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**SPR Reading Guidance**



**Capacity Development and Support for the National School Feeding Programme**  
**Standard Project Report 2017**

World Food Programme in Morocco, Kingdom of (MA)



**World Food Programme**

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# Country Context and WFP Objectives

## Achievements at Country Level

In 2013, the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco requested WFP's support to review its National School Meals Programme (NSMP). In response, WFP launched its Development Project 200494, which included three components: an assessment of the existing school meals programme; the development of a Plan of Action for the improvement of national school meals; and study visits for sharing lessons learnt and technical experiences.

Within the project framework, WFP has successfully advocated for an enhanced NSMP to be leveraged as a social safety net that can guarantee nutritious meals for vulnerable children in rural areas, and an essential component of the Vision 2030 Education Reform and the National Nutrition Strategy (2011-2019), which aims to promote a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle in schools. WFP has supported Morocco's Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research (MNE) efforts to improve meals in primary, secondary and boarding schools. This contributes to making universal schooling for all children up to the age of 15 a possibility, in particular, for girls and boys in rural areas. These efforts have been pursued through a comprehensive assessment and review of the existing NSMP, and the development of a Plan of Action for its enhancement.

In 2017, WFP provided policy advice to the MNE in the implementation of the Plan of Action (2016-2018) for the improvement of the NSMP, based upon the findings of the comprehensive assessment. Through its capacity strengthening activities, WFP supported the development of a ministerial decree outlining Morocco's school feeding policy, which sets out specific objectives of the NSMP: improving access to education, nutrition and health through nutritious school meals, advancing social protection and gender equality, and supporting smallholder farming through local procurement, in line with a home-grown school meals approach. WFP collaborated with the Government in the design of innovative pilot experiences, including the preparation of school meals by women-led community based organisations (CBOs) and the preparation of daily school meals in a boarding school's kitchen to distribute them daily to schools in its vicinity. WFP is engaging two technical experts to develop implementation guidelines for school meals management, including nutrition guidelines for preparation of school meals in primary, secondary and boarding schools.

WFP will be facilitating Morocco's Zero Hunger Country Strategic Review (CSR) in 2018, through a multi-stakeholder process led by the Government, in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and in consultation with other agencies including United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The preliminary set up for the CSR began in 2017.

## Country Context and Response of the Government

Morocco is a lower-middle income country with relatively positive macroeconomic indicators, low inflation and moderately high economic growth rates averaging 4.5 percent annually over the past decade. By adopting a gradual approach to democratisation, and introducing a new constitution in 2011, the country's political landscape has remained comparatively stable against the backdrop of the Arab Spring.

After a severe drought in 2016, the Moroccan economy - which has a sizable agriculture cycle - is anticipated to rebound in 2017, however final data are still not available at the beginning of 2018. Agricultural production fluctuates yearly as a result of unpredictable weather patterns, as increasing temperatures and declining in rainfall levels pose a serious threat to the agriculture sector. Conservation projections indicate that reduced rainfall and higher temperatures will increase risks on water and environmental resources, already under extensive pressure from population growth, industrialization, tourism and agricultural extension. The Green Plan, the national strategy to drive and reform the agricultural sector, aims to promote the integration of agriculture into international markets, and help agriculture achieve sustainable growth mitigating the considerable climate change-related risks it faces. The Green Plan has two main pillars: (i) relates to high-yield, intensive and market-related agriculture; and (ii) relates to strengthening small farmers through the promotion of crop yield growth and encouraging a shift toward crops that are better adapted to environmental conditions and aligned with market demand.

Morocco has engaged in an ambitious sustainable development agenda and has initiated a wide range of reforms with the aim of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Morocco was among the first countries to submit a National Voluntary Review of the country's capacity to attain the SDGs [1]. Cross-sectorial challenges for the attainment of SDG 2 – Zero Hunger - include regional disparities, unemployment, gender inequality and an

education sector lagging behind the needs of the modern labour market. Gender disparities in education have resulted in 21 percent of adult women reaching at least a secondary level of education, compared to 30 percent of their male counterparts. Morocco is ranked 123 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index, and 113 out of 159 countries on the Gender Inequality Index.

