



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief

June 2021



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.



Population: **0.73 million**

2015 Human Development Index: **132 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **21.2% of children between 6-59 months**

Highlights

Throughout the month, apart from implementing the planned activities, WFP focussed on building partnerships and exploring resource mobilization options and opportunities.

Operational Update

- WFP Bhutan is working to strengthen the capacity of the Royal Government of Bhutan to respond to emergencies through improved emergency telecommunication preparedness and response capacity at both national and local government levels with a funding amount of USD 38,600 received from the Corporate Critical Initiative to uplift the country's capacity in emergency telecommunications.
- WFP Bhutan will receive two drones from its Regional Bureau and will support the Royal Government of Bhutan to enhance the current capacities of key Government technical institutions. This will include using drones for post and pre-disaster needs assessments, including mapping of forest fires, disaster impact analysis, glacial lakes monitoring and agriculture land surveys.
- The Joint Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA) concept note and terms of reference have been finalised. The responsibility matrix and work schedule for the LCA has been discussed among the stake holders. As soon as the funding is confirmed from WFP Regional Office, WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF) along with the Department of Disaster Management (DDM), will initiate updating the LCA 2021 for Bhutan.
- Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA), in collaboration with WFP, has launched two series of "Zhego Delek" articles to raise awareness among Bhutanese consumers on Food Safety, Food Quality and Food Adulteration in the weeks leading to the World Food Safety Day 2021. The third series, a food label literacy video, was also rolled out using digital platforms (through MoAF & BAFRA Websites and BAFRA's Facebook Page) to commemorate the third World Food Safety Day.

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WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jul-Dec 2021 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.94 m	5.67 m	0.16 m

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.

- In coordination with MoAF and the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO), there has been good progress on the Food Systems Summit (FSS) dialogues: the Government identified the dialogue national Convenor (the Secretary of the MoAF), who was formally registered with WFP's support. A task force was also formed for the dialogues and WFP prepared the draft proposal for accessing USD 25,000 through the RCO to support the FSS dialogues.

Donors

KOICA; First-line of Defense (USAID); Global Logistics Cluster support; WFP internal funds.

Challenges

- In line with Government's priorities, WFP is adapting its programmes to help mitigate the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis in Bhutan, which is causing some delays in the implementation of WFP normal planned activities.
- Cost escalation in construction materials and labour charges has hindered the timely implementation of WFP's support to school infrastructure requiring several revisions to the construction cost estimate.
- 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 build stronger national capacity to prepare and respond to disasters.