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SPR Reading Guidance



Development of Sustainable School Feeding Standard Project Report 2017

World Food Programme in Armenia, Republic of (AM)



World Food Programme

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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Achievements at Country Level

During 2017, in partnership with the Government and key stakeholders, WFP pioneered the new cash-based transfers (CBT) modality in Armenia. The introduction of CBT has helped ensure a smooth handover process of the School Meals programme from WFP to the Armenian Government, enhancing its progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, alongside establishing itself as a reliable partner through the efficient implementation of the School Meals programme, WFP Armenia has also strengthened its role as a policy adviser and provider of analytical products in the areas of food security, nutrition and social protection.

In 2017, the Government leadership's role on the National Sustainable School Feeding Programme was significantly augmented building on 2016 achievements, this included the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) exercise and the Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) event. WFP continued working with an inter-ministerial group to draft a National School Feeding Strategy, whose elements are reflected in the State Budget. Steady advocacy efforts, coupled with technical support, resulted in a mutually agreed operational hand-over plan by 2023 and the formal establishment of the National Sustainable School Feeding Foundation (established in January 2017 with Field Level Agreement signed with WFP in August 2017).

WFP Armenia closely supported the Government throughout the nationalization process of SDGs 1, 2, 3 and 17. A government-led National Strategic Review (NSR) of Food security and nutrition in Armenia was developed during October-December 2017 with WFP support. The NSR will be launched by the Government of Armenia on 15 January 2018. The NSR findings and recommendations, endorsed by the Steering Committee members, will inform the WFP Armenia Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023) as well as priorities and actions of the Government and other

stakeholders working on SDGs.

With a series of studies completed this year, WFP Armenia continued investing in research and analysis to underpin policy formulation and programme design. Additionally, collaboration with national and international research institutions was strengthened in order to enhance the food security analysis and impact reviews. Food Security Analysis is now updated on annual basis by the Caucasus Research Resource Center Armenia (CRRC-Armenia) and the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (NSS RA), with WFP support, demonstrating national progress towards the SDGs. Few examples of the studies that WFP Armenia undertook in 2017 include: 'A Scoping Study on Social Protection and Safety Nets for Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia'; 'Cost of the Diet (CoTD)'; 'Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability Analysis Update (CFSVA)'; 'Strengthening the Local Economy Effects of Cash Transfers'; 'A Case Study of a Cash Transfer School Meals Programme in Armenia'; and 'Assessing Poverty Alleviation through Social Protection: School Meals and Family Benefits in Armenia'.

Furthermore, WFP increased its local procurement from 20 percent in 2016 to 78.8 percent in 2017. The flexibility of contributions, which was agreed by donors, allowed WFP to support local food production of small-holders' farmers. The shift optimised the cost efficiency of the supply chain, which allowed a higher return on investment for each dollar invested in the School Meals programme. This marks the first tangible step of a Home-Grown School Meals approach in Armenia providing a reliable market for the produce of small-holder farmers, thus stimulating local economy.

Country Context and Response of the Government

Armenia is a lower-middle income, net food-importer country vulnerable to external shocks. Despite macro-economic progress and structural reforms, growth has not been inclusive. A rising state debt has strained the Government's budget, hindering greater investments in health, education and social protection sectors, and driving many Armenians to leave the country in search of economic opportunities abroad.

Despite the volatile political period experienced these recent years, the current Government continued its ambitious programme of economic reform, which seeks to drive development goals through strong macroeconomic growth. In 2016, the Armenian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at a slower pace when compared year-to-year (from 3.2 in 2015 to 0.2 percent in 2016). Poverty rate amounted to 29.8 percent in 2015. According to the most recent Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Analysis Update (CFSVA), the level of food insecure households in 2015 remained high at 16 percent, double the level in 2008 and one percentage point higher than the previous year [1]. The coexistence of undernutrition (9 percent stunting), overweight (14 percent) and micronutrient deficiencies is a growing challenge further exacerbating the food security and nutrition situation in the country. Child malnutrition is significantly linked to household poverty, poor food consumption, poor care and infant and young child feeding practices, and lower maternal education.

Armenia is characterized by widening disparities in wealth and income that led to a deepening socioeconomic inequality among households and regions. The Gini coefficient increased from 0.339 in 2008 to 0.374 in 2015, revealing the worsening situation. Rural areas and urban areas outside of Yerevan are generally worse off. Armenia's weak labour market triggers high male-dominant emigration, severely impacting the demographic composition of the population [2]. In 2016, remittances accounted for about 13.1 percent of GDP [3]. Migrant remittances make up about 12 percent of the per capita monthly incomes of the non-poor population, 8 percent of the incomes of the poor and 5 percent of the extremely poor. Without remittances, 11 percent of the non-poor population would fall into poverty or extreme poverty [4].

Reducing emigration is recognized officially as a priority of national security and the key to resolving this demographic challenge is addressing relatively high unemployment rate of 18.5 percent, which reaches as high as 26.4 percent among youth and 19.5 percent among women [5]. In addition, Armenia is exposed to multiple man-made and natural risks: 27 percent of households are at risk of becoming food insecure if affected by any shock.

Armenia is ranked 84 out of 188 in the 2015 Human Development Index (HDI) and 61 out of 159 on the Gender Inequality Index. The creation of productive employment opportunities remained limited and persisting gender-based disparities further restrict the opportunities for women to access economic resources, severely impeding Armenia's socio-economic development. Although the country scored consistently high in equal access to education and positive health outcomes for women, this did not translate into measurable progress in women's political empowerment and greater access to economic opportunities [6].

