would appear to be a very inconsistent ability to provide schools with adequate and functioning WATSAN facilities that endure over time. In several cases of schools we visited, latrines were locked and from the look at the outside condition, it would appear that they are not regularly used. When we inquired about this, in some places we were told that the children defecate in the nearby bushes.

91. The other important prerequisite and complementary issue for the success of the programme is an all-season water supply for the viability of the school gardens. It appeared to the ET that the issue of water and sanitation needs additional thinking and more consistent support in order to gain the intended benefits from the school feeding activities.

92. Supported by WHO, deworming is taking place in schools; however, it does not always adhere to recommended practice given that teachers in some schools reported giving it to the children only once per year, rather than twice. There is no specified 'Deworming Day' in the school calendar which makes scheduling this activity more ambiguous. As a mitigation measure the WFP CO has applied to MGD for funding to support sensitization and behaviour change materials to improve deworming take-up (information received from WFP RBB).

Capacity development

93. The MGD project results framework has indicators on increased government capacity and support, alongside an improved policy and regulatory framework, but also increased engagement of local organisations and community groups, necessitating capacity development activities at national, provincial, district and community level. The targets for these four indicators are included in Table 21 in Annex H.

Increased capacity of government institutions

94. WFP have strengthened efforts at the national level directed towards hand-over during the evaluation period. This has included facilitating two SABER³⁰ exercises (February and December 2016), facilitating visits by Government of Lao PDR staff to the Centre of Excellence in Brazil, organising a transition workshop in August 2015 and holding ongoing

³⁰ SABER = Systems Approach for Better Education Results. The World Bank hosts SABER which promotes multi-stakeholder analysis of ways to strengthen education systems. It includes a school feeding module: World Bank, 2014.

negotiations with MOES and other stakeholders such as the World Bank to move the process forwards. The SABER exercise with CRS and the counterpart confirmed that Laos is advanced not only in terms of policies but also in terms of community involvement and coordination (technical working group and sector plans) (SPR 2015). Based on 11 indicators, the SPR 2015 shows the School Feeding National Capacity Index increased from 1.50 to 2.40 between 2012 and 2015 (SABER, 2015). For further analysis on capacity development activities at national level and sustainability see section 2.5 below.

95. Capacity development efforts for provincial level staff have been less frequent than at the district or local level, since these staff play less of a hands-on role in providing technical assistance and monitoring in the current ministry approach. Symptomatic of the management problem in MOES, provincial monitoring takes place through an annual visit designed only to address unresolved problems referred through the year by the District. However, it is important that they have appropriate understanding, especially of strategic and planning issues to be able to play their management oversight role and act as master trainers. WFP have responded to this need by including provincial staff in appropriate training, although some of the respondents we met said they had not been involved in this. In September 2015, WFP together with staff from MOES Vientiane, who are responsible for the National School Meals programme, trained ten provincial officials through the Training of Trainers (TOT) on the lunch modality. Training of Trainers on school gardens was conducted for provincial and districts education and agriculture officials from lunch-implementing districts of Beng (Oudomxay province), Boun Neua, (Phongsaly province), Viengphoukha (Luangnamtha province), Laongam (Saravan province) and Thateng (Sekong province) in June and July 2016.

96. Oudomxay province's education staff seemed to have a good strategic sense of the project and noted that they work together to try to maximize utility of the activities and proper capacity development. At the village, district and provincial level they believe they are developing experience and systems that can be applied to school lunch management when the time comes. The steering committee in Oudomxay is an important asset and the provincial office reported that they gain experience through this mechanism as well.

97. Whilst Provincial Education staff had a working understanding of the programme, Provincial Agriculture staff lacked understanding of the role of school gardens and the successes and challenges associated with them.³¹ There is also a pervasive sentiment from Government staff in both sectors that provincial staff currently play a limited role in the programme and do not feel part of the programme, but that there is scope to play a greater role, for example in annual planning. Despite the previous efforts WFP has gone to, to secure provincial involvement, further efforts are needed to increase the understanding and engagement of provincial staff. Both provincial and district staff reported that WFP is weak at sharing data with them.

98. At the start of the project, District Education Officers were responsible for monitoring the activities and providing technical support. As the quality of data generated by this system was too poor to satisfy donors, WFP took steps to extract the monitoring function from the officers, leaving them with the technical support function for a period of time. In order to ensure the proper implementation of programme under the MGD support, WFP created 23 monitoring assistant posts in January 2016 to cover all the targeted schools (see illustrative job description in Annex H, Box 11) that also includes a role in the new LRP. There is a plan to re-involve MOES in data collection starting in 2017 and training has already taken place for that purpose. WFP will pay for a monthly monitoring plan produced by the district office, based on the variables of distance and number of person days, organized on the assumption of a two-person team from the district office (DO). The DO will receive an advance for the cost of the monitoring described in the monthly plan and be required to give a report by the

³¹ The sample interviewed was small.

25th of the following month in order to be eligible for the next advance. This has been negotiated and cleared between WFP and the provincial and district offices.

99. Schools reported that District Education Officers do visit schools without WFP but the provision of technical assistance is limited. It is not clear if and how the engagement of district staff has changed whilst Monitoring Assistants (MAs) have been responsible for monitoring, and whether their re-involvement in monitoring will produce better quality data than before. District Agriculture Officers are more active, providing technical assistance to the school gardens with varying frequency. District staff do see themselves as playing an important role in the programme and as one suggested, ‘Communities will listen to us more than outside organisations’. It was also suggested that government staff can better leverage the District Governor to solve problems, who has a strong influence on the community. WFP’s engagement with District Governors to date has been scant, although there are plans to increase engagement.

Increased government support and improved policy and regulatory framework

100. These two outcomes are specified in the results framework but are not mentioned in the WFP proposal to USDA, or the commitment letter or, perhaps more critically, WFP’s monitoring reports. In the results framework the colour code indicates that this outcome will be achieved and progress towards it will be monitored through partners’ activities, specifically the MOES, MOH, and UNICEF. Further discussion on these areas is presented in section 2.5 below.

Increased engagement of local organisations and community groups

101. There is a perception amongst development partners that engagement of communities with the programme is one of the strongest factors for contributing to programme success. The community structures related to this include VEDCs, Village Authorities and mass organisations such as the Lao Women’s Union (LWU); in many villages LWU is responsible for organising the cooking rota. VEDCs (see Box 2 above) exist in all locations and key informants were able to describe who the members were the roles each of them played. An assessment carried out in March 2015 looking at the functionality and impact of VEDCs concluded that the ‘basics’ of VEDCs are largely in place, but there are challenges in ensuring that all members are committed to and capacitated for their roles (Seel et al., 2015). To capacitate the members requires more than training; it requires mentoring and coaching supported by sufficient face-time. Capacity development of communities is currently the responsibility of WFP MAs, yet these staff are also responsible for monitoring and each have a large number of villages to cover (each MA is required to visit each school in their portfolio twice per semester), hence it is impossible to conduct anything more meaningful than relatively shallow discussions on an infrequent basis.

102. The semi-annual reports measure performance in this area through a number on indicators such as the number of school meals committees (SMCs) contributing to their schools and the number of SMCs that have been trained on good health and nutrition as well as the construction of kitchens, warehouses and storerooms. However, no results data have been documented in the reports (as apparent in Table 21 in Annex H).

Gender equality and protection issues

103. WFP Lao has developed an implementation plan to complement WFP’s corporate gender policy (WFP, 2016l). One activity in the plan was to analyse the reasons for gender differences in drop-out rates. The analysis found in many cases, boys drop out around harvest and planting seasons and as a result WFP and partners continue to advocate with the Government to revise the school calendar, or facilitate half days during these seasons so that boys can attend school. There are also activities in the plan around cooking such as sharing

photos of men cooking to break down social stereotypes, and to delay the move to school lunches where water is an issue to prevent overburdening cooks (who are usually women) who may have to fetch water from long distances. Schools visited during the field visit found that if water was far away, often the school lunches did not happen, even if the transition from MMS to lunch had occurred.

104. WFP and the World Bank signed a Joint Letter on August 2nd, 2014 to pilot the use of clean cook stoves that reduce smoke exposure and the risk of lung disease. In 2014, four types of stoves were tested in Laos through support of World Bank and SNV Netherlands Development Organization. WFP will purchase 20 such stoves with technical advice on specifications from the World Bank.

105. The SPR 2015 states that a 2015 evaluation by UNICEF and World Vision, found that the representation of women and marginalised groups in the VEDCs needs to be improved. Indeed the proportion of women beneficiaries in leadership positions of project management committees fell from 47 percent in 2014 to 38 percent in 2015 (SPR 2015).

106. VEDC members are elected following Government guidelines. The committee is typically chaired by the head of the village (a male) with the only female in the group being a representative of the Lao Women's Union, one of the Lao mass organizations. Through its activities in community participation, WFP may influence the composition of the village committee by working with village men and women to promote gender equality and promote more women in decision making at the village level using the Government's own policies on gender mainstreaming. This can also provide opportunities to advocate at the central level for gender parity in local governance.

107. This will require long-term efforts and an improved WFP human resource structure at community level that presently has quite limited scope for providing meaningful support to VEDCs to change. This is primarily because of a lack of 'face time' in each location and the age and experience of the staff.

108. Using more women (and perhaps more locally hired women) in these positions may be improved since, according to the SPR 2015, there were no differences between men and women in terms of how safe they felt travelling to and from the programme and the proportion who felt safe was high at 97 percent for both sexes (WFP, 2015c).

2.4 What factors have affected the results?

Box 5 Key findings on factors affecting results

- A clearly positive factor has been the responsiveness to experience of the project design. On the other hand, deficiencies in M&E will limit its ability to learn and adjust from experience.
- WFP's logistic capacity helps ensure effective delivery to schools, although there are problems in ensuring regularity of meals.
- The importance of capacity development, at both national and local levels, is recognised, but WFP's human resourcing has yet to catch up with capacity development objectives.
- An optimal model for joint ownership, technical support and monitoring is not yet attained, and providing an effective support to capacitate VEDCs is an additional challenge.
- Implementation has been facilitated by good relationships with partners, but the feelings of lack of ownership by MOES have meant a sub-optimal partnership with government. Partnerships with others to produce quality teaching resources and literacy / reading materials are on a very much smaller scale than the school feeding activity that they are intended to reinforce
- The national policy context has been generally favourable, but Government of Lao PDR faces significant difficulties in rolling out national policies to, and developing capacity at, local level.
- The national policy context has been generally favourable, although there are weaknesses in the

approach to school gardens.

- The biggest inhibitor of potential results is the small scale of complementary activities within the project, and the lack of adequate funding for complementary inputs anticipated from outside the project, such as support to WASH and school health activities.
- MOES and the Government have a policy to locally source food commodities that they call “Buy your parents’ rice”. WFP/MDG project modality of in-kind commodity is not compatible with this. MOES faces its own significant problems with allocating budgets for SF and related activities.
- The MTE finds that many of the theory of change assumptions on which programme success depends are not being met.

Overview

109. This section reviews internal and external factors that have influenced the results of the MGD-funded SFP. As noted in the previous section, the project has generally been satisfactory in the logistical sense of delivering school feeding, with numbers of beneficiary schools and students reasonably close to targets, but there appear to be problems in ensuring that children are fed on every school day. Results from complementary activities and capacity development work have been more problematic. This section considers explanations for both positive and problematic aspects of performance so far. It concludes with an assessment of the validity of the key assumptions identified in the inferred ToC (summarised in Table 5 on page 29). The assumptions concerned are noted in the subheadings that follow (for a sequential list of the assumptions see Table 32 in Annex M).

Quality of partnerships (ToC assumptions 1-3)

110. **Good collaboration amongst members of the Technical Working Group** – the TWG is an effective structure for open dialogue between stakeholders involved in school feeding, which is also helped by the fact they are not that numerous – comprising MOES, World Bank, WFP and CRS. The most prominent non-Lao government actors (WFP, World Bank and CRS) use this forum to work collaboratively which has aided efforts to work towards handover, such as exchange visits.

111. Appropriate attention to **complementarity and relationships with partners** has already been noted in section 2.2 above, ¶46-51.

Financial constraints and scale of complementary activities (ToC assumptions 1-3)

112. **Financial gap for literacy and WASH** – as shown above there is a need to improve literacy levels in Laos and the MGD project is addressing this by supporting reading activities with partners Big Brother Mouse and Plan International. Whilst the Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL) consortium is an important step in promoting literacy it still does not operate at sufficient scale, reaching as it does only five districts (out of 66 districts identified under BEQUAL) in four provinces: Oudomxay (Plan), Luang Prabang (Save the Children), Khammouane (World Vision) and Huaphanh (ChildFund). This highlights a resource gap.

113. Similarly, the lack of WASH facilities is cited in surveys (Kimetrica, 2015, Moossavi & Trinies, 2016) as a substantial constraint for adequate hygiene and sanitation practices in schools and schools gardens, as well as having an effect on cooking lunches. UNICEF’S WASH programme has only targeted approximately 80 schools targeted by WFP with school feeding while the GIZ-WFP partnership supports ten schools. Again, this highlights that WASH activities are not implemented at sufficient scale to match the need. WFP has recognised this and have submitted a joint proposal with UNICEF for more WASH activities.

114. **Lack of Government of Lao PDR budgetary commitment** - although the policy framework is in place and there is a School Feeding Unit embedded within the MOES, the Government of Lao PDR has not yet committed funding for school feeding, which constrains the commitment and engagement of staff throughout the MOES (see section 2.5).

115. **Complementary activities are often constrained by scale** – WFP has recognised that it cannot undertake all the activities necessary to contribute to the results in the framework and therefore appropriately partners with other organisations. Many of these partners though, particularly INGOs and NGOs do not have the capacity to work at the scale required to match the coverage of the SFP. Neither is there a sufficient number of NGOs to cover the geographical area. In this regard, the project has more of a demonstrative function, showing the Government how to implement activities that will achieve required results and providing the data to justify it.

National political and policy environment (ToC assumptions 4-5, 15, 16)

116. **Government of Lao PDR policy framework in place** – The Government of Lao PDR Policy on Promoting School Lunch 2014 has been instrumental in shaping WFP’s school feeding programme. It sets out objectives, target group and the components of a school meals programme. The Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP’s Country Programme in Laos (Coombs et al., 2014) recommended that WFP better align itself with the Government’s School Meals programme and as such WFP has been transitioning to school meals with 503 schools are serving school lunch to school children as of September 2016 while the rest of 943 schools continue the mid-morning snack (semi-annual report 2016). Simultaneously, WFP has been supporting the development of school gardens in locations where school meals are taking place. This welcome move by schools and the effect on afternoon absenteeism is partially driven by the Government’s school meals policy since it has influenced the acceleration of the shift from MMS to lunch.

117. **Weaknesses in approach to school gardens.** The policy states that school gardens should be a component alongside school lunches but it does not offer a nuanced approach that considers various local constraints such as a variability in water supply. Whilst the policy is in agreement with WFP’s own home-grown school feeding approach and is a push-factor in schools implementing school gardens, it is not helpful in suggesting different approaches that may need to be taken in various contexts to achieve effective and useful gardens. (See also the discussion in ¶77–80 above.)

Project design and WFP Processes ToC (assumptions 6-8, 13, 14)

118. **Flexibility.** A clearly positive factor has been the responsiveness to experience of the project design. The current project design also includes revisions approved by MGD in October 2016 that respond to operating requirements of the project and opportunities that have arisen. In particular, the ability to cover an additional province, the phasing out of the THR, the ability to use local partners to provide inputs into literacy and training materials development are good examples of the flexibility in the design and implementation.

119. **WFP logistics deliver food in a timely manner** – in project documents and from key informant interviews at national and community level and FGDs with schools and communities, no issue was raised around the supply chain in terms of delivering food in time for the start of each semester. (As mentioned above there were some complaints around the quality of food post-storage at village level.)

120. **WFP’s human resourcing has yet to catch up with capacity development objectives** - WFP’s country strategy for Laos heavily features capacity development which is in line with its corporate shift away from food aid towards food assistance and the development service delivery that is essential. This move towards more capacity development

and working with the Government supports the relevance of activities in Laos. However, global evaluations have detected that corporately WFP's skill set amongst its human resources has not shifted sufficiently to support capacity development (WFP, 2014b, WFP, 2014d, Mokoro, 2016a) and the case of the monitoring assistants in Laos is another example. As mentioned previously, strong community governance is seen as pivotal for effective school feeding and it is the responsibility of the monitoring assistants to support capacity development at community level. However, these staff are overburdened since they are responsible for monitoring as well and have to cover a significant number of villages. This is perhaps a reflection that WFP has not yet fully appreciated that capacity development does not just mean training, but involves a suite of other support including mentoring and coaching to fully capacitate community members. WFP has started to recognise this and to discuss the human resource model that should be employed. Ideally, monitoring assistants should have a sufficient level of experience behind them to carry sway with community members; in reality, they are often younger staff with minimal work experience and as one key informant relayed a teacher saying '*I was teaching this MA last year and now he is here to teach me*'. It is incredibly difficult though, to find older people who are willing to travel to remote locations that are difficult to access, and to travel a lot which means that WFP will need to find the optimal model that uses the most proficient human resources that are available to it.

121. **Optimal model for technical support and monitoring not yet attained** – at the start of the project WFP attempted to use the government system for monitoring and technical support in an appropriate effort to strive for sustainability. However, this approach faced many difficulties, including the poor quality of data being generated which is why the monitoring function has been temporarily removed from district staff with a view to re-involving them in 2017. The technical support function (e.g. advising and mentoring on content, teaching methods and approaches) remained with district officers but key informants reported that while district officers did visit schools, the quality of technical support is questionable and not at a level to satisfy donors. There is little to suggest that the competencies of district staff will improve with subsequent efforts by WFP, and the National School Meals Programme is also suffering from poor monitoring as highlighted in the recent SABER exercise. The school meals programme implemented by CRS reports few problems with monitoring data but CRS employs 50 community mobilisers for 350 schools in only one province to do this work, which arguably has sustainability issues.

122. The higher expectation placed on districts and schools in current ministerial policy is likely to be the most influential factor in improving the quality of data generated by a Government-led system. The VEDCs are also meant to exert a pull-factor by exerting a demand for quality data. Once the Government commits budgets for school meals through the VEDCs this will work to change the relationships between schools and VEDCS. In the meantime, WFP's advocacy efforts can continue to highlight the issue of monitoring whilst continuing to develop local capacity where possible. Sharing data is one way of highlighting successes and data gaps particularly if other provinces, districts and schools can see how others are performing.

Education system context (ToC assumptions 9-12)

123. **Education indicators from school feeding shaped by quality of the education system** – in the MGD results framework there are three educational outcome indicators around literacy, attentiveness and attendance. The baseline survey (Kimetrica, 2015) found that from the available school records, student attendance appears to be very high, with 97 percent attendance on average and 100 percent with regular attendance (i.e. students who attended ≥ 80 percent of class days). There is therefore limited scope for trying to increase attendance through school feeding as stipulated by the MGD result indicator. The

baseline survey also found that the average dropout rate over the last academic year is less than one percent.

124. There is certainly much room for improvement around literacy since the baseline survey found that only 1.9 percent of students were able to demonstrate at least 75 per cent comprehension of the Lao language compared with a target of 25 per cent (Kimetrica, 2015). Whilst the survey suggests that teachers are present in schools with 94 percent average attendance and 84 percent of teachers attending at least 90 percent of the school days in the last academic year, key informant interviews highlighted that the quality of teaching is an issue. It is suggested that in some instances teachers see their role as occupying children while they are in school rather than actually ‘teaching’. This finding requires further clarifying evidence but if it does hold true then it presents a substantial challenge for WFP since it signifies a need to address the quality of teacher training and the mind set of teachers will system-wide, which takes WFP further beyond its mandate.

Gender dimensions

125. **WFP's gender plan is a useful framework to guide implementation** – WFP Lao has developed a plan to implement the WFP Gender Policy and updates it on an annual basis (WFP, 2016l). This has overall activities as well as activities relating to each programme, thereby enabling staff to concretely incorporate gender issues into programming. Although the gender focal point is relatively shy of the necessary experience, he is backstopped by the periodic presence of an expatriate consultant who also provides inputs into the updating of the annual plans around gender. The lack of a full time experienced person means that mentoring and resource development opportunities may be lost. An example is the lack of gender approach in the reading materials from BBM and their inability to suggest how the books and content could be used to promote gender equality (interview with BBM).

Validity of ToC Assumptions

126. Table 32 in Annex M shows the MTE findings against each of the implicit assumptions in the ToC and rates each assumption as valid, problematic or invalid, as shown in Table 5 below. A number of key assumptions are not valid (notably #1 and #5 on adequate complementary activities and government funding, and #7 on adequate M&E), while most of the other key assumptions are problematic (they are not necessarily blocking ToC pathways completely, but they are significant constraints on the achievement of project results).

Table 5 Validity of ToC Assumptions

<p>Valid assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Strong coordination with other donors. 8. Adequate response to natural disasters. 11. Programme not disrupted by staff turnover. 12. Teachers willing to engage in training etc.
<p>Problematic assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Adequate capacity of NGO sector. 4. Continued government support for national SF programme. 6. Sufficient attention to strengthening systems and capacity at all levels. 9. Preconditions for causal links between SF and educational performance objectives are valid in the Laos context. 10. Adequate staff and equipment and structures in schools to support learning. 13. Quality of training activities. 14. Community members, particularly VEDCS, willing to perform roles that the programme envisages for them. 15. The WFP/ MOES relationship reflects / supports the effectiveness of MOES role in school feeding.

Invalid assumptions

1. Adequate complementary activities and inputs by other partners and contributors.
5. Government willingness to commit funding to school feeding.
7. Adequate monitoring and reporting systems associated with SF.
16. School gardens etc. can produce ingredients for SF in substantial quantities.

2.5 To what extent has sustainability been considered?

Box 6 Key findings on sustainability

- Sustainability of school feeding programmes and their benefits depends on the development of capacities to maintain and operate such programmes at both national and local levels.
- There is ongoing collaboration, supported by the World Bank, WFP and others, to strengthen national school feeding capacities, but SF strategy development will be moot unless it is matched by sufficient budget allocations.
- At local level there is need for stronger relationships with MOES staff and more effective engagement with VEDCs, as well as stronger links between national and local levels of government on SF and related policy implementation.
- The project design, and WFP's approach to monitoring and implementation have shown substantial attention to gender issues. Sustained effects will depend on continuing to mainstream a gender focus and there are many opportunities at the local level with VEDCs and in developing improved training/ reading resources.

Overview

127. The key criterion of sustainability is whether the benefits of the operation are likely to continue after the programme is completed. This has local and national dimensions. At national level, it depends on the medium and long term capability of the Government (a) taking full responsibility for school feeding strategy and programmes (in a way that links social protection, educational and nutrition policies), and (b) ensuring adequate budgetary and human resources are available for ongoing implementation of the SF strategy. At the local level it requires sufficient ownership and capacity in local governments, village organisations and other stakeholders to continue to operate and maintain an effective SF programme. The importance of strengthening the capacity of national stakeholders is recognised in the foundational results of the MGD programme, but, as demonstrated in Annex H, Table 21, very little has been reported against the performance indicators directly linked to the foundational results. This section therefore provides a mainly qualitative assessment, drawing particularly on observations, interviews and other discussions during the MTE country visit. Suggestions have been made for ways to enhance the likelihood of sustainable results at the various administrative levels.

Handover planning at national level

128. Interviews by the ET and programme documentation, show the a high level of concern WFP places on sustainability of the SFP; however, this requires a multilevel acceptance of, and engagement with, a variety of practical implementation issues at the field level which exceed WFPs ability to manage. For WFP itself at the national policy level, their concerted effort towards handover is in line with government policy and other stakeholders who all participate in a technical working group to this end. The target of 2020 has been known to the government since 2014; it is referred to in the MGD project documents and is in line with the National Policy on Promoting School Lunch.

129. At the same time, “handover” means more than transferring responsibility from WFP. The Government’s ability to put budget lines in place for the various programmes in its

NSEDP is very much constrained by its inability to generate sufficient income, and all donor programmes deal with budgetary and cash flow constraints faced by the Government to fund its variety of competing policies. Within MOES for example, anecdotally, a significant issue for sustainability is that the government's budget required for food procurement ranks lower in priority than teacher salaries, supply of books and construction of new classrooms. In the highly centralized environment of Lao government decision-making, these matters lie well beyond the ability of any donor to deal with and are decided ultimately by the Politburo. The efforts that WFP and other donors make through, for example the TWGs, provide at least some assistance to creating understanding and mutual support for Government programmes. Creating more informal and collegial contact to listen to the problems of national level staff, done sensitively, could open opportunities to enhance the likelihood of sustainable results.

Sustainability issues at local level

Engagement with district level ministry staff

130. In general MOES staff at all levels have the view that WFP is the de facto manager of the WFP SFP. Although the lack of a ministry budget sufficient to the need for field monitoring is a significant and worrying factor, they point to their experience of lacking a role in even substantive discussion on the purchasing, distribution or in the project budgeting. Government staff made it clear to the ET that they find themselves to be more followers of WFP rather than responsible co-owners, and they lack a feeling of ownership. This is particularly due to WFP having its own procedures managed by its own personnel and this results in MOES staff normally waiting to be invited to get involved.

131. At the central level, MOES believe it is especially important to get more involvement of district officials to ensure a better handover as the MOES makes further changes to the SFP, which is concurrent with efforts by WFP to involve district officials in monitoring and technical support. The MOES reports that WFP have asked them to name a person as focal point at district level but there is a lack of understanding by MOES on the precise role for this position given the issues around the lack of government budget for school feeding. Regular management workshops are very much needed in the field where central /provincial /district education offices and WFP could examine together the activities in which Government staff could become more involved to enhance the likelihood of sustainable results. The continuation of the programme after the completion of the grant is also dependent on a number of related issues at the local management level, discussed next.

Centrality of the VEDC

132. The Government of Lao PDR and MOES are looking to the VEDC as a local mechanism to provide in-kind support from communities and see it as an extension of their 3 Builds Policy.³² In order to make this work, considerable improvements need to be made in the membership and functioning of VEDCs. WFP is working in conjunction with others on this as a strategy (cf. Box 2 above) to enhance the likelihood of sustainable results.

National guidance for local activity

133. The 8th Plan and the National Strategy for Gender Equality to 2025 are important foundation documents that can reassure local government staff of national priorities and directions. The 3 Builds Policy for example, is a positive step as is the National Nutrition Strategy (see below) and the coordination between MAF, MOES and MOH. Familiarity with these at the working level in WFP and the ability to link project annual plans to the implementation of these policies, would be useful to encourage local commitment and

³² "Building provinces to become strategic unit, districts to become comprehensively strengthened unit and villages to become development unit"; 8th Plan para 36 p 11; Also "Ensure women participation in decision making at family and community level"; *ibid* Section 7.21.2 p 127.

participation and enhance the likelihood of sustainable results. In this regard WFP's gender action plan seems well-suited to the field challenges as seen by the evaluation team.

Moving away from in-kind commodity support

134. An in-kind modality depending on international donations of commodities is clearly not sustainable in the long run (cf. the discussion in section 2.2 above ¶42-45 and Box 7 below). The new directions of WFP's Country Strategic Plan highlight the role of cash transfers in the future and this is entirely consistent with MOES policy. WFP Laos has also received a USD1 million grant from USDA to implement a Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) pilot during 2017 (see Annex J). To enhance the likelihood of sustainable results, it would be desirable to create a number of field study tours to schools that are functioning well.³³

Box 7 Sustainability of the in-kind modality

The MGD project stipulates that the food is supplied in-kind from the United States, which has several consequences. Firstly, feedback from children is that the rice seems 'old' perhaps because of the difference of variety or due to the time between it being harvested in the US and it being eaten as part of a school meal. There are also complaints about the lack of diversity since the protein component (which is what the complaints mainly revolve around) is the same for every single meal, as well as the issues around appropriateness described in section 2.2. Secondly, and more fundamentally, national policy is that a sustainable national SF programme should be based on local procurement, not international donations.

Discussions are under way between MGD and WFP to introduce a cash or voucher system as may be appropriate in differing locations and WFP is currently conducting a series of assessments to test the feasibility of this. Whilst acknowledging there are risks associated with this modality, it would enable schools to provide a varied menu and to be able to afford more locally appropriate foods. It also contributes to MOES policy, sustainability and empowerment by allowing schools to manage their own school meal budgets and not have to rely on in-kind support from abroad. WFP could consider broadening its donor base, including with the private sector, to facilitate the cash/voucher model during its pilot stages.

Importance of linking local action to the NNS

135. The current grant came into existence before the National Nutrition Strategy had been finalized. However, there are now perfect opportunities provided by the NNS and within the scope of the grant, for WFP to further focus its support for sustainability over the remaining project years and to anchor it to an important Government/MOES policy priority, thus further demonstrating close relevance of the MDG grant, WFP country policy and national policy.

136. In particular, the NNS requires the convergent action of MOES, MAF and MOH at the district and school level in order to achieve the objectives of the NNS as well as to create sustainable behaviour changes.³⁴ The provincial or district education staff interviewed were unable to provide any detail of the regular consultations required by the National Nutrition Strategy. There was scant awareness of it as a policy and provincial or district meetings have yet to start to coordinate between the three ministries. While the primary responsibility for this of course lies with the Government of Lao PDR, WFP could assume a facilitating role in combining approach towards monitoring and troubleshooting to serve the needs of the

³³ Two good examples are Na Huey, in Beng and the "handed over" school in La District. Incidentally this school is managed by a complete female staff except for one male teacher. It thus provides a very good example of the capability of female managers. They themselves pointed this out during our visit and were proud of the performance that they had achieved. This should be capitalized on.

³⁴ See NNS Part 3 2016-2020 NPAN In Detail

Convergent Approach. This would offer a further tangible way to enhance the likelihood of sustainable results.³⁵

137. As highlighted in Section 2.3 above, the school lunches are not adhering to the global guidelines on the food basket. However, when striving for a model that is appropriate to the local diet and enhances sustainability there is a trade-off in terms of which objectives can be met. Achieving educational outcome and government engagement may be at the expense of a food basket that meets minimum standards, but given the limitations of the impact of school feeding on nutrition, arguably this trade-off is plausible. Nutrition education becomes even more important in this scenario however and adds even more weight to the need to measure the impact of nutrition education via behaviour change.³⁶

138. According to the NNS Part 3 2016–2020 National Plan of Action on Nutrition (NPAN)³⁷ WFP partners with MOES in several activities relevant to MOES' priority interventions:

- PI 19.1 Improving Human Capacities, providing for “Capacity building for management and administration personnel,³⁸
- PI 19. 2 Develop and improve M&E systems,³⁹ and
- PI 19.3 Data survey on the nutritional status of children in schools
- PI 19.4 Impact group-specific assessment of implementation
- PI 20.1 Strengthen capacities for the creation of vegetable gardens at provincial, district, and school levels (training, study tours of vegetable gardens, and the provision of food in schools).⁴⁰

139. The target groups for all of the above are the Government's information, education and communication (IEC) programmes, MOES' Department of Preschool and Primary and Preschool Education (DPPE), MAF, provinces, districts, schools and students.

140. There are a variety of highly relevant activities on which WFP can collaborate to enhance the likelihood of sustainability:

- PI 21.1 Review and develop curricula to incorporate nutrition, water, sanitation, and vegetable gardening (in the ordinary education stream, teacher training colleges, and non-formal education).
- PI 21.2 Provide training for teachers in the teaching of curricula into which nutrition, water, sanitation, and vegetable gardening have been incorporated (in the ordinary education stream, teacher training colleges, and non-formal education).

141. The current agreement between WFP and PLAN for developing training materials serves this activity directly and needs a high visibility of management with schools and MOES (National/ Provincial/ Districts) to tie the activity to MOES and national policy.

Other opportunities to further enhance the likelihood of sustainability:

142. The issue of **supporting stronger community efforts** is essential to the sustainability of government plans for school lunch and the outcomes that are sought by WFP. The current plans to address VEDC functionality and member capacities by WFP will

³⁵ See MOES' priority interventions immediately below

³⁶ A workshop in 2016 focused on ways of strengthening nutrition messages within the primary school curriculum (WFP, 2016t).

³⁷ See SO9 – Improving Human Capacities

³⁸ Since WFP and CRS are mentioned as partners, this is an important linkage for MGD reinforcing grant investment and potential impact

³⁹ As for 19.1, since WFP and CRS are mentioned as partners, this is an important linkage for MGD reinforcing grant investment and potential impact

⁴⁰ WFP partner PLAN is also mentioned as an MOES partner for this activity offering scope for further collaboration reinforcing action between PLAN and WFP.

enhance the likelihood of sustainable results and are to be encouraged. It should be noted that VEDCs provide the most important platform to challenge gender roles. Increased women's involvement in VEDCs would surely offer pivotal improvements in the plans for sustainability (see discussion of gender at ¶147 below).

143. An essential ingredient will be to mentor and encourage support from district governors whose commitment is important to the actions of local government staff. In addition, WFP needs to ensure appropriate human resources are available for these participatory development activities. As was noted above, these appear to be not much in evidence and WFP needs to propose a realistic strategy to provide them as well as to be able to mentor and support employees with supervisors' improved capabilities, supporting local decision-making in the field – a very significant issue for the handover will be the question of how to promote provincial and district level ownership of WFP's school feeding activities. In the view of the evaluation team, this will succeed only if some kind of joint monitoring is worked out. Therefore, the success of proposed plans to reintegrate monitoring as a responsibility of district education staff is key.

144. A more mundane issue that seems easier to handle is that of providing for *flexible approaches to ensure the availability of cooks*. A tentative plan at Na Huey School deserves further investigation, refinement and possible roll-out in other areas. This school is considering collecting a once a year donation from families and combining it with in-kind support from WFP's commodity assistance to create full-time job for two or three women. This and other imaginative ideas that should be conscious and targeted as a result of increased contact with VEDCs should be investigated.⁴¹

145. With regard to *school gardens*, MOES currently has a rather rigid application of their idea that every school should have garden sufficient to supply food needs for the school lunch. Ensuring a reliable water supply for 12 months of the year is a pre-requisite for the success of this. It is likely that there will be schools where a water supply of sufficient quantity will simply not be available and thus the policy needs to be flexible and based on the capability of the local environment to supply this important resource. This and other areas of reading practical feedback into the ministry policy could and should be targeted as one of the outcomes of the SFP over the duration of its life.

146. With regard to *school meals objectives*, WFP has a significant role to play in providing robust evidence to the decision-makers around the effectiveness of school feeding in increasing attendance, particularly in the afternoons, and literacy, its influence on behaviour change and as a social protection mechanism. A deeper analysis in these areas is required both to better inform ministry policy and to provide a practical cause-and-effect framework with which to motivate schools, VEDCs and district and provincial staff. A more comprehensive understanding of the merits of school feeding will be an enabler for sustainability.

Gender

147. The project design, and WFP's approach to monitoring and implementation have shown substantial attention to gender issues. Sustained effects will depend on continuing to mainstream a gender focus into practical field level activities and teaching materials. Corporate and regional policies are available to support WFP CO in its gender work. These include WFP's (Corporate) Gender Policy Plan (WFP, 2015a) as well as WFP Asia's Gender

⁴¹ Positive note is taken of WFP's "Guidance for Monitoring Assistants" (WFP, 2016w). However, it needs further effort to ensure that the MA creates a close partnership with the head of the VEDC and mentors/ trains them to do the monitoring hand in hand. The document's language needs improvements that put the VEDC and local people in the driver's seat with ownership in their hands. Likewise WFP's "Role of MAs seen from Programme perspective" (WFP, 2016w) is very useful. There might usefully be a column for the VEDC responsibility that the WFP/ DO/MA move them towards sustainability. This might include some of VEDCs' key mandated tasks as well as their role in school garden food production.

Implementation Strategy (WFP, 2016e) that outlines the constraints in Lao PDR (inter alia) and how these can be addressed.

148. At the country level, WFP already identifies the need to mainstream gender in capacity development activities through working with gender focal points in the Government of Lao PDR, and has introduced an annually updated gender implementation plan (WFP, 2016l). This is a very proper context for action and highly practical opportunities need to continue to be explored and supported to operationalize it. The ET would like to highlight two based on our consultations and field travel:

- The development of good quality teaching aids and reading materials that explore and question the boy/girl and man/woman status quo of ideas and behaviours and then encourage the ability and sensitivity of teachers to use them, would be an important action to break down traditional gender views. Working with VEDCs to try and encourage reflection by husbands and wives on the value of educating girls and the need for a greater role of women in local decision-making will also be useful, provided it is predicated on constraints that can be identified by VEDC brainstorming and not a simplistic approach of simply transporting Western ideas of gender equality.
- The programme should also collect examples of best practice from schools and focus attention on them during trainings and in specifically designed study tours. This evaluation has identified some very encouraging examples in schools and among individuals where this could start. Replication of existing best practices is the first choice in providing for sustainability of improvements in gender relations made thus far.

149. The SF operation has made incremental contributions to positive changes in gender relations, rather than any major or unique difference. But those incremental changes, like progress towards GEEW in many cultures, are unlikely to be reversed; they are part of national social trends in Lao PDR, and are likely to be sustained after the programme is completed.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Overall Assessment / Conclusions

Summary

150. The MTE's overall assessment is that the MGD-funded SF operation has many positive and promising features. SF is clearly valued by beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Positive features, which can be further built on, include: (a) the quality of many partnerships, including cross-sector and cross-agency coordination at national level; (b) the potential for sustainable locally-owned approaches to SF if the planned VEDC improvements take root strongly. At the same time the MTE has highlighted a number of significant concerns, including: (a) the quality of results reporting; (b) the discrepancy between reported numbers of beneficiaries and reported numbers of meals consumed; (c) the inconsistency between a SF modality based on international in-kind food donations and the long-term objective of a nationally managed and resourced SFP; and (d) the challenges facing WFP and MOES collaboration at provincial and district level.

151. The MTE review of the underlying theory of change, and of the assumptions on which it depends, indicates that many key assumptions are (currently) either invalid or problematic (see Table 5 above); this reduces the likelihood that this programme will make significant progress towards the (very ambitious) wider outcomes that it seeks.

152. This overall assessment is reflected in the lessons learned and good practices that we highlight in section 3.2 below, and in the practical recommendations we put forward in section 3.3.

Conclusions against evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions

Evaluation criteria

153. Evaluation criteria cut across evaluation questions (as shown in the annexed Table 16) so there is inevitably some duplication in summarising the MTE conclusions according to criteria as well as the four key questions.

154. **Relevance.** Section 2.2 shows that the WFP operation, as designed, was relevant in most of the relevance dimensions considered, including relevance to needs of the beneficiary populations. However the in-kind modality inherent in MGD donations was not the most relevant to the Government's sustainable national SF strategy and programme. In particular this includes MOES efforts to use local procurement (“Buy your parents’ rice”) and to develop more emphasis on partnership / ownership by village level organizations, that requires the development of some models of VEDC participation that can be replicated..

155. **External coherence.** The project is generally coherent with national policies, but not coherent with the Government's preferred move towards local procurement. It systematically sought complementarity, and to avoid duplication, with related programmes.

156. **Internal coherence.** It is broadly in line with WFP policy on school feeding, though not with WFP's increasing trend towards cash-based modalities. It is consistent with WFPs country strategy and programme. There is coherence in principle between the core SF operation that is funded and the supporting activities undertaken, but in practice most complementary activities are undertaken on too small a scale to amount to a genuinely integrated programme.

157. **Efficiency.** The MTE identified various dimensions of inefficiency that have delayed or undermined the potential effectiveness of the programme. Apart from the delayed start-up, the apparent discrepancy between beneficiary numbers and numbers of meals served suggests a serious inefficiency. It is not possible to be definitive about this, because of the unsatisfactory quality of monitoring and reporting: this must be seen as source of inefficiency since it inhibits better management and learning that could lead to more effective use of resources.

158. **Effectiveness** (and potential **impact**). Effectiveness, and hence the possibility of long-term impact, is the area where the evidence base is weakest, both in terms of the quality of reporting on the project itself, and in terms of evidence for the ability of SF to leverage wider (educational, nutrition, etc.) effects. There is good evidence (globally and some from within Laos) that SF can contribute to the wider outcomes sought in the MGD results framework, but the hard data to demonstrate that it is actually doing so are lacking, and our analysis of ToC assumptions does not generate confidence that such effects are likely to be occurring on a significant scale.

159. **Sustainability.** Sustainability of school feeding programmes and their benefits depends on the development of MOES capacities to maintain and operate such programmes at both national and local levels. The MTE findings suggest that, while sustainability is by no means guaranteed (and cannot be made to depend on in-kind donations), (a) WFP and other partners are supporting positive moves of MOES and the Government towards a coherent national SF strategy, although the crucial ingredient of Government funding is still lacking, (b) the emerging VEDC model for local support to SF is an important factor supporting sustainability, and (c) the link to MAF and MOH stakeholders for their inputs both to SF and the convergent work of all three ministries helps to make a success of the NNS.

160. **Gender** dimensions are factored into the project design and it conforms with national gender commitments and policies. It has sought to understand and respond to differences in needs and roles of boys/men and girls/women. There is scope to take this further in future, and WFP's new gender policy and the CO's related implementation plan provide a good basis for doing so. Examples of specifics should include: examine activities to sharpen the gender focus further such as using new literacy materials and reading times to challenge unsuitable gender roles and improve sensitivity; investigate the use of the lunch break for gender-specific activities.

Key evaluation questions.

161. **Appropriateness of the operation.** MTE findings mirror those on relevance (¶154 above) – i.e. the operation was appropriately designed in most respects, although the inherent dependence on in-kind donations was a significant handicap. WFP has shown a valuable willingness to adapt (e.g. in moving faster towards the preferred school lunch modality and the planned implementation of an LRP pilot – see ¶134).

162. **Results.** The MTE has repeatedly emphasised that this is the question for which available evidence is weakest. Beneficiaries are positive about its effects, but deficiencies in reporting make it difficult to be definite about outputs, let alone outcomes. What can be said is that school meals are being delivered on a significant scale and are appreciated by the beneficiaries; there is credible evidence that wider benefits could occur but not that they are actually doing so.

163. **Factors affecting results.** Positive factors include WFP's logistics expertise and long experience of SMP delivery. The biggest inhibitor of potential results is the small scale of complementary activities within the project, and the lack of adequate funding for complementary inputs anticipated from outside the project, such as support to WASH and school health activities. Theory of change analysis suggests many of the key assumptions on which full effectiveness depends are either not valid or problematic. This has implications (both for future project design and for focusing efforts on significant bottlenecks, such as local level capacity) which influence our recommendations in section 3.3 below.

164. **Sustainability.** A school feeding programme that remains dependent on in-kind donations cannot be sustained indefinitely. However, as noted in ¶159 above, there are promising collaborative efforts towards a more sustainable national SF strategy and local implementation modalities.

3.2 Lessons Learned and Good Practices

Good Practice

165. MOES policy puts the VEDC at the centre of sustainability for the school feeding programme. This is consistent with international best practices on participatory development and needs to be supported whilst testing whether this is the optimal model.

166. Increasing national efforts to locate school feeding within broader, coordinated strategies and programmes concerning education, health and nutrition, and social protection also represent good practice.

Lessons for WFP and USDA

167. Several issues raised in this report are of general relevance when future SF collaborations between USDA and WFP are under consideration:

- a) An in-kind SF modality based on imported foodstuffs is unlikely to be consistent with evolution towards a nationally-owned and managed SF strategy, and becomes especially problematic when real progress towards implementation of such a SF strategy is under way.

