



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bhutan Country Brief October 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 supports nutrition and agriculture in Bhutan, which includes strengthening the capacity of farmers and government agencies. One component of this support is on developing WFP's innovative menu optimizer tool, 'PLUS'. Additionally, as part of WFP's support of food fortification in Bhutan, WFP is working on the development of Bhutanese standards for fortified rice, which will form the starting point for the development of a regulatory and compliance framework for fortified rice.

## Operational Updates

- WFP took part in the Scale-up Innovation Bootcamp in Google's headquarters in San Francisco. During the event, WFP presented the School Meals Menu Optimizer tool called 'PLUS'. Bhutan is the lead country of implementation for the tool, which will ensure that the meals in the school feeding programme are nutritious.
- The implementing agencies of the national school feeding and nutrition programme, including WFP, UNICEF and FAO, convened a consultative workshop in October to finalize a draft handbook for the programme. The handbook has been shared to be tested by 20 selected schools across the country. The School Health and Nutrition Division of the Ministry of Education hopes to finalize and release the handbook, which provides practical guidance on the implementation of the programme at the school level as well as the district and national levels.
- In collaboration with the Royal Education Council of Bhutan, WFP is in the process of developing a game-based learning application called EduTriton. A gaming company from India has been contracted to develop the prototype with support from the WFP Innovation Centre in Munich. The platform will strengthen nutrition education and integrate physical activity in the schools' learning sessions, to address micronutrient deficiencies and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in children.

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# WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Nov 19 – Apr 20 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.9 m	1.49 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.

- WFP Bhutan participated in a workshop coordinated by the Bhutan Standards Bureau held from 24-25 October with the aim of drafting the national standards for fortified rice and fortified rice kernels. These draft standards will be presented to a higher technical committee in Bhutan prior to a nation-wide circulation. Food fortification is an important nutrition activity supported by WFP in Bhutan to address micronutrient deficiencies among the Bhutanese. WFP is supporting the multi-sectoral Food Fortification Taskforce by developing a regulatory and compliance framework for the Food Fortification Programme. This will start with the development of Bhutanese standards for fortified rice.

## Challenges

- Bhutan lacks a full awareness of disaster risks, partly compounded by the fact that the country has not faced major disasters in recent times. There is low awareness on the relationship between disasters and its impact on food security. WFP is therefore working with government partners to increase national disaster awareness.
- While the implementing partners in nutrition are highly committed, their numbers are limited, which hinders their ability to support the implementation of national health and nutrition strategies. WFP is therefore supporting the Department for Disaster Management to build stronger national capacity to prepare and respond to disasters.

## Donors

Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) – confirmed for the next four years;

Australia,

Canada,

Private Sector: (River Star Foundation, JAWFP)