



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Mauritania Country Brief

October 2021



## 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 km<sup>2</sup> 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.



Population: **4.8 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **157 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **19.6%** of children between 6-59 months

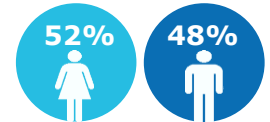
## In Numbers

**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



## 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 crops' 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 enrolment. 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).

**Contact info:** Maria Ludovica Carucci ([marialudovica.carucci@wfp.org](mailto:marialudovica.carucci@wfp.org))

**Country Director:** Kinday Samba

Further information: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/mauritania>

**Main photo:** Credit: WFP/Melissa Marques

**Caption:** Training on use of drones in FFA activities, Assaba region

## Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

2021 Total Requirements (in USD)	2021 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
39.6 m	39 m	10 m

## Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crisis.

**Focus area:** Crisis response

## Activities:

- Provide food/cash assistance (conditional and/or unconditional), school meals, and preventive nutrition ration and MAM treatment to refugees
- Provide food assistance and supplementary feeding to pandemic affected populations/households.

## Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Food-insecure populations, including school-age children, have access to adequate and nutritious food all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience-building

## Activities:

- Provide seasonal food assistance to food-insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment
- Provide school meals to vulnerable Mauritanian children

## Strategic Result 3: No one suffers from malnutrition

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant and lactating women and girls, have improved nutritional status all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience building

## Activities:

- MAM treatment and cash transfers to pregnant and lactating women and girls attending pre/post-natal care

## Strategic Result 4: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

**Strategic Outcome 4:** Food-insecure populations and communities exposed to climate shocks have more resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience-building

## Activities:

- Provide livelihood support to food-insecure and at-risk Mauritanian households, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets

## Strategic Result 5: Country strategic capacities

**Strategic Outcome 5:** National institutions have strengthened capacities to manage food security, nutrition, and social protection policies and programmes, including an adaptive (shock responsive) social protection system, by 2030.

**Focus area:** Resilience-building

## Activities:

- Provide training and technical support to governmental institutions

## Strategic Result 6: Global partnership support

**Strategic Outcome 6:** Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services that permit them to reach and operate in targeted areas all year.

**Focus area:** Resilience-building

## Activities:

- Provide flight services to humanitarian partners for humanitarian interventions
- Provide on-demand logistics services to Government, United Nations and Non-Governmental partners to facilitate effective field operations (CPA Service Provision and platform activities)

- 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 oeuvre 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 replicate in other sites.

## Challenges

- WFP faces an estimated funding shortage of approximately USD 10.2 million for the next six months (November 2021 to Avril 2022) representing 47 percent of the requirements for the period (USD 21.7 million).
- The two activities most affected are **assistance to Malian refugees** and the **school feeding programme**. They account for more than 96 percent of funding deficit. If resources are not immediately secured, a complete interruption of both food and cash assistance for more than 65,000 Malian refugees will occur in the camp starting from the beginning of January 2022, and a complete interruption of the school feeding programme benefiting more than 45,000 pupils will happen from the end of January 2022. WFP is strengthening advocacy efforts with a wide range of partners to address those gaps.

## 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.