UNITED NATIONS LAO PDR

EL NIÑO 2026-27

What it means for Lao PDR and how to prepare

Issued on 13 July 2026

El Niño is active and expected to persist through late 2026, increasing the risk of hotter temperatures, uneven rainfall , drought and localized flooding across Lao PDR.

1 WHAT IS EL NIÑO?

Pacific Ocean warms → Atmospheric circulation changes → Rainfall patterns shift → Hotter temperatures & more extremes

El Niño is a naturally ocurring climate phenomenon that occurs every 2-7 years when sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean become warmer than normal. These changes alter global weather patterns and can lead to hotter temperatures, drought, heavy rainfall, and flooding in different parts of the world.

2 LATEST FORECAST

(as of 9 July 2026)

ACTIVE

El Niño conditions are currently present

STRENGTHENING

El Niño is forecast to strengthen rapidly during the second half of 2026.

STRONG EVENT

WMO forecasts a strong El Niño event during July-September 2026.

>90%

Chance of El Niño persisting through early 2027, according to NOAA.

3 WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR LAO PDR

NORTH

Mixed conditions

- Localized heavy rainfall possible
- Up to 40% above-normal rainfal in some areas

CENTRE

Near-normal rainfall

- Near normal overall
- Provinces Khammouane & Savannakhet slightly drier than average

SOUTH

Highest drought risk

- drought possible in several areas
- Potentially persisting till early 2027

National

+0.5 to +2.0° above normal temperatures lasting till January 2027

Source: DMH seasonal outlook, issued 16 June 2026

Key message

El Niño conditions are underway and forecast to strengthen through late 2026, with possible impacts continuing into early 2027. UN agencies and development partners are encouraged to review the implications for ongoing programmes, contingency planning, supply readiness, early action, and coordination with government counterparts.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND EARLY ACTIONS

4 POTENTIAL SECTORAL IMPACTS

AGRICULTURE
- May–Jul planting overlaps with El Niño
- Rainfed rice production may be affected
- Possible harvest shortfalls

FOOD SECURITY
- Lower food production
- Increased food prices
- Higher vulnerability among rural households and vulnerable people

WATER RESOURCES
- Reduced river flows
- Lower reservoir levels
- Potential Drinking water shortages
- Irrigation constraints

ENERGY
- Potention reduction in hydropower generation
- Increased pressure on electricity

ENVIRONMENT
- Higher risk of forest fires
- Wildlife habitats impacted
- Stress on ecosystem

HEALTH
- Heat-related illnesses
- Water-borne diseases
- Poor air-quality from forest fires

5 WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?

MONITOR
- Track DMH weather forecasts, advisories and warnings
- Monitor water levels, reservoir conditions and water availability
- Monitor crop conditions, food production and market prices.

COORDINATE
- Ensure information sharing
- Review and update contingency plans
- Update preparedness arrangements
- Maintain coordination through government and inter-agency preparedness mechanisms.

PREPARE
- Review readiness and prepare for activation if agreed triggers are met.
- Check stocks, procurement and last-mile delivery readiness
- Scale up “no-regret” water, drought & flood measures in hotspots

Government and UN Preparedness Arrangements

Support to Government Preparedness
UN agencies and development partners are encouraged to coordinate with and support the Secretariat of the Central Disaster Management Committee in pre-positioning essential stocks, strengthening preparedness, and aligning assistance with the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan 2026.

SEADRIF-supported risk financing with FAO and WFP
SEADRIF-supported initiatives with FAO and WFP aim to strengthen pre-arranged financing for early action and timely assistance.The FAOsupported pilot focuses on anticipatory drought action, while the WFPsupported policy supports rapid assistance following floods and other disaster shocks.

Sources: WFP and FAO, May 2026

Key Sources

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