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SPR Reading Guidance



Supporting Access to Education for Vulnerable Children
Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in Tajikistan, Republic of (TJ)



World Food Programme

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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Country Context

Tajikistan is a land-locked, food deficit country with a population of approximately eight million people, three quarters of whom live in rural areas. It is characterized by a mountainous landscape that limits arable land to just seven percent of its surface. Despite achieving lower-middle income status in 2015 and notable progress towards poverty reduction, Tajikistan remains the poorest among the Commonwealth of Independent States, with 47 percent of its population living on less than USD 1.33 a day. Remittances from labour migration are an important component to Tajikistan's economy, accounting for 36 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) according to the latest 2016 World Bank estimates [1]. The economic downturn that has affected the region, derived by economic sanctions and a fall in global oil prices that hit the Russian economy starting in 2013, has negatively affected Tajikistan resulting in the drastic reduction of remittances. This has disproportionately affected the bottom 40 percent of the population. The country is suffering from an on-going crisis in the banking sector; non-performing loans have increased substantially to over 50 percent by the end June 2016, from 30 percent at the end 2015 [2].

Among countries in the Europe and Central Asia region, Tajikistan is classified as the most vulnerable to climate change and prone to frequent natural disasters. Environmental shocks, including earthquakes, disproportionately affect the rural poor, who have limited resources and capacities to adapt. According to a World Bank analysis, it is estimated that climate change has resulted in a 20 percent decline in agricultural productivity, which may increase poverty by 13 percent [3].

The 2016 Global Hunger Index (GHI), lists Tajikistan as having the highest rate of malnutrition among the former Soviet Republics; in addition, 33 percent of Tajikistan's population suffers from undernourishment [4]. Tajikistan

remains the only country in Central Asia that is categorized as facing 'serious' food security issues: experiencing an increase in undernourishment from 28 percent (1990-1992) to 33 percent (2014-2015). Nutrition indicators for the country, as measured by the latest Demographic Health Survey (2012), are the worst in Central Asia, and chronic malnutrition is of significant concern, with 26.8 percent of children 6-59 months suffering from stunting. Children affected by stunting are predominantly from poor households, with significant disparities between rural and urban areas. Regional variation ranges from 19 percent in Dushanbe to 27 percent each in the Sughd and Khatlon Regions. Prevalence of severe stunting is especially high among children in Sughd (12 percent) Khatlon (10 percent), Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) and Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS) (9 percent each) [5].

Inadequate infant and young child feeding practices further exacerbate malnutrition, as only 20 percent of children 6-59 months receive an acceptable level of frequent and diversified diet. In Tajikistan, food insecurity correlates to certain health issues, in particular Tuberculosis (TB). Tajikistan ranks sixth highest in the region for cases of TB and is at especially high risk as the disease spread within families, affecting household income sources.

According to the Gender Inequality Index (2014), Tajikistan rates 69 out of 155. Whilst Tajik law guarantees the equality of men and women throughout all aspects of society, it is widely recognised that women face greater obstacles exercising their rights and accessing the labour market. Gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms, are deeply embedded in society and disadvantage women. Women are consequently more affected by poverty due to gender-based discrimination in the labour market, wage disparities between women and men, access to economic resources, and reduced social protection for low-income households headed by women.

The Government of Tajikistan's strategic vision points towards the consolidation of development gains combined with an efficient and increased social protection system, including more focus on food security, education and healthcare. The current social protection system, however, focuses on protective measures and its coverage remains limited.

[1]. World Bank Group; KNOMAD: Migration and Remittances, April 2016. <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/661301460400427908/MigrationandDevelopmentBrief26.pdf>

[2] World Bank; Macro-poverty outlook for Tajikistan, Sep. 2016

[3] World Bank; Tajikistan: Economic and Distributional Impact of Climatic Change. 2011

[4] Global Hunger Index 2016; <http://ghi.ifpri.org/countries/TJK/>

[5] Tajikistan, Demographic Health Survey 2012 <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR279/FR279.pdf>

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

The Government of Tajikistan has organised its development priorities and objectives under the National Development Strategy (NDS 2016–2030) and the Mid-Term Development Strategy (MDS 2016–2020), which pursue structural consolidation and development gains, increased social protection measures and safety nets, together with a strong focus on food security, education and health care. WFP provides multi-sector support to the Government in its efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, ending hunger in Tajikistan.

WFP operated in coordination with the Government of Tajikistan and, in particular, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education as cooperating partners in the School Meals Programme. WFP has been active in supporting the Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee on School Meals and in engaging local authorities to address School Meals activities.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with the Agency of Forestry under the Government of Tajikistan for the implementation of tree plantation projects, and with the Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defense for collaboration in the area of emergency preparedness and response, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Areas of collaboration were framed while identifying roles and responsibilities for planning, implementing and monitoring the activities. Additional strategic coordination was established with the Committee of Environmental Protection under the Government for WFP to implement a climate adaptation project. The project will support short term and long term weather forecast and climate advisory to help rural communities manage their resources proactively and help mitigate damages caused by climate extremes. It will also support livelihood diversification at community level and will seek funding from the Green Climate Fund in 2017.

WFP activities are included under Tajikistan's United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2016–2020, and contribute to UNDAF priorities in health, education, social protection, food security and nutrition, resilience and environmental sustainability.

Strategic and operational partnerships have been discussed with technical partners, most notably the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund Agricultural Development (IFAD), to work together in strengthening local food production and supply chain, which will be integrated and support the WFP-led school meals programme. This cooperation aims to strengthen capacity and market opportunities to create a sustainable nutrition-sensitive school meals programme as part of the national safety net system.

Together with other United Nations agencies and development partners, WFP has supported the Government in nutrition-focused activities under the strategic coordination of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative, a movement led by countries that unites governments, civil society, the United Nations, donors, businesses and researchers, in a collective effort to improve nutrition. Since joining the SUN initiative in 2013, Tajikistan has established a dedicated Food Security and Nutrition Council, highlighting increased government commitment.

Strategic partnership with the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund has been established and will facilitate a three year cross-border cooperation project between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan implemented by United Nations agencies, including WFP, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Women (UNWomen). The project focuses on the promotion of coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflicts, in addition to conflict prevention and conflict management.

