

Project Number: 201107 | Project Category: **Single Country IR-EMOP**

Project Approval Date: September 15, 2017 | Planned Start Date: September 15, 2017

Actual Start Date: September 29, 2017 | Project End Date: January 28, 2018

Financial Closure Date: N/A

Contact Info

Cristina Benvenuti
cristina.benvenuti@wfp.org

Country Director

Laura Melo

Further Information

<http://www.wfp.org/countries>
SPR Reading Guidance



Assistance to Victims of Hurricane Irma in Cuba

Standard Project Report 2017

World Food Programme in Cuba, Republic of (CU)



World Food Programme

Table Of Contents

Country Context and WFP Objectives

- Achievements at Country Level
- Country Context and Response of the Government
- WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

Country Resources and Results

- Resources for Results
- Supply Chain
- Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Strengthening capacities at the national and local level

Project Results

- Activities and Operational Partnerships
- Results
- Performance Monitoring
- Prepositioning food stocks to enhance immediate response to natural shocks

Figures and Indicators

- Data Notes
- Overview of Project Beneficiary Information
- Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity and Modality
- Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity (excluding nutrition)
- Resource Inputs from Donors

Country Context and WFP Objectives



Achievements at Country Level

Throughout 2017, WFP continued to support the Government in strengthening food security and nutrition among the most vulnerable groups, by providing food assistance and capacity strengthening activities. The **National Food Consumption Survey**, launched in 2016 with methodological support by WFP, was completed. Such a survey had not been conducted since 2001. The results will be shared in early 2018 during a national workshop and could represent a strategic tool to support decision making for social protection programmes, to make them more efficient. WFP also continued working with the supra-ministerial body that oversees the implementation of the Socio-Economic Guidelines for the update of Cuba's social and economic model, positioning itself as a valuable partner to provide technical assistance on beneficiary targeting and food transfers.

WFP advanced in **strengthening local agricultural value chains** to ensure timely, adequate, and sustainable food supply to social safety net programmes. In addition to supplying agricultural equipment, WFP focused on delivering training and promoting innovative practices to enhance the efficiency of these value chains, such as the “variety gardens”, the “service fairs” and the auto-assessment methodology for cooperatives. A series of gender sensitization workshops for both men and women were also carried out to foster gender equality and women's empowerment among the actors of the bean value chain.

WFP also supported the Government in adapting different methodologies to enhance community resilience and disaster risk management. An enhanced system for **the comprehensive management of drought** was developed and tested with national and local institutions, using innovative procedures to include indicators to measure the vulnerability of food production in risk assessments, as well as strengthening the drought early warning system to

improve dissemination of information and decision-making. WFP also engaged in dialogue with its partner institutions (including the Ministry of Environment, Civil Defence and the Ministry of Agriculture) to promote a greater involvement of women in the different processes envisaged by comprehensive drought management.

WFP finalised its emergency assistance to the populations affected by **Hurricane Matthew**, and launched two operations in response to the devastating impact of **Hurricane Irma**. Swift food assistance was made possible by the prepositioned in-country stocks under the country programme. Due to the massive damage to warehouse infrastructure, WFP also provided logistic support to enhance the food storage capacities of local authorities. WFP's commitment to support the Government's response was emphasized during a visit of the Executive Director one week after the impact of Hurricane Irma, and was highlighted on various occasions by local and national press.

Country Context and Response of the Government

Cuba has some of the most comprehensive social protection programmes in the world, which allowed it to largely eradicate poverty and hunger. The country's 2016 human development index ranked 68th out of 188 countries (high human development category), and its global hunger index was below 5, which is considered low. However, recurrent financial and economic crises, frequent natural hazards, low productivity and limited access to credit have put at risk food security and the nutrition of the population. This situation is compounded by the continued U.S. embargo that is likely to remain in place following the recent cooling of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States.

It is estimated that the country imports around 70 to 80 percent of its food needs. These imports are primarily used in the social protection programmes, which include a highly subsidized monthly food basket for each citizen. With the prices of imported commodities increasing over the last decade, this food basket currently covers only 38 percent of household food needs, while it used to cover up to 50 percent in the early 2000s. Cubans now meet most of their food needs through purchases in non-subsidized markets, spending 60 to 75 percent of their income on food [1]. Although effective, the high cost of social protection programmes with universal coverage puts the national budget under unsustainable strain.

The diet of the average Cuban family is poor in micronutrients [2]. This is due to the limited consumption of a diversified diet because of limited access and cultural habits. Anaemia is a major public health concern: since 2011, the Cuban Government invested significant effort in strengthening its National Plan for the Prevention and Control of Anaemia, a programme supported by WFP. The Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (SISVAN) still pointed to the continued high prevalence of anaemia in 2017. In the 34 municipalities – considered the most vulnerable to this nutritional disorder and, therefore, assisted by WFP – the prevalence of anaemia is 24.4 percent in children aged 23 months and is up to 44 percent in children aged 6 months. Pregnant and lactating women are also particularly vulnerable to anaemia, with a prevalence rate of 31.5 percent in 2017.

The rising obesity rate is yet another concern: nearly 45 percent of the Cuban population (55 percent women) is overweight or obese, which is a risk factor for chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease (Ministry of Health) [3].

WFP supports the Government in developing a new management model and innovative approaches to strengthening social protection programmes and ensuring food security and nutrition. The focus is on enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of national food-based social protection programmes for vulnerable groups, strengthening agricultural value chains and promoting resilience.

