



World Food Programme

SAVING
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WFP Turkey Country Brief March 2019

Operational Context

Turkey currently hosts the highest number of refugees in the world, 4 million people, of which 3.6 million are from Syria. Only 140,000 refugees reside in camps located in the south-east, while the majority live in cities and villages throughout the country. The Government of Turkey has demonstrated leadership and generosity in providing for the needs of these populations. Since June 2011, a temporary protection regime has granted Syrians access to basic services such as healthcare and education. Refugees of other nationalities benefit from International Protection status.

WFP re-established a presence in Turkey in 2012, in response to the Syria crisis. WFP Turkey's [Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan](#) builds on WFP's partnership with the Government of Turkey and other stakeholders to contribute to refugee households' ability to meet their basic needs, ensuring no vulnerable refugee is left behind.



Population of Turkey:
79.5 million

2018 Human Development Index:
64 out of 188 (0.767)

Income Level: **Upper middle**

Poverty Rate: **28.7 percent** living below the national poverty line (TUIK)

In Numbers

1.63 m people assisted
in March 2019



US\$ 36.4 m distributed in multi-purpose cash

US\$ 0.86 m distributed through value vouchers

Operational Updates

- WFP, in partnership with the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC/Kızılay) and the Turkish Government, with funding from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), continued to deliver assistance through the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), the world's largest humanitarian multi-purpose cash programme.
- In March, the ESSN assisted approximately 1.6 million vulnerable refugees across Turkey, providing each person with TRY 120 (USD 22.6) to help cover their essential needs. The monthly "severe disability top-up" payment of TRY 600 (USD 113 per person) was made to 6,873 of those ESSN beneficiaries.
- In March, WFP in partnership with TRC and the World Academy for Local Government and Democracy (WALD) held interviews to select participants for the Mutfakta Umut Var (MUV) (Kitchen of Hope) project, which allows vulnerable refugees and Turkish citizens to learn cooking skills and get work experience. A total of 488 individuals applied, out of whom 209 were short-listed according to the eligibility criteria. WFP, TRC and WALD interviewed the short-listed candidates at TRC community centres in Ankara and Istanbul. Based on motivation, skills and experience, 60 participants were selected and have been enrolled to start the cooking skills training programme in April. Of this number, 60 percent are Syrians living in Turkey under Temporary Protection (SuTP) and 40 percent Turkish citizens. Of the total participants, 80 percent are female and 20 percent male. An additional 30 SuTP beneficiaries have been enrolled in a two-month Turkish language training course prior to joining the cooking skills training programme in June. The MUV programme combines a two-month technical skills training to obtain a government-issued Chef Apprentice certificate, with an additional two-month on-the job training at a partner hotel, restaurant or café for participants to gain work experience. This activity will promote social cohesion and enhance self-reliance of beneficiaries.
- WFP continues to support over 90,300 refugees in six camps across the southeast of Turkey with a monthly e-voucher worth TRY 50 (USD 9.4) per person to buy food in participating shops. The Turkish Government provides an additional TRY 50 on a separate card for food and non-food items.

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Photo Caption: Interview with participants in the Kitchen of Hope project, in Ankara, Turkey. WFP/ Ozan Toptas

**Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan
(2018-2019)**

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)
1.67 bn	845.2 m
2019 Requirements (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (April–September 2019)*
935.3 m	294.4 m

* Based on current implementation considerations, no imminent shortfall is expected.

Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise and technology strengthen global partnership support to country efforts to achieve the SDGs

Strategic Outcome #1: All eligible refugees in Turkey have access to a safety net addressing their basic needs until a safe return is possible.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide technical advice to and strengthening of national institutions and NGO partners
- Provide technical assistance to Government and NGO partners in order to transfer resources to refugees in Turkish communities.
- Provide technical assistance to Government and NGO partners in order to transfer resources to refugees living in camps in Turkey.
- Provide technical assistance to Government, academia and NGO partners in vocational training and livelihood creation for refugees in Turkey (category 10; modality CBT)

Monitoring

- Findings from the February ESSN Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were released in March. FGDs investigated factors that contribute to the vulnerability of refugees in Turkey. The role of gender was considered from four perspectives: vulnerabilities and capacities; access to resources; future plans and education of children; and division of responsibilities.

The majority of participants reported having at least one literate adult in their household, adding that most adults were capable of using a smartphone or a computer. There were no formally employed participants in any of the FGDs in February. However, in almost all groups, participants reported knowing refugees who were able to find formal jobs enabling them to be registered with the national social security scheme.

According to participants, widowed women faced greater difficulties than most refugee households as they were not able to work and generate income. The majority of the female-headed ESSN beneficiary households and households with chronically ill men often relied only on the ESSN assistance for their basic needs.

The majority of participants reported that restrictions on the movement of refugees were a major barrier to seeking better job opportunities. Women stressed the role of gender and cultural sensitivities in preventing them from participating in the labour force. Most participants reported that decisions over children's education were often made

by adults but in some households, however, children over the age of fifteen were also allowed to contribute to the decision-making process.

- Findings from the ESSN Post-Distribution Monitoring analysis covering November 2018 to January 2019 showed that beneficiaries are still better off than before they received assistance, yet there is a deterioration in almost all indicators during this period, particularly for smaller households and female-headed households. This is attributed to inflation. Eighty-four (84) percent of beneficiaries continue to have acceptable food consumption, a decrease from 89 percent in January 2018. Beneficiaries resorted more to livelihood coping strategies, such as buying food on credit, spending savings and reducing education expenditures. Families also borrowed money, increasing their debt. However, most results are worse for refugees who do not receive the ESSN, which suggests that the assistance is preventing a further deterioration in living standards.

Partnerships

- WFP and TRC collaborate at the country and field level with Turkish authorities, including the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services; the Ministry of Interior's Directorates General of Migration Management and of Population and Citizenship Affairs; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations; as well as Provincial and District Governors' offices. Several agencies participate in the ESSN Governing Board, co-chaired by the Government of Turkey and ECHO.
- An ESSN Task Force in seven locations, co-chaired by WFP and TRC, ensures external coordination with UN agencies and NGOs. This helps to maximise coverage of services for vulnerable refugees and reduce duplications in assistance.

WFP Turkey in the News

- To mark the 3-year anniversary of an EU-Turkey agreement on supporting refugees, on 20 March Turkish broadcaster TRT World carried a news item focusing on the EU-funded ESSN programme assisting over 1.5 million refugees. In an interview, WFP Country Director Nils Grede explained how the programme, implemented by WFP and the Turkish Red Crescent, provides monthly cash transfers to the most vulnerable families. Watch [here](#).

**Donors**

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Germany, Hainan Airlines Group, Ireland, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, USAID