



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Nicaragua Country Brief March 2019



Operational Context

Whilst Nicaragua has achieved sustained economic growth and human development in recent years, it continues to be a food deficit country (FAO 2016) and one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Undernourishment has improved, yet the prevalence of chronic undernutrition is 17 per cent and rates are higher in Madriz (30 per cent), Jinotega, and Nueva Segovia (28 per cent). Additionally, obesity and overweight are on the rise.

Nicaragua is vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters, ranking fourth in the Long-Term World Climate Risk Index (Germanwatch, 2016). Food insecurity relates closely to poverty, recurrent natural disasters, and the effects of climate change.

Agriculture accounts for 17 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the main source of livelihoods for 80 per cent of the rural population, including vulnerable women and men farmers, who struggle to place their production in formal markets. Women farmers face greater challenges than men do due to the persistence of a gender gap in rural areas.

WFP supports the Government's Zero Hunger efforts by strengthening social safety nets, fostering disaster risk reduction and food security of smallholder farmers. WFP has been present in Nicaragua since 1971.



Population: **6.08 million**

2015 Human Development Index: **124 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **17% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

USD 2.7 m six months net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- As WFP prepares to start its new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) in April 2019, March was an important planning month to prepare for the next five-year programmatic cycle. Thus, WFP began assessments to map and analyse the capacities of the farmer organizations (FOs) that will receive WFP support during 2019-2023, including three new FOs. These farmer organizations will join 12 others that already receive technical assistance, inputs, and equipment to improve their climate and economic resilience, enhancing their sales to formal markets. To determine which farmer organizations will be targeted under the CSP, WFP is applying a series of criteria, including a minimum level of women membership, since promoting gender equality and women empowerment are at the centre of these activities.
- WFP continued supporting women and men farmers from its assisted farmer organizations. As part of these efforts, WFP delivered important equipment to two FOs, to improve their aggregation capacity and the quality of staple food production. With this new equipment, the FOs will be able to provide better services to its members and will have improved chances to place their staple food production in formal markets.
- Additionally, WFP supported another one of its assisted organizations, COMPARE, facilitating its participation in a two-day event, hosted by the NGO Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) for key stakeholders in the agricultural sector. During the two-day event, COMPARE was able to showcase its products on a stall, giving visibility to its work.
- WFP also continued to support the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation, and Response (SINAPRED) in the development of a national risk communication strategy, which aims to generate a culture of preparedness and improve risk perceptions among disaster-prone populations. To design the strategy, WFP and SINAPRED conducted field assessments in March, carrying out surveys at the household level in 46 municipalities to gather data to help identify the information requirements of the different target groups, the messaging, and the right communication channels. The strategy will be developed and institutionalized during 2019, as part of national risk management programmes of SINAPRED.

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

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
68.4 m	16.7 m	2.7 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Pre and Primary schoolchildren and persons living with HIV have access to adequate food and nutrition during 2018

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- Provide school meals to pre and primary school children in targeted municipalities to incentivise access to the national school meals programme and increase access to food
- Provide food assistance to HIV patients

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 4: Shock affected populations have access to adequate and nutritious food after an emergency

Focus area: Crises Response

Activities:

- Scale-up school meals for schoolchildren in shock-affected areas
- Provide food assistance to shock-affected populations.

Strategic Result 2: End Malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Nutritionally vulnerable groups in the targeted areas meet their nutritional needs during 2018

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- Provide food assistance to PLW/G and children aged 6-36 months to prevent malnutrition.

Strategic Result 3: Smallholder Farmer Productivity

Strategic Outcome 3: Smallholder farmers in targeted departments increase their food security and access to markets all year round

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance to smallholder farmers to enhance access to formal markets, generating linkages with national social safety nets and empowering women.

Strategic Result 5: Capacity Strengthening

Strategic Outcome 5: National institutions and programmes are strengthened to prevent and respond to shocks during 2018

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance to the government in disaster risk management, supporting national programmes

perspective into daily work and guaranteeing the implementation of WFP's Gender Policy (2015-2020) at the field level. As part of the programme, WFP strengthened local staff capacities; and revised its planning tools and implementation strategies to ensure that its work addressed the different needs of women, girls, men, and boys. In February, the Country Office completed the programme and received a certification from the Gender Office, showing its commitment to advancing gender

- WFP prepared for building kitchens and storage rooms in nine schools in the department of Jinotega, as parts of its contribution to the Government-led school feeding programme. These infrastructure projects will bring much needed support to the schools and their communities, generating safe and hygienic environments for food preparation and consumption. School Feeding is the largest national social protection programme in Nicaragua. WFP supports its implementation, reaching over 165,000 pre- and primary schoolchildren with daily school meals. The school feeding programme guarantees uninterrupted access to nutritious food and provides incentives for children to stay in school. At times of economic hardship, the programme alleviates the food burden and economic pressures at home, preventing low-income households from adopting negative coping strategies, such as removing children from school.

Monitoring

- During March, WFP conducted post distribution monitoring in schools in Jinotega and the Northern Autonomous Caribbean Coast, providing oversight to the implementation and collecting output and process indicators, as established in the monitoring system.

Challenges

- The school feeding programme is facing funding constraints for the upcoming food distributions. If funds are not secured, ration cuts can be expected as of April, posing a risk to school children's access to nutritious food. For some, the food basket that they receive at schools is the only meal of the day.
- With the new CSP starting in April, WFP is seeking funding for its disaster risk reduction activities to provide technical assistance to the Government of Nicaragua. Activities are key to guarantee food and nutrition security, as strong and recurrent natural hazards disrupt the livelihoods of the most vulnerable and threaten the sustainability of food systems. WFP is strongly advocating with the international community for support.
- WFP is also seeking for support to allow for the prepositioning of food for emergency response. Prepositioning food is key in a country like Nicaragua, where disasters occur frequently, and lead times for food procurement are long. To guarantee a fast response to a sudden onset shock, particularly during the hurricane season, WFP will need to start the procurement process in the coming two months.

Donors

Canada, European Union, Japan, Nicaragua, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, and Switzerland.