Recurrent climate hazards affect the economy and food security of the population. The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was rated as one of the most active since 1851 (Cubadebate, 2017). Cuba's Central region – already suffering from a severe drought over the last three years – was heavily affected by the passage of powerful Hurricane Irma, causing significant damage to homes and livelihoods. According to official reports, overall damage amounted to over 13 billion Cuban pesos (Cubadebate 2017). A positive consequence of the hurricane season was more rainfall during the last quarter of 2017, mitigating the drought that had been affecting agricultural production and public water supply in most of the country over the last four years.

Despite Cuba's positive results in achieving Millennium Development Goal 3 to promote gender equality and empower women – as reflected by a high gender global indicator (ranking 62 out of 188 countries) – inequality persists regarding women's participation in socio-economic activities and in decision-making processes. This is particularly true of rural areas where women represent 16.4 percent of the agricultural workforce, 17 percent of cooperative members at national level, but only 11 percent of those new members who have benefitted from land allocation in recent years.

In 2016, the Government of Cuba launched the 2030 National Plan for Economic and Social Development, which lays down the guiding principles for updating Cuba's economic and social model. This plan links up to the process

launched in 2011 with the Socio-Economic Policy Guidelines for 2011-2015 and maintains it for the period 2016-2021. In line with Sustainable Development Goal 2, food security is identified as a national priority and the increase in domestic food production is considered the key measure to substitute imports and ensure sustainable food security. Nutrition priorities are included in the Comprehensive Plan for the Prevention and Control of Iron-Deficiency Anaemia and the Cuban Public Health Projections.

[1] Centros de Estudios de la Economía Cubana. 2013. Gastos básicos de una familia cubana urbana en 2011. Situación de las familias “estado-dependientes”. Annual seminar on the Cuban economy and business management, 25-27 June 2013. Hotel Nacional de Cuba.

[2] This is confirmed by national scientific researches carried out by the National Institute of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology (“Iron-deficiency anaemia in childhood in Cuba”, Gisela Pita-Rodríguez and Santa Jiménez-Acosta, 2011; and “Food consumption and preferences of the Cuban population with over 15 years of age”, Carmen Porrata-Maury, 2009).

[3] Ministry of Health, Third National Survey on risk factors and prevention activities for non-transmittable diseases (2010-2011). This phenomenon is more severe in the age group 35-54 years old.

WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

In Cuba, WFP supports national food security and nutritional priorities, as outlined in the Guidelines to update the country's economic and social model, and reiterated in the 2030 National Plan for Economic and Social Development. Technical support and capacity strengthening are emphasized in accordance with national and local authorities work towards more sustainable, targeted and gender-sensitive social protection systems for vulnerable groups (which include children aged 6-23 months, pregnant and lactating women, and elderly people). WFP also supports the National Plan for the Prevention and Control of Anaemia, focusing on iron supplementation, food fortification, food diversification and nutritional education.

In 2017, WFP's portfolio comprised the following operations:

Country programme - CP 200703 (2015-2018): supported national efforts in improving the sustainability and targeting of social protection programmes in 43 municipalities of the five eastern provinces and in Pinar del Rio and Matanzas in western Cuba. Benefitting nearly 900,000 people, activities include: i) supporting food security and nutrition-related social protection programmes for vulnerable groups; ii) strengthening links between social protection systems and agricultural value chains; and iii) improving community resilience, disaster risk management and climate change adaptation capacities at the local level. These activities are in line with Sustainable Development Goals 2, 5 and 17 by promoting food security and improving nutrition, while bolstering gender equality and partnerships.

Emergency Food Assistance to Communities Affected by Hurricane Matthew in Cuba - EMOP 201034 (2016-2017): supported Cuban authorities in preserving the food security and nutrition of nearly 180,000 people in eight eastern municipalities that had been most affected by Hurricane Matthew. Special emphasis was placed on food assistance for vulnerable groups, including children aged 12-23 months and pregnant or lactating women, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 2, especially on the objective of improving nutrition and food security. To ensure timely assistance, WFP used food stocks already prepositioned in-country under the country programme. WFP also provided mobile storage units, lightening equipment and pallets to enhance local food storage.

Assistance to Victims of Hurricane Irma in Cuba - IR-EMOP 201107 (2017): provided immediate food assistance – using in-country food stocks prepositioned under the country programme – to the most affected populations in 22 central municipalities, supporting nearly 640,000 people. In alignment with the Government's strategy, particular emphasis was placed on vulnerable groups, including children aged 6-23 months, school-aged children, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly.

Emergency Food Assistance to Victims of Hurricane Irma in Cuba - EMOP 201108 (2017): ensured continuity for another three months to the immediate relief provided with the IR-EMOP 201107 in 22 central municipalities. In addition to food assistance, WFP supplied mobile storage units, lightening equipment and pallets to enhance local food storage. This operation supports nearly 640,000 affected people, including vulnerable groups (children aged 6-23 months, school-aged children, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly).

Both emergency operations are in line with Sustainable Development Goals 2, 5, and 17, by supporting, in partnership with national and local institutions, the food security of shock-affected populations while ensuring equal support to women and men.

WFP works in synergy with the United Nations System in Cuba, as well as with a number of development partners. All WFP operations are part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Cuba

2014-2018, supporting its outcomes 3, 4, 6 and 8. WFP also leads the United Nations Emergency Technical Team and co-leads the food security cluster with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In addition, WFP promotes synergies with the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to improve the bean value-chain, and implements joint operations on drought resilience with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF.

WFP also places emphasis on South-South Cooperation within Latin America and the Caribbean by sharing good practices and experiences in disaster management and response, and in managing food security and nutrition programmes.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

In 2017, as part of the Integrated Road Map, WFP Cuba embarked on a process of improving its financial, monitoring and reporting procedures. This process entails the revision of WFP's operational structure to better demonstrate results in approaching the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting greater accountability and financial transparency. In particular, in order to be aligned with the WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021), the Corporate Results Framework and the Country Portfolio Budget, WFP Cuba has prepared a “transitional interim country strategic plan” (T-ICSP) to commence in 2018. The T-ICSP will be followed by a country strategic plan that will guide future operations in the framework of the next United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Cuba.

