



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief September 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 US\$ 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 continued with its various capacity building and technical assistance programmes: training farmers in financial literacy, supporting the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests in monitoring and reporting, study on post-harvest management and marketing, continued training on PLUS menu optimizer and 72-hours Rapid Assessment Approach and participating in few relevant workshops and field trips.

Operational Update

- The Regional Agriculture and Marketing Cooperatives (RAMCO) Gelephu conducted financial literacy trainings for eight farmer groups of upper Kheng and ten farmer groups of lower Kheng. These farmer groups are already linked to the schools for the supply of local fruits and vegetables through an annual contract. The training is part of a crucial capacity strengthening programme of WFP and its implementing partners.
- WFP supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MOAF) to digitize and realign the agriculture monitoring and reporting system to emerging climate change and food system indicators. WFP supported the MOAF to introduce this online M&R system to the remaining ten districts including central agencies of the MOAF such as the National Plant Protection Centre (NPPC), National Seed Centre (NSC), Agriculture Machinery Centre (AMC), and National Post Harvest Centre (NPHC).
- A primary field-based study on postharvest management and marketing of fruits and vegetables is completed and the findings have been compiled into a short report. The findings will inform capacity strengthening activities and other support to smallholder farmers and value chain actors involved in growing, storing, transporting and marketing locally produced fruits and vegetables.
- WFP together with the Department of Disaster Management organized a workshop on 72-hour Rapid Assessment Approach (RAA) and Digital Vulnerability Database from 6-9 September 2021 to identify the vulnerability indicators and assign weightages and comprehensive ratios to those indicators. This aims to ensure that the RAA is not only inclusive of all data related to disaster but provides an accurate picture of the disaster scenario.
- WFP participated in the Codex advocacy workshop "Achieving Leadership in the Codex Process" which was organized by BAFRA from September 20-22, 2021 at Punakha. The workshop sensitized relevant stakeholders about Codex to bring all present stakeholders to a common understanding on the subject. It also advocated for multi-sectoral collaboration to facilitate effective participation in Codex activities.

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WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Oct 2021-Mar 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 priorities, WFP is adapting its programmes to help mitigate the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is causing delays in the implementation of WFP 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 estimates.
- WFP is working with government partners to increase national disaster awareness and how these potential risks may impact food security.
- 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 together with officials from the School Health and Nutrition Division visited a school to assess the ongoing Kitchen and Store refurbishment. The main objective of the refurbishment is to ensure food safety, hygiene and quality of the food commodities used for school meals as well as to ensure that food commodities are stored in proper conditions and the kitchen environment is congenial to prepare healthy school meals.

- WFP and the Ministry of Education brought together field officials from education, health and agriculture sectors in Wangdue Phodrang District for a four-day PLUS Menu workshop. 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 a nutritious menu within the available budget and increased the use of local produce.

- To streamline all nutrition programmes and interventions in the country, the Ministry of Health established a National Nutrition Taskforce to adopt a multisectoral approach to ensure adequate health and nutrition along the life course of Bhutanese people. The taskforce comprises of representatives from various sectors such as health, agriculture, education, regulatory, service providers and development partners including WFP, UNICEF and WHO.



Photo Page 1: Participants at the Codex Advocacy Workshop, Punakha. © WFP/Gayjoong Bhutii

Photo Page 2: Participants of agriculture monitoring & reporting training, Paro. @WFP/Binai Lama.

Donors

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