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 November Cadre Harmonisé, 694,612 individuals and 13 regions will face crisis conditions (phase 3+) during the peak of the upcoming lean season (June-August 2023). This corresponds to 16 percent of the population and reflects a decrease of 4 percent compared to 2022.

Mauritania continues to host the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa. The Malian refugee situation entered its ninth year and the security conditions in Mali remain volatile, resulting in a continuous refugee influx to Mauritania. As of October 2022, 89,468 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.

In Numbers

- 601 mt of food, including specialized nutritious food, distributed
- USD 1.8 m cash-based transfers made
- USD 13.4 m for six months (November 2022 – April 2023) net funding requirements
- 256,697 people assisted in October 2022

Operational Updates

- **WFP’s refugee response** in the Mbera camp: WFP provided food and cash assistance to some 53,300 (55 percent women) highly vulnerable and newly arrived refugees, covering their September and October needs. To treat moderate acute malnutrition, close to 600 children aged 6-59 months (50 percent girls) and over 200 pregnant and lactating women received specialized nutritious food and oil. To prevent malnutrition, over 2,100 children (6-23 months, 50 percent girls) and close to 1,300 women received nutritious food. Since October is the back-to-school month in Mauritania, WFP provided two meals every day in the camp: breakfast porridge and lunch meals to some 4,700 primary school children (50 percent girls) in the eight schools of the camp.

- As part of its **lean season response**, WFP provided cash transfers to some 55,400 vulnerable people (54 percent women) in the departments of Aioun, Magama, Tamchekett, and Guidimakha. The cash provided beneficiaries with the flexibility to meet their food and other household needs (such as school and medicine) while reducing negative coping strategies such as debt.

- Under the **treatment of moderate acute malnutrition** (MAM) programme, WFP provided specialized nutritious foods to some 10,400 children aged 6-59 months (52 percent girls) and over 1,900 pregnant and lactating women in 916 health centres located in six regions. As a result of the treatment, 98 percent of children were discharged from the MAM management programme (out of 1,759 discharged children, 1,723 were cured). WFP Mauritania conducted a mission in the region of Assaba, along with the Regional Bureau for Western Africa, to support the review of the nutrition strategy of the country office. This mission identified several opportunities to rethink WFP’s nutrition strategy in Mauritania such as the possibility of doing a causal analysis of malnutrition and strengthening the multisectoral approach to nutrition. It is also important that the country office, together with other agencies, support the government in the effective implementation of nutrition issues and the roles and responsibilities of state entities in order to ensure program effectiveness.

- As part of **Food Assistance for Assets**, WFP conducted a training for the field staff on asset monitoring with aerial drone photos to assess the impact of activities. WFP also contributed to the preparation for the COP 27 to display the country’s efforts to enhance communities’ climate adaptation. A UN inter-agency booth was installed at the Mauritanian pavilion for the COP in Egypt. In addition, WFP supported the Deputy Director of the National Agency of the Great Green Wall’s participation and published an article about the positive impact of its resilience interventions on communities adaptability to the climate crisis.
WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Result</th>
<th>2022 Total Requirements (in USD)</th>
<th>2022 Available Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food</td>
<td>80 m</td>
<td>54 m</td>
<td>13.4 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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)

WFP Mauritania Country Brief

October 2022

- 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 concluded.
- Through smallholder agricultural market support (SAMS) activities, five savings groups, exclusively managed by women, have been established in Bouly. The value of contributions in the savings groups vary from MRU 20 to 100 per woman and the money drawn from contributions is primarily used for social expenses rather than for production or entrepreneurial purposes. This presents an opportunity for awareness-raising efforts by WFP and other resilience actors to encourage women to use the funds for livelihood purposes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Small ruminant prices increased in October compared to September 2022 (+3 percent for sheep) and were higher than October 2021 (+5 percent for sheep) as well as for the last five-year average (+34 percent for sheep). Compared to October 2021, food prices increased by 1 percent for imported rice, 9 percent for corn, 6 percent for oil, 29 percent for sugar, and 29 percent for wheat. Compared to September 2022, only the price of corn fell by 6 percent, while the prices of the rest of the products rose, specifically: sugar (+1 percent), oil (+2 percent), wheat (+7 percent), and imported rice (+4 percent).

- The October market monitoring exercise demonstrated good availability of products on the market, except for certain staples such as sorghum and small millet. For imported goods, supply is sufficient in almost all markets monitored.

Challenges

- WFP does not have sufficient resources to assist Malian refugees (Act. 1) and provide school meals (Act. 3). WFP has been drastically reducing food and cash rations for refugees since July 2022 to stretch available resources and avoid a complete interruption of the assistance. WFP is also advocating for additional resources for school feeding activities for the next school year.
- Due to ongoing strikes at the Mauritanian customs, WFP is yet to receive the entirety of the commodities purchased for the Mbéra camp, and thus food distributions to beneficiaries have been delayed. The delayed delivery pushed the October 2022 distribution date to November 2022.

Donors

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