Compared to previous years, the overall funding level of the **country programme** did not change significantly in 2017, with funding availability not being homogeneous across the three strategic areas. While activities to strengthen resilience and disaster risk management were almost entirely funded, operations to strengthen agricultural value chains faced funding shortages. Therefore, WFP had to adjust the geographic coverage of these activities, reducing the number of target municipalities in the province of Guantánamo. Moreover, WFP experienced a significant increase in the cost of irrigation systems needed to strengthen the bean value chain in the eastern provinces and in Matanzas province. As a result, WFP had to further adjust, in coordination with the Government, a series of activities in the province of Pinar del Río in Western Cuba, focusing on capacity strengthening rather than on the purchase of agricultural equipment. [1] In addition, due to these funding challenges, WFP could not support the implementation of gender economic empowerment initiatives in the framework of the bean value chain. Overall, due to these funding challenges, nearly 2,000 participants in the bean value chain could not benefit from WFP's capacity strengthening activities.

In the second part of the year, new contributions were received from Italy and Germany to support the nutritional activities planned for 2018. Other key donors for the country programme include Brazil, Canada, Cuba, European Union, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Switzerland and the private sector.

The **Hurricane Irma emergency** in the Caribbean, affecting a large number of other islands and exacerbated by the passage of powerful Hurricane Maria, was also initially challenging in terms of mobilizing funds for Cuba. However, the Cuba United Nations Country Team prepared an Action Plan and a proposal for the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), to foster a coordinated and harmonized response, covering all clusters (i.e. food security and nutrition, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, health and education). Coordination among all UN agencies was particularly effective in avoiding duplication of efforts and optimizing the geographic coverage of activities. WFP played a particularly active role by coordinating the food-security area and by the timely launching of two emergency response operations (IR-EMOP 201107, followed by EMOP 201108). WFP also followed a very active fund-raising strategy, both with traditional (CERF, Canada, European Union, Italy and Switzerland) and non-traditional donors (Portugal and the private sector). Thanks to these efforts, almost 90 percent of the funding needs of the two emergency operations were covered in nearly 3 months.

In 2017, WFP also concluded its emergency operation in response to **Hurricane Matthew** that had struck Eastern Cuba in October 2016. Despite the extent of devastation and the active fundraising strategy, coordinated with other UN agencies, only two-thirds of the operation were funded over the nine months of project duration (donors to this operation comprised the CERF and the governments of Canada, Italy and the Republic of Korea). Given these financial constraints, WFP could purchase less food commodities to assist the target populations.

[1] Adjustments in geographic targeting of the provinces of Guantánamo and Pinar del Río were conducted in close consultations with the Government, and according to the priorities identified by the bean value chain actors during the value chain assessments. The rationale was to maintain WFP's assistance in both provinces.



Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	54,140	51,519	105,659
Children (5-18 years)	105,184	102,430	207,614
Adults (18 years plus)	340,645	342,138	682,783
Total number of beneficiaries in 2017	499,969	496,087	996,056



Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Country Programme	556	-	250	58	12	876
Single Country EMOP	1,454	214	1,359	-	-	3,027
Single Country IR-EMOP	720	188	478	-	-	1,386
Total Food Distributed in 2017	2,730	402	2,087	58	12	5,289

Supply Chain

Cuba has **two main ports**: Mariel in western Cuba (55 km from Havana) and Guiller món Moncada in eastern Cuba (in the city of Santiago de Cuba). There are also **six international airports** [1] and several domestic airports almost in every province. A national highway connects Havana to central Cuba, along with a network of provincial roads, some of them in precarious condition.

Most **WFP-purchased commodities** arrive in the two main ports. Upon arrival, the commodities are handed over to the Government that warrants their internal transport, storage and distribution, while WFP ensures monitoring throughout the food distribution process until the final beneficiary. Due to the limited availability of goods in Cuba, most food and non-food items required for the country programme and the emergency operations have to be imported. The main non-food items **internationally procured** for the WFP country programme in 2017 were: i) agricultural equipment to strengthen the bean value chain in the eastern provinces, as well as the production of fresh food in the urban areas of Santiago de Cuba; ii) equipment to support comprehensive drought management in the eastern provinces and kitchen tools for emergency preparedness in Pinar del Río; iii) kitchen tools to enhance food processing capacities in health institutions for the elderly; and iv) computer equipment to support data processing for the National Survey on Food Consumption and the national Food Security Monitoring System

(SISVAN).

Under WFP's response to Hurricane Irma, part of the vegetable oil slated for the affected populations was **purchased locally**. The in-country availability of this commodity, coupled with the selection of a state enterprise as a provider, enabled WFP to reduce the delivery time of vegetable oil to final beneficiaries.

In 2017, WFP maintained a small **contingency stock** of beans and rice for disaster response in the cities of Cienfuegos, Havana and Santiago de Cuba. This contingency stock – established under the country programme activities to promote resilience – represented a valuable mechanism to reduce the delivery times of immediate response. However, the distance from international markets often lengthens international purchase processes. Hence, the availability of funds does not necessarily ensure a rapid continuation of the assistance provided with the prepositioned food stocks.

WFP continued strengthening national and local logistics capacities. Given the massive damage caused to the warehouse infrastructure by Hurricane Irma, WFP supported local authorities in improving their storage capacities, with particular attention to maintaining the food security and nutritional status of the population. Collaboration with the Panama UNHRD confirmed its effectiveness to ensure the swift purchase of mobile storage units.

