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Update of WFP's Safety Nets Policy
Policy Evaluation

Evaluation Report: Volume I

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Disclaimer

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Table of Contents

Annexes (in volume II)

Annex 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Annex 3:   Evaluation Methodology

Annex 4: Fit of the Policy Update within WFP Normative and Performance Management Frameworks

Annex 5: Social Protection Frameworks of Other Organizations

Annex 6: WFP Policy Hierarchy

Annex 7: Key Activities to Implement the Policy Update

Annex 8: Analysis of Policy Update Quality

Annex 9: Analysis of Progress on Implementation of Recommendations from the 2011 Strategic Evaluation

Annex 10: Summary of Cross-Case Analysis

Annex 11: List of People Met

Annex 12: Bibliography

Annex 13: Learning Workshop Feedback on Draft Recommendations

List of figures

List of tables

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION AND EVALUATION FEATURES

1.   The "Update of WFP's Safety Nets Policy: The Role of Food Assistance in Social Protection" was approved by the Executive Board at its 2012 annual session and superseded the 2004 policy.[1] Now in its sixth year, the policy update is due for evaluation in accordance with WFP's policies. The evaluation provides evidence, analysis and recommendations related to the policy update's quality and results and to the factors that influenced those results; it has the dual objective of enhancing accountability and learning.

2.   The evaluation was conducted between June and November 2018. It covers the period from 2012 to 2017 but also takes note of more recent developments in the countries studied and at headquarters with a view to providing timely evaluation findings that are related to ongoing and potential changes.

3.   The following methods and approaches were used in the evaluation:

> ➢ construction of a theory of change;

> ➢ twelve country case studies, five through field visits (Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Egypt and Uganda) and seven through remote desk studies (Ecuador, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mozambique, Turkey and Sri Lanka;

> ➢ 250 key informant interviews with representatives of all regional bureaux, relevant headquarters units, partners and other actors;

> ➢ review of 2016–2017 data from standard project reports analysed by the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit;

> ➢ review of global and regional WFP documents and records; and

> ➢ review of external literature including from other organizations.

4.   Major limitations included variable clarity among WFP country offices regarding the classification of activities as safety nets, which sometimes contradicted WFP guidance. The ability to assess results comprehensively was limited by corporate reporting systems and results frameworks, which do not identify the activities, outputs and outcomes of WFP's programmes that are linked to safety nets and social protection. The overall timeline for data collection and reporting was highly compressed, limiting the potential for follow-up enquiries.

5.   Despite these limitations, the evaluation findings are based on triangulated evidence from multiple data types and sources. Reliability was enhanced through debriefs with country offices at the end of field missions in order to confirm impressions, a global debriefing held at the end of the data collection phase, a workshop with WFP staff and management from the countries and regions visited, and discussions of findings, conclusions and recommendations with headquarters divisions, during which feedback was gathered.

CONTEXT

6.   The policy update defined safety nets as "formal or informal non-contributory transfers provided to people vulnerable to or living in poverty, malnutrition and other forms of deprivation". This definition was consistent with those used by the World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund at the time. However, some ambiguity in these definitions was evident, including

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[1] WFP/EB.3/2004/4-A.

regarding whether safety nets must be government-owned, the duration of safety net interventions and whether humanitarian assistance can be a safety net.

7. The evaluation used the policy update's definition of safety nets and criteria from WFP guidance of 2014, which states that safety nets are long-term, predictable and linked to governments. WFP's definition from 2017 was adopted, which defines social protection as "the broad set of arrangements and instruments designed to protect members of society from shocks and stresses over the lifecycle".

8. The use of safety nets and social protection has grown considerably since 2012, with all governments around the world employing at least one safety net mechanism by 2015.[2] Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 focuses on ending poverty including through the use of national social protection systems and measures.[3] Globally there has been increased focus on expanding safety nets, using social protection systems in times of shock – and while preparing for shocks – and increasing the use of cash-based transfers.

9. WFP's direct implementation of safety nets has also expanded through a broader focus on providing capacity strengthening and technical support for national social protection systems, in line with WFP's shift from "implementer to enabler" initiated in the WFP strategic plan for 2008–2013. Various humanitarian and development conferences have also shaped the global landscape and influenced WFP's work.[4]

WFP'S SAFETY NETS POLICY UPDATE (2012) AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

10. The policy update includes principles and lessons learned, concepts and definitions, roles and comparative advantages and five scenarios for different levels of country capacity and stability. It presents emerging issues, programming choices, key priorities and implications.

11. The policy update did not include a theory of change, a logical framework, specific results statements or indicators for measuring progress. A theory of change was developed for the evaluation by inferring the expected activities, outputs, outcomes and impact of the policy update. This theory of change identified two pathways for WFP's contributions to safety nets and social protection: a "provision pathway" for the direct implementation of activities for providing "safety net instruments and transfers"; and a "support pathway" for WFP's "functions in support of nationally led safety nets".[5] A third set of elements that contribute to both pathways were identified. Activities in the constructed theory of change were reflected in the sub-questions of the evaluation.

12. The organizational structure of WFP units relevant to the policy update has changed several times, including through increased staff resources for the Social Protection and Safety Net Unit over the past two years. A timeline of milestones in WFP's safety net and social protection work is provided in figure 1.

13. WFP's documented experiences with safety nets reaches back to at least 1998,[6] when a policy paper entitled *Food-based safety net needs and WFP* was developed. WFP's role in safety nets

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[2] The World Bank. 2015. *The state of social safety nets 2015*, page 1. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/415491467994645020/The-state-of-social-safety-nets-2015.

[3] SDG Target 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable. SDG Knowledge Platform. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg1.

[4] For example, the International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and forced Displacement led by the United Nations Children's Fund and the European Commission and co-organized by WFP in 2017.

[5] Activities in the provision pathway include the design of safety nets for food security and nutrition and the operationalization and implementation of safety nets, including procurement, logistics and the delivery of transfers. Activities in the support pathway include country capacity strengthening, technical and analytical advice and advocacy for influencing policy.

