



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Sri Lanka Country Brief April 2021



WFP's resilience team held a community consultation with farmers at Wilgamuwa, Matale, to assess their needs for last mile climate services and adaptation knowledge, under the Adaptation Fund Regional Concept. © WFP/Mark

Operational Context

Sri Lanka has shown steady growth over the last decades with progress on SDGs, reflecting the country's elevation to middle-income status. Presidential elections were held in November 2019 followed by parliamentary polls in August 2020, where the incumbent Government won a majority.

Despite the progress, the country faces many socio-economic challenges, including a nutritional 'triple burden' comprising of undernutrition, overnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.

Sri Lanka is ranked 30th on the Climate Risk Index, however, hydro-meteorological hazards brought about by climate change have a serious impact on vulnerable communities.

Moreover, the outbreak of Covid-19 in March 2020, with serious effects on the economy and livelihoods of vulnerable communities, is expected to negatively impact the socio-economic status of the population. This may hinder country's progress towards achieving zero hunger by 2030 in all its forms. WFP has been present in Sri Lanka since 1968, working in partnership with the Government for the past 50 years to save lives in times of crises, and improve livelihoods for the future.



Population: **21 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **72 out of 189 countries**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **17% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

15 percent of children under 5 years of age are wasted. This places Sri Lanka among the countries with widespread malnutrition in the world. **45 percent** of women of reproductive age group are overweight or obese; **33 percent** of pregnant and lactating women are anaemic (Demographic and Health Survey, Sri Lanka, 2016).

US\$ 565 paid as cash-based transfers to **34** participants (**136** beneficiaries) assisted in resilience projects for April.

US\$ 2.28 million - six months net funding requirement (May - October 2021)

Situation Updates

- Following the Sinhala and Tamil New Year festivities in April, Sri Lanka recorded a spike in COVID-19 cases, with a cumulative total of 108,146 positive cases and 678 deaths by the end of April. 15,440 of these confirmed cases were in April alone. In response, the government issued revised guidelines on public activities and allocated resources to increase the capacity of the healthcare system.
- By the end of April, 925,242 people had received their first vaccine dose and 22,919 had received their second. However, uncertainties persist on the ability to administer the second dose to the population on time. Delays are expected in receiving the second dose from India given the current crisis. While a first batch of vaccines from the COVAX facility arrived in-country in March, it is expected that the additional doses required to cover 20 percent of the Sri Lankan population will arrive in the second half of 2021.
- WFP has reorganized its activities to support vulnerable groups, taking into account additional challenges posed by the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

Operational Updates

- WFP worked in collaboration with the Disaster Management Centre to support Kalutara, Galle, and Rathnapura District Secretariats in designing and establishing Emergency Operation Centres and District Control Rooms to manage emergency operations. With the South-West monsoon anticipated in May, hazard maps were developed to facilitate preparedness, decision making and early action.
- WFP held a community consultation with farmers of Wilgamuwa in Matale district to assess their needs and requirements for last mile climate information services. Men and women farmers expressed their interest and expectations on receiving simple, timely and localized agrometeorological advisories to support them in planning their cultivation ahead of agricultural seasons.

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Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
46.57 m	29.21 m	2.28 m

Strategic Result 1: End hunger by protecting access to food

Strategic Outcome #1: Crisis-affected people have access to food all year round.
Focus area: Crisis Response to ensure humanitarian assistance

Activities:

- Provide food assistance to crisis-affected people

Strategic Outcome #2: School-age children in food-insecure areas have access to food all year round.

Focus area: Root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition among school-age children

Activities:

- Provide nutrition-sensitive food assistance, in partnership with the government, to school-age children.
- Provide technical and policy support for the delivery of nutrition-sensitive school meals programmes to the government.

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome #3: Children under 5, adolescent girls and women of reproductive age have improved nutrition by 2025

Focus area: Immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition.

Activities:

- Provide evidence-based advice, advocacy, and technical assistance to the government and implementing partners.
- Provide technical assistance and advocate the scaling up of the fortification of staple food and specialized nutritious foods to the government and other stakeholders, including the private sector.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome #4: Vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers have strengthened livelihoods and resilience in the face of shocks and stresses all year round.

Focus area: Resilience building to enable vulnerable communities to better withstand shocks and stresses and to augment government capacity to implement disaster-management and integrated disaster-risk-reduction strategies.

Activities:

- Support nutrition-sensitive and gender-transformative livelihood diversification and income generation through integrated resilience-building activities.
- Provide technical assistance for emergency preparedness and response operations to the government.
- Provide technical assistance to the government and related agencies in the building of improved, unified, shock-responsive safety-net systems.

Challenges

- Given the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, particularly the loss of income and disruptions to livelihoods, there is a high demand for assistance to ensure nutritional health and well-being of the vulnerable communities.
- With the increase of COVID-19 cases in the country the Government has issued revised regulations on public activities, including travel restrictions and prohibition of large gatherings. As a result, several operational activities, including community consultations, trainings and other capacity strengthening initiatives had to be temporarily suspended.

Operational Updates (continued)

- WFP signed an agreement with the Federation of Chamber of Commerce Sri Lanka (FCCISL) in April to expand the Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network (SBN) platform for the private sector. This partnership is expected to create national ownership of the SBN movement and encourage small and medium entrepreneurs to work towards the nutrition wellbeing of the people in Sri Lanka.
- In collaboration with the Department of Samurdhi Development, WFP will be supporting 1,500 pregnant and lactating mothers in six districts with cash-based transfers for two months, through national social protection schemes.
- WFP's Sri Lanka country office contributed to an internal disability inclusion campaign, which highlighted difficulties faced by persons with disabilities.

Monitoring

- During the month of April, WFP conducted monitoring visits to Mullaitivu district to test the livelihoods monitoring tool and capture outcomes of 2019 beneficiaries. Monitoring activities revealed positive outcomes relating to household water harvesting and micro-irrigation schemes. In addition, increases in cropping intensity, agriculture production diversification, household income and improvements in women's decision-making were observed at field level. This was followed by a debriefing session through which necessary program quality improvements and other recommendations were shared with the programme team.
- WFP's Gender and Protection Officer conducted a rapid gender analysis for the R5n project in Thanamalvila which highlighted improved economic status of women beneficiaries who received agro-wells. Gender-responsive action plans have been developed and will be taken forward.

Donors

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Government of Japan, UN Peace-building Fund, The Earth Group, Italian Comitato, Government of Australia (DFAT), Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (BHA), Government of Denmark, Japan Association for WFP, FEED, DSM N, Global Affairs Canada, Master Card, Johns Hopkins University USA (JHU).



WFP conducted field monitoring visits to the district of Mullaitivu to test the livelihood monitoring tool and capture outcomes on 2019 beneficiaries. Photo: © WFP/Nagalingam Jegatheeswaran