



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Mauritania

Country Brief

December 2019



In Numbers

1,450 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 0.47 m cash-based transfers made

US\$ 7.6 m six months (January – June 2020) net funding requirements

129,274 people assisted in December 2019



Operational Updates

- Following the end of the lean season response, food security and nutrition partners in Mauritania held a lessons-learned exercise to improve the implementation of the 2020 integrated emergency response. Representatives of the Government (Adviser to the Prime Minister's Office, Ministries of Health, National Education and Rural Development and the National Commission for Food Security – CSA), financial partners and international and national NGOs took part in the workshop. The CSA presented its vision for the coordination and implementation of the 2020 response plan to be carried out under the Response Preparation and Coordination Mechanism, expected to be put in place in the course of 2020. Moreover, the outline of the 2020 national response plan including a time chart of activities, was prepared and validated by the workshop participants.
- Due to funding shortfalls, WFP has been forced to suspend the emergency school feeding programme in Mbera camp during the 2019-2020 school year, hampering the implementation of the self-reliance strategy for Malian refugees. School feeding acts as a solid incentive, especially in emergency context, to combat school dropout, enhance educational outcomes and minimize associated protection risks for out-of-school children, including worst forms of child labour and early marriage. And while it is too early to draw conclusions, a drop in the enrolment rates by as much as 10 percent has so far been observed when comparing the 2019/2020 and the 2018/2019 school years. WFP is striving to continue fundraising for this major humanitarian priority in the camp.
- WFP continues implementing the recommendations of the integrated livelihood strategy for Bassikounou, providing assistance to refugees on the basis of vulnerability rather than status alone. In December 2019, WFP conducted a post-distribution monitoring survey to measure the impact of this new strategy on food security of refugees. Results show that the acceptable food consumption score for deactivated households (the most secure ones) is higher than for households in other groups and food insecurity affects less deactivated households (25 percent), than households receiving just the cash portion of the ration (group 4 -31 percent) or the full ration (groups 1, 2 and 3 - 33 percent).

Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel, with a population of 4.7 million, living over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km² territory. Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting reproductive capacity and resilience of populations. High levels of food insecurity are still recorded, particularly in the eastern and southern regions. The most recent drought in 2017 sparked acute pasture and water shortages, raised food costs and caused livestock prices to plummet, adding further stress to already impoverished households and food insecure vulnerable people. A total of 10,000 pregnant and lactating women and 128,000 children (of whom almost 41,000 suffering from moderate acute malnutrition) need nutritional assistance. Overall, 23 departments were identified as the most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition in 2019.

WFP operations are currently focused on development interventions to improve food security, reduce malnutrition, enhance education achievements, minimise gender inequalities, strengthen institutional capacity, and help communities adapt to climate change and reduce exposure to natural shock. Mauritania hosts the second largest number of Malian refugees in the Sahel, with close to 57,000 refugees registered in Mbera camp.

WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: 4.7 million

2018 Human Development Index: 161 out of 189

Income Level: Lower middle

Chronic malnutrition: 19.6% of children between 6-59 months

Contact info: Maria Ludovica Carucci (marialudovica.carucci@wfp.org)

Country Director: Nacer Benalleg

Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/mauritania

Main photo

Credit: WF/Francesc Galban

Caption: Children eating nutrition food in Mbera camp

• Following confirmation of the pay-out from the African Risk Capacity's (ARC) Replica Coverage programme which provides index insurance against droughts to African Union member states, the CSA validated WFP's 2020 implementation plan submitted in October. The pay-out is expected to finance the provision of cash-based transfers in Tagant between March and May in 2020 (pre lean-season).

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

2019 Total Requirements (in USD)	2019 Allocated Contributions (in Dec. 2019) (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
35.8 m	3.5 m	7.6 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide food/cash assistance (conditional and/or unconditional), school meals, and preventive nutrition ration and MAM treatment to refugees

Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Food-insecure populations, including school-age children, have access to adequate and nutritious food all year.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide seasonal food assistance to food-insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment
- Provide school meals to vulnerable Mauritanian children

Strategic Result 3: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant and lactating women and girls, have improved nutritional status all year.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- MAM treatment and cash transfers to pregnant and lactating women and girls attending pre/post-natal care

Strategic Result 4: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

Strategic Outcome 4: Food-insecure populations and communities exposed to climate shocks have more resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems all year.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide livelihood support to food-insecure and at-risk Mauritanian households, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets

Strategic Result 5: Country strategic capacities

Strategic Outcome 5: National institutions have strengthened capacities to manage food security, nutrition and social protection policies and programmes, including an adaptive (shock responsive) social protection system, by 2030.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide training and technical support to government institutions

Strategic Result 6: Global partnership support

Strategic Outcome 6: Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services that permit them to reach and operate in targeted areas all year.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide flight services to humanitarian partners, towards humanitarian interventions

- In **Mbera camp**, general food distributions through in-kind and/or cash transfers took place from 16 to 20 December, reaching 52,878 individuals (55 percent women), representing 97 percent of the target. The daily hybrid food basket per person was composed of 250 grams (g) of rice, 25 g of oil and 5 g of salt and a reduced cash component of USD 8 (per month). Some 6,000 people belonging to group 4 only received the cash portion (withdrawal of the food portion in line with the vulnerability-based targeting strategy). Activities for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition were conducted, reaching 514 children aged 6 to 59 months (44 percent girls) with lipid-based nutrient supplements. A total of 102 children were newly admitted, 201 were healed and discharged, while 320 remained in the programme.

- In the framework of **food assistance for asset (FFA)** creation activities, a total of 26,475 beneficiaries received food assistance to cover their immediate food needs, while they continue to build or boost assets. WFP and cooperating partners finalized the operational plans highlighting activities and priorities for 2020. All operational plans were developed in collaboration with communities through community-based participatory planning exercises. The CSA, together with WFP experts, conducted field visits in Guidimakha, Assaba et Hod el Charghi to assess the implementation progress and respective outcomes.

- Thanks to the **school feeding programme**, 48,519 Mauritanian children in 324 schools received a morning snack and a hot lunch. As part of the integrated resilience strategy in the Sahel, this year, the school feeding programme is implemented in the same villages where WFP is carrying out FFA activities.

- The **United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** transported 128 passengers and 364 kg cargo in December, connecting Nouakchott-Nema-Kiffa, through over 21 in-country rotations.

Monitoring

- Price analysis collected in several markets around Mbera camp show stable cereals' and livestock prices and availability of basic food products.

Challenges

- USD 7.6 million are urgently needed for WFP's operations in Mauritania for the next six months, representing 44 percent of the period requirements (USD 17 million) under the approved Country Strategic Plan.

- WFP and the United Nations Resident Coordinator continue to liaise with the Government for access to UNHAS services in Kaédi, Aïoun and Sélibaby. Lack of authorization to operate in these locations is affecting the humanitarian operations, restricting access to many vulnerable families and communities.

- Since 18 September, due to the deteriorated condition of the airstrip, air operations from Bassikounou are suspended until the airstrip is rehabilitated. WFP is seeking USD 740,000 to carry out the necessary rehabilitation works and continue providing reliable air transport services to Hodh El Charghi region for the humanitarian community.

Donors

Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Monaco, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, UN Other Funds and Agencies, United Kingdom and USA