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Further Information

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SPR Reading Guidance



Assistance to displaced populations in the Pool Department

Standard Project Report 2017

World Food Programme in Congo, Republic of the (CG)



World Food Programme

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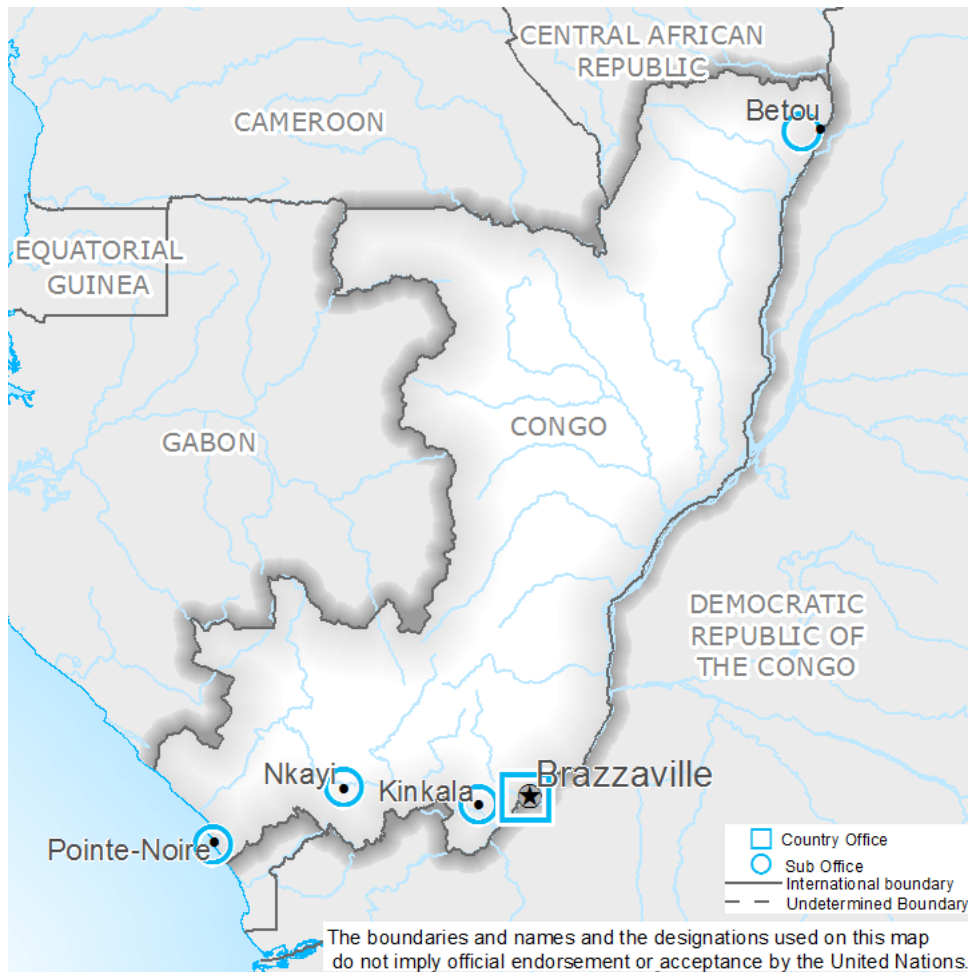
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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Achievements at Country Level

WFP scaled up its assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Pool district of the Republic of the Congo (RoC) to reach 58,061 people by the end of 2017. The implementation of the Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP) took longer than planned due to security-related access constraints in Pool department.

WFP promoted smallholder farmers' access to markets and improved the quality, volume and competitiveness of their beans as a commodity. WFP will purchase 30 percent of the produce for the school feeding programme from the first quarter of 2018.

WFP also assisted the government in finalizing its Fortification Rapid Assessment Tool (FRAT) survey to support its food fortification programme.

Since 2013, WFP has been assisting Central African Republic (CAR) refugees living in RoC's Likouala department with emergency food assistance and nutritional support. A total of 18,780 CAR refugees were assisted in 2017.