To address these concerns, the Government has developed strategic frameworks for poverty reduction and social protection, together with sector-specific policies and programmes intended to strengthen agricultural development, and decrease malnutrition. WFP has played a key role in facilitating discussions, with evidence-based studies, with

various stakeholders to support the Government in addressing these concerns. The Armenian Development Strategy 2014-2025 is the principal framework for poverty reduction through sustainable economic growth. The National Strategy on Child Nutrition 2014-2020 formulates the vision to target malnutrition, though only among children. Due to its unique position at the nexus of food security, nutrition, rural development and social protection, school meals have become a national priority. Recognising this, WFP has continued to support the Government of Armenia with a comprehensive support package, including capacity strengthening, before handing over the schools from WFP to the National School Feeding Programme.

[1] National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (NSS RA), Caucasus Research Resource Center in Armenia (CRRC-Armenia), WFP (2017) Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Analysis Update (CFSVA).

[2] National Statistics Service and IOM, 2014. Report on Household Survey on Migration in Armenia. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/household_survey_eng.pdf

[3] World Bank (2016). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=AM>

[4] National Strategic Review (NSR) of Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia, 2017

[5] National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (2017) <http://armstat.am>

[6] Millennium Development Goals Progress Report, 2015.

WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

WFP Armenia pursued policy dialogue on the country's key challenges of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition in order to advocate for and enhance the benefits of school meals. Additionally, while WFP continued to be directly involved in the food security and education of children, its primary objective became to ensure that the Armenian Government had the capacity to implement, and assume full ownership of its National School Feeding Programme. To facilitate the handover to the Government, WFP scaled up its growing capacity to deliver policy advice, technical support and transfer of skills to existing and new national institutions.

In September 2017, the Government successfully assumed control over the school meals programme in the province of Tavush, which brought the total to four provinces under the Government's administration. WFP, at present, still oversees the operations in the remaining six of Armenia's ten provinces. Following an agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), a full operational handover strategy has been established to be implemented by 2023.

Reflecting on the need for adequate forward planning to prevent a deterioration in programme quality, WFP, in partnership with the Social Industrial Food Services Institute (SIFI), has developed a transitional model, which MoES agreed to replicate in all provinces. This comprehensive support package includes the introduction of cash-based transfers (CBT) coupled with school staff trainings and provision of kitchen equipment and renovation material to schools, further amplified by multiple partnerships to improve WASH conditions (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene). Major changes have occurred in the capacity strengthening strategy with the comprehensive training, formerly delivered by WFP, now delivered by SIFI.

The National Strategic Review (NSR) of Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia (official launch is to take place on January 2018) was a consultative process which emphasised redefining the food security agenda as one that goes beyond food availability, an unprecedented discussion at the nation's highest levels. Throughout, the NSR prompted a cross-sectoral dialogue and stimulated coordination among line ministries, the donor community, United Nations agencies, civil society, the private sector and the diaspora.

WFP Armenia is also pursuing partnerships and joint advocacy opportunities with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, seeking to promote nutrition-sensitive programming and integration of the school meals programme into the national social protection system. WFP also coordinates with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) to promote linkages between the school meals programme and the local agricultural production. In addition, WFP partnered with the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPAR) in order to integrate local production of buckwheat into the school meals' supply chain. This initiative contributes towards the development of home-grown school meals, another step towards the gradual handover to the Armenian Government.

WFP Armenia's Development Project is fully aligned with the Armenia Country Development Strategy. It is also aligned with key sectoral strategies including the Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy; the Armenia Education Development State Programme; and the National Strategy on Child Nutrition Health. Each of

these directly contributes to SDG 2, 'Zero Hunger', and SDG 17, 'Partnerships for the Goals', as well as indirectly contributing to SDG1: Ending Poverty and SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing. Furthermore, WFP Armenia's projects are aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Armenia 2016-2020, specifically with UNDAF outcome 5, which seeks to ensure that by 2020 vulnerable groups have improved access to basic education and social protection services and participate in their communities.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

WFP Armenia has achieved substantial results due to the multi-year, multilateral contributions from its single donor, the Russian Federation, coupled with firm commitment of the Government of Armenia, which continued funding the food internal transportation, storage and handling costs of the WFP supported school feeding project. Compared to previous years, annual funding needs increased in 2017, propelled by a significant scale-up of the capacity strengthening activities and the provision of technical support for a sustainable handover to the Government of Armenia.

The project has been receiving generous and predictable funding since 2010 which has allowed WFP to reach defined targets and accomplish the expected activities. Specifically, in 2017, WFP handed over the Tavush province to the Government, which consisted of a comprehensive transitional model to be replicated in other provinces.

Nearly a quarter of the confirmed additional contribution of USD 7 million from the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation for the period of 2016-2018 was utilized in 2017. This enabled WFP to support the creation of two fundamental institutions for the school feeding programme: National Sustainable School Feeding Foundation, the implementing arm of the Government of Armenia for the school meals programme, and the Republican Training Centre, responsible to conduct capacity strengthening trainings for the school feeding programme. Additionally, funding has been secured for the continued provision of food assistance in WFP supported schools, kitchen rehabilitation - enabling schools to provide hot meals, and the gradual introduction of the cash-based transfer modality through 2017. The remaining portion of the USD 7 million from the Russian Federation will allow to implement the Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (TICSP) in 2018.



Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	1,017	1,017	2,034
Children (5-18 years)	30,154	30,155	60,309
Adults (18 years plus)	3,071	3,071	6,142
Total number of beneficiaries in 2017	34,242	34,243	68,485





Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Development Project	2,173	133	191	-	-	2,497
Total Food Distributed in 2017	2,173	133	191	-	-	2,497



Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Development Project	139,923	-	-
Total Distributed in 2017	139,923	-	-

Supply Chain

Armenia is a landlocked country with two main supply chain corridors: from the north, using the Georgian port of Poti, and from the south, through the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas. The majority of importers, including the humanitarian community, are using the northern corridor to bring goods to Armenia, especially when importing goods from Europe and the Russian Federation, as the northern corridor is shorter and infrastructure is better developed.

