



WFP DPR Korea Country Brief December 2021

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



DAYS OF ACTIVISM
AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



In Numbers

WFP's interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) needs in 2022: \$21 million

566,886 people assisted from January to March 2021 (the last food distribution)

891.5 mt of fortified food and **4,970 mt** of raw food commodities distributed from January to March 2021

Operational Context

Since 1995, WFP has been providing food assistance to vulnerable women and children in DPR Korea, and working to build resilience of communities to climate-related risks.

DPR Korea usually produces a quantity and range of foods insufficient to ensure adequate energy intake and dietary diversity. Despite government efforts to mitigate the food deficit, including through the Public Distribution System, these deficiencies result in chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, and translate into high rates of undernourishment, stunting and anaemia, requiring the support of the international partners.

These challenges are compounded by the increase in climate-related disasters. According to INFORM Global Risk Index 2021, the DPR Korea ranked 29th among 191 countries and was placed in high-risk category. The effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic, such as borders closure, restricted mobility and periodic closure of public and child institutions have reportedly also affected food security and nutrition situation in the DPR Korea.

According to the latest data 5.5 million mt of crops were harvested in September/ October 2020. This is lower than average. There is an uncovered food gap estimated at about 860,000 mt.



Population: **25.4 million**¹

Life expectancy: **73 years**³

Income Level: **Low-income country**²

Prevalence of stunting: **18.2 % of children under 5 years of age**⁴

Situation Update

- The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPR Korea) was among the first countries to introduce measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Since the beginning of 2020 the borders have been fully closed, travel abroad banned and the mobility in-country severely restricted.
- Additionally, public institutions, including schools, kindergartens, nurseries were fully closed for several months.
- By the end of November 2021, the Government of the DPR Korea has not confirmed any cases of COVID-19.
- WFP Country Director left Pyongyang in March 2021. He was the last UN international personnel in country. Since then, there has been no UN international staff present in the DPR Korea.
- The foreign diplomatic presence in Pyongyang has shrunk significantly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of today, just a few countries maintain their embassies open in the DPR Korea.

Operational Updates

- After the introduction of COVID-19 preventive measures, WFP continued operations using remaining in-country food stocks. The last distribution took place in March 2021 when all food stocks were exhausted.
- Since August 2021, very few relief items were permitted to enter the country, after quarantine of more than three months followed by disinfection procedures.
- WFP's Interim DPRK Country Strategic Plan (2019-2021) has been extended to the end of 2022. The UN Strategic Framework 2019-2022 has been extended until the end of 2023.
- WFP has been developing scenarios to be ready to immediately return international staff and resume the food assistance as soon as the borders reopen. Meanwhile, WFP's national team continues working in Pyongyang.

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WFP Country Strategy

Interim Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Total needs in 2022 (in USD)
182 m	21 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Children under 7, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and tuberculosis patients in targeted counties have stabilized or improved nutrition, particularly micronutrient status, by 2025.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide nutrition assistance to children under 7, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PLWG) and TB patients, and strengthen the capacity of local food processors

Strategic Outcome 2: People vulnerable to disasters and food insecurity in targeted counties are able to meet their food and nutrition needs during and after shocks and stresses by 2021.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide conditional gender-responsive resilience-building support for disaster-prone communities in WFP-targeted areas.

Strategic Outcome 3: Crisis-affected people have access to food all year.

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:

- Provide emergency in-kind food assistance to crisis-affected people in the event of humanitarian crises.

Monitoring

- Since the COVID-19 pandemic prevention measures restricted mobility within the country, WFP applied tele-monitoring modalities, such as phone calls, photo and video reports. Following the last food distributions conducted by WFP in March 2021 the tele-monitoring activities have been suspended. In cooperation with FAO, WFP continues its regular analyses based on remote sensing and satellite imagery to monitor agricultural production and climate patterns.

Challenges

- Without international staff on the ground, there is limited information with which to assess the food security situation in the DPR Korea. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic and prevention measures added to climate events may have caused the nutrition and food security situation in the country to deteriorate.
- The closure of borders for food and people and restricted mobility within the country remain the key challenges. There is currently no clear timeframe for reopening the border.
- Key partners continue their engagement with WFP's activities, however, due to the prolonged COVID-19 measures and impossibility to access the country donor support may wane.

- The UN Security Council sanctions on financial transactions have an unintended impact on WFP's operations. The absence of bank channels compounded by travel restrictions hindered access to cash; WFP has therefore postponed all non-essential payments in-country.

Partnerships

- DPR Korea's Government is the main cooperating partner for implementation. The National Coordinating Committee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NCC) provides human resources, assets (such as factories for food transformation, warehouses and office space) and services (transportation from port to the factories and food distributions to WFP-supported institutions). Estimated host-government support in the form of logistics and technical assistance amounts to USD 6-7 million per year.
- The UN country team is currently working remotely outside the DPR Korea. The 2021 Humanitarian Plan of DPR Korea, featuring the UN and international cooperation, has a financial requirement of USD 76 million, of which WFP's share accounts for USD 25 million (33 percent).

Donors

Canada, India, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, and the private sector.

¹ DPRK Population Census 2019.

² OECD DAC list of ODA recipient 2021 flows.

³ UNFPA, 2021

⁴ The State of Food Security in the World (SOFI 2021)