[6] WFP activities that are now considered to be safety nets, such as school feeding, have been in operation since the 1960s.

was first formalized in the 2004 policy "WFP and food-based safety nets: Concepts, experiences and future programming opportunities".[7]

14.   Between 2004 and 2012, WFP developed several papers that articulate the understanding of what safety nets are in WFP. A 2011 strategic evaluation of WFP's role in social protection and safety nets[8] concluded that WFP was widely engaged in safety nets and social protection but lacked adequate guidance and needed to institutionalize changes in planning, programme design, external collaboration, monitoring and financial systems for safety nets and social protection. The 2012 policy update had the aim of building on these lessons by clarifying key concepts and linking them to WFP's activities and roles.

Figure 1: Milestones in WFP's safety nets and social protection work
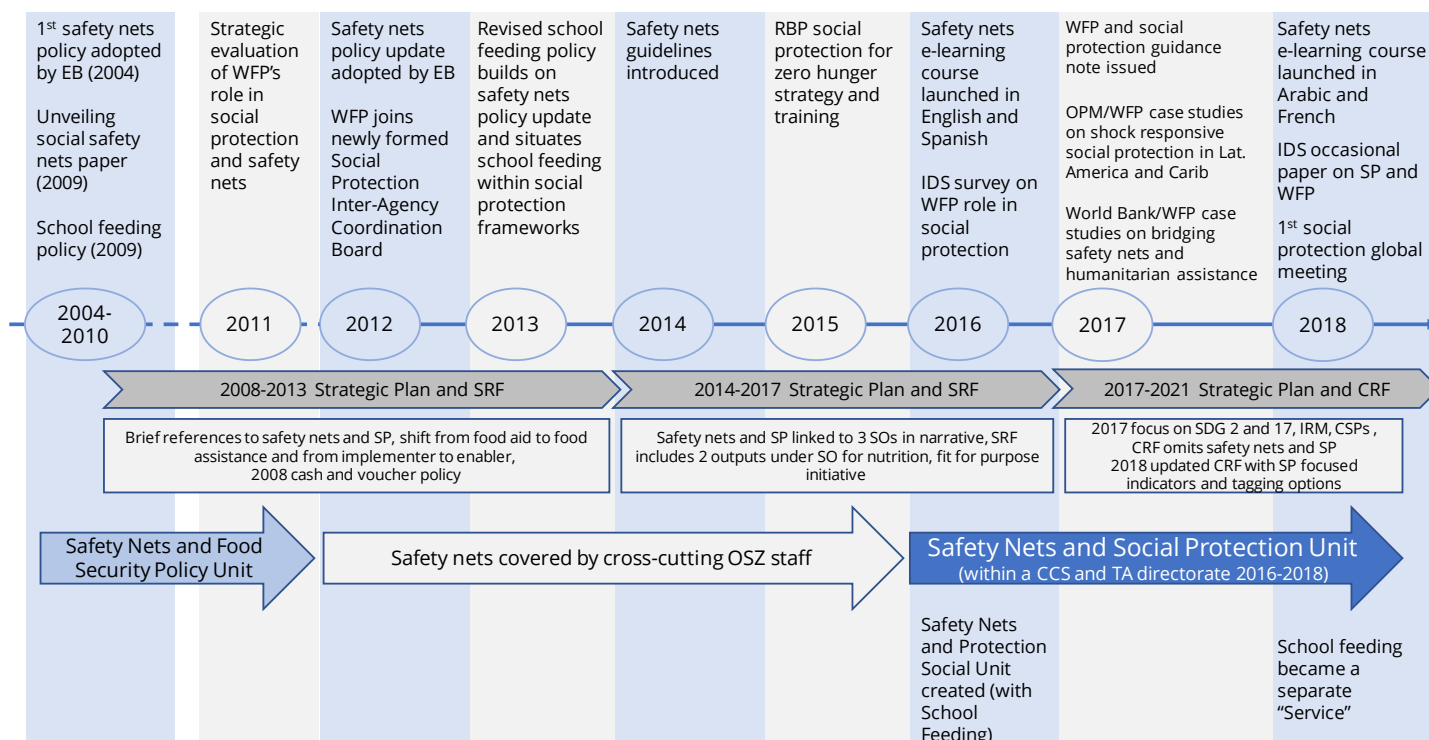
Abbreviations: CCS: country capacity strengthening; CRF: corporate results framework; IDS: Institute for Development Studies; SO: strategic outcome; SP: social protection; SRF: strategic results framework; TA: technical assistance
Source: Evaluation team from document review and interviews.

FINDINGS

Quality of the policy

15.   The quality of the policy update and its related guidance and tools was assessed. The evaluation found that the policy update was generally aligned with the concepts of safety nets and social protection prevailing at the time. While it emphasized the rationale for supporting safety nets, it neglected some opportunities for supporting broader social protection, reducing its relevance and utility today. The core content of the policy update remained relevant throughout the evaluation period but thinking about and approaches to social protection have advanced considerably, especially regarding the strengthening of systems, links to humanitarian assistance and the expansion of access and coverage.

16.   The relevance and utility of the policy update were diminished by a lack of essential elements. The policy update did not establish a clear conceptual framework, vision, purpose,

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[7] WFP/EB.3/2004/4-A.
[8] WFP/EB.A/2011/7-B.

outcomes or outputs and, as a result, was less practical and feasible than it could have been. In addition, it included little consideration of gender or disability issues. The policy update was well grounded in WFP's established food assistance mandate and outlined the scope of WFP's engagement, evidence, lessons and priorities but it did not discuss alignment with other WFP policies and only briefly mentioned the WFP strategic plan.

17. WFP guidance developed in 2014 and 2017 went beyond the focus on safety nets and provided more information on contributing to national social protection systems. The 2014 guidance provided a clearer explanation of concepts and tools for programme design, implementation and external engagement. The 2017 guidance note provided a clear and up-to-date articulation of how WFP activities for social protection can be framed and positioned in the development of country strategic plans (CSPs) and in alignment with national actors and priorities. The guidance also noted the need for an explicit focus on nutrition in the design of social protection in order to enable nutrition impacts, and provided examples of outcomes and outputs for integration into CSPs, but it is too early to assess the results of these changes as reflected in CSPs.

