



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Mauritania

## Country Brief

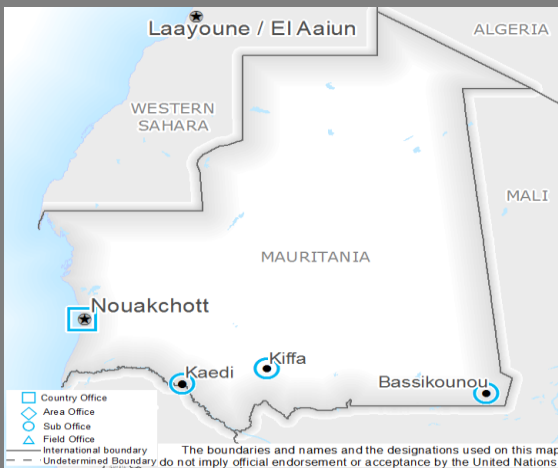
October 2019



### Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel, with a population of 4.6 million, living over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km<sup>2</sup> territory. Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting reproductive capacity and resilience of populations. High levels of food insecurity are still recorded, particularly in the eastern and southern regions. The most recent drought in 2017 sparked acute pasture and water shortages, raised food costs and caused livestock prices to plummet, adding further stress to already impoverished households and food insecure vulnerable people. A total of 10,000 pregnant and lactating women and 128,000 children (of whom almost 41,000 suffering from moderate acute malnutrition) need nutritional assistance. Overall, 23 departments were identified as the most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition in 2019.

WFP operations are currently focused on development interventions to improve food security, reduce malnutrition, enhance education achievements, minimise gender inequalities, strengthen institutional capacity, and helps communities adapt to climate change and reduce exposure to natural shock. Mauritania hosts the second largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with close to 57,000 refugees registered in Mbera camp. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: **4.6 million**

2017 Human Development Index: **159 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **23% of children between 6-59 months**

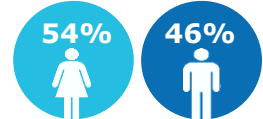
## In Numbers

**492 mt** of food assistance distributed

**US\$ 1.2 m** cash-based transfers made

**US\$ 11 m** six months (November 2019 – April 2020) net funding requirements

**159,357 people assisted** in October 2019



### Operational Updates

- Interventions in support of drought-affected people during the lean season ended in October. A preliminary appraisal of WFP's drought-response activities indicates a positive response provided from June in the regions of Guidimakha, Assaba and Gorgol, identified as having the highest prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition in by various assessments conducted in 2018 and 2019. A total of 98,549 people (86 percent of the target) received cash transfers as part of the general food distributions, including 3,479 children and 2,118 pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) who also received fortified blended foods to prevent malnutrition. A total of 6,889 children were treated for moderate malnutrition. This activity will be implemented until February 2020.
- In December, food security and nutrition partners will hold a lesson learned exercise to discuss relative strengths and weaknesses in terms of early warning system, response planning and implementation as well as to draw the lessons learned.
- The third round of cash assistance applying refugees' vulnerability-based targeting took place in Mbera camp. After the removal in April and July of groups 6 and 5 (the most food secure ones), in October 6,060 people belonging to group 4 only received the cash portion of the mixed ration (withdrawal of the food portion). Nutrition support activities are maintained for all groups regardless of their level of vulnerability. Moreover, the households removed from general food distribution will benefit from food assistance for asset creation that WFP plans to introduce for refugees and host populations towards the end of the year, as part of the integrated livelihood strategy in Bassikounou.
- WFP continued to strengthen the national Commission for Food Security (CSA)'s capacity to customize its parametric insurance, with two training sessions carried out in October for ten members of the Technical Working Group in charge of African Risk Capacity's (ARC) Replica Coverage programme. WFP also submitted a final implementation plan to the CSA as it is expected to receive a pay-out from ARC for the drought recorded during the lean season. This pay-out is expected to finance the provision of cash-based transfers in Tagant between March and May in 2020. The plan was submitted to the government for approval in October.
- In the framework of the setting up of the future permanent early warning and shock response system, WFP in collaboration with the two cooperating partners, ACF and Oxfam, conducted a field mission, to visit the intervention areas of the DIPECHO project (Gorgol and Guidimakha regions) in order to ensure the smooth implementation of the activities for the deployment of community presidia sites and of the coordination mechanisms at regional level.
- The International Food Day was celebrated on 16 October in Nouakchott. This day is celebrated each year by the Ministry of Rural Development in collaboration with FAO, and with WFP support. An exhibition in which participated various agricultural organizations and cooperatives was held to showcase some local products. A special event in which participated the Government and the civil society was also organized on 24 October by the United Nations System to celebrate the United Nations Day.