The school feeding program restarted thanks to a contribution Japan. A grant from the United States of America's McGovern-Dole School Feeding Program (2018-2022) was also announced - preparatory activities have commenced.

Despite resource shortfalls and security constraints, efforts were made to improve WFP monitoring activities. Data was collected systematically for baseline, follow-up and outcomes indicators.

Country Context and Response of the Government

The Republic of the Congo (RoC) is the fourth largest oil-producing country in sub-Saharan Africa. Oil revenues contribute more than 60 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and account for 90 percent of export earnings and 80 percent government revenues. The Congolese economy continues to suffer from low oil prices. The GDP contracted by 2.8 percent in 2016 and 1.1 percent in 2017. Economic prospects continue to be poor as the government struggles to meet its fiscal obligations.

RoC has a population of 4.2 million people, with some 64 percent living in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, its largest cities, which are also home to significant numbers of food insecure people. Despite its status as a middle-income country, RoC is ranked 135 out of 188 countries on the 2015 Human Development Index. Food insecurity and poverty limit the access of many to primary social services, including basic education.

An estimated 47 percent of the population live below the national poverty line. The Gini coefficient is 0.43, reflecting significant inequality. According to the 2016 Global Hunger Index, Congo had a “serious” hunger score of 27. The index reflects the prevalence of wasting and stunting among children under 5.

According to UNICEF, RoC's under 5 mortality rate stood at a rather high 96 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2012. Among children, wasting stood at 8 percent, stunting at 30 percent and underweight at 11 percent (UNICEF, 2008-2012). Malnutrition has various causes, including food insecurity, lack of dietary diversity, poverty, limited access to healthcare, poor hygiene, inadequate infant feeding practices and infectious diseases. The national HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is 3.2 percent.

Due to the ongoing economic crisis, the government was not able to fund its 60 percent share of WFP's Country Programme (CP). WFP faced similar challenges in mobilizing funds for its other programmes in RoC. Apart from the resource situation, WFP also faced logistics constraints that greatly affected operations on the ground. This was especially the case with the implementation of EMOP 200799, which covered the landlocked administrative department of Likouala. Delivering food was particularly challenging - the transportation of food from Brazzaville to Likouala department is only possible by river, and this can only be undertaken six months of the year. As such WFP pre-positioned food ahead of the low-tide period.

Conflict in the (Southern Africa) region caused a series of mass displacements, with many refugees fleeing to RoC. The country currently hosts some 59,467 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), CAR, Rwanda, Angola and other countries.

In Pool department, conflict between government forces and local militias resulted in the displacement of nearly a third of its population since April 2016. The difficult living conditions faced by internally displaced people (IDPs) were worsened by their isolation, with limited access to food and markets.

In July 2017, a UN-Government Humanitarian Response Plan for the Pool Crisis, which estimated needs at USD 23.7 million up to December, was launched. This plan aimed to provide emergency assistance, enhance protection and build the resilience of vulnerable populations in the affected area, and of those who sought refuge in neighbouring departments.

Insecurity in Pool department required the implementation of IR-EMOP 201039 and EMOP 201066, the latter providing food assistance to more than 58,000 internally displaced people in Pool and Bouenza departments until December 2017.

The conflict also affected the implementation of some activities, such as the school feeding programme, and limited WFP's oversight missions for the emergency programme, especially in areas where physical access was denied to UN staff.

Within host families and those at displacement sites in Pool and Bouenza departments, 60 percent were headed by women or girls. A nutrition and food security survey carried out in May 2017 showed that female-headed IDP households tended to be more food insecure (54.5 percent compared to 47.4 percent for male-headed households). Displaced women have less access to income-generating activities such as agricultural labour for the host population's smallholder farmers. The study also showed that volatile food prices combined with low food availability had limited households' food access leading to high rates of acute malnutrition among displaced children under 5, reaching a peak of 17.3 percent.