18. The 2011 strategic evaluation report[9] included six recommendations on strengthening WFP's policy, capacities and positioning for, and contributions to, safety nets and social protection. While its findings and conclusions are broadly addressed in the policy update, this evaluation found that progress in implementing the recommendations is incomplete. Recommendations on strengthening organizational capacities and staff capacities, positioning, policy engagement and adherence to good practice standards were not fully implemented and failed to achieve the intended effects. However, the rate of progress has increased considerably since the creation of the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit at headquarters in 2016.

19. The policy update is credited with encouraging WFP's alignment with national governments. It marked the beginning of a shift in focus for WFP from direct implementation of safety net activities to provision of support for government-led safety nets. The emphasis on using WFP's comparative advantages to contribute to filling gaps in national systems is increased in subsequent guidance.

20. Although the policy update does not explicitly mention alignment with other WFP policies, it was largely coherent with WFP policies at the time of its adoption. More recent policies on related subjects[10] reflect updated thinking on and the concept and coverage of social protection and on how WFP relates to them.

21. The quality of a policy can be partly assessed from the levels of awareness and use of the policy throughout an organization. The evaluation found that most WFP staff members were unfamiliar with the policy update and few were aware of the 2014 and 2017 guidelines. Only 21 percent of the staff members interviewed during country office visits reported having read the policy prior to the evaluation, and staff at 10 of the 12 country offices visited stated that the policy update was not useful as practical guidance. Key informants stressed challenges related to dissemination of the policy update, its emphasis on WFP's traditional activity areas rather than cross-cutting issues, and their own capacity to absorb the large number of WFP strategies, policies, guidance and process changes. Nevertheless, WFP country directors, deputy country directors and heads of programme in all 12 countries felt that the subject covered by the policy was relevant to the work of their offices.

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[9] Ibid.
[10] For example, the revised school feeding policy: WFP/EB.2/2013/4-C.

Policy results

22.   The evaluation assessed the results stemming from the policy update. Although awareness of the policy update was low, the evaluation found that the results observed are indirectly attributable to it through the influence of guidance, training and other initiatives.

Global results

23.   Development of the 2014 guidelines and 2017 guidance note provided tools for programme design and implementation. Key informants at country offices felt that the content of guidance documents was useful but still too general for most programme design and implementation decisions.   A considerable portion of the 2014 guidelines provides general information that staff need for country capacity strengthening work, engagement with external actors, securing of funding and overall programme design – topics that could have been covered once in overarching programme guidance rather than being duplicated in various documents providing guidance on specific activities or themes.

24.   The three-module safety nets e-learning course has been used by staff throughout WFP, but delays in its development resulting from staff turnover at headquarters and gaps in project management may have limited its utility and relevance. Only 5 percent of WFP's internationally recruited workforce and 3 percent of local employees completed at least one module.[11]

25.   Recent efforts to develop a global base of evidence have generated useful learning for WFP but have not been part of a broader knowledge management and learning strategy. Following establishment of the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit, current information and knowledge management practices were assessed and a workplan was developed. Efforts to generate and share evidence included:

> ➢ creation of a document repository, a community of practice on school feeding and social protection and information hubs on the intranet;

> ➢ regular communications to social protection focal points at regional bureaux and country offices ;

> ➢ case studies with the World Bank on humanitarian assistance and social protection;

> ➢ research with Oxford Policy Management (OPM) on shock-responsive social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean;

> ➢ a study on WFP and social protection and technical support for CSP development from the Institute for Development Studies (IDS);

> ➢ case and scoping studies on social protection carried out by the Regional Bureau for the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia with IDS in the Middle East and North Africa and with Maastricht University in the Commonwealth of Independent States; and

> ➢ research on social protection in rural and urban areas, adaptive social protection and migration and social protection carried out by the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

26.   The evidence generated from these efforts provided material for increasing knowledge throughout WFP, but dissemination and use of the results were limited, largely because corporate knowledge management efforts were ad hoc. Country office staff were generally unaware of the

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[11] Three-hundred-sixty-one national staff members/consultants (out of 12,674) and 167 international staff members/consultants (out of 3,189) have completed at least one module of the e-learning package. Total WFP employee figures found in WFP Annual performance report for 2017 (WFP/EB.A/2018/4-A/Rev.1), annex V: WFP employees as at 31 December 2017.

results of research efforts, except when the research was conducted in their own countries or regions.

Country and regional results

27.   Evidence from evaluation case studies showed that WFP contributed to safety nets and social protection through both the direct provision and the support pathways identified in the theory of change (see paragraph 11). Key informants almost universally viewed WFP's work in safety nets and social protection as a critical means of fulfilling its strategic goals. In a January 2018 report, IDS noted that the opportunities for WFP to engage in safety nets and social protection will likely increase, with its commitments related to SDG 2 providing an "entry point for WFP to advocate for food security-oriented safety nets and nutrition-sensitive social protection".[12]

28.   While WFP guidance suggested that long-term, predictable interventions and connections to national systems and programmes are important, key informants at many country offices incorrectly referred to activities that were not connected to national systems as "safety nets". Table 1 summarizes where WFP engaged in direct provision of or support for different types of activities.

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[12] Sabates-Wheeler, R. and Devereux, S. 2018. *Social Protection and the World Food Programme.*, WFP Occasional Paper No. 25. https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000073283/download/

TABLE 1: ACTIVITIES IN WHICH WFP ENGAGED IN DIRECT PROVISION OR SUPPORT, 2012–2017												
	Country visits					Desk studies						
	Burkina Faso*	Cambodia**	Colombia	Egypt	Uganda	Ecuador***	Kenya	Lesotho	Mauritania	Mozambique	Sri Lanka	Turkey****
	LIC	LMIC	UMIC	LMIC	LIC	UMIC	LMIC	LMIC	LMIC	LIC	LMIC	UMIC
School feeding	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	
Nutrition	P/S	S		P/S	P/S		P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	
Food security		S		S	P/S	P/S	S	P/S	P	P/S		P/S
Livelihoods, smallholders	P	P		P	P/S		P/S	P/S	P	P/S	P/S	
Emergency preparedness and response	P	P				P/S	P/S		P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S
Capacity strengthening and technical assistance		S	S	S		S	S					S
Shock-responsive social protection						S	S	S		S	S	S