In 2017, WFP increased its local procurement fourfold compared to 2016, from 20 percent to almost 80 percent. This important shift toward local procurement marked an important step towards a sustainable school meals programme, providing a reliable market for the produce of smallholder farmers, thereby stimulating local economy. This increase in local procurement was owed to the flexibility of donor contributions.

Promoting competitiveness of farmers and supporting increased exports has long been seen as way to produce more food and strengthen the domestic economy, improving the livelihoods of the poor. Smallholder and subsistence farmers are at particular risk of falling into poverty and food insecurity in the event of a shock. According to SDG 2, target 3, the productivity and incomes of smallholders should be doubled by 2030 and WFP has already significantly contributed to this by ensuring that the smallholder farmers have a market for their produce. In 2017, WFP Armenia partnered with the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) and its producer groups in order to purchase local buckwheat for the schools. This partnership capitalized on the existing efforts in the country, maximising the efficient use of resources, impact and sustainability.

In addition, WFP Armenia supply chain unit conducted a series of assessments to inform the introduction of CBT in Tavush province (supply chain assessment in 2016 and retailer assessment in 2017). As WFP hands over the control of operations within more provinces to the Government, more assessments will be carried out in 2018.

Six food commodities were regularly delivered to almost 600 schools throughout six provinces and the transportation of these commodities was organised with commercial trucking companies selected through a competitive and transparent tendering process. Other than the locally purchased buckwheat, wheat flour, and pasta, the remaining three commodities were purchased from the Russian Federation, under the agreed delivery terms with the supplier delivering the commodities directly to the WFP warehouse in Armenia. WFP performed good warehouse practices, with measures related to dis-infestation and repackaging, which resulted in negligible post-delivery losses.

WFP systematically ensured that the quality and safety of imported commodities were in line with the highest standards. In addition to the commodity quality certification documents issued in the supplier's country, WFP has

contracted an external independent company for quantity and quality assurance of commodities imported into Armenia, which provided additional guarantees for food safety. The in-country transport, storage and handling (LTSH) of the commodities continues to be covered by the Armenian Government - reflecting the commitment of the Government to the school meals programme.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Buckwheat	80	20	100
Pasta	94	-	94
Rice	60	40	100
Split Peas	-	180	180
Vegetable Oil	-	117	117
Wheat Flour	2,235	-	2,235
Total	2,469	357	2,826
Percentage	87.4%	12.6%	

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

An independent operational evaluation of the DEV 200128 project was undertaken in February 2015 and provided seven strategic and operational recommendations on improving implementation. By the end of 2017, WFP Armenia successfully implemented the first six areas of recommendations, and has recorded continued successful efforts in investing in studies to build evidence for solid policy and programme design.

WFP Armenia's has also begun its transition from being a direct implementer of programmes towards becoming a facilitator of national projects. This has been demonstrated by the successful handover of school meals in Tavush province in September, alongside the necessary feasibility assessments which have been completed for other two provinces, Shirak and Aragatsotn. Both provinces are planned to be handed over respectively in September 2018 and 2019. Within the framework of the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019 – 2023, WFP and the Government of Armenia have agreed for a full handover to be finalized by 2023.

The design of the Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 drove increased investments in studies to build evidence for robust policy and programme design. WFP supported the development of the National Strategic Review on Food Security and Nutrition (NSR), defining the national priorities on zero hunger, food security and nutrition in Armenia. The Government views the NSR process as a meaningful framework, which is beneficial for giving national control over SDGs 1, 3 and 4. WFP is also advocating to mobilise further support for the NSR through collaboration with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), with the latter holding overlapping objectives in achieving SDG2. The NSR will be launched on 15 January 2018.

WFP Armenia has invested significantly in evidence-based policy and programming, including: Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis, in partnership with the National Statistical Service and UNICEF; the Investment Case in partnership with MasterCard; and the Cost of the Diet (CotD) study. An agreement with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has also been signed, resulting in an impact review. The review was conducted jointly by WFP and IFPRI to assess the importance of school feeding programme in the landscape of social protection and its contribution to poverty reduction. Additionally, the Scoping Study on Social Protection and Safety Nets, supported by the WFP Regional Bureau, was conducted in partnership with Maastricht University and the Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia.

Furthermore, the review of the CBT pilot in Tavush province, conducted in mid-2017, has proven to be essential in enhancing the transitional model for future provinces to be handed over to the Government of Armenia.

Extra section

When Home Grown School Meals empower women: strengthening the nexus between education, nutrition and local agriculture

Nerqin Tsaghkavan is a border town located in the mountains region of Tavush. With a population of 700 people, inhabitants are mainly engaged in agricultural activities, although at times these activities are disrupted by sporadic insecurity.

In the highlands of Nerqin Tsaghkavan lies a primary school, initially under the WFP school meals project but handed over to the Government in September 2017. WFP introduced cash-based transfers (CBT) to allow schools to purchase the food locally, with the objective to better prepare the handover to the Government while improving the children's overall micro-nutrient intake. School and community members unanimously mentioned their preference for CBT and the positive impact it has on the children's diversified meals and the local agriculture.

Armine is a farmer who, like most people in the region, has been struggling to get meaningful employment. Her grandchildren attend the school which benefits from the school meals programme. Seeing the potential to link the school with local production, Armine launched a 12-member women's cooperative, with support from OXFAM, and established a 1000 m² vegetable greenhouse, which started functioning in February 2017. The first harvest, which was approximately 100 kg of vegetables, was donated to the school in March/April 2017, and was used to prepare nutritious hot meals for the children.