WFP and other United Nations agencies coordinated their actions by preparing and submitting two different joint proposals. The first, prepared with UNICEF, UNDP and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and submitted to the SDG Fund, focused on designing integrated interventions to support the rollout of the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition approach. The second, developed in partnership with UNDP, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, and UNWomen, was submitted to the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. The proposals were designed to realise the NDS, with the primary aim being to strengthen the resilience of communities by reducing their vulnerability to climate change and disaster-related risks. Through this project, implementing United Nations Agencies will seek to reinforce national capacity for the continued analysis of application of the human security approach, both at national and at sub-regional levels.

WFP is a member of Tajikistan's Development Coordination Council (DCC) and chairs the DCC Food Security and Nutrition Cluster together with United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Through the Cluster, WFP contributes to the formulation of government policies and strategies in coordination with Tajikistan's development partners and the donor community. The cluster has advocated for food security and nutrition issues by regularly updating the Government on food security and nutrition priorities within the country.

In order to achieve its objectives, WFP has developed strategic partnerships with a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Russian NGO, Social and Industrial Food Service Institute (SIFI), provides technical support to WFP Tajikistan to carry out capacity strengthening activities within the School Meals programme.

A MoU was signed with Caritas Switzerland to support the development of a sustainable school meals programme. Under this partnership, the two organizations piloted the distribution of locally purchased commodities in Mumominobod, monitoring the pilot and exploring possibilities to expand it to additional schools. To complement the integrated approach towards a sustainable school meals programme, WFP is developing a partnership with Welthungerhilfe and local partners to optimize food-cooking processes in assisted schools, thereby improving the efficiency of energy consumption in schools under the school meals programme. Welthungerhilfe campaigns against worldwide hunger and works in the rural regions of Tajikistan for sustainable food and nutrition security. Through the MoU, Welthungerhilfe will provide technical expertise and supervision for the design of energy efficient stoves for the schools. In addition, they will advise on low cost, low energy consumption technologies for an effective utilization of available resources in schools.

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

In 2016, WFP continued providing assistance through relief, recovery and development operations, in alignment with national priorities and in coordination with strategic partners and governmental actors. During the first quarter of the year, WFP completed the three main projects that had been active since 2010. Starting from April, these activities were consolidated under a new Country Programme, which frames WFP's action for the period 2016-2020.

Country Programme CP 200813 (2016-2020), approved budget USD 79.4 million will support the Government of Tajikistan's efforts to increase access to food and to improve nutrition, focusing on two interlinked components: i) Build and consolidate a national safety net system with a food security and nutrition focus, targeting the poorest and most food insecure households, and; ii) Enhance the resilience of food insecure and vulnerable rural communities exposed to recurrent natural and economic shocks. The Country Programme is aligned with the objectives of the Zero Hunger Challenge and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Country Programme is committed to support WFP's Strategic Objective 1, to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergency; Strategic Objective 3, to

reduce risk and enable people, communities and countries to meet their own food and nutrition needs; and Strategic Objective 4, to reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger. All activities under the Country Programme are consistent with Tajikistan's NDS 2016–2030, and specifically with the two goals of the Mid-Term Development Programme 2016-2020: overcoming the critical level of food insecurity and providing equal access to social services. The programme will emphasize advocacy, policy development and capacity development with the Government, with a gradual reduction in direct implementation leading to a full hand-over of the school meals and the tuberculosis (TB) programmes to the Government by 2021.

Relief Operation: PRRO 200122 (2010-2016), approved budget USD 28.8 million addressed WFP's Strategic Objectives 1 and 2 by improving food access of food insecure people facing recurring natural disasters and socio-economic challenges. This activity has been implemented through the emergency response component and through a nutrition and a recovery component. Emergency response targeted households affected by shock or crises and aimed to protect their livelihoods. Nutrition activities were designed to address moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in children between 6-59 months, and chronic malnutrition in children between 6-23 months and malnourished pregnant and lactating women (PLW). The recovery component aimed to support food security and livelihoods of targeted communities through food assistance for assets (FFA) activities, through which community assets were built or rehabilitated to support communities' food security.

Development Operations: DEV 200120 (2010-2016), approved budget USD 59.6 million and DEV 200173 (2010-2016), approved budget USD 12.6 million supported the country's social protection systems by implementing school meals programme activities, and by providing a food-based social safety net to TB patients and their families. The school meals programme targeted children living in rural food insecure areas, enabling them to access education and working as a social protection safety net. The programme aimed to strengthen the Government's capacity for taking ownership of the school meals programme through close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education and Science and through the Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee on School Meals and local authorities. Assistance to TB patients and their families sought to help to the most vulnerable and poorest households in Tajikistan.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

Over the past five years, WFP Tajikistan has met 65 percent of the required funding to implement planned activities. WFP prioritized available resources with the consideration of country priorities and managed to assist 500,000 beneficiaries per year. Low resourcing levels negatively affected the quantity of food items provided to schoolchildren and the number of assisted food assistance for assets (FFA) sites. Under nutrition, moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment was prioritized over prevention, for which no activities have been implemented.

The support extended to patients with Tuberculosis (TB) and their families was supported by the Global Fund for TB, HIV and Malaria up to 2013, and directly by WFP until 2015; and it was put on hold while discussing programme prioritization with Ministry of Health and Social Protection. WFP received specific funding to support capacity development and augmentation activities (CD&A) for the period of 2013-2015. As of mid-2016, planned CD&A activities were postponed due to delayed pledged contribution.

WFP is working on a resource mobilization strategy aimed at identifying new donor countries and private companies.

Achievements at Country Level

At the end of March, WFP closed all three of its operations: PRRO 200122, DEV 200120 and DEV 200173, which had framed WFP support for the last five years.

Following the alignment with the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2016-2020 [1] and priorities identified by the Government in the Mid-Term Development Strategy 2016-2020, WFP activities were reorganised into a new Country Programme that was designed on a five year cycle (2016-2020). WFP started implementation of the Country Programme in close collaboration with the Government of Tajikistan, United Nations agencies and other development partners. Capacity Development & Augmentation (CD&A) activities aimed to develop the Government's capacity to gradually take on the management of some WFP activities during the course of the Country Programme. The School Meals Inter-Agency Working Group, created by the Government to guide the legislative and management design of a forthcoming national programme, actively collaborated with WFP to develop a National School Meals programme. WFP assisted the Government in the implementation of the National Nutrition Protocol, strengthening the capacity of health staff at the central and local level and supporting community based management of acute malnutrition. Training events were conducted in 145 primary health centres with participation of more than 150 health department staff.

