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SPR Reading Guidance



Emergency Food Assistance to Victims of Hurricane Irma in Cuba

Standard Project Report 2017

World Food Programme in Cuba, Republic of (CU)

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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

Strategic Objective 1: End hunger by protecting access to food

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

Output 1.1: Shock-affected populations benefit from food assistance in order to avoid a deterioration of their health and nutritional status.

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

WFP provided support to government efforts ensuring that the food needs of the communities worst affected by Hurricane Irma in Central Cuba be met and a deterioration in their food security could be prevented. Particular attention was devoted to vulnerable groups, including children under 5, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, and school-age children. This complemented the assistance that had started under the immediate response emergency operation (IR-EMOP 201107).

Given the challenges to stable access to basic foods for the affected communities – suffering from the severe destruction to crops and other livelihoods, coupled with damage to food storage facilities and markets disruption – WFP focused on ensuring the distribution of key staple foods (rice and beans), complemented by vegetable oil to increase the nutritional value of the ration.

The impact of Hurricane Irma affected an exceptionally extended region spreading over various provinces. The targeted areas were identified in consultation with national authorities: they comprised a total of 22 seriously affected municipalities in the five provinces of Camagüey, Ciego de Ávila, Matanzas, Sancti Spíritus and Villa Clara [1].

With the rice and beans available from WFP's prepositioned stocks and the Government's loan, WFP was able to ensure 40 days of consumption to the affected populations in all 22 municipalities. This complemented the immediate relief provided with the IR-EMOP (covering 20 days of consumption) to these same beneficiaries, ensuring a total of two months of consumption [2].

Blanket general food distribution was provided to the entire population of the 14 hardest hit municipalities, and targeted general food distribution was granted to the vulnerable groups of further eight affected municipalities. Meanwhile, WFP carried out the international purchase of additional rice, beans and vegetable oil, to continue assistance to the vulnerable groups of the 22 affected municipalities in 2018, covering additional 60 days of consumption.

All project activities were implemented with the engagement of government counterparts, mainly under the leadership of the Ministry of External Trade and Foreign Investments (MINCEX, WFP's main partner that coordinates all operational issues with the other technical ministries), and the Ministry of Domestic Trade (MINCIN, responsible for all the logistics regarding food transportation, storage and distribution to final beneficiaries).

As WFP's food assistance was channelled through the mechanisms already established for the national social protection programmes, the collaboration of government counterparts at both national and local levels was key in ensuring the effective distribution of commodities to final beneficiaries. In particular, local governments led the various stages of food distribution (from provincial and municipal warehouses to the final distribution points to beneficiaries) and maintained regular contact with WFP to share data related to food assistance. The Government's food loan allowed WFP to guarantee food assistance to 10 municipalities while waiting for the shipment of the internationally purchased commodities.

Coordination was also bolstered within the United Nations System in Cuba, with WFP as the leading agency of the United Nations Emergency Technical Team. A joint Action Plan was presented to the Government to promote a harmonized response to the most urgent needs, avoiding duplication of efforts. Moreover, frequent inter-agency situation reports were prepared to provide sectoral updates on the hurricane damage, as well as information on the response of the Government and the UN system. This coordinated work, particularly appreciated by the donor community, resulted in a more effective fund-raising strategy.

Output 1.2: Shock-affected populations benefit from enhanced food storage capacity of local state institutions.

Activity: Provision of non-food items to ensure a swift food assistance to shock-affected populations.

Hurricane Irma severely affected the warehouse infrastructure for the storage of food and other key products. Over 2,500 facilities were reported damaged in the five most-affected provinces. Hence WFP provided basic equipment and technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of local authorities on food management and logistics.

WFP's support included mobile storage units (MSUs), lightning equipment and pallets. Five MSUs were supplied to the province of Villa Clara, while lightning equipment and pallets are expected to arrive in Cuba in January 2018. Moreover, WFP secured funding for the purchase of five additional MSUs, which will be procured in 2018.

The Ministry of External Trade and Foreign Investments (MINCEX) and the Ministry of Domestic Trade (MINCIN) were key partners in the implementation of these activities, helping to identify and prioritize logistical needs.

