Operational Context

Bhutan will transition to lower Middle-Income Level status by 2023 and considers WFP’s support critical to this transition process.

The national poverty rate, as measured by the international poverty line of USD 1.90 per person per day (PPP), has fallen from 23 percent in 2007 to 8.2 percent in 2017.

Although people’s overall nutritional status has improved, health problems related to a lack of nutritional and balanced diets remain a challenge, including micronutrient deficiencies.

Bhutan remains highly vulnerable to earthquakes but lacks the necessary data information systems, response plans and coordination systems to adequately prepare for emergencies.

WFP has been present in Bhutan since 1974.

Operational Update

- On 27-29 April, WFP organized a workshop to institutionalize and validate the 72-hour rapid assessment approach and digital vulnerability database with government partners. These workshops equipped the Government with a spatial vulnerability database which includes household and social vulnerability data, to immediately produce impact assessments and recommendations for emergency response.

  WFP trained Government staff in the approach, data processing, analysis, and report generation, while also defining standard operating procedures, roles and responsibilities. Aside from the classroom-based sessions, the training also included a field exercise to validate the 72-hour rapid assessment approach, conducted in selected sites in Paro, Bhutan. A second phase of the same training will be conducted for Eastern Bhutan.

- WFP conducted a “Training on the application of GIS and open-source data collection tools: Gearing towards 72-hour rapid assessment approach” together with the Department of Disaster Management from 5-9 April. The objectives of the training were to provide hands-on experience on the use of GIS and open-source data collection systems in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) while advocating for the importance of geo-spatial data in an emergency decision making process.

  The training was provided to district official in Western Bhutan and also included a field exercise in Paro, Bhutan to test those applications. A second phase of the same training will be conducted for Eastern Bhutan.

Highlights

WFP conducted several trainings and workshops in April for government partners to strengthen national preparedness for disasters and climate change. These included topics such as the 72-hour rapid assessment approach; application of Geographic Information System (GIS) and open-source data collection tools for use in the rapid assessments, and the Consolidated Livelihood Exercise for Analysing Resilience (CLEAR).
**WFP Bhutan Strategy**

### Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>May-Oct 2021 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>8.94 m</td>
<td>5.67 m</td>
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</tbody>
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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

- The 43-day long national lockdown that was recently lifted affected the ability of WFP’s extension staff to provide support regular production support services to smallholder farmers. Logistics and market access were severely disrupted due to restrictions on travel and mobility. This also led to postharvest losses, which denied the farmers of a good opportunity to sell their produce and earn income.

- 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 strengthen national capacity to prepare and respond to disasters.

- Together with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, WFP supported a two-day regional workshop with a focus on food safety and quality management as part of the rice fortification programme. The workshop comprised of online sessions, live discussions and a field visit to a school. Expert speakers from Thailand, Bangladesh, India and Bhutan set the regional context on rice fortification while national stakeholders shared a progress update from their respective ministries. The workshop successfully met the following objectives: a) reflect on the progress and current status of rice fortification activities in the country; b) learn from regional experiences; c) discuss challenges and potential solutions to strengthen food safety and quality management within the national school feeding and nutrition programme.

- WFP organized a stakeholder consultation workshop on CLEAR to present approaches for livelihood zoning and spatial development, including key implementation steps and planning for resource mobilization. Many government and UN agencies participated in the consultation who also presented on their efforts that link with CLEAR.

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**Photo Page 1:** Workshop to institutionalize and validate 72-hour rapid assessment approach. © WFP/ Gayjoong Bhutii

**Photo Page 2:** A participant interacts with the cooks on a field visit to one school during the food safety and quality awareness workshop on Rice Fortification. © WFP/ Gayjoong Bhutii