



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief July 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 Government of Bhutan conducted a 5-day training for 58 school cooks, wardens and teachers on food preparation and the integration of health, nutrition, agriculture and WASH activities.

Operational Updates

- The trainings on food preparation targeted six schools in July and primarily centred around food safety, hygiene and nutritious cooking. WFP provided technical and financial assistance and the training was headed by officials from the Ministry of Education and staff from WFP.
- WFP conducted a training on the inspection and quality control of fortified rice for the Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) inspectors. The training lasted three days and involved all stakeholders including the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited, BAFRA, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, the Ministry of Education and WFP. WFP brought in an expert on rice fortification from its regional office to conduct the training.
- WFP continues to seek support from donors and partners towards its Emergency Preparedness and Response activities.
- WFP participated in a Business Continuity Plan exercise organised by the UN Security Management Team in Bhutan. This provided the opportunity for WFP to update some of its preparedness measures to ensure business continuity in case of an emergency.
- WFP continues to work internally and with partners from the Rome Based Agencies and the World Bank to support the Government as it develops the Agricultural Strategy 2040.

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Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Bhutan

WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Aug 2019-Jan 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.9 m	1.33 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.

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)