WFP is engaged with the government at all levels and plays a key role in emergency and development programmes. The government has curbed public investment as part of its fiscal reforms. It reneged on a pledge to fund 60 percent of WFP's operations in RoC. This forced WFP to reduce number of beneficiaries as well as the scope of the Country Programme (CP). For example, Component 4 of the CP - risk and disaster management - was not implemented and Component 2 ran for only one month.

WFP works with the main ministries and in coordination with the other UN agencies. The UNDAF (United Nations Development Assistance Framework) 2014-2018 and the WFP Country Programme were developed in alignment with the government's National Development Plan and have been extended until end-2019 for better alignment with the new national development plan now being formulated.

WFP brings critical capacity through its extensive field presence (4 sub-offices) and strong relationship with local authorities and communities. With financial and technical support from WFP and its partners, the government has developed and adopted a National School Feeding Policy. WFP and UNICEF are also providing support to the government to develop a national fortification policy and related programs.

WFP is a key partner for the government in the implementation of its national social protection and national school feeding policies. Under WFP leadership a pilot home grown school meals project funded by the European Union (EU) is being implemented in Bouenza department. Also, in collaboration with FAO, IFAD and the Ministry of Agriculture, the project aims to support smallholder farmers to produce beans, 30 percent of which WFP will purchase for the school feeding program. This is the first time WFP is piloting a home grown school meals program in RoC. The project is aligned with the National School Feeding Policy, which has been adopted by the government with support from WFP, the World Bank and other partners, with a view to expanding the school feeding program to all primary schools by 2025 using locally-produced food. To consolidate the school feeding programme and ensure sustainability and gradual handover to the government, WFP has launched together with UNICEF, UNESCO, ACTED and other NGOs a USDA-funded McGovern Dole programme.

WFP is also working with UNICEF and the Ministry of Industry on a joint cassava fortification project to reduce micronutrient deficiency among school-aged children.

Through the National Institute of Statistics and the Nutrition Division of the Ministry of Health, WFP is providing support in organizing regular food security and nutrition assessments.

WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

WFP has been active in the Republic of the Congo (RoC) since 1968. WFP's operations in RoC contribute to global efforts to reach Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 (end poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality) and 17 (partnerships).

In 2017 WFP continued to develop the capacity of the government to support thousands of beneficiaries through its different programmes to address hunger and nutrition issues.

Country Programme (CP) 200648 (2015-2018) supported the government through four components aimed to (1) promote access to education by ensuring that primary schoolchildren have a balanced diet based on local produce; (2) support the government in setting up a social safety net for vulnerable households; (3) provide nutrition support to people living with HIV or TB, pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6-23 months who are malnourished; and (4) provide technical support to the government to strengthen disaster risk management.

Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP) 201039 (February-June 2017) as well as Emergency Operation (EMOP) 201066 (July-December 2017) assisted IDPs and host populations affected by the Pool crisis. Under the leadership of OCHA, WFP and other UN agencies launched the Humanitarian Response Plan in July 2017. WFP received a contribution from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Humanitarian partners, that include NGOs and UN agencies, attended weekly UNDP-facilitated coordination meetings. The Minister of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action also convened regular high-level meetings.

WFP is recognized by the government, the UN and NGOs as an expert in logistics management and emergency preparedness and response, including in port operations, transport and warehousing. Apart from ability to provide logistics services to other organizations, WFP's logistics expertise strengthens the management capacity of the government in emergency preparedness and response.

WFP is also a leader in innovation. For example, in 2013 WFP introduced a pilot voucher system for vulnerable urban households as part of the government's social safety net programme. The programme represented the first ever mobile transfer by a development agency in RoC. In September 2017, WFP's mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) system was launched in Pool department. The mVAM project uses mobile technology to track food security trends in real-time, providing data that support humanitarian decision-making.

In mid-October 2017, WFP in partnership with Fongwama (a local "hacker collective"), launched the first "hackathon" on food security in RoC, called "Hack4Food". The winning team, LonaTek, offered a platform for users to buy and sell goods. WFP plans to work with the winning team to develop appropriate applications to connect smallholders to markets.