[1] https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/operact/Technical_Cooperation/Delivering_as_One/UNDAF_country_files/UNDAF_files_2015-2020/Tajikistan-UNDAF_2016-2020-Eng_final.pdf

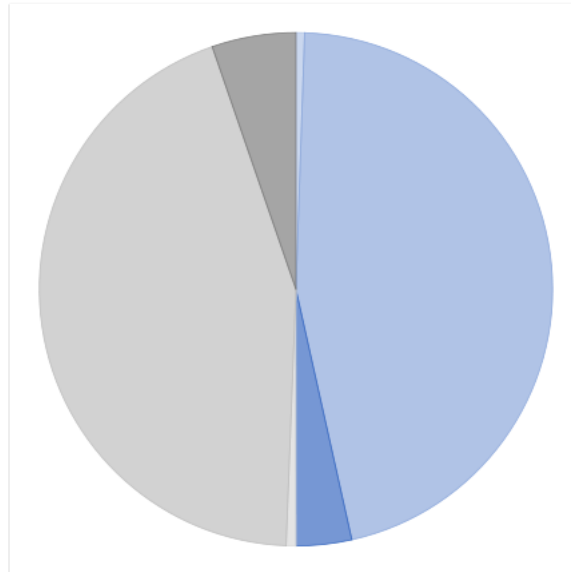


Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	2,217	2,526	4,743
Children (5-18 years)	188,792	181,135	369,927
Adults (18 years plus)	14,337	21,740	36,077
Total number of beneficiaries in 2016	205,346	205,401	410,747

Country Beneficiaries by Gender and Age

- Children (under 5 years)
- Children (5-18 years)
- Adults (18 years plus)
- Children (under 5 years)
- Children (5-18 years)
- Adults (18 years plus)



Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Country Programme	4,858	295	367	13	126	5,658
Development Project	1,712	99	142	-	42	1,996
Single Country PRRO	233	9	25	21	3	291
Total Food Distributed in 2016	6,803	403	535	34	171	7,945

Supply Chain

The fortified wheat flour, vegetable oil and pulses were purchased regionally in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. Iodized salt was procured through local purchase, while SuperCereal Plus was purchased internationally.

Regionally and locally purchased food commodities were delivered in timely and efficient manner. Internationally purchased food arriving from Europe through the Baltic port of Riga (Latvia) and then transported through Russia by rail usually has an average lead time of three to four weeks from departure to reach WFP warehouses in country. However, due to customs clearance issues between Europe and the Russian Federation, the shipment of SuperCereal Plus was delayed by six weeks at the beginning of the summer. This resulted in the temporary suspension of nutrition activities, which were then promptly resumed with the arrival of the commodity. In order to avoid such delays in future, WFP will explore alternative corridors and the possibility of supporting the local production of specialized nutritious food.

Quality control for both internationally and locally purchased commodities is performed by TajikStandard, the Agency on Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection under the Government.

To support operational logistics, WFP manages three warehouses (in Dushanbe, Khujand and Khorog), with a storage capacity of more than 5,000 mt. WFP organised food delivery to in-country warehouses, selecting transport companies according to WFP rules and regulations. Cooperating partners provided secondary transportation to the final distribution points. Handling, storage and distribution services were done by cooperating partners. No post-delivery losses occurred during the reporting period due to the effective food handling practices of cooperating partners. Aiming to enhance cooperating partners logistics capacity and to ensure an overall efficient management of food commodities WFP provided training to 120 cooperating partners warehouse staff across all regions on handling, reconstitution and storage practices.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Iodised Salt	130	-	130
Split Peas	-	338	338
Vegetable Oil	-	280	280
Wheat Flour	-	5,312	5,312
Wheat Soya Blend	-	57	57
Total	130	5,986	6,116
Percentage	2.1%	97.9%	

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

WFP strategy at country level was informed by a series of evaluations and systematic reviews. The 2014 PRRO evaluation mission findings have been used in the design of the Country Programme. The evaluation recommended continuing the activities focused on the prevention and treatment of acute and chronic malnutrition, aligned with national strategies and priorities identified under the government-led Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative. WFP further developed its emergency preparedness and response capacity through activities focused on developing the capacity for WFP and both central and local counterparts on logistics, telecommunication and programme design and management to adequately respond to emergencies.

Given the high exposure to natural disasters like earthquakes, floods and droughts, WFP implemented a number of mitigating actions based on experience built in preparing and responding to natural shocks. This included maintaining minimum preparedness activities, regularly updating the contingency plans, and supporting the Government's capacity development. In the framework of the collaboration between WFP and the Committee of

Emergency Situations and Civil Defense of the Republic of Tajikistan in the area of Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, WFP recruited an Emergency Focal Point/Coordinator, based within the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense to provide secretariat support to the Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT) activities, and act as a focal point to interface with WFP and other REACT members for emergency coordination, post-disaster evaluation and response mechanisms in compliance with National laws and regulations. The typology of food assistance for assets (FFA) activities supported focused on disaster risk reduction. WFP conducted regional and community discussions in order to better understand climate change-related food security issues, and plan possible support activities together with local stakeholders.

Partnership with the Government has been important in school meals activities for the involvement of various levels of national and local authorities in programme implementation. The design of the Country Programme marked an occasion for WFP to further improve and refine its action. Learning from more than a decade of food distributions in schools and with the long-term goal of supporting the establishment of a country-owned school meals programme, WFP planned to test different models and modalities of school meals provision throughout the five-year duration of the 2016-2020 Country Programme. This measure takes into account the great diversity of the targeted schools and the challenge of developing a single school meals model, valid at country level. WFP action was informed by the 2015 System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) exercise, which guided the work within policy making and management of the programme. Following the recommendations of the SABER workshop, WFP supported national stakeholders in drafting the national school meals strategy.