- b) Good monitoring and reporting of results is extremely important, but including too many indicators in the reporting requirements can be counterproductive. It increases the likelihood, especially in contexts where local M&E capacity is constrained, that the reporting system as a whole will be unreliable. WFP continues to struggle with M&E. What has become "best practice" in development organizations (see our recommendations on targets/ timing / number of indicators) has yet to result in a reliable internal system.
- c) School feeding is legitimately linked to wider educational, nutrition and other Government objectives. But while it is important to link SF to complementary programmes, such as those addressing the quality of teaching, nutrition education, school gardens and so forth (by UN partners like UNICEF and FAO for example), SF programmes (and WFP itself) do not have a comparative advantage in directly managing such programmes themselves. SF programme design should first of all take account of good practice as noted in ¶166 above, and seek to align with complementary programmes but not necessarily to incorporate them within what is primarily an operation to deliver school meals.

3.3 Recommendations

168. Ten recommendations are set out in some detail in Table 6 below. They are clustered as follows:

- Recommendations R1, R2, and R3 address the urgent need to rationalise and strengthen the programme's reporting system and reporting capacity, while also investigating and addressing the serious discrepancy between reported beneficiary numbers and reported school meals consumed.
- Recommendations R4 and R5 address the required pivotal strengthening of VEDCs and of WFP's currently limited ability to support local level capacity development.
- Recommendation R6 concerns work towards developing sustainable SF models based on cash and local procurement.
- Recommendation R7 is for WFP to reconsider its involvement in activities not directly related to its core competences.
- Recommendations R8, R9 and R10 concern related aspects of future design of SF in Lao PDR, including the appropriate role of school gardens, the strengthening of nutrition education, and further mainstreaming of gender into field-level activities.

169. Several of the recommendations seek to reinforce actions the CO has already embarked upon, while, overall, they align with WFP's forthcoming Country Strategic Plan.

Table 6 Recommendations

Recommendation	Specific action and timing	Responsible	Rationale
<p>R1. Improve the monitoring and evaluation function and in particular the table used for reporting against plans and targets</p>	<p>Revise the reporting format to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the time frames for targets and performance are identical (for the current grant this should be six monthly targets); • include a column for the percent achievement of target ; • include a column to provide an explanation or comments against any indicator which shows performance more than 15 percent below or above target; • substantially reduce the number of the indicators that are currently used to measure the achievement of school feeding activity. <p>In rationalising indicators and reporting formats, take account of information needs for efficient management of SF in the short term, as well as data needed to support the end-line evaluation. (Before next 6 monthly report.)</p>	<p>WFP CO, USDA</p>	<p>Section 2.3 and Annex H highlight that reporting against the indicators is often problematic. Better quality reporting against fewer indicators would be more useful.</p>
<p>R2. Investigate the discrepancy between the number of beneficiaries reached and the number of school meals provided.</p>	<p>Check the validity of the data on number of meals provided. If it is confirmed that substantially fewer meals than planned are being provided, investigate the reasons for this and take action to resolve the underlying issues. Report and recommended actions to be submitted within 6 months.</p>	<p>WFP CO</p>	<p>The data show that the target number of beneficiaries were broadly reached while the number of school meals provided fell short of target (e.g. in FY 2016 only 59 percent of the target were provided).</p>
<p>R3. Work with other partners to advocate for and assist the strengthening of Government monitoring systems</p>	<p>(ongoing) Continue to engage with TWG and the Donor Coordination Group to support a shared approach with MOES to strengthen monitoring and support their attention to gender.</p>	<p>WFP – CO support from RBB</p>	<p>Government of Lao PDR data should be used wherever possible, but there is a clear need to strengthen MOES data collection and dissemination. Specifically including attention to gender will help both agencies to surface and include the various issues identified (e.g. in R10 Specific Actions).</p>

Recommendation	Specific action and timing	Responsible	Rationale
<p>R4. Create a model to strengthen current community capacity development activities, principally targeting schools and VEDCs, to facilitate the growth of local ownership of school feeding and related activities and improved functionality to play a stronger role with school staff.</p>	<p>1) Select (2 months) and work (use a 12 month plan) with 3-4 of the strongest VEDCs, to create a pilot to develop them as a type of local social M/F friendly enterprise (drawing on useful FAO guidance⁴²)</p> <p>2) Engage local / regional community development trainers to work with MAs and their supervisors to review and sharpen skills using the FAO Handbooks as training material (3 months)</p> <p>3) Create a close contact at the national level between WFP and the National Nutrition Secretariat that targets the improvement of monitoring of the National nutrition strategy at the district and village level; offer the services of WFP local staff to work to support closer collaboration between ministries of education, agriculture and health. (12 months)</p>	<p>WFP – CO (with close links to leading INGOS doing community development), RBB (FAO may assist) liaison with NNS secretariat</p>	<p>The consensus amongst stakeholders is that strong community engagement is key to sustainable school feeding and VEDCs are pivotal, especially to absorbing possible shortfalls in MOES/Government of Lao PDR support as they occur. The WFP programme needs to work towards this in synergy with other stakeholders who are all striving for the same goal. Others are developing a working model of how to achieve effective community governance and WFP contributions to lessons learned could be widely replicated. Optimally, pilot VEDCs/ schools should be those that are receiving UNICEF and FAO complementary WASH. nutrition education, effective school gardens. Care must be taken not to load women with an unfair share of the support activities.</p>
<p>R5. Adapt WFP's deployment of local-level personnel so as to provide more effective support to meaningful capacity development at community level</p>	<p>Using the best international resources, conduct a Strategic Review (by October 2017) and design a workplan (end 2017) to reengineer HR; build on the community capacity development training pilot suggested in R3 above.</p>	<p>WFP – CO, RBB and HQ</p>	<p>The movement of WFP corporate direction towards development service delivery is a profound change. The current MA model is not the best fit to achieve good community governance. Lao PDR CO could become a model of how to change the nature of field delivery jobs and the skills of the people that supervise them.</p>

⁴² Two useful handbooks authored by FAO: are a) “The group enterprise book - A practical guide for Group Promoters to assist groups in setting up and running successful small enterprises (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-v9779e.pdf>); b) “The Group Promoter’s Resource Book” - also available from FAO (<http://tinyurl.com/Group-promotion>)

Recommendation	Specific action and timing	Responsible	Rationale
<p>R6. Experiment with cash-based, local procurement models of school feeding.</p>	<p>Drawing on studies completed so far, develop a plan to test alternative approaches that are appropriately tailored to the context and promote school and community empowerment. (over next 12-18 months)</p> <p>The TWG should act as a steering committee for the approach and the approach should be coherent with other efforts where appropriate.</p> <p>There should be robust monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness, appropriateness and sustainability of the approach.</p> <p>Seek donor support for this exercise, but fully engage with the Government of Lao PDR from the outset.</p>	<p>WFP CO, RBB Government of Lao PDR TWG</p>	<p>The appropriateness and sustainability of in-kind approaches are questionable. However, alternatives can take many forms and systematic experimentation would help to develop an approach best fitted to the Lao PDR context.</p>
<p>R7. In the next phase of MGD support, reconsider WFP's direct role in supporting complementary activities that are not linked to its core competences.</p>	<p>To be taken into account in the design of and review of any continuation of the present MGD operation.</p>	<p>WFP USDA</p>	<p>School feeding should be designed strategically to support wider educational, social protection and nutrition objectives, but a direct role for WFP in supporting activities (e.g. literacy programmes) that do not reflect WFP's core competences is neither efficient nor sustainable. The coverage of complementary activities is far smaller than the coverage of school feeding. Given the target to hand-over schools in 2020, efforts should on activities directly related to the delivery of the SF programme in areas supported by the necessary complementary programmes of other partners. See R4 rationale.</p>
<p>R8. In the context of the SF programme, and the convergent approach of the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS), collaborate with MOES, MOH and MAF to review experience and seek a better balance between using school gardens a) for educational purposes and b) to provide ingredients for schools meals</p>	<p>Advocate with all concerned parties for a review of experience with school gardens and the strengthening of guidelines for their use. A review should be jointly commissioned by the Government and its development partners and commenced within 12 months. WFP CO could help with developing appropriate ToR and seeking funding for the review.</p>	<p>WFP CO; MOES; NNS and District officials</p>	<p>Government policy is that there should be school gardens wherever schools offer lunch. The MTE has highlighted the challenges school gardens face, and suggests there may be unrealistic expectations of their capacity to produce quantities of food but not enough emphasis on their role in education about nutrition as well as agriculture. (The MTE has identified 1-2 schools that could be modelled.)</p>

Recommendation	Specific action and timing	Responsible	Rationale
R9. Strengthen nutrition education activities.	Conduct a more detailed assessment to determine the extent of nutrition education in schools, the barriers to uptake and the barriers to behaviour change. Highlight ‘model’ schools where nutrition education is effective and use them for peer learning. Develop a strategy to strengthen nutrition education across the programme. (Seek multi-partner support – drawing on the work already under way to integrate nutrition messages into the revised primary education curriculum (WFP, 2016t), with an initial review to be undertaken within the next 12 months.)	WFP CO in collaboration with other partners (e.g. UNICEF, NNS secretariat)	Nutrition education is a weaker element of the programme and it will also promote understanding by the community of the minimum nutritional standards for the food basket.
R10. Collaborate with partners to further mainstream gender into field-level activities	Building on the solid gender focus that already exists, examine activities to sharpen the gender focus further such as using new literacy materials and reading times to challenge unsuitable gender roles and improve sensitivity. Investigate the use of the lunch break for gender-specific activities. Collaboration with partners can be done formally through review of documentation, meetings and workshops or through more informal discussions. (Continuing.)	WFP CO and partners	The project design, and WFP's approach to monitoring and implementation have shown substantial attention to gender issues. Sustained effects will depend on continuing to mainstream a gender focus into practical field level activities and teaching materials.

ANNEXES

Annex A	Terms of Reference
Annex B	The MGD Operation in Laos
Annex C	Key Findings from Previous Evaluations
Annex D	Map
Annex F	Methodology
Annex G	Evaluation Matrix
Annex H	Performance data on MGD implementation
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Annex J	Pilot Project on Local and Regional Procurement
Annex K	Government Policies Supporting Gender Equality and Ethnic Diversity
Annex L	Evaluation Process
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Annex N	Bibliography

Annex A Terms of Reference

This annex reproduces the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, but does not include the Annexes mentioned in the TOR.

WFP School Feeding USDA McGovern Dole Grant FFE-439-2014/049-00 in Laos WFP Regional Bureau for Asia

1. Introduction

1. This Terms of Reference (TOR) is for the mid-term evaluation (MTE) of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Grant (MDG) FFE-439-2014/049-00 supported school feeding activities in Laos. This evaluation is commissioned by the World Food Program's (WFP) Laos Country Office and will last from August 2016 to March 2017 including internal preparation time. This evaluation will cover the start of actual implementation of the McGovern-Dole funded operation from September 2015 to the point of the mid-term evaluation, planned for September 2016.
2. The evaluation process within WFP will be managed by an evaluation manager (–FP - EM) appointed by the WFP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RB) who will be the main focal point for day to day contact during the evaluation period. The WFP – EM will be supported by an evaluation focal point not associated with the implementation of the school meals programme in the WFP Lao country office. An outside firm will be contracted to carry out the actual evaluation and will appoint their own evaluation manager in accordance with normal practice. Appropriate safeguards to ensure the impartiality and independence of the evaluation are outlined within this TOR.
3. The evaluation will provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of performance of the operation and associated interventions so far, so that WFP-Laos and the Cooperating Partners (CPs) can adjust the project's course as necessary for the remainder of the project term and to inform any future project design.
4. This TOR was prepared by RB for Asia based upon an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders and following a standard template. The purpose of the TOR is twofold: firstly, it provides key information to the evaluation team and helps guide them throughout the evaluation process; and secondly, it provides key information to stakeholders about the proposed evaluation.
5. The TOR will be finalized 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

6. The WFP Lao Country Office is commissioning a mid-term evaluation of MGD supported WFP school meals activities in Laos to assess performance of program operations and associated interventions for the purposes of accountability and program strengthening.

The WFP started the School Feeding Programme (SFP) in Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) in 2002. Recently, the country programme received a US\$27 million donation from USDA to support 150,602 children during the period 2014-2016. WFP's school meal programme in Laos incorporates three kinds of food

supplementation: mid-morning snacks (MMS), lunch for primary school students, and take home ration (THR) for informal boarders⁴³.

As the programme is now at its mid-way point, the Laos country office is keen to evaluate progress to date and receive guidance on the programme implementation. Further, a key component of the programme is to work in partnership with stakeholders and provide capacity building to government to eventually take over the programme. Therefore, an important part of this evaluation will be to assess the partnerships with the government and other key stakeholders, such as the local communities and NGOs.

This mid-term evaluation will also fulfil a requirement of USDA that MGD funded projects carry out a midterm evaluation to critically and objectively review the progress of implementation with an eye to generating recommendations that will strengthen project implementation and inform future project design. The mid-term evaluation will also be an opportunity to evaluate whether recommendations made during the baseline evaluation were integrated into programme implementation and if so, whether these recommendations were successful in strengthening the programme.

2.2. Objectives

7. Evaluations in WFP serve the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning.
 - **Accountability** – The evaluation will assess and report on the performance and results of school feeding activities.
 - **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.
 - For USDA, the purpose of the evaluation is to critically and objectively review and take stock of the program participant's implementing experience and the implementing environment, assess whether targeted beneficiaries are receiving services as expected, assess whether the project is on track to meeting its stated goals and objectives, review the results frameworks and assumptions, document initial lessons learned, and discuss necessary modifications or mid-course corrections that may be necessary to effectively and efficiently meet the stated goals and objectives.⁴⁴

2.3. Stakeholders and Users

8. **Stakeholders** A number of stakeholders both inside and outside of WFP have an interest in the results of the evaluation and some of these will be asked to play a role in the evaluation process. The methodology for the evaluation will ensure that a range of beneficiary voices are captured through key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) with various interest groups of both genders (parents/teachers/students).

⁴³ Informal boarders are students who do not have access to schooling in their home villages. They are therefore living on their own either in school hostels or in a small hut near the school. Sometimes the informal boarders might also stay with their relatives near the schools.

⁴⁴ USDA Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, 2013

- The methodology employed in the mid-term will follow the baseline approach that included: school questionnaires to collect school-level information through interviews with the head teacher, direct observation of the school facilities, and school records data; student questionnaires of selected pupils in each sampled school; household questionnaires for parents of the pupils; early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) administered to selected students from the third grade from each school; a teacher questionnaire to selected teachers and their teaching techniques observed; a storekeeper questionnaire administered to the person responsible for the storage of SFP food in each school as well as direct observation of the storeroom. Qualitative methods were employed to provide independent sources of information through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with teachers, parents and school management committee (SMC) members.
 - Table 1, below provides a preliminary stakeholder analysis, which should be further developed by the evaluation team as part of the inception phase.
9. **Accountability to affected populations** is tied to WFP’s commitments to include beneficiaries as key stakeholders in its work. As such, WFP is committed to ensuring gender equality and women’s empowerment in the evaluation process, with participation and consultation in the evaluation by women, men, boys and girls from different groups.

Table 1: Preliminary Stakeholders’ analysis

Stakeholders	Interest in the evaluation and likely uses of evaluation report to this stakeholder
INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	
Country Office (CO) Laos	Responsible for the country level planning and operations implementation, 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 and partners for performance and results of its operation.
Regional Bureau (RBB) for Asia and the Pacific based in 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.
WFP HQ	WFP has an interest in the lessons that emerge from evaluations, particularly as they relate to WFP strategies, policies, thematic areas, or delivery modality with wider relevance to WFP programming.
Office of Evaluation (OEV)	OEV has a stake in ensuring that independent evaluations commissioned directly by WFP country offices and regional bureaux, deliver high 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 may feed into annual syntheses and into corporate learning processes.
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	
Beneficiaries	As the ultimate recipients of food assistance, beneficiaries have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate

Stakeholders	Interest in the evaluation and likely uses of evaluation report to this stakeholder
	and effective. More than 140,000 primary and pre-primary schoolchildren from the most vulnerable and food insecure provinces (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Luang Prabang, Saravane, Sekong and Attapeu) receive nutritious mid-morning snacks (MMS) or school lunch. Cooks and storekeepers also receive food incentives to encourage their participation. 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. The Lao Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) will have particular interest in the findings as the direct institutional beneficiary.
UN Country team (UNCT)	The UNCT's harmonized action should contribute to the realisation of the government's 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.
Donors USDA Food Assistance Division (FAD)	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. USDA has specific interest in ensuring that operational performance reflects USDA standards and accountability requirements, as well as an interest in learning to inform changes in project strategy, results framework, and critical assumptions.
Others	A wide range of actors, such as local suppliers, school administrators and local communities, are involved in the provision of school meals and are expected to benefit from some of the capacity development activities. WFP-Lao PDR also has established partnerships with the World Bank, AusAID, JICA, UNICEF and WHO, and the Lao MoES to achieve project objectives. Their respective perspectives will be sought as the engagement of these actors influences the effectiveness of the programme as well as its sustainability.

10. Users

The primary users of this evaluation will be:

- WFP Lao and its partners in decision-making, notably related to programme implementation and/or design, country strategy and partnerships.
- Given RB's core functions, the RB is expected to use the evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, programme support, oversight, and to extract lessons for sharing across the region.

- The government is expected to take over the management and monitoring of the school feeding program over time, therefore, information on whether the programme is yielding the desired results is of primary importance. The Lao MoES will use evaluation findings as input for its handover strategy.
- Other implementing partners such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) and AusAID and UN agencies such as UNICEF and WHO as well as The World Bank will be interested in the results of the evaluation.
- WFP HQ may use evaluations for wider organizational learning and accountability
- OEV may use the evaluation findings, as appropriate, to feed into evaluation syntheses.
- USDA will use evaluation findings to inform changes in project strategy, results framework, and critical assumptions.
- Other COs may also benefit from the findings, which can contribute to corporate learning on implementation of capacity development interventions.

3. Context & Subject of the Evaluation

3.1. Context

11. Lao PDR remains a Least-Developed Country (LDC),⁴⁵ ranked 107th by the Human Poverty Index out of 134 countries. Mortality rates are high (under 5 mortality rate stands at 79 per 1000)⁴⁶ and both life expectancy (63 years for women and 59 years for men). National literacy rates for young men (15 to 24 years) surpass women at 77 percent compared to 69 percent⁴⁷. According to the 2015 International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Global Hunger Index rates hunger levels for Laos as 'serious' with Laos ranked 76 out of 104 countries⁴⁸. Currently, 27 percent of children are underweight and 44 percent of children are stunted. Although prevalence of stunting in the WFP-assisted provinces decreased modestly, stunting levels still exceed the WHO's 'critical' levels of 40 percent⁴⁹. The prevalence of wasting stands at 6 percent⁵⁰. Micronutrient deficiencies also affect large parts of the population with IFPRI (2014) reporting the prevalence of anaemia in school-aged children as 'severe' and anaemia in pregnant and lactating women (PLW) at 45.3 percent⁵¹.
12. In the 1990s, the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) committed to reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), including the second goal, which focuses on universal access to primary education. Since then, Lao PDR has made significant progress toward the achievement of MDG2. As of the 2006- 2007 school year, 86.4% of all children and 84.5% of girls 6-10 years of age were enrolled in primary school and as of the 2014-2015 school year that rate has increased to 98.5% of all children and 98.3% of female students. However, dropout and repetition rates still remains the challenge, 5.2 % and 5.8% respectively. Especially, the dropout rate at grade 1 is high at 8.5%⁵².
13. Given this progress, the country as a whole is on track to meet MDG2. However, these national averages mask inequalities at the provincial and district levels. For

⁴⁵ The human development index-UNDP, November 2011

⁴⁶ Lao Social Indicator Survey, December 2012

⁴⁷ Lao Statistics Bureau 2013

⁴⁸ Ministry of Health 2013

⁴⁹ Ministry of Health, Lao Statistics Bureau, UNICEF and WFP, 2015

⁵⁰ Lao Social Indicator Survey, 2011-2012

⁵¹ Ministry of Health, Lao Statistics Bureau, UNICEF and WFP, 2015

⁵² Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Statistics 2006-2007 and 2014-2015

instance, Phongsaly province has a net enrolment rate (NER) of only 86% in contrast to Vientiane capital with an NER of 99.4%. Within provinces, the differences among districts can be even more striking. Luangnamtha province has a net enrolment rate of 91.7% but the rate for Long, a district within the province, is just 75.5%. Similarly, Kaleum district in Sekong province has a rate of only 77.7%⁵³. These figures suggest that overall enrolment must continue to rise in order to meet the MDG 2 target and particular provinces and districts require special attention.

14. Further, the baseline survey conducted in December 2015 by Kimectrice across ten districts of six provinces (Pongsaly, Oudomxay, Luang Namtha, Salavan, Sekong, and Attapeu) found that student literacy levels were extremely poor, with only 1.9 percent of students demonstrating at least 75 percent comprehension compared with a target of 25 percent.
15. The GoL strongly supports the WFP-Lao PDR School Feeding Program, which is helping the government address educational challenges such as access, quality, and financing. In May 2014, the Government adopted a schools lunch policy, laying the foundations of a nation-wide approach of the Government offering school lunches as an incentive for children in primary school age to attend school prioritizing for disadvantaged children such as children from remote areas, minority ethnic groups, etc. The policy encourages and promotes the implementation of 5 aspects of education: integrate school meals into the school curriculum, promote school gardening and small animal raising as complementary activities to make sufficient and varied foods available.
16. In order to align with the policy of the GoL, WFP started a transition process in September 2015 from distribution of mid-morning snacks to provision of lunch. To date 259 schools have been transferred from snack to a lunch modality. By September 2017, all WFP supported school will provide school lunch, targeting to hand over the programme to GoL.

3.2. Subject of the evaluation

17. The school meals programme provides critical food resources in conjunction with complementary resources (school gardens, training of communities etc.) and the capacity building of the GoL to implement and manage its National School Meals Program (NSMP). The Government's NSMP currently operates in five of sixteen provinces and is funded by a World Bank managed trust fund.
18. In seven of the remaining most vulnerable and food insecure provinces (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Luang Prabang, Saravane, Sekong and Attapeu), WFP-Lao PDR, together with partners, provides either nutritious mid-morning snacks (MMS) or school lunch for pre-primary and primary schoolchildren with accompanying nutrition related messages and campaigns. The WFP assistance aims to contribute to efforts to enhance literacy, support enrolment, improve the nutritional status of schoolchildren and their families as well as increase student enrolment and attendance in a sustainable manner.
19. The school meals programme is a longstanding WFP operation; McGovern-Dole became the **primary financial input for implementation in September 2015 for the agreed target areas**. As a result of USDA-assistance, WFP reaches more than 140,000 primary and pre-primary children in 1,446 schools. Cooks and storekeepers receive food incentives to encourage their participation. All WFP supported schools receive nutrition education and training on how to prepare Corn-Soya Blend CSB using locally available ingredients. This increases both the nutritional value and the cultural acceptability of CSB - a non-traditional food source in Lao PDR.

⁵³ Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Statistics 2011-2012

20. WFP-Lao PDR's school feeding activities are aligned to achieve McGovern-Dole's two strategic objectives: improved literacy of school-age children (MGD-SO1), and increased use of health and dietary practices (MGD-SO2).
21. Under McGovern-Dole's SO 1, the program contributes directly towards results 1.1 (Improved Quality of Literacy Instruction), and 1.3 (Improved Student Attendance). The activities are designed to achieve results, 1.1.2 (Better Access to School Supplies & Materials), 1.1.4 (Increased Skills & Knowledge of Teachers), 1.1.5 (Increased Skills and Knowledge of School Administrators), and 1.2.1 (Reduced Short Term Hunger), 1.2.1.1 (Increased Access to Food). In addition, the project will contribute towards achieving results 1.3.1 (Increased Economic & Cultural Incentives), 1.3.2 (Reduced Health Related Absences), 1.3.3 (Improved School Infrastructure), , and 1.3.5 (Increased Community Understanding of Benefits of Education) as well as the foundational results 1.4.1 (Increased Capacity of Government Institutions), 1.4.3 (Increased Government Support), and 1.4.4 (Increased Engagement of Local and Community Groups).
22. Under McGovern-Dole's SO 2, the program contributes directly towards results 2.1 (Improved Knowledge of Health and Hygiene Practices), 2.2 (Increased Knowledge of Safe Food Prep and Storage Practices), 2.3 (Increased Knowledge of Nutrition), and 2.6 (Increased Access to Requisite Food Prep and Storage Tools and Equipment).
23. To achieve the results aforementioned, WFP-Lao PDR uses its established partnerships with the World Bank, AusAID, Jica, UNICEF and WHO, FAO and the Lao MoES. Monitoring of activities and outputs will be carried out by MoES; tools will be developed in consultation with WFP and partners. Mid-level and foundational results, as well as activities to be implemented by WFP and partner organizations, are outlined in the Project Level Results Framework, available in **Annex 3**.
24. USDA signed the McGovern-Dole commitment letter in September 2014. USDA has allocated up to \$27 million for donations of commodities, transportation, and financial assistance through McGovern-Dole Grant FFE-439-2014/049-00 for FY2014-2016. Project implementation started with commodities arrival in September 2015, and the baseline assessment was conducted in October 2015. The survey was delayed mainly due to the late arrival of commodities in country. The actual provision of school meals to schoolchildren started in September 2015, when the new school year started after a three-month break.
25. USDA has recently approved an amendment to the original grant that extends the project coverage to new areas and enhances literacy activities using underutilized resources.
26. Because there will be two evaluations at nearly the same time on School Feeding programme activity, i.e. this USDA mid-term evaluation and a separate impact review study, it is expected that the two team of evaluators collaborate and share information. The impact review study will mainly look at the impact of school meals and Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) on the education indicators using Australian funds. Since the impact review study is planned to take place ahead of the USDA mid-term evaluation, the draft reports might be available and be shared with the USDA evaluation team.

4. Evaluation Approach

4.1. Scope

27. The evaluation will cover the WFP Lao School Feeding USDA McGovern-Dole Grant FFE-439-2014/049-00, including all activities and processes related to its formulation, implementation, resourcing, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting relevant to answer the evaluation questions. This evaluation, commissioned by the WFP Lao Country Office, is expected to provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of performance of the operation so that WFP and program partners can

adjust course as necessary for the remainder of the program term and to inform any future program design. It will be carried out in the areas of intervention (targeted schools in 7 of the 16 most vulnerable and food insecure provinces Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Luang Prabang, Saravane, Sekong and Attapeu) and analysis of data and final preparation of evaluation will take place at the central level (Vientiane).

28. The evaluation will focus primarily on the following three activities:

- Review of relevant documents including project documents, internal/external administrative records, collected data, monitoring plan and reports and Project-Level Results Framework;
- Field visits to WFP school feeding sites to conduct surveys and interviews with focus groups at the village level;
- Interviews with representatives and staff members of governmental implementing partners, as well as interviews with community participants impacted by the project.
- Gender Equality and the Empowerment of women (GEEW) will be mainstreamed throughout.

29. The evaluation scope will cover the period from the start of the McGovern-Dole funded operation from September 2015 to the start of the midterm evaluation, planned for September 2016. The first weeks will encompass desk review, planning, and inception report.

4.2. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

30. **Evaluation Criteria** The evaluation will use the standard evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, and Impact.⁵⁴ Gender Equality and the Empowerment of women (GEEW) should be mainstreamed throughout.

31. **Evaluation Questions** Allied to the evaluation criteria, the evaluation will address the following key questions, which will be further developed by the evaluation team during the inception phase. Collectively, the questions aim at highlighting the key lessons and performance of the school feeding activities, which could inform future strategic and operational decisions.

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

- Are coherent with relevant stated national policies and strategies on education, food security and nutrition, including gender.
- Seek complementarity with the interventions of relevant government and development partners.
- Were coherent at project design stage with relevant WFP and UN-wide system strategies, policies and normative guidance (including gender), and remained so over time.
- Whether the strategies (education, food security and nutrition) and project design were appropriate to the needs of the food insecure population and community, and were based on a sound gender analysis that considered the distinct needs and participation of boys and girls (and as appropriate within the context of the school meals programme, women and men) from different groups and geographical areas, as applicable, and remained so over time.

⁵⁴ For more detail see: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm> and <http://www.alnap.org/what-we-do/evaluation/eha>

Question 2: What are the results of the operation? This will entail an analysis of outputs and progress towards outcomes expressed in the results framework (in so far as these can be assessed at the mid-term point); overview of actual versus planned outputs; efficiency issues; assessment of whether assistance reached the right beneficiaries in the right quantity and quality at the right time. Particular attention will be paid to gender disaggregation and analysis.

- The level of attainment of the planned outputs (including the capacity development activities as well the number of beneficiaries served disaggregated by women, girls, men and boys) and the extent to which the intervention delivered results for men and women, boys and girls;
- The extent to which the outputs led to the realization of the operation objectives as well as to unintended effects highlighting, as applicable, differences for different groups, including women, girls, men and boys; how Gender Equality and the Empowerment of women (GEEW) results have been achieved;
- The extent to which gender equality and protection issues have been adequately addressed by the programme;
- How different activities of the operation dovetail and are synergetic with what other actors are doing to contribute to the overriding WFP objective of developing the capacity of the GoB to manage and implement school feeding; and
- The efficiency of the operation and progress of capacity building of government stakeholders toward eventual handover.

Question 3: The factors affecting the 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 as relevant); the partnership and coordination arrangements (how have these partnerships helped/hindered implementation of the programme?); to what extent the implementation partnerships in force are relevant, sufficient and effective etc.
- Externally (factors outside WFP's control): the external operating environment; the funding climate; external incentives and pressures; etc. How has the limitation of available government funding affected the achieved results, caused the observed changes and may affect the success of the capacity development efforts in the future (post-WFP)?

Question 4: To what extent does the intervention's implementation strategy include considerations for sustainability, such as capacity building of national and local government institutions, communities and other partners?

- Are the benefits of the intervention likely to continue after the programme is completed?
- Has the intervention made any difference to gender relations thus far and is it likely to continue once the intervention is completed?

4.3. Evaluability assessment

32. 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. In doing so, the team will also critically review the evaluability of the gender aspects of the operation, identify related challenges and mitigation measures and determine whether additional indicators are required to include gender empowerment and gender equality dimensions.

33. The mid-term evaluation will draw on the existing body of documented data, as far as possible, and complement and triangulate this with information to be collected in the field. Specifically, this will include the baseline survey, the first outcome survey, government capacity assessments, previous evaluations of WFP-Laos's School Feeding Program, as well as all monitoring data. The evaluation will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods including: desk review of documents and data, semi-structured interviews and focus groups (to ensure that a cross-section of stakeholders are able to participate and a diversity of views are gathered) and observation during field visits. The selection of field visit sites will be based on objectively verifiable criteria and may include stratified sampling to ensure a representative a selection.
34. The results of the first outcome survey will inform the assessment of the project impact in the Mid-Term Evaluation. Data from the outcome survey should be available to the evaluation team to provide systematically generated evidence on effectiveness of the school meals programme. The full list of monitoring data available for the evaluation is provided in **Annex 5**.
35. The evaluation team will have access to the following information for desk review: baseline and assessment reports and data, project documents, the project level results framework (which outlines the strategic objectives, selective outputs, outcomes, and targets) and logframe, and previous evaluations. In addition, the team will have access to relevant WFP strategies, policies, and normative guidance.

4.4. Methodology

36. The evaluation team will design the methodology during the inception phase. The methodology should mirror that of the baseline evaluation. The baseline evaluation employed quantitative and qualitative data collection methods conducted in parallel. Quantitative data was collected via a cross-sectional survey of a sub-sample of SFP schools and beneficiaries. Extensive desk research complemented this process. Qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and provided an independent source of information to triangulate and support the quantitative findings. The only exception to this methodology for the mid-term evaluation will be the collection of data from NON-participating schools. These schools will not be included in the mid-term evaluation and will participate in the final evaluation **only**. If the service provider wishes to make adjustments to the methodology employed for the baseline, this should be clearly indicated and justified. Overall, the mid-term methodology should consider the following:
 - Adopt a program theory approach based on the results framework agreed with USDA. The evaluation team will review, verify, and elaborate if necessary, the theory of change preparing the framework for the mid-term evaluation. Specifically, this will include the baseline survey, government capacity assessments, previous evaluations of WFP-Laos's School Feeding Program, as well as all monitoring data. The results of the first outcome survey will inform the assessment of progress towards the project impact in the mid-term evaluation.

- Draw on the existing body of documented data, and triangulate this with information to be collected in the field using the quantitative methodology as well as appropriate qualitative information; The adequacy of available CO monitoring data to inform the evaluation needs to be reviewed and the methodology adjusted depending on the findings.
- Include: a desk review, semi-structured interviews and focus groups (to ensure that a cross-section of stakeholders is able to participate so that a diversity of views is gathered) and observation during field visits. The selection of field visit sites will be based on objectively verifiable criteria and may include stratified sampling to ensure a representative selection. Field work should take approximately three weeks, however, the service provider is invited to indicate if there are circumstances that would dictate less or more time required. Exact timing of the field visits will be negotiated with the country office to ensure that there is no overlap with regular country office missions. As some of the field locations are quite remote, team members may be required to hike to field locations.
- Apply an evaluation matrix geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions taking into account the data availability challenges, the budget and timing constraints.
- Consider whether the mode of implementation will generate a sufficient understanding of how the needs of boys and girls are being addressed.

Impartiality and Independence: Measures are in place to ensure impartiality and independence during the mid-term evaluation. An external service provider will be hired to conduct the evaluation; WFP has appointed a dedicated evaluation manager to manage the evaluation process internally; an internal WFP evaluation committee, led by staff not directly implementing the programme at the country office level, to manage and make decisions on the evaluation; an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) (including WFP and external stakeholders) will be set up to steer the evaluation process and further strengthen the independence of the evaluation. (**Annex 2 shows the composition of the two groups**). All feedback generated by these groups will be shared with the service provider. The service provider will be required to critically review the submissions and provide feedback on actions taken/or not taken as well as the associated rationale.

Risks: A risk to the evaluation includes a potential difference in the methodological approach used by the service provider between the baseline and mid-term evaluation. To mitigate this risk, a service provider will be chosen from among a well recommended set of evaluation firms that regularly provide services to WFP. Additionally, the inception report will be carefully reviewed by WFP and stakeholders to ensure methodology and approach are sound.

4.5. Quality Assurance

38. WFP's Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) 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 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) and aims to ensure that the evaluation process and products conform to best practice and meet WFP's quality standards. DEQAS does not interfere with the views and independence of the evaluation team.
39. The evaluation team should be assured of the accessibility of all relevant documentation within the provisions of the directive on disclosure of information. **Refer to WFP Directive (#CP2010/001) on Information Disclosure.**

40. DEQAS 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.
41. The CO will designate an Evaluation Focal Point who has no involvement in the daily implementation of the school meals programme. An internal evaluation committee (IEC) will be chaired by the Country Director or his/her deputy. The IEC will ensure due process in evaluation management, providing advice the evaluation focal point and clearing evaluation products submitted to the Chair for approval.
42. The CO will further establish an evaluation reference group of WFP and external stakeholders to review TORs, inception packages, and final reports to ensure appropriate safeguards for independence and impartiality.
43. WFP's OEV has developed a quality assurance checklist for its independent evaluations. This includes checklists for feedback on quality for each of the evaluation products. These checklists will be applied to ensure the quality of the evaluation process and outputs. In addition, a post-hoc quality assessment of the final decentralised evaluation report will be conducted by OEV.
44. Concerning the quality of data and information, the evaluation team should systematically check accuracy, consistency and validity of collected data and information and acknowledge any limitations/caveats in drawing conclusions using the data.

5. Phases and Deliverables

45. The evaluation will proceed through the following phases. The evaluation schedule in **Table 2** provides the proposed timeline for each phase over the full timeframe. A summary of the deliverables and deadlines for each phase are as follows:
46. **Preparation phase** (May – September 2016): The RBB Regional M&E Advisor will conduct background research and consultation to frame the evaluation; prepare the TOR; select the evaluation team and contract the company for the management and conduct of the evaluation. According to the USDA McGovern-Dole programme requirements, draft Evaluation ToRs for the Mid-Term Evaluations must be ready for WFP to transmit to the USDA Food Assistance Division (FAD) for inputs and comments three months prior to the start of an evaluation.
47. **Inception phase** (October - November 2016): This phase aims to prepare the evaluation team for the evaluation phase by ensuring that it has a good grasp of the expectations for the evaluation and a clear plan for conducting it. The inception phase will include a desk review of secondary data, finalisation of evaluation methodology and tools and initial interaction with the main stakeholders. The quality assured inception reports must be submitted to the WFP Country Office for approval no later than *two weeks before* the evaluation begins.
 - **Deliverable: Inception Report.** The Inception Reports will describe the country context, provide an operational factsheet and a map, and provide a stakeholder analysis. The Inception Reports will also describe the evaluation methodologies and the approach taken by the team to cultivate ownership and organize debrief sessions and quality assurance systems developed for the evaluation. The Inception Reports will include use of Evaluation Plan Matrices, and they will outline how the evaluation teams will collect and analyse data to answer all evaluation questions. Finally, they must include an evaluation activity plan and time line. The evaluation designs and proposed methodologies specified in the Inception Reports must reflect the evaluation plans, budgets and operational environments, and the extent to which methods lead to collection of reliable data and analysis that provide a basis for

reaching valid and reliable judgments. For more details, refer to the [content guide for the inception package](#).

48. **Evaluation phase** (November/December 2016): The fieldwork will span two to three weeks and will include visits to project sites and primary (to the extent needed) and secondary data collection from local stakeholders. Accessibility to remote areas should be considered when determining sample size and travel logistics. A debriefing session will be held upon completion of the fieldwork.
- **Deliverable: Exit debriefing presentation.** An exit debriefing presentation of preliminary findings and conclusions (power point presentation) will be prepared to support the de- briefings.
49. **Reporting phase** (December -March 2016): The evaluation team will analyse the data collected during the desk review and the field work, conduct additional consultations with stakeholders, as required, and draft the evaluation report. It will be submitted to the evaluation manager for quality assurance. Stakeholders will be invited to provide comments, which will be recorded in a matrix by the evaluation manager and provided to the evaluation team for their consideration before report finalisation. According to the USDA McGovern-Dole programme requirements, the Mid-Term Evaluation Reports must be finalized for WFP to transmit to the USDA FAD *within 60 days* following the evaluation fieldwork and *no more than 15 days* after the report has been completed. Quality assured final Mid-Term Evaluation Reports must be submitted to WFP COs for final comments and pre-approval *one month before* the USDA deadline.
- **Deliverable: Evaluation report.** The mid-term evaluation report will outline the evaluation purpose, scope and rationale, and the methodologies applied including the limitations that these may come with. The report must reflect the ToR and Inception Report and outline evaluation questions and the evaluation teams' answers to these alongside other findings and conclusions that the teams may have obtained. The reports will also outline interim lessons learned, recommendations and proposed follow-up actions. The evaluation report should be no longer than 25 pages, excluding annexes.
50. **Follow-up and dissemination phase** (April 2017): The final evaluation report will be shared with the relevant stakeholders. A meeting on mid-term evaluation findings and recommendations will include USDA FAD programme staff and WFP CO staff. The USDA FAD and CO management will respond to the evaluation recommendations by providing actions that will be taken to address each recommendation and estimated timelines for taking those actions. According to USDA McGovern-Dole programme requirements, the meeting should be held within 30 days of USDA receipt of the final Mid-Term Evaluation Report. **Deliverable: Evaluation summary with power-point presentation.** As the service provider will simultaneously undertake MGD mid term evaluations in Nepal and Bangladesh, a final briefing to WFP RB and COs will be required during which the service provider will present a summary of the evaluation findings across all three countries. Comparisons and contrasts and lessons learned should be highlighted.
51. The evaluation report will also be subject to external post-hoc quality review to report independently on the quality, credibility and utility of the evaluation in line with evaluation norms and standards. The final evaluation report will be published on the WFP public website. Findings will be disseminated and lessons will be incorporated into other relevant lesson sharing systems.
52. WFP-Laos will coordinate with MoES and USDA to host an educational partners' forum to discuss the findings, and to incorporate adjustments that will strengthen implementation for the second half of the program.

53. **Notes on the deliverables:** The inception package and evaluation reports shall be written in English and follow the DEQAS templates. The evaluation team is expected to produce written work that is of very high standard, evidence-based, and free of errors. The evaluation company is ultimately responsible for the timeliness and 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.

54. Key dates for field mission and deliverables are provided in **Table 3**.

Table 2: Key dates for field mission and deliverables (indicative only - exact dates to be finalized with selected service provider)

Entity responsible	Phase	Activities	Key Dates
ET	Preparation	Prepare budget proposals	12 th September 2016
EM/WFP	Preparation	Selection of service provider	18 th September 2016
EM/WFP	Preparation	Signing of contract	By 26 th September at the very latest
EM/ET	Inception	Draft Inception Package	18 th October 2016
RBB	Quality assurance of draft inception report	Submit draft inception report for external quality assessment as per WFP DEQAS	19 ^h October 2016 (The report will take up to 8 days to be returned)
ET	Inception	Incorporate comments of peer reviewers	4 th November 2016
RBB	Comment on inception report	Stakeholders review and comment on final inception report draft	By 11 th November 2016 one week
EM/ET	Finalize inception report	Final Inception Package	18 th November 2016 one week
CO/ET	Evaluation	Evaluation field mission	To start by 28 th November 2016 at the very latest
ET	Evaluation	Exit Debriefing Presentation	By 16 th December 2016. (will be dependent on time taken for field missions – assumed to be between 2 and 3 weeks depending on the country)

Entity responsible	Phase	Activities	Key Dates
EM/ET	Reporting	Draft Evaluation Report	Between 16 th December 2016 and 20 th January 2017 (given holidays in between, the service provider will have 4-5 weeks to prepare the final draft evaluation report)
RBB	Quality assurance of final evaluation report	Submit final draft evaluation report for external quality assessment as per WFP DEQAS	20 th January 2017 (The report will take up to 8 working days to be returned)
EM/ET	Finalize evaluation report	Incorporate peer review recommendations and produce final draft of evaluation report for stakeholder review	30 th January 2017
RBB	Finalize evaluation report	Stakeholders review and comment on final inception report draft	13 th February 2017
EM/ET	Reporting	Final Evaluation Report	21 st February 2017
CO/RBB	Follow-up	Management Response	30 th March 2017 at the very latest
USDA	Follow-up	USDA Review of MTE	30 days following receipt of final MTE (due to be sent on or before 30 th March 2017)

6. Organization of the Evaluation

6.1. Evaluation Conduct

55. The evaluation team will conduct the evaluation under the direction of its team leader and in close communication with the WFP evaluation manager. The team will be hired following agreement with WFP on its composition.
56. The independent evaluation consultants or consulting companies will conduct and report on the evaluation according to WFP standards:
- Evaluators must have personal and professional integrity.
 - Evaluators must respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators must take care that those involved in evaluations have a chance to examine the statements attributed to them.
 - Evaluators must be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environments in which they work.

- In light of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality.
- Evaluations sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Also, the evaluators are not expected to evaluate the personal performance of individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with due consideration for this principle.
- To ensure the independence of the studies and the evaluations the role of Evaluation Manager is distinguished from the role of the independent evaluation team. As a result, the Evaluation Manager cannot take the role of a Study and Evaluation Team member. The main functions and tasks expected from the Evaluation Manager, the independent Study and Evaluation Teams, the WFP COs, the OMB and the USDA FAD are described below.

