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Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management Sector Project – SRIWMSP

Additional Financing

Nutrition Programme



In partnership with



With funding from

Abbreviations and acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFN	Agriculture for Nutrition Project
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019 (SARS-CoV-2 virus)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CU5	Children Under 5 years of age
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DHO	District Health Office
DNC	District Nutrition Committee
DNT	District Nutrition Team
DPIT	District Project Implementation Team
ENUFF	Enhancing Nutrition of Upland Farming Families
EU	European Union
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
FNS	Farmer Nutrition School
GoL	Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic
HH	Household
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KAPP	Knowledge, Attitudes, Perceptions, Practices
LANN	Linking Agriculture, Natural resource management and Nutrition approach
LWU	Lao Women's Union
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MAD	Minimum Acceptable Diet
MDD-C	Minimum Dietary Diversity for Children
MDD-W	Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women
MoH	Ministry of Health
NNSPA	National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2021-2025
NSA	Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PAM	Project Administration Manual
PGT	Project Governance Team
PHO	Provincial Health Department
PICSA	Partnerships for Irrigation and Commercialization of Smallholder Agriculture (IFAD)
PBW	Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women
PNC	Provincial Nutrition Committee
PPIT	Provincial Project Implementation Team
PPMS	Project Performance Management System
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
SBCC	Social and Behavior Change Communication
SRIWMSP	Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management Sector Project (ADB)
ToT	Training of Trainers
VDP	Village Development Plan
VF	Village Facilitator
VNC	Village Nutrition Club
VNT	Village Nutrition Team
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WFP	United Nations - World Food Programme
WRA	Women of Reproductive Age

1. Project overview

Project Title	Nutrition Programme under the “Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management Sector Project-SRIWMSP”
Submitting Country	Lao People’s Democratic Republic
Geographical coverage	Pek and Kham districts, Xieng Khouang province, Viengxay, Sopbao, and Xamnua districts, Houaphan province, Lao PDR
Supervising Entity for TA	United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
Supervising Entity for Investments	Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Counterpart government partner	Department of Irrigation, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Lao People’s Democratic Republic
Duration of project	4 years: 30 September 2023 – 30 September 2027 ¹
Total project financing	4,000,000 USD for Technical Assistance

Introduction

The “Nutrition Programme” is an Additional Funding project under the overall ADB funded project of Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management Sector Project (SRIWMSP) provided by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) under the country led 7th Call, launched on 30th September 2022.

The full Project Proposal with a budget of USD 14 million (Investment USD 10 million under ADB and Technical Assistance USD 4 million under WFP) was submitted to GAFSP by the Ministry of Finance of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on 28th November 2022.

The additional funding was officially approved by the GAFSP Steering Committee on 16th March 2023 with a letter notifying the MOF and both SEs (ADB and WFP). This letter also summarized the strong and weak areas of the original proposal with a request to revise the Project Document to be approved by the SE latest by 18th June 2023 with implementation not starting later than 6 months after SE approval.

WFP and ADB have decided to submit their final Project Documents separately to GAFSP due to internal reporting differences. The current Project Document (Nutrition Programme) is for the TA part supervised by WFP in the amount of USD 4,000,000 (USD Four Million).

¹ Adjusted from the Full Proposal to match actual project implementation start

SRIWMSP summary

The ADB funded Sustainable Rural Infrastructure and Watershed Management Sector Project (SRIWMSP) is implemented since 2020 in the four northern provinces of Houaphan, Xieng Khouang, Luang Prabang, and Xaignabouly.

SRIWSMP is aligned with the following impacts: market-driven and safe agricultural products developed, and rural areas integrated into the national economy. The project will have the following outcome: high value agricultural production, natural resources management, status of women and community nutrition improved is implemented through 4 separate Outputs:

Output 1: Market orientated high value agriculture production increased

Output 2: Watershed ecological services protected

Output 3: Command areas irrigation reliability improved

Output 4: Nutrition awareness and WASH facilities improved **(implemented by WFP)**

SRIWMSP has established partnerships with the following development partners:

- On output 2, GIZ provides parallel financing to the Emission Reductions Program through Improved Governance and Sustainable Forest Landscape Management (ERP) that provides complementary land-use plans and village forest management in SRIWMSP provinces.
- On output 3, the irrigation systems constructed and/or rehabilitated under SRIWMSP are complemented by the agriculture extension activities provided through IFAD's project on "Agricultural Development Partnerships for Irrigation and Commercialization of Smallholder Agriculture" (PICSA).
- On output 4, ADB and IFAD have agreed that nutrition works in the provinces of Luang Prabang and Xaignabouly will be covered by IFAD (PICSA), while Houaphan and Xieng Khouang are covered by SRIWMSP. WFP is the current service-provider of nutrition works under SRIWMSP in Houaphan and Xieng Khouang.

SRIWMSP is being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) of the Lao PDR, as its executing agency and through a Programme Governance Team (PGT) formulated under the Department of Irrigation (DOI), MAF. The PGT manages ERP, PICSA and SRIWMSP under one overall program umbrella.

Rationale of SRIWMSP: Rising prices of fertilizers, animal feed, food, and fuel continue to discourage agricultural activities and are threatening the food and nutrition security of households in the Lao PDR who are still suffering from the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It is anticipated that volatile commodity prices coupled with the depreciation of local currency kip are likely to keep the inflation high for the rest of 2022.² Such circumstances place severe challenges not only for the people, but also for public finances. To address these challenges, based on the first round of discussions with donors and relevant stakeholders, the additional funding for SRIWMSP has been identified as the best instrument to swiftly address the pressing food security and nutrition concerns of households living in the poorest upland villages. It will support women and men smallholder farmers to reduce their vulnerability to externally sourced farming inputs, develop climate resilient diversified crop production systems, and improve access to nutritious food for rural consumers.

² ADB. 2022. [Supply Disruptions, Rising Prices Delay Lao PDR's Economic Recovery](#)

On the macro-economic level, the additional GAFSP grants will help lower the government's debt burden.

Approach: The GAFSP grants will complement SRIWMSP outputs and widen the outreach of SRIWMSP in the four project provinces. Implementation of the GAFSP grants will be managed by the SRIWMSP teams in each of the four provinces and the SRIWMSP head office staff. This will allow using the established financial management, procurement, and technical expertise which will help minimize administrative costing of proposed GAFSP activities.

Output 4 of SRIWSMP (Nutrition awareness and facilities improved) is currently funded through an ADB-administered EU grant. The project uses the existing multi-sectoral nutrition coordination process in Lao PDR, to identify nutrition-priority villages in each of the 5 target districts and will scale up existing tried and tested methods promoted under the NNSPA, by building capacity of DAFO staff on NSA, forming village nutrition groups to implement nutrition sensitive home gardens and rearing small livestock, and using Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) approaches to disseminate and provide nutrition education, and supporting community development plans designed to increase the production and year-round consumption of diverse and nutritious local vegetables and fruits. It works with and complements **Outputs 1, 2 and 3** to ensure that a proportion of the vegetable production from the irrigation schemes will be readily accessible to people in surrounding areas where diverse and nutritious fresh produce is currently not widely available. This output will be implemented in 120 villages in 5 districts in the 2 provinces of Houaphan and Xieng Khouang and with the GAFSP funds an additional 80 villages in these 5 districts will be added.

Country, sector, and institutional context

The food system in the Lao PDR has been strongly impacted by the disruptions in supply chain caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These disruptions have resulted in the limited availability of key farm inputs, especially fertilizers, and increase in cost of farm inputs, fuel, and food prices, forcing farmers to reduce their application of agricultural inputs, which means crop yields in the current season will be limited or at a reduced volume.³ The country's food system has yet to recover from COVID-19 on top of the regular flooding in lowland rice producing areas, droughts and periodic storms.