In line with the beginning of the Country programme, WFP completed a gender analysis to better inform programming and implementation modalities. This analysis sought to strengthen equal participation of women and men in WFP projects, and to increase women's participation in decision-making processes. WFP followed the analysis recommendations in the formulation of a gender action plan. In particular, the latest Food Security Monitoring System, WFP incorporated more tools to better assess gender perspectives.

The results of a study conducted in 2015 indicate that food assistance provided to patients with Tuberculosis (TB) and their family members could improve TB outpatient treatment, reduce the side effects of TB medicine, increase the nutritional status and endurance of TB patients and potentially contribute to preventing TB drug resistance. This notwithstanding, Government assistance to TB patients was shifted to cash through a different service provider. According to this approach change, WFP has been renegotiating its support to the National TB Centres, concentrating on technical support for the development and dissemination of nationally adapted guidelines on nutrition assessment, counselling and support for TB patients.

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

The educational system of Tajikistan has undergone significant achievements in recent years marked by increased attendance and enrollment rates in primary schools. However, Tajikistan still faces significant challenges as the education sector has remained greatly underfunded. Families, particularly those from vulnerable communities, struggle economically to send and keep their children at school, as they are required to cover fees for the textbooks, supplies, school maintenance and additionally salaries for technical staff. The school meals project addressed WFP Strategic Objective 4, to reduce undernutrition and break the inter-generational cycle of hunger, by aiming to increase equitable access to education through the provision of school meals to children from food insecure areas. The School Meals Programme provides a nourishing bowl of hot soup and bread to over 370,000 primary school children, their teachers and support staff every day. The programme covers nearly 2,000 schools in 52 districts, and some 60 percent of all rural primary school children in the country. The ingredients for the soup are comprised of pulses, enriched oil, iodized salt and vegetables. School meals provided an important incentive for the parents to continue to send their children to school. This development project contributed to increased enrollment, attendance rates and good performance of school children through the provision of nutritious hot meals in schools. Implementation of the programme has resulted in alleviation of additional food costs for the food insecure rural families. Furthermore, the hot school meals contribute to the increased attention of children during school days, allowing them to better focus on their lessons.

DEV 200120 sought to strengthen the government's capacity to take over school meals programme by 2021 through close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education and Science and other line ministries through the Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee on School Meals and local authorities. The programme was aligned with the National Strategy for Education Development 2012-2020. The National School Feeding Strategy Concept was endorsed by government decree in 28 February, 2015, to produce a sustainable country owned school meals programme. The concept intends to provide a basis for designing and implementing measures leading to the establishment of the National School feeding Policy in Tajikistan. The concept takes into consideration the importance of providing students with a nutritious diet to enhance their learning capacity and encourages high attendance rates at schools. The concept states the long-term objective impacts of the programme, including improving food security and contributing to the overall agricultural and economic development in Tajikistan.

WFP implemented a number of capacity development activities within the concept's framework during the period in reference, including pilot implementation of Micronutrient Status survey of school children in Tajikistan, planning and establishment of school based bakeries, training of school staff. DEV 200120 has played a key role in the formulation of the education pillar under United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016-2020 document and the National Development Strategy of Tajikistan 2016-2030 approved by the government in 2016, the Mid-term Development Strategy (MDS) of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016-2020.



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

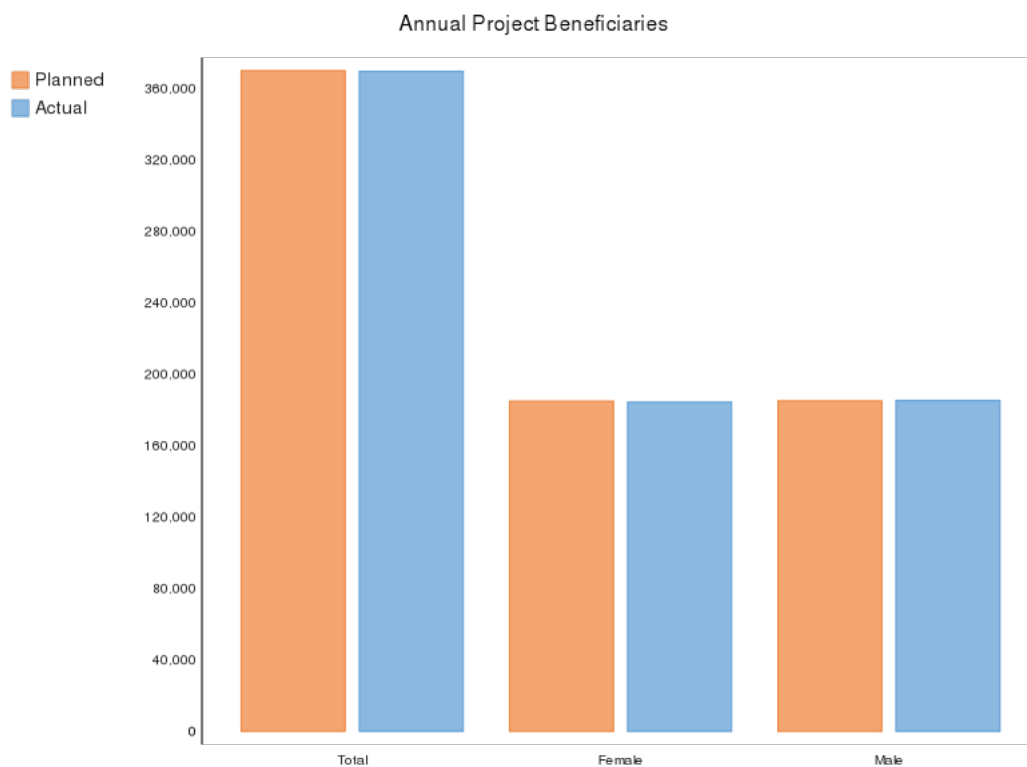
Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	1,663,852
Direct Support Costs	7,743,848
Food and Related Costs	46,276,766
Indirect Support Costs	3,897,913
Total	59,582,380

