Operational Context
In 2019, the estimated GDP per capita in São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) amounted to approximately USD 2,001. Recent World Bank estimates show that about one third of the population lives on less than USD 1.9 per day and more than two thirds of the population is poor, using a poverty line of USD 3.2 per day.

In the past decade, the country has made considerable progress in reducing child mortality and malnutrition, and in improving maternal health. However, in 2014, it was estimated that 17.2 percent of children aged 6-59 months were stunted, 8.8 percent were underweight, and 4 percent were suffering from wasting.

The 2019 Human Development Index value of 0.625 puts the country in the medium human development category, ranking 135 out of 189 countries and above the Sub-Saharan Africa average. According to the same Human Development Report 2020, Sao Tome and Principe has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.537, ranking it 133 out of 162 countries in the 2019 index.

With Sao Tome heavily dependent on food imports, food availability is unpredictable: there is no deep-sea port, and, in bad weather, landing is difficult on the country’s single short airstrip. In addition, no cereals are cultivated on the island. The country is prone to natural hazards such as floods and landslides, which negatively affect crop development and road access as well as destroy houses and household assets.

WFP assistance is focused on strengthening capacities of the Government to implement the national sustainable home-grown school feeding programme, which reaches over 50,000 children attending schools (around 25 percent of total population) and facilitating smallholder farmers’ access to markets.

Sao Tome and Principe confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on 6 April 2020.

WFP has been present in Sao Tome and Principe since 1976.

Operational Updates

- Since 1976, WFP is supporting the implementation of school feeding in São Tomé and Príncipe either by direct implementation until 2015, or through capacity strengthening for the National School Feeding and Health Programme (PNASE) created in 2012. With the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, many borders were closed creating a serious food security problem in the country, especially in the most vulnerable families. On 17 September, schools were again closed for 15 days – after one week of reopening – due to the third wave of the pandemic. To mitigate its impact on the lives of these families, WFP provided direct food assistance to 5,000 vulnerable girls (51 percent and boys (49 percent), and their parents, in 209 schools in six districts, and for the Autonomous Region of Principe.

- In September, WFP delivered to PNASE food stocks for a new cycle of distributions destined to vulnerable children, to help them and their families mitigate the effects of social economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- On 8 September, WFP participated in the Opening Ceremony of the School Year 2021/2022. Speaking at the ceremony, the Minister of Education Julieta Rodrigues praised WFP for its support to school feeding during the 2020/21 school year. Ms Rodrigues stressed that this support was fundamental through the “delivery of staple food to schools, the supply of uniforms to all canteen workers and the distribution of baskets for the most vulnerable students in public elementary and secondary schools” in all districts of Sao Tome and Principe.

- On 9 and 10 September, WFP visited six school gardens in the same number of schools, to ensure school gardens in two districts of São Tomé (Caué and Lembá) will be ready to supply communities’ schools with fresh vegetables and fruits, in the school year 2021/2022 that started on 13 September. WFP is implementing a pilot project with its partner in STP, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) ADDAPA. The gardens will supply smaller schools nearby with food staples.

- As a funding partner of the Food and Nutritional Security Council of São Tomé and Príncipe (CONSAN-STP), WFP supported a series of meetings aimed at producing STP’s position on Food Systems, ahead of this year’s UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS). Those meetings informed São Tomé recommendations that were included in the joint CPLP (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries) document presented at the UNFSS, that took place on 23 and 24 September in New York, as part of the 76th UN General Assembly.
### WFP Country Strategy

**Country Strategic Plan (2019-2024)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2021 Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>2021 Available Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6 m</td>
<td>1.2 m</td>
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*Six-month net funding requirements as of 17 September 2021.

#### Strategic Result 1: Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement SDGs

**Strategic Outcome 1**: The Government of Sao Tome and Principe has strengthened capacity to implement an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and smallholder-friendly home-grown school meals (HGSM) programme and related food security and nutrition policies and programmes nationwide by 2030.

**Focus area**: Root Causes

**Activities:**
- Provide capacity strengthening (including through SSC) to the Government in the design, management and coordination of an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive HGSM programme and related FS&N policies and programmes.
- Provide capacity strengthening and coordination support to the Government in providing incentives for sustainable and equitable local food value chains and stimulating smallholder agricultural markets.

#### Strategic Result 2: Access to food

**Strategic Outcome 2**: Crisis-affected populations including school children in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crisis.

**Focus area**: Crisis Response

**Activities:**
- Provide food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations through in-kind transfers

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### Challenges

- Programme implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic continues to represent one of the major WFP challenges in Sao Tome and Principe in 2021. Some of the containment measures declared by the Government continue to affect the implementation of activities and WFP’s. One week after the begin of new school year, schools were again closed for 15 days, from 20 September. To contain COVID-19 third wave in STP. WFP carried out food distributions to vulnerable children in schools, facing challenges of crowd control, social distancing and ensuring children and adults wore masks. Besides food and hygiene materials, WFP distributed masks to all children beneficiaries of COVID-19 mitigation support.

- The funding environment continues to be challenging and is another concern for WFP in STP that might affect the implementation of an innovative home-grown school feeding programme linked to smallholder farmers’ market.

### Partnerships

- PNASE, the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSAN) and the National Centre for Supporting Smallholder Farmers (CADR) remain WFP main partners in STP.

- With WFP funding, and facilitated by its implementing partner ADAPPA, PNASE carried out on 10 September a training of around 20 principals of basic schools and kindergarten on the importance of school gardens for the sustainability of home-grown school feeding in Sao Tome and Principe.

### Communication

- To advocate during the 76th UN General Assembly and its Food Systems Conference on 23 September, the country office supplied WFP West Africa Twitter account with content on food systems reform for the achievement of Zero Hunger. A particular tweet was posted on Agrarian Reform national holiday, observed by the United Nations in Sao Tome and Principe.

- On 17 September, Sao Tomean private online media Tela Non published a news story on WFP delivery of food through PNASE, destined to vulnerable children and families coping with the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic.

- Through UN in STP webpage, WFP announced the conclusion of refurbishment of the three-school feeding warehousing and distribution poles operated by PNASE. It will ensure PNASE capacity to deliver food to schools during the new school year.

### Donors

Donors to WFP Sao Tome and Principe in 2021 include the UN COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund, Chellaram Foundation and the Global Partnership for Education Fund.