



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Mauritania Country Brief August/ September 2024



In Numbers



108,301 vulnerable people assisted

4,945 mt of food distributed

US\$ 1,238,894 in cash transferred

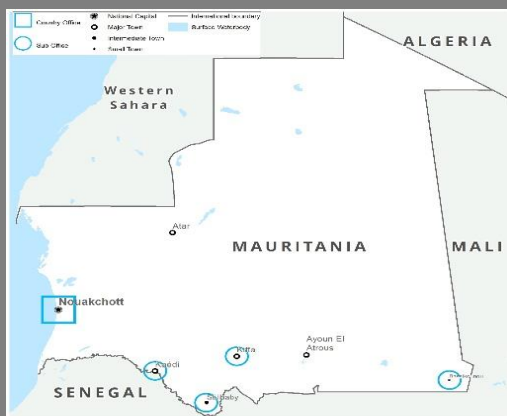
US\$ 13.6 million six-month net funding requirements
(October 2024 - March 2025)

Operational Context

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania faces significant challenges related to land degradation and desertification, with vast portions of its territory being arid and only 0.4 percent of land classified as arable. These challenges are compounded by increasing desertification, which drastically reduces soil fertility and productive capacity, negatively impacting both agricultural and pastoral livelihoods. According to the March 2024 *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis, 656,652 people would face crisis-level food insecurity conditions (IPC 3+) during the peak of the lean season (June–September 2024).

Mauritania hosts the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa, due to ongoing conflict in neighbouring Mali. As of September 2024 ([UNHCR dashboard](#)), there is a total of 275,881 refugees and asylum seeker in the country, with some 92 percent residing in the Hold El Chargui Region (255,517).

WFP's operations aim at responding to basic food and nutrition needs of targeted vulnerable populations, while providing humanitarian air transport service (UNHAS) to hard-to-reach regions for humanitarian and development partners. In parallel, WFP strives to ensure the continuation of its resilience programmes, while strengthening institutional capacities and promoting gender equality. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: 4.9 million

2022 Human Development Index:
Ranked 164th out of 193 countries

Income Level: Lower-middle 1

Chronic malnutrition: 24.8 percent of
children aged 6 to 59 months²

1 A "lower-middle income country" is a classification used by the World Bank to group countries based on their gross national income (GNI) per capita. Lower-middle income countries have a GNI per capita between \$1,136 and \$4,465 (measured in current US dollars using the World Bank Atlas method).
2. Based on GAM - Global Acute Malnutrition) is commonly monitored to assess the severity of malnutrition and guide interventions. When GAM levels are high, it typically indicates a need for urgent nutrition programmes.

Operational Updates

Refugee response in the M'bera Refugee Camp: In August, WFP delivered cash assistance to 77,965 people (of which 42,647 were women/girls) and provided 550 children aged 6 to 59 months (257 girls) and 272 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWG) with specialized nutritious food to supplement moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). In September, WFP's cash assistance reached 80,549 people (of which 44,060 women), while 495 children (244 girls) and 179 PBWG received the specialized nutritious food for MAM supplementation. The difference in terms of the number of refugees reached in August and September (increase of 2,584) represents the continued influx of refugees into the camp considering ongoing conflict in neighbouring Mali.

2024 Lean Season Response: In August, WFP's third round of cash assistance as part of the Government's lean season response in the Kankossa Department (Assaba region) reached 26,899 vulnerable people. In September, WFP assisted 26,893 people via the provision of cash transfers. During both months, a cash top-up to prevent malnutrition, benefiting 1,670 children aged 6 to 23 months and 1,737 pregnant and breastfeeding women, was also provided. These activities were accompanied by sensitizations vis-à-vis the importance of a healthy diet and adequate nutrition practices. While WFP managed to ensure assistance during the lean season to the targeted communities thanks to its donor contributions, the national lean season response was stalled due to the political context, with most government-led transfers not taking place during this reporting period.

Prevention of malnutrition: In August and September, WFP provided guidance to cooperating partners in Assaba, Guidimakha and Hodh El Chargui on integrating nutrition activities into the resilience package focusing on the prevention of all forms of malnutrition. Additionally, WFP conducted a training from 4-5 September for 7 staff members of the Government's Food Security Commission (CSA, in French) and the Directorate of Nutrition, on the use of the Nutrition Data Management Dashboard tool, developed by WFP, CSA and the NGO SIC4CHANGE. On 25-27 September, WFP participated in a national workshop to validate Mauritania's nutrition framework documents (Nutrition Multi-Sectoral Action Plan 2025-2027, Nutrition Strategic Plan 2025-2030). In August, WFP provided specialized nutritious food (RUSF and Super Cereal) to 1,190 children aged 6 to 59 months (627 were girls) with a recovery rate of 98 percent, in 107 outpatient nutritional rehabilitation centres for moderate malnutrition (CRENAM) in Assaba, Guidimakha and Hodh El Chargui. While in September, 1,032 children (502 girls) were treated in 107 CRENAMs in Assaba, with a 100 percent recovery rate.

