



**WFP EVALUATION**



**World Food  
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# **Evaluation of Sudan WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023**

Centralized Evaluation Report – Volume I

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Office of Evaluation

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# Acknowledgements

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## Disclaimer

The opinions expressed are those of the evaluation team, and do not necessarily reflect those of the World Food Programme (WFP). Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report rests solely with the authors. Publication of this document does not imply endorsement by WFP of the opinions expressed.

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The research on which this report is based was completed by September 2021, and the draft report prepared in the weeks following. There were major developments in governance and government in Sudan very recently. It is understood that changes which will follow these events may significantly impact WFP operations. However, this report was produced under different circumstances and does not reflect these developments.

## Photocredits

Cover photo: WFP/Niema Abdelmageed

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# Executive summary

## INTRODUCTION

### Evaluation features

1. Country strategic plan (CSP) evaluations are the primary instrument for accountability and learning at the country level. They provide evidence of WFP's strategic positioning and results to inform the design of successive CSPs and potentially contribute to the design of United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks.
2. The evaluation of the Sudan CSP for 2019–2023 was conducted between May 2021 and January 2022. It covered WFP's activities from 2017 to September 2021. The primary users of the evaluation are the WFP country office and its internal and external stakeholders, including beneficiaries.
3. The evaluation adopted a theory-based mixed-methods approach. Data collection included a desk review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Findings were validated through triangulation of sources and methods, and conclusions and recommendations were discussed with internal and external stakeholders during two online workshops in January and February 2022.

### Context

4. The Sudan is the third largest country in Africa, with a population of approximately 44 million in 2020. Almost 65 percent of its people live in rural areas, and 39.8 percent are under 14.<sup>1</sup> Chronic child malnutrition is estimated at 34 percent.<sup>2</sup> According to Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) data for April and May 2021, an estimated 7.3 million people (16 percent) suffer from acute food insecurity.
5. Since 2017 economic conditions have deteriorated, with high inflation and rising prices. The percentage of people living in extreme poverty increased to an estimated 54.8 percent;<sup>3</sup> gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 1.3 percent in 2019 and by 1.6 percent in 2020.<sup>4</sup>
6. Agriculture accounted for 21 percent of GDP in 2020.<sup>5</sup> However, agricultural productivity is low and the Sudan has been affected by increasingly unpredictable climate events, which are expected to reduce GDP dramatically.
7. The Sudan ranks 138 of 162 countries in the 2019 Gender Inequality Index. Food security and nutrition outcomes differ by gender, with women and girls facing greater barriers and faring worse than men and boys.
8. The CSP was implemented during a tumultuous period that included political upheaval, a growing influx of refugees from Tigray and disruption caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank. [Sudan country page](#). Data extracted in 2021.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Children's Fund. 2021. *The State of the World's Children 2021: On My Mind – Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health*.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank Group. 2020. *Macro Poverty Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa: Country-by-country analysis and projections for the developing world* and World Bank. 2020. *Country Engagement Note: Sudan – For the Period FY21-FY22*.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank. [Sudan country page](#). Data extracted in 2021.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Life expectancy at birth (years) (1)	65.3	2020
	Gender Inequality Index (1)	0.545 (138 out of 162)	2019
	Literacy rate (% , > 15 years) (2)	60.7	2018
	Primary and secondary school enrolment (2)	79 and 46	2018
	Under-5 chronic malnutrition (%) (3)	34	2021
	Under-5 acute malnutrition (%) (3)	16	2021
	Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) (3)	58	2021
	Population with high levels of acute food insecurity (Phase 3+) (4)	7.3 million (16 percent)	2021
	Share of agriculture in gross domestic product (%) (2)	21	2020
	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) (1)	295	2020

Sources: (1) United Nations Development Programme. 2020. [Human Development Report 2020: The next frontier – Human development and the Anthropocene](#); (2) World Bank. [Sudan country page](#). Data extracted in 2021; (3) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). [The State of the World's Children 2021, interactive dashboard and statistical tables](#); (4) IPC. 2021. [Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation April–May 2021 and Projections for June–September 2021 and October 2021–February 2022](#).

### WFP country strategic plan

9. Following the 2017–2018 interim CSP, WFP put forward a long-term vision that recognizes the humanitarian–development–peace nexus and reflects national objectives and capacities.

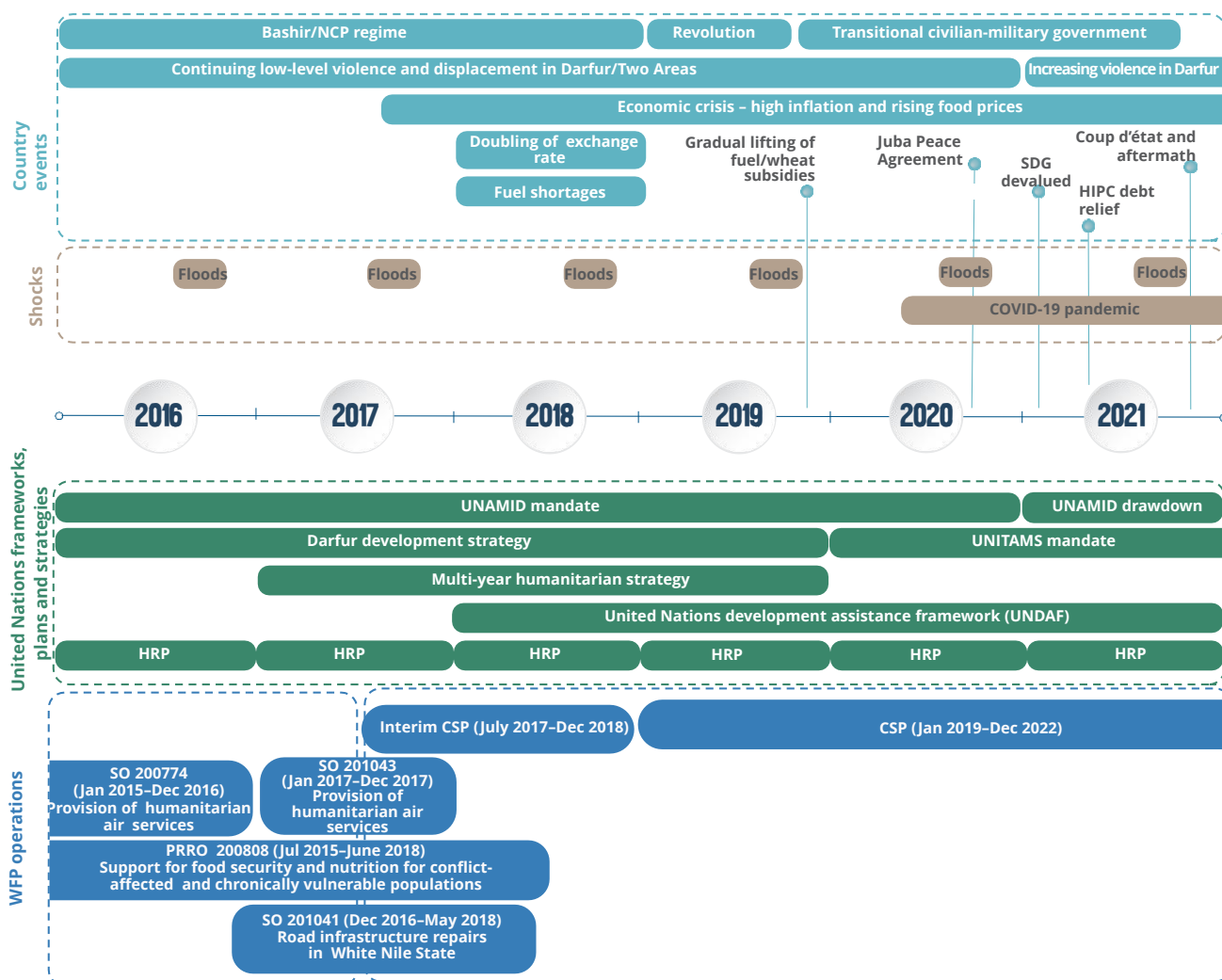
10. Originally planned to run from 2019 to 2023, the CSP was due to be shortened by one year to bring it in line with the United Nations development assistance framework for the Sudan. However, political events in October 2021 brought consultations on the new United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework to a standstill. And, in line with an inter-agency decision, WFP reinstated the original CSP timeframe.<sup>6</sup>

11. The CSP was designed around four strategic outcomes and nine activities focusing on food assistance for food-insecure people, school meals programmes, nutrition, asset creation, service provision and capacity strengthening. However, several CSP revisions between 2019 and 2021 expanded the CSP to five strategic outcomes and twelve activities. Figure 1 illustrates the major changes in the country context, WFP's strategic focus and the United Nations development assistance framework.

<sup>6</sup> WFP. 2021. [Crisis response revision of the Sudan country strategic plan \(2019–2023\) and corresponding budget increase](#). Revision 4 was approved by the WFP Executive Director and the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in December 2021. The budget revision maintained the strategic orientation of the CSP. It increased the budget to USD 3.4 billion and increased the number of beneficiaries by 5 million.



**Figure 1: Country context and WFP operational overview of the Sudan (2016–2021)**



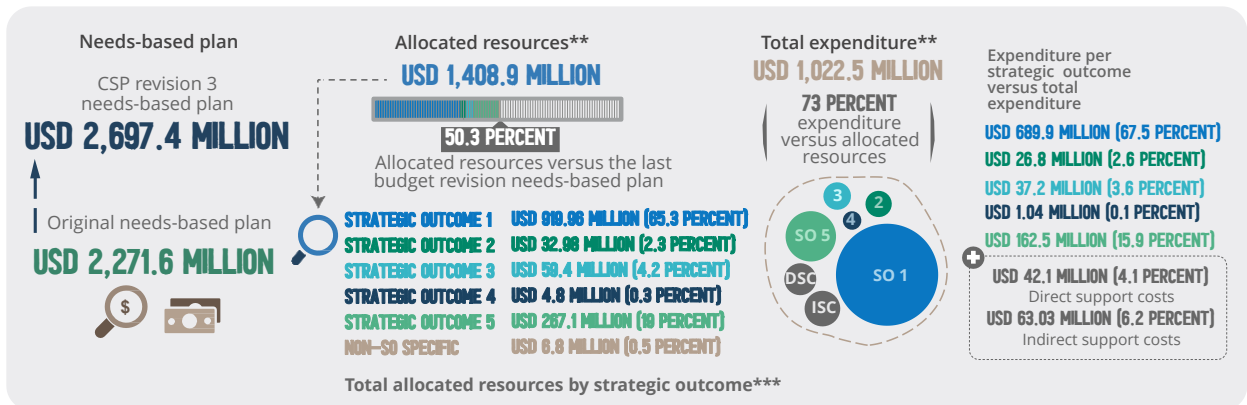
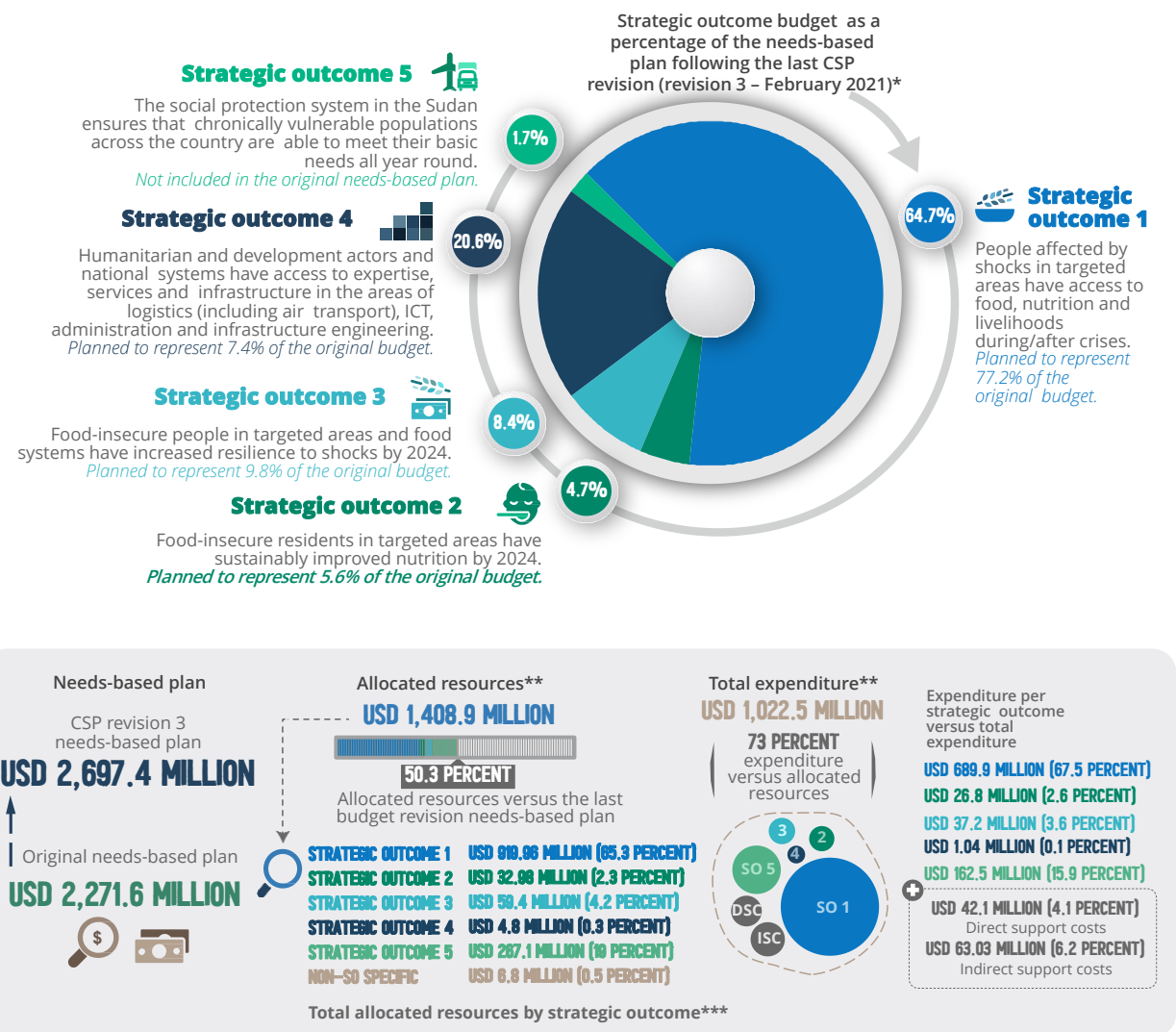
Source: Integrated Road Map analytics ACR1 report and System for Programme Approval Plus.

**Abbreviations:** HIPC = heavily indebted poor country; HRP = humanitarian response plan; NCP = National Congress Party; PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation; SDG = Sustainable Development Goal; SO = special operation; UNITAMS = United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan; UNAMID = African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

12. The CSP had an original budget of USD 2.27 billion for the period 2019–2023 (figure 2) and was intended to reach 6,251,700 beneficiaries (figure 3). During implementation, however, the budget was increased to USD 2.7 billion and there were no changes in the number of planned beneficiaries.

13. By August 2021, the CSP was 50.3 percent funded, with 64.7 percent of total resources allocated to emergency response (figure 2). The United States of America was the main donor, providing 51 percent of CSP funding, followed by regional trust funds (10 percent), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (7 percent) and the European Commission (6 percent); 11 percent of the funding came from miscellaneous income.

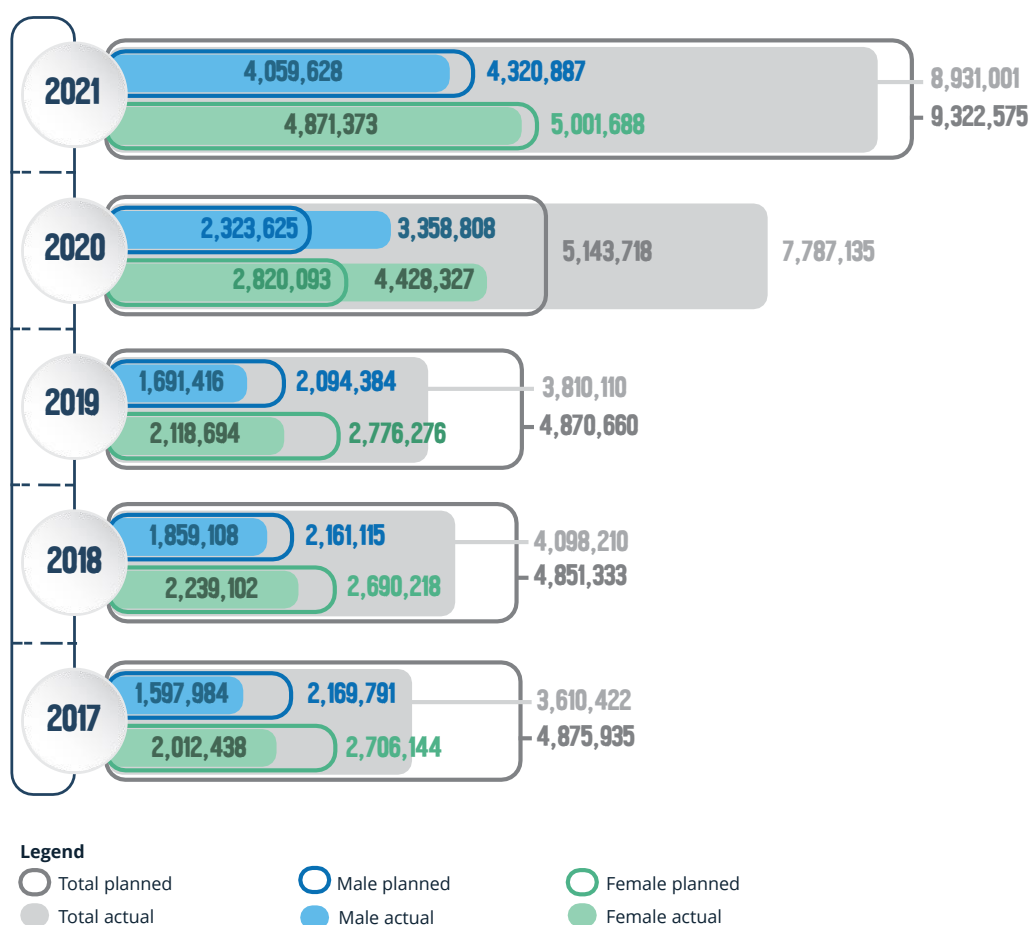
**Figure 2: The Sudan country strategic plan (2019–2021) strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures**



\* The needs-based plan budget percentages by strategic outcome have been calculated at the grand total costs level, including direct (USD 117.5million) and indirect (USD 139.3 million) support costs. This data refers to CSP revision 3, approved in February 2021.  
 \*\* Allocated resources and expenditures figures are cumulative, covering the period January 2017–31 December 2021.  
 \*\*\* Allocated resources by strategic outcome do not add up to USD 1,408.9 million because resources were also allocated to direct (USD 54.9 million, or 3.9 percent of total allocated resources) and indirect (USD 63.03 million, or 4.5 percent of total allocated resources) support costs.

Source: Graphic by the Office of Evaluation based on the full report on the evaluation of the Sudan CSP for 2019–2023.

Figure 3: Annual overall actual versus planned beneficiaries by sex (2017–2021)



Sources: Annual country reports for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020; draft annual country report 2021.

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

To what extent are WFP’s strategic position, role and specific contributions based on country priorities, people’s needs and WFP’s strengths?

### Relevance and alignment

14. Developed within a challenging political context, the CSP was grounded in national priorities and the most pressing issues facing the country’s poor. It was successfully aligned with relevant national policies and goals and with the SDGs. The CSP drew on the zero hunger strategic review for 2017–2030 and was informed by extensive consultations with national institutions at the central and state levels, civil society and other United Nations entities. The CSP built on WFP’s proven strengths and comparative advantages in food distribution and delivery, common services and geographic reach.

### Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable

15. Through its strong data collection and rapid response capability, WFP confirmed its leadership and demonstrated strong overall performance in mitigating food insecurity in the Sudan.

16. Detailed analysis reveals, however, that centralized approaches to general food distribution and other delivery methods do not always adequately adjust and respond to local needs, and there can be trade-offs between enhanced coverage and the adequacy of rations.

17. The CSP design was gender-sensitive and reporting was largely disaggregated; however, the mainstreaming of gender in implementation did not go beyond the gender-balanced coverage of beneficiaries. Disability was acknowledged and data on its prevalence among vulnerable households were

collected, but programming did not seem to pay attention to the special needs of people living with disabilities or their families.

### Strategic position and responsiveness to a dynamic context

18. WFP responded strongly to the challenge of increasing food and cash distribution in the context of COVID-19, both in terms of the number of beneficiaries reached and the areas covered, and its common services are highly valued as a means of ensuring efficient and effective emergency response. Overall, WFP's operational response to the pandemic was highly appreciated; the organization significantly contributed to saving lives and reinforced its position as a leader in humanitarian response.

19. WFP adapted relatively well to a volatile political context. However, its ability to reposition its "changing lives" work was limited by donor funding frameworks, its own programming structures and the need to focus on humanitarian assistance.

### Coherence with the United Nations cooperation framework

20. The CSP reflected shared United Nations priorities in the Sudan. Synergies have been established with various entities, including UNICEF to support the Ministry of Health on nutrition policy development and implementation and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to establish relief operations for the Tigray refugee population in eastern Sudan. WFP also worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on crop and food assessments. In other cases, however, the respective roles of cooperating entities were not clear.

### What are the extent and quality of WFP's contribution to country strategic plan outcomes in the Sudan?

21. The CSP spreads school feeding and the provision of nutrition support in health centres across strategic outcomes 1 and 2. Similarly, WFP engagement with the Government on the Sudan family support programme features under two activities linked to two different strategic outcomes. The cash transfer service delivery component is formally linked to strategic outcome 4, while the social protection capacity strengthening component is categorized as a contribution to strategic outcome 5. This structure did not result in double-counting of beneficiaries but presented challenges for results-based reporting.

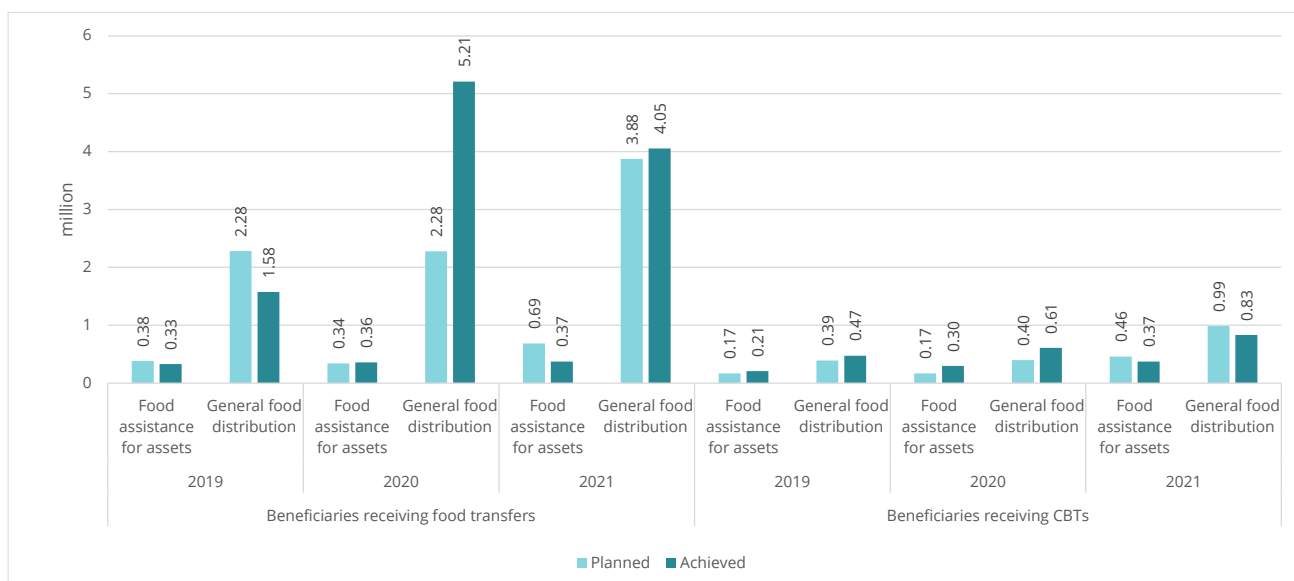
Unconditional resource transfers contributing to strategic outcome 1: People affected by shocks in targeted areas have access to food, nutrition and livelihoods during and after crises

22. Strategic outcome 1 absorbed almost 70 percent of all CSP resources. Unconditional food and cash transfers accounted for 80 percent of the budget for this strategic outcome.

23. WFP operations were significantly scaled up in 2020 in response to rising food insecurity and in support of the Government's initiative to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 containment measures on vulnerable urban and peri-urban populations in Khartoum State. At the same time, increased humanitarian access to previously inaccessible areas in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Jebel Marra (Central Darfur) enabled the provision of humanitarian assistance in those locations for the first time since 2011.

24. Targets related to food assistance for assets, general food distribution and cash-based transfers (CBTs) were largely achieved and sometimes exceeded (figure 4). In some cases, challenges related to the operating environment brought assistance to an abrupt halt and can explain differences between planned and actual beneficiaries.

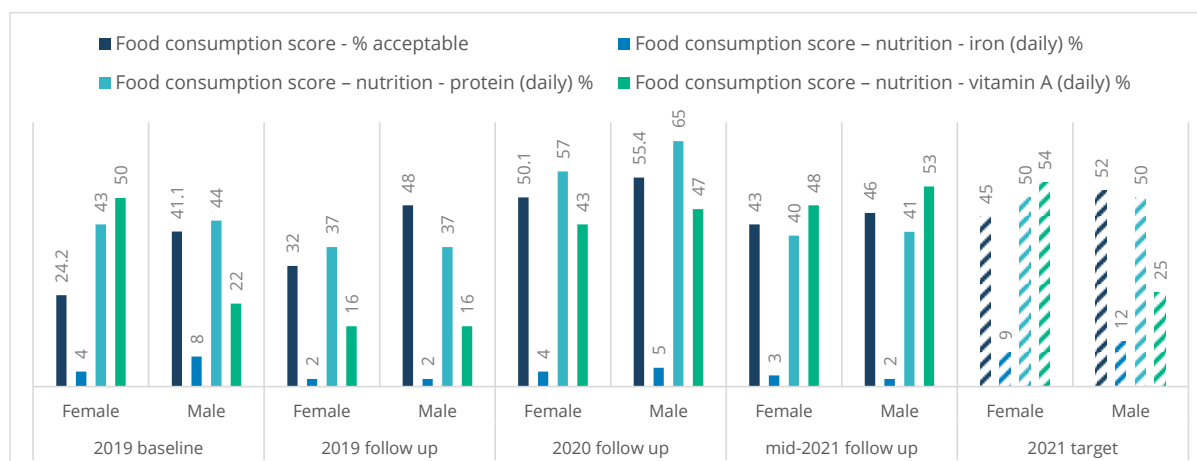
**Figure 4: Provision of food and CBTs to people affected by shocks**



Sources: Annual country reports for 2019 and 2020; draft annual country report 2021.

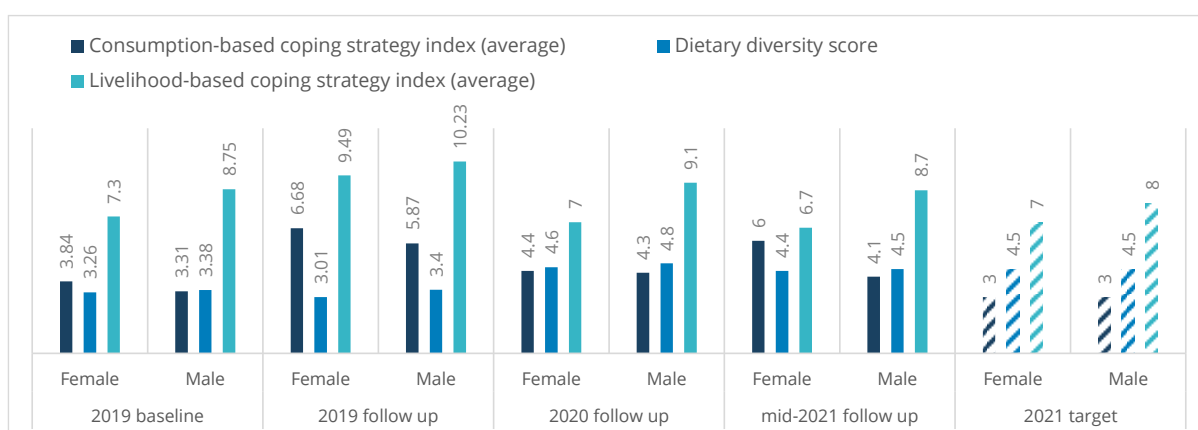
25. As illustrated in figures 5 and 6, outcome results were mostly encouraging. Food consumption scores, coping indices, nutrition scores and dietary diversity generally improved for the sampled beneficiaries, although indicators fluctuated across years. For example, iron, vitamin A and protein consumption deteriorated in 2019, while in 2020 targets for the daily consumption of protein were met or exceeded and iron consumption by both men and women and vitamin A consumption by women remained at or below baseline levels. By mid-2021 daily iron and protein consumption had decreased again and vitamin A consumption had increased slightly.

**Figure 5: Food consumption and nutrition indicators**



Sources: Annual country reports; food security monitoring system data (June 2021).

**Figure 6: Coping indices and dietary diversity scores**



Sources: Annual country reports; food security monitoring system data (June 2021).

26. Average figures across a sampled population do not account for variables beyond WFP control that can heavily influence food and nutrition security. For example, household consumption and nutrition scores can deteriorate quickly if breadwinners lose their jobs or access to markets is curtailed.

**Malnutrition interventions and school feeding, contributing to strategic outcome 1 and strategic outcome 2: Food-insecure residents in targeted areas have sustainably improved nutrition by 2024**

27. In partnership with the Ministry of Health and state health authorities, WFP supported community nutrition centres in the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition in children age 6–59 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls, complementing treatment with food-based prevention of malnutrition and micronutrient supplementation. Outcome indicator targets for malnutrition treatment were met: 97 percent of targeted children age 6–59 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls enrolled in moderate acute malnutrition treatment programmes were cured.

28. School feeding activities had a positive effect on school retention levels. Anecdotal evidence suggests that examination results also improved. However, output level results from nutrition-related interventions were severely constrained by funding shortfalls.

29. In response to school closures due to COVID-19, WFP provided take-home rations in lieu of school meals in 11 states; this assistance included for the first-time primary schoolchildren in Khartoum State.<sup>7</sup>

30. WFP also contributed to increasing the coverage of the school feeding programmes implemented by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and in 2021 a budget line for school feeding was included in national and state budgets for the first time, suggesting increased national ownership. However, the CSP had no clear parameters for capacity strengthening and efforts to that end mostly resulted in one-off CBT training and in filling capacity gaps in the Ministry of Education through the secondment of national WFP staff, with no clear long-term strategy for going beyond temporary capacity substitution.

**Productive safety net and post-harvest losses programmes contributing to strategic outcome 3: Food-insecure people in targeted areas and food systems have increased resilience to shocks by 2024**

31. Through the CSP, WFP seeks to contribute to enhancing livelihoods by increasing the productive capacity of food-insecure rural populations and creating community-based assets. It also seeks to strengthen national institutions operating at the state and community levels.

32. Activities were generally implemented as planned. However, limited financial and human resources limited the effectiveness of WFP’s response to beneficiary needs. The evaluation also found that a more

<sup>7</sup> WFP 2020 **School feeding in Sudan: Before the coronavirus and beyond**

consultative approach to identifying and following up on beneficiary needs would have improved relevance, ownership and effectiveness. Focus group discussions with farming communities during the evaluation field work revealed that if they had been consulted, they would have prioritized improved access to farming inputs rather than reducing post-harvest losses. Asset-creating training activities were perceived relevant by beneficiaries but without further assistance and the provision of the necessary equipment and raw materials the learned skills are of limited use in improving livelihoods.

33. The range of programming options is very limited, particularly in respect of post-harvest losses, but WFP has ambitions to expand. Some area offices are trying to offer more integrated programming at the community level, with good prospects for enhancing the effectiveness of development-oriented programming.

[United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, logistics/supply chain services and wheat procurement contributing to strategic outcome 4: Humanitarian and development actors and national systems have access to expertise, services and infrastructure in the areas of logistics \(including air transport\), information and communications technology, administration and infrastructure engineering](#)

**34. United Nations Humanitarian Air Service services were essential to supporting the safe and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in the Sudan during the period under review.**

Stakeholders see WFP as having a very strong comparative advantage in supply chain management and logistics, and its services have enabled the humanitarian and development community to reach the most vulnerable populations to provide critical assistance.

35. However, some stakeholders have voiced concern about the functioning of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service steering committee, which is perceived as too large (with over 40 members) and poorly governed; no meetings were held between November 2020 and September 2021.

36. WFP helped to balance local currency expenditure with foreign exchange in the Sudan and helped improve the supply of bread to the population. Following a request by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, WFP purchased wheat on the international market on behalf of the Government. Currency devaluation posed a significant challenge to procurement: between 2018 and 2021 the Sudanese Pound to USD exchange rate plummeted from SDG 9.00 to SDG 445.00. WFP continued the wheat import support programme in 2021 but was not able to achieve the same level of exchange rate gains as in previous years.