Ongoing high food inflation is likely to further deteriorate the household food security. Inflation recorded 41.3% in March 2023, the highest over the past 22 years, reflecting increasing commodity prices and depreciation of the local currency.⁴ Due to high transportation and input costs, and the expected decline in local production in 2022, the price of rice, recorded 48% increase in October 2022 compared to the year earlier. Local prices of key food items have also sharply increased, such as pork and vegetables with a 43% year-on-year increase.⁵

Key factors affecting food crop production and contributing to increasing the food security risk are:⁶

³ FAO. 2022. Global Information and Early Warning Systems: Lao PDR

⁴ Bank of the Lao PDR (BOL) <https://www.bol.gov.la/en/inflation>

⁵ [Inflation giving Lao people serious concerns about the future](#). 23 November 2022

⁶ FAO. 2022. Lao PDR Rapid Assessment

- Continued increases in the cost of agriculture inputs while the increase in the farm price of agricultural products has been much lower. The aggregate production costs for agricultural production increased sharply in 2022;
- The production cost of rice, the main Lao staple food, more than tripled in July 2022, compared with 2021 levels. The high prices and low availability of fuel, especially in remote area has hampered the timely sowing of rice crops. Application of urea, nitrogen, phosphate, and potash fertilizers are lower and will reduce rice yields. The most vulnerable farmers only planted rice for subsistence, and up to 20% of farmers were unable to plant rice at all; and,
- Prices for livestock inputs have increased by up to 300%;

Market supply of agricultural and livestock inputs has decreased with fertilizer sales declining by 20 times. Farmers are limited to cash purchases due to the absence of credit facilities.

The combination of all these factors has led to an increase in the number of food insecure households, especially in rural areas. WFP reported that 14% of households are food insecure and 58% of households started to adopt coping strategies since September 2022.⁷ Based on WFP's remote consolidated approach, food insecurity prevalence varies among project provinces ranging from 4.9 % in Xiang Khouang to 24.4% in Luang Prabang, and on average higher in rural households with 17% prevalence. Women headed households are more food insecure (20% of them are food insecure, compared to 13% among male headed households), because of high cost of healthy diet and low-income levels. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 79.8% of the households could not afford a healthy diet.⁸ This lack of access to nutrition is the key cause of persistently high levels of malnutrition in the country: the prevalence of anemia among women of 15-49 age was 39.5% in 2019, and stunting prevalence among children under 5 years old remain high at 30.2% in 2020.

As part of the coping strategies, households started to cut household related expenditures such as cutting down on education and health expenditures and borrowing money to be able to purchase food.⁹ Many households, especially the most vulnerable ones, have reduced their meal size and the quality of food.

Relevance to the Country's crisis response and resilience building priorities

Lao PDR is one of the most vulnerable countries to adverse climate change impacts which are expected to fall disproportionately on the poorer and the vulnerable population such as women and ethnic groups who have limited knowledge and capacity to manage such risks. Apart from better managing expected extreme weather events such as floods and droughts, extreme heat during the growing season is likely to reduce rice yields by 5–20% by the 2040s, as well as other crop yields, for which significant adaptation efforts are indispensable, particularly for poor communities operating subsistence and rain-fed agriculture.¹⁰

⁷ Lao PDR, Food Security Monitoring, September 2022, WFP.

⁸ FAO. 2022. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the world.

⁹ Laos Food System Rapid Assessment, FAO, September 2022.

¹⁰ ADB and World Bank. 2021. [Climate Risk Country Profile Lao PDR](#)

Lao PDR recently developed a recovery plan set out in the Second National Agenda for 2021-2023 with a set of short-term measures aimed at addressing the current economic and financial difficulties through five priority areas: (i) Promote production to reduce imports and increase exports, (ii) Strengthen revenue collection, (iii) Promote austerity, prevent extravagance, ensure efficient state investment and spending along with efficient payment of domestic and foreign debts, (iv) Stabilize value of the kip, and (v) Increase efficiency of the rule of law.¹¹

The “Resilience Framework 2022-2025” was developed by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) as an evolution of previous work related to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and addressing the more recent fuel, financial, and food crisis. The Resilience Frameworks aims at prioritizing actions from within existing frameworks that would make the greatest contributions to resilience future crises. One of the actions proposed in this Framework is to: “Promote environmentally friendly and safe agricultural practices geared towards increased yields and greater diversification of products which leads to reduced rural poverty and improved macro-fiscal governance of the economy”, and to “Promote climate-resilient agriculture, nature-based solutions, and good agricultural practices.”

The GAFSP project responds to the Second National Agenda priority and the Resilience Framework by promoting production to reduce imports and increase exports. Increased production of high-quality fruits and vegetables will occur on the upgraded irrigation schemes, and these will be marketed locally, and some will be exported to Thailand, Vietnam, and the People’s Republic of China. The fruit and vegetable crops will be able to substitute on the local market for imported crops thus saving some foreign exchange. Export of the irrigated crops will increase revenue of farmers.

The proposed GAFSP funding aligns closely and contributes to the efforts of the National Plan of Action on Nutrition (NPAN) 2021-2025, which lays out a multisectoral approach to nutrition security by a clear link between malnutrition, food security and food systems, agriculture, education, access to health services and primary health care, adolescent health, and responses to disasters and emergencies, including climate change-related events and epidemics such as COVID-19. The GAFSP funding includes social, and behavior change communication (SBCC), gender equality and the need to address nutrition from birth up to 8,000 days (up to 21 years of age) which are part of this strategy.

The GAFSP funding will further strengthen the partnerships already established under SRIWMSP with GIZ, IFAD, and WFP. WFP implements nutrition related projects in various parts of the country, including the GAFSP funded Agriculture for Nutrition project (AFN).

The GAFSP funding will complement several other development partner projects in Lao PDR that contribute to mitigating the impacts of the food crisis and building resilience of food systems. Examples include:

- (i) Two projects for ADB funding pipelined for 2023 which will improve food resiliency in provinces not covered by SRIWMSP. These projects include the Greater Mekong Sub-Region Cross-Border Livestock Health and Value Chains Improvement Project (\$50.4 million) as well as the Flood and Drought Mitigation and Management Project (\$31.5 million).
- (ii) \$1.6 million worth supplies (laptops and tablets) handed over by the European Union and UNICEF to improve nutrition in Lao PDR. The equipment will be used by the Ministry

¹¹ Vientiane Times August 2021 [National Assembly adopts national agendas, amended laws](#)

of Health to gather and analyze health and nutrition data which is the baseline for nutrition interventions of the GAFSP funding.

- (iii) World Bank's \$132 million Southeast Asia Regional Economic Corridor and Connectivity Project, which strengthens climate resilient transport connectivity and regional trade along an east-west corridor through northern Lao PDR. The crops produced with the support of GAFSP funding will benefit from this corridor for export to domestic and regional markets.
- (iv) Recently in August 2022, IFAD's Agriculture For Nutrition - Phase 2 (AFN II) was approved with GAFSP grant of \$20 million covering two target districts in Xieng Khouang province (Mok and Nonghet districts). The AFN II project will provide nutrition and climate resilient farming knowledge and services for the vulnerable population (female headed households, persons with disability, returning migrants, etc.). Same as for the present project, WFP is the TA of AFN II project (USD 8 million GAFSP funding) which will enable close coordination and collaboration among the activities of the two projects.

Additional Funding under GAFSP project summary

The GAFSP grant will complement SRIWMSP outputs and widen the outreach of the nutrition activities under Output 4 of SRIWMSP in the two project provinces.