To provide its assistance to women IDPs affected by the Pool humanitarian crisis, UNFPA requested WFP's support to provide dignity kits to improve hygiene and quality of life. This kind of partnership - a first in RoC and Sub-Saharan Africa - will continue into 2018.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

Since 2014 RoC has been in economic decline. The government did not have sufficient resources to meet its commitment to support WFP's Country Programme. The response from the external donor community was very limited, leading to shortfalls that significantly affected the implementation of the programme. In view of the limited resource availability, WFP prioritized core components of its activities and contracted others to align with funding. WFP's Immediate Response Account (IRA) allowed it to cover logistics and direct support costs needs from July 2017. The implementation of the school feeding component was maintained in 2017 thanks to a contribution from the Japanese government, but could not reach the whole target population. Component 2 (social safety nets) made only one transfer to vulnerable people. Components 3 (nutrition) and 4 (disaster risk management) were not implemented.

The same trend was observed for the Emergency Operation (EMOP) to assist internally displaced people following armed conflict between government forces and armed groups in the Pool department. Through IR EMOP 201039, WFP provided its first food assistance to a reduced caseload in the second half of 2017 (from 15,000 to 12,000). The IR-EMOP was followed by EMOP 201066, which allowed for the continued provision of emergency food assistance to the displaced population. In the second half of 2017, needs increased, necessitating the government and the UN to launch a Humanitarian Response Plan. Following this appeal, WFP received a significant contribution of USD 7 million enabling the organization to target 70,000 beneficiaries until the end of the year.

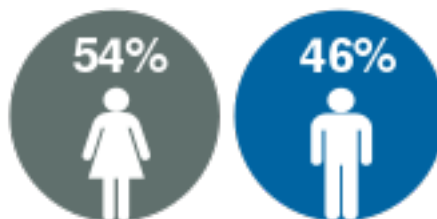
Assistance to CAR refugees was possible in 2017 due to a contribution of USD 1 million received at the end of 2016 from USAID/FFP and an allocation from multilateral sources.

Efforts were made by the WFP Country Office to seek additional funds for the implementation of the CP. Multi-year funding was approved by United States Department of Agriculture following a successful submission to the McGovern-Dole programme (USD 30 million for 2018-22). This five-year programme will support some 54,000 children attending primary school, out of the 132,500 targeted by WFP.



Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	9,437	10,135	19,572
Children (5-18 years)	24,989	24,564	49,553
Adults (18 years plus)	14,205	22,546	36,751
Total number of beneficiaries in 2017	48,631	57,245	105,876





Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Country Programme	379	84	109	-	91	664
Regional EMOP	645	143	232	48	14	1,081
Single Country EMOP	467	46	131	10	8	664
Total Food Distributed in 2017	1,492	273	472	58	113	2,408



Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Country Programme	-	23,667	-
Regional EMOP	467,771	-	-
Single Country EMOP	74,144	933,474	-
Single Country IR-EMOP	313,322	-	-
Total Distributed in 2017	855,237	957,141	-

Supply Chain

RoC is a food-deficit country with an under-developed agricultural sector. In mid-September 2016, WFP launched a project to support local agricultural production, and local purchases were possible in 2017. A WFP-FAO-IFAD project supported 200 smallholder farmers to produce beans for a pilot home grown school feeding programme as a part of the National School Feeding Policy implementation. WFP planned to purchase 30 percent of the production to supply nearby school meal programme activities. WFP plans purchase 13 mt of beans in early 2018. WFP also bought 1 mt of locally produced palm oil from the Eco Oil Company.

Food transportation from the port of Pointe Noire to WFP warehouses in Brazzaville and Nkayi was effected by road. Private barges took the food on to Likouala department. In 2017, 14 mt of Corn-Soya Blend (CSB) was transported between Douala and Bétou through Douala corridor.

For delivery to final distribution points (FDPs) by road, WFP contracted private transport companies. The armed conflict in the Pool department caused occasional delays in delivering food during the year.