Despite their key role in agriculture, women lack equitable access to labour markets and productive assets. Although the agricultural sector represents 15 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), approximately 40 percent of Morocco's labour force is employed in agriculture. About 30 percent of labour on family farms is provided by women, yet only 7 percent of women own land [2]. The participation of women in the remunerated labour force is very low - 27 percent against 79 percent of men [3], which is driven by cultural norms, particularly in rural areas. Traditional gender roles disadvantage women's and girls' perspectives for economic empowerment are still prevalent.

Although access to food is generally guaranteed, it is closely linked to disparities in income between regions, urban and rural areas, and between men and women. Morocco bears a "double burden" of under-nutrition and overweight, and high rates of micronutrient deficiencies. This is concurrent with obesity levels in the population, which indicates that dietary diversity is not at optimal rates. More than half of Morocco's adult population is overweight: 50 percent of men and 60 percent of women, whilst 22 percent of the population suffers from obesity: 28 percent of women compared with 14 percent of men. At the same time, the prevalence of stunting among children aged 6-59 months, caused by chronic malnutrition during pregnancy and infancy, is 15 percent. Micronutrient deficiencies include anaemia, 33 percent of the overall population, and vitamin A deficiency, 15 percent of children aged 6-59 months [4]. The National Nutrition Strategy calls for a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle in schools, as well for increasing the proportion of boys and girls engaged in physical activities at school.

The education system in Morocco faces significant challenges. Despite a moderate reduction in school dropout rates, around 220,000 children under the age of 5 who should be in kindergartens were out of school in 2015 (26 percent), along with nearly 83,000 primary school aged children (2 percent) and over 255,000 lower secondary school aged children (16 percent) [5]. Low levels of daily attendance; teacher absenteeism, long travels or lack of adequate management and supervision from senior staff; and a multi-lingual environment at school contribute to low literacy rates. National efforts to achieve SDG 4 - Quality Education - align with the Vision 2030 Education Reform, which aims to address regional disparities, boost academic performance to better prepare young Moroccans for the modern labour market, and foresees a more nutrition-sensitive approach to Government-provided school meals.

[1] UN Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews, 2017

[2] UN WOMEN. 2014. Spring Forward for Women Programme

[3] World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report, 2017

[4] IFPRI, Morocco Nutrition Country Profile, 2017

[5] UNICEF, Morocco Country Report on Out of School Children, 2015

## WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

As an essential component of the Vision 2030 Education Reform, WFP Development Project DEV 200494 (2013-2017) aims to strengthen national capacity and provide technical assistance to enable the Government to implement a more equitable, efficient, effective and sustainable school meals programme; in addition it aims to advance the National Nutrition Strategy (2011-2019), which promotes a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle in schools and universities.

The project strives to ensure compliance with the international school meals quality standards outlined in WFP's School Meals Policy. WFP's activities include supporting the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research (MNE) in strengthening regulatory frameworks and tools in the areas of school meals. Additional support is provided through the development of innovative, home-grown pilot modalities that align with the Green Plan's pillar two, which aims to strengthen smallholder farmers through the promotion of crop yield growth that are better adapted to environmental conditions and market demand.

In line with the Governmental Plan for Equality (PGE) developed by the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development to promote gender equality, pilot activities will focus on fostering women's opportunities by encouraging the participation of women-led community based organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It will also promote participation of both women and men local producers in the school meals supply chain and in other activities such as the preparation and delivery of school meals.

WFP activities support the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target 17.9: enhancing international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all SDGs, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. In partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), WFP support's Morocco's achievement of SDG 4: Quality Education.

The project is aligned with the first pillar of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017-2021 to support the education sector. WFP's activities contribute to Morocco's efforts to combat malnutrition, promote food security, support smallholder farmers, and aims to strengthen the Government's capacity to implement the SDGs. The enhanced National School Meals Programme (NSMP) can contribute to the attainment of SDG 4: ensuring Quality Education, and SDG 2: achieving Zero Hunger; focusing on target 2.1 to end hunger by 2030 and ensure access by all people to safe, nutritious food throughout the year.

WFP interventions are in line with the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) assistance to Morocco which is set out by the Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2013-2016. The CPF focused on four priority areas, including the promotion of vulnerable groups and women in agriculture and fisheries. WFP is partnering with FAO and Morocco's Higher Planning Commission to launch the country's food security and nutrition strategic review during the first quarter of 2018.

