



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Sao Tome and Principe Country Brief March-June 2021



Operational Context

In 2019, the estimated gross domestic product per capita in São Tomé and Príncipe amounted to approximately USD 2,001. Recent World Bank estimates show that about one third of the population lives on less than USD 1.9 per day and more than two thirds of the population is poor (i.e. lives below the poverty line of USD 3.2 per day).

In the past decade, the country has made considerable progress in reducing child mortality and malnutrition, and in improving maternal health. However, in 2014, it was estimated that 17.2 percent of children aged 6-59 months were stunted, 8.8 percent were underweight, and 4 percent were suffering from wasting.

The 2020 Human Development Index ranking puts the country in the medium human development category, ranking 135 out of 189 countries and above the Sub-Saharan Africa average.

Heavily dependent on food imports, food availability is unpredictable: there is no deep-sea port, and, in bad weather, landing is difficult on the country's single short airstrip. In addition, no cereals are cultivated on the island. The country is prone to natural hazards such as floods and landslides, which negatively affect crop development and road access as well as destroy houses and household assets.

WFP assistance is focused on strengthening capacities of the Government to implement the national sustainable home-grown school feeding programme, which reaches over 50,000 schoolchildren (around 25 percent of total population) and facilitating smallholder farmers' access to markets. WFP has been present in Sao Tome and Principe since 1976.

Sao Tome and Principe recorded its first COVID-19 case on 6 April 2020 and cases continue to rise.



Population: 215,056

Income Level: Lower middle

In Numbers

USD 0.8 m six months (July–December 2021) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- In March, WFP participated in a discussion on national television in with key partners, namely the non-governmental organization (NGO) HELPO, the National School Feeding and Health Programme (PNASE) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (MAPDR) on school feeding based on traditional local products. During the two hours talk, the speakers were able to convey to the public the importance of food security and nutrition, as well as the benefits of investing in a diet based on local products. It was an activity allusive to the 1st of March, date on which the 6th anniversary of the African School Feeding Day was celebrated.
- To celebrate the International Women's Day on 8 March, WFP supported the drafting of a report highlighting women leaders who have empowered and created opportunities for other women through their daily work. Four women were featured, including a parliamentarian, a food processing worker, a school canteen staff and a farmer.
- In May, WFP received a substantial contribution to fund school feeding activities in the country, which had been suspended between end February (beginning March in other schools) and 17 March due to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The donation will help ensure that children most at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition receive the food they need during this difficult period. From July to September, during the vacation period, take-home rations and hygiene kits will be provided to 5,000 vulnerable children targeted with the Government And once schools reopen in September, on-site school meals will be provided again in four districts of Sao Tome and Principe Autonomous Region.
- WFP participated in the ceremony to launch the first territorial diagnosis on the existing family farming systems in São Tomé e Príncipe, to then propose public policies to support these farmers. The virtual opening ceremony was presided over by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, Francisco Ramos, assisted by WFP. National and international officials from the Ministry of Agriculture were also present. Emphasis will be placed on the drafting of recommendations for improving the São Tomé National School Feeding and Health Programme (PNASE), indicating which types of family farmers are most suitable for supplying food to school canteens.

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Main photo: Credit: WFP/Jorcilina Correia

Caption: Children having their school meals after the school reopening in April 2021

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2024)

2021 Total Requirement (in USD)	2021 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six Month (July-Dec) Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
1.6 m	1.04 m	0.8 m

*Six-month net funding requirements as of 14 July 2021.

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement SDGs

Strategic Outcome 1: The Government of Sao Tome and Principe has strengthened capacity to implement an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and smallholder-friendly home-grown school meals (HGSM) programme and related food security and nutrition policies and programmes nationwide by 2030.

Focus area: *Root Causes*

Activities:

- Provide capacity strengthening (including through SSC) to the Government in the design, management and coordination of an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive HGSM programme and related FS&N policies and programmes.
- Provide capacity strengthening and coordination support to the Government in providing incentives for sustainable and equitable local food value chains and stimulating smallholder agricultural markets.

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Crisis-affected populations including schoolchildren in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crisis.

Focus area: *Crisis Response*

Activities:

- Provide food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations through in-kind transfers

- On 16 June, WFP supported the Ministry of Education and the National School Feeding Programme (PNASE) to organize a recreational activity with children, to celebrate the International Day of the African Child, respecting COVID-19 preventive measures. WFP reinforced its commitment to support the PNASE during this event and was praised for the work done in the PNASE school gardens.
- In line with one of the recommendations of the Zero Hunger Strategic Review conducted in-country in 2018, WFP had supported a cost-benefit analysis of the PNASE, which was carried out in partnership with WFP's Centre of Excellence in Brazil. In June, WFP held a ceremony to disseminate the finalized report. The ceremony was attended by the Minister of Education, representatives from the Ministries of Finance, Health, Agriculture, Embassies, UN agencies and other partners.

Challenges

- Programme implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic continues to represent one of the major challenges in 2021. Some of the containment measures imposed by the Government, which affected the implementation of activities and WFP's capacity to organize in-person meetings with government counterparts, stakeholders and donors, have been eased but not completely lifted. Schools which were closed in February reopened in April, allowing the resumption of some school feeding activities.
- Although there are some funding opportunities in the pipeline, the funding environment is still challenging and continues to negatively affect the implementation of an innovative home-grown school feeding programme, based on smallholder farmers' food production.

Partnerships

- PNASE, the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSAN) and the National Centre for Supporting Smallholder Farmers (CADR) remain WFP's main partners in country.
- WFP partnered with UNICEF for the reopening of schools, local and international NGOs, namely HELPO and ADAPPA for the Multi-Partner Trust Fund-funded project, and the African Development Bank for the database and information management system for the Ministry of Agriculture.

Donors

Donors to WFP Sao Tome and Principe in 2021 include the UN COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund and the Global Partnership for Education Fund.