Based on market and feasibility studies and to avoid logistics constraints in Likouala department, WFP launched in March a cash-based transfers (CBT) programme for CAR refugees, thereby obviating transport challenges.

River transport between Brazzaville and Likouala was undertaken during the rainy season (July-December) when the Oubangi River was navigable. Transport from extended delivery points to final distribution points was achieved using small barges operated by private companies. Food handling, loading and offloading at the entry port, the extended delivery points, and the final delivery points were also carried out by private companies.

Minor post-delivery losses of commodities occurred (0.22 percent), mainly because of poor packaging and damage during transportation on small barges carrying commodities from extended delivery points to the final distribution points. The inability to continue using the railway due to security problems in Pool department obliged WFP to

prioritize road transportation.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Beans	13	-	13
Canned Fish	-	189	189
Corn Soya Blend	-	380	380
Iodised Salt	-	64	64
Ready To Use Supplementary Food	-	78	78
Rice	301	-	301
Vegetable Oil	1	-	1
Total	315	711	1,026
Percentage	30.7%	69.3%	

Annual Global Commodity Management Facility Purchases Received in Country (mt)

Commodity	Total
Corn Soya Blend	100
Ready To Use Supplementary Food	89
Rice	2,850
Split Peas	890
Vegetable Oil	428
Total	4,356

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

WFP continued to provide financial support to school inspectors to meet transport costs for collecting data.

To assess the implementation of CP 200648 at its mid-point, an independent evaluation was commissioned by WFP and the Ministry of Planning. Work is ongoing.

In preparation for the implementation of the McGovern Dole program, school inspectors and staff were trained and a new partner (Educational Programme of Sustainable Development) engaged via a Field Level Agreement (FLA) to implement a school feeding programme in Sangha department.

The quality of support to CAR refugees has been improved by the introduction of CBT, which allows beneficiaries to diversify their food basket.

Two new approaches have been implemented in 2017 in the field of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and partnerships. With no access to Pool department, WFP contracted third-party monitoring.

Project Results

Activities and Operational Partnerships

The Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP) aligned with WFP's Strategic Objective 1: save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies. It aimed to stabilize or improve food consumption over the assistance period for targeted households and/or individuals.

A rapid assessment conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Actions and Solidarity (MSAHAS) and UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, UNHCR, FAO and UNFPA) in June 2016 showed that many of those displaced were children, women and other vulnerable groups such as elderly people and female-headed households. As corroborated by other assessments, the displaced lacked essential food and non-food items, and had limited access to sanitation, water and healthcare services. They had settled in different localities and towns (Kinkala, Mindouli, Mbanza-Ndounga, Louingui, Kibouende, Madzia and Loutete) in the departments of Pool and Bouenza. Given limited capacity, aid organizations could not cover the needs of the displaced population.

WFP provided cash-based transfers (CBT) under the IR-EMOP from February to March 2017 via mobile money. The target departments of Pool and Bouenza had mobile network coverage, and the service provider (Airtel) the capacity to reach affected populations. Markets were integrated and functional, and some local produce was available. However, security constraints did hamper the response.

An average individual transfer value of USD 0.6 was provided daily for 35 days from February 2017. Beneficiaries received cash-based transfers (CBT) in the form of mobile money to buy food at three designated stores. They also received up to 10 percent of the transfer in cash to cover transport costs. CBT was particularly appropriate given the general unavailability of WFP food stocks in Brazzaville.

MSAHAS and WFP worked closely throughout the IR-EMOP, jointly targeting beneficiaries, with the support of WFP's implementing partner, CARITAS. The beneficiary lists were validated by the head of MSAHAS in Pool department.

