



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief August 2024



WFP staff interviewed Aum Zam in Lunana, Gasa in the presence of glacial lake outburst floods. ©WFP/Rain Skullerud

Operational Context

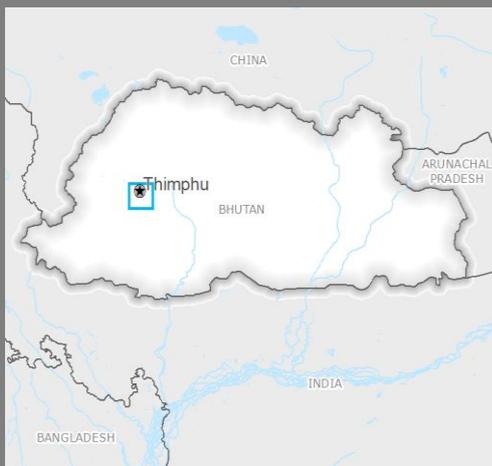
Bhutan transitioned from the least developed country category in December 2023. WFP's support to the Government remains critical in areas of food systems and resilience, school nutrition and emergency preparedness and response, which are also key areas of focus in the 13th five-year plan (2024-2029).

Only 2.6 percent of Bhutan's land is arable and agricultural production costs are high. The country is also highly vulnerable to natural hazards and increased climate variabilities. Employment in agriculture is mainly for small-scale subsistence farming with low productivity, often with limited processing and value addition.

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**

2023-24 Human Development Index: **125 out of 193 countries**

Income Level: **Lower middle-income**

Stunting: **17.9%** Wasting: **5.1%**
Underweight: **8.8%** (Children under-5)

Highlights

WFP conducted a five-day nutrition workshop for the BRECSA project management unit on nutrition-sensitive agriculture activities

WFP visits flood-affected sites in the community of Dechencholing for case study

US\$1.7 million six months (September 2024 - February 2025) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

Smallholder agriculture

- WFP conducted a five-day nutrition consultation workshop for the Building Resilient Commercial Smallholder Agriculture (BRECSA) project management unit (PMU), participated by 13 staff. The workshop aimed to i) orient the PMU on nutrition-sensitive agriculture activities under the BRECSA project and ii) contribute to enhancing their capacity to implement effective strategies for the project. The workshop also facilitated discussions to establish seamless integration methods for operations and activities between the PMU and WFP, ensuring synergy and maximizing impact. The PMU affirmed the criteria for targeting beneficiary groups, defined key performance indicators, and developed a comprehensive monitoring plan to effectively track progress and outcomes.



BRECSA PMU and WFP visited Deepak Organic Farm in Gelephu, Sarpang. ©WFP/Jigme Samdrup.

WFP visit to Dechencholing flood-affected site

- WFP conducted a field visit to the flood-affected site in Dechencholing, Thimphu on 13 August. The flood, which occurred on 9 August, has significantly impacted 133 households and 62 foreign workers employed at nearby construction sites. Despite being categorized as a community-level disaster, the magnitude of the event is considerable due to the high population density in the affected area. All emergency frontliners were extensively engaged in the disaster response efforts. WFP continues to

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Country Strategic Plan (2024-2028)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	September 2024 – February 2025 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
14.6 m	3.8 m	1.7 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

coordinate with the Government to arrange a meeting with these frontline responders for a comprehensive after-action review.



Houses damaged by the recent flood in Dechencholing. ©WFP/Dechen Yangzom



Water transmission pipelines damaged by the flood. ©WFP/Dechen Yangzom

Donors

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