



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Benin Country Brief April 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 9 May 2022, there have been 26,605 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 163 deaths. As of 8 May 2022, a total of 3,152,148 vaccine doses and 19.5 percent of the population was vaccinated (covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/bj).

WFP has been present in Benin since 1964.



Population: 11.8 million
Income level: lower
2020 Human Development Index: 158 out of 189
Gender inequality index 2020: 158 out of 189

In Numbers

2,690 mt of food assistance distributed in 3,846 schools in March 2022

USD 3.3 m six months net funding requirements (May-October 2022)

672,264 assisted in March 2022



Operational Updates

- WFP supported school canteens operations in 3,847 schools and completed its food allocation plan for the third quarter of the school year. In April, WFP supported 672,264 school children, of whom 46 percent are girls and 54 percent are boys.
- In the framework of the extension of the national school feeding programme, the Ministry of Maternal and Primary Education, the Presidential Unit, the Ministry of Development, and WFP validated 1,721 new schools. On 25 April 2022, 1,484 new schools resumed classes. Canteens operated in 1,266 schools and 262,061 pupils, of whom 41 percent are girls have received school meals. At the end of the first week, 92.6 percent of the canteens were operational (1,375 schools). In addition, out of the 3,849 old schools, 3,819 schools (99.2 percent) resumed teaching activities on 25 April 2022. Canteens operated in 3,761 schools (98.5 percent) and WFP assisted 620,115 pupils.
- In March 2022 WFP led bilateral and regional consultations with the school feeding programme stakeholders on the identification of national capacity strengthening needs. Following those consultations, WFP organised a workshop on 5 April 2022 in Cotonou to share the results. The workshop resulted in the joint development of the capacity strengthening plan and the update of the roadmap for the gradual transfer of competencies to the Government.
- WFP in collaboration with the Government organised on 28 and 29 April 2022 technical consultations on the supply chain of school canteens, to operationalise the strategy of supplying school canteens from local production. The workshop welcomed 60 participants including ministers involved in the school feeding programme, the civil society, the private sector, technical and financial partners, WFP national and regional offices and headquarters in Rome, CERFAM, and United Nations agencies. Based on the recommendations, a roadmap with clear actions will be developed.

- In the framework of the community feedback mechanism (CFM), WFP organised several trainings for staff members and the call center operators in March and April 2022. The topics included a cross-cutting approach to accountability, communication skills, procedure and disclosure of gender-based violence incidents, first-aid psychological actions, basic principles of accountability to affected populations (AAP), and protection policies. During these trainings, participants learned about non-verbal communication, the CFM information management system, good practices to address the needs of the affected population, and the escalation process. These trainings sessions were delivered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Micro-Finance, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN clinic, and WFP facilitators. The next steps will be training sessions on AAP and CFM for WFP sub-office staff and partners.

- In the South of Benin, WFP is implementing the “Emergency food assistance to Benin in response to COVID-19 and natural disaster”. The project will support 50,000 beneficiaries. The pre-positioning of food is almost (90 percent) completed, and the beneficiary targeting will begin next month.

Monitoring

- WFP observed an improvement in the performance of the school feeding programme. The number of schools with very low attendance rate has dropped from 85 (2.2 percent) in January to 10 schools (0.26 percent). Awareness-raising campaigns organized by cooperating partners continue to maintain children in school.
- In 1,126 schools, 214,591 pupils benefited from vegetable protein produced in their school gardens. In addition, in more than 70 percent of schools, the management committees are regularly following up school canteen operations. WFP and its cooperating partners are continuing awareness-raising activities in the remaining schools to increase the community ownership of the programme.

Challenges

- Since November 2021, the insecurity in northern Benin is growing. On 11 April and 26 April 2022, the country recorded two terrorist attacks in the north, in Pendjari and Monsey areas. This situation has led to the closure of eleven schools for seven days. Classes in these schools resumed on 5 May 2022. Those attacks led to the food distribution disruption for few days.
- Some cases of food burglary have been recorded in schools. Actions are being carried out with the local authorities to deal with 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.

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

2022 Total Requirement (in USD)	2022 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
34 m	18.7 m	3.3 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable population including school-aged children in Benin have adequate access to safe, nutritious food and basic social services all year-round

Focus area: Root causes

Activity:

- Provide integrated and inclusive school meals programmes in targeted communities in a way that relies on and stimulates local production.

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable population including children under 5, adolescents and pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLW/G) in targeted areas have improved their nutritional status in line with national target by 2023

Focus area: Root causes

Activity:

- Provide specialised nutritious food to children and PLWG to treat malnutrition and prevent risk of stunting and support Benin health services on nutrition education and gender-sensitive behaviour-change.

Strategic Result 3: Institutional capacity-strengthening

Strategic Outcome 3: National and local institutions in Benin have increased capacity to implement an integrated school feeding programme and to achieve food security by 2023.

Focus area: Root causes

Activity:

- Provide technical assistance and policy support, including through South-South cooperation, to local and national institutions in the areas of gender-sensitive school feeding, food security, and emergency food preparedness and response.

Strategic Result 4: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 4: Crisis-affected populations in Benin can meet their basic food and nutrition requirements in the aftermath of shocks.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activity:

- Provide food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations and strengthen the capacity and coordination among national partners in responding to crisis as a contingency measure.