[Social protection system capacity strengthening contributing to strategic outcome 4 and strategic outcome 5: The social protection system in the Sudan ensures that chronically vulnerable populations across the country are able to meet their basic needs all year round](#)

37. Activities under these outcomes were aimed at supporting the Sudan family support programme, which was conceived by the transitional Government of the Sudan and co-financed by the World Bank to provide cash transfers to 80 percent of the population. Although the United Nations country team initially declined to be involved with the programme, WFP later offered to provide technical assistance with regard to cash-based transfers.

38. WFP support included communications, software development, payments, system architecture, business analysis, data centre management, finance and budget data analysis and relationship management.

39. The evaluation found that WFP over time gained recognition for its capabilities, demonstrating agility in a context of shifting external expectations, changing government interlocutors and challenging operational dynamics.

40. However, WFP lacked a coherent and consistent strategy, not only for working with the Government and the World Bank but also for articulating its own objectives. Coupled with a challenging political landscape, this hampered the effectiveness of capacity strengthening initiatives.

41. Although WFP's long-term role in relation to the Sudan family support programme is uncertain, the organization remains an essential partner able to contribute on-the-ground expertise and experience in cash delivery, beneficiary enrolment and registration.

## **Sustainability**

42. For reasons largely beyond the control of WFP, sustainability of results has been elusive. An integrated approach to policy development and institutional capacity strengthening, supporting the enhancement of core competencies needed to carry out essential tasks at the national and local levels will be critical to enhancing sustainability. Also, under current conditions there is little prospect for refugee and internally displaced communities to become self-reliant in the near future.

***Cross-cutting aims: Humanitarian principles, protection, disability, accountability to affected populations, gender and equity considerations***

***Humanitarian principles***

43. The design of interventions was informed by WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping assessments using standard vulnerability criteria and well-defined vulnerable groups. Programme activities are founded on the principle of equity, targeting and supporting the most vulnerable women, men, boys and girls. The rigor of vulnerability assessments and needs-based plans is key to WFP impartiality and has enabled WFP to adhere to international humanitarian principles.

44. Several evaluation respondents indicated that WFP faced difficulties in ensuring operational independence or in being perceived as independent when working with the Government. In the Sudan's highly politicized environment WFP staff are very aware of this issue, although it applies to certain regions more than others.

***Accountability to affected populations and protection***

45. Accountability to affected populations (AAP) and protection mechanisms are in place and operationalized in the Sudan. However, a gender analysis conducted by WFP in 2017 indicated that sexual abuse and rape were underreported due to a lack of protection, cultural issues and social stigma. To address this challenge, the country office established a 24/7 free-of-charge centralized call centre. In parallel, help desks are being set up at distribution sites for beneficiaries who may feel uncomfortable or may not be able to report serious incidents by telephone.

46. Consultations with beneficiaries in White Nile, South Darfur and Red Sea revealed that they were often unaware of the existence of feedback mechanisms despite WFP efforts to publicize them. Beneficiaries said that although WFP conducted satisfaction surveys it did not respond adequately to issues raised. WFP staff interviewed pointed to a gap in protection capacity and skills in the country office.

***Gender equality and empowerment of women***

47. The CSP succeeded in setting the direction for gender-transformative programming and effectively contributed to achieving medium-term results for women's empowerment.

48. Evidence suggests that women's representation on project management committees and decision making about the use of food by both women and men were strongly promoted.

49. Despite this encouraging progress, the scale of activities and their relatively short duration limit the prospect for bringing about sustainable transformational change and the evaluation revealed that country office capacity for in-depth gender analysis was less than optimal.

***Humanitarian-development-peace nexus***

50. There are good examples of conflict-sensitive approaches in the CSP such as work carried out at the WFP offices in two rebel-held areas.

51. However, the evaluation found that effectiveness across the triple nexus was hindered by limited programme integration and internal coordination and limited synergies with other national and international humanitarian and development actors.

***To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to country strategic plan outputs and strategic outcomes?***

***Timeliness***

52. Overall, emergency assistance was timely. Timeliness in supply chain performance was generally favourable compared to other country offices in 2017 and 2018, but less so from mid-2019 to 2020.



Significant efforts were made in 2021 to push commodities further down the supply chain in anticipation of access constraints due to rains and flooding.

53. In a few cases, however, the implementation of non-humanitarian activities was delayed. Examples include the release of grants; the processing of invoices, which can often take double the targeted time; and the provision of cash advances to kick-start programmes. With rising inflation, funds received late are by the time of receipt no longer adequate to meet actual costs.

54. In the case of the White Nile state, field-level data collection revealed that the quality of post-harvest loss activities was compromised by the late delivery of hermetic bags, which were received only after the harvest was completed. This meant that 75 percent of targeted beneficiaries did not benefit from this activity.

### ***Appropriateness of the coverage and targeting***

55. Coverage of humanitarian assistance expanded significantly during the CSP in almost all areas of the country in response to the economic crisis and the impact of COVID-19. The geographic targeting of resident populations generally aligned with the levels of vulnerability identified.

56. Targeting of refugees and internally displaced persons in Darfur was appropriate because those groups were the most food-insecure populations in the country. Continued and increased support for displaced populations outside of Darfur was also in line with food insecurity trends.

57. Targeting of activities that address root causes and build resilience was geographically unfocused and could have been better aligned with work under other WFP programmes as well as those of UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization, FAO and other United Nations entities and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) based on joint needs assessments and area-based programming and coordination.

### ***Cost efficiency***

58. WFP in the Sudan performed well in minimizing pre- and post-delivery losses compared with other countries in the region and Africa more widely.

59. Costs per beneficiary for food transfers tended to be equal to or lower than global averages. However, costs per beneficiary for CBTs were found to be higher than the global average.

60. The predominance of short-term contracting and funding cycles is a major obstacle to cost efficiency. For example, field-level agreements with cooperating partners last just six months, increasing transaction costs and potentially hampering operational continuity.

### ***Alternative cost-effectiveness measures***

61. The country office was successful in implementing a large-scale solar power project, which involved the largest solar power installation ever done by WFP anywhere in the world. This should substantially reduce energy costs and WFP's environmental footprint.

62. Amid the constant pressure to deliver, however, the country office has paid little attention to other cost-effectiveness measures.

### ***What factors explain WFP's performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected under the country strategic plan?***

#### ***Evidence base***

63. WFP made thorough use of up-to-date analysis of the food security and nutrition situation across the Sudan. By drawing on the zero hunger strategic review, it also ensured that the country analysis was consistent with key components of government policy and strategy for addressing food deficits and the emerging challenges linked to economic insecurity.

64. The CSP captured household and local population needs in a way that previous operations had not, giving WFP a more comprehensive assessment of the nutrition needs of the whole population as well as insight into how the local economy influenced nutrition.

65. WFP was relatively successful in securing adequate funding, particularly for emergency response. However, funding flexibility remains limited, and 77 percent of multilateral contributions for the Sudan CSP have been earmarked at the activity level.

66. Funding predictability, as measured by the length of time that grant funding may be spent, has not increased with the CSP. Compared to the interim CSP, the proportion of funding provided for more than 25 months has decreased from 25 to 11 percent and the proportion of donor funding that is provided as part of a multi-grant pledge covering multiple years has halved to 8 percent, constraining efforts to build long-term development-oriented programming.

### ***Partnerships***

67. Stronger partnership was an important component of the strategic shift envisaged in the CSP; examples of stronger partnerships include joint work with UNICEF and with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, although the range and modality of WFP partnerships within the United Nations system could be expanded and the division of roles and responsibilities made clearer to build on each actor's comparative advantage.

68. Overall, the evaluation found that WFP had not significantly adjusted its approach to partnerships. For example, WFP continued to view civil society organizations mainly as implementers of standardized activities without acknowledging their knowledge and experience or using their input to inform its strategic focus and operational approach. In some cases, this limited the relevance, ownership and ultimately the effectiveness of activities, in particular those designed to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and build resilience.

### ***Flexibility***

69. The CSP enabled the country office to adapt to unforeseen challenges in an agile manner. WFP mounted rapid responses, adjusting its operations to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

### **Other factors**

#### ***Perceptions and expectations of WFP's role***

70. Despite general support for a move towards a more balanced humanitarian–development portfolio, the Government of the Sudan and some major donors expressed a preference for WFP to focus on its role as lead for humanitarian assistance in the Sudan. This limited WFP's ability to embrace the strategic shift and associated new ways of working, which are central to the CSP.

#### ***Programme design, monitoring and reporting***

71. The way activities were organized under the five strategic outcomes reflected WFP efforts to mitigate the effects of donor earmarking. However, the separation of food assistance for assets and school feeding from resilience building work made it difficult to build coherent and broad-based programming around social protection aimed at meeting the needs of individual communities. More broadly, this approach posed challenges for results-based management and reporting.

72. Some donors said that CSP reporting should focus on how WFP was making a difference rather than merely list outputs and activities completed. They also called for a more thorough explanation of how WFP's interventions could bring about a strategic shift and how donors could support that. Responding to these requests will be critical to WFP strengthening its partnership with donors.

73. The evaluation also revealed a need to strengthen the use of monitoring data to inform decision making and to ensure that decisions on food or cash distribution and other activities are based on accurate and up-to-date information.

#### ***Country office structure and capacity***

74. There is a gap between the strategic focus and ambitions set out in the CSP and the organizational structures and arrangements in place to implement it. The country office organizational structure and human resources should be assessed and a change management plan should be prepared to ensure that the country office has the expertise required to manage long-term development-oriented programming.

## **Context**

75. Throughout the implementation of the CSP there was political turbulence and uncertainty. This put extra pressure on WFP and the United Nations country team while reducing the prospects for establishing strong partnerships with the Government. Continual staff turnover at government institutions led to long delays in decision making and disrupted capacity strengthening activities.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

76. The evaluation concluded that the CSP developed in 2018 was appropriately aspirational and that its implementation provided an opportunity to achieve a strategic shift in the focus of WFP operations and embed new ways of working. The CSP as designed responded effectively to the principal challenges facing the Sudan while also reflecting government priorities in food security and related matters. The country office demonstrated its strengths in responding to emergencies and unforeseen developments. However, partly because of the need to scale up its humanitarian response, WFP was less successful in making the strategic shift central to the CSP and should consider how best to balance the demand for its support as a service provider and its expected role as enabler in line with the strategic shift envisioned by the CSP.

77. WFP has been a major stakeholder in the political and economic transition of the Sudan. It built appropriately on its comparative advantages in food distribution and service delivery and was able to adapt and adequately respond to several emergencies. However, as WFP did not fully engage in the role of enabler and supporter of strengthening national systems, it did not optimize the effectiveness and sustainability of its work with the Government.

78. WFP was effective in emergency response but the delivery of the development-oriented activities envisaged in the CSP was constrained by factors such as the impact of COVID-19, natural disasters and a dramatic rise in food insecurity. WFP should engage in institutional analysis to help improve national systems. Long-term holistic approaches to resilience building and cooperation with the Government are also needed to support the development of national systems.

79. Although WFP paid considerable attention to gender equality and AAP, a deeper analysis of community-level gender dynamics is needed to inform programming in order to achieve sustained gender-transformative results. Similarly, AAP could be strengthened through a more consultative approach to identifying beneficiary needs and better follow-up to beneficiary complaints and feedback.

80. While WFP undertook some conflict-sensitive initiatives, its approach to partnerships has not engaged sufficiently with the “whole system” to realize the ambitions of the triple nexus. WFP lacks an inter-agency approach to partnering that involves all stakeholders in programme planning and implementation. WFP partnerships have not yet sufficiently acknowledged or built upon WFP’s comparative advantage or the comparative advantages of others. The evaluation also concludes that WFP has not yet fully leveraged its partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as it largely treats them solely as contractors for the delivery of standardized activities.

81. Emergency assistance was delivered as planned with high levels of budget utilization; targeting was appropriate and coverage was commensurate with the resources available. However, delays in implementing some resilience activities affected their relevance and effectiveness. The cost effectiveness of activities aimed at building resilience and root causes was also hindered by fragmentation and limited integration with other WFP and United Nations country team programming areas.

82. CSP performance and results were affected by factors related to the grouping of activities and the validity of some assumptions at the design stage; the adequacy of WFP human resources systems to attract and retain staff with relevant skills and experience; the timely use of monitoring data to inform decision making during implementation; the need to strengthen partnerships and donor relations; and challenges related to funding flexibility and predictability. The highly complex and dynamic country context and challenging political environment were also key factors influencing operations and performance

## RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
<b>1</b>	<b>WFP should ensure that the conceptual umbrella of the next country strategic plan matches fully integrated programming on the ground, which will require closer collaboration with development partners, joint programming and drawing on expertise in fields such as conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding and political economy.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	November 2023
1.1	The country strategic plan should include closer links between nutrition interventions and recovery and resilience programmes, with a clear plan for beneficiary transition from general distribution to conditional assistance for all populations. This will require oversight management and training for WFP staff to avoid the siloed management of activities.					
1.2	WFP should develop a strategic approach to partnerships with a partnership plan that recognizes different expertise from national and international partners in order to strengthen synergies across the triple nexus.					
1.3	WFP should conduct research on, and work with other United Nations entities, international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions to explore how best to incorporate social protection elements into its core activities and expand existing elements. It is further recommended that expertise necessary for the professional development of WFP staff be externally sourced. For instance, the Better Assistance in Crises Programme funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland encourages collaboration with United Nations entities on social protection capacity strengthening and training.					

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
<b>2</b>	<b>WFP should advocate with donors to secure at least a three-year (or annual recurring) fund to enhance predictability and ensure continuity of processes over the medium to long term.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	March 2024
2.1	WFP should give greater emphasis to resilience and livelihoods programming and build systematically on the experience of area offices in community-based integrated programming, linking resilience and recovery programmes. WFP should also increase staffing for such programming at the country offices and area offices and explore options for funding for long-term programming for selected communities, supporting the transition from emergency support to lasting solutions.					November 2023
2.2	WFP should explore options for three-year contracts with reliable international non-governmental organizations and national or local non-governmental organizations. Such contracts would be reviewed annually, with performance assessed against agreed criteria, and continued except where performance is inadequate. This will build local knowledge and programming skills while reducing the transaction costs associated with annual bid review and contract renewal.			N/A	Medium	March 2024
2.3	WFP should provide area offices with adequate resources for monitoring resilience programmes and explore mechanisms for including such programmes in their ongoing work.			N/A	Medium	March 2024
<b>3</b>	<b>Capacity strengthening should play a prominent role in the new country strategic plan, reinforced by appropriate staffing and budget and the development of monitoring and evaluation indicators that measure longitudinal progress.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	March 2024
3.1	WFP should conduct a staffing review, assess gaps and weaknesses and redouble its efforts to ensure optimal matching between the skills of its staff and the strategic role it intends to play.					March 2024

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
3.2	WFP should prepare a capacity strengthening strategy to accompany the new country strategic plan. Urgent attention should be given to ensuring that the country office staff have the expertise necessary to support country capacity strengthening work in all programmes, including the Sudan family support programme, and to design additional programming with the Government at the federal and state levels. Such expertise would also be used to advise on and learn from country capacity strengthening work at the local level with civil society, including community-based organizations.			Regional bureau, headquarters Country Capacity Strengthening Unit	High	March 2024
3.3	WFP should develop a regularly updated stakeholder analysis that examines opportunities to work more closely with the Government at the federal and state levels and any risks involved in doing so.			Regional bureau, headquarters	Medium	June 2023
<b>4</b>	<b>WFP should promote a country gender analysis and strategy with realistic gender-based objectives reflected in the results frameworks. This should be accompanied by professional development support and clear, practical guidelines for the country office on how to build gender-transformative activities.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau, headquarters Gender Office	High	March 2024
4.1	WFP should provide comprehensive and practical professional development for operational staff – including those at area and field offices – and cooperating partners on gender transformation and its translation into programming under current and planned country strategic plan outcomes. This could involve external experts, possibly from international non-governmental organizations or other United Nations or bilateral agencies with direct, hands-on experience.					March 2024
4.2	An advanced training programme should be offered for those who complete the training referred to in 4.1 and demonstrate interest and capability, with graduates who would be qualified to act as gender equality and women's empowerment focal points or leaders of thematic groups. The training might be offered by the regional bureau and could involve participants from other country offices in the region. However, some of the training and materials should be focused on the Sudan and informed by the situation there.					

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
<b>5</b>	<b>WFP should urgently review the accountability mechanisms for recipient populations, including complaints procedures and feedback opportunities (for accountability to affected populations), with a view to adopting a plan for improvement.</b>	Operational	Country office (including monitoring and evaluation unit)	N/A	Medium	March 2024
5.1	The plan should include the development of mechanisms to ensure that feedback from affected populations heavily influences annual plans and is used to adjust the implementation of activities.					
5.2	In the spirit of new ways of working, the plan could be developed jointly with other members of the United Nations country team.					
5.3	WFP should undertake local case studies of the experience of beneficiaries in using accountability to affected populations mechanisms and their level of satisfaction that their concerns are heard and acted upon. There should also be selected focus group discussions with community leaders.					

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. EVALUATION FEATURES

1. WFP Country Strategic Plan Evaluations (CSPEs) were introduced by the WFP Policy on Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) in 2016. This evaluation is an opportunity for the WFP Sudan Country Office to benefit from an independent assessment of its strategy and portfolio. The timing enables the country office to use the CSPE evidence in the design of the new Sudan CSP.
2. The evaluation is designed to provide:
  - Evidence and learning on WFP's performance for country-level strategic decisions, specifically for developing WFP's future engagement in Sudan
  - Accountability for results to WFP stakeholders.
3. The evaluation of the Sudan CSP 2019-2023 covers all WFP activities in Sudan up to September 2021,<sup>8</sup> including cross-cutting issues and results. The evaluation focuses particularly on gender and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), given that WFP committed to a gender transformative approach to programming and to improving its accountability to the people it serves. The evaluation's temporal scope starts before the CSP itself (with the Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) in 2017) to assess important changes. Within this timeframe, the evaluation examines how the CSP builds on, or departs from, previous activities, and assesses the extent to which the intended 'strategic shift' has taken place.
4. The evaluation started in May 2021 with inception briefings and evaluation design. Primary data collection took place in August/September 2021 through a combination of remote key informant interviews across Sudan and outside, in-person consultations in Khartoum and El Obeid, and field-level interviews/focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries in White Nile, Red Sea and South Darfur. A full methodology is presented in Annex 2. While there were limitations, the Evaluation Team judged that the data gathered was adequate to provide the basis for the analysis on which this report is based.
5. The primary evaluation users will be internal to WFP, specifically the country office, Regional Bureau Nairobi, Office of Evaluation and other headquarters divisions, and the Executive Board. However, it is also hoped that the evaluation will be useful to a broader range of actors, including the Government of Sudan, United Nations Country Team, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors.

## 1.2. CONTEXT

### Demography

6. Sudan is the third-largest country in Africa, with a population of approximately 44 million (2020), growing at around 2.4 percent annually.<sup>9</sup> Half of the population is female, and around 64.7 percent live in rural areas (2020).<sup>10</sup> Life expectancy at birth is 65 years,<sup>11</sup> and the under-5 mortality rate is 58,<sup>12</sup> which is higher than the Middle East and North Africa regional average of 22 percent and lower than the Sub-Saharan Africa average of 70 percent. The total fertility rate<sup>13</sup> is 4.3 and the adolescent fertility rate<sup>14</sup> is 58

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<sup>8</sup> The current CSP was originally planned to run from 2019 to 2023. It was meant to be shortened by one year to align to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework cycle and based on this intention the CSP evaluation was conducted in 2021 as per standard practice: conduct the evaluation in the penultimate year of the programme cycle. However, in 2021 it was decided to maintain the original duration of the CSP up to December 2023. This is in line with the inter-agency decision following the political change in October 2021, which resulted in a lack of clarity with regards to government interlocutors for the United Nations Country Team to take forward the Sudan Transitional Framework, putting the UNSDCF/ISF consultation process on hold.

<sup>9</sup> World Bank, online data (a) – extracted 2021.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank online data (b) – extracted 2021.

<sup>11</sup> World Bank online data (c) – extracted 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Per 1000 live births (2019). World Bank online data (d) – extracted 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Children per woman. World Bank online data (e) – extracted 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years. World Bank online data (f) – extracted 2021.



(2019), and 39.8 percent of the population are children aged 0-14 years<sup>15</sup> (2020). Approximately 70 percent of the population identifies as Sudanese Arab and most of the remaining 30 percent identify as either Fur, Beja, Nuba or Fallata.<sup>16</sup>

## Economy

7. Since 2017, economic conditions have deteriorated. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted by 1.3 percent in 2019 and 1.6 percent in 2020 (amid the COVID-19 pandemic).<sup>17</sup> GDP per capita declined from USD 1,103 in 2017, to USD 595 in 2020,<sup>18</sup> and inflation reached an average of 150 percent in 2020.<sup>19</sup> The Sudanese Pound (SDG) devalued sharply against the US dollar in the parallel market<sup>20</sup> (see Figure 1). The estimated number of people living in extreme poverty – the population living below USD 1.90 a day – has increased over the last four years. Simulations suggest that extreme poverty increased by 3.2 percent between October 2017 and July 2018, and is projected to reach 19.5 percent in 2022. However, if the lower middle income countries' poverty line (USD 3.60 a day) is used, the 2022 projection for in extreme poverty is 54.8 percent.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 1: SDG–USD parallel/unofficial exchange rate**



Source: WFP-VAM.

## Food security and nutrition

8. The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) data (April–May 2021) shows that an estimated 7.3 million people in Sudan (16 percent) are at high levels of acute food insecurity (Phase 3+). Of these, 1.8 million are critically food insecure, classified as in an emergency condition (Phase 4). During the first projection period (June–September 2021), which will coincide with the lean season, it is estimated that around 9.8 million people will likely be in crisis (Phase 3) or worse (Figure 2). Compared to the June 2020 analysis period, there is a noticeable deterioration (+5 percent population) to more extreme IPC classifications.

<sup>15</sup> World Bank online data (g) – extracted 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Sudan CSPE Terms of Reference.

<sup>17</sup> World Bank online data (h) – extracted 2021.

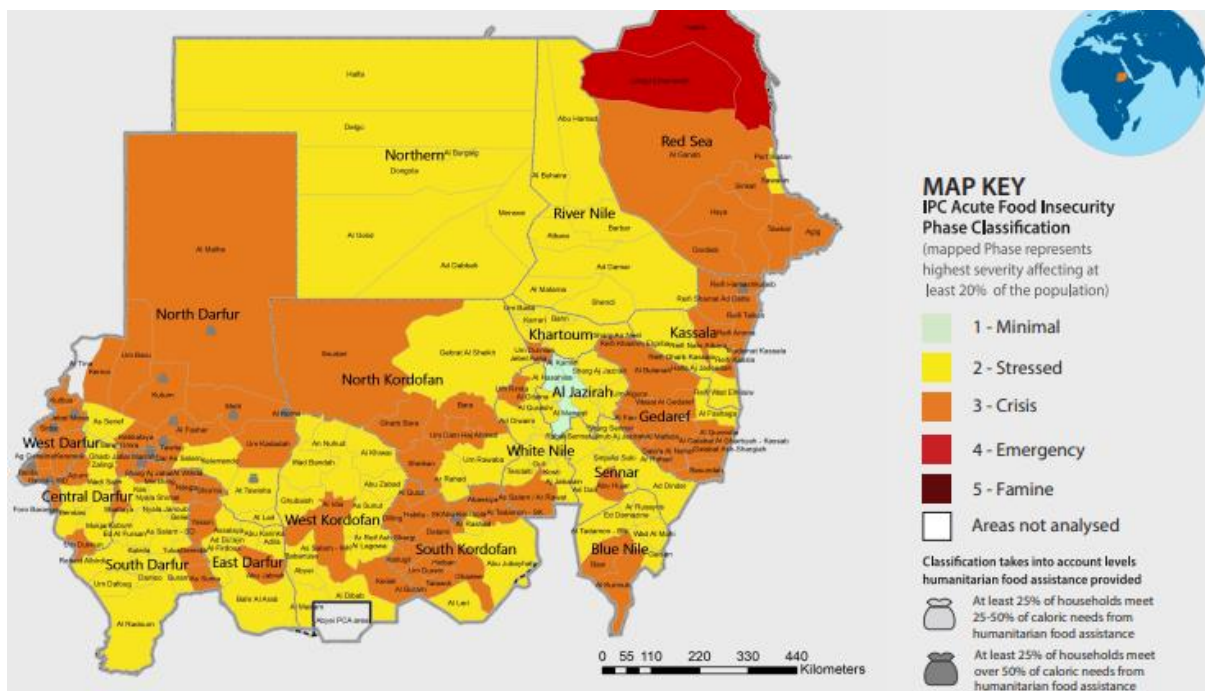
<sup>18</sup> World Bank online data (i) – extracted 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Based on consumer prices (annual percentage). World Bank online data (j) – extracted 2021.

<sup>20</sup> Prior to February 2021, the Central Bank fixed the exchange rate, most recently at SDG/USD 55. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Food Price Monitoring and Analysis, “Sudan devalues sharply the exchange rate 17/03/2021”.

<sup>21</sup> World Bank Group. Macro Poverty Outlook, Sub-Saharan Africa, 2020; World Bank. Sudan Country Engagement Note for the Period FY21-FY22.

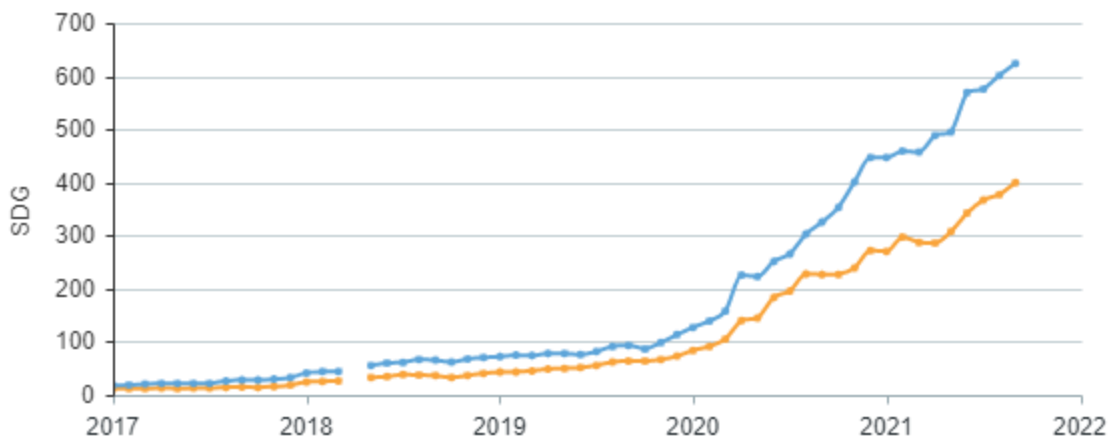
**Figure 2: IPC acute food insecurity projected situation (April-May 2021)**



Source: IPC technical working group – 24 May 2021.

9. This projected level of food insecurity in the country can, in part, be attributed to the annual lean season, new displacements caused by conflict, and environmental shocks such as flooding – all of which Sudan has experienced annually in recent decades. However, the marked increase in the number of people projected to be food insecure in recent years is principally caused by the economic crisis (compounded by COVID-19) which has driven up food prices (Figure 3), diminished labour/employment opportunities and eroded the economic capacity of the population.<sup>22</sup>

**Figure 3: Average retail price (in SDG) of 3 kg sorghum (orange) and 3.5 kg millet (blue)**



Source: WFP-VAM.

10. Indicators of inadequate nutrition are higher than regional averages; 34 percent of children aged under 5 years are classified as ‘stunted’ and 16 percent as ‘wasted’, compared to respective regional averages of 32 percent and 5 percent (2020).<sup>23</sup> Food security and nutrition outcomes are also gendered, with women and girls facing greater barriers and faring worse than men and boys.

<sup>22</sup> Sudan: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Snapshot | April 2021 – February 2022

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF. The State of the World’s Children (2021).

## Agriculture and climate change

11. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing contributed to 21 percent of GDP in 2020.<sup>24</sup> Agricultural productivity is low due to poor farming practices, post-harvest losses, persistent gender gaps and conflict.<sup>25</sup> Changes in climate pose challenges to Sudan's ongoing efforts to combat poverty, reduce food insecurity and sustainably manage natural resources. Climate projections include increases in temperature, unpredictability of seasonal rains, and incidence of drought.<sup>26</sup> In the past few decades, such phenomena have already put stress on the region's rain-fed agriculture and pastoralist systems – the principal livelihoods in rural areas. In North Darfur, reduction of rainfall, in combination with increased water demand and land use change, has contributed to desertification of millions of hectares, depletion of water sources, and unstable crop production.

12. Like other countries in the region, Sudan has been affected by an increasing unpredictability of climate events. In 2021, heavy rains and flash floods affected about 314,500 people across the country (by late September), overwhelming the local response capacity. More than 15,000 homes were destroyed, 46,000 damaged, and an unconfirmed number of public infrastructure facilities and farmlands affected. Heavy rain and flooding were reported in 14 out of 18 states. This followed the worst floods experienced by Sudan for 100 years in 2020, in which 900,000 people across 18 states were affected.<sup>27</sup>

13. A study by Christian Aid for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (2021) focused on the economic impact of climate change on vulnerable countries. It determined that Sudan would be the country most affected in terms of GDP reduction. Under current global climate policies, Sudan faces a GDP reduction of 32.4 percent by 2050.<sup>28</sup>

## Education

14. Primary and secondary school enrolment rates have been steadily increasing to 79 and 46 percent respectively (by 2018). However, this still left 2,130,650 out-of-school children of primary age (1,127,796 girls and 1,002,854 boys).<sup>29</sup> The literacy rate for the population over 15 years increased from 53.5 percent in 2008 to 60.7 percent in 2018, although with gender inequalities (65.4 percent for men and 56 percent for women).

## COVID-19

15. The first case of COVID-19 in Sudan was reported on 13 March 2020, and 41,949 cases and 3,114 deaths were recorded by 24 November 2021. However, with an overstretched health care system, minimal testing capacity, and poor reporting, these numbers are probably considerably underestimated,<sup>30</sup> and this should be considered throughout the discussion of COVID-19 in Sudan. The conflict-affected states have experienced the highest Case Fatality Rates: in North Darfur, the figure is 57.5 percent, and in Central Darfur, 50 percent (December 2020).<sup>31</sup> According to the World Health Organization (WHO), stigma, denial, misinformation, and rumours have emerged as the main challenges, standing in the way of positive health-seeking behaviours among the affected populations.

16. The federal government, and several state governments, introduced containment measures in April 2020. While they may have been somewhat effective in slowing the spread of infection, they also exacerbated the already deteriorating economic conditions. COVID-19 has also had an impact on children,

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<sup>24</sup> World Bank online data (k) – extracted 2021.

<sup>25</sup> WFP. Sudan Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023).

<sup>26</sup> USAID, Fact Sheet: Climate Change Risk Profile, Sudan, August 2016.

<sup>27</sup> OCHA, Sudan Situation Report, September 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Christian Aid, Lost & Damaged: A study of the economic impact of climate change on vulnerable countries (November 2021), as reported in OCHA, ReliefWeb, 8 November 2021.

<sup>29</sup> World Bank online data (l) – extracted 2021.

<sup>30</sup> WHO, *Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan*, COVID Addendum, March-December 2020, p.5.

<sup>31</sup> Quraish Sserwanja et al., COVID-19 in border regions: a case-study of South Kordofan, *Conflict and Health*, 15, Article #34, 2021.

with nine million affected by school closures.<sup>32</sup> The lockdown was resisted by a large proportion of the population because of increased economic hardship affecting households.<sup>33</sup>

## Gender

17. Sudan has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.545, ranking it 138 out of 162 countries in the 2019 index. This index value reflects gender inequalities across three dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. For every 100,000 live births, 295 women die from pregnancy-related causes, and the adolescent birth rate is 64.<sup>34</sup> Female participation in the labour market is 29.1 percent compared to 68.2 percent for men. Only 15.4 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 19.5 percent of men.<sup>35</sup>

18. Gender inequality in Sudan is deeply rooted and aggravated by a history of conflict and political denial of women's rights. Women in Sudan have been subject to violence from state and non-state actors and continue to shoulder the burden of displacement and poverty associated with conflict.<sup>36</sup> Despite the defined minimum age, forced early marriage is understood to be significant. The Transitional Government claims that support for girls and women towards gender equality is a priority, but the country is far from achieving tangible change. In April 2021, Sudan ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, with reservations on the fundamental notion that women are equal with men at all political and social levels and have equal rights in marriage, divorce, and parenting.