6.2. Team composition and competencies

57. 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.
58. The evaluation team will comprise of a team leader and other team members as necessary to ensure a complementary mix of expertise in the technical areas covered by the evaluation. All will be independent consultants and may be national or a mix of international and national consultants. The team leader will have strong evaluation skills and experience as well as leadership skills. At least one team member should be familiar with WFP's FFE work and with the USDA monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policy. The team will be selected during a competitive bidding process in line with WFP's regulations.
59. The team will be multi-disciplinary and include members who together include an appropriate balance of expertise and practical knowledge in the following areas:
 - Institutional capacity development (with a focus on handover process, cost-efficiency analysis, supply chain management, logistics)
 - School feeding, education, nutrition and food security
 - Agro-economics/rural development
 - Knowledge management
 - Gender and protection expertise / good knowledge of gender issues within the country/regional context as well as understanding of UN system-wide and WFP commitments on gender.
 - All team members should have strong analytical and communication skills, evaluation experience, and expertise or experience in the country or region.
 - All team members should have strong skills in oral and written English. In addition, given the remoteness of some field sites and their limited accessibility, all team members should be in good physical condition.
60. 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.
61. Her/his primary responsibilities will be: i) defining the evaluation approach and methodology; ii) guiding and managing the team; iii) leading the evaluation mission and representing the evaluation team; iv) drafting and revising, as required, the inception report, exit debriefing presentation and evaluation report in line with EQAS.

62. 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. At least one member of the evaluation team should have gender expertise.
63. Team members will: i) contribute to the 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).

6.3. Security Considerations

64. Security clearance where required is to be obtained from the Laos duty station.
- As an ‘independent supplier’ of evaluation services to WFP, the evaluation company is responsible for ensuring the security of all persons contracted, including adequate arrangements for evacuation for medical or situational reasons. The consultants contracted by the evaluation company do not fall under the UN Department of Safety & Security (UNDSS) system for UN personnel. Consultants hired independently are covered by the UN Department of Safety & Security (UNDSS) system for UN personnel, which cover WFP staff and consultants contracted directly by WFP.
65. However, to avoid any security incidents, the Evaluation Manager is requested to ensure that:
- The WFP CO registers the team members with the Security Officer on arrival in country and arranges a security briefing for them to gain an understanding of the security situation on the ground.
 - The team members observe applicable UN security rules and regulations – e.g. curfews etc.

7. Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

66. The Laos Country Office

The Laos Country Office management will be responsible for:

- **Timely provision of comments and inputs on all deliverables.** WFP COs will appoint a McGovern-Dole Focal Point, who will review main quality assured deliverables and share these with CO management and programme staff, as appropriate, to solicit comments and inputs and to consolidate and return these to the Evaluation Manager. The CO Focal Point will facilitate CO participation in teleconferences, briefings and debriefings relating to all deliverables.
- An internal evaluation committee chaired by the Country Director(CD)/Deputy Country Director(DCD) will approve Terms of Reference, budget, evaluation team, inception and evaluation reports, which helps to maintain distance from influence by programme implementers.
- A wider Evaluation Reference Group **chaired by the CD/D**CD with representation from different stakeholder groups will be involved in review of draft ToR and inception and evaluation reports— safeguarding against undue influence and bias in reporting.
- **Acting as Key Informants and providing documentation on school meals programmes for baseline studies, and evaluations.** The WFP CO MGD Focal Point and other staff, as required, will be available to act as Key Informants and provide the documentation and data sets required for production of the midterm evaluation. The WFP CO MGD Focal Point will facilitate site visits and meetings for the evaluation mission.

- Organise security briefings for the evaluation team and provide any materials as required
- **Endorsing all deliverables (draft and final) before submitting these to the USDA FAD through the WFP Washington Office.** The WFP COs will pre-endorse all deliverables before transmitting these for final approval or comments to the USDA FAD through the WFP Washington Office.
- **Provide management response to evaluation findings and recommendations for follow-up action** and participate in debriefings and teleconferences to discuss study and evaluation findings.

67. The WFP Washington Office will be responsible for:

- **Managing all communication with the USDA FAD relating to Performance Management** including USDA FAD provision of comments on deliverables and organization of FAD participation in stakeholder discussions of evaluation findings and project-level follow-up.

68. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBB). The RB management will be responsible to:

- Field and manage selection of independent evaluation consultants, and contract agreement for these services.
- Comply with the evaluations policy's provisions and safeguards of impartiality at all stages of evaluation process: planning, design, team selection, methodological rigor, data gathering, analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- Assign a Focal Point to support the evaluation.
- Brief evaluation team, provide technical oversight to the country office, and participate in all debriefings and teleconferences..
- Provide comments on the TORs, inception report and the evaluation report at the request of the Country Office.
- Coordinate the management response to the evaluation and track the implementation of the recommendations.

69. USDA Food Assistance Division (FAD)

- Provide inputs and comment on all draft Mid-Term and Final Evaluation draft ToRs.
- Participate in discussions of findings and recommendations that suggest changes in the project strategy, results frameworks and critical assumptions.

70. **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.

71. **The Office of Evaluation (OEV).** OEV will provide technical oversight as required to ensure quality assurance standards are maintained.

8. Communication and budget

8.1. Communication

72. To ensure a smooth and efficient process and enhance the learning from this evaluation, the evaluation team should place emphasis on transparent and open communication

with key stakeholders. This will be achieved by ensuring a clear agreement on channels and frequency of communication with and between key stakeholders:

- The Evaluation Manager will submit all final deliverables to the WFP COs for pre-approval. Upon pre-approval of deliverables, the WFP COs will forward the deliverables to WFP's Washington Office with the Bangkok Regional Bureau in copy. WFP's Washington Office will transmit deliverables to the USDA FAD for comments and inputs. All communication with USDA will be transmitted via WFP's Washington Office including invitations to the FAD programme staff to participate in teleconferences to discuss CO management responses to evaluation findings and recommendations.
- The service provider will deliver an evaluation report. USDA comments on the final draft report will be taken into consideration by the evaluation team in addition to comments from external stakeholders in the evaluation reference group. The evaluation team will produce an excel file indicating all comments received and how these were addressed. Exit debriefings will follow all field visits. A final presentation on the overall findings will be delivered to the RBB and the CO.

8.2. Budget

73. **Funding Source:** The evaluation will be funded by the WFP Lao Country Office using the M&E budget allocation in the McGovern-Dole grant funds.

74. **Budget:** The service provider will outline their budget in a financial proposal to WFP as part of their response to the Request for Proposals (RfP). For the purpose of this evaluation the company will:

- Include budget for domestic travel and for all relevant in-country data collection
- Hire and supervise any and all technical and administrative assistance required (including in-country).
- Follow the agreed rates for decentralized evaluations as provided for in your Long Term Agreement (LTA) with WFP.
- Not exceed a budget of USD 120,000 – this should include any foreseen primary data collection and analysis.

Annexes

Annexes to the TOR are not reproduced here. They were:

Annex 1 – Map (see Annex D in this report)

Annex 2 – Evaluation reference groups (see Annex L in this report)

Annex 3 – Project Level Results Framework (see Annex B in this report)

Annex 4 – Key characteristics of the operation (see Annex B in this report)

Annex 5 – MGD 5 Year Evaluation Map

Annex B The MGD Operation in Laos

Introduction

1. This annex provides basic information about McGovern-Dole-supported School Feeding Programme (FFE-439-2014/049-00) in Laos from 2014⁵⁵ to 2017. It includes summaries of the programme's original design (with the original results framework appearing at the end of this annex), of its implementation, and of its monitoring and evaluation prior to this MTE. Details of available data on performance against intended outputs and outcomes are provided in Annex H.

Design

2. In collaboration with the MOES WFP first introduced a school feeding programme in Laos in 2002 with the objective to increase enrolment, reduce drop-out rates, bridge the gender gap and assist with children's concentration. USDA first supported the SFP in 2008.

Objectives and Activities

3. The current three-year MGD programme, which started in September 2015, was designed to provide school feeding assistance to pre-primary and primary school children in seven of the most vulnerable and food-insecure provinces (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha, Luang Prabang, Saravane, Sekong, and Attapeu – see map at Annex D), and to support a critical phase of the handover of school feeding to the Government of Lao PDR, with the tentative start date for handover scheduled for 2020.⁵⁶

4. In these seven provinces WFP Lao, together with partners, provides either a nutritious mid-morning snack (MMS)⁵⁷ or school lunch⁵⁸ for pre-primary and primary schoolchildren with accompanying nutrition-related messages and campaigns. Take-home rations for informal boarders were being provided (SPR 2015), but these have been phased out in line with Government of Lao PDR policy (interview with CO during inception report preparation). WFP reaches more than 140,000 primary and pre-primary children in 1,446 schools (WFP TOR, Annex A). Cooks and storekeepers receive food incentives to encourage their participation. All WFP-supported schools receive nutrition education and training on how to prepare CSB-based recipes using locally available ingredients. This increases both the nutritional value and the cultural acceptability of corn-soya blend (CSB), a non-traditional food source in Lao PDR.

5. The MGD-funded SFP has two overarching strategic objectives (see results framework in Figure 5 below): MGD Strategic Objective 1 (Improved School Literacy of School-Age Children) and Strategic Objective 2 (Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices). Underpinning these and the activities and outcomes that contribute to the higher impact results, are four indicators termed foundational results (see Figure 5 below) which can be viewed as relating to systems strengthening: a) Increased capacity of government institutions, b) Improved policy and regulatory framework, c) Increased government support, and d) Increased engagement of local organisations and community groups.

6. Table 7 below summarizes the strategic objectives and activities under the MGD-funded SFP. WFP implements the SFP under its own Strategic Objective 4: Reduce undernutrition and break the intergeneration cycle of hunger.

⁵⁵ Implementation was delayed and began in 2015, see ¶11 below.

⁵⁶ According to communication with the CO and RBB.

⁵⁷ Super Cereal, vitamin-enriched oil and sugar

⁵⁸ WFP provided 100g rice and 10g oil per student per day, as well as seeds, tools and technical assistance to establish school gardens to complement the lunch. The gardens yielded vegetables, such as long beans, cabbage and morning glory. As the production of vegetables took time, 30g of canned fish per student per day was provided to complement the lunch.

Table 7 Strategic Objectives and Activities of the MGD-funded SFP

MGD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES		ACTIVITIES
MGD SO 1:	Improved Literacy of School-Age Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for teachers and school administrators • Providing school supplies and literacy instruction materials • Providing school meals (mid-morning snack, lunch) • Establish school gardens • Economic incentives through school meals • Provide training on food preparation and hygiene • Community awareness on benefits of education • Improve school infrastructure (store, kitchen, school garden, access to water)
MGD SO 2:	Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver nutrition, health and hygiene training • Provide training on safe food prep and storage practices • Provide input on nutrition into national curriculum • Improve access to water and sanitation facilities • Training on safe food prep and storage practices to factories and warehouses

Source: WFP TOR (Annex A above).

Planned Outputs and beneficiaries

7. Table 8 below summarises the planned outputs at design stage.

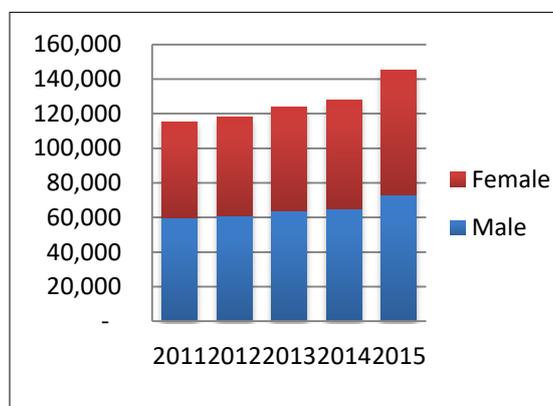
Table 8 Planned Outputs

PLANNED OUTPUTS & ACHIEVEMENTS		
	Initial	Revised
Planned beneficiaries	406,758	369,833
Planned food requirements	In-kind food: 6,000mt of CSB, 1,140mt of vegetable oil, 5,500mt of white rice Cash and vouchers: N/A	In-kind food: 3,880mt of CSB, 940mt of vegetable oil, 6180mt of white rice and 982mt of lentil Cash and vouchers: N/A
US\$ requirements	US\$27,000,000	US\$27,000,000

Source: USDA, 2014, USDA, 2016

8. Figure 3 below displays the planned beneficiaries by sex at design stage.

Figure 3 MGD SFP: planned beneficiaries (by sex)



Outcomes

9. Table 9 below summarises the main expected outcomes relating to the MGD school feeding programme. These are further detailed in the MGD results framework reproduced in Figure 5 below. The MGD objectives and foundational results, as shown below, refer specifically to improved literacy and use of health and dietary practices.

Table 9 Summary of MGD Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

MGD Strategic Objective	MGD Expected Outcome
MGD SO 1: Improved Literacy of School-Age Children	MGD 1.1 Improving Quality of Literacy Instruction MGD 1.2 Improving Attentiveness by reducing short-term hunger (MGD 1.2.1) and increased access to nutritious food (MGD 1.2.1.1, 1.3.1.1) MGD 1.3 Improving Student Attendance
SO 1 Foundational Results	MGD 1.4.1 Increased Capacity of Government Institutions MGD 1.4.2 Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework MGD 1.4.3 Increased Government Support MGD 1.4.4 Increased Engagement of Local Organisations and Community Groups
MGD SO 2: Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices	MGD 2.1 – 2.3 Improved Knowledge of Health and Hygiene Practices, Safe Food Prep and Storage Practices, Nutrition MGD 2.4-2.6 Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services, Preventative Health Services, and Requisite Food Prep and Storage Tools and Equipment
SO 2 Foundational Results <i>Note: in the case of SO 2 foundational results, the colour coding on the results diagram (Figure 5 below) indicates that all will be addressed by partners other than WFP Lao PDR.</i>	MGD 2.7.1 Increased Capacity of Government Institutions MGD 2.7.2 Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework MGD 2.7.3 Increased Government Support MGD 2.7.4 Increased Engagement of Local Organisations and Community Groups

Planned outputs and outcomes

10. For planned and actual outputs and outcomes see Table 19, Table 20, and Table 21 of Annex H.

Implementation and Revisions

11. USDA signed the McGovern-Dole commitment letter for the current SFP in Laos on September 26, 2014 and allocated US\$27 million for donations of commodities, transportation and financial assistance for a three-year period. The arrival of the first tranche of commodities was delayed and project implementation started a year late in September 2015.

12. An overall budget revision to the WFP Laos Country Programme 200242 was approved in September 2015. This budget revision includes WFP's SFP under component 3 and describes SF as a two-tiered approach in alignment with national interventions and policies, involving the transition from mid-morning snacks to providing lunches and gradual hand-over of a home-grown SFP to the Government.

13. An amendment was approved on October 12, 2016 to the MGD grant on providing lunch instead of mid-morning snacks, changing commodities from Corn-Soya Blend (CSB) to lentils, stopping take-home rations for secondary schools, strengthening the literacy approach through new partners, enhancing community strengthening activities, suspending enrolment campaigns, and updating on performance indicators and result framework.

14. WFP has identified a need to change certain programme components (WFP, 2016i – amendment request letter dated 23 June 2016). These include: (1) revise beneficiary numbers and schools assisted; (2) transfer all schools from MMS to Lunch; (3) change in commodities (from CSB to lentils); (4) strengthen the approach to literacy; (5) community strengthening; (6) suspending the enrolment campaign.

15. In order to align with Government of Lao PDR policy (Government of Lao PDR, 2016a) and facilitate planned handover, WFP started a transition process in September 2015 from its MMS provision to provision of lunch, favoured by the MoES. By September 2015, 264 of 1,446 primary schools had already been transferred from snack to a lunch modality. WFP expected to implement the lunch programme in an additional 257 schools by September 2016.⁵⁹ By September 2017, all WFP supported schools will provide school lunch

Performance targets

16. Under the MGD-funded SFP, WFP planned to provide school meals to 150,602 school children (76,355 boys and 74,247 girls) in Financial Year (FY) 2015, to 142,204 school children (72,097 boys and 70,107 girls) in FY2016, and to 112,952 school children (57,267 boys and 55,685 girls) in FY 2017, totalling assistance to 405,758 school children. Initially the commodity requirements were therefore 6,000mt of CSB, 5,500mt of rice, and 1,140mt of vegetable oil (USDA, 2014, WFP, 2016m, WFP, 2015-2016).

17. In consultation with the MOES, WFP suspended implementation of the THRs for informal boarders in late 2015, as well as 63 poor performing schools where no improvement was observed (WFP, 2016i). The beneficiary numbers were therefore revised. The target for FY2017 is now 106,172 (53,645 boys and 52,527 girls), bringing the total number of school children assisted to 398,978. This is due to the fact that assistance to 63 poor performing schools has been removed.

Partners

18. WFP Lao partners with government institutions as well as UN agencies, other donors including NGOs and private partners, as summarized in Table 11 below. It has Field Level Agreements (FLAs) with two NGOs – see Table 11 below. (The stakeholder analysis for this evaluation is summarised in Annex F – see Figure 7 on page 95.)

Table 10 Partners under the MGD-funded SFP in Lao PDR

Government	Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Lao Women’s Union, Lao Youth Union, Lao Front for National Construction, and Lao Trade Union
UN agencies	UNICEF, FAO
NGOs	GIZ, Plan International, Big Brother Mouse
Private Partners	Yum!

Source: WFP TOR (Annex A above, WFP, 2016m)

Table 11 Summary of WFP Partner FLAs

Partner	FLA date	Activity	Cost attributable to WFP (US\$)	Project name
Big Brother Mouse	01/08/2016-31/05/2017	Literacy ('book parties') in 99 primary schools in Ngoi and Phonthong districts of LuangPrabang province	88,222	Literacy activities in support of the SFP under CP 200242
PLAN International Laos	01/07/2016-30/06/2018	Literacy, Hygiene and Community Sensitisation in Nga district, Oudomxay Province	303,368	Literacy, hygiene and community sensitisation activities in support of the SFP under CP 200242
Total:			391,590	

Source: FLAs supplied by Laos CO (WFP & BBM, 2016, WFP & PLAN, 2016)

⁵⁹ This figure was revised from 300 (see November 2015 semi-annual report to USDA).

Resource requirements and funding situation

19. The MGD contribution for the requested FY 2014-2016 is US\$27 million, with the planned breakdown shown in Table 12 below.

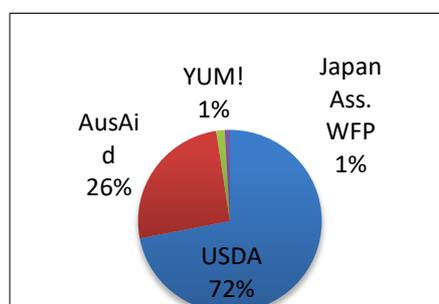
20. The main donors for the CP School Meals Programme are USDA, Australia, Cuba, Japan Association for the World Food Programme and Yum! Brands Inc. Their contributions are shown in Table 12 below. Contributions received for the CP's overall SFP as of May 2016: US\$45,958,344, which is 100 percent against the total requirements. The subject of this evaluation is the MGD-funded programme only. However, the ET has an interest to understand the overall picture and how SFP fits into WFP's CP. The Australia-funded support for school feeding is substantial and includes involvement in many of the foundational issues reflected in the MGD-funded operation. The recent impact review summarised in Annex C ¶26ff is directly relevant to this MTE.

Table 12 MGD total budget

Commitment Item	Total MGD funding
Type of commodity	tonnage
Pulses	1,121.54
Rice	8,723.03
CSB	3,888.46
Oil	1,011.00
Total MT	14,744.03
Cost breakdown	(US\$)
Total commodity cost	11,933,849.34
External transport, \$300/MT	4,423,209.72
LTSH, \$226.08/MT	3,333,330.84
ODOC Food, \$39.94/MT (\$83.95 for 2017)	822,285.63
Capacity building and augmentation (CD&A)	715,000.00
DSC, 20% of DOC (17% for 2017)	4,005,969.33
ISC	1,766,355.14
Total	27,000,000.00

Source: WFP Laos CO

Figure 4 USDA and other contributions to WFP school feeding



Source: WFP TOR (WFP, 2016m)

Design of potential follow-on programme

21. WFP has submitted a proposal (WFP, 2016q) for a new school feeding project from 2017, with a budget of US\$35 million over five years. In line with WFP Lao's new Country Strategic Plan, this proposal focuses on capacity building activities and local ownership, with the aim of handing over traditional WFP assistance, as the country is expected to achieve middle-income country

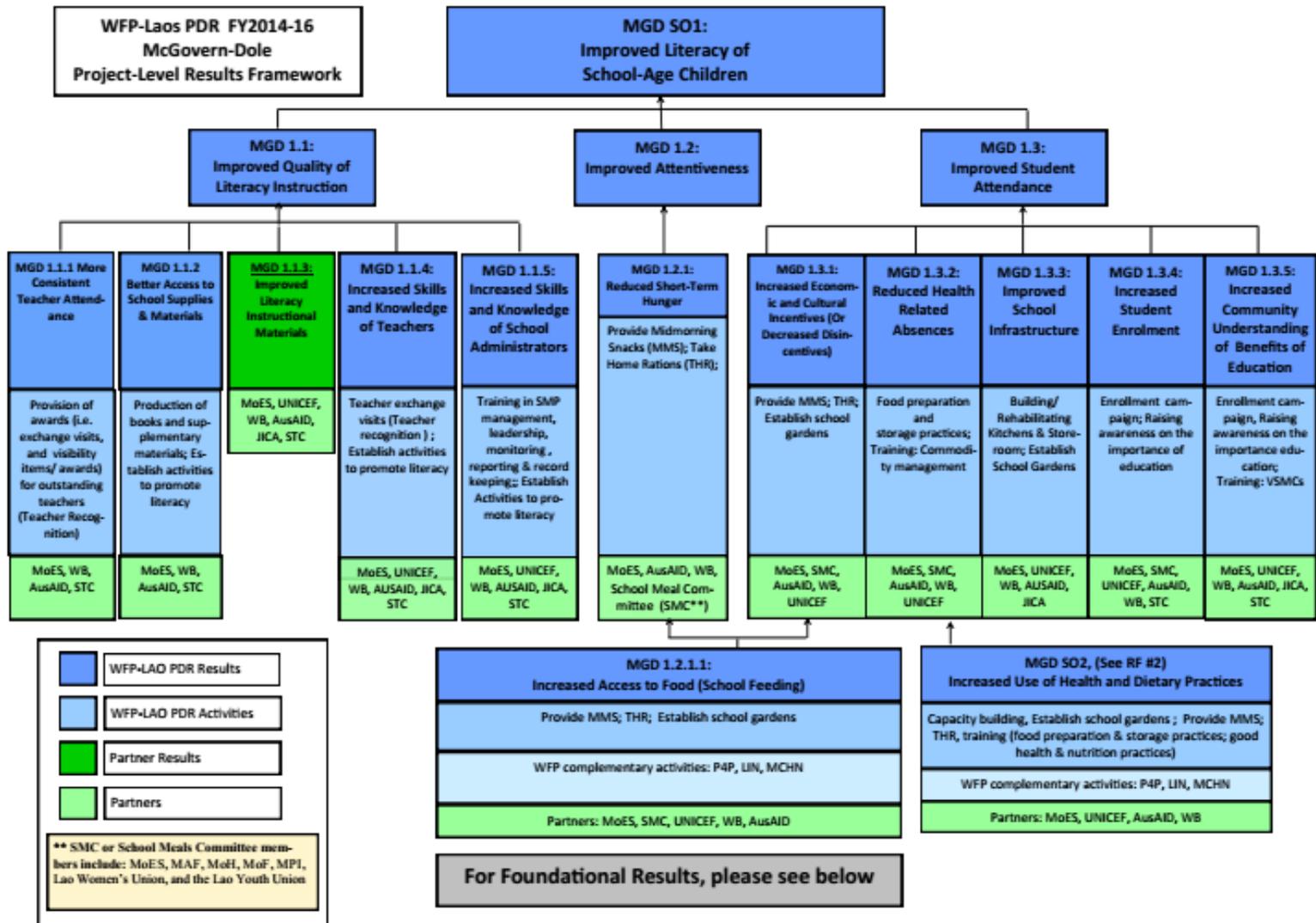
status. The new country strategy includes four strategic objectives, with Strategic Outcome 1 being “School children in remote rural areas have sustainable access to food by 2021”. This outcome is to be achieved through the following activities:

- Provision of policy support, technical assistance and transfer of capacities
- Acceleration of the implementation of the Government’s Plan of Action of the School Meals Programme
- Support of a national process for community and Government handover of school meals

22. The proposal suggests to continue the ongoing school feeding and complementary activities to the 1,446 primary schools under the current programme, however, emphasis is being put on capacity building at various levels, from teacher training to community training, to capacity building at national level. The proposal also envisages two more implementing partners as sub-recipients of the grant in addition to Plan International and Big Brother Mouse, namely UNICEF and the local non-profit association Education Development Fund (EDF).

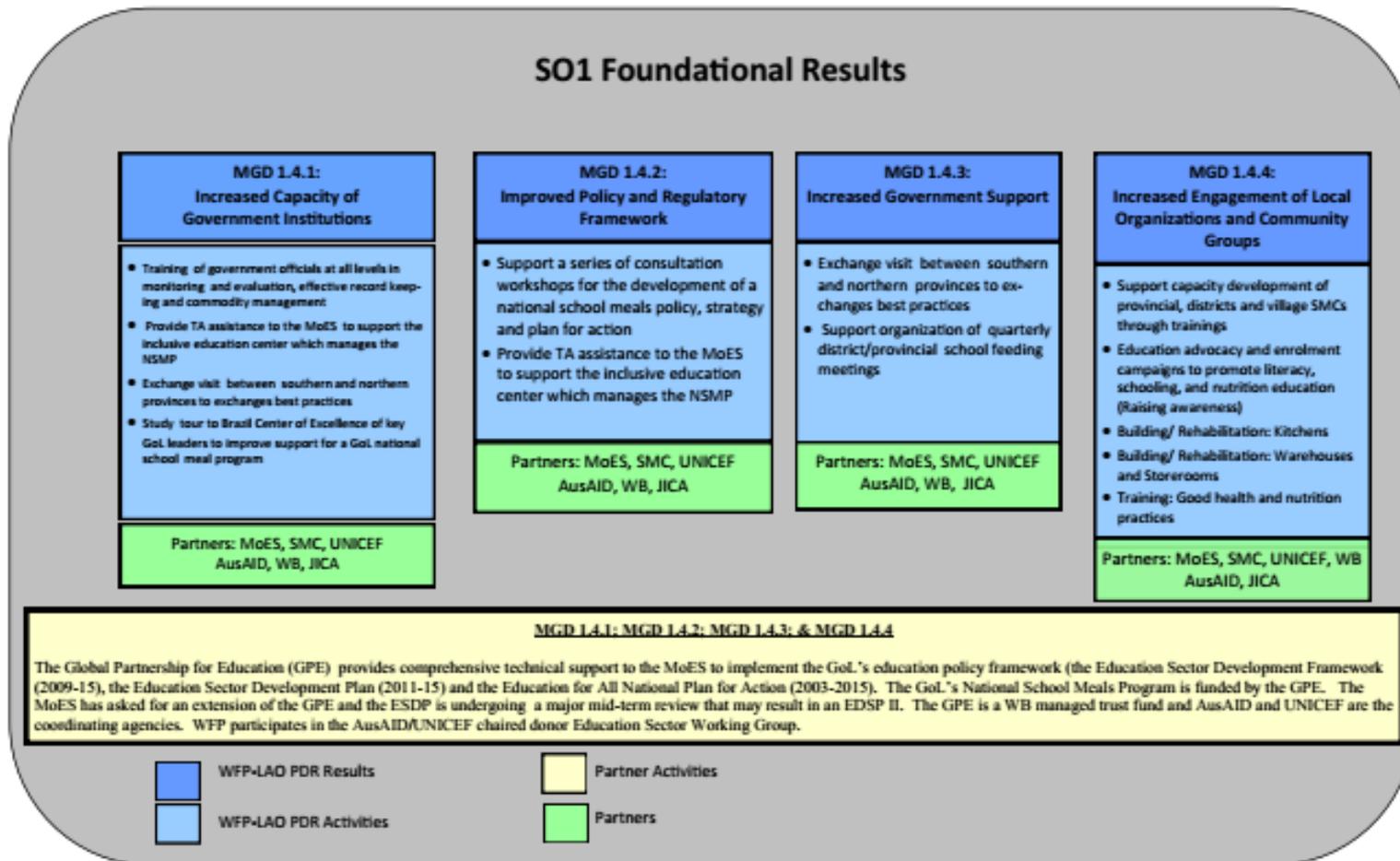
Figure 5 The Original Results Framework

MGD Laos Results Framework, page 1/4

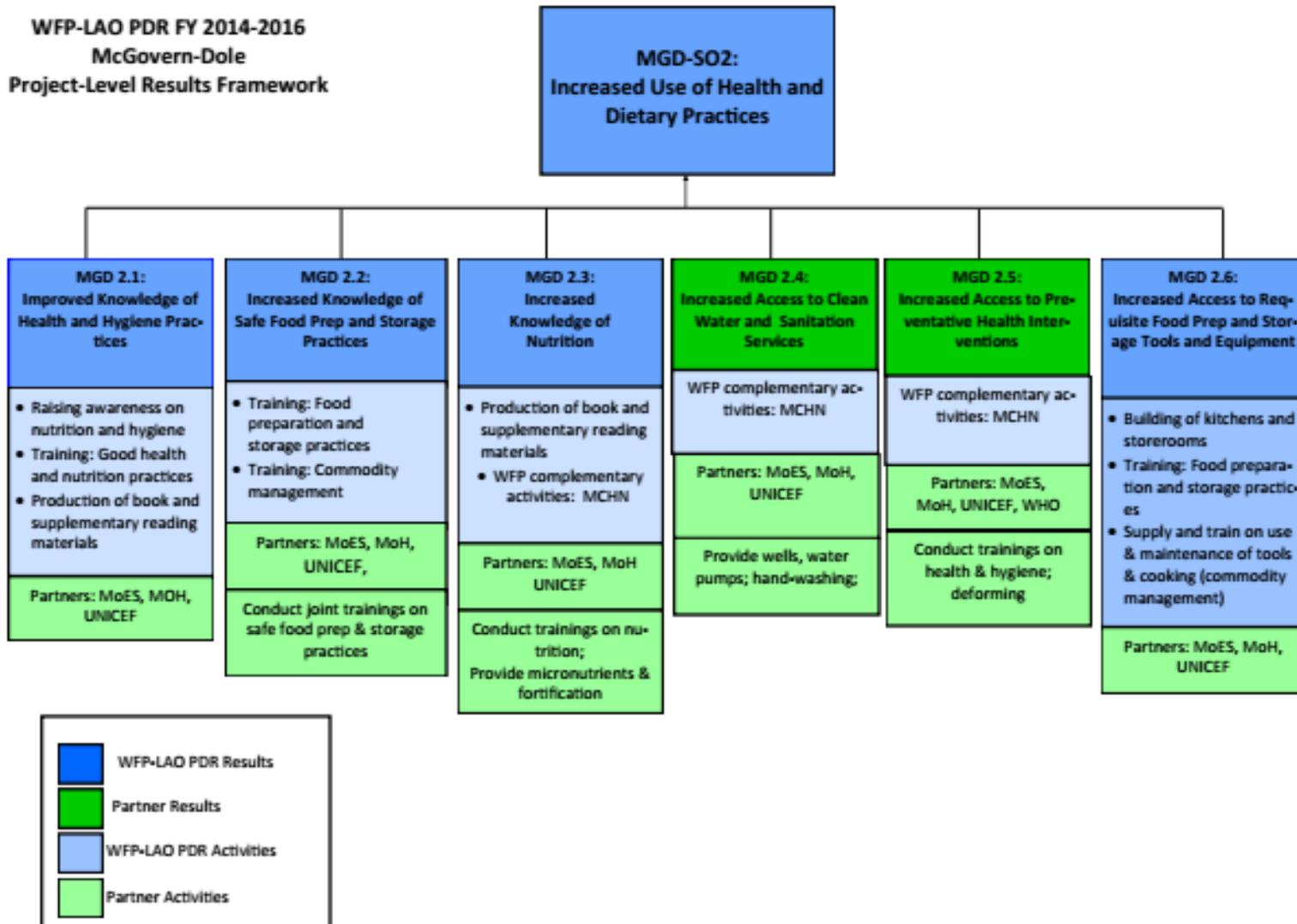


MGD Laos Results Framework, page 2/4

WFP-LAO PDR FY2014-15
McGovern-Dole
Project-Level Results Framework



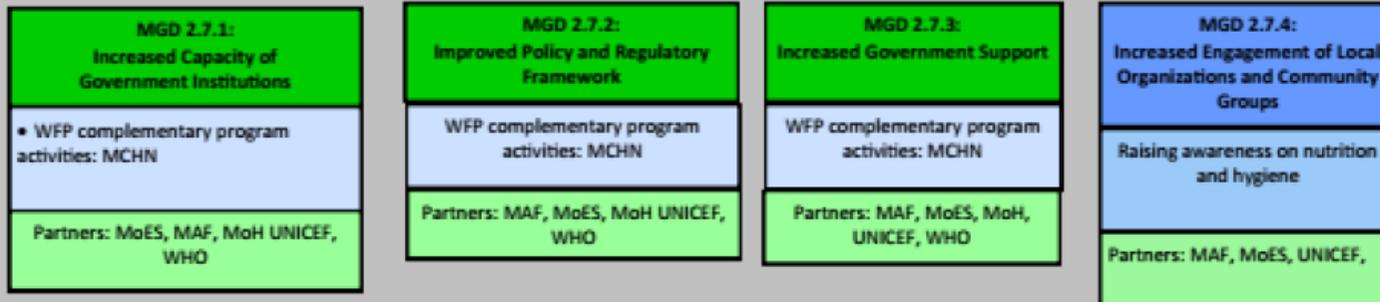
MGD Laos Results Framework, page 3/4



MGD Laos Results Framework, page 4/4

WFP-LAO PDR FY2014-15
 McGovern-Dole
 Project-Level Results Framework

SO2 Foundational Results



Annex C Key Findings from Previous Evaluations

Introduction

1. This annex provides a summary of the key findings from relevant previous evaluations and reviews. Those included are shown below. The most recent studies were particularly valuable.

Date	Subject	Ref.
2009	Evaluation of Laos CP	WFP, 2009c
2010	Laos School Feeding Impact Evaluation	WFP, 2011d, WFP, 2011e, Bittenheim et al, 2010
2011	Assessment of Home-Grown School Feeding Pilot Program in Lao PDR	WFP, 2011a
2011	Evaluation of WFP's School Feeding Policy	Mokoro, 2011
2012	USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Pilot Project – Independent Evaluation Report	MSI & Coffey, 2012
2014	Laos – Education for All 2015 National Review	UNESCO & Lao PDR, 2014
2015	Village Education Development Committees in Lao PDR: Their functionality and impact – 2015	Seel et al., 2015
2015	Kimetrica baseline evaluation of MGD-funded SFP	Kimetrica, 2015
2016	Impact assessment review on School Meals and WASH activities	Moossavi & Trinies, 2016

Evaluation of Laos CP – 2009 (WFP, 2009c)

2. This evaluation was conducted in the first half of 2009 and covered the WFP country portfolio that was implemented between 2000 and 2008. The evaluation focused on three main areas of inquiry: the strategic alignment and position of WFP in the country context, the driving forces behind the choices made in putting together the portfolio as it is, and the performance and results of the portfolio. The evaluation was to support the WFP CO in developing its country strategy and its future portfolio.

3. The evaluation found that

- the WFP portfolio was generally well aligned with national policies, systems and processes.
- the portfolio was well aligned with WFP's corporate priorities, as expressed in its strategic objectives, and that the CO undertook efforts to test and implement new programming tools, in spite of limited resources.

4. In terms of SF the following observations were made:

- School feeding contributed to achieving education outcomes, even though other investments in the education sector took place in parallel and contributed to these achievements as well.
- The sustainability of school feeding is supported through the inclusion of school feeding in the Government's policy framework, but will require commensurate capacity development and financial allocations.

Alignment with Government Policies

- School feeding is targeted on communities that meet a combination of food security and vulnerable indicators and educational performance indicators. All primary schools in a district, except those in district towns unless compelling reasons exist for including them, are eligible to receive school feeding as long as they have adequate classrooms, appropriate food storage, and a School Feeding Committee with balanced participation of women.

Education

- School feeding has become fully integrated into the Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF), which aims to expand school feeding and nutrition programmes to 39 districts. This is a key strategy of the framework to reduce dropout rates of children in lower primary grades from disadvantaged communities and ethnic populations. In addition, pre-school feeding for 5 and 6 year olds is expected to help in building school-readiness among these new entrants in the formal school system.

Ownership

- For school feeding, the Ministry of Education is an unequivocal partner for programme design, management and implementation. However, the evaluation observed that in the early years of the project, planning and targeting were mostly carried out by WFP. This arrangement improved since 2008, particularly, in preparation for the South expansion of the programme. Planning and consultation meetings were held with the central, provincial and district education authorities.

Decentralization, Participatory Approaches and Parallel Structures

- The structures required for the management of WFP operations, such as food security or school feeding committees follow the same pattern as others and could be perceived as parallel structures built in addition to existing ones. However, structures are not consistently operational throughout the country, and thus each project or operation makes efforts to develop something for its purposes. For instance, school feeding committees could be perceived as duplicating the earlier established village education committees. Many school feeding committees were found to be weak, especially as women in the committees have little or no schooling (which they would need for record-keeping) and/or have little time for committee work, and thus cannot carry out their tasks well. On the positive side, it has been reported that wherever there is an actively functioning Parents-Teachers' Association, School Feeding Committees also function well.

Local Ownership

- In the case of school feeding, ownership was directly linked to the teacher and his/her ability to communicate with children and parents.

Shared Ownership and Mutual Accountability

- School feeding in Laos was initially designed as a joint programme with the Ministry of Education and WFP having mutual accountability for its outcomes. Efforts are continuously being made to increase the role of the Ministry in managing and monitoring of school feeding.

Coordination mechanism

- The UNDAF provides a framework for WFP’s traditional programme activities (such as FFR, FFW and school feeding) to support goals of enhancing livelihoods and improving access to social services, or increasing the awareness of malnutrition issues. The results framework attached to the UNDAF identifies specific areas in which each of the agencies are expected to contribute, fully integrating WFP in this framework, and including references also the International Finance Institutions and their unique role in the development of Laos. The results framework is discussed further in section 2.3 below.

Strategic Objective 4⁶⁰

- School feeding in Laos is fully in line with the provisions of goal 2 under this strategic objective that aims “to **increase levels of education and** basic nutrition and health through food and nutrition assistance and food and nutrition security tools” (WFP, Strategic Plan 2008-2011, paragraph 53). This strategic objective also opens opportunities for placing greater emphasis on nutritional goals, especially goal 1 that aims “to help countries bring under nutrition below critical levels and break the intergenerational cycle of chronic hunger” (WFP, Strategic Plan 2008-2011, paragraph 52).

Laos SF impact evaluation – 2010 (WFP, 2011d, WFP, 2011e, Buttenheim et al, 2010):

5. An SFP evaluation conducted by the World Bank in Laos in 2010 (Buttenheim et al, 2010) was synthesized by Mokoro as part of a contribution to Mokoro’s evaluation of WFP’s School Feeding Policy:

- C7. The study was undertaken in two northern provinces of Lao PDR. A baseline survey in 2006 preceded the roll-out of SF interventions, and a follow-up survey took place in 2008. The intention was to conduct a quasi-experimental longitudinal comparison of different SF modalities (on-site school feeding vs. take-home rations (THR)).
- C8. For practical reasons different modalities had to be offered at district level, so the comparison was between three districts in one province, respectively offering on-site feeding, on-site feeding plus THR, and just THR. A control district, with no SF intervention had to be drawn from a neighbouring province. Sampling was at household level, so as to include children not in school, including the younger siblings of pupils. An added complication was that villages in each province could choose to take up the SF interventions, so the study had to attempt to control for characteristic differences between take-up and non-take-up villages.
- C9. The study found very little conclusive evidence that SF affected enrolment or the nutritional status of the population. On enrolment, there was a secular trend increase in enrolment across the country, and the take-up villages had higher baseline enrolments than the non-take-up villages. Against this background, it was not possible to determine a conclusive and significant effect of SF on enrolments.
- C10. On nutrition, the study examined weight-for-age, height-for-age and anaemia. Here too, the study failed to find evidence of positive effect of school feeding on children's nutritional status.

⁶⁰ Subsequent WFP Strategic Plans have slightly different formulations of objectives and goals.

- C11. The study speculates that effects might have been greater if there had been full take-up of the interventions, or if they had been targeted on more disadvantaged villages (given that more advantaged villages tended to select into the programme). It notes the more positive findings from the Uganda and Burkina Faso studies, and draws attention to the high costs and other implementation challenges of school feeding in Laos.

Assessment of Home Grown School Feeding Pilot Program in Lao PDR – 2011 (WFP, 2011a)

6. Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) is a school feeding programme that provides students with food produced and purchased within a country to the maximum extent possible. In preparation for the launch of the National School Meals Programme (NSMP), the Government of Lao PDR requested that WFP trial the new modality in selected schools and assess the results. The model programme was implemented in nine villages in Oudomxay and Phongsaly provinces from April to May 2011, reaching a total of 917 students in nine schools for an average of 26 school days per school.

7. The assessment found that

- villages successfully served school lunch for an average of 86 percent of school days during which classes were held, to an average of 97 percent of all students enrolled and attending;
- A high level of acceptability was evidenced by the modality, with an average of 94 percent of all beneficiaries expressing satisfaction. Benefits cited by parents and teachers included more time for parents to work, reduced absences during afternoon classes, and improved student-teacher relationships as children and teachers spent more time together during lunch breaks. Children cited satisfaction with the increased diversity and amount of food.
- Despite high beneficiary satisfaction, results of the trial suggest ongoing and persistent challenges associated with the HGSF modality. The decentralised nature of the approach contributed to difficulties in assessing the model programme itself, as record-keeping was inconsistent and results were in some cases difficult to verify; however, areas of concern were identified. The weak capacities of Village School Meals Committees (VSMC) and insufficient financial reporting present significant challenges. In addition, food served in each school was found to be insufficient in quantity and nutritional quality. Local procurement processes were weak due to inadequate quantities of food in local markets, while the remote locations of villages and poor road accessibility made it difficult to purchase additional food from the closest available markets. Transport of food from such markets was difficult, costly and not budgeted for among the funds disbursed to villages for food procurement. Finally, most schools did not have adequate basic infrastructure or services to accommodate cooking requirements such as clean water, sufficient cooking pots or instruments, or designated cooks able to prepare meals in a timely manner.

Evaluation of WFP's School Feeding Policy (Mokoro, 2011)

8. The Mokoro evaluation summarised the evidence relating to the objectives of the policy as follows. Although the Policy was subsequently revised (see WFP, 2013g), the evaluation's summary of the evidence-base related to the different benefits claimed for school feeding remains relevant.

9. On **educational benefits**: there is no doubt that school feeding can act as an incentive for enrolment and attendance. It can be targeted effectively to girls through on-site

feeding and take-home rations (THR). However, the fact that such effects have often been demonstrated does not mean that they are inevitable (this is a key finding from recent impact evaluations). Effects further along the causal chain are more controversial. Attendance may be necessary for learning to take place, but it is never sufficient. Learning depends on the presence and quality of teachers, together with other aspects of the learning environment, and there may be little return on investment if children drop out early. School feeding may have undesirable or paradoxical effects on the education system as a whole. For example, it may exacerbate overcrowding and strain inadequate facilities. It has been empirically demonstrated that short-term hunger can impair concentration and cognitive performance, but impact evaluations have found it much more difficult to demonstrate a corresponding performance improvement attributable to school feeding. (This is not wholly surprising, in view of the complementary factors that contribute to learning.)