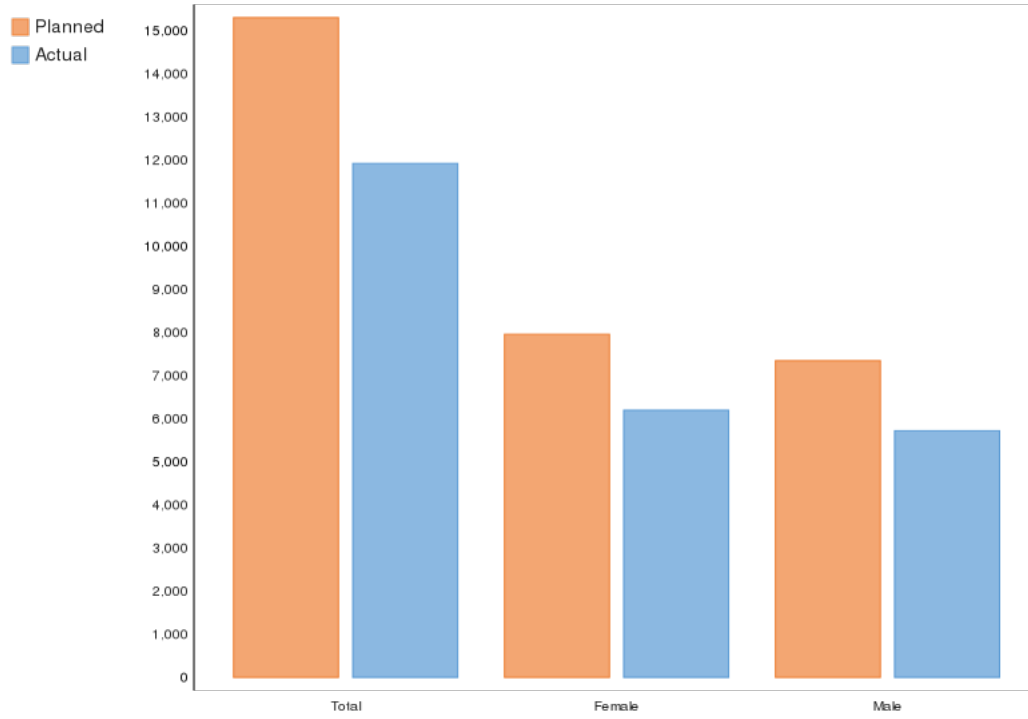
The UN's access to affected areas was restricted. To mitigate these limitations WFP worked with its NGO partner CARITAS to ensure delivery of assistance. Together they also trained partners in providing commodities to pregnant and lactating women and persons with disabilities.

Results

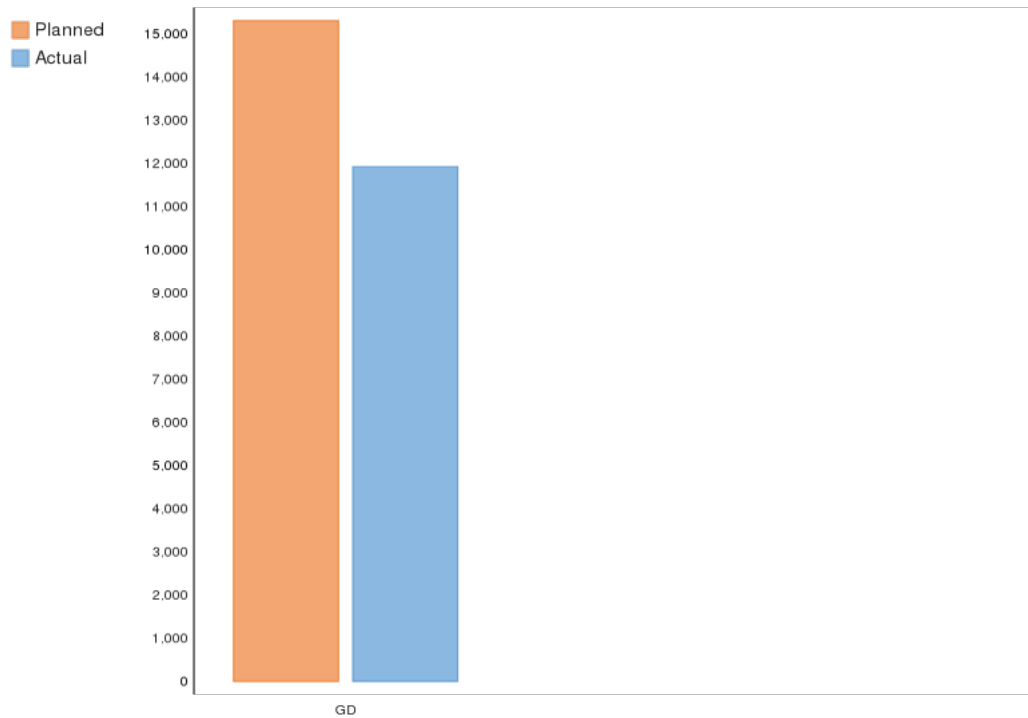
The IR EMOP aimed to provide food assistance to 15,304 people internally displaced by conflict in Pool department through cash-based transfers (CBTs). Due to the security and access constraints, only 78 percent of the targeted beneficiaries - 11,920 people - were reached, 59 percent of them women. To optimize food use, some beneficiaries received 3 months of transfers rather than the planned six weeks' worth.