In 2016, the Government launched a revision of the national customs clearance and distribution procedures, decentralizing the import management mechanisms by distributing the tasks among multiple actors – each with their own distinct standards and procedures. To date, these new regulations – resulting in complex procedures to obtain import permits – have caused various delays in the international purchase processes.

[1] The Havana international airport is the only facility able to receive air cargos.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Beans	-	1,454	1,454
Rice	-	4,431	4,431
Vegetable Oil	195	338	533
Total	195	6,222	6,418
Percentage	3.0%	97.0%	

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

In 2017, a centralised **mid-term operation evaluation of the Cuba country programme** was carried out by an external firm. The evaluation assessed the performance and preliminary results of the country programme, while identifying lessons learned and good practices that have emerged in the course of implementation.

As part of the analytical work, the evaluation team conducted a field mission in March 2017, interviewing national and local authorities, institutions, and beneficiaries. The main conclusions were provided in the evaluation report, issued in July 2017, which comprised a series of **findings and recommendations** (both for the remaining part of the country programme and the country strategic plan) that were shared with the Government, donors and other UN agencies.

Evaluation findings: The Cuba country programme proved to be **highly relevant**, responding to the government priorities on food security and nutrition and supporting its decentralization goals. The evaluation report highlighted the effectiveness of WFP's **capacity strengthening activities** for national and local partners, empowered by the provided innovative tools to enhance food security and nutrition. Moreover, WFP is enhancing **synergies with other United Nations agencies**, mostly in its actions to support the early-warning systems for climate hazards, to strengthen agricultural value chains, and to promote drought resilience in the city of Santiago de Cuba.

Evaluation recommendations and WFP's compliance: Throughout the second part of 2017, WFP successfully complied with all the short-term evaluation recommendations:

- As a first step, WFP revised its monitoring and evaluation system, streamlining the data collection and information reporting procedures for government counterparts.
- WFP enhanced linkages between disaster risk management and the activities to strengthen the bean value chain, by introducing risk analysis in the value-chain assessment methodology.
- WFP continued to support the systematization efforts already in place, covering various operational areas such as South-South cooperation, gender equality in rural areas, disaster risk management, and the strengthening of the bean value chain.
- WFP strengthened gender mainstreaming throughout the country programme, mainly in disaster risk management. A gender analysis of the operation was facilitated to foster women's participation in the comprehensive management of drought.
- Given the gradual increase in bean production, WFP also began a dialogue with the National Grain Institute, responsible for seed selection and distribution, drawing attention to the potential shortages of basic seeds, which may affect the objective of supplying a greater quantity of beans to the social protection systems. As a result, a seed production strategy to ensure the availability of beans was developed by the National Grain Institute and was submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture.

WFP also continued its dialogue with government counterparts to strengthen social protection programmes in the medium to long term by considering the use of other food assistance modalities. Results of this dialogue will guide the formulation of the coming country strategic plan.

Strengthening capacities at the national and local level

In 2017, WFP placed special emphasis on strengthening capacities at the national and local level to enhance food security and nutrition. These activities entailed the use of innovative tools and methodologies, fostered coordination among diverse actors (ministries, technical institutions, farmers, state enterprises, etc.) and empowered local institutions and beneficiaries in various strategic areas such as:

- **Promoting comprehensive drought management and community resilience.** Over the last three years, WFP has supported a multi-sectoral group of institutions (including the Ministry of Environment, the Institute of Meteorology, Civil Defence, the Institute of Hydraulic Resources and the National Bureau of Statistics) to develop and test innovative tools for managing drought through a comprehensive approach. [1] These tools are the result of joint work with national and local institutions carried out with WFP's technical assistance, and are tailored to the priorities of each targeted territory. As a significant achievement, WFP facilitated the preparation of previously missing standard operating procedures for the comprehensive management of drought, which will represent a valuable tool for national and local authorities.

- **Enhancing the efficiency of agricultural value chains.** WFP continued to strengthen the capacities of different actors in the targeted agricultural value chains [2] through training sessions and the provision of equipment. In particular, WFP facilitated practical activities that increased the capacities of participants in the agricultural value chains in different areas (bean cultivation, services to the value chain, cooperativism skills). It also promoted the adoption of new practices and fostered dialogue among the various stakeholders, (including farmers, cooperative managers, national and local authorities, as well as representatives of social protection programmes).

The organization of “variety demonstration plots” was a useful experience to showcase good agricultural practices in the production of beans and fresh food, identifying the varieties most suited to local conditions and consumers' preferences. For the first time in the country and with great success, WFP also hosted “service fairs” that promoted an exchange related to the value chain between farmers and service providers. This enhanced awareness about the local services available. In addition, the “self-assessment tool for cooperatives”, adapted to the Cuban context in collaboration with WFP's regional office, was among the most innovative activities promoted by WFP. With this tool, WFP-supported cooperatives learned to assess their efficiency and compliance with the principles of cooperativism, and they could identify specific measures to address weaknesses.

In addition, the provision of equipment (i.e. tractors, moisture meters, etc.), accompanied with training on its use, also promoted an increase in the production capacities of farmers.

