



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Madagascar Country Brief February 2021



Operational Context

Madagascar is a low-income country with an estimated population of 25.5 million. With a gross domestic product per capita of USD 422, the country is ranked 164 out of 189 on the Human Development Index. Almost 70 percent of the population lives on less than USD 1.90 a day. Five million people are affected by recurring natural disasters, including cyclones, floods, and droughts. The 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey showed that the rate of acute malnutrition is 6 percent and the rate of chronic malnutrition is 42 percent, placing Madagascar as the 10th worst country affected by stunting in the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a sudden and deep recession, reversing nearly a decade of prior income per capita gains. The latest [World Bank economic update](#) for Madagascar estimates that the economy contracted by 4.2 percent in 2020 due to COVID-19 disruptions to global trade and domestic activity. While conditions are expected to stabilise in 2021, the impact of the pandemic will cast a long shadow on economic and social prospects and could be compounded by other shocks, including droughts and other climatic events affecting already vulnerable populations.

WFP's Country Strategic Plan in Madagascar (CSP) aims to promote an integrated, shock-responsive social protection system for ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to nutritious food before, during and after crises. It also aims to provide children in vulnerable communities with access to nutritious foods while at school and extend integrated approaches for the prevention of malnutrition among vulnerable women, adolescent girls and children. Moreover, WFP helps build the resilience of vulnerable smallholder households and communities and ensure that interventions for addressing both chronic and acute needs are supported by enhanced capacities and resources for emergency preparedness and response.



Population: **25 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **164 out of 189 countries**

Income Level: **Low**

Chronic malnutrition: **42% of children aged 6–59 months**

In Numbers

446,405 people assisted through in-kind and cash assistance as a part of emergency drought response

541,490 people received cash assistance in urban areas as part of the COVID-19 response

USD 51 million six-month (March–August 2021 net funding requirements

Key Highlights

The drought in the south of Madagascar persisted throughout February, further **deteriorating food supply** and critical **access to water** in some areas, while heavy rains in certain areas have damaged the roads and complicated access.

In two of the most affected districts (Amboasary and Ambovombe), **Severe Acute Malnutrition admissions have spiked** from 400 in January 2020 to 2,700 in January 2021, signifying the **gravity of the situation**.

The number of **people migrating** from food-insecure villages to Fort-Dauphin is increasing. Assistance in Fort Dauphin and return to the villages of origin of displaced persons is jointly coordinated by the Government and humanitarian community.

Operational Updates

Drought Situation

To better assess the state of current food security situation and confirm the extension of the current lean season beyond May, in February 2021, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) jointly conducted a food security and crop assessment. The results of the most recent start of agricultural season and food security assessment, conducted by the NVAC (National Vulnerability Assessment Committee) in February 2021, reveal a very alarming situation: one out of two households is severely food insecure, while agricultural production is expected to be significantly reduced, in all areas (especially in Amboasary, Ampanihy and Ambovombe) by more than 60% compared to the average of the last five year's harvest. Full analysis and assessment results will be available and announced by the end of March. This will guide WFP and other humanitarian actors in adapting their response to the growing needs.

The nutrition situation becomes more and more worrisome. New admissions of children with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) have progressively increased in 2020 and in the beginning of 2021. In two of the most affected districts (Amboasary and Ambovombe), SAM admissions have gone up from 400 in January 2020 to 2,700 in January 2021.

While in some southern districts drought and sandstorms persisted throughout February, significant rainfalls started occurring in other areas (Tuléar, Ampanihy and Amboasary). Although these rains provide some relief, mostly allowing farmers to better feed their cattle, they have arrived too late to save the 2020/2021 harvest. In Amboasary, the rains are causing delays in food delivery as road conditions are deteriorating.

The crisis is also becoming more and more complex due to the increased migratory flows of affected people to urban centers, mainly to Fort-Dauphin. The Government and humanitarian actors are jointly taking action to assist the displaced persons in Fort Dauphin and arrange their safe return to their villages of origin.

Drought Response

In the areas where markets are still functional, WFP has started to provide unconditional cash assistance at an amount of USD 20 per household per month. In February, **277,955 people** residing in the drought-affected southern regions received cash transfers. Where the markets are not fully functional, WFP reached **168,450 people** with in-kind assistance, complemented with supplementary nutritious food for **36,881** pregnant and lactating women as well as children under the age of 6 months.

With the available resources WFP aims to scale up its assistance until the end of April 2021 and reach almost **300,000 people** every month with cash and **450,000 people** with in-kind assistance.

