



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Timor-Leste Country Brief

May 2020



Participants at the launch day of the 2020 Timor-Leste Food Security and Nutrition Survey

Operational Context

Timor-Leste is one of the world's newest countries, being internationally recognized as an independent state in 2002. Poverty rates have dropped from 49.9 percent in 2007 to 41.8 percent in 2014 according to the World Bank.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Timor-Leste with the country confirming its first case on March 21, 2020. On March 28, the Government declared a 'State of Emergency' that will now last until June 26, 2020 to prevent the spread of the virus.

The Country Office is planning a contingency budget revision to add crisis response to the Country Strategy Plan (CS). The estimated budget value could be up to US\$16 million for approximately 700,000 targeted beneficiaries (GFD: 660,000 including 430,000 IPC level 3 and 4, and urban poor 230,000, TSFP: 48,128). Immediate priorities are to scale nutrition programmes under the existing CSP.

According to the IPC, the major contributing factors to food insecurity are low agricultural productivity, poor quality, and quantity of food consumption, and low-value livelihood strategies combined with a high dependency on single livelihoods.

WFP has been present in Timor-Leste since 1999. WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP 2018-2020) supports the attainment of the Government's vision and contributes to the National Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030.



Population: **1.3 million**

2018 Human Development Index: **132 out of 188**

Chronic malnutrition: **50% of children between 6-59 months**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

In Numbers

US\$ 0.60 m six months (June – November 2020) net funding requirements.

Operational Updates

- After the second 'State of Emergency' ended on 27 May, 2020, the Government extended it for another 30 days until 26 June 2020, mainly due to the increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19 in neighboring Indonesia, particularly in West Timor. Since 10 May 2020, there have been no new cases of COVID-19 identified in Timor-Leste.
- On behalf of humanitarian and health communities, WFP is launching WFP Aviation services on 14 June 2020 between Kuala Lumpur and Dili, to ensure that humanitarian workers, the UN, the broader humanitarian community, and medical personnel are not restricted by commercial transport airlines closures. In the absence of commercial flights, WFP will also rapidly provide access for common logistics services to UN agencies to transport medical supplies procured on behalf of the Government, ensuring that they reach the areas where they are most needed, in full compliance with COVID-19 protocols.
- The Ministry of Health launched the 2020 Timor-Leste Food Security and Nutrition Survey, with technical and financial support from WFP, UNICEF, and donors like the EU and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). This launch started with a refresher training for 64 enumerators from all 13 municipalities, after having been put on hold since March, due to COVID-19.
- WFP is continuing to track incoming shipments of food items from the private sector and monitoring the shipping schedule in coordination with the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ). In May, WFP recorded a monthly import of 21,000 mt of rice from Vietnam into Timor-Leste.
- To reduce COVID-19 economic impacts, local markets have reopened in several municipalities, except in Covalima and other areas close to the Indonesian border. This situation makes these municipalities more vulnerable to food insecurity. Currently, commercial vehicles are providing services but with restrictions in place to observe MOH COVID-19 protocols.
- For severe nutrition challenges – WFP continues to work with the Ministry of Health to scale up the existing targeted supplementary feeding programme, aimed at improving nutrient intake for children under 5, and pregnant & lactating women.
- WFP is collaborating with the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports and KOICA, on plans to deliver a nutritious take-home food basket (and/or back to school incentives) to students and their families affected by the school closure imposed by the COVID-19 crisis.

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Country Strategic Plan (2018-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
16.97 m	6.1 m	0.60 m

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 1: Children under five, adolescent girls and pregnant and breastfeeding women have improved nutrition towards national targets by 2025

Focus area: *Root Causes*

Activities:

1. Provide nutritious food and raise awareness through social and behaviour change communication for targeted individuals.
2. Provide the Government and partners with technical assistance and evidence for enhancing the efficiency of national programmes and safety nets.

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 2: National and subnational government institutions have increased capacity sustainably to deliver food-, nutrition- and supply chain related services by 2020.

