



WFP India Country Brief

WFP Assistance

Country Strategic Plan (2015-2018)	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)
	25.5 m	7.00 m (27.4%)

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 which provide food security, has allowed WFP to transition from food distribution to providing 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) **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)** which assists 67 percent of the Indian population (800 million people), (ii) **Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDMS)** – reaching out to about 120 million children in the age group of 6 to 14 years across the country; and (iii) the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**, assisting 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) – that 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

Main Photo

Credit: WFP/Jan Delbaere
Caption: WFP is supporting the Government in its school feeding programme in Gajapati, Odisha.

Highlights

- The National Institute for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), the institution responsible for spearheading the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India, is organising a consultation for making the SDG-2 agenda a part of India's National Development Goals. WFP is partnering for the consultation with other UN agencies.
- WFP India has commissioned a mid-term review of its work in India. The team is recruited and work has started in March 2017. The recommendations of review are expected to be available by the first week of June.
- WFP's support to Targeted Public Distribution System in India is very well received and many of WFP's recommendations are used for state level implementation.

Government's efforts towards sustainable impact on the food and nutrition security by covering various vulnerabilities such as poor/extremely 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 a "Best Practice Solution" 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.

Improve systems for food security analysis and monitoring: WFP is partnering with state and national governments to strengthen their 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): A Letter of Intent has been signed to initiate the process of establishment of a CENEX. A high-level steering committee consisting of secretaries and key working groups has been constituted to take it forward. It is currently awaiting cabinet approval.

Operational Updates

- A mid-term review of WFP's work in India was initiated with a team of external consultants. Following the inception briefing, field visits are currently ongoing with extensive interactions with state and national level stakeholders. The recommendations of the review are expected by the first week of June 2017.
- WFP in collaboration with the Government of Odisha is fortifying school meals with multiple micronutrients reaching 200,000 school children aged 6-14 years through the Mid-Day Meal Scheme daily. So far, 423.72 mt of fortified rice and 3.35 mt of micronutrient powder (MNP) have been distributed to schools in the project district Dhenkanal. The project succeeds the Gajapati rice fortification project which was handed over and is fully run by the state government since 2016.
- In Kerala, WFP is focusing on reducing micronutrient malnutrition among children below 3 years of age by ensuring fortification of take-home rations (THR) provided through the government scheme. So far, 31.7 mt of fortified blended foods have been produced and distributed to the beneficiaries as per the plan.
- An agreement was signed with the Government of Odisha to institutionalise food security analysis and vulnerability mapping in the context of the Zero Hunger Challenge and Sustainable Development Goal-2 (SDG-2). Collation and analysis of data is ongoing.
- To improve the efficiency of TPDS, WFP has been providing support at the national and state level. A concept note on the Public Distribution Network was shared with the Department of Food and Public Distribution. This network would enable beneficiaries to purchase food allocations from any state across India using the ration card, irrespective of the issuing state. Guidelines for direct benefit transfers were also shared with the Government. A supply chain assessment mission is planned in April 2017.
- NITI Aayog, the government agency leading the SDGs in India, is organising a consultation on SDG-2. WFP is partnering with other UN agencies to provide technical support.

Challenges

- High reliance on the Government, especially for technical assistance as capacity is being built for sustainability, 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 in 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. WFP's support has immense potential to contribute to reducing food and nutrition insecurity in India; however, a limited budget is a challenge.

Country Background & Strategy



With 17.3 percent of the world's population and 24.5 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). 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 the government priorities laid down by the National Food Security Act (NFSA 2013) and the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (2015-30).

WFP has been present in India since 1963.

Population: **1.25 billion**

2015 Human Development Index:
130 out of 188

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

Donors

Government of India, Yum!, TECK and Sodexo

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