WFP has submitted a food and nutrition security technical assistance package to the Royal Government of Bhutan to support in COVID-19 preparedness and response. WFP will support food price monitoring, prepositioning of food, targeting, food distribution modality, as well as food safety and quality. As part of the package, WFP has officially donated two mobile storage units to the Government.

The pandemic is causing some minor disruptions in the food supply chain due to a complete lockdown in neighbouring India, the major supplier of food to Bhutan. Therefore, WFP has reprogrammed some of its funds to accelerate agriculture production and farmer linkages to markets to help mitigate the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the economy.

Operational Updates

- WFP has donated two mobile storage units in support of the Royal Government of Bhutan COVID-19 preparedness and response. The facilities will be used to help authorities preposition food to meet the needs of half of Bhutan's entire population for six months.

  The handing over of the storage units, with a capacity of 500 mt each and worth a total of USD 45,000, were part of a larger food and nutrition security technical assistance package to the Government. The package offered support on food price monitoring; prepositioning of food; targeting, food distribution modality and monitoring; and food safety and quality.

- As a part of the Government’s plan for COVID-19 response, WFP also agreed to support the National Contingency Plan and Agriculture Stimulus Plan for the agriculture sector and has front-loaded assistance to agriculture production and farmer linkages to markets. WFP has reprogrammed some of its funds to these priorities.

- WFP participated in sub-technical committee meetings on 3rd and 19th March held for the drafting of technical standards for fortified rice and fortified rice kernels. Led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, the meetings formed part of an important decision to standardize the rice fortification process in the country.

In its country strategic plan, WFP Bhutan country office supports the development of the regulatory and compliance framework of the food fortification programme in the country, where the
WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Apr-Sep 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.9 m</td>
<td>5.3 m</td>
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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.

Challenges

- Bhutan has limited awareness about its disaster risks, compounded by the fact that the country has not faced major disasters in recent times. There are also some knowledge gaps on the relationship between disasters and its impact on food security. In response, WFP is 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

Photo Page 1 and 2 (left): WFP Bhutan/Gopi Kharel. WFP Bhutan Head of Office, Mr. Svante Helms signing and presenting the hand-over document for the Mobile Storage Units, with the Director General of the Department of Disaster Management, Mr. Jigme Thinley Namgyal.

Photo Page 2 (above): WFP Bhutan/Namgay Tenzin. Picture of a WFP mobile storage unit being constructed in a drill dated December 2018. Two such units have been donated to the Government as part of the ongoing COVID-19 preparedness and response plan.