



World Food Programme

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WFP Bhutan Country Brief March 2024



Emergency logistics workshop participants visit the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited's warehouse in Phuentsholing. 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 had 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**

2021-22 Human Development Index:
125 out of 193 countries

Income Level: **Lower middle-income**

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

In Numbers

314 farmers and local government officials consulted for development of agriculture resilience plans for Zhemgang, Sarpang and Trongsa districts

Emergency logistics preparedness standard operating procedures developed for **13** agencies

US\$ 2.4 m six months (April-September 2024) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- WFP completed community consultations for the development of agriculture resilience plans in three of the four districts where the Building Resilient Commercial Smallholder Agriculture (BRECSA) project is implemented. The consultations were carried out through a CLEAR exercise (consolidated livelihood exercise for analysing resilience) from 11 March, covering 25 *gewogs* (sub-district) under Trongsa, Sarpang and Zhemgang districts. Farmers and local government officials (91 women and 223 men) participated in the consultations. Through CLEAR, WFP will collect insights, experiences, and observations on how climate change affects agricultural practices, livestock rearing and other livelihood activities to help identify specific vulnerabilities of community members. The agriculture resilience plans identify potential strategies and interventions to strengthen resilience and mitigate risks in response to the impacts of the climate crisis. The Tsirang district consultations will be carried out in April.
- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, organized a five-day workshop on emergency logistics preparedness from 4-8 March to develop standard operating procedures (SOP) for frontline agencies. Thirteen emergency logistics SOPs were developed by 44 participants representing 21 different agencies, such as the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, *De-Suung* (national service volunteers), and Bhutan Red Cross. These workshops, supported by the Global Logistics Cluster, follow the development of a national logistics preparedness manual in 2023 to respond efficiently and effectively in a coordinated manner during disasters.

Contact info: carrie.morrison@wfp.org

Country Director: Carrie Morrison

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

Country Strategic Plan (2024-2028)		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	April – September Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
14.6 m	3.4 m	2.4 m

Strategic Outcome 1:

Rural populations in Bhutan, particularly women smallholder farmers, young people and persons with disabilities, achieve climate-resilient livelihoods and increased food security and nutrition by 2030

Focus area: *Resilience building*

- Activities:
- Provide technical assistance to national and local government institutions with the aim of strengthening the capacity of farmer-based organizations to manage climate shocks and introduce innovative risk management solutions for climate resilient and nutritious food production
 - Provide technical assistance to national and local government institutions with the aim of strengthening the capacities of producer groups, small-scale agro-enterprises and other value chain actors that empower women and young people in targeted value chains

Strategic Outcome 2:

The citizens of Bhutan, particularly vulnerable population groups, benefit from enhanced human capital and a food system that is resilient to climate and other crises and shocks by 2030

Focus area: *Resilience building*

- Activities:
- Provide technical assistance to government and other stakeholders aimed at improving social protection provision, including by linking national school feeding programmes to farmers and suppliers, to facilitate the consumption of safe, healthy and nutrient-dense diets
 - Provide technical assistance, including in relation to social behaviour change, in support of government and private sector efforts to promote fortified food products, and ensure that all school feeding programme beneficiaries and the public consume safe, healthy and nutrient-dense diets
 - Provide technical assistance and innovative solutions to government institutions for the expansion of people-centred disaster risk reduction programmes that integrate nutrition considerations and foster preparedness for and effective response to shocks and stressors

Donors

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA),
Global Logistics Cluster support, WFP internal funds,
Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP)

- WFP joined colleagues from United Nations agencies in Bhutan to visit the [Gelephu Mindfulness City](#) project site from 19 to 21 March. The special administrative region project will create a vibrant economic hub anchored on the vision and values of Gross National Happiness. His Majesty, King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck announced the project during the National Day address on 17 December 2023.
- WFP launched its [Annual Country Report 2023](#) on 29 March. The report highlights the partnership between WFP and the Government of Bhutan, which has been critical in achieving progress in areas of school feeding and nutrition, food systems and resilience, and emergency preparedness and response. Key documents providing insight into WFP’s work in Bhutan in [school nutrition](#) and [social behaviour change](#), [resilient food systems](#), [emergency preparedness and response](#), and [supply chain](#) were also published in March.
- WFP launched an internal campaign - Respect+ on 29 March, aiming at fostering a culture of respect in the workplace, through the four pillars of awareness, inclusion, fairness and humanity.



CLEAR community consultations in progress at Drakteng, Trongsa district. WFP/Karma Penjore