



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief February 2020



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 contributed as a key player to the ongoing development of the "21st Century Economic Roadmap", based on recommendation by Bhutan's king on the country's future economic progress. WFP has agreed to act as the penholder of the development partner group on agriculture, food security and nutrition.

WFP is also working to increase engagement with the global private sector, through an initial dialogue with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in order to deliberate on any potential partnerships, particularly in nutrition. This was undertaken after an important India-Bhutan start-up summit concluded in Thimphu in February. At this summit, various stakeholders of the two countries deliberated on various possibilities of strengthening private entrepreneurship in the country.

Operational Updates

- WFP participated in an ongoing discussion with government counterparts, task force members and development partners to build what is known as "Bhutan's 21st Century Economic Roadmap". As part of this roadmap, WFP has volunteered to work to enhance resilience to disaster and climate change while also investing in human capital through health and nutrition and access to quality service delivery. WFP's focus will also be on agriculture development with private sector involvement, while accelerating Bhutan's ability to navigate the fourth industrial revolution through technology transfer, data capabilities and innovations.

WFP has agreed to act as the "pen-holder" along with the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Helvetas, to lead the group on agriculture, food security and nutrition.

Bhutan's 21st Century Economic roadmap, which will be developed within this year, is expected to guide the country's economic development over the next ten years. One of the key messages by the King of Bhutan during his National Day address last year was the need to develop a clear economic roadmap for the 21st century in order to create economic opportunities for the next generation by leveraging technology and innovation. WFP will continue actively contributing to and complementing these plans.

- WFP participated in the Bhutan-India Start-up Summit 2020 on 29 February. Organized by the Embassy of India, the occasion saw the presence of imminent members of the Indian

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WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jan-June 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.9 m	5.3 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.

Photo: © WFP Bhutan/Jigme Tenzin. A green paddy field in Bhutan. As part of the ongoing deliberation for the 21st century economic roadmap, WFP in partnership with World Bank, UNDP and Helvetas has agreed to lead the country's agricultural development, food security and nutrition.

Government as well as members of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The event aimed at promoting the country's economy by enhancing the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The Indian CII counterpart made a pledge to strengthen Bhutan's capacity on private entrepreneurship through various activities, including giving training sessions and starting a satellite CII office in Bhutan's capital city.

Based on the summit, WFP Bhutan has started a dialogue with CII counterpart in India to identify any potential opportunities for knowledge sharing, project implementation and investment in the country, particularly in the field of nutrition. While the relationship is in its initial stages, CII has acknowledged that there were many areas of congruence between the two organizations' work and they are keen on keeping the conversation alive.

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)
- The Government of Australia
- The Government of Canada