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Emergency Food Assistance to Populations Affected by Earthquakes

Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in Ecuador, Republic of (EC)



World Food Programme

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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Country Context

Ecuador has made considerable progress in economic, social and human development in the past decade, but challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals persist, regarding goals 2 and 17, in particular. These challenges include a high prevalence of stunting, increasing overweight and obesity coupled with micronutrient deficiencies, limited access to food and employment for refugees, vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, gender inequalities, and limited opportunities for smallholder farmers.

Access to food: The Global Hunger Index score for Ecuador is 13.9, a moderate level, with 24 percent of the population below the national poverty line, rising to 41 percent in rural areas. Poverty undermines access to food and reduces dietary diversity. The 2016 UNDP Human Development Report ranked Ecuador 88 out of 187 countries and the Gini coefficient of income inequality was at 46.5 percent. In 2015, Ecuador hosted more than 60,000 refugees, mostly from Colombia. About 64 percent of recent arrivals have poor or borderline food consumption and low dietary diversity.

End malnutrition: Despite significant public investments and notable improvements, progress on nutrition indicators remains below targets. Between 1986 and 2014, the prevalence of stunting among children under 5 decreased from 40.2 to 25.3 percent; underweight prevalence decreased from 12.8 to 4.8 percent. In spite of significant progress, anaemia remains a serious public health concern, affecting 62 percent of the children under 1 year of age (Encuesta Nacional de Salud y Nutrición-2012). Concurrently the country has seen rising levels of obesity and overweight resulting from the “nutrition transition”, with up to 62.8 percent of adults overweight or obese

(Encuesta Nacional de Salud y Nutrición-2012). The reasons for limited progress include lacking nutrition awareness, limited access to nutritious foods, low dietary diversity, limited access to water and basic sanitation, and children's high exposure to disease.

Smallholder farmers' productivity and incomes: Agriculture remains the main source of livelihood in Ecuador, employing 28.5 percent of the economically active population - 68.5 percent in rural areas. Women constitute approximately 43 percent of the employed in agriculture. Indigenous women face gender, occupational, and ethnic discrimination limiting their participation and productivity in the sector and resulting in heavy workloads, slight decision-making power, limited knowledge of their rights and restricted access to property titles. By 2014, about 2.53 million people in rural areas lived in adverse conditions, 1.6 times more than the total population in urban areas (INEC, 2015). According to Ecuadorian authorities, between 2014 and 2015 more than 26 percent of the population worked in agriculture, husbandry and fishery (INEC, 2015). Despite the fact that the agricultural sector generates more employment, people working in this sector earn 44.3 percent less than the national average income per capita. In 2016, the rural poverty rate was reported for 43.96 percent, extreme poverty rate for 19.53 percent of the population (INEC 2016).

Sustainable food systems: The sustainability of food systems is threatened by population growth, soil erosion, exposure to natural disasters, reduced land productivity, land and environmental degradation, and climate change. Ecuador is highly vulnerable to natural disasters that cause loss of life and damage to infrastructure. On 16 April 2016, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck the northern coast of Ecuador. Esmeraldas and Manabí provinces were hit the hardest. Government reports spoke of more than 660 people dead and 380,000 people affected. Two thirds of the affected population became food insecure (Emergency food security assessment-April 2016). El Niño Southern Oscillation events with their negative impact on biodiversity, agriculture and fisheries, threaten food production and exert an upward pressure on food prices. In the 1982-83 El Niño losses amounted to more than USD 1 billion and the 1997-98 El Niño losses were estimated to reach USD 3 billion. Poor and food-insecure populations in the areas most vulnerable to climate change (Esmeraldas, Manabí, Guayas, Los Rios, Santa Elena and El Oro) have limited capacity to cope with these threats.

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

The third National Plan for Good Living (PNBV, 2013–2017) identifies four objectives related to food security and nutrition and Sustainable Development Goal 2: i) eliminate child malnutrition; ii) ensure access to food; iii) ensure the sustainability of food systems; and iv) improve the living conditions of smallholder farmers.

The United Nations and the Government, under the leadership of the Technical Secretariat for International Cooperation, developed the 2015–2018 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF, 2015-2018) in line with national priorities. The UNDAF prioritizes five objectives related to the PNBV: i) rule of law and participation; ii) reduced inequality, social cohesion and inclusion and quality of life; iii) eradication of discrimination and gender-based violence, and gender equality; iv) environmental sustainability, resilience and risk management; and v) sustainable and equitable economic development.

WFP contributes to Ecuador's efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 17 by (i) supporting equitable access to information and services, including safety nets, education, health services and training, for displaced people, and analysis of their vulnerability; (ii) supporting the incorporation of nutrition outcomes and nutrition-sensitive interventions into social protection and resilience programmes; (iii) promoting opportunities for smallholder farmers by linking them to national and local procurement platforms and social protection programmes; (iv) supporting the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities by increasing their awareness of climate change and implementing adaptation measures in priority sectors such as environment, water resources, climate monitoring, food sovereignty and security, with a view to achieving gender equality; and (v) providing technical assistance and strengthening national capacity in emergency preparedness and response, and undertaking food assistance and logistics emergency responses to complement government efforts.

In 2016, WFP maintained its active participation in the Humanitarian Country Team, with the participation of IOM, FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO-PAHO, UNHCR, UNESCO, UN Women, Red Cross and NGO partners as well as ministries and state secretariats concerned in the emergency preparedness and response. WFP was recognized as a lead agency in emergency response and as a support agency to the Government for technical assistance and capacity strengthening. For the earthquake response, WFP worked in close coordination with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Public Health and the Secretariat for Risk Management.

Moreover, WFP has special coordination arrangements with UN-Women on issues related to gender equality, and with UNICEF and UNHCR on protection issues. WFP has worked with FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture to enhance productive capacity and collaborates with UNICEF and WHO to enhance synergies in the efforts to reduce chronic malnutrition. Also, WFP has been working with the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Government of Ecuador on developing a new study with a focus on the cost-effectiveness of nutrition programmes, entitled “Closing the Gap: The cost of eradicating chronic malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.”

