



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief January 2024



WFP presented the CSP (2024-2028) to Ambassador Tenzin R Wangchuk. ©WFP/Kinley Wangmo

Operational Context

Bhutan transitioned from the Least Developed Country category in December 2023. WFP's support to the Government remains critical in areas of food systems and resilience, school nutrition and emergency preparedness and response, which are also key areas of focus in the draft 13th five-year plan (2024-2029).

Bhutan's poverty rate, which has decreased from 23 percent in 2007 to 8.2 in 2017, increased to 12.4 percent in 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The population's overall nutritional status has improved, however 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 disaster events but lacks the necessary data information systems, response plans and coordination systems to prepare for emergencies adequately.

WFP has been in Bhutan since 1974.



Population: **0.65 million**

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

Income Level:
Lower middle-income

2021-22 Human Development Index:
127 out of 191 countries

Highlights

- WFP presented the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2024-2028 to Ambassador Tenzin R Wangchuk, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan in Geneva on 30 January.
- An organizational alignment of the Country Office structure and workforce to deliver the CSP 2024-2028 was carried out through a mission from the Regional Bureau.

Operational Updates

- WFP presented the second-generation CSP 2024-2028 to Ambassador Tenzin R Wangchuk, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the UN in Geneva on 30 January. Ambassador Wangchuk is set to make a statement in support of WFP's new CSP to the Executive Board in February.
- An organizational alignment of the Country Office structure and workforce to deliver the CSP 2024-2028 was carried out through a mission from the Regional Bureau. The organizational alignment aims to improve the structure through a participatory approach, and an analysis of workforce data and composition.
- WFP supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MoAL) and stakeholders of the logistics desk to develop agency-specific operational manuals on emergency logistics to make their roles clearer for effective disaster response. The first two workshops, from 17-20 January, were attended by 21 participants representing the MoAL, Bhutan Red Cross Society, and five districts in Bhutan. The operation manuals will be finalized through a one-day workshop in early 2024.
- The inaugural technical session meeting for the Building Resilient Commercial Smallholder Agriculture project was organized on 25 January at Gelephu. Key participants included project managers, project support officer, accountant, and WFP staff. The agenda included discussions on the immediate implementation of project activities. This involved the sensitization of local government officials and the governors from the implementation districts of Zhemgang, Trongsa, Tsirang and Sarpang.

WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019 – 2024)		
Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated contributions (in US\$)	February – July 2024 Net funding requirements (in US\$)
14.6 M	10.4 M*	0.5 M

*Allocated contributions including long-term contributions for implementing activities across multiple years.

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 the 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: The Government has strengthened its 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.

- As part of the *Eat Kheta, Be Seta* (Eat Smart, Be Smart) healthy diets campaign, a three-episode cooking competition among schoolchildren was aired on *School Health and Nutrition Bhutan* social media pages. The social media pages are jointly managed by WFP and the Ministry of Education and Education and Skills Development (MoESD). The cooking competition was organized in October 2023 as part of MoESD's social behaviour change (SBC) strategy and action plan implementation. WFP supported the MoESD in developing the strategy with funding from the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).



WFP staff participates in the organizational alignment of Country Office in preparation for CSP 2024-2028. ©WFP/Nutthapong Prapatrungrsee

Donors

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