Project Activities

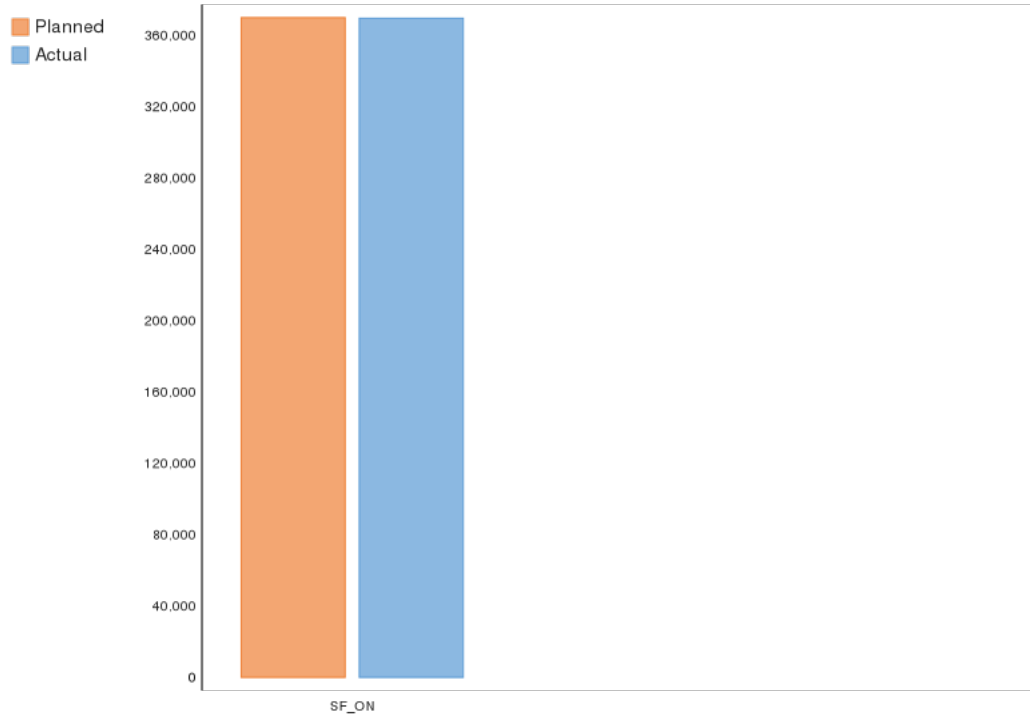
WFP school meals programme targeted children in primary grades one to four and was able to successfully reach the target number of beneficiaries under its activities. The programme reached 370,000 children in 2,000 primary schools in rural food insecure areas of Tajikistan. The slight increase compared to planned number was in line with the number of students attending the primary schools covered by the programme.

The districts covered by the programme were selected in the starting phase of the schools meals programme in 1999, selection was done on the basis of the vulnerability assessment conducted in cooperation with the government. WFP's main support to the schools comes in the form food assistance, by providing a daily hot school meal to children. WFP supplies food products including fortified wheat flour, fortified vegetable oil, iodised salt and pulses. At the same time, parents and local executive bodies contributed by means of delivering fresh products like fruit and vegetables. These complementary food commodities and condiments are then used for preparing hot meals. The support of parents and local authorities includes partially covering the costs related to fuel, cooks' salaries, kitchen maintenance, secondary transport of the food and bread baking.

The inconsistency between higher than planned coverage of beneficiaries in comparison to the lower than planned actual food distribution was due to resource availability in order to adequately cover the beneficiaries WFP provided a reduced entitlement. As a result of limited resource availability, WFP had to provide 516 kcal instead of the planned 758 kcal. This accounts for 24.5 percent of the daily calorie intake recommendation of 2,100 kcal for children aged 7 to 11, according to the National Nutrition Recommendations by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.

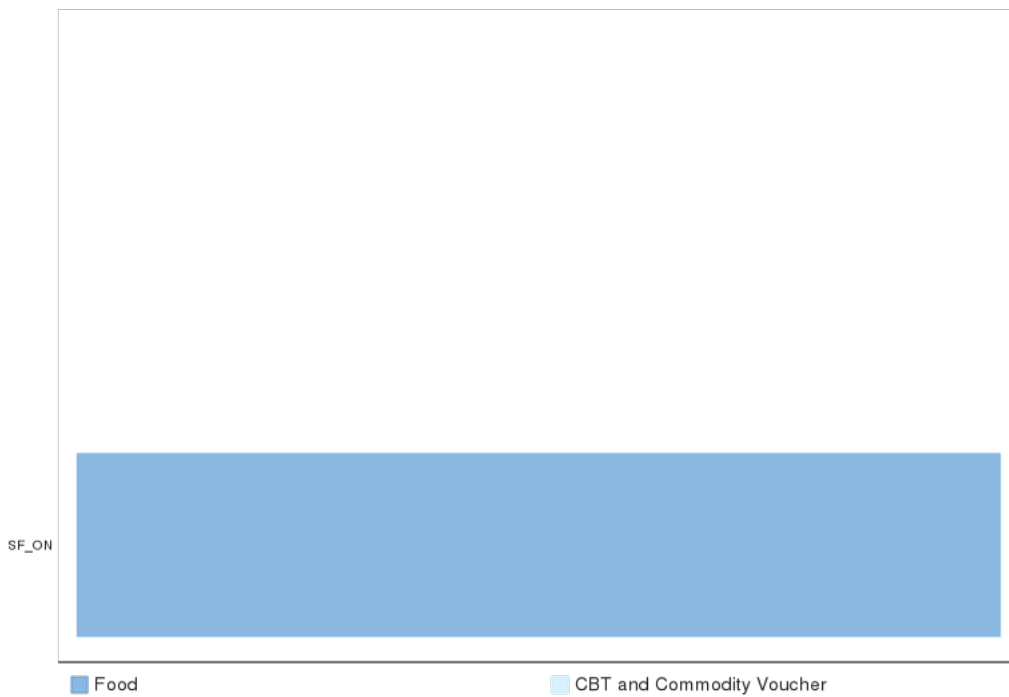


Annual Project Beneficiaries by Activity



SF_ON: School Feeding (on-site)

Modality of Transfer by Activity



SF_ON: School Feeding (on-site)



Annual Project Food Distribution

Commodity	Planned Distribution (mt)	Actual Distribution (mt)	% Actual v. Planned
Iodised Salt	44	42	93.9%
Split Peas	444	141	31.7%
Vegetable Oil	222	99	44.5%
Wheat Flour	2,220	1,700	76.6%
Total	2,930	1,981	67.6%

Operational Partnerships

During the course of the project WFP has developed close partnerships with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture to coordinate efforts to improve the transition of the programme to national ownership. Cooperation has been developed for the field level implementation of the programme with the Ministry of Education and Science through district education departments. Administrative and informational support has been provided by the national and local level government. The local government contributed financially by paying the cooks' salaries, maintenance and utilities and secondary transportation costs, in addition to partial payment of local private bakeries that have an agreement to bake bread for the school meals with WFP commodities. Regular monitoring of the schools was performed by Ministry of Education staff who have responsibilities as district level school meals focal points. The focal points visited all the assisted schools a minimum of three times per school year during which data was collected such as attendance rates, gender-disaggregated data and community contributions for regular monthly reports.