## Disability

19. Officially statistics relating to disability are based on the 2008 census, which estimates the number of disabled persons as 1,854,985, or 4.8 percent of the population. While updated data on the prevalence of disability is lacking, it is estimated that 15 percent of global population (Sudan included) live with some form of disability.<sup>37</sup> There are no legislative measures for ensuring equitable access to services for people with disabilities. Information on their specific needs and protection concerns, including those emerging from or exacerbated by COVID-19, are not available.<sup>38</sup> The WHO and the Ministry of Health estimate that around 6 percent of people with disabilities are children under five years of age, while 28 percent are aged 60 years and older. People with disabilities face major challenges, including access to health, support, rehabilitation, and education, and employment.<sup>39</sup>

## Displacement

20. Sudan has a long history of refugee hosting and internal displacement. The 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview estimates 2.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs), mostly in the conflict-affected Darfur states, and the Two Areas (Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states). Sudan hosts 1.1 million refugees, predominantly from South Sudan.<sup>40</sup> Refugees and IDPs are concentrated in the states classified by WFP/IPC as the most food insecure. Since November 2020, a new crisis has been unfolding in the east, with more than 46,000 new Ethiopian refugees registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>41</sup>

## Protection

21. The persistence of significant humanitarian funding gaps, exacerbated by the economic situation, makes the displaced population in Sudan highly dependent on humanitarian assistance. It also exposes

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<sup>32</sup> UNESCO data, from UNINFO COVID-19 Data Portal.

<sup>33</sup> Mukhtar, M.M., and Khogali, M, The Accelerating COVID-19 Epidemic in Sudan, *Nature Immunology*. 22, pp.797-798, May 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Births per 1,000 women of ages 15-19

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 2020

<sup>36</sup> OECDdev Gender Index – Sudan

<sup>37</sup> WHO/World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (2011)

<sup>38</sup> Humanitarian Needs Overview- Sudan Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021. December 2020

<sup>39</sup> World Health Organisation. – World Report on Disability (Arabic)

<sup>40</sup> Humanitarian Needs Overview - Sudan, UNOCHA, 2021.

<sup>41</sup> UNHCR, Regional Update #17 Ethiopia Situation (Tigray Region) 17 May to 14 June

refugees and asylum seekers to protection risks, including: access to registration; limits on freedom of movement; lack of land and asset ownership; access to the labour market and basic services.<sup>42</sup>

### National policies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

22. In 2015, the Government of Sudan initiated The Higher Committee for Sustainable Development. National SDG objectives were set as: (a) prosperity and economic development; (b) social development; (c) peace and security; and (d) conservation of the environment. The programme aims to produce development that is sustainable, inclusive, equitable and sensitive to human rights, especially of vulnerable groups. Three documents were prepared:

- a) The National Sustainable Development Programme (2016-2020)
- b) Sustainable Development Implementation plan (2017-2020)
- c) State Sustainable Development Plans (for North Kordofan).<sup>43</sup>

23. This framework included specific national priorities with relevance to SDG 2. However, they mostly predate the Sudanese revolution in 2019, which substantially shifted the governance, social and economic context for international cooperation/humanitarian assistance.

### The political transition and implications for WFP

24. The CSP coincides with a period of major political, economic, and social transition which began with the fall of ruler Omar Al-Bashir. Between 2019 and 2021, Sudan was governed by a transitional civilian-military Government mandated by the Interim Constitutional Declaration, signed between the Transitional Military Council and an opposition movement known as the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC).

25. This administration pursued a range of significant reforms that shaped the operational context for WFP. It concluded peace agreements with several (but not all) armed groups that had opposed the previous national Government for many years. From February 2021, the new cabinet brought the parties to the Juba Peace Agreement into ministerial positions. It also took a bold approach to macroeconomic reform; by pressing ahead with the phased removal of wheat and fuel subsidies and by effectively devaluing the national currency from a previous fixed rate of SDG/USD 55 to a new flexible rate, which rose to SDG440 by October 2021. Subsidy removal and exchange rate liberalization were required by Sudan's creditors as a pre-condition for debt relief.<sup>44</sup> Sudan's removal from the USA's "State Sponsors of Terrorism" list was also negotiated. This had been a major obstacle to foreign investment, development assistance and international finance since 1993.

26. The Transitional Government's outlook, reforms and relations with international donors presented opportunities for a longer-term view and a more development-oriented programme. However, amid the economic crisis, humanitarian needs are greater than ever, and peace deals have not necessarily addressed the underlying causes of conflict and displacement. This is particularly the case in Darfur, where intercommunal violence increased following the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur draw-down at the end of 2020.

27. The underlying uncertainty and fragility of the political transition meant that the operational context for interaction with government remained challenging throughout the period. Between October 2021 and February 2022, the transition entered a new period of uncertainty with the dissolution of the political cabinet by the military, the signing of a new military-civilian political agreement, the civilian Prime Minister's resignation, continued demonstrations, and a number of national and international attempts at political dialogue.

28. At the time of writing the future governance situation in Sudan is uncertain. This has significant impact in the way WFP works with government in implementing its main programmes, including any meaningful work in country capacity strengthening (CCS) in Khartoum. In this context, the immediate focus for WFP will be sustained engagement and capacity building of technical state ministries.

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<sup>42</sup> UNHCR. Sudan: Country Refugee Response Plan 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Sudan Voluntary National SDG Review.

<sup>44</sup> IMF press release, 2021-06-29.

### 1.3. SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED

#### CSP design and evolution

29. Until 2017, WFP Sudan operated primarily through a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), complemented by short-term Special Operations. However, since the 2017-2018 ICSP, WFP emphasized a longer-term vision that recognizes the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (the triple nexus), and accounts for national objectives and capacities. This is continued and reinforced by the CSP.

30. The original CSP document presented a budget of USD 2.27 billion (2019-2023) and articulated the strategy in four strategic outcomes (SOs), with an original nine contributing activities:

- a) SO1 – response to new/protracted emergencies, through resource transfers, nutrition interventions and school feeding, for predominantly IDPs/refugees but also some residents (77 percent of the budget)
- b) SO2 – the sustainable improvement of nutrition through nutrition interventions and school feeding for residents (6 percent)
- c) SO3 – strengthened household and food system resilience through productive safety net and farmer-to-market capacity strengthening activities (10 percent)
- d) SO4 – support to the humanitarian/development community through common service provision including air transport, logistics and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (7 percent).

31. The CSP evolved quite significantly between 2019 and 2021, with several budget revisions (BRs) and an overall expansion to USD 2.7 billion. In May 2020, budget revision 2 (BR02) introduced a stand-alone food procurement service provision activity under SO4, reflecting a newly reached agreement with government (USD 64 million), as well as capacity strengthening under SO1. WFP agreed to procure 200,000 metric tons (MT) of wheat from the international market on the Government's behalf to help it respond to the economic crisis in the country, while preserving reserves of foreign currency (payments are made to WFP in SDG).

32. CCS was originally only envisaged under SO2/3 but became a more definite aim of the CSP, following the later addition of SO1 sub-activities, including support to community-based organizations on skills development/fuel-efficient stove production, use of school feeding to support shock response capacities of state governments, and capacity support to federal and state health authorities to respond to nutrition emergencies.

33. In early 2021, USD 352 million was added by BR03 for a new SO5 and two additional activities. Firstly, WFP is providing support to government to implement the Sudan Family Support Programme (SFSP); an important World Bank-supported government initiative to establish a large cash transfer programme (USD 1.9 billion targeting 80 percent of the population) to cushion families against the loss of purchasing power resulting from the removal of subsidies. WFP is responsible for cash transfer service delivery in certain areas of the country, and also supporting the Government in establishing a payment system and complaints and feedback mechanism, as well as training and capacity building for staff.

34. A further important new initiative is in 'peacebuilding'. At a high level, WFP brokered and facilitated negotiations between the Government of Sudan and Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North factions that control the "Two Areas" in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. This presented WFP with new opportunities to expand existing programmes and respond to needs. It required specific attention to access negotiations, conflict-sensitivity, participatory approaches, and cross-community confidence building.

35. The structure of CSP SOs, activities, and modalities of intervention, with budgeted amounts and levels of funding (by activity) to date is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: WFP Sudan CSP – strategic outcomes, activities and modalities**

Strategic Outcome	Activity	Modalities	Original budget (USD)	Budget after BR03 (USD)	% of current budget <sup>45</sup>	% funded <sup>46</sup>
<i>SO1: People affected by shocks in targeted areas have access to food, nutrition, and livelihoods during/after crises</i>	URT1 (Unconditional Resource Transfer): Provide food and Cash-Based Transfers (CBT) to people affected by shocks	Mixed distribution modalities – in-kind, cash and hybrid: General Food Distribution (GFD) and Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) – and capacity strengthening	1,348,184,208	1,341,046,651	50%	116%
	SMP2 (School Meal Programme activities): Provide nutrition sensitive programming in schools	In-kind distributions (school meals on site) and capacity strengthening	105,301,840	105,827,876	4%	114%
	NPA3 (Malnutrition Prevention Activities): Provide preventative and curative nutrition activities to children aged 6-59 months and Pregnant and Lactating Women and Girls (PLW/G)	In-kind distributions (MAM treatment, acute malnutrition prevention and home fortification) and capacity strengthening	299,222,358	297,979,034	11%	42%
<i>SO2: Food-insecure residents in targeted areas have sustainably improved nutrition by 2024</i>	NPA4 Provide curative and preventative nutrition activities to children aged 6-59 months and PLW/G and capacity strengthening to national and state health institutions	In-kind distributions (MAM treatment, acute malnutrition prevention and home fortification) and capacity strengthening	93,821,693	92,994,936	3%	49%
	SMP5 Provide nutrition-sensitive programming in schools and capacity strengthening support to national and state education institutions	Mixed distribution modalities (in-kind, cash and hybrid, on site and take-home) and capacity strengthening	32,684,905	32,395,541	1%	75%
<i>SO3: Food-insecure people in targeted areas and food systems</i>	ACL6 (Asset Creation and Livelihoods): Offer asset creation activities and technical assistance through safety nets to help	CBT (cash and paper vouchers) and capacity strengthening	108,118,363	113,059,129	4%	61%

<sup>45</sup> Percentages total 99% due to rounding to the nearest 1%

<sup>46</sup> Comparison of the cumulative budget requirement to end-2021 and allocated resources (to August 2021).

Strategic Outcome	Activity	Modalities	Original budget (USD)	Budget after BR03 (USD)	% of current budget <sup>45</sup>	% funded <sup>46</sup>
<i>have increased resilience to shocks by 2024</i>	food-insecure households to reduce risk and adapt to climate change					
	CSI7 (Institutional Capacity Strengthening): Provide capacity strengthening support to farmers and local, state, and national agricultural institutions	Capacity strengthening	115,589,111	114,623,677	4%	83%
<i>SO4: Humanitarian and development actors and national systems have access to expertise, services, and infrastructure in the areas of logistics (including air transport), ICT, administration, and infrastructure engineering</i>	CPA8 (Service Provision and Platforms): Provide technical and support services (Logistics, ICT, administrative and project) to the humanitarian and development community and national entities/systems	Service delivery and capacity strengthening	27,918,144	25,993,490	1%	124%
	CPA9 Provide air transport services for personnel and light cargo alongside aviation sector technical assistance	Service delivery	140,719,537	139,504,173	5%	87%
	CPA10 Provide food procurement services to the Government and other stakeholders <b>(BR02)</b>		N/A	64,467,648	2%	241%
	CPA11 CBT service provision for the Sudan Family Support Programme <b>(BR03)</b>		N/A	324,751,063	12%	27%
<i>SO5: The social protection system in Sudan ensures that chronically vulnerable populations across the country are able to meet their basic needs all year round <b>(BR03)</b></i>	CSI 12 Provide advisory and technical services to federal and state governments and the private sector for strengthening food assistance delivery platforms and national and regional systems, including social safety nets programme management, early warning and emergency preparedness systems, and supply chain solutions and management <b>(BR03)</b>	Capacity strengthening	N/A	44,739,549	2%	18%



## CSP resources and outputs

36. As detailed in Table 1, the best-funded service provision and platforms activity is CPA10. However, this is anomalous, given that WFP is reimbursed for the wheat procured, and an agreement for an additional 200,000mt has been reached in 2021.<sup>47</sup> Aside from this, the best-funded activities are Unconditional Resource Transfer 1 (URT1), funded at 116 percent of projected budget, and School Meal Programme activity 2 (SMP2) under SO1. The least well-funded activities to date are the most recent additions to the CSP relating to the SFSP. Of the original activities, the least well-funded are the nutrition interventions. Overall, the CSP is 50.3 percent funded as of August 2021 (just beyond its mid-point).

37. The major donors have been the USA, United Kingdom, European Commission, Germany, United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, Sweden, Canada, Switzerland, Norway, and Japan. The USA provided more than 50 percent of the total directed multilateral contributions in all but one of the last five complete years (2016-2020) and as illustrated by Figure 8 (Annex 9) it is possible that WFP's reliance on US funding is increasing.

## CSP outputs achieved to date

38. The total number of beneficiaries (planned and actual) between 2016 and 2019 was relatively stable. A greater proportion of beneficiaries was female and, in general, a marginally greater proportion of the (smaller) planned number of male beneficiaries was reached. The major change in the numbers of beneficiaries reached came in 2020 as WFP scaled up original plans to reach more than 7.7 million people. Numbers reached increased markedly across all residence categories (IDPs, refugees, residents, returnees), but particularly residents (Figure 12, Annex 9). There was a further expansion of overall reach in 2021.

39. Additional beneficiaries were predominantly reached through crisis response activities. The significant scaling up of school feeding activities in 2019-2020, and the seemingly consistent lower reach of nutrition interventions were also noteworthy in 2019 and 2020. However, nutrition activity reach expanded significantly in 2021. Under SO3, the productive safety net programme appears to be expanding coverage steadily, but no data was reported on numbers of farmers reached with capacity strengthening until 2021.

**Table 3: Planned and actual (male and female) unique beneficiaries by year**

Year		Female	%	Male	%	Total	%
2017	Planned	2,706,144	74%	2,169,791	74%	4,875,935	74%
	Actual	2,012,438		1,597,984		3,610,422	
2018	Planned	2,690,218	83%	2,161,115	86%	4,851,333	84%
	Actual	2,239,102		1,859,108		4,098,210	
2019	Planned	2,776,276	76%	2,094,384	81%	4,870,660	78%
	Actual	2,118,694		1,691,416		3,810,110	
2020	Planned	2,820,093	157%	2,323,625	145%	5,143,718	151%
	Actual	4,428,327		3,358,808		7,787,135	
2021	Planned	5,001,688	97%	4,320,887	94%	9,322,575	96%
	Actual	4,871,373		4,059,628		8,931,001	

Source: ACRs 2017 (ICSP+PRRO), 2018 (ICSP+PRRO), 2019 (CSP), 2020 (CSP); 2021 (draft ACR).

40. The trend in 2019/2020 was for WFP to transfer less food than planned. In contrast, combined cash and voucher transfers – cash-based transfers (CBTs) – were overdelivered compared to plans, reversing a trend of under delivery in 2017/2018. In the calendar year of 2021, WFP transferred significantly more food than in previous years. Planned and actual volumes of CBTs have also increased markedly in 2021, largely replacing vouchers.

<sup>47</sup> The Evaluation Team is advised that, at the time of publication, a new Budget Revision increased the service provision and platforms CPA10 budget line and removed this anomaly.

**Table 4: Total food, cash and voucher planned and actual distribution by year**

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Food – planned (MT)	265,637	256,726	337,915	340,420	528,060
Food – actual (MT)	145,260	148,048	150,035	235,907	350,653
Food % of planned	<b>54%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>66%</b>
Voucher – planned (USD)	\$20,209,602	\$51,240,258	\$23,011,812	\$25,747,565	\$840,760
Voucher – actual (USD)	\$6,428,061	\$22,104,751	\$29,312,533	\$51,033,761	\$6,357,487
Voucher – % of planned	<b>32%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>127%</b>	<b>198%</b>	<b>756%</b>
Cash – planned (USD)	\$3,895,803	\$13,051,833	\$21,322,921	\$22,392,390	\$97,308,186
Cash – actual (USD)	\$891,586	\$5,664,374	\$18,267,699	\$23,357,017	\$52,570,881
Cash – % of planned	<b>23%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>104%</b>	<b>54%</b>

Source: Annual Distribution Summaries, ACRs for *food only* in 2017/2018 (italics); 2021 (draft ACR).

41. A full analysis of CSP performance data, including outcome target achievement rates and budget implementation by outcomes and activity to August 2021 is included in Annex 9, as well as under EQ2 and EQ3 below. The evolving context, WFP's operations, activities, funding and headline outputs are graphically represented along a 2016-2022 timeline in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Evolution of context and WFP interventions (2016-2022) - last updated November 2021

Context	Bashir/NCP regime												Revolution				Transitional civilian-military government						Oct 25th coup d'etat and aftermath																																																
	Continuing low-level violence and displacement in Darfur/Two Areas																Increasing violence in Darfur																																																						
External	National level conflict in South Sudan												Power-sharing agreement in South Sudan - sub-national level conflict ongoing																																																										
													Tigray conflict/displacement																																																										
Economic													Economic crisis - high inflation, rising food prices																																																										
													Doubling of exchange rate								SSTL end				HIPC debt relief (in question post-coup)																																														
Envt.	Floods												Floods																																																										
													Fuel shortages								SDG devalued																																																		
IPC 3+ pop.													Gradual lifting of fuel/wheat subsidies																																																										
													COVID-19 pandemic - ongoing																																																										
Timeline	2016				2017				2018				2019				2020				2021				2022																																														
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
WFP	Strategies and Operations		PRRO and Special Ops.												Country Strategic Plan (CSP)																																																								
			Interim Country Strategic Plan																																																																				
			General food distribution (GFD)																																																																				
			Food assistance for assets/training (FFA/FFT)																																																																				
			Unconditional resources transfers to support food access (GFD/CBT/FFA)																																																																				
			Malnutrition treatment and prevention																																																																				
			School feeding/"school meal activities"																																																																				
			Institutional capacity strengthening (expanded from May 2020)																																																																				
			Climate risk and adaptation activities																																																																				
			Asset creation and livelihood support																																																																				
			Smallholder agricultural market support												Farmer to market capacity strengthening (post harvest-losses)																																																								
			Road infrastructure repairs																																																																				
			Gradual expansion of common service and platform provision (logistics, ICT, telecomms, SCOPE, fuel, accomodation, infrastructure)																																																																				
			UNHAS (inc. KRT-ADD service in May-July 2020)																																																																				
	Donor contributions			\$209m				\$155m				\$245m				\$301m				\$321m				\$294m (to Aug)				-																																											
WFP		MT	177,482 MT				145,260 MT				148,048 MT				153,698 MT				235,907 MT				258,175 MT (to Sept)				-																																												
Outputs (ACRs)	USD		\$3.7m				\$22m				\$28m				\$47m				\$74m				\$41m (to Sept)				-																																												
	Bens.		3,902,157				3,610,422				4,098,210				3,810,110				7,787,135				7,428,694 (to Sept)				-																																												
UN	UN/AU missions		UNAMID mandate												UNAMID draw down																																																								
															UNITAMS mandate																																																								
	UN strategies		Darfur Development Strategy												United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)																																																								
		Multi Year Humanitarian Strategy																																																																					
		HRP				HRP				HRP				HRP				HRP				HRP																																																	

Source: Evaluation Team, ACRs (MT, USD, Bens.) and IPC (phase 3+ population). Donor contributions are "directed multilateral contributions" from 2021.08.18\_Earmarking 18 August - see footnote 30. 2021 data output is not finalized.

## Country office analytical work

42. A summary of analytical work conducted by the country office to assess vulnerability, monitor, and evaluate programme performance, and inform programme decisions is presented in Annex 5.

43. Major annual and biannual food security monitoring exercises using vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) and Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) are very large, and robust pieces of work. They are also the primary source of food security information in the country, a key source for the IPC, and provide a guide for WFP's geographic targeting. These are complemented by more regular monthly market monitoring.

44. The country office Monitoring & Evaluation unit oversees extensive process monitoring, through WFP monitors and contractors, to verify the timeliness and quality of delivery by partners.<sup>48</sup> Outcome monitoring is also undertaken (in cooperation with VAM for SO1 – IDPs and refugees) to determine the status of programme beneficiaries. The results of outcome monitoring reach headquarters and the public as outcome indicators in Annual Country Reports (ACRs).

## Gender, AAP, and other cross-cutting issues

45. As part of its preparations for the CSP, WFP Sudan conducted a study to assess the extent to which gender inequalities in policies and practices hinder food security and nutrition for women, men, girls, and boys. The analysis identified gender mainstreaming programme priorities and gender inequalities that would require a specific focus to achieve gender equality and enhance women's empowerment.

46. Drawing on gender analysis, the design of interventions emphasized the importance of gender inclusion. CSP activities include specific nutrition interventions for pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLW/G), children under five, and what was described as a "gender-transformative approach engaging men and boys in childcare and nutrition" to facilitate a change in knowledge and behaviour. The School Feeding component includes additional CBTs to girls to sustain school attendance in specific locations in eastern Sudan where social norms do not favour girls' education. The CSP design prioritized the engagement of women in Productive Safety Net (PSN) activities.

47. The CSP document stated that WFP would ensure that all activities and capacity-strengthening efforts promote gender-transformative institutional objectives in pursuit of SDG 5. Overall, articulation of gender under the CSP was considered strong enough to meet approval standards. The CSP is given a Gender and Age Marker of 3, indicating that gender is fully integrated.

48. The CSP document identified people living with disabilities as being among the vulnerable groups affected by protracted crises and stated that WFP will pay particular attention to their needs.

49. In principle, WFP's commitments to Protection and AAP are integrated into the design, implementation, and monitoring of activities by ensuring that all the interventions under the CSP fully address vulnerable people's safety, dignity, and integrity.

50. The CSP document indicated that WFP, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, will undertake climate risk analysis and environmental screening to inform programme design to contribute to resilience-building. WFP will also identify opportunities to reduce its environmental footprint throughout its operations.

## Reconstructed Theory of Change

51. The Evaluation Team reconstructed a Theory of Change (ToC) for the strategic shift intended by the CSP. This considered the context and the factors influencing or contributing to the CSP design and its activities alongside the "pathway" of organizational change required for WFP to contribute meaningfully to

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<sup>48</sup> Specifically, process monitoring collects and reports information on the progress of activities under implementation at different programme and activity sites. The monitoring looks at how project activities adhere to technical specifications, working norms, protocols, adequacy of basic services facilities. The process also focuses on protection and accountability to affected populations (AAP), among other considerations that point to proper implementation of project activities. Reporting is weekly for urgent and serious issues, and the matter is communicated and eventually resolved by the technical team at country office and area office level. A biannual and/or annual report is collected to inform field-level agreement season with the most noticeable deficiencies in implementation.

the CSP's intended SOs, and the critical assumptions underpinning this process. The reconstructed ToC was discussed and validated in a virtual workshop with the country office.

52. In addition to contextual factors, the main inputs or processes contributing to the CSP design were identified as the national Zero Hunger Strategic Review policies from headquarters, WFP's organizational culture and established ways of working, and recent lessons learned. CSP implementation was identified as being influenced by corporate tools and guidance, support from Regional Bureau Cairo and Regional Bureau Nairobi, and established ways of working at country office level.

53. In order for the CSP achieve its intended outputs and make progress/contribute to the SOs, a strategic shift must be driven by WFP. The evaluation team identified three areas that it considers critical in this regard:

- a. Developing "adaptive management" to create an organization capable of grasping complexity, facilitating rapid changes, embracing learning and building new skills in response to emerging needs and challenges.
- b. Maintaining and strengthening the quality and reach of crisis response activities and building in conflict analysis.
- c. "Deep policy integration", including: a holistic/strategic approach to institutional capacity strengthening, gender transformative approaches, engagement with/integration of the humanitarian-development nexus, and more strategic approach to partnerships (based on response to needs and consideration of comparative advantage/limitations).

54. This theory is underpinned by a number of critical assumptions at various levels – some are within the control of WFP and others are not. Most importantly, full implementation of the required strategic shift is based on the assumptions of relative political stability, workable relationships with government, acceptance by donors or United Nations partners. Annex 4 includes a full graphic presentation of the ToC and list of critical assumptions.

#### **1.4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

55. The unit of analysis for the evaluation is the Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022) rather than a portfolio of projects or activities. This is not a detailed evaluation of each of the 12 activities currently in the WFP portfolio. Rather, the focus is on a more holistic assessment of the relevance, coherence and pathways presented by a reconstructed ToC, with an emphasis on how effectively WFP devised a more strategic approach to food security across the emergency, recovery/development, and peace nexus, to contribute to the SOs articulated by the CSP.

56. Due to the evaluation's broad scope, a theory-based approach with mixed methods was necessary to reach evidence-based answers to the evaluation questions (EQs). The evaluation drew on qualitative and quantitative data sources and analysis methods, and data was collected from a mix of primary and secondary sources (as explained in Annex 7 of Volume 2 of the report). As a theory-based evaluation, it was guided by a reconstructed ToC for the CSP (see Annex 4).

57. The evaluation assembled a large quantity of qualitative information in the form of document review notes, interview notes/transcripts, FGD transcripts, and so on. To make the analysis of such a large body of information manageable with multiple lines of inquiry, the evaluation team coded the gathered information against the various elements of the evaluation matrix. This facilitated consolidation of all the evidence gathered in relation to any one indicator/critical assumption, allowed for its consideration in one place, and for findings to be triangulated across various sources.

58. Workshops and discussions were held with internal and external stakeholders at country/regional level to discuss (and to some extent validate) key findings, conclusions, and recommendations before the final evaluation products were completed.

59. The core questions that the evaluation sought to answer are common to all CSPs and broadly cover relevance and coherence (EQ1), effectiveness/sustainability (EQ2), efficiency (EQ3), and changes attributable to the CSP (EQ4). Annex 2 provides a comprehensive review of methodology, field research and data analysis. Specific lines of inquiry and indicators are shown in the Evaluation Matrix (presented in Annex 7).

## 2. Evaluation findings

### EQ1: TO WHAT EXTENT IS WFP'S STRATEGIC POSITION, ROLE AND SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION BASED ON COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND PEOPLE'S NEEDS AS WELL AS WFP'S STRENGTHS?

EQ1.1 To what extent is the CSP relevant to national policies, plans, strategies, and goals, including achievement of the national Sustainable Development Goals?

**Despite a challenging political context, the country office was successful in aligning the CSP with relevant national policies and goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

60. The Country Strategic Plan (CSP)<sup>49</sup> was produced under considerable constraints linked to the political context. This limited the engagement with the highest levels of government during the CSP's preparation and formulation. However, the country office and senior management team adjusted well to the circumstances and took a robust approach to grounding the document in the country priorities and basic needs of the Sudanese people.

61. The country office drew on its experience in preparing the Sudan Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) 2017-2018 previously and utilized the same process for preparation of the CSP.<sup>50</sup> By contrast with the planning of the earlier document, on this occasion, the country office was able to draw on the report of the Zero Hunger Strategic Review (ZHSR), 2017-2030. This was managed for the Government by the country office which engaged with central and state level government, civil society, and United Nations agencies. The ZHSR also reflected the Government's commitment to achieve SDG 2 by 2030.<sup>51</sup>

62. To ensure credibility and consistency with relevant government policy, the team producing the ZHSR included three former Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security, as well as agronomists, economists, and other experts. The CSP built on the priorities and concerns raised in the earlier report, and so had no difficulty in obtaining government signatures on the memorandums of understanding with relevant ministries, prepared following the CSP's adoption.

63. Throughout the CSP development process there were extensive technical consultations with government at the working level, particularly with the Humanitarian Aid Commission and Commission for Refugees. With ZHSR's work and WFP's thorough identification of the food insecure population and analysis of their basic needs, these consultations ensured that the CSP was focused on the most pressing issues facing the country's poor, as well as current strategies to address them.

64. The food security assessments managed by WFP – the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) and Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) – are used as the sources for the CSP Needs-Based Plan (NBP). The two surveys are also the main source for the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis.<sup>52</sup> Technical staff members of relevant government ministries and bodies advised the Evaluation Team that the IPC analyses are the main source of information for planning and decision making related to food security. Accordingly, WFP's estimates for food insecurity and food vulnerability match the government estimates and needs assessments.

65. Both the government and WFP had taken the ZHSR as the basis for the commitment to eradicate hunger. All the strategic objectives (SOs), (including SO5) added during implementation follow and reflect priority themes set out in the ZHSR. Beyond this, the CSP is consistent with the National Nutrition Strategy and the Scaling Up Nutrition initiative, as well as the Agricultural Revival Programme and the National Agriculture Investment Plan. Implemented activities remained consistent with these policies and programmes.

66. The new country strategic plan built on WFP's proven strengths, as well as its comparative advantage in food distribution and delivery, common services, and geographic reach. WFP support was vital in

<sup>49</sup> Sudan Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023), WFP/EB.2/2018/8-A/10\*. The CSP was approved at the Second Regular Session of the WFP Executive Board, Rome, 26-29 November, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> WFP/EB. A/2017/8-B. The ICSP was approved by the WFP Executive Board Annual Session, Rome, 12-17 June 2017.

<sup>51</sup> The ZHSR stands as the Government of Sudan's agenda and commitment to achieve SDG 2 by 2030 (to quote the CSP, page 9, footnote 50).

<sup>52</sup> IPC: Acute Food Insecurity Classification.

provision of common services and at operational level. This was acknowledged in interviews conducted for the evaluation by its United Nations peers and donors alike, and by government representatives,

**EQ1.2 To what extent did the CSP address the needs of the most vulnerable people in the country to ensure that no one is left behind?**

**Based on its strong data collection methods and rapid response capabilities, WFP continues to merit its reputation as the leader in mitigating food insecurity in Sudan.**

**Despite a strong overall WFP performance, detailed analysis demonstrates that centralized approaches to general food distribution and other methods of food delivery do not always adequately adjust and respond to need at the local level, while quantities of food or cash provided may be inadequate to relieving food insecurity.**

67. All stakeholders recognize WFP's proven expertise in vulnerability and food security assessment. Data collection in Sudan has historically been poor, and the government itself does not have adequate demographics for states such as Darfur. Donors have demanded quick delivery, and therefore relied on WFP data which was integrated into national database systems. The overall Sudanese food insecurity caseload (IPC Phase 3+) now stands at 9.8 million.<sup>53</sup>

68. Among the main data collection tools employed by WFP are the CFSVA and the FSMS. The CFSVA is based on a national survey of up to 35,000 households and, since 2019-20, covers most of the country, including Khartoum. The most recent survey took place between December 2020 and March 2021.<sup>54</sup> The FSMS surveys 10,000-14,000 households drawn from refugee and internally displaced people (IDP) households in Darfur and the Southern and Eastern Sudan regions. Surveys for both exercises are conducted in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Food Security Technical Secretariat, and the State Ministries of Production and Economic Resources. In addition, 'S3M' (Simple Spatial Survey Method) surveys, focusing on the collection of data on nutrition status, are conducted by the federal government, in coordination with WFP, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The 2020 survey included 93,882 households and 145,002 children aged under 5 years old across Sudan.<sup>55</sup> The baseline for all WFP work for refugee and IDP populations has been the exhaustive household profiling exercise. This is a lengthy and complex process, undertaken by the country office vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) team, and last conducted in 2016-2017, when the list of beneficiaries supported by WFP was much shorter than today. This assessment quickly became outdated. With increasing numbers of beneficiaries to cover, the methodology became impossible to replicate, since it would take an estimated three years to complete. Consequently, the decision was made to switch to community-based profiling, rather than to seek to record data on every household. This approach is proving to be easier to repeat and goes along with collection of biometric records for all beneficiaries enrolled.<sup>56</sup>

69. Whatever the quality of data collected and assistance provided, in practice, food or cash distribution may not meet beneficiaries' basic needs. The Country Strategic Plan Evaluation (CSPE) identified a range of problems at the community level (see paragraphs 71 to 73). These ongoing deficiencies suggest a gap in monitoring and in the ability of WFP to adjust programming to respond to the local context, and/or a lack of capacity. It could also point to a corresponding failure on the part of implementing partners to assess the situation and report any issues.

70. As a backdrop to these findings, (see below), it should be observed that the IPC found a drastic increase in household food insecurity between 2017 and 2021. The total population classified at IPC Phase 3 and above (Crisis or Emergency) increased from a peak of 3.8 million in 2017 to 9.6 million in 2020, and 9.8 million in 2021 (see Figure 4). Across the country, the CFSVA consistently found households headed by

<sup>53</sup> OCHA, Situation Report, Sudan 27 September 2021.

<sup>54</sup> Background on the most recent CFSVA survey: "During this food security assessment, data was collected from approximately 36,300 resident households and surveys were completed in 181 localities distributed across all 18 states. The findings were aimed to be representative of households at the locality level. The questionnaire included information at the household level on demographics, housing, assets, livelihoods, expenditures, coping strategies and food source and consumption. Additional information was collected on child health and caring practices as well as awareness of nutrition related messages." From Relief Web, posted on 11 July 2021.

<sup>55</sup> Information on S3M from OCHA, as recorded in the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) March 2020

<sup>56</sup> Information from interviews with country office managers and technical staff.

females to be more vulnerable to food insecurity<sup>57</sup> than those headed by men (by 15 to 20 percentage points – see Annex 9, Figure 24).

71. Particularly relevant to the findings is that reduced purchasing power affected households' access to food. In areas such as East and South Darfur, insecurity, conflict, and population mobility have affected food availability, thus worsening the food security status of already vulnerable households.<sup>58</sup> This suggests that WFP did not make the necessary adjustments to payment levels in a timely fashion.

72. According to South Sudanese refugees interviewed for the CSPE in White Nile state, food rations and variety have remained the same since 2014. According to both male and female focus group discussion (FGD) participants as well as the community leader interviewed, these rations are hardly enough for refugees and their families.<sup>59</sup>

73. The size of the ration is WFP's responsibility, while United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is responsible for registration of refugees and subsequent additions to WFP beneficiary listings. Clearly there is a need for improved on-the-ground coordination and more timely response to address these issues. There is also a need for more frequent updating of registration of beneficiaries, speedy communication of additions to the list to WFP. A procedure to rapidly increase the number of rations and their contents would allow food distribution to be better tailored to the needs of beneficiaries.

