



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief October 2021



Operational Context

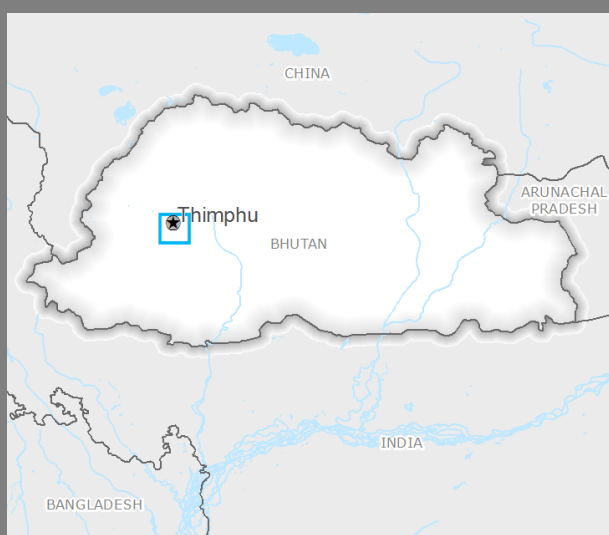
Bhutan will transition to lower Middle-Income Level status by 2023 and considers WFP's support critical to this transition process.

The national poverty rate, as measured by the international poverty line of US\$ 1.9 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

WFPs capacity strengthening, and technical assistance continued in agriculture (enterprise promotion, linking farmers to schools and hospitals), emergency preparedness (telecommunications and logistics preparedness) and nutrition. The country office is also stepping up efforts to mobilize resources particularly from climate funds.

Operational Update

- The Department of Agriculture and WFP organised a weeklong capacity building program on 'Promoting Enterprises in Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) sector of Bhutan' in Bumthang. A total of 36 (19 female and 17 male) participants with diverse expertise and background attended the workshop. Project proposal development, sourcing of investment finances, certification processes, research and development of food product, value addition, cold chain, marketing and potential of small-scale enterprises were some of the primary contents discussed during the workshop.
- WFP supported the Department of Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives (DAMC) and Regional Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives (RAMCO)-Gelephu office to revive the linking of Agriculture and Livestock Farmers' Groups with Schools and Hospitals in Tsirang under the School and Hospital Feeding Programme (SHFP). The stakeholders involved in the linking process were educated on how the stakeholders involved should collaborate, creating synergies, fostering mutually beneficial partnership and ensuring trade-off in the long run.
- WFP is assisting the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) and relevant agencies of the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) to prepare concept note for the Adaptation Fund - Large Innovation Grant project. The aim is to develop a proposal that assists smallholder farmers to address their key identified climate change risks, and to increase their resilience and adaptive capacity. WFP has conducted two stakeholder workshops with relevant agencies and institutions as a part of the concept note application process.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF) celebrated World Food Day on October 18 with a global theme, "Our actions are our future - better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life." WFP Head of Office joined officials from international organizations and government agencies. The day reinforced the need to encourage awareness on sustainable agricultural practices and to celebrate the 'Food Heroes' who work tirelessly to provide food for the world, collectively call for global solidarity in ensuring adequate access to nutritious food for all despite exigencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Contact info: Svante.helms@wfp.org

Country Director: Svante Helms

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

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.

- Healthy Drukyl & WFP Bhutan observed World Food Day on October 16 this year with the launch of a Social Media Campaign. The campaign was launched with the Healthy Drukyl jingle to celebrate healthy eating and advocate for nutritious and diverse meals. The campaign will create awareness and highlight useful ways of eating healthy and diverse.
- The Ministry of Education and WFP held a four-day workshop on food preparation, hygiene & school feeding management to improve the nutritional status of Bhutan's school children. Workshop participants included principals, school feeding and nutrition focal points, & cooks.
- To strengthen the capacity of the RGoB to respond to emergencies through improved emergency telecommunication preparedness and response capacity at both national and local government levels, WFP received an additional USD 15,000 from the Critical Country Initiative. This fund will strengthen the telecom infrastructure to extend transmission to ensure signals can cover long distances and can be received at the site of an emergency.
- WFP has also initiated a discussion to carry out the first ever drone training for the country with the RGoB, WeRobotics and Nepal FlyingLabs. The training intends to strengthen the capacity of relevant government stakeholders in the usage of drones for disasters. The training is planned for December 2021 and the government has approved the execution of the training.
- As part of the implementation of the Field-based Preparedness Project, WFP supported the MoAF and Department of Disaster Management in conducting the 2nd National Logistics Preparedness Capacity Gaps Analysis and Action Planning workshop from 18-22 October 2021, to identify preparedness capacity gaps that currently exist in the area of humanitarian supply chain and logistics management within Bhutan and collectively identify area of improvements and the relevant agencies that are required to take the necessary actions. Further, to support the preparedness efforts, WFP has commenced a joint logistics capacity assessment with government counterparts. The exercise is planned in coordination with government staff that form part of the logistics preparedness working group depending on the geographical and functional areas within the supply chain.

Photo Page 1: Capacity building programme on "Promoting Enterprise in RNR sector in Bhutan" @WFP/Binai Lama

Donors

KOICA; First-line of Defence (USAID); Global Logistics Cluster support; WFP internal funds