- **Positioning nutritional education as a strategic topic in the school system.** In 2017, WFP continued to assist the Ministry of Education with the implementation of the Strategy on Nutritional Education for Schools that had been developed in 2016 with WFP's technical assistance. The strategy – adopted for the school feeding programme in five eastern provinces, and the Pinar del Río province in western Cuba – aims at enhancing knowledge on healthy nutrition in the educational sector, by training the staff (including caregivers, teachers, personnel responsible for handling food and decision makers) who then sensitize schoolchildren and their families. As confirmed by a mid-term review conducted by the Ministry of Education with WFP's assistance, the Nutritional Education Strategy that uses the school system as a priority channel promoted the knowledge of schoolchildren and their families on good nutritional practices, and contributed to strengthening coordination between the ministries of Education and Health. [3]

- **South-South cooperation on disaster management and response.** As part of a Forecast-based Financing pilot project in Haiti, WFP facilitated the exchange of capacities and skills between Cuba and Haiti on disaster management and response, leveraging the experience of Cuba with South-South cooperation. In 2017, WFP promoted various exchanges and field visits between Cuban experts and their homologues in Haiti to set up a short-term meteorological forecasting system, and provide training for its use. Additionally, capacity development activities were promoted in Haiti to strengthen risk assessments and the contingency plan for hurricanes, with the aim to mitigate the impact of extreme events on food security and nutrition. Food security is not automatically highlighted in disaster risk management. Hence, the involvement of WFP and its experience to introduce this dimension constituted an added value. The tools and methodologies shared with WFP's support will ultimately facilitate assistance to the most vulnerable groups.

[1] Comprehensive drought management is based on four pillars: i) drought surveillance; ii) inclusion of food production vulnerability indicators in municipal multi-risk assessments; iii) dissemination of drought-related information to key users; and iv) procedures to support decision-making on mitigation measures.

[2] In the eastern provinces (Granma, Guantánamo, Holguín and Las Tunas) and in western Cuba (provinces of Matanzas and Pinar del Río), WFP is supporting bean value chains, while it is strengthening fresh food value chains

in the province of Santiago de Cuba.

[3] In particular, the Ministry of Health provides the knowledge on food and nutrition, while the Ministry of Education develops the methodology to transmit this knowledge to schoolchildren and caregivers.

Project Results

Activities and Operational Partnerships

WFP supported the Government in meeting the immediate food needs of the worst impacted populations in 22 municipalities located in the northern coastline of Central Cuba. Thus, the deterioration of their food security could be avoided. In agreement with government counterparts, particular emphasis was placed on the most vulnerable groups, including children under 5, pregnant and lactating women, school-age children and the elderly.

The impact of category 5 Hurricane Irma – defined as the most powerful Atlantic Ocean hurricane in recorded history – brought extensive damage to agricultural production and disrupted local markets, thus limiting the access and availability of food in the affected communities. WFP's contribution helped bridge the gap between the immediate food needs of the affected populations and the rations provided by the local safety net programmes. The targeting of beneficiaries and the geographical prioritization process were done in close consultation with government counterparts and in agreement with all the United Nations agencies. Particular emphasis was placed on targeting the 22 hardest hit municipalities, with special attention to the most vulnerable groups.

Blanket general food distribution was provided to the entire population in the 14 most affected municipalities, while targeted general food distribution was supplied to vulnerable groups of other 8 affected municipalities in the five provinces of Camagüey, Ciego de Ávila, Matanzas, Sancti Spiritus and Villa Clara.

WFP's food assistance, covering 20 days of consumption, comprised daily rations of rice, beans and vegetable oil. Rice and beans are the key staple foods in Cuba, while vegetable oil was included to increase the nutritional value of the ration, as this important food commodity is not included in the monthly food basket provided by the government social protection programmes. To distribute rice and beans, WFP used the food stocks prepositioned under its country programme, vegetable oil was purchased locally. Due to transportation delays, distribution of vegetable oil was not completed in 2017. A 45-day extension of the project was approved to complete the distribution of this commodity, as well as to guarantee before project closure the arrival of additional beans and rice, purchased internationally to replenish the stocks prepositioned under the country programme.

Given the extensive damage to the warehouse infrastructure, WFP liaised with the Government to relocate five mobile storage units (MSUs) from Guantánamo province to the affected municipalities in Ciego de Ávila and Villa Clara provinces. These MSUs had been donated by WFP as part of its support to the Hurricane Matthew response and purchased with the last contributions received in 2017. For this reason, given their late arrival in the country, Cuban authorities had not yet assembled these MSUs when Hurricane Irma struck.

As food distributions relied on the existing national social protection programmes, WFP maintained regular contacts with government counterparts to coordinate operations and to help monitor the food distribution. The project was implemented under supervision by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment (MINCEX) that ensured overall coordination with the Ministry of Domestic Trade (MINCIN) responsible for the internal transport, handling, storage and distribution of relief assistance to beneficiaries through the government distribution channels (final distribution points known in Cuba as "bodegas") and local governments.

WFP also worked with the United Nations System in Cuba, leading the United Nations Emergency Technical Team and implementing the Emergency Response Preparedness mechanism, developed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and adapted to the Cuban context. WFP's expertise in targeting the most vulnerable groups was particularly appreciated when liaising with all UN agencies and government counterparts to prioritize the most affected municipalities and to maximize efforts. This was key in ensuring a harmonized and coordinated emergency response.

Results

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable people in shock-affected municipalities have stable access to basic food to meet their dietary requirements following a natural disaster, as a complement to government food distribution

Activity: Blanket and targeted general food distribution to shock-affected populations.

WFP effectively assisted the Government in providing swift relief to the affected populations of the 22 target municipalities in Central Cuba, being the first humanitarian agency to respond to the hurricane's impact.

The initial food relief out of the prepositioned stock of rice and beans was key in ensuring the timeliness of WFP's assistance to final beneficiaries. This relief was later complemented by locally purchased vegetable oil. Local procurement was preferred despite a slight increase in costs in order to reduce delivery time [1]. However, contract negotiations with the local provider – the state company that has the monopoly of vegetable oil in Cuba – and the consignment of commodities took longer than expected. Hence, distribution of vegetable oil to final beneficiaries started only in mid-November and could not be completed by the end of 2017. Despite this delay, distributions were still faster than the alternative, international purchase.