In 2016, WFP supported the international seminar on “Challenges to overcome malnutrition” with a view to foster South-South collaboration. This seminar brought together representatives of government institutions, academia, and the private sector of Ecuador and other countries in the region. The seminar was led by the Coordinating Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, and the Ministry of Public Health.

In addition, WFP works with the Government of Ecuador, particularly with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries and Local Governments to complement School Feeding Operations. This initiative provides daily rations of fresh products delivered by farmer associations to schools in the northern areas of Ecuador. By partnering with these associations, WFP can stimulate local economies and purchase locally grown, nutritious foods such as fruits and vegetables that improve children’s dietary diversity.

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

In Ecuador, WFP works to improve the food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations in rural areas, in the provinces affected by the conflict in Colombia or by natural disasters and deteriorating climatic conditions. In 2016, WFP provided food assistance through cash-based transfers (CBT) and strengthened government and partner capacity at local and national levels. WFP’s activities were implemented through a protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO), a corporate response emergency operation (CR EMOP), a special operation (SO) and a trust fund.

The **PRRO 200701** for a period of 3 years started in January 2015 with a planned cost of USD 19 million. It was designed to support national social protection policies and development plan, the Government of Ecuador’s refugee integration and migration policies, as well as food security and nutrition goals. The objective of the operation implemented in eight provinces that have a high concentration of refugees was to provide food assistance to newly arrived Colombian refugees and asylum seekers and ensure that their immediate food needs be met. WFP oriented its operational capacity to: a) implementing interventions that provide livelihood solutions for Colombians in Ecuador; b) empowering women and increase their participation in decision making; c) reducing tensions and integrating refugees in Ecuadorian communities; and d) leveraging purchasing power and connecting smallholder farmers to markets.

The **EMOP 200665** was formulated as part of the flash appeal by the Humanitarian Country Team to assist vulnerable people who had been affected by the 7.8 magnitude earthquake along the coast of Ecuador on 16 April. The operation supported adequate access to food and prevented a deterioration of the nutritional status of targeted populations. This eight-month project started in April 2016 with a planned cost of USD 16.7 million and was coordinated with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES). It provided assistance to people in shelters, hospitals and communities through commodity vouchers and cash-based transfers using the national social protection platform.

The three-month **Special Operation 200972** started April 2016, with a planned cost of USD 2 million. The main objective was to improve the coordination, predictability, timeliness and efficiency of the emergency logistics response under the sectorial approach led by the Government of Ecuador, and also support the delivery of humanitarian aid to affected populations by augmenting logistics capacity in the country. Temporary forwarding hubs and office space were established in Pedernales, Manta and Quito.

Through a **Trust Fund**, the Ministry of Environment (MAE) and WFP jointly developed a project in response to climate change-related threats in order to build local resilience and improve food security in rural communities through adaptation measures. The operation had a planned cost of USD 7.4 million. The overall goal of the project was to reduce food insecurity and vulnerability, related to the adverse effects of climate change, of communities and ecosystems, in the most vulnerable cantons.

In 2016, WFP continued its participation in **two inter-agency projects**. Firstly, the implementation of nutrition sensitive activities in a joint effort with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children’s

Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), with funds from the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security with the objective to strengthen local capacities for peace and development in the northern border zone of Ecuador through a human security approach. WFP's intervention aligned with Government priorities to defuse tensions between refugees and Ecuadorian communities and promoted integration by simultaneously improving food consumption and diversity and reducing tensions. Secondly, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNICEF and World Health Organization (WHO), WFP worked to strengthen local food systems and capacity building aimed at improving the production and access to safe food for families with a contribution from the United Nations Sustainable Development Fund.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

The **funding of WFP operations** in a middle-income country like Ecuador remains a challenge. Nevertheless, the evolving situation in Colombia and the April 2016 earthquake aroused significant concerns and donor interest both in national capacity strengthening and emergency response. In 2016, operations received directed multilateral cash contributions from public (mainly USAID and ECHO) and private donors, yet this funding did not fully cover the requirements. Thus some activities had to be prioritized. Two significant multiyear contributions were received that allowed for a better programming of resources: Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) provided support for school meals and the Adaptation Fund supported climate change adaptation.

Due to the magnitude of the **April 2016 earthquake** and the scale of the emergency response needed, the Humanitarian Country Team immediately decided for an international appeal to mobilize resources for the humanitarian response. A Flash Appeal of USD 73 million was approved by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ecuador and formally launched on April 20, 2016, with the objective to provide a three-month humanitarian assistance in priority sectors. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) rapidly granted funds. WFP received for this emergency funds various donors, including CERF.

Ecuador used **cash-based transfers** in all its activities which allowed flexible shifting of resources between priorities. The complementarity between WFP's response and government resources (financial, human and logistic) in the earthquake response created synergies, enhanced effectiveness and led to an optimization of resources. In light of limited funding, general distributions were prioritized over other activities in order to ensure continuity of assistance to newly-arrived refugees and the earthquake affected population. At the same time, food assistance for asset creation had to be scaled down.

Local governments were actively involved in school-based activities and their linkage to small farmers' associations. They also provided, in addition to material contributions, a daily USD 0.10 per child to complement school meals. **Joint resource mobilization** efforts were made by the WFP offices in Colombia and Ecuador, given the linkages between the peace process in Colombia and its impact on Ecuador.

