



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief August 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

WFP conducted a series of technical trainings, workshops and missions in August: National Logistics Preparedness Inception workshop, National School Feeding Supply Chain workshop, Training to Strengthen the Capacity of Milk Processing Units (MPU), PLUS (School Menu Optimizer) workshop in Trongsa and Zhemgang, and Agriculture Supply Chain Assessment mission to Trongsa and Punakha.

Operational Update

- WFP supported the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MOAF) in conducting the 1st National Logistics Preparedness Inception Workshop on 3-4 August 2021. It involved 16 government agencies identified as primary stakeholders with roles during emergency response situations. The workshop resulted in a stakeholder mapping and capacity needs definition based on current system readiness. Participants also identified collectively area of support requirements.
- WFP supported the School Health & Nutrition Division (SHND) in conducting a national school feeding supply chain workshop in Punakha on 19-20 August 2021. The KOICA-funded workshop reviewed the implementation status of past recommendations and current updates, and conducted series of discussions on key performance indicators (KPIs), data, supply chain and process flowchart validation. The workshop involved 28 on-site and 169 online participants.
- WFP conducted an agriculture supply chain assessment mission to Trongsa and Punakha on 22-29 August 2021. The assessment identified current challenges and opportunities, both within the rural and peri-urban contexts, that are faced by farmers, value chain actors and schools in relation to farmers-market system linkage. This included challenges around the supply of perishable commodities for the national school feeding programme.
- WFP is working to strengthen the capacity of (sub) national disaster responses, enhance the preparedness of disaster response mechanism and improve inter-agency emergency preparedness planning capacity with a funding amount of USD 232,960 received from the Immediate Response Account for Special Preparedness Activity (IR-PREP) to further reinforce the country's capacity to respond to disasters at any given time.

Contact info: Svante.helms@wfp.org

Country Director: Svante Helms

Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Bhutan

WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Sep 2021-Feb 2022 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.94 m	5.93 m	0.00 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.

- Supported by WFP, the Regional Agriculture marketing & Cooperatives Office (RAMCO), Gelephu conducted a training to strengthen the capacity of Milk Processing Units (MPU). A total of 21 members of the farmer groups (dairy) from Trongsa and Bumthang received training in various post production techniques (including for yogurt, paneer, chugo and rusgulla). Out of 21 participants, 14 were female. The resource person was sourced from the Regional Livestock Development Centre (RLDC), Zhemgang.
- WFP and the Ministry of Education brought together field officials from education, health and agriculture sectors in the districts of Zhemgang and Trongsa for a 4-day PLUS Menu workshop in each district. Around 25 participants agreed on local foods available across the school year (February-December) along with average local prices. With this critical information, the PLUS School Menu tool helped the nutritionist to develop nutritious menu within the available budget, and increase the use of local produce.



Photo Page 1: Interacting with the farmers group as a part of agriculture supply chain mission. © WFP/Dungkar Drukpa

Photo Page 2: Participants to PLUS Menu workshop, Trongsa. @WFP/Binai Lama.

Donors

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