



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bhutan Country Brief May 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

Staff from WFP Bhutan and officials from the Government attended the Cargill and WFP Innovation Bootcamp in Munich, Germany, to work on EduTriton, an innovative learning platform from improving nutrition in schools.

## Operational Updates

- Following the release of the Logistics Capacity Assessment report, planning will commence with the Royal Government of Bhutan (Department of Disaster Management) on developing a strategic capacity strengthening plan for both national level and rural staff on logistics issues. Pre-positioning of humanitarian items will be discussed with the different sectors to enable an overall logistics capacity needs plan to be developed.
- Discussions have been held with the DeSuung for the ongoing support of these frontline responders. A two-day meeting will be held to raise issues, challenges and training needs to enable us to develop a long-term training programme for staff at all levels.
- The bootcamp in Munich familiarized the team with tools and techniques to use to develop plans, validate ideas and take EduTriton forward. EduTriton is a digital game-based learning platform for school children that promotes nutrition education and behaviour change while integrating physical activity in schools to address malnutrition including Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD). EduTriton was proposed for the innovation award.
- A multi-sectoral delegation from the Royal Government of Bhutan, accompanied by officials from WFP Bhutan, had a successful visit to India between 26-30 May. They interacted with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and WFP India to learn about their regulatory framework for fortified food, especially on laboratory testing and analysis, and learn the essence of the Eat Right Movement in India, which was pioneered by FSSAI.

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## WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jun-Nov 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.

## Operational Updates (continued)

- The national standards setting for fortified rice, through the adoption of WFP specifications and standards, started in May and will be completed by June 2020. The Bhutan Standards Bureau is coordinating this standard setting, upon request by the Department of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, which is the lead agency for the Bhutan Food Fortification Programme, together with WFP.
- WFP, with technical contribution from the Bhutan Ecological Society (BES), a civil society organization, and the Ministry of Education, conducted an assessment of existing standards of school kitchens and food storage. This assessment will help to inform decision-making during the development of a minimum standards for school kitchens and food storage that would enable a clean and hygienic environment to ensure healthy school meals.

## Monitoring

- To improve the monitoring and reporting system related to the school feeding and 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 platform.
- WFP continues to monitor pilot activities related to the integrated approach as and when necessary.

## Challenges

- Capacity of the cooperating partners: While the partners of the school feeding team in the Ministry of Education are highly committed, unfortunately they are limited in number and time with a high rate of staff turnover, so it will be important to find a balance between the need to develop capacity and their regular work obligations. The Department for Disaster Management also has limited capacity – both technically and financially – which may limit the response capacity in an emergency.
- Funding: While some of WFP's activities in Bhutan are well funded, its emergency preparedness and response (EPR) activities face funding shortages. EPR activities are critical to WFP's shift in direction in Bhutan, which aims to contribute to the country's achievement of SDG 2. WFP is exploring possible funding, in support of EPR activities, from Japan, Australia and the UK.

## Donors

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