[1] Among the 22 seriously affected municipalities the 14 worst affected were Esmeralda, Minas, Nuevitas, Sierra de Cubitas (Camagüey province), Bolivia, Chambas and Morón (Ciego de Ávila province), Yaguajay (Sancti Spíritus), and Caibarién, Camajuaní, Corralillo, Encrucijada, Quemado de Güines, Sagua la Grande (Villa Clara province); the other eight were Ciro Redondo, Florencia and Primero de Enero (Ciego de Ávila province), Cárdenas and Martí (Matanzas province) and Cifuentes, Remedios and Santo Domingo (Villa Clara province).

[2] With the loan provided by the Government, WFP could only assist the provinces of Sancti Spíritus and Villa Clara.

Results

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

Output 1.1: Shock-affected populations benefit from food assistance in order to avoid a deterioration of their health and nutritional status.

Activity 1: Blanket and targeted food distribution to shock-affected populations.

WFP reached all the target communities in the 22 seriously affected municipalities in Central Cuba, providing relief food assistance to augment the ration provided by the government social protection programmes.

To ensure timeliness of assistance, part of the rice and beans distributed were borrowed from the food stocks prepositioned in-country by WFP. Although the prepositioned food stocks represented an effective solution in initial immediate response, they were not sufficient. Though funding was available, the need to rely on international markets for supplies delayed the availability of commodities. Time consuming procurement processes threatened the continuity of WFP's support. Therefore, while carrying out the international purchase processes, WFP borrowed rice and beans from government stocks to reduce the impact of these delays. The internationally procured rice and beans will be used to replenish the stocks prepositioned under the country programme, to return the Government's loan, and to finalise distributions under this operation in early 2018.

Within three months after the impact of Hurricane Irma WFP could only distribute food assistance for 10 days of consumption in all 22 impacted municipalities, due to the lengthy international purchase procedures. This was followed by a second distribution for 30 days of consumption, although only in 10 municipalities (in the provinces of Sancti Spíritus and Villa Clara). Hence the quantity of distributed rice and beans was lower than planned. However, distribution will continue during the coming months to assist the remaining targeted municipalities.

As food assistance was distributed through the government mechanisms for social protection programmes, WFP benefitted from the rigorous beneficiary control carried out by local institutions [1]. WFP had planned its food assistance to the target municipalities according to the population data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics (ONEI) and updated 31 December 2016. However, for 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 on a monthly basis. Thus, although the number of actual beneficiaries differs from the planned ones, WFP reached all hurricane-affected persons in the 22 target municipalities.

By receiving WFP food assistance under this emergency operation – complementing the immediate relief received with the immediate response emergency operation (IR-EMOP 201107) prior to this operation – the hurricane-affected populations quickly recovered their access to basic foods to meet their dietary requirements. This was confirmed by on-site monitoring visits carried out by WFP. Beneficiaries also stressed that WFP's assistance bridged the lacking food availability in markets (especially in terms of fresh foods and tubers). In fact, as observed by WFP, food production in the hardest hit municipalities had not recovered in three months after Hurricane Irma. This strengthened the relevance of WFP as an emergency partner assisting the hurricane-affected populations.

Given the delays with the international procurement of vegetable oil and its transportation to cooperating partners' warehouses, its distribution was postponed to early 2018.