Achievements at Country Level

On April 19, three days after the magnitude 7.8 earthquake, the Ecuadorian Government requested WFP to provide food assistance to people in the earthquake-affected provinces of Manabí and Esmeraldas. For the first time in Latin America, WFP responded to an emergency through the existing social safety net programme of a government. This made the response faster, more efficient and sustainable, strengthened partnership with the Government regarding improved preparedness and faster response to disasters. WFP collaborated with the Coordinating Ministry for Social Development to complement its housing incentive with a monthly cash transfer to cover the nutrition needs of families in the provinces of Esmeraldas and Manabí. For the delivery of cash, WFP used, in cooperation with its main government counterpart, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES), the platform of the national social protection programme that provides conditional transfers. This platform allowed for a wide coverage of the population through seven banking networks and associated financial institutions. WFP could rapidly introduce cash transfers in an emergency. Prior to the earthquake, as part of its emergency preparedness and response procedures in preparation for El Niño related emergencies, WFP had already determined all processes for the provision of commodity vouchers.

In 2016, WFP also strengthened its relationship with the Coordinating Ministry for Social Development for the coordination of nutrition activities, and for the preparation of case studies such as the "Cost of Malnutrition" in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Following an official request from the Coordinating Ministry, WFP, along with UNICEF, WHO and World Bank, became a member of the Monitoring Committee for the Implementation of the Strategy to Accelerate the Reduction of Chronic Malnutrition in Children.

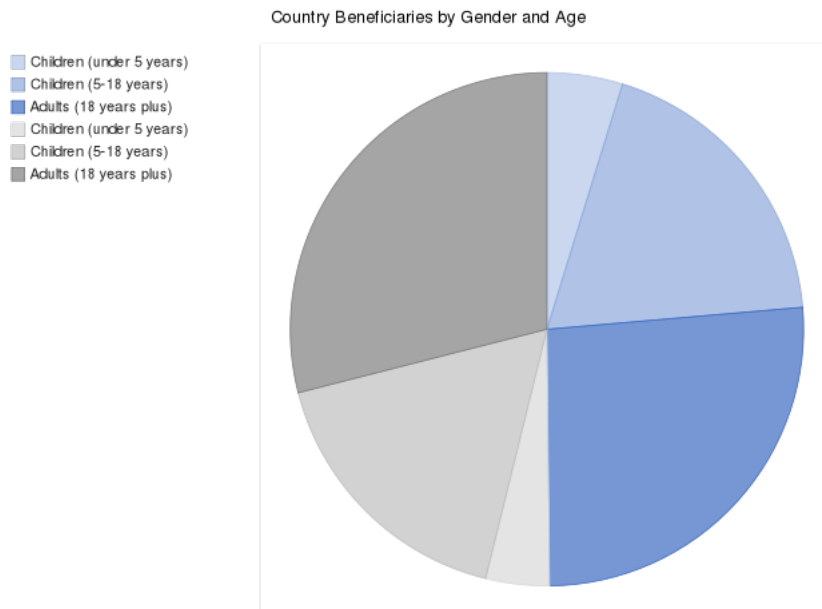
WFP has collaborated with, and strengthened capacities of, national, regional and local governments to design and implement food security policies and programmes. WFP used an integrated approach in strengthening government capacity to improve access to nutritious foods, build resilience to climate change and provide income opportunities by linking smallholder farmer production with social protection programmes and local markets. This approach was introduced in the school meals programme: WFP and its partners work with smallholder farmer associations that

provide locally grown, healthy, fresh and nutritious food to school meals programmes. This model boosts the local economy, promotes local partnerships and creates a demand for fresh locally grown produce. WFP trained the technical staff at its partner institutions who would, in turn, transmit this knowledge to beneficiary families.



Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	13,315	11,210	24,525
Children (5-18 years)	52,760	48,027	100,787
Adults (18 years plus)	73,252	81,034	154,286
Total number of beneficiaries in 2016	139,327	140,271	279,598





Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Single Country EMOP	8,100,000	-	350,973
Single Country PRRO	375,468	1,678,980	-
Total Distributed in 2016	8,475,468	1,678,980	350,973

Supply Chain

WFP relied on different transfer modalities: commodity vouchers and cash transfers were provided for the earthquake response; value vouchers to refugees and host communities in areas with access to integrated markets; and cash to local governments to link school meals to the produce of smallholder farmers.

As part of the supply chain assessment, service providers were appraised in each location. Market assessments were carried out to identify supermarkets. In the contracting process of supermarkets for the redemption of commodity vouchers, the linkage between food assistance and smallholder farmers was emphasized. WFP monitored prices and services throughout the year and conducted an end-year appraisal of services. CBT processes were prepared for El Niño related emergencies: a supermarket chain was selected for the provision of assistance and a Stand-by Agreement was concluded.

During the earthquake emergency, WFP established forward logistics hubs under a Special Operation in Pedernales, Manta and Quito. In these hubs, the WFP-led logistics sector facilitated the storage of humanitarian supplies of 13 organizations, including Red Cross, International Medical Corps, Action against Hunger, Save the Children, UN agencies and the Government of Ecuador. The WFP temporary emergency storage service, which included approximately 4,800 square meters of storage facilities and workspaces, was initially offered to humanitarian actors free of charge. Later, WFP shifted to a full-cost-recovery model. As part of WFP support to government emergency preparedness and response capacities, all logistics equipment used during the emergency was handed over to the government. International flights with humanitarian cargo for the earthquake response were coordinated in close liaison with the Ecuadorian Government.

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

The design and implementation of activities in Ecuador benefited from past operations and studies. Programmes were based on consultations with and participation of refugees, host communities, cooperating partners and the Government. Suggestion boxes to receive feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders were posted in WFP field offices and in partners' offices. **Lessons from consultations** with Government, United Nations agencies and partners highlighted the following:

1. Coordination is most effective when WFP work at the local level is aligned with national guidelines and priorities and involves the inter-sectoral participation of local governments, local chapters of national institutions, other United Nations agencies and partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
2. In the northern border provinces affected by insecurity, cash-based transfers (CBTs) were considered the appropriate modality for improving access to food, dietary diversity, ensuring the protection of beneficiaries and reducing gender-based violence.
3. WFP's work on resilience and adaptation to climate change, based on community-based participatory planning, has had a positive impact on the quality of people's lives, increasing their resilience to and awareness of the adverse effects of climate change. It has also strengthened the capacity of local governments that incorporate experiences into local land management plans.
4. WFP's comprehensive approach to food security is sensitive to local cultures and contexts. WFP has strengthened stakeholders in the grassroots economy through local purchases. Its response to the April 2016 earthquake was integrated with the Government's conditional cash distribution platform and revitalized the local economy.