Supplementing this, Armine and her co-farmers underwent series of agro-trainings organized by OXFAM enriching their farming experience and ultimately increasing the productivity. Currently, the cooperative has a formal agreement with the school to ensure steady supply for the preparation of the school meals. Sustainable demand enabled longer term planning to diversify the produce and to expand the market beyond this first school using microcredit from financial institutions. "The additional income essentially goes back to business..." said Armine when asked by WFP staff, "but I am confident that our business will grow, generating enough resources to ensure the wellbeing of not only our families but also the whole community...". The community has recognised the holistic impact of the Home-Grown School Meals (HGSM) approach supported by WFP. Their children enjoy healthy, diversified meals and the women in the community enjoy increased income and confidence.

Both WFP and the Government of Armenia have recognized that the Home-Grown School Meals model can significantly contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2.

Project Results

Activities and Operational Partnerships

WFP provides nutritious hot meals to 60,185 children (pre-school to grade 4) in six of Armenia's 10 provinces. The remaining provinces are covered by the national school feeding programme. Food assistance, provided five days a week over 166 days of the school year, is comprised of wheat flour, vegetable oil, rice, split peas, locally-produced buckwheat and pasta. In February 2017, WFP successfully introduced the cash-based transfer (CBT) modality in Tavush province for 7,594 primary school children and the 1,045 household members of the 209 kitchen staff working within the programme. The introduction of CBT significantly improved the nutritional diversity of the menu and fostered local food purchasing. In addition, CBT was coupled with comprehensive school staff trainings on procurement, logistics and financial management, as well as the provision of kitchen equipment and renovation of schools. Arrangements were made with the Republican School Meals Training Centre, and its partner Yerevan Regional College N1, to conduct trainings on financial and food management, procurement, reporting and accounting, as well as hygiene and sanitation for school headmasters. WFP and the Armenian Government have agreed to replicate the transitional model developed in Tavush in other provinces. After the successful handover of Tavush province in September 2017, the necessary feasibility assessments, which included micro financial assessments, together with retailer assessments, were completed by mid- 2017 for Shirak province.

The field-level operational partners for implementing the school meals programme continued to be the schools themselves, the local communities and the regional authorities. The schools, which are the primary responsible entities for provision of timely and nutritious meals, played a crucial role in reaching WFP's programmatic objectives. Regional authorities were intentionally engaged in the needs assessment and capacity development processes, as they have local institutional control over the schools. Tripartite field level agreements (FLAs) between WFP, Tavush schools and the regional authorities on implementation of school meals through the CBT modality were prepared to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of each partner were clearly defined. To enhance synergies around capacity augmentation activities, specifically on kitchen equipment and rehabilitation in all provinces, WFP mobilised various partners, including UNDP, Children of Armenia Fund, Fund for Armenian Relief and local governments, to multiply the efforts on infrastructure rehabilitation of schools. As a result, kitchens and cafeterias in 25 schools were rehabilitated for the preparation of hot meals in Tavush province. In addition, WFP distributed kitchen equipment to all 75 schools in Tavush province before handing it over to the Government. WFP continued its successful operational partnership with Social and Industrial Food Service Institute (SIFI) to contribute to the handover of the Government. An additional part has been incorporated in the new FLAs with partners, incorporating WFP gender and protection requirements, more specifically in the FLA with the Sustainable School Feeding Foundation signed in August 2017.

WFP Armenia invested significantly in evidence-base policy and programming studies, including the Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis in partnership with the National Statistical Service and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). As a result of this partnership, the Caucasus Research Resource Centre–Armenia embeds regular food security analysis in its annual operations framework. An agreement was reached between WFP and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to assess the school meals programme's impact on poverty reduction as well as to initiate a Decentralized Impact Evaluation of the "Nutrition-sensitive Aspect of the Development of Sustainable School Feeding Project" in Armenia. The Scoping Study on Social Protection and Safety Nets for Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia, commissioned by the WFP Regional Bureau, was undertaken in partnership with Maastricht University and the Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia and will be completed by mid 2018.

WFP also pursued partnerships and joint advocacy with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to promote nutrition-sensitive programming and integration of the school meals programme into the national social protection system. WFP and the WB are part of a working group on "nutrition sensitive social safety nets" created in the framework of the WB project on rapid social response. The group is comprised of the line ministries, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UNICEF to coordinate nutrition-sensitive social protection and food security interventions.