WFP has engaged in discussions with the USAID funded 'Millennium Challenge', following USAID's signature on a USD 450 million compact agreement with the Government of Morocco in 2015. The compact focuses on strengthening education and land productivity as a means to improve economic growth and stability in the country.



# Country Resources and Results

## Resources for Results

WFP Capacity Development for School Meals project has been financed since its outset, beginning with a contribution of USD 1.5 million received in 2012, as part of a partnership between the Government of the Russian Federation and WFP.

WFP continued to offer technical assistance to the Government of Morocco in 2017, at a lower expenditure rate than previous years, focusing on delivering better value for money for its activities. This was achieved by building on the successful validation of the Moroccan Government's Plan of Action for the enhancement of the National School Meals Programme (NSMP) in 2016, which set the direction for the implementation of a sustainable school meals strategy aimed at providing nutritious and balanced meals to vulnerable populations in rural areas of Morocco. In line with the Government's request, WFP supported the development of Morocco's school feeding policy narrative, the recommendations on the design of innovative school feeding pilot experiences, and the implementation guidelines for school feeding management.

## Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

The Government of Morocco requested WFP's assistance to review the National School Meals Programme (NSMP) as a mean to address dropouts; improve nutrition; and strengthen learning, especially in rural areas. WFP Morocco's Development Project (DEV 200494 2013-2017), aims to enhance the technical capacity of education authorities to improve the implementation of their existing programme.

The main programmatic recommendations for WFP's activities in Morocco were derived from the in-depth assessment of the NSMP, which took place in 2015. The findings of the assessment and the lessons learned from study visits, undertaken by delegations of national authorities, were incorporated into the Plan of Action (2016-2018) for the enhancement of the national school meals programme developed in 2016. WFP worked with national authorities throughout 2017 to support the implementation of the recommendations for a stronger school meals programme, as part of a nutrition-sensitive national social protection system.

In this regard, WFP incorporated relevant recommendations and lessons learnt from the Tunisia's 2015 Operation Evaluation into its project activities in Morocco, as projects in both countries aimed to strengthen national capacity on school meals, and are similar in terms of objectives and approach. Project activities were informed by the 2016 report by WFP and the Institute of Development Studies, a comprehensive review of Social Protection and Safety Nets in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) [1]. The report confirmed the value of school meals as a cost-effective approach to promote improved nutrition, as well as access to education, and the need for a holistic approach to social protection in the MENA region.

All of the aforementioned findings helped to shape the recommendations of the Plan of Action (2016), which included i) the establishment of an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism and strengthening of the legal frameworks; ii) enhancing community participation, strengthening the capacities of staff involved in school meals implementation at all levels, and developing relevant guidelines; iii) reviewing the geographic distribution of canteens, increasing coverage in most vulnerable areas; iv) exploring partnerships with civil society in general and local community-based organisations; and v) increasing nutrition related actions, by integrating nutrition education materials into curricula.

[1] WFP and Institute of Development Studies, Social Protection and Safety Nets in the Middle East and North Africa, 2016

# Project Results

## Activities and Operational Partnerships

During 2017, WFP continued to support its main Government partner, the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research (MNE). WFP's activities aimed to strengthen regulatory frameworks and tools in the areas of school meals governance and normative guidelines, as well as to accompany the design and implementation of school meals pilots that are efficient, accountable, and support local development.

As part of its capacity strengthening activities, WFP supported the development of Morocco's National School Meals Policy, which aligns efforts to enhance the national school meals programme with national policy priorities embodied by the Vision 2030 Education Reform and the National Nutrition Strategy 2011-2019. The guiding principles of the policy are: (i) efficiency and effectiveness for the NSMP to optimise its impact and value for money; (ii) partnership, to diversify the resources for the programme and realise multiplier effects for local development; (iii) synergies, which need to be captured to realise school meals' full potential to address dropouts in the framework of the broader social protection system, and (iv) community participation and ownership, notably of parents and teachers, as a means to increase the programme's accountability. The draft policy was submitted to the Government of Morocco in October 2017 and is currently under review.