Through the **earthquake response**, WFP strengthened its position as a key partner to the Government, and helped develop food and nutrition security capacities at national, local and community levels. The response also highlighted the need for increased synergies between the various social protection mechanisms as well as between, national responses and WFP assistance to refugees and vulnerable groups. Various initiatives were launched to strengthen national systems, increase their sustainability and improve their capacities.

WFP strengthened its **partnership with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES)** in the joint emergency response provided under the Government's "Rebuilding Ecuador" plan. This partnership included the training of MIES technical staff in the earthquake-affected areas (Manabí and Esmeraldas) how to sensitize families to healthy eating and hygiene practices and the best use of the cash transfer for the purchase of nutritious foods. The use of the existing MIES platform for conditional cash transfers for human development ensured coordination of assistance and avoiding duplication. The linkage between the beneficiary database and the cash transfer infrastructure allowed real time reporting on the assistance provided. The mechanisms developed during this emergency response strengthened efficient and effective shock response using large-scale government social protection programmes. Linkages between the MIES database and other government registries were also established. This will speed up beneficiary enrolment in future emergencies.

An **evaluation** of the previous Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200275 was carried out in 2014, findings informed programs in 2015 and 2016. One of the main recommendations was to standardize the content of the food security and nutrition training material and enhance skills of WFP and partner staff.

Capacity Strengthening

To fulfil the food security and nutrition objectives of the National Plan for Good Living 2013-2017 (PNBV- Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir), the Government developed “Nutrition Action”, the National Strategy for the Accelerated Reduction of Child Malnutrition. During 2016, WFP participated in follow-up discussions about this strategy, and provided technical support to achieve the targets outlined in the roadmap.

As a strategic partner of the Government, WFP provided technical assistance in a series of workshops to government and NGO partners. Trainings of trainers were held to provide information to local communities and schools on nutrition for refugees and other vulnerable populations, on farm management, sustainable farming, smallholders' market access and the cultivation of nutritious foods. Participants also learnt about sustainable and climate resilient agricultural practices. In 2016, over 1.500 small farmers from 65 smallholder farmers associations participated in workshops.

The prompt action by various stakeholders in the aftermath of the April 2016 earthquake showed appropriate preparation and response capacities of national and international organizations. WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) measures, carried out within the Government Sectoral Agenda, were regarded as a key contribution. WFP provided technical assistance to the staff of the National Secretariat for Risk Management (SGR), carried out training for trainers, monitored and accompanied trainings of local government staff. About 100 national and local institutions and NGOs participated at emergency response trainings.

Upon government request, WFP worked closely together with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) and with the working groups established during the earthquake emergency operation. For the first time in Latin America, WFP responded to an emergency with cash transfers through a National Social Protection platform. This experience will be documented by WFP in collaboration with Oxford Policy Management as part of a broader study to inform regional and global learning on shock-responsive safety nets. [1] In addition to food assistance, communication materials were developed to promote healthy eating habits. MIES technicians were trained in food security and nutrition to sensitize families to the importance of purchasing nutritious and healthy food.

[1] Beazley, R. (2017) 'Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean: Ecuador Case Study'.

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

On 16 April 2016, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck the Northern coast of Ecuador causing loss of lives, destruction of homes and livelihoods, and the displacement of populations. The Government declared a state of emergency in the most affected provinces of Manabí and Esmeraldas, and requested WFP assistance. According to the registry of earthquake-affected populations set up by the Coordinating Ministry for Social Development, over 383,000 people were affected, 660 people died and 28,800 were evacuated to shelters.

The EMOP helped ensure adequate food access for food insecure people who had been affected by the earthquake and also prevent the deterioration of their nutritional status by providing food assistance in the form of commodity vouchers and cash transfers. This project contributed both to WFP's Strategic Objective 1: "Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies" and the national efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture".



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Direct Support Costs	1,562,780
Food and Related Costs	-
Indirect Support Costs	1,098,216
Cash & Voucher and Related Costs	14,126,019
Total	16,787,015

Project Activities

Prior to the earthquake WFP had prepared all processes for cash-based transfers (CBT) as part of its **emergency preparedness and response** procedures in preparation for El Niño related emergencies. WFP and the Government had agreed on the composition of a nutritionally balanced relief food basket and a long-term agreement with a supermarket chain had also been reached in order to ensure a stable supply of food items for which commodity vouchers could be redeemed.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, WFP carried out an **Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA)** in both rural and urban areas. This identified two-thirds of the affected population as food insecure. In line with its Strategic Objective 1, to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies, WFP planned to provide food assistance to up to 161,000 people in the most affected provinces of Manabí and Esmeraldas, to stabilize or improve their food consumption for a period of three months.

In the earthquake response, WFP closely collaborated with its main government counterpart, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES). Beneficiaries were identified and the most appropriate mechanism decided upon for the delivery of food assistance that would complement the government response. In addition, the National Institute of Statistics and Census, local authorities and community leaders also supported the beneficiary validation process. Based on the Government's unique registry of earthquake-affected populations, people in the most distressed geographic areas were selected to receive food assistance.

