



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief February 2023



A contestant cooks a healthy meal during the cooking contest finale in Thimphu. © WFP/Phuntsho Wangmo

Operational Context

Bhutan will transition to lower middle-income status by end 2023 and considers WFP's support critical to this transition process.

The national poverty rate, as measured by the international poverty line of US\$1.9 per person per day, decreased from 23 percent in 2007 to 8.2 percent in 2017.

Although the population's overall nutritional status has improved, there is a 'triple burden of malnutrition' with undernutrition, overnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. These are related to a lack of knowledge and access to nutritious and diversified foods.

Bhutan remains highly vulnerable to earthquakes but lacks the necessary data information systems, response plans and coordination systems to adequately prepare for emergencies.

WFP has been present in Bhutan since 1974.



Population: **0.66 million**

Chronic malnutrition: **21% of children under five**

Income Level: **Low-income**

2021/22 Human Development Index: **127 out of 191 countries**

Highlights

- In collaboration with the Tarayana Foundation, **WFP supported a cooking competition among farmers**, as part of a nutrition and health advocacy campaign in rural areas of Bhutan.
- In partnership with the Regional Agriculture Marketing and Co-operatives Office, **WFP facilitated the contract renewal of 15 schools** in Trongsa district with local smallholder farmers. The farmers supply vegetables and fruits for school meals.

Operational Update

- WFP and the Tarayana Foundation supported a cooking competition, advocating for healthy diets among rural and vulnerable populations. The finale was organized on 28 February. Ten farmers, who were selected after an initial round of competition from Zhemgang, Trongsa, Tsirang, and Lhuentse districts, participated in the finale. The competition showcased the community members' skills and facilitated the sharing of original recipes that were nutritious and locally sourced. The contest aimed at promoting creativity, enhancing cooking skills, and strengthening knowledge on nutrition, while building confidence in basic food preparation. WFP's support to Tarayana is part of a project that aims to create a database of available local foods, consumption patterns, and cooking and storage practices.
- Fifteen schools in Trongsa district renewed their contracts with local smallholder farmers for procurement of vegetables and fruits for school meals. The contract renewal was facilitated by the Regional Agriculture Marketing and Co-operatives Office under Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, in partnership with WFP. The linkages between smallholder farmers and schools have increased income for the farmers, while improving food diversity and nutrition of the school meals.

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019 – 2023)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated contributions (in US\$)	March–July 2023 net funding requirements (in US\$)
8.94 m	7.05 m	0.58 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: School-age children, women and vulnerable groups in Bhutan have improved nutrition in line with national targets by 2023

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Assist the Government in its national school nutrition programme based on an integrated approach to school feeding that connects school feeding with nutrition education, school health and school agriculture, strengthened supply chains and school nutrition infrastructure optimization.
- Provide technical assistance to the Government and the national food production and trade sectors to ensure that sound policies are in place and ensure quality and safety of fortified foods, especially rice, throughout the supply chains.

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

Strategic Outcome 2: Government has strengthened capability to address food security and nutrition challenges and prepare for and respond to crises, including those resulting from climate change, by 2023.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide the Government with vulnerability-focused capacity strengthening relevant to its management of national emergency resources, development, enhancement and testing of national emergency response plans and coordination systems, through WFP's leadership of the emergency logistics and communications sectoral working group.

- WFP facilitated the linking of six farmer groups from Zhemgang, Tsirang and Dagana districts with the Khenrig Namsum Cooperative to export 2 mt of ginger and turmeric to Malaysia. Linking farmers to international markets has helped increase income for the farmers. WFP, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Department of Agriculture Marketing and Co-operatives, strengthens farmers' capacity in optimal agriculture practices, climate resilient production, post-harvest management, value chain development, market access, and enhanced supply chains.
- WFP's Annual Work Plan for the fiscal year 2023-2024 was finalized in consultation with the Royal Government of Bhutan. Activities in WFP's work plan focus on enhancing access to and use of reliable and timely data for inclusive and evidence-based policy and decision making. They also focus on reaching communities and population who are vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition, building a resilient and nutrition-secure food system, and strengthening capacity in disaster risk reduction and management.

Challenges

With Bhutan's National Council elections scheduled for 20 April 2023, the Election Commission of Bhutan discourages mass gatherings, field missions, and workshops, which has delayed the implementation of WFP's planned activities for the first quarter of the year.

Donors

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), World Bank, First-line of Defence (USAID), Global Logistics Cluster support, WFP internal funds