WFP Ecuador Country Brief
July 2022

Operational Context
Ecuador exhibited gross domestic product growth in the years prior to the pandemic, resulting in declining poverty and increased investment in social policies, infrastructure, health, and education. However, the COVID-19 health crisis triggered a deep recession that led to a rebound in poverty (25 percent in June 2022; 10.7 percent extreme poverty). Ecuador is an upper-middle-income country with high income inequality (2019 Gini index = 0.48).

The conflict in Ukraine started at a time when Ecuador was already dealing with the economic damages caused by COVID-19, resulting in rising inflation, production deficits and strained Government capacity. Consumer price inflation in Ecuador is expected to accelerate to 4.6 percent by the end of 2022 and decelerate after, the fastest annual pace since 2012.

Compounding issues, Ecuador is vulnerable to climate change and prone to natural disasters, including droughts, floods, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes. These, combined with soil erosion and environmental degradation, threaten food systems, and may increase malnutrition and poverty rates.

WFP has been present in Ecuador since 1964, providing advisory, technical, and policy support to the Government of Ecuador and contributing to the food security and nutrition of vulnerable people.

In Numbers

- **USD 1.9 m** cash-based transfers made*
- **USD 8.8 m** six months (August 2022 to January 2023) net funding requirements, representing 37 percent of total funding requirements
- **65,972 people** assisted* in July 2022

*Preliminary figures

Operational Updates

- In July, WFP provided food vouchers to 57,374 migrants, refugees, and people from host communities across Ecuador. WFP also provided 8,101 pregnant and lactating women and girls as well as children under 2 from the most vulnerable households in 16 provinces with an additional cash-based transfer (CBT) to improve their nutrition during the first 1,000-day window.
- 5,597 migrants, refugees, and people from host communities received hot meals at shelters and canteens in 16 provinces (out of the 24 provinces of the country).
- 4,647 migrants on the move received a one-time voucher to buy food at local supermarkets.
- WFP delivered ten wildfire and reforestation kits to the Portoviejo municipal government in Manabi province, providing local authorities with advanced emergency-response tools.
- On 14 July 2022, WFP, alongside authorities from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and Loja province, carried out the Commercial Rice Meeting Loja 2022. Beneficiaries from the WFP-led Rice and Duck project participated and were able to sell rice grown under the project.
- In Quito, WFP launched risk management virtual courses to strengthen local risk management capacities. Over 30 officials from the National Risk and Emergency Management and local governments participated in the event.
- WFP Ecuador, alongside the Ministry of Education Government, organized the National Meeting on the Road to Educational Transformation which counted with the participation of several United Nations agencies. WFP Regional Social Protection Advisor participated in the event and shared the importance of school feeding to achieve healthy schools.

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
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<td>197.4 m</td>
<td>171.1 m</td>
<td>8.8 m</td>
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Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome #1: Refugees, displaced persons and vulnerable people in Ecuador are enabled to meet their basic food and nutrition requirements all year long

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:
- Complement the Government's social protection strategy by providing Cash-Based Transfers to the most vulnerable populations and support in vulnerability analysis and knowledge management.

Strategic Result 3: Smallholders have improved food security and nutrition

Strategic Outcome #2: Smallholder farmers, especially women, in targeted areas, durably increase their incomes and improve their productivity by 2021.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:
- Support and increase the participation of smallholder farmer organizations in national and local commercial mechanisms and institutional markets.
- Strengthen the capacity of farmer organizations.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome #3: Food-insecure communities and individuals in areas that are highly vulnerable to climate change, and government institutions have strengthened capacity for adaptation to climate change by 2021.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:
- Strengthen or develop emergency preparedness, response, and early warning systems.
- Strengthen the implementation of adaptation and resilience measures.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome #4: National institutions and programmes in Ecuador, including social protection programs, are supported to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition by 2021.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:
- Technical assistance, research and assessments, to improve the implementation of programs linked to food security and nutrition.
- Knowledge management and sharing of best practices and studies, including through South-South cooperation.

Strategic Result 8: Enhance Global Partnership

Strategic Outcome #5: Humanitarian and development partners in Ecuador have access to reliable services throughout the crisis.

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:
- Provide technical assistance and services through the logistics sector to the National Disaster Management Offices and relevant partners to improve emergency logistics coordination and supply chain management.

*Budget Revision 07 was approved in December 2021.

Monitoring

- The results of WFP remote assessments in Ecuador have confirmed a deteriorating trend in the food security situation, where the number of severely food insecure people passed from 2,011,000 (11.4 percent of the total population, August 2021) to 2,433,000 (13.6 percent of the total population, March 2022). More than 400,000 Ecuadorians fell into severe food insecurity in a lapse of only six months.
- WFP received 383 calls through its community feedback mechanism in July 2022. To ensure an effective use of the mechanism among the beneficiaries, WFP increased communication campaigns and keeps engaging the beneficiaries on a case-by-case basis in response to their concerns and requests.
- WFP continues to provide capacity trainings for cooperating partners on food safety and quality. WFP also works to ensure that all trainees provides the relevant guidance to the beneficiaries on managing healthy and nutritious foods.

Challenges

- The persistence of COVID-19 continues to challenge WFP's activities. In July 2022, Ecuador’s Ministry of Health recorded 60,411 new COVID-19 cases. In the country, over 14 million people (84 percent of the population) are vaccinated under the National Vaccination Programme, including 100,000 migrants and refugees.
- According to the National Institute of Statistics, the national unemployment rate decreased from 4.7 percent in May 2022 to 4 percent in June 2022. However, for men it increased from 3.1 percent in May to 3.7 percent in June; and among women remained at 4.5 percent in both May and June. Underemployment risen from 22.1 percent in May to 23.6 in June 2022.
- In June 2022, the National Institute of Statistics and Census presented the updated poverty data. According to the data, poverty stands at 25.0 percent, while extreme poverty stands at 10.7 percent. While there was a marginal increase in extreme poverty, the overall poverty decreased slightly (in December 2021, it was at 27.7 percent).

Donors

Brazil, Canada, European Union, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea (the), United States of America, and private and multilateral donors.

Additional support has been provided by the Adaptation Fund.