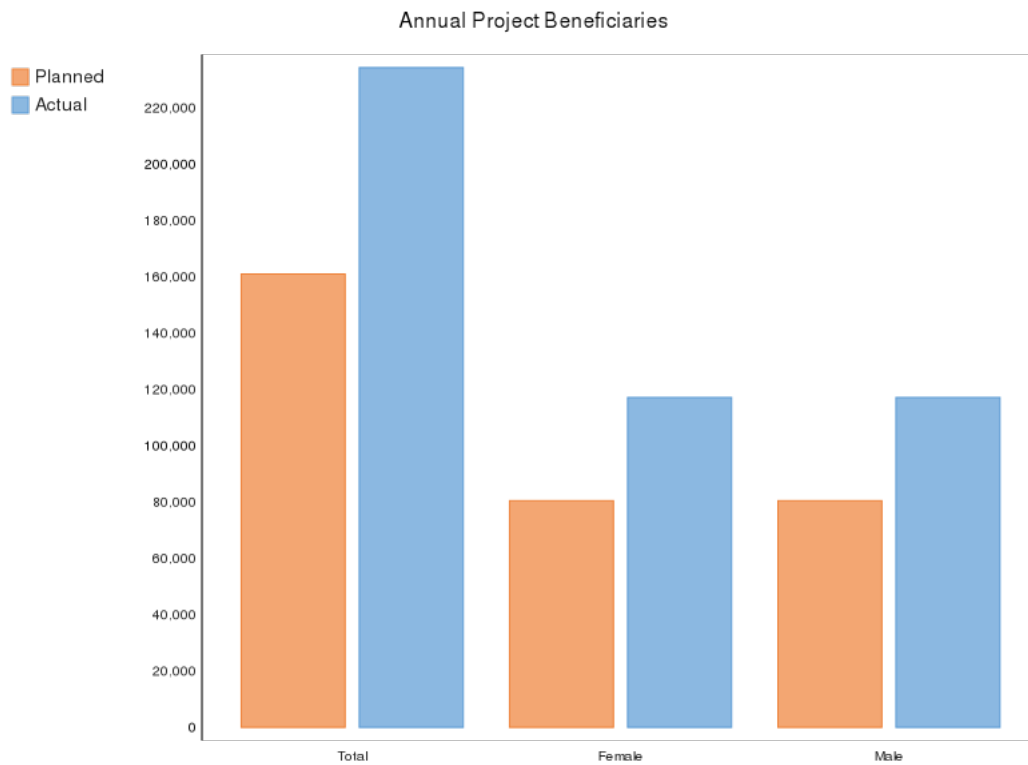
In the **first phase of assistance**, WFP provided commodity vouchers to the most vulnerable people who had been evacuated to shelters in Manabí and Esmeraldas or hospitalized in the cities of Manta and Pedernales. Commodity vouchers were redeemed against a pre-established food basket of cereals, fish, pulses, oil, sugar and salt: fully covering the dietary requirements of the assisted population. The ration was determined for the average family size of four. The Government deemed unnecessary the inclusion of high-energy biscuits into the immediate relief

assistance.

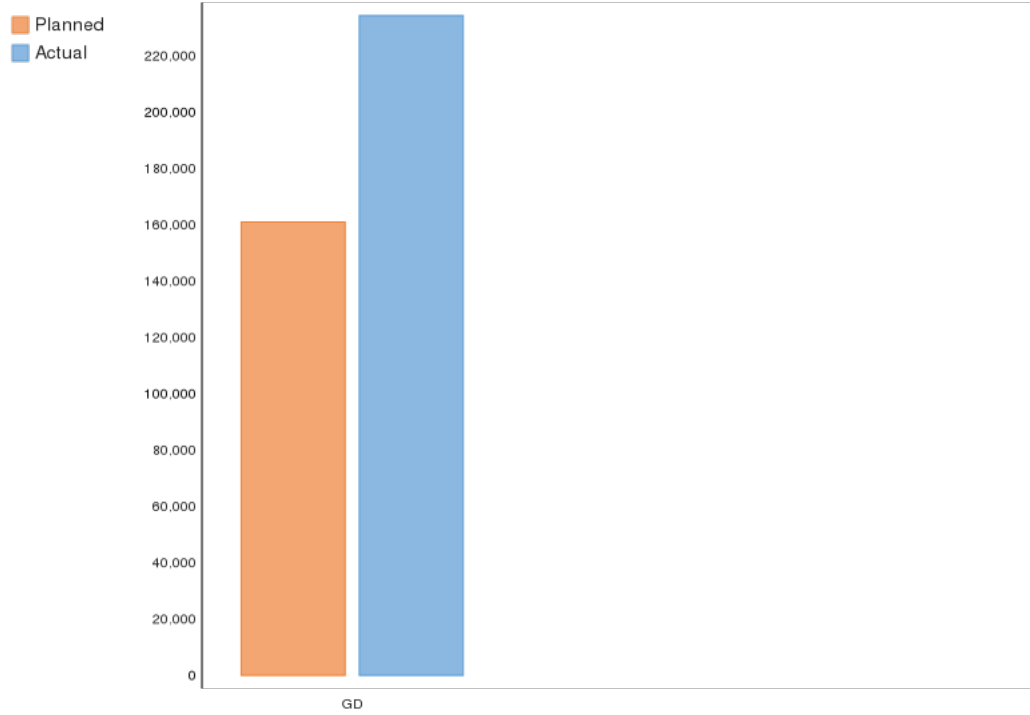
In the **second phase of assistance**, WFP collaborated with the Coordinating Ministry for Social Development (MCDS) in order to complement the government housing/hosting incentive. While the government initiative provided hosting families with a monthly cash transfer, WFP provided an additional cash transfer to guarantee that their food and nutrition needs were met. Each family received a monthly cash transfer of USD 100 for a period of three months, which allowed them to locally purchase 40 percent of their overall food requirements.

To realize the transfer, WFP used the **MIES platform** of the national social protection programme for providing conditional transfers. This platform allowed for a wide coverage of beneficiaries through seven banking networks and associated financial institutions. WFP transferred cash to a Central Bank account which in turn reimbursed partnering banks according to their payments to beneficiaries. Beneficiaries received their entitlements by presenting their national identification card at their preferred financial institution. Moreover, since cash transfers ensured a sustained demand for food commodities in earthquake-affected areas, they indirectly helped reactivate local markets.