WFP presented recommendations to the Government on the envisaged school meals pilots, which feature two main innovations: (i) a "central kitchen pilot", which oversees the preparation of daily meals in an existing upper secondary or boarding school's kitchen, to be distributed to schools in the vicinity; and (ii) outsourcing the preparation of daily meals to community-based organisations led by women in rural areas. In both cases, the projects aim to promote the integration of smallholder farmers into the school meals supply chain. WFP's recommendations aim to ensure that some of the produce used to prepare the school meals is sourced from local smallholder farmers, and that meals will be diversified according to locally available products.

WFP provided technical assistance to the Government of Morocco in supporting the implementation of its Plan of Action (2016-2018) for the improvement of the NSMP, mainly through improved regulatory frameworks and tools. WFP worked with the Government to advance the main recommendations of the Plan of Action, including:

- Establishment of an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism at the central and regional levels, and strengthening of the legal frameworks
- Enhancing community participation and strengthening the capacities of staff involved in school meals implementation at all levels, and developing relevant guidelines
- Reviewing the geographic distribution of canteens, increasing coverage in most vulnerable areas, particularly for lower secondary schools
- Exploring partnerships with civil society in general and local community-based organisations in particular
- Increasing nutrition related actions, particularly in terms of integrating nutrition education materials into the curriculum.

WFP also provided technical support to the MNE in the development of implementation guidelines for the NSMP. Objectives of the guidelines are (i) to modernise and standardise the NSMP operational practices in primary, secondary and boarding schools, based on international quality standards; (ii) to facilitate performance evaluation; and (iii) to improve the overall effectiveness of the NSMP. The guidelines were launched in October 2017, and will enable the government to introduce improvements in the areas of governance, financing, supply chain, monitoring and evaluation.

The Ministry of Health is also involved in inter-ministerial coordination efforts to improve the NSMP through their membership in the National School Meals Steering Committee. The steering committee is responsible for planning and oversight of the implementation of the Plan of Action, with WFP support.

[1] Lower secondary "collège" (ages 13-16) - Upper secondary "lycée" (ages 16-18)

## Results

In 2017, WFP worked to strengthen the capacities of Moroccan national institutions to improve the National School Meals Programme (NSMP), in line with national efforts to achieve SDG 2 "Zero Hunger" and within the framework of

the Vision 2030 Education Reform. WFP's support mainly contributed to the Education Reform's Chapter 1: "Towards an equitable school and equal opportunities", and in particular to the chapter's levers 1: "promote equal access to education and training"; and 3: "positive discrimination in favour of rural, peri-urban and vulnerable areas". The three activities which were delivered by WFP in 2017 were: i) the development of the ministerial decree outlining Morocco's school feeding policy; ii) recommendations on innovative school meals pilots to be implemented by the Government; and iii) the launch of the development of school feeding implementation guidelines.

Technical assistance was predominantly focused at the national level, and was organised around international standards for the design and implementation of high-quality, sustainable school meals programmes. The project activities have resulted in enhanced government capacity to improve its NSMP, notably by gaining valuable insight as to how the programme can be leveraged as an effective social safety net that addresses nutrition concerns, promotes community development through fostering links with local agriculture, supports poverty reduction, and increases access to education. In line with the project plan, outputs focused on strengthening governance tools and regulatory frameworks at the central level.

## Performance Monitoring

Project activities have been directed to strengthen the Moroccan Government's capacity for the implementation and management of an improved National School Meals Programme (NSMP) at a central government level. The project's monitoring plan is aligned with the activities and targets outlined by the Plan of Action for the enhancement of the NSMP.

The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) school meals evaluation - conducted by WFP in 2014 - identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school meals policies, institutional arrangements and systems in order to inform planning of future actions. The SABER assessment revealed the overall National Capacity Index (NCI) of 2.8 out of a maximum value of 5. Overall, the baseline showed significant opportunities for improvement of the Moroccan school meals capacities, which provided analytical justification for WFP's continued involvement in the capacity development and technical assistance activities.

No SABER workshop was planned in 2017 to provide a follow up value for this indicator. However, technical assistance activities rolled out in 2017 were conducive to improvements in all of the SABER quality standards, as per its school meals five pillars: i) policy frameworks; ii) financial capacity; iii) institutional capacity and coordination; iv) design and implementation and v) community participation. Progress on these dimensions will be captured in the next scheduled SABER workshop, the date of which will be decided in partnership with the Government of Morocco.

In accordance with the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021), and the corporate Gender Policy (2015–2020), consideration of gender issues was integrated in the monitoring of all of WFP's activities, as an effort to advance the implementation of gender transformative programmes and policies.