The partnership with the Russian NGO, Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute (SIFI) was extended until the end of the project which included technical assistance, research support and development of new pilot projects for the school meals programme. SIFI has continued providing technical expertise in improving food services in schools and extended their support for the activities to improve the program and the process of handover to the Government. The overall objective of the technical assistance was to develop an efficient school meals programme.

WFP advocated for the school meals in Government led forums and consultations, Government-UN, Government civil society events, together with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other United Nations agencies like World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which are included in the social protection and education pillar of the UNDAF 2016-2020 and in the National Social Protection Strategy for 2016-2020. WFP has established a closer relationship between the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education and Science at both the technical and Deputy Minister Level in order to improve both project design and implementation, this was achieved through dialogue facilitation between implementation partners, reducing bureaucracy and improving organization of the school meals.

In addition to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Protection, key implementing partners, WFP worked actively to establish possible collaboration and joint actions with specialized partners including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNICEF, Caritas Switzerland and the NGO Welthungerhilfe in Tajikistan with the objective of promoting the use of local produce for school meals, thus supporting the market and creating links between schools and the agricultural sector to encourage local farming. It is expected that such collaborations will materialize during the implementation of the forthcoming Country Programme 2016-2020.

Performance Monitoring

Monitoring visits were conducted by WFP, local authorities, the Inter-ministerial Coordination Council and the technical partner Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute (SIFI) to monitor project implementation and progress made. In each district a focal point was appointed by the local authorities to be responsible for the monitoring and

follow-up on the implementation progress in the schools. WFP local monitors conducted regular visits to the schools and produced monitoring reports using monitoring tools and standard monitoring structures for the project. Monitoring also assessed the technical capacity of the schools to organise meals in accordance with national hygiene and sanitary standards. Process monitoring, like sanitary situation, hygiene and menu composition were monitored by district authorities and school health personnel who provided official feedback to the schools and followed-up on implementation of recommendations. In order to ensure compliance with the recommendations the schools with poor hygiene standards were required to implement improvement plans which were followed up by the local Government during the next semester. WFP monitors conducted random cross checks of the data provided by the Ministry of Education.

The coordination council members conducted random monitoring visits to the schools, reporting back to the council and following up on any issues brought up. SIFI conducts technical monitoring of the schools where pilot activities, like establishment of school bakeries and provision of modernized kitchen equipment's are implemented. Each school was visited at least once a semester.

The outcome data such as enrollment, attendance, distribution dates, were collected on a monthly basis using official school data, while some indicators were collected on a quarterly basis, such as data on food contribution from teachers and supporting staff. All the school involved in the school meals programme used the WFP standard package consisting of information collection formats.

Results/Outcomes

The WFP School Meals programme helped to stabilize high enrollment and attendance rates in food insecure areas in Tajikistan. On average, children received multi-fortified meals on 19 school days each month, which had a positive impact on their nutritional status, as suggested by the pilot micronutrient survey conducted in spring. The System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) exercise, conducted in April 2015, provides the baseline to guide and evaluate the work within policy-making and management of the programme, through the National Capacity Index (NCI) indicator.

Within the framework of capacity strengthening activities under the school meals programme, WFP conducted trainings on monitoring, reporting, management, organisation of school meals, and hygiene and sanitation issues for regional school meals focal points involved in the implementation of the programme. While training female staff was a priority for WFP, the number of male staff trained was higher than planned in line with the actual number of male and female staff in the municipalities. Together with the Ministry of Education, WFP advocated for cooks to receive formal trainings and for their positions in schools to be financed through the districts' education budgets. As a result, within the reporting period of January and March, a total of 50 government staff including district level focal points and school personnel received training for the management of the school meals programme. Cooks in all districts continued to be trained while Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's) continued to be key drivers of successful implementation of school meals. PTA's received training from school meals focal points from different WFP field offices on supervision of food preparation food service, bread baking, and food storage management. Coordination of the deliveries of complementary food provided by parents and community members to the schools meals programme was conducted by PTA's. In the Rasht valley with high levels of food insecurity, WFP continued delivery of energy efficient stoves to schools to facilitate the preparation of hot meals during winter. Additionally, WFP provided ovens, scales, and water containers to assisted schools.

Under the WFP school meals programme 2 pilot school in Nurek and Rogun were selected to establish bakeries. The bakery pilot was developing in collaboration with Social and Industrial Food Service Institute's (SIFI) as a capacity development activity. SIFI and WFP planned on installation of baking equipment in both selected schools and training of staff planned to be conducted by SIFI's food technologist in order to familiarize staff with the equipment, bread preparation and on hygiene and nutrients. WFP working together with the selected schools formed a management and quality assurance committee. The overall goal of the School bakery pilot is to ensure availability of more nutritious and more resource efficient production of bread for school meals, but also to test the possibility of schools to raise funds using the bakeries' capacity for selling products in the local markets. The bakeries could also have a positive impact on the local community collaboration increasing communities' responsibilities in the management and operation of the bakeries as an active component of the School Meals programme. The pilot bakeries became fully operational at the beginning of the academic year 2016/2017, and WFP will monitor the implementation and results of the pilots in the course of the next years.