10. On **nutritional benefits**: the WFP School Feeding Policy (the Policy) acknowledged the importance of the “first thousand days”, which are not directly covered by school feeding. The Policy highlighted the potential importance of school feeding programmes not only in alleviating child hunger in school, but also in enhancing the nutritional status of children particularly when the food is fortified with micronutrients, and referred to the potential cognitive – and hence educational – benefits that may derive from this. There is indeed strong evidence that school feeding can bring such benefits: a large number of studies agree on the direction of effects, but their scale is less clear. At the same time, recent evidence in two areas has tended to strengthen the nutritional relevance of school feeding. The first relates to the spillover effect (the benefits of school feeding that extend to other members of the household), and the second to evidence about the potential positive influence of school feeding on adolescent girls from a life-cycle perspective. The Policy does not mention the latter case, though WFP’s Strategic Plan does.

11. Framing school feeding as a **social protection** measure does not introduce new benefits; it is more a matter of looking at the same effects in a different way.⁶¹ For example, it highlights the significance of the value transfer that provides the incentive for increased enrolment or for a lower drop-out rate in times of stress. The Policy drew attention to two very important pieces of “pragmatic” evidence: i) as countries develop, they tend to maintain school feeding systems; and ii) school feeding can often be scaled up rapidly (a major lesson of the 2008 crisis). These factors suggest that school feeding should indeed be taken into account when considering the range of available social protection measures. On the other hand, the Policy tends to understate the difficulties in the way of school feeding being seen as the optimal intervention. School feeding may be at a disadvantage because of its high administrative costs and its limited targeting. Its strengths may include an ability to scale up and the low opportunity cost if resources are provided as food aid (though WFP is rightly seeking to make resources more fungible).

12. As regards **Home-Grown School Feeding** (HGSF), the dimension of the local economic benefits derived from it is the hardest to bring within the “social protection” framework, though it can be reconciled with WFP’s broader mandate. It is certainly true that food procurement can be a stimulus to local agriculture, and there are conspicuous examples (including the United States of America and Brazil) where this has contributed to the development of established national school feeding systems. These collateral benefits can attract political support, which reinforces the sustainability of school feeding. The Policy, however, tends to oversimplify the mechanisms through which school feeding may be able to contribute to local economic development.

⁶¹Indeed, WFP’s 2009 *Rethinking School Feeding* introduced the safety net element. In 2013 WFP’s *Revised School Feeding Policy* announced a “new approach of supporting government-led programmes, and outlined innovations” such as “alignment... with safety net and nutrition policies” although both of these remain problematic in SF in Lao PDR as paragraphs b and c explain.

USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Pilot Project – Independent Evaluation Report (MSI & Coffey, 2012)

[extracted and adapted in part from the report's executive summary]

13. The USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Pilot Project (USDA LRP Project) was a five-year, US\$60 million pilot authorized by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (The Farm Bill). Under the pilot programme, USDA funded agreements for 21 local and regional procurement (LRP) projects in nineteen countries. This evaluation examined the activities of the final twenty projects in 18 countries: ten emergency projects and ten development projects. The pilot programme was designed to evaluate the timeliness, cost-effectiveness and market impact of using LRP as a tool to respond to natural disasters and other food crises in developing countries. A portion of the funds was also made available for development assistance projects of one year or more in duration.

14. Sixteen of the twenty projects procured locally, three procured regionally, and one procured both local and regional sources.⁶² Fourteen projects distributed food directly, two projects distributed vouchers, and four used both approaches.

15. The evaluation gathered quantitative and qualitative data through reviewing LRP project documents and datasets, conducting site visits in eight countries (= nine projects), and carrying out in-depth interviews with participants, researchers, and others in the United States. The evaluation did not assess the performance of participants, but highlighted characteristics that may affect timeliness, cost-effectiveness, or market impacts associated with LRP.

16. The evaluation answered the following key questions:

- **Timeliness:** What amount of time was required by each project, and across LRP projects, to procure and deliver food assistance? What differences are found between different LRP approaches?
- **Cost-effectiveness:** How much did each procurement cost under the LRP projects? Were there differences in cost-effectiveness between LRP approaches?
- **Impacts on markets:** To what quantifiable extent have the LRP projects contributed to increased prices or price volatility in the markets in which the procurement took place and, if observed, what conditions contributed to adverse market impacts?
- **Quality:** To what extent did the commodities purchased under the LRP projects satisfy relevant quality and safety standards?
- **Comparison to in-kind food aid:** In what situations can LRP modalities deliver food aid in a more timely fashion than can in-kind transfers? How cost-efficient is LRP relative to in-kind transfers, and what factors contribute to the relative cost-effectiveness of the two approaches?

17. The main findings and conclusions were as follows:

- **Timeliness:** Among the procurements through LRP, timeliness is most important for emergency projects. Timeliness in reaching vulnerable populations with critical food insecurity is often considered more important than cost by donors. The evaluation finds that the total time for contracting and delivery of food for emergency LRP projects averaged 45 days faster than the total time for development LRP projects.

⁶² Local procurement = within a recipient country, regional = within the same region and/or same continent as the recipient country.

- **Cost-Effectiveness:** The variable that most affects cost-effectiveness in LRP is the type of commodity procured. The evaluation team’s analysis thus focuses primarily on commodity category as the main variable of study, with procurements falling into five major categories of commodities: unprocessed cereals, milled cereals, fortified blended foods (FBFs), pulses, vegetable or cooking oils, and an “other” category, comprised of a range of other commodities procured in small amounts. Average costs were weighted by tonnage purchased for the analysis, to control for price variation based on economies of scale.
- Among LRP project procurements, unprocessed cereals were the least expensive of all commodities purchased in the LRP projects, at approximately US\$326 per metric ton (MT). Milled cereals (e.g., maize flour and rice) cost US\$429/MT. Pulses averaged US\$672/MT and FBFs US\$667/MT (see Figure B, which also shows transport, storage and handling costs). Vegetable oils and “other” commodities (e.g., canned fish, iron-fortified fish sauce (IFFS) and salt) were the most expensive categories of commodities purchased under the LRP Project.
- **Impacts on markets:** Analysis of the 20 LRP projects’ market interventions could neither confirm nor find probable that any of the projects caused market impact in procurement markets. For all commodities procured for which there existed enough information to evaluate market impact, the analysis concluded that 15 projects were “unlikely” to have caused any impact and that three had “possibly” caused an impact. The remaining two projects fell into the “unlikely” category for two commodities and into the “possibly” category for another.

Quality: The participants complied with the food safety and quality standards requirements in their agreements, which specified that all commodities must meet national standards or Codex Alimentarius standards and also be tested for aflatoxin. Testing laboratories were identified in LRP project countries, and in some cases, particularly for aflatoxin, in neighbouring countries to ensure that testing was carried out regularly for procurements. Many country projects could choose between public and private facilities for testing, and some put out tenders for the service. Defaults based on quality issues were very few, and participants had included contract language for no-cost replacement in each case. During site visit discussions, beneficiaries reported satisfaction with the commodities in the great majority of cases. They are familiar with their appearance, their storage and food preparation needs, and with the resulting taste and texture. Voucher users said they were pleased they could select products from their local markets. A school feeding program in West Africa trained school committee members to select quality pulses from local producers, while one in Asia supported dietary diversity with high nutritional content by using locally procured goods. Voucher programs present unique circumstances for quality testing. Often, voucher schemes involve many vendors, to ensure that beneficiaries have options and have access to vendors within a reasonable distance. With so many vendors, it can be difficult to subject them all to testing.

- **Comparison of LRP to in-kind food aid:**

- **Timeliness**

Across all LRP and in-kind shipments for emergencies that were examined for purposes of this evaluation, total time for LRP purchases averaged 56 days, while total time for comparable in-kind shipments to the same countries, in the same time frame, took an average of 130 days, for a difference of 74 days (2.3 times) longer for in-kind commodities to arrive at the final delivery endpoint than commodities purchased locally or regionally. As data on pre-positioned in-kind stocks were not made available for this evaluation, the analysis of time to

deliver the in-kind shipments does not include an analysis of the time to deliver from prepositioned stocks.

- **Cost-effectiveness:** For all five main commodity categories, in-kind commodity costs were lower than LRP commodity costs when considering commodity costs alone; however, total costs (i.e., including Transport, Storage, Handling (TSH)) were lower for LRP for every commodity category with the exception of vegetable oils. Total costs for in-kind shipments were higher for unprocessed cereals, milled cereals, FBFs and pulses. For unprocessed cereals, the largest category of purchases through LRP, LRP commodity costs were 26 percent higher than for in-kind purchases; however, including TSH costs makes total costs for LRP cereals 35 percent cheaper than through in-kind food aid. The pattern is similar for pulses – the other unprocessed commodity category – and for milled cereals, to a lesser degree. For vegetable oils, LRP purchases cost more than did in-kind shipments, though the difference is not large (US\$100/MT).

Laos – Education for All 2015 National Review (UNESCO & Lao PDR, 2014)

18. UNESCO’s report presents the progress made in achieving the six Education for All goals with then available disaggregated information. It describes difficulties at the time and emerging challenges to fulfil the respective targets of these goals as well as a recommended agenda for education development in 2015 and beyond.

19. The six goals are as follows:

- Goal 1: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- Goal 2: Universal Primary Education
- Goal 3: Life skills and Lifelong Learning: “Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programme”
- Goal 4: Literacy- Adult Literacy Rate. This goal calls for an increase in adult (age 15 and above) literacy by 50 per cent by 2015.
- Goal 5: Gender parity and equality in education. Focus of the gender parity is as follows:
 - Establish a gender and education policy
 - Systematically use sex-disaggregated data
 - Set target goals specifically for girls and women, in addition to overall targets
 - Encourage and train parents to support girls’ education
 - Promote girls’ school attendance based on various incentives
- Goal 6: Improved Quality of Education

Village Education Development Committees in Lao PDR: Their functionality and impact – 2015 (Seel et al., 2015)

20. The March 2015 study offers an important perspective on VEDCs and how to develop lasting improvements in their capacity, functioning, effectiveness and inclusiveness. Specific objectives were to: (1) Evaluate the effectiveness of VEDCs and their contribution towards achieving the Education Quality Standards (EQS) at school level; (2) Assess the level of

diversity within the VEDC representative structure, with a particular emphasis on the inclusion of women and marginalised groups; and (3) Assess the efficiency and sustainability of VEDC capacity-building approaches currently being implemented in the country.

21. The research found much that the ‘basics’ of VEDCs are largely in place, but there is more work to be done to ensure optimal functioning. VEDCs are adding greater weight to the previously-existing parents’ associations and are becoming increasingly effective in supporting enrolment, improving infrastructure and assisting school development. They generally have the ‘right’ members, but these are not necessarily in the ‘right’ roles. VEDCs often do not avail themselves of the existing provision to extend beyond seven members. The ‘status-based’ VEDC structure promotes their authoritative agency but not necessarily their inclusivity or continuity. Support is needed to ensure members are committed to and capacitated for their roles. Most VEDCs do not meet on the recommended monthly basis. In the best examples they were supporting a range of cross-sectoral initiatives to address demand-side barriers to education. The various roles of DEDCs (District Education Development Committee) and their linkages with DESBs (District Education and Sports Bureaux) and VEDCs are not yet fully clear or well-established.

22. The report makes the following sixteen recommendations:

1. Further clarify the existing stipulation that a VEDC should have at least 7 members but may have up to 15.
2. Further clarify who should be the core members of the VEDC, whilst also allowing for some flexibility in dividing detailed tasks according to the context.
3. Implement measures to support the increased participation of women in VEDCs and learn from good practice in projects in tailor approaches to included marginalised groups and establishing a means for the students voice to be heard.
4. Encourage that selection and election of non-status based positions on VEDCs (teachers, additional community members and parents) takes place at a different time from the changeover in village leadership and clarify that it is the responsibility of the School Director, with the support of existing and out-going VEDC members, to give orientation to new members.
5. Clarify the roles, membership and functions of DEDCs and incorporate these into a set of clear Guidelines.
6. Strengthen the systems of SBM to facilitate and maximise VEDC involvement.
7. Further enhance VEDCs’ contribution to supporting enrolment, equity and inclusion by establishing village maps as a strategy to reach out to ALL children, clarify the roles and responsibilities of VEDCs regarding ECD and build all VEDCs’ awareness of the benefits both of pre-primary education and all forms of early childhood development support.
8. Improve VEDC effectiveness in supporting teaching and learning by establishing the monitoring of both teacher and pupil attendance as a strategy for ALL schools and make explicit the role of the VEDC in monitoring teachers’ management and discipline of children.
9. Ensure sufficient financial and human resources to enable all Districts to reach all VEDCs (including school directors) that currently lack basic capacity, with at least a basic training on core purpose, roles and responsibilities of VEDCs.
10. Consider a range of factors in further development and roll-out of VEDC training: a national training plan dividing existing training content into discrete modules which allows for a flexible roll out and a staged approach to capacity development; development of content in specified areas; increased emphasis on on-the-job,

participatory and school- or cluster-based training; further measures to support VEDC members who do not speak Lao.

11. Prioritise untrained school directors for basic school management training and further incorporate within such trainings basic skills in support and orientation of VEDC members, VEDC operations, record-keeping and accounts etc.
12. Disseminate the VEDC Handbook and two volumes of SD Handbooks to ALL schools, updating to new versions as these become available and develop a simplified version of the VEDC handbook targeted to VEDC members with limited education/literacy skills, focused on core practical skills and understanding.
13. Strengthen the focus on the development of cross-departmental teams within DESBs with the capacity to support and monitor all aspects of V'DCs' work; ensure that all PESS and DESBs have full access to the full set of current and future relevant manuals and develop/adapt further supplementary visual and audio-visual materials.
14. Ensure further dissemination and awareness-raising around VEDCs.
15. In order to optimise the potential benefits of planned support through GPE-2, BEQUAL and other programmes, make every effort to address the current lack of recurrent funding for DESBs to carry out their core functions in relation to school support and monitoring (and VEDC support as integral to this) and consider a more flexible allocation of pedagogy advisers (PAs) to take account of the size of districts (in terms of the number and level of accessibility of schools).
16. In light of the process of decentralisation, consider how to further establish and institutionalise mechanisms by which VEDCs and primary stakeholders of education have ongoing opportunity to express their views and provide a 'reality check' on policy and programme implementation at the grassroots.

Kimetrica baseline evaluation of MGD-funded SFP – 2015 (Kimetrica, 2015)

Overview of baseline findings

23. The objective of the baseline survey of the Lao PDR SFP was to calculate USDA's SFP performance indicators and other school related variables across the sampled schools. The baseline survey collected data on education and food security variables at the individual, household and school levels. It also collected data on a range of other variables including school infrastructure, school location, teacher attendance, etc. that could potentially affect or explain programme outcomes.

24. Findings from the baseline survey, conducted in December 2015 across ten districts of six provinces (Pongsaly, Oudomxay, Luang Namtha, Salavan, Sekong, and Attapeu), are summarized here below:

- student literacy levels were extremely poor, with only 1.9 percent of students demonstrating at least 75 percent comprehension compared with a target of 25 percent;
- child inattentiveness is a significant problem, with 19 percent of children being identified as inattentive by teachers, with a difference between girls (16 percent) and boys (22 percent);
- mean dietary diversity is low;
- water and sanitation facilities at schools are poor; only 44 percent of schools have access to drinking water near or at the school; although 85 percent of schools have toilet facilities for students only 25 percent provide separate facilities for boys and girls;

- facilities for food storage and preparation are generally adequate; however, less than half of the storekeepers (45 percent) and only 33 percent of the food preparers have received training on safe food handling and hygiene practices; knowledge of good hygiene is poor;
- knowledge of good hygiene among students is also poor;
- teacher and student attendance are reportedly high, but, discrepancies between school records and baseline attendance observations suggest that school level record keeping and data quality are poor;

Baseline Recommendations and follow-up

25. Table 13 below presents the recommendations that were made by the Kimetrica baseline (Kimetrica, 2015), comments on these and references related MTE recommendations.⁶³

Table 13 Baseline Recommendations and Follow-up

S/N	Recommendation	MTE Findings	MTE Recommendation
1	Kimetrica recommend that WFP builds and maintains a strong partnership with the MOES in order to use available resources to create a better teaching and learning environment and to develop strategies and take actions to improve primary school pupils' reading and comprehension abilities.	Collaboration with the MOES is essential and can still be further improved to maximise the benefits of the programme and to prepare the GOL for handover.	It is essential that WFP continues to build and maintain a strong partnership with MOES and other stakeholders, especially those involved in the TWG. (overall MTE recommendation)
2	Kimetrica recommend working closely with local communities and schools to mobilise contributions of food items to the school meal programme. This is particularly important for the success of the lunch programme, as WFP only provides rice and oil, leaving the rest of the food and non-food items dependent on community contribution.	Collaboration with local communities and schools remains essential to achieve the objectives of the SFP.	MTE R4. Create a model to strengthen current community capacity development activities, principally targeting schools and VEDCs, to facilitate the growth of local ownership of school feeding and related activities and improved functionality to play a stronger role with school staff. MTE R6. Experiment with cash-based, local procurement models of school feeding.
3	Kimetrica recommend that the SFP work closely in partnership with the key actors already identified in the results framework (MOES, MOH, UNICEF, WHO) and other donors and non-government organisations to improve the water and sanitation facilities at schools.	There is still a noticeable gap in WASH infrastructure which needs to be addressed.	WFP and UNICEF to advocate for WASH activities which are an important complementary activity and recognized as such.

⁶³ As discussed in Annex F, the baseline study was of crucial importance for the MTE, but the MTE's scope is broader: "The MTE has different and additional purposes compared with the baseline assessment, including the need to look at foundational results, capacity development and so forth, which, for the most part, the baseline study did not address; its main focus was on school and household indicators, not system ("foundational") indicators" (Mokoro, 2016a).

S/N	Recommendation	MTE Findings	MTE Recommendation
4	Kimetrica recommend increasing training coverage and offering refresher courses in order to improve the hygienic condition of the food served to pupils, to ensure proper stock management and to improve the record keeping of food utilisation in schools.	The need for capacity development remains.	<p>While capacity development activities have taken place during the implementation period so far, findings show that there is a need for continued activities and to increase understanding of education and nutrition activities among government staff and community members, especially those directly involved in the SFP. The MTE recommends WFP and partners to strengthen this aspect.</p> <p>MTE R4 Create a model to strengthen current community capacity development activities, principally targeting schools and VEDCs, to facilitate the growth of local ownership of school feeding and related activities and improved functionality to play a stronger role with school staff.</p>
5	Kimetrica recommend WFP to work with the government and partners for proper implementation of activities (e.g. raising awareness on nutrition and hygiene, training on good health and nutrition practices, production of supplementary reading materials etc.) identified in the result framework.	As above, collaboration with GOL and other development partners is essential for successful implementation of all aspects of the operation.	<p>MTE R3. Work with other partners to advocate for and assist the strengthening of GOL monitoring systems</p> <p>MTE R4 Create a model to strengthen current community capacity development activities, principally targeting schools and VEDCs, to facilitate the growth of local ownership of school feeding and related activities and improved functionality to play a stronger role with school staff.</p> <p>MTE R8 In the context of the SF programme, and the convergent approach of the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS), collaborate with MOES, MOH and MAF to review experience and seek a better balance between using school gardens a) for educational purposes and b) to provide ingredients for school meals.</p>
6	Kimetrica recommend WFP to raise the critical issue of inaccurate school records at senior level in the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and continue to work closely with the central, local and school level actors to ensure proper record keeping at school level.	Monitoring systems and information sharing need to be improved not only at school level but across the SFP at all levels.	MTE R3 Work with other partners to advocate for and assist the strengthening of Government monitoring systems

Impact assessment review on School Meals and WASH activities (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016)

26. The purpose of this impact assessment (commissioned by WFP Lao CO with funding from Australia) is to provide evidence on the impact of the WFP School Meals Programme in the Lao PDR on educational outcomes. The assessment also aims to know to what extent the provision of school lunch, combined with or without WASH activities, contributes to an impact on educational and health indicators.

27. The overall findings from this assessment are as follows:

Assessment question 1 : Does School feeding have a positive impact on educational indicators?

- Schools receiving the WFP school feeding programme performed slightly better than control schools across all educational indicators except for enrolment. Pupils in school receiving lunch were less likely to be absent at both at roll call and at afternoon roll call than pupils in schools that were receiving MMS. Girls in lunch schools were also more likely to be reported more attentive than girls in MMS schools, although no difference was seen among boys.
- There were no clear trends in the data to indicate the additional effect of the UNICEF WASH program on educational indicators. WASH schools fared better at some indicators and non-WASH schools fared better at others.
- Pupils in schools receiving a WFP school feeding programme had higher overall dietary diversity scores and were less likely to have low scores than pupils in control schools. Pupils in programme schools reported slightly lower absence due to illness and incidence of some illnesses, but these differences were not significant. Pupils in schools that also received the WASH programme were marginally less likely to report having had diarrhoea than pupils in schools without the WASH program.

Assessment question 2: Has School Meals been an effective tool in achieving educational outcomes?

- SM Programme contributed to improvement of educational outcomes when there was an acceptable level of coordination between DESB and WFP and communities had stronger organizations. A functional SL Programme depended on access to water and market and effective communication with community regarding the reason for shift from MMS to SL. The most important challenges of DESB and WFP to run SM Programme effectively were inadequate budget and inadequate monitoring and community mobilizing skills. Communities that were relatively well-off generally donated a variety of non-rice food items, in both wet and dry seasons. For poor villagers providing vegetables or other required items was challenging.

Assessment question 3: Is school lunch more sustainable than mid-morning snack?

- School Lunch Programme was widely accepted in communities where it had been implemented because it was culturally appropriate and was considered the main meal. In almost all programme schools, the VEDC was highly or somewhat functional and took a lead role in 15.6 percent of schools.
- Under optimal conditions, the gardens were at best a minor supplement to the lunch programme. In the most productive regions, school gardening could produce some vegetables for approximately half of the year. Key barriers to the establishment and productivity of gardens were insufficient access to water and suitable land.

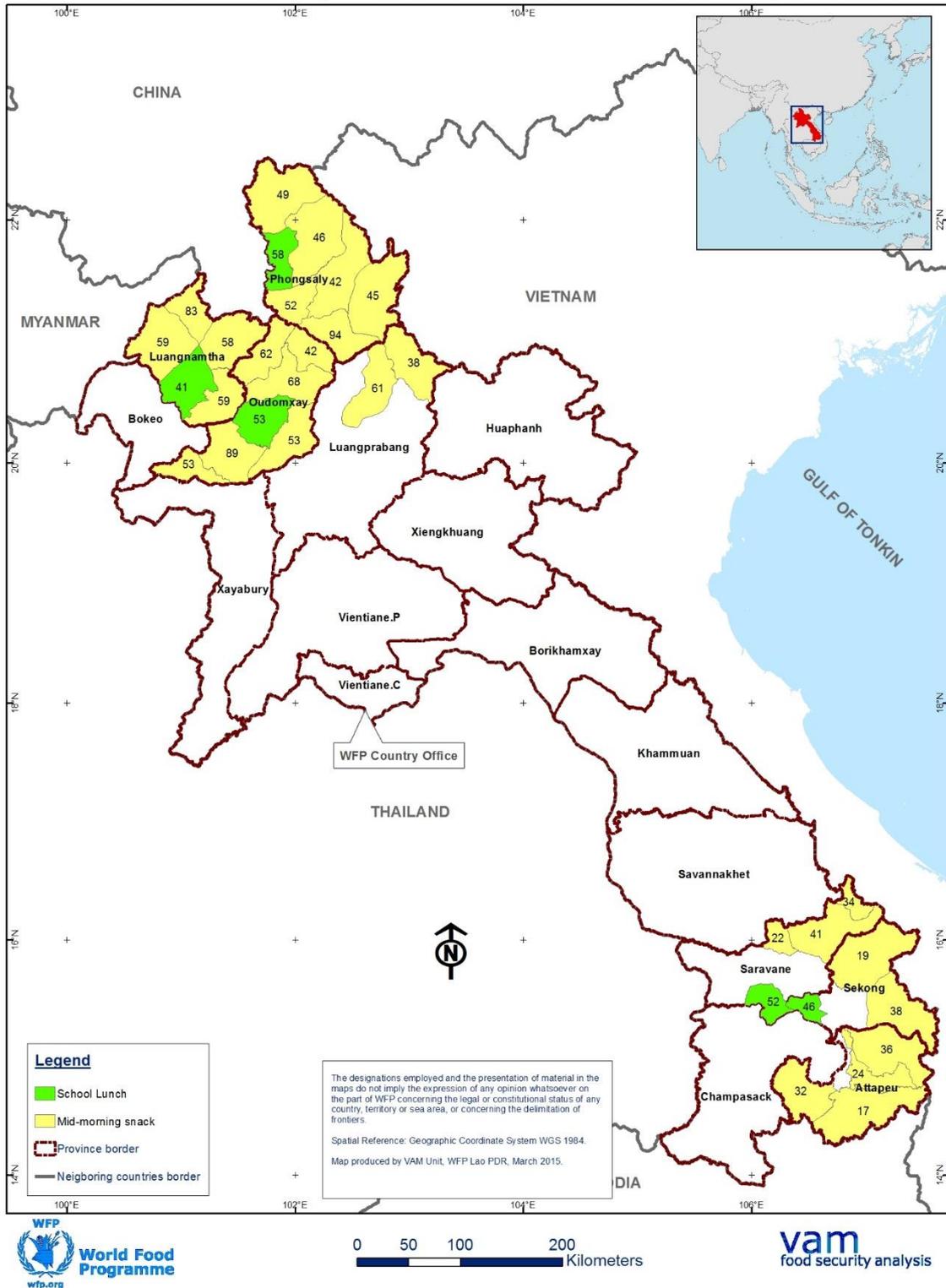
- The provision of lunch at school offers cost savings, but the amount is too insignificant to serve as a motivator for increased parental participation that could enhance the sustainability of the school lunch programme.
- Sustainability of School Lunch Programme depends on improved monitoring systems, increased efforts to solve problems in communities that are not performing, enhanced capacity of DESB, integration of SM Programme with other support activities such as WASH, and building model villages based on good practices.

Assessment question 4: What is the impact of WASH on implementation of school meals?

- Water access was cited as a challenge to school feeding in a majority of schools, and in some cases led to inconsistent feeding or the cessation of the school feeding program. However, most schools and community members agreed that they could find solutions when water was limited and continue the school feeding program.
- Water access was a greater challenge for school gardens, and a water point on the school grounds was considered essential for a school garden to be implemented.
- Fewer than 1 in 4 schools provided pupils access to hand washing facilities with soap, which could lead to exposure to infectious diseases among children.

Annex D Map

Map 1 School Meals Programme in Laos – Location and Number of Schools
Number of Primary School - School Meal Programme



Source: WFP TOR, Annex I

Annex E Gender Dimensions

This annex reproduces the gender analysis included in the Inception Report.

Status of gender in Lao PDR

1. According to the 2015 Global Gender Gap Index - which measures the relative gaps between women and men across four key areas (health, education, economy and politics) – there have been improvements in gender equality as reflected in the assigned score for Lao PDR (0.699 in 2013 and 0.713 in 2015).⁶⁴ A Country Gender Assessment (World Bank & ADB, 2012) commented that government policies combined with rapid economic modernization have supported the steady advancement of women’s status in Lao PDR, particularly in urban areas. The report notes that:

- The private sector is creating opportunities for entrepreneurs. 30-40 percent of these new entrepreneurs are women.
- Cross border markets are emerging for hand-woven textiles and other handicrafts produced mainly by women. The government targets to expand the handicrafts market by 15 percent from 2011 to 2015, with 18 percent export growth.
- The electric grid connection increased from 18 percent of households in 1995 to nearly 72 percent in 2010. Rural electrification has helped reduce the time women spend on domestic chores.
- The political representation of women in the National Assembly has grown by nearly 20 percent since 1990. It's among the highest in the region. However, women continue to struggle to participate in equal numbers.
- Rural areas are undergoing rapid transformation and off-farm jobs are helping pull households out of poverty. But, at the same time, this also makes women who don't have access to arable land and lack off-farm skills more vulnerable.
- Women are mainly responsible for household water supply and energy for cooking yet their voices are still often excluded from local and national decision-making processes about how to manage risks from natural disaster and climate change.

2. The report observes that Laos is at a critical juncture to harness its economic growth to ensure that everyone can benefit. To achieve this, it's necessary for place gender equality and women's empowerment at the centre of its national development plans. It makes the following recommendations:

- Increase the coverage and quality of maternal and reproductive health and nutrition, with a focus on remote areas.
- Pursue a labour-intensive growth strategy that expands opportunities, especially in emerging industries such as tourism, garments, and food processing.
- Expand women's control over finance, land, and business training for farm and non-farm enterprises.
- Improve female participation in transport, hydropower, and mining operations.
- Support regional policy dialogue on how to minimize risks from regional economic integration through forums such as the Greater Mekong Sub-region Working Group on Human Resources Development and the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking.

3. The 8th Five Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan notes that there is a need to address the gender issue among the various ethnic groups in order to ensure quality

⁶⁴ 0.00 = inequality, 1.00 = equality

human capital amongst future generations. It also notes there are still disparities in the school enrolment ratios of girls to boys and the disparity increases with the level of education, as shown in Table 14 below

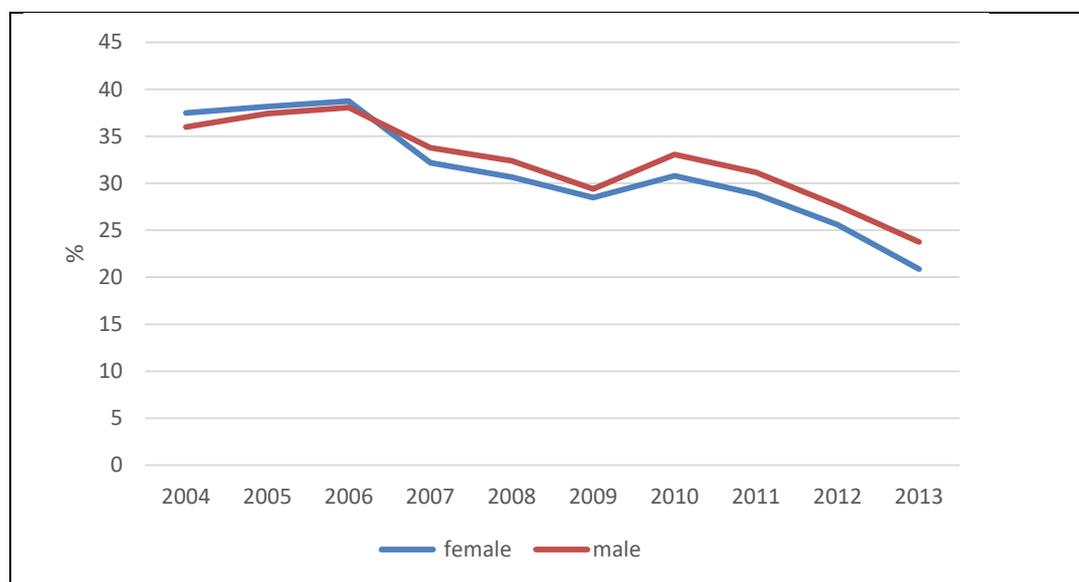
Table 14 School enrolment ratio by sex

Indicator	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Target 2014-15
Ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school	0.94	0.94	0.95	0.91	1
Ratio of girls to boys enrolled in lower secondary school	0.86	0.87	0.89	0.88	1
Ratio of girls to boys enrolled in upper secondary school	0.82	0.81	0.83	0.82	1
Ratio of girls to boys enrolled in higher education				0.87	1
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agriculture sectors			34%		
Proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly				25%	

Source: Data on Ratio of girls to boys is from the LSIS

4. The gender parity index for net enrolment (primary) has improved from 0.93 in 2004 to 0.98 in 2014. However, as shown in Figure 6 below, since 2006, more boys than girls have been dropping out of primary education.⁶⁵

Figure 6 Cumulative drop-out rate to the last grade of primary education



5. The Plan states that the literacy rate of women and men is generally related to poverty. Women's literacy is lower than men's especially in the rural area without road access, amongst the poorest group and ethnic groups living in very remote areas. The ratio of literate women to men in the younger population (age between 15-19 years) is better than the ratio of the age group between 20-24 years. This could be due to the higher girl school enrolment rate during the past years.

6. The share of women in wage employment in non-agriculture sectors increased from approximately 20 percent in 1990 to 34 percent in 2010 which is still low. This may be attributed to the high proportion of women in unpaid family work. The male workforce is better educated than the female workforce and it can be observed that women are mostly in

⁶⁵ <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/ed-stats>

non-stable employment, self-employed or engaged in unpaid family work (65 percent) as compared to men (35 percent).

7. Box 8 below outlines the government's policies and plan that support gender.⁶⁶

Box 8 Government of Lao PDR Policies on Gender Equality

National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) –

Gender Policy: To improve poor women's economic activities, access to services, and participation in local governance and national planning.

7th Five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan

(NSEDP) – Gender Policy: Emphasizes population policy, human capital development and elimination of all forms of violence against women and children.

NSEDP Gender Targets:

Governance: Aims at 20 percent of government core staff to be female; At least 15 percent of posts above level of district mayor held by women; An increase in percentage of female National Assembly members to more than 30 percent;

Sector Development: Emphasizes the inclusion of women in sector and area development and planning;

Labor and Social Protection: Works towards increasing women's participation in paid labor force to 40 percent; Raises awareness on social hazards to 85 percent of women over age 15 on issues such as human trafficking; and

Human Resource Development: upgrading academic and technical knowledge of women.

8th Five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) 2016-2020

Targets:

- Increase the number of women in leadership positions in the Party-Government organizations and mass organizations by at least 30%.
- Increase the number of female members of the 7th National Assembly by 30%.
- Create conditions for female government officials to upgrade their political governance theory, knowledge on laws, administration, technical, socio-technical at least 40% of the total number of officials upgraded.
- Achieve gender equality in services such as education, health and social welfare to have at least 40% of the total number of service providers.
- Ensure gender equality in opportunities for business for their livelihood such as: land, capital, technical upgrading on new technology and infrastructure (electricity, roads and markets).
- Reduce discrimination and violence against women.
- Ensure women participation in decision making at high level issues.
- Ensure women participation in decision making at family and community level according to 3 Builds directions.
- Develop families, villages and districts associated with gender equality and nonviolence in families especially against women and children to achieve.....families, villages, districts ...

National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (NSAW) 2016-2020

Targets include: more than 35 percent increase in number of women in vocational and technical training in each sector; and 30 percent increase in women in political and governance studies; promotion of women's SMEs and economic leadership; increases in women's participation in planning and access to services.

Action Plan on Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Children in Lao PDR (2014-2020).

Source: World Bank & ADB, 2012, Government of Lao PDR, 2015a, Government of Lao PDR, 2014.

⁶⁶ See also Annex K.

WFP corporate gender policy

8. WFP’s 2009 Gender Policy (WFP, 2009b) was in force for the majority of the evaluation review period. This policy sought to mainstream gender into WFP operations through the 2010–2011 Gender Policy Corporate Action Plan which specified commitment to gender across four dimensions: capacity development; accountability; partnerships, advocacy and research; and operational mainstreaming. While the Gender Policy of 2009 attempted to denote a shift from “commitments to women” to a more comprehensive understanding of gender with an examination of the interacting roles of both men and women, the subsequent Gender Policy Evaluation (WFP, 2014h) found that it failed to develop a clear, comprehensive and shared understanding of what gender means within WFP. It found that gender integration in WFP programmes had largely been a bottom-up, country-led process, rather than one influenced by a clear organisation-wide vision. While it found evidence of progress in identifying gender-based needs and priorities in many programme areas, including nutrition, it noted less evidence of WFP contributing to transformative changes in gender relations. Although it found some good examples of gender-sensitive programming, it also found that capacity development of WFP staff in gender had been inadequate and there was no shared definition of what gender means for WFP; there was still a strong focus on enhancing women’s engagement in programmes or specifically targeting women, so that while it found strong evidence of increased inclusion of women and girls, this “results mainly from a vulnerability rather than a gender lens”.

9. WFP’s latest Gender Policy 2015–2020 (WFP, 2015a) was adopted towards the end of the review period. The new policy addresses previous weaknesses by reinforcing a gender, rather than women-focused, approach, to establish four objectives: adapt food assistance to the different needs of men and women, pursue equal participation, empower women and girls in decision-making regarding their food security and nutrition and ensure the protection of men and women.

10. Both WFP’s Strategic Plans, 2008–2013 (WFP, 2008) and 2014–2017 (WFP, 2013c), also include clear commitments to gender equality. At regional level, an Asia-Pacific Gender Implementation Strategy (WFP, 2016h) has been developed which outlines the regional strategy to operationalise the new gender policy within the specificities of the Asia-Pacific context.

11. The Asia-Pacific gender implementation strategy outlines WFP’s corporate strategy to operationalise the Gender Policy 2015-2020 in the Asia-Pacific region by focusing on six main areas: clarifying the new gender policy and organisational aspirations, developing institutional capacity and confidence, improving information provision and knowledge management, enhancing partnerships, mobilising resources and strengthening the profile of the Gender Results Network (GRN). It also identifies the most prominent gender issues in the region and priority actions to mainstream gender in WFP programming, as well as the respective roles of WFP COs, the RBB and HQ.

WFP Lao PDR approach to gender

12. Based on a gender analysis, WFP Lao PDR has prepared a plan to implement WFP’s Gender Policy 2015 which overall actions and actions specific to each programme area (school feeding, nutrition etc.). The actions relating to school meals are:

- Guidance to schools should include instructions for boys and girls to share tasks in school gardens, that the tasks should not be split as boy tasks and girl tasks
- Delay transition from snack to school lunch for schools without water, to prevent increased workload for women cooks in collecting water for school lunch OR advocate for shared responsibility for bringing water to the school

- Complement efforts for fuel efficient and smoke reducing stoves being implemented in school kitchens with awareness raising for cooks and communities on the health risks of cook stove smoke
- Share best practice examples in school meals from one village to other villages
- Take and circulate photos of men cooking in schools and encourage this practice, for gender equality, as this may be carried over to the home, and change social roles around who cooks the food
- Analysis of gender dimensions of drop-out rates
- Consider women's unpaid workload in collecting the community contribution, and how this could be made easier or workload spread to men

13. The Lao PDR CP describes the provision of a take-home ration as part of the school feeding programme for girls and ethnic minorities to enhance enrolment and attendance while the SPR 2015 notes that a 2015 evaluation by UNICEF and World Vision, found that the representation of women and marginalised groups in the Village Education Development Committees (VEDCs) needs to be improved. WFP has no control over the selection of VEDC members. The composition of the committee is established by the government and typically, chaired by the head of the village (a male) with the only female in the group being a representative of the Lao Women's Union, one of the Lao mass organizations. As WFP cannot influence the composition of the village committee, WFP will focus on developing the capacity of women in order to promote gender equality and empower women at the village level, and advocate at the central level for gender parity in local governance (SPR 2015).

14. While the results framework of the MGD design document does not require gender disaggregated data for all its indicators, this was introduced as part of the baseline and the Results Indicators Monitoring Report. It found that inattentiveness was more common among boys (22 percent) than girls (16 percent) and that school lunch schools had better gender equity (ratio 0.98) compared to MMS schools (ratio 0.93), and the ratio has remained fairly consistent over the past four years. It also observed that toilets were often not separated by gender (Kimetrica, 2015).

Gender issues and approach for this evaluation

15. The TOR for this evaluation require that GEEW should be mainstreamed throughout. The evaluation matrix at Annex G responds to this requirement. It acknowledges the necessity of checking on the programme's coherence with national policy on gender (EQ 1). EQ 5 asks whether the operation's strategies were based on a sound gender analysis that considered the distinct needs and participation of boys and girls (and as appropriate within the context of the school meals programme, women and men), and whether they have continued on that basis. Answers to EQs 7 and 8 on the attainment of outputs and outcomes will be disaggregated by sex. EQ 9 asks how adequately the operation has addressed gender equality and protection issues. EQ 12 will surface unintended outcomes including those affecting gender issues. EQ 14 will allow a review of WFP's attention to monitoring and correcting gender issues. EQ 22 asks whether the operation has made any difference to gender relations at any level thus far, and whether any such change likely to be sustained after the programme is completed. In the course of these enquiries, the ET will also explore the quality of women's involvement in local school feeding management and support committees; the factors contributing to boys and girls being out-of-school; factors contributing to the higher drop-out rate of boys; the effect of girls' burden of household labour on their regular attendance at school; the problems older girls face in reaching often remote secondary schools; the variation across ethnic groups; and the status of women teachers. The approach will allow the evaluators to posit and discuss gender/ ethnic/ age

related biases in benefits, the program delivery implications and WFP capacity / policy strengthening work with MoES.

Annex F Methodology

Overview of Approach and Methodology

1. This annex summarises the methodology which was fully set out in the Inception Report (Mokoro, 2016a). The process of implementing the evaluation is summarised in Annex L below.
2. The methodology adopted closely followed the TOR and the USDA guidance in respect of MTEs ("Interim Evaluations" in the terminology of the USDA M&E guidelines - see Box 9 below). Since this is one of three MTEs (the other two concern MGD SFP in Bangladesh and Nepal) commissioned together and undertaken in parallel by Mokoro, learning across as well as within the three programmes can be maximised.

Box 9 USDA M&E Policy on Interim Evaluations

The purpose of interim evaluations may vary across projects and will depend on the evaluation design outlined in the evaluation plan. In general, however, *interim evaluations should be used to assess progress in implementation; assess the relevance of the interventions; provide an early signal of the effectiveness of interventions; document lessons learned; assess sustainability efforts to date; and discuss and recommend mid-course corrections, if necessary.* A variety of methodologies may be used to carry out interim evaluations and may include external reviews, *implementation or process evaluations*, evaluability assessments, or other special studies.

All food assistance projects are required to carry out an interim evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to critically and objectively review and take stock of the project's implementing experience and the implementing environment, assess whether targeted beneficiaries are receiving services as expected, assess whether the project is on track in meeting its stated goals and objectives, review the project-level results frameworks and assumptions, document initial lessons learned, and discuss necessary modifications or mid-course corrections that may be necessary to effectively and efficiently meet the stated goals and objectives.

When conducting the interim evaluation, the project should consider *participatory approaches to involving key stakeholders* including implementing partners or sub-contractors, local and national government partners, project beneficiaries and other donor partners. The project shall also invite USDA to participate in the evaluation, particularly during discussions related to mid-course corrections or changes in strategy, results frameworks, and critical assumptions.

As the final output of the [interim] evaluation, the project is required to submit a detailed report outlining the purpose of the evaluation, methodology, primary questions, findings, lessons learned to date, and recommendations. *The final interim evaluation report should include proposed actions the project deems appropriate to address the review findings and recommendations.*

Source: USDA Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (emphasis added)

3. The Mokoro proposal did take issue with one proposed element of the TOR, namely the replication of the methodology of the baseline survey; WFP accepted that this was not the best use of the MTE, as "The MTE has different and additional purposes compared with the baseline assessment, including the need to look at foundational results, capacity development and so forth, which, for the most part, the baseline study did not address; its main focus was on school and household indicators, not system ("foundational") indicators" (Mokoro, 2016a).
4. As envisaged in the TOR, the evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining desk review and analysis of documents and data with semi-structured interviews and focus groups and observation during field visits.

5. In principle, a contribution analysis approach would be relevant for a complex intervention where the MGD operation seeks to contribute to broad outcomes which depend also on other actors and interventions. However, this was not practical (a) because it is very early in the course of the intervention to assess the wider outcomes to which it may have contributed, and (b) because of limitations in the quality of performance data, as discussed in Annex H.

Stakeholder Analysis

6. The Inception Report (Mokoro, 2016a, see its Annex F) included a detailed stakeholder analysis and mapping, which informed the consultation strategy and identification of interviewees. Figure 7 below is an overview of the main internal and external stakeholders.