WFP will ensure that the nutrition activities under Output 4:

- Complement project outputs 1, 2 and 3 of SRIWMSP by providing increased local availability and markets for nutritious food products originating both from the irrigation schemes and from improved use of the catchment areas for Non-Timber Food Product (NTFP) production.
- Complement nutritional gains by identifying financing gaps in priority WASH infrastructure in selected villages.
- Interlinked to other Projects' components, notably that a proportion of the vegetable production from the irrigation schemes will be readily accessible to communities in surrounding areas where fresh produce is currently not widely available.
- Sensitize and inform selected farmers/producers under Outputs 1 & 3 about nutrition choices and healthy diets.
- Link to the ongoing EU budget support on nutrition to attract interest and understanding on NSA investments for improved food & nutrition security and increased climate resilience.
- Include empowerment of women who dominate the management and control of high value crops, and gender equality which will be undertaken from a nutrition perspective, which is fully in line with the EU focus area on nutrition.

The GAFSP funded activities will contribute to the overall SRIWMSP Project level Indicator of: **High value agricultural production, natural resources management, status of women and community nutrition improved**, measured by increases on Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W), Minimum Dietary Diversity for Children (MDD-C), Minimum Acceptable Diet for children of 6-23 months (MAD), and Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES).

More specifically, the GASP funding will be used towards:

Output 4: Nutrition Awareness and Facilities improved (to be managed by WFP)

GAFSP funding will be used to scale-up the SRIWMP nutrition support from currently 120 villages in Houaphan and Xieng Khouang provinces to about 200 villages. The additional villages that the GAFSP will fund will be the ones prioritized by the National Plan of Action on Nutrition 2021-2025. Nutrition outreach services will be delivered to an additional 2,400 households with 8,500 direct beneficiaries. This will include at least 2,500 women of reproductive age between 15-49 years and caregivers with children under 5 years of age. As early marriage is prevalent in Laos, adolescent girls who no longer attend school may also be involved in some village level activities. Ethnic people form a high proportion of the upland population and at least 80% of people that will be reached belong to non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups. The GAFSP funded activities will complement the SRIWMP nutrition program, and pilot experience from the SRIWMSP nutrition work will be used for the GAFSP funded nutrition activities that has the following nine activities that are fully aligned with the original SRIWMSP:

Activity 1 - Preparation stage

With provincial and district Project implementation team input, develop selection criteria and carry out the selection of 80 additional project villages equally represented in the five districts (three in Houaphan, and two in Xieng Khouang); and in each of the 800 villages, target 30 households or more if necessary to avoid grievances, explore the possibility of generating a cascade effect and present the selection criteria to the Program Governance Team (PGT) in DOI for review and approval.

Activity 2 – Develop and apply Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (NSA) Planning

Through DNTs, the development of district-wide NSA planning, monitoring, and reporting systems will be implemented. The NSA Information System is part of the main Information System in MAF, specifically built to manage the agriculture related nutrition sensitive indicators. The system was launched in 2019 covering 11 provinces and 82 districts. Each District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) will assign a focal point who will be responsible for planning and oversight of NSA activities in the district. The District Nutrition Committee (DNC) is the responsible body for the development of multi-sectoral district nutrition plans. DNCs have already been formed in all the districts in Houaphan and Xieng Khouang, but experience shows that many may not be fully functional and will need additional support and trainings. The project team will work closely with the DAFO NSA Focal Point and DAFO DNC member to reinforce the NSA planning, budgeting, monitoring, and reporting system through a series of trainings. This will be done in close collaboration with the different departments of MAF.

Activity 3 – Formation and capacity building of District Nutrition Teams and Village Nutrition Clubs

GAFSP funds will support the formation and capacity building of DNTs, consisting of DAFO and LWU (Lao Women's Union) staff in each of the five target districts. DNTs will be responsible for providing extension services and nutrition messaging to the Village Nutrition Clubs (VNC) in the additional 80 project villages and will receive specific technical trainings on home garden establishment and small livestock raising, for household consumption. VNCs are semi-structured interactive gatherings in the project villages, focused on nutrition, food security, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), and basic agriculture, facilitated by the DNTs. Diverse and nutritious vegetables and fruits and small livestock will be promoted, and

where possible, local nutrient-rich wild foods will be encouraged. All agriculture activities on home garden level will follow “clean” and organic concepts, such as the use of compost, liquid bio-fertilizer, and Integrated Pest Management measures.

Home garden demonstrations will be implemented under this activity and participants of the nutrition trainings will be eligible to receive an input package for investing in homegarden activities.

Activity 4 - Monitoring and evaluation (including baseline, end-line and Formative Research conducted)

- Together with the PGT/DOI prepare and finalize baseline and formative research survey tools to be carried out in a representative sample of prioritized villages, reviewed, and approved by the PGT/DOI.
- Carry out a baseline survey and formative research with the assistance of the PPIT and DNTs; and present the results in a workshop with key stakeholders.
- Conduct ToT for PAFOs, DAFOs, and DNTs on survey tools developed.
- Together with the PGT/DOI to develop and finalize the end-of-project survey.
- Together with the PPITs, DNTs, and VNCs, carry out end-of-project survey to determine the progress made in reaching the SRIWMSP’s nutrition programme indicators.

Activity 5 – Development of Convergence Action Plans

Convergence Action Plans for the 80 additional villages will be prepared in close coordination with the DNTs and endorsed by the village authorities, for each of the project villages that will support awareness about nutrition issues in the community and stimulates discussions on actions that can be taken to address it. The plans will be presented at village level which will be based on dietary practices, sanitation and hygiene facilities and agriculture production practices, translated into key nutrition and WASH indicators for each village. Information of the status of these practices (i.e., diet, sanitation, agriculture production) will be based on the baseline data collected. Presentation of data aims to instill ownership of the communities on key nutrition and WASH actions and to feed back into the district and provincial nutrition plans.

Activity 6 – Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) campaign

A tailored SBCC campaign will be developed based on data collected at village level using communication channels such as radio, text messages, and use of village loudspeakers. Together with nutrition and health messages, gender equality messaging such as reducing workload and burden of care for children, will also be included. SBCC strategies will be tailored and use illustrations, multi-lingual information, education, and communication materials, using audio-visual methods. The SBCC campaign will target all households in the additional 80 project villages.

Activity 7 – Village WASH facilities

Gaps in WASH infrastructure at the household and community levels will be identified within the GAFSP project villages and presented for investments in up to 14 villages. It will feature: (i) WASH facilities at schools and health centers upgraded (latrines, hand-washing stations); (ii) WASH facilities provided at household and/or community levels; (iii) Safe drinking water supply in communities; (iv) Multiple-Use Water Systems for home gardens, fishponds, and livestock raising; and (v) Rehabilitation of existing water schemes to ensure year-round supply of water.

Activity 8 - Communication and Visibility

WFP will follow the existing Communication and Visibility Workplan that has been agreed with ADB and EU. Furthermore, is presented in Annex 6 of the Agreement signed between ADB and the EU. The SP will review and revise this plan during the Inception Phase and submit an updated plan in the inception report for approval by ADB

