



Water, Environment and Sanitation (WES)

Lao PDR

Basic Indicators

Total population (1000s)	5,657
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000)	91
Total adult literacy rate (%)	65

Water and Sanitation Coverage

	Water (%)	Sanitation (%)
Urban	66	61
Rural	38	14
Total	43	24

Country Setting

- Lao PDR is among the 10 poorest countries in the world.
- Child survival indicators are among the lowest in Asia.
- Poverty is widespread, especially in remote rural areas among ethnic minorities.
- There is great geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity.
- A newly emergent private sector is contributing to economic development.

WES Sector Setting

- There is ongoing WES sector reform with increased decentralization and an institutional shift from Nam Saat (Ministry of Health) as the main supplier of services to it as the implementation facilitator for provincial, district and village levels.
- Some coverage gains have been made in the past decade but utilization rates are still low.
- New targets: by 2020, increase rural water coverage to 90 per cent of population and sanitation coverage to 80 per cent.
- Community responsibility for operation and maintenance of WES projects needs emphasis.
- Water quality is threatened by increasing chemical and toxic pollutants.
- Cost sharing with communities is part of National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy.

UNICEF WES Programme

Main Components

- Promotion of better hygiene and construction of WES facilities at community level.
- Primary school sanitation and hygiene education.
- Establishment of sustainable management structures, reaching poorest households and maintaining acceptable water quality.

Programme Highlights and Achievements

- UNICEF support critical since 1983 in creating rural infrastructure and building logistic and human resource capacity in all 18 provinces.
- National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy developed in collaboration with SIDA and WSP-EAP.
- UNICEF has leading role in advocating for sustainable sector reforms and decentralization.
- WES services are central to the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- WES activities are core interventions for achieving IECD and girls' education goals.