Focus area: *Resilience*

Activities:

3. Provide the Government and partners with technical expertise for improved targeting, monitoring, and programme analysis.
4. Provide the Government and partners with technical expertise for the development of an efficient and effective supply chain management system.

Monitoring

- WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Directorate General Statistics, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), collected the 22nd week of price data for basic commodities from 35 retailers and 20 fuel stations across eight municipalities (Dili, Aileu, Baucau, Covalima, Ermera, Liquiça, Manatuto, and Oecusse).
 - It was found that during May, the prices of imported rice remained, on average, between US\$ 0.50/kg to 0.56/kg. The average price of local rice was found to be two to three times higher compared to imported rice.
 - The data indicated a stable pattern among the eight municipalities for cooking oil, eggs, sugar, and salt. However, some municipalities reported negative impacts of movement restrictions from the State of Emergency and recent heavy rainfall in certain areas.
 - Diesel and Gasoline stayed within the US \$ 1-1.5/ltr range.
- WFP will continue to support the Government to carry out registration of household heads for the COVID-19 household cash payment to beneficiaries.

Challenges

- The COVID-19 pandemic and the State of Emergency continues to disrupt the Country Strategy Plan 2018-2020 activities. Hence, WFP is adjusting its programme implementation based on needs, in line with other UN agencies and the Government's COVID-19 Response Plan.

Current Priority Areas

Priority Under Activity 1: Nutrition and Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC)

Interventions:

1. WFP conducted training for enumerators for the 2020 Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey (TLFNS) for four consecutive days for a total of 64 participants from different municipalities. The enumerators were trained on data collection techniques as well as on how to use online applications for the survey.
2. On the COVID-19 response, WFP continues to support the Government to establish and launch physical social distancing measures in Dili municipality markets.
3. WFP continues to provide technical support to the Ministry of Health with increased focus on Pillar 2 during the COVID-19 response (Risk Communication and Community Engagement).

Priority Under Activity 2: Nutrition Policy through Filling Data Gaps

Interventions:

1. For the celebration of 'World Food Safety Day 2020' at the National Level, WFP participated in a joint planning session with WHO, FAO, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and AIFAESA to prepare advocacy tasks (TV and radio talk shows).
2. WFP supported market price monitoring in eight municipalities by providing online training to the field officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries on how to use the weighing scales during data collection.
3. Participated in a joint planning session with the Department of Food Security at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) on the dissemination of the 2019 Fill the Nutrient Gap final findings.

Priority Under Activity 3: Strengthening Nutrition-related Social Safety Nets

Interventions:

1. WFP is developing a Concept Note seeking the allocation of South-South opportunity funds to support two schools in Metinaro to improve the kitchen facilities and other related items including materials for the establishment of hand-washing stations (mainly non-food items) for the school feeding programme.
2. The National Directorate for School Social Action and Education of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports requests WFP's support in the finalization of the school feeding manual.

Priority Under Activity 4: Assuring an Effective Emergency Response and Logistic Network in Timor-Leste

Interventions:

1. On 14 May 2020, WFP donated two motorbikes, one vehicle, and ten units of laptops to the National Logistics Centre to support and strengthen their supply chain system.
2. On 15 May 2020, WFP formally handed over one mobile storage unit to [SAMES Timor-Leste](#), the logistics arm of the Ministry of Health to store the new arrivals of medical supplies and personal protective equipment for the COVID-19 response.
3. The installation of prefabricated office buildings: two units at the Ministry of Health, and one unit in Tibar for the COVID-19 response is in progress and expected to be completed by early June 2020.
4. As a part of capacity strengthening, WFP is working in partnership with the Government of Timor-Leste to provide technical assistance on food storage, delivery, and distribution of the government planned 30,000 metric tons food assistance programme.

Donors

Government of Timor-Leste, Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), SRAC/Multilateral Contributions, China and Japan