Figure 7 Internal and External Stakeholders in the Evaluation

Internal Stakeholders	External Stakeholders
<p>WFP CO: Act as an internal reference group; responsible for country level planning, providing documents, arranging field visits, meetings, and workshops, etc.</p> <p>WFP RBB: Act as an internal reference group, responsible for oversight and technical guidance.</p> <p>WFP HQ: Providing policies and strategies; interest in the lessons learnt.</p> <p>WFP OEV: Guidance of DEQAS; has a stake in ensuring independent and credible evaluation.</p> <p>WFP Washington Office: responsible for donor relations with USDA</p>	<p>Beneficiaries: Includes direct beneficiaries of the SFP and the schools/communities receiving support.</p> <p>Government of Lao PDR: Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, to ensure alignment with national priorities.</p> <p>NGO partners: GIZ, Plan International, and Big Brother Mouse are implementing the SFP and other activities. They are interested in recommendations, partnerships and strategic orientation.</p> <p>UN Agencies: implementing partners in areas such as education and school gardens.</p> <p>USDA: as the donor has vested interest in effective performance.</p> <p>Other Aid Agencies: working in the same field – cooperation is always key</p>

Theory of Change

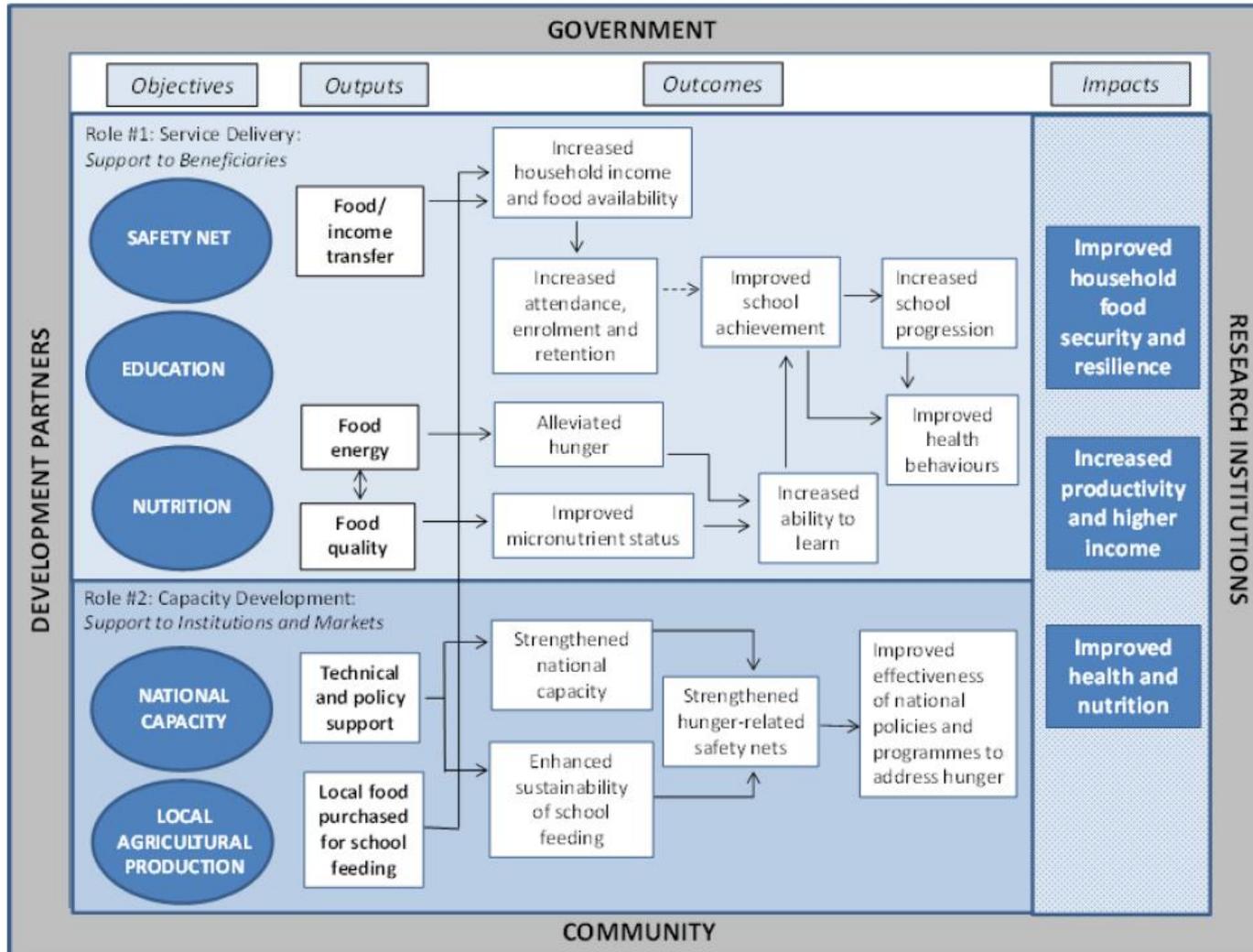
7. At the heart of the approach is an analysis of the theory of change (ToC) underlying the design of the MGD programme. See Figure 9 below, where the ET took account both of the MGD programme's own results framework (Figure 5 in Annex B above) and of the ToC that underpins WFP's 2013 school feeding policy (WFP, 2013g, see Figure 8 below) in elaborating the implicit ToC for the MGD programme that was evaluated.

8. The Results Framework of the school meals programme thus provides the starting point for the consideration of the subject of the evaluation. It is the basis for the ToC that is developed and is used as basis for the assessment of the criterion of effectiveness, understanding intermediate level changes and making clear the linkages between school feeding and nutrition and education results.

9. The principal purpose of this approach was to analyse the understanding of causality implied in programme design and, by identifying the assumptions underlying that understanding, to determine key factors or issues likely to explain the degree to which the programme is achieving (or likely to achieve) its objectives. Particularly through the assumptions identified in the ToC analysis (see Table 15 below), the ToC directly informed the full evaluation matrix presented in Annex G. Table 32 in Annex M includes the ET's findings against each assumption. Some assumptions were found to be inaccurate, while certain assumptions about causality are proving correct and emphasise appropriate design.

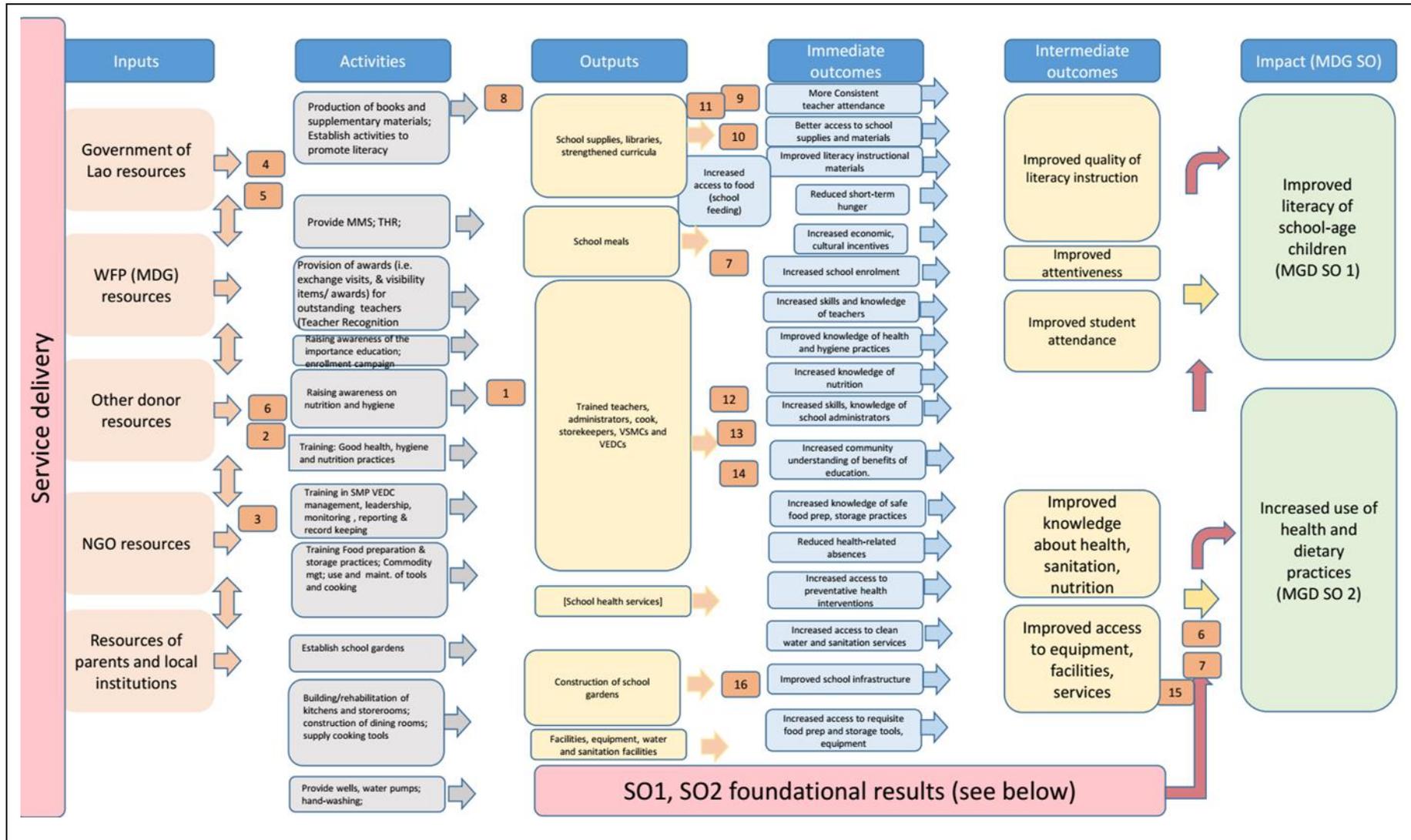
Figure 8 Theory of change for school feeding (WFP School Feeding Policy, 2013)

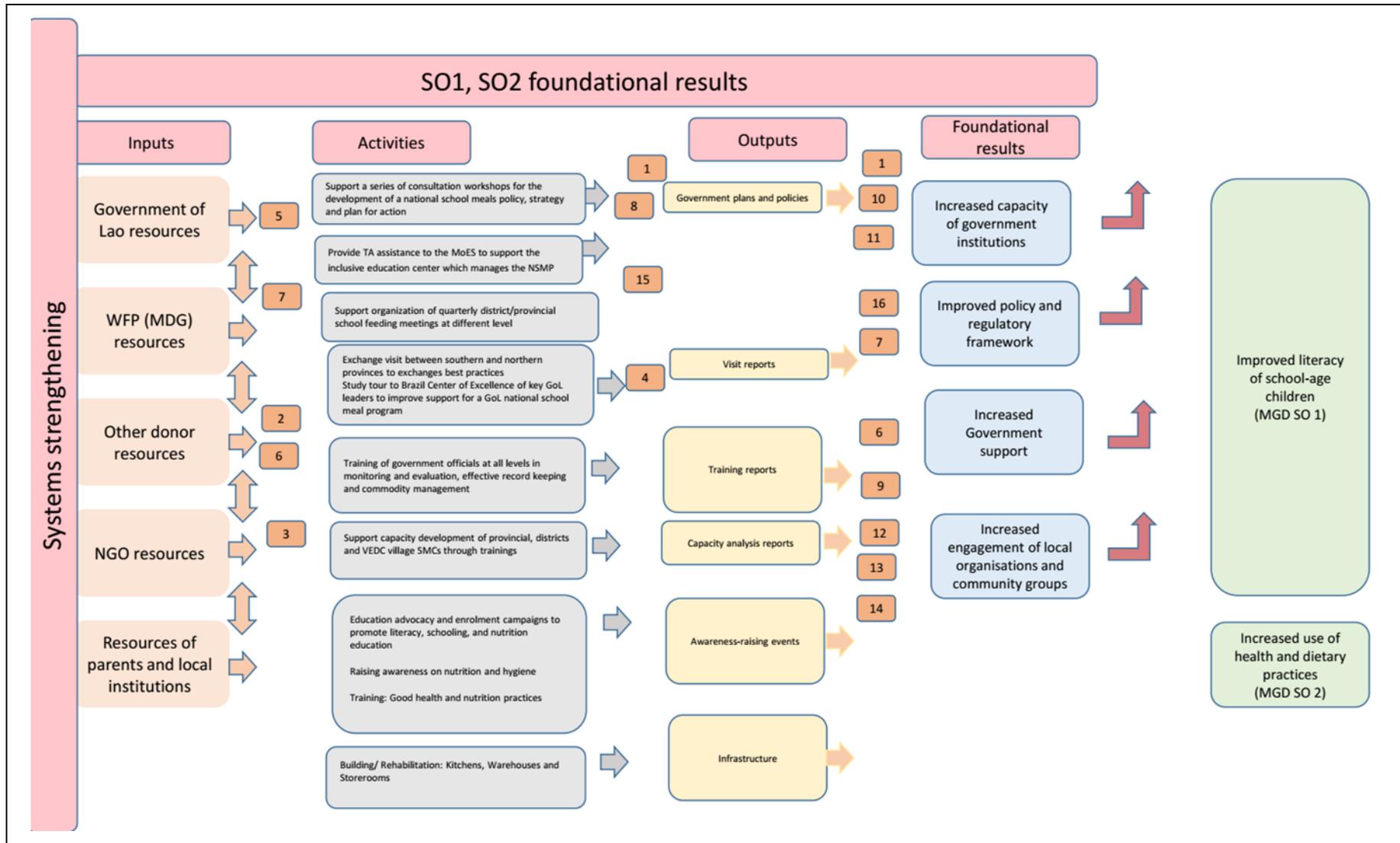
First Type of Results: Child Outcomes and Theory of Change for School Feeding



ANNEX I

Figure 9 MGD Laos Implicit Theory of Change





10. The MGD project results framework (summarised in Table 7 in Annex B above) has two overall impact results: SO1 – improved literacy of school-age children, and SO2 – increased use of health and dietary practices. Underpinning these and the activities and outcomes that contribute to the higher impact results, are four indicators termed foundational results which can be viewed as relating to systems strengthening:

- Increased capacity of government institutions
- Improved policy and regulatory framework
- Increased government support
- Increased engagement of local organisations and community groups

11. As is immediately apparent, these objectives require WFP to work in a variety of sectors and programmatic areas, from policy development, to the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene, education infrastructure, and engagement of civil society. This has direct implications for the ToC assumptions and relevant EQs (Table 15 below). Table 32 below (in Annex M) analyses whether the assumptions associated with the TOC can be validated.

Table 15 The Theory of Change Assumptions and related EQs

Number	Assumption	Evaluation Question related to the assumption
1	Partners and contributors adequately providing effective complementary activities / inputs (e.g. WASH – MoH, Plan; Literacy/education activities – MoES, Big Brother Mouse, STC, World Bank, PLAN (new with WFP); Deworming – MoH, WHO; MNCH – WFP, agriculture support to schools – MAF, FAO; institutional strengthen- ng - CRS, DFAT, FAO)	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22
2	The programme links at many points with the inputs and activities of other donors. It was assumed that these other donors would maintain a strong, co-operative, co-ordinated presence.	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 16, 19, 22
3	With important roles assigned to NGOs in programme design, another notable assumption is that the NGOs in question, and by extension all relevant elements of the NGO sector, are trusted partners, adequately capacitated and institutionally stable.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20
4	There would be continued government support for a national school feeding programme.	1, 2, 3, , 7, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 21
5	Since the government has a School Meals Policy (also a part of the convergence approach ⁶⁷ of the NNS), the Government is willing to commit funding to school feeding	1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21
6	The viability of the programme depends on the activities around systems strengthening at all levels (national, Provincial, district, school), as reflected in the Foundational Results. These receive sufficient attention and are implemented as thoroughly as the rest of the programme.	1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 20, 21
7	Corresponding to the programme’s design emphasis on upgrading monitoring and reporting systems associated with SF, the ToC notes the assumption that the improved systems are adopted and used efficiently	3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 19, 21, 22
8	It had to be assumed that there would be an adequate response to natural disasters.	3, , 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22

⁶⁷ The 2015 National Nutrition Strategy uses a convergent approach with national, provincial and district level management in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the programmes of the MAF, MOH and MOES directed at improving nutrition and food security.

Number	Assumption	Evaluation Question related to the assumption
9	Much global debate about SF has concerned the causal links between school meals and enhanced academic performance, as well as actual attendance at school. For this programme, an obvious basic assumption was that its causal assumptions about the influence of SF and related measures on student attentiveness and attendance (and literacy) are correct in the local context.	2, , 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21
10	For assumption 9 to be correct, it is assumed that there are adequate staff and equipment and structures in schools to support learning	6, 11, 12, 19, 21
11	The programme design noted the problems of staff turnover and (re)deployment. The ToC therefore notes the assumption that these personnel changes will not be at a level that diminishes the effectiveness of staff and institutional capacity development.	1, 7, 8, 11, 12, 19, 21
12	Teachers want to be trained, engage and benefit	7, 8, 9, 21, 22
13	Training activities are designed to support learning principles (theoretical and practical methodologies with sufficient mentoring and supportive supervision)	4, 8, 9, 12, 21, 22
14	Parents and other local community members, particularly members of VEDCS, are willing to perform the roles that the programme envisages for them.	2, , 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22
15	The WFP/ MOES relationship reflects / supports the effectiveness of MOES role in school feeding	1, 3, 7, 11, 12, 18, 21, 22
16	The harvesting time and quantities of fishponds (frogs/ insects/ etc.) can meet the needs of school lunches	8, 9, 12, 20, 21

Evaluation criteria

12. The evaluation approach complied with the TOR in applying the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact; although for the latter two criteria it was only be possible to identify initial signals of likely performance at this mid-term stage. The ET also explicitly considered *coherence*, defined as " *The consistency of policy/programme elements with each other (do they complement each other in a positive way?)*". This can be applied as *internal coherence* to the different elements of a school feeding programme, and as *external coherence* to the consistency of the school feeding programme with other related programmes. Annex G includes definitions for all the evaluation criteria. Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) was mainstreamed throughout.

Evaluation questions and evaluation matrix

13. The team developed a series of evaluation questions, guided by (but not restricted to) the four key questions and the respective sub-questions specified in the TOR. These questions are set out in a full evaluation matrix (Annex G) and are also shown in Table 16 below, which cross-references them to the evaluation criteria. As noted above, the EQs are directly correlated with the ToC analysis. For each EQ, the matrix shows the analysis and indicators that were used to answer it; the main sources of information for this purpose; and how the findings of each question were triangulated. Wherever appropriate, gender dimensions were factored into the sub-questions, judgement criteria and indicators for each EQ.

Table 16 Evaluation questions

Key Question 1: How appropriate is the operation?	Evaluation criteria
EQ1. How coherent are the operation's objectives, targeting and activities with relevant stated national policies and strategies on education, food security and nutrition, including gender?	relevance
EQ2. Are the operation's objectives, targeting and activities supported by global and national evidence and best practice?	relevance
EQ3. To what extent have the operation's objectives, targeting and activities sought complementarity with the interventions of relevant government and development partners?	relevance external coherence
EQ4. To what extent were the operation's objectives and targeting coherent at design stage with relevant WFP and UN-wide system strategies (e.g. Delivering As One, FAO/ MAF links to school gardens, UNICEF work on NNS, UNESCO support to education), policies (e.g. revised school feeding policy 2013) and normative guidance (including those on gender), and how far have they and the operation's activities remained coherent with them?	relevance internal & external coherence
EQ5. Were the operation's strategies appropriate to the needs of the target (most vulnerable and food insecure provinces) population and community at design stage, and have they remained appropriate?	relevance
EQ6. Were the operation's strategies based on a sound gender analysis that considered the distinct needs and participation of boys and girls (and, as appropriate within the context of the school meals programme, women and men), and have they continued on that basis?	relevance
Key Question 2: What are the results of the operation?	
EQ7. To what extent have planned outputs, including capacity development activities, been attained?	effectiveness sustainability
EQ8. To what extent have planned outcomes been attained?	effectiveness sustainability
EQ9. How adequately has the operation addressed gender equality and protection issues?	effectiveness sustainability impact
EQ10. How fully are the operation's activities dovetailed with those of other donors and agencies in building the Government's capacity to manage and implement SF?	external coherence efficiency effectiveness
EQ11. How efficiently and effectively has the operation worked towards handover to the Government of Lao PDR?	efficiency effectiveness sustainability
EQ12. What if any have been the unintended outcomes?	efficiency effectiveness internal & external coherence sustainability
Key Question 3: What factors have affected the results?	
EQ13. How significant have internal WFP process, system and logistical factors been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	efficiency effectiveness
EQ14. How significant have WFP's monitoring and reporting arrangements (including the role of Government/NGO partners' involvement and support to M&E efforts) been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	efficiency effectiveness
EQ15. How significant have WFP's internal institutional and governance arrangements been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	efficiency effectiveness
EQ16. How significant have WFP's partnership and co-ordination arrangements been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	efficiency effectiveness
EQ17. How significant has the external operating environment been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	effectiveness external coherence
EQ18. How significant has the national political and policy environment been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	effectiveness external coherence
EQ19. How significant have domestic and external funding factors been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	efficiency effectiveness sustainability

Key Question 4: To what extent does the intervention’s implementation strategy include considerations for sustainability?	
EQ20. To what extent has the operation made explicit efforts to promote sustainable SF after programme termination?	sustainability impact
EQ21. Are the benefits of the operation likely to continue after the programme is completed?	sustainability impact
EQ22. Has the operation made any difference to gender relations thus far, and is that change likely to be sustained after the programme is completed?	effectiveness sustainability impact

Data collection methods and tools

14. The ET sought both triangulation and complementarity between methods (see Box 10 below). The team also triangulated within methods where appropriate (e.g. comparing the perspectives of different stakeholders interviewed – see the final column of the evaluation matrix in Annex G.

Box 10 Triangulation and Complementarity

Methods can be combined in different ways:

‘Triangulation’: confirming and corroborating results reached by one method with other results reached by another method. For instance, when beneficiaries of a project’s service state that they judge it good (or bad); this can be cross-checked by collecting quantitative data on coverage and accessibility of the service.

‘Complementarity’: results obtained by a method help better understand those obtained by another method. In-depth theory-based approaches may help understand reasons why a project led to unexpected results; qualitative methods may help clarify concepts and define variables; and large-scale data sets may be analysed by multivariate and case-based methods.

Source: Stern et al, 2012

15. Quantitative data that are available were sought, but it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to collect primary quantitative data. Moreover, some of the key issues for the evaluation do not easily lend themselves to quantitative assessment.⁶⁸ This reinforced the case for careful combination of methods, linked to an elucidation of the theories of change underlying the different interventions.

16. The team employed a comprehensively consultative approach to the evaluation, approaching as wide a range of stakeholders as time allowed and ensuring that the views of all key groups were considered, reflected and triangulated, with full attention to the gender issues involved.

Principal Instruments

Document/ literature review and review of secondary data

17. The bibliography in Annex N is drawn from a much larger e-library of documents gathered with the support of RBB, the Evaluation Manager and the Laos CO. The e-library included a comprehensive collection of WFP’s internal data, including Standard Project Reports (SPRs) and annual work plans, together with country-level data on performance in the various sectors in which WFP is engaged.

18. M&E data for the MGD programme are reviewed in Annex H below. The evaluation carefully analysed available monitoring data on the programme. Important sources were CO reports on output and outcome data relative to baselines, as well as WFP SPRs and – where available and reliable – M&E data from their internal Project Reporting system.

⁶⁸ This applies to issues that are intrinsically difficult to quantify (e.g. capacity development) and those where causality is very complex and cannot be rigorously proven over a short time period and with limited data (e.g. the long-term effects of school feeding).

19. The evaluations summarised in Annex C above were especially relevant.

Field visits

20. Annex D shows a map of the districts in which the programme is implemented. As explained above it was not appropriate for this MTE to undertake extensive field survey work. In consultation with the CO and local authorities, the team visited a small number of districts in the programme areas. The team visited the same provinces together but split up to visit different schools so that (with the addition of national consultants/interpreters), more schools could be covered. However, the principal aim of the field mission was to focus on gathering qualitative data rather than visiting as many locations as possible. The team regrouped in Vientiane after the field visits for a full exchange of findings and initial discussion of conclusions.

21. In each district, the team visited at least one school. Schools were selected according to certain criteria: they should have been covered by the baseline survey and should have experienced as many and as diverse a range as possible of programme activities in addition to school feeding. At school level, interviews were sought with the head teacher, the coordinator of school meals, a group of at least five fathers of pupils, a group of at least five mothers of pupils, a group of ten boy pupils and a group of ten girl pupils. Cooking and storage facilities and arrangements will be inspected, as well as school gardens, latrines and other sanitation and hygiene facilities. Schools were selected from amongst those included in the baseline study sample (Kimetrica, 2015), so that the ET's qualitative findings can be compared with the earlier ones.

22. Where applicable, men and women (boys and girls) were interviewed separately. In each district, the team sought interviews with the local education authorities, specifically any officials responsible for school feeding; and with staff of NGOs and other agencies collaborating with WFP in implementation of the programme.

Gender analysis

23. The TOR for this evaluation required that gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) should be mainstreamed throughout. The evaluation matrix in Annex G responded to this requirement. It acknowledged the necessity of checking on the programme's coherence with national policy on gender (EQ 1). EQ 6 asks whether the operation's strategies were based on a sound gender analysis that considered the distinct needs and participation of boys and girls (and as appropriate within the context of the school meals programme, women and men), and whether they have continued on that basis. Answers to EQs 7 and 8 on the attainment of outputs and outcomes were gender disaggregated. EQ 9 asks how adequately the operation has addressed gender equality and protection issues. EQ 12 was to surface unintended outcomes including those affecting gender issues. EQ 14 allowed a review of WFP's attention to monitoring and correcting gender issues. EQ 22 asks whether the operation has made any difference to gender relations at any level thus far, and whether any such change is likely to be sustained after the programme is completed.

24. In the course of these enquiries, the ET also explored the quality of women's involvement in local school feeding management and support committees; the factors contributing to boys and girls being out-of-school; the effect of girls'/boys' burden of (household/ farm) labour on their regular attendance at school; the problems older girls face in reaching often remote secondary schools; the variation across ethnic groups; and the status of women teachers. The MTE did not conduct a statistical survey, and time available for discussion with stakeholders was constrained, but this approach allowed the evaluators to posit and discuss gender/ ethnic/ age-related biases in benefits, the programme delivery

implications and WFP capacity / policy strengthening work with MoES. Findings from interviews and FGDs were triangulated with available data and secondary sources.

Quality assurance and ethical standards

25. WFP has developed a Decentralised Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS – see WFP, 2016f), informed by the norms and standards for evaluations developed by UNEG. The DEQAS forms a specific set of guidance materials based on WFP’s Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) and its Evaluation Policy. The guide sets out process maps with in-built steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products, as well as checklists for feedback on quality for evaluation products. DEQAS was systematically applied during the course of this evaluation, with relevant guideline documents having been provided to the ET.

26. In addition, Mokoro’s internal Quality Support (QS) System was integrated into the evaluation process in line with the company’s commitment to delivering quality products and adherence to the principles of independence, credibility and utility. Evaluation products were shared with the QS experts (Stephen Lister, the Technical Evaluation Manager, and Nick Maunder) prior to submission. Both experts have deep familiarity with WFP and EQAS, making them well placed to review deliverables and advise on evaluation methodology, as well as to provide technical insights to complement the team’s evaluation assessments.

27. There was no conflict of interest in the performance of this evaluation as none of the ET members has been involved in the preparation or direct implementation of the WFP MGD Laos SFP.

28. The team adopted a careful and thorough approach to the ethics of the evaluation, complying with standard 3.2 of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards (UNEG, 2016). While supportive and collegiate in its working relations with WFP, it was strictly neutral and unbiased. Consent was requested from all interviewees and focus groups before proceeding with discussions, full confidentiality was assured: while informants’ views may be quoted and their names are listed in an annex to this evaluation report, no view or statement has been attributed to a named individual, or presented in such a way that an individual can be traced as its source. The team thus encouraged all informants to be frank and accurate in their assessments of programme performance. It fully complied with Government of Lao PDR and WFP guidelines on contact with children (UNEG, 2008).

Limitations and mitigations

29. **Timing of the MTE in the programme cycle.** A fundamental design and/or scheduling weakness of the MTE was that it took place when USDA had already drawn up its plans for a further phase of MGD support for school feeding in Laos and invited applications, and when WFP had already drafted/submitted its proposal in response. This weakened the value of analysis and recommendations applying to 2018 and beyond. It can be hoped that the Government of Lao PDR, WFP and USDA will still be able to consider the MTE’s longer-term ideas and potentially incorporate them into adjustments to the next MGD phase and/or enhanced implementation of what may be agreed. (At the time of writing it is not guaranteed that a further grant would be made to WFP rather than a different applicant.)

30. **Validity and reliability of available evidence.** The main challenge for the MTE was to identify clear performance data from the complex and sometimes inconsistent reports available.⁶⁹ Although this report has been able to give a clear and comprehensive strategic analysis of the performance of the operation and the issues arising for the future, it has not been able to give the intended detailed and unambiguous empirical statement of performance towards planned outputs and outcomes. As noted in Annex F, there are concerns about both

⁶⁹ Inconsistencies occur not least because of programmatic changes.

the reliability, and in some cases the validity, of available data. Findings on EQs where quantitative data are most pertinent are therefore not as strong as for EQs where findings can rely on more qualitative sources, including project and policy documents, interviews and focus groups. This is reflected in final column of Table 31 in Annex M, where we provide an assessment of the strength of evidence for the findings against each of the 22 EQs.⁷⁰ At the level of the four key questions our assessments are:

- 1) Appropriateness: evidence is generally strong.
- 2) Results of the operation: evidence on outputs and outcomes is more indicative than conclusive, and overall evidence on results ranges from indicative to weak.
- 3) Evidence on factors affecting results is generally satisfactory.
- 4) Evidence on sustainability is also generally satisfactory.

31. **Logistical constraints on field work.** The MTE inception report noted that logistical difficulties are always a challenge for field work in Laos due to the remoteness of many project locations (Mokoro, 2016a). The ET mitigated this by splitting into teams to cover as many schools as was possible within the timeframe given.

⁷⁰ Based on a simple scale from 1 to 4: 1 (strong), 2 (more than satisfactory), 3 (indicative, not conclusive), and 4 (weak).

Annex G Evaluation Matrix

1. Table 17 is the full evaluation matrix which was the guiding framework for the evaluation.

2. The standard OECD DAC evaluation criteria are relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, for which we used the following definitions.

<i>Relevance</i>	<i>The extent to which the objectives of an intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.</i>
<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>The extent to which the intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.</i>
<i>Efficiency</i>	<i>A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, etc.) are converted to results.</i>
<i>Sustainability</i>	<i>The continuation of benefits from an intervention after major assistance has been completed. The probability of long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.</i>
<i>Impact</i>	<i>Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.</i>

3. As regards “*impact*” and “*results*”, the evaluation follows the EQAS preferred usage in which:

- “*result*” and “*effect*” are practically synonyms, and results can be at the output, outcome and/or impact levels, while
- “*impact*” (as above) refers to lasting and significant effects at the goal and outcomes level of the logical framework (results-chain).

4. As regards *efficiency* and *effectiveness* the evaluation follows the technical guidance note (WFP, 2013e) which adopts the DAC definition of effectiveness as a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives (the relationship between subsequent levels in the logical framework: activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact), and a broad definition of efficiency as a measure of the relationship between inputs and results (outputs, outcomes, and impact).

5. We employed the additional criterion of coherence as follows:

<i>Coherence</i>	<i>The consistency of policy/programme elements with each other (do they complement each other in a positive way?)</i>
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6. This can be applied as *internal coherence* to the different elements of a school feeding programme, and as *external coherence* to the consistency of the school feeding programme with other related programmes.

Table 17 Full Evaluation Matrix

Specific questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Triangulation approach
Key question 1: How appropriate is the operation?			
EQ 1. How coherent are the operation's objectives, targeting and activities with relevant stated national policies and strategies on education, food security and nutrition, including gender?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check of alignment of operation's objectives, targeting and activities with those stated/ prioritised in national policies on education, food security and nutrition and gender (including gender elements of sector policies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme documentation • National policy documentation • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare views of Government of Lao PDR, WFP, development partner (DP) and NGO informants
EQ 2. Are the operation's objectives, targeting and activities supported by global and national evidence and best practices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check on outcomes • Check alignment of activities with global and national evidence base on change pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global and national / other national studies on literacy, attendance, nutrition, food security modality (e.g. lunch or MMS) • Programme documentation • National policy documentation • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare views of Government of Lao PDR, WFP, development partner (DP) and NGO informants
EQ 3. To what extent have the operation's objectives, targeting and activities sought complementarity with the interventions of relevant government and development partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check of alignment of operation's objectives, targeting and activities with those of Government of Lao PDR and DPs • Assessment of realism of design linkages between operation's FRs and the rest of its results framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFP operation documentation • Government of Lao PDR operation documentation • DP operations documentation • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare views of Government of Lao PDR, WFP, DP and NGO informants
EQ 4. To what extent were the operation's objectives and targeting coherent at design stage with relevant WFP and UN-wide system strategies (e.g. Delivering As One, FAO/ MAF links to school gardens, UNICEF work on NNS, UNESCO support to education), policies (e.g. revised school feeding policy 2013), policies and normative guidance, and how far have they and the operation's activities remained coherent with them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check of alignment of operation's design objectives and targeting (and any subsequent revisions thereof) with corporate WFP and UN strategies, policies and standards: school feeding, resilience, nutrition, gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme documentation • WFP and UN corporate documentation • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare views of informants in WFP, other UN agencies, DPs and INGOs.

Specific questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Triangulation approach
EQ 5. Were the operation's strategies appropriate to the needs of the target (vulnerable and food insecure provinces) population and community at design stage, and have they remained appropriate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of needs of target population at design stage, and significant trends Check of alignment of operation's strategies with those needs, at design and currently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical data (from baseline survey and other assessments) of needs of girls, boys, women and men in the target population Expressed views of target population (girls, boys, women and men) as recorded at design stage, since, and during mission field work Analytical opinions of expert informants (local and national government, (I)NGOs, DPs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare needs as summarised in formal documentation with those expressed by target group. Compare needs as interpreted in the design and implementation of the operation with the interpretation of expert analytical informants
EQ 6. Were the operation's strategies based on a sound gender analysis that considered the distinct needs and participation of boys and girls (and as appropriate within the context of the school meals programme, women and men), and have they continued on that basis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of operation's gender strategies and their implementation compared with national, WFP and other relevant policy and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme documentation Government of Lao PDR, DP, WFP and UN corporate documentation Opinions of target group on relevant gender issues, as expressed at design, in subsequent consultations and/or during mission field work Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare issues as summarised in formal documentation with those expressed by target group. Compare views of Government of Lao PDR, WFP, other UN and DP informants
Key question 2: What are the results of the operation?			
EQ 7. To what extent have planned outputs, including capacity development activities, been attained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison of most recent output data with baseline and targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP performance data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-check recorded output data with informants in Government of Lao PDR and at schools visited in field
EQ 8. To what extent have planned outcomes been attained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison of most recent outcome data with baseline and targets Qualitative analysis by Government of Lao PDR, WFP, DP and NGO observers of outcome-level performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP performance data Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-check recorded outcome data with informants in Government of Lao PDR and at schools visited in field
EQ 9. How adequately has the operation addressed gender equality and protection issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of output- and outcome-level performance data compared with design targets Qualitative analysis by Government of Lao PDR, WFP, DP and NGO observers of programme's gender equality and protection performance against WFP and Government of Lao PDR criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP performance data Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-check recorded performance data with informants in Government of Lao PDR and at schools visited in field Compare WFP perceptions of gender equality and protection performance with those of Government of Lao PDR and DP,

Specific questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Triangulation approach
EQ 10. How fully are the operation's activities dovetailed with those of other donors and agencies in building Government of Lao PDR capacity to manage and implement SF?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of linkages and interactions specified in design and performance documentation of the WFP operation and of other donors' and agencies' activities in school feeding and related sectors – including assessment of causal relationship between progress towards FRs and the other objectives of the results framework • Qualitative analysis by Government of Lao PDR, WFP, DP and NGO observers of degree of formal linkage and of practical interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme design and performance documentation • Interviews 	<p style="text-align: center;">NGO informants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare design with performance • Compare WFP perceptions of dovetailing with those of other informants
EQ 11. How efficiently and effectively has the operation worked towards handover to the Government of Lao PDR,?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of programme reporting on steps towards handover and sustainability (with reference to five objectives specified in s. 5 of grant application) • Analysis of programme reporting on change in community and parent capacity and attitudes • Qualitative analysis by Government of Lao PDR, WFP, DP and NGO observers of extent and depth of progress towards handover and sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme performance documentation • Interviews • Focus group discussions during mission field work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare views of WFP, Government of Lao PDR and other policy and programme observers • Compare assessment in Vientiane with that in sample communities and schools
EQ 12. What if any have been the unintended outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Programming: Consistency and alignment of MoES/ Government of Lao PDR directions and WFP/ DP support/ advice • Village level outcomes: Observed deviations from project plan during the discussions and field visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews in Vientiane and local government offices • Focus group discussions during mission field work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare views of WFP, Government of Lao PDR and other policy and programme observers • Other evaluation reports (e.g. DFAT Oct 2016)

Specific questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Triangulation approach
Key question 3: What factors have affected the results?			
EQ 13. How significant have internal WFP process, system and logistical factors been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of WFP SPRs and other reporting for commentary on internal factors positively or negatively affecting performance: including staffing levels, financial resources, pipeline issues Qualitative assessment by Government of Lao PDR, WFP and community/school level informants of positive or negative influence of internal WFP factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme performance documentation and related WFP data Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare assessment of factors by WFP CO and field staff Compare assessment of factors by WFP and Government of Lao PDR staff Compare assessment of factors by WFP staff and community/school level informants
EQ 14. How significant have WFP's monitoring and reporting arrangements been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse content, timeliness and external perceptions of monitoring and reporting arrangements Determine whether monitoring reports are just a procedural statement of performance data or offer any analysis of issues affecting performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme performance reports and other relevant WFP reporting and data Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare assessment by responsible WFP personnel and views of external stakeholders and observers
EQ 15. How significant have WFP's internal institutional and governance arrangements been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse WFP governance and management arrangements pertinent to this operation Review programme performance reporting for commentary on these issues Gather and analyse WFP, Government of Lao PDR, DP and NGO views of the significance, if any, of WFP institutional and governance arrangements for this operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme performance reports and other relevant WFP reporting Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare assessment by responsible WFP personnel and views of external stakeholders and observers
EQ 16. How significant have WFP's partnership and co-ordination arrangements been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within context of national education sector and school feeding architecture, analyse partnership and co-ordination arrangements specified at design, and their performance to date – including possible termination or launch of linkages and collaborations, and the capacity in practice of NGOs and other partner agencies Check on performance of key complementary activities, e.g. deworming programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme design and performance documentation Documentation on institutional arrangements in education and school feeding sector Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare assessment by responsible WFP personnel and views of external stakeholders and observers

Specific questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Triangulation approach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather and analyse WFP, Government of Lao PDR, DP and NGO views on design quality of partnership and co-ordination arrangements and their performance to date 		
<p>EQ 17. How significant has the external operating environment been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse programme performance and related reporting by WFP • Review other documentation on significant contextual events, trends and issues (including macro-economic factors and the stance and performance of the private sector) during the review period • Gather and analyse WFP, Government of Lao PDR, DP and NGO views about influence of external environmental factors on performance of the operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme reporting and other relevant WFP documentation • Reports by Government of Lao PDR and other DPs on events and trends during the review period • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare assessment by responsible WFP personnel and views of external stakeholders and observers
<p>EQ 18. How significant has the national political, policy and business environment been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse programme performance and related reporting by WFP • Review other documentation on key events and trends in the political and policy environment during the review period (including staff and institutional development and management by Government of Lao PDR) • Gather and analyse WFP, Government of Lao PDR, DP and NGO views about influence of these events and trends on performance of the operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme reporting and other relevant WFP documentation • Reports by Government of Lao PDR and other DPs on relevant political and policy events and trends during the review period • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare assessment by responsible Government of Lao PDR and WFP personnel and views of external stakeholders and observers
<p>EQ 19. How significant have domestic and external funding factors been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare proposed budget and cash flow for the operation with the pattern of resource receipts to date • Review programme performance reports and other relevant WFP documentation for information on significant enhancements or constraints arising from domestic and external funding issues • Check whether Government of Lao PDR and third party resourcing has been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFP SPRs and other reporting • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare views of WFP staff with those of Government of Lao PDR and DPs to assess consistency of opinions about significance and root causes of domestic and external funding factors

Specific questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Triangulation approach
	provided as planned, and what the significance of any deviation is		
Key question 4: To what extent does the intervention's implementation strategy include considerations for sustainability?			
EQ 20. To what extent has the operation made explicit efforts to promote sustainable SF after programme termination?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of programme reporting on steps towards handover and sustainability (with reference to five objectives specified in s. 5 of grant application) • Analysis of stakeholder views: Government of Lao PDR, WFP, DPs, NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme documentation • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess views of different stakeholder categories (notably Government of Lao PDR and WFP) for congruence/divergence
EQ 21. Are the benefits of the operation likely to continue after the programme is completed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative assessment of progress achieved with planned steps towards handover and sustainability and of conditions of receiving environment (Government of Lao PDR resources, institutional capacity, readiness of schools, parents, communities) • Analysis of stakeholder views: Government of Lao PDR, WFP, DPs, NGOs, parents, school and local authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme documentation • Documentation on events and trends in education and school feeding sector • Interviews • Focus group discussions during mission field work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess views of different stakeholder categories (notably Government of Lao PDR and WFP) for congruence/divergence
EQ 22. Has the operation made any difference to gender relations thus far, and is that change likely to be sustained after the programme is completed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative assessment of progress achieved in national policy and performance, and in participating schools • Analysis of stakeholder views: Government of Lao PDR, WFP, DPs, NGOs, parents, school and local authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme performance reports • Reports on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Lao education sector and more broadly • Interviews • Focus group discussions during mission field work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess views of women and men in different stakeholder categories (Government of Lao PDR, WFP, DPs, NGOs) and in schools and communities visited during mission field work

Annex H Performance data on MGD implementation

Data sources

M&E planned for this operation

1. Each MGD operation is required to supplement the basic project document (WFP, 2014j), with an overall Evaluation Plan (EP – WFP, 2013d) and a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP – WFP, 2014a); the PMP sets out definitions of proposed performance indicators and the timetable/responsibilities for their collection. This annex:

- provides an overview of M&E system/ plans;
- assembles comprehensive data (to the extent possible), with commentary on quality and availability of data (tables at activity/output/outcome level);
- also draws on a recent impact evaluation (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016) as well as the baseline survey (Kimetrica, 2015) for further insights into the (likely) results of the operation vis-à-vis the underlying theory of change (ToC).

2. Table 18 below provides an overview of intended M&E and M&E undertaken to date. According to the EP, a comprehensive quantitative baseline survey was to be undertaken by an independent agency (see Annex C for an overview of the baseline findings). Data collected is to be complemented by regular project monitoring data and reports on project implementation from cooperating partners. A mid-term evaluation (the present exercise) and a final evaluation were planned. According to the TOR (Annex A above, ¶33-34) an outcome survey following up the baseline was to be completed ahead of the MTE, but this has not happened. Furthermore, a special study measuring the effectiveness of the Home Grown School Feeding pilot was to be conducted in December 2015 but has not taken place.

