



## WFP India Country Brief

### WFP Assistance

Country Strategic Plan (2015-2018)	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)
	25.5 m	8 m (31.4%)

WFP's work in India has evolved with the economic growth and changing needs of the country. India's self-sufficiency in cereal production and large food-based safety nets that provide food security has allowed WFP to transition from food distribution to provision of technical assistance, policy and advocacy support. The shift in focus was supported by WFP's food security analysis and recommendations from a 2011 mid-term evaluation. Food delivery was phased out in 2012, and a new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2015-18 was signed between the Government of India and WFP.

Through this CSP, WFP supports the Government's largest food-based safety nets—(i) the **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**, which assists 67 percent of the Indian population (800 million people); (ii) the **Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDMS)**, which reaches out to about 120 million children from 6 to 14 years of age across the country; and (iii) the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**, which assists pregnant and nursing women and children below 6 years of age. The three schemes are covered under a progressive umbrella legislation—the National Food Security Act (NFSA)—which makes food a legal entitlement and gives support to all needy and vulnerable citizens through the life-cycle.

Although the Government has been implementing the food-based safety nets for more than two decades, the nutritional status of children and women has been perpetually poor. The main issues highlighted by various evaluations of these schemes included inefficient service delivery with large inclusion-exclusion errors, diversion of food grains and nutritional inadequacy. These issues represent challenges to achieving the zero hunger goal for India despite the scale and design of these schemes. WFP supports the Government's efforts towards sustainable impact on

## Highlights

- WFP India Country Office has concluded the mid-term review (MTR) of its work in India under Country Strategic Plan 2015-18. The MTR has appreciated the transition of the CO to non-food technical assistance and provided recommendations on way forward.
- WFP is working on development of a national roadmap for achieving SDG-2 in collaboration with research agencies- Research and Information Systems in Developing Countries (RIS) and Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and led by the National Institute for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, Government of India (GoI).
- Collaboration of the Rome Based Agencies (RBA) to demonstrate a model through establish mechanisms to achieve a malnutrition free status, in the state of Odisha was conceptually agreed by the state government.

food and nutrition security by covering various vulnerabilities such as poor, women, children and adolescents, through the following interventions:

**Improve the efficiency of safety nets:** WFP supports improving the efficiency of service delivery through technological solutions and evidence-based research. WFP collaborates with the states of Odisha and Kerala to scale up reforms, building on the experiences of an earlier pilot and a country-wide study undertaken to develop "Best Practice Solutions" for improved efficiency. Through these initiatives, WFP is indirectly reaching 67.3 million people assisted by the NFSA in both states.

**Improve nutritional value of food under the safety nets:** WFP advocates for the enhancement of the nutritional content of the food basket of the safety net schemes through fortification and diet diversification. WFP supports various pilot initiatives to demonstrate operational models that can deliver impact at scale in the government feeding programme. These projects are being implemented in both Kerala and Odisha with potential for state-wide scale-up while policy advocacy is conducted at the national level with relevant government stakeholders.

**Improve systems for food security analysis and monitoring:** WFP is partnering with government to strengthen statistical and analytical systems for monitoring the food and nutrition security situation. Collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation at the national level and with the Department of Planning and Convergence in Odisha will facilitate the institutionalisation of such analysis and its use for decision-making.

**Contribute to knowledge sharing within and outside India through establishing a Centre of Excellence (CENEX):** Following the signing of a letter of intent to establish a Centre in India, and a subsequent visit to the Brazil Centre of Excellence by a high level government delegation, a proposal for establishing a CENEX in India was drawn up and submitted. This is currently being reviewed with a stronger South-South collaboration lens.

## Operational Updates

- WFP is collaborating with the Government of Odisha to fortify school meals with multiple micronutrients, reaching to 129,485 school children aged 6-14 years daily through the Government's school feeding programme. So far, 1184.1mt of fortified rice and 7.71mt of micronutrient powder have been distributed to schools in Dhenkanal district. As an important achievement, scale-up of rice fortification to 14 tribal districts through state resources has been agreed.
- In Kerala state, WFP is focusing on reducing micronutrient malnutrition in children below 3 years of age by ensuring fortification of take-home rations (THR) provided through the ICDS scheme. As of September 2017, 98.4mt of fortified THR has been produced and distributed to 3,052 children. WFP will also conduct media campaigns to increase awareness on fortified foods and appropriate complementary feeding.
- A pre-pilot mission in collaboration with Department of Food and Public Distribution for the introduction of Direct Benefit Transfers in TPDS in the state of Jharkhand was completed. Based on the mission learnings, a project proposal was prepared and submitted to the Government for potential implementation.
- A mid-term review of WFP's work in India was conducted through independent experts. The preliminary findings were shared with the national government. The review recognised the quick transition and mentioned that WFP's work under the current CSP is on track. The recommendations will provide guidance for WFP's work going forward.
- WFP, in partnership with the Rome Based Agencies (RBAs) and state government of Odisha, plans to implement a comprehensive pilot to address all aspects of food and nutrition security in one district to subsequently upscale across the state. A meeting between the state government and the RBAs was positive and added impetus to work towards the development of a project plan.
- WFP is working in consultation with the Government and the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) for the development of a national roadmap for SDG-2. Formal engagement with two research agencies—Research and Information Systems in Developing Countries (RIS) and Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI)—is complete and inception meetings were organized to kick-start the work.

## Challenges

- High reliance on the Government, especially as WFP provides technical assistance for sustainable capacity building, has its pros and cons. Changes in government staff, complex bureaucracy and long clearance procedures at times have a negative bearing on timelines.
- The challenging funding environment also poses difficulties for the achievement of the strategic objectives laid out within the CSP. Most bilateral donors have been asked by the Government to conclude their programmes. Thus, with limited funding from traditional donors, funding for the CSP has to be sourced from the Government of India and the Indian private sector.

## Country Background & Strategy



With 17.3 percent of the world's population and 23.4 percent of world's undernourished population, India bears a huge burden of global food insecurity. Though there are some recent improvements in the nutritional status of children, the rates are well above acceptable levels. Micronutrient deficiencies are very high (anaemia among women - 55.3 percent). The sex ratio is declining (940 females per 1000 males) and expected years of schooling among females is less than that for males. India ranks 97 (out of 118 countries) on the 2016 Global Hunger Index. Recent economic growth, food grain production of 264.8 million MT and the existence of three large food safety nets to cover the entire vulnerable population of the country allows WFP to play a catalytic role.

The CSP 2015-18 is aimed at providing technical assistance for improved efficiency and nutritional effectiveness of the Government's food-based safety nets to contribute to impact at scale. WFP's activities are aligned with government priorities laid down by the National Food Security Act (NFSA 2013) and Sustainable Development Goals 2 & 17 (2015-30).

WFP has been present in India since 1963.

Population: **1.25 billion**

2016 Global Hunger Index: **97 out of 118 countries**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **38.7% of children under 5 years of age**

## Donors

Government of India, Yum! TECK and Sodexo

**Contact info:** Hameed Nuru ([hameed.nuru@wfp.org](mailto:hameed.nuru@wfp.org))

**Country Director:** Dr Hameed Nuru

Further information: [www.wfp.org/countries/india](http://www.wfp.org/countries/india)