



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Mauritania Country Brief

April 2022



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 km² 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 April 2022, 1,567,041 people are fully vaccinated (34 percent of the population) against COVID-19 and 47,137 have received a booster shot, with a total of 58,757 total cases and 982 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 March 2022, 69,368 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

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

Main photo's credit: WFP/ En haut !

Caption: FFA worker, Chalkha-Chteib

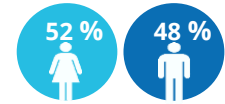
In Numbers

52 mt of food, including specialized nutritious food, distributed

0.3 m cash-based transfers made

USD 18.5 m for six months (May – Oct 2022) net funding requirements

128,156 people assisted
In April 2022



Operational Updates

- In the **Mbera refugee camp**, March and April distributions were coupled together. Based on the results of the new targeting exercise, WFP assisted 18,617 moderately food insecure refugees (10,053 of whom were women) with cash only as well as 47,043 highly vulnerable and newly arrived refugees (25,733 women and 21,310 men) with food and cash. In parallel, for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, 490 children aged 6-59 months (249 of whom were girls) and 237 pregnant and lactating women received 3.2 mt of specialized nutritious food and 0.127 mt of oil. As part of the school feeding programme, WFP distributed school meals (7 mt of fortified food) to 5,962 students (3,008 of whom were girls) in the 8 schools of the camp. Malnutrition prevention activities planned for this month couldn't be implemented due to operational delays relating to the screening of beneficiaries. The activities will likely resume in May.
- WFP finalised the **pre-lean season** targeting in the Moughataas (departments) of Maghama and Aioun, which are facing severe food insecurity this year. Around 45,000 individuals (24,300 of whom were women) were identified as meeting the eligibility criteria and will receive assistance in May for the months of April and May and will continue to receive assistance throughout all the lean season. The food assistance and safety nets specialised group, within the scope of the Dispositif National de prevention et de response au crises alimentaires et nutritionnelles" (DCAN), finalised the modalities and tools review for the 2022 **lean season response**. The existing targeting and delivery tools, harmonized between humanitarian and shock-responsive safety-net programmes, were further enhanced in 2022 through determining the quota of beneficiaries at the commune level (rather than department) and including targeting criteria for semi-urban localities. Moreover, the monthly ration was maintained at 450 MRU per person (covering 98% of food needs) and the reduction for households benefitting from Tekavoul is set at 730 MRU per household.
- WFP's **school feeding programme** reached 48,702 children (26,299 girls) with morning porridge and warm lunch in April. This activity will not be implemented in May due to lack of funding coupled with delays in fund confirmations, which make purchasing food items in a timely manner impossible given the long lead time.
- On the **treatment of moderate acute malnutrition**, 4,228 children aged 6-59 months (2,283 of whom were girls) and 648 pregnant and lactating women received specialized nutritious foods in 427 health centers located in the three regions where WFP is implementing the resilience package, namely Hodh El Charghi, Guidimakha, and Assaba. In parallel, in April 2022, WFP completed the first screening to identify moderately malnourished children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women in need of treatment in the regions of Guidimakha, Assaba, Hodh el Chargui, and Hodh el Garbi (malnutrition screening in Gorgol has not yet started) during the lean season. A total of 49,148 children were screened, among whom 5,450 children were found in need of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment. These children will be enrolled in the WFP MAM treatment programme. Similarly, WFP, together with its implementing partners, screened a

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

2022 Total Requirements (in USD)	2022 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
80 m	29 m	18.5 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)

total of 19,889 women, among whom 1,893 will be enrolled in the WFP MAM treatment programme. Screening exercises are conducted regularly to identify needs and ensure the inclusion of beneficiaries most in need of malnutrition treatment activities and reach the planned target.

- As part of the **Food Assistance for Assets** programme, 3,000 beneficiaries took part in land rehabilitation activities and received cash transfers as an incentive to work. In parallel, at the site of El Rguig, WFP organized a workshop on manufacturing gabion nets and boxes, used to build assets. In addition to fostering young people's technical skills, the workshops supported young people in finding employment or starting a business and aimed to empower them to have confidence in their technical capacities and abilities to carry out the work.
- Within the framework of the operationalization of the *Dispositif national de prevention et de réponse aux Crises Alimentaires et Nutritionnelles*, the Commissariat a la Securite Alimentaire (CSA), supported by WFP, submitted the **National Response Plan 2022** (NRP) to the Prime Minister to schedule a meeting of the inter-ministerial committee in charge of its approval.
- The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (**UNHAS**) transported 75 passengers and over 572 kg of light cargo connecting Nouakchott to Kiffa, Nema, and Bassikounou, through 20 in-country rotations. The aircraft was undergoing maintenance in Uganda from 15 to 28 April, which resulted in the cancellation of flights during this period.
- In April, the WFP Mauritania gender focal point held technical meetings with two implementing partners responsible for setting up the Smallholder Agriculture Market Support (SAMS) in the Guidimakha region to ensure the **full participation of women** when drafting the statutes and internal regulations of the cooperatives.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- In April, the **price trend** was in line with that observed over the past three months (January-March 2022). There has been a sharp increase in prices compared to last year and compared to the average for the last five years for most local products (rice, sorghum, small millet, corn, etc.) and for imported products, where there have been significant spikes for oil (+77%), sugar (+39%), and wheat (+37%) compared to average levels. This upward trend is expected to continue, especially for certain products such as wheat imported from Russia and Ukraine. This will undoubtedly have negative impacts on the purchasing power of poor and vulnerable households, further worsening their food and nutrition situation.

Challenges

- WFP faces an estimated funding shortage of approximately **USD 18.5 million** for the next six months (May to August 2022) representing 54% of its requirements for the period (USD 34.2 million). WFP's current priority is to advocate for additional resources to **assist Malian refugees** to avoid the worst-case scenario, a complete interruption of GFD activities this summer (including for new refugees who recently arrived and are being registered by UNHCR). WFP Mauritania does not presently have credible financing forecasts for GFD for its refugee assistance activity.
- The current military operations in Mali are having an impact on populations along the border between Mali and Mauritania. On the one hand, the number of Malians fleeing their country and settling in the border area continues to rise, on the other hand, Mauritanian traders who used to cross to Mali can no longer do so and are forced to stay in the border area. The concentration of the two communities in the same area increases the risk of conflict, food insecurity, and other security issues. Radical groups could use the opportunity to expand if support and assistance measures are not urgently taken.

Donors

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