WFP could not conduct monitoring during this period, although an improvement in the nutritional situation of women and girls was observed by CARITAS. Assistance initiated by the IR-EMOP continued through EMOP 201066.

Annual Project Beneficiaries

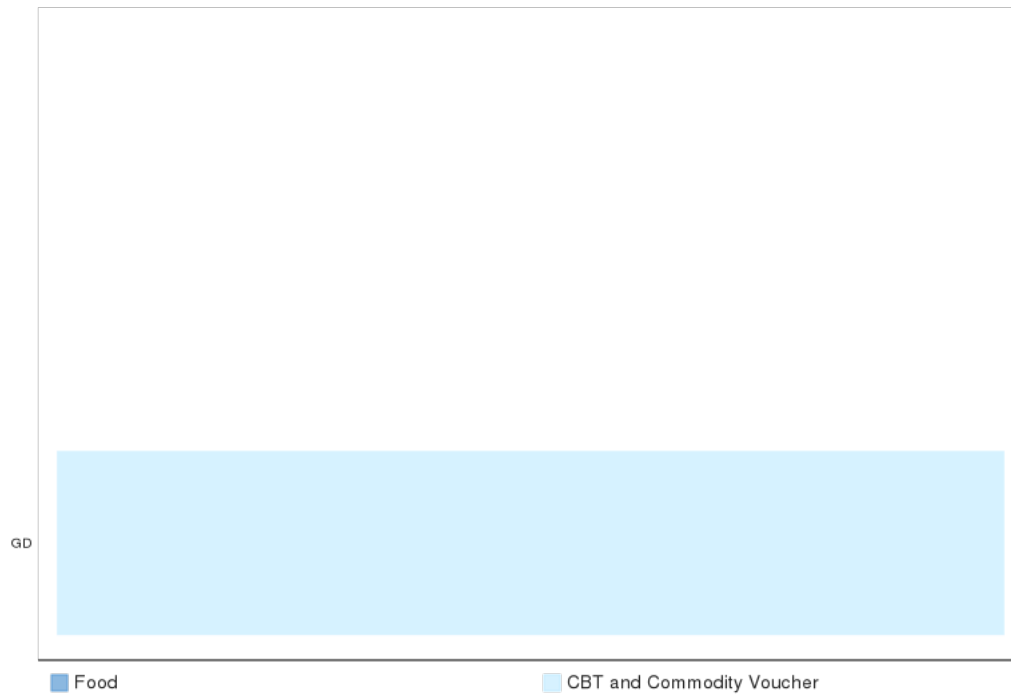


Annual Project Beneficiaries by Activity



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	321,363	313,322	97.5%
Total	321,363	313,322	97.5%

Performance Monitoring

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Actions and Solidarity (MSAHAS) based in the conflict-affected Pool department, WFP established a monitoring and evaluation system. Owing to security and access constraints, WFP's main partner, CARITAS, implemented field activities while MSAHAS focused on the validation of beneficiary lists and troubleshooting. As no field visits could be conducted by UN agencies due to insecurity, WFP trained CARITAS agents in beneficiaries count monitoring.