WFP food assistance contributed to bridging the gap between the food needs of the affected populations and the rations provided by the public distribution system (subsidized monthly food basket). In times of emergencies, this food basket is increased to cover nearly 70 percent of the recommended dietary intake (RDI). Taking into account the different needs of the targeted vulnerable groups, WFP complemented the government assistance with food rations that covered an additional 22 percent of the RDI.

Food relief was distributed to all affected communities in close coordination with national and local authorities through the existing channels. Within the framework of the United Nations System Action Plan for Hurricane Irma, WFP had planned its food assistance to the target municipalities according to the population data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics (ONEI), updated 31 December 2016. However, when delivering the food commodities to final beneficiaries, local authorities used the latest figures provided by the Office of Supply Distribution Control (OFICODA), which are updated monthly. Hence, the number of actual beneficiaries differs from the planned ones.

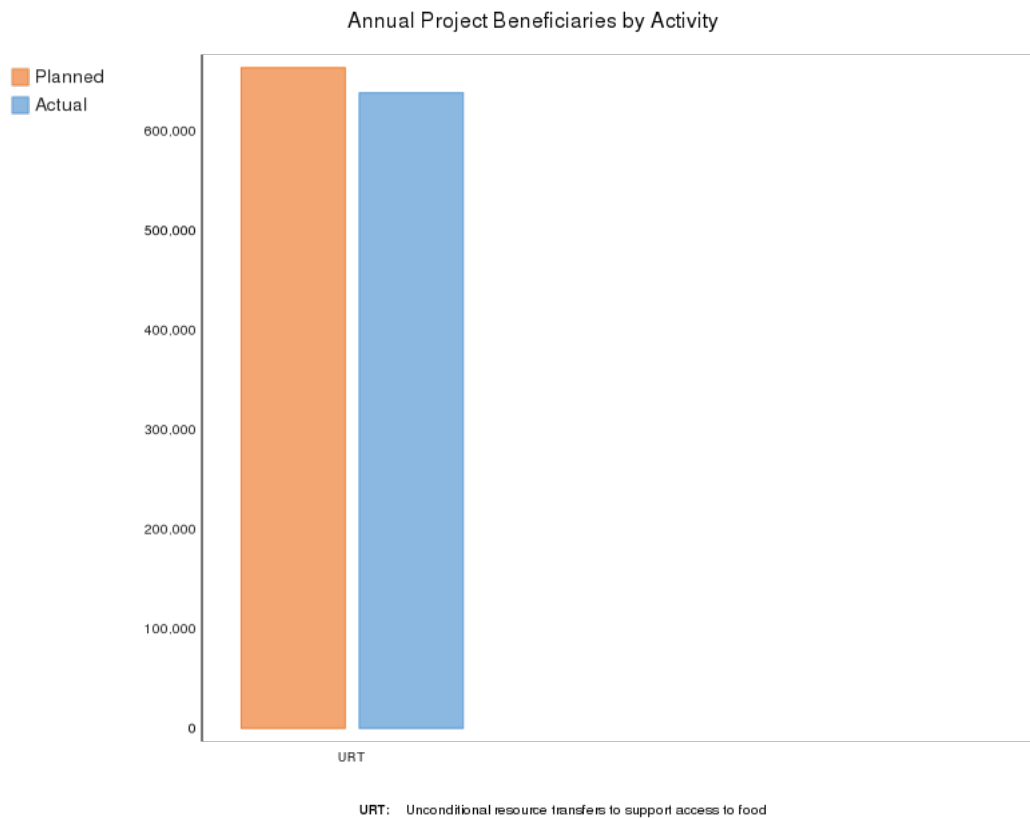
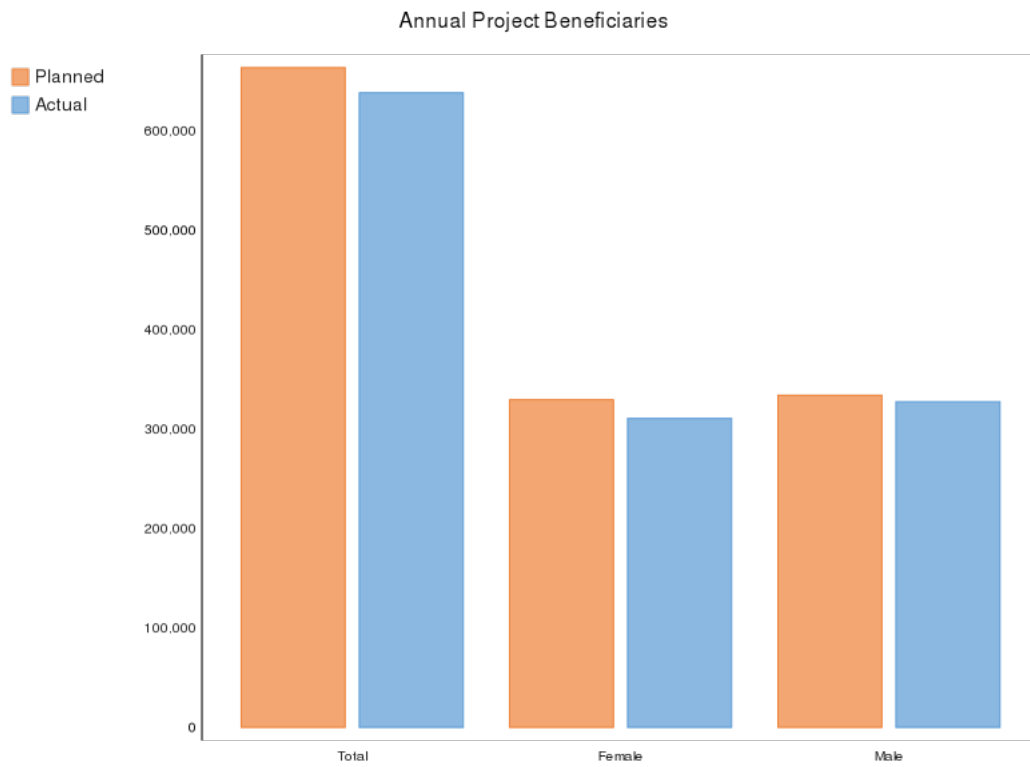
Receiving food assistance for a period of 20 days, the affected populations improved their access to basic foods to meet their immediate dietary requirements following the hurricane's impact. This was confirmed through interviews conducted with cooperating partners and with beneficiaries during on-site monitoring visits undertaken by WFP staff from the central office in Havana. Moreover, the participation of women made an outstanding contribution to managing safe food storage in counterpart's warehouses. They also greatly supported the management of food delivery to final distribution points.

