



World Food Programme

SAVING
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WFP Benin Country Brief May 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 for 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.

In Benin, as of 9 June 2022, there have been 26,605 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 163 deaths. As of 29 May 2022, a total of 3,621,913 vaccine doses have been administered and 22.4 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

1,206 mt of food distributed in 3,848 schools in April 2022

USD 2.1 m six months net funding requirements (June-November 2022)

667,329 beneficiaries assisted in April 2022



Operational Updates

- As of April 2022, WFP supported school feeding operations in 3,848 schools and 667,329 school children, of whom 46 percent are girls and 54 percent are boys were fed. In May 2022, the coverage increased to approximately 1,000,000 children aged 6 to 12.
- WFP held a series of launch ceremonies to extend the national school feeding programme. Local authorities, school children, and community members expressed appreciation for the national school feeding programme's success and scale up. WFP reiterated its commitment to continue supporting the Government in pursuing full coverage of the national school feeding programme.
- In the South of Benin, WFP is implementing the "Emergency food assistance to Benin in response to COVID-19 and natural disaster", a project which aims to support 50,000 beneficiaries. After the pre-positioning of food and the beneficiary targeting, from 27 May to 05 June WFP undertook the distribution and assisted more than 40,000 beneficiaries. The Post Distribution Monitoring will be conducted in June 2022.
- On the "Resilience against COVID-19 in Borgou and Alibori (RECOBA)" project, WFP purchased 100 mt of maize produced by the smallholder farmers in March and April 2022. WFP is revising its operating procedures to smooth the procurement process. These smallholders are committed to providing almost 600 mt of maize to WFP for the first quarter of the school year 2022-2023.
- From January to April 2022, WFP organized national, regional, and local consultations with the school feeding programme stakeholders for the identification of national capacity strengthening needs. WFP finalised the needs identification report, and the capacity building plan and updated the roadmap. A key lesson is that leadership at all levels (sectoral ministries, technical and financial partners, NGOs, local authorities), coordination among stakeholders and community ownership are crucial for the sustainability of the school feeding programme.
- WFP and Songhai Centre are exploring partnership opportunities to develop the national model for the Benin school meal Programme. After visiting schools in the south, the joint visit by WFP and the Songhai Centre continued in the north to apprehend the different aspects to consider in the partnership. A joint action plan is developed and will be implemented in the coming months.

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Photo: WFP visited a school canteen at Djougou.

Credit: WFP Benin

- Within the framework of the handover of the national school meal programme, the Government established in November 2019 a technical committee that leads the national school feeding model development process. It comprises government sector ministries involved in school feeding activities (health, education, social protection, economy and finance, agriculture, etc.) and WFP. In March and April 2022, the members discussed and validated the school feeding model components: grassroots organisation, infrastructure and equipment, food procurement, meal management, finance, and administration, monitoring evaluation, and accountability. There is a lead government structure for each component with WFP technical support. In May, WFP finalised and disseminated the meeting report and followed up on the agreed actions. The ownership of the model components by stakeholders will facilitate WFP's support throughout the process while at the same time progressing on the options, innovations, and research to consider for the following steps.

Monitoring

- WFP monitored the implementation of school canteens activities and the outputs in all 5,400 schools. In May, cooperating partners visited 98% of schools. In addition, WFP selected and visited 48 schools due to their low contributions and low attendance rates. During these visits, WFP checked the food storage conditions and followed up on building kitchens and improved stoves. This monitoring has helped raise communities' awareness about the importance of children's schooling, aiming to increase the attendance rate in the coming months.

Challenges

- Scarcity of cereals and beans on the local and international market seriously affected the school canteens' operations because it prevented WFP suppliers from delivering commodities. This has been exacerbated by the lack of security stocks in Benin. The low capacity of food suppliers has been a recurrent challenge, putting risks on the food distribution in school canteens. The current crisis in Ukraine aggravates this situation. WFP has mitigated these challenges by utilizing the stocks with WFP's Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF). It is currently revising its local procurement with smallholder farmers to scale-up its achievement in this area.

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	47.8 m	2.1 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 and improved inclusive systems to achieve SDG 2 including for integrated school meals and 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 of national partners on emergency response and coordination.