



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Cuba Country Brief August 2021



Operational Context

Over the last 50 years, Cuba's comprehensive social protection programmes have primarily eradicated poverty and hunger. Although effective, these programmes mostly rely on food imports and strain the national budget. Recurrent natural shocks place further challenges to food security and nutrition.

WFP accompanies the Government on its efforts to develop a new management model to make food-based social protection programmes more efficient and sustainable. WFP supports social safety nets for different vulnerable groups, strengthens agricultural value chains and promotes the improvement of resilience and disaster risk management. These activities contribute to Sustainable Goals 2, 5 and 17.

WFP has been working with Cuba since 1963.



Population: **11.2 million**

2018 Human Development Index:
70 out of **189**

Income Level: **Upper middle**

2019 Gender Inequality Index: **65**
out of **189**

Contact info: wfp.havana@wfp.org

Country Director: Paolo Mattei

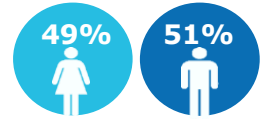
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/cuba

In Numbers

US\$ 3.2 m six months (September 2021-February 2022) net funding requirements

74,8 mt of food assistance distributed

19,334 people assisted
in AUGUST 2021



Operational Updates

- On 6 August, an official ceremony took place in the occasion of the EUR 120,000 donation by the Italian Government to WFP in support of the COVID-19 response plan. This contribution will support the distribution of 50 mt of vegetable oil and beans, to complement the food distribution provided by the Government, to more than 2,300 people infected by COVID-19 in hospitals of Havana and Matanzas, two of the most affected provinces. The ceremony was attended by the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Cuba, a representative of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment, the Ambassador of Italy in Cuba, and the WFP Country Director.
- Despite the complex epidemiological situation in the country, WFP continues to foster the implementation of the project "Strengthening the resilience of the local food system to natural disasters and climate change, with a nutritional approach for supplying social protection programmes" funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in five municipalities of the eastern provinces. In August, WFP trained local counterparts remotely to enable them to carry out: i) validation of selected value chain assessment's results, and ii) gaps prioritization process in each municipality with the support of WFP field monitors.

COVID-19 Response

- In August 2021, the upward trend in the number of people infected by COVID-19 continued. The provinces of Cienfuegos, Pinar del Rio, Mayabeque, Sancti Spiritus, Ciego de Avila, Artemisa and Camaguey had the highest levels of transmission. On 31 August, national authorities reported a cumulative total of 659,464 confirmed cases, 620,157 recovered, and 5,377 deceased.

Country Strategic Plan (2021-2024)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
28.7 m	12.7 m	3.2 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Populations facing multiple hazards maintain access to food during and in the aftermath of disasters.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activity 1:

- Provide timely food assistance to shock-affected people while strengthening national and local capacity relevant to emergency preparedness and response.

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Nutritionally vulnerable groups in targeted municipalities have improved nutrition status and more diversified and nutritious diets by 2024.

Focus area: Root causes

Activity 2:

- Provide nutritious food to nutritionally vulnerable groups through social protection programmes and a social and behavioural change strategy that promotes healthy diets.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable groups benefit from local food systems that are more resilient with regard to the impact of climate change and more efficient social safety nets by 2024.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activity 3:

- Provide training, equipment and technical assistance to stakeholders of local food systems while ensuring a more diversified, stable and nutritious diet for school-age children and other nutritionally vulnerable groups.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 4: National and local authorities have strengthened capacities to manage inclusive, comprehensive and adaptive food and nutrition systems by 2024.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activity 4:

- Strengthen the capacity of national and local decision makers related to the management of social protection programmes and disaster and climate risk, food security and nutrition analysis and monitoring.

Donors

European Union, ECHO, Government of Cuba, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Republic of Korea, KOICA, the Russian Federation and Latter-day Saint Charities.

- As part of the UN socioeconomic response plan to COVID-19, WFP continued distributing Corn-Soy Blend plus (CSB+) and milk to benefit vulnerable population assisted in community canteens of the five eastern provinces and through the social programmes of the Office of the Historian of Havana City. WFP also distributed rice, vegetable oil and wheat flour in community canteens nationwide to benefit about 66,400 vulnerable people.

Emergency Preparedness

- In the second half of August, the cyclonic activity in the Atlantic Basin increased. However, the presence of dry air and dust from the Sahara reduced the formation of cyclones in the tropical zone.
- On 26-27 August, hurricane Ida affected the provinces of Pinar del Río, Artemisa and the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud. No loss of human life was reported, and damages occurred in some crops, electrical service, telecommunications, and facility roofs. WFP intervention was not necessary on this occasion.
- WFP continues monitoring the evolution of the hurricane season in the Atlantic Basin which is expected to intensify from 1 September.

Monitoring

- WFP continuously monitors the implementation of programme activities. Considering the complex COVID-19 situation in the country, field monitors have reduced their visits to institutions and have increased monitoring by using remote alternatives, in close coordination with government counterparts.

Challenges

- Cuba experienced the worst economic downturn of the last three decades as evidenced by a GDP fall of 11 percent in 2020 and a 2 percent drop in the first half of 2021. The challenging economic and financial situation of the country has been strongly impacted by the COVID-19 and by the economic, commercial, and financial embargo imposed against it. The pandemic caused a sharp decrease in national and household level income sources, as well as increased the lack of food and basic supplies in the local markets. Furthermore, the monetary reform which started on 1 January has triggered an increase in the cost of living in general.
- COVID-19 has caused delays in the implementation of the capacity strengthening activities. However, trainings, assessments and meetings have been adjusted to be carried out virtually. The pandemic has also affected the procurement processes considering the low availability of commercial flights and ships to Cuba. This has created an increase in external transport costs. In addition, the increasing of embargo restrictions has caused delays in payments to international suppliers.