**Contact info:** Maria Ludovica Carucci: [marialudovica.carucci@wfp.org](mailto:marialudovica.carucci@wfp.org)

**Country Director:** Nacer Benalleg, [nacer.benalleg@wfp.org](mailto:nacer.benalleg@wfp.org)

**Further information:** <http://www1.wfp.org/countries/mauritania>

**Main photo:** Credit: WFP/ Francesc Galban

**Caption:** Children standing in front of WFP car, Kiffa

## Country Strategic Plan (2019)

2019 Total Requirement (in USD)	2019 Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>36 m</b>	<b>0.28 m</b>	<b>11 m*</b>

\*As of 30 October 2019

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

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises.

**Focus area:** Crisis response

**Activities:**

- Provide food/cash assistance (conditional and/or unconditional), school meals, and preventive nutrition ration and MAM treatment to refugees

### Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Food-insecure populations, including school-age children, have access to adequate and nutritious food all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

**Activities:**

- Provide seasonal food assistance to food-insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment
- Provide school meals to vulnerable Mauritanian children

### Strategic Result 3: No one suffers from malnutrition

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant and lactating women and girls, have improved nutritional status all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

**Activities:**

- MAM treatment and cash transfers to pregnant and lactating women and girls attending pre/post-natal care

### Strategic Result 4: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

**Strategic Outcome 4:** Food-insecure populations and communities exposed to climate shocks have more resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

**Activities:**

- Provide livelihood support to food-insecure and at-risk Mauritanian households, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets

### Strategic Result 5: Country strategic capacities

**Strategic Outcome 5:** National institutions have strengthened capacities to manage food security, nutrition and social protection policies and programmes, including an adaptive (shock responsive) social protection system, by 2030.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

**Activities:**

- Provide training and technical support to government institutions

### Strategic Result 6: Global partnership support

**Strategic Outcome 6:** Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services that permit them to reach and operate in targeted areas all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

**Activities:**

- Provide flight services to humanitarian partners, towards humanitarian interventions

- In **Mbera camp**, general food distributions through in-kind food and cash transfers took place from 28 October to 1 November, reaching 52,477 individuals (of which 55 percent women), representing 97 percent of the target. A hybrid food basket composed of 250 gr (per person per day) of rice, 25 gr of oil and 5 gr of salt and USD 12 per person per month was distributed to beneficiaries (96 percent of implementation rate). A total of 1,496 pregnant and lactating women (100 percent of the target) received 30-day ration of fortified blended foods for malnutrition prevention. This activity was preceded by an awareness campaign and carried out simultaneously with the screening. Children were not assisted due to funding deficit. Activities for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition were conducted, reaching 593 children (of which 50 percent girls) aged 6 to 59 months with lipid-based nutrient supplements. A total of 186 children were newly admitted, 243 were healed and discharged, while 431 remained in the programme.

- In the framework of food assistance for asset creation activities (FFA), cooperating partners developed operational plans for the period October–December 2019 and January–March 2020, which will serve as a basis for the implementation of next year activities. All operational plans were developed in collaboration with communities (through community-based participatory planning exercises). A total of 10,855 beneficiaries took part in food assistance for asset activities.

- In October, WFP reached 66,232 drought-affected people through food and cash assistance, and preventative and curative nutrition activities as part of the lean season response.

- The school feeding programme resumed in October for the 2019/2020 school year, reaching 29,793 Mauritanian children in 324 schools (60 percent of the target in 324 schools). As part of the integrated resilience strategy in the Sahel, this year the school feeding programme will be implemented in villages where WFP is already carrying out FFA activities.

- The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) transported 129 passengers and 666 kg cargo in October, connecting Nouakchott–Nema–Kiffa, through over 31 in-country rotations.

## Monitoring

- Rainfall deficit in 2019 combined with an already unfavourable rainy season in 2017 and 2018 could lead to a cumulative impact on the food security of populations, who have exhausted most of their coping strategies in the past years.
- Price analysis collected in several markets around Mbera camp show stable cereals and livestock prices. Basic food products are available in the markets.

## Challenges

- USD 11 million are urgently needed for WFP operations in Mauritania for the next six months, representing 65 percent of the period requirements (USD 16.9 million). Assistance to Malian refugees faces a funding deficit of USD 7.4 million, USD 2.2 million is needed for the implementation of food assistance and nutrition activities while USD 1.1 million is required for FFA and USD 0.6 million for UNHAS activities.
- Since 18 September, due to the deteriorated condition of the airstrip, air operations from Bassikounou are suspended until the airstrip is rehabilitated. WFP is seeking USD 740,000 to carry out the necessary rehabilitation works and continue providing reliable air transport services to Hodh El Charghi region for the humanitarian community.

## Donors

Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Monaco, Sweden, UN Agencies, United Kingdom and USA