The performance of the project has been monitored and documented through reports and meeting minutes, elaborated on by WFP staff supporting the Moroccan Government during key project activities. WFP liaised with the Government at a strategic level, ensuring a streamlined approach to school meals enhancement is in line with national priorities and policy objectives.

## Progress Towards Gender Equality

Women in Morocco lack equitable access to markets and factors of production, despite their key role in the agricultural sector. The proportion of female youth in formal workforce is less than 12 percent nationwide and only 5 percent in rural areas. While only 21 percent of women are employed in non-agricultural sectors, women represent a major force in the agricultural sector which accounts for 52 percent of active women in the labor force. Women's participation in agricultural activities tends to be temporary and low-paid employment, concentrated in the lower levels of agricultural value chains, such as performing basic farming activities.

In 2015, an in-depth assessment of the National School Meals Programme (NSMP), carried out by WFP in partnership with Mazars, a Moroccan-based consulting firm, showed there was parity of access to school meals for girls and boys in primary, boarding, and upper secondary schools. However, it also highlighted a need to increase the proportion of girls receiving WFP assistance in lower secondary schools, which was one of the recommendations of the Plan of Action for the enhancement of the NSMP [1].

Advancing gender equality is one of the six specific objectives of the National School Meals Policy, which, with WFP's technical assistance, was drafted in 2017. In line with this objective, the policy calls for national institutions to further encourage the schooling of girls in rural areas, through measures such as the provision of integrated



childcare facilities (that include appropriate boarding facilities for girls and boys); as well as actively promoting equal participation of women in school committees and parent-teacher associations.

Encouraging women and girls to participate in decision-making is a key aspect of community participation under the framework of WFP's technical assistance. The pilot projects designed by WFP pay special attention to fostering women's empowerment by encouraging the inclusion of women-led community based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations. WFP advocated with the Government to include women in rural areas through remunerated tasks related to school meals supply chain. As part of the proposed pilot activities, local procurement of fresh produce and/or higher value added activities such as the preparation and delivery of school meals can contribute to the creation of revenue-generating opportunities for CBOs.

Under the framework of the Morocco Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (TICSP), commencing on 01 January 2018, WFP will engage with the Ministry of Social Solidarity's Directorate for Women to mainstream a gendered approach in its activities, while promoting a coordinated development and implementation of the enhanced NSMP.

[1] Lower secondary "collège" (ages 13-16) - Upper secondary "lycée" (ages 16-18)

## Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

While the activities of WFP DEV 200494 are solely comprised of technical support and capacity development - with no direct beneficiaries - it seeks to ensure that Morocco's National School Meals Programme (NSMP) is in line with WFP's commitment for protection and accountability to affected populations, ensuring to not compromise the safety, dignity or integrity of the children receiving school meals, or their families.

The Plan of Action (2016-2018) for the improvement of the NSMP, which has been developed with WFP assistance, outlines a school meals programme that serves nutritious meals free of charge and without conditions, to ensure equal access for beneficiaries of school meals. WFP encourages the establishment of school councils as a proactive means to engage parents, children and school staff, and to address any protection risks related to the provision of school meals. One of the main functions of the school councils' is to provide information to beneficiaries about the school meals programme, and to facilitate discussions about the school meals experience.

Moreover, WFP advocates for the Government to establish and maintain feedback mechanisms to ensure that parents and children are aware of their entitlements, and to provide them with a channel through which they can share experiences of the school meals programme.

# Figures and Indicators

## Data Notes

Cover page photo © WFP/Aziz Turki

Children harvest vegetables from a school garden.

## Project Indicators

### Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
<b>SO4 Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger</b>				
Ownership and capacity strengthened to reduce undernutrition and increase access to education at regional, national and community levels				
<b>NCI: School Feeding National Capacity Index</b>				
<i>NATIONAL, Base value: 2014.12, Joint survey, SABER-SF Workshop</i>		2.80	-	-

### Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
<b>SO4: Capacity Development - Strengthening National Capacities</b>				
Number of government staff trained by WFP in nutrition programme design, implementation and other nutrition related areas (technical/strategic/managerial)	individual	5	5	100.0%
Number of technical assistance activities provided	activity	2	3	150.0%