



World Food Programme

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WFP Mauritania Country Brief September 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 March *Cadre Harmonisé*, 878,921 individuals and 36 departments will face crisis conditions (phase 3+) during the peak of the upcoming lean season (June-August 2022). This corresponds to 20 percent of the population, one of the highest rates in the Sahel region, and reflects an increase of 64 percent compared to 2021. It is also the highest level ever recorded by the *Cadre Harmonisé* in Mauritania.

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 August 2022, 79,284 refugees were registered by UNHCR in and around 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**

2021 Human Development Index: **158 out of 191**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **19.6%** of children between 6-59 months

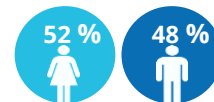
In Numbers

513 mt of food, including specialized nutritious food, distributed

USD 3.9 m cash-based transfers made

USD 13.4 m for six months (Oct. 2022 – Apr. 2023) net funding requirements

311,730 people assisted in September 2022



Operational Updates

- **WFP's refugee response** in the **Mbera camp**: WFP provided food and cash assistance, covering September and October, to 54,640 highly vulnerable and newly arrived refugees. Cash assistance was provided to 76,133 refugees (55 percent woman), of which 56 percent were extremely vulnerable and 44 percent moderately vulnerable. To treat moderate acute malnutrition, 578 children aged 6-59 months (50 percent girls) and 230 pregnant and lactating women received 2 mt of specialized nutritious food and 0.2 mt of oil. As part of malnutrition prevention, 2,104 children (6-23 months, 50 percent girls) and 1,274 women received 8 mt of nutritious food. WFP will recommence providing morning porridge to primary school children in the camp next month when schools open.
- As part of its **lean season response**, WFP assisted 166,015 people (86,328 women) in the departments of Aioun, Magama, Tamchekett, and Guidimakha in September and carried out prevention of malnutrition interventions for 8,304 women and children.
- Under the **treatment of moderate acute malnutrition** programme, 11,888 children aged 6-59 months and 1,986 pregnant and lactating women received specialized nutritious foods in 916 health centres located in six regions (Hodh El Charghi, Guidimakha, Assaba, Hodh El Gharbi, and Brakna). WFP worked closely with the Commission for Food Security to carry out nutrition activities during the lean season.
- As part of the **Food Assistance for Assets programme**, WFP supported the population of Kiffa with the construction of 3 boreholes. These boreholes will be equipped to help communities produce fruits and vegetables on a relatively small scale for local sale. In addition, within the framework of the Debt Swap project, WFP distributed cash to 137 beneficiaries (69 women) in four resilience sites in the commune of Boumdeid.

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

Main photo credit: WFP / Bechir Malum

Caption: Assistance alimentaire et nutritionnelle – saison de soudure

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

2022 Total Requirements (in USD)	2022 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
80 m	21 m	19.8 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)

- The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (**UNHAS**) transported 128 passengers and over 386 kg of light cargo connecting Nouakchott to Kiffa, Nema, and Bassikounou, through 36 in-country rotations. The maintenance of the Bassikounou airstrip has finished.

- In the sub-office of Kiffa (Assaba region), WFP organized a training and sensitization awareness session for staff on the **linkages between gender and food security** and to examine good practices that could be replicated. In preparation of the training, WFP surveys have shown that crisis-affected communities and individuals prefer cash transfers to in-kind assistance because it gives them greater “dignity”. Thoughtful communication with affected communities is needed to verify assumptions and ensure context-specific assessments.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The **2022-2023 agro-pastoral campaign** is characterized by significant rainfall with cumulative excess rainfall at most of the rainfall stations monitored. This implies prospects for good production except in some localized areas, such as Zemmour. The rainfall recorded favors good development of crops and pastures, with the availability of surface water, dams, and other reservoirs facilitating mobility and watering of livestock. Despite the prospects for a good agro-pastoral season, some areas are still at risk due to several factors, including phytosanitary pressures, flood damage, and excessive humidity, which have caused reseeding in agricultural areas and could reduce crop yields.

Challenges

- WFP's current priority is to advocate for additional resources to **assist Malian refugees** (Act. 1). **WFP has been reducing food and cash rations drastically since March 2022** to stretch available resources and avoid a complete interruption of the assistance. Given currently available resources, the assistance is expected to halt at the beginning of January 2023.
- As expected, **heavy rainfall and flooding** have slowed down WFP interventions. In some instances, beneficiaries could not be reached because road inaccessibility led to delays in the assistance.

Donors

Donors to WFP Mauritania CSP 2019 – 2023 include Andorra, Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Mauritania, Monaco, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States. Additional support was provided by the private donors, ARC Replica, UN Adaptation Funds, UN CERF, UN PBF, UN SDG, UNICEF, and UNHCR.