



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Ecuador Country Brief March 2024



Martha Solano with her students enjoying their nutritious school meals provided by WFP. Photo: WFP/Gonzalo Ruiz

Operational Context

Ecuador showed gross domestic product (GDP) growth before the COVID-19 health crisis, resulting in a relative decrease in poverty and major public investment. However, the poverty rate rose from 21.5 percent in 2017 to 25.2 percent in 2022 while extreme poverty from 7.9 percent to 8.2 percent, with a large difference in rural and urban contexts. 41 percent of the rural population lives under the poverty line compared to 17.8 percent in urban areas. The influx of migrants continued through 2022 increasing the number of migrants living in Ecuador. Between 2021 and 2022, violent deaths grew by 82 percent in Ecuador. It is the sixth most violent country in the region. The Ukraine conflict has further exacerbated existing economic and social issues, resulting in rising inflation and production deficits. Annual inflation reached 3.8 percent in 2022, up from 0.13 percent in 2021. The rapid price increase has caused social unrest and a Government deficit as it tries to curb the increasing costs.

Ecuador is vulnerable to climate change, prone to natural hazards, and faces environmental degradation, threatening food systems and potentially increasing malnutrition and poverty rates across the country.



Population: **17.7 million**

2015 Human Development Index:
86 out of 189

Income Level: **Upper middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **23.9% of children under 5 years old**

In Numbers

7.0 mt of food assistance distributed*

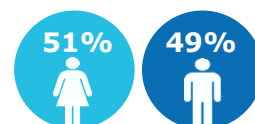
USD 1M cash-based transfers made*

USD 14.3 six months (April to September 2024) net funding requirements, representing 70 percent of total

33,153 people assisted*

in MARCH 2024

*Preliminary figures



Operational Updates

- In March, WFP provided 12,709 migrants with value vouchers (valued at USD35) to across the country, of which 4,998 were pregnant women and girls and households with children aged 24-59 months in 16 out of 24 of the country.
- WFP assisted 10,508 migrants, refugees and people from host communities with hot meals at shelters and canteens. Another 5,052 migrants in transit received a food kit and a one-time voucher to buy food at local supermarkets.
- At the Government's request, WFP distributed emergency value vouchers to 4,884 individuals affected by heavy rains and flooding in March, funded by the Government of Canada.
- In March, as part of the school meals programme, WFP supplied 50 educational centres across the provinces of Carchi, Montúfar, and Tulcán, ensuring that each of the 3,555 students received a fresh, nutritious hot meal daily.
- WFP began developing multi-hazard response plans for nine municipalities prone to disasters, while also updating its initial needs assessment tool. Moreover, WFP conducted training sessions for community risk management committees in 20 communities, empowering them to establish emergency brigades, among other skills.
- In March, WFP started the final evaluation of the binational project by visiting communities in mangrove or tropical forests and high-dry areas. Over 3,500 families across four provinces in the northern border region of Colombia benefitted from this project. Results are expected in April.

- Inflation in March 2024 remained relatively stable in comparison to February 2024, at 0.3 percent. In comparison to March 2023, inflation increased by 1.7 percent.
- In February 2024, the unemployment rate reached 4.2 percent, the highest rate since April 2022. Adequate employment stood at 33.9 percent.
- The Basic Family Basket currently costs USD795.30, while the Essential Family Basket now costs USD560.15.

Challenges

- Since the beginning of 2024, there has been a notable decrease of over 60 percent in violent deaths compared to the 2023 average. However, an increase in extortion and kidnappings highlights the ongoing security crisis, especially evident in Guayaquil due to organized crime activities. Despite these challenges, WFP operations remain unaffected at present, with close monitoring remaining a priority.
- In March, the effects of the El Niño phenomenon persisted, bringing heavy rainfall along the coast. Although sea temperatures remained above average, a slight 0.5-degree decrease is anticipated to reduce the related climate shocks currently being experienced. Meanwhile, WFP sustained its emergency aid efforts, assisting 4,884 individuals affected by flooding.

Donors

Canada, European Union, Japan, United States of America and private donors.

Additional support has been provided by the Adaptation Fund.

Country Strategic Plan (2023-2027)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
165.3 m	48.2 m	14.3 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

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

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Deliver food assistance (CBT and in-kind) with equitable access to and control over, and access to services, strengthening food security and socioeconomic integration of population in human mobility, host population and other vulnerable Ecuadorian people affected by disasters, emergencies, and prolonged crises, considering the gender and protection approach.
- Strengthen the government’s shock-responsive social protection programs with a gender and protection approach, through technical assistance, evidence and capacities to public institutions, decision makers and communities, strengthening national systems of anticipation, prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response to disasters and early recovery.

Strategic Result 2: End malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: People have better nutrition, health and education outcomes.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Strengthen institutional capacities and provide an adequate and comprehensive package of interventions with a gender and protection approach to girls, boys, adolescents, and people in vulnerable situations, throughout the life cycle and with emphasis but not limited to on the first 1,000 days.

Strategic Result 3: Sustainable food systems

Strategic Outcome 3: People have improved and sustainable livelihoods.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Strengthen institutional capacities and provide technical and operational assistance, resources, assets, services, and information to better support climate-vulnerable communities and family farmers.

Strategic Result 4: Capacity Strengthening

Strategic Outcome 4: Humanitarian and development actors are more efficient and effective.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide supply chain and other services to Government and humanitarian partners, including supply chain diagnostics and identification and documentation of gaps, needs and opportunities for operational improvement.