* In Burkina Faso, most WFP staff consulted viewed food assistance for assets programmes as a safety net. Government interviewees and a World Bank review of safety nets also included seasonal or emergency food assistance.
** In Cambodia, food assistance for work or assets programmes during 2012–2017 ranged from large-scale projects that the Government considered as part of its social protection system to small-scale interventions that fell outside the national system.
*** In Ecuador, programmes link smallholder farmer associations to school feeding.
**** In Turkey, the emergency social safety net is oriented towards meeting basic needs through multi-purpose cash transfers. WFP monitors food security and nutrition outcomes. The programme serves an emergency response function and is coordinated with national disaster management authorities, implemented in partnership with social protection ministries and aligned with the ministries' systems.
LIC = low-income country; LMIC = lower-middle-income country; UMIC = upper-middle-income country.
P = provision; S = support.
Light grey shading signifies activities that were not directly linked to government systems.
Sources: Evaluation team analysis based on review of case study documents and interviews. World Bank
http://data.worldbank.org/country for data on countries' income level.

Contributions of the support pathway

29.   The evaluation found that country offices made relevant and useful contributions to national social protection systems through cross-cutting technical and analytical support and advice. While aligned with the activities in the policy update, WFP's capacities for support may not always meet the broader needs of government systems.

30.   Many examples of WFP's contributions to technical assistance, analytical support, policy advice and capacity strengthening were noted.[13] Key informants reported that WFP's engagement in safety nets and social protection efforts has grown in recent years, in line with WFP's strategic shifts and the development of CSPs. A review of CSPs for case study countries found that all 12 country offices explicitly included reference to work in social protection and safety nets. Four CSPs cited recommendations from national zero hunger strategic reviews regarding engagement in

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[13] While the policy update listed these activities separately, the distinctions among them were often found to be blurred and WFP now frequently refers to all of them as country capacity strengthening or technical assistance.

social protection. All 12 CSPs mentioned social protection or safety nets either directly in their strategic outcome statements or in the accompanying activities and outputs. Shock-responsive social protection is a key activity in 10 of the 12 CSPs.

31.   Figure 2 shows the numbers of country offices that supported government safety nets or social protection initiatives, by the theme of the country capacity strengthening offered.[14]

Figure 2: WFP's support for government safety nets or social protection initiatives, by theme of country capacity strengthening, 2017
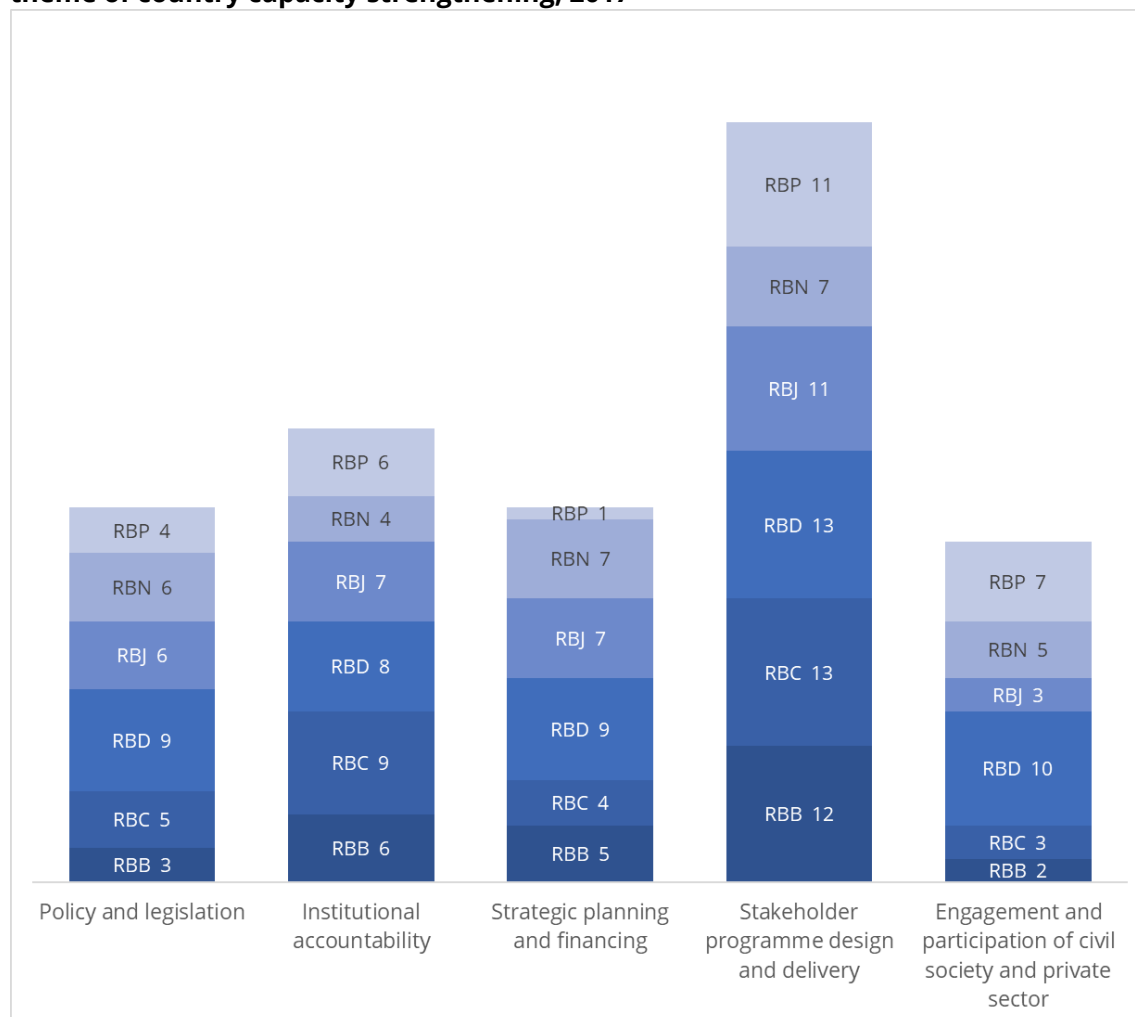
Source: Evaluation team's elaboration of the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit's analysis of 2017 data from standard project reports.
Abbreviations: RBB: Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific; RBC: Regional Bureau for the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; RBD: Regional Bureau for West Africa; RBJ: Regional Bureau for Southern Africa; RBN: Regional Bureau for East Africa; RBP: Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Contributions of the direct provision pathway