74. In South Darfur, the cash-based transfer (CBT) was considered insufficient by male and female respondents and community leaders, due to the small amounts of money provided (SDG 1,900 per person per month at the time of data collection).<sup>60</sup> When asked about the change from in-kind to cash-based support, female FGD participants stated that this negatively affected food consumption due to the high food prices and limited cash.<sup>61</sup>

75. The somewhat fragmented studies summarized in Annex 5 find mixed evidence relating to the effect of cash assistance on food consumption. Dietary diversity and coping mechanisms and the sufficiency or otherwise of cash transfer values, are rarely addressed directly. However, WFP Sudan is keenly aware of the impact of food price inflation on the purchasing power of CBTs. Internal studies frequently make recommendations regarding the need to index cash transfer values to inflation, and food price analysis is conducted monthly by VAM to inform changes to transfer values. Incidents of insufficient cash transfer values might also be attributed to the size of the population in need, resource limitations, and distribution of half-rations.

#### Gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) and disability

**The CSP design was informed by a country gender analysis. It was effective in mainstreaming gender equality, and consistent with the WFP gender policy.**

**In practice, while WFP was consistent in ensuring that gender equality is central to all activities in terms of numbers of beneficiaries supported, there are limits to how much overall difference it makes to the lives of girls and women.**

76. A Sudan-specific gender analysis, *Gender Analysis in the Context of Food Security*, informed the CSP design. It provided recommendations for programming priorities to address gender gaps in policies and practices, and highlighted guiding principles for achieving gender equality. This provided a basis for mainstreaming gender equality in the CSP.

77. Gender and age were integrated into the CSP at a level consistent with headquarters requirements. Gender and Age Marker (GAM) monitoring was also calculated and included as part of the annual reporting process. The evaluation did not find evidence that the GAM was developed through a participatory process

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<sup>57</sup> Food security at locality level is assessed using the WFP corporate tool, Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>59</sup> Sudia, *Sudan CSPE Analysis Report*, based on research in White Nile, South Darfur and Red Sea State October 2021.

<sup>60</sup> This amount is reported to be SDG 1,900 per person, regardless of whether it is an adult or child. However, with the lack of registration of new-borns, children are rarely included in the system. Shortly after research was completed, the SUDIA researcher in Darfur was informed that WFP is planning to increase this amount to SDG 2,600 per person. By February 2022, the country office advised that it had increased again to SDG 3,000 per individual and an SDG 1,000 lump sum per household.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, female FDG beneficiaries URT1, Nyala North.



or used as a reflection point to improve the programme, or address shortcomings. For example, the reported GAM Implementation (GAM M) for School Meal Programme activity 2 (SMP2) was 3 in 2019 and 1 in 2020, with no explanation or follow-up actions. The GAM M for URT1 also dropped from 4 to 3, with no explanation provided.

### Disability

**Disability is recognized as a cross-cutting issue, and data is collected on its prevalence among vulnerable households. Despite this, programming appears to give no attention to the special needs of the disabled or their families.**

78. Output data are mostly disaggregated by gender and age, with less attention to other vulnerability factors such as disability. It is noted that process monitoring reports collect data on "Households with a disabled person", with numbers reported as making up around 25 percent of the households sampled. The 2020 Annual Country Report (ACR) estimated the number of persons with disabilities at 483,000 (57 percent female, 43 percent male). Further analysis of what kind of activities could support them and how WFP assistance would deliver better outcomes in their lives is required, but no further action has been reported.

79. According to the ACR, "WFP Sudan has developed in 2020 a Guidance Note on Disability Inclusion, with questions based on the Washington Group short set of questions and WFP Headquarters corporate indicators. These will be embedded into processes involving data collection". However, no change was noted in the 2021 data reporting, and most importantly there is no evidence on the use of data in informing programmes.<sup>62</sup>

**EQ1.3 To what extent has WFP's strategic positioning remained relevant throughout the implementation of the CSP considering changing context, national capacities and needs? In particular, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?**

### Adapting to change

**WFP adapted relatively well to the changed circumstances that accompanied the appointment of the Transitional Government. However, limitations of donor funding frameworks, its own programming structure, and a continuing emphasis on humanitarian assistance, limited the scope of realignment.**

80. A degree of flexibility was built into the CSP, enabling it to adapt to some new opportunities offered by a reforming government that was open to new ideas. At the same time, the Government has been finding its way. For WFP, as with other United Nations agencies, this has made it challenging to build firm, reliable relationships.

81. The CSP was described by its authors as "aspirational", in that it set out immediate priorities, and other actions intended to set directions for the future. It was clear to senior managers and others that programme teams had become entrenched in established ways of doing things and needed a nudge towards broadening collective thinking on what WFP might do. Several new thematic areas began to receive attention, although practical changes were slower to move forward. A small group of donors, including Germany, Sweden, the UK, and Canada, moved to more flexible funding, permitting an expansion of financial support for resilience activities, although on a modest basis.

82. The CSP structure and principles on which it was built did permit more opportunity than in the past to adapt to a volatile environment. Reportedly, it is now easier to respond rapidly to changes on the ground. Area Office and Field Office staff also report that it is now possible to fluctuate more quickly between emergency and recovery elements of the agency's work. At times, there were efforts to tailor programming packages to meet local needs and to move towards integrated approaches, blending different components of the programme portfolio in taking steps towards more durable support.

83. During the Bashir-NCP regime, for WFP as for other members of the United Nations Country Team, there was only limited opportunity to support the Government in building national systems. With the new Transitional Government, there were no longer any such limitations.

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<sup>62</sup> The Evaluation Team has been advised that WFP is working to develop a more comprehensive policy with the Federal Ministry of Education to improve data relating to disability, and guarantee the inclusion of people with disabilities.

84. Despite the barriers to cooperation between United Nations agencies and the government at the time, the ZHSR emphasized as a priority the development of stronger partnerships to enhance national capacities “to end malnutrition, achieve sustainable food systems, promote peace, respond effectively to emergencies and promote the self-reliance of those affected by hunger”.<sup>63</sup> With the revitalization of government, it became possible, at least in principle, to address these concerns.

85. WFP worked on all these priority areas since adopting the CSP. At the core of this set of proposals is the building of national capacities. WFP took modest steps in this direction, in cooperation with the Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture, its established government partners, as well as in support to enhance capacities in emergency preparedness.

86. WFP also responded to an important new opportunity to support the new Government’s emerging priority, which took shape as the Sudan Family Support Programme (SFSP). This programme is intended to provide cash assistance to 80 percent of the population, to help with increased household living costs associated with the removal of food and fuel subsidies.

87. Because the CSP was produced under the constraints of planning under a military government, and limited financial framework and repertoire of activities included in its portfolio, it lacked what some have termed the “bandwidth” to fully take advantage of changed circumstances.

88. At the CSP’s outset there was optimism that the overall situation would remain steady, and WFP could move purposefully towards resilience with more durable solutions for the displaced. This optimism was upset by further refugee influxes in the east, devastating floods in 2020, the onset of COVID-19, and a deteriorating economy.

89. Limited funding flexibility and the limited timeframe of much donor assistance, as well as the growing demands for emergency support, restricted WFP’s ability to move into supporting durable solutions. Hence, movement along the nexus from humanitarian to development programming was constrained, though favoured by the new government.

90. At a macro level, in terms of finance and budget, the CSP proved to be highly adaptable to accommodate changes in circumstance and emerging needs, without the requirement to rewrite the country strategy. Hence, there have been three budget revisions, with a fourth in preparation.<sup>64</sup>

91. In Darfur, under the rubric of recovery, Food for Assets (FFA) programming broadened the range of activities supported. Greater attention was given to more ambitious construction or small infrastructure activities, including building or rehabilitating access roads, schools, and clinics, and enhancing water supply and water quality.

92. The more creative approach to adapting emergency assistance to the distinctive needs of local communities was recognized as a positive development by several evaluation respondents. However, there were also responses which are less positive concerning WFP’s response to local needs in other communities, as discussed below.

#### Adapting to COVID-19

**WFP responded strongly to the overall challenge of increasing food and cash distribution in the context of COVID-19, both in terms of numbers reached and areas covered.**

**At a detailed level, there is a more mixed picture in stakeholder and beneficiary responses to the support provided by WFP in adjusting the CSP and addressing the needs of beneficiaries and of government partners in the context of COVID-19.**

**WFP adapted well to the increased logistical needs related to the COVID-19 emergency.**

93. In March 2020, Sudan reported its first confirmed COVID-19 case. A declaration of a health emergency and the implementation of mitigation measures intended to reduce the spread of the virus quickly followed. WFP took several steps to support the Government, including development of technical guidance on COVID-19, special programming to enable nutrition workers to safely undertake community-based management of acute malnutrition, and food distribution in Khartoum in collaboration with the Ministry of

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<sup>63</sup> As quoted in Executive Summary to CSP.

<sup>64</sup> On the detail of the budget revisions and the allocation of additional funds, see Annex 9, Tables 18, 19 and Figure 4.

Social Development. Also, given the already increasing food insecurity among the population (principally caused by the economic crisis and predating the pandemic), WFP scaled up its existing emergency interventions through unconditional assistance in several states.<sup>65</sup>

94. In general, there was strong government buy-in to WFP's effort to provide direct support to address the challenges associated with COVID-19. Some key informants provided information on WFP's ability to adapt to the COVID-19 context and address emerging challenges. In school feeding, the packages provided were distributed as a take-home ration for both boys and girls in 2020 to adhere to the safe distributions guidance while ensuring that students continued to have access to nutritious food.

95. For WFP managers and staff, the pandemic also increased the severity of risks to be mitigated. Existing risks became more difficult to manage, while new risks became all too apparent, including those concerning the health, safety and security of staff, partners, and beneficiaries. A range of mitigation measures was introduced, including the prepositioning of contingency stocks.<sup>66</sup>

96. One area of immediate concern was the inadequacy of health care prevention and services for staff. Despite a range of mitigation measures, the number of staff testing positive for COVID-19 increased by 1,100 percent in March 2021, compared to previous months. There was an improvement in the situation the following month.<sup>67</sup> However, the situation remains serious.

97. The pandemic accelerated WFP's transition to assistance using CBT. For example, due to the closure of schools, CBT in support of girls' education could not be distributed from March to October 2020 due to it being conditional on school attendance. Cash assistance was therefore converted to unconditional support for two months to protect students' food security and nutritional status and to encourage the return of girls to school.

98. There is evidence of strong performance in many areas, particularly in the fulfilment of plans for General Food Distribution (GFD). Substantial additional funding was received for both URT1 and SMP2. Funds provided for URT1 facilitated a rapid donor response to multiple emergencies, including major floods, and the influx of refugees from Tigray, as well as the broader impact of the pandemic and economic decline. For SMP2, school feeding was scaled up in the light of growing food insecurity.<sup>68</sup>

99. There was no reduction in fulfilment of plan targets for 2020 compared with 2019. With the population's heightened levels of need and an increasing number of vulnerable people, numbers for GFD and SMP vastly exceeded those planned. Under URT1, there was an increase of 206 percent and 208 percent, respectively, for males and females over the targets set out in the NBP, with the number of women and girls substantially higher than men and boys (3,395,521 female and 2,727,895 male).

100. Overall, WFP's operational response to the pandemic must be rated very positively. However, at a more detailed level, the picture is mixed. In some areas, WFP's response, although significant, and certainly making a difference, seemed less appreciated by government stakeholders and beneficiaries.

101. According to interviews with several stakeholders, WFP packages that were distributed in Khartoum were not suited to the population, nor their dietary habits. The food provided was considered to be lesser quality food that was meant for refugees or displaced persons. Certain food items (cooking oil more specifically) were not labelled, and this caused suspicion and doubt as to the container's contents. In other places, including Red Sea state, FGDs indicated that WFP distributed sorghum to a population which does not (by preference) eat sorghum. The grain was mostly fed to the animals, or sold where markets were accessible, at below-market prices.

102. There were also concerns about transparency regarding the funds raised or leveraged by WFP from international donors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government was unaware of how much WFP had raised for the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation revealed a perception among stakeholders that the funds raised were used to replenish old stocks of food that were in WFP warehouses, and that these old stocks were distributed. According to government respondents, these beliefs circulated within government circles, and not merely among the general population.

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<sup>65</sup> WFP, Annual Country Report (ACR) 2020, p.3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Sudan Quarterly Risk Reports, January-March, and April-June 2021.

<sup>68</sup> ACR 2020, pp.11-12.

103. WFP has been the lead agency for operations and logistics as part of the Sudan United Nations Humanitarian Country Team/United Nations Country Team COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan in support of the Government, in partnership with UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund and WHO. In the context of the pandemic, the Logistics Cluster was activated in May 2020 to enhance inter-agency coordination. It provided coordination support and shared logistics information within and between humanitarian partners. Support was also provided to the National Medical Supplies Fund for the national transport of medical supplies.<sup>69</sup>

104. United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) service provision platform CPA9 was impacted by restrictions in domestic passenger flights, but funding received enabled WFP to deploy critical services for the humanitarian/development community. For example, following the closure of airports,<sup>70</sup> permission was obtained to establish an international air bridge (Khartoum – Addis Ababa), linked to the global United Nations aviation service established to respond to the pandemic, to transport passengers and cargo<sup>71</sup> for United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and diplomatic missions.

105. The COVID-19 crisis became a significant challenge for common service provision due to restrictions on staff and labour movement. Road transport with WFP-owned trucks had to be used to a much greater extent than planned to support humanitarian operations.

**EQ1.4 To what extent is the CSP coherent and aligned with the wider UN and include appropriate strategic partnerships based on the comparative advantage of WFP in the country?**

**The CSP is coherent and well-aligned with the shared priorities of the United Nations in Sudan. Synergies and programme coherence were established through working partnerships with other United Nations agencies, most notably UNICEF. However, working with others was not the case across the board (partnership issues are discussed more fully in EQ4.3 below).**

**Under challenging circumstances, WFP worked appropriately with the Government of Sudan at both federal and state level.**

106. The WFP-UNICEF partnership flourished during the period of CSP implementation. The two agencies worked well together to complement each other in nutrition in support of the Ministry of Health, at policy and implementation levels. Recently, the two embarked on developing a joint programme in 'social cohesion', with a EUR 100 million budget, as proposed and promoted by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

107. Similarly, there is effective cooperation with UNHCR, notably through the establishment of relief efforts for the Tigray refugee population in eastern Sudan. Working relations with the International Organization for Migration are also constructive, and with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on crop and food assessments. However, in other areas of activity, there would appear to be a lack of clarity on their respective roles.

108. The CSP reflected the United Nations consensus at the time of preparation. All United Nations agencies faced the same issues of operating in a difficult context. All were attempting to apply the humanitarian-development-peace (triple nexus) and "new ways of working" to their planning and operations. However, despite friendly consultations during the preparation of the CSP, there was some apprehension at WFP embracing "the strategic shift", insofar as it included a stronger move into the development space by the largest international agency operating in Sudan – yet one that lacked significant experience in this sphere. Some donors expressed similar reservations.

109. WFP has a larger footprint than that of any other agency, in terms of the scope and budget of its operations, the number of its offices across the country, and staff numbers. WFP has been the lead agency for the Food Security Cluster throughout the CSP period, and some concerns were expressed by other United Nations Country Team members regarding its dominance in this sector. Stakeholders suggested that innovations and new approaches by smaller agencies tended to be overlooked.

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<sup>69</sup> WFP ACR 2020 and the FSMS.

<sup>70</sup> United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights from Khartoum to field locations were suspended between March and July 2020.

<sup>71</sup> From May to July 2020, UNHAS transported 626 passengers internationally and moved 2.1 mt of light cargo.

110. At times, it was seen as acting independently of United Nations Country Team and advising the other members of the United Nations family after the event. Its strength and reliability in the provision of common services and facilities (offices and accommodation) are much appreciated, given the limited presence of many other United Nations agencies in many parts of the country. Beyond this, it is apparent that WFP has not always fully appreciated or been aware of the comparative advantage of other United Nations agencies in certain areas. This may lead to unnecessary duplication. For example, in White Nile state, WFP was found to be undertaking resilience-building activities in the same locations where the UNDP was implementing similar activities, but with a larger and more significant operation than that of WFP. This limited its ability to forge strategic relationships with other members of the United Nations Country Team.

## EQ2: WHAT IS THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF WFP'S SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES IN SUDAN?

### EQ2.1 To what extent did WFP deliver expected outputs and contribute to the expected CSP strategic outcomes

#### Overall factors influencing outcome performance

111. This section presents complete figures for 2019 and 2020, (the only two years within the CSP period for which there are full sets of data), and partial data up to August/September 2021 (shared by the country office but not yet validated at the time of report writing). All three years were tumultuous times that included political upheaval, increasing refugee numbers, and further disruption caused by COVID-19. Behind significant disparities between planned and actual figures are unforeseen events, which in some cases caused an abrupt halt to assistance.

[Unconditional Resources Transfers contributing to Strategic Outcome 01: People affected by shocks in targeted areas have access to food, nutrition, and livelihoods during/after crises.](#)

**WFP's funding was highly in favour of SO1:URT1, with a significant degree of earmarking by donors. Some 70 percent of total CSP resources were allocated to SO1. This was also the outcome of responses to a series of wider United Nations appeals sparked by new crises in the country.**

**Table 5: Outputs: SO1: URT1 – Provide food and cash-based transfers (CBTs) to people affected by shocks**

	Beneficiaries receiving food transfers				Beneficiaries receiving CBT			
	FFA		General distribution		FFA		General distribution	
	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved
2019	383,275	328,600	2,280,466	1,576,015	167,975	206,294	389,100	474,431
2020	341,755	358,456	2,277,256	5,207,404	167,976	295,616	398,386	610,923
2021	685,057	372,540	3,875,851	4,052,050	457,831	373,224	985,654	831,191

Source: ACRs (draft 2021)

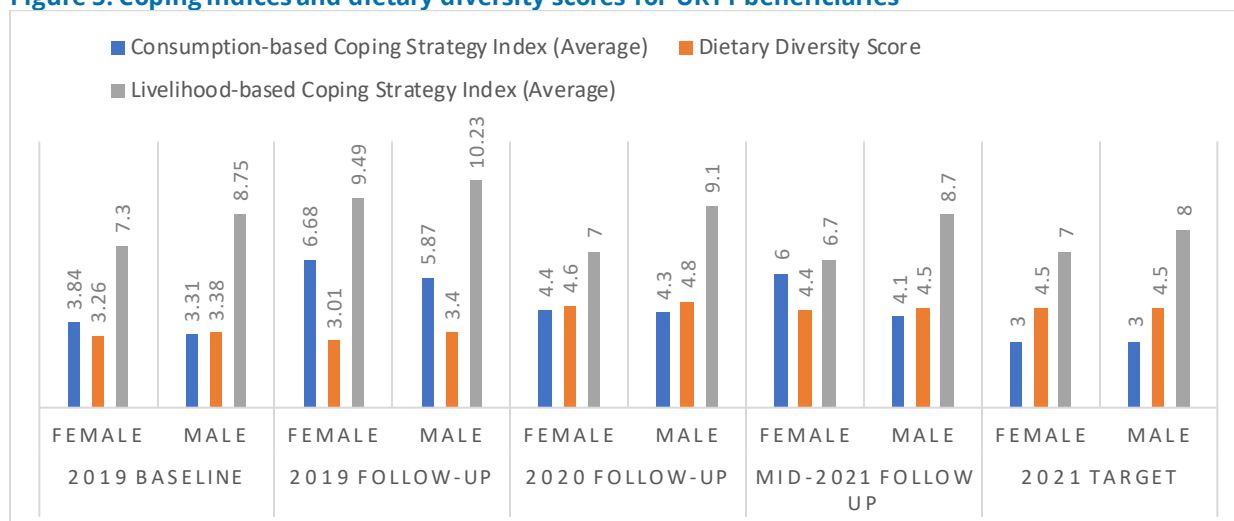
112. In 2020 the number of URT1 recipients rose to 6.47 million, a huge increase, particularly in terms of the numbers receiving unconditional GFD. This was followed by an overall decrease in 2021, but a continued gradual expansion in the number of beneficiaries receiving food/cash for assets and unconditional cash. In 2020, SO1 absorbed over 70 percent of CSP resources, with URT1 using about 80 percent of these. High funding levels were linked to new appeals for COVID-19,<sup>72</sup> an increased number of food-insecure people, victims of floods (250,000) and the influx of Ethiopian refugees from Tigray region. Increased humanitarian access to previously inaccessible areas in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Jebel Marra (Central Darfur) enabled the provision of humanitarian assistance there for the first time since 2011.

113. The following outcome figures fluctuate across each year. The reasons can be both complex and context specific. Sudan experienced significant population movements compounded by conflict and environmental disasters. One of the challenges in presenting average figures across a sampled population is that they don't tell the full story of how quickly household consumption and nutrition scores can deteriorate if, for example, breadwinners lose their jobs or access to markets is curtailed.

<sup>72</sup> This included 1.8 million people receiving a one-off in-kind food distribution in support of the Government's initiative to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 containment measures on vulnerable urban/peri-urban populations in Khartoum state.

114. Outcome results for URT1 beneficiaries were mostly encouraging. Food consumption scores, coping indices, nutrition scores and dietary diversity have generally improved for the sampled beneficiaries (understood to be IDPs and refugees)<sup>73</sup> from 2019 to 2020 (in households headed by both men and women). The overall percentage of sampled beneficiaries with an “acceptable” food consumption score improved from a baseline of 34 to 53 percent in the 2020 follow-up, but dropped to 45 percent by June 2021. The percentage with a “poor” food consumption score declined from 24 to 11 percent in 2020 and increased to 13 percent in 2021. Consumption-based and livelihood-based coping strategies deteriorated against baseline values in 2019 (apparently due to the disruption of the revolution and deteriorating economic situation). Significant improvement on the previous year was measured in 2020 (although not to a level that met the targets set), followed by minimal changes in 2021 (except for increased consumption-based coping by households headed by women – see Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Coping indices and dietary diversity scores for URT1 beneficiaries**

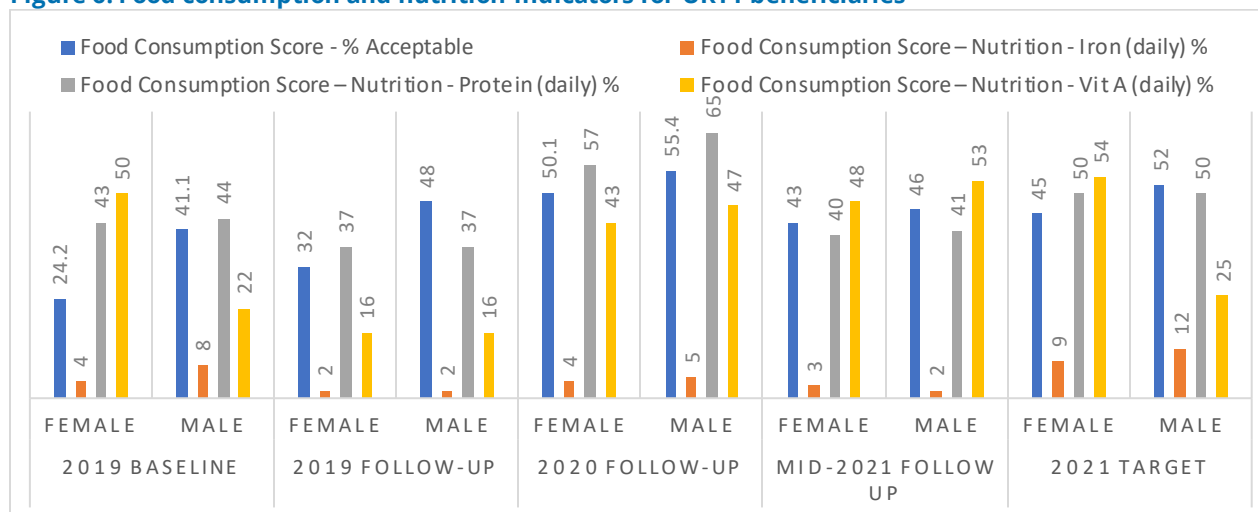


Source: for 2019 and 2020 data: ACRs; for 2021 data: June 2021 Food Security Monitoring System.

115. Nutrition indicators for sampled URT1 beneficiaries also deteriorated in 2019, in terms of iron, vitamin A and protein consumption. There was some improvement in 2020, with targets for daily consumption of protein met or exceeded. However, iron consumption by both men and women and vitamin A consumption by women remained at or below baseline levels. Outcome monitoring in mid-2021 found that daily iron and protein consumption decreased again, while vitamin A consumption increased slightly. Dietary diversity scores showed no improvement against the baseline in 2019, improved somewhat in 2020, then deteriorated very slightly in 2021.

<sup>73</sup> That is, the Evaluation Team understood that the sampling for data collection to inform SO1 and URT1 outcome indicators was based on the original profile of beneficiaries (refugees and IDPs) and is missing (or not at all representative) new caseloads of residents supported by this activity from 2019 onwards.

**Figure 6: Food consumption and nutrition indicators for URT1 beneficiaries**



Source: For 2019 and 2020 data: ACRs; for 2021 data: June 2021 Food Security Monitoring System

Malnutrition interventions and school feeding, contributing to SO1 and SO2: Food-insecure residents in targeted areas have sustainably improved nutrition by 2024.

**Output levels on school feeding have remained high, as have school retention levels, while output levels on nutritional intervention were quite severely impaired by funding shortfalls.**

**The parameters of capacity strengthening are not clear, though government ownership of school feeding is increasing.**

116. WFP spread school feeding and provision of nutrition in health centres across SO1 and SO2 to enable predictability in funding. Hence the demarcation of data across the activities presented in table 5 to 8 below, even though the activity itself is essentially the same in schools, health centres and in capacity strengthening. This does not amount to double-counting. It is purely for administrative and funding purposes.

117. In 2019, Sudan faced a worsening economic crisis and widespread unrest, which led to the appointment of a Transitional Government in September 2019. An estimated 6.2 million people were food insecure.<sup>74</sup> The 2019 numbers in the tables below reveal the following:

- Insecurity in some parts of the country caused the temporary closure of schools and constrained access to nutrition centres. Heavy rains in some areas also had an impact on schools' opening, and they remained closed for about 50 percent of the planned school days.
- Significant shortfalls in NPA3 (preventative and curative nutrition activities) point to funding constraints (resourced at 50 percent of the needs) which limited the level of implementation, particularly of the food-based prevention of malnutrition activities. Higher funding levels translated into more complete implementation under SMP2.
- The same funding shortfalls occurred in NPA4 (nutrition activities and capacity strengthening) which was funded at only 65 percent, limiting the level of implementation, while SMP5 (nutrition-sensitive programming in schools and capacity strengthening) was funded above the annual needs level.
- This contrasts with outcome results which show that for those reached, their nutritional status improved<sup>75</sup>, and the retention rate in schools remained high (94.3 percent).<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). *Humanitarian Needs Overview Sudan 2020*.

<sup>75</sup> In moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), for instance, the cure rate increased from 89.6 percent to 93.3 percent and the default rate went down from 7.5 percent to 3.2 percent.

<sup>76</sup> WFP, ACR 2019.

**Table 6: Outputs: SO1: SMP2 – Provide nutrition-sensitive programming in primary schools**

	No. of schools assisted		Children receiving school meals	
	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved
2019	1,301	1,276	827,478	696,487
2020	1,406	1,406	827,701	657,125 <sup>77</sup>
2021	3,931	4,330	1,986,145	1,868,626 <sup>78</sup>

**Table 7: Outputs: SO1: NPA3 – Provide preventative and curative nutrition activities to children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLW/G)**

	PLW/G					
	No. of health centres/sites assisted		Prevention of acute malnutrition		Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition	
	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved
2019	535	510	211,789	3,592	288,258	59,133
2020	535	376	220,006	34,121	317,079	73,849
2021	535	851	178,571	74,508	351,618	113,081
	Children					
	Micro-nutrient supplementation		Prevention of acute malnutrition		Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition	
	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved
2019	196,844	196,430	187,417	14,367	833,890	304,660
2020	216,544	133,098	194,416	105,989	905,941	354,068
2021	249,026	230,377	267,857	223,463	1,054,853	648,597

**Table 8: Outputs: SO2: NPA4 – Provide curative and preventative nutrition activities to children aged 6-59 months and PLW/G and capacity strengthening to national and state health institutions**

	PLW/G					
	No. of health centres/sites assisted		Prevention of acute malnutrition		Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition	
	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved
2019	238	238	103,602	18,679	60,769	32,632
2020	238	434	108,780	38,539	66,842	25,357
2021	238	475	119,654	74,508	76,869	113,081
	Children					
	Micro-nutrient supplementation		Prevention of acute malnutrition		Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition	
	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved
2019	123,958	194,938	88,254	36,382	173,627	110,888
2020	136,360	72,954	92,664	57,717	190,978	79,196
2021	156,814	230,377	101,928	223,463	219,627	648,597

**Table 9: Outputs: SO2: SMP5: Provide nutrition-sensitive programming in schools and capacity strengthening support to national and state education institutions**

	No. of schools assisted		Cash-based transfers		On-site feeding		Take-home rations	
	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved
2019	579	798	100,000	4,425	45,260	453,951	N/A	37,485
2020	748	748	150,000	28,535	54,763	140,112	0	162,361
2021	715	850	150,000	25,400	54,763	140,762	0	106,486

Source: ACRs

118. In 2020, Sudan again suffered multiple crises – economic hardship compounded by COVID-19, the worst floods in decades, and new displacements. The level of food insecurity hit a record high, with 9.6

<sup>77</sup> Added to this total are 817,251 primary school children who received take-home rations under COVID-19 arrangements.

<sup>78</sup> Added to this total are 734,638 primary school children who received take-home rations.



million people estimated to be food insecure.<sup>79</sup> Despite this, WFP assisted 7.8 million IDPs, refugees and food-insecure residents in 15 states – more than double the numbers for 2019. The results in Tables 5 to 8 show that the COVID-19 crisis presented new nutritional requirements. WFP began providing take-home rations in lieu of the in-school meals in 11 states, targeting nearly 1.1 million students enrolled in WFP-supported schools, including for the first time 180,000 primary school children in Khartoum State.<sup>80</sup>

119. With SO2 facing significant funding shortfalls (50 percent), the situation was exacerbated by COVID-19. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the available resources for SO2 and SO3 were from multi-year funding,<sup>81</sup> which was crucial to ensuring continuity and innovative approaches.

120. SMP2 (school feeding) reached more beneficiaries than the previous year, and the scale-up continued at pace in 2021. As with the outcomes reported for SO1, retention rates remained high. Expenditures were above the initial implementation plan and the programme expanded to 15 of the 18 states in the country, bringing the total of children reached to 1.9 million by the end of 2021.

121. In terms of regional achievements in 2020 under SO1, 162,000 boys and girls received school meals/alternative take-home rations in North Kordofan, Kassala and Red Sea. The opening of South Kordofan also enabled WFP to provide school feeding for primary school students prioritized by the communities. WFP expanded the School Meal Programme to 90 schools in South Kordofan, adding 12 schools in Blue Nile, to cover approximately 60,000 children.

122. In El Fasher, numbers have been increasing steadily, and by 2021 the programme covered some 330,000 students and 60 percent of schools in North Darfur. Bearing in mind that school feeding outcomes purport only to retention figures, anecdotal evidence suggests examination results have improved. Ministry of Education officials in Darfur attribute this to improved attendance and enhanced food security brought about by school feeding.

123. Despite the challenges, outcome results related to the performance of malnutrition treatment show that target values were met, and 97 percent of children aged 6-59 months and PLW/G enrolled in Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) treatment were cured.<sup>82</sup>

124. The evaluation notes that the ACRs' only indicators for capacity strengthening in SO1 and SO2 are numbers attending one-off CBT transfer training, and the (small) number of secondees attached to Government ministries. WFP did, however, provide advocacy and technical assistance for policies and programmes through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement. This included support for a mapping exercise for the development of a multisectoral nutrition strategy with the Government and relevant development partners.<sup>83</sup>

125. WFP has increased Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health implementation coverage. In some states, the Ministry of Education is the only cooperating partner delivering school feeding, and this should significantly develop its capacity and improve programme ownership further. In 2021, a budget line for school feeding was included in the national and state government budgets for the first time (a small amount, but, nevertheless, an indicator of government commitment).

126. Institutional capacity strengthening for school feeding (SO2) included the embedded secondment of national WFP staff in the Ministry of Education (three people in 2019, reduced to one person in 2020 and 2021). However, secondments to ministries are not inherently equal to capacity strengthening. Secondees have to constantly inform government of their aims, and avoid simply filling designated regular tasks. The need for advocacy on approaches to nutritional health, for instance, within the Ministry of Health is paramount, yet there was little inter-ministerial collaboration with the Ministry of Education.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> OCHA. *Humanitarian Needs Overview Sudan 2021*.

<sup>80</sup> WFP (August 2020), *School feeding in Sudan: Before the coronavirus and beyond* ●

<sup>81</sup> WFP ACR 2020, p.10.

<sup>82</sup> WFP ACR 2020.

