



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief July 2021



Operational Context

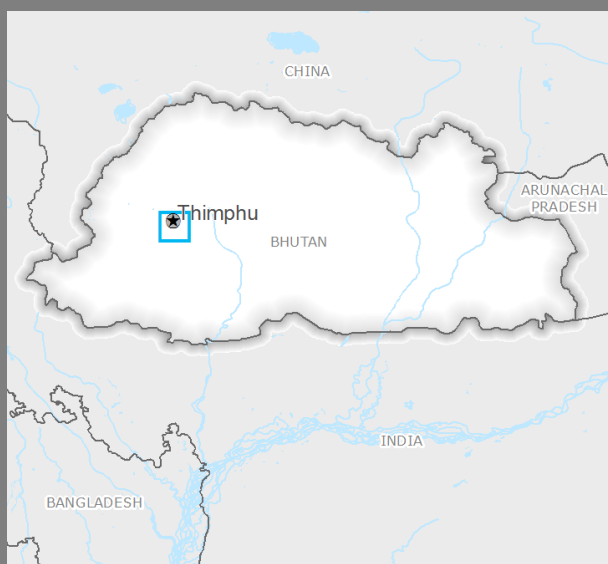
Bhutan will transition to lower Middle-Income Level status by 2023 and considers WFP's support critical to this transition process.

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

July marked the start of the Food Systems Summit Dialogue process. WFP also made progress in the decentralized evaluation of its agriculture portfolio and started the mid-term review of its Country Strategic Plan (CSP). Concerted efforts also have been made for resource mobilization.

Operational Update

- WFP, in partnership with Healthy Drukyul, is organising a jingle competition to raise awareness on the importance of nutrition. The competition is part of the social media campaign initiated with Healthy Drukyul – an initiative of the Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and the Ministry of Health – to advocate for nutritious, diverse, and balanced diets. Through this campaign, messages on healthy dietary habits, including practical tips, will be shared on social media platforms of WFP and Healthy Drukyul. The social media campaign will commence in August.
- Together with the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Department of Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives (DAMC), district agriculture sectors and relevant projects, WFP Bhutan country office is conducting an assessment of "Post-Harvest Management and Agriculture marketing, focusing on fruits & vegetables". The work will comprise of primary investigative work in the field, secondary research and literature review, consultation with key people involved in the sector (comprising of government officials, development agencies, farmers, Agri entrepreneurs, processors, trainers, traders, transporters and financial institutions).
- The Decentralized Evaluation of WFP's portfolio in agriculture was in full swing with the team interviewing various stakeholders in the government as well as other developmental partners.
- The mid-term review (MTR) of WFP Country Strategic Plan (CSP) also started formally with the joining of the national consultant and the formation of a MTR Reference Group.

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WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.94 m	5.67 m	0.02 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.

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 Bhutan kicked-off its climate financing agenda and hired a consultant who will be responsible for preparing a concept note for the large-scale innovation grant of the climate Adaptation Fund focused on building climate resilience and food security in vulnerable communities in Bhutan through improved last mile climate services and climate adaptation practices using innovative approaches. The consultant will work in close collaboration with technical experts, including within WFP.
- WFP was selected to receive a funding of US\$ 24,000 through the WFP South-South Opportunity Fund. With the fund received, WFP Will start a pilot project which aims to empower youth and disaster front-line workers to improve their skills in disaster exposure and critical infrastructure data collection and digitization, which is in line with WFP's support towards the government in disaster preparedness and response.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests organized a meeting on how to take forward the Food Systems Summit Dialogues (FSSD). The Convenor, Assistant Convenor and national consultants to support the Convenor have been hired and a Task Force formed.

Donors

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

Photo Page 1: WFP staff interacting with the farmers as part of Post-harvest management and marketing assessment. © WFP/Karma Penjore