



WORKING
BETTER TOGETHER

SUMMARY

European Joint Programming for Lao People's Democratic Republic 2016-2020

Nutrition



OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Aiming to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (SDG2), European partners align their support with the Lao PDR National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016-2020, to improve the nutritional status of children and women, especially the most vulnerable and hard to reach, and reduce significantly the number of stunted children under 5 years old.



Food and nutrition security is about ensuring that everybody is able to access sufficient, affordable and diversified nutritious food. In Lao PDR, access to sufficient and affordable food remains a challenge in itself. Beyond this crucial question, ensuring that food, once obtained, is being utilised and provides adequate nutrition is another key challenge. Nutrition is interlinked with agriculture, food security, social protection, health, education, water and sanitation. As the factors shaping nutrition are multisectoral, so are the interventions that must combine to achieve improvements.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

SO 1 – Support to strengthened nutrition Governance
Leadership, good governance and ownership are central to tackling under-nutrition. European JP support the government's current political commitment to nutrition and solicit broader support from across the development partner community, UN agencies, civil society and private sector so that:

- 1. Nutrition is prominent in national development priorities**, with Lao PDR taking time-bound and measurable commitments such as national stunting reduction targets;
- 2. Sound nutrition governance approaches are applied**, including mobilisation of the most relevant sectors, adoption of costed nutrition plans and strong coordination at national and subnational levels;
- 3. Ensuring nutrition outcomes are clearly defined** at national level;

- 4. Stronger development partner coordination** and alignment and inclusive partnerships, and
- 5. Planning and implementing communication for behaviour change.**

SO 2 – Contribute to scaled-up nutrition specific support
To promote improved integrated access to quality health care services by remote, rural and upland communities and vulnerable communities especially women and young children, support is provided through:

- increasing the number of skilled, professional operational health workers;
- broadening health services' community outreach points; and
- nutrition-specific service delivery mechanisms.

SO 3 – Contribute to scaled-up nutrition sensitive support
EJP invests in interventions (including involvement of local

communities) such as:

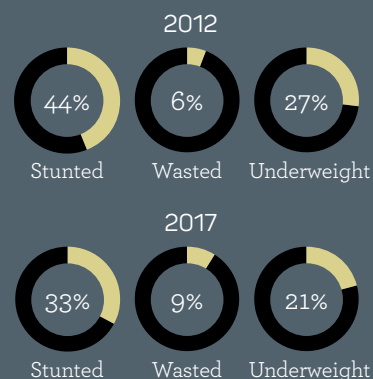
- water and sanitation;
- sustainable nutrition-sensitive farming, including more diverse food production;
- nutrition sensitive services and value chains, and
- empowerment of women to combat under-nutrition.

UPDATE

There has been good progress in strengthening nutrition governance, and stunting rates among children under five years old have fallen. The total number of stunted children has fallen nationally by nearly one third over the past five years. Nevertheless, fundamental weaknesses in the health sector are impeding progress in delivering better nutrition and there remains little progress on basic interventions such as improving the quality of drinking water in households across the country.

'HIDDEN HUNGER'

Healthy children learn better. People with adequate nutrition are more productive and can seize or create opportunities to gradually break the cycles of poverty and hunger, thereby contributing to future wealth creation.



Stunting threatens the human, social and economic development of the country.

It is associated with:



Reduced years of school enrolment



Reduced learning achievement




Future productivity deficit



JOINT PROGRAMMING CONTRIBUTION IN THIS SECTOR FROM 2016 TO 2020



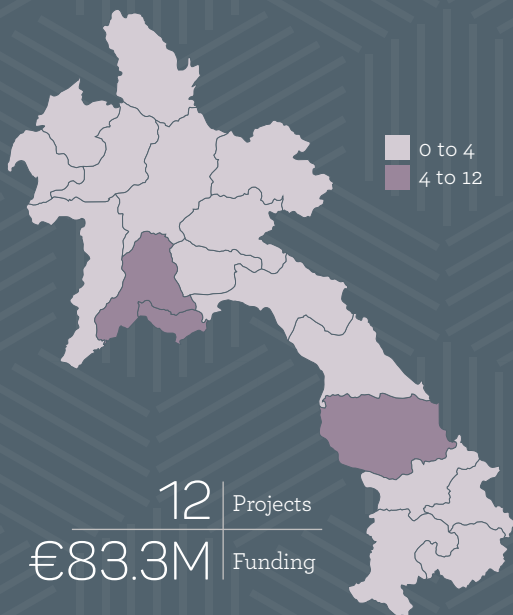
Joint Programming has contributed to the sector's achievement by providing an important platform for internal coordination and complementarity. Nutrition is a convergent sector, with most other areas of Joint Programming able to impact nutrition outcomes. For example, it was helpful for all European JP to view activities in the Agriculture, Health and Education sectors through a nutrition-sensitive lens.

 The **EU** has proactively promoted multi-stakeholder coordination, as the Scaling-Up Nutrition Donor Convener, the co-chair of the Annual National Nutrition Forum and as co-chair of the Development Partners group.

 **France** supports the fight against stunting through the promotion of nutrition-sensitive agricultural practices amongst Lao upland communities in 4 northern provinces.

 **Switzerland** provides support in districts of two northern provinces on nutrition sensitive agriculture, improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as gender and social inclusion.

The map below shows the geographical distribution of Nutrition programmes funded by European Partners through Joint Programming. Projects with national coverage are reported in Vientiane Capital.



IN FOCUS

Sustainable Change Achieved through Linking Improved Nutrition and Governance (SCALING)

With the objective of improving the nutritional status of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and children under 5 in 4 northern provinces, SCALING's Theory of Change is based on a socio-ecological approach, working at strengthening linkages at household level, up through villages, systems, and policy. The action operationalizes at scale the Government's National Nutrition Strategy Action Plan (NNSAP) and convergent approach, working too with agriculture focused NUSAP (Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture in the Northern Uplands of Lao PDR), co-financed by EU and AFD, while improved nutrition governance is supported in partnership with UNICEF.

“After the training, I shared some knowledge with my husband about sharing the workload. Since then, I have observed my husband helping me with household chores. For example, when I am cooking or preparing food for our breakfast, he helps with feeding the pigs and chickens. He also helps look after the children. At the moment I still have little children, so my husband sets me the lighter tasks of weeding the sugar cane and he works longer hours gathering rubber from the plantation, which is considered to be harder and heavier work.” - Ms Pelu



Gender related inequalities are a key barrier to improving nutrition and health care practices for women like Ms Pelu (centre).



PICTURES FRONT PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Woman breastfeeding in northern uplands ©EU/Marie Levy. Teacher coaches students at school handwash facility. ©EU/Chindavanh Vongsaly. Nutrition information in Nong Kiau © NUFNIP. Child growth monitoring © LuxDev.