32.   WFP country offices designed and implemented activities that they considered to be safety nets. Sometimes, these activities were planned so that they could become components of national social protection systems. However, some activities seemed to operate in parallel with national

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[14] These five themes were defined in the corporate framework for country capacity strengthening (July 2017). (https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000011956/download/),
 where they are referred to as "pathways". WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit, 2017 internal analysis of standard project reports.

systems but with shorter duration and, therefore, of limited predictability, particularly for general food assistance and food assistance for assets.

33.   In 2017, 67 country offices reported having implemented various activities as safety nets, serving more than 41 million direct beneficiaries as shown in figure 3.[15]

Figure 3: WFP implementation of safety nets*
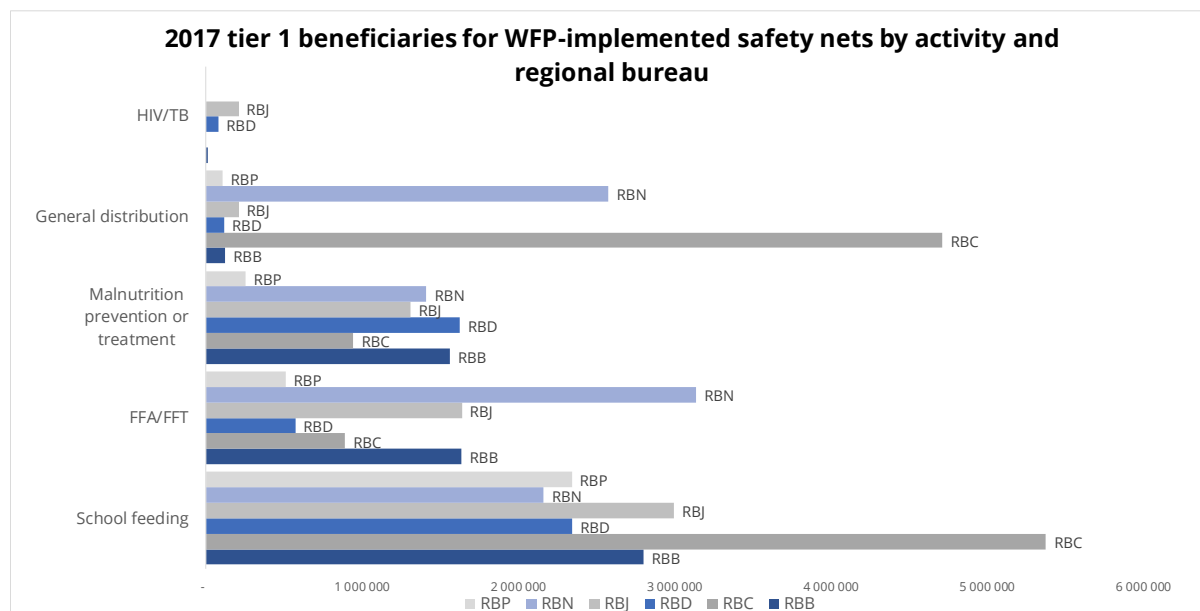
2017 tier 1 beneficiaries for WFP-implemented safety nets by activity and regional bureau

* According to the WFP Management Plan (2018–2020) (WFP/EB.2/2017/5-A/1/Rev.1) tier 1 beneficiaries are those who benefit directly from WFP assistance, while tier 2 and tier 3 beneficiaries benefit indirectly.
Source: Evaluation team's elaboration of the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit's analysis of 2017 data from standard project reports.
Abbreviations: RBB: Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific; RBC: Regional Bureau for the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; RBD: Regional Bureau for West Africa; RBJ: Regional Bureau for Southern Africa; RBN: Regional Bureau for East Africa; RBP: Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

34.   Some country offices, with support from regional bureaux, engaged with national social protection systems for emergency response or worked with governments to make existing social protection systems more shock-responsive. WFP often used the term "shock-responsive social protection" to describe efforts that reflect good practices and accepted definitions, such as activities for increasing the number of people reached by social assistance in response to a shock, but in some cases the term was used incorrectly, such as when referring to rice banks or seasonal food assistance that were not linked to social protection systems.

Partnerships

35.   WFP worked in partnership with other social protection actors, but high competition for resources and positioning limited collective impacts and posed challenges for national governments.

36.   Evidence was found of strong partnerships for specific initiatives with a wide range of actors at the global, regional and country levels, including through WFP's work to support South–South and triangular cooperation particularly through the Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil. At the same time, however, because of competition for resources from shared

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[15] The regional bureaux for the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and for East Africa represented outliers with substantially more direct (tier 1) beneficiaries of general food distributions than other regions, likely because of the heavy concentration of emergency and protracted crises in these regions. The Regional Bureau for the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia was an outlier in school feeding because of the large number of beneficiaries resulting from the Syrian crisis. The Regional Bureau for East Africa had a disproportionate number of direct beneficiaries in food assistance for assets or training interventions, likely because of the significant focus on working with smallholders in this region.

donors, these relationships were characterized by tension in some places. The evaluation found instances of direct competition for support from specific donors and national governments, especially related to nutrition activities and work with smallholder farmers.

37.   Some government stakeholders expressed concern about the inability of WFP and international actors to collaborate on common priorities for social assistance. This inability creates challenges for coordination and decisions regarding which programming models and priority outcomes to adopt, often in situations of scarce government resources and limited capacity. The evaluation team observed that the ideas and approaches adopted by governments were most often influenced by the ability of an agency to build and sustain relationships, understand government systems and position itself accordingly.