In addition to the food assistance provided, WFP trained MIES staff on food security and nutrition. A joint **beneficiary communication strategy** of using text messages (SMS) and leaflets was developed to provide advice on the optimal use of cash transfers and on healthy eating habits. WFP also supported MIES to enhance its integrated **management information system and** include a shock-responsive component that allows for the rapid horizontal expansion of the database and the registration of beneficiaries in the aftermath of a disaster.

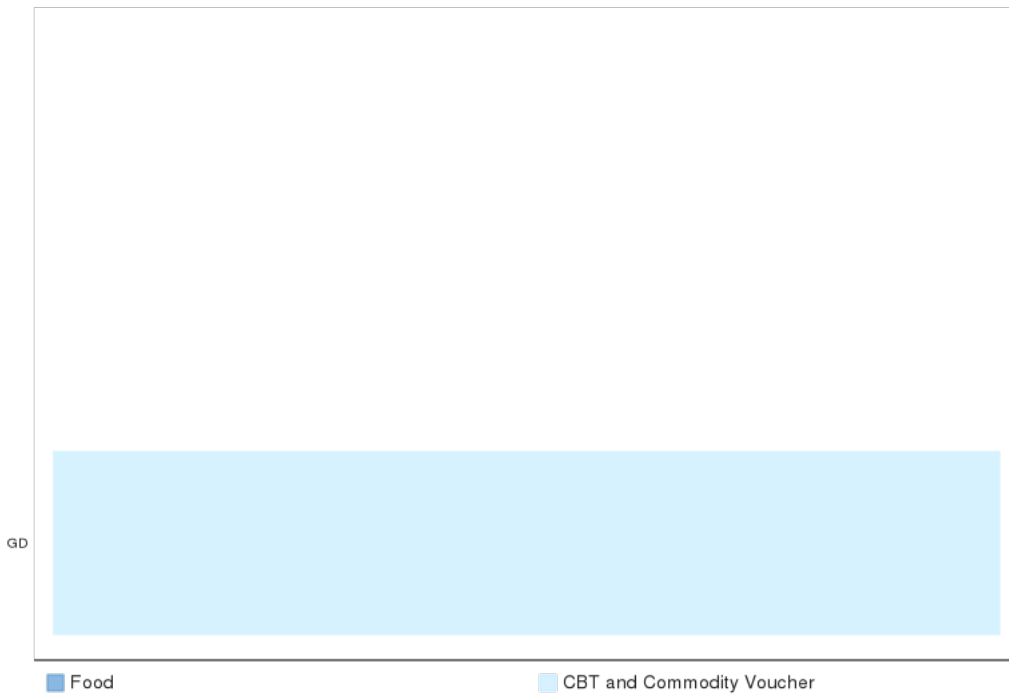


Annual Project Beneficiaries by Activity



GD: General Distribution (GD)

Modality of Transfer by Activity



GD: General Distribution (GD)

Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution for the Project (USD)

Modality	Planned (USD)	Actual (USD)	% Actual v. Planned
Cash	12,801,883	8,100,000	63.3%
Commodity Voucher	350,965	350,973	100.0%
Total	13,152,848	8,450,973	64.3%

Operational Partnerships

WFP strengthened its partnership with the **Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES)** in the joint emergency response provided under the Government's "Rebuilding Ecuador" plan. As part of the national social protection policy, MIES is in charge of delivering social transfers, including the conditional cash transfer for human development (BDH - bono de desarrollo humano). This cash transfer is intended to cover basic food needs, reduce chronic malnutrition, raise school enrolment and attendance, and protect the elderly and disabled. The BDH platform for cash transfers relies on a wide network of financial institutions and their trained staff, and was used for the coordinated delivery to the earthquake affected persons of the government housing assistance and WFP food assistance. MIES covered the cost of transactions that were of similar amount as other conditional cash transfer programmes in the region.

The use of an existing **platform warranted coordinated assistance** and the avoidance of duplication; moreover, it allowed for timely transfer since there was no need to separately contract with financial service providers. The linkage between the beneficiary database and the cash transaction infrastructure allowed for real time reporting on the assistance provided. Beneficiaries were familiar with the platform, received their cash entitlements in the proximity of their homes, and used the cash according to their specific needs.

As the current **registration process** for the national safety net is onerous and built on manual procedures, this partnership encountered initial technical challenges in activating WFP's cash transfer beneficiaries in the database. This bottleneck was addressed: WFP cash distributions could start in June, yet only by August had all beneficiaries been fully integrated onto the government platform.

The mechanisms developed during this emergency response significantly strengthened partner capacity to produce **efficient and effective shock response** with the help of large-scale government social protection programmes. Linkages between the MIES database and other government registries were established, which will speed up beneficiary enrolment in future emergencies. In addition, WFP trained MIES staff on nutrition and they jointly developed leaflets and short text messages (sms) advising on the optimal use of cash transfers and on healthy eating habits.

WFP closely coordinated its activities with a number of stakeholders, including the Government, other United Nations agencies, NGOs and donors. Effective **coordination mechanisms** were in place to avoid duplication of government efforts with those of the humanitarian community. At the national level, the Emergency Operations Center (COE) provided overall coordination and leadership. The COE's national, cantonal and provincial cells were important in linking WFP with partners and government authorities, such as the Risk Management Secretariat (SGR) and the MIES.

For the provision of the emergency response, the government-led **technical working groups** coordinated assistance, allowing for rapid operational response in each sector. WFP participated in the technical working group 4 "Comprehensive attention to the earthquake-affected population" led by MIES at national and local levels. This technical working group requested WFP to provide humanitarian food assistance, identified the type of assistance needed and coordinated its geographic targeting. The working group also requested support in coordinating the emergency needs assessments. Technical working group 2 coordinated the distribution of commodity vouchers to hospitals and health centres, while overall humanitarian logistics, telecommunication and security was directed through the technical working group 5 "Basic security for the population".