Table 18 Overview of M&E plan for MGD-funded SFP

Monitoring and Evaluation	Date	Revised Date
Baseline Study	August 2014	October 2015
Establishing of M&E system	September – December 2014	N/A
Outcome survey (to follow up the baseline)	[stated in MTE TOR ¶33-34 that this would be available to the MTE team]	Pending
Midterm Evaluation	December 2015	October 2016
Final Evaluation	June 2017	tbc
Routine field monitoring and reporting	January 2014 –August 2017	Up to August 2018
Special Study: Measuring effectiveness of Home Grown School Feeding pilot and complementary activities	December 2015	not known (no such study was made available to the team)

3. For the MGD project, WFP submits reports twice a year to USDA, including a narrative report and an excel spreadsheet showing quantitative data measuring performance indicators. As will become apparent below, there have been changes in

proposed performance indicators (e.g. in the project amendment), what is actually reported on does not always match either the original or the amended set of indicators, and there are gaps in data availability for many indicators.

4. Schools also complete reports on how many meals were distributed and the number of pupils attending as well as any meals that were missed. The schools also report on the amount of food stored.

5. At the start of the project, District Education Officers were responsible for monitoring the activities and providing technical support. As the quality of data generated by this system was too poor to satisfy donors, WFP took steps to extract the monitoring function from the officers, leaving them with the technical support function for a period of time. In order to ensure the proper implementation of programme under the MGD support, WFP created 23 monitoring assistant posts in January 2016 to cover all the targeted schools. There is a plan to re-involve MOES in data collection starting in 2017 and training has already taken place for that purpose. WFP will pay for a monthly monitoring plan produced by the district office, based on the variables of distance and number of person days, organized on the assumption of a two-person team from the district office (DO). The DO will receive an advance for the cost of the monitoring described in the monthly plan and be required to give a report by the 25th of the following month in order to be eligible for the next advance. This has been negotiated and cleared between WFP and the provincial and district offices. Box 11 below illustrates the job description for MAs.

Other available M&E sources

6. WFP submits Standard Project Reports (SPRs) that use a corporately standardised template at the end of each calendar year. These include output and outcome indicators as well as a description of activities and a section on gender and protection, in line with the Country Programme's logframe.⁷⁴

7. In Laos the MOES has its own Education Management Information System. (EMIS). Data for the EMIS are collected electronically; it covers all schools (public & private) in the following areas:

- the status of schools, province, district and village location, numbers of classrooms and buildings by condition;
- student enrolment data by age, grade, gender and ethnicity;
- number of classes by type;
- numbers of repeaters by age, grade, gender and ethnicity;
- numbers of graduates at the final years of each cycle by ethnicity;
- List of individual teacher by level and type of training ,experience , employment status ; and/
- numbers of textbooks by type, subject and grade level

⁷⁴ SPRs are not tailored to MGD's logframe.

Box 11 Role of Monitoring Assistants – Illustrative Job Advertisement

Recruitment - Monitoring Assistant, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic

Source: <https://unjobs.org/vacancies/1480545762628>

Abbreviated

JOB PURPOSE

To coordinate and perform monitoring activities within a specific coverage area and provide reports to support the effective delivery of assistance packages.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES (not all-inclusive)

- Plan, coordinate, and monitor the implementation of the assistance programme at the local level, in close collaboration with the implementing partners.
- To support USDA-Local Regional Procurement (LRP) project for development of capacities of Village Education Committee, Head of Village, School Principal, Parent representative, Lao Women Union, Lao Youth Union, and community volunteers.
- To support Lao Women Union and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry develop the capacities of farmers in targeted communities
- Supervise local farmers to efficiently plan and implement the programme activities at community level to ensure that the programme activities will be functioning well and achieving its goals.
- Support and collaborate with District Officers (DO's), Provincial Education and Sports Department to implement the school feeding project, and others tasks relating to case based transfer activities, such as opening bank account and purchasing food.
- Assist DO's in preparing work and training plans, and in organizing monthly coordination meetings.
- Work alongside the relevant organizations to provide assistance to community cooks, which includes helping communities to set up their cooking teams and schedules as a rotating basis, advising the community cooks in preparing proper and various menus or recipes as well as cooking utensils maintenance.
- Prepare regular activity progress reports
- Update School Meals database and a database to track LRP progress.
- Support the Monitoring & Evaluation unit in collecting and uploading data.
- Assist in training at provincial, district and village levels.
- Support local farmers to have regular meeting within their communities to ensure the participants will have a chance to mutually exchange and learn from one another.
- Encourage female participation into School Meals implementation at village levels.
- Supervise and train other personnel as appropriate.
- Assist in monitoring other WFP projects as requested.

8. There are questions around the quality of data gleaned from school records. For example, the baseline survey team aimed to collect enrolment data from school records for the-past five academic years in order to examine trends in student enrolment in WFP supported schools. Around a quarter (26 percent) of the schools could not produce any enrolment records during the baseline survey. About 40 percent of schools had records for at least one of the years, and 34 percent had complete enrolment records for all five years (Kimetrica, 2015). These data deficiencies are not WFP's fault but pose a considerable challenge.

Overall performance data

9. In Table 19, Table 20 and Table 21 below, the MTE team has assembled as much data as was available against the operation's annual performance targets. The three tables deal successively with beneficiaries, output and outcome levels of the results framework. It is notable that the commitment letter and subsequently the semi-annual reports include very different lists of results and indicators. The list of indicators reported on is much reduced compared with the original proposal and the baseline survey. Table 21 links to the results framework reproduced in Figure 5 in Annex B above. It includes commentary on sources, definitions and the quality of available data. As the tables show, there are many indicators for which data are not available.

Table 19 Beneficiaries: targets and actuals⁷²

BENEFICIARIES		Target ⁷³			Results ⁷⁴			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014-31/03/15	01/04/2015-30/09/2015	01/10/2015-31/03/2016	01/04/16-30/09/16
Provide School Meals	Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (male)	76,355	72,097	57,267	4,506 ^a	74,456 ^b	73,538 ^c	72,919 ^d
	Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (female)	74,247	70,107	55,685	4,160	68,153 ^{e+f}	67,881 ^c	67,309 ^d
	Comments	<p>^a “The CSB, rice and oil only arrived in February and March 2015, 2-3 months late for the distributions to the school to ensure food availability for the school year commencing in February. To avoid pipeline breaks, the food commodities were purchased by funds from Australia. Upon arrival food was distributed to schools for immediate consumption. Upon arrival it took xx weeks to distribute to the 1700 schools. This means food has only been available for consumption after 31/3/2015.” [sic] (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^b “USDA commodities were distributed ahead of the rainy season throughout July/August.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^c “USDA commodities were distributed from February to March 2016.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^d “USDA commodities were distributed from June to August 2016. This covers the need for the 1st semester (Sep16 to Jan17).” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016). This report contains two diverging figures, the one under worksheet “Results” is identical to the previous reporting period, and so was assumed to be an error.</p> <p>^e “The beneficiary figures from first term (September 2014 – January 2015): pre-primary, primary and Informal boarders” [sic] (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^f “The number of children was lower than anticipated as WFP took off 63 bad performing schools from the list of support in June.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>						
	Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (new)	150,602	18,799	14,969	8,666	142,609 ^g	0	28,046

⁷² Unless a comment is provided, WFP’s semi-annual reports do not include any further data or information on a given indicator.

⁷³ Targets are shown as in the USDA commitment letter 2014 (USDA, 2014), unless otherwise stated.

⁷⁴ Results are taken from WFP’s semi-annual progress reports to USDA.

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BENEFICIARIES		Target⁷³			Results⁷⁴			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014- 31/03/15	01/04/2015- 30/09/2015	01/10/2015- 31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
	Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (continuing)	0	123,405	98,283	0	8,666 ^h	141,419	112,182
	Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (male)	96,777	88,822	70,131	4,506	92,954 ⁱ	92,036	74,133
	Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (female)	90,950	84,132	67,214	4,160	84,098 ^j	83,826	71,047
	Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (new)	187,727	22,772	18,889	0	177,052 ^k	0	28,046
	Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (continuing)	0	150,182	172,954	0	9,798 ^l	175,862	117,134
	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	98,215	15,139	13,218		101,009 ^m	83,277	82,638
	Number of students enrolled in schools receiving USDA assistance (female)	87,950	81,132	64,214	87,720	84,098	80,455 ⁿ	67,309 ^o

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BENEFICIARIES		Target ⁷³			Results ⁷⁴			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014- 31/03/15	01/04/2015- 30/09/2015	01/10/2015- 31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
	Comments	<p>^g “This is one ration for one day calculation. The amount of children decreased as WFP took out 63 schools of the WFP support in June due to poor implementation/ performance. The amount does not include Take Home rations” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^h “8,666 children received food and are therefore considered as continuing” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>ⁱ “Meal (74456) + THR (16871) + Storekeepers (1429+198)” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^j “Meal (68153) + THR (12574) + cooks (3371)” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^k “Meal, THR, cooks, store keepers, and cooks incentive rations”</p> <p>^l “8,666 children received food + 1132 received THR in the previous semester and are therefore considered as continuing”</p> <p>^m This number is marked in red in the report with another higher number mentioned in the comments. There is no final version.</p> <p>ⁿ “The beneficiary figures from the first semester (September 2015- January 2016): pre-primary, primary and informal boarders.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^o “The beneficiary figures from the second semester (February - May 2016): pre-primary and primary.” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>						
	Number of students enrolled in schools receiving USDA assistance (male)	95,277	87,322	68,631	100,582	92,954 ^p	90,409 ^q	72,919 ^r
	Comments	<p>^p “The beneficiary figures from first term (September 2014 – January 2015): pre-primary, primary and Informal boarders” [sic] (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^q “The beneficiary figures from the first semester (September 2015- January 2016): pre-primary, primary and informal boarders.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^r “The beneficiary figures from the second semester (February - May 2016): pre-primary and primary.” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>						
	Number of individuals benefiting directly from USDA-funded interventions (male)	97,357	88,972	70,197	4,506	93,087	92,161	74,258
	Number of individuals benefiting directly from USDA-funded interventions (female)	90,980	84,182	67,218	4,556 ^s	87,479	83,836	71,057
	Comment	^s “students and cooks” (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).						
	Number of individuals benefiting directly from USDA-funded interventions (new)	0	22,972	18,959	0	170,768	0	28,046

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BENEFICIARIES		Target ⁷³			Results ⁷⁴			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014- 31/03/15	01/04/2015- 30/09/2015	01/10/2015- 31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
	Number of individuals benefiting directly from USDA-funded interventions (continuing)	0	150,182	118,456		9,798	175,997	117,269
	Number of students regularly (80%) attending USDA supported classrooms/schools (male)	47,639	48,027	41,179	t	N/A ^u	4,398 ^v	>83% ^x
	Number of students regularly (80%) attending USDA supported classrooms/schools (female)	39,578	40,566	35,318	t	N/A ^u	3,971 ^w	>83% ^x
	Comments	<p>t “Awaiting baseline and subsequent changes due to provisions of food.” (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>u “Awaiting baseline report which will be available 3rd week of November. The Government does not have figures as attendance rates are collected sporadically” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016)</p> <p>v “According to the baseline survey, the average student attendance rate is 97%, and the percentage of students who attend schools regularly (80%) is 99.5% for male students. This is just the estimate figure of 85 surveyed school, but due to the sample locations (10 districts in 6 provinces) its considered to be representative for all WFP assisted schools.” (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>w “According to the baseline survey, the average student attendance rate is 97%, and the percentage of students who attend schools regularly (80%) is 99.4% for female students. The attendance rate is higher than expected and may be due to the timing of the survey (early in the school year)” (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>x “The Government does not have a systematic approach to collection of attendance. WFP monitors collect data during school visits. WFP monitoring for period September 2015-May 2016 shows on average attendance is circa 83.5%. On average every months more than 300 school were monitored. In September 2016, an impact review took place and collected information. The data collected showed less than 3% absenteeism according to school records, whereas roll calls showed absenteeism of 8.4% in School Meals and 10.2% in control schools. See Sheet 1 for graphic presentation (F/M)” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>						
Take Home Rations	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (male)	18,922	15,225	11,364	589	16,871	1,436 ^{aa}	12,214
	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (female)	13,703	11,025	8,229	543	12,574	3,516 ^{ab}	14,738
	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (new)	32,625	5,940	4,435	0	28,313 ^y	0	22,000

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BENEFICIARIES		Target ⁷³			Results ⁷⁴			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014- 31/03/15	01/04/2015- 30/09/2015	01/10/2015- 31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (continuing)	0	20,310	15,158	0	29,460	4,952 ^{ac}	26,952
Training: Food Preparation and Storage Practices	Number of cooks and storekeepers trained in food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	4,500	0	4,500	396 ^z	2,717	0 ^{ad}	1,028
	Comment	<p>^y “In total it’s 29,460, but in the last semester of 2015, 1132 children received rations. They are therefore subtracted from this.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016)</p> <p>^z “Cooks from 61 schools in Ngoi and 38 schools in Phongton districts were trained. On average each school have 4 cooks.” [sic] (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{aa} “16,871 boys received take home rations before this reporting period to cover the 1st semester (Number is excluded from this figure). Only storekeepers received the rations as WFP stopped the distribution to the students (Informal Boarders) in September 2015 in consultation with the government.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ab} “12,574 girls received take home rations before this reporting period to cover the 1st semester (Number is excluded from this figure). Only cooks received the rations as WFP stopped the distribution to the students (Informal Boarders) in September 2015 in consultation with the government.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ac} “Due to the removal of the students (Informal Boarders) in September 2015, the figure is lower than planned.” “Though the students (Informal Boarders) were still benefiting from the previous delivery of taka-home rations, the support was stopped in consultation with the government as they also receive the cash grants under the ADB’s assistance. Therefore, the provision of take-home rations were limited to cooks and storekeepers during this reporting period.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ad} “No training was conducted during this period. After May 2016, training as part of the scale up of the lunch programme will be given to cooks and storekeepers in 247 villages. Training will take place during school holidays.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>						
Training: Good Health and Nutrition Practices	Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance (male)	4,867	6,846	6,846	^{ae}	1,070 or 1,358 ^{af}	0	1,156
	Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance (female)	3,524	4,958	4,958	^{ae}	589 or 1,359 ^{af}	0	643

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BENEFICIARIES		Target ⁷³			Results ⁷⁴			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014- 31/03/15	01/04/2015- 30/09/2015	01/10/2015- 31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
	Comment:	<p>^{ae} “WFP is working with the Ministry of Education and Sports exploring opportunities to make new education material in support of nutrition curriculum development. Should this be achieved all children attending primary school in Laos will be impacted by USDA support.” (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{af} Both sets of figures have been reported in the April – September 2015 report for the same indicator.</p>						
Training: Commodity Management	Number of cooks and storekeepers trained in commodity management	4,500	0	4,500	0	0 ^{ag}	0 ^{ah}	771 ^{ai}
Comments	<p>^{ag} “In July the warehouse manuals became available in Lao language. WFP has requested training companies to submit quotes for training in commodity management. It is expected that by the end of the year, trainings will be conducted.</p> <p>^{ah} ”Last year, the warehouse manuals became available in Lao language. WFP made a call for interest for the trainings on commodity management to store keepers but no training company responded positively. It is expected that WFP warehouse staff will establish trainings of storekeepers after May 2016.</p> <p>^{ai} “During the expansion of school lunch to another 257 schools, 514 cooks and 257 village heads were trained in commodity management in August 2016.” (Semi-Annual Report March - September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016)</p>							
Establish Activities to Promote Literacy	Number of students benefiting from campaign to promote literacy as a result of USDA assistance	10,000	10,000	10,000	0	N/A ^{ak}	0 ^{am}	0 ^{ao}
Develop Partnerships with Farmer Groups to Supply Food to Schools	Number of farmers benefiting from developed partnership to supply food to school as a result of USDA assistance	500	500	500	aj	0 ^{al}	0	0 ^{ap}
	Number of students benefiting from developed partnerships to supply food to schools as a result of USDA assistance	10,000	10,000	10,000	0 ^{aj}	0	3,871 ^{an}	N/A ^{aq}

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BENEFICIARIES		Target ⁷³			Results ⁷⁴			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014- 31/03/15	01/04/2015- 30/09/2015	01/10/2015- 31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
	Comments:	<p>^{aj} “None within reporting period” (Semi-Annual Report Oct 2014-March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ak} “WFP is awaiting the baseline reports in 85 districts so as to target a literacy campaign in these areas.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{al} “Though farmers started to make contributions to add nutritious value to school meals, this is still their voluntary contribution. WFP will pilot a cash transfer modality in line with the government policy on promoting lunch. The pilot will take place in 10 schools and commence in Sept 2016 with the support of Australia. This would allow farmers to benefit through the local purchase.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{am} “According to the baseline survey conducted in October 2015 at 85 schools in 10 districts, only 1.9% of student scored above 75% in the literacy assessment test. In order to improve the literacy, the discussion with the potential partners are taking place. There is a high possibility of working with Big Brother Mouse, a local not-for-profit project, at 18 schools in Ngoi and Phonthong districts, Louangphabang province. There’s also a possibility of following the model developed by the Literacy consortium (formed by Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision, Child Fund) to boost the literacy among ethnic groups. This would cover 10 schools in Nga district in Oudomxai province.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{an} “Based on the baseline survey conducted in October 2015, in 85 surveyed schools, 46% of them has already received the voluntary contribution by the farmers/farmers groups. WFP will support the communities to better record voluntary contributions so as to get a better understanding of the practice.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ao} “WFP signed the contract with two sub-recipients Plan International and Big Brother Mouse to implement the literacy activity. The training for trainers and preparation has just started in September. During next reporting period, nearly 10,000 students are expected to benefit from their activities.” (Semi-Annual Report March - September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ap} The Cash-based transfer modality still under the preparation. 50 schools in Nale district will be benefiting from this intervention starting in November 2016 using funds from USDA LRP and 20 schools in Oudomxay province from Australian Aid and Japanese funds. This means local farmers in this area will benefit from this intervention. During the next reporting period, the data would be available. US\$0.10 will be provided to a child per day to purchase the locally available vegetables, meat and eggs.” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{aq} “This will be captured during the mid-term evaluation field visit since this indicator is not collected during the process monitoring regularly taking place in the field.” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>						

Table 20 Outputs: targets and results⁷⁵

OUTPUTS		Target ⁷⁶			Results ⁷⁷			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014-31/03/15	01/04/2015-30/09/2015	01/10/2015-31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
Provide School Meals	Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	24,999,932	23,605,864	18,799,832	8,666 ^a	6,274,882 ^b	9,333,654 ^c	4,627,524
Comments	<p>^a “CSB was distributed and could ensure 7,000 rations. As for oil this was enough for 8,666 rations. The rice distributed equalled 1,132 rations. As oil is used for the preparation of mid-morning snack – it’s the reach of the oil which is counted.” [sic] (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016)</p> <p>^b “CSB was distributed and could ensure 7,000 rations. As for oil, this was enough for 8,666 rations. The rice distributed equalled 1,132 rations. As oil is used for the preparation of mid-morning snack - it’s the reach of the oil which is counted. The number is calculated as a one day ration. And counting 44 schooldays from 1 September to 31 October 142,609 children received a daily meal”(Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^c “There were 110 school days between October 2015 and March 2016. On average, schools cook around 60% of school days (66 days). 141,419 school children benefited from either breakfast or lunch.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>							
Take Home Rations	Number of take-home rations provided as a result of USDA assistance	74,250	61,500	48,186	0	30,532	4,952	48,952 ⁱ
Building/Rehabilitation: Kitchens	Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance (kitchens, cook areas)	379	396	564	0 ^d	0 ^e	469 ^g	no information
Building/Rehabilitation: Warehouses and Storerooms	Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance (Other school grounds or school buildings)	379	396	725	0 ^d	0 ^f	386 ^h	no information

⁷⁵ Unless a comment is provided, WFP’s semi-annual reports do not include any further data or information on a given indicator.

⁷⁶ Targets are shown as in the USDA commitment letter 2014 (USDA, 2014), unless otherwise stated.

⁷⁷ Results are taken from WFP’s semi-annual progress reports to USDA.

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OUTPUTS		Target ⁶			Results ⁷			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014-31/03/15	01/04/2015-30/09/2015	01/10/2015-31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
Comment:	<p>^d“None within reporting period.” (Semi-Annual Report Oct 2014-March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^e “Procurement of building material started in March and material arrived in May. Due to the rainy season, the costs of distributing the material doubled, and since the communities will not build during rainy season it was decided to distribute the building material after the rains. Only the 5 districts that commenced lunch received building material together with the school garden material. Due to rainy season it is expected that construction and rehabilitation work will take place before the end of the year.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^f “Procurement of building material started in March and material arrived in May. Due to the rainy season, the costs of distributing the material doubled, and since the communities will not build during rainy season it was decided to distribute the building material after the rains. Only the 5 districts that commenced lunch received building material.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^g “Procurement and delivery of material have continued since Aug 2015. 259 schools have already received the material during the last reporting period. Additional 469 schools received the kitchen renovation/reconstruction materials. The community volunteered to rehabilitate kitchen.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^h “Procurement and delivery of material have continued since Aug 2015. 348 schools in northern provinces and 38 schools in south received renovation materials. The community volunteered to rehabilitate warehouse.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>ⁱ “Beyond storekeepers and cooks benefiting from THR, 22,000 children received additional take home rations for the lean season.” (Semi-Annual Report March - September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>							
Raising Awareness on the Importance of Education ^j	Number of TV and Radio programs created nationwide as a result of USDA assistance	1	1	1	0	0	0	N/A ^l
	Number of awareness raising posters distributed as a result of USDA assistance	5,000	0	0	0	0	0 ^k	8,676 ^m

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OUTPUTS		Target ⁶			Results ⁷			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014-31/03/15	01/04/2015-30/09/2015	01/10/2015-31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
Comments:	<p>^j The MOES has not shown any interest according to WFP’s semi-annual report October 15 – March 2016 (WFP, 2015-2016)</p> <p>^j “WFP submitted a letter to the Ministry of Education and Sports in March to discuss awareness campaigns. The issue has also been discussed at various meetings, but WFP is still waiting for agreements with MoES about joint campaigns. It is likely to be linked to areas with high dropout rates as a continuation of the efforts in 2014 where MoES and development partners jointly sought to address the issues of dropout rates in Laos.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^j “WFP submitted a letter to the Ministry of Education and Sports last year on the raising awareness campaign for reducing drop out, however, till now the MoES hasn't shown their interest. WFP discussed the effectiveness of TV and Radio programs internally, and came to the conclusion that only Radio programme will be produced considering the accessibility in the rural areas” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^k “In order to raise the awareness on School Meals, importance of education and community contribution, 7 different posters were designed during this reporting period. They will be disseminated in all 1446 villages under the WFP School Meals Programme after April 2016.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^l “It was requested to remove the creation of TV/radio programme in the amendment request.” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^m “In order to raise the awareness on School Meals, importance of education and community contribution, 6 different posters were printed during this reporting period. In total, 18,000 copies were produced and shared with MOES and other development partners. The distribution is on the way to 1446 schools under the WFP School Meals Programme.” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>							
Provide: Energy Saving Stoves	Number of schools receiving energy saving stoves as a result of USDA assistance	200	268	300	0	0 ⁿ	0 ^o	0 ^p
Comments	<p>ⁿ “The logic behind this activity is not only energy saving cooks stoves, but to provide cook stoves with reduced smoke. The women in developing countries--and in Laos in particular--suffer from lung diseases or die prematurely due to heavy smoke exposure. WFP is entering a partnership with the World Bank, who as part of the Global Alliance for Clean Cook stoves, has been testing clean cook stoves in a significant number of countries. In 2014, 4 types of stoves were tested in Laos through support of World Bank and SNV. Laos has been selected as a priority country for the World Bank. WFP and World Bank are currently drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), where World Bank will provide technical expertise for the technical specifications of the procurement of the clean cook stoves. WFP can use the training material and knowledge that World Bank/SNV gathered during last year's testing in Lao villages. There may be some differences as the stoves for the school lunch programme have to be bigger than the household stoves that till date have been tested. A copy of the MoU between World Bank and WFP can be shared with USDA. The MoU is expected to be finalized before end of 2015.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^o “The discussion with the World Bank is still on-going. Over the three years, WFP plans to shift its assistance from mid-morning snack to lunch at 768 schools in line with the government of Lao's National School Lunch Program. As Laos is a priority country for the smoke reducing stoves, World Bank is likely to support the implementation of lunch program.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^p WFP and World Bank signed the Joint Letter on 2 August 2016. After having had a series of discussions with the World Bank, WFP plans to purchase 20 smoke-reduced cook stoves with the technical advice on specification from World Bank to be piloted. The World Bank is proposing two different types of stoves. (WFP’s semi-annual report September 2016 (WFP, 2015-2016)</p>							

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OUTPUTS		Target ⁶			Results ⁷			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014-31/03/15	01/04/2015-30/09/2015	01/10/2015-31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
Training: Good Health and Nutrition Practices	Number of trainings and workshops provided on good health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	59	83	83	0 ^q	147 ^t	0 ^y	103
Capacity Building: Local, regional, national level	Number of national school meal sustainability workshops held as a result of USDA assistance	1	0	0	0 ^r	0 ^u	N/A ^v	1 ^z
	Number of study tours outside Laos as a result of USDA assistance	1	0	0	1 ^s	1	N/A	N/A
	Number of exchange visits within Lao PDR as a result of USDA assistance	0	1	0	0	N/A	3 ^w	N/A ^{aa}
	Number of national school meal review workshops held as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	1	0	N/A	N/A ^x	0

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OUTPUTS		Target ⁶			Results ⁷			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014-31/03/15	01/04/2015-30/09/2015	01/10/2015-31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
Comments:	<p>q “None within reporting period.” “WFP is working with the Ministry of Education and Sports exploring opportunities to make new education material in support of nutrition curriculum development. Should this be achieved all children attending primary school in Laos will be impacted by USDA support.” (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>r “Through funds of USDA, WFP has supported 3 Government led workshops about school gardens, nutrition surveillance and data base management, A Workshop on School garden guidance recently took place with the participation of EDF and CRS.” [sic] (Semi-Annual Report Oct 2014-March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>s “A mission to Brazil organised by the WFP Center of Excellence took place in November-December 2014. The mission led by the vice-minister of Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) included members from various ministries (Health, agriculture, planning and investments). The objective was to be exposed to the Brazilian models of social safety nets including school meals and the links into support of small farmers.” [sic] (Semi-Annual Report Oct 2014-March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>t As part of the school lunch modality village representatives and cooks are trained in health and nutrition practices. So far 2717 have been trained. WFP is working with the Ministry of Education and Sports exploring opportunities to make new education material in support of nutrition curriculum development. Should this be achieved, all children attending primary school in Laos will be impacted by USDA support. MoES are expected to call for a joint meeting with various development partners involved in curriculum development to avoid duplication of efforts. FAO is considering to pilot education material in 3 WFP assisted schools in Luangnamtha. (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>u “Through funds of USDA, WFP has supported 3 Government led workshops about school gardens, nutrition surveillance and database management. A Workshop on School garden guidance recently took place with the participation of EDF and CRS. A national sustainability workshop was scheduled for June, and then October, but Government has requested to push it to January 2016. In August 2015, WFP provided financial support to the first brainstorming meeting for transition (hand over/exit) of the school feeding to the Government. The other school feeding partners (CRS, EDF) also actively attended. A workshop report identifying 4 transition models can be shared with USDA.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>v “Already conducted in August 2015. (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>w “<i>Instead of organizing the exchange visit within the country, WFP uses the trainers to facilitate the exchange between WFP operational areas and the National School Meals areas. This is a part of the long term hand over strategy to be align its operation with the National School Meals Program.</i>” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>x “Planned for 2016 to discuss the new modalities of collection of Monthly Distribution Reports.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>y “During the last reporting period (September 2015), the trainings have already conducted. 259 villages received training in both school garden set up and subsequently in lunch modality which also included hygiene and nutrition messaging. In this reporting period, the focus was more given on the curriculum development on nutrition awareness and school garden. The school garden technical guidelines and other nutrition materials were shared with the curriculum developers.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>z “A transition workshop was held in August 2015. A follow up meeting with the participation of World Bank, CRS, MOES and WFP was held in September 2016. Next meeting is scheduled for November 2016. “(Semi-Annual Report March - September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>aa “This activity has already taken place during last reporting period by facilitating the exchange between the WFP and National School Meals areas.” “(Semi-Annual Report March - September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>							

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OUTPUTS		Target ⁶			Results ⁷			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014-31/03/15	01/04/2015-30/09/2015	01/10/2015-31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
Establish School Gardens	Number of gardens established as a result of USDA assistance	200	268	300	0	259	0 ^{ac}	257 ^{ae}
Production of Books and Supplementary Reading Materials	Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance	0	10,000	20,000	0	0 ^{ab}	0 ^{ad}	0 ^{af}
Comments:	<p>^{ab} “WFP wishes to link this with the curriculum development of school garden and nutrition material. Through discussion with partners it has been agreed to start first quarter 2016 with the formulations.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ac} “During the last reporting period, 259 schools in 5 districts have already established school gardens. To ensure the water supply to gardens, the materials for water pipe extension were procured and delivered to 89 schools in this reporting period. Rest of the schools are scheduled to receive the materials. Further expansion to establish school gardens is planned while shifting from the school meals to lunch programme in 240 schools in September 2016. Prior to this transition, the training on school garden and lunch will be given to those 240 schools in June/July 2016.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ad} “WFP has engaged in curriculum development of school garden and nutrition material. WFP submitted the school garden technical guidelines and other nutrition material to the curriculum developers. In the next reporting period, WFP and FAO will financially support the first workshop, which is scheduled on 20-21 April among the partners and experts.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ae} “257 schools in 8 districts have additionally shifted to lunch programme from mid-morning snack. Prior to this transition, WFP gave the training on school garden and lunch in Aug 2016. For the lunch programme, the village head, school principle/teacher, a member from the parent association and 2 members of the village Lao Women Union) were trained. In total 1285 people were trained in lunch, hygiene and cooking. With the amendment approved WFP will shift the remaining 940 schools to lunch in September 2017. The school garden training was conducted by the District Agriculture and Forestry office (DAFO) and by the district education and sports bureau (DESB) for village heads, school principals and teachers. A total of 771 people were trained in the 257 communities.” (Semi-Annual Report March - September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{af} “On April 20-21, WFP and FAO financially supported the first workshop of curriculum development on school agriculture and nutrition. Two sub-recipients, Plan International and Big Brother Mouse are planning to distribute the reading materials for teachers and students during next reporting period. 60,000 books are estimated to be distributed.” (Semi-Annual Report March - September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>							
Develop Partnerships with Farmer Groups to Supply Food to Schools	Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance (Multi-focus)	50	50	50	0 ^{ag}	0 ^{ah}	33 ^{ai}	N/A ^{ak}
	Number of schools receiving food from farmer groups	40	50	60	0 ^{ag}	0 ^{ag}	39	N/A
	Amount of food provided to schools (dollar value) from farmer groups per semester	4,000	6,000	10,000	0 ^{ag}	0 ^{ag}	26,136 ^{aj}	N/A ^{al}

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OUTPUTS		Target ⁶			Results ⁷			
Activity	Indicator	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	1/10/2014-31/03/15	01/04/2015-30/09/2015	01/10/2015-31/03/2016	01/04/16 - 30/09/16
Comments:	<p>^{ag} “None within reporting period” (Semi-Annual Reports Oct 2014-March 2015, April – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ah} “None within reporting period. From July- September an expert in purchase for progress was deployed into the country office to assess the potentials for supporting farmers and to build their capacity to meet quality standards. WFP is planning to start smaller local purchase of rice to strengthen the partnership.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ai} “According to the baseline survey conducted in October 2015, around 39% of 85 schools had developed a partnership to supply food to schools, which is around 33. To promote this partnership, WFP has initiated discussions with CARE International, who supports the farmers group in the northern part of country. A potential partnership with JICA, who supports the farmers group is also discussed. The challenge is that in rural areas farmers are subsistence farmers with low crop diversification.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{aj} “259 out of total 1436 schools in the programme started to implement the lunch programme in September 2015. According to the baseline survey, 40 out of 85 surveyed schools have the lunch interventions, and 75% of those schools receive the contribution. The schools under the government support received US\$0.10 per child per school day to supplement rice provided by the government to purchase vegetable, meats and eggs. WFP also plans to pilot a cash modality apply the same rate as the government’s intervention with the support of Australia in September 2016.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ak} “This will be captured during the mid-term evaluation field visit since this indicator is not collected during the regular and on-going process monitoring” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{al} “This will be captured during the mid-term evaluation field visit since this indicator is not collected during the process monitoring regularly taking place in the field.” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>							
Enrolment Campaigns	Number of enrolment campaign events held as a result of USDA assistance	1	1	1	0 ^{am}	0 ^{an}	0 ^{ao}	N/A ^{ap}
Comment:	<p>^{am} “None within reporting period” (Semi-Annual Report Oct 2014-March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{an} “The national enrolment rates are currently above 97%, but the challenges are to ensure that children attend school and to reduce the dropout rates. For months WFP has been in dialogue with the MoES to discuss targeted campaigns (challenges in certain areas) - this is again joint work with several development partners engaged in the education sector.” (Semi-Annual Report April 2015 – September 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ao} “The national enrolment rates are currently above 97%. The baseline also showed the slight decrease in enrolment over last 5 years. The government more focuses on ensuring the regular attendance and reducing the dropout rates. For months WFP has been in dialogue with the MoES to discuss targeted campaigns (challenges in certain areas) - this is again joint work with several development partners engaged in the education sector.” (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^{ap} “Currently the national enrolment rates are 98.5%. Due to this high enrolment rate, it was suggested to remove enrolment campaigns in the amendment request. It is under the approval process as of Sep 30.” (Semi-Annual Report March – September 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>							

Table 21 Outcomes: targets and results

OUTCOMES Result Title & Description		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
MGD SO1	Improved Literacy of School-Aged Children	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text	Girls – 25% ⁸¹ Boys – 25% ⁸²	Girls – 1.9% Boys – 1.9%	0 ^a	no data	no data	no data
Comment	<p><i>“The literacy comprehension of students is poor, with only 1.9 percent demonstrating greater than 75 percent comprehension on the literacy boost questionnaire on grade level text. This very low baseline status suggests that there is much work to be done to meet the final target of 25 percent of students (both male and female) that can read and understand grade level text.”</i> (Kimetrica, 2015: 18)</p> <p><i>However, no data is available on this outcome as this was not measured after the baseline survey. The semi-annual reports state that “This will be captured during the mid-term evaluation field visit since this indicator is not collected during the process monitoring regularly taking place in the field.”</i> (WFP, 2015-2016)</p> <p>^a <i>The semi-annual report (October 2014 – March 2015) states that “Literacy boost campaigns will be done from September 2015.”</i> (WFP, 2015-2016)</p>							
MGD 1.1	Improved Quality of Literacy Instruction	Percent of teachers in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as identified by their supervisor/mentor/coach	-	100%	no data	no data	no data	no data
Comment	<p><i>The baseline survey measures this. This indicator, however, was included slightly differently in the results framework: “Number of supplementary reading materials provided as a result of USDA assistance”, with a target of 500,000 set in the proposal. No target was set in the commitment letter; and none of the semi-annual reports capture this indicator on the outcome level.</i></p>							
MGD 1.2	Improved Attentiveness	Percent of students in classrooms identified as inattentive by their teachers	0%	Girls – 16% Boys – 22%	no data	no data	no data	no data
Comment	<p><i>The proposal showed the target as 0% and a target to be established in December 2014. WFP semi-annual monitoring reports, and MGD proposal do not include an indicator for this outcome.</i></p>							
MGD 1.3	Improved Student Attendance	Percent of students (girls/boys) regularly (80%) attending USDA supported schools	Girls – 115,461	Girls – 99.4%		87,153	81%	83%
			Boys – 136,844	Boys – 99.5%		79,142	81%	81%
								72,854

⁷⁸ As shown in the WFP project proposal to USDA (WFP, nd-a), unless otherwise stated.

⁷⁹ Kimetrica, 2015.

⁸⁰ Drawn from WFP’s six-monthly monitoring reports to USDA.

⁸¹ Targets as set in the USDA commitment letter (USDA, 2014).

⁸² Targets as set in the USDA commitment letter (USDA, 2014).

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OUTCOMES Result Title & Description		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
		Percent of students (girls/boys) in target schools who start grade one and complete the last grade of primary school (cohort survival rate)	Girls -95% Boys: 95%	59.5% (2011-2012 school year) ^b	no data	no data	no data	no data
Comment	<i>Targets shown in proposal as percentages. The USDA commitment letter and WFP semi-annual monitoring reports, also show numerical targets: 115,461 girls and 136,844 boys. ^b Baseline as per MGD proposal, not Kimetrica data</i>							
MGD 1.1.1	Consistent Teacher Attendance	Percent of teachers attending at least 90% of the school days. ^c	-	Male – 83% Female – 85%	no data	no data	no data	no data
Comment	The MGD proposal includes as an indicator: “Number of teachers benefitting from an exchange visit” (see MGD 1.1.4 below). The commitment letter and the semi-annual reports do not include an indicator. ^c Indicator as included in the Kimetrica baseline survey.							
MGD 1.1.2	Better Access to School Supplies & Materials	<i>Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance^d</i>	30,000	-	0	0	0	0
		<i>Number of students benefitting from the literacy promotion campaign</i>	<i>girls: 1,350 boys: 1,150</i>	-	0	0	0	0
Comment	^d See MGD 1.1.3 below. It is noted that WFP’s implementing partners Big Brother Mouse and PLAN International are expected to distribute approximately 60,000 books in the next reporting period (WFP, 2015-2016). The proposal also showed the following indicators: “Number of students and parents benefitting from the provision of school supplies: female: 480,000 and male: 540,000” This indicator was not included in the commitment letter or the semi-annual monitoring reports.							
MGD 1.1.3	Improved Literacy Instructional Materials	<i>Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance</i>	30,000	-	0	0	0	0
Comment	It is noted that WFP’s implementing partners Big Brother Mouse and PLAN International are expected to distribute approximately 60,000 books in the next reporting period (WFP, 2015-2016). The results framework also indicates that this outcome will be achieved and monitored through partners’ activities, specifically through activities by the MOES, UNICEF, World Bank, AUSAID, JICA, and STC.							
MGD 1.1.4	Increased Skills and Knowledge of Teachers	Number of teachers benefitting from an exchange visit.	Female - 216 Male - 284		no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of exchange visits within Lao PDR as a result of USDA assistance	1	-	N/A	N/A	3 ^e	N/A

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OUTCOMES		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰				
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016	
Result Title & Description									
Comment	<p><i>Kimetrica measured MGD 1.1.4 with the following indicator: “Percent of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified in teaching techniques during the last one year”, with baseline results: female: 26%, male: 20%. The commitment letter and the semi–annual monitoring reports do not measure this. e “Instead of organizing the exchange visit within the country, WFP uses the trainers to facilitate the exchange between WFP operational areas and the National School Meals areas. This is a part of the long term hand over strategy to be align its operation with the National School Meals Program.” (Semi-Annual Report October 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</i></p>								
MGD 1.1.5	Increased Skills and Knowledge of School Administrators	Percent of school administrators in targeted schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	
Comment	<p><i>The proposal erroneously repeated a previous unrelated indicator. The commitment letter and WFP semi-annual monitoring reports do not include an indicator on this.</i></p>								
MGD 1.2.1	Reduced Short-Term Hunger	FTF Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (male) ⁸³	255,730	102,587	4,506 ^f	92,954	9,333,654	9,333,654	
		FTF Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (female) ⁸⁴	242,296	99,754	4,160 ^f	84,098	-	0	
		Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (new)	229,388	-	8,666 ^f	177,052	141,419	141,419	
		Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (continuing)	268,638	-	0 ^f	9,798 ^f	92,036	92,036	
		Comment: ^f WFP’s semi-annual report (Oct. 2014 – March 2015) includes different worksheets. Some data that is present in one sheet for the same indicator is not filled in in another worksheet making data extraction cumbersome. The worksheet on results includes no data and states that a “Baseline survey will be conducted in September.” (Semi-Annual Report Oct 2014-March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).							
		Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	67,405,628 ⁸⁵	-	8,666	6,274,882	9,333,654	4,627,524	

⁸³ Indicator, baseline and target figures as per USDA commitment letter.

⁸⁴ Indicator, baseline and target figures as per USDA commitment letter.

⁸⁵ As per USDA commitment letter.

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OUTCOMES Result Title & Description		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
		Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (male)	205,719 ⁸⁶	-	4,506	74,456	73,538	72,919 ⁸
		Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (female)	200,339 ⁸⁷	-	4,160	68,153	67,881	67,309
		Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (new)	184,370 ⁸⁸		8,666	142,609	0	28,046
		Number of school-aged children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance (continuing)	221,688 ⁸⁹		0	8,666	141,419	112,182
		Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (male)	45,511 ⁹⁰		16,871	3,971	3,971	1,436
		Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (female)	32,957 ⁹¹		12,574	-	0	3,516
		Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (new)	43,000 ⁹²		28,313	0	0	0
		Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (continuing)	35,468 ⁹³		1,132	1,436	1,436	4,952
		Number of take-home rations provided as a result of USDA assistance	183,936 ⁹⁴		29,460	3,516	3,516	4

⁸⁶ As per USDA commitment letter.

⁸⁷ As per USDA commitment letter.

⁸⁸ As per USDA commitment letter.

⁸⁹ As per USDA commitment letter.

⁹⁰ As per USDA commitment letter.

⁹¹ As per USDA commitment letter.

⁹² As per USDA commitment letter.

⁹³ As per USDA commitment letter.

⁹⁴ As per USDA commitment letter.