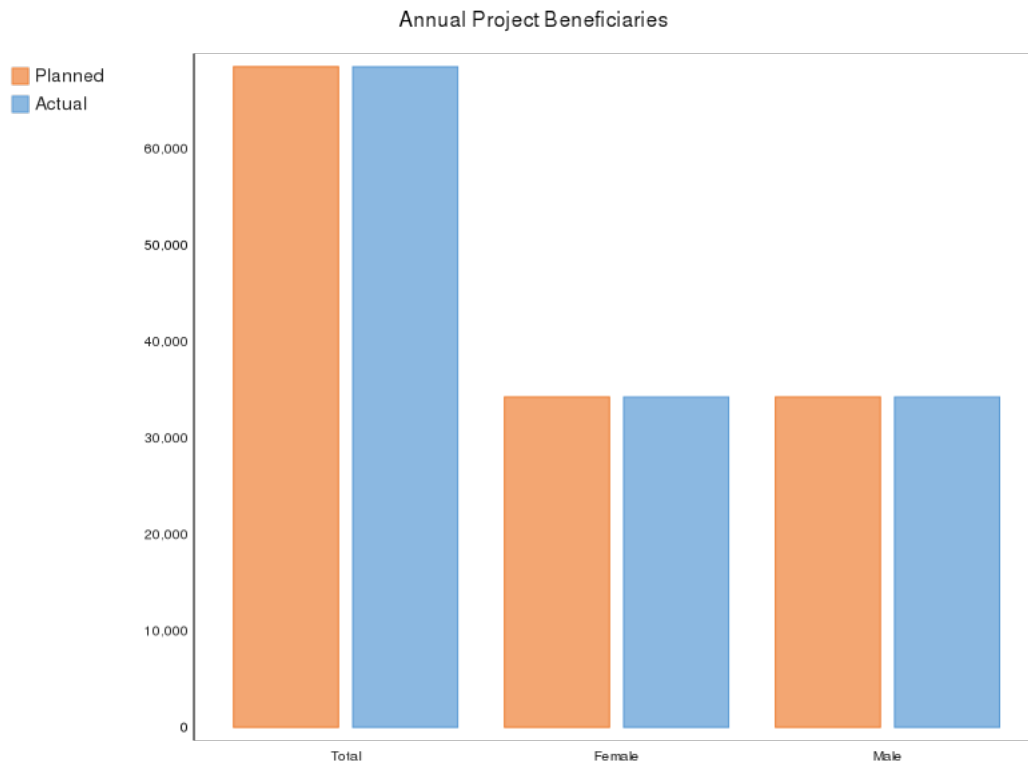
Results

The project (DEV 200128) reached close to 100 percent achievement when measured against planned benchmarks. The baseline benchmark was the number of beneficiaries reached, which was then disaggregated by age and gender, food distributed per commodity type and implementation of activities under each beneficiary

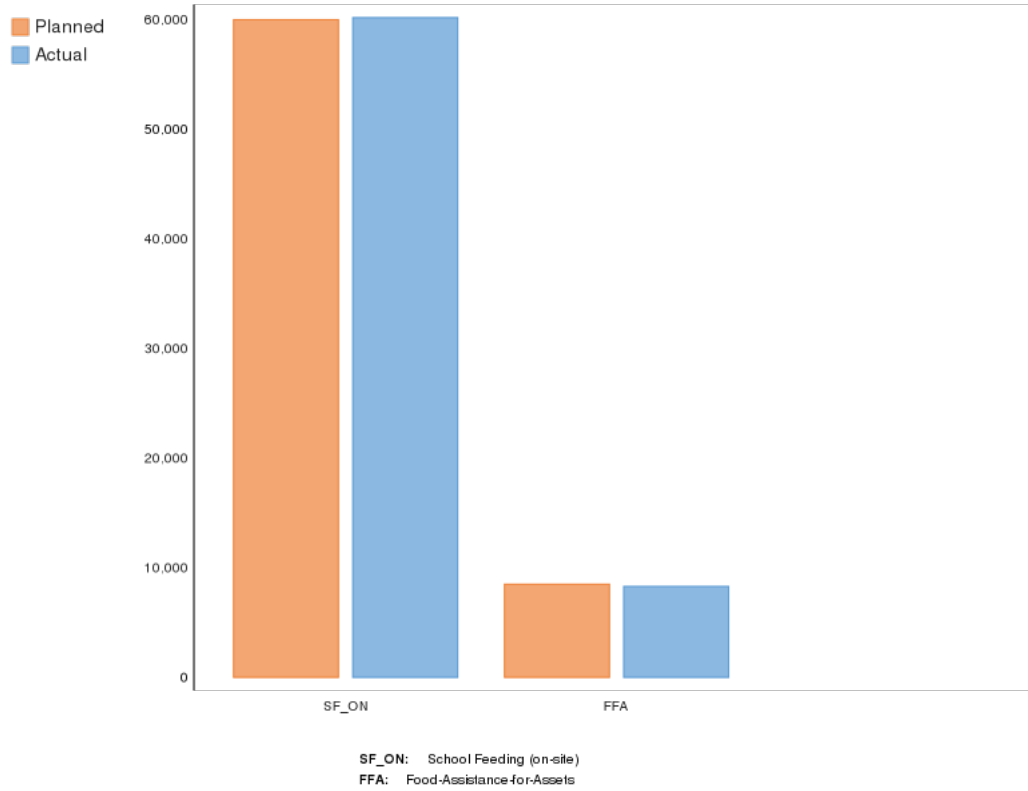
category. These results were achieved due to generous multi-year funding and WFP's vigorous efforts to improve programmatic planning and implementation. However, WFP started CBT modality in Tavush later than initially planned in order to ensure that the schools were well prepared for this transition and to avoid reversing programme quality. This explains the 67.1 percent CBT achievement against planned. Equitable access to primary education, including gender-equitable child enrollment, attendance and pass rates remained consistently high in 2017 throughout WFP-assisted schools. Combined with the state regulation on compulsory education for primary grade students, these positive trends might be also attributed to the social protection effects for family budgets generated through the value transfers from the school meals programme.

As a result of enhanced advocacy efforts and WFP-led analysis, the Armenian Government bolstered its commitment towards the sustainability of the national programme. This was done, firstly, through dedicated funding for both the government-administered programmes and internal transportation and handling costs for WFP-administered programmes and, secondly, through the establishment of the Sustainable School Feeding Foundation, which institutionalised governmental functions related to programme administration.