Focus group discussions were held monthly by implementing partners and the WFP Food Monitoring Assistant, which allowed beneficiary feedback. Where possible, WFP monitors were present to track operational performance.

Progress Towards Gender Equality

Special attention was paid to pregnant women, who received dedicated support. A complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) desk was established with two agents. The toll-free complaints hotline received more phone calls from women, of whom some may be inhibited from speaking in the presence of their husbands. CARITAS and MSAHAS assisted disabled persons during the distributions.

The WFP Country Office's new gender policy integrates the specific needs of adolescent girls. Many activities and outputs contributed to gender equality:

- Men and women participated in all stages of project;
- a CFM enabled both men and women to voice needs and concerns;
- the food distribution committee was gender-representative (50 percent women);
- sensitization campaigns targeted all beneficiaries.

A major challenge was the cultural taboo surrounding adolescent girls expressing themselves in front of their fathers, as well as taboos around the discussion of sex between children and parents. In the context of the emergency, women and adolescent girls face sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), sexually transmitted diseases and urinary tract infections due to lack of clean water. The underlying causes of gender inequality are lack of appropriate information provision and the level of girls' education and culture. In general, WFP responds to these causes through:

- Sensitization campaigns;
- promoting education through school meal programmes;
- provision of emergency dignity kits;
- running of focus groups of adolescent girls to understand their specific needs.

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

Beneficiaries received cash-based transfers (CBT) in the form of mobile money to buy food at three designated stores. They also received up to 10 percent of the transfer in cash to cover transport costs, the amount is included in the transfer of 0.60 cents a day. All efforts were made to ensure that designated shops were accessible to the affected populations. Men accompanied women, who generally selected and purchased food at the retailers.

WFP's partner Caritas was trained in CBT, both for their understanding of the modality and to better inform beneficiaries.

A complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) at the distribution sites was established to resolve issues from beneficiaries concerning transfers.

Sensitization of partners was undertaken to raise awareness of gender and accountability to affected populations (AAP) in the implementation of activities. Furthermore, during field missions, informal discussions with internally displaced women on WFP gender and AAP recommendations were undertaken. As per WFP's Field Level Agreements, pregnant and lactating women had priority over others in queues when receiving cash transfers.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page photo © WFP/ Benoît Lognoné.

WFP supports IDPs in Loutété, Bouenza.

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	7,346	7,959	15,305	5,722	6,198	11,920	77.9%	77.9%	77.9%
By Age-group:									
Children (under 5 years)	1,071	1,071	2,142	834	834	1,668	77.9%	77.9%	77.9%
Children (5-18 years)	2,755	2,602	5,357	2,146	2,026	4,172	77.9%	77.9%	77.9%
Adults (18 years plus)	3,520	4,286	7,806	2,742	3,338	6,080	77.9%	77.9%	77.9%
By Residence status:									
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)	7,346	7,959	15,305	5,722	6,198	11,920	77.9%	77.9%	77.9%

Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity and Modality

Table 2: Beneficiaries by Activity and Modality

Activity	Planned (food)	Planned (CBT)	Planned (total)	Actual (food)	Actual (CBT)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (food)	% Actual v. Planned (CBT)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
General Distribution (GD)	-	15,305	15,305	-	11,920	11,920	-	77.9%	77.9%

Annex: Participants by Activity and Modality

Activity	Planned (food)	Planned (CBT)	Planned (total)	Actual (food)	Actual (CBT)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (food)	% Actual v. Planned (CBT)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
General Distribution (GD)	-	3,061	3,061	-	5,173	5,173	-	169.0%	169.0%

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	1,439	1,622	3,061	2,431	2,742	5,173	168.9%	169.1%	169.0%
Total participants	1,439	1,622	3,061	2,431	2,742	5,173	168.9%	169.1%	169.0%
Total beneficiaries	7,346	7,959	15,305	5,722	6,198	11,920	77.9%	77.9%	77.9%