Operational Context

In Armenia, WFP supports the Government and partners in their efforts to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to implement the Government of Armenia’s development agenda.

Together with the Government, WFP contributes to human capital development, health promotion and sustainable economic growth to benefit the Armenian population.

Armenia is an upper-middle-income, landlocked, net food-importing country vulnerable to external shocks. Since its independence in 1991, the border closure with neighbouring Turkey and Azerbaijan has constrained the country’s economic development.

According to the latest National Statistical Service data, the poverty rate reached 27 percent in 2020, while WFP’s fifth Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment conducted in January 2023 revealed that 30 percent of households are food insecure.

Through the adoption of its Country Strategic Plan (2019-2025), WFP’s interventions in Armenia support the strengthening of a shock-responsive social protection system; sustainable food systems and value chains; provision of evidence and analysis to support evidence-based policy and decision-making; strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction, preparedness and response capacities; enhancing and fully nationalising the School Feeding programme and, as needed, delivering emergency food assistance and supply chain service provision.

Operational Updates

- In July, a ceremony for the handover of the School Feeding Programme to the Government of Armenia took place. WFP has been implementing the School Feeding programme successfully in Armenia since 2010, gradually increasing the number of children reached by over 700 percent. At the time of the handover, more than 100,000 school children in grades 0-4 received hot and nutritious meals across all ten provinces of Armenia (except the capital city of Yerevan). Starting from 2017, WFP began a gradual transition of the School Feeding programme to the Government, capitalizing on the successful and strategic partnership between the Government of Armenia, the School Feeding and Child Welfare Agency (SFCWA), the Social and Industrial Food Service Institute (SIFI), WFP, and other technical partners.

- Within the framework of the “Transformative School Feeding” initiative, WFP piloted the establishment of 20 kw capacity “Agri-voltaic” solar station in Tsaghkunk school’s intensive orchard. The orchard was established in 2022 by WFP, covering an area of 1,000 m². The agri-voltaic solar station is space-intensive and covers only 100 m² of the orchard area, generating commercial benefits in the form of productive crops and energy, harvesting from the same land. Both the electricity and yield from the intensive orchard are used for school feeding activities, benefiting 147 schoolchildren and school staff.

- Building on the cooperation between WFP and the Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU), WFP supported the establishment of a Soil Analysis Laboratory (along with the establishment of an intensive orchard and an innovative greenhouse). This is part of joint efforts to establish a Smart Farm at ANAU’s Sisian branch in Syunik province. The impact of this Soil Analysis Laboratory is far-reaching in the region. It is the only facility in this area providing services at low costs to local farmers from the Syunik and Vayots Dzor provinces.

In Numbers

- **3,167 people assisted**
  - In July 2023

- **USD 142,000 cash-based transfers made**
  - USD 1.6 m six months (August 2023 – January 2024) net funding requirements

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2025)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirements* (in USD)</th>
<th>Total Received (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84 m</td>
<td>36 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023 Requirements (in USD)</td>
<td>Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (August 2023 – January 2024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 m</td>
<td>1.6 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable populations in Armenia, including schoolchildren, have access to adequate and nutritious food year-round.

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:
- Strengthen and complement the national school feeding programme to facilitate handover to the Government.

Strategic Outcome 4: Vulnerable populations in Armenia have access to basic needs and livelihoods during and in the aftermath of a crisis.

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:
- Support to Government and partners to identify and provide food assistance to vulnerable populations.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement SDGs

Strategic Outcome 2: National policies, programmes and systems are strengthened to improve food security and nutrition among targeted groups by 2024.

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:
- Provide technical support to national institutions to generate an evidence-base and inform policies, strategies, and systems to address food insecurity and malnutrition in Armenia.
- Strengthen national food systems in Armenia, supporting actors along the food value chain.
- Provide support to national institutions to strengthen the national social protection system.

Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise and technology, strengthen global partnership support to country efforts to achieve the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable populations benefit from improved capacities of national entities and partners to prevent and respond to emergencies.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:
- Provide on-demand service provision to the Government and other partners.

In July, within the framework of the “Integrated Response to Food Price Increase in Armenia” project, 3,020 food-insecure individuals (702 households) in five communities of Shirak, Tavush, and Lori provinces received food cards. In addition, WFP implemented the second phase of the Food Security Assessment in three targeted provinces. This involved the training of social workers from the Territorial Center of the Unified Social Service (USS) to conduct assessments of the needs of about 4,000 households in seven targeted communities. As a result, 40 social workers have been trained using the food assessment tool jointly developed and tested by WFP, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) and USS. The food needs assessment will be launched in August.

- In July, WFP and MLSA held consultations and reviewed the tailored menus and nutrition standards based on age requirements, developed by WFP for seven overnight childcare institutions in Armenia. Directors, nutritionists, and nurses of these institutions were engaged in discussions to provide final formulations to amend and update the respective Government Decree.

Monitoring and Assessments

- WFP’s Market Price Bulletin of July 2023 highlights that in June 2023, the Food Price Inflation decreased by 5.5 percent, and the Consumer Price Index decreased by 0.5 percent compared to June 2022. The highest food price decrease was seen in Shirak, Kotayk, and Gegharkunik provinces.

- In July, WFP finalized the Country Capacity Assessment report which outlines baseline information on the ability of the National Social Protection System to respond to shocks. The report also provides recommendations to design shock-responsive social protection protocols and operationalize them using existing mechanisms. Validation of the report by stakeholders is scheduled for September.

- Under the "Enhancing Food Security and Livelihoods through Cooperation on Humanitarian Demining" project, cost-benefit analysis and field visits were carried out by WFP and the Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE) to understand the real needs of border settlements and people whose livelihood sources rely on mined and contaminated land areas. Based on the results, investments will be made in five bordering settlements of Gegharkunik, Syunik, and Vayots Dzor provinces. Investments will be directed towards the rehabilitation and modernization of the irrigation system in Gegharkunik province, as well as the introduction of sustainable agricultural practices in Syunik and Vayots Dzor provinces.

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