



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Nicaragua Country Brief April 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 to 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 2.7m** six months net funding requirements

**178,000 people assisted**  
in April 2019



## Operational Updates

- At the end of April, WFP began the second school feeding distribution of the year, together with the Ministry of Education, covering 60 school days. The school feeding programme is the largest national social protection programme in Nicaragua, reaching about 1.2 million children across the country. WFP supports its implementation in the Northern Autonomous Caribbean Coast (RACCN) and Jinotega and will directly support 178,000 pre-, primary, and secondary school children. The programme provides much needed support, guaranteeing uninterrupted access to nutritious food and at the same time providing incentives for children to stay in school. At times of economic hardship, it alleviates the food burden and economic pressures at home, preventing low-income households from adopting negative coping strategies, such as removing children from school.
- WFP also continued its efforts to introduce nutrition-sensitive actions into the school feeding programme. WFP is conducting a pilot activity for the fortification of 110 mt of rice, seeking to increase the consumption of fortified food by pupils and the demand for fortified rice by social protection programmes. During April, WFP identified local service providers to carry out the fortification process, which will be completed in June and distributed in the second half of the year to the targeted schools. During 2019, WFP will continue to advocate for the distribution of fortified rice at schools. It will also help generate greater awareness among parents and members of the school community of the importance of consuming fortified food to guarantee a satisfactory intake of vitamins, minerals, and other micronutrients.

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## Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

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:** People in targeted areas who are living in poverty or vulnerable to food insecurity have access to adequate nutritious food all year round by 2023.

**Focus area:** Resilience

**Activities:**

- Provide nutritious school meals to school boys and girls in targeted areas, complementing the national programme, and strengthen national nutrition and gender-sensitive social protection programmes that promote food security.

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

**Strategic Outcome 4:** Populations affected by shocks have access to adequate and nutritious food during and after an emergency

**Focus area:** Crisis response

**Activities:**

- Provide food assistance to populations affected by shocks.

### Strategic Result 4: Sustainable Food Systems

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers in targeted areas benefit from sustainable food systems and have strengthened capacities to cope with shocks, climate change and natural hazards by 2023.

**Focus area:** Resilience

**Activities:**

- Provide government institutions with technical assistance in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation with a view to reducing the vulnerability to food insecurity of populations prone to disasters.
- Provide technical assistance to smallholder farmers in order to increase their resilience, improve their livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability to adverse climate events.

### Strategic Result 5: Capacity Strengthening

**Strategic Outcome 3:** National institutions have improved capacities to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and to incorporate gender-transformative approaches into programmes, contributing to the achievement of zero hunger by 2023

**Focus area:** Root causes

**Activities:**

- Provide technical assistance to the Government in designing and implementing gender-transformative interventions for promoting gender equality and food security and nutrition.

- As WFP Nicaragua started its new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) in April 2019, this month served to plan the activities WFP will implement in support of smallholder farmers, including new actions aimed at promoting food transformation. The consultative planning process has led to the identification of concrete actions to support smallholder farmers in their access to credit and agricultural inputs. Additionally, with the first planting season of the year approaching (May), WFP facilitated exchanges between smallholder farmer organizations and three providers of agricultural inputs. This served to establish price agreements and anticipate future contracts under more favourable terms for the farmer organizations.
- Finally, WFP facilitated the participation of the Government of Nicaragua at the Latin America and Caribbean Forum "Strengthening Social Protection to Enhance Resilience to Shocks" held in Peru. The Government of Nicaragua was represented by the Co-Director of the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation, and Response (SINAPRED), who was accompanied by WFP's Representative in Nicaragua. This was an important space for South-South cooperation, where the different governments of the region could exchange best practices and lessons learned on shock-responsive social protection systems. Such activities are highly relevant, considering that Nicaragua is a multi-hazard country, with high exposure and vulnerability to climatic shocks.

## Challenges

- 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. As of now, this activity is severely underfunded, with no resources available to implement actions in 2019.
- 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.