



WFP El Salvador Country Brief August 2023

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Youngsters at a Gastro-Lab class ©WFP Photo

Operational Context

El Salvador has a population of 6.3 million. In 2023 the economy is expected to grow by 2.3 percent. Inflation slightly decreased to 3.1 percent, however rural basic food basket's prices increased (2.5 percent compared with July). The fiscal deficit reached 2.5 percent of GDP, and the debt exceeded 90 percent. Food production represents only 5 percent of the GDP, relying heavily on imports and remittances (5.6 percent of the GDP). Further, 26 percent of the families live in multidimensional poverty with multiple disadvantages (e.g., poor health or malnutrition, or little schooling).

Recurrent and adverse weather conditions often affect crops, limiting efforts to reduce food insecurity (rank 28th, Global Climate Risk Index 2021). The El Niño phenomenon is causing prolonged periods without sufficient rainfall, leading to unfavorable conditions for an optimal harvest. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources reported that El Salvador has faced its third period of drought so far in 2023, the most affected area is the east of the country. Simultaneously, heavy rainfalls affected the central part of the country. Climate variability impacts the production of basic grains and puts household food stocks at risk of depletion, negatively affecting smallholder farmers' incomes and dietary diversity. This is one of the causes that increase malnutrition among children aged 6-59 months (10 percent stunted).

WFP has been present in El Salvador since 1971.



Population: **6.3 million**

2022 Human Development Index:
125 out of 189

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **14% of children
between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

USD 420,360 cash-based transfers made*

USD 12.5 m six months (September - February 2024) net funding requirements, representing 72 percent of total

465,047 people assisted*
In AUGUST 2023



*Preliminary numbers

Operational Updates

- WFP delivered a monthly cash-based transfer (USD 120 per household) for emergency food assistance to 13,953 beneficiaries (53 percent women) affected by climate hazards and global economic crises in the Usulután, San Miguel, and La Unión departments.
- WFP provided *Biofortik* to 449,654 children in 5,051 schools nationwide. *Biofortik* is a nutritional supplement for school-aged children made from fortified maize and sorghum. This is part of the Ministry of Education's School Feeding and Health Programme.
- WFP started a new cohort of the gastronomic certification programme (Gastro-Lab) with a group of 200 youngsters (82 percent women) in the department of La Unión, La Libertad and Santa Ana. Participants will learn cooking techniques, nutrition, food safety, customer service and personal development and gain job experience through internships.
- Under the resilience programme, WFP strengthened the capacity of 510 smallholder farmers to enhance vegetable gardening practices, including the maintenance of irrigation systems, aiming to maintain community vegetable gardens amidst the climate variability in the Department of La Unión.
- As part of the Kitchen-in-a-Box project (safe kitchens using shipping containers), WFP trained 25 mothers and technical staff of the Altavista School (San Salvador) in good cooking practices.
- WFP distributed microinsurance policies to 6,500 beneficiaries in seven departments. Each with a value of USD 500 covering one year in case of earthquake, drought or excess rainfall.

Contact info: Claudia Rodríguez (claudia.rodriguez@wfp.org)

Country Director: Riaz Lodhi

Further information: [WFP El Salvador](#)

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2027)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
134.1 m	29.3 m	12.5 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1 (SO1): SO1: People are better able to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs.

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:

- Provide immediate nutrition-sensitive food assistance to crisis-affected populations to meet their essential needs and facilitate relief and early recovery.
- Strengthen emergency preparedness and response capacity at the community and institutional levels.

Strategic Result 2: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 2 (SO2): People have improved & sustainable livelihoods.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Empower food-insecure communities to adopt improved and inclusive climate risk management and adaptation practices, as well as services to enhance production and resilience against shocks and stressors.
- Strengthen the production, management, and marketing capacities of urban and rural.
- Strengthen the national capacity to manage social protection programmes, to attend the most vulnerable population including school children through provision of food assistance.

Strategic Result 3: Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs.

Strategic Outcome 3 (SO3): National programmes & systems are strengthened.

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance to strengthen institutional capacity and social protection systems, enhancing inclusivity to meet the differentiated food and nutrition security needs of people and communities in conditions of vulnerability.

Strategic Result 4: Sharing of knowledge, expertise and technology, strengthen global partnership support to country efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Strategic Outcome 4 (SO4): Humanitarian & development actors are more efficient & effective.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide cash-based transfer platform services to government partners, United Nations agencies and national and international non-governmental organizations to meet the essential needs of targeted populations.
- Provide food procurement services to government partners, United Nations agencies and national and international non-governmental organizations to meet the essential needs of targeted populations.
- Provide logistics and non-food item procurement services to government partners, United Nations agencies and national and international non-governmental organizations for the delivery of social protection.

Monitoring

- WFP conducted the baseline survey in the departments of Usulután, San Miguel and La Unión. WFP surveyed 423 food-insecure people affected by climate events and the global economic crisis. The results showed that the average monthly income per household of four members is USD 143.67 (below the price of the rural food basket, USD 194). The survey showed that 85 percent of households have used at least one livelihood coping strategy, such as buying on credit, borrowing money or reducing spending on health and education.

Challenges

- The El Niño phenomenon has a 95 percent chance of maintaining and further strengthening by December 2023 and January 2024. This scenario could negatively impact agricultural production and put more households at risk of food insecurity due to recurring climate shocks and higher-than-average staple food prices.
- The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources reported that El Salvador faced a third drought in 2023 with seven consecutive dry days. According to the Ministry, there is an accumulated rainfall deficit of 26 percent. Between 1 January and 10 August, 723.8 mm of rain against the average for this season of 982.5 mm have been reported. Productions of basic grains are expected to be reduced by 6,000 mt this year.
- Since January 2020, the cost of the basic food basket has significantly increased in urban and rural areas by 28 and 34 percent respectively. In July, the price of the basic urban food basket reached USD 255 and USD 194 in rural areas. If the drought persists, the prices are expected to rise further as a market reaction to low agricultural outputs.

Donors

Canada, European Commission (DG ECHO), El Salvador, Germany, Switzerland, United States of America (the) and private donors.

Additional support has been provided by the Adaptation Fund.