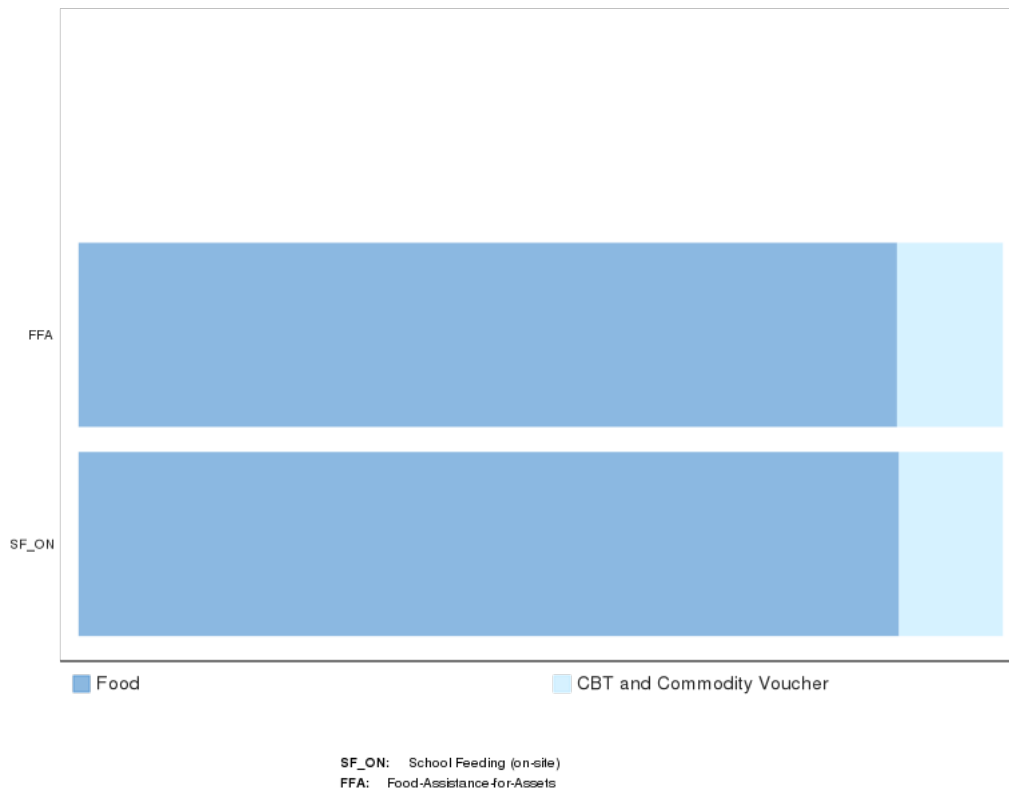
Finally, WFP's drastic increase in expenditure for technical assistance to strengthen government capacities motivated the decision to secure funds for the takeover of schools within the province of Tavush. The political decision to increase budgetary allocations from the state budget for national school feeding programme was considered an essential milestone, especially as it was done in spite the recent trend of cutting budgetary expenditures for development programmes and public services.



Annual Project Beneficiaries by Activity



Modality of Transfer by Activity





Annual Project Food Distribution

Commodity	Planned Distribution (mt)	Actual Distribution (mt)	% Actual v. Planned
Buckwheat	103	95	91.9%
Lentils	195	-	-
Pasta	103	85	82.2%
Rice	103	80	77.5%
Split Peas	-	191	-
Vegetable Oil	146	133	91.2%
Wheat Flour	2,029	1,914	94.3%
Total	2,679	2,497	93.2%



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

Modality	Planned (USD)	Actual (USD)	% Actual v. Planned
Cash	208,421	139,923	67.1%
Total	208,421	139,923	67.1%

Performance Monitoring

Significant work has been done to improve the monitoring and evaluation system following the external evaluation of the DEV 200128 project and the recommendations to improve the monitoring system. WFP made successive improvements on information timeliness, accuracy, and regular reporting. The CO collects data on the output measures through monthly reports submitted by the schools. The report format for schools was further standardised in 2017 to minimise error. Process monitoring is carried out by three field monitors, each responsible for a subset of three to four provinces. During the school year, monitors must visit all the schools in the provinces assigned to them at least once. On average, each monitor visits 40-50 schools in a month and 10 -15 schools per province. Each visit lasts around an hour and a half. Schools that are newly involved in the project and schools requiring follow up actions are prioritised for these visits. In 2017, the field monitors visited all 588 schools supported by WFP. Programme quality information, collected through process monitoring, usually includes observations on general conditions of the school infrastructure, the state of hygiene and sanitation, the condition of the kitchen, cafeteria and equipment, warehouse utilization, and, finally, the community's involvement. Other information collected during onsite visits includes nutritional information of the school meals menu, correspondence of the menus with the technical cards, and compliance with procurement and storage regulations of the products. To improve timely flow and quality of monitoring data, since September 2016 WFP has started mobile tool for data collection through use of WFP's Geo-Referenced Real-time Acquisition of Statistics Platform (GRASP). The platform allows for the collation of programme quality information into a country office database, thereby ensuring the proper actions are taken. Weekly update reports also contribute to timely follow up and action by the relevant country staff.

Outcome indicators including sex disaggregated data on retention, drop-out rates and attendance are analysed based on school records made available to WFP by the assisted schools. Gender parity between boys and girls enrolled, attended, dropped-out and passed to the next grade is used as a basis for analysis whenever relevant. A standardised bi-annual reporting format introduced in 2017 is shared internally and externally. In addition to the aforementioned monitoring procedures, based on WFP's mandatory corporate requirements, WFP Armenia

outsourced an Outcome Monitoring Survey for the "Development of Sustainable School Feeding" project in Armenia. The survey assessed if the project implementation lead to reaching the overall objectives of the "Sustainable School Meals Programme", the relevance of the assistance and, also, set baselines for the new cycle of project implementation. The exercise included surveys of school headmasters, kitchen staff and parents of the children benefiting from the School Meals Programme; in-depth interviews with the representatives of regional departments of education and food safety; and focus group discussions with the representatives of school parent councils. The survey sample was representative in terms of the modality of implementation, including direct food transfers and cash-based transfers under the WFP School Meals Programme, and the hot and dry meals modality under the national Sustainable School Feeding Programme. The report based on the results of the Survey will be available in March 2018.

