



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bhutan Country Brief March 2019



## Operational Context

Bhutan will transition to lower Middle-Income Level status by 2023 and considers WFP's support critical to this transition process.

The national poverty rate, as measured by the international poverty line of USD 1.90 per person per day (PPP), has fallen from 23 percent in 2007 to 8.2 percent in 2017.

Although people's overall nutritional status has improved, health problems related to a lack of nutritional and balanced diets remain a challenge, including micronutrient deficiencies.

Bhutan remains highly vulnerable to earthquakes but lacks the necessary data information systems, response plans and coordination systems to adequately prepare for emergencies.

WFP has been present in Bhutan since 1974.



Population: **0.73 million**

2015 Human Development Index: **132 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **21.2% of children between 6-59 months**

## Highlights

The finalization of Bhutan's Roadmap for Disaster Risk Management is a milestone for the country's emergency preparedness and response capacity, which WFP supports through its Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

WFP's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific visited Bhutan to attend the 14<sup>th</sup> Round Table Meeting (RTM), a stocktaking event gathering donors and partners that is held two times during Bhutan's five-year planning cycle.

## Operational Updates

- A Roadmap for Disaster Risk Management in Bhutan has been finalized jointly by the Royal Government of Bhutan and the United Nations and shared with stakeholders during the 14<sup>th</sup> Round Table Meeting. The Roadmap will form the basis of a coordinated and effective response to potential disasters by detailing priority actions, responsibilities and budget. WFP's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific visited Bhutan to attend the Round Table Meeting and meet with government officials.
- WFP continued to hold discussions with potential donors to explore possibilities for funding and/or collaboration in emergency preparedness and response and disaster risk management.
- Together with the Ministry of Education, WFP rolled out the online digital school feeding monitoring and reporting system to additional districts.
- WFP facilitated an agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited (FCBL) on the billing of logistics services related to the delivery of school meals. The agreement will help the Ministry provide school meals in a more cost-effective way, as logistics services provided by the FCBL will from now on be based on a rate per mt of food delivered.
- Six schools which are piloting an innovative integrated approach to health and nutrition management received a face-lift of their school kitchen and store, including the installation of time- and energy-efficient electric cooking stoves, stainless steel kitchen work tables, shelves and user-friendly sinks for food cleaning and preparation. The schools have contributed through plumbing and masonry works as well as measures to prevent insects from entering the kitchen. The participating schools are committed to meeting the highest standards in hygiene and sanitation, to allow for the production of healthy school meals.

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## WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	April-Sep 2019 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.9 m	1.3 m	0.0 m

### Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** School-age children, women and vulnerable groups in Bhutan have improved nutrition in line with national targets by 2023

**Focus area:** Root Causes

#### Activities:

- Assist the Government in its transition to a national school nutrition programme based on an integrated approach to school feeding that connects school feeding with nutrition education, school health and school agriculture and embeds gender across all activities, strengthened supply chains and school nutrition infrastructure optimization.
- Provide technical assistance to the Government and the national food production and trade sectors to ensure that sound policies are in place and ensure quality and safety of fortified foods, especially rice, throughout their supply chains.

### Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Government has strengthened capability to address food security and nutrition challenges and prepare for and respond to crises, including those resulting from climate change, by 2023.

**Focus area:** Root Causes

#### Activities:

- Provide the Government with gender-informed and vulnerability-focused capacity strengthening relevant to its management of national emergency resources, development, enhancement and testing of national emergency response plans and coordination systems, through WFP's leadership of the emergency logistics and communications sectoral working group.

## Monitoring

- In order to improve the monitoring and reporting system related to the school feeding/nutrition programme, WFP supported the Ministry of Education in the design, development and roll out of a real-time, integrated school-based nutrition, health and education monitoring and reporting system, using the Mobile Data Collection and Analytics (MDCA) platform.
- Monitoring of pilot activities related to the integrated approach continues as and when necessary.

## Operational Updates

- WFP provided comprehensive comments on the draft Strategy for National School Nutrition Programme. This strategy was initiated based on WFP's recommendation with the main objective of facilitating a proper transition from the current school feeding programme to a school nutrition programme. The strategy aims to achieve improvements in the key areas of health, education and agriculture while supporting social and economic development.
- Together with the Ministry of Education, WFP celebrated the first National School Nutrition Day in the country on 23 March 2019. The day was observed in Yangchen Gatsel Middle Secondary School in Thimphu District with participation from 11 public and private schools of the district. Parents of the Yangchen Gatsel school and community members also joined in the celebration. The celebration also served to raise awareness among school children, parents and community members of the importance of good nutrition for children's health and education.

## Challenges

- Lack of technical capacity within the country has led to a delay in implementing some of the capacity strengthening activities. Identifying qualified local consultants continues to be a bottleneck for programme execution.

## Donors

Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) – confirmed for the next four years; contribution balances from Australia, Canada, Private Sector (River Star Foundation, JAWFP)