



# WFP Mauritania

## Country Brief

January 2020

World Food Programme

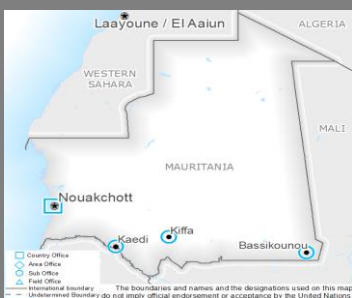
SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



### Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel with a population of 4.7 million that lives 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, resilience and food security of the population. In 2019, Mauritania's southern agropastoral regions experienced for the third consecutive year drought-like conditions. Moreover, projections of the food insecurity forecast model predict high levels of food insecurity in rural Mauritania for the 2020 lean season, particularly in Assaba, Guidimakha, and Tagant. Major concerns relate to the livelihoods of subsistence farmers who rely primarily on rainfed agriculture and pastoralists whose livelihoods depend on largely depleted rangeland.

WFP operations are currently focused on development interventions to improve food security, reduce malnutrition, enhance education achievements, minimise gender inequalities, strengthen institutional capacity, help communities adapt to climate change and reduce exposure to natural shock. Mauritania hosts the second largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with more than 56,000 refugees registered in Mbera camp. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: **4.7 million**

2018 Human Development Index: **161 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **19.6%** of children between 6-59 months

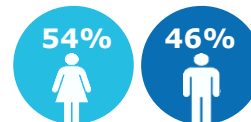
### In Numbers

**186 mt** of food assistance distributed

**US\$ 0.64 m** cash-based transfers made

**US\$ 11 m** six months (February– July 2020) net funding requirements

**71,385 people assisted** in January 2020



### Operational Updates

- Following the December lessons-learned exercise on the 2019 lean season response, the food security group defined the priority recommendations to be implemented before the start of 2020 lean season and agreed on a common work agenda. Seven working groups were created to facilitate the coordination work between all partners. Among the recommendations emerged from the workshop, the need to strengthen the integration of the gender lens in the next response was highlighted. A gender-focused group composed of five members (WFP, FAO, STC, *Action Contre la Faim* and Oxfam) was formed in this perspective.
- From 13 to 17 January, a three-day practical training (bootcamp) took place in Guidimakha region targeting 26 actors engaged in the implementation of food assistance for assets (FFA) activities. The necessary technical knowledge on different water and soil conservation techniques and soil defence and restoration methods was taught, to support communities in the creation of the assets. Participants familiarized themselves with techniques like stony barriers, half-moons, trenches, filter dikes and compost pits.
- From 21 to 23 January, WFP organized a capitalization exercise on the implementation of FFA activities. Seventy-one (71) participants, including governmental technical services, partners and communities' representatives from the regions of Guidimakha, Assaba and Hodh El Charghi, took part in this review. The aim was to capitalize on good practices and identify improvement areas, and to formulate technical and strategic recommendations for a pragmatic implementation of FFA programmes in 2020.
- In **Mbera camp**, unconditional resource transfers through in-kind and/or cash transfers took place from 17 to 31 January, reaching 54,297 individuals (55 percent women). This represented 97 percent of the target. The daily hybrid food basket per person was composed of 100 g of rice, 25 g of oil and 5 g of salt and a cash component of USD 12 (per month). In line with the vulnerability-based targeting strategy, some 6,000 people belonging to the more or less autonomous group 4 (group 1 being the most disadvantaged and vulnerable group and group 6 being the most autonomous group), only received the cash portion of the ration in January. The food portion was withdrawn as part of the gradual phase-out of WFP's assistance. Nutrition-related activities could not be carried out due to operational constraints and are expected to resume in February.

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Further information: [www.wfp.org/countries/mauritania](http://www.wfp.org/countries/mauritania)

**Main photo**

Credit: WFP/Francesc Galban

Caption: Hands holding cereals

## Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

2020 Total Requirements (in USD)	2020 Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>32.6 m</b>	<b>14.5 m</b>	<b>11 m</b>

### 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 the framework of **FFA** activities, operational plans for 2020 were finalised. Activities are expected to resume in February in the regions of Guidimakha, Assaba and Hodh El Charghi.

- As part of **nutrition activities**, a capacity-strengthening workshop was organized at the end of January in Mbera camp for the benefit of 26 women in charge of managing the malnutrition centers, 2 supervisors and 1 programme coordinator involved in the management of nutritional rehabilitation centres for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition.

- Through the **school feeding programme**, 17,959 Mauritanian children received a morning porridge and a hot lunch to help them concentrate on their classes. As part of the integrated resilience strategy in the Sahel, the school feeding programme is implemented in the same villages where WFP is carrying out FFA activities.

- WFP started a market analysis in the region of Tagant and Guidimakha in order to better inform the choice of the transfer modality in these areas. The analysis will also be conducted in the regions of Gorgol, Assaba, Hodh El Gharbi and Hodh El Charghi to assess the feasibility of cash transfers and market absorption capacity in view of scaling up this modality in Mauritania.

## Monitoring

- In the framework of the roll-out of the early warning system (EWS) and emergency response plan, WFP, together with the Government, worked on the preparation of a workshop. The overall objective of the upcoming workshop will be to harmonise all the tools used by partners and select the most appropriate and useful one for the EWS. It will be an opportunity to strengthen the Government's preparedness and response capacity to shocks.

## Challenges

- USD 11 million is urgently needed for WFP's operations in Mauritania for the next six months, representing 48 percent of the period requirements (USD 17 million) under the approved Country Strategic Plan. The 2020 seasonal assistance to food insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment to pregnant and lactating women and children, faces USD 5.9 million shortfall. Meanwhile, USD 3.6 million is required for the assistance to Malian refugees, USD 1 million for the implementation of FFA activities, and USD 0.5 for United Nations Humanitarian Air Services.

- Since 18 September, due to the deteriorated condition of the airstrip, air operations from Bassikounou are suspended until the airstrip is rehabilitated. WFP is gearing up for the necessary rehabilitation works with the aim to continue providing reliable air transport services to Hodh El Charghi region for the humanitarian community.

## Donors

Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Monaco, Private Donors, Saudi Arabia, Spain UN Other Funds and Agencies, United Kingdom and USA