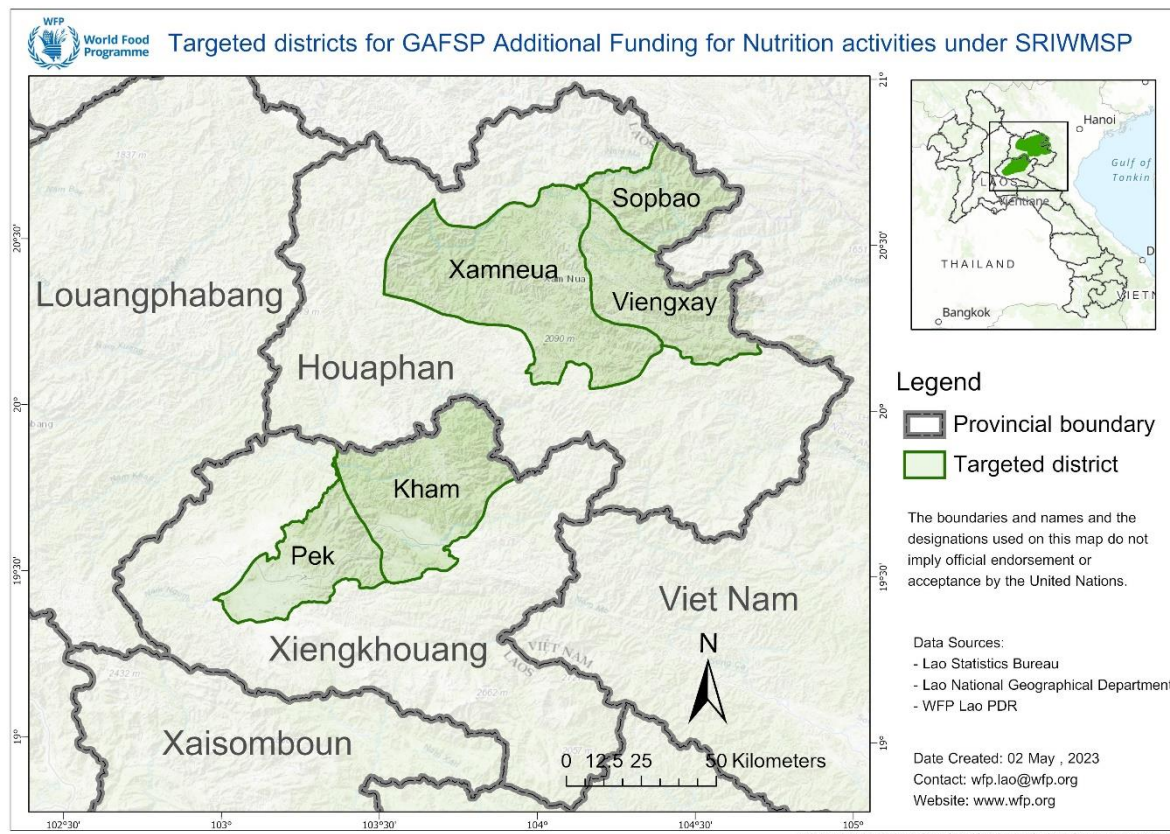
Activity 9 - Project Management

- Provide a quarterly progress report, which includes the work of the PPITs, DAFOs, and DNTs in their roll-out (on-going), work activities in implementing NSA, LANN, SBCC, and other related activities; submit to the PGT/DOI.
- Carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of the project activities and report quarterly and annually.
- Provide quarterly and annual progress reports that follow the Project progress report template. Provide semi-annual reports to GAFSP of the nutrition output. Provide end-of-project analytical report based on the M&E template summarizing main outputs and evaluating project effectiveness including the Tier 1 and Tier 2 GAFSP indicators.

2. Project design and implementation strategy

Project area

The project will target two districts (Kham and Pek) in Xieng Khouang province and three districts (Xamneua, Sopbao and Viengxay) in Houaphan province.



Map of the project area

Target groups

Primary beneficiary target groups for Output 4 are as follows:

- Women (and girls) of Reproductive Age (WRA), age between 15-49 years,
- Adolescent girls (10 – 19 years),
- Mothers with Children under 5 years (CU5), pregnant/breastfeeding women, and
- Smallholder farmers
- Ethnic Groups, around 70% of beneficiaries will belong to Ethnic Groups (Indigenous)
- Youth

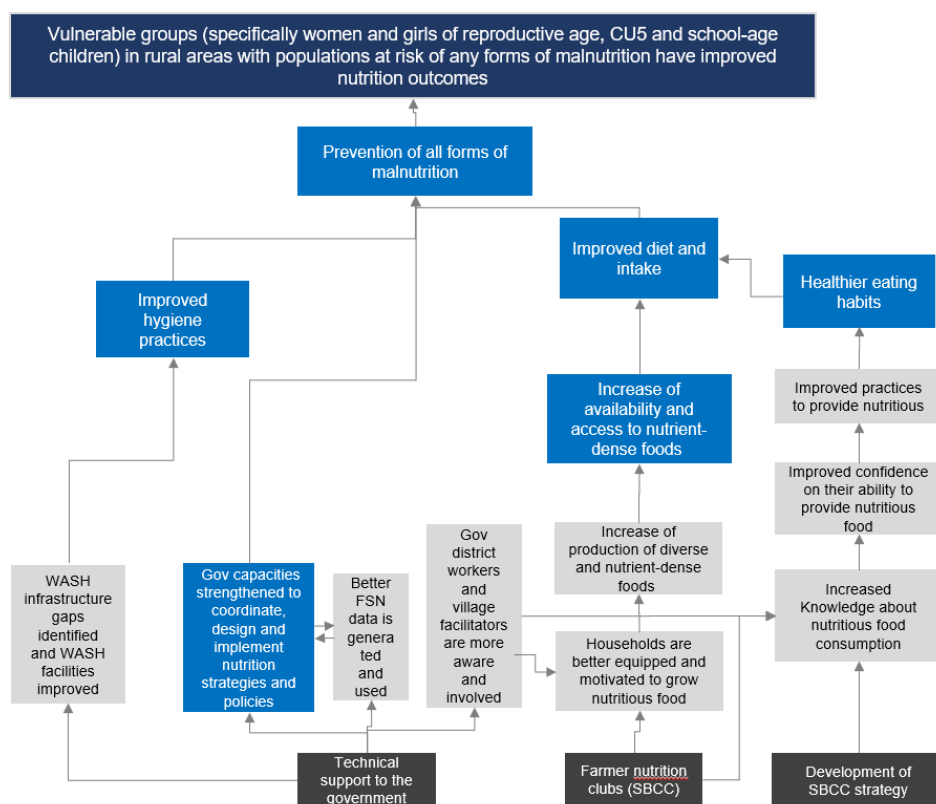
The high proportion of people living in the upland communities in the four provinces of SRIWMSP are indigenous people. Laos refers to them as ethnic groups that include: Phouan, Khmu, Hmong, Lao Loum, and Thai Dam amongst others. The SRIWMSP design has identified the constraints that these indigenous people face and recognized their needs. The GAFSP design is closely aligned to the SRIWMSP in which an inclusive approach will be followed for ethnic minorities and youth who will be included in and benefit from all GAFSP activities.

Timeline

The project will be implemented over four years, from January 2024 until 31 December 2027. The project implementation timeline will closely follow the original SRIWMSP Output 4 activities for the 120 first villages. Due to many of the structures on provincial and district level already in place, implementation of the activities under the GAFSP funding can start relatively quick once the 80 target villages have been selected. See **Annex 1** for a detailed timeline.

Project theory of change

The project theory of change, outlined below, details how the cohesive approach will integrate nutrition-sensitive agriculture activities with the added benefits of improved WASH infrastructures on village level.



Project Implementation Structure

The implementation structure of the GAFSP funded activities will mirror the existing structure of the Nutrition activities being implemented by WFP in SRIWMSP for the 120 current villages.

The additional financing from GAFSP will follow the implementation arrangements of the SRIWMSP. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) will remain the executing agency (EA), Department of Irrigation (DOI) will remain the principal implementing agency (IA), and the provincial agriculture and forestry offices (PAFOs) will remain as the provincial implementing agencies. The project governance team (PGT) in DOI and the project implementation units in the PAFOs will continue to support overall project planning, management,

implementation, supervision, and reporting. The existing Project Administration Manual (PAM) will remain the main implementation guideline for the project activities.

WFP will continue to implement all nutrition activities financed by the additional financing and will manage a \$4 million technical assistance fund from GAFSP. The reporting lines and other arrangements will remain the same as Output 4 arrangements under the existing SRIWMSP.

