WFP Benin
Country Brief
February 2022

Operational Context

The Republic of Benin is a low-income West African country ranked 158 out of 189 countries on the 2020 Human Development Index report. The estimated population of 11.8 million is predominantly rural and juvenile, with an average age of 21 years old. The quality of education and the school environment are poor, and in many rural districts the primary school enrolment rate remains below 50 percent, particularly among girls.

The agricultural sector, predominantly small-fragmented farms with low productivity, employs around 70 percent of the population and contributes to 33 percent of the national gross domestic product.

Households spend on average 63 percent of their budget on food. Food insecurity mostly affects impoverished rural households; worsens during the lean season and increases after natural disasters such as the heavy floods that affect the country every rainy season. Benin is classified by RISK INFORM as the 36th nation most vulnerable to climate change out of 190 states.

In Benin, as of 1 March 2022, there have been 26,567 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 161 deaths. As of 22 February 2022, a total of 2,788,620 vaccine doses were administrated and 17 percent of the population was vaccinated (Benin - COVID-19 Overview - Johns Hopkins (jhu.edu)).

WFP has been present in Benin since 1964.

In Numbers

1,950 metric tons of food assistance distributed in 3,848 schools in January 2022

USD 0.7 M six months net funding requirements (March-August 2022)

675,107 people assisted in January 2022

Operational Updates

• WFP’s Executive Director (ED) visited Benin from February 16 to February 17, 2022. He met with the President of Benin, His Excellency Patrice Talon, and expressed WFP’s appreciation for his leadership and personal involvement to fight hunger in Benin, and for his investments to provide equal education opportunities to all children, boys and girls. The ED also exchanged with the government, technical and financial partners, donors, and the UN country team about issues related to the implementation of the national integrated school feeding program, challenges, and prospects, both in the context of the food crisis in the sub-region and the growing insecurity in northern Benin. Finally, the ED visited field activities related to the implementation of the national integrated school feeding programme.

• WFP supported school canteens operations in 3,848 schools and developed a food allocation plan for the third quarter of the school year. In January, WFP supported 675,107 school children, among which 46 percent of girls and 54 percent of boys.

• In the framework of the school feeding programme extension, the country office recruited, trained, and deployed 82 casual workers (26 women) to identify new schools that could join the programme.

• In the South of Benin, WFP is implementing the “Emergency food assistance to Benin in response to COVID-19 and natural disaster” project which will support 50,000 beneficiaries. The country office identified 13 warehouses for the re-positioning of food before distribution.

• The country office, in collaboration with WFP superintendent, checked the quantity and quality of 450 mt of maize purchased from local traders and received 520 mt of yellow peas from Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) to cover the needs of the third quarter of the school year.

• Smallholder farmers are essential for the sustainability of WFP school feeding activities and emergencies response. In this regard, WFP trained about 500 smallholder farmers, of which 39 percent are women, on its requirements to enable local food purchase. On the “Resilience against COVID-19 in Borgou and Alibori (RECOTA)” project, WFP superintendent checked the quality of 100 mt of maize produced by smallholder farmers (94 farmers including 30 women). The results of the analyses show that 100 percent of the products are compliant with WFP’s standards.

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Photo: The ED received by the President of Benin. Credit: Makeba TCHIBOZO
The data collection phase for the comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis 2021 was conducted from mid-January to mid-February in 26,000 households and more than 1,300 villages and markets. The debriefing organized on 28 February 2022 provided an opportunity to review the progress of this data collection phase, to outline the issues and constraints encountered, and the solutions and good practices put in place during the analysis. The report will be available in April 2022.

- A community feedback mechanism (CFM) strategy is under development with the objective of promoting accountability to the affected population in a cross-cutting manner. It will enable affected population to express their concerns, complaints and provide feedback on areas relevant to food assistance operations in a safer manner. It will also provide WFP Benin management with an overview of the main concerns, needs and challenges of communities by region, gender and age, to help them make better informed programming decisions, and to inform future community engagement interventions.
- On 9 February 2022, WFP staff participated in the cooking and distribution of meals to 213 and 296 school children of ‘Le Littoral’ and ‘Aïdo’ public primary schools respectively. It was an opportunity to demonstrate that school canteens are a shared responsibility.

## Monitoring

- In January and February 2022, partner NGOs (non-governmental organizations) helped collect data through Mobile Operational Data Acquisition (MODA) on food consumed, the beneficiaries assisted by WFP, and the financial and in-kind contributions from communities for the proper functioning of the school canteens. Data quality has improved, and the percentage of error has decreased from 7 percent in September 2021 to 2.3 percent in January 2022.
- 80 enumerators collected baseline indicators for the 1,729 schools that will join the school feeding programme in April 2022.

## Challenges

- Since November 2021, the insecurity in northern Benin is growing. On 9 February 2022, in the African Parks two explosive devices killed six people and injured another 10. This situation has led to the closure of four schools and may restrict WFP’s monitoring activities.
- According to national data, 24 percent of schools do not have any water points. For schools that have canteens, the analysis shows that 58 percent of schools do not have water points, 22 percent have water points that are not operational, and only 20 percent have functional water points. WFP and UNICEF developed jointly an advocacy message for universal access to safe water in schools. WFP is actively seeking partnerships opportunities to address this issue.

## Donors

The top five donors to WFP Benin Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023) are the Government of Benin, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and China.