Performance Monitoring

In the most affected area of Manabí and Pedernales, WFP established two new **suboffices** to ensure field monitoring, while the existing suboffice in Esmeraldas oversaw the operations in Muisne. WFP monitored the distribution of commodity vouchers to government institutions and beneficiaries in hospitals and shelters. For the **monitoring** of cash transfers, MIES provided a weekly database of beneficiaries, containing a list of activated beneficiary accounts and cash recipients. Weekly meetings were held with MIES to share information. WFP supported MIES technical staff in household visits that were undertaken for the purpose of getting data on the proximity of financial service providers, transport costs, waiting times, information received on the assistance, and beneficiary protection measures. In addition, starting with the second distribution cycle, information on household needs and intra-household decisions on cash transfers was also gathered.

Data was collected using tablets and WFP's geo-referenced real-time acquisition of statistics platform (GRASP) that allowed reducing the time for **data collection**, cleaning and aggregation. Based on a simple random sample of beneficiaries, 736 families were visited and interviewed. The analysis of the data shows enhanced food consumption and dietary diversity among beneficiaries.

Because of the high territorial dispersion of project beneficiaries, WFP relied on phone calls to collect interviews on project implementation. In addition, WFP continuously monitored the functioning of markets, prices, the availability of products and transfer infrastructure. WFP and MIES had weekly coordination meetings, where concerns related to project targeting, implementation and beneficiary feedback were discussed prior to decision-making.

MIES activated a **national hotline for beneficiary feedback**, questions or complaints and this was supplemented by WFP phone numbers. These hotlines provided information to families on their inclusion in the beneficiary database and on where and how to collect transfers. They also dealt with complaints when transfers had not arrived.

An **emergency food security assessment** was conducted in April 2016 which served as project baseline when gauging progress in outcomes that was then compared to information collected during a follow-up survey in December.

Results/Outcomes

Strategic Objective: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergency

Outcome 1: Stabilized or improved food consumption over assistance period for targeted households.

Activities: General distribution of commodity vouchers and cash transfers.

The operation was successful in ensuring acceptable food consumption in the targeted earthquake-affected households by the end of the assistance period. Technical delays in the provision of food assistance through the national social protection platform required an extension of the overall project duration, outcomes were measured therefore in December 2016.

In the first months after the earthquake, WFP distributed food assistance in the form of commodity vouchers to people in shelters, hospitals and in most affected communities. Given peoples' limited stay in institutions, assistance lasted shorter than the initially planned three months, ranging from 3 to 15 days.

In June, WFP started to provide monthly cash transfers to beneficiaries both in urban and in rural areas. Once initial challenges related to the registration of beneficiaries had been met, a rising number of families could receive transfers. The Government requested WFP to further increase the number of the beneficiaries of cash transfers, but the operation did not receive additional resources allowing it to fully respond to the increased need. In order to expand coverage, the total amount of cash provided to some of the assisted households had to be cut back: instead of the three planned rounds of distribution, 61 per cent of the targeted households received only two transfers and 13 percent only one. Nevertheless, the Government committed itself to filling the gap in food assistance and thus guarantee that all beneficiaries receive three months of assistance.

The impact of WFP's food assistance in response to the earthquake was assessed using the April 2016 emergency food security assessment (EFSA) in the most-affected communities as a baseline. That report found that two-thirds of the earthquake-affected population were food insecure. A follow-up survey was conducted in December 2016 on a random sample of 736 families after at least two months of cash transfers. The survey examined household level **food consumption, food diversity, and the strategies families use to cope** with the lack of food. By the end of the intervention, virtually all assisted households (99 percent) became food secure, with no substantial difference in this respect between households headed by men or women.

As market functionality and access quickly improved after the earthquake, families could use their cash transfers to purchase fruits, vegetables, dairy products, pulses and eggs, fish and meat products. All beneficiary households (99 percent) reported **eating a wider range of foods**, measured by an increase in the number of food groups in their diet from 5 to 7. Particularly significant was the increased consumption of dairy products, fruits and vegetables, eggs, fish and meat: while in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake only 70 percent of households could access these products up to five days a week, these foods are now eaten every day. Again, the survey has not shown any substantial difference in this respect between households headed by men or women.

WFP also assessed **the family strategies** to deal with a lack of food at household level. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, families had to resort to a variety of coping strategies, such as reducing the size (80 percent of households) or the number of daily meals eaten (67 percent). About 89 percent of households purchased less expensive foods, if these were available on the heavily affected local markets. Emergency level coping strategies, such as asking family and friends for help or migrating, were employed by 39 percent of the surveyed families, whereas half of the families resorted to crisis level strategies, such as using savings, selling household and productive assets or sending the children to live with relatives.

By the end of the operation the number and type of coping strategies had clearly improved: less than one-third of the families ate smaller meals and only 44 percent purchased cheaper foods than usual. Families continued to resort to crisis level coping strategies and less to emergency level strategies. This trend indicates that the recovery of household and productive assets will take significantly more time: nine months after the earthquake, almost one third of families had already sold all their productive assets without being able to rebuild their houses or find new income-generating activities.

In order to complement relief assistance, the **Government initiated recovery projects** in the earthquake-affected areas. Families received seeds and livestock, and the reconstruction of houses also started. WFP provided trainings in food security and nutrition to government staff and these trainings have been replicated at community level.

Progress Towards Gender Equality

The humanitarian country team jointly protected beneficiaries in the emergency situation, including safe and non-discriminatory access to humanitarian assistance, prevention and/or response to physical violence and abuse, response to sexual violence, abuse and exploitation (particularly of children, adolescents and women), as well as prevention, mitigation, and response to gender-based violence, and the integral provision of psychosocial support.

Based on the National Plan for the Eradication of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Religion was responsible for the prevention of and response to GBV among earthquake-affected people, especially women, adolescents and girls.

WFP promoted the empowerment and participation of women in its emergency response, by advocating the registration of women as cash transfer entitlement holders in case of newly registered households in the MIES database. WFP trained MIES field staff on food security, nutrition and gender issues. MIES staff carried out monthly household visits to sensitize people on how to use the cash transfer best by purchasing nutritious and varied foods according to the dietary needs of family members, with a specific focus on children under 5, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly.

