



World Food Programme

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WFP Bhutan

Country Brief

February 2024



WFP inspecting the non-perishable storage unit in Sonamthang Central School in Zhemgang. Photo: WFP/Jigme Tenzin

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 disasters but lacks the necessary 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 years**

Income Level:
Lower middle-income

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

Highlights

- The Executive Board approved WFP's country strategic plan (CSP) 2024-2028 for Bhutan on February 28.
- A team from WFP and the Health and Wellbeing Division under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development visited 17 schools to monitor the construction and refurbishment of kitchens and storage.

Operational Update

- The Executive Board approved WFP's [CSP 2024-2028](#) for Bhutan. The CSP is aligned with Bhutan's draft 13th five-year plan (2024-2029) and the United Nation's sustainable development cooperation framework. The new plan is informed by the [evaluation of the CSP 2019-2023](#). The plan supports the Government's efforts to deliver equitable and inclusive economic growth and advance human capital development. All activities will continue through partners in the Government. Key contributions will include the expansion of investments in capacities for resilient food systems, the integration of nutrition considerations in social protection programmes such as school feeding, and the strengthening of systems for emergency preparedness and response.
- WFP and Ministry of Education and Skills Development officials visited 17 schools in central and eastern Bhutan from 12-21 February to monitor the construction and refurbishment of school kitchens and storage. The construction and refurbishment works were carried out under the KOICA-funded, joint project with the Ministry called '*consolidating of a fully integrated universal national school nutrition programme in Bhutan*'. Monitoring was undertaken to ascertain the benefits of the new and refurbished infrastructure for the schools and students, who benefit from the national school feeding and nutrition programme. The construction and refurbishment activities have been completed in all 17 schools and handed over to the school management. The team also monitored the school agriculture programme in schools that received mini power-tillers under the same project.

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Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Bhutan

WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019 – 2024)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated contributions (in US\$)	March – August 2024 Net funding requirements (in US\$)
14.6 m	0	0.5 m

*Allocated contributions including long-term contributions for implementing activities in 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.

- The annual review and planning workshop for Building Resilient Commercial Smallholder Agriculture (BRECSA) project started in Panbang, Zhemgang. The workshop, organized by WFP and the BRECSA, was attended by district livestock, agriculture, economic development, and marketing officers from the four districts of Zhemgang, Sarpang, Tsirang and Trongsa, where the project will be implemented. During the workshop, participants reviewed the past work plan and carried out planning for the year 2024-2025.



Participants of the annual review and planning workshop for BRECSA.
Photo: BRECSA/Ugyen Choden

Donors

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