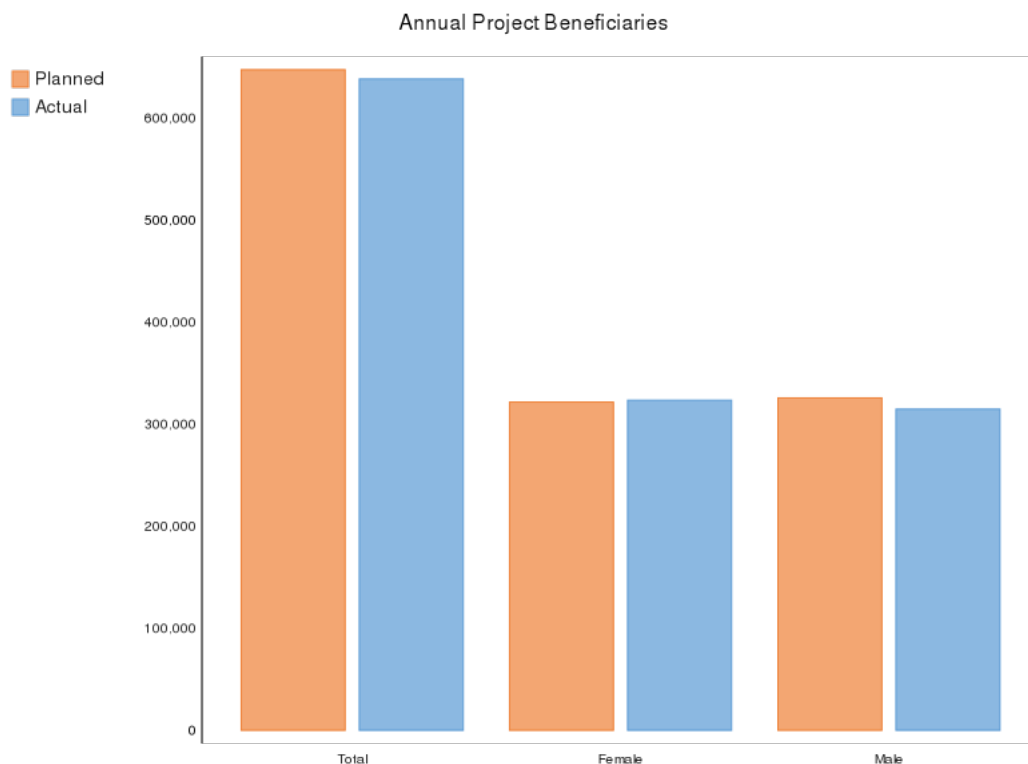
Output 1.2: Shock-affected populations benefit from enhanced food storage capacity of local state institutions.

Activity 1: Provision of non-food items to ensure a swift food assistance to shock-affected populations.

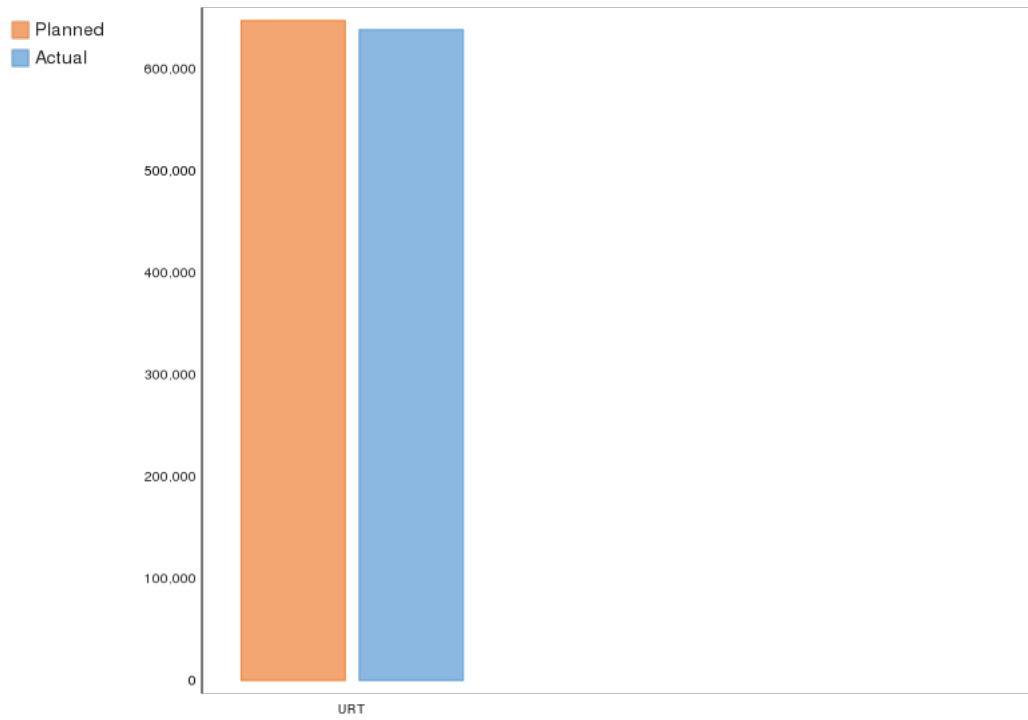
WFP finalized the international procurement of all non-food items planned in 2017, although not all of them had arrived in the country by the end of the year. While the five mobile storage units (MSUs) – procured through the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Panama – arrived in three weeks, the international procurement of lighting equipment and pallets took over two months, due to time-consuming procedures.