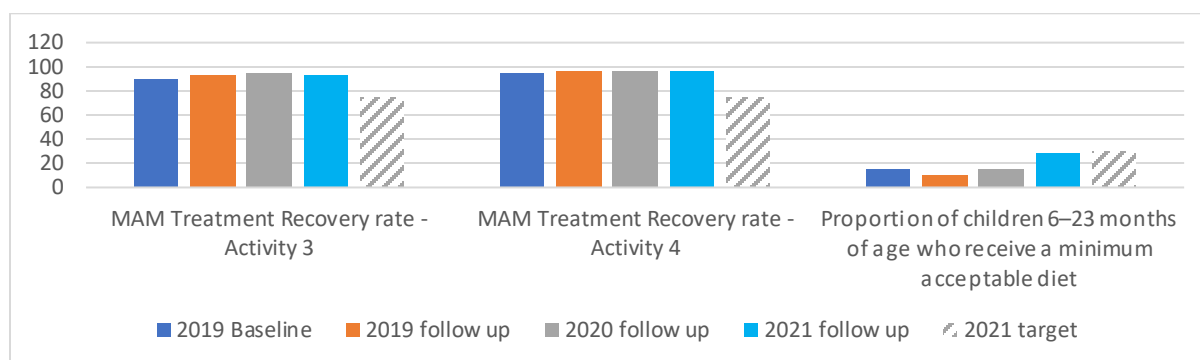
<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Confirmed by three of the evaluation respondents. One WFP respondent commented that this would be the role of UNICEF not WFP, as the agency responsible for the promotion of nutritional health in schools.

127. Output levels on school feeding (on-site and take-home) were generally high, impaired only by school closures (unrest and COVID-19). Outcome levels in terms of retention (male and female) also remained high. However, output levels on nutritional intervention were quite severely impaired by funding shortfalls. This is especially true for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition for PLW/G, where the number of beneficiaries was well below optimal levels.

128. In partnership with Federal and State Ministry of Health, WFP implemented a variety of forms of emergency nutrition support in 12 states. Community nutrition centres have been supported to provide treatment of MAM for children aged 6-59 months, care for PLW/G, complemented with food-based prevention of malnutrition for at-risk vulnerable populations, and micronutrients supplementation.<sup>85</sup> Treatment of MAM is tracked with standard indicators recording the outcome of each individual case. However, these indicators do not truly provide any evidence of progress towards a higher-level strategic outcome, as they cannot provide any indication that the nutritional status of the population as a whole is improving, merely that WFP treatment of acute malnutrition is medically effective. The indicator that may measure progress in this area is the 'proportion of children that receive a minimum acceptable diet'. No progress against baseline values was found by outcome monitoring to 2020, and targets were not achieved. The reported value for 2021 may indicate progress, but its comparability with the previous year is not known (see Figure 7).<sup>86</sup>

**Figure 7: NPA3 and NPA4 nutrition indicators**



Source: ACRs, WFP Sudan Nutrition Database

[Productive safety net and post-harvest loss programmes contributing to SO3: Food-insecure people in targeted areas and food systems have increased resilience to shocks by 2024.](#)

**Although output results are generally positive, limited human and financial resources have restricted the extent to which resilience programming (SO3) was able to respond effectively to beneficiary needs.**

129. SO3 is aligned with SDG 2, aimed at achieving sustainable food systems. The two activities supported are ACL6 and CS17. The first focuses on Productive Safety Net (PSN), and the second on Post-Harvest Losses (PHL). Under PSN, WFP seeks to contribute to enhancing livelihoods by increasing the productive capacity of food-insecure rural populations and creating community-based assets. It also provides capacity strengthening to national institutions that operate at state and community level, and engage in supporting the work.

130. The 2018 ACR places PSN in the broader context of a commitment to strengthen the national safety net.<sup>87</sup> According to interviews, a substantial component of the work in resilience prior to the CSP focused on

<sup>85</sup> Home fortification for children aged 6-59 months uses micronutrient powders as supplement to reduce and prevent micronutrient deficiencies. The COVID-19 global pandemic increased the lead time for the arrival and availability of micro-nutrient powders, which impacted the level of distribution. (ACR 2020).

<sup>86</sup> A relatively recent evaluation of the WFP MAM programme in Sudan found that the addition of a food-based MAM programme on a targeted supplementary feeding programme decreased the prevalence of at-risk children but not of MAM and GAM incidence or prevalence directly. (International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (July 2018) *Impact evaluation of the World Food Programme's moderate acute malnutrition treatment and prevention programmes in Sudan*).

<sup>87</sup> ACR 2018, p.20.

capacity strengthening, but this was not reflected in indicators or monitoring reports at the time. A Letter of Agreement was signed with the then Ministry of Social Security and Development to provide technical assistance, and support reform of Sudan's social safety net system.<sup>88</sup> This predated the subsequent initiative on the SFSP, discussed in the following section of the report.

131. It should be noted that PSN programming (ACL6) is precisely the same, in substantive terms, as FFA (URT1). The difference between the two, in principle, is in the target population – FFA focuses mainly on IDPs, and is funded under ‘crisis response’ budgets, while PSN aims to build resilience in resident populations. However, FFA is clearly about resilience, and SO3 management was asked to take responsibility for some FFA operations under SO1. Further, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the boundary between SO2 and SO3 is unhelpful.<sup>89</sup> The 2019 ACR notes that SO3 activities “form part of an integrated approach to build resilience in a way complementary to nutrition and school-based activities”.<sup>90</sup>

132. PHL activities are implemented during the harvest season and improve household food security by focusing on reducing the harvest loss of smallholder farmers to spoilage. The beneficiaries are provided with hermetic bags for storage, along with training on how to use and maintain them. Training is also provided on post-harvest handling, storage and food quality.<sup>91</sup> Linkages to markets and market sustainability for the products are promoted through engagement of the private sector and the government. According to the 2018 ACR, similar operations are underway in 16 African countries.<sup>92</sup>

133. Full data on beneficiaries, expenditures and other outputs predominantly cover ACL6. In 2019, the planned number of beneficiaries to receive PSN support was 230,390 and 67.5 percent of the target was achieved. In 2020, the target remained almost identical, with 72 percent of beneficiaries reached. 2021 saw a major increase in the number of beneficiaries, and a reach of 109 percent against the target (see Table 9).<sup>93</sup> Expenditure as a percentage of the figure given in NBPs stood at 59 percent in 2019 and 54 percent in 2020.<sup>94</sup> While the total number of beneficiaries supported increased between 2019 and 2021, the percentage of women among beneficiaries initially remained steady at 67 percent in 2021 and then fell to 57 percent in 2021.<sup>95</sup> In terms of numbers of training sessions delivered and the number of individuals trained under ACL6 (in livelihood support, agriculture and farming, and income-generating activities), targets were mostly achieved in 2019. Also, 24 out of 38 asset creation targets were achieved (e.g. constructions and rehabilitations of environmental and community assets). However, in 2020, (presumably resulting from COVID-related disruption), the number of training sessions delivered, and the number of asset creation targets achieved were very much below original targets. Draft data for 2021 shows improvements on both fronts.

**Table 10: Selected ACL6 output indicators**

Year	Beneficiaries receiving CBT		Training sessions delivered		Training participants		Assets created	
	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	No. targets	No. achieved
2019	230,390	155,420	527	525	7,043	7,043	38	24
2020	230,930	166,495	527	195	7,043	7,862	36	7
2021	232,840	254,575	N/A	N/A	20,940	20,940	10	10

Source: ACRs

134. For the most part, CSI7 does not register in output monitoring reports. The only exception is data on performance against one indicator included in the ACRs for 2019 and 2020, measuring the number of smallholder farmers trained in post-harvest handling practices. For 2019, the planned target was 45,800, with 40,005 farmers reported as trained. For 2020, the figures are 50,300 planned and only 21,000 actuals.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Interviews with WFP staff at country office, area office, and field office levels.

<sup>90</sup> ACR 2019, p.12.

<sup>91</sup> ACR 2019, p. 13.

<sup>92</sup> ACR 2018, p.21.

<sup>93</sup> See Table 27, Annex 9 for full data sources.

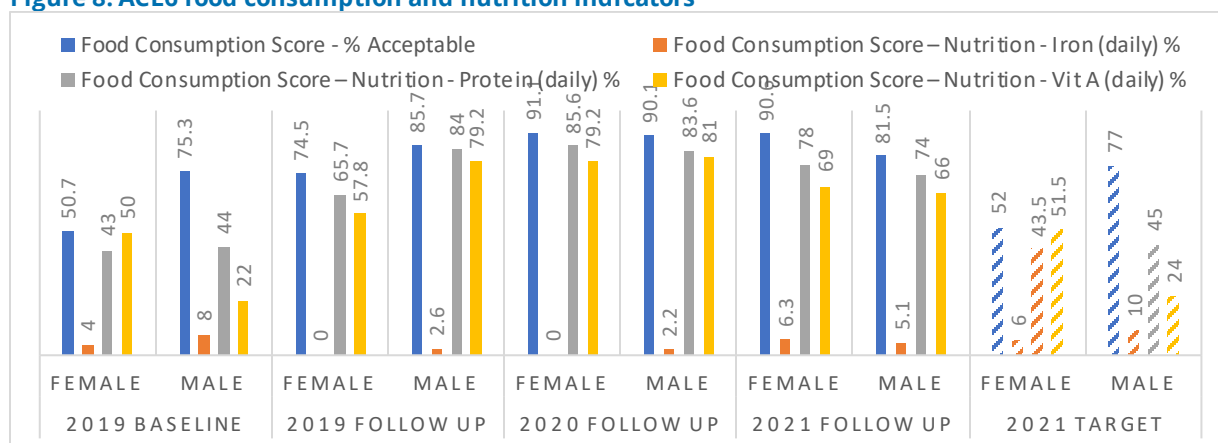
<sup>94</sup> See Table 8, Annex 9.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

At least in part, the discrepancy appears to be accounted for by interruptions relating to COVID-19. Draft data for 2021 indicates that 53,000 smallholder farmers were supported/trained.

135. For ACL6 (PSN), the outcome indicators are food consumption scores and levels of nutrition target achievement. Readings on the indicators generally improved during the period (Figure 8). From the baseline to 2019 follow-up, significant improvements could be seen for households headed by men, but with only minimal improvements for households headed by women. However, this initial gender disparity was not repeated in 2020. Most food consumption and nutrition targets were achieved, or considerably exceeded. However, these targets were set at a low level, just above the baseline values measured (indicating the purpose of the programme as a safety-net to prevent deterioration in food security status, rather than to enhance it). The exceptional indicator is iron consumption, which remained very low, but increased somewhat in the 2021 survey.<sup>96</sup> This suggests a possible lack of nutrition sensitivity in planning utilization of the CBT modality, which was used in all operations for this activity.

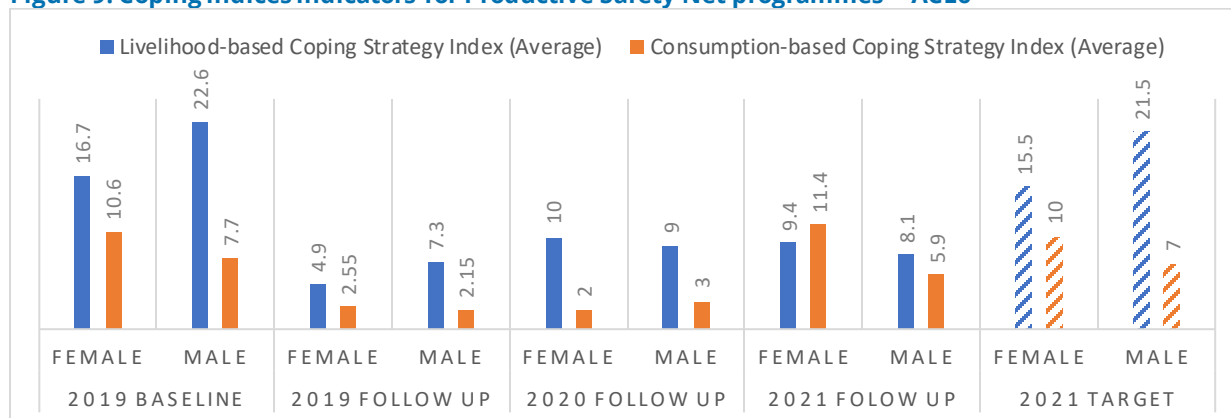
**Figure 8: ACL6 food consumption and nutrition indicators**



Source: ACRs

136. The trends in coping strategies for ACL participants are generally positive, according to the outcome data available (Figure 9). In the baseline, households headed by men and those headed by women recorded very high (negative) average coping scores. These reduced significantly in the 2019 follow-up, but increased slightly by 2020, and again in 2021 (especially among women). Nonetheless, the targets of an improvement against the baseline continue to be largely achieved.

**Figure 9: Coping indices indicators for Productive Safety Net programmes – ACL6**



Source: ACRs

137. According to long-term staff, WFP began working on resilience programming (PSN) in 2013. The PHL programme is more recent in its origin, beginning only with the CSP. For PHL, the principal partner is the Ministry of Agriculture and its Agricultural Research Centre. For PSN, prior to the Revolution, what is now the Ministry of Social Development was a strong partner, however government relations are no longer so well-defined. WFP staff capacity is limited, with only three dedicated country office staff working on SO3,

<sup>96</sup> For scores by indicator, see Table 36, Outcome Baselines, Targets and Values, in Annex9, Volume 2.

plus area office and field office staff. There are also difficulties in finding cooperating partner organizations with the skill set and experience to work in resilience-related work.

138. Community leaders interviewed for the evaluation found WFP to be lacking in experience of undertaking resilience programming, as well as in having suitable ground-level staff capacity required for the delivery of interventions. However, an earlier study in Red Sea (Port Sudan) yielded more positive findings (see Annex 5). In this case, the programme was delivered by an experienced partner, the Sudanese Red Crescent Society. Key features of the programme included the creation or rehabilitation of community-based assets, including clinics, schools, and public latrines. In addition, vocational training was offered, which was viewed as highly relevant by beneficiaries. The Red Crescent Society had several committees with responsibility for maintenance and management of assets. This made it more likely that the benefits that accrued from the assets would be available on a continuing basis. Less positively, cash was not always delivered on time, and no assessment was made on cost efficiency of operations.<sup>97</sup>

139. Despite innovations in some of the resilience-building activities, fieldwork revealed that, had they been consulted, farming communities would have prioritized needs other than reducing post-harvest losses. Farming inputs and machinery were becoming more expensive and scarcer in the wake of the economic deterioration in the country, and farmers were struggling to maintain cultivation in the same areas of land they farmed in previous seasons. Similar findings were reported in a November 2020 WFP baseline study for PHL and PSN in Kassala and North Kordofan, leading to the following recommendation:

“WFP and its partners must improve household access to improved farming inputs like hybrid seeds and fertilizers for crop production. Similar support can also be rendered to livestock production as households indicated challenges in accessing veterinary products and services.”<sup>98</sup>

140. Two FGDs (male and female) in White Nile, revealed similar findings. The participants reported that they were not consulted when it came to deciding the subjects of the vocational training provided in 2020 and 2021. While the needs of the participants have been met, insofar that they generally agreed that they would profit from asset-creating training, there was no follow-up. Without further assistance and the provision of the necessary equipment and raw materials, none of the learned skills would prove to be useful for the beneficiaries in improving their livelihoods.

141. According to country office technical staff, there is increasing demand for activities that build community assets and provide relevant skill training to support increased income for households and smallhold farmers. However, within current limitations, it proved to be difficult to offer an adequate, continuing response. For now, the range of programming options, particularly in PHL, is highly limited but WFP has ambitions to expand. Some area offices are offering integrated programming at community level, taking in components from other SOs, beyond SO3. This approach offers promise in enabling WFP to enhance the effectiveness of its development-oriented programming. In this way, it may also contribute more substantially to supporting the strategic shift, while enhancing relevance and effectiveness of programming.

[UNHAS, logistics/supply chain services and wheat procurement contributing to SO4: Humanitarian and development actors and national systems have access to expertise, services and infrastructure in the areas of logistics, ICT, administration and infrastructure engineering.](#)

**UNHAS (CPA9) services were essential to supporting the safe and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in Sudan, yet the local steering group faced concerns.**

142. WFP established UNHAS Sudan in 2004 in response to the Darfur emergency to provide safe travel services for the humanitarian community, and security and medical relocation due to the challenging operational environment, large travel distances, and poor transport infrastructure.

143. UNHAS has been well funded through donor contributions<sup>99</sup> and partial cost recovery via ticket sales. Operations were regarded as essential to enable the humanitarian and development community to reach the most vulnerable populations to provide critical assistance. In 2019, UNHAS transported 23,861

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<sup>97</sup> WFP Sudan, *Productive Safety Nets Review Report Red Sea (Port Sudan)*, October 2018.

<sup>98</sup> WFP Sudan Country Office, *Productive Safety Nets and Post-Harvest Loss Reduction Programme Baseline Study* (funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), November 2020).

<sup>99</sup> UNHAS estimate that donor contributions make up 85 percent of budget needs.

passengers (from 96 organizations to 39 locations) but in 2020 this number reduced to 15,587 passengers<sup>100</sup> (8,413 fewer than planned) due to the COVID-19 crisis. The value increased to 23,144 in 2021.<sup>101</sup>

**Table 11: UNHAS annual performance indicators**

Key Performance Indicator	2018 value	2019 value	2020 target	2020 value	2021 target	2021 value
Total number of passengers transported	23,500	23,861	24,000	15,587	26,400	23,144
% of passengers served against requested	95%	94.77%	100%	-		
Lead time in recovering cancelled flights (hours)	24	24	24	24		
% of cargo transport against requested	100%	100%	100%			
% of user satisfaction rate	89%	87.50%	90%	92.6 %	95%	92%
% of humanitarian organizations transported that are implementing the Humanitarian Response Plan	89%	62.80%	80%			

Source: APRs

144. The Evaluation Team found that, in general, the UNHAS service performance was perceived by users as satisfactory,<sup>102</sup> with the highest satisfaction level achieved in 2020, and key informants recognizing the level of operational flexibility and important role it has played. However, of concern to some stakeholders was the functioning of the UNHAS Steering Committee, which was seen as being too large (with over 40 members) and poorly governed, with no meetings held between November 2020 and September 2021. The membership list was also found to be out of date with some 'members' no longer in Sudan.<sup>103</sup>

145. To ensure an efficient and effective service, the UNHAS booking system aims to maximize passenger seat utilization and minimize the number of 'no-shows'. However, in 2020 there were a high percentage of users who were 'no-shows' (8 percent)<sup>104</sup> and a high number of cancellations. One reason cited<sup>105</sup> for this was the utilization of UNHAS flights by government departments that had been given their own booking account and so could book staff at no cost.<sup>106</sup> Other concerns raised by key informants included the use of Mi8 helicopters which were seen as too big (with high fuel consumption) for anticipated demand on certain routes.

146. The Evaluation Team noted that UNHAS does not produce an annual report, and that document archiving should be improved through digitization. For example, user surveys older than 2019 could not be located. A further challenge has been staff turnover, leading to the loss of institutional knowledge.

#### **WFP provided essential common logistics, supply chain and telecommunications services to the humanitarian community and the Government.**

147. WFP is regarded by stakeholders as having a very strong comparative advantage in supply chain management and logistics.<sup>107</sup> Under CPA8, WFP provided common logistics services to the humanitarian aid community.<sup>108</sup> These services were for road and river transport, storage, logistics information and ICT for the deployment of connectivity services, and essential fuel supply. In 2020, WFP transported 16,644 mt of non-food items to field locations and stored 3,771 mt of relief items for the humanitarian and development community, including during the response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

148. The Evaluation Team noted that the logistics sector was not backed by a strategic vision or Theory of Change (ToC) (for logistics and supply-chain management) in the United Nations Humanitarian Country

<sup>100</sup> ACR 2020.

<sup>101</sup> ACR draft data.

<sup>102</sup> The results of UNHAS Sudan 2020 Passenger Satisfaction Survey indicated that user satisfaction was 92.6 percent.

<sup>103</sup> Based on key informant interviews.

<sup>104</sup> A target for 'no-shows' should be closer to 2%.

<sup>105</sup> European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) regional office (Nairobi) conducted a monitoring visit/review of UNHAS in Mid-2021 (draft report).

<sup>106</sup> Key informants estimated that the value of seats used by Humanitarian Aid Commission and other government departments was approximately USD 2.0 million, with many 'no-shows' and no apparent monitoring of their travel.

<sup>107</sup> Activity is monitored through a user satisfaction rate, with a target of 100 percent. Key informant interviews confirmed a high level of satisfaction.

<sup>108</sup> Common logistics services or Bilateral Logistics Services were coordinated through the Logistics Cluster activation (from May 2020 to May 2021) but subsequently were referred to as the Logistics and Telecommunications Sector (LET).

Team or among donors. Minutes from user group meetings, since the 2019 revolution<sup>109</sup> indicated that most coordination meetings were focused on short-term tactical and operational issues only. While most United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are well established and operate multimillion-dollar assistance missions, a sector-wide logistics and supply-chain management plan led by WFP may have supported a more coordinated approach to country capacity strengthening.

149. While at the start of the CSP there was limited recognition of the value of WFP's common service provision, the Evaluation Team found that the situation improved over time, with better support from headquarters to develop new processes and enhanced services. This led to an increase in the number of customers, improved staff morale, and positive recognition in monthly donor meetings.<sup>110</sup>

150. In late 2017 there was a serious fuel shortage in Sudan<sup>111</sup> which necessitated WFP taking on the international and local procurement, and operational provision of fuel, with services being managed as an additional common service.<sup>112</sup> This approach had a positive effect on transport performance, particularly when compared to other WFP operations in the region (see Annex 9 – Tables 42 and 43). By early 2021, WFP held more than 70 fuel service level agreements with INGOs, United Nations agencies and donors. Fuel was accessed via these agreements, and WFP's Service Marketplace System, based on requests for proforma invoices – 100 percent deposit of cost and monthly release of fuel. WFP stored and distributed fuel on a full cost recovery basis (Table 12). Interviewed donors confirmed that the WFP fuel service was extremely valuable, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis.

**Table 12: Fuel issued by year showing significant reliance on WFP bilateral fuel service**

	WFP fleet contractors	UN/INGO
Year	Litres Issued	
2018	499,185.00	48,222.00
2019	134,310.00	641,797.00
2020	11,399,637.38	1,258,481.44
2021	10,253,272.51	1,422,089.80
<b>Total:</b>	<b>22,286,404.89</b>	<b>3,370,590.24</b>

Source: Country office.

151. Telecommunications has been a critical common service to support the safety and security of aid organization staff and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.<sup>113</sup> During 2019 there was a data blackout, but WFP ICT was able to provide internet connectivity to the humanitarian community. This capability was subsequently enhanced as part of an emergency preparedness plan and capacity for data connectivity and inter-agency security telecommunications (on behalf of the United Nations Department for Safety and Security)<sup>114</sup> by installing dedicated equipment for connectivity systems to minimize disruption.

152. The Evaluation Team also found that there were potential management gaps due to the existence of different team structures for logistics and procurement. According to some key informants, this risked competition between units, and strategic and operational inefficiencies, such as a disconnect is between upstream and downstream pipeline management. There was no supply chain unit.

**The international purchase of wheat for the Government was recognized as a successful support intervention.**

153. While local procurement is a main objective, WFP purchased wheat on the international market to help the Government balance local currency expenditure with foreign exchange, and help improve bread supply to the population.

<sup>109</sup> Logistics cluster/Sudan.

<sup>110</sup> Based on key informant interviews.

<sup>111</sup> Fuel shortages were caused partly by oil refinery breakdown and lack of foreign currency to import fuel, as well as a reduction of fuel subsidies and blockages in Port Sudan.

<sup>112</sup> All bilateral logistics services were provided on a 100% cost recovery basis plus 4.5% overhead – except during logistics cluster activation – through the Bilateral Service Provision platform.

<sup>113</sup> The provision of emergency data connectivity was on a full-advance payment basis, and for security telecommunication voice connectivity service on a cost-recovery basis.

<sup>114</sup> Telecommunications services comply with the United Nations Telecommunication Security Standards (TESS).

154. CPA10 (food procurement services on behalf of government) was added to the CSP in 2020 when WFP signed an agreement with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to import 200,000 mt of wheat – equivalent to approximately 10 percent of Sudan’s wheat import requirement for the year – a target that was exceeded by 74,268 mt.<sup>115</sup> The Government was to repay WFP in Sudanese Pounds (SDG) to enable the Central Bank to retain more than USD 50 million in hard currency.<sup>116</sup> Limited foreign exchange for fuel imports had led to rationing, shortages and disruptions to electricity and food supply. A significant challenge in procurement was currency devaluation. Between 2018 and 2021 the SDG to USD exchange rate declined from 9.00 to 445.00.

155. WFP continued the wheat import support programme in 2021 but was not able to realize the same level of exchange rate gains. By the end of 2021, a further 77,228 mt had been imported. Throughout the intervention, the Global Commodity Management Facility’s procurement support was key to the success of the WFP’s support.

[Social protection system capacity strengthening contributing to SO4 and SO5: The social protection system in Sudan ensures that chronically vulnerable populations across the country are able to meet their basic needs all year round.](#)

156. Within the CSP, WFP’s engagement with government on the SFSP constitutes two activities contributing to two different SOs. The cash transfer service delivery component (CPA11) is a contribution to SO4, while the social protection capacity strengthening component (CSI12) is categorized as a contribution to SO5. This section addresses both.

157. SO5 was not included in the original, approved CSP, but was added in concert with a subsequent budget revision. As noted in the 2020 ACR, it contributes to strengthening capacity for implementation of SDG 17. Under CSI12, WFP provides advisory and technical assistance services to strengthen “food assistance delivery systems, as well as national and states’ systems.”<sup>117</sup> While there are other operations included in SO5, also under CSI12, these are substantial, but one-off, activities undertaken at the Government’s request.<sup>118</sup> The focus for the budget revision and the new SO is on WFP’s support to the Government’s SFSP.

158. By contrast with the other four strategic objectives, there is no overall SO manager for SO5. The head of the WFP SFSP technical team reports directly to the Deputy Country Director Operations.<sup>119</sup> It should also be noted that SO5 is not covered by monitoring activities.

**Throughout the period of engagement with the SFSP, WFP lacked a coherent and consistent strategy, not only for working with the Government and the Bank, but also for articulating its own objectives.**

159. In consultation with the World Bank, the SFSP emerged as an initiative conceptualized by the Transitional Government in late 2019. The new programme aimed to provide cash transfers to 80 percent of the population.<sup>120</sup> According to the World Bank, there was broad agreement within the international community, as well as among government and societal stakeholders, that the programme should be implemented rapidly to accompany financial reforms agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).<sup>121</sup> Although the United Nations Country Team initially declined to be involved, WFP later offered to provide

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<sup>115</sup> ACR 2020. Approximately 193,000 mt of wheat was procured via the Global Commodity Management Facility in five tranches and an additional 81,455 mt through dedicated donor funding.

<sup>116</sup> In March 2020, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that Sudan’s international reserves were low, estimated at USD 1.4 billion in October 2019, equivalent to two months of imports. In 2019, Sudan imported 2.7 million tons of wheat valued at USD 1.1 billion (source: Central Bank of Sudan).

<sup>117</sup> As documented in ACR 2020, p.21.

<sup>118</sup> These include: the refurbishment of silos operated by the Agricultural Bank of Sudan; the rehabilitation of specific sections of the Sudan railway system and lease of locomotives; as well as working with the Government of Sudan on preparatory work to support strengthening the food quality control system for agricultural products (Sudan ACR 2020, p.21).

<sup>119</sup> Apparently, it is preferred practice in WFP for new activities that do not fit readily into regular operations to be managed through stand-alone units, not fully integrated in the organizational structure of the country office. In the case of Sudan, this also applies to the Digitalization Unit and the Two Areas Team, both reporting to the Deputy Country Director Operations.

<sup>120</sup> World Bank, Sudan: SFSP, Project Approval Document, (PAD), October 2020, Strategic Context, p.6.

<sup>121</sup> World Bank, SFSP, Project Information Document (PID), September 2020, p.10.



technical cash transfer support for the initiative.<sup>122</sup> At a corporate level, WFP was keen to play a stronger role in CBT and other forms of support to beneficiaries.

160. Due to the delay in confirming its participation, WFP was not initially involved with the World Bank in the programme design phase, therefore needing to accept the Bank's leadership for both the technical assistance and cash delivery components. Lacking guidance on the Government's intentions, many in WFP viewed the World Bank as a competitor for managing the programme, rather than as a partner which should take the lead on the programme of support to the Government of Sudan.<sup>123</sup>

161. Such difficulties arose from a situation not initially of WFP's making. For example, at the time the programme was planned, Sudan was still under a US sanctions regime, with donors not in a position to provide resources to the Government of Sudan Treasury via the World Bank. Consequently, and as a temporary measure, WFP established a separate fund through which donors might contribute to the programme.<sup>124</sup> Interviews confirmed that the existence of two funding opportunities led to confusion among donors, as it appeared that the Bank and WFP were competing for funds. This uncertainty was resolved in late August 2021.

162. Following a visit by the WFP headquarters, the country office agreed to move ahead with involvement in the SFSP as proposed by the World Bank. Utilizing the donor funds, it proceeded with a pilot project in Khartoum in cooperation with government. This enabled WFP to make a start in October 2020 in Khartoum, with a team assembled specifically for the programme. A pilot phase was completed in July 2021.<sup>125</sup> Since the launch of the SFSP pilot phase in October 2020, WFP transferred SDG 597 million to 304,649 beneficiaries (50,755 families) in Khartoum, West Darfur and North Darfur on behalf of the Government.<sup>126</sup>

163. The provision of support to the SFSP under SO5 included capacity-strengthening assistance for a two-year programme to establish an SFSP call centre and complaints and feedback mechanism, as well as call centre staff training on standard operating procedures and business analytics. The SFSP Unit also covered communications, software development, payments, system architecture, business analysis, data centre management, finance and budget data analysis, and relationships management.<sup>127</sup> Outcomes from the various country capacity strengthening (CCS) initiatives could not be determined by the Evaluation Team due to the evolving political crisis at the end of 2021.

164. The Evaluation Team found that WFP's support to the SFSP needed to be extremely agile in a context of shifting external expectations, changing government interlocutors, and challenging operational dynamics – for example, the decision to change from an averaged family size transfer to one based on the number of individuals in a household.<sup>128</sup> According to interviews, the WFP technical team became well recognized for its capabilities and was well-accepted by its World Bank and Government of Sudan colleagues.

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<sup>122</sup> This discussion is based on interviews with WFP, as well as United Nations, government, and World Bank respondents.

<sup>123</sup> In the conclusion to a *Lessons Learned* report prepared by the WFP SFSP Technical Unit, it is recommended that: "WFP should continuously take stock of the political landscape, particularly in a dynamic environment of a transitional government, to anticipate changes in Government partners and to maintain its neutral position. WFP should take the lead in facilitating technical meetings with the Government, the World Bank and other key SFSP stakeholders, and pave the way for transparency and information sharing. In addition, WFP must ensure the engagement of Government's SFSP technical team (PIU) in each aspect of the planning and implementation of the pilot." See: *Sudan Family Support Programme, Interim Lessons Learned Exercise*, June 2021.

<sup>124</sup> The largest contributions are from USAID (USD 20 million) and KfW Development Bank (via BMZ, Germany EUR 20 million). Taken together, these two contributions constitute the bulk of all funds received. (Information from WFP country office, Partnership Unit). The initial World Bank grant to the programme is for USD 200 million (figures from Project Approval Document) from the Mult-Donor Trust Fund. The estimated ultimate cost for the programme, when fully implemented, is USD 1.9 billion.

<sup>125</sup> USAID Monthly Performance Report, Sudan Family Support Programme, 1-31 August 2021.

<sup>126</sup> WFP ACR 2021.

<sup>127</sup> Information from materials supplied by SFSP team at WFP. Currently, there is no Social Protection specialist on staff at the country office, though a new position has been created in the most recent staffing realignment. On the multitrack approach to social protection, see *Integrated Social Protection Framework for Supporting Basic Needs in Sudan* (not dated, but presented in November 2019).

<sup>128</sup> Regional Bureau Nairobi Social Protection support mission report on *WFP's Support to the Sudan Family Support Programme*, July 2021

165. While WFP's longer-term role with SFSP is uncertain, it remains an essential partner, with the on-the-ground expertise and experience in cash delivery, beneficiary enrolment and registration, that both the Government of Sudan and World Bank lack. The technical team clearly learned many important lessons about how to work with the Government and the Bank, and how to provide capacity-strengthening support. These lessons will need to be absorbed by the country office and WFP corporately if it is to realize its potential in a changing programming field (see also Conclusions). What is apparent is that WFP suffered from the lack of a guiding strategy for this type of technical engagement, which set out priorities, plans and expectations for its participation.

#### EQ2.2 To what extent did WFP contribute to achievement of cross-cutting aims (humanitarian principles, protection, disability, accountability to affected populations, gender, and other equity considerations)?

166. WFP collects annual (SO2 and SO3) or bi-annual (SO1) "outcome-level" data to inform a set of standard cross-cutting indicators. Indicator baseline, follow-up and target values are presented in the tables below headings on gender, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), protection and environment.

