

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES



WFP Iraq Country Brief

December 2021

In Numbers



272,634 people assisted
in December 2021



US\$3.4 million distributed through cash-based transfers

US\$32.6 million six months net funding requirements (January – June 2022)

Operational Context

In Iraq, intermittent conflict and impact of climate change continues to affect the lives of people of Iraq. Alongside the return of families from camps, that continues since 2018, the situation and needs of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees remain precarious. WFP Iraq's assistance focuses on saving lives, changing lives: supporting the Government of Iraq's social protection work towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger. The challenges of rebuilding infrastructure, providing basic services, promoting social cohesion, creating jobs, developing skills, opportunities for youth and working towards gender equality whilst maintaining security have impeded the country's efforts to make progress on the SDGs.

WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2020-2024 in Iraq has an all-encompassing goal of supporting the Government of Iraq to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, shifting WFP's role from implementing to enabling and capacity strengthening. This is critical in transitioning from crisis response to resilience building, and for longer-term peace and development. Mainstreaming gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive programming is also key.

The first case of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 was recorded in Iraq in February 2020. Given the ongoing cases reported by the Ministry of Health, WFP and its partners continue to take additional measures to safeguard the health and wellbeing of people assisted. Supporting vulnerable families is even more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has negatively impacted upon people's food security.



Population: **41.2 million**
(UNFPA 2021)

Poverty rate: 24.8% (Ministry of Planning, World Bank, 2021)

2020 Human Development Index:
123 of 189 (lowest)

1.2 million IDPs (IOM)
254,561 Syrian refugees in Iraq (UNHCR)

Operational Updates

- In December, WFP provided cash and food assistance to 186,200 internally displaced persons (IDPs), 68,728 refugees, and 17,706 people from vulnerable communities through resilience building initiatives. The number of new daily COVID-19 cases has risen exponentially from 1,355 cases at the beginning of December to 11,679 cases by the end of the month. This drastic increase can be attributed to the spread of the highly transmittable 'Omicron' variant of COVID-19.
- Heavy rains in Iraq's northern Erbil governorate caused extensive flooding that damaged property and caused at least 11 fatalities. The floods also damaged tents and living quarters at Qushtapa refugee camp in the governorate. WFP provided Immediate Response Rations to 235 affected families in the refugee camp who lost their food, clothing, and shelters.
- WFP continues to run resilience-building activities across the country. WFP is improving livelihoods for vulnerable families in the north and south assisting IDPs and host communities in Ninewa and advocating for initiatives that support climate change adaptation in Basra. WFP is planning asset creation, rehabilitation and capacity strengthening activities that will benefit 130,000 people. This will contribute towards building the resilience of 12,162 smallholder farmers and their families in southern Iraq. The current cycle of WFP's Urban Livelihood initiatives in Basra, Thi-Qar and Maysan is ending, having supported nearly 3,000 unemployed people and their families to create sustainable incomes and small businesses. The activities include support through cash assistance, vocational training and asset provision. The project aims to improve the livelihood of vulnerable families with a particular focus on female-headed households, which form nearly 50% of the participants. Several funding proposals have been submitted to donors and WFP Iraq is awaiting donor feedback.
- Under the School Feeding Programme with the Government of Iraq, WFP signed a bilateral agreement addendum to support the implementation of school feeding activities in the country until the end of May. The programme is funded entirely by the government, and WFP has been actively advocating in support of the Ministry of Education (MoE) towards further government funding to ensure the continuous implementation of the programme beyond the current school year.

Photo Caption: When heavy flooding struck Erbil in December, WFP quickly responded with ready-to-eat food packages (immediate response rations, IRRs). At the flood-damaged Qushtapa refugee camp in Erbil, hundreds of families in need were supported.

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Country Strategic Plan (CSP, 1 January 2020–31 December 2024)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions 2020-2024 (in USD)
522 m	230 m
Total Requirements for 2022*	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (January 2022 – June 2022)
141.1 m	32.6 m

*WFP Iraq is in the process of preparing a Budget Revision. Pre BR total needs for 2022 stand at USD 77 million.