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OUTCOMES		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
Result Title & Description								
Comment		<p>Reported figures are puzzling because Take-Home Rations were discontinued from September 2015, according to the CO (WFP, 2015-2016)</p> <p>⁹ The Semi-Annual Report (September 2016) contains two diverging figures. It is assumed that the ones in the worksheet “Results” has incorrectly been copied from the previous report.</p>						
MGD 1.3.1	Increased Economic and Cultural Incentives or Decreased Disincentives ^h	Number of school gardens constructed as a result of USDA assistance	530	-	0	259	0	257
Comment		<p>^h The proposal also includes indicators as under MGD 1.2.1 above, as well as “number of storekeepers and cooks benefitting from the provision of THR as a result of USDA assistance”. The latter is not included in the commitment letter or the semi-annual monitoring reports.</p> <p>The targets set in the commitment letter and the monitoring reports are: FY2015: 200, FY2016: 268, and FY2017:300. It is not clear whether these are cumulative.</p>						
MGD 1.3.2	Reduced Health and Related Absences	Number of cooks and storekeepers benefitting from training in food preparation and storage practices	Female: 6,440 Male: 7,560	Storekeepers: 45 Cooks: 33% ^j	396	2,717	0 ^m	1,028
		Number of training and workshops in commodity management conducted for GoL staff and WFP staff as a result of USDA assistance ⁱ	9	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of GoL staff benefitting from training in commodity management ⁱ	Female: 83 Male: 97	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of WFP staff benefitting from training in commodity management ⁱ	Female: 21 Male: 24	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of trainings and workshops provided on good health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance ^k	955	-	0 ^l	147	0	103
Comment		<p>ⁱ This objective, indicator and target appeared in the WFP proposal to MGD but were not subsequently reported.</p> <p>^j The Kimetrica baseline survey provides separate percentages for trained cooks and storekeepers – no distinction is made between sexes.</p> <p>^k As included in the commitment letter and WFP semi-annual monitoring.</p> <p>^l “None within reporting period” (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^m “Last year, the warehouse manuals became available in Lao language. WFP made a call for interest for the trainings on commodity management to store keepers but no training company responded positively. It is expected that WFP warehouse staff will establish trainings of storekeepers after May 2016.”</p>						
MGD 1.3.3	Improved School Infrastructure	Number of kitchens constructed or rehabilitated as a result of USDA assistance	1,700	-	no data	no data	469	no data

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OUTCOMES			Performance Indicator Target⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015)⁷⁹	Performance indicator results⁸⁰			
Result Title & Description	Performance Indicator				10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
		Number of students benefiting from the rehabilitation/construction of kitchens as a result of USDA assistance	Boys – 87,480 Girls – 74,520	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of warehouses and store rooms rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	1,700	25%	no data	no data	386	no data
		Number of students benefiting from the rehabilitation/construction of warehouses/store rooms a result of USDA assistance	Boys – 87,480 Girls – 74,520	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of school gardens constructed as a result of USDA assistance ⁿ	530	-	0	259	0	257
		Number of students benefiting from the creation of school gardens as a result of USDA assistance	Girls – 9,890 Boys – 11,610	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
Comment	<p><i>ⁿsee MGD 1.3.1</i></p> <p><i>Except for the number of school gardens created, the other indicators mentioned in MGD proposal were not included in the regular monitoring.</i></p> <p><i>The 2015 baseline survey did not record data on these indicators, except the number of storerooms as a result of USDA assistance: 25%.</i></p>							
MGD 1.3.4	Increased Student Enrolment	Number of students (girls/boys) enrolled in schools receiving USDA assistance	Girls – 233,296	-	-	84,098	80,455	80,455
			Boys – 251,230	-	-	92,954	90,409	90,409
		Number of events held as a result of USDA assistance	450	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of school-aged children’s parents benefiting from the event	Female: 2,070 Male: 2,430	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of TV program, radio program and number of awareness raising posters created as a result of USDA assistance	TV/Radio: 2 Posters: 2	-	0	0	0 ^o	N/AP ^p
		Number of people benefiting from the TV, program, radio program and awareness raising posters created	F: 9,200,000 M: 10,080,000		no data	no data	no data	no data

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OUTCOMES	Result Title & Description	Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
Comment	<p><i>WFP's proposal to MGD proposed a 3% percentage increase in the number of boys and girls enrolled. The USDA Modification I Letter and WFP six-monthly reports simply show a target number: 233,296 girls and 251,230 boys. There seems to be a confusion around total targets. Numbers reported over the last three six-monthly periods (note those for two of those periods are identical) fall significantly short of this target.</i></p> <p>^o "In order to raise the awareness on School Meals, importance of education and community contribution, 7 different posters were designed during this reporting period. They will be disseminated in all 1446 villages under the WFP School Meals Programme after April 2016." (Semi-Annual Report September 2015 – March 2016, WFP, 2015-2016).</p> <p>^p <i>WFP requested this to be removed in the amendment request dated June 2016.</i></p>							
MGD 1.3.5	Increased Community Understanding of Benefits of Education	Percentage of parents in target communities who are members of School Meal Committees as a result of USDA assistance	Female: 24,786 Male: 21,114	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of events held as a result of USDA assistance	450	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of school-aged children's parents benefitting from the event	Female: 2,070 Male: 2,430	-		no data	no data	no data
		Number of TV program, radio program and number of awareness raising posters created as a result of USDA assistance	TV/Radio: 2 Posters: 2	-	0	0	0	N/A ^r
		Number of people benefiting from the TV, program, radio program and awareness raising posters created	F: 9,200,000 M: 10,080,000		no data	no data	no data	no data
		Percent of parents in programme schools who can name at least three benefits of primary education ^q	-	45%	no data	no data	no data	no data
Comment	<p>^q <i>As included in the Kimetrica baseline survey</i></p> <p>^r <i>WFP requested this to be removed in the amendment request dated June 2016.</i></p> <p><i>A number of indicators used in the MGD proposal were not followed up on and are not included in the commitment letter or the WFP semi-annual monitoring reports.</i></p>							
MGD 1.4.1⁹⁵	Increased Capacity of Government Institutions	Number of training and workshops in commodity management conducted for GoL and WFP staff as a result of USDA assistance	9		no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of GoL staff benefitting from training in commodity management	Female: 83 Male: 97	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of WFP staff benefitting from training in commodity management	Female: 21 Male: 24	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of training, workshop and exchange visits held as a result of USDA assistance	7	-	no data	no data	no data	no data

⁹⁵ MGDs 1.4.1 – 1.4.4 are foundational results in support of MGD SO1 "Improved literacy of school-age children"

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OUTCOMES		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
Result Title & Description								
		Number of government staff benefitting from the training, workshop or exchange visit	Female: 258 Male: 302	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of national school meal sustainability workshops held as a result of USDA assistance ^s	1	-	0	0	N/A	1
		Number of study tours outside Laos as a result of USDA assistance ^s	1	-	1	1	N/A	N/A
		Number of exchange visits within Lao PDR as a result of USDA assistance ^s	1	-	0	N/A	3	N/A
		Number of national school meal review workshops held as a result of USDA assistance ^s	1	-	0	N/A	N/A	0
Comment	<p><i>The first five indicators are included in the MGD proposal but have not been included in the commitment letter or the WFP monitoring reports.</i></p> <p><i>^s These four indicators were included in the commitment letter and the monitoring reports.</i></p>							
MGD 1.4.2	Improved Policy or Regulatory Framework	Number of training, workshop and exchange visits held as a result of USDA assistance	7	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of government staff benefitting from the training, workshop or exchange visit	Female: 258 Male: 302	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
Comment	<i>No performance indicators referring to policies or regulatory frameworks are included in the actual monitoring.</i>							
MGD 1.4.3	Increased Government Support	Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance ^t	150	39%	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comment	<p>The proposal only included the two indicators as under MGD 1.4.2. However, these are not reflected in the monitoring process.</p> <p>^tThis indicator is captured under the activity “develop partnerships with farmer groups to supply food to schools” in the commitment letter and the semi-annual reports. The semi-annual reports include a comment that the MTE will capture this information, since this is not collected during the regular and ongoing monitoring.</p>							
Comment	<i>WFP’s proposal to MGD showed a target of three public-private partnerships. The USDA Modification I Letter and WFP six-monthly reports show a revised target of two.</i>							
MGD 1.4.4	Increased engagement of local organizations and community groups	Number of SMCs contributing to their schools as a result of USDA assistance	45,900	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of training in good health and nutrition conducted practices for district and provincial school meals committees as a result of USDA assistance ^u	6	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of district and provincial school meals committees benefitting from the training in good health and nutrition practices	482 (provincial: 90; district: 392)	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of kitchens constructed or rehabilitated as a result of USDA assistance	1,700	-	no data	no data	469	no data

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OUTCOMES		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
Result Title & Description								
		Number of students benefiting from the rehabilitation/construction of kitchens as a result of USDA assistance	Boys – 87,480 Girls – 74,520	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of warehouses and store rooms rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	1,700	25%	no data	no data	386	no data
		Number of students benefiting from the rehabilitation/construction of warehouses/store rooms a result of USDA assistance	Boys – 87,480 Girls – 74,520	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of events held as a result of USDA assistance	450	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of school-aged children’s parents benefitting from the event	Female: 2,070 Male: 2,430	-		no data	no data	no data
		Number of TV program, radio program and number of awareness raising posters created as a result of USDA assistance	TV/Radio: 2 Posters: 2	-	0	0	0	N/A ^v
		Number of people benefiting from the TV, program, radio program and awareness raising posters created	F: 9,200,000 M: 10,080,000		no data	no data	no data	no data
Comment	<p>The proposal also included the same two indicators as under MGD 1.4.2. However, these are not reflected in the monitoring process.</p> <p>^u <i>The commitment letter and the monitoring reports contain a slightly different indicator: “Number of trainings and workshops provided on good health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance”, with a target of 955 and achieved 147 in reporting period April to October 2015 and 4,952 in reporting period April to September 2016.</i></p> <p>^v <i>WFP requested this to be removed in the amendment request dated June 2016. (compare MGD 1.3.4 above)</i></p>							
MGD SO2	Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices	Number of total individuals directly benefiting from USDA-funded interventions	Female: 57,665	-		87,479	83,836	71,057
			Male: 67,693	-		93,087	92,161	74,258
		2015 baseline survey indicator: Average dietary diversity score of school aged children (both male and female)		5.0				
Comment	<p><i>WFP’s proposal to MGD showed a single target of 57,665 female and 67,793 male “total individuals directly benefiting from USDA-funded interventions”. The rationale for using this to reflect increased use of health and dietary practices is unclear. The commitment letter and WFP semi-annual reports did not change this. However, the outcome is not mentioned specifically, but targets are considerably higher: Female: 242,296; Male: 255,730.</i></p> <p>The baseline survey measured the average dietary diversity score of school-aged children.</p>							

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OUTCOMES Result Title & Description		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
MGD 2.1	Improved knowledge of health and hygiene	Number of students in target schools who achieve a passing score on a test of good health and hygiene practices as a result of USDA assistance	Girls – 57,665 Boys – 67,693	0				
		Number of trainings and workshops provided on good health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	955			147	0	103
		Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance (male)	1,562 ^w			1,070	0	1,156
		Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance (female)	1,330 ^w			589	0	643
Comment	<p><i>The WFP proposal to MGD proposed an indicator (referring to Feed the Future 5) of “number of people (parents) trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance”. The proposal also included three more indicators: “number of provincial SMC benefitting from the training in good health and nutrition practices”, “number of supplementary reading materials provided as a result of USDA assistance” (not specifying health and nutrition content), and “number of students and parents benefitting from the provision of school supplies” (again, no specific reference to health and nutrition is made). These were not included in the monitoring process.</i></p> <p><i>^w WFP’s proposal to MGD stated the target (referring to FTF 5) as “Number of people trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance”. The commitment letter and WFP semi-annual reports revised this to “number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance”, with a target of 13,440 for females and : 18,559 for males. These numbers are significantly higher than those in the proposal.</i></p> <p><i>The 2015 baseline survey proposed this indicator: “Number of students in target schools who achieve a passing score on a test of good health and hygiene practices as a result of USDA assistance” (baseline score was 0%). The commitment letter and the monitoring data have not referred to this target at all.</i></p>							
MGD 2.2	Increased knowledge of Safe Food Preparation and Storage Practices	Percentage of food preparers at target schools who achieve a passing score on a test of safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance	Female: 8,632 Male: 10,133	8.2%				
Comment	<p><i>The proposal mentions number targets, not a percentage: Female – 8,632, and Mal – 10,133. The 2015 Kimetrica baseline survey does not differentiate between men and women and provides a percentage.</i></p> <p><i>The monitoring reports do not include this indicator.</i></p> <p><i>The proposal also includes the following indicators: “Number of cooks and storekeepers benefitting from training in food prep and storage practices”, number of training and workshops in commodity management conducted for the Government of Laos and WFP staff as a result of USDA assistance”, “number of Government of Laos/WFP staff benefitting from training in commodity management”. These have not been included in the regular monitoring.</i></p>							
MGD 2.3	Increased knowledge of nutrition	FTF5 Number of people (parents & teachers) trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance (female)	1,330 ^x		0	0	244	3,083

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OUTCOMES		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
Result Title & Description								
		FTF5 Number of people (parents & teachers) trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance (male)	1,562 ^x		0	0		3,877
Comment	<p>WFP's proposal to MGD stated the target (referring to FTF 5) as "Number of people trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance".</p> <p>* The commitment letter and WFP semi-annual reports revised this to "number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance", with a target of 13,440 for females and 18,559 for males. These numbers are significantly higher than those in the proposal.</p>							
MGD 2.4	Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services							
Comment	<p>This outcome and its indicators are not mentioned in the WFP proposal to USDA, or the commitment letter or WFP's monitoring reports.</p> <p>In the results framework the colour code indicates that this outcome will be achieved and progress towards it will be monitored through partners' activities, specifically the MOES, MOH, and UNICEF.</p> <p>However, one of the indicators in the commitment letter and the monitoring reports includes "number of latrines": "Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance". There is no data on the number of latrines built however.</p>							
MGD 2.5	Increased Access to Preventative Health Intervention							
Comment	<p>This outcome and its indicators are not included in the WFP proposal to USDA, or the commitment letter or WFP's monitoring reports.</p> <p>In the results framework the colour coding indicates that this outcome will be achieved and progress towards it monitored through partners' activities, specifically those by the MOES, MOH, UNICEF, and the WHO.</p>							
MGD 2.6	Increased Access to Requisite Food Preparation and Storage Tools and Equipment	Number of target schools with improved food prep and storage equipment	1,700 ^y	-	99 ^{ab}	358	1436	257
		Number of kitchens rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	1,700	-	no data	no data	469	no data
		Number of training and workshops in commodity management conducted for Government of Laos staff and WFP staff as a result of USDA assistance ^z	9	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of Government of Laos staff benefitting from training in commodity management ^z	Female: 83 Male: 97	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of WFP staff benefitting from training in commodity management ^z	Female: 21 Male: 24	-	no data	no data	no data	no data

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OUTCOMES		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
Result Title & Description								
		Number of students benefiting from the rehabilitation/construction of kitchens as a result of USDA assistance	Boys – 87,480 Girls – 74,520	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of warehouses and store rooms rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	1,700	25%	no data	no data	386	no data
		Number of students benefiting from the rehabilitation/construction of warehouses/store rooms a result of USDA assistance	Boys – 87,480 Girls – 74,520	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of cooks and storekeepers benefitting from training in food preparation and storage practices	Female: 6,440 Male: 7,560	Storekeepers: 45% Cooks: 33% ^{aa}	396	2,717	0	1,028
Comment	<p>^y This target was revised to 1,500 in the commitment letter and subsequent monitoring reports.</p> <p>^z This objective, indicator and target appeared in the WFP proposal to MGD but were not subsequently reported.</p> <p>^{aa} The Kimetrica baseline survey provides separate percentages for trained cooks and storekeepers – no distinction is made between sexes.</p> <p>^{ab} 61 schools in Ngoi district and 38 schools in Phongton districts received training in cooking between 22 March to 10 April. The trainings were 1 day per village. In addition, the 259 schools were trained in food preparations, storage, hygiene etc. as part of the lunch modality training” (Semi-Annual Report October 2014 – March 2015, WFP, 2015-2016).</p>							
MGD 2.7.1⁹⁶	Increased capacity of government institutions							
Comment	<p>This outcome and its indicators are not mentioned in the WFP proposal to USDA, or the commitment letter or WFP’s monitoring reports.</p> <p>In the results framework the colour code indicates that this outcome will be achieved and progress towards it will be monitored through partners’ activities, specifically the MOES, MOH, and UNICEF.</p>							
MGD 2.7.2	Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework							
Comment	<p>This outcome and its indicators are not mentioned in the WFP proposal to USDA, or the commitment letter or WFP’s monitoring reports.</p> <p>In the results framework the colour code indicates that this outcome will be achieved and progress towards it will be monitored through partners’ activities, specifically the MOES, MOH, and UNICEF.</p>							
MGD 2.7.3	Increased Government Support							

⁹⁶ MGDs 2.7.1 – 2.7.4 are foundational results in support of MGD Strategic Objective 2 “Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices”

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OUTCOMES		Performance Indicator	Performance Indicator Target ⁷⁸	Baseline survey (10/2015) ⁷⁹	Performance indicator results ⁸⁰			
					10/2014-03/2015	04/2015-09/2015	10/2015-03/2016	04/2016-09/2016
Result Title & Description								
Comment	<p><i>This outcome and its indicators are not mentioned in the WFP proposal to USDA, or the commitment letter or WFP's monitoring reports.</i></p> <p><i>In the results framework the colour code indicates that this outcome will be achieved and progress towards it will be monitored through partners' activities, specifically the MOES, MOH, and UNICEF./</i></p>							
MGD 2.7.4	Increased Engagement of Local Organisations and Community Groups	Number of training in good health and nutrition conducted practices for district and provincial school meals committees as a result of USDA assistance ^{ac}	6	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
		Number of district and provincial school meals committees benefitting from the training in good health and nutrition practices	482 (provincial: 90; district: 392)	-	no data	no data	no data	no data
Comment	<p>^{ac} <i>The commitment letter and the monitoring reports contain a slightly different indicator: "Number of trainings and workshops provided on good health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance", with a target of 955 and achieved 147 in reporting period April to October 2015 and 4,952 in reporting period April to September 2016.</i></p> <p><i>The MGD proposal, the commitment letter and WFP semi-annual monitoring reports do not include separate indicators for this outcome. The results framework indicates "raising awareness on nutrition and hygiene" as the key content of activities to achieve this outcome. MGD 1.4.4 includes indicators on health and hygiene, however, there is not much data available in the WFP semi-annual reports to USDA. Other indicators under MGD 1.4.4 about events presumably should be included under MGD 2.7.4 as well, but they do not specifically refer to health and hygiene, e.g. "number of events held", or "number of TV program, radio program, and number of awareness raising posters created".</i></p>							

Additional insights from the baseline survey and impact assessment

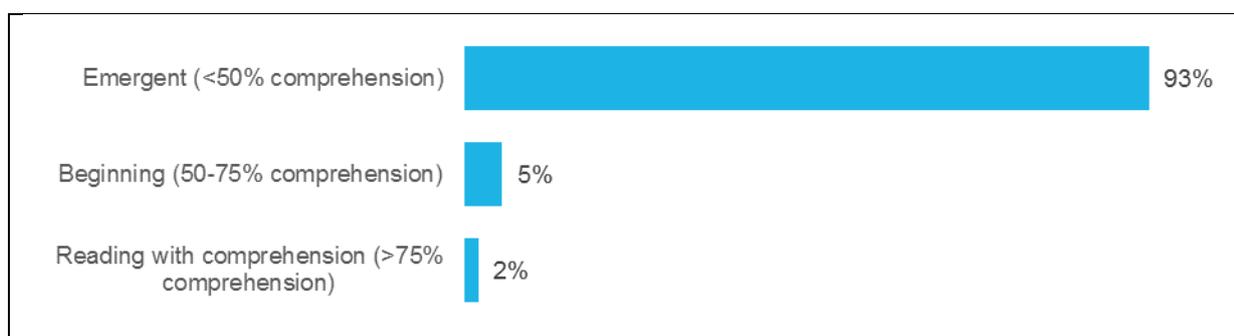
10. As is apparent from Table 21 above, the data available against outcome and impact indicators from the MGD results framework are very limited. This is not surprising for an early mid-term review, especially given the late commencement of the intervention being evaluated. However, it is possible to make some observations about whether the data being sought for M&E are likely to be conclusive, and about existing evidence which may indicate whether the desired results of the operation are reasonably likely to be achieved. The recent impact assessment review on school meals and WASH activities (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016), described in ¶26ff of Annex C above is especially relevant for this purpose. Even where there is only one data observation rather than a trend (from the baseline study), its findings help to indicate the scope for improvement under the project.

Impact Indicator MGD SO1: Improved literacy of school-age children

11. **Target:** Percent of students (girls/boys) who, by the end of grade 5 demonstrate reading comprehension equivalent to their grade level as defined by national standards at USDA supported schools: 80 percent boys, 80 percent girls (MGD grant application).

12. **Assessment** of the impact of the project on literacy will require comparing the baseline and endline surveys (although the evidence for attribution of the change to the project will need to be carefully considered). The findings from the baseline survey on the reading comprehension ability of pupils in WFP supported schools are shown in Figure 10 below. This indicator does not demonstrate significant differences between groups when disaggregated by sex and geographical location (North/South).

Figure 10 Baseline reading comprehension tier in WFP supported schools



Source: Kimetrica, 2015

13. The baseline survey also collected data on outcome level indicators some of which were also collected by the impact assessment on school feeding and WASH (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016).

Outcome indicators: teacher attendance

More Consistent Teacher Attendance

➤ *Average teacher attendance rates*

14. The average teacher attendance rate over the academic year is high, at 94 percent. This is consistent across sex and intervention type (Kimetrica, 2015).

➤ *Percent of teachers attending at least 90 percent of the school days*

15. Eighty-four percent of teachers regularly attend school (attend more than 90 percent of school days). This is slightly higher in schools that receive MMS (87 percent) than in lunch-only schools (80 percent) (Kimetrica, 2015).

Increased Skills and Knowledge of Teachers

➤ *Percent of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified in teaching techniques during the last one year*

16. Only 23 percent of the teaching staff reported having received training in teaching techniques over the last year. This is slightly higher for female teaching staff and for those at schools receiving MMS (both 26 percent). (Kimetrica, 2015)

➤ *Percent of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as identified by their supervisor/mentor/coach*

17. The head teachers reported that all of the teachers are applying their new skill sets (Kimetrica, 2015).

Outcome indicator: attentiveness

➤ *Improved Attentiveness (Percentage of students in classrooms identified as inattentive by their teachers)*

18. On average, 19 percent of students were classified as inattentive by two out of three of their teachers. Inattentiveness is slightly more of a problem for boys than girls (22 percent compared to 16 percent) and for students in schools receiving only lunch compared to MMS (26 percent compared to 16 percent) (Kimetrica, 2015).

19. The impact assessment found that in programme schools, pupils were reported as more attentive by one or both of their current and prior year teachers at higher rates compared with pupils in control schools (89.1 percent programme, 84.9 percent control). This difference was largely seen among boy pupils; 87.0 percent of boys were reported as attentive in programme schools, compared to 80.0 percent of boys in control schools ($p=0.09$). Attentiveness rates for girls were higher than boys and were similar between the two groups (91.2 percent programme, 90.5 percent control) (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016).

Outcome indicators: improved student enrolment and attendance

Attendance rates

20. There were no statistical differences between programme schools and control schools for any of the three measures for absence in the impact survey (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016).

➤ *Average student attendance*

21. Average student attendance is high at 97 percent. It is similar for both sexes and intervention types (Kimetrica, 2015).

➤ *Percent of students regularly attending school (at least 80 percent of the school days)*

22. The percent of children who regularly attended school is almost 100 percent (Kimetrica, 2015).

➤ *Student attendance on the day of the survey*

23. School attendance on the day of the survey was lower than the average and regular attendance rates, at 89 percent (Kimetrica, 2015).

Increased Student Enrolment

Target: the percentage increase in girls/boys enrolled as a result of USDA assistance: 3 percent girls and 3 percent boys

➤ *Average percent change in school enrolment*

24. The baseline survey found that on average, student enrolment dropped by only 0.7 percent between academic year 2014-15 and academic year 2015-16. However, student enrolment also declined slightly, by 2.4 percent during academic year 2014-15 compared to the year before; and previous academic year observed less than one percent raise and fall in student enrolment compared to the years before (Kimetrica, 2015).

25. The impact assessment found that there was an average increase of 5.3 percent among programme schools and a decrease of 2.0 percent among control schools ($p=0.04$). Among girls, enrolment across all schools increased by an average of 8.1 percent in programme schools and decreased by 2.6 percent in control schools ($p=0.03$), while among boys' enrolment increased by 6.6 percent in programme schools and by 0.2 percent in control schools ($p=0.02$) (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016).

➤ *Average enrolment ratio of girls to boys at target schools*

26. The female to male enrolment ratio was 0.95 during academic year 2015-16, indicating that the number of girls enrolled was 5 percent less than number of boys enrolled. There was no variation by school location; however, school lunch schools had better gender equity (ratio 0.98) compared to MMS schools (ratio 0.93), and the ratio has remained fairly consistent over the past four years.

Outcome indicators: dropout and repetition

➤ *Average student dropout rate*

27. The baseline found that the average dropout rate over the last academic year is less than one percent. It is slightly higher for boys (1.2 percent) than for girls (0.5

percent), but the difference is not statistically significant. Schools providing lunch interventions reported markedly higher (1.4 percent) dropout rates than schools providing MMS (0.1 percent). However, overall, the dropout rate is very low in the sample schools compared to the national average of 5.5 percent (UNESCO, MoES 2014). The observed differences between MMS and lunch schools and also the overall low dropout rate might be either due to underreporting of the student dropout at school level, or to a lower number of dropouts at sample schools.

28. The impact assessment found that dropout rates over the past six years were low and similar across both groups. Among programme schools the average dropout rate was 0.7 percent compared to 0.6 percent for control schools. Among boys the dropout rate was 0.7 percent in programme schools and 0.8 percent in control schools, while among girls the rate was 0.7 percent in programme schools and 0.5 percent in control schools (Moossavi & Trinies, 2016).

➤ *Repetition rate*

29. Overall, 7.8 percent of students had to repeat in the same grade during last academic year. This rate is significantly higher for boys (9.5 percent) than for girls (6.0 percent). Although MMS school dropout rates are marginally higher (9.1 percent) than lunch schools (6.7 percent), the difference is not statistically significant. Overall, the repetition rate in the sample schools is slightly higher than the national average of 6.9 percent (UNESCO, MoES 2014) (Kimetrica, 2015).

30. The impact assessment found that repetition rates were also similar between programme and control schools. Among programme schools the average repetition rate was 8.7 percent and among control schools the rate was 8.9 percent. Among boys the rate was 9.6 percent in programme schools and 8.9 percent in control schools, while among girls it was 7.8 percent in programme schools and 9.1 percent in control schools (Moossavi and Trinies 2016).

Outcome indicators: community appreciation of education

➤ *Increased Community Understanding of Benefits of Education (percent of parents in programme schools who can name at least three benefits of primary education)*

31. The baseline survey found that less than half of the parents interviewed (45 percent) could name at least three benefits of primary education. There is a significant difference in the parents' understanding of educational benefits depending on whether their child(ren) attend an MMS school (38 percent could name three benefits) or a lunch school (53 percent). School location also affects parents' knowledge of educational benefits, with 42 percent in the north being able to name three compared to 50 percent in the south.

32. The three most common responses were that primary education: (i) improves literacy rates, (ii) increases the chances of the pupil's future self-reliance and (iii) helps to break the cycle of poverty.

Impact Indicator MGD SO2: Increased use of dietary and health practices

33. **Assessment** of the impact of the project on dietary and health practices will require comparing the baseline and endline surveys (although the evidence for attribution of the change to the project will need to be carefully considered). The baseline survey uses three outcome indicators to assess the overall impact relating to this indicator.

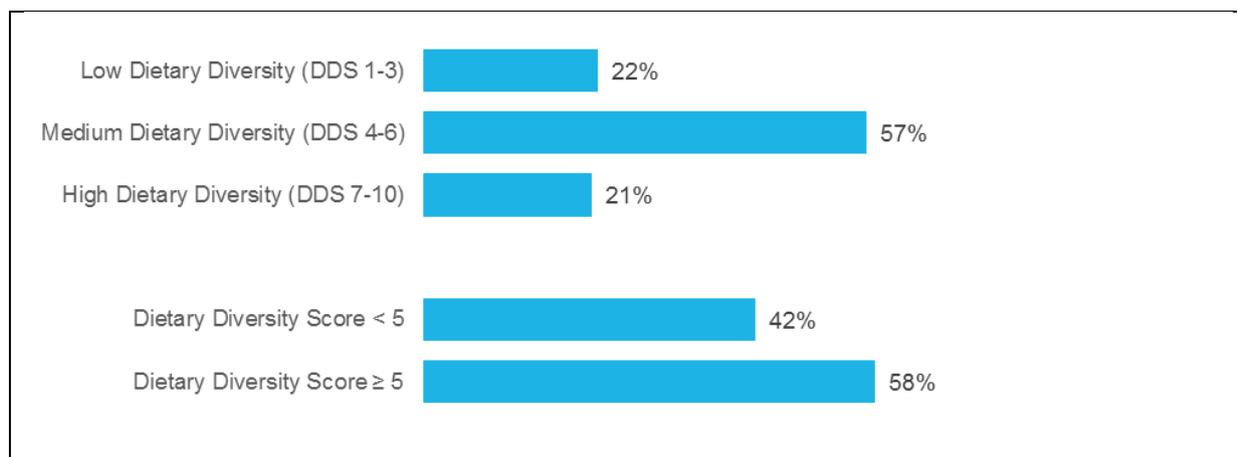
Outcome indicator: Dietary diversity

➤ *Average dietary diversity score (DDS) of school-aged children*

34. The mean dietary diversity score (DDS) was quite low at 5.0 (out of a maximum score of 10), which holds for both boys and girls when disaggregated by sex. It varies slightly between north (5.2) and south (4.8); and between MMS (5.3) and lunch (4.7) schools. Both differences are statistically significant.

35. As presented in Figure 11 below, only one in every five children exhibit high dietary diversity. A similar proportion (22 percent) exhibit low dietary diversity. Approximately three in five students had consumed 5 or more food groups in the 24 hours preceding the survey. Results do not vary significantly between male and female students or between intervention types along either method of classification.

Figure 11 Student dietary diversity scores



Source: Kimetrica, 2015

36. The impact assessment found that on average, pupils in programme schools had higher dietary diversity scores with an average score of 6.1 (out of 10) while pupils in control schools had an average score of 5.5 ($P < 0.01$). Pupils in programme schools were also less likely than pupils in control schools to have low dietary diversity, meaning a score of 4 or less (20.6 percent programme, 32.6 percent control, $p < 0.01$). Boys had lower dietary diversity scores than girls, although dietary diversity was better in programme schools for both boys and girl. Average scores for boys were 5.8 in programme schools and 5.4 in control schools ($p = 0.06$), and for girls average scores were 6.3 in programme schools and 5.6 in control schools ($p < 0.01$).

Outcome Indicator: Health and hygiene practices

- *Improved knowledge of health and hygiene practices (Percent of students in target school who achieve a passing score on a test of good health and hygiene practices as a result of USDA assistance)*

37. According to the baseline survey:

- None of the students obtained a passing score of 80 percent on a test on good health and hygiene practices.
- 25 percent of students could identify at least three good health and hygiene practices
- 32 percent of students could not identify a single good health and hygiene practice
- Less than one percent of the students could correctly identify at least 50 percent of the practices.

38. Three most commonly identified practices were:

- (i) hand washing with soap after using latrine, before eating / preparing food / feeding a child;
- (ii) drinking clean water from a safe source (e.g. tube well, or treated water collected from river/lake);
- (iii) keeping the school building and compound clean.

- *Increased knowledge of safe food preparation and storage practices (percent of food preparers in target school who achieve a passing score on a test of safe food preparation and storage practices)*

39. According to the baseline survey:

- Only 8 percent of food preparers achieved at least a score of 80 percent (sample of 85).
- Results did not vary by intervention type or school location.
- On average, the cooks could correctly answer five questions (out of ten);
- 54 percent of the cooks answered more than 50 percent of the questions correctly.

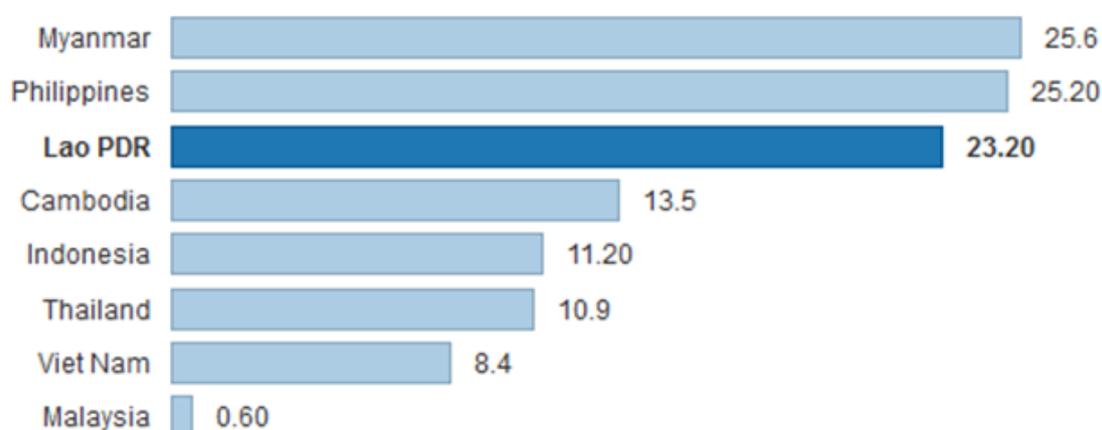
Annex I Additional Data on Lao PDR

A. Poverty and Inequality

1. Laos has made good economic progress since the introduction of market-based economic reforms in the 1980s. Standards of living have improved for many people but the country still faces significant development challenges. The benefits of economic growth have not been shared equally and some social development indicators remain very weak. Educational opportunities diverge significantly depending on geography, gender, and ethnicity.⁹⁷

2. Figure 12 below compares Lao PDR poverty prevalence with its Asian neighbours. ADB reports that available data show that the distribution of private household expenditures has become more unequal in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Over the last 2 decades the Gini coefficient for expenditure in the Lao People's Democratic Republic has risen from 0.311 to 0.364, even though absolute poverty incidence has halved. When the data is decomposed into rural and urban areas, or by the ethnicity of the household head, the increase in inequality within groups dominates any changes between groups; indeed, inequality has increased throughout the country. In contrast, access to publicly provided services has become more equal.⁹⁸

Figure 12 Share of the population under the poverty line (% 2014)



Source: ADB (<https://www.adb.org/countries/lao-pdr/poverty>, accessed Jan 2017)

3. In addition, the World Bank finds⁹⁹ poverty could have declined further had a large number of vulnerable households not fallen back into poverty. Many people escaping poverty remain close or have slipped to the poverty line – about half of the poor in 2013 were not poor in 2008. Agriculture and health shocks are the main drivers of household vulnerability and farming households are twice as likely to fall back into poverty compared to non-farming households.

4. As well as job creation and improving the business environment, higher poverty reduction requires increased investment in education. Strengthening the social protection system is important to ensure sustainable poverty reduction,

⁹⁷ <http://dfat.gov.au/geo/laos/development-assistance/Pages/development-assistance-in-laos.aspx>

⁹⁸ <https://www.adb.org/publications/two-decades-rising-inequality-declining-poverty-lao-pdr>

⁹⁹ <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/590861467722637341/pdf/101567-REPLACENENT-PUBLIC-Lao-PDR-Poverty-Policy-Notes-Drivers-of-Poverty-Reduction-in-Lao-PDR.pdf>

especially putting in place social welfare programs that target the vulnerable and the chronically poor.

B. Stunting Prevalence

5. The following tables use data from the most recent available Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) 2011–12 (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2012) to compare stunting rates in the MGD/WFP provinces (Table 22), with those identified in the draft national Nutrition Strategy (NNS – Government of Lao PDR, 2015a) as priorities (Table 23). Table 24 shows the seven provinces with the highest stunting prevalence. Shading draws attention to the appearance of EFP/MGD-assisted provinces in both the other lists.

Table 22 Stunting in WFP/MGD Assisted Provinces

7 MDG/ WFP Provinces	Stunting prevalence (<5 Moderate and severe)	% of National	Population (2012)	people < 5 stunted (Population X% under 5 X stunting prev)	# HH (@ 5.2 HH size national average)	% of national total stunted under 5s
Sekong	0.627	142%	103,326	7,256	19,870	2%
Pongsaly	0.611	138%	179,822	12,306	34,581	4%
Oudomxay	0.549	124%	314,269	19,324	60,436	6%
Salavan	0.544	123%	384,438	23,423	73,930	8%
Luangnamtha	0.532	120%	171,967	10,246	33,071	3%
Luangprabang	0.456	103%	463,485	23,671	89,132	8%
Attapeu	0.397	90%	133,545	5,938	25,682	2%

Table 23 Stunting in draft NNS Priority provinces

Draft NNS 7 Priority Provinces	Stunting prevalence (<5 Moderate and severe)	% of National	Population (2012)	people < 5 stunted (Population X% under 5 X stunting prev)	# HH (@ 5.2 HH size national average)	% of national total stunted under 5s
Sekong	0.627	142%	103,326	7,256	19,870	2%
Houaphan	0.611	138%	333,762	22,840	64,185	7%
Pongsaly	0.611	138%	179,822	12,306	34,581	4%
Oudomxay	0.549	124%	314,269	19,324	60,436	6%
Salavan	0.544	123%	384,438	23,423	73,930	8%
Luangnamtha	0.532	120%	171,967	10,246	33,071	3%
Xiengkhouang	0.529	120%	282,769	16,753	54,379	5%

Table 24 Seven Provinces with highest stunting

7 Provinces with highest < 5 stunted populations	Stunting prevalence (<5 Moderate and severe)	% of National	Population (2012)	people < 5 stunted (Population X% under 5 X stunting prev)	# HH (@ 5.2 HH size national average)	% of national total stunted under 5s
Savannakhet	0.408	92%	937,907	42,859	180,367	14%
Champasak	0.367	83%	670,122	27,545	128,870	9%
Vientiane province	0.426	96%	506,881	24,184	97,477	8%
Luangprabang	0.456	103%	463,485	23,671	89,132	8%
Salavan	0.544	123%	384,438	23,423	73,930	8%
Houaphan	0.611	138%	333,762	22,840	64,185	7%
Oudomxay	0.549	124%	314,269	19,324	60,436	6%
Vientiane capital	0.193	44%	797,130	17,231	153,294	6%

Annex J Pilot Project on Local and Regional Procurement

1. WFP Lao has received a US\$1m grant provided by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) to carry out a pilot in Nalae District of Luang Namtha (LNT) Province for locally-procuring commodities for its school feeding programme from October 2016 to September 2018 with the following components (WFP, 2016r, WFP Laos CO):

1. Capacity Building - From October 2016 through January 2017, WFP will undertake a series of trainings to build capacity of local beneficiaries to procure, select, and manage seeds and crops in the community to supply to designated McGovern-Dole funded schools. This includes a series of trainings for 1) Village Education Development Committee (VEDC) members, 2) Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) provincial staff, 3) farmers, with LWU and MAF on procurement of seeds or cuttings, seed selection and preservation, choosing of planting stock to provide schools with the required nutritious meal ingredients together with identification of the best environment for various crops, preparation of soil, daily care, and harvesting, WFP 4) and LWU will train cooks on preparation of variety of school meal menus. Inventory control, budgeting, and cash management will also be addressed. Cooks and community members will get an overview on how to open a bank account, and provide assistance on opening a bank account if requested.

MoES will incorporate information on the selected planting stock into the Nutrition and School Agriculture curriculum.

2. Plant Crops and Start Cash Based Transfers – For six months from late January / February 2017 participating schools will receive Cash Based Transfers (CBT) of 800kip per student per day for local procurement. A VEDC-identified member will withdraw necessary funds weekly for the purchase and preparation of school meals, purchasing commodities from the local community based on the previously approved menu. During this second phase, farmers will have already begun harvesting and, in some cases, preserving the commodities to sell to the supported schools. MAF will conduct monthly monitoring visits throughout the school semester.

Trainings and follow-up will continue as needed to match the crop calendar reviewing additional seasonally-appropriate commodities, long-term commodity storage /preservation techniques, as well as natural pest control and growth stimulants.

3. Community Feedback and Lesson Learned Sessions – For three months beginning June 2017 during school closure, WFP and MAF will continue with farmers to reinforce reduction of post-harvest loss and the long-term benefits of family food storage for shock and disaster resilience. A debriefing with VEDC members, LWU, cook representatives and farmers will discuss successes and difficulties to improve future implementation and retraining.

4. Gradual Handover: Improve Harvest Techniques, Plant Crops, and Cash-Based Transfers – During the September 2017 to May 2018 school year, refresher trainings and the CBTs will continue. During this

period, some commodities with longer growing seasons will be introduced into the menu planning and preparation and exchange visits held

5. Complete Handover to Communities - In the fifth and final phase of the LRP program, WFP will close the project at the end of the school year and before September 2018. VEDC members and farmers will share their experiences and expectations for the future. Representatives from each village will be invited to participate in a district-wide session to incorporate community feedback and close-out of the program. WFP will conduct wrap-up meetings with the MoES and MAF partners following the close of the school term.

Comments by the Evaluation Team

2. Documentation on the LRP pilot was received after the main field visit, but the Evaluation Team offers the following informal comments:

- a) The LRP provides an excellent and important initiative involving all the needed stakeholders but needs to add MOH (in the important context of the NNS) and shared ownership with and among Government of Lao PDR ministries needs to be made central.
- b) The NNS link is critical since it provides a mandated GOL policy platform for the necessary collaboration and highest level support. This is a natural and needed partnership for WFP of which they should take full advantage. In the field, a lead role and ownership by the Provincial Governor's office/ designated official is needed and MOES HQ should be encouraged to set this up. This is not a job to be seen to be led by WFP.
- c) Since Oudomxay LRP activities are noted at the end of the LRP documentation, it is not clear why the pilot is not happening / also happening there.
- d) Budgets and availability of MAF and LWU staff are not mentioned but are potentially killing assumptions.
- e) Ownership of VEDC needs a higher profile in LRP, in the village implementation and in the contact with WFP/ MAs.
- f) Natural links to female farmers and cooks are absent from consideration in the documentation provided. There are opportunities and requirements however that maybe missed unless closer examination is undertaken by WFP.
- g) It would be useful to examine and draw attention to MAF's NNS strategy ad especially to their interest in promoting tree crops and other protein sources like small animals, fish, frogs, insects.

Annex K Government Policies Supporting Gender Equality and Ethnic Diversity

Source: adapted from
<http://rightslinklao.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/11/HandOut-GEED-Day-1-S8-GOL-Treaties-and-Laws-V2.pdf>

The Government of Lao PDR is signatory of many United Nations Human Rights Treaties and Declarations, and ASEAN Declarations:

	Name of UN Treaty or Declaration	Government action	Timeline
1	Convention on the Political Rights of Women	Acceded	1969
2	International Convention to End All Forms of Racial Discrimination	Acceded	1974
3	Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against	Signed Ratified	1980 1981
4	Convention on the Rights of the Child	Acceded	1991
5	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural	Signed Ratified	200 0
6	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Signed Ratified	200 0
7	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)	Voted in favour at UN General	200 7
8	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Signed Ratified	200 8
9	Protection of All Persons Against Enforced	Signed	200
10	Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and	Signed Ratified	2010 2012
ASEAN Declarations			
1	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women	Co-Signatory	200 4
2	ASEAN Human Rights Declaration	Co-Signatory	2012
3	Vientiane Declaration on Enhancing Gender Perspective and ASEAN Women's Partnership for Environmental	Co-Signatory	2012
4	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women	Co-Signatory	2013
5	ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social	Co-Signatory	2013

For UN Treaties, see: <http://treaties.un.org/Home.aspx?lang=en>

Constitution of the Lao PDR (1991 and 2003):

Equality for all citizens in the social, political, economic and legal spheres in a multi-ethnic society. Article Eight “All ethnic groups have the right to preserve their own traditions and culture, and those of the Nation. Discrimination between ethnic groups is forbidden.”

Further Legislation:

Law on the Development and Protection of Women, November 2004, mentions equal rights of women to land and other property, and their rights to equal pay for equal work.

Labour Law, December 2006 (amended January 2007), includes statement on non-discrimination: *Work shall ensure that the employer and employees receive mutual benefit, without discrimination as to race, nationality, gender, age, religion, beliefs, and socio-economic status;*

Decree on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, 2012 (PM/201) mentions gender equality as a development criterion.

Establishment of Various Organisations (not exhaustive list):

- National, Ministerial, Provincial and District Committees for the Advancement of Women;
- Lao Women’s Union;
- Women Parliamentarians Caucus;
- Lao Front for National Construction;
- National Assembly Ethnic Affairs Committee;
- (as of 2011) Department of Ethnic and Religious Affairs under MoHA.

Various Policy Documents

Five Year National Social Economic Development Plan (NSEDP)(2011 – 2015) gender equality: health, education, vocational training, labour markets and in the political sphere (civil service and National Assembly);

National Rural Development and Poverty Eradication Plan (2011 – 2015) (NRDPEP): all ethnic groups in the country must be included in rural development and poverty eradication efforts;

National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (NSAW) (2011 – 2015): create awareness on gender equality, promote women’s rights, encourage women in leadership roles, implement CEDAW: Different Ministries have their “SAWs” based on their own Sub-CAWs and programmes of work.