##### Humanitarian principles

#### **The VAM assessments and NBPs played a pivotal role in enabling WFP to adhere to the humanitarian principles.**

167. The interventions' design is informed by evidence of needs (NBPs) from the VAM assessments using standard vulnerability criteria and well-defined vulnerable groups. Almost all programme activities are founded on the principles of equity in terms of targeting and supporting the most vulnerable women, men, boys, and girls. The rigour of vulnerability assessments and NBPs is important for WFP impartiality and enabled WFP to adhere to international humanitarian principles.

168. Regarding access and coverage, the data shows (discussed under EQ2.1) that WFP generally performed well; however, WFP faced challenges in reaching beneficiaries in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states where rebel-controlled areas became accessible in 2020, but the numbers reached were relatively low. The funding and the number of delivery sites for nutrition activities have significantly affected the nutrition interventions, though humanitarian principles were upheld.

169. Several evaluation respondents indicated the difficulties WFP has in ensuring operational independence or being perceived as independent when working with the Government. This is largely dependent on the region, but in Sudan's highly politicized environment, it is something the WFP staff are alerted to.

##### Protection and accountability to affected populations

#### **Accountability to AAP mechanisms are in place and operationalized. However, attention given to "complaints and feedback" and protection from sexual abuse is inadequate.**

**Table 13: Progress against cross-cutting indicators – protection**

<b>Protection: Affected populations are able to benefit from WFP programmes in a manner that ensures and promotes their safety, dignity and integrity</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>CSP Target</b>
Proportion of targeted people accessing assistance without protection challenges	95 (M 94 F 96)	96	100	-	>95
Proportion of targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes	97	-	96	98	100
Proportion of targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges (new)	100	-	100	64 or 99 <sup>129</sup>	100
Proportion of targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified (new)	16	-	61 (M 62 F 59)	90	90

Source: ACRs

**Table 14: Progress against cross-cutting indicators – Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)**

<b>AAP: Affected populations are able to hold WFP and partners accountable for meeting their hunger needs in a manner that reflects their views and preferences</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>CSP Target</b>
Proportion of assisted people informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, length of assistance)	14 M/F	28	24	22	>80
Proportion of project activities for which beneficiary feedback is documented, analysed and integrated into programme improvements	83	88	90	100	100

Source: ACRs

170. The country office developed a Protection and AAP strategy defining the WFP Sudan approach for meeting the protection and AAP obligations. The strategy has three main objectives: 1. Enhancing capacity to conduct protection risk analysis and assessments; 2. Providing opportunities for beneficiary engagement through robust AAP mechanisms and tools; and 3. Incorporate protection mainstreaming principles throughout the programme management cycle.<sup>130</sup>

171. Process Monitoring activities conducted show that the country office monitors how the programme is implementing its protection obligations. Monitoring activities collect data related to general protection elements, such as beneficiaries' access to distribution sites, waiting time at the distribution lines, security and health safety measures at the sites, and measures to ensure the beneficiaries' dignity. According to the reports, most of the distribution sites were well organized, had crowd control measures in place, and few beneficiaries reported safety issues. The FGDs also confirm that distribution sites were generally well-organized. However, the Process Monitoring data show that the beneficiaries had no access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities at nearly half of the distribution sites. In addition, one-third of the distribution sites had insufficient shade.<sup>131</sup> These deficiencies were also reported by some beneficiaries during the FGDs conducted for the evaluation. The FGD participants also indicated that the number of distribution centres/cash providers does not adequately respond to the large number of recipients. The CSP logframe includes the corporate protection indicators, and the 2020 and 2021 ACRs show that, overall, WFP is progressing in delivering its general protection obligations (Table 13).

172. Regarding protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, the 2017 gender analysis indicated that sexual abuse and rape were not adequately reported due to lack of protection, cultural issues, and social stigma.<sup>132</sup> The staff interviewed pointed to a gap in protection capacity and skills within WFP, and advised

<sup>129</sup> 64% in FSMS survey; 99% in process monitoring.

<sup>130</sup> WFP Sudan Protection/AAP Strategy 2019-2023.

<sup>131</sup> WFP Sudan Distribution Monitoring – Process Monitoring Report, April 2021.

<sup>132</sup> WFP – Sudan Gender Analysis in the Context of Food Security, December 2017.

that there are difficulties in getting the right skills (at the time of data collection the protection officer position was vacant).<sup>133</sup> At the time of data collection, it was unclear to the Evaluation Team how WFP addresses the challenges related to under-reporting sexual abuse, and the evaluation did not find evidence of measures to address this problem. However, the Evaluation Team is advised that a 24/7 free-of-charge Centralized Call Centre has been established. In parallel, helpdesks are being set up in distribution sites for beneficiaries who may not be able or comfortable to report serious incidents through phones.

173. The 2020 and 2021 (draft) ACRs show poor performance on the indicator "Proportion of assisted people informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, length of assistance)". However, the monthly distribution monitoring report in 2021 shows good performance in two dimensions: 1. Who is included; and 2. What people will receive. Although, there is poor performance in the third dimension: communication of the duration of assistance. WFP established a call centre in North Darfur as a pilot complaints and feedback mechanism. The centre is now merged in the newly established national call centre for WFP operations across Sudan. Process Monitoring reports indicate that community helpdesks at the distribution sites offer an option to provide feedback. The data reveal that the helpdesk is available on less than 75 percent of the distribution sites. The FGDs with beneficiaries in White Nile, South Darfur and Red Sea revealed that feedback mechanisms were often unknown, in spite of WFP efforts to publicize them. Beneficiaries indicated that WFP conducts satisfaction surveys, but provides insufficient response on issues raised.<sup>134</sup>

174. According to WFP and cooperating partners, the adoption of community-based participatory planning under FFA and PSN provides women and men with the opportunity to be consulted on activity selection. Special FGDs for women were also formed in some situations. Community-based participatory planning contributes to improving beneficiary awareness of the objectives of activities and increasing their engagement. WFP staff noted that the revised profiling for IDPs will be based on community consultations, which should increase IDPs' acceptance of the results. However, the FGD participants reported varied levels of satisfaction with WFP consultations.<sup>135</sup>

## Gender

**Gender initiatives under the CSP have promoted gender equality, succeeded in setting directions for the gender transformative programme, and have effectively contributed to medium-term results for women's empowerment. However, there is little evidence of long-term or sustainable outcomes in women's empowerment.**

**Table 15: Progress against cross-cutting indicators – gender**

Gender equality: Improved gender equality and women's empowerment among WFP-assisted population	Baseline	2019	2020	2021	CSP Target	
Proportion of food assistance decision making entity – committees, boards, teams, etc. – members who are women	37	31	51	35	50	
Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of food/cash/vouchers, disaggregated by transfer modality	Decisions made by women	49	59	42	49	<35
	Made by men	11	19	6	14	<5
	Jointly made	40	22	52	37	>60

Source: ACRs

175. The Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan enabled the country office to fully mainstream gender within the programme, and identified existing discrimination/gaps that facilitated the development of a gender transformative approach in line with the WFP Gender Policy. All activities targeted and reached the

<sup>133</sup> A P3 Protection and Gender Officer has been recruited and was in place as of November 2021. In addition, National Protection and Gender Associates were recruited in the four area offices. Recruitment for the fifth area office is currently underway.

<sup>134</sup> Sudia, Sudan CSPE Analysis Report, based on research in White Nile, South Darfur and Red Sea State October 2021,

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

most vulnerable women, men, boys, and girls. Additionally, women were given consideration as participants within the PSN and PHL activities. WFP also implemented Social and Behaviour Communication Change activities targeting men and boys to be more involved in childcare, taking children to health centres, and to share care and nutrition responsibilities with women. The programme engaged men in cooking classes (using efficient cookstoves) and peer and father groups. WFP introduced additional take-home rations for girls in certain locations in eastern Sudan where social norms do not favour girls' education (based on a target of 80 percent attendance) with the aim of increasing girls' enrolment. WFP succeeded in setting directions for the gender transformative programme. However, the scale of activities and their relatively short duration limits the prospect for bringing about transformational change.

176. The evaluation finds that WFP is consistent in collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data for monitoring vulnerability and planning and reporting on beneficiaries, but gives less attention to other vulnerability factors, such as disability. The data show that WFP is inconsistent in reporting participants' disaggregated data by sex, age and disability, such as for participants in training sessions and retailers participating in CBT programmes.

**The data collected on gender equality show that there was strong promotion of women's representation on Project Management Committees and encouragement for both women and men to make decisions on the use of food.**

177. Most programme activities are founded on the principles of equity in terms of targeting women, men, boys, and girls and addressing their specific needs. Women were given special consideration as participants within PSN and the PHL activities, and women and children are the primary beneficiaries of nutrition interventions. Despite this, there is no evidence of how CSP activities have directly or indirectly contributed to observable changes in the lives of women and other vulnerable groups.

178. The 2020 ACR shows that women represent 51 percent of Project Management Committee members (exceeding the CSP target of 50 percent). The 2020 ACR also shows substantial progress towards joint decision making (women and men) on the use of food. These achievements are important milestones towards women's empowerment. However, female representation on committees was found to have fallen back to 35 percent in the 2021 ACR sample (draft). The evaluation did not find evidence of long-term outcomes on women's empowerment and change in power relations (due to the absence of qualitative studies). However, the Food Security Assessments show that households headed by women were consistently more likely to be food insecure than households headed by men (see EQ3 above).

#### Environment

**CSP implementation paid little attention to environmental issues, with fragmented small-scale initiatives that are not captured by the monitoring systems to improve learning and facilitate follow-up.**

**Table 16: Progress against cross-cutting indicators - environment**

Environment: Targeted communities benefit from WFP programmes in a manner that does not harm the environment	Baseline	2019	2020	2021	CSP Target
Proportion of activities for which environmental risks have been screened and, as required, mitigation actions identified	0	13.3	0	100	100

Source: ACRs

179. The indicator tracked by the CSP is "Proportion of activities for which environmental risks have been screened and as required, mitigation actions identified". For this indicator, the ACRs reported scores of 13.3 percent in 2019, 0 percent in 2020, and 100 percent in 2021. It is not clear to the Evaluation Team how this is calculated, and whether the methodology is consistent enough for this to indicate genuine progress.

180. In 2018, WFP Sudan and the United Nations Environment Programme carried out a joint environmental risk screening of the FFA project in West Darfur<sup>136</sup> to support the introduction of the WFP 2017 Environmental Policy that aims at integrating environmental considerations into WFP's programmes.

<sup>136</sup> WFP/United Nations Environment – Joint Environmental Screening Exercise of food assistance for assets (FFA) activities in EL Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan.

The joint assessment was intended to pilot WFP's environmental screening tool in FFA projects and raise awareness among WFP staff and cooperating partners on the policy and screening process. The evaluation did not find evidence of follow-up or further progress on this initiative.

181. Modest efforts were made to promote the use of fuel-efficient stoves (though at a small scale). There were 4,964 fuel-efficient stoves distributed in 2020 against a plan of 13,500. Fuel-efficient stoves were also used during the cooking demonstration activities under the Social and Behaviour Communication Change activities, and participants were informed about their benefits. Some PSN/FFA activities (tree seedlings, latrine construction, and cleaning) also have a positive environmental impact.

#### Country capacity strengthening (CCS)

**There are several examples of efforts by WFP to support capacity strengthening at federal and state government levels. However, generally for reasons partly out of the control of WFP, these initiatives often amount to capacity substitution, rather than capacity strengthening.**

**As for gender transformation and the triple nexus, capacity strengthening beyond training is not well-served by the corporate results framework, monitoring, and annual reporting.**

**There is a noticeable absence of a strategic approach to CCS, as well as of expert staff, whether in Regional Bureau Nairobi or the country office, to design and implement programming in this sphere.**

182. The Office of Evaluation's Evaluation Synthesis Report on CCS (April 2021) noted that issues raised in earlier corporate audit and evaluation reports continued to be evident. These included: inconsistent and incomplete approaches to CCS; lack of expertise to support capacity-strengthening design and implementation; and weak monitoring of, and reporting on, performance in capacity strengthening. As the Evaluation Team discovered, these characteristics of CCS programming remain for WFP Sudan.

183. CCS is not new to WFP, but it received more attention under the CSP. While some activities make explicit mention of CCS, all have at least some elements of work in support to the government at national or state level, or to service providers, or beneficiary groups and associations, in strengthening capacities. Under the Transitional Government, with many new appointees at all levels and in all states, and ongoing turnover and mobility in and out of government, there is more need than ever for support of this kind.

184. Overall, WFP sought to follow up on opportunities to provide assistance to the government. Yet, in many areas, it became more difficult to provide support aimed at institutional capacity strengthening. As discussed earlier in the report, one of the challenges for WFP is the need to continually adjust to the replacement of interlocutors. In the case of nutrition, WFP is now working with the third minister and third under-secretary in the past two years. During 2021, there have been three directors of nutrition. In some cases, at both federal and state government levels, positions remain unfilled, and whole departments may be inactive. The Nutrition Unit at the country office has three staff members seconded to the Ministry of Health for support to food fortification. Efforts to support capacity strengthening continue, but progress is constrained by high turnover of staff and associated delays. At times, officials must await decisions by new, incoming managers that may take months.

185. In some areas, particularly at state level, cooperation that worked well prior to the Revolution ceased, because of the removal of former staff from office, with no replacements yet appointed. In others, new managerial position-holders have not yet assessed the need for external support of this kind for their units. Despite this, support at all levels is being provided in several areas, including emergency preparedness, nutrition, school feeding and the CBT process.

186. However, it appears that support sometimes takes the form of capacity substitution, rather than capacity strengthening. Although the issue is well-understood by the WFP SFSP team, given the urgency attached to having the necessary infrastructure and enabling environment, there is a danger that technical assistance for that programme may follow the same path. This reflects the absence of an overall CCS strategy, but also the reality that there are very substantial capacity gaps. In Sudan, as in many other conflict and post-conflict states, these gaps are likely to persist for years, until the Government is able to recruit and retain qualified staff with the necessary skills, or has the budget, opportunity, and incentive to acquire them, to manage and operate national and state-level systems.

187. Some initiatives focus only on short-term training, which is unlikely to produce significant results in building enduring capacity. However, at an institutional level, probably the most significant, and longest-

established cooperation between the Government and WFP has been in food security analysis. The Food Security Technical Secretariat, under the Ministry of Agriculture, leads IPC analyses and processes, which constitute the basic source of information for all planning decision making. Through its long engagement with the Ministry of Agriculture, WFP facilitated the development of government capacity for data collection.

188. The Ministry of Agriculture and the State Ministry of Production and Economic Resources teams, now have the joint capacity to collect the FSMS quantitative data, through the administration of the Household Questionnaire. While this is a positive result of CCS efforts, complementary fundamental skills, such as analysis and report writing were not targeted by WFP. Almost all of the staff from the Ministry of Production and Economic Resources who were interviewed indicated that they have requested WFP many times to engage them in data analysis, but with no response. WFP also supported the Sudan Meteorological Authority in establishing an agrometeorological information system and early-warning capacity. WFP continues to pay the software licence and provide technical support. The Evaluation Team noted that the technical staff at the Sudan Meteorological Authority have been working there for years (not an issue of staff turnover) and still rely on WFP to a significant degree. Continuing dependence on external expertise without a transition plan will not lead to institutional sustainability.

189. According to the CSP, CCS support to government entities, as provided through NPA3 and NPA4, is intended to promote national ownership, support institution-building and increase impact and sustainability.<sup>137</sup> No indicators are provided to assess progress. However, within the CSP period, both the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education at the state level have taken greater ownership for WFP-supported programming and have supported coordination and planning. WFP has increased Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health implementation coverage. In some states, the Ministry of Education is the only cooperating partner for school feeding, and this should significantly develop its capacity and improve programme ownership further. A budget line for school feeding was included in the national and state-level budgets, for the first time in 2021 (a small amount, but an indicator of government commitment).

190. These are encouraging developments. However, the technical support provided to the ministries remains somewhat ad hoc, lacking a strategic framework for cooperation, with a defined path towards national ownership, and a transfer to government of full responsibility for devising policy and planning and implementing operations. It is recognized that uncertain circumstances in governance have made it difficult to develop a systematic joint strategy and a policy framework with government. Nevertheless, the preparation of a capacity-strengthening plan will be required, leading on to a mapping of a path towards establishing an enabling environment, and the building of national and state-level systems to take over responsibility for the sector.

191. As noted in the Strategic Evaluation of School Feeding, the role of “enabler” in this process of building national systems is central to the WFP School Feeding Strategy.<sup>138</sup> It is also a core component of the triple nexus (humanitarian, development, and peace). Yet, currently, there is only incomplete guidance from the corporate level on implementing such an approach and adapting it to country conditions.<sup>139</sup> Although a CCS toolkit was developed, and some useful tools were prepared concerning capacity needs mapping, these do not provide the necessary framework to support efforts to build or enhance national systems to address hunger. Furthermore, there is a demonstrable need to go beyond provision of materials to actual field-level advice and assistance in design and implementation of programming. It is also apparent that, under present conditions, there is an absence of effective coordination between headquarters, Regional Bureau Nairobi and the country office regarding CCS, with no dedicated expertise at either location.

192. At a local community level, where most WFP programming takes place, limited government capacity affects sustainability. WFP is taking modest steps to address this weakness in programming under SO2 and SO3, but the work lacks a strategic focus and substantial investment.<sup>140</sup> The heavy reliance on WFP

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<sup>137</sup> WFP Sudan CSP, p.13.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, pp.56-57.

<sup>139</sup> See the analysis and recommendations on these issues in *WFP Strategic Evaluation of the Contribution of School Feeding Activities to the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: Centralized Evaluation Report*, May 2020, especially section 2.4. The report notes that the process of working towards handover of responsibilities to government has been completed by WFP in Kenya – admittedly a more conducive environment in which to make the transition (see p.31).

<sup>140</sup> It was noted in an earlier Office of Evaluation report on CCS at WFP that, unlike some United Nations agencies, WFP does not have systematic access to country-level funding to finance its capacity-strengthening work (*WFP Policy on*

incentives for staff and volunteers and logistics is also a challenge for sustainability. Connectedness remains somewhat elusive, though (as discussed earlier in the report), efforts to integrate activities with this in mind are visible in some locations.

193. Emergency humanitarian assistance remains the primary theme for WFP in Sudan in its own planning, as well as in the eyes of government and donors. This is reflected in the financial reality of a budget still heavily weighted in that direction. Consequently, attention to national system building and CCS more generally, as measured by the overall level of effort, remains marginal within WFP programming. However, WFP is well-positioned to support the government to mount its own response to emergencies. The country office launched a pilot Forecast-based Financing and Anticipatory Action project. This pilot capacity-strengthening project with technical government ministries aims to anticipate and prepare for predictable shocks, such as flooding, and shift from reactive emergency response to proactive preparedness and risk mitigation.

194. UN agencies with a stronger focus on development programming will find it easier to adapt to supporting national system-building in the context of the triple nexus. They are also more likely to have the experience and expertise to make a ready adjustment to giving greater emphasis to this priority. In providing technical assistance to the nutrition sector of the Ministry of Health, WFP collaborates with UNICEF. The agency will also be wise to recognize the value of partnering as equals with other well-qualified members of the United Nations Country Team, as well as INGOs.

195. As for gender transformation and the triple nexus, capacity strengthening beyond training is not well-served by the Corporate Results Framework, monitoring, and annual reporting. There are success stories, but these mostly go unreported, despite the efforts of the CCS team at headquarters and Office of Evaluation.<sup>141</sup> The *Evaluation Synthesis Report on CCS* (April 2021) noted that issues raised in earlier corporate audit and evaluation reports continued to be evident. These included: “inconsistent and incomplete approaches to CCS, lack of expertise to support capacity-strengthening design and implementation, as well as weak monitoring of, and reporting on, performance in capacity strengthening”. As the Evaluation Team discovered, these characteristics of CCS programming are also evident today in the case of WFP Sudan.

196. When asked who was responsible for addressing capacity strengthening and institutional development issues in the SFSP, team members answered, “we all are”. This is a positive answer in that all recognize their responsibilities, but less positive when it is recognized that none of the team members have any expertise in this sphere. This reflects an apparently generalized belief in the country office that, if you are a technical specialist in a particular area, you can transfer the skills to others and understand what needs to be done to contribute to strengthening the host institution. Combined with the absence of an overall strategy and dedicated expertise in capacity analysis, implementation design, and relationship building, it is a recipe for disappointment.

### EQ2.3 To what extent are the achievements of the CSP likely to be sustainable?

#### **Incorporating capacity strengthening in SO1 enabled a closer working relationship with the Government of Sudan in local government.**

197. WFP strives to reach agreement with government partners over required levels of technical competence and the training required. It also encourages establishing working groups that bring line ministries and the Humanitarian Aid Commission together. However, at federal level, with the current exception of SFSP, and, (to some degree) nutrition, capacity strengthening is mainly about policy formulation, rather than technical training as a means to building core competencies. By contrast, technical training at field level is possible once protocols and guidance are in place. However, taken alone, under normal circumstances, technical training is unlikely to build sustainable capabilities.

#### **Sustainability in WFP’s largest ‘homogeneous’ caseload – IDPs – will continue to be unobtainable where people do not have access to, or ownership of, land.**

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*Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation (2009)*, January 2017, see Executive Summary, paragraph 52.). This remains the case.

<sup>141</sup> One study of note is the *Evaluation Synthesis of Evidence and Lessons on CCS from Decentralized Evaluations*, Office of Evaluation, April 2021.



198. FFA activities in camps have therefore been confined to soft assets – tree planting, fencing, food processing, handicraft, literacy classes, and so on. Moreover, a six-month resilience project, such as tree planting, belies the possibility of impact measurement. Even where lasting infrastructure is attempted – for example, in building a women’s centre – a six-month budget means that the best artisans and materials cannot be sourced in the time permitted.

199. According to information from WFP and government respondents, there was a (positive) change of attitude towards ownership for programmes and innovations under the Transitional Government, at both federal and state levels. However, converting this into iterative plans to gradually take on greater responsibility is likely to take some years.

#### EQ2.4 In humanitarian contexts, to what extent did the CSP facilitate more strategic linkages between humanitarian, development and, where appropriate, peace work?

**The CSP framework tends to promote a degree of ‘silo thinking’ that demarcates activities as stand-alone events, contrary to the nexus concept. The SO division, coupled with an expanding list of activities, is both confusing and counterintuitive for staff.**

200. The expansion of FFA to address production safety nets and post-harvest losses is welcomed by many, but there have not been clearly defined linkages across the SOs. For example, livelihood activities should have had a clearly articulated link for those graduating from nutritional interventions, otherwise the vicious cycle repeats itself. The teams from the various SOs have tended to work independently, nurturing silo thinking and planning. The country office is aware of these issues and initiated more focus on integration in recent months.

201. Silo thinking is less apparent at area office level. The Kassala Area Office (which also received a joint SO1, SO2 and SO3 mission from the country office in September 2021) reported that a small team has the advantage of regular consultation among those working on programming under different SOs, and was able to move flexibly between emergency and recovery elements of their work. When a new area opened in the east, WFP needed to respond with both PSN (ACL6) and emergency provision in certain areas. Both SO managers developed a useful hybrid response that allowed WFP to deliver short-term in-kind food assistance to the most vulnerable, while not discounting them from quite rapid graduation to cash-based assistance, including PSN.

**There is still an unequal relationship between WFP and NGO partners, which to some extent runs contrary to the nexus.**

202. To some extent, WFP’s partnerships with INGOs reflect the legacy from 2008 when INGOs were expelled from Sudan, and the United Nations – in particular, WFP – came to the fore. This dominance in the humanitarian field – and the necessity for WFP to develop everything from policy to delivery – led to a degree of assertiveness not always appreciated by INGOs, some of whom feel treated as delivery contractors rather than knowledgeable partners who are consulted on a regular basis.

203. The peacebuilding element of the nexus is inherently problematic in that it has no straightforward indicators and no direct attribution. Aligning conditionality with unconditional assistance provoked conflict in some areas. This is partly a legacy of prior programmes where WFP’s targeting is out of date. The tendency has been a “one size fits all” approach from WFP that has not capitalized on INGO – and, by extension, local NGO – learning and expertise on context, peacebuilding and impediments to development that are apparent from their other programmes.

204. FFA is a way out of unconditional food delivery, but care must be taken to avoid conflict in the transition. Where WFP introduces population profiling and/or means testing, there can be resistance from the local population. Some complaints were launched with local government.<sup>142</sup>

**The Joint Programme on Social Cohesion presents a valuable opportunity, through which WFP may craft an approach to peacebuilding through resilience.**

205. The new UNICEF-WFP joint programme (four years, EUR 100 million, BMZ-funded) is one of the more directly funded peacebuilding initiatives that examines social cohesion within a community development

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<sup>142</sup> A particular case was in an IDP camp called Calmer (Darfur) where the change from unconditional provision of COVID-19 food to FFA caused some conflict.

and resilience framework – protection, community engagement, livelihoods, education, access to land and water, etc. – all through a peacebuilding lens. A main objective of this new initiative is that common social service delivery should also strengthen trust in the Government of Sudan. The programme aims to contribute to SO1, SO2 and SO3.

206. As a beginning, WFP prioritized host communities and inter-community consultation on pragmatic solutions such as access to water, land, and other facilities. This formed a foundation of social cohesion to build on. But SO1, SO2 and SO3 are not easily presented as an integrated package to the Government of Sudan, and peacebuilding tended to be presented retrospectively as a ‘potential outcome’. Recent flashpoints in Geneina, for instance, showed that building water points and wells must be accompanied by community-based dialogue between nomadic and resident populations to abate conflict. WFP staff and partners do not always have significant experience and expertise in this type of consultation.

### **EQ3: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS WFP USED ITS RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY IN CONTRIBUTING TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUTS AND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES?**

#### **EQ3.1 To what extent were outputs delivered within the intended timeframe?**

207. For the purpose of this analysis, “timeliness” is defined by Office of Evaluation as the “extent to which goods, activities and outputs are delivered within their intended timeframe, with attention to quality”.<sup>143</sup>

**WFP demonstrated its capability to deliver emergency assistance rapidly, effectively, and on a timely basis. However, some factors reduced the timeliness of WFP’s non-humanitarian delivery activities.**

208. WFP moved quickly in response to deteriorating economic conditions and COVID-19 while scaling up assistance for areas and populations that it has not traditionally assisted. This was a response to increasing humanitarian needs, so should be expected of the largest humanitarian agency in Sudan. Nonetheless, the country office should be praised for overseeing an expansion of activities amid the pandemic, rather than a contraction due to the unprecedented operational challenges. WFP also showed its agility in being the first actor on the scene to respond to the needs of refugees from Tigray, in being the first actor to return to the Two Areas (Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile) when access became possible and providing a rapid and effective response to flooding and other emergencies.

209. Budget revisions were generally timely and enabled WFP to adapt the CSP to the new circumstances of the post-Bashir Government. The budget revision approved in May 2020 came just eight to nine months after the establishment of the Transitional Government, and added wheat procurement and capacity strengthening activities to the CSP.

210. There have been notable improvements in the quick release of food stocks for emergencies. For example, when the Tigray refugee crisis emerged, WFP covered the supply chain while waiting for additional resources from donors. However, the quality of real-time operational decision making is constrained (across WFP) by the need to use information from different corporate and national-level databases (e.g. WINGS, COMET, LESS, SCOPE, DOTS, and others). These databases are not linked or coordinated.

211. In the nutrition programme, where the Ministry of Health is the main implementing partner, high staff turnover is a major constraint, (as discussed above). If some activities are not completed on time (e.g., developing emergency modules), WFP undertakes this responsibility itself on behalf of the Ministry. The same scenario is playing out in the high-profile case of the SFSP, where the Government feels under intense public pressure to show quick results. In such cases, capacity substitution occurs, delivery takes precedence over capacity-strengthening objectives, and progress may be elusive.

212. One area of difficulty arises from internal staffing shortages at the country office and in the area and field offices, because it has been challenging to attract qualified international staff to apply for positions in Sudan. Country office management may have been slow in addressing and processing responses to staffing shortages, which, in turn, have impeded effective and timely programme delivery. For example, in North Darfur, there are only six field monitors to cover developments with a population of 2 million beneficiaries. There is an acute need to strengthen local monitoring to ensure that decisions on food or cash distribution and other activities are based on accurate and up-to-date information.

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<sup>143</sup> WFP Office of Evaluation Technical Note on Efficiency Analysis in CSPs (draft).

**Despite high levels of budget utilization and reasonable achievement of beneficiary and transfer targets (see EQ2 and Annex 9), when consulting cooperating partner organizations and beneficiaries at field-level, the evaluation found evidence of delays in a number of specific cases.**

213. INGOs point to continuing delays in WFP's release of grants, sometimes amounting to four to six months' delay with several contractual instalments outstanding. Also, processing invoices can often take double the targeted time (usually 45 days), and cash advances to kick-start programmes are frequently delayed. The problem is inflation; there is no mechanism for adjusting monthly costs, so a late consignment of funds means that the cash received does not match actual costs. INGOs hoped that the CSP would lead to longer contracts, but there has been limited progress on this so far (see EQ3.3 below).

214. Beneficiaries also pointed to some delays that compromised the utility of WFP assistance. Field-level data collection found that the quality of PHL activities (CSI7) in White Nile state was compromised by a late delivery of the hermetic bags (and relevant training in their use) that were supposed to be delivered before the harvest season. However, farmers did not receive them until after harvest was completed. While some of the harvest was transferred to the bags, about 75 percent of their harvest did not benefit from this activity.

**Timeliness in supply chain performance was generally favourable compared to other country offices during 2017 to 2018, but less so from mid-2019 to 2020.**

215. Several supply chain performance indicators reported at country level by WFP relate directly to timeliness and facilitate a comparison across quarters and years and against other WFP operations in broadly comparable contexts. Tables 41 and 42 in Annex 9 present the values of country office supply chain Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Sudan, Nigeria, Malawi, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. The Sudan country office generally compared favourably against other country offices during 2017 to 2018, but less so from mid-2019 to 2020 (according to the available data). For the number of days between planned dispatch and actual uplift, Sudan's performance is more consistent than others. The country office stated that, following an headquarters/regional bureau review, significant efforts were made in 2021 to push commodities further down the supply chain, in anticipation of access constraints due to predictable rains and flooding.

### [EQ3.2 To what extent was coverage and targeting of interventions appropriate?](#)

[On overall coverage \('reach'\) of activities compared to plans](#)

**The overall footprint of WFP's URT1 expanded significantly during the CSP period in almost all states/regions of the country as a response to the economic crisis and COVID-19. Beneficiaries in the Darfur states remain the majority by a substantial margin.**

216. Tables 44 and 45 (Annex 9) present the planned number of URT1 beneficiaries (Implementation Plan) and actual number reached each month in every state, with a calculated percentage (reach vs. planned) and colour scaling. The two states in which WFP found it most difficult to reach its intended number of URT1 beneficiaries are Blue Nile and South Kordofan, where the "Two Areas" are located. Rebel-controlled Blue Nile only became accessible to WFP in late 2019/early 2020, and a major scale-up of URT1 in the state was planned for late 2020 onwards. Numbers reached were low in early 2021 but improved significantly by May–July. A major scale-up of URT1 assistance to South Kordofan was also attempted, firstly during the 2019 lean season and then progressively from January 2020 to present, with a planned total of 854,000 beneficiaries in July 2021. While beneficiary numbers are increasing in the state, in the last 12 months for which data is available, monthly coverage ranged between 15 percent and 44 percent (in terms of actual reach versus planned reach).

217. In Darfur, the states most affected by periods of violent conflict and new displacement (Central, West, and North) have seen periods where beneficiary numbers have fallen below what was planned (within URT1). In North Darfur, there were periods of around 50 percent reach in mid-2019 and mid-2020, and an apparent decline in percentage reach following the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur draw-down from January 2021. A similar but less severe trend (with less drop-off in 2021) can be observed for Central and West Darfur.

218. In White Nile, host to a large refugee caseload from South Sudan, WFP consistently reached 85–100 percent of the planned number of URT1 beneficiaries' month by month. The same trend is observable for

much smaller URT1 caseloads in West Kordofan, North Kordofan, Kassala and Gedaref. During the COVID-19 emergency, WFP expanded URT1 to Khartoum, Sennar and Red Sea states. In direct partnership with the Government, very large numbers of newly vulnerable urban residents were reached in Khartoum during spring-summer of 2020.

219. "Coverage" at field-level was related to the number and location of activity delivery/distribution sites. Field-level data collection in White Nile state and South Darfur revealed that the limited number of distribution centres for URT1 was insufficient to assist the population in the refugee/IDP camps in a timely and appropriate manner. Similarly, nutrition beneficiaries consulted in Red Sea state noted that WFP nutrition services were only provided at a single centrally located health centre, and therefore did not reach many families due to the distances they would need to travel.