Photo Caption: WFP assistance in the M'bera Refugee Camp - treatment of moderate acute malnutrition
WFP/ Abderrahmane Camara

Country Strategic Plan (2024-2028)

Total CSP Requirements (US\$)	Total Received in 2024 (US\$)
417.6 million	48.1 million
2024 Requirements (all year) (US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (US\$) (Oct 2024– Mar 2025)
82.8 million	13.6 million

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

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected populations in targeted areas, including women and children in need of nutrition support, are better able to meet to their urgent needs immediately before, during and after shocks.

Focus area: *Crisis response*

Activities:

- Provide refugees with an integrated package of assistance including food, school meals, nutritional support for the management and prevention of malnutrition.
- Provide nutritionally adequate assistance to crisis-affected populations in the form of cash assistance for food security and nutrition-specific purchases.

Strategic Result 2: People have improved and sustainable livelihoods.

Strategic Outcome 2: Communities vulnerable to shocks in targeted areas have sustainable livelihoods, access to basic services, strengthened human capital, reinforced markets, improved nutrition and resilience to climate shocks by 2028.

Focus area: *Resilience-building*

Activities:

- Provide integrated resilience support to communities vulnerable to shocks and strengthen institutional capacities at the local and national levels, including linkages to national social protection programmes.

Strategic Result 3: National programmes and systems are strengthened.

Strategic Outcome 3: By 2028, national institutions have strengthened capacity to establish a robust, effective, and adaptive social protection system, which includes school-based programmes and nutrition and food security policy.

Focus area: *Root Causes*

Activities:

- Provide technical support to improve the capacity of government institutions to build a social protection system that adequately addresses food security, nutrition and shock response.

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

Strategic Outcome 4: Government partners and humanitarian and development actors support vulnerable people effectively and efficiently throughout the year

Focus area: *Crisis Response*

Activities:

- Provide air transport services and technical assistance for humanitarian and development partners.
- Provide on-demand services at the request of the Government and other partners, in addition to technical assistance.

Integrated Resilience Package (IRP)

School Feeding: WFP is preparing to launch its cash-for-schools pilot project in early 2025. This initiative will complement the existing school feeding programme by enabling schools to purchase local commodities, thereby supporting the local economy and food value chains through partnerships with small and medium producers. Additionally, preparations are underway to pre-position stocks for the 2024-2025 academic year, starting in early October.

Food assistance for assets (FFA): From 22-26 August, WFP and NORCAP (operated by NRC) visited the Llemgayiss agrosilvopastoral farm and resilience site in Hodh El Chargui Region to showcase the IRP and discuss intervention differences between M'bera and surrounding communities. The visit aimed to strengthen support for partners by developing strategic frameworks for sustainable energy access and solutions for displaced communities. These frameworks include comprehensive country roadmaps outlining the humanitarian context, strategic intervention areas, and high-impact priorities in the energy and environment sectors, aligning with national strategies and policies. They also identify potential stakeholders for partnerships and establish work plans for delivering energy solutions. In September, efforts focused on preparing for a high-level mission to assess climate solutions and strategies for building resilience to food insecurity in Mauritania and the Sahel. WFP also conducted a support mission to partners in Guidimakha, Assaba, and Hodh El Chargui, resulting in a roadmap for implementing nutrition activities in the new program phase.

Capacity-strengthening and anticipatory actions: In September, WFP and the National Meteorological Office (ONM, in French) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen the national meteorological service's capacity to develop climate services, particularly seasonal forecasts.

Gender: In September, WFP hosted a workshop in Nouakchott on the Social Norms Exploration Tool (SNET) as part of a joint programme with FAO and IFAD focused on gender-transformative approaches to food security. Participants from Niger, Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania analyzed social norms affecting food security and nutrition in Guidimakha. These findings will be used internally by the organization and guide WFP Mauritania's programmes to prevent malnutrition included in the integrated resilience package.

The **United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** transported 161 passengers and 430 kg of cargo connecting Nouakchott to Bassikounou, Kiffa, and Nema.

Challenges

Funding shortfalls could severely impact WFP's operations at the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025. WFP urgently requires US\$13 million to support Malian refugees in the M'bera Refugee Camp. Starting in December 2024, funding constraints will limit the cash component of its in-camp refugee response programme, but WFP will continue providing assistance through an in-kind food basket thanks to recent contributions. UNHAS is funded until January 2025. Additionally, the Integrated Resilience Package faces a US\$2.7 million shortfall in the last quarter of 2024.

Donors

Donors to WFP Mauritania's CSP 2024–2028 include Andorra, Austria, the Czech Republic, the European Commission (ECHO), France, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Monaco, Norway, Spain, Finland, Ukraine and the United States of America. **Financial support has also been received** from the African Risk Capacity (ARC) and United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).