The purchase of non-food items was also delayed by the initially limited availability of funds. In order to ensure swift support to local food storage capacities, the government authorities agreed to relocate five MSUs donated by WFP during the response to Hurricane Matthew from Guantanamo province to the Irma-affected territories. WFP oversaw the setting up of these in-country MSUs with technical assistance. This proved an effective solution for storing not only WFP-donated food, but also the food commodities for social protection programmes that had been transferred from damaged government warehouses. WFP's support was greatly appreciated by government counterparts, contributing to position the agency as a key partner in emergency response at local and national levels.

[1] Official cross-checking mechanisms are in place to make sure that food assistance is delivered to all target beneficiaries.

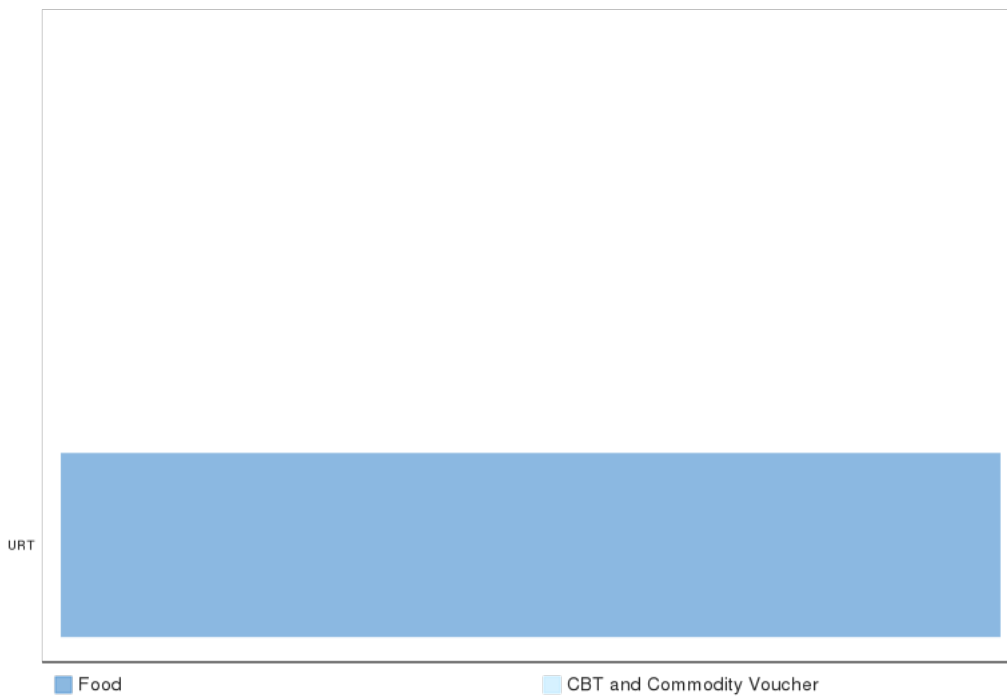


Annual Project Beneficiaries by Activity



URT: Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food

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	993	338	34.0%
Rice	2,019	847	41.9%
Vegetable Oil	496	-	-
Total	3,509	1,184	33.7%

Performance Monitoring

WFP continuously monitored the implementation of project activities to ensure accountability and transparency and to measure operational performance. These tasks were conducted in close collaboration with national and local counterparts, especially the Ministry of Domestic Trade (MINCIN) and local governments.