WFP's targeting strategy also focused on ensuring relief to the most affected populations, especially within vulnerable groups. Particular emphasis was placed on pregnant and lactating women, who are at risk of nutritional disorders (such as anaemia) and are particularly vulnerable during emergencies, and the resulting markets disruptions. As food availability is limited in emergencies, these women face greater challenges to meet their dietary requirements. Hence WFP's assistance provided for their food needs by augmenting the ration provided by the government social protection programmes.

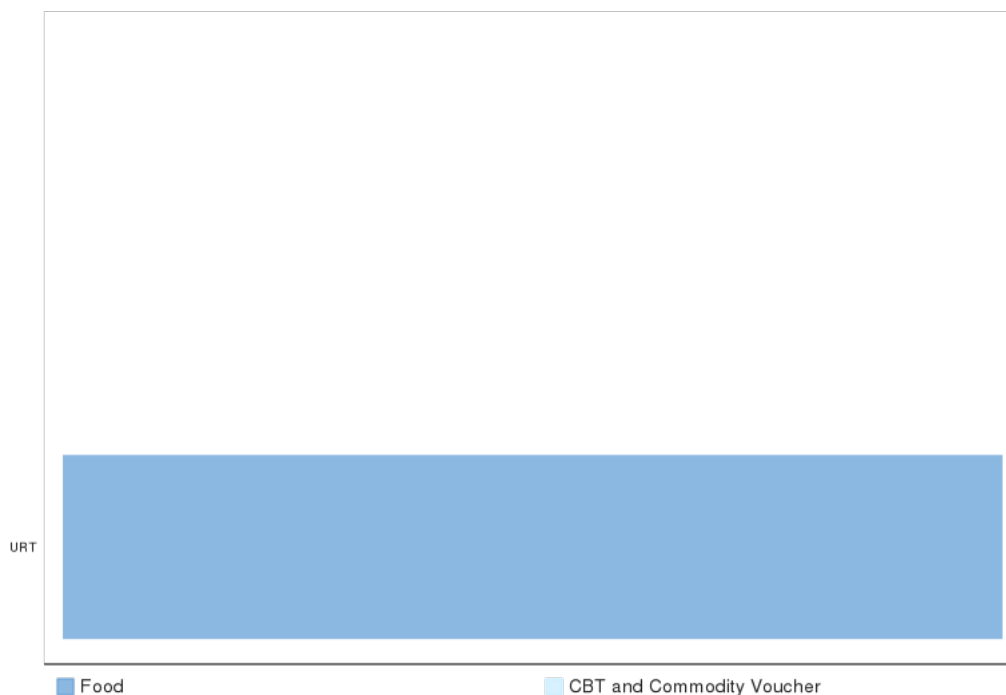
With the funding secured, WFP was also able to procure additional rice and beans to replenish the in-country prepositioned food stocks. These commodities were used again to continue WFP's assistance to the hurricane-affected populations under the emergency operation "EMOP 201108".

Given the massive destruction of the warehouse structures in the affected municipalities, the five mobile storage units assembled in the provinces of Ciego de Ávila and Villa Clara were key in ensuring safe food conservation in the impacted territories. Adequate storage was granted to both WFP donated food and to food commodities slated for social protection programmes and transferred from damaged government warehouses.

[1] The delivery of international purchases to Cuba last long due to transportation issues and the customs process at port.



Modality of Transfer by Activity



URT: Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food



Annual Project Food Distribution

Commodity	Planned Distribution (mt)	Actual Distribution (mt)	% Actual v. Planned
Beans	390	478	122.4%
Rice	797	720	90.3%
Vegetable Oil	195	188	96.4%
Total	1,382	1,386	100.3%

Performance Monitoring

WFP invested considerable effort in monitoring the food assistance provided to the affected populations in Central Cuba. All monitoring activities were planned and carried out in coordination with national and local authorities, especially the Ministry of Domestic Trade (MINCIN).

Real data on beneficiaries and on the amount of food distributed was provided by government counterparts, who submitted weekly distribution reports to WFP. These reports were informed by the rigorous mechanisms in place for the government social protection programmes, which kept track of food distribution from warehouses to final beneficiaries. In particular, as agreed with government counterparts, final distribution points to the population (“bodegas”) compiled ad-hoc beneficiary registers to ensure adequate monitoring of the WFP-donated food assistance. The data was disaggregated per gender and beneficiary type (i.e. children under 5, pregnant and lactating women, elderly, etc.) to reflect WFP’s support to vulnerable groups. Beneficiary feedback mechanisms are also in place through government social protection programmes and community organizations.