Issues related to gender, disability and accountability to affected populations

38.   There is little evidence that WFP's work in safety nets and social protection contributed to gender-transformative outcomes, specifically identified or addressed the needs of people with disabilities or enhanced accountability to affected populations in the cases studied.

39.   While the policy update and related guidance provided little direction on gender considerations, the Gender Office issued guidance on the integration of gender issues into social protection programming in 2017. Sex- and age-disaggregated data are collected in corporate reporting systems, and some standard project reports include sections on gender, but data related to safety nets and social protection cannot be isolated because activities are not "tagged" as safety nets and social protection in WFP's systems. A few cases were identified of school feeding programmes prioritizing the needs of girls, and women and their children were specifically targeted for some nutrition programmes, but examples of programmes designed to lead to gender-transformative outcomes were not found.

40.   WFP has no specific policy on persons with disabilities, and the policy update made no reference to them. The specific needs of this population group were sometimes considered during targeting and assessment, but the programmes reviewed did not differentiate assistance in accordance with these specific needs. The Emergency Social Safety Net in Turkey was a positive outlier in this regard in considering disability and inclusion in its targeting criteria, providing a "top-up" to their cash transfers and identifying and addressing barriers to access for persons with disabilities.

41.   Accountability to affected populations was also not well covered in the policy update or guidance. Some evaluation case studies provided evidence of country offices supporting governments in the development of feedback and complaint mechanisms. Examples of programme participants being consulted and involved in the design of programmes were rare, except for some small-scale efforts related to livelihoods and resilience work.

Factors explaining results

42.   The evaluation collected and analysed evidence on the factors that influence results through stakeholder interviews, a review of WFP documents and triangulation of the results observed with various characteristics of countries and WFP's capacities and resources in the country.

External factors

43.   WFP was widely viewed as a credible safety net actor based on its comparative advantages related to its field presence, focus on delivering assistance, logistics, links to local organizations, analytical capacities and ability to deliver at scale. Since 2012, WFP's experience with implementing large-scale cash-based programmes and adopting technology for the registration and management of beneficiaries have added to these strengths. These advantages create opportunities for WFP to contribute to sustainable, government-led programmes that alleviate hunger, improve nutrition and mitigate the effects of poverty and vulnerability. However, there is

a perceived risk that systems and tools developed by WFP for its own programming may not be compatible with or appropriate for governments' own systems. Transferring the skills and capacities to develop context-specific solutions may be a better approach.

44. The suggestion in the policy update that a country's stage of development, stability, capacity and risk exposure determine WFP's roles was not fully confirmed. Data from case studies revealed no link between a country's income, fragility or risk rating and WFP's roles. WFP's past programme portfolios, relationships with government actors and country office leadership, the roles of other partners and funding patterns had greater bearing on WFP's engagement and contributions.

45. Most funding for WFP activities in safety nets and social protection was short-term, limiting predictability and challenging WFP's ability to commit to long-term programming, including country capacity strengthening. It was reportedly difficult to convince donors that WFP has a key role to play in long-term programming, including social protection, although alignment with government initiatives led to increased donor interest in a few cases.[16] The 2018 IDS report[17] noted that short-term, unpredictable funding puts WFP at a competitive disadvantage and makes it difficult to engage with systems that require reliable and sustainable flows of funding over extended periods.

Internal factors

46. The evaluation found that WFP's ability to analyse, understand and relate to government structures, political developments and overarching social protection systems determine how relevant and influential it can be. Country offices with dedicated staff for the monitoring and analysis of legislative and budgetary developments, administrative structures and political priorities were better positioned than those without such resources. The evaluation found that investing in the development and maintenance of relationships with core government staff and partners is critical, although continuity is a major challenge for WFP and government counterparts.

47. Where WFP has a well-developed understanding of government systems, policies and politics, it can contribute effectively by influencing national social protection systems through both incremental support to programmes and systems and advice during significant systems changes. Changes in government structures, policies and leadership pose risks to WFP's positioning when not expected, but also provide opportunities if WFP can adjust nimbly to new actors and structural changes.

48. Since 2012, WFP's corporate investments in safety nets and social protection have reportedly been minimal.[18] Centralized efforts to build internal capacities, enhance learning and provide technical support to regional bureaux and country offices have been made only for projects with earmarked funding from donors. This parallels the even more limited corporate support for country capacity strengthening efforts, as found in the evaluation of the capacity development policy update (2009).[19] WFP's potential for credibly and consistently positioning itself and contributing to social protection requires greater attention from WFP's global leadership and more resources if it is to be fully realized.

49. WFP's systems for and investments in human resources were found to be ill-suited to an increased role in social protection. Numerous evaluations and audits since the fit for purpose

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[16] See the summary report on the strategic evaluation of WFP's support for enhanced resilience for similar conclusions. WFP/EB.1/2019/7-A.

[17] Sabates-Wheeler, R. and Devereux, S. 2018. *Social Protection and the World Food Programme.*, WFP Occasional Paper No. 25. https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000073283/download/.

[18] Staff turnover and lack of systematic consolidated tracking of funding sources for and amounts of headquarters and regional bureau investments in capacity building for safety nets and social protection limited the ability of the evaluation team to fully analyse financial trends during the period covered.

[19] WFP/EB.1/2017/6-A/Rev.1.

initiative of 2012[20] and the people strategy of 2014[21] have highlighted the need for WFP to adapt its workforce so that it includes the competencies needed to support achievement of WFP's Strategic Objectives, including competencies in upstream engagement in policy dialogue and work with governments. Standard job profiles do not cover such skills, however, and the staff rotation system makes it difficult for country office staff to develop the relationships needed for networking and establishing political influence before moving to other WFP offices.

50.   The use of short-term consultants has enabled country offices to fill some critical gaps but does not represent a sustainable method for meeting human resources needs. The evaluation did not find substantial progress in the systematic recruitment of experts from outside WFP to regular staff positions. National staff played critical roles in enabling WFP's work in social protection, providing insights into local conditions and continuity of WFP staffing.

51.   Strategic reviews and consultations for the development of CSPs frequently highlighted the importance of working through national social protection systems in order to achieve SDG 2. Key stakeholders felt that these processes provided a good opportunity to engage government actors in discussion of WFP's support for social protection.