WFP collected outcome and output indicators with the support of the government counterpart using representative samples. Coverage was measured on the basis of consumption reports provided weekly by government counterparts, using the mechanisms already in place for food assistance under the national social protection programmes. These mechanisms include a beneficiary register (disaggregated by sex, beneficiary type, and location) that keeps rigorous track of food delivery in the final distributions points to the population (“bodegas”).

As a complement to the monitoring missions initiated under the immediate response emergency operation to Hurricane Irma (IR-EMOP 201107), WFP continued periodical on-site visits to cross-check data on food assistance. These monitoring missions to oversee food storage and transportation covered all cooperating partners’ local warehouses in the 22 target municipalities. They included randomly selected *bodegas* as well as primary schools and collected information through beneficiary interviews and compared the figures on food distribution with those provided by local warehouses. WFP also monitored the adequate conservation of the five mobile storage units donated to the province of Villa Clara. Representatives from MINCIN and local governments joined these missions to provide institutional support to WFP and to take corrective action immediately when some problems related to food transportation occurred.

Given the absence of field offices in the five affected provinces, WFP’s on-site missions were carried out by staff from the main office in Havana. As no additional staff dedicated to the emergency response were available for this task that entailed long missions to ensure adequate geographic coverage (with an average duration of 10 days each), these activities placed considerable pressure on the office agenda. However, the country office was able to manage both the emergency-related additional work and the regular operations.

Progress Towards Gender Equality

WFP ensured equitable access to food assistance for vulnerable men and women under its blanket and targeted general food distributions.

Gender considerations were mainstreamed throughout project design, monitoring and implementation.

While designing the operation, the targeting of beneficiaries – conducted in close consultation with government counterparts – placed a special emphasis on vulnerable groups within the affected populations. Of these, women (including pregnant and lactating women) and children under 5 represented an important portion of WFP’s food assistance beneficiaries. Particular attention was devoted to pregnant and lactating women, who are at risk of nutritional disorders (such as anaemia) and are especially vulnerable during emergencies and the resulting markets disruptions. As food availability is limited in emergencies, these women face greater challenges in meeting their dietary requirements. Hence, WFP’s assistance contributing to augment the ration provided by the government social protection programmes contributed to meet their food needs.

During periodical on-site missions to monitor food distribution, WFP could access beneficiary data – provided by government counterparts – that were disaggregated by sex and age. WFP also observed the participation of women in collecting the emergency assistance: both women and men were collecting food for their households.

WFP noted that women's participation was significant at all stages of project implementation, including the management of food storage in cooperating partners' warehouses, as well as the distribution of WFP's food assistance. The great majority of employees in final food distribution points to the population ("bodegas") were women. Given women's knowledge on food handling, this might have contributed to ensuring adequate food storage conditions. WFP observed that women employees brought a significant added value by maintaining rigorous data management in the *bodegas* (such as beneficiary registers) as well as by informing the population about WFP's food assistance (i.e. rations, composition, etc.).

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

Cuba has a very high level of security – considered by the United Nations as security level 1, minimal. Government counterparts and WFP's field monitoring missions reported no security incidents that might have jeopardized the security of beneficiaries while going to, from and/or at WFP's programme sites.

WFP's food assistance was distributed through the government social protection programmes, which with their well-established mechanisms ensure order and adequate security standards for the population. In particular, national laws create conditions to guarantee that food assistance is distributed in a safe environment, with no protection challenges for beneficiaries.

Moreover, government institutions engaged in the distribution of food assistance are requested by law to publicly display the ration entitlement of each beneficiary, ensuring that it is understood by the diverse women, men, girls and boys in the affected population. Beneficiary feedback mechanisms are also in place to collect complaints related to food distribution.

As confirmed during WFP's on-site monitoring missions to the targeted municipalities, beneficiaries were regularly informed by the employees of final distribution points ("bodegas") about WFP's food assistance and the ways to provide feedback for the sake of improvements. Local media were also very active (i.e. radio programmes, newspapers, etc.) in disseminating information to the population, representing an additional channel for beneficiaries.

