



World Food Programme

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WFP Timor-Leste Country Brief February-March 2025



The Minister of Education and WFP Representative & Country Director inaugurated a new school kitchen in Manufahi municipality. ©WFP/Mariano Redondo

Operational Context

Timor-Leste has one of the highest rates of stunting in Southeast Asia and twenty-six percent of the population face acute food insecurity.

In response, the World Food Programme (WFP) is shifting programmatic focus to be an enabler and strengthen the country's capacity to reduce hunger, with a nutrition- and climate-sensitive food systems approach. This emphasizes putting people at the centre in line with the road map for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including ending hunger, combating all forms of malnutrition, and establishing sustainable and climate-resilient food systems.

WFP's country strategic plan (CSP 2023-2025) supports the Government of Timor-Leste's vision for zero hunger and contributes to the National Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030. The overall goal of the CSP is to improve food security and nutrition through strengthening the existing social protection programmes (*Bolsa da Mãe Condicional*, *Merenda Escolar*), food value chain, supply chain management, and home-grown school feeding, and emergency shock response.



Population: **1.36 million**

2021/22 Human Development Index: **141 out of 191**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **47% of children (6-59 months old)**

Contact info: Mariano Redondo (mariano.redondo@wfp.org)
Country Director: Jacqueline de Groot (jacqueline.degroot@wfp.org)
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/timor-leste

Highlights

- The Ministry of Education and WFP have handed over seven school kitchens under the SN5S project, implemented in three municipalities, to support the school feeding programme.
- WFP supported the Timor-Leste Government in the N4G Summit discussions, advancing global nutrition efforts, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing social protection and health systems integration.

Operational Updates

Nutrition and Food Security

- The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with WFP, has handed over seven new school kitchens to support the school feeding programme, with a remaining set of three kitchens to be constructed for handover this year. These kitchens are part of the Say No to 5S (which stands for 'starvation, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, skin diseases, smoking, and sugar/alcoholic drinks') (SN5S) project, co-implemented by WFP and the World Health Organization in three municipalities: Baucau, Bobonaro, and Manufahi, and funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The project aims to improve the school cooking environment to provide safe, healthy, and nutritious meals for students, carry out social and behaviour change communication on better health and nutrition to students and the public, while also providing training to help strengthen the Ministry and local government. The SN5S project benefits 400 schools, reaching nearly 70,000 students through improved school meals, cooking equipment, and utensils.

Social Protection

- In March, the Asian Development Bank and WFP signed a US\$1.55 million agreement to support a three-year pilot project led by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI). The project aims to develop a nutrition-sensitive and shock-responsive social protection programme. Key activities include developing a Poverty and Vulnerability Framework, undertaking data collection, designing an integrated social registry, and establishing guidelines for the *Bolsa da Mãe Health Nutrition Mother and Child* pilot programme.
- The President of Timor-Leste, Jose Ramos-Horta, with support from WFP, launched the latest edition of *Policy in Focus*, a magazine dedicated to analysing and evaluating policy models. This issue, presented to government institutions, UN agencies, and development partners, includes a foreword by President Ramos-Horta, who serves as Co-Chair of the Global Taskforce on Social Protection for Nutrition, a platform that fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange to support fragile and least-developed countries. Access it [here](#).
- A scoping mission took place from 3 to 18 March, with experts from Pakistan's Benazir Income Support Programme to lay the groundwork for the nutrition-sensitive social protection pilot project.

Country Strategic Plan (2023-2025)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
21.2 m	12.47 m	0.81 m

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

CSP Outcome 1: Crisis-affected populations in Timor-Leste have equitable access to adequate nutritious foods that meet their basic nutritional needs during and in the aftermath of shocks.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

1. Provide food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations.

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

CSP Outcome 2: People vulnerable to nutrition insecurity, in particular women, adolescent girls, and school-age children, in Timor-Leste have equitable access to enhanced nutrition-sensitive programmes that promote and enable healthy diets by 2025.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

2. Provide technical assistance to national institutions working to enhance the quality and nutrition integration of school-based programmes and other social assistance programmes by improving the availability, affordability, equitable access to and consumption of nutritious and safe food.

Strategic Outcome 3: National programmes and systems are strengthened

CSP Outcome 3: People vulnerable to shocks in Timor-Leste benefit from enhanced national capacity for disaster preparedness and response and supply chain management by 2025

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

3. Provide technical assistance to national institutions in strengthening disaster risk and supply chain management

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

CSP Outcome 4: Communities vulnerable to and affected by crises in Timor-Leste benefit from improved services and enhanced capacities of Government and humanitarian and development actors to prepare and respond to crises by 2025.

Focus area: Service Delivery

Activities:

4. Provide on-demand services including food and non-food procurement, and logistics supply chain capacity to the government and humanitarian and development partners.

The mission focused on stakeholder mapping, capacity assessment, IT infrastructure review, risk mitigation, monitoring & evaluation frameworks, and feasibility analysis. It also aimed to foster technical collaboration between the governments of Timor-Leste and Pakistan on nutrition-sensitive social protection. Meetings were held with government agencies, UN partners, and others to exchange expertise on strengthening social protection systems. The mission also included field visits to three municipalities to assess local implementation needs. This mission will help design inclusive social protection systems in Timor-Leste, within the South-South Cooperation and g7+ and fragile country contexts.

- With the support of WFP, Timor-Leste played a key role in the 2025 Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in Paris, reinforcing global efforts to combat malnutrition through social protection and health systems. As co-chair of the Global Task Force on Social Protection for Nutrition (GTF) alongside Chile, Vice Prime Minister Mariano Assanami Sabino represented Timor-Leste in the opening plenary and at a thematic session with leaders from Ethiopia, Laos, and Egypt, where discussions focused on governance, investment, and programme expansion.

Timor-Leste's commitment was further strengthened through strategic bilateral meetings with France, as a donor to the GTF and contributor to Timor-Leste's nutrition-sensitive social protection project.

The Vice Prime-Minister also met with Japan, as an opportunity to advocate for and highlight linkages between the GTF and Japan's development support priorities. The Summit built momentum for the Second World Summit for Social Development in November 2025.

Country Strategic Plan 2026-2030

- WFP and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) presented their new country programmes to government partners, marking a significant step in aligning with Timor-Leste's priorities and strategies for the next phase of development cooperation. This high-level consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs brought together key stakeholders to gather insights, recommendations, and feedback, ensuring that WFP and UNDP's strategies align with Timor-Leste's development aspirations, national priorities, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Similarly, WFP held a session with development partners to present its Country Strategic Plan for 2026–2030. This engagement strengthened collaboration and joint efforts to address critical challenges, including poverty reduction, food security, and social inclusion.

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