Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel with a population of 4.8 million that lives over a vast but mostly arid, 1,030,700 km² territory.

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought, resulting in the degradation of natural resources, and structurally affecting productive capacity, resilience, and food security of the population. According to the March 2021 Cadre Harmonisé, 484,150 people were projected to be food insecure between June and August 2021 (lean season). As of October 2021, 0.9 million of people were recorded to have an insufficient food consumption score.

Mauritania began its COVID-19 vaccination campaign in March 2021. As of October 2021, 711,452 people (15.3 percent of the population) received at least one dose of a vaccine against COVID-19 and 587,570 people are fully vaccinated (12.6 percent of the population).

Mauritania continues to host the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa. The Malian refugee situation entered its ninth years and the security conditions in Mali remains volatile, resulting in a continuous refugee influx to Mauritania. As of October 2021, 67,032 refugees were registered by UNHCR in the Mbera camp.

WFP country portfolio aims to meet the basic food and nutrition needs of affected people as well as to provide UNHAS flight services for all humanitarian and development partners. In parallel, WFP strives to ensure the continuation of resilience programmes, while strengthening institutional capacity and minimizing gender inequalities. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.

In Numbers

- **591 mt** of food, including specialized nutritious food distributed
- **USD 0.6 m** cash-based transfers made
- **USD 10 m** for six months (November 2021 – April 2022) net funding requirements
- **178,590 people assisted**
  - In October 2021
  - 52% men, 48% women

Operational Updates

- Interventions in support of vulnerable households during the **lean season** ended in October (for a total of six months of assistance). WFP carried out the fourth and final round of cash distributions, coupled with malnutrition prevention, reaching 59,830 men and women (6,375 households). In total, 79,597 men and women (115 percent of the initial target) benefited from the 2021 lean season WFP response, representing 23 percent of the total beneficiaries assisted by the Government and Food Security Group’s partners within the National Response Plan. For the third year in a row, cash rations were provided based on the actual size of the households within a range of 42 and 104 USD per month.

- As part of the long-term integrated resilience package implemented in the regions of Hodh El Charghi, Assaba and Guidimakha, 1,363 men and women were involved in construction of fences to avoid animal raving as well as water and soil conservation techniques and soil defence through the **food assistance for assets (FFA)** programme. 8,539 children aged 6-59 months and 1,292 women were assisted with specialised nutritious foods to **treat moderate acute malnutrition**. Following the reopening of schools, WFP's **school feeding programme** reached 45,690 Mauritanian boys and girls (93 percent of the target). In October, WFP also carried out an energy assessment study in 10 schools in resilience sites with the objective to find sustainable alternative cooking methods that could reduce wood consumption and protect cookers from harmful wood emissions.

- In **Mbera camp**, where Malian refugees are hosted, WFP-UNHCR comprehensive retargeting exercise is being finalized. Based on socioeconomic survey data analysis, three groups of refugees have been identified according their vulnerability status. Assessed households have been notified about their group, and WFP-UNHCR started receiving feedback from refugees. Once the targeting is finalized, the final beneficiary list will be shared with Tekavoul (the governmental social transfer programme) for enrollment. September and October **general food and cash distributions** were coupled, reaching 58,153 refugees with food and 63,162 refugees with cash. In parallel, for the **treatment of moderate acute malnutrition**, 441 children aged 6-59 months (of whom 21 were girls) and 201 pregnant and lactating women and girls received 3 mt of fortified nutritious food. For the **prevention of malnutrition activities**, WFP reached 2,039 children aged 6-23 months (of whom 988 were girls) and 1,076 women with 13 mt of fortified food. As part of the **school feeding programme**, WFP also distributed a morning porridge to 4,729 schoolchildren (3 mt of specialised nutrition food distributed).
**WFP Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Result</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Focus area</th>
<th>Targeted outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Everyone has access to food</td>
<td>• Provide food/cash assistance (conditional and/or unconditional), school meals, and protective nutrition and treatment</td>
<td>Crisis response</td>
<td>Targeted areas all year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Everyone has access to food</td>
<td>• Provide seasonal food assistance to food-insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment</td>
<td>Resilience-building</td>
<td>Targeted areas all year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. No one suffers from malnutrition</td>
<td>• MAM treatment and cash transfers to pregnant and lactating women</td>
<td>Resilience-building</td>
<td>Targeted areas all year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders</td>
<td>• Provide livelihood support to food-insecure and at-risk Mauritanian households, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets</td>
<td>Resilience-building</td>
<td>Targeted areas all year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country strategic capacities</td>
<td>• Provide training and technical support to governmental institutions</td>
<td>Resilience-building</td>
<td>Targeted areas all year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Global partnership support</td>
<td>• Provide humanitarian and development partners access to common services that permit them to reach and operate in targeted areas all year.</td>
<td>Resilience-building</td>
<td>Targeted areas all year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Challenges**

- With regards to the establishment of **a national framework** for early warning, preparedness, planning and response to food security and nutrition shocks, thanks to continuous technical WFP support, major steps have been taken to improve the functionality and government leadership of the Food Security Group, so as to prepare the ground for the new "**Comité de mise en œuvre et de coordination de la réponse**" (CCMR). Following the official launch of the scheme, the Food Security Group will be replaced by the CCMR.
- As part of **early warning and response planning**, WFP Community Sentinel Sites (CSS) were identified in the department of Monguel and Maghama (Gorgol) and the existing capacities of CSS in the regions of Hodh El Charghi, Guidimakha and Gorgol were strengthened. The CSS are responsible for collecting and transmitting relevant and timely information to local and national stakeholders, to support decision-making at the national level.
- Since 2018, WFP has been supporting the Government to use drought insurance provided by the African Union's African Risk Capacity (ARC) through the ARC Replica programme. Building on good practices and lessons learned, WFP Mauritania participated in a mission to Mali to foster knowledge sharing at regional level and support the deployment of the ARC Replica programme in Mali.
- The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) transported 163 passengers and over 334 kg of light cargo connecting Nouakchott to Kiffa, Nema and Bassikounou, through 42 in-country rotations.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

- WFP took part in the second agro-pastoral campaign monitoring mission. Preliminary results highlight **scattered and poor rainfall** patterns across the country, likely leading to reduced agricultural production and unfavourable pastoral conditions. An **upward trend** of basic commodities' prices was also recorded.
- WFP carried out a mission in Assaba for the introduction of a **drone-based imagery** into the Community-based Participatory Planning (CBPP) exercises. Preliminary results show the feasibility and value added of this tool which will be replicated in other sites.

**Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2021 Total Requirements (in USD)</th>
<th>2021 Available Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six-Month Net-Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39.6 m</td>
<td>39 m</td>
<td>10 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WFP Mauritania Country Brief**

October 2021

**Donors**

Donors to WFP Mauritania CSP 2019 - 2022 include Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Mauritania, Monaco, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States. Additional support was provided by ARC Replica, UN Adaptation Funds, UN CERF, UN PBF, UN SDG, UNICEF and UNHCR.