



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief August 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

WFP Bhutan has started a project to link farmers to the national school meals programme in Trongsa District. Part of the School Nutrition Programme, one of the components of the project focuses on developing WFP's innovative menu optimizer tool ('PLUS').

US \$0.4 million – Six months net funding requirement (September 2019 – February 2020)

Operational Updates

- WFP coordinated a joint meeting with the FAO, IFAD and the World Bank to identify opportunities for inter-agency collaboration. All four agencies have the expertise to support the agricultural sector in Bhutan. During the meeting they discussed how to build synergies and emphasized the importance of following the right process to effectively develop the agriculture strategy 2040.

During the meeting, WFP also shared its plans to support the Government's school and hospital feeding programme, initially in the pilot district of Trongsa, by working jointly with government agencies. The pilot will support the direct linkage of farmers groups with schools and promote nutrition sufficiency of school meals.

- WFP continues to test and improve the menu optimizer tool ('PLUS') with the Ministry of Education. The tool will help improve the nutrition content of school meals in a way that is cost-effective way, increases the use of available local food and supports district-based menu planning.
- WFP coordinated a UN Emergency Task Force meeting with other UN agencies. At the meeting WFP updated cluster and sector leads on pertinent issues and presented a road map for Disaster Risk Management in Bhutan. Other focuses of the discussion included coordination, how to link UN clusters with the Government's Incident Command System desks and an upcoming simulation activity being organized by the Bhutan Red Cross Society.
- Officer's from the Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority are conducting a trial quality inspection of rice fortification facilities in Phuentsholing (the main entry gate from India). This trail tests the standard operating procedures (SOP) for quality inspection services that are needed for rice fortification. The inspection follows the quality inspection training that WFP held for BAFRA food inspectors in July.

Contact info: [Dungkar Drukpa \(dungkar.drukpa@wfp.org\)](mailto:dungkar.drukpa@wfp.org)

Country Director: [Svante Helms](#)

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

WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Sep 2019 – Feb 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.9 m	1.3 m	0.4 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.

- WFP is pursuing partnership with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Development Fund (SDF) in the area of rice fortification.

Challenges

- Capacity of the implementing partners - while the partners of the nutrition team are highly committed, they are limited in number and time with high staff turnover rate. 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 its response capacity in an emergency.

Donors

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