In order to inform possible options to improve the nutrition status of school children, and hence influencing their performance, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), in collaboration with WFP and other partners, conducted a research to test the micro-nutrient status of primary school age children comparing data from schools with no school meal programme, schools supported by WFP with fortified food, and schools that, in addition to food, received WFP support to improve the infrastructure and hygienic standards of kitchens where hot meals are prepared. Findings indicate that the ordinary diet of school children is poor in many essential micronutrients that negatively influences growth, development, school performance and overall health. The study showed that the nutritional status of school children who benefit from WFP school meals prepared with fortified food tend to have less iodine or copper deficiency than those who do not receive school meals.

Through the Food for Assets (FFA) activities conducted under the duration of PRRO 200122, renovations on six classrooms and on toilet facility took place to minimize the possibility of hazards for children's health and well-being. Despite funding shortfalls, WFP was able to absorb the growing number of children in the assisted schools providing hot meals five days a week.

WFP, with its technical partner SIFI and MoHSP, developed and published a recipe book for school meals which was published and made available to rural schools, local municipalities and public libraries in 2016. The handbook promotes healthy and varied diets for school children based on available local products and provides nutritional facts and dietary requirements. WFP monitors follow up the use of the recipe book, reporting that estimated 30 percent of schools follow the cooking instructions given in the book.

Within the reporting period the eight pilot projects started in 2015 and implemented in two districts of the country continued as part of infrastructure development and improved efficiency of school meals. The eight pilot schools selected in Norek and Ayni districts had canteens renovated and refurbished and supplied with modern equipment. The management and the technical staff of the schools and district hukumats [1] received relevant training's and regular follow-up from the district education departments' focal points and programme experts. As a result the process of meals organization and service was facilitated for the kitchen staff, reducing the working hours, as well as the quality of the food delivered was majorly improved.

[1] local government

Progress Towards Gender Equality

Post-independence and civil war has adversely affected women by the lack of economic security. This has caused a decrease in employment and sectors where women are predominately employed, such as health and education, have witnessed drops in wages. Moreover, women's workloads often limit their opportunities to participate in social, educational and economic activities. The collapse of social safety nets has led to an increased number of women and families living in poverty, while the abolishment of quotas guaranteeing equal representation in political and governmental bodies has increasingly kept them out of decision-making positions. WFP committed to conduct a gender analysis at the beginning of the Country Programme in April 2016.

Parents and teacher's associations (PTA) members manage school meals at the local level, with half of all PTA members expected to be women. In order to facilitate women's participation in the programme WFP was actively involved in awareness raising and promotion of gender parity during PTA board meeting and election events. A quota system has been put in place for female PTA members with WFP lobbying for scheduling meetings during daytime in order to facilitate women's participation in board meetings. Newly elected members of the committees were provided with trainings, with slightly less involvement of female participants than expected, which is attributed to persistent traditional gender behavioural patterns in some communities.

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

Data for the standard protection indicators is collected at the end of the year with latest available data from December 2015. Field monitors and cooperating partners (CPs) did not observe and report any security incidents involving beneficiaries during school meals activities, and the PTAs did not express concerns about the safety of school children. The results of the reports were crosschecked with other involved stakeholders, including CPs and local authorities, and are believed to be credible. To ensure transparent feedback provision, posters were placed in every schools with phone numbers of WFP field offices. In addition some schools had a feedback boxes on their premises. During the reporting period, no feedback was shared through those means.

Some schools lacked facilities, such as toilets or special classrooms for certain subjects, and children were forced to walk great distances through hazardous terrain to other schools. The integration of school meals under the DEV

200120 and FFA activities implemented under PRRO 20122 allowed WFP to renovate 6 classrooms and 1 toilet facility for children's health and well-being.

WFP staff and school focal points informed PTA members about WFP's school meals programme through monthly information meetings and PTA gatherings, the results of which were reported back to WFP by school meals focal points. The members of PTAs were included in the development of the menus and daily organisation of the meals. This encouraged them to show more initiative in supporting school meals by providing firewood for cooking and complementary ingredients for the meals. Feedback from school staff was received through the local school meals focal point from the district's education department, who visited each school three times a year and subsequently reported back to WFP field monitors.

Mirlan's story

Mirlan is a 9 years old boy who lives in the Rankul Jamoat of the Murgab District, in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region of Tajikistan (GBAO). He is the third of five children, and his family has always faced serious economic problems. His father Nurali occasionally trades fuel at the local market, which is very difficult to reach from their house, and his income is very low. The family owns a small garden where Mirlan's mother, Bualima, used to take care of the livestock and produce handcrafted goods to help supplement the family's income. This allowed the family to maintain a sufficient standard of living, until Bualima was involved in a car accident that resulted in a spinal trauma which left her disabled. Now in a wheelchair and unable to provide for her family as she once had, Bualima has expressed appreciation for WFP's School Meals programme, "I cannot take care of my own children as I did before the accident and this is the most terrible experience for a mother". Mirlan and his younger brother Olim sometimes missed school due to their family's financial situation and were not able to afford to buy lunch. Things at home became more difficult after the accident, Mirlan and Olim now regularly did not attend their classes when their mother couldn't prepare their lunch on time. With the daily school meals provided at school, Olim and Mirlan were regularly sent to school as it was a great help for Bualima. With their mother, "I see how WFP puts a smile on their faces every day, as they tell me how they enjoy eating their meals together with their friends at school, and they have so much more energy for learning", she says looking at her young son doing his homework.

As part of WFP's School Meals programme, Mirlan and his younger brother Olim, receive one hot meal everyday at school thanks to the support of WFP and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) who supplement the meals with fresh vegetables. WFP School Meals programme is provided to vulnerable areas is supportive of children that, like Mirlan, experience difficulties at home. In addition to providing nutritional support, the programme alleviates the economic pressure on the most vulnerable households, saving them money as they do not have to cook an extra daily meal.

Through its School Meals programme, WFP assists with the continued education for those children targeted for assistance, as the daily school meal helps to improve their cognitive abilities.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

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School children enjoy their daily school meal consisting of soup and bread in a WFP assisted school.

