



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Mauritania Country Brief

November 2021



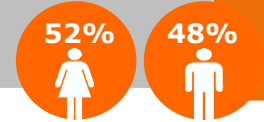
## In Numbers

793 mt of food, including specialized nutritious food, distributed

USD 1.3 m cash-based transfers made

USD 11.6 m six-month (Dec 2021 – May 2022) net funding requirements

128,593 people assisted in November 2021



WFP SAYS NO to GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

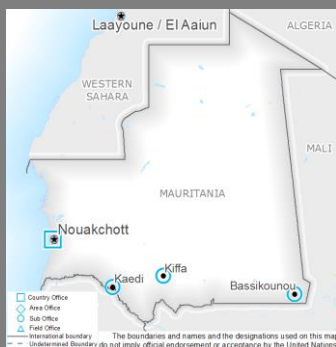
## Operational Context

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 impacting the population's productive capacity, resilience, and food security. According to the 2021 November Cadre Harmonisé, around 660,740 people (15% of the population) will be in phase 3 (crisis) or beyond in the next lean season, between June and August 2022, an increase of 36 percent compared to last year. The national global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate stood at 11.1 percent, while the prevalence of chronic malnutrition reached 17 percent (2021 SMART).

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

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



Population: <b>4.8 million</b>	2020 Human Development Index: <b>157 out of 189</b>
Income Level: <b>Lower middle</b>	Chronic malnutrition: <b>17%</b> of children between 6-59 months

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**Photo: Credit:** En Haut!  
**Caption:** FFA beneficiary and a sorghum plan, Assaba region

## Strategic Updates

- On 18 November, WFP held a workshop to disseminate the results of the **Fill the Nutrition Gap** analysis. Participants included government partners, UN agencies, and national and international NGOs. The workshop highlighted the necessity of a joint multi-sectoral effort, through national policies and programmes, to strengthen and transform the country's food systems.
- On 19 November, WFP signed an agreement with the Commission for Food Security (CSA) for cooperation on the **use of drones** for humanitarian purposes. Drones can provide fast and accurate impact assessments of humanitarian interventions. WFP is therefore committed to training government partners on their use in the humanitarian context.
- Results from the **2021 November Cadre Harmonisé** (CH) point to a disturbing food security situation for the next lean season (June-August 2022) with 660,740 people (15 percent of the country's population) in a crisis situation, an increase of 125,850 compared to last year. Mauritania has the second-highest rate recorded across the Sahel region, there is therefore an urgent need for an integrated and coordinated response plan to limit the predicted impacts and protect the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable.
- Following the end of the lean season distributions, WFP participated in the first meetings of the **"Response Committee of the National Preparedness and Response Plan"**, a new government-led committee that replaces the Food Security Group. WFP supports the government by providing guidance and technical support to fully operationalize the committee and prepare for the 2022 Lean Season Lessons-Learned workshop, planned for 19-20 January 2022.
- WFP continued to support the Commission for Food Security, in the context of the operationalization of the DCAN (**Food and Nutritional Crisis Response Mechanism**) and its bodies. In addition, WFP collaborated with the World Bank to support the process of defining the National Food and Nutrition Crisis Response Fund (FNRCAN). Finally, WFP supported the Social Registry by participating in the survey monitoring committee in Nouakchott (co-financed by WFP, UNICEF, and the World Bank) as well as by initiating discussions on the update of the Registry database.
- WFP participated in the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence** (GBV) annual campaign. This year, the campaign's theme was: *"Orange the World: End Violence against Women Now"*. Various activities were organized among WFP staff and beneficiaries, including organizing a cooking competition in one resilience site in Assaba to encourage the involvement of men in nutrition and food security activities.

## 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	46 m	11.6 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)

• **The lean season response** ended in October 2020. A preliminary appraisal of WFP's response indicates the positive impacts of the response provided. One example above all, the portion of people with an acceptable food consumption score increased by 14 percentage points.

• As part of the long-term integrated resilience package implemented in the regions of Hodh El Charghi, Assaba and Guidimakha and the **Food Assistance for Assets (FFA)** programme, 960 households received food assistance through cash transfer to address immediate food needs. 14 community-based participatory planning (CBPP) sessions took place to plan activities for the next month and 7,084 children, aged 6 to 59 months, and 1,292 women were assisted with specialized nutritious food to **treat moderate acute malnutrition**. Following the reopening of schools, WFP's **school feeding programme** resumed and was able to reach **48,702** Mauritanian children in November.

• WFP-UNHCR's finalized their comprehensive retargeting exercise for the **Mbera camp**, where Malian refugees are hosted, in November, and accordingly, refugees were divided into three groups based on their vulnerability status. When WFP-UNHCR notified assessed households of the results of the exercise, they received appeals from 3,400 refugees, which led to a reassessment of their vulnerability status. A list of highly vulnerable households was shared with Tekavoul (the government's social safety net system project) for validation prior to enrolment. November-December **general food and cash distributions** reached 69,165 and 64,689 refugees respectively, an increase of 18 and 2 percent compared to previous distributions. For **the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition**, 462 children (of whom 230 were girls) aged 6-59 months and 223 pregnant and lactating women received 2 mt of specialized nutritious food. Moreover, under **the prevention of malnutrition activities**, WFP reached 1,076 women with 6 mt of specialized fortified food. Finally, as part of the **school feeding programme**, WFP distributed morning porridge to 5,686 students (7 mt of specialized nutrition food), an increase of 20 percent compared to previous distributions.

• The **United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** transported 219 passengers and over 390 kg of light cargo between Nouakchott, Kiffa, Nema, and Bassikounou, through 52 in-country rotations. Moreover, upon the request of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), UNHAS supported UNCT with safe transport for their annual meeting.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

• WFP finalized its quarterly **Complaints and Feedback Mechanism report** in November. From July to September 2021, WFP received 590 calls, 67 percent of which were from women. The calls were mostly either complaints regarding food assistance targeting by excluded households (79 percent) or thanking WFP for the assistance (17 percent).

## Challenges

• WFP faces an estimated funding shortage of approximately USD 11.6 million for the next six months (December 2021 to May 2022) representing 53 percent of the requirements for the period (USD 21.8 million).

• Securing funds for **assistance to Malian refugees and the school feeding programme** is a top priority. Currently, both interventions face more than 96 percent shortfall and will come to a complete halt in January 2022 if resources are not immediately secured, leaving more than 65,000 Malian refugees and 48,000 Mauritanians school children without assistance. WFP is therefore increasing advocacy efforts with a wide range of partners to address the funding gaps.

## Donors

WFP Mauritania CSP (2019-2022) donors include Canada, the European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Mauritania, Monaco, Private donors, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Additional support is provided by ARC Replica, UN Adaptation Funds, UN CERF, UN Peacebuilding Fund, UN SDG Fund, UNICEF, and UNHCR.