According to monitoring data, cash transfer entitlements were almost always collected by a single member of the household. Almost half of the men and yet over 80 percent of women reported deciding over the use of cash in the household. While in two-thirds of the households women decided over the use of food, 60 percent of the households reported that major decisions affecting their family were jointly made by the couple.

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

WFP contributed to humanitarian protection by designing and carrying out the emergency response in a manner that did not compromise the safety and dignity of those it served. The cash transfer delivery infrastructure relied on a network of seven financial service providers with 427 distribution points in the proximity of beneficiaries, and contributed to their safety, dignity and integrity and allowed them to purchase goods according to their needs.

In order to ensure accountability to affected populations, even in this short relief operation, WFP has made every effort to systematically and meaningfully engage people, by providing them with information about the programme and channels to voice their complaints. In collaboration with MIES, WFP circulated leaflets and posters at all participating banks and distribution points, providing a description of cash transfers, their targeting and distribution, as well as suggestions related to locally available nutritious foods. These leaflets also included information on food

preparation, conservation and hygiene, and listed phone hotlines of both WFP and the Government, ready to respond to queries related to targeting, entitlements, duration and modality of assistance.

Beneficiaries received phone calls and text messages informing them about the programme and their entitlements every time their cash transfers were ready to be collected at one of the financial service providers, including neighbourhood banks and cooperatives. The most vulnerable and the elderly were given the option to delegate the collection of their entitlements.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Coverage Photo © WFP/ Alexander Houghton.

Mayra and her family lost their home after the earthquake. They received monthly cash transfer to rebuilt their livelihood.

No baseline was collected for gender cross cutting indicators, due to the short time before the starting of the intervention.

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	80,500	80,500	161,000	117,159	117,159	234,318	145.5%	145.5%	145.5%
By Age-group:									
Children (under 5 years)	8,050	6,440	14,490	11,716	9,373	21,089	145.5%	145.5%	145.5%
Children (5-18 years)	25,760	22,540	48,300	37,491	32,805	70,296	145.5%	145.5%	145.5%
Adults (18 years plus)	46,690	51,520	98,210	67,952	74,981	142,933	145.5%	145.5%	145.5%
By Residence status:									
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)	-	-	-	64,437	64,437	128,874	-	-	-
Residents	80,500	80,500	161,000	52,722	52,722	105,444	65.5%	65.5%	65.5%

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)
General Distribution (GD)	-	161,000	161,000	-	234,318	234,318	-	145.5%	145.5%

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)
General Distribution (GD)	-	40,250	40,250	-	81,000	81,000	-	201.2%	201.2%

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)
General Distribution (GD)									
People participating in general distributions	20,125	20,125	40,250	40,500	40,500	81,000	201.2%	201.2%	201.2%
Total participants	20,125	20,125	40,250	40,500	40,500	81,000	201.2%	201.2%	201.2%
Total beneficiaries	80,500	80,500	161,000	117,159	117,159	234,318	145.5%	145.5%	145.5%

Project Indicators

Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
SO1 Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies				
Stabilized or improved food consumption over assistance period for targeted households and/or individuals				
FCS: percentage of households with poor Food Consumption Score				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.10, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	<4.70	23.80	-	0.50

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
FCS: percentage of households with borderline Food Consumption Score				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.11, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	<15.30	32.40	-	0.80
FCS: percentage of households with acceptable Food Consumption Score				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.10, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	>80.00	43.80	-	98.70
FCS: percentage of households with poor Food Consumption Score (female-headed)				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.10, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	<4.70	23.50	-	0.70
FCS: percentage of households with poor Food Consumption Score (male-headed)				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.10, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	<4.70	23.90	-	0.00
FCS: percentage of households with acceptable Food Consumption Score (female-headed)				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.10, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	>80.00	43.00	-	98.20
FCS: percentage of households with acceptable Food Consumption Score (male-headed)				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.10, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	>80.00	44.00	-	100.00
Diet Diversity Score				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.11, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	>4.90	4.80	-	6.92
Diet Diversity Score (female-headed households)				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.11, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	>4.90	4.90	-	6.91
Diet Diversity Score (male-headed households)				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.11, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	>4.70	4.70	-	6.94
CSI (Food): Coping Strategy Index (average)				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.11, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	<33.90	33.90	-	30.00
CSI (Asset Depletion): Coping Strategy Index (average)				
<i>MANABI - ESMERALDAS, Project End Target: 2016.11, Base value: 2016.05, WFP survey, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP survey</i>	<39.00	39.00	-	28.50

Gender Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Proportion of households where females and males together make decisions over the use of cash, voucher or food				
<i>MANABI, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>20.00	0.00	-	20.00
Proportion of households where females make decisions over the use of cash, voucher or food				
<i>MANABI, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>60.00	0.00	-	67.00
Proportion of households where males make decisions over the use of cash, voucher or food				
<i>MANABI, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	<20.00	0.00	-	13.00

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>MANABI, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>70.00	0.00	-	70.00
Proportion of assisted people (men) who do not experience safety problems travelling to, from and/or at WFP programme site				
<i>MANABI, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>80.00	0.00	-	100.00
Proportion of assisted people (women) informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, where people can complain)				
<i>MANABI, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>70.00	0.00	-	77.00
Proportion of assisted people (women) who do not experience safety problems travelling to, from and/or at WFP programme sites				
<i>MANABI, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>80.00	0.00	-	100.00
Proportion of assisted people informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, where people can complain)				
<i>MANABI, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>70.00	0.00	-	75.50
Proportion of assisted people who do not experience safety problems travelling to, from and/or at WFP programme site				
<i>MANABI, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.12, Base value: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>80.00	0.00	-	100.00

Partnership Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Latest Follow-up
Number of partner organizations that provide complementary inputs and services		
<i>ECUADOR, General Distribution (GD), Project End Target: 2016.04, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	>0.00	2.00