Overview of Project Beneficiary Information

Table 1: Overview of Project Beneficiary Information

Beneficiary Category	Planned (male)	Planned (female)	Planned (total)	Actual (male)	Actual (female)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (male)	% Actual v. Planned (female)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
Total Beneficiaries	185,074	184,926	370,000	185,262	184,360	369,622	100.1%	99.7%	99.9%
By Age-group:									
Children (5-18 years)	177,526	177,378	354,904	174,846	167,709	342,555	98.5%	94.5%	96.5%
Adults (18 years plus)	7,548	7,548	15,096	10,416	16,651	27,067	138.0%	220.6%	179.3%
By Residence status:									
Residents	185,074	184,926	370,000	185,266	184,356	369,622	100.1%	99.7%	99.9%

Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity and Modality

Table 2: Beneficiaries by Activity and Modality

Activity	Planned (food)	Planned (CBT)	Planned (total)	Actual (food)	Actual (CBT)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (food)	% Actual v. Planned (CBT)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
School Feeding (on-site)	370,000	-	370,000	369,622	-	369,622	99.9%	-	99.9%

Annex: Participants by Activity and Modality

Activity	Planned (food)	Planned (CBT)	Planned (total)	Actual (food)	Actual (CBT)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (food)	% Actual v. Planned (CBT)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
School Feeding (on-site)	370,000	-	370,000	369,622	-	369,622	99.9%	-	99.9%

Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity (excluding nutrition)

Table 3: Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity (excluding nutrition)

Beneficiary Category	Planned (male)	Planned (female)	Planned (total)	Actual (male)	Actual (female)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (male)	% Actual v. Planned (female)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
School Feeding (on-site)									
Children receiving school meals in primary schools	170,540	169,860	340,400	171,671	170,986	342,657	100.7%	100.7%	100.7%
Activity supporters	14,504	15,096	29,600	13,509	13,456	26,965	93.1%	89.1%	91.1%
Total participants	185,044	184,956	370,000	185,180	184,442	369,622	100.1%	99.7%	99.9%
Total beneficiaries	185,044	184,956	370,000	185,180	184,442	369,622	100.1%	99.7%	99.9%

Project Indicators

Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
SO4 Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger				
Reduced undernutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies among children aged 6-59 months, pregnant and lactating women, and school-aged children				
Average number of schooldays per month on which multi-fortified foods or at least 4 food groups were provided				
<i>COUNTRYWIDE, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2014.03, WFP programme monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, WFP programme monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03, WFP programme monitoring</i>	>17.00	18.70	18.88	19.00
Increased equitable access to and utilization of education				
Enrolment: Average annual rate of change in number of children enrolled in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>COUNTRYWIDE, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2010.12, WFP programme monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, WFP programme monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03, WFP programme monitoring</i>	>0.20	0.01	0.20	0.20

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Enrolment (girls): Average annual rate of change in number of girls enrolled in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>COUNTRYWIDE, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2010.12, WFP programme monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, WFP programme monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03, WFP programme monitoring</i>	=0.02	0.01	0.10	0.10
Enrolment (boys): Average annual rate of change in number of boys enrolled in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>COUNTRYWIDE, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2010.12, WFP programme monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, WFP programme monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03, WFP programme monitoring</i>	=0.02	0.01	0.20	0.20
Attendance rate in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>COUNTRYWIDE, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2010.12, WFP programme monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, WFP programme monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03, WFP programme monitoring</i>	=99.00	98.40	98.45	98.80
Attendance rate (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>COUNTRYWIDE, Project End Target: 2016.03, Monthly SF report, Base value: 2010.12, WFP programme monitoring, Monthly SF report, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, WFP programme monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03, WFP programme monitoring</i>	=98.40	98.40	98.42	98.90
Attendance rate (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>COUNTRYWIDE, Project End Target: 2016.03, Monthly SF report, Base value: 2010.12, WFP programme monitoring, Monthly SF report, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, WFP programme monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03, WFP programme monitoring</i>	=98.40	98.20	98.47	98.80
Ownership and capacity strengthened to reduce undernutrition and increase access to education at regional, national and community levels				
NCI: School Feeding National Capacity Index				
<i>COUNTRYWIDE, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2015.04, Secondary data, SABER</i>	=1.60	1.40	-	-

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO4: Capacity Development - Strengthening National Capacities				
Number of female government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training	individual	20	20	100.0%
Number of male government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training	individual	30	30	100.0%
Number of technical assistance activities provided	activity	7	7	100.0%
SO4: School Feeding (on-site)				
Energy content of food distributed (kcal/person/day)	individual	758	516	68.1%
Number of feeding days	instance	38	38	100.0%
Number of schools assisted by WFP	school	1,990	1,990	100.0%

Gender Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Proportion of women beneficiaries in leadership positions of project management committees				
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03</i>	=50.00	50.00	55.00	55.00
Proportion of women project management committee members trained on modalities of food, cash, or voucher distribution				
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03</i>	=70.00	10.00	65.00	65.00

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Proportion of assisted people (men) informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, where people can complain)				
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2015.12</i>	=90.00	90.00	-	-
Proportion of assisted people (men) who do not experience safety problems travelling to, from and/or at WFP programme site				
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2015.12</i>	=100.00	100.00	-	-
Proportion of assisted people (women) informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, where people can complain)				
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2015.12</i>	=90.00	90.00	-	-
Proportion of assisted people (women) who do not experience safety problems travelling to, from and/or at WFP programme sites				
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2015.12</i>	=100.00	100.00	-	-
Proportion of assisted people informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, where people can complain)				
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2015.12</i>	=90.00	90.00	-	-
Proportion of assisted people who do not experience safety problems travelling to, from and/or at WFP programme site				
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Base value: 2015.12</i>	=100.00	100.00	-	-

Partnership Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Latest Follow-up
Amount of complementary funds provided to the project by partners (including NGOs, civil society, private sector organizations, international financial institutions and regional development banks)		
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03</i>	=2,000,000.00	804,332.00

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Latest Follow-up
Number of partner organizations that provide complementary inputs and services		
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03</i>	=2.00	2.00
Proportion of project activities implemented with the engagement of complementary partners		
<i>TAJIKISTAN, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2016.03, Latest Follow-up: 2016.03</i>	=100.00	100.00

Resource Inputs from Donors

Resource Inputs from Donors

Donor	Cont. Ref. No.	Commodity	Purchased in 2016 (mt)	
			In-Kind	Cash
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00049-03	Wheat Flour	-	42
		Total	-	42