The project will continue to implement the nutrition activities through the District Nutrition Teams (DNT) in each of the five target districts. DNTs are formed by at least three technical staff assigned from the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) and possibly Lao Women's Union (LWU) if sufficient DAFO staff is not available. The DNTs will be responsible for providing extension services and nutrition messaging to the Village Nutrition Clubs (VNCs). The DNTs will receive intensive training on SBCC, as well as specific technical trainings on home garden establishment, agriculture production, and small livestock raising.

The SE will mobilize one additional technical local staff on district level in each of the 5 districts to cover the project activities, equipped with a motorcycle for travel. These district staff are embedded in the DAFO office. Direct supervision of the district-based staff will be carried out by the existing SE staff on provincial level in Xieng Khouang and Houaphan. Overall technical guidance will be provided by a designated Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) from WFP, operating from the Vientiane office. The CTA will be supported by two local specialists on Nutrition and Agriculture, based in Vientiane but regularly travelling to the project districts and villages. Additional support will be provided by WFP staff based in Vientiane on subjects related to gender, monitoring and evaluation, finance, environment, etc.

The WFP district-based staff will be responsible for day-to-day coordination with the DPITs and DNTs.

As with the original project, WFP will work together with its cooperating partner SNV (Netherlands Development Organization) to implement the nutrition activities in Houaphan province. WFP will establish a separate FLA (Field Level Agreement) with SNV outlying the activities, workplan and budget. SNV will report directly to WFP.

GAFSP Cross-Cutting Themes

The GAFSP cross-cutting themes of climate, gender, nutrition, and smallholder farmer livelihoods have been considered during the full proposal development.

Climate

Several climate change risk studies have been conducted for Laos and these risks are well summarized in the Climate Risk Country Profile of Lao PDR¹² and UN-Habitat's National Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment.¹³ Lao PDR is ranked 142 out of 181 countries in the 2020 ND-GAIN Index.¹⁴ Increased temperature and more intense precipitation periods are recognized as the two key climate change trends. Main climate risks are: (i) the very high exposure to flooding, including flash floods; (ii) droughts; and (iii) heat waves. The most common hazard combinations are: (i) droughts and landslides; (ii) droughts and floods; and (iii) floods and landslides. Droughts are widespread across the country and tend to be more severe in the northern provinces.

¹² World Bank and ADB 2021

¹³ UN Habitat Laos PDR 2020

¹⁴ <https://gain-new.crc.nd.edu/country/laos> Retrieved data in November 2022.

Droughts and storms are the two main climate hazards in the two project provinces. The GAFSP design recognizes these risks, and they are addressed through key activities that include: (i) use of the LaCSA weather information and warning system to inform the rural communities of upcoming storms (under GAFSP-ADB funding); (ii) women and men farmers learning how to plan their crop farming pattern to mitigate high intensity rainfall risks using the LaCSA crop models; (iii) the proposed climate-resilient farming practices under LANN will further enhance soil health and improve their water holding capacity.

Gender

The activities under the GAFSP funding are gender-sensitive and the main target groups of the nutrition activities are women (pregnant and breastfeeding women, mother of children under 5 years of ages and adolescent girls). For both the nutrition activities as well as the nutrition sensitive agriculture activities, the percentage of women reached will be over 60%.

Nutrition

The activities under the GAFSP funding are specifically earmarked for nutrition activities in 80 villages and reaching at least 2,400 households directly. Furthermore, the nutrition SBCC campaign will reach all the full population in these villages. Tier 1 indicators on MDD-W, MDD-C and additionally MAD will measure the progress of the project activities

Smallholder farmer livelihoods

The project will promote improved homegarden activities and LANN approaches. These activities aim mainly to improve the production of nutrient-dense crops and small livestock for household consumption. But as observed at the AFN project, surplus production is sold at local markets and generates considerable extra cash for women. Poultry, eggs, and fish are some of the commodities mostly sold this way. Often, women start to form small groups and increase their production areas and volume to produce directly for the local markets, especially in villages that have a good road connection to nearby district and provincial markets. The endline survey from AFN reported that homegardens during the project life increased in size by 70% and overall crop production increased by 95%. Poultry production increased by an impressive 181%, showing the demand for households to intensify chicken and duck raising as this enables both a steady income and supply of meat and eggs for household production. Where feasible the project will encourage and provide technical support for these women led Producer Organizations.

Lessons Learnt

Both the ongoing activities of WFP under SRIWSMP and the GAFSP funded activities are heavily influenced by the lessons learnt by WFP from the Agriculture for Nutrition (AFN) project, other ongoing nutrition related projects implemented by WFP, and by WFP's close collaboration with the Worldbank nutrition projects, such as the Poverty Reduction Fund additional funding (PRF-III) and the pipeline Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience (CLEAR) project. The AFN approach of targeted SBCC towards women, adolescents girls, mothers and caretakers, supplemented by basic agriculture trainings and provision of a small grant to develop home gardens proved to be successful in increasing the minimum dietary diversity score for women and children, increasing the percentage of children having a minimum acceptable diet, decreasing overall food insecurity and decreasing stunting and underweight, although the recent crises seems to have "flattened" the ongoing trends.

Capacity building for local service providers, such as lead farmers, village nutrition facilitators and village technicians is important to increase capacities on the local level so as not to rely heavily on services provided by the DAFO departments as their staffing and resources are limited.

Ownership on village and district level is important and through village planning and capacity building events the village authorities are better able to plan village nutrition activities and link them with district line agencies, through the District Nutrition Committees, that were also capacitated under the AFN project.

The SBCC approaches of AFN and the Worldbank projects are presently being aligned to make sure the objectives but also some the operational details such as fee payment, are harmonized between the WFP and Worldbank. This will benefit the upcoming AFN2 project as well as the nutrition activities under SRIWMSP.

Risk identification and mitigation

The COVID-19 pandemic and following economic crisis has had a significant negative economic impact on vulnerable populations in Cambodia, especially in rural areas, through income and employment shocks, global supply chain issues, and rising inflation (finance), particularly for food, fuel, and fertilizer (4Fs). Frequent and prolonged movement restrictions have led to considerable reductions in average household income. This is likely to be exacerbated by the recent food crisis as increasing fuel prices have caused food price spikes. WFP will keep monitoring market prices and functionality throughout the country on a regular basis to ensure potential operational and programmatic risks are detected early on and addressed.

A detailed Integrated Project Risk Matrix (IPRM), which describes the risks, the likelihood and risk ratings - L (low), M (moderate), or H (high) - and proposed mitigation measures, is provided in **Annex 2**.

Sustainability

Sustainability of project outcomes is highly likely. Sustainability is a core project principle and has been factored into project design through the following design features and/or expected measures.

Institutional sustainability

At the ground level, project activities will be implemented primarily through government stakeholders and village level institutions (VNC). The following steps have been planned to ensure that the key activities will continue to be performed by relevant groups in the post-implementation stage: i) a focus on cascade trainings to ensure the capacity stays within the target groups upon project closure; ii) establishment of a strong M&E system to identify weaknesses and address them during the project implementation period; iii) alignment with national priorities and existing systems to avoid duplications, which may otherwise only operate during the project implementation period.

Financial Sustainability

No significant issue regarding financial sustainability arises since the project interventions (demonstrations, trainings, and capacity building) are one-time, non-recurring cost items. Once the farmers and women have been trained, these costs need not be incurred again.

Technical Sustainability

The project will undertake the following activities to enhance technical sustainability: i) technical training provided to government stakeholders; ii) technologies demonstrated to VNCs and smallholder farmers will be relatively simple and will not necessarily generate a post-project demand for technical backstopping; and iii) technology dissemination at the ground level will be conducted by farmer-led mechanisms rather than rely solely on external service providers or DAFO technicians in the long run.

