



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Madagascar Country Brief April 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**

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In Numbers

351,348 people assisted through in-kind and cash assistance as a part of the emergency drought response in April 2021

WFP supported moderate acute malnutrition treatment for **13,218 children** under five years in the districts of Amboasary, Ambovombe, Bekily and Ampanihy in April 2021

USD 74 million net funding requirements for the emergency response for the next six months (May – October 2021)

Key Highlights

Latest IPC conducted in April 2021 reveals a dramatic situation: **1.14 million people** need urgent assistance (IPC Phase 3 or above), of which **14,000** are critically food insecure (Catastrophe or **IPC Phase 5**). The situation is expected to continue deteriorating from October to December 2021, bringing the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above to 1.31 million, and the population in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) will likely double.

The number of children admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in the Grand Sud in the first quarter of 2021 has quadrupled compared to the five-year average. The situation is particularly critical in Ampanihy and Ambovombe districts, where 27 percent of children are acutely malnourished.

Post-distribution monitoring conducted by WFP in February shows no significant improvement of Food Consumption Score among assisted beneficiaries, signifying that an urgent **scale-up of humanitarian response in terms of ration and scope is crucial to avert famine**.

Operational Updates

Drought Situation

Madagascar is presently facing the most severe drought since 1981, affecting most of the areas in the south, including Atsimo Andrefana region, the breadbasket of the Grand-Sud, and leading to a severe humanitarian crisis. The latest [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\) analysis](#) reveals a dramatic situation: 1.14 million people need urgent action (IPC Phase 3 or above). Amboasary Atsimo is the most affected district, classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), 75 percent of its population is in IPC Phase 3 or above, and nearly 14,000 people are in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). This is the first time that people have been recorded in IPC Phase 5 since the methodology was introduced in Madagascar in 2016. With insufficient food stocks, high prices of staples due to COVID-19 and related restrictions and poor employment opportunities, the situation is expected to continue deteriorating from October to December 2021, bringing the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above to 1.31 million. The population in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) will likely double, and the number of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) or worse, will likely exceed 510,000.

Moreover, chances to see a significant improvement in access to food in the coming months are rather low. The latest WFP rapid assessment of agricultural season and household food security indicates that the agricultural production is expected to be significantly reduced in all areas (especially in Amboasary, Ampanihy and Ambovombe) to 40 percent of the five-year average.

The nutrition situation becomes more and more worrisome, as prevalence of acute malnutrition is above emergency levels and continues to deteriorate dramatically and sharply. Based on the results of a surveillance survey during the first trimester of 2021, the number of children admitted for treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in the Grand Sud in the first quarter of 2021 has quadrupled compared to the five-year average. The situation is particularly critical in Ampanihy and Ambovombe districts, where 27 percent of children are acutely malnourished. In total, at least 70,595 children under age 5 are acutely malnourished (GAM), of which 11,238 are facing SAM.

Drought Response

In the areas where markets are still functional, WFP provides unconditional cash assistance in an amount of USD 20 per household per month. In April, **269,240 people** residing in the drought-affected southern regions received cash transfers.

Where the markets are not fully functional, WFP reached **82,108 people** with in-kind assistance, complemented by supplementary nutritious food for **22,850** pregnant and lactating women as well as children aged 6-23 months.

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	74 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

With the available resources, WFP aims to continue its assistance beyond the lean season and reach almost **214,000 people** with cash and **450,000 people** with in-kind assistance in May-July 2021.

The most recent post-distribution monitoring in February indicates that the food consumption score of the beneficiaries has not significantly improved compared to non-beneficiaries after three months of assistance (November 2020–January 2021). This signifies that despite the support by WFP and all the humanitarian actors in the south, the current response to their needs is not sufficient and requires review and scale-up.

Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM): In collaboration with partners, WFP supported MAM treatment for **13,218 children** under five years in the districts of Amboasary, Ambovombe, Bekily and Ampanihy in April 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, WHO registered 39,012 COVID-19 cases and 722 deaths in Madagascar. On 21 March, the Malagasy government officially declared the beginning of the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic after the discovery of the South African variant and a recent spike in the number of new cases and deaths. As part of newly imposed measures, entrance and exit of the regions with the highest COVID-19 statistics have been restricted and curfew from 21.00 to 5.00 has been imposed. On top of complete closure of international airspace and ban for foreigners to enter the island, all the internal commercial flights were suspended until further notice. Furthermore, following the Government Council's approval of Madagascar's application for the COVAX mechanism, the first doses of COVID-19 vaccines have arrived at the island and the vaccination campaign has been launched.

From April 2020 to February 2021, in support of the national social protection strategy, WFP provides cash assistance to vulnerable urban households economically affected by the lockdown measures. In total, WFP has assisted **544,610 people** with cash-based transfers in the amount of USD 20 per family for two months split in two distribution cycles. Provided new funding opportunities arise, WFP will be able to resume its COVID-19 response, as the prolonged restrictions and second wave of the pandemic are still deeply affecting urban communities.

WFP Regular Programmes

School feeding programme: In collaboration with the Ministry of National Education, WFP provides school meals to 200,000 primary school children in 800 schools in the south. Due to a growing number of COVID-19 cases, schools were temporarily closed for a prolonged Easter break in April. Except for four regions, including Analamanga (the capital) and Anôsy (southern Madagascar), classes will resume in May. The extended school closure has so far not had any impact on the distributions, scheduled to take place in early May. However, WFP is closely monitoring the situation and is ready to adjust the distribution plan or assistance modality, if needed.

Nutrition: Thanks to the recently received contribution from France, 2 additional communes (Androipano and Anavoha) will be supported through the prevention of stunting Miaro project. At least 23,000 women and children in southern Madagascar will receive nutritious food and specialized services to address malnutrition. The identification of beneficiaries was carried out in April, and the preparation of distributions will take place in May.

Resilience: WFP's food-assistance-for-assets activities with a particular emphasis on reforestation and agroforestry in southern Madagascar help restore the exhausted natural resources and strengthen community resilience, while at the same responding to their immediate food needs. In April, the reforestation project in certain communes of Ambovombe and Tuliar has advanced in its preparatory stage, as budgeting and targeting were conducted.

Following the capacity-strengthening projects aimed at enhancing competencies of women groups, a clear improvement in the quality of products crafted through these projects (soap, mats, gari) has been noted. This will help communities to better generate income while also strengthening their resilience.

Funding Challenges

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

WFP requires **USD 74 million** to sustain the emergency response (including general food distributions, prevention of acute malnutrition, and MAM treatment) in the next six months (May–October 2021).

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.