52.   Other WFP systems, processes and structures are unsupportive of a coherent shift towards a greater role in national social protection systems. The strategic results frameworks for 2012–2017 and the corporate results framework approved in 2016 did not enable country offices to monitor and record their contributions to safety nets or social protection. New social protection indicators were approved in November 2018 in the revised corporate results framework, along with the option of "tagging" activities that are related to social protection. However, there is a risk that because such tagging is voluntary, the data it generates will be of limited use.

CONCLUSIONS

53.   Engagement in safety nets and social protection is a cross-cutting element in much of WFP's work rather than a theme for specific programmes. The evaluation identifies the challenges that this poses, particularly given WFP's strong focus on implementation of specific programmes and the early stages of its shift towards more integrated, long-term programming through CSPs. The findings of the evaluation present evidence of clear strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges as WFP looks to its future roles in social protection and safety nets.

54.   *Strengths.* The policy update was relevant when adopted and the topic remains important to stakeholders throughout WFP. The update outlined a clear rationale for WFP's engagement in safety nets, created authorization for such work and provided legitimacy to support country office programming and positioning. The policy also introduced dual approaches through which WFP supports national government efforts while also continuing to implement activities directly.

55.   Creation of the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit reinvigorated implementation of the policy. The guidance produced to support policy implementation was generally good quality. The e-learning modules supported learning and provided a link between the policy and practice. The recent dissemination of knowledge products, establishment of a community of practice and increased partnerships and efforts to engage in global social protection forums further enhanced policy implementation.

56.   The expansion of WFP's experience of implementing safety nets at scale and the enhancement of country offices' abilities through capacity strengthening and partnerships position WFP well to continue contributing to social protection systems. The successes of country offices and regional bureaux in using social protection to improve food security and nutrition can be leveraged to expand work in this area.

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[20] WFP/EB.1/2017/11-C.
[21] WFP/EB.2/2014/4-B.

57.   *Weaknesses.* The policy update had a narrow focus on WFP's role in safety nets rather than on WFP's position in relation to broader social protection systems. It neglected gender-responsive social protection and disability considerations. Equivocal language in the update and lack of a clear results framework reduced its value as a tool for providing direction. Poor dissemination of the policy update and guidance resulted in weak uptake throughout WFP.

58.   Investments in the building of internal capacity to support policy implementation were limited and there was little evidence of senior management focusing on safety nets and social protection. This was coupled with an overall lack of resources for country capacity strengthening throughout WFP. Human resource limitations and gaps in expertise for upstream policy analysis and engagement pose challenges for WFP's work in social protection. No overall knowledge management and learning strategy for social protection was in place and WFP's monitoring and reporting systems did not consistently or adequately capture results related to safety nets and social protection.

59.   *Opportunities.* Social protection is an essential means of sustainably working towards zero hunger. Commitments in the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021), CSPs and the 2030 Agenda affirm the centrality of national governments in their countries' development, which will require WFP to support the development and enhancement of national social protection systems.

60.   The growing experience of social protection among country offices and regional bureaux provides a platform for further development of WFP's approach. WFP's strengths can complement those of other international actors, potentially leading to partnerships based on a clear WFP "offer". The overall growth in instruments for national social protection and emphasis on increasing access to and coverage and quality of social protection programmes present opportunities for greater WFP contributions. As noted in the 2019 strategic evaluation of WFP's support to enhanced resilience,[22] global interest in bridging humanitarian response and social protection and a focus on the humanitarian–development–peace nexus further increase the relevance of WFP's work in this area.

61.   *Threats.* Senior management's prioritization of WFP's work in social protection is unclear. As a cross-cutting topic rather than a programme activity, it is difficult to define and operationalize WFP's social protection work and ensure that it is coordinated throughout the organization. Such definition and coordination are prerequisites for a coherent approach and for ensuring that appropriate resources are allocated to delivering concrete results in this area.

62.   WFP culture remains largely operational rather than systems- or policy-oriented. Social protection work requires a systems-oriented approach and alignment with government priorities. Interest in shock-responsive social protection is growing but, without proper context analysis, may lead to overestimation of the capacities of national systems. Another perceived risk is that WFP will try to transfer tools developed for its own programmes rather than strengthening the capacities of governments to design and implement tools and systems that are appropriate to national situations.

63.   Working in partnership with other actors will be critically important in avoiding unnecessary competition with them and fragmentation of support for governments. Unpredictable short-term funding and donors' perceptions of WFP's role present further threats to the expansion and enhancement of WFP's social protection work.

64.   *Summary.* When aligned with national systems, WFP's work in social protection can play an important role in sustainably addressing food and nutrition needs at scale. To achieve the vision of a world free of hunger, WFP needs to expand its engagement with social protection actors and systems. Country offices and regional bureaux have demonstrated interest in, and a willingness to rethink, how WFP can contribute to social protection for more lasting and sustainable results. Recent investments and organizational changes to enhance staff capacity and systems will support

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[22] WFP/EB.1/2019/7-A.

continued results. Greater leadership attention and prioritization of social protection work is needed to amplify and support these efforts and thereby maximize WFP's contributions to social protection systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

65.   The following recommendations draw on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation. They were informed by inputs provided by a wide-array of stakeholders, including at a January 2019 workshop with WFP staff from headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices.