Annex L Evaluation Process

1. During the inception phase the methodology was developed, extensive desk-based research was conducted on the country context and an initial analysis of the SFP done. A briefing mission to the WFP Bangkok Regional Bureau took place from 10 to 12 October 2016 and included preliminary briefings with key RB staff, an introductory conference call with the CO and work on stakeholder analysis. This fed into the inception report, which was finalised on 29 November 2016.
2. The main evaluation mission took place from 5 to 15 December 2016. The team consisted of Mike Adair (Team Leader), Jane Keylock (Senior Evaluator - Nutrition and Public Health), Ms Phoukham Sipathseuth (national consultant), Mr Vannasit Somthaboun (Interpreter in Salavan only), with desk-based support from Christine Berger (Research Analyst) and evaluation management from Stephen Lister and Rebecca Aikman.
3. For the visits outside Vientiane, the team split into two groups to be able to visit more schools and meet more stakeholders. A detailed schedule is provided in Table 25 below, followed by Table 26 which lists all informants.

Table 25 Field Work Schedule

Sunday, 04 December 2016 – Arrival Vientiane

Mission Members (All locations)

Mike Adair (MA)

Jane Keylock (JK)

Ms Phoukham Sipathseuth (PS)

(in Salavan only, joined by) Mr Vannasit Somthaboun (VS)

Day 1: Monday, 05 December - Vientiane

Time	Activity	Remarks
1000-1300	Briefing for Sr. Management WFP CO Internal briefing	Senior Management; Technical leads for school feeding, nutrition, safety nets; gender and M&E
13:00-14:00	Break and Lunch	
1400 – 1500	Big Brother Mouse - NGO implementing partner (Mr Kamla)	(teleconference from WFP)
1545-1630	WFP Gender Focal Point (Mr Vilon)	
1600-1700	Meeting with FAO focal point	meeting not held – focal point not available)
1630-1715	WFP Logistics Chief (Kevin Howley)	
	Night stay at Vientiane	

Day 2: Tuesday, 06 December - Vientiane

Time	Activity	Remarks
9-00-1100	Meeting with MOES (Mdm Yangxia)	School feeding focal point
1130-1300	Meeting with MoH (Dr Rattiphone – National Nutrition Center)	School feeding focal point and senior coordinator for National Nutrition Secretariat and Strategy
1300-1400	Lunch	
1400-1500	Meeting with MAF (Mr Savanh)	School feeding focal point Department of Health (DOH)
1600-	DOA (Mr Boudkasone)	Teleconference (020-22229192)

Time	Activity	Remarks
1700		(boudkasone@yahoo.com)
	Night stay Vientiane	

Day 3: Wednesday, 07 December – Field sit– 1 - South

Time	Activity	Remarks
810 AM	Flight to Pakse (4 persons)	Flight: QV233; Time: 0–10 - Hotel drop off
9:30	Mr Air Sensomphone (Head of sub office Pakxe)	(Interim position)
10:30	Drive to Salavan (117 km 2 hrs)	WFP arranged vehicle
PM	Meet with Provincial and District Education & MoH, MAF	Ask about school garden fact sheets
PM	Travel to Laongarm and overnight	

**Day 4: Thursday, 08 December – Field sit– 1 - South
Team 1 (MA and VS)**

Date	District	Village	Farm activity	Ethnicity	Distance	Other
8 Dec	Laongarm	(10:45) Ngeui	Cassava, cash crop and lowland	Souy + Lao	5 km	
		(12:45) Dongbang	Cassava, cash crop and lowland	Souy + Lao	3 km	
		(15:30) Vangpuey				
PM		Overnight Laongarm				

Team 2 (JK and PS))

Date	District	Village	Farm activity	Ethnicity	Distance	Other
8 Dec	Laongarm	Nongkae	Cassava, Upland farm	Lao + Souy	15 km from Laongarm	11 km local road
		Nathan	Cassava, Low land, Upland farm	Lao + Souy	04 km from Nongkae	
		Tabaeng	Cassava, Lowland, Upland farm	Lao + Souy	03 km from Nathan	Have lunch at village, should arrange lunch from district centre.
		Overnight Laongarm				

Day 5: Friday, 09 December – Field site 1

Team 1 – South (MA and VS)

Date	District	Village	Farm activity	Ethnicity	Distance	Other
	Laongarm	(08:15) Sanuemna	Low land, Upland farm	Lao + Souy	12 km	12 km to return to Laongarm district main road
		(10:30) Muoanthae	Low land, Upland farm	Lao	17 km from Saneumna	1.5 km local road
		(13:00) Interview Mr Chanto (WFP Monitoring Assistant)				
	To Pakse with Team 2					
1730	QV 224 to VTE arrive 1845	Overnight Vientiane				

Team 2 South (JK and PS)

Date	District	Village	Farm activity	Ethnicity	Distance	Other
9 Dec	Laongarm	Nazae	Cassava, cash crop and lowland	Souy + Lao	26 km from Laongarm	19 km difficult road
		Vangpeuay	Cassava, cash crop and lowland	Souy + Lao	33 km from Nazae	
	To Pakse with Team 1				80 km	1 h 30 min from Vangpeuay to Pakse
1730	QV 224 to VTE arrive 1845	Overnight Vientiane				Hotel pickup from VTE airport

Day 6: Saturday, 10 December - Vientiane

Time	Activity	Remarks
1120 AM	Flight to Oudomxay (MA/ JK/ PS)	
14:15	WFP Oudomxay Office (Ms Bouavone Phasouk - Head of sub office Oudomxay and Mr Somjit – Programme Assistant)	Mr Somjit –WFP - Revise itinerary
15:30	Travel to Houn and Overnight	(WFP vehicle)

Day 7: Sunday, 11 December to Wed, Dec 14 – Field sit– 2 - North

Date	District	Village	Social Economic	Ethnicity	Distance
	Houn	(0900) Dong ngone	Upland rice	Hmong and Khmu,	40 KM 1 hour and 30 min
		(1500) Oudom	Corn farm	Khmu	32 km (45 min)
PM		Travel to and Overnight Beng			
Mon 12 Dec	JK (only) travels from ODX to VTE at 1300				
	MA and PS carry on with school visits				
	(0830) Beng District Office- 2 Dpty Directors of Education/ Sport;				
Mon 12 Dec	Beng	(1000) Monitoring Assistant			
	Beng	(1100) Na Huey			In Beng town
	Beng	(1530) Khone		Lao, Khmu	22 KM 50 min
		MA–PS - Overnight Oudomxay			
Tues Dec 13	DESO (Xay)	(0830) DESO Dpty Director; Focal Point for PESO/ WFP; statistics head; Dpty Head M&E			
	Xay	(1130) Vangyan	Upland rice	Khmu	28 KM 40 min from ODX
	(1445) PLAN International	(1445)			
		Overnight Oudomxay			

Day 9 Tuesday 13 Dec (JK)

Time	Activity (JK in VTE)	Remarks
AM	SABER Workshop	Meet Mdm Yangxia (MOES) and World Bank
PM	Transition Planning (MOES/WFP)	

Day–10 - Wed Dec 14 in Oudomxay (MA and PS)

Wed Dec 14	(0800) PESO	(0830) PESO Dpty Director; PESO Focal Point for DESO/ WFP; statistics head; Dpty Head M&E			
	(1030) La	Samakhxay	Upland rice	Khmu	26 KM far from Xay district 30 min to ODX airport
	MA and–PS - ODX to VTE 1300 Overnight Vientiane				

Day 10 Wed 14 Dec (JK)

Time	Activity (JK in VTE)	Remarks
AM	Meet Nanna Skau, Head of Programmes, WFP	
PM	Follow-up meetings generated from SABRE workshop e.g. MoE DG, World Bank, CRS,	
	Any other meetings rescheduled from first week	
	Team to prepare for debriefing	

Day 11: Thursday, 15 December (MA/JK)

Time	Activity	Remarks
0900-1030	CRS	
1100-1200	UNICEF – Bishnu Timilsina and WASH Team- UNICEF	
1–00 - 1400	Lunch	
1400-1600	Debriefing with WFP CO	Regional Office participates by phone
2130	MA and JK depart	

Table 26 List of Interviewees

NAME	ROLE
WFP CO LAOS	
Sarah Gordon Gibson	Country Director
Kevin Howley	Head of Supply Chain
Nanna Skau	Head of SF Programme
Utomo Tjipto	Head of M&E/VAM
Somphone Inthavong	Head of ICT
Phonesavanh Vongsaya	Deputy Head of Finance and Admin
Outhai Sihalath	Programme Policy Officer - School Feeding
Lalongkone Chanthamaly	Programme Policy Officer - Emergency Preparedness and Response, and Project Manager for USDA Local Regional Procurement.
Khizar Asraf	Nutrition Officer
Vilon Viphongxay	Gender focal point
Air Sensomphone	Head of sub office Pakse (South)
Ms Bouavone Phasoul	Head of Office Oudomxay (North)
Mr Somjit	Programme Assistant
Mr Chanyo	Field Monitoring Assistant for Larngam District Salavan
WFP RB AND HQ	
Ms Denise Brennan	WFP Evaluation Manager
Ms Alanna Malick	WFP Partnership Officer, USA
Ms Clare Mbizule	Regional M&E Advisor, RBB
Ms Jennifer Shin	School Feeding Focal Point, RBB
Ms Nicola Peach	Cash and Voucher Focal Point
Mr Peter Guest	Senior Regional Programme Advisor, RBB
Ms Sandra Hart	Regional Pacific Food Security Cluster Coordinator, (former RBB School Feeding and Gender Focal Point
GOVERNMENT OF LAO PDR	
Mdm Yangxia	MOES - 2016–12-06 VTE
Dr Ratiphone Oula	Head of Nutrition Centre, and Coordinator for NNS; MoH VTE (2016-12-6)
Mr. Savan Hanphom	Deputy Director General MAF VTE (2016-12-6)
Mr Boudsakone	Director – Agricultural Development Center (DOA) VTE (2016-12-6)

*Mid-Term Evaluation of McGovern-Dole School Feeding in Laos 2015–2016
Evaluation Report (final)*

NAME	ROLE
FIELD VISITS	
2016–12-13 POES Oudomsay	
Somsanit Sutiwong	Vice-Director of POES
Mdm Jansunii	Head of Teacher Development ; focal point for SL/WFP
2016–12-13 DESO (-ay - Oudomxay)	
Kamon Siliphon	Head of preschool unit and PESO focal point for the DESO
Somok Galwomphon	Deputy Director responsible for MMS
Silisai Nonwong	Head of Statistics (speaks English)
Ms. Buajan Phantulak	Deputy Director M&E
2016–12-13 Samakixay School –La - Oudomxay) “Handed over school”	
Ms XX	Director
Ms xx; Ms yy and Me ZZ	3 teachers
Ms AA and Ms BB	2 cooks
2016–12-13 Vangyan School (-ay - Oudomxay)(2)	
2016–12-13 Tue Vangyan (-ay - Oudomxay)(2)	
Ms Kamla	Acting Director
Ms Laeh	Teacher of Grade 1 (22 of which 12 female)
Somjit Leewongjan	Teacher of Grade2 (24 of which 13 female)
Seuy Suwanka	Teacher of Grade 4 (24 of which 13 female)
Mr Kampaeng	Head of VEDC for 17 years
Mr Julee	Deputy Village Head
2016–12-12 Na Huey School (Beng Oudomxay)	
Mr Jansai	Deputy Village Head (3 years in the position) focal point for education and health
Ms Nanjang Peng	Head of VEDC ; Link between the community and the school; in the position for three years
Mr XX	School Director
2 women and one man	Cooks
3 teachers	
2016–12-12 Khone School (Beng Oudomxay)	
Ghen Wienkaeen	Director of School
Yon	Dpty of Lao Youth Union
Boonthang	VEDC Chairperson
Kampaeng Sayagham	Vice head of Village
Ms Gaew	LWU Head
Boon Yeum	Teacher
2016–12-11 Sun 14 Dong Ngon School (Oudomxay)	
Mr Boonthun	Deputy director of the school and teacher for grade 5
Mr Ly	Teacher for grade 4
Ms Nie	Teacher for preschool
Mr Tojun	Deputy village head
M Jataw	VEDC Chairman
2016–12 - 11: Oudom School – (Oudomxay Province, Houn District)	
Mr Sulim	Member of VEDC
Mr Journalee	Teacher and responsible for school meals
Mr Bunoua	Vice Director of School
Mr Bapeng	Head of Village
2016–12 - 09: Nathan, Tabeng & Vangpeuay Villages (Salavan/ Laongarm district)	
Mr. Khamson Mounlasy	Head of Tabang village
Mr. Keo Thepasa	Deputy head of Tabang village
Mr. Bounkham	Representative of village education committee (Tabang village)
Mr. Khamphoun Phongphila	Head of Nathan village
Mr. Khamxay	Deputy head of Nathan village
Mr. Somporn Sengouthai	Teacher of Nathan school
Mr. Fansako	Nathan school director
2016-12-09 Muentae School (Salavan Province, Laongarm district)	
Mr Khamlasai Saiyansan	Director
Ms XX	School cook
2016-12-09 Saneumna School (Salavan Province, Laongarm district)	
Ms Jansamai	Teacher of Class 5

NAME	ROLE
Ms Nokda	Teacher of Class 3
2016–12-08 DOES (Salavan Province, Laongarm district)	
Mr Phitsamai	Head of DOES
Mr Buaphan	DAFO
Mr Tongsai	Admin Officer DOES
2016–12-08 Dong Bang school (Salavan Province, Laongarm district)	
Mr XX	Director
Mr YY	Village headman / Chair of the VEDC
Ms Meut	Cook
2016–12 - 08Nongkae School (Salavan Province, Laongarm district)	
Mr. Siphone Khomsavang	Deputy head of village
Mr. Khamkeurth	Teacher
Mr. Mieng Khamphout	VEDC
2016-12 – 08 Nazae School (Salavan Province, Laongarm district)	
Mr. Bounmy Khammavong	Head of village
Mrs. Sounida	Deputy of VEDC
Mr. Yomala Chanthalungsy	Storage Officer
2016–12-08 Vangpeuay School (Salavan Province, Laongarm district)	
Ms YY	School Director
Ms ZZ	School Cook
2016–12-08 09 Ngeui School (Salavan Province, Laongarm district)	
Gepha Thamsuan	School Director
Ms Phankoot	Cook
2016–12 - 07: Salavan Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office	
Mr Khampin Silavie	Director
2016-12–07: Salavan Provincial Education and Sports Office	
Mr Somchit	Deputy Provincial Director
Mr Puwiang	Technical Officer – Primary and Pre schools
Mr Boongeut	Administrative Officer
Mr ViewKaew	Deputy M&E Manager
Mr Donjang	Statistics Section
AID AGENCIES/DONORS	
Mr. Bishnu Timilsina	UNICEF - Chief of WASH 2016-12-15
Mr Stephen Rudgard	FAO Country Rey (by phone) 2016-12-07
Ms Alessandra McCormack	Program Analyst (Laos and Nepal), Food Assistance Division, Office of Capacity Building and Development, USDA, Washington (conference call on 5th January 2017)
Ms Molly Rumery	Program Analyst (Bangladesh), Food Assistance Division, Office of Capacity Building and Development, USDA, Washington (conference call on 5th January 2017)
Ms. Traci Johnson	M&E Analyst, Food Assistance Division, Office of Capacity Building and Development, USDA, Washington (conference call on 5th January 2017)
Mr Plamen Nikolov Danchev	Senior Education Specialist, World Bank, Thailand (discussions during SABER exercise 2016-12-13)
Ms Eleanor Morefield	M&E Analyst, Food Assistance Division, Office of Capacity Building and Development, USDA, Washington (conference call on 5th January 2017)
NGOs/OTHERS	
Bernie Chaves	Country Representative (VTE) 2016–12-14
Mr Tiphavanh Mailaithong	WASH Manager PLAN Oudomxay 2016–12-13
Mr Somloth	Lao manager of the WFP contract Oudomxay 2016–12-13
Mr Kamla	Big Brother Mouse (by phone)
Victoria Trinies	Consultant for WFP Impact Assessment (by skype)
Nastaran Moossavi	Consultant for WFP Impact Assessment (by Skype)

Table 27 External debriefing, Vientiane, 15 December 2016

NAME (FUNCTION)
1. Sarah Gordon Gibson (Country Director)
2. Kevin Howley (Head of Supply Chain)

NAME (FUNCTION)
3. Nanna Skau (Head of Programme)
4. Utomo Tjipto (Head of M&E/VAM)
5. Somphone Inthavong (Head of ICT)
6. Phonesavanh Vongsaya (Deputy Head of Finance and Admin)
7. Outhai Sihalath (Programme Policy Officer - School Feeding)
8. Lalongkone Chanthamaly (Programme Policy Officer - Emergency Preparedness and Response, and Project Manager for USDA Local Regional Procurement.
9. Denise Brennan (DB) (regional Office via skype)

4. Internal and external reference groups were formed for the evaluation, with the memberships shown in Table 28 and Table 29 below. Their roles are in line with the guidance provided in the respective DEQAS Technical Notes (WFP, 2016c and WFP, 2016d).

5. The Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC) is a temporary committee that “oversees the evaluation process, by making decisions, giving advice to the evaluation manager and clearing evaluation products submitted to the Chair for approval”. The IEC is a sub-group of the ERG. (WFP, 2016d)

Table 28 Internal Evaluation Committee - Members

Internal Evaluation Committee - List of Members				
Name	Organization and Designation	Position on IEC	Alternate	Organization and Designation
Sarah Gordon Gibson	WFP, CD	Chair	Hakan Tongul	WFP, Deputy CD
Denise Brennan	WFP MGD MTE Evaluation Manager	Member		
Nanna Skau	WFP, Head of Programmes	Member	Khizar Ashraf	WFP, Programme Policy Nutrition Officer
Kevin Howley	WFP, Head of Logistic and Procurement	Member	Khongthanou Khanthavixay	WFP, Procurement Officer
Utomo Tjipto	WFP, M&E & VAM Officer	Member	Bouangern Xayalath	WFP, Senior Programme Associate M&E

6. The Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) “is a group of key stakeholders to the evaluation who review and provide feedback on specific outputs. The ERG members act as experts in an advisory capacity, without management responsibilities.” (WFP, 2016c). In addition this group supports “the relevance, independence and impartiality of the evaluation” (WFP, 2016c, WFP, 2016p).

Table 29 Evaluation Reference Group – Members

Evaluation Reference Group - List of Members				
Name	Organization and Designation	Position on ERC	Alternate	Organization and Designation
WFP Laos				
Hakan Tongul	WFP, Deputy CD	Chair	Sarah Gordon Gibson	WFP, CD
Phasouk Phommavong	WFP, Finance and Admin Officer	Member	Phonesavanh Vongsaya	WFP, Senior Finance Associate
Kevin Howley	WFP, Head of Logistic and Procurement	Member	Khongthanou Khanthavixay	WFP, Procurement Officer
Nanna Skau	WFP, Head of Programmes	Member	Outhai Sihalath	WFP, Programme Policy Officer
TBC	WFP, Donor and Reporting Officer	Member	Air Sensomphone	WFP, Programme Policy Officer
Utomo Tjipto	WFP, M&E & VAM Office	Member	Bouangern Xayalath	WFP, Senior Programme Associate M&E

RBB				
Clare Mbizule ¹⁰⁰	WFP Regional M&E Advisor	Member		
External				
Dr. Mithong Souvanvixay	Director General Ministry of Education and Sports	Member	Ms. Yangxia Lee	Deputy Director General Ministry of Education and Sports
Dara Khiamthammakhoun	Ministry of Education and Sports - staff	Member	TBC	Ministry of Education and Sports - staff

7. The responsible staff at the WFP Laos CO was very supportive during the planning and implementation of the MTE. Informants in Vientiane and in the field were cooperative and supportive, which enabled the ET to collect valuable data and discuss ideas with various participants.

¹⁰⁰ Clare Mbizule was re-assigned to Nigeria and replaced by Caterina Kireeva in November 2016.

Annex M Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Table 30 Recommendations and the text that supports them

Recommendation	Recommendation addressed to:	See main text paragraph number(s)
R1. Improve the monitoring and evaluation function and in particular the table used for reporting against plans and targets.	WFP CO, USDA	95, 98, 99, 121, 123
R2. Investigate the discrepancy between the number of beneficiaries reached and the number of school meals provided.	WFP CO	63, 64, 150, 157
R3. Work with other partners to advocate for and assist the strengthening of Government monitoring systems	WFP – CO support from RBB	95, 98, 121, 122
R4. Create a model to strengthen current community capacity development activities, principally targeting schools and VEDCs, to facilitate the growth of local ownership of school feeding and related activities and improved functionality to play a stronger role with school staff	WFP – CO (with close links to leading INGOS doing community development), RBB (FAO may assist) liaison with NNS secretariat	101, 132, Box 2
R5. Adapt WFP's deployment of local-level personnel so as to provide more effective support to meaningful capacity development at community level	WFP – CO, RBB and HQ	131, 132, 143, 144
R6. Experiment with cash-based, local procurement models of school feeding.	WFP CO, RBB Government of Lao PDR TWG	134, 156, Box 7
R7. In the next phase of MGD support, reconsider WFP's direct role in supporting complementary activities that are not linked to its core competences.	WFP USDA	120, 125
R8. In the context of the SF programme, and the convergent approach of the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS), collaborate with MOES, MOH and MAF to review experience and seek a better balance between using school gardens a) for educational purposes and b) to provide ingredients for school meals.	WFP CO; MOES; NNS and District officials	77-80, 117, 123
R9. Strengthen nutrition education activities.	WFP CO in collaboration with other partners (e.g. UNICEF, NNS secretariat)	78, 81-83
R10. Collaborate with partners to further mainstream gender into field-level activities.	WFP CO and partners	56-58, 103-108, 148-150

Table 31 below provides a summary of the MTE’s findings for each of the evaluation questions, shows where in the main text each EQ has been addressed, and indicates the strength of the evidence for each finding, based on a simple scale from 1 to 4: 1 (strong), 2 (more than satisfactory), 3 (indicative, not conclusive), and 4 (weak).

Table 31 Where the MTE responds to each EQ

	Summary of Findings	Where addressed	Strength of evidence
Key Question 1: How appropriate is the operation?			
EQ1. How coherent are the operation’s objectives, targeting and activities with relevant stated national policies and strategies on education, food security and nutrition, including gender?	The programme is broadly coherent with national policies and strategies, except that it remains dependent on imported commodities while the Government of Laos intends to build its school feeding strategy around local procurement and production.	33-39	1
EQ2. Are the operation’s objectives, targeting and activities supported by global and national evidence and best practice?	The various elements and objectives of the project are supported by global evidence about school feeding. A key finding from global evidence is that the various benefits of SF are not automatic: they depend on context and on complementary inputs. This is recognised in principle in the MGD design. The final evaluation needs to contribute to the evidence base regarding the existence of this change pathway.	40-41, Annex C (Evaluation of WFP’s School Feeding Policy (Mokoro, 2011))	1
EQ3. To what extent have the operation’s objectives, targeting and activities sought complementarity with the interventions of relevant government and development partners?	WFP has worked constructively with the Government of Laos and the Donor Consortium and TWG to seek complementarity between the various elements of its MGD SMP and the many other interventions supported by other agencies in these sectors.	12, 39, 46, 47, 49-51, 139-141	1
EQ4. To what extent were the operation’s objectives and targeting coherent at design stage with relevant WFP and UN-wide system strategies (e.g. Delivering As One, FAO/ MAF links to school gardens, UNICEF work on NNS, UNESCO support to education), policies (e.g. revised school feeding policy 2013) and normative guidance (including those on gender), and how far have they and the operation’s activities remained coherent with them?	At the design stage and since, the operation’s objectives and targeting have been largely coherent with relevant WFP and United Nations-wide system strategies, policies and normative guidance	40-41, 46-59, Table 3	1

	Summary of Findings	Where addressed	Strength of evidence
EQ5. Were the operation's strategies appropriate to the needs of the target (most vulnerable and food insecure provinces) population and community at design stage, and have they remained appropriate?	The project has deliberately focused geographically on provinces where the needs are among the greatest in the country, and the baseline survey indicates the scope for improvements on the key outcomes the project addresses. As a strategy, the continued reliance on imported food is not appropriate.	32, 56-59	1
EQ6. Were the operation's strategies based on a sound gender analysis with regard to children and adults as relevant, and have they continued on that basis?	Although there are missed opportunities and some misunderstandings due to a lack of full time qualified gender staff, programme design and implementation were aligned with past and current WFP gender policies and criteria, and the programme conforms with national gender commitments and policies.	56-59, 103, 125, 147-149	2
Key Question 2: What are the results of the operation?			
EQ7. To what extent have planned outputs, including capacity development activities, been attained?	The numbers of schools and beneficiaries reached (including their gender balance) are only slightly short of target, and the WFP's logistic arrangements are regarded as efficient. However, the reported number of meals served is only around two-thirds of the target. Infrastructure outputs (kitchens, warehouses and storerooms as well as school gardens) have fallen behind schedule. Capacity development at the national level has been satisfactory while efforts with provincial level staff have been less frequent since these staff play less of a hands-on role.	62-69, 77, 81, Table 4, Table 19 (Annex H), Table 20 (Annex H)	3
EQ8. To what extent have planned outcomes been attained?	At this early stage one could only expect limited evidence of outcomes, especially given the delay to the project's commencement. Children's families and teachers clearly regard the SF benefits as positive, referring directly or indirectly to its benefits as income support for poor families, an incentive for attendance, an aid to attentiveness, and a support to good health. Lunch is consistently regarded as superior to a snack. Wider outcomes such as improved literacy, nutritional knowledge and hygiene depend on complementary inputs, but these have been delivered only to a small fraction of the participating schools. Although there is evidence from Laos that such benefits can be achieved, at present they are not being pursued at scale.	60, 70-74, Table 21 (Annex H)	3

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	Summary of Findings	Where addressed	Strength of evidence
EQ9. How adequately has the operation addressed gender equality and protection issues?	There is attention to gender and relevant protection issues in a variety of practical ways. The focus is being reinforced by the CO's implementation plan to follow up WFP's updated gender policy.	40, 56-59, 103-108	2
EQ10. How fully are the operation's activities dovetailed with those of other donors and agencies in building Government of Laos capacity to manage and implement SF?	Although the programme is aligned in principle with other donors and agencies, the complementary activities it directly supports (e.g. WASH and nutrition education) are on a much smaller scale than the SF itself, with an optimal model for joint ownership, technical support and monitoring not yet attained	81-83, 89, 92	2
EQ11. How efficiently and effectively has the operation worked towards handover to the Government of Laos,?	As above, an optimal model for joint ownership, technical support and monitoring is not yet attained, and providing effective support to capacitate VEDCs is an additional challenge.	56, 65, 94, 110, 128-146	2
EQ12. What if any have been the unintended outcomes?	In its document review and interviews, the ET did not find any unintended outcomes.	76	1
Key Question 3: What factors have affected the results?			
EQ13. How significant have internal WFP process, system and logistical factors been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	WFP systems coped well with the core tasks of the MGD programme. A much more complex challenge is to assist in the move towards sustainability and to coordinate and ensure ownership and quality of services among the range of partners and activities involved. This is a heavy burden for the CO, and presents significant challenges given the skills of field staff.	118-120	2
EQ14. How significant have WFP's monitoring and reporting arrangements been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	An optimal model for technical support and monitoring has not yet been attained. Deficiencies in M&E will limit ability to learn and adjust from experience.	121-122	1
EQ15. How significant have WFP's internal institutional and governance arrangements been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	WFP's institutional, governance, partnership and coordination arrangements have generally enhanced the performance of the operation. Its centralised structure is a legacy of its logistics-focused heritage. The current human resource model lacks the right competencies to support meaningful capacity development at community level that are required by its corporate policy shift	47-51, 119	2
EQ16. How significant have WFP's partnership and co-ordination arrangements been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	Implementation has been facilitated by good relationships with partners, but the feelings of lack of ownership by MOES have meant a sub-optimal partnership with government. Partnerships with others to produce quality teaching resources and literacy / reading materials are on a very much smaller scale than the school feeding activity that they are intended to reinforce	78, 84-85, 110, 113	2

	Summary of Findings	Where addressed	Strength of evidence
EQ17. How significant has the external operating environment been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	WFP SF policy is a subject for ongoing internal review as it adjusts to its COs' experience and the wider operating environment. WFP is consequently changing its school feeding policy from food aid to food assistance. USDA's modality of supplying in-kind commodity support is not optimal for WFP to support and rehearse a locally sustainable model for school feeding with MOES/Government of Laos.	53-55	2
EQ18. How significant has the national political and policy environment been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	The national policy context has been generally favourable. Government of Laos faces significant difficulties in rolling out national policies to, and developing capacity at, local level.	116-117, 130-132, Box 2	2
EQ19. How significant have domestic and external funding factors been in enhancing or impairing the performance of the operation?	MOES and Government of Laos have a policy to locally source food commodities that they call "Buy your parents' rice". MOES considerations of sustainability and the need to develop sufficient Government of Laos budgets, local procurement practices and local transport have begun to emerge more strongly now as the question of sustainability and MOES handover in 2020 is more seriously discussed. WFP/MDG project modality of in-kind commodity is not compatible with this. MOES faces its own significant problems with allocating budgets for SF and related activities.	45, 49, 92, 114, 131-132, 159, 163, Box 7	2
Key Question 4: To what extent does the intervention's implementation strategy include considerations for sustainability?			
EQ20. To what extent has the operation made explicit efforts to promote sustainable SF after programme termination?	Constrained as it is to work mainly with an in-kind commodity modality that all agree is unsustainable, WFP has nevertheless made explicit efforts to promote more sustainable approaches through its collaboration with the MOES. These include clarity of the 2020 end of project date since 2014, support for policy development and capacity development, handover planning, consideration of voucher support, starting to address VEDC needs, the plan to resume collaborative monitoring with districts in 2017.	45, 93-101, 128-132	1

	Summary of Findings	Where addressed	Strength of evidence
EQ21. Are the benefits of the operation likely to continue after the programme is completed?	Sustainability of school feeding programmes and their benefits depend on the development of capacities to maintain and operate such programmes at both national and local levels. Some of the WFP contributions and benefits of the operation are likely to continue after the programme is completed in 2020. Those benefits include national policies for healthier growth, better educational performance and stronger livelihood prospects of beneficiary school children; greater awareness of appropriate school feeding and complementary strategies and institutional arrangements at community, district and national levels; and in a stronger commitment to reinforcing Lao PDR's future through a national school feeding programme that is integrated with complementary literacy, WASH and nutritional interventions in and around the school environment. At the local level, increased collaboration with local government, working with VEDCs and schools is key.	128-149	2
EQ22. Has the operation made any difference to gender relations thus far, and is that change likely to be sustained after the programme is completed?	The SF operation has made incremental contributions to positive changes in gender relations, rather than any major or unique difference. But those incremental changes, like progress towards GEEW in many cultures, are unlikely to be reversed; they are part of national social trends in Lao PDR, and are likely to be sustained after the programme is completed. The programme has made various specific contributions to highlighting and acting on gender issues, but continued efforts will be required to move the agenda forward. These include further support of balanced membership and decision making in VEDCs and the development of literacy/ reading materials that highlight and challenge gender roles/ gender dynamics and to provide a full time and fully experienced gender person to ensure mentoring and resource development opportunities are not lost.	103-108, 147-149	2

Table 32 ToC Assumptions and their links to EQs and evaluation findings

Note: the colour shading in the first column reflects the verdict in the final column as follows:

 (red) assumption is not valid  (orange) assumption is problematic  (green) assumption is valid

Number/ grading	Assumption	Evaluation Question related to the assumption	ET Finding
1	Partners and contributors adequately providing effective complementary activities / inputs (e.g. WASH – MoH, Plan; Literacy/education activities – MoES, Big Brother Mouse, STC, World Bank, PLAN (new with WFP); Deworming – MoH, WHO; MNCH – WFP, agriculture support to schools – MAF, FAO; institutional strengthen-ng - CRS, DFAT, FAO)	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22	Some activities are more effective than others and coverage is an issue. For example, literacy and education activities benefit from being linked to the BEQUAL consortium. WASH activities are also effective where they occur. School gardens face significant challenges due to water and management issues. All these activities face problems of achieving sufficient scale. Stakeholders involved in systems strengthening collaborate well but, in addition to their own internal funding and management constraints, face the challenge of a lack of government budget and ineffective monitoring data when using government staff.
2	The programme links at many points with the inputs and activities of other donors. It was assumed that these other donors would maintain a strong, co-operative, co-ordinated presence.	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 16, 19, 22	Within the sphere of school feeding this assumption is valid, since the Technical Working Group is an effective forum for WFP, World Bank and to some extent DFAT etc. to coordinate.
3	With important roles assigned to NGOs in programme design, another notable assumption is that the NGOs in question, and by extension all relevant elements of the NGO sector, are trusted partners, adequately capacitated and institutionally stable.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20	This assumption is valid in the sense that WFP's NGOs partners do seem institutionally stable and have appropriate technical and managerial skills, however, they face coverage constraints rooted in numbers of staff and budget resources. In addition, the NGOs' MOU(s) and ongoing Government conservatism around civil society severely constrains changes - like scaling up or geographic enlargement and makes the process very time consuming.

Number/ grading	Assumption	Evaluation Question related to the assumption	ET Finding
4	There would be continued government support for a national school feeding programme.	1, 2, 3, , 7, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 21	The Government policy framework and the presence of a school feeding unit in the MOES reflects government support, but overall, budget is lacking and is constrained by competing priorities. The remaining lead time is 3 years until the 2020 Policy target date for budgets and processes, may prove to be insufficient.
5	Since the government has a School Meals Policy (also a part of the convergence approach ¹⁰¹ of the NNS), the Government is willing to commit funding to school feeding	1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21	Related to #4 above. To date this assumption is not valid since Government has not committed any budget for school feeding so far and relies on World Bank funds for the WFP “handed over” schools.
6	The viability of the programme depends on the activities around systems strengthening at all levels (national, Provincial, district, school), as reflected in the Foundational Results. These receive sufficient attention and are implemented as thoroughly as the rest of the programme.	1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 20, 21	It is valid that the viability of the programme depends on systems strengthening and this is recognised by WFP as evidenced by an increased emphasis in the last two years. However, the current human resource model used to support systems strengthening by WFP at grassroots level is not adequate.
7	Corresponding to the programme’s design emphasis on upgrading monitoring and reporting systems associated with SF, the ToC notes the assumption that the improved systems are adopted and used efficiently	3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 19, 21, 22	Activities to improve monitoring and reporting and collaboration with MOES are still under way and WFP and MOES are discussing different models of support to district staff to generate quality data. But this MTE's has found the current quality of data unsatisfactory.
8	It had to be assumed that there would be an adequate response to natural disasters.	3, , 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22	This assumption remains valid. WFP is well versed in handling such emergencies.

¹⁰¹ The 2015 National Nutrition Strategy uses a convergent approach with national, provincial and district level management in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the programmes of the MAF, MOH and MOES directed at improving nutrition and food security.

Number/ grading	Assumption	Evaluation Question related to the assumption	ET Finding
9	Much global debate about SF has concerned the causal links between school meals and enhanced academic performance, as well as actual attendance at school. For this programme, an obvious basic assumption was that its causal assumptions about the influence of SF and related measures on student attentiveness and attendance (and literacy) are correct in the local context.	2, , 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21	An impact assessment found that schools receiving the WFP school feeding programme performed slightly better than control schools across all educational indicators except for enrolment. Pupils in schools receiving lunch were less likely to be absent at both at morning and afternoon roll calls than pupils in schools that were receiving MMS. Girls in lunch schools were also more likely to be reported more attentive than girls in MMS schools, although no difference was seen among boys. Literacy was not an indicator of this impact assessment but is included in the baseline and endline surveys for the MGD project. There is an onus on the project to produce evidence that will speak to this assumption.
10	For assumption 9 to be correct, it is assumed that there are adequate staff and equipment and structures in schools to support learning	6, 11, 12, 19, 21	The Education for All National Review 2015 found that Lao PDR is able to improve the basic structure of education sector such as access to education, gender equality, school rehabilitation and construction, support for school facilities (classrooms, dormitories, water and sanitation), expansion of the school grants and stipend scheme, increments teachers' salaries and incentives and so on. However there are still major issues around the quality of teaching.
11	The programme design noted the problems of staff turnover and (re)deployment. The ToC therefore notes the assumption that these personnel changes will not be at a level that diminishes the effectiveness of staff and institutional capacity development.	1, 7, 8, 11, 12, 19, 21	Staff turnover and deployment was not cited in project documents as an issue in monitoring reports or in ET interviews and FGDs
12	Teachers want to be trained, engage and benefit	7, 8, 9, 21, 22	Key informant interviews confirm this assumption is valid.

Number/ grading	Assumption	Evaluation Question related to the assumption	ET Finding
13	Training activities are designed to support learning principles (theoretical and practical methodologies with sufficient mentoring and supportive supervision)	4, 8, 9, 12, 21, 22	This assumption is partially valid. Training on cooking is a mix of practical and theoretical but is less geared towards sub-optimal conditions e.g. how to maintain flavour and nutrient value whenever the food contributions from the community are sparse. Training on school gardens currently offers limited application to nutrition education. Mentoring and supportive supervision is the responsibility of MAF technical staff and has been weak due to lack of travel funds and often the approach / skills of extension staff.
14	Parents and other local community members, particularly members of VEDCS, are willing to perform the roles that the programme envisages for them.	2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22	VEDCs badly need better support to grow into the roles designed for them – i.e. collaborating with teachers and “owning” local education and school feeding. VEDC institutional culture currently provides members with a certain local status, but engagement focuses on ‘easier’ tasks such as identifying school-age children in the village. On the seemingly straightforward issue of availability and motivation of cooks (usually mothers) consistently providing meals, the variability points to the absence of a common approach that would exist with better support.
15	The WFP/ MOES relationship reflects / supports the effectiveness of MOES role in school feeding	1, 3, 7, 11, 12, 18, 21, 22	WFP and MOES need regular and collegial contact at all levels of the MOES system to maintain their relationship in favour of the effectiveness of school feeding programme. Engagement constraints at Provincial and district level are exemplified by the monitoring function temporarily being removed from government staff to try and provide better quality data for WFP’s donors

Number/ grading	Assumption	Evaluation Question related to the assumption	ET Finding
16	<p>The harvesting time and quantities of fishponds (frogs/ insects/ etc.) can meet the needs of school lunches</p> <p><i>[Note: with hindsight, this assumption should have been framed more generally to include school gardens ad a means of production for school meal ingredients]</i></p>	8, 9, 12, 20, 21	<p>It is too early to test this assumption. Fishponds and small animal production are not yet common enough to be able to support this hypothesis. WFP has partnered with AAR Japan to develop 16 fish ponds in 2 districts therefore scale is small.¹⁰² A closer role of MAF is required (see also # 13 above).</p> <p><i>[A strong ET finding is that constraints on school gardens (e.g. water supply) are serious, and that their potential as a food source is over-estimated.]</i></p>

¹⁰² This activity is not funded under the MGD grant.

Annex N Bibliography

"Location" in the listing below refers to folder and document numbers in the evaluation team's electronic library. The bibliography shows documents that have been directly referenced in the IR and ER.

Short ref	Full ref	Location
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Bhatia, 2013	<i>Operational guidance on menu planning</i> . London: Rita Bhatia, Partnership for Child Development, April 2013.	8-8
Bundy et al, 2009	<i>Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development and the Education Sector</i> . Bundy, D., Burbano, C., Grosh, M., Geli, A., Jukes, M., Drake, L. (2009), The World Bank.	8-2
Buttenheim et al, 2010	<i>Impact Evaluations of School Feeding Programs in Lao PDR</i> Buttenheim, A, Alderman, H and Friedman, J. World Bank, October 2010.	
CIA, 2016	https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/la.html	online
CLEAR, 2016	<i>Consolidated Livelihood Exercise for Analysing Resilience (CLEAR)</i> . A special report prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's Department for Disaster Management and Climate Change (DDMCC) and the World Food Programme with technical support from the USAID Mekong ARCC project. September 2016.	3.8-4
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Government of Lao PDR, 2016a	<i>School Lunch Action Plan, 2016-2020</i> . Government of Lao PDR, 2016	3.3-4

Short ref	Full ref	Location
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IFPRI, 2015	<i>2015 Global Hunger Index.</i> Bonn/Washington, DC/ Dublin: International Food Policy Research Institute, October 2015.	3.8-12
Kimetrica, 2015	<i>USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Programme's Support (2014-2016) to WFP Lao Country Programme: Baseline Survey Report.</i> Kimetrica, November 2015.	3.1-6
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Lao Statistics Bureau, 2014	<i>Statistical Yearbook.</i> Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau, 2014. http://www.lsb.gov.la/en/statistic2014.php	online
MOES, 2016	<i>[In Lao] "School Garden Manual"</i> prepared by MOES with support from the Department of Agriculture and supported by USDA, Australian Aid, CRS and WFP, 2016.	
Mokoro, 2011	<i>WFP's School Feeding Policy: A Policy Evaluation Vol. I Full Report.</i> Stephen Lister, Stephen Anderson, Mirella Mokbel Genequand, Anthea Gordon, Judith Sandford, Stephen Turner, Mokoro Ltd. WFP Office of Evaluation, 30 November 2011.	7.1-1
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Acronyms

BBM	Big Brother Mouse – a Lao NGO
BEQUAL	Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DEQAS	Decentralised evaluation quality assurance system (of WFP)
DP	Development Partner
EB	Executive Board (of WFP)
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Education
ED	Executive Director
EM	Evaluation Manager
EMOP	Emergency Operation
EP	Evaluation Plan
EQ	Evaluation Question
EQAS	Evaluation quality assurance system (of WFP)
ER	Evaluation Report
ESDF	Education Sector Development Framework
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
FAD	Food Assistance Division
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFA	Food (assistance) for Assets
FFR	Food for Relief
FFT	Food for Training
FFW	Food for Work
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
GFD	General Food Distribution
GIF	Global Innovation Fund (funded by the UK government it invests in social innovations that aim to improve the lives and opportunities of millions of people in the developing world)
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German aid agency)
GM	Gender Marker
GNR	Global Nutrition Report
GoL	Government of Lao PDR
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus

HQ	Headquarters
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IR	Inception Report
LBW	low birth weight
LIC	Low Income Country
LMIC	Lower Middle Income Country
LRP	Local and Regional Procurement
LWU	Lao Women's Union
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MA	Monitoring Assistant
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MGD	McGovern Dole
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sport
MOH	Ministry of Health
M/P/DOES	Ministry/Provincial/District Office of Education and Sport
MT	Metric ton
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
NAN	National Plan of Action on Nutrition
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNS	National Nutrition Strategy
NSMP	National School Meals Programme
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEV	(WFP) Office of Evaluation
OIC	Officer in Charge
OLA	UN Office for Legal Affairs
OpEv	Operation Evaluation
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
PLW	pregnant and lactating women
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
QS	Quality Support
RB	Regional Bureau
RBAP	(UNDP) Regional Bureau for Asia & the Pacific
RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
REACH	Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition – Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Partnership (FAO, WHO, UNICEF, WFP)

SMP	School Meals Programme
SNF	Specialised Nutritious Food
SPR	Standard Project Report
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
SRSO-CAAC	Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children Affected by Armed Conflict
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition movement
TEM	Technical Evaluation Manager
THR	Take-Home Rations
TL	Team Leader
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group (for school feeding)
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	The joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VEDC	Village Education Development Committee – a Government of Lao PDR-mandated village-based organization of local residents
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZHC	Zero Hunger Challenge

WFP Lao Country Office
[Link to website]