Progress Towards Gender Equality

Despite economic progress over the last decade, disparities between women and men remain salient in Armenia, especially in dimensions vastly influenced by social norms. In education and health, gender equality outcomes in Armenia are broadly comparable with those in Europe and Central Asia and better than those of lower-middle-income countries globally. However, barriers to women's access to economic opportunities persist and gender inequalities are evident in demographic imbalances, and under-representation in leadership roles. Concerted policy efforts are required to close gender gaps that hamper economic growth.

In 2017, Armenia had a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.677, ranking it 97th out of 144 countries [1]. The smallest gap in the country is in education, where Armenia ranks 42nd, with regards to health Armenia is ranked 143rd, mainly due to sex-selective abortions. In Armenia, 94 percent of adult women have reached secondary education compared to 95 percent of the men. However, despite women's high educational level, they are largely excluded from administration and development processes. Given the limited economic opportunities for women, households headed by women are vulnerable to poverty, food and nutrition insecurity [2]. The school meals programme promoted gender equality and women's economic empowerment by fostering equal participation from both men and women, regardless of role. This included engagement from, and between, school head-teachers, parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and kitchen helpers, in capacity strengthening activities, decision-making and implementation.

WFP staff are focused on engaging men in the PTAs, promoting the importance of men's engagement in children's development and upbringing. Periodic meetings were organised with parent councils, headmasters and communities, where the challenges of the programme implementation were discussed. WFP highlighted the important role of fathers in coordination and management of the programme on school level, including resource mobilisation to complement the meals with nutritious fruits and vegetables. The out-migration of men combined with the gendered division of roles within the family in Armenia, where women have greater responsibility for children's education compared to men, limits the participation of men in PTAs. The PTAs were instrumental in the planning and monitoring of food preparation in the schools and were regularly counselled and encouraged to complement the programme activities. The involvement of men in PTAs and overall support to school meals activities increased over time due to WFP's advocacy efforts. Parent and teacher participation had a visible impact on the accountability and transparency of school meals activities.

Further, there is a gender imbalance in the labour market within Armenia, which likely contributes to the undernourishment among employed women. About 23.8 percent of employed women are poor, 1.2 percent are extremely poor and 3.7 percent are undernourished based on the Armenian Ministry of Health's standards for nutrition. The unemployment rate among women is higher, at 19.5 percent, compared to 17.6 percent among men [3]. To mitigate this, WFP provides opportunity for 1,700 women kitchen helpers to contribute to their households' food security by receiving food entitlements calculated for five family members. The programme intentionally encouraged the enrolment of unemployed women from local communities to provide this opportunity to the most vulnerable women. As reported by post-distribution focus group discussions, women's confidence and self-esteem increased by being employed in the programme.

WFP Armenia is preparing its Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2019-2023. In order to integrate gender into the CSP, WFP commissioned a local non-governmental organisation, specialized in gender related issues, to analyse the current situation in Armenia and improve gender mainstreaming in WFP activities. The report, "Gender analysis in food security areas, Republic of Armenia" was finalised in 2017 and included recommendations, which will significantly contribute to the drafting of WFP CSP Armenia.

In order to enhance awareness towards Gender Equality in 2018, WFP Armenia held a communication campaign, "16 Days of activism against Gender-Based violence," and disseminated information among the various functional units. In addition, two gender focal points from WFP Armenia successfully passed the Training of Trainers in

Masculinities in HQ and delivered the same training for all the Country Office staff.

[1] World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report, 2017

[2] World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report, 2017; DHS 2010; ILCS 2014; UNDP HDP 2015; EU 2015; UNDAF 2015

[3] National Strategic Review (NSR) of Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia, 2017

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

WFP remains committed to ensuring the transparency and accountability of its assistance to the people it serves. It has continued to strengthen its monitoring mechanisms for collecting and analysing feedback from direct and indirect participants of the school meals programme. WFP –supported schools are equipped with 'information corners', where children, parents, and teachers are provided with information on WFP's programme, the weekly menu, the food entitlement for children and kitchen helpers. All stakeholders in the school meals programme were encouraged to use the confidential hotline to report any issues or concerns. Interested parents were encouraged to join and actively participate in these associations to be informed of the expenditures and to influence the decisions on budget management. WFP conducted periodic meetings separately with parents, PTAs, kitchen helpers, headmasters and regional authorities on the quality of the food provided, children's consumption and cultural food preferences, hygiene and sanitation, together with any potential risks to the protection, safety and integrity of beneficiaries. A cook book has been published with various recipes, which has been another channel to ensure that the meals prepared are diversified and, additionally, to increase awareness and advocacy for healthy eating habits and lifestyle. The book has been distributed to the schools and Sustainable School Feeding Foundation is already using it to train kitchen staff in the schools. An official launch of the book will take place in March 2018 where the book will be shared with various stakeholders.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page photo © WFP/ Tatev Mnatsakanyan.

WFP-supported school feeding programme in Tavush province handed over to the Government in September 2017

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	34,250	34,250	68,500	34,242	34,243	68,485	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
By Age-group:									
Children (under 5 years)	1,025	1,025	2,050	1,017	1,017	2,034	99.2%	99.2%	99.2%
Children (5-18 years)	30,080	30,080	60,160	30,154	30,155	60,309	100.2%	100.2%	100.2%
Adults (18 years plus)	3,145	3,145	6,290	3,071	3,071	6,142	97.6%	97.6%	97.6%
By Residence status:									
Residents	34,250	34,250	68,500	34,242	34,243	68,485	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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)	60,000	7,000	60,000	59,999	7,594	60,185	100.0%	108.5%	100.3%
Food-Assistance-for-Assets	8,500	1,000	8,500	8,080	1,045	8,300	95.1%	104.5%	97.6%

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)	60,000	7,000	60,000	59,999	7,594	60,185	100.0%	108.5%	100.3%
Food-Assistance-for-Assets	1,700	200	1,700	1,616	209	1,660	95.1%	104.5%	97.6%