Shock-responsive safety nets for a more effective emergency response

As Hurricane Irma severely affected important agricultural production poles, the livelihoods of those depending on agriculture, livestock and fishery were destroyed, with repercussions on immediate food availability. Based on the successful experiences with previous emergency responses, WFP and the Government agreed to use local food-based social safety nets to distribute relief food assistance.

Cuba's well-known food-based social protection programmes – which include the distribution of a food ration to every citizen – are supported by a sound structure that ensures stable food access to the population. This structure supports various processes, ranging from food transportation, storage and distribution to final beneficiaries, coupled with monitoring procedures and security standards.

In the event of a natural disaster, these social programmes can be also used as effective shock-responsive mechanisms to avoid deterioration in the nutritional status of the affected populations, especially vulnerable groups (which include children under five, pregnant and lactating women, school-age children and elderly people). That is why WFP – besides strengthening social protection programmes under its regular operations – relies on these mechanisms to distribute its emergency food assistance as they represent the most effective solution to reach final beneficiaries.

During the emergency operation, the WFP-donated commodities were first stored in cooperating partners' warehouses, and then redirected to final distribution points ("bodegas"), where final beneficiaries normally collect the subsidized food basket granted by the universal social protection programme. As beneficiaries are already familiar with the delivery mechanism, this represented a significant time-saving factor. In addition, by not having to establish an ad hoc system, this solution also proved to be particularly cost effective.

WFP's support, extensively covered by local and national media, was often appreciated by local institutions and beneficiaries. During one of WFP's on-site visits to monitor food distribution in Coralillo municipality (Villa Clara province), Kenia Martínez – employee of the bodega "La Occidental" – affirmed that "the hurricane had heavily affected crops. Hence, food availability was limited in markets. Thanks to WFP, the population could count on a greater availability and quality of food".

As part of its regular development operations, WFP will continue supporting the Government in strengthening the sustainability and efficiency of the national social protection programmes, to ensure that no one is left behind, especially in the event of natural disasters.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page photo © WFP / David Veliz

Distribution of WFP's food assistance through a "bodega" (final distribution point) in Camaguey province.

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	325,797	321,639	647,436	314,806	323,503	638,309	96.6%	100.6%	98.6%
By Age-group:									
Children (under 5 years)	26,056	24,244	50,300	25,078	23,570	48,648	96.2%	97.2%	96.7%
Children (5-18 years)	49,830	47,083	96,913	54,833	52,684	107,517	110.0%	111.9%	110.9%
Adults (18 years plus)	249,911	250,312	500,223	234,895	247,249	482,144	94.0%	98.8%	96.4%
By Residence status:									
Residents	325,797	321,639	647,436	315,032	323,277	638,309	96.7%	100.5%	98.6%

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	647,436	-	647,436	638,309	-	638,309	98.6%	-	98.6%

Annex: Participants by Activity and Modality

Activity	Planned (food)	Planned (CBT)	Planned (total)	Actual (food)	Actual (CBT)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (food)	% Actual v. Planned (CBT)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food	647,436	-	647,436	638,309	-	638,309	98.6%	-	98.6%

Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity (excluding nutrition)

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

Beneficiary Category	Planned (male)	Planned (female)	Planned (total)	Actual (male)	Actual (female)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (male)	% Actual v. Planned (female)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food									
All (General Distribution)	285,114	278,597	563,711	302,499	295,585	598,084	106.1%	106.1%	106.1%
Children (pre-primary) (General Distribution)	24,404	23,125	47,529	11,596	10,989	22,585	47.5%	47.5%	47.5%
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)	-	8,982	8,982	-	2,852	2,852	-	31.8%	31.8%
Total participants	323,397	324,039	647,436	321,637	316,672	638,309	99.5%	97.7%	98.6%
Total beneficiaries	323,397	324,039	647,436	321,637	316,672	638,309	99.5%	97.7%	98.6%

Project Indicators

Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
SR1 Everyone has access to food				

