



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Republic of Congo Country Brief

April 2020



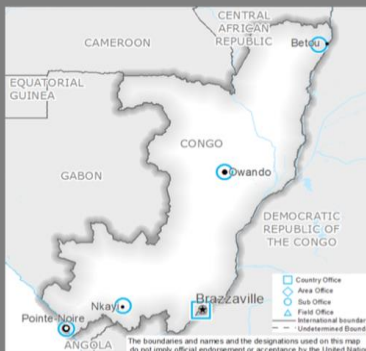
Operational Context

The Republic of Congo (RoC) ranks poorly on the Human Development Index. Its food production is below national requirements, with only 2 percent of arable land currently under cultivation, covering 30 percent of the country's food needs. Forty-eight percent of Congolese live on less than USD 1.25 per day.

WFP is assisting 130,000 people affected by flooding, which took place in late 2019 and early 2020. WFP analysis shows that around 36-79 percent of the population is moderately or severely food insecure. Sustained food assistance until the end of 2020 is needed in order to avoid a full-blown food crisis in the affected areas. WFP also provides assistance through food-assistance-for-assets to people in Pool region, an area of the country that was affected by a conflict in 2016-2018. WFP supports communities in building their resilience through projects such as fish ponds and rehabilitation of rural roads.

WFP supports refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) in Likouala and from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Plateaux with food and nutrition assistance.

WFP's operations in RoC include assistance to vulnerable people in the country, contributing to the global efforts to reach Sustainable Development Goals 1 (End Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).



Population: **4.2 million**

2018 Human Development Index: **139 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

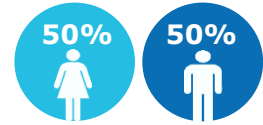
Chronic malnutrition: **21.2% of children aged 6-59 months**

In Numbers

541 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 115,000 cash-based transfers made

78,728 people assisted
In April 2020



Operational Updates

- Since 31 March, RoC has been under lockdown and curfew as authorities attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19. WFP has invoked its business continuity plans, with non-essential staff working from home. WFP operations, however, are continuing in the field. In April, COVID-19 cases have been identified in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, with the total number of confirmed cases exceeding 200.
- WFP is launching an urban cash-based transfer (CBT) programme, for which USD 9.3 million is required in order to help 300,000 vulnerable people in urban areas affected by the impact of the lockdown on their food security.
- To counteract the shutdown of school canteens caused by the closure of schools, WFP has started distributing take-home rations to 61,000 students across the country. School children get the equivalent of three months of rations, allowing them to maintain good nutrition. An official launch of the operation took place on 25 April with the Ministry of Education, UN representatives and the press. Educational continuity is also implemented by the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and UNESCO through lessons on television, radio and newspapers.
- The impacts of COVID-19 and measures to contain it include rising food prices and loss of income, which undermine the most vulnerable households in urban areas. WFP, through the Household Economy Analysis, was able to identify the areas and criteria of vulnerability in order to better target the most vulnerable households in Brazzaville. A cash transfer programme is being planned to enable these households to meet their food and hygiene needs.
- Operations to assist CAR and DRC refugees, returnees from the Pool and flood-affected populations are continuing and are adapted to the social distancing measures recommended to limit the spread of the virus. This includes installing handwashing stations at distribution sites and staggering distributions to limit the number of people at the sites at any one time.
- With the fall in oil prices and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the national budget has been cut in half for the year 2020. The national economy relies heavily on oil incomes. Economic impacts are projected to be significant, with annual growth of -9 percent versus 1.2 percent initially expected. The budget deficit will reach 13 percent of GDP.

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Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
98 m	41 m	13,7 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Food insecure people affected by shocks have access to adequate food all year round

Focus area: Nutrition, distribution of cash/ food to the affected households, and Food Assistance For Assets

Activities:

- Provide unconditional and/or conditional food and nutrition assistance to people affected by shocks

Strategic Outcome 2: Equitable national social protection interventions effectively target vulnerable populations, including school-aged children with sustained access to safe and nutritious food

Focus area: School feeding and technical assistance to the Government

Activities:

- Provide safe, adequate and nutritious school meals to targeted school children.
- Provide technical support to Government for improved implementation of shock-responsive social protection interventions

Strategic Result 3: Smallholder productivity and incomes

Strategic Outcome 3: Targeted smallholder farmers and communities benefit from productive and sustainable livelihoods which support nutrition value chains

Focus area: Technical supports to smallholders and local purchase

Activities:

- Provide analytical, technical and equipment support for smallholder farmers aimed at encouraging market-oriented and climate-resilience production and livelihoods

Strategic Result 8: Enhance global partnership

Strategic Outcome 4: Humanitarian and development actors and national systems have access to WFP expertise and services

Focus area: Provision of logistic support

Activities:

- Provide on-demand supply chain services for partners

- The main concern is that the poorest households, deprived of their income, will not be able to afford food at increased prices. Targeted vulnerable households in peripheral areas of Brazzaville will receive a cash-transfer through mobile money in order to buy food and soap in identified shops. WFP partners UNDP and the Catholic Relief Services will join the WFP platform and will provide a financial complement.
- WFP signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health and Population to provide logistics support. Medical equipment has been dispatched by trucks to hospitals and health centres across the country.

Flooding in the Likouala, Cuvette and Plateaux Departments

- Since November 2019, nearly 145,000 people affected by the floods have received food assistance, either in-kind or through cash transfers in the departments of Likouala, Cuvette and Plateaux.
- In February 2019, an Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) revealed that 130,000 people were food insecure, moderate or severe, in the flood-affected areas. In line with those alarming results, WFP's unconditional assistance was extended until May 2020 to the most vulnerable households. The assistance continues, following the limited number of beneficiaries during the distributions, social distancing measures, and raising the population's hygiene awareness. By living in unsanitary conditions for many months, the populations affected by the floods are exposed to increased risks.
- 6,453 CAR refugees received cash-based transfers in Bétou and Impfondo (Likouala).
- WFP continues to provide on-demand logistic services for UN partners.
- For the flood response, WFP received contribution from USAID, China, ECHO, Canada, Germany. Through the WFP Immediate Response Account (IRA), USD 1.3 million has been granted to continue the assistance through cash transfers in the Likouala department.

Monitoring

National Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak

- After a month of preventive containment measures, the Congolese food market is experiencing major disruptions with profound socio-economic consequences at the household level. WFP monitors weekly prices on markets in urban areas.
- The overall price trend is well above the seasonal and annual average, especially for imported products, such as rice and fish, which are subject to disruption in the supply chain. At the end of April, it was reported that a decrease in the availability of certain basic products at wholesalers was leading to a price increase. As the basic household food basket is impacted by these variations in the market, weekly monitoring is imperative to obtain indications of the socio-economic dynamics and the impact of COVID-19 and related measures.

Donors

Government of Republic of Congo, China, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Japan, United States of America.

Photo: WFP/Alice Rahmoun

School children line up to receive their take-home rations.