Strategic Result 1: Access to food (SDG Target 2.1)

Strategic Outcome 1 (SO 1): Crisis-affected people in Iraq, including IDPs and refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises throughout the year

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:

- Provide unconditional food assistance to IDPs, refugees and other crisis-affected people.

Strategic Result 4: Sustainable food systems (SDG Target 2.4)

Strategic Outcome 2 (SO 2): Targeted communities, including farmers, have enhanced livelihoods and increased resilience to shocks by 2024

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide livelihood support, asset creation and climate adaptation activities, including capacity strengthening, to targeted farmers and communities.

Strategic Result 5: Capacity strengthening (SDG Target 17.9)

Strategic Outcome 3 (SO 3): National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacities and systems for targeting and assisting food-insecure vulnerable people by 2024

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Provide institutional capacity strengthening to government officials and partners.
- Provide support to government officials and partners in enhancing information technology for managing PDS modernization and in strengthening the safety net component of the government social protection system.

• WFP's regional Nutrition expert led a two-day workshop on Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC), attended by the deputy Minister of Education. The WFP Iraq nutrition case study was presented to stakeholders and will be incorporated into the government's national SBCC strategy (currently being drafted).

• As part of the joint Social Protection Programme with the government and partners, WFP is proceeding with creation and distribution of 69,000 new electronic Public Distribution System ('ePDS') smart cards. These will be utilized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) to support vulnerable Iraqis under the Ministry's social safety nets. The creation of cards will be concluded in January 2022.

• WFP initiated discussions with stakeholders on the 'Single Registry' project, whereby a unified common list of families eligible for social protection programmes will be developed. WFP along with UNICEF and ILO is also advocating for improving

prioritisation of families in need by the social protection networks in the country with the government. WFP is supporting the Government's capacity strengthening through trainings and workshops that will focus on senior level and technical staff from the federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region Government. The workshops will also define a roadmap on the implementation of the project with WFP as a key lead partner for Social Protection in Iraq.

• As part of WFP's EMPACT – 'Empowerment in Action!' – youth programme, WFP and the University of Sulaymaniyah are holding a careers fair for EMPACT graduates, and also installing a new solar panel system that will provide clean energy to the EMPACT centre. A total of 2,311 participants graduated from WFP's EMPACT programme, were awarded certificates and had the opportunity to meet and network with potential career providers at WFP-sponsored careers fairs. WFP's 'storyteller' training for EMPACT students (held in cooperation with the design firm 'JOVOTO') concluded. Currently 12 participants from Iraq are awaiting the results of the JOVOTO competition where two talented winners will be announced and receive prizes.

Monitoring and Assessments

- In December, WFP conducted 180 monitoring visits, including 78 cash-out points for IDPs and Syrian refugees, 63 livelihood and resilience sites, 25 e-voucher points, 10 shops in camps and 7 school feeding sites. In addition, 78 monitoring interviews were carried out with people assisted.
- WFP's resilience-building food-for-asset (FFA) activities contributed to reduce the level of stress due to a food shortage faced by the targeted families who therefore diminished the adoption of negative coping strategies, whereas non-participants widely adopted these negative strategies. In addition, FFA activities supported 90% of participants in cultivating their lands, resulting in increased cultivated areas of 57% compared with the same season last year. FFA activities helped 16% of people to mainstream cultivation using greenhouse strategies; of these, 72% expanded their area under cultivation and reported an increase in production and diversification of crops, compared to the same season last year.
- Thanks to WFP's resilience activities, nearly 88% of people assisted reported positive benefits from participating in the initiatives and managed to enhance their livelihood asset base. In addition, 68% of people in communities managed to improve their capacity to manage risks associated to climate shocks, and develop improvements in climate resilient livelihoods practices, through their production and diversification of crops that yielded more and better crops in comparison to the last season.

Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP requires an additional USD 32.6 million to ensure operations continue without interruption through June 2022. Due to the ongoing humanitarian needs and the limited funds available to WFP Iraq, a pipeline break will take place in February 2022.

Donors

WFP would like to thank all partners for their contributions including Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Union, France, Germany, the Government of Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Multilateral Funds, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United Nations Agencies, United States, the World Bank, Private Donors and Individual Donors through #ShareTheMeal.