Social and Environmental Sustainability

Socially, the project will target indigenous peoples and low-income women farmers, thus avoiding elite capture and maintaining broad support for the project at the ground level. It is widely recognized that organic farming is environmentally sustainable as it reduces the carbon footprint of conventional agriculture. Organic cultivation methods are conceived to improve locally available conditions through a holistic farming approach and by means of environmentally friendly techniques that can render rainfed land more productive and resilient. For the home garden activities, the project will promote organic techniques, such as have been used in the AFN projects, including composting and the use of organic liquid pesticides and fertilizers.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A strong monitoring system, aligned with SRIWMSP, will assist in monitoring and assessing the sustainability of investments made under the project. Further details are elaborated in Section 3.

Governance, Oversight and Coordination

The mechanisms for overall governance, oversight and coordination that have been established between ADB-SRIWMSP and WFP and will remain the same for the GAFSP funded activities. The overall project is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, under its Department of Irrigation (DOI) and the Program Governance Team (PGT) at DOI. At provincial and district levels, the project activities are led by the Provincial Project Implementation Teams (PPIT) and District Project Implementation Teams (DPIT).

Quarterly technical meetings will be organized on national, provincial and district levels with ADB, DOI, PPIT, DPIT and WFP staff.

Procurement and Financial Management

Procurement and contracting of service providers and cooperating partners will follow a competitive process in line with WFP's corporate requirements and guidelines.¹⁵ All proposals will be evaluated based on technical requirements, as well as cost, to ensure the best use of funding. All cooperating partners will undergo a rigorous capacity assessment prior to contracting to ensure they have the needed skills to carry out the assignment.

Flow of funds

WFP will establish a Multilateral Contribution Agreement with DOI using the standard corporate template used for WFP managed GAFSP projects worldwide. The agreement outlines

¹⁵ A copy of WFP's rules and regulations may be found [here](#).

key deliverables, overall funding modalities, timeline, and reporting requirements. Counterpart funds (DSA, travel, etc) will be released by WFP on national, provincial and district levels, following WFP financial guidelines.

Reporting

In line with the GAFSP reporting structure, WFP will report on progress bi-annually (June and December). To ensure timely reporting, all cooperating partners will be asked to provide WFP with progress updates no later than May 15th and November 15th, leaving sufficient time for WFP to triangulate (*i.e.*, with findings from process monitoring) and reconcile reported data. In addition, WFP will undertake outcome monitoring surveys (baseline, mid-term and endline) to collect data on tier 1 project-level indicators among a representative sample of targeted households (see Section 3). The findings of these surveys will feed into the annual December reporting. WFP's Annual Country Report (ACR) will serve as the only financial reporting to GAFSP. This will be shared annually in April for the period covering the previous calendar year.

The final financial report will be submitted in April 2028, together with a project completion report.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

M&E framework

WFP has developed a comprehensive Monitoring, Review and Evaluation (MRE) plan based on WFP's corporate results framework (CRF) and monitoring guidelines. This directs the collection of data and production of evidence under each Strategic Outcome (SO) of the Laos Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2021-2025. The GAFSP M&E Framework (see **Annex 3**) is aligned to WFP's MRE plan to ensure that project results contribute towards WFP's strategic objectives and ultimately the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, it is closely aligned with the SRIWMSP monitoring requirements as the data gathered under the GAFSP funding will directly flow into the SRIWMSP M&E system at DOI.

The M&E framework sets out the project-level indicators (tier 1; mid-term outcomes) and component-level level indicators (tier 2; short-term outcomes and outputs).

The tier 1 indicators measure the project contributions to enhanced food security and nutrition of the target population through a set of household and individual-level indicators. This includes the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W), the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Children (MDD-C) and the Minimum Acceptable Diet for Children (MAD).

Contributing to the tier 1 indicators at project level, the tier 2 outputs refer to tangible effects that are the consequence of achieving project outputs. Outputs are the direct results from the implementation of project activities. While tier 1 outcomes are assessed and reported annually, tier 2 outcome data are collected and reported bi-annually, and output data collected monthly and reported bi-annually. The tier 2 indicators are a mix of ADB and GAFSP indicators.

The Baseline and Endline surveys will be conducted internally by WFP, using their in-country expertise on nutrition related indicators and surveys, with support from the Regional Bureau Bangkok.

The qualitative research part of the baseline and endline surveys will be conducted by an independent outside service provider.

Monitoring Approach

The project will implement two main surveys during the project time: baseline, and endline surveys that will form the basis of the reporting on Logframe indicators. Findings will be disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, youth, and household size. Quantitative results from the household surveys will be complemented by routine qualitative data collection (including FGDs and KIIs) to gain deeper insights into household and individual dynamics and programmatic aspects of interest as well as by triangulation with evidence available through existing research or assessments by WFP and others.

Output monitoring data will be collected by the project staff from DPIT and WFP and compiled by WFP and forwarded to the SRIWMSP M&E team on district, provincial and national level where it will feed into the overall project MIS database.

4. Budget

The overall cost of the project is estimated at USD 4,000,000 over four years. WFP Indirect Support Costs (ISC) of 4% will be covered from the additional GAFSP admin fee (5%) that will be requested separately. A budget summary is provided in Table 1 and a budget summary according to WFP cost categories is provided in Table 2.

Table 1: Budget summary

Activities	Total (USD)
Activity 1. Preparation Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select 80 villages for project implementation 	50,000
Activity 2. Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (NSA) Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the DNTs in implementing district-wide NSA planning, monitoring, and reporting system development 	275,000
Activity 3. DNT and VNC formed and capacitated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the capacity of the DNTs Select and develop Village Nutrition Clubs (VNCs) Assist the DNTs in training and in providing technical advice and inputs to the VNCs Conduct home garden demonstrations 	1,675,000
Activity 4. Monitoring and Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out baseline, and endline surveys for the 80 villages Carry out regular Monitoring and Evaluation 	280,000
Activity 5. Convergence Action Plan development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Convergence Action Plans 	450,000
Activity 6. Develop, adapt, and disseminate an SBCC campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizing mass media and other suitable methods, implement SBCC activities to the whole population in 80 villages 	500,000
Activity 7. Identify gaps within the WASH infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Together with the PAFOs/PPITs and DAFOs, identify the gaps within the WASH infrastructure in the households and within the communities of the project villages 	320,000
Activity 8. Communication and visibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders will be addressed as per the target groups set out in the Communications and Visibility Plan; this will include GAFSP specific branding requirements 	75,000
Activity 9. Project Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide quarterly and annual progress reports that follow the Project progress report template Provide 6-months progress reports to GAFSP 	375,000
Total GAFSP grant	4,000,000
GAFSP 5% admin fee (to be separately requested by SE)	200,000
Total Project Funding (GAFSP)	4,200,000

Table 2: Budget summary with WFP cost categories

	Planned Expenditures (USD)
Allocated resources from GAFSP including 5% admin fee	4,200,000
Planned expenditures	
Food and related costs	0
Cash based transfers and related costs	0
Capacity Strengthening	3,111,102
Service Delivery	0
Total Transfer	3,111,102
Implementation Cost – 9.59%	402,780
Total Direct Operational Cost	3,513,882
Direct Support Cost (DCS) – 12.49%	524,580
Total Direct Costs	4,038,462
Indirect Support Cost (ISC) – 4%	161,538
Total planned expenditures	4,200,000

An explanation of the WFP cost structure can be found in Annex 5.

