



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief February 2022



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 USD 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

WFP participated in the UN Food System Summit's convenor connection sessions, sharing expectations on how the national food systems will evolve, between now and the global stock-take in September 2023.

WFP also supported the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) with containers worth USD 54,000 for storage of critical search and rescue equipment.

Operational Update

- WFP participated in the **UN Food System Summit** convenor connection sessions, focused on the status of food systems, the progress with national pathways, anticipated milestones leading up to the stock-take in September 2023, as well as synergies and opportunities available for **collaboration** within regions. WFP provided an update on the progress in Bhutan.
- WFP together with the Department of Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives, the Department of Agriculture and Policy and, the planning division of the Agriculture Ministry discussed activities lined up for implementation in the next 18 months. WFP will provide **technical assistance**, advisory services and USD 70,000 in funding to support the workplans. The workplans will focus on the following activities:
 - Supporting **postharvest research, and facilities** and equipment such as storage, dryers, testing kits, packaging materials. It will also strengthen capacity of frontline staff and agripreneurs.
 - Facilitating linkage of **smallholder farmers** and farmer groups/cooperatives to markets like schools, institutions, local & national markets. It will also provide value chain support to link agricultural primary production to agribusinesses like storage, processing, and marketing.
 - Setting up a digital platform to improve the Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) **monitoring and reporting system** for inclusive data, and improved dissemination of RNR information, including upscaling of successful models and field practices.

WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Mar-Aug 2022 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.94 m	6.38 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

- A surge in community transmission of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 resulted in new lockdown measures for most districts in the country, including Thimphu. These new lockdown restrictions have affected implementation and monitoring of activities.

Donors

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

- WFP supported the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) with the provision of containers worth USD 54,000, for storage of critical search and rescue equipment which the government has purchased. Currently, the equipment is stored at an office building. The containers would not only provide waterproof storage but also be able to withstand jolts and crushing pressures. Additionally, the containers are a non-permanent solution which can be assembled and disassembled easily, allowing for easy deployment of equipment to affected areas. As of end-February not all districts in Bhutan had a container, however, the DDM is working towards providing one container for each district so they can effectively respond to future disasters.
- WFP participated in the 4th Country Programme Board Meeting between the Government and Heads of UN agencies in Bhutan on 18 March 2022. Members reviewed implementation of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework** for 2021 as well as the workplan for 2022.



Photo Page 2: Members of a women farmers group in Trongsa, supported by WFP, supply vegetables to a school, monastic institution, and hydropower project in the district. @RNREC/Dechen Pelden

Photo Page 1: Like in most high-altitude areas of the country, farmers in Trongsa prepare their fields for the farming season. @RNREC/Dechen Pelden