



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Mauritania Country Brief January 2021



Operational Context

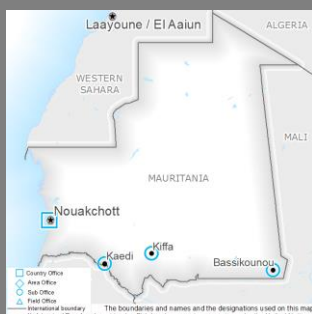
Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel with a population of 4.6 million that lives over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km² territory.

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. According to the November 2020 *Cadre Harmonisé*, 409,940 people are projected to be food insecure between June and August 2021 (lean season).

Recent surge in new COVID-19 cases is noted in Mauritania. The Government announced on 13 December new restrictive measures to limit the second wave of the virus in the country, including the imposition of a new curfew from 20:00 to 6:00.

Mauritania continues to host the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa. The number of refugees registered in Mbera camp had reached 62,546 (Dec 2020). Most of the refugees are unlikely to return to their homes in the near future due to the volatile security situation in Mali and the restrictive measures implemented to prevent the spread of the COVID-19

As part of crisis response activities, WFP country portfolio aims to meet the basic food and nutrition need of crisis affected people as well as to provide UNHAS flight services for all humanitarian and development partners. In parallel, WFP strives to ensure the continuation of resilience programmes, while strengthening institutional capacity and minimizing gender inequalities. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: **4.6 million**
(UNFPA 2020)

2019 Human Development Index
157 out of 189

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

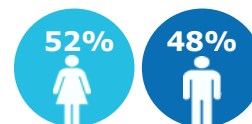
In Numbers

26 mt of food assistance and specialized food distributed

USD 0.8 m cash-based transfers made

USD 11.8 m six months (February 2020 – July 2021) net funding requirements

86,231 people assisted
in January 2021



Operational Updates

- WFP continued implementing **treatment of moderate acute malnutrition** in Guidimakha, Assaba and Hodh El Charghi regions, reaching 7,161 children and pregnant and lactating women. A new screening exercise is under preparation for Assaba and Hodh El Charghi region in order to identify people in need of nutrition assistance.
- The **school feeding programme** resumed on 4 January following the decision of the Mauritanian government to re-open schools. A daily morning porridge and a hot meal were distributed to 19,694 pupils in the three regions of the country where WFP already implemented a package of resilience building activities. As part of a refocusing exercise to concentrate school-canteens in the same communes and departments as resilience sites, new schools were identified and included in the programme. On 24 January, during the International Education Day, WFP disseminated a video at regional and national levels to raise awareness on the importance of the school feeding programme. Moreover, WFP took part in the launch of the National School Feeding Programme in Hodh El Charghi region.
- In **Mbera camp**, January's general food distributions were coupled with those of February to minimize the risk of spread of COVID-19. Thus, 479 mt of rice, 39 mt of oil and 15 mt of salt were distributed to 53,269 beneficiaries. A total of 59,376 beneficiaries received approximately USD 0.8 million cash. The rations consisted of a food basket of 150 g of rice, 12.5 gr of salt and 5 g of oil and a cash component of USD 7. In parallel, through malnutrition treatment activities, WFP reached 510 children with 1 mt of Plumpy Sup and 270 women with 1 mt of Super Cereal Plus. Overall, 150 beneficiaries recovered and were discharged from the programme. With the aim of preventing acute malnutrition, 3,464 children and 814 women were assisted with 25 mt of Super Cereal Plus. January was marked by the reopening of schools in the camp. Thus, 3,929 students benefited from a morning porridge as part of WFP school feeding programme (3 mt of Super Cereal Plus were distributed).

Food for assets creation activities were implemented in Assaba, Guidimakha and Hodh el Charghi regions. They mainly consisted of water and soil conservation and soil defence and restoration activities. In Hodh El Charghi region, WFP, the Commissariat for Food Security and the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development have jointly evaluated the assets completed since June 2020 in order to identify relevant activities to implement for the next six months, in line with communities' needs.

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Main photo: Credit: WFP/ Melissa Marques

Caption: UNHAS check-in desk

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

2021 Total Requirements (in USD)	2021 Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
39.7 m	5.2 m	11.8 m

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
- Provide food assistance and supplementary feeding to pandemic affected populations/households.

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
- Provide on-demand logistics services to Government, United Nations and Non-Governmental partners to facilitate effective field operations (CPA Service Provision and platform activities)

Moreover, as part of a BMZ-funded resilience project implemented jointly with UNICEF, a field mission took place for the positioning and activation of 30 hydraulic pumps in Assaba and Guidimakha regions to irrigate vegetable gardens.

- **United Nations Humanitarian Air Service** (UNHAS) transported 70 passengers and over 258 kg cargo, connecting Nouakchott-Kiffa and Bassikounou, through 26 in-country rotations.
- WFP Mauritania reconfirmed its **Gender and Age Marker** (GAM) code 4 and successfully completed the WFP gender transformation programme. Not only were gender and age well integrated into the design, delivery and monitoring of activities, but WFP also contributed significantly to the integration of the gender approach into national normative frameworks.

Monitoring

- Since 2013 WFP has been working globally with GeoPoll to send food security surveys through mobile phones, enabling remote data collection. Since December 2020, WFP and GeoPoll are running a pilot project in Mauritania and WFP trained 10 interviewers that will collect food security data on a monthly basis through remote calls and cover all regions in the country. In parallel, WFP completed the market price assessments in seven regions of the country. Data analysis is ongoing.

Challenges

- Overall, USD 11.8 million are urgently required for the next six months (58 percent of requirements) to carry out WFP activities in Mauritania. Critical assistance to Malian refugees in the Mbera camp face a funding gap of 2.7 million. Reduced food ration is maintained from January onwards, while assistance to all food insecure refugees is maintained. Malnutrition treatment activities face a funding gap of 84 percent of the requirements, although these interventions are critical in this health crisis context.
- If no sufficient funding is secured, adjustments will be made on the rations and/or the number of feeding days but not on the number of people assisted, taking into consideration the pressing needs.
- One of the main priorities for 2021 will be to reach new partners and diversify WFP donor's portfolio.

Donors

Donors to WFP Mauritania in 2021 include Canada, Germany, Monaco and United Kingdom. Additional support has been provided by UN Peace Building Fund.