Annex 1: Project timeline

SRIWMSP Nutrition Awareness and WASH Facilities Improved - GAFSP Additional Funding		2023	2024				2025				2026				2027		
Activities	Responsible	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Activity 1: Preparation Stage																	
1.1. Select 80 additional Villages for project implementation	PPIT- DPIT - DNC																
Activity 2: Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (NSA) Planning																	
2.1 Assist the DNTs in implementing district-wide NSA planning, monitoring, and reporting system development	WFP																
2.2 WFP to work with one focal point per district from DAFO to carry out NSA planning, budgeting, and implementation.	WFP																
Activity 3: DNT and VNC formed and capacitated																	
3.1 Together with the PPIT, set up or reinforce existing DNTs in each of the 5 Districts	PPIT-DPIT-DAFO																
3.2 Provide Training of Trainers (ToT) to DNTs on Linking Agriculture to Nutrition and Natural Resources (LANN)																	
3.3 Assist the DAFO focal point and the PPITs and DNTs in conducting home garden demonstrations in 80 villages in the five districts																	
3.4 Select and develop Village Nutrition Clubs (VNCs) made of village households, initially, in the 80 pilot villages	WFP																
3.5 Build the capacity of the DNTs (comprised of DAFO staff, in providing agricultural extension services to VNCs in selected villages																	
3.6 Assist the DNTs in training and in providing technical advice and inputs to the VNCs in carrying out LANN activities	WFP																
Activity 4: Monitoring and Evaluation (including Baseline, end-line and Formative Research)																	
4.1 Carry out a baseline survey and formative research in early 2024 with the assistance of the PPIT and DNTs; and present the results in a workshop with key stakeholders	WFP																
4.2 Together with the PGT/DOI to develop and finalize the end-of-project survey	WFP																
4.3 Together with the PPITs, DNTs, and VNCs, carry out end-of-project survey	WFP																
Activity 5: Convergence Action Plan development																	
5.1 Through the DNT's, present results from baseline and formative research report, together with any nutrition-related data, to communities to instill ownership	WFP																
5.2 Develop Convergence Action Plans for 80 villages	WFP																
Activity 6 Develop, adapt and disseminate an SBCC campaign based on an SBCC strategy																	
6.1 Develop SBCC activities closely with the Project activities in agriculture and WASH that aim to improve the food and sanitation environment, respectively	WFP																
6.2 Utilizing mass media and other suitable methods, implement SBCC activities to the whole population, in the 80 villages.	WFP-PPIT-DPIT																
Activity 7. Identify gaps within the WASH infrastructure																	
7.1 Prepare and finalize a plan for identifying gaps in WASH infrastructure at the household and community levels in the 80 pilot villages	WFP																
7.2 Together with the PAFOs/PPITs and DAFOs, identify and finalize the gaps within the WASH infrastructure of the 80 villages and submit to the PGT/DOI	WFP																
Activity 8: Communication and visibility																	
8.1 Ensure donor (GAFSP) visibility all written, on- and offline printed materials as well as in (audio) visuals, throughout the project, in close collaboration with DOI	WFP																
Activity 9: Project Management																	
9.1 Provide a quarterly progress report, which includes the work of the PPITs, DAFOs, and DNTs and submit to the PGT/DOI	WFP																
9.2 Provide 6-month progress reports to GAFSP	WFP																
9.3 Carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of the project activities	WFP																

Annex 2: Integrated Project Risk Matrix (IPRM)¹⁶

Risk	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk	Proposed mitigation measures
Limited government capacity may constraint effective decentralisation efforts.	M	M	Strengthening capacities at provincial and district levels through technical assistance, training, and improved management tools. The PGT, PPIT and DPIT will be supported by the project to identify training needs, develop technical tools and training packages to address various capacity gaps.
Inter-institutional cooperation among government bodies is not fully effective.	M	M	Working through existing government systems and focus on building technical cooperation at the provincial and, particularly, district levels. This will be achieved through planning and coordination at all levels of government under the responsibility of the project management bodies.
Inflation triggered by rise in global fuel and food prices and exacerbated by the crisis in Ukraine	M	M	Frequent monitoring of national economic, food security and nutrition trends as well as food market prices to spot any anomalies early on and put in place mitigation measures.
COVID-19 impacts reduce positive outcomes of projects due to long-term job losses and business closures caused by the spread of COVID-19 which may continue to put pressure on households' incomes.	H	H	The project aims to increase nutritional status and livelihoods opportunities for the most vulnerable households which include women and youth and return workers that have been most impacted by COVID 19. Livelihood opportunities will be created through agriculture trainings and provision of garden materials. In addition, the use of ICT for communication to overcome constraints related to possible travel and meeting restrictions. Continuous monitoring of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural households, and provide support to mitigate impacts on most affected households.
Conflict in Ukraine impacts international supply chains. Prices of fuel, raw materials for animal feed manufacturing, fertilisers, equipment.	H	H	Assess economic and financial viability of investments. Monitor the evolution of the impacts of the conflict on supply chains and adjust project interventions accordingly if needed. More directly the project will mitigate these impacts through several interventions that include production and use of organic fertilisers, forage production to be integrated into village project activities.

¹⁶ Likelihood/risk (impact) rating: L (low), M (moderate), or H (high).

Market price volatility. Inflation (increased from 2% in 2019 to 5% in 2020, 3.75% in 2021 and 23% in 2022).	H	H	Under the leadership of MAF and DOI and the SRIWMSP and PICSA projects, enhance farmers' knowledge about markets in the project areas for GAFSP.
High vulnerability to climate shocks and natural disasters.	H	H	Invest in knowledge transfer and adoption of climate smart agricultural technologies to farmers.
The risk that the project may cause significant threats to or the loss of biodiversity, availability of diversified nutritious food, ecosystems and ecosystem services, territories of the indigenous peoples, or the unsustainable use/production of living natural resources.	M	L	The project approach is to avoid conversion and degradation of biodiversity, habitats and ecosystems. The project interventions will be limited to promoting sustainable and climate resilient production practices in existing production areas only. The project interventions that would include rehabilitation and upgrading of existing small-scale infrastructure schemes are mostly small-scale and scattered by nature and do not require procurement of significant natural resource materials. Under the GAFSP nutrition activities these small-scale infrastructures will only be identified, construction will be carried out under the main SRIWMSP outputs, and the risk management is covered in those Outputs.
The risk that the project may cause significant adverse impacts on the physical, mental, nutritional, or social health/safety status of an individual, group, or population, including as a result of gender-based violence.	L	L	Introduce good agriculture practices and encourage use of organic fertilizer to avoid environmental pollution from chemical fertilizers, apply Integrated Pest Management techniques. Through nutrition education and SBCC the project will promote good nutritional practices (healthy diets), food safety, WASH practices and health promotion. Through the VNCs, the project will provide sensitization on gender-based violence at household and community levels.
Operational risk related to whether project partners are willing to collaborate and work in convergence in the project area.	M	M	The project will map all the relevant project stakeholders and their engagement mechanisms and continue monitoring the collaboration between stakeholders and the grievance redress mechanism. Include Province, District and Village authorities in steering groups with concerned departments.
Targeting, project implementation, quality of service may be potential sources of grievances.	M	L	Establishment/strengthening of Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) system, awareness creation to complainants. Create awareness to the beneficiaries on the CFM and monitor its use.

