



World Food Programme

SAVING
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WFP Mauritania Country Brief

February 2023



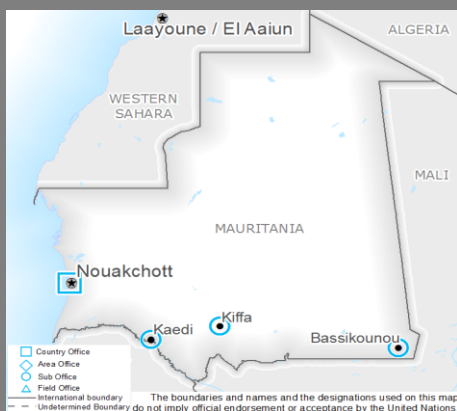
Operational Context

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 2022 *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 tenth year and the security conditions in Mali remain volatile resulting in a continuous refugee influx into Mauritania. As of February, more than 90,000 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: **24.8 percent** of children between 6-59 months

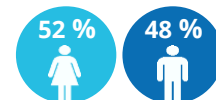
In Numbers

31.5 mt of food, including specialized nutritious food, distributed

USD 2.2 million cash distributed

USD 32.2 million for six months (March– August 2023) net funding requirements

172,578 people assisted
in February 2023



Operational Updates

- **WFP's refugee response in the Mbera camp:** WFP delivered **food and cash assistance** to 82,915 highly vulnerable refugees (54 percent women), including 2,841 new arrivals (52 percent women). The distribution is currently underway until 5 March with a ration of MRU 450 per person for group 1 and MRU 300 for group 2. **To treat moderate acute malnutrition in the camp**, 449 children aged 6-59 months (50 percent girls) received specialized nutritious food. WFP had to temporarily suspend **in-camp school feeding** due to food shortage.
- As part of the **2023 lean season response**, WFP delivered the first round of its **urban response campaign** throughout February, in coordination with the Food Security Commission of Mauritania and with support from Germany (BMZ/KFW), and USAID. A total amount of USD 1.2 million has been distributed to 15,835 households (77 percent coverage) in the capital city of Nouakchott to improve the food security status of the most vulnerable. The second round is planned to start on 1 March and will cover 4,733 households, who were unreachable in the first round. For the first time, WFP will make retroactive payments for those who were not reached. Beneficiaries were able to provide feedback on the assistance and voice complaints through a toll-free number.
- Through the **School Feeding Programme**, WFP provided two hot meals per day to students in 400 schools in three regions. An orientation session on the strategic aspects of school feeding was held between the Country Office and the Regional Bureau in light of the new Country Strategic Plan (CSP). This session was an opportunity to share lessons learned from the current CSP and identify actions to prioritize for the next CSP. In addition, new culinary tools (purchase of gas cylinder regulators and the first refill of gas) were introduced in the energy pilot sites in Assaba. The pilot sites aim to cut down the energy used and preserve trees, reducing the impact on the ecosystem and preserving the health of cooks.
- Regarding **acute malnutrition treatment**, active screening was conducted in resilience sites in the Assaba, Hodh El Chargui, and Guidimakha regions, to identify the needs for malnutrition treatment : **62,441 children detected with 4,769 moderate cases and 148 severe cases**. WFP arranged for the pre-positioning of nutritional supplements for children and pregnant and lactating women and girls. In addition, staff of partner organizations in Assaba were trained on the implementation of treatments in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Food Security Commission.
- Under the **Food Assistance for Assets (FFA)** programme, a framework agreement was signed between WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture to oversee resilience activities. This collaboration will focus on strategic and operational cooperation

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

Main photo credit: WFP/Abdoulaye MBODJ

Caption: Resilience-building activities in El Rguig

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

2023 Total Requirements (in USD)	2023 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
59.8 m	33.4 m	10.3 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)

between the two parties through the provision of reciprocal services mainly in the implementation of the resilience package (FFA, school feeding, and nutrition).

WFP conducted three support missions in Assaba, Guidimakha, and Hodh El Chargui to monitor the progress of resilience activities. Meanwhile preparations were underway for the mass distribution of information (including the census of the participants to determine the human and financial resources required for the cash distribution) scheduled for March. In addition, consultations with the National Civil Aviation Agency were ongoing to facilitate WFP's aerial imagery activities' compliance with regulations. Aerial drone images are essential for monitoring FFA activities, specifically in comparing pre and post-intervention images of the field.

- For the **capacity strengthening activities**, WFP continued supporting the institutional and operational processes related to the Adaptive **Social Protection system**. An essential component of this system, the 2023 National Response Plan is currently being drafted before the upcoming lean season. The Government is taking the lead on this exercise, with technical and financial support from WFP. WFP and Taazour had bilateral meetings to facilitate WFP's usage of the Government's payment platform linked to the Social Registry, with WFP's regional bureau in Dakar providing support on the risk assessment of the platform.
- The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (**UNHAS**) transported 167 passengers and 233 kg of cargo connecting Nouakchott to Kiffa, Nema, and Bassikounou, through 36 in-country rotations. The service to Sélibaby, however, has been postponed as ANAC did not authorize landings in February.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Data production for March 2023 Cadre Harmonisé is ongoing. The working session has been scheduled for 13 to 18 March.
- In February 2023, prices for small ruminants were down compared to last month (-4 percent for sheep), but up compared to February 2022 (+6 percent for sheep) and to the average of the last five years (+20 percent for sheep). Prices of basic food items are down compared to last month, mainly for oil (-4 percent), sugar (-1 percent), wheat (-12 percent), and imported rice (-1 percent); yet prices of maize recorded an increase of +2 percent. Compared to February 2022, the prices are up for maize (+29 percent), stable for imported rice (no change), but down for oil (-2 percent), sugar (-2 percent), and wheat (-8 percent). All products recorded a significant increase compared to the average prices of the last 5 years, including corn (+16 percent), vegetable oil (+40 percent), sugar (+40 percent), and wheat (+7 percent). The exception was rice, which went down by 3 percent.

Challenges

- WFP faces an estimated **funding shortage of USD 10.3 million** for the next six months (March to August 2023), representing 33 percent of the requirement for the period (USD 31.2 million).
- The main **funding deficit** concerns the **Malian refugee assistance in the Mbera camp** (75 percent funding gap equivalent to USD 8.2 M) and **malnutrition prevention interventions during the upcoming lean season** (funding requirement of USD 250,000). Timely confirmation of funds is crucial to prevent pipeline breaks and to anticipate long procurement lead times.

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 private donors, Gimbel Foundation, ARC Replica, UN Adaptation Funds, UN CERF, UN PBF, UN SDG, UNICEF, and UNHCR.