



World Food Programme

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# WFP Mauritania

## Country Brief

January 2019



### Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel, with a population of 4.6 million, living over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km<sup>2</sup> territory. Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting reproductive capacity and resilience of populations and still has high levels of food insecurity, particularly in the eastern and southern regions.

The most recent drought in 2017 sparked acute pasture and water shortages, raised food costs and caused livestock prices to plummet, adding further stress to already impoverished households and food insecure vulnerable people.

The projections of the *Cadre Harmonisé* estimate that 575,600 people will be in a food crisis during the 2019 lean season. 31,000 pregnant and lactating women and 128,000 children (of whom almost 96,000 suffering from moderate acute malnutrition) will need nutritional assistance. Overall, 23 departments have been identified as the most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition in 2019.

Mauritania hosts the second largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with 56,000 refugees registered in Mbera camp. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: **4.6 million**

2018 Human Development Index: **159 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **23% of children between 6-59 months**

## In Numbers

**330 mt** of food assistance distributed

**US\$ 0.8 m** cash-based transfers made

**US\$ 8.3 m** six months (February 2018-July 2019) net funding requirements

**148,00 people assisted**  
in January 2019

### Strategic Updates

- Following the end of the lean season emergency response, the Government held a lessons-learned workshop on the 2018 drought response. It was organized with the financial and technical support of WFP, and followed a similar exercise held in December among food security and nutrition sector partners. Recommendations highlighted the importance for the Government to establish the tools and institutional framework to setup a **national preparedness and response scheme** (in line with Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP) priorities), as well as to produce an integrated plan for the 2019 lean season response.
- WFP co-led the food security and nutrition sectors' efforts aimed at coordinating the development of the **2019 lean season response plan**. The plan is based on a prioritization exercise which identifies 23 departments of the country most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, based on the *Cadre Harmonisé*, food security monitoring system (FSMS) and SMART estimates. Discussions are ongoing with the *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* (CSA) to produce an integrated version of the plan combining the Government's and partners' planned interventions.
- WFP and the World Bank signed a country-level agreement** articulating a joint vision to support the setup of a national Adaptive Social Protection system in Mauritania. The agreement covers the entire duration of the Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022) and details a set of common actions to undertake to achieve this objective. It is part of the corporate partnership framework signed at global level among the two organizations in 2018.
- Considering the serious funding deficit that the **UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** was facing, all users convened to replace the current plane with a less expensive one and double the cost of passengers' tickets. These measures will increase the cost recovery rate and allow flight to continue until March 2019. WFP, UNHCR and SIDA funding have supported the efforts thus far but finding is urgently needed. WFP/UNHAS is continuing fundraising this common and efficient service.
- The country office finalised its **Gender Action Plan**. The goal is to strength WFP's efforts to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into all its work and activities, ensuring that the different food security and nutrition needs of women, men, girls and boys are addressed.

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**Main photo: Credit:** WFP/Agron Dragaj

**Caption:** A WFP beneficiary in Kaedi

## Country Strategic Plan (2019)

2019 Total Requirement (in USD)	2019 Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>36\$ m</b>	<b>6.6 m</b>	<b>8.3 m</b>

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

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises.

**Focus area:** Crisis response

#### Activities:

- Provide food/cash assistance (conditional and/or unconditional), school meals, and preventive nutrition ration and MAM treatment to refugees

### Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Food-insecure populations, including school-age children, have access to adequate and nutritious food all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

#### Activities:

- Provide seasonal food assistance to food-insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment
- Provide school meals to vulnerable Mauritanian children

### Strategic Result 3: No one suffers from malnutrition

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant and lactating women and girls, have improved nutritional status all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

#### Activities:

- MAM treatment and cash transfers to pregnant and lactating women and girls attending pre/post-natal care

### Strategic Result 4: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

**Strategic Outcome 4:** Food-insecure populations and communities exposed to climate shocks have more resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

#### Activities:

- Provide livelihood support to food-insecure and at-risk Mauritanian households, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets

### Strategic Result 5: Country strategic capacities

**Strategic Outcome 5:** National institutions have strengthened capacities to manage food security, nutrition and social protection policies and programmes, including an adaptive (shock responsive) social protection system, by 2030.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

#### Activities:

- Provide training and technical support to government institutions

### Strategic Result 6: Global partnership support

**Strategic Outcome 6:** Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services that permit them to reach and operate in targeted areas all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

#### Activities:

- Provide flight services to humanitarian partners, towards humanitarian interventions

## Operational Updates

- In Mbera camp, food balances carried over from 2018 allowed WFP to continue to assist **53,000 refugees** (97 percent of the target) with reduced mixed cash/food ration, covering 70 percent of the refugees' kcal needs. More than **500 children and women** continued to receive curative malnutrition support. In parallel, WFP continued providing **4,000 refugee schoolchildren** with a daily nutritious meal to improve their nutritional intake and to encourage parents to send children to school regularly.
- In the regions of Assaba, Hodh ech-Charghi and Guidimakha, WFP is implementing a longer-term **resilience package**, serving both protective and productive safety-net functions. The package, designed to shift communities from chronic vulnerability to durable resilience and self-support, integrates providing livelihood support in the form of food assistance for assets and implementing school feeding activities. Through its **school feeding programme**, WFP provided two daily meals - a warm morning porridge and a hot lunch prepared with rice, pulses and vegetable oil - to more than **37,000 children** attending primary schools in the regions of Assaba and Guidimakha.
- **Food assistance for assets activities** continued to take place in 40 villages located in the regions of Hodh EchCharghi, Guidimakha and Assaba, and consisted of soil conservation, dune stabilization and agroforestry activities. WFP elaborated multi-sectorial plans to be implemented in the coming months, and tailored to local priorities, ensuring prioritisation and ownership by communities throughout a participatory planning approach. Under the *Projet d'Adaptation à la Résilience et aux Changements Climatiques* (PARSAAC), **54,000** beneficiaries were involved in plantation activities (more than 6,000 fruit trees were planted in 16 sites) as well as in building functional chickraen coops in 6 villages. Water harvesting, and conservation activities mainly for family gardening and livestock watering were carried out in more than 20 sites.
- The UN Humanitarian Air Service (**UNHAS**) transported 111 passengers and over 69 kg cargo, connecting Nouakchott-Bassikounou-Kiffa, through over 19 in-country rotations. UNHAS still didn't receive official authorization to resume flight operations in three locations (Kaedi, Aioun and Selibaby) out of the six planned. The temporary authorization to fly to Kiffa is still valid, to compensate the temporary closure of the Nema airport for maintenance works. Nema airport will be closed until further notice.

## Challenges

- **USD 8.3 million is needed for WFP operations in Mauritania for the next six months, February to July 2019.** Refugee operations face a deficit of USD 2 million. USD 1 million is needed for school feeding activities. Seasonal assistance to food insecure Mauritania populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment to pregnant and lactating women and children, faces USD 4.3 million shortfall. USD 1 million is needed for UNHAS activities.

## Donors:

European Commission, Germany, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, UN Agencies, United Kingdom and USA