Annex 3: Detailed M&E framework for Nutrition activities

Impacts. The SRIWMS Project is Aligned with market-driven and safe agricultural products developed, and rural areas integrated into the national economy (9th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2021–2025); Agriculture Development Strategy to 2025 and Vision to the Year 2030 Central Party’s Resolution on Land; Forestry Strategy to the Year 2020); and National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action, 2021-2025) ¹⁷	
Indicator	
Outcome 1.: High value agricultural production, natural resources management, status of women and community nutrition improved.	
Outcome Indicator 1.1. In target areas, 60% of women of reproductive age meet minimum dietary diversity – MDD-W.	GAFSP Tier 1 Indicator ADB Indicator
Outcome Indicator 1.2. In target areas, 60% of children between 6-23 months meet minimum dietary diversity – MDD-C.	GAFSP Tier 1 Indicator ADB-EU Indicator
Outcome Indicator 1.3. In target areas, 60% of children between 6-23 months meet Minimum Acceptable Diet – MAD.	WFP Indicator ADB-EU Indicator
Outcome Indicator 1.4. Prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity in the population reduced by 15%, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	GAFSP Tier 1 Indicator
Output 4.1 Nutrition awareness and facilities improved.	
Output Indicator 1.1. Percentage (50%) of women’s participation at different levels, including district nutrition teams and village nutrition clubs	ADB Indicator
Output Indicator 1.2. 80 villages reached by the nutrition activities	ADB Indicator Total project: 120+80=200 villages reached by the nutrition activities
Output Indicator 1.3. 80 Village Nutrition Clubs operational and targeted to adolescent girls and women	ADB Indicator Total project: 120 + 80 = 200 Village Nutrition Clubs operational

¹⁷ Government of Lao PDR, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. 2015. Agriculture Development Strategy to 2025 and Vision to the Year 2030. Vientiane, Government of Lao PDR. 2017. Central Party’s Resolution on Land. Vientiane, Government of Lao PDR. 2014. Forestry Strategy to the Year 2020. Vientiane, and Government of Lao PDR. 2015. National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action 2016-2020. Vientiane.

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Indicator	
Output Indicator 1.4. Target districts (5) and provinces (2) applying the MAF’s guidelines to develop and implement a district-wide NSA planning, monitoring, and reporting system	ADB Indicator
Output Indicator 1.5. Percentage of households producing nutrient dense food groups for household consumption increased.	ADB Indicator
Output Indicator 1.6. 2,400 Smallholder producers receiving productivity enhancement support (farmer), of which at least 50% are female	GAFSP Tier 2 Indicator #3 Total project: 6,000 Smallholder producers receiving productivity enhancement support
Output Indicator 1.7. 4,800 People receiving improved nutrition services and products (person), of which at least 60% are female	GAFSP Tier 2 Indicator #12 Total project: 12,000 People receiving improved nutrition services through community nutrition education activities
Output Indicator 1.8. 75 Persons receiving capacity development support (person), of which at least 50% are female	GAFSP Tier 2 Indicator #9

Annex 4: Comments from GAFSP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The GAFSP Technical Advisory Committee identified 6 weak points in the original proposal submitted by ADB and WFP. This project document has provided answers to these 6 points throughout the text where needed. Below is a summary of the identified weaknesses and the response from the project team, where applicable.

Weaknesses identified by the TAC and WFP's responses:

1. Target area, direct beneficiary and targeting strategy are not well described in the proposal and need to be further developed. While the description of project components and activities, and additional results from GAFSP grants (including Annex 2 of the proposal) are interspersed with beneficiary numbers for some activities, the proposal does not provide the total number of people who will benefit from the additional financing. This includes women, youth, and Indigenous beneficiaries.

Response: Under the GAFSP funding an additional 80 villages will be targeted for nutrition activities, with 2,400 additional households or 12,000 people (HH size = 5). 1,440 female farmers will be directly supported with agriculture services and 2,880 women will be directly supported with nutrition services. Around 70% of all beneficiaries will belong to one of the Ethnic Groups living in the project areas. Youth will be mainly targeted through activities for adolescent girls and will benefit around 800 girls.

2. Post-project sustainability needs more development, including lessons from other projects.

Response: Lessons from the AFN project will be considered to address the sustainability issues of the project nutrition activities. At AFN, local ownership of the activities, complemented by establishment and intensive training of local service providers (lead farmers, village technicians, village nutrition facilitators) were identified as the main drivers of sustainability. On district level, the multi-sectoral District Nutrition Committees played a crucial role in mobilizing support from the government line agencies for nutrition sensitive planning.

3. The proposal provides a very comprehensive description of constraints women face and how the AF will address them; however, the target percentage of women beneficiaries is low and does not align with the higher targets of the associated project's Gender Action Plan. Targeting more women needs further development.

Response: It is highly likely that the direct beneficiaries of the nutrition activities will be primarily women, as we have experienced under the AFN project (around 80%). The Logframe in this document has set the minimum percentage of women will be 60%, this will likely be exceeded.

4. The project should explore lessons from the GAFSP-funded Agriculture for Nutrition Project that is nearing completion, as well as recently completed IFAD and WB projects noted in the Development Coordination appendix of the associated project. These lessons should inform project design.

Response: Most of the activities under the nutrition activities funded by GAFSP are directly scaled-up from the nutrition activities implemented by WFP under the AFN project. The AFN Farmer Nutrition School (FNS) model is very similar to the Village Nutrition Clubs (VNC). Furthermore, the nutrition SBCC activities will follow the AFN approach and the nutrition sensitive agriculture activities (home garden trainings, demonstrations and provision of small materials) are similarly copied from the AFN project, with the difference that under the SRIWMSP there will be no provision of cash garden grants, but rather the beneficiaries will be supported with small materials, such as vegetable seeds, drip-irrigation, small livestock, tree saplings etc, depending on the demand and feasibility.

5. The project budget needs clarification. There are inconsistencies in the GAFSP costs between investment and TA. For example, Table A shows a split of US\$9.5 million for investment and US\$4.5 million for TA, while Table B shows it as US\$10.0 million for investment and US\$4.0 million for TA.

Response: The division of project budget between ADB and WFP is ADB: USD 10 million and WFP: USD 4 million.

6. The project design will need to include measures to resolve issues of delayed procurement and the recruitment of staff in provincial areas.

Response: This issue will not affect the nutrition activities. WFP will place 2 additional TA staff on district level, this will probably not be time consuming as WFP can use the existing pool of WFP AFN technical local staff in the North that will be phased out by the end of June 2023. Most procurement is of small materials that can be most likely be procured locally. This will be supported by specialized WFP procurement specialists from the WFP Vientiane office.

Annex 5: WFP Cost Structure

1. Full cost comprises Direct Costs (including Direct Operational Costs and Direct Support Costs) and Indirect Support Costs.

2. Direct Operational Costs include:

(a) Transfer costs:

Costs which add directly to the transfer value of food and cash-based transfer modalities and transfer cost of food assistance, cash-based transfers, capacity strengthening, and service delivery activities and are directly related to the specific transfer and modality within the scope of the outputs.

Transfer costs can include but not limited to: purchase price of a commodity and related costs; the costs of cash or vouchers and related costs (e.g. setting up the delivery mechanism); distribution costs; partners' costs associated with transfer of resources; costs directly attributable to capacity strengthening; and service delivery activities within the scope of the outputs.

(b) Implementation costs:

Costs which are directly linked to implementation of specific activities within the scope of the outputs. Implementation costs can include but not limited to: UN Partner staff working on an output, assessments, monitoring and evaluation related directly to the output; and UN Partner field office expenses such as facility rent and running costs, equipment that are linked to delivering the output. It may also include costs of assessments, monitoring and evaluations, and beneficiary management costs directly linked to an output(s).

(c) Direct support costs (DSC):

Costs that are managed at the country level and directly support multiple activities required for delivery of the outputs. Direct support costs (management and other administrative costs) are not linked to a specific activity/output but shared across various activities within the Country program (referred to as the Country Portfolio Budget). They are extended by the country office to the project but may not be directly attributed to a specific activity. The costs charged to the Project are proportional to the support required for delivery of the outputs and are budgeted on basis of cost sharing with other programs/activities of the UN Partner. Direct Support costs can include but are not limited to: country office management costs (such as heads of units); office rental and maintenance costs; vehicle leasing and running costs, country portfolio evaluations and assessments that are not directly linked to a specific activity; and certain security costs.

4. Indirect Cost rate applicable to the Agreements with the Government that are financed from the loan, credit or grant proceeds obtained from the Bank pursuant to the Financing Agreement between the Government and the Bank, is set up in accordance with WFP General Regulations Rules and the relevant annual decisions of WFP's Executive Board on cost recovery. The ISC rate applicable under this Agreement is 4% (four percent).