Chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, cyclical drought, locust infestations, seasonal floods, disease outbreaks, and recurrent complex emergencies have presented major challenges to vulnerable populations in the West Africa region during the past decade. Between FY 2007 and FY 2016, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) provided humanitarian assistance to address the impacts of a diverse range of crises, including food insecurity and malnutrition in the Sahel; complex emergencies in multiple countries; disease outbreaks, including Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), cholera, meningitis, and measles; an explosion in Benin; and flooding throughout the region.

From FY 2007 to FY 2016, USAID provided approximately $3 billion to respond to disasters in West Africa. USAID/OFDA assistance included more than $1.2 billion for programs in agriculture and food security; economic recovery and market systems; health; humanitarian coordination and information management; logistics support and relief commodities; nutrition; protection; search and rescue; shelter and settlements; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). USAID/FFP support included more than $1.8 billion for food assistance in the form of U.S.-purchased food, locally and regionally purchased food, cash transfers, food vouchers, and related activities, including asset-building activities, nutrition sensitization, and climate-smart agriculture activities.

Over the last decade, USAID responded to 97 disasters in the West Africa region. USAID deployed Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) to the region—including to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone from FY 2014 to FY 2016 for the EVD outbreak—and activated Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Teams to support coordination and response efforts. USAID also sent humanitarian assessment teams to Côte d’Ivoire, the Sahel, and Lake Chad Basin countries in response to complex emergencies and food insecurity. In West Africa, USAID has focused on addressing immediate needs—such as food, basic relief items, health services, protection, and WASH assistance—while supporting recovery activities to build resilience against future crises, including insecurity, drought, floods, below-average agricultural yields, and other shocks.