



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP ESWATINI

Country Brief

May 2024



Operational Context

Eswatini is a lower-middle-income country, with 59 percent of the rural population living below the national poverty line and 29 percent categorized as extremely poor. The average life expectancy in Eswatini is 61 years, and 45 percent of children under-five are categorized as orphaned or vulnerable. HIV is a significant issue in the country, affecting 27 percent of people ages 15 to 49. Smallholder agriculture is a crucial for rural livelihoods, with over 70 percent of the total population relying on subsistence farming, with 60 percent of this population being women. Persistent food insecurity manifests in chronic malnutrition with 26 percent of children under 5 experiencing stunting. Eswatini is also facing a drought in the south and east of the country.

WFP has been in Eswatini since the late 1960s, offering emergency relief and development projects to strengthen education and health. Today, WFP supports the Government of Eswatini to improve food and nutrition security and establish safety nets for those most affected by poverty and HIV.



Population: **1.2 million**

2022 Human Development Index: **148 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

2022 Global Hunger Index; **75 out of 125 countries**

In Numbers

323.411 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 3 m six months (June to November 2024) net funding requirements, representing 50% of total requirements.

36,935 people assisted in May 2024

Operational Updates

Social Safety Nets

WFP provided social safety nets for 27,000 orphans and vulnerable children between ages 2-6 at 873 Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs) in Eswatini through access to food and other essential services. Due to funding constraints, WFP had to reduce the NCP caseload from 1700 NCPs to 873 in May.

Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) Pilot Programme

WFP worked with the Ministry of Education and Training to supply **50 schools and 24,392** students with increased food commodities and diversified meals, through a local purchase programme, by linking smallholder production to the Government-led school feeding programme. About **17 Farmer** organizations were identified to supply **878 MT** of maize and **235 MT** of beans to the pilot programme.

Working with FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, WFP provided training on Climate SMART technologies, production and commodity pricing, marketing linkages, food safety and food preparation to 672 smallholder farmers from the 17 registered farmer organizations to meet food safety standards.

Climate Proof and Resilient Livelihood Project

WFP supported about 5,265 people with self-sufficiency projects across 27 Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs) in 17 chiefdoms within the Shiselweni and Lubombo region. The project successfully ensured food provision for 820 children and empowered the NCPs to cultivate their own crops for self-sustainability. A total of 223 farmers, with women constituting 59 percent, received training in climate change adaptation, crop production, and post-harvest handling.

Furthermore, WFP provided ongoing support to 9 farmer enterprise organizations: including nurseries, farm input shops, layer production, and vegetable production. This support increased profits, reinvestment in farms, diversified incomes, as well as amplified resilience, and sustainable food systems.

Additionally, 62 farmers who received farm inputs from WFP benefited from post-harvest handling techniques training, to reduce spoilage and enhance the quality of their produce.

Lastly, WFP collaborated with a farmer group of 12 members to install water infrastructure, securing vegetable production for the NCPs and enabling the sale of surplus produce. This initiative significantly impacted the farmer organizations involved, marking a stride towards agricultural and economic advancement.

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Country Strategic Plan (2020-2025)

CSP Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
76.5 m	34.5m	3m

Strategic Result 01: Everyone has access to food.

Strategic Outcome 01: Vulnerable populations in shock-affected areas can meet their basic food and nutrition needs during times of crisis.
Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities 1: Provide food and/or cash-based transfers to food insecure populations, including children affected by shocks.

Strategic Result 03: Smallholders have improved food security and nutrition through improved productivity and incomes.

Strategic Outcome 02: Smallholder farmers, particularly women, have enhanced capacities to supply structured markets with nutritious food by 2024.
Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities 2: Strengthen the capacities of smallholder farmers, particularly women, to supply nutritious foods to structured markets, including schools.

Strategic Result 05: Developing countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs.

Strategic Outcome 03: Vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, adolescent girls and people living with HIV, have access to integrated and shock-responsive social protection systems by 2030.
Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities 3: Provide evidence and strengthen national systems and capacities for designing and implementing, nutrition-sensitive and shock-responsive social protection programmes, including school feeding.

Resilience Building

In response to food insecurity and other shocks faced by vulnerable communities in Eswatini, WFP provided life-saving support through CBT in 4 Constituencies. WFP targeted 58,109 beneficiaries, however, due to funding constraints a total of 48,300 beneficiaries were reached.

WFP improved community targeting and registration to ensuring that the most vulnerable people are reached. WFP undertook a community outreach exercise, to improve community-based targeting method in 19 communities.

WFP is also engaging with the new government and constituency leadership orienting them on WFP operations.

WFP provided technical support to the Food Security Consortium (and forum of 20 local non-governmental organisations) in developing a livelihood climate resilience proposal for the Adaptation Fund.

WFP also supported the rollout of Three-Pronged Approach (3-PA) in the country in partnership with the University of Eswatini and the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office. Through this partnership WFP implemented a pilot resilience project under the KuNjelu community – Nhlambeni Inkhundla. The project aims to reach 530 beneficiaries in the community through asset-building activities.

Social Protection

WFP in collaboration with UNICEF has developed a Shock Responsive Social Protection Road Map, which will inform future programmatic and policy decisions for Social Protection programmes in the country. WFP provided technical and financial support to the Department of Social Welfare under the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office in transforming the current social protection system to be more shock responsive.

Monitoring and Assessments

According to the [2023 Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis data](#), an estimated 283,000 people (26 percent of the population) have been classified to be facing IPC Phase 3 (crisis) level of acute food insecurity or worse, requiring humanitarian support during the peak of the lean season (October 2023–March 2024).

Home-Grown School Feeding Evaluation: Key finding indicates a lack of a comprehensive policy to guide the implementation of the HGSF pilot programme.

The pilot programme was able to promote a well-balanced nutritious food basket but encountered challenges associated with ensuring a constant supply of commodities from smallholder farmers. From this exercise, WFP will support Government in assessing and revising the design and implementation of the project, advocating for more local ownership and, where feasible, channelling resources reserved for traditional school feeding into the HGSF programme.

Economic Forecast

The Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) indicated that even though given regional and international developments, Eswatini economy is still recovering from the impact of COVID-19 and the impact of ongoing Global inflation. According to the CBE the economy had grown by 6.2 percent on a year on year in the second quarter of 2023. The Economy is only projected to grow by 4.9 percent in 2024. Gross official reserves were at approximately USD 491 million equivalent to an import cover of 2.8 months. This falls below the CBE target - 6 months of the import bill.

While the National budget anticipated a strong investment space, several economic indicators do not support this. Food security in the wake of an El-Nino induced drought is causing food prices to increase excessively, while the supply in the South African Region is predicted to decrease. Due to this, the country is already looking beyond Africa for maize and other food security commodities.

Donors

Japan, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Norway, Germany, Global Fund United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Government of Eswatini, Multilateral funding, Private Donors.