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# WFP Afghanistan Country Brief March 2020



An aid worker at a food distribution site in Kandahar checks the temperature of a WFP beneficiary. © World Food Programme

## Operational Context

Situated between Central and South Asia, with a committed Government, rich natural resources, and a young and diverse population, Afghanistan has the potential to make significant progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, a complex and protracted conflict combined with other challenges—including climate change and natural disasters, demographic shifts, limited job opportunities, pervasive gender inequalities, food insecurity and transparency concerns—has dramatically constrained the country's wider development efforts.

Food insecurity rose dramatically between 2014 and 2017 to a total of 13.2 million people in rural and urban areas according to the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey 2016-2017 (ALCS).

The 2019 IPC report shows that 10.2 million people are acutely food insecure. The report further projects that in the winter season, 11.3 million people (37% of the population) will be in IPC phase 3 or higher and hence in need of humanitarian assistance.\* The provinces of Badakhshan, Daikundi, Ghor, Nimroz, Nuristan and Uruzgan are all classified as emergencies.

WFP has been present in Afghanistan since 1963.



Population (Oct. 2019): **38.34 million**

Income Level (2019): **Low income**

Human Development Index (2019): **170 out of 189 countries**

Chronic malnutrition: **41% of children between 6-59 months**

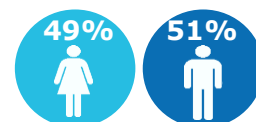
Gender Inequality Index (2018): 143 out of 189 HDI listed countries (UNDP)

## In Numbers

In March, WFP assisted more than **1.1 million people** in need with **13,184 mt** of food and cash.

WFP disbursed more than **US\$375,000** in cash transfers to cover families' food needs.

**US\$43 million** is the net funding shortfall for the next six months (April – September 2020).



## Operational Updates

- In March, **WFP reached more than 1.16 million food-insecure girls, boys, women and men across 30 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.**
- WFP's emergency response activities included food assistance and cash-based transfers for **959,665 people**. This included seasonal support for **871,003 highly vulnerable people** in 19 provinces to get through the final months of winter and assistance to **23,856 people displaced by conflict** in 16 provinces.
- WFP provided **7,371 returnees from Iran and Pakistan** and **36,491 refugees from Pakistan** with food assistance. In addition, WFP assisted **3,017 people affected by flooding** with in-kind food assistance and disbursed **US\$150,647** in cash transfers to **2,561 families** in Kabul and Kunduz provinces under its social safety nets initiative.
- WFP, in partnership with health centres and partners, distributed **378 mt of specialized nutritious foods** for **63,518 children aged 6-59 months** and **26,852 pregnant and lactating women (PLW)**. WFP also provided **16 mt** of specialized nutritious foods for more than **2,000 malnourished children and PLW**.
- Under the **school feeding programme**, WFP provided **45,029 primary school students** with high energy biscuits each day at school. Further, **16,587 girls** were provided with fortified vegetable oil to take home, to encourage school attendance and reduce gender disparity.
- As part of its work at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, WFP assisted **33,341 food-insecure participants** of asset creation activities or vocational skills training and their families.
- The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) **transported 1,027 passengers from 82 different agencies and organizations to 19 locations** in Afghanistan.

\* The UN estimates a higher number (14.28 million people) are likely to experience severe acute food insecurity in the winter season. This is due to the UN's population count for Afghanistan being higher than the official government statistics, on which the IPC report is based.

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## Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total CSP Requirement (in USD)	Total Allocated Contributions (in USD)	April – September 2020 Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>890 m*</b>	<b>386 m</b>	<b>43 m</b>

\* based on the budget revision approved in 2019

## Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food (SDG target 2.1)

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Vulnerable people in Afghanistan are able to meet their food and nutrition needs during and immediately after emergencies through 2022

**Focus area:** Crisis response

## Activities:

- Emergency food assistance

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Vulnerable people in Afghanistan are increasingly able to meet their food and nutrition needs on their own by 2022

**Focus area:** Resilience

## Activities:

- Livelihood support
- Emergency preparedness capacity strengthening

## Strategic Result 2: End malnutrition (SDG target 2.2)

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Vulnerable people at each stage of the life cycle in target areas have improved nutrition by 2022

**Focus area:** Resilience

## Activities:

- Prevention and treatment of malnutrition

## Strategic Result 4: Sustainable food systems (SDG target 2.4)

**Strategic Outcome 4:** People throughout the country have a wide range of fortified, nutritious food products available to them at affordable prices by 2022

**Focus area:** Resilience

## Activities:

- Nutritious food system strengthening

## Strategic Result 6: Policy coherence (SDG target 17.14)

**Strategic Outcome 5:** National and subnational institutions have a strengthened policy approach to food security and nutrition by 2022.

**Focus area:** Resilience

## Activities:

- Enhancing policy coherence on food security and nutrition

## Strategic Result 8: Enhance global partnerships (SDG target 17.16)

**Strategic Outcome 6:** The humanitarian community has enhanced capacity to respond to needs throughout the country through 2022

**Focus area:** Crisis response

## Activities:

- Common service provision (SCOPE, supply chain, ICT)
- UN Humanitarian Air Service

WFP's Country Strategic Plan for Afghanistan has a WFP Gender & Age Marker score of 3, "fully integrates gender." A gender transformative approach with integration of Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations is applied across all strategic outcomes.

- **The COVID-19 situation** in Afghanistan is quickly turning from a health emergency to a food and livelihood crisis.
- WFP is prioritizing life-saving seasonal support activities and providing beneficiaries of general food assistance with rations for two months at one go to limit exposure at distribution sites.
- Partners re-organized distributions in a way that not more than 100 people were gathered at any given time. In parallel, WFP ensured that handwashing stations are available at the food/cash distribution points, that social distancing is maintained at all times, that temperatures are checked and that sensitization material in Dari and Pashto are on display.
- In the second half of March, authorities started banning mass gatherings and putting in place lockdowns to quell the spread of the coronavirus. Lockdowns and subsequently reduced economic activities **leave the most vulnerable urban residents not knowing where their next meal will come from.** In rural areas, farmers and agricultural seasonal workers are seeing their **livelihoods plummet, unable to cultivate and harvest.** Afghan citizens continue to return from Iran and Pakistan, facing an uncertain future.
- **The border to Pakistan remained closed for trucks for the whole month of March.** 15 trucks carrying 578 mt of SuperCereal and vegetable oil remained at the Chaman-Spin Boldak border crossing in the south of the country and 258 mt of SuperCereal were held at Karachi port. While borders along Torkham and Chaman crossing points eventually reopened on 10 April, prolonged border closures are expected to have serious impact on WFP's international supply chain.
- Commercial flights to and from Afghanistan were suspended in March. **UNHAS continued domestic services for the humanitarian community** with social distancing measures, and is making arrangements to establish an international airbridge.

## Funding

- Funding requirements for the coming six months (April – September 2020) are **US\$126 million**, of which **US\$43 million** remain to be resourced. **This figure does not include additional needs due to COVID-19 outbreak. WFP is working on assessing and costing the potential needs for urban and rural families, as well the families of returnees from Iran.**
- UNHAS has received an initial US\$3.7 million to ensure domestic services facilitating the COVID-19 response for three months and to start and run the international airbridge, also for three months. **The extension of the airbridge by three months will cost an additional US\$1.5 million.**

## Donors

Top 5: United States of America, Australia, Japan, the Netherlands and Canada