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
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				
Proportion of eligible population that participates in programme (coverage) / Female				
TARGETED MUNICIPALITIES IN CAMAGÜEY, CIEGO DE AVILA, SANCTI SPÍRITUS, VILLA CLARA, MATANZAS, Project End Target: 2018.02, Base value: 2017.10, WFP programme monitoring, WFP Monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, WFP programme monitoring, WFP Monitoring	>90.00	0.00	-	100.60
Proportion of eligible population that participates in programme (coverage) / Male				
TARGETED MUNICIPALITIES IN CAMAGÜEY, CIEGO DE AVILA, SANCTI SPÍRITUS, VILLA CLARA, MATANZAS, Project End Target: 2018.02, Base value: 2017.10, WFP programme monitoring, WFP Monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, WFP programme monitoring, WFP Monitoring	>90.00	0.00	-	96.60
Proportion of eligible population that participates in programme (coverage) / Overall				
TARGETED MUNICIPALITIES IN CAMAGÜEY, CIEGO DE AVILA, SANCTI SPÍRITUS, VILLA CLARA, MATANZAS, Project End Target: 2018.02, Base value: 2017.10, WFP programme monitoring, WFP Monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, WFP programme monitoring, WFP Monitoring	>90.00	0.00	-	98.60

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
CRF SO1-SR1: Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food				
Quantity of equipment (computers, furniture) distributed	non-food item	620	5	0.8%

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Proportion of targeted people accessing assistance without protection challenges / Female				
TARGETED MUNICIPALITIES IN CAMAGÜEY, CIEGO DE AVILA, SANCTI SPÍRITUS, VILLA CLARA, MATANZAS, Provide unconditional food transfer and mobile storage units to ensure a swift food assistance to shock-affected populations, in coordination with national authorities, Food, Project End Target: 2018.02, Base value: 2017.10, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12	>90.00	0.00	-	100.00
Proportion of targeted people accessing assistance without protection challenges / Male				
TARGETED MUNICIPALITIES IN CAMAGÜEY, CIEGO DE AVILA, SANCTI SPÍRITUS, VILLA CLARA, MATANZAS, Provide unconditional food transfer and mobile storage units to ensure a swift food assistance to shock-affected populations, in coordination with national authorities, Food, Project End Target: 2018.02, Base value: 2017.10, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12	>90.00	0.00	-	100.00

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Proportion of targeted people accessing assistance without protection challenges / Overall TARGETED MUNICIPALITIES IN CAMAGÜEY, CIEGO DE AVILA, SANCTI SPÍRITUS, VILLA CLARA, MATANZAS, Provide unconditional food transfer and mobile storage units to ensure a swift food assistance to shock-affected populations, in coordination with national authorities, Food, Project End Target: 2018.02, Base value: 2017.10, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12	>90.00	0.00	-	100.00

Resource Inputs from Donors

Resource Inputs from Donors

Donor	Cont. Ref. No.	Commodity	Purchased in 2017 (mt)	
			In-Kind	Cash
Canada	CAN-C-00555-01	Beans - Black	-	69
Canada	CAN-C-00555-01	Rice - Brokens 15%	-	165
Canada	CAN-C-00555-01	Vegetable Oil - Soya Bean	-	20
European Commission	EEC-C-00691-01	Beans - Black	-	239
European Commission	EEC-C-00691-01	Rice - Brokens 15%	-	682
Italy	ITA-C-00213-05	Beans	-	64
Italy	ITA-C-00213-05	Rice	-	140
Italy	ITA-C-00213-05	Vegetable Oil - Soya Bean	-	20
Private Donors	WPD-C-04171-01	Rice - Brokens 15%	-	210
Switzerland	SWI-C-00606-01	Beans - Black	-	138
Switzerland	SWI-C-00606-01	Rice - Brokens 15%	-	150
Switzerland	SWI-C-00606-01	Vegetable Oil - Soya Bean	-	119
UN CERF	001-C-01657-01	Beans	-	464
UN CERF	001-C-01657-01	Rice	-	964
UN CERF	001-C-01657-01	Vegetable Oil - Soya Bean	-	159
		Total	-	3,602