



World Food Programme

# WFP Mauritania Country Brief

February 2022

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## 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 percent of the population) will be in phase 3 (crisis) or beyond in the next lean season, between June and August 2022, an increase of 125,850 people (+23.5 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 began its COVID-19 vaccination campaign in March 2021. As of January 2022, 977,788 people are fully vaccinated (20.3 percent of the population) against COVID-19 and 24,162 have received a booster shot, with a total of 57,794 confirmed cases, 51,877 recoveries and 937 deaths.

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 remain 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

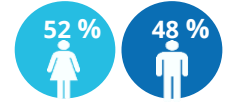
## In Numbers

**91 mt** of food, including specialized nutritious food, distributed

**No** cash-based transfers made

**USD 12.2 m** for six months (March – August 2022) net funding requirements

**119,323 people** assisted  
In February 2021



## Operational Updates

- In the **Mbera refugee camp**, January and February distributions were coupled together. Based on the results of the new targeting exercise, WFP assisted 22,858 moderately food insecure refugees (10,335 man and 12,503 women) with cash only, as well as 41,357 highly vulnerable people (18,734 man and 22,623 women) and 2,525 new arrivals (1,144 man and 1,381 women) with food and cash.
- In parallel, for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, 487 children aged 6-59 months (of whom 242 were girls) and 228 pregnant and lactating women received 3 mt of specialised nutritious food and 1 mt of oil. As part of the school feeding programme, WFP distributed school meals (7 mt of fortified food) to 5,772 students (2,615 boys and 3,157 girls). Malnutrition prevention activities were not planned for this month and will resume in March 2022 for a period of 6 months.
- In line with the **2022 National Response Plan**, WFP stands ready to position itself in any of the 33 moughataas (departments) projected to be in phase 3+ (crisis) per the Cadre Harmonisé and located in the regions of Adrar, Assaba, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Hod El Chargui, Hod El Gharbi, Tagant, and Tiris Zemmour. Priority areas of geographical positioning shall be decided on by the end of the first quarter of 2022 based on consultations with the Government and partners, to maximize coverage of acutely affected populations and complementarities among actors. Resource permitting, WFP will provide cash assistance to 200,000 food insecure individuals (of which, 104,000 women) (26 percent of people projected in phase 3+), combined with blanket supplementary feeding for children aged 6-23 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls. Starting from April, WFP will provide pre-lean season assistance in the moughataas of Maghama and Aioun. Preparations have already started.
- On March 1<sup>st</sup>, the African School Feeding Day, Taazour (the Delegation for National Solidarity and the Fight against Exclusion), the Commission for Food Security, and the Ministry of Education signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding for the implementation of a national school feeding program. This is an important step, which was made possible through the advocacy and technical expertise of WFP.
- WFP's school feeding programme reached 48,702 students (24,351 boys and 24,351 girls) in 373 public schools in the three targeted regions (Guidimakha, Assaba, and Hod el Charghi). In Guidimakha and Assaba, WFP organised a

**Country Director:** Kinday Samba

**Contact Info:** Farah Kashaf (farah.kashaf@wfp.org)

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

**Main photo:** Credit: WFP/En Haut

**Caption:** Primary school children at school, Chteib, Assaba region

## Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

2022 Total Requirements (in USD)	2022 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>50 m</b>	<b>25.1 m</b>	<b>12.2 m</b>

## 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)

training session on school feeding management, food hygiene and nutrition, reaching 315 people (canteen managers, parents, school directors, and technical service), of which 158 were women.

- On the treatment of **moderate acute malnutrition**, 4,763 children aged 6-59 months and 1,592 pregnant and lactating women received specialized nutritious foods in the three regions where WFP is implementing the resilience package, namely Hodh El Charghi, Guidimakha, and Assaba.
- In 68 integrated resilience sites, WFP continued implementing **Food Assistance for Assets activities**, supporting communities to build or rehabilitate productive assets that improve the management of ecosystems and food production, and dietary diversity. WFP is running a horticultural campaign (October 2021 to March 2022) where rural women (through cooperatives) are cultivating in the gardens, thereby enhancing their livelihoods and improving nutritional diversity in the villages.
- As part of **early warning and response planning** (adaptive social protection system), WFP and the World Bank provided technical support for the finalization of the draft decree establishing the Food and Nutrition Crisis Response National Fund (FNRCAN). It will be published in the official gazette, after signature by the Prime Minister.
- The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (**UNHAS**) transported 137 passengers and over 365 kg of light cargo connecting Nouakchott to Kiffa, Nema, and Bassikounou, through 33 in-country rotations.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- The next Cadre Harmonisé session is scheduled for 7-12 March, with technical and financial support from WFP and FAO. Preparations are ongoing.
- WFP and Action Against Hunger (ACF) continued to work closely with the community sentinel sites. For the first time, the data collected through these community-based sentinel sites will feed into the *Cadre Harmonisé's* analysis. Experts have already worked on a protocol to be used as a trigger for sudden or slow onset emergencies with thresholds to be validated through a national workshop.

## Challenges

- WFP faces an estimated funding shortage of approximately **USD 12.2 million** for the next six months (March to August 2022) representing 41 percent of the requirements for the period (USD 29.6 million).
- The most worrisome shortfalls concern **assistance to Malian refugees, the school feeding programme, lean season assistance, malnutrition treatment, and UNHAS activities**.
- If resources are not immediately secured, a complete interruption of both food and cash assistance for more than 64,000 refugees will occur in the camp starting from July 2022, and a complete interruption of the school feeding programme for 50,000 students will occur in April 2022. In addition, food needs of more than 90,000 vulnerable people will be left unaddressed during the lean season; around 20,000 children and pregnant and lactating women will not receive the necessary treatment for malnutrition, and UNHAS activities will be suspended in May.

## 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 the Gimbel Foundation, ARC Replica, UN Adaptation Funds, UN CERF, UN PBF, UN SDG, UNICEF, and UNHCR.