A developmental evaluation was carried out on WFP’s support to smallholder farmers and its expanded portfolio across the agriculture value chain in Bhutan from January 2019 to June 2021. Based on the findings, five recommendations were made to advance its food systems portfolio.
COUNTRY CONTEXT

2.6% of the land area is used for crop production

727,145 Bhutan's population

5% of Bhutanese identified as multi-dimensionally poor in 2017

2023 The year in which Bhutan is to graduate to lower middle income country

130 Bhutan's global ranking for women's equal economic participation

22.6% youth unemployment in 2020

Real GDP growth

7.2% 2019 pre-COVID-19

5.5% 2018-2019 financial year

2.7% 2019-2020 financial year

50,000 jobs among youths and young adults lost due to low tourist arrivals in 2020 and 2021

Evaluation coverage

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Evaluation coverage
With the majority of schools closed from March to December 2020 due to national lockdowns, just 29 percent of the 100,000 school children entitled to receive school meals were able to access them or acquire the nutrition supplements.

- **7,516** smallholder farmers benefited from establishment of farmer-school linkages and the emergence of a national fresh produce market
- **60%** of beneficiary group members were women
- **55** officers trained in adherence to procurement standards (including food quality management and inspection) and farmer group support by WFP
- **18,095** students’ diet improved
  - (9,538 girls and 8,557 boys)
- **96.5%** net primary school enrollment rate
  - (Stakeholders say access to school meals contributed to high enrollment rate)
- **30%** of arable land was fallow in 2020
- **13.4%** agriculture sector’s contribution to GDP
Findings

The introduction of agriculture portfolio complemented the transfer of School Feeding Programme to government with integrated package of support for farmer-school linkages

Government interest in WFP sector contributions supported a role in accelerating smallholder market access in Bhutan

WFP began to build a value proposition focused on the strengthening of smallholder access to markets and a WFP role as a food systems enabler

Examples of progress and good practice in integrated food and nutrition programming, homegrown school feeding and digital enhancement

Recommendations

Recommendations focused on action areas where WFP had opportunities to make significant progress in advancing its future portfolio and value proposition for agriculture

Support tangible development outcomes, enhanced resource contributions and expanded support for country capacity strengthening

Focus on supporting smallholder access to agriculture markets as a basis for the development of effective government, partner and donor relations

Develop a partnership strategy providing a clear focus and direction for the Country Office’s engagements with government, UN and civil society counterparts beyond its project activities

Establish key organizational capacities to deliver a balanced portfolio of innovation projects, country capacity strengthening and resource mobilisation support for government

Seek to build on existing engagement of rural women and commit to the transformative opportunities of organisational capacity strengthening for rural women, farmers’ groups and cooperatives

Bhutan’s food systems did not keep pace with a growing demand for high quality food products, especially in urban areas. While food imports had risen significantly, food exports had failed to grow.