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	30,000	30,000	60,000	30,092	30,093	60,185	100.3%	100.3%	100.3%
Total participants	30,000	30,000	60,000	30,092	30,093	60,185	100.3%	100.3%	100.3%
Total beneficiaries	30,000	30,000	60,000	30,092	30,093	60,185	100.3%	100.3%	100.3%
Food-Assistance-for-Assets									
Activity supporters	-	1,700	1,700	-	1,660	1,660	-	97.6%	97.6%
Total participants	-	1,700	1,700	-	1,660	1,660	-	97.6%	97.6%
Total beneficiaries	4,250	4,250	8,500	4,150	4,150	8,300	97.6%	97.6%	97.6%

Project Indicators

Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
SO3 Reduce risk and enable people, communities and countries to meet their own food and nutrition needs				
Increased marketing opportunities for producers and traders of agricultural products and food at the regional, national and local levels				
Food purchased from regional, national and local suppliers, as % of food distributed by WFP in-country				
<i>ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS Access database, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP programme monitoring, Distribution data, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, WFP programme monitoring, Supply chain data</i>	=25.00	-	100.00	100.00
SO4 Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger				
Increased equitable access to and utilization of education				

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Enrolment: Average annual rate of change in number of children enrolled in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, NSS, WB, UNICEF, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, NSS, WB, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, NSS	=3.00	-	2.85	2.82
Enrolment (girls): Average annual rate of change in number of girls enrolled in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS database, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring	=3.00	-	2.75	2.72
Enrolment (boys): Average annual rate of change in number of boys enrolled in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS access database, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring	=3.00	-	2.99	2.96
Attendance rate in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, School headmasters, Base value: 2008.12, Secondary data, UN DATA. UNICEF_SOWC-Special edition on Children rights, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP programme monitoring, School headmasters survey, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, WFP programme monitoring, WFP outcome monitoring survey	>96.40	96.25	96.29	97.56
Attendance rate (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS access database, Base value: 2008.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, WFP survey, KI survey	>96.40	96.19	96.09	97.36
Attendance rate (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS access database, Base value: 2008.12, Secondary data, UN DATA. UNICEF_SOWC-Special edition on Children rights, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP programme monitoring, KI interviews, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, WFP survey, KI survey	>96.40	96.28	96.85	98.12
Drop-out rate in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, NSS, WB data, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, NSS, WB data, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring	<2.00	-	1.44	1.44
Drop-out rate (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS access database, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring	<2.00	1.45	1.45	1.45
Drop-out rate (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS access database, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring	<2.00	1.44	1.44	1.44

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Pass rate in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS database, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP programme monitoring, KI interviews, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, WFP programme monitoring, KI interviews	>70.00	-	98.88	98.89
Pass rate (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS database, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring	>70.00	-	98.79	98.80
Pass rate (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, MS database, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, WFP monitoring	>70.00	-	98.89	98.90
Ownership and capacity strengthened to reduce undernutrition and increase access to education at regional, national and community levels				
NCI: School Feeding National Capacity Index				
ARMENIA, Project End Target: 2017.06, SABER working groups decision, Base value: 2016.04, Secondary data, SABER working groups decision	>2.10	2.20	-	-

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO4: Capacity Development - Emergency Preparedness				
Number of contingency plans created	contingency plan	1	1	100.0%
SO4: Capacity Development - Strengthening National Capacities				
Number of national programmes developed with WFP support (school feeding)	national programme	1	1	100.0%
Number of technical assistance projects conducted by WFP to strengthen the national capacity	project	1	1	100.0%
SO4: School Feeding (on-site)				
Government contributions to WFP for technical assistance and capacity development support (USD)	US\$	120,102	102,000	84.9%
Number of WFP-assisted schools that have school gardens for learning or complementary food input	school	300	-	-
Number of national programmes developed with WFP support (school feeding)	national programme	1	1	100.0%
Number of schools assisted by WFP	school	700	588	84.0%
Number of schools with revitalised school gardens	school	100	-	-
WFP expenditures for technical assistance to strengthen national capacity	US\$	500,000	818,803	163.8%

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>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	>60.00	90.00	92.00	92.00
Proportion of women project management committee members trained on modalities of food, cash, or voucher distribution				
<i>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	>60.00	85.00	88.00	88.00

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>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	>95.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Proportion of assisted people (men) who do not experience safety problems travelling to, from and/or at WFP programme site				
<i>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	>95.00	100.00	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>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	>95.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Proportion of assisted people (women) who do not experience safety problems travelling to, from and/or at WFP programme sites				
<i>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	>95.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Proportion of assisted people informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, where people can complain)				
<i>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	>95.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Proportion of assisted people who do not experience safety problems travelling to, from and/or at WFP programme site				
<i>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Base value: 2014.12, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	>95.00	100.00	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>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	=150,000.00	102,000.00
Number of partner organizations that provide complementary inputs and services		
<i>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	=5.00	10.00
Proportion of project activities implemented with the engagement of complementary partners		
<i>ARMENIA, School Feeding, Project End Target: 2017.06, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	>90.00	100.00

Resource Inputs from Donors

Resource Inputs from Donors

Donor	Cont. Ref. No.	Commodity	Purchased in 2017 (mt)	
			In-Kind	Cash
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00032-01	Pasta	-	34
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00033-01	Buckwheat	-	80
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00033-01	Pasta	-	60
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00033-01	Rice	-	100
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00033-01	Split Peas	-	120
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00033-01	Vegetable Oil	-	99
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00033-01	Wheat Flour	-	1,485
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00052-01	Buckwheat	-	20
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00052-01	Split Peas	-	66
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00052-01	Vegetable Oil	-	18
Russian Federation	RUS-C-00052-01	Wheat Flour	-	750
		Total	-	2,832