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# WFP Bhutan Country Brief

June 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

The country office is exploring funding opportunities in support of Emergency Preparedness and Response activities from Australia, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

## Operational Updates

- WFP is partnering with Durham University to complete a research study on the potential impact that earthquakes would have in Bhutan. This involves modelling earthquakes of different magnitudes, occurring at different times of day, and comparing the impact they have on building types as well as urban and rural households. The study will inform emergency planning, the prepositioning of humanitarian assistance and the positioning of logistics hubs at strategic locations.
- WFP facilitated a follow up meeting between stakeholders and Durham University researchers to finalise the earthquake impact model by selecting appropriate indicators for the Bhutan context. The model should be completed before the end of 2019.
- A team from Newcastle University came to Bhutan to plan a study with the aim of improving earthquake early warning systems, especially in relation to Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) triggers. This study would initially be undertaken in the Lunana area, to try to identify and quantify potential triggers that may indicate that a GLOF is imminent. This data could then be used to increase the length of time between a warning and the flood impact, thus enabling communities downstream to take preventive action.
- While they were in Bhutan, the Newcastle University Researchers undertook a four-day visit to the Jechu Drake glacial lake to test the equipment that they planned to use in later stages of the study. Staff from WFP and National Centre for Hydrology and Meteorology accompanied them. All equipment functioned well, and the team was very positive about the future of the project.
- As the government of Bhutan has made the School Nutrition Programme (SNP) a flagship program, WFP is closely supporting the involved Ministries of Education, Agriculture and Health to develop a national SNP policy and implementation system. This will address the large diversity of Bhutan in terms of seasonal vegetable production and access to markets. WFP is also developing a collaboration with IFAD, FAO and the World Bank on the SNP, to build upon existing good practice, and to learn from previous challenges.

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# WFP Bhutan Strategy

## Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jul-Dec 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.

## Monitoring

- To improve the monitoring and reporting system related to the school feeding and nutrition programme, WFP supported the Ministry of Education to design, develop and roll out a real-time, integrated school-based nutrition, health and education monitoring and reporting system, using the Mobile Data Collection and Analytics platform.

## Challenges

- Capacity of 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)