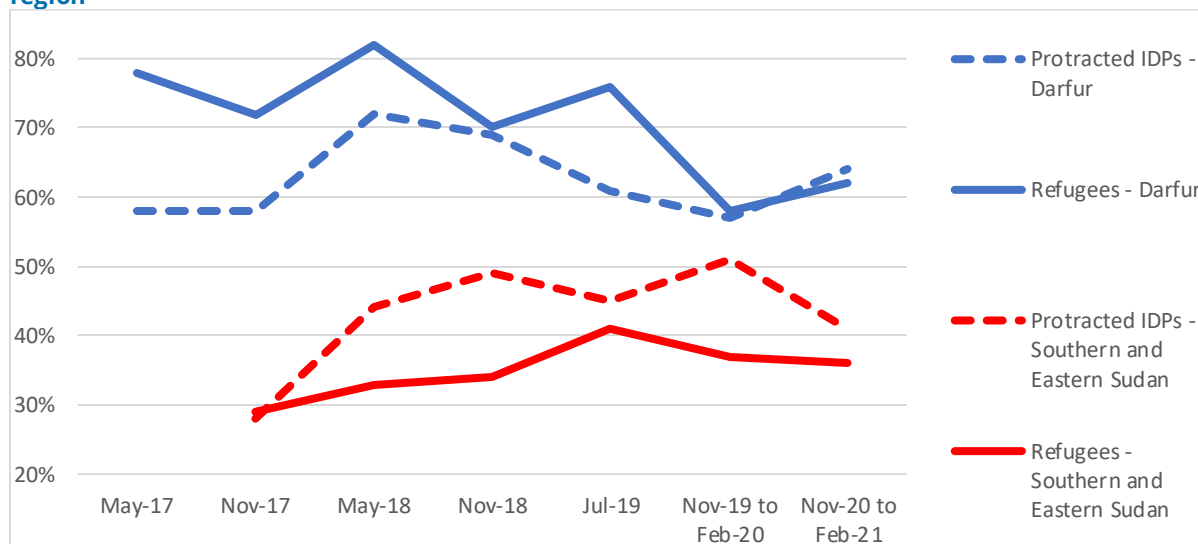
**On the appropriateness of URT1 targeting at national level**

**WFP's targeting of refugees and IDPs in Darfur remains appropriate given that these groups continue to represent the most food-insecure populations in the country. Continued and increased support to displaced populations outside of Darfur is also in line with identified trends in food insecurity.**

**Geographic targeting of resident populations generally aligns with the levels of vulnerability identified. The targeting of very large resident caseloads in Darfur and the Two Areas is broadly consistent with the CFSVA findings on levels of food insecurity (and appropriate in terms of conflict sensitivity considerations).**

220. While assessment of broad geographic programme coverage is reasonably straightforward, the extent to which assistance has reached the most vulnerable people/groups is much harder to assess quantitatively with the available data. Between 2017 and 2021, the FSMS found significant differences in the levels of food insecurity between refugees and IDPs in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan. Displaced populations in Darfur continue to be the most food-insecure groups, and predominantly South Sudanese refugees. Prevalence of food insecurity among displaced populations elsewhere in Sudan is significantly lower, and conversely refugees are found to be less food insecure than IDPs. However, since 2017, the disparity between displaced people in Darfur and in southern and eastern Sudan has been narrowing due to gradually decreasing food insecurity in Darfur and increasing insecurity elsewhere (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Proportion of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) who are food insecure, by region**



Source: FSMS reports

221. Comparison of WFP's state-level targeting (URT1) with these food security trends among displaced populations confirms that the prioritization of assisting the displaced is appropriate (given that they are very likely to be food insecure). The continuing targeting of large refugee and IDP caseloads in the Darfur states is certainly appropriate, because these are judged to be the most food-insecure people in the

country. The scale-up of assistance to IDP populations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile is also justifiable, given the increased food insecurity of this group.

222. Between 2017 and 2021 the CFSVA found approximately 30 percent of the resident population in the surveyed states to be moderately or severely food insecure. Households headed by women are consistently found to be more food insecure than households headed by men. In the Darfur region, North, West and Central Darfur have generally been found to be the most food-insecure states. In the rest of the country, the Kordofan states and Blue Nile (the south) was found to be marginally more food insecure than White Nile, Gedaref and Kassala (the east), with Red Sea being the exception (Figure 24, Annex 9).

[On the appropriateness of URT1 targeting methodologies and the quality of targeting outcomes at community level](#)

**WFP's household targeting methodologies, based on established best practices and with considerable community involvement, appear to be appropriate attempts to meet the challenge of directing assistance to where it is most needed.**

**The extent to which targeting at the micro/community-level resulted in WFP assistance actually reaching the most vulnerable people has been very hard to establish based on the limited secondary data made available to the Evaluation Team.**

223. WFP's methodology for new targeting of the resident population with URT1 assistance amid the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic was based on a four-stage process. First, food-insecure localities are identified using the IPC. Second, given that there is considerable variation in levels of food insecurity between settlements in most localities in Sudan, a screening process to identify the most vulnerable settlements is undertaken (based on risk factors such as prevalence of informal labour, population density, flood/drought risks, MAM/SAM (Moderate/Severe Acute Malnutrition) prevalence, assistance from other actors, high levels of internal migration, remoteness, and risk of food supply chain disruption). Third, selected communities form committees to identify vulnerable households in need of assistance based on set criteria. Finally, following this identification, WFP should verify the targeting with a check on 10-20 percent. Of this sample, 90 percent must be found to meet the criteria in order for the distribution to take place.

224. The ongoing reprofiling of IDPs and refugees has a different goal: rather than to inform a scale-up in URT, it aims at a scale-down – targeting households based on actual vulnerability, rather than their status as an IDP/refugee.

225. If one assumes that targeting is necessary, then these methodologies, based on established best practices and with considerable community involvement, appear to be acceptable attempts to direct assistance to where it is most needed and where it will have the most impact.

226. However, the extent to which targeting at the micro/community-level resulted in WFP assistance reaching the most vulnerable people was very hard to establish based on the secondary data made available to the Evaluation Team. According to the targeting guidelines, the quality of the targeting outcome in reaching the most vulnerable is to be measured by randomly returning to 10 percent of the identified households and verifying vulnerability with a Poverty Score Questionnaire. The Evaluation Team requested that the country office share the Verification Reports that would result from such exercises on several occasions, but these reports have not been shared.

**Root causes (SO2) and resilience (SO3) interventions are fragmented, and their targeting could align better with the work of other WFP programmes, as well as those of UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, FAO, other United Nations agencies, and INGOs, based on joint needs assessments and area-based programming/coordination.**

227. For WFP's non-emergency response activities, which target chronically food-insecure locations, OCHA has pointed to the need for more integrated targeting – on food security but also nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene, post-harvest losses, and so on, which would bring other agencies on board. Targeting needs to be better integrated and shared in respect of development data, especially now that nexus programming possibilities are opening up. Integrated programmes, discussed above, may offer a solution.

### EQ3.3 To what extent were WFP's activities cost-efficient in delivery of its assistance?

228. Assessment of the extent to which WFP's activities were cost-efficient requires analysis in two dimensions. First, in "economy", referring to the extent to which inputs are acquired at the lowest possible cost and losses are kept under control, with attention to input quality; and second, "cost efficiency" itself, referring to the extent to which activities are maximized at the lowest possible cost, with attention to quality of delivery and externalities.

#### On economy in procurement and management of losses

229. Overall, the cost per metric ton (mt) of food was higher than the costs anticipated by both the NBP and cooperating partners in all activities. The only exceptions are SMP2 (school feeding) in 2019, NPA4 and SMP5 2020 (school feeding and nutrition) and SMP2 in 2021 (to date). See Table 46 in Annex 9 for details. The reasons for the higher price per metric ton of food than in the country office's plans were due in part to higher in-land transport costs caused by fuel shortages as well as higher-than-anticipated commodity prices and shipping rates (see below).

**Since 2019, the Sudan country office performed well in terms of minimizing losses compared to possibly comparable countries in the region, and Africa more widely.**

230. An important factor in minimizing ultimate costs is the control of losses, both pre-delivery and post-delivery, and due to expiry ("best before date (BBD)"). These KPIs are monitored by country offices, regional bureaux and headquarters. Table 16 shows that, since 2019, the Sudan country office performed well in terms of minimizing post-delivery losses compared to other countries, as indicated by the colour scaling.

**Table 17: Percentage of post-delivery losses in Sudan and other country offices 2016-2021**

WFP CO	2016	2017			2018				2019				2020	2021 to Sept
		Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Annual		
Sudan	0.08%	0.08%	0.13%	0.28%	0.02%	0.02%	0.41%	0.42%	0.01%	0.03%	0.03%	0.02%	0.08%	0.06%
Nigeria	0.02%	0.05%	0.06%	0.21%					3.07%	0.05%	0.63%	1.25%	0.76%	0.06%
Malawi	0.01%	0.07%	0.12%		2.57%	1.62%	0.88%	0.67%	0.29%	0.01%	0.04%	0.11%	0.96%	0.00%
Ethiopia	0.08%	0.15%	0.08%	0.13%	1.07%	1.08%	0.48%	0.45%	0.11%	0.01%	0.63%	0.25%	0.01%	0.02%
South Sudan	2.45%	0.16%	0.19%	0.41%				3.38%		0.07%	0.11%	0.09%	0.75%	0.19%

Sources: Q3 performance indicators 2019; Regional Bureau Nairobi, logistics KPI results; Executive Board reports on Global Losses; DOTS reports on the percentage of post-delivery losses, losses due to expired BBD.

**The country office in Sudan procured the largest proportion of food for consumption in the country.**

231. Between January 2020 and August 2021 (the period for which Supply Chain Import Parity System data was made available to the Evaluation Team), the Sudan country office procured 70 percent of food items, by weight (mt), within the country (excluding food purchased for consumption in other countries such as South Sudan). In USD, this translated to 57 percent of purchases, given the higher cost of the food items procured internationally.

#### On efficiency of transfers and beneficiary reach

232. Food/CBT value transferred to beneficiaries compared to the transfer costs of reaching those beneficiaries is also a measure of efficiency at activity level. Table 18 shows the percentage of food/CBT value costs compared to the total cost of food/CBT delivery (not including implementation costs or direct support costs). The supposed benefits of CBT over in-kind food are strongly demonstrated here in the NBP/IP columns: it is anticipated that, by using a CBT modality, up to 94 percent of activity costs (excluding implementation) can be transferred to beneficiaries. The total food value transferred across all activity budgets (minus implementation costs) increased from 51 percent in 2019 to 70 percent by mid-2021, presumably representing economies of scale being realized in the country office's scale-up of almost all activities.

**Table 18: Food/CBT value as a percentage of total food/CBT cost (Food/CBT value + transfer costs) by CSP activity and year (NBP v IP v Actual)<sup>144</sup>**

Activity	Modality	2019			2020			Jan - Aug 2021			Cumulative (2019-2021)		
		NBP	IP	Actual	NBP	IP	Actual	NBP	IP	Actual	NBP	IP	Actual
URT1	Food	50%	48%	51%	50%	52%	47%	50%	45%	62%	50%	48%	52%
	CBT	94%	92%	92%	94%	94%	95%	94%	93%	95%	94%	93%	94%
SMP2	Food	61%	69%	41%	58%	64%	72%	58%	51%	43%	59%	58%	59%
NPA3	Food	81%	71%	51%	82%	74%	65%	82%	61%	77%	82%	67%	65%
NPA4	Food	79%	72%	59%	79%	67%	50%	80%	67%	66%	79%	69%	60%
SMP5	Food	56%	89%	57%	57%	74%	33%	56%	55%	88%	56%	72%	63%
	CBT	93%	71%	18%	94%	77%	66%	94%	85%	95%	94%	81%	74%
ACL6	CBT	88%	86%	70%	88%	72%	69%	88%	85%	49%	88%	81%	69%
Overall	Food	58%	54%	51%	58%	56%	61%	59%	49%	70%	58%	52%	62%
	CBT	92%	91%	88%	92%	91%	92%	93%	92%	94%	92%	91%	91%

Source: SD02-NBP-BR03 February 2021; Country Portfolio Budget (CPB) Plan vs Actuals Report 18 August 2021.

**Costs per beneficiary in WFP Sudan's food transfer activities tended to be equal to or lower than global averages. However, costs per beneficiary for CBT are found to be higher.**

233. For the CSP overall (including non-food/cash transfers, implementation costs and Direct Support Costs), values of food and CBT transferred to beneficiaries was planned at 38 percent of country office expenditure during the CSP period (excluding Indirect Support Costs) but represented 51 percent of actual expenditure.<sup>145</sup> Although this may appear to be an efficiency gain, it is influenced by slower roll-out of non-food/cash activities – for example, capacity strengthening/services (Activities #7-12 – including SFSP, which is considered Service Delivery, not WFP assistance).

234. Cost per beneficiary is a common way of measuring cost-efficiency in humanitarian assistance.<sup>146</sup> Costs per beneficiary across all WFP Sudan food assistance activities tended to be equal to or lower than global averages reported in the annex of the 2020 Annual Performance Report, in particular the nutrition activities (see Table 19).

**Table 19: Annual cost of providing food assistance per beneficiary (food value + transfer costs/ number of unique beneficiaries)**

Activity	2019			2020			WFP Average
	NBP	IP	Actual	NBP	IP	Actual	
URT1	\$64	\$55	\$50	\$66	\$26	\$26	\$50
SMP2	\$18	\$48	\$6	\$19	\$15	\$13	\$14
SMP5	\$16	\$7	\$4	\$16	\$14	\$3	
NPA3	\$23	\$50	\$15	\$24	\$32	\$20	Prevention – \$42 Treatment – \$35
NPA4	\$21	\$37	\$8	\$21	\$19	\$13	

Note: Annual cost of providing food assistance per beneficiary in 2021 cannot be calculated because only planning figures are available.

Source: SD02-NBP-BR03 February 2021; CPB Plan vs Actuals Report 18 August 2021; CM-R002b, Annual Beneficiaries by Strategic Outcome, 14 May 2021; Activity and Modality (CSP) 2017–2023; CM-A002 Actuals - Commodities by location 3 September 2021; and Implementation Plans.

<sup>144</sup> A percentage that is equal to or greater than the NBP/IP value is coded green. A percentage that is up to 5 points below either the IP or NBP value is coded yellow. A percentage which is more significantly lower than the NBP/IP value is coded red.

<sup>145</sup> Source: SD02-NBP-BR03 February 2021; CPB - Plan vs Actuals Report 18 August 2021

<sup>146</sup> The Evaluation Team calculated costs per beneficiary in line with the methodology/formula that we believe is applied corporately, based on a review of recent APRs. This involves adding the total food value (or CBT) transferred to the costs of transferring it, and dividing by the number of unique beneficiaries that a given activity reached in the calendar year. This excludes implementation costs, capacity-strengthening costs, service delivery costs, direct support costs and indirect support costs.

235. The findings of the same analysis for CBTs are quite different (see Table 19).

236. Table 20 Costs per beneficiary were higher than anticipated in Implementation plans (except for the case of URT1 in 2019), and also higher than global averages. It is likely that the high cost per beneficiary is due to CBT in Sudan being a relatively new initiative, with ambitious roll-out targets and a challenging operational context for the CBT modality.

**Table 20: Annual cost of providing CBT per beneficiary (CBT value + transfer costs/number of unique beneficiaries)**

Activity	2019			2020			WFP Average
	NBP	IP	Actual	NBP	IP	Actual	
URT1	\$ 78	\$ 117	\$ 87	\$ 83	\$ 83	\$ 106	\$ 63
SMP5	\$ 92	\$ 11	\$ 136	\$ 100	\$ 18	\$ 98	\$ 21
ACL6	\$ 288	\$ 52	\$ 286	\$ 272	\$ 52	\$ 212	\$ 42

Note: Annual cost of providing CBT per beneficiary in 2021 cannot be calculated because only planning figures are available.

Source: SD02-NBP-BR03 February 2021; CPB - Plan vs Actuals Report 18 August 2021; CM-R002b - Annual Beneficiaries by Strategic Outcome, Activity and Modality (CSP) 2017–2023 14 May 2021; and Implementation Plans.

#### Efficiency in contracting (field-level agreements)

#### **The predominance of short-term contracting and funding cycles, especially in resilience programming, represents a major inhibitor to programme effectiveness and efficiency.**

237. While some of WFP's donors shifted to providing longer-term funding to the CSP in general, or specifically to resilience programming, this has not yet been accompanied by changes in the duration of Field Level Agreements (FLAs) with cooperating partners, which negatively impacted on efficiency and effectiveness through enhanced transaction costs (revision of project proposals, and so on). For example, PSN and PHL contracts are for a fixed duration of just six months (with the possibility of one-month no-cost extensions).

**Table 21: Field-level agreement durations**

Activity (or sub-activity)	Duration (months)
General Food Distribution	12
Food Assistance For Assets	12
Nutrition	12
School feeding	8
Productive Safety Net	6
Post-Harvest Losses	6

Source: Country office Partnerships Unit (by email)

238. Consulted cooperating partner organizations suggested that multi-year FLAs, and more strategic partnerships with WFP would increase efficiency, by enabling them to plan more effectively and potentially invest in targeted communities with leveraged funds from other donors. WFP staff have spent extensive time in repetitive planning: managing calls for proposals and reviewing and administering FLAs. There was no assurance of resources for cooperating partners from one year to the next, which constrained planning, recruitment, projects developed, and the quality of work, while also limiting impact monitoring.

#### **WFP is well placed to deliver efficiency gains for the United Nations/humanitarian system as whole through its provision of common services and the United Nations Business Operations Strategy process.**

239. Under the United Nations reform agenda, such services are becoming more formalized via the Business Operations Strategy (BOS).<sup>147</sup> The Sudan United Nations Country Team developed a five-year BOS to support the United Nations' collective response to national development priorities as outlined in the

<sup>147</sup> The Sudan BOS was developed through the BOS online platform on 1 March 2020. It was due for review on 1 September 2021. For example, cost avoidance for United Nations agencies over five years for vehicle maintenance was estimated at USD 1.7 million.



United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The aim is for all United Nations offices<sup>148</sup> to adopt a common back-office function. The Sudan BOS opportunity analyses for future United Nations cooperation identifies potential cost savings of USD 41 million over five years (Table 59, Annex 9). However, the Evaluation Team was not able to verify whether these potential savings are on track to being realized.

#### EQ3.4 To what extent were alternative, more cost-effective measures considered?

**Amid the constant pressure to deliver, there has been little attention paid by the country office to cost-effectiveness.**

240. The Evaluation Team discovered that there were few initiatives underway at the country office to address cost-effectiveness. Given the set of emergencies and unexpected developments that have occurred during the period of CSP implementation, and the pressure to respond quickly and in agile fashion (see EQ3.1), perhaps it is no surprise that this should be the case.

241. One initiative of note was launched, which should have a substantial effect on operating costs. This focuses on an effort to reduce energy costs and the organization's environmental footprint. The country office was successful in implementing a large-scale solar power project. Electrical power is essential, and significant costs were incurred with the installation and running of diesel generators in all offices. Fuel is not only difficult to transport, but its use also has a negative environmental impact. A solarization project was started at the end of 2018, triggered by an acute fuel shortage, the need to provide more reliable power supply, and to reduce costs for field offices and warehouses.<sup>149</sup> The project became the largest solar installation for WFP worldwide, covering 19 sites and producing approximately 1,000 MWh of energy.

#### EQ4: WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT EXPLAIN WFP PERFORMANCE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT HAS MADE THE STRATEGIC SHIFT EXPECTED BY THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN?

##### EQ4.1 To what extent did WFP analyse, or use existing evidence on the hunger challenges, and the food security and nutrition issues in the country to develop the CSP?

**WFP drew on extensive and up-to-date analysis of the factors underlying food insecurity and malnutrition, as well as the growing list of challenges facing the country, in designing the CSP.**

242. As discussed above, in the CSP's preparation, WFP made thorough use of up-to-date analysis of the food security and nutrition situation across Sudan, with careful identification of vulnerable groups. In drawing on the Zero Hunger Strategic Review, it also ensured that the country analysis presented was consistent with the crucial components of government policy and strategy for addressing enduring food deficits and the emerging challenges of economic insecurity.

243. Further, the CSP captured household-level and local population needs in a way the previous Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO)/emergency operation did not. It enabled WFP to have a more comprehensive assessment of nutritional needs for the whole population, as well as an insight into how the local economy influences nutrition.

**Social protection flexibility was demonstrated by the use of hybrid in-kind food and cash transfers.**

244. Challenges included fuel and currency shortages, while insecurity, tensions and a volatile context affected the arrival of commodities and distribution of assistance. In the second quarter of 2019, WFP faced funding shortages for CBT, mainly due to donor earmarking by modality. The Core Donor Working Group was informed of the situation and promptly provided additional funding. Along with the use of a hybrid approach (both in-kind food and cash distribution), this averted the interruption of assistance, and highlighted the importance of flexible funding in the CSP.

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<sup>148</sup> In addition, there are two peacekeeping operations in the country – the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei – and field offices in several locations.

<sup>149</sup> The project was due to be completed by the end of 2021 and to cut WFP's annual carbon emissions by 669 tons (Source: WFP ACR 2020)

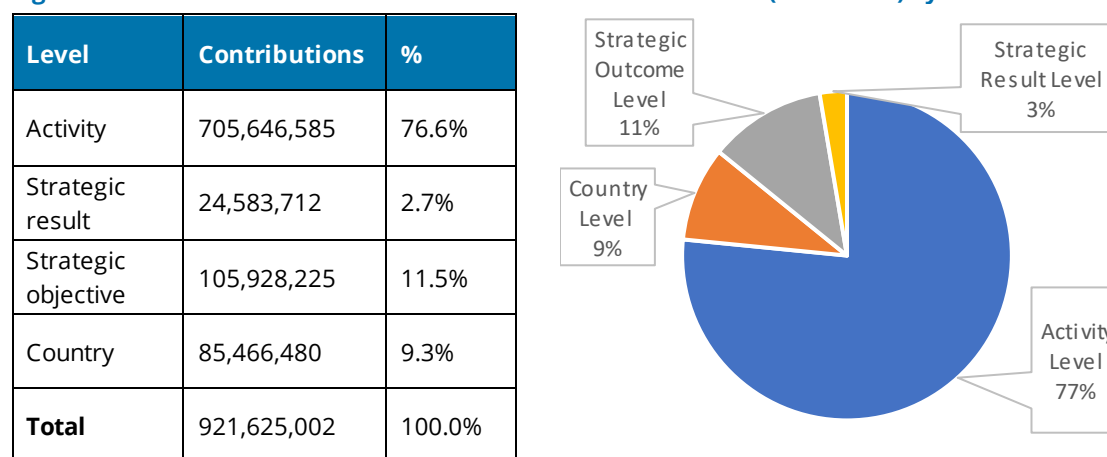
EQ4.2 To what extent has WFP been able to mobilize adequate, predictable, and flexible resources to finance the CSP?

**To date, WFP has been successful, for the most part, in securing adequate and predictable funding. However, the objective of achieving flexibility in budget financing remains elusive.**

245. According to information from Regional Bureau Nairobi, Sudan is the best-funded country programme in the East Africa region, and consistently has the largest budget. To date, the country office has been highly successful in mobilizing adequate funds. However, in a few programmes – notably nutrition and capacity-strengthening activities – there has been a consistent gap between NBPs and funds received.<sup>150</sup> Further, the willingness of some major donors to provide financial support to the strategic shift was limited to underwriting the move to development-oriented programming. Hence, the objective of securing flexible funds was not realized. With its commitment to a holistic approach, the CSP was welcomed by donors, yet earmarking at activity level is still largely driven by donor priorities. This has practical consequences, which are particularly apparent in Darfur, where there has been little opportunity for flexibility in switching resources. WFP’s largest donors have largely pre-ordained where food is delivered and for how long.

246. CSPs aim to mobilize longer-term, flexible funding at the level of results, rather than activities. To date, directed multilateral contributions to the Sudan CSP have been predominantly earmarked at activity level (77 percent) and the remaining 23 percent at SO, strategic result, and country level. This overall picture is illustrated in Figure 11. Further analysis of earmarking levels by year (2016-2021) finds no obvious trend of earmarking at activity level. This level of earmarking is broadly in line with global trends in WFP funding. In 2019, 71 percent of directed multilateral funding to WFP was earmarked at activity level (this was a reduction from 94 percent in 2018).<sup>151</sup>

**Figure 11: Directed multilateral contributions to the Sudan CSP (2019-2023) by level of earmarking**



Source: Earmarking, 18 August 2021.

247. Among the ten largest donors between 2016 and 2021 there are some significant differences in earmarking practices. Just 4 percent of US contributions during the period were earmarked at strategic result level or above (with the remainder at activity level). By contrast, major European donors (and Canada) have been more inclined to provide flexible funding earmarked at outcome, result, or country level. In Germany, 82 percent of funding falls into this category, as does more than 65 percent of funding from Canada, Switzerland, and Norway.

248. Flexibility of funding can also be measured in terms of the length of grant validity given by donors, and the extent to which individual grants are linked to others as part of multi-year funding pledges. Analysis of both these metrics (Table 26, Annex 9) provides further evidence that the assumption is not true that Country Strategic Planning would lead to longer-term and more flexible donor funding practices. The proportion of funding that has a duration of less than 12 months decreased from 18 percent to 2 percent

<sup>150</sup> However, for the coming year, the country office is only 46 percent funded, though this percentage is higher than for all other country offices in the East Africa Region. It is uncertain whether this is merely an early aberration, or a sign of a significant and deliberate decline in support at a time of pressure on overall government budgets in donor states in the context of extra costs associated with COVID-19 (data from Regional Bureau Nairobi).

<sup>151</sup> WFP Office of Evaluation, Strategic Evaluation of Funding WFP’s Work, May 2020, Rome.

from the ICSP period to the CSP period. However, the proportion of funding that has a duration of more than 25 months also decreased from 25 percent to 11 percent. The result is that 87 percent of CSP funding has a 12- to 24-month duration (by default, 18-month US grants fall into this category). As a comparison, in 2019, 45 percent of WFP had a validity period of less than one year, 39 percent was one to two years, and 15 percent was more than two years.<sup>152</sup> From the ICSP period to the CSP period, the proportion of donor funding that is part of a multi-grant pledge (naturally covering multiple years) halved to 8 percent. This is in line with the average across the Regional Bureau Nairobi countries, according to interviews conducted.

#### Donor positioning and the strategic shift

##### **Donor concern that WFP continued as the lead agency in provision of humanitarian assistance in Sudan, plus increasing demand for emergency response, led to only a muted response to WFP's intent to move towards a more balanced humanitarian-development portfolio.**

249. In addition to consultations with government and other Sudanese stakeholders, the CSP team at the country office worked with the donor community throughout the formulation period to ensure that international partners were in touch with shaping plans and setting priorities. Donor advice also facilitated smooth passage for the CSP when considered for approval at Executive Board meetings.

250. However, despite general support for the strategic shift envisaged in the CSP, it was donor advice that led to a restriction in the ambition and scope of the programme's development components. Donors continued to be preoccupied by the continuing need for strong support from WFP for the growing refugee and IDP population, particularly in light of evidence of growing food insecurity in the country. Much of WFP's reputation among donors and other United Nations and international agencies in Sudan rests on its speed in responding to emergencies, its capacity for mapping vulnerability, and its performance in directing support to those who need it most.

#### Reporting to donors

##### **Some donors report disappointment with country office reporting, indicating that there should be a focus on making a difference, with outcome/impact results, not just outputs and activities completed. They also need a more thorough explanation of how WFP's interventions bring about a strategic shift and what donors can do to support it.**

251. Concerns around donor reporting are connected to the adequacy, predictability, and flexibility of funding. They are based on the assumption that quality reporting should lead to improved trust in WFP and an increased likelihood of longer-term and more flexible funding. Donors report frustration with the framing and content of WFP reporting: the pages of data do not tell donors the difference that funding makes, and the rationale for programme content and delivery.

252. Donors are looking for a focus on real results, evidence of progress made, and an explanation of barriers to achievement and how these are being addressed. There is a story to be told, and it is not to be found in WFP reporting. There is also a need to document longer-term thinking, giving examples of a development orientation in programming and organizational planning, and indications of a willingness to share programming with other United Nations agencies and INGOs.

253. Achieving this will require a two-way process, including changes in the way that donors earmark funds and require time-limited reporting. The CSP's preparation demonstrated a sea change in approach by WFP, including a close consultation with donors. This was followed up with more regular contacts throughout implementation. However, it is apparent from interviews that more dialogue, beyond information-sharing, is required.

#### EQ4.3 To what extent did the CSP lead to partnerships and collaborations with other actors that positively influenced performance and results?

##### **Partnership is an important component of the triple nexus and the strategic shift. Yet, with some important exceptions, the Evaluation Team found that WFP had not adjusted its approach to partnership, as it promised to do under the CSP.<sup>252</sup>**

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid. Note: the methodology for grant validity categorization may differ between the two evaluations. For example, grants with an exact 12-month duration could fall into either of the first two categories (less than one year or one to two years).

254. Partnership has been an important principle of the triple nexus, as well as a core element of the CSP's delivery and undertaking the strategic shift. The CSP (Section 4.5, pp. 29-30) identifies it as a requirement for achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Further, the corporate partnership action plan lessons learned exercise (January 2019) recommended that each country office develop a partnership plan, pointing out that "UN reform will necessitate that COs have a clear partnership planning strategy, in line with, and supportive of, United Nations Country Team objectives, reinforcing collaboration and avoiding overlap."<sup>153</sup>

255. In practice, WFP Sudan has not followed this guidance, although there are promising signs of progress in advancing partnership, at least with selected United Nations partners. Current practice is considered in more detail in EQ1.4 above. For practical reasons, during CSP, the country office developed closer working partnerships with UNICEF, International Organization for Migration and UNHCR. However, except for the recently announced collaboration with UNICEF on Social Cohesion, and (to a degree) in nutrition, these partnerships, which must go beyond routine agreements, summed up in Memoranda of Understanding, lack an articulated strategy to guide further development, or cooperation in programme planning.

256. As the largest United Nations agency in Sudan, WFP inevitably has an unequal relationship with its partners, particularly those field NGOs dependent on its funding. WFP size and resources have sometimes stifled dialogue and the sharing of knowledge. Many GoS respondents still regard WFP as a donor. INGOs depend on WFP contracts and are, in effect, delivery agents. In the United Nations Country Team, competition for resources and a quest for sector pre-eminence are still rife.<sup>154</sup>

257. The difficulty encountered by WFP in determining how to work with government and the World Bank on the SFSP, (as reviewed earlier in the report), is an indicator of the country office's problems in determining how to approach a strategic partnership – except for those that focus on revenue-generating opportunities. This observation is based on interviews conducted for the evaluation.

258. In Sudan, as in all countries where it operates, the first step must be that WFP form a partnership with government. In Sudan, the agency found itself cooperating with a military government, then an unstable Transitional Government, which involved the military in a prominent role, and now a military government once again. It is not possible to develop a "strategic" partnership with government at federal and state level under such conditions. Despite this, some patient efforts were made to build and maintain links.

259. Certainly, political uncertainties make long-term planning with the Government of Sudan difficult. Individual officials have welcomed the CSP and its proposals for working with government. However, this has not yet filtered down through all departments at federal level. A crucial issue inhibiting the building of a shared approach is high turnover at all levels.

260. A notable exception to the difficulties encountered elsewhere was in school feeding. Six years ago, when the Government of Sudan could not obtain access to conflict areas in Darfur, WFP relied heavily on NGOs. Now, the State Ministry of Education in North Darfur is the sole partner. It has a school feeding supervisor for each cluster of five to six schools, a budget for training, and engages in joint monitoring with WFP. In turn, WFP takes food only as far as the cluster; from there, costs and implementation are managed through local communities.

261. The CSP suggests that WFP has strategic and operational partnerships with NGOs. It also notes a commitment to quarterly consultation meetings for "dialogue, feedback and collaborative strategy planning" with these organizations.<sup>155</sup> Interviews and reports confirm that very few consultations have occurred, and that WFP rarely explored the expertise that NGOs have at community level. The result is that partnership becomes 'delivery agent' with terms and conditions set by the dominant partner. In delivering humanitarian assistance (food, cash) this may not be a problem, but when WFP's mandate extends to resilience and development interventions, knowledge of, and relationships within, communities are of

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<sup>153</sup> *Partnership Action Plan: Lessons Learner Exercise, Executive Summary and Recommendations*, January 2019, p.4. The completion of the exercise was followed by the preparation of a guidance note on Partnership Action Plans.

<sup>154</sup> The following documents note and examine the phenomenon of competition among United Nations agencies: Katharina Schmid et al, *Blessing or Curse? The Effects of Earmarked Funding on UNICEF and UNDP*; Global Governance, September 29, 2021; United Nations Economic and Social Affairs, *Funding for UN Development Cooperation*, (n.d. but estimated around 2006-07; a series of articles in *The Guardian*, on *A World of Problems: the UN at 70*, September 2015; Phillip Rawkins, *UN Liberia: A Report on Joint Programmes*, October 2010.

<sup>155</sup> CSP, p.30.

paramount importance. NGOs do not, by definition, have a monopoly on this, but WFP has (in some cases) overlooked their potential. Some INGOs may be better equipped than WFP in both substantive knowledge and operational know-how. With a long-term presence, they and some of the national or local NGOs also have valuable knowledge of local dynamics and conditions. In adopting the triple nexus, WFP will need to look for new avenues of expertise beyond conventional partnership and practice. Not all NGOs have greater knowledge of and access to communities, so WFP would need to undertake a thorough stakeholder analysis.

262. The absence of consultation was commented on by many interviewees. This suggests the absence of a proper stakeholder analysis, and WFP's lack of appreciation of what its partners may have to offer, as well as a realistic understanding of its own limitations.