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Country Strategic Plan (July 2019 – June 2024)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
297.4 million	66 million	51 million

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected women, men, boys and girls in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs before, during and after crises.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- General food distribution and early recovery
- Prevention of acute malnutrition
- Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition
- Nutritional support to tuberculosis patients

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Primary schoolchildren in targeted areas have access to adequate, healthy and nutritious food as part of a government-led social protection strategy

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- School canteens
- Home grown school feeding

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Nutritionally vulnerable populations in areas with consistently high rates of undernutrition have improved nutritional status.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Chronic malnutrition prevention
- Food fortification
- Social Behavior Change Communication

Strategic Result 3: Sustainable food systems

Strategic Outcome 4: Women and men smallholder producers in targeted communities facing climate shocks increase their access to profitable markets and establish more inclusive, efficient and resilient food systems all year round

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Local purchase to smallholder farmers organizations
- Food assistance for assets creation
- Disasters and crisis prevention and management

Strategic Result 4: Enhance global partnerships

Strategic Outcome 5: Government and humanitarian partners in Madagascar are supported by effective emergency preparedness and response arrangements before, during and after crises.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Support for assessment, analysis and emergency preparedness and response
- Shared logistics services and platforms
- Shared emergency telecommunications services and platforms

Donors

European Union (ECHO), France, Germany, Republic of Korea (KOICA), Lichtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, UBRAF, UN Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), UNICEF, UN Peace Building Fund (PBF), USAID (Bureau for Humanitarian assistance), WPD Japan, WPD Share the Meal App.

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Photo: WFP field staff measures the level of child's malnutrition in the South of Madagascar. WFP/Tsiory Andriantsoarana

Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM): In collaboration with its partners, WFP supported MAM treatment for **14,658 children** under five years in the districts of Amboasary, Ambovombe, Bekily and Ampanihy in February 2021. Given the deterioration in the nutritional situation, WFP plans to intensify MAM treatment and start providing assistance in additional sites in these four districts aiming to cover 375 sites in total.

COVID-19 Response

To date, the World Health Organization (WHO) indicated 20,155 COVID-19 cases and 300 deaths in Madagascar. Although there is little sign of a second lockdown to be announced, and the state of health emergency was lifted in early October throughout the country, international commercial flights remain closed.

Since April 2020, in support of the national social protection strategy, WFP has been providing cash assistance to vulnerable urban households economically affected by the lockdown measures. In February 2021, WFP assisted **108,388 households (542,000 people)**, in the cities of Antananarivo, Moramanga, Ambatondrazaka, Fénérive Est, Taolagnaro, Mahajanga, Toliara, Manakara. In total, since the beginning of its COVID-19 response from April 2020 and until February 2021, WFP has assisted **544,610 people** with cash-transfers in the amount of USD 20 per family for two months split in two distribution cycles. In February, WFP reached the remaining number of planned beneficiaries and finalised all cash distributions put in place as part of the COVID-19 response. The response was implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of the Population and the National Office for Risks and Disasters Management (BNGRC), and in collaboration with the Cash Working Group (World Bank, United Nations Development Bank, and United Nations Children's Fund), and non-governmental organizations).

WFP Regular Programmes

School-feeding programme: WFP provides school meals to 200,000 primary school children in 800 schools in the south, in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education. As families are leaving villages, where access to food is an issue, they prioritise migrating to the areas where school meals programme is implemented. Hence, enrolment rate in such in schools is increasing. WFP is currently exploring ways to expand the roll-out of school meals programme in more schools.

Since January 2021, in collaboration with the Fitia association, founded and led by the First Lady of Madagascar, WFP has contributed to the reopening of canteens in 20 primary schools in Androy and Anosy regions in southern Madagascar. Thanks to this initiative, around 6,000 schoolchildren can again benefit from school meals, which is often the only meal a child can have access to in a day.

Nutrition: The nutritional situation is severely deteriorating in the southern area of Madagascar. Five out of ten districts assessed during the last trimester of 2020 in the south are in a situation of nutritional "alert". This puts pressure on the implementation of other regular programme and requires a continuous review of operational priorities.

Resilience: The project "production-oriented water mobilization in the south" has been launched. The project's main objective is to deliver drinking water and to provide irrigating plots for gardening from water boreholes in some villages/fokontany located in Amboasary District (Anosy region) and Ambovombe District (Androy region).

Around 5,000 households will benefit from this project and 50 ha of gardening plots will be irrigated with the water from boreholes equipped with solar pumps in Amboasary District. In Ambovombe District, the project sites are still being identified and the project implementation is planned to start in the coming weeks.

Funding Challenges

WFP is facing serious funding shortfalls that can hinder its ability to assist especially crisis-affected people. **Additional funding is crucial** for WFP to be able to continue its assistance beyond April and to meet the growing needs as the drought persists.

WFP requires **USD 51 million** (March–August 2021) to sustain the emergency response (including general food distributions, prevention of acute malnutrition, and MAM treatment) and to continue its school feeding, nutrition and resilience activities.