WFP carried out on-site visits to the 22 target municipalities to oversee the management of food storage and movements in all cooperating partners’ warehouses storing WFP’s food. Particular emphasis was placed on the compliance with the international standards for food storage to prevent losses. In addition, WFP staff conducted

random on-site visits to final distribution points (“bodegas”) and primary schools for beneficiary contact monitoring and post-distribution monitoring. During every visit, WFP conducted documentation cross-checks to verify the food commodities’ critical route. These data collecting methods enabled WFP to measure operational performance and demonstrate results.

During its on-site visits, WFP also monitored the adequate setting up of the five mobile storage units transferred from Guantanamo province and used to store WFP food assistance and other food commodities slated for the government social protection programmes.

Prior to the start of WFP food assistance, on-site supervisory visits were also carried out to monitor the safe storage of the prepositioned food stocks in Cienfuegos, Santiago de Cuba and Havana provinces.

Coordination with the ministries of Internal Trade and of External Trade and Foreign Investments as well as local governments – whose staff often accompanied WFP’s field visits – was key in ensuring the effectiveness of all on-site missions.

As WFP does not have field offices in any of the five affected provinces, on-site visits were carried out by staff from the country office in Havana. Due to the extended geographical coverage of this emergency operation, each on-site visit had an average duration of at least 10 days. With no additional staff for these monitoring activities, these visits placed additional strain to the programme unit agenda. However, the country office was able to successfully manage both the emergency-related additional work and the regular operations.

Prepositioning food stocks to enhance immediate response to natural shocks

As part of its country programme activities to enhance resilience, WFP had strategically prepositioned 1,600 mt of rice and beans in Cienfuegos, Havana and Santiago de Cuba provinces. In the event of a natural shock, WFP can borrow the prepositioned commodities to immediately assist affected populations. Funds for the emergency response are used to replenish these stocks and/or continue its food assistance.

This mechanism was used for the first time in 2016 during the Hurricane Matthew response in eastern Cuba and proved to be an effective solution to support the Government in ensuring a swift emergency assistance. The experience with Hurricane Irma confirmed this effectiveness.

Given the extensive damage caused by Hurricane Irma to crops and warehouses, posing challenges to food storage and distribution, the immediate availability of food stocks was a significant relief for the hurricane-affected populations. This was especially true as the hurricane came at a time when the country was still recovering from Hurricane Matthew in the previous year, and had also been facing a severe drought over the last four years.

The use of prepositioned food stocks allowed to overcome the most recurrent challenges linked to international and local food purchases, such as extended lead times and high costs. This represented an added value that strengthened WFP’s accountability and credibility towards beneficiaries, government institutions and donors.

Using the prepositioned food stocks was also a way to further strengthen WFP’s partnership with national and local authorities. The mechanism set up on the basis of an earlier memorandum of understanding with the Government and tested during the Hurricane Matthew emergency was key in ensuring the swift food transportation and distribution in the hurricane hit areas. WFP’s rapid support was appreciated by both national and local authorities. WFP is carrying out food purchases under the IR-EMOP to replenish the contingency stock, which will continue to be used in the framework of the other emergency operation for Hurricane Irma (EMOP 201108).

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page photo © WFP / David Veliz

Monitoring of pre-positioned food stocks in the province of Cienfuegos.

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	334,064	329,582	663,646	327,545	310,764	638,309	98.0%	94.3%	96.2%
By Age-group:									
Children (under 5 years)	26,056	24,244	50,300	29,836	28,162	57,998	114.5%	116.2%	115.3%
Children (5-18 years)	58,097	55,026	113,123	46,928	45,089	92,017	80.8%	81.9%	81.3%
Adults (18 years plus)	249,911	250,312	500,223	250,781	237,513	488,294	100.3%	94.9%	97.6%
By Residence status:									
Residents	334,064	329,582	663,646	317,172	321,137	638,309	94.9%	97.4%	96.2%

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)
Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food	663,646	-	663,646	638,309	-	638,309	96.2%	-	96.2%

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)
Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food	663,646	-	663,646	638,309	-	638,309	96.2%	-	96.2%

Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity (excluding nutrition)

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

Beneficiary Category	Planned (male)	Planned (female)	Planned (total)	Actual (male)	Actual (female)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (male)	% Actual v. Planned (female)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food									
All (General Distribution)	310,320	303,229	613,549	302,499	295,585	598,084	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%
Children (pre-primary) (General Distribution)	9,864	9,347	19,211	11,518	11,067	22,585	116.8%	118.4%	117.6%
Students (primary schools) (General Distribution)	13,879	13,335	27,214	7,542	7,246	14,788	54.3%	54.3%	54.3%
Pregnant and lactating women (General Distribution)	-	3,672	3,672	-	2,852	2,852	-	77.7%	77.7%
Total participants	334,063	329,583	663,646	321,559	316,750	638,309	96.3%	96.1%	96.2%
Total beneficiaries	334,063	329,583	663,646	321,559	316,750	638,309	96.3%	96.1%	96.2%

Resource Inputs from Donors

Resource Inputs from Donors

Donor	Cont. Ref. No.	Commodity	Purchased in 2017 (mt)	
			In-Kind	Cash
MULTILATERAL	MULTILATERAL	Beans	-	480
MULTILATERAL	MULTILATERAL	Rice	-	720

Donor	Cont. Ref. No.	Commodity	Purchased in 2017 (mt)	
			In-Kind	Cash
MULTILATERAL	MULTILATERAL	Vegetable Oil - Soya Bean	-	195
		Total	-	1,395