263. Working with the private sector in Sudan presents its own set of challenges. WFP engaged with the private sector on innovative approaches. These include the retailing of micronutrient powders<sup>156</sup> to address micronutrient deficiencies, and the production of hermetic storage bags to mitigate post-harvest grain losses. Nutritional fortification is overseen by the Government of Sudan but implemented by the private sector.<sup>157</sup> The latter has to be persuaded of the merits of fortification, and must also demonstrate technical ability and quality control in the factories.

**EQ4.4 To what extent did the CSP provide greater flexibility in dynamic operational contexts and how did it affect results in particular as regards adaptation and response to the COVID-19 and other unexpected crises and challenges?**

**WFP has proven itself to be extremely capable in mounting rapid responses to unforeseen emergencies and making necessary adjustments to its operations to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.**

**The CSP provided a suitable platform to enable the country office to adapt resiliently and in an agile manner to a sequence of unforeseen challenges.**

264. As reported above, staff at the country office and area offices advise that the CSP provided greater opportunities for flexibility in integrating programmes in crisis response and resilience to facilitate a fuller response to community need (see EQ2.1 above). However, the predominance of short-term funding and contracting limits the effectiveness of such efforts.

265. On response to emergencies, (as covered above), WFP generally proved to be effective in logistics and programming in mounting rapid operations. The CSP provided a suitable platform to enable the country office to adapt resiliently to a sequence of challenges.

266. The organization is at its best in rapid response, beginning field operations, or responding to dramatic increases in the population of beneficiaries to be served. The organization also adapts well to changes in its geographic distribution across the territory of Sudan. Through the provision of common services, it has also been able to facilitate the involvement of its United Nations partners in a collective effort. The response to the Tigrayan refugee situation is a good example of WFP's exemplary performance in this regard.

**Organizational issues and operational systems**

**There is a gap between the substantive priorities set out in the CSP, the triple nexus and the strategic shift, and the organizational structures and arrangements to deliver them. There is an apparent need for a broad-based assessment of the organizational structure and human resource allocations, and preparation of a management of change plan to assist the Sudan country office to adjust to new realities.**

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<sup>156</sup> Micronutrient powders are retailled by a private sector partner through a platform of pharmacies and supermarkets, complemented by social marketing.

<sup>157</sup> Through the ministries responsible for Agriculture, Health, Industry and Trade, WFP, FAO and WHO are implementing a joint project on food fortification, including support for an enabling legislative and policy environment. This encompasses food fortification policy, product standards and laboratory capacity related to the fortification of wheat flour, oil and salt, as well as retail of micronutrient powders through a platform of pharmacies and supermarkets by a private sector partner, complemented by social marketing. (WFP ACR, 2020)

267. While somehow everything works, and the organization (and its staff) delivers, organizational readiness for the strategic shift is not there yet. The organization and staffing of WFP Sudan are not well-adapted to the new tasks and challenges set out for them in the CSP, beyond the strong response to the requirements of emergency assistance and long-established programming requirements. The high level of demand to respond to mainstream service requirements, and a culture of delivery and speed of response, does not accommodate itself readily to reflection and embracing change.

268. Thus far, despite many changes made in the reprofiling of a long list of positions and in recruitment, there is only modest evidence of adapting to the strategic shift. Several important functional areas (Monitoring & Evaluation, Partnership, Donor Relations, and Risk and Compliance) supporting operations in the country office structure remain understaffed,<sup>158</sup> and expertise in many of the core, and emerging, substantive sectors is thin. Organizational and human resources realignment, while admirably professional in planning and implementation, does not address the scope and scale of what may be required. The Evaluation Team's view is that the exercise's parameters

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270. were too narrow. There is a clear gap between the strategy's ambition as set out in the CSP and the organizational means to deliver it. There are costs to both organizational effectiveness and efficiency in current arrangements, and this impacts on programming performance.

271. The CSP's structure introduced some additional flexibility in how WFP is able to deploy donor grants (by combining several activities into one). However, the staffing and model for contracting cooperating partners (at country office level) have created new silos. This is less of a problem at area office level, where some integrated programming initiatives are being undertaken.

272. There is an awkwardness and lack of clarity in working relationships and accountability structures between the country office and area offices, with conflicting views on whether there should be centralization or decentralization of decision making. In addition, there is some uncertainty in terms of responsibility and accountability for programme performance and arrangements between SO managers and the Heads of the area offices.<sup>159</sup>

273. National staff make up a substantial majority of all of those employed by WFP Sudan. Yet, while the realignment exercise brought about promotions or improved terms of employment for some staff members, there is as yet no plan for a process of professional development and definition of a clear path to promotion to management positions.

274. Organizational drift will allow these issues to persist. Organizational coherence may come from an effort to look at these matters together in an effort to build a structure and set of organizational processes tuned to the requirements of the strategic shift. The 'Fit for Purpose' organizational strengthening exercise (2017) predated the preparation of the new approach to WFP strategy embodied in the current generation of CSPs. Since the purpose changed to a considerable degree, in the context of United Nations reform, the organizational perspective also needs to shift.<sup>160</sup>

275. Another important component of the work of the country office concerns targeting/data collection/measuring results and data analysis. WFP's overall systems of data collection, analysis, knowledge management, and learning are flawed in certain ways. It is very hard to determine if assistance is reaching the people who need it the most. Monitoring & Evaluation is almost exclusively quantitatively driven, which is not appropriate for such areas of programming as CCS (national system building), and gender transformation, AAP, or conflict sensitivity analysis. There is little reporting on the way programming makes a difference in the life chances of beneficiaries and their communities. Overall, the analysis functions

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<sup>158</sup> The country office Human Resources (HR) Department has advised the Evaluation Team that 'In order to mitigate the under staffing experienced by substantive Units/area offices while in the implementation stage, country office Management authorized the appointment/reappointment of over 100 employees on short-term contracts.' This important contribution to meeting emergent HR requirements is acknowledged. However, the challenges in staffing do not refer to understaffing as per country office plans, but in relation to the requirements to be addressed if WFP Sudan is to wholeheartedly embrace the strategic shift as presented in the CSP.

<sup>159</sup> The Evaluation Team is advised that the country office is currently working to clarify the roles and responsibilities of, respectively, the country office, area offices, and field offices (February 2022).

<sup>160</sup> WFP. Review of Fit for Purpose Organizational Strategy Initiative. February 2017.

of WFP Sudan are underdeveloped, under-resourced, and not being used strategically to feed into decision making and better programming.

EQ4.5 What are the other factors that can explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the CSP?

**The accepted and preferred view – by the Government of Sudan and some major donors – of WFP as the principal player in relief of food insecurity and emergency response, and (to a degree) its own self-image, has inhibited WFP’s opportunity to embrace fully the changes called for by the strategic shift and associated new ways of working, central to the CSP.**

**Overall, WFP Sudan lacks the expertise required to lead longer-term, development-oriented programming. In seeking durable solutions, its current programme portfolio remains quite limited in scope and ambition.**

Overall situation and explanatory factors, positive and negative, for performance and undertaking the strategic shift

276. The generally very good track record of WFP Sudan in responding to emergencies and emergent crises throughout CSP implementation, and in providing the foundation for engagement by other United Nations agencies, builds on the excellent set of proven operational priority-setting directives and procedures, and staff well-prepared to perform their assigned roles, often under difficult conditions.

277. The organizational culture of the organization is built around agility in performance of this set of roles and an associated short-term operational horizon.<sup>161</sup> In many ways, this is positive, but it does have a downside. One of the concerns expressed to the Evaluation Team by management and staff was that the emphasis on the strategic shift would cause a drop in attention to the emergency response, regarded as the agency’s “bread and butter”, or the foundation of its global reputation. This did not happen. However, it is that same reputation and self-image, which, together with the new set of emergencies and crises that emerged in Sudan in the time of the CSP, has made it difficult for the organization to show substantial progress in introducing the changes associated with the shift, including the development of strategic partnerships.

278. In addition, WFP lacks experience in thinking in terms of programme or project, for activities that unfold on a continuing basis within an extended timeframe. For spheres of activity such as gender empowerment, capacity strengthening, or partnership building, a longer-term and broad-based approach, going beyond short-term outputs, will be essential

#### The governance situation

279. Throughout the period of CSP implementation, there has been political turbulence and uncertainty, and government and governance remain fragile, making it problematic for government to build a strong policy and programming environment, or to develop a full legislative agenda. Persistent weakness in governance and low capacity in important institutions has limited government’s ability to tackle major challenges. This puts extra pressure on WFP and the United Nations Country Team, while reducing prospects for strong partnerships with government. From the highest level to mid-level positions in the bureaucracy, there has been a continuing turnover of staff. This resulted in long delays in decision making, and disruption in efforts at capacity strengthening. At times, there was also a lack of clarity on government expectations concerning WFP’s role. The governance factor had a major impact in blunting WFP efforts in making the strategic transition called for in the CSP.

#### The deteriorating economy

280. At the time of CSP planning, Sudan was a country characterized by “macroeconomic instability” and low agricultural productivity.<sup>162</sup> The country plan was developed with these economic conditions in mind. Yet, what was not anticipated was the degree of subsequent economic deterioration. The worsening conditions were exacerbated by COVID-19 and massive floods in 2020 and 2021. This resulted in heightened levels of food insecurity among a broader population, including both rural and urban residents,

<sup>161</sup> The point on the operational horizon is also made in the conclusions to The Office of Evaluation Evaluation Report, *WFP Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation*, January 2017.

<sup>162</sup> See Sudan CSP 2019-2023, Country Analysis.

as well as IDPs and refugees. As a result, at a macro level, WFP made little progress in advancing towards the sustainable reduction or elimination of hunger and the achievement of the SOs.

#### The character of the strategic objectives

281. The choices made in combining activities across the five SOs extended from efforts to mitigate the effects of donor earmarking. However, they have proved unhelpful as WFP attempts to build up its development-oriented programming. However, separating FFA and school feeding from resilience has mostly made it difficult to build coherent and broad-based programming around a social protection theme to contribute to the needs of individual communities. This approach posed challenges for results-based management and reporting.



# 3. Conclusions and recommendations

## 3.1 CONCLUSIONS

### Overview

282. The evaluation concluded that the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) developed in 2018 was aspirational and set out a map for the future. The experience of its implementation provided WFP with a platform for learning what may be required to realize the envisaged strategic shift and embed new ways of working. The design of the CSP responded effectively to the principal challenges facing Sudan, while also reflecting government priorities in food and nutrition security. WFP Sudan showed itself to be highly capable in addressing the various emergencies and unforeseen developments, including COVID-19, widespread floods, revolution, and the dramatic deterioration in economic conditions. The CSP provided a strong platform for WFP to undertake the necessary activities in response to these developments. However, partly because of its focus on scaling up humanitarian response, WFP was less successful in making the strategic shift central to the CSP. WFP should consider how best to address the balance between the demand for its support in contracting as a provider of services and its expected role as a supporter/enabler in building national systems, providing policy advice, designing longer-term development programming, and contributing to peacebuilding, in line with the goals of the strategic shift.

### Conclusion 1

**WFP has been a major stakeholder in the political and economic transition of Sudan. It built appropriately on its comparative advantage in food distribution and service delivery and was able to adapt and adequately respond to several emergencies. However, WFP has not fully stepped into the role of enabler and supporter for strengthened national systems to optimize the effectiveness and sustainability of its work with the Government .**

283. WFP is an actor in some of the most critical transitional issues – for example, involvement in wheat procurement, peace agreements, the Sudan Family Support Programme and food distribution in Khartoum (in response to a direct request from government). For WFP to strengthen its enabling role, there is a need to develop a more in-depth understanding of how government works, and how to operate in a conflict-sensitive manner. Thus far, WFP has managed to balance explicit support to government at the national level with additional work at the local level, including delivering cash on behalf of the Government in Darfur and accessing the rebel-held Two Areas. WFP was successful in continuing its established technical relationships with the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Health through the change from the former regime to the Transitional Government. However, it faced several challenges in defining its role when trying to forge new types of relationships with the Government of Sudan and the World Bank over the Sudan Family Support Programme initiative.

### Conclusion 2

**WFP was effective in emergency response in terms of delivery and support services, including in the response to COVID-19. The enhancement of development-oriented activities envisaged in the CSP design was significantly overshadowed, part because of a drastic increase in the proportion of the population suffering from food insecurity due to the multiple emergencies faced during the CSP.**

284. Unconditional transfers of food and cash were significantly scaled up in response to an increasing number of food-insecure people – including victims of floods, and Ethiopian refugees from Tigray – and in support of the Government’s initiative to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 containment measures on vulnerable urban and peri-urban populations in Khartoum State. Outcome results for beneficiaries of the transfers were mostly encouraging, as food consumption scores, coping indices, nutrition scores and dietary diversity have generally improved.

285. WFP adapted well to the increased logistical needs related to the COVID-19 emergency and responded strongly to the overall challenge of increasing food and cash distribution, in terms of numbers reached and areas covered. However, according to interviews with several stakeholders, in Khartoum and at local level, the food packages distributed by WFP could have better suited the dietary habits of the target population.

286. The evaluation also determined that there was an extremely positive support service performance during the CSP. United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) services were essential to supporting the safe and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in Sudan, in enabling the humanitarian and development community to reach the most vulnerable populations, and in facilitating provision of critical assistance.

287. The purchase of wheat on the international market on behalf of the government was recognized as a highly successful support intervention, and one greatly appreciated by government and other stakeholders. Similarly, positive results were accomplished in school meals. School retention levels remained high throughout the CSP. However, results on nutritional intervention were impaired significantly by funding shortfalls.

288. Through the assistance of expert advisers, WFP contributed to increasing the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health implementation coverage in 2021, and a budget line for school feeding was included in the national and state budgets for the first time, suggesting increased national ownership. However, lacking the guidance of a strategic framework, and with frequent turnover in government staffing, this work often amounted to capacity substitution – or, at best, where there is continuity of personnel, enhancement of the capabilities of a small number of officials. There is a clear need for ongoing guidance, hands-on support on methodologies and institutional analysis, and longer-term thinking on programming, as well as on how to design and implement holistic approaches to working with government in supporting building national systems.

289. In relation to resilience activities, evidence from some community-level assessments and innovative programming by some area offices would suggest that a more flexible, community-based approach, with links to activities in education and nutrition, will pay dividends in terms of enhanced connectedness and improved overall results.

290. For reasons largely beyond the control of WFP, sustainable results have been elusive. A strong focus on institutional capacity strengthening, supporting the enhancement of core competencies in carrying out essential tasks at national and local levels will be critical to enhance sustainability. Under current conditions, there is little prospect for refugee and internally displaced communities to become self-reliant in the near future.

### Conclusion 3

**WFP paid considerable attention to gender equality and accountability to affected population, but sustainable gender transformative results would require a more in-depth analysis of gender dynamics at community level to better inform programming. Similarly, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) could be strengthened with a more consultative approach to identifying beneficiaries' needs, and with better follow-up to complaints and feedback.**

291. The approach to gender equality was focused on ensuring balanced coverage of female and male beneficiaries, and on enhancing women's participation in community decision making regarding Food assistance for Assets (FFA) and Productive Safety Net (PSN) activities. However, there is a lack of in-depth gender analysis to help understand gender norms and dynamics and address them in a more transformative and sustainable way. The excellent resource of gender guides and advisory notes prepared at headquarters lacks resonance at country and field level where substantial capacity in gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) is lacking.

292. WFP attaches considerable importance to AAP. However, in Sudan, implementation was highly uneven. Beneficiaries have very rarely been consulted on their needs in informing programming. Feedback gathered from AAP or complaints and feedback mechanisms does not seem to have any impact on decision making. Like all cross-cutting areas, AAP is under-resourced..

#### Conclusion 4

**While WFP initiated conflict-sensitive approaches, it has not sufficiently developed partnerships to bridge the continuum of the triple nexus. The CSP's ambitions for more integration, external coherence and connectedness in planning and implementing its emergency response, recovery, and resilience programming have not yet been fully embedded.**

293. The follow-up to the opening of the Two Areas with some conflict-sensitive programming is contributing to confidence building and enhancing the foundation for peace across communities. This represents a valuable example of how WFP can contribute in a highly relevant and effective way to peacebuilding. Yet, the evaluation found that WFP had not adjusted its approach to partnership, as it was projected to do under the CSP, to strengthen external coherence and connectedness. For the concept of the nexus to be realized by WFP, it must be done through a “whole system”, inter-agency, approach, involving all stakeholders in programme planning and implementation, and exploiting its own comparative advantage while acknowledging that of others. The evaluation concludes that WFP did not leverage its partnerships with non-governmental organizations; it related to them merely as contractors for the delivery of standardized activities, without acknowledging them as actors with knowledge, analytic thinking, and other contributions to make. However, WFP is taking an important step in developing its approach to peacebuilding by beginning jointly with UNICEF a major initiative in social cohesion. The adoption of a social protection framework to guide its work in its development-oriented programming has the promise of bringing coherence to what is now a scattered series of activities.

#### Conclusion 5

**Emergency assistance was delivered as planned with high levels of budget use. Targeting was appropriate and coverage commensurate to the resources available. However, the delivery and sequencing of resilience activities was sometimes delayed. More generally, the cost effectiveness of resilience and root cause activities was hindered by fragmentation and limited integration with other WFP and the wider United Nations Country Team programming areas.**

294. The country office was able to deliver emergency assistance as planned, and on a timely basis. Because of COVID-19, and other climate-related and economic emergencies, the footprint of support to refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) grew substantially. In addition, support was provided to increasingly food-insecure populations among resident communities, in rural and urban areas, with assistance reaching nearly all states. Budget utilization levels were high, and achievement levels for beneficiary and transfer targets were reasonable. Geographic targeting aligned well with levels of vulnerability to food insecurity identified and reflected careful consideration of conflict sensitivity. Costs per beneficiary in food transfer activities tended to be equal to or lower than global averages. However, costs per beneficiary for cash-based transfers (CBTs) were found to be higher, mainly due to CBTs in Sudan being a relatively new initiative, with ambitious roll-out targets and a challenging operational context for the CBT modality.

295. The efficiency of supply chain performance in meeting targets for on-time delivery was generally good, despite many challenges. However, field-level research did reveal several delays at local level concerning timely delivery of food or cash payments to beneficiaries. In addition, there were problems with delays and sequencing of resilience programming, which resulted in ineffective resource use. More generally there was evidence of fragmentation and scattering of root causes and resilience programmes, and weak alignment of activities with other WFP and United Nations Country Team programming that limited cost effectiveness.

#### Conclusion 6

**The CSP performance and results were affected by a number of factors, including: combining activities; the validity of some assumptions at design stage; the adequacy of WFP human resources (HR) and monitoring systems to attract and retain staff with relevant skills and experience; the need to strengthen partnerships and donors' relations; and challenges related to funding flexibility and predictability. A highly complex and dynamic country context and a challenging political environment also influenced operations and performance.**

296. The building of the CSP around (initially) four strategic outcomes was a rational response to the need to protect what were perceived to be vulnerable areas of the programme from donor earmarking, which would have had the effect of marginalizing them. This strategy was successful, in part, but also led to a design problem, with the same activities taking place under more than one strategic outcome. This created difficulties in management and implementation, results monitoring and reporting, as well as accountability.

297. The Theory of Change (ToC) reconstructed for the Country Strategic Plan Evaluation (CSPE) set out the challenges to be met by WFP in acting on the priorities included in the CSP. Particularly critical was what was termed “deep policy integration”. Whether it is a holistic approach to institutional capacity strengthening, gender transformative approaches, adopting a strategic approach to partnerships, or approaching the triple nexus, the country office capacity to engage was disappointing, and only modest steps were made in grasping these challenges.

298. There are signs of progress in adaptive management to grasp complexity, but current efforts at organizational realignment and adjustments to staffing do not reflect the needs for change associated with CSP, corporate, and broader United Nations reform priorities. The current staffing configuration and organizational arrangements do not equip the country office with what it needs to deliver on the strategic shift and to fully engage with the triple nexus. Even in the areas of emergency response, school feeding and nutrition, specialist staff are thin on the ground. Managers and staff perform creditably under current arrangements, but at considerable cost in terms of both effectiveness and efficiency.

299. While WFP and its managers devote considerable attention to keeping donors informed of programme plans and developments, the organization has not built on the kind of interactive partnership that was developed with donors during the preparation of the CSP. Ongoing effort is needed to engage donors on WFP’s aspiration to take on the strategic shift, along with its work to support the triple nexus, and build its capacity in durable solutions. Also WFP must provide reassurance of its continuing commitment to excellence in crisis response. Currently, donors are dissatisfied with WFP reporting, which does not convey effectively how the work is done, and what difference WFP is making. Building a relationship of substantive dialogue and engagement will also assist WFP in addressing with donors the continuing problem of funds earmarking, which limits financial flexibility, and that of short-term funding, which constrains effort to build longer-term development-oriented programming. There was some progress in both areas, but more will be required of donors in playing their part if WFP is to make the shift the CSP calls for.

300. To a degree, progress towards CSP strategic outcomes was also hindered by contextual factors, mostly related to: ongoing political instability; the existence of workable relationships with government, which have been challenging; and acceptance of directions set by donors whose support, in principle, for WFP’s strategic shift is still to be fully realized in terms of allocation funding.

### 3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
<b>1</b>	<b>WFP should ensure that the conceptual umbrella of the next country strategic plan matches fully integrated programming on the ground, which will require closer collaboration with development partners, joint programming and drawing on expertise in fields such as conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding and political economy.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	November 2023
1.1	The country strategic plan should include closer links between nutrition interventions and recovery and resilience programmes, with a clear plan for beneficiary transition from general distribution to conditional assistance for all populations. This will require oversight management and training for WFP staff to avoid the siloed management of activities.					
1.2	WFP should develop a strategic approach to partnerships with a partnership plan that recognizes different expertise from national and international partners in order to strengthen synergies across the triple nexus.					
1.3	WFP should conduct research on, and work with other United Nations entities, international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions to explore how best to incorporate social protection elements into its core activities and expand existing elements. It is further recommended that expertise necessary for the professional development of WFP staff be externally sourced. For instance, the Better Assistance in Crises Programme funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland encourages collaboration with United Nations entities on social protection capacity strengthening and training.					

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
<b>2</b>	<b>WFP should advocate with donors to secure at least a three-year (or annual recurring) fund to enhance predictability and ensure continuity of processes over the medium to long term.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	March 2024
2.1	WFP should give greater emphasis to resilience and livelihoods programming and build systematically on the experience of area offices in community-based integrated programming, linking resilience and recovery programmes. WFP should also increase staffing for such programming at the country offices and area offices and explore options for funding for long-term programming for selected communities, supporting the transition from emergency support to lasting solutions.					November 2023
2.2	WFP should explore options for three-year contracts with reliable international non-governmental organizations and national or local non-governmental organizations. Such contracts would be reviewed annually, with performance assessed against agreed criteria, and continued except where performance is inadequate. This will build local knowledge and programming skills while reducing the transaction costs associated with annual bid review and contract renewal.			N/A	Medium	March 2024
2.3	WFP should provide area offices with adequate resources for monitoring resilience programmes and explore mechanisms for including such programmes in their ongoing work.			N/A	Medium	March 2024
<b>3</b>	<b>Capacity strengthening should play a prominent role in the new country strategic plan, reinforced by appropriate staffing and budget and the development of monitoring and evaluation indicators that measure longitudinal progress.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	March 2024
3.1	WFP should conduct a staffing review, assess gaps and weaknesses and redouble its efforts to ensure optimal matching between the skills of its staff and the strategic role it intends to play.					March 2024

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
3.2	WFP should prepare a capacity strengthening strategy to accompany the new country strategic plan. Urgent attention should be given to ensuring that the country office staff have the expertise necessary to support country capacity strengthening work in all programmes, including the Sudan family support programme, and to design additional programming with the Government at the federal and state levels. Such expertise would also be used to advise on and learn from country capacity strengthening work at the local level with civil society, including community-based organizations.			Regional bureau, headquarters Country Capacity Strengthening Unit	High	March 2024
3.3	WFP should develop a regularly updated stakeholder analysis that examines opportunities to work more closely with the Government at the federal and state levels and any risks involved in doing so.			Regional bureau, headquarters	Medium	June 2023
<b>4</b>	<b>WFP should promote a country gender analysis and strategy with realistic gender-based objectives reflected in the results frameworks. This should be accompanied by professional development support and clear, practical guidelines for the country office on how to build gender-transformative activities.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau, headquarters Gender Office	High	March 2024
4.1	WFP should provide comprehensive and practical professional development for operational staff – including those at area and field offices – and cooperating partners on gender transformation and its translation into programming under current and planned country strategic plan outcomes. This could involve external experts, possibly from international non-governmental organizations or other United Nations or bilateral agencies with direct, hands-on experience.					March 2024
4.2	An advanced training programme should be offered for those who complete the training referred to in 4.1 and demonstrate interest and capability, with graduates who would be qualified to act as gender equality and women's empowerment focal points or leaders of thematic groups. The training might be offered by the regional bureau and could involve participants from other country offices in the region. However, some of the training and materials should be focused on the Sudan and informed by the situation there.					

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
<b>5</b>	<b>WFP should urgently review the accountability mechanisms for recipient populations, including complaints procedures and feedback opportunities (for accountability to affected populations), with a view to adopting a plan for improvement.</b>	Operational	Country office (including monitoring and evaluation unit)	N/A	Medium	March 2024
5.1	The plan should include the development of mechanisms to ensure that feedback from affected populations heavily influences annual plans and is used to adjust the implementation of activities.					
5.2	In the spirit of new ways of working, the plan could be developed jointly with other members of the United Nations country team.					
5.3	WFP should undertake local case studies of the experience of beneficiaries in using accountability to affected populations mechanisms and their level of satisfaction that their concerns are heard and acted upon. There should also be selected focus group discussions with community leaders.					



# Acronyms

<b>AAP</b>	accountability to affected populations
<b>ABS</b>	Agricultural Bank of Sudan
<b>ACL</b>	Asset creation and livelihood support
<b>ACR</b>	Annual Country Report
<b>ADRA</b>	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
<b>ALNAP</b>	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
<b>AO</b>	area office
<b>APR</b>	Annual Performance Report
<b>ARC</b>	Agriculture Research Corporation
<b>BBD</b>	best before date
<b>BHA</b>	Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance
<b>BMZ</b>	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>BOS</b>	UN Business Operations Strategy
<b>BR</b>	budget revision
<b>CARI</b>	consolidated approach to reporting indicators of food security
<b>CBT</b>	cash-based transfer
<b>CCS</b>	country capacity strengthening
<b>CD</b>	Country Director
<b>CEQAS</b>	Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance
<b>CFM</b>	Complaints and feedback mechanism
<b>CFR</b>	case fatality rate
<b>CFSSVA</b>	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis Survey
<b>CO</b>	country office
<b>COMET</b>	Country Office Tool for Managing Effectively
<b>COMPAS</b>	Commodity Movement, Processing and Analysis System
<b>CP</b>	Cooperating partner
<b>CPA</b>	service provision and platforms
<b>CPB</b>	country portfolio budget
<b>CPP</b>	Corporate Planning and Performance Division
<b>CPRP</b>	COVID-19 Country Preparedness and Response Plan
<b>CRF</b>	corporate results framework
<b>CSF</b>	Conflict Sensitivity Facility (Khartoum)
<b>CSI</b>	institutional capacity strengthening
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>CSP</b>	Country Strategic Plan
<b>CSPE</b>	Country Strategic Plan Evaluation
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
<b>DCD</b>	Deputy Country Director
<b>DDE</b>	Deputy Director of Evaluation
<b>DG ECHO</b>	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
<b>DOE</b>	Director of Evaluation
<b>DRR</b>	disaster risk reduction
<b>DSC</b>	direct support costs

<b>DSRSG</b>	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
<b>EB</b>	Executive Board
<b>EM</b>	Evaluation Manager
<b>EMOP</b>	emergency operation
<b>EQ</b>	evaluation question
<b>ER</b>	evaluation report
<b>ET</b>	Evaluation Team
<b>FAO</b>	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FCS</b>	food consumption score
<b>FFA</b>	food assistance for assets
<b>FFC</b>	Forces for Freedom and Change
<b>FFT</b>	food assistance for training
<b>FGD</b>	focus group discussion
<b>FLA</b>	field-level agreement
<b>FO</b>	field office
<b>FOs</b>	Farmers organizations
<b>FSA</b>	food service agreement
<b>FSMS</b>	food security monitoring system
<b>FSP</b>	financial service provider
<b>GAIN</b>	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
<b>GAM</b>	Gender and Age Marker
<b>GAM D</b>	Gender and Age Marker – Design
<b>GAM M</b>	Gender and Age Marker – Implementation
<b>GCMF</b>	Global Commodity Management Facility
<b>GDP</b>	gross domestic product
<b>GEEW</b>	Gender equality and empowerment of women
<b>GFD</b>	general food distribution
<b>GIS</b>	geographical information system
<b>GoS</b>	Government of Sudan (The)
<b>HC</b>	Humanitarian Coordinator
<b>HEB</b>	high energy biscuits
<b>HH</b>	household
<b>HIPC</b>	highly indebted poor countries
<b>HNO</b>	Humanitarian Needs Overview
<b>HoP</b>	Head of Programme
<b>HR</b>	human resources
<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>HST</b>	hermetic storage technology
<b>ICG</b>	International Crisis Group
<b>ICSP</b>	Interim Country Strategic Plan
<b>IDP</b>	internally displaced person
<b>IEC</b>	information, education and communication
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFI</b>	international financial institution
<b>IKI</b>	International Climate Initiative
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization

<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INGD</b>	Institute for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
<b>INGO</b>	international non-governmental organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IP</b>	implementation plan
<b>IPC</b>	Integrated Phase Classification
<b>IR</b>	inception report
<b>IRM</b>	Integrated Road Map
<b>ISC</b>	indirect support costs
<b>KA</b>	Kassala
<b>KH</b>	Khartoum
<b>KII</b>	key informant interview
<b>KPI</b>	key performance indicator
<b>LESS</b>	Logistics Execution Support System
<b>LET</b>	Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Sector
<b>LNS - MQ</b>	Lipid Based Supplement Medium Quantity
<b>LTA</b>	long-term agreement
<b>LTSH</b>	landside transport, storage, and handling
<b>M&amp;E</b>	monitoring and evaluation
<b>MAM</b>	moderate acute malnutrition
<b>MNO</b>	mobile network operator
<b>MNP</b>	micronutrient powder
<b>MSF</b>	Medicins Sans Frontieres
<b>mt</b>	metric tons
<b>MUAC</b>	mid-upper arm circumference
<b>NAPA</b>	National Adaptation Plan of Action
<b>NBP</b>	Needs-based Plan
<b>NCP</b>	National Congress Party (Sudan)
<b>ND</b>	North Darfur
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>NPA</b>	malnutrition prevention activities
<b>NWOW</b>	New Ways of Working
<b>OBD</b>	El Obeid
<b>OEV</b>	WFP Office of Evaluation
<b>OHCHR</b>	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PDM</b>	post-distribution monitoring
<b>PHL</b>	post-harvest losses
<b>PLW/G</b>	pregnant and lactating women/girls
<b>PMC</b>	project management committee
<b>PRRO</b>	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
<b>PSN</b>	productive safety net
<b>PTA</b>	parent and teacher association
<b>RAM</b>	Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division
<b>RB</b>	regional bureau
<b>RBAs</b>	Rome-based Agencies

<b>RBN</b>	Regional Bureau Nairobi
<b>RC</b>	Resident Coordinator
<b>RMP</b>	Performance Management and Monitoring Division
<b>RUSF</b>	ready to use supplementary food
<b>RVI</b>	Rift Valley Institute
<b>SABER</b>	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
<b>SBCC</b>	social behaviour change and communication
<b>SC</b>	supply chain
<b>SDG</b>	Sudanese Pound
<b>SDG(s)</b>	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
<b>SED</b>	South and East Darfur
<b>SER</b>	summary evaluation report
<b>SF</b>	school feeding
<b>SFSP</b>	Sudan Family Support Programme
<b>SG</b>	Secretary General
<b>SGBV</b>	sexual and gender-based violence
<b>SIPRI</b>	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
<b>SMP</b>	school meal programme activities
<b>SOs</b>	strategic objectives
<b>SPHERE</b>	Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response
<b>SRCS</b>	Sudanese Red Crescent Society
<b>SSTL</b>	State Sponsors of Terrorism List (USA)
<b>STARS</b>	Sudan Transition and Recovery Support Trust Fund
<b>SUDIA</b>	Sudanese Development Initiative
<b>SUN</b>	Scaling Up Nutrition
<b>TA</b>	Technical assistance
<b>TL</b>	Team Leader
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>TPM</b>	third-party monitoring
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN HABITAT</b>	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
<b>UNCBPF</b>	United Nations Country-based Pooled Fund
<b>UNCEDAW</b>	UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNHAS</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
<b>UNHCT</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Country Team
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
<b>UNMAS</b>	United Nations Mine Action Service
<b>UNOPS</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

<b>URT</b>	Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USD</b>	United States dollar
<b>USIP</b>	United States Institute of Peace
<b>VAM</b>	vulnerability analysis and mapping
<b>WASH</b>	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
<b>WCD</b>	West and Central Darfur
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WHS</b>	World Humanitarian Summit
<b>WINGS</b>	WFP Information Network and Global System
<b>WVI</b>	World Vision International
<b>ZHSR</b>	Zero Hunger Strategic Review

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