



# WFP Bhutan Country Brief

October 2024

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



Children receiving school meals prepared by the SMP PLUS tool  
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## 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, in collaboration with Building Resilient Commercial Smallholder Agriculture, completed the district agriculture resilience plan workshops for Tsirang and Zhemgang districts.
- WFP requires **US\$0.582 million** six months (November 2024 to April 2025) net funding

## Operational Updates

### Agriculture Resilience Plan Workshop for two districts

- WFP, together with the Building Resilient Commercial Smallholder Agriculture’s (BRECSA) project management unit conducted two agriculture resilience plan (ARP) workshop in the districts of Zhemgang and Tsirang.
  - In Zhemgang, 49 participants (5 women and 44 men) comprising of local leaders, livestock and agricultural extension officers, sector heads and lead farmers participated in the consultation workshop from 24-26 October.
  - In Tsirang,, 63 participants (14 women and 49 men) comprising of local leaders and stakeholders, livestock and agricultural extension officers, sector heads, lead farmers, and representatives from the Ability Bhutan Society and Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW) participated in the workshop from 28-30 October.
- The main objectives of the workshops were to present and validate key findings from the Consolidated Livelihood Exercise for Analyzing Resilience (CLEAR+) Exercise, gather additional feedback from district, and sub-district stakeholders, and collaboratively draft the ARPs. The ARPs will be one of the key documents in informing the district annual work plan and budget 2025-26.



Agriculture resilience plan Workshop for Zhemgang district.  
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Country Strategic Plan (2024-2028)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	November 2024 – April 2025 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
14.6 m	8.85 m	0.582 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

- From 21-24 October, the School Menu Planner (SMP) PLUS training workshop was conducted for schools in Thimphu district in partnership with Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD). A total of 21 participants (6 women and 15 men) comprising of school authorities, district livestock authorities were trained on developing optimized menus using WFPs innovative SMP PLUS tool.
- Following the SMP PLUS workshop, 14 participants (10 women and 4 men) comprising of chef, school cooks and matron were trained on integrated food preparation training for the SMP PLUS designed menus. Menus designed with SMP PLUS will support schools in designing cost-efficient, nutritious meals while improving dietary diversity and increasing use of locally available food in school meals for children enrolled in the national school feeding and nutrition programme.



Integrated food preparation training for the SMP PLUS designed menus. ©MoESD/Nikesh Rai

Donors

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