



Timor-Leste

COUNTRY BRIEF
MAY 2026



106,588 people targeted through the EU-funded project *Strengthening Social Inclusion and Nutrition in Timor-Leste*



106,063 Schoolchildren and Children Under Five



525 Farmers



USD 0.3M (May – OCT 2026) net funding requirements

KEY HIGHLIGHT

- The Government of Timor-Leste, with support from WFP, launched a data-driven initiative using machine learning and a national registry to strengthen social protection and improve maternal and child nutrition.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- Timor-Leste, a least-developed small island state of 1.3 million people, has made notable progress in reconstruction, human rights, and development since independence in 2002, yet it still faces major nutrition and food security challenges, exacerbated by natural hazards.
- Stunting among children under five remains among the world's highest. The 2024 IPC analysis shows 27 percent of households are acutely food-insecure, while the 2023 cost-of-diet study found that 75 percent cannot afford a nutritious diet, with food prices up 78 percent since 2019. Low agricultural productivity, poor maternal and child nutrition practices, high poverty rates, limited safety nets, and frequent climatic shocks further weaken food systems and household resilience.
- WFP's country strategic plan (CSP 2026-2030) 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 by strengthening existing social protection programmes (Bolsa da Mãe Kondisionál, Merenda Eskolár), the food value chain, supply chain management, and emergency shock preparedness and response.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

School-Based Assistance

- On 4 March, WFP, UNICEF and ILO held the first Project Management Team (PMT) meeting for the EU-funded project, bringing together representatives from the Government, local authorities, civil society organizations and the European Union. During the meeting, partners agreed on the team’s working arrangements, including its roles and governance structure, to strengthen coordination among all stakeholders. The PMT Terms of reference (TOR) was discussed, adjusted and formally endorsed by the team. The meeting also provided a platform to discuss and endorse the 2026 work plan, which will guide project activities over the coming year.
- The “*Strengthening Social Inclusion and Nutrition in Timor-Leste*” project aims to reduce malnutrition and promote social inclusion among pregnant and breastfeeding women, children under five, and school-aged children. A key component is the integration of Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF), which strengthens linkages between schools and local farmers. By sourcing food directly from farmer groups and cooperatives, the project not only improves the nutritional quality of school meals but also enhances livelihoods and supports local value chains.

Social Protection

- WFP is supporting the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) in the design and implementation of the Bolsa da Mãe Kondisional ba Saúde Nutrisaun Inan no Oan (SANUTRIO) programme and the establishment of Timor-Leste’s first national social registry, the Rejistu Sosial Uniku (RSU). The RSU, through a census in the three selected municipalities of Covalima Ermera, and Oecusse, will generate comprehensive socio-economic and vulnerability data to strengthen evidence-based policymaking and improve targeting of social protection programmes, particularly the SANUTRIO programme which is scheduled for launch in June 2026.
- During March and April 2026, WFP supported the MSSI and the National Institute of Statistics of Timor-Leste (INETL) to strengthen operational readiness for the rollout of the RSU. This included recruiting and training enumerators, alongside the

development and testing of digital data collection and analysis systems to enable large-scale census implementation. This work builds on key technical foundations established in March, including the finalization of the social registry questionnaire, the proxy means testing (PMT) analysis, and the integration of climate risk data within the national Poverty and Vulnerability Framework. The implementation of the RSU is supported by formal agreements between MSSI, INETL and WFP, ensuring clear governance, data-sharing protocols, and coordinated execution.

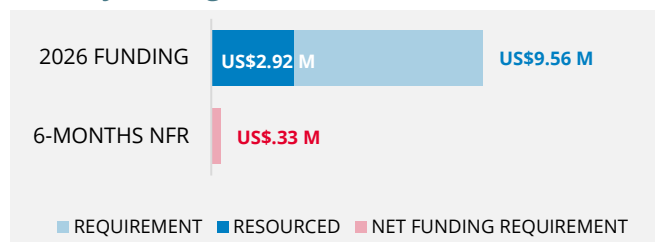
- To prepare for SANUTRIO’s launch in June, WFP worked with MSSI and the Ministry of Health in March and April to plan and develop implementation training. The training will be delivered across the three municipalities in May and June 2026 and will reach more than 120 local government staff and programme implementers.



Enumerator training, Covalima municipality. ©WFP/Fat Baptista

FUNDING OVERVIEW

Country Strategic Plan (2026-2030)



Donors

Asian Development Bank (ADB), Agence Française de Développement (AFD), China Aid, European Union, Government of France, Government of Ireland, Government of Japan, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Nordic Development Fund (NDF), Government of Timor-Leste, UK International Development.

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