RECOMMENDATIONS	Action by	Implementation deadline and priority
Recommendation 1: Prioritization and leadership. WFP leadership should confirm and sustain its commitment to supporting nationally-led social protection programmes. A strategy for engagement in social protection should be developed and widely disseminated. The strategy should include: • a clear definition of social protection endorsed by WFP with an outline of the boundaries of WFP's work; • a theory of change that articulates the implications of social protection as defined by WFP, including what it means for WFP's activities and programmes; and • a costed implementation plan, budget and resource mobilization strategy, which could be embedded in a broader programming strategy for WFP's support to national systems and country capacity strengthening.	• Assistant Executive Director of Operations Services Department (OS), Director of Policy and Programme Division (OSZ)	December 2019 High priority
Recommendation 2: Cross-functional coordination and coherence. Strengthen mechanisms for coordination in social protection in order to ensure coherent cross-functional approaches. Disseminate guidance on implementation of the strategy and incorporate the guidance into other activity-specific and overarching programme strategies, policies and guidance, especially those related to country capacity strengthening, in coordination with other units at headquarters – including those for operation services, human resources, performance management and reporting, supply chains, emergency preparedness and response and information technology – and in consultation with regional bureaux and country offices.	• Assistant Executive Director of OS, Director of OSZ	Mid-2020 Medium priority
Recommendation 3: Knowledge management and positioning. WFP should develop a knowledge management component of the social protection strategy that builds on existing activities, consolidates evidence, learning and good practices and facilitates adaptation to changes in the	• Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit (OSZIS) in consultation with	Mid-2020 High priority

RECOMMENDATIONS	Action by	Implementation deadline and priority
environment, including advances in food security-focused, nutrition-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches to social protection.	the Innovation and Change Management Division and regional bureaux	
Recommendation 4: Internal capacity. Identify the dedicated human, technical and financial resource requirements for building sustainable internal capacities in social protection, including the resources needed for shared, cross-functional activities: • Provide additional resources and training opportunities to WFP staff in all relevant functions with a view to enhancing their understanding of and engagement in policy, public financing, public administration systems and debates on aspects of social protection such as targeting and conditionality. • Develop an approach to human resources that enables units to establish the best balance among the building, buying or borrowing of human resources and is based on a review of standard national and international job profiles, a mapping of social protection competencies and gap analysis against the strategy, development of additional specialist job profiles for social protection as needed, training plans, recruitment of experts from outside WFP to fill gaps and adjustments to human resource policies as needed. • Identify the core capacity requirements and submit a financial request for these to be included in the next management plan.	• Assistant Executive Director of OS and OSZ with support from the Human Resources Division	March 2020 High priority

RECOMMENDATIONS	Action by	Implementation deadline and priority
Recommendation 5: Monitoring and reporting. Standardize monitoring of and reporting on WFP's contributions to social protection in order to establish a reliable base of quantitative and qualitative evidence on WFP's role and added value and enhance learning. Building on recent revisions to the corporate results framework, WFP should: • require the tagging of activities that contribute to social protection based on clear quality standards such as timeliness, predictability and links to national strategies and systems in order to enable analysis of outputs and outcomes disaggregated by category of vulnerability such as sex, age and disability; • engage with custodians of SDG Target 1.3 with a view to identifying ways of reporting on WFP's contributions and supporting country offices in reporting on country-specific contributions in national and global SDG reporting formats; • develop a monitoring framework for further improving performance measurement of social protection activities linked to the strategy and theory of change, and use this as a basis for future evaluations with mandatory reporting on standard indicators and tagging in the next corporate results framework; and • produce an annual or biannual summary report on WFP's social protection contributions (or standardize a format for integrating such a report into the annual performance report) that supports internal learning and external positioning.	• Performance Management and Monitoring Division with support from OSZIS	March 2020 High priority

1. Introduction

1.1 EVALUATION FEATURES

Evaluation rationale, scope and stakeholders

1.   **Rationale:** The Update of WFP's Safety Nets Policy: The Role of Food Assistance in Social Protection (hereafter referred to as the 'Policy Update') was approved in June 2012, superseding a 2004 policy.[1] Now in its sixth year, the Policy Update is due for an evaluation as per the WFP Policy on Policy Formulation[2] and WFP Evaluation Policy (2016-2021).[3] The WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit has expressed its intent to develop a new social protection policy or strategy.

2.   **Objectives and scope:** WFP policy evaluations serve to assess the quality of a policy, its results and the related explanatory factors with dual purposes of learning and accountability. As set forth in the terms of reference (ToR) provided in Annex 1, the two objectives of the evaluation were:

- Accountability – Assess and report on the quality and results of the policy, its associated guidance and activities to implement it

- Learning – Determine the reasons why certain changes occurred or not, draw lessons and derive good practices and pointers for learning. Provide evidence-based findings to assist in decision-making around further implementation and eventual development of a new policy on social protection.

3.   The evaluation covered the period 2012 to 2017, but also took note of more recent developments in the countries studied and at headquarters to ensure timeliness and relate to ongoing[4] and potential future changes. It considered the Policy Update, corporate guidance (produced in 2014 and 2017) and tools (including an e-learning training tool), efforts to generate related evidence, activities to implement or support safety nets and social protection, WFP's strategic plans and other policies, and the external operating environment.

4.   **Stakeholders and users:** The Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit (OSZIS) within the Policy and Programme Division is the primary intended user of this evaluation. Other stakeholders and users will include WFP's senior leadership, policy-makers and programme designers in headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices. The evaluation should be useful to external actors, including WFP's governmental and non-governmental partners.

5.   The evaluation integrated feedback from global, regional and country-based actors at different stages in the evaluation. Given stakeholders' critical advisory role, their interests in the Policy Update and the evaluation were analyzed in the inception phase based on available information from documents and a limited number of inception phase interviews.

6.   Based on the key stakeholder groups listed in the terms of reference, a detailed stakeholder analysis matrix was developed and included in the inception report. The evaluation team drew from the analysis to inform its consultations and obtain a range of views on WFP's work in safety nets and social protection. The matrix identifies the range of stakeholders, their role in

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[1] WFP and Food-Based Safety Nets: Concepts, Experiences and Future Programming Opportunities, WFP/EB.3/2004/4-A, 17 September 2004.
[2] WFP Policy Formulation, WFP/EB.A/2011/5-B, 21 April 2011.
[3] WFP/EB.2/2015/4-A/Rev.1
[4] For example, the WFP Integrated Road Map (IRM) currently being implemented, which consists of the Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and Corporate Results Framework, the Financial Framework Review and the Policy on Country Strategic Plans.

relation to the policy, the evaluation, and their interest in the evaluation.

7.   A graphical representation of the stakeholders, and a summary analysis of (i) their interests or stake in the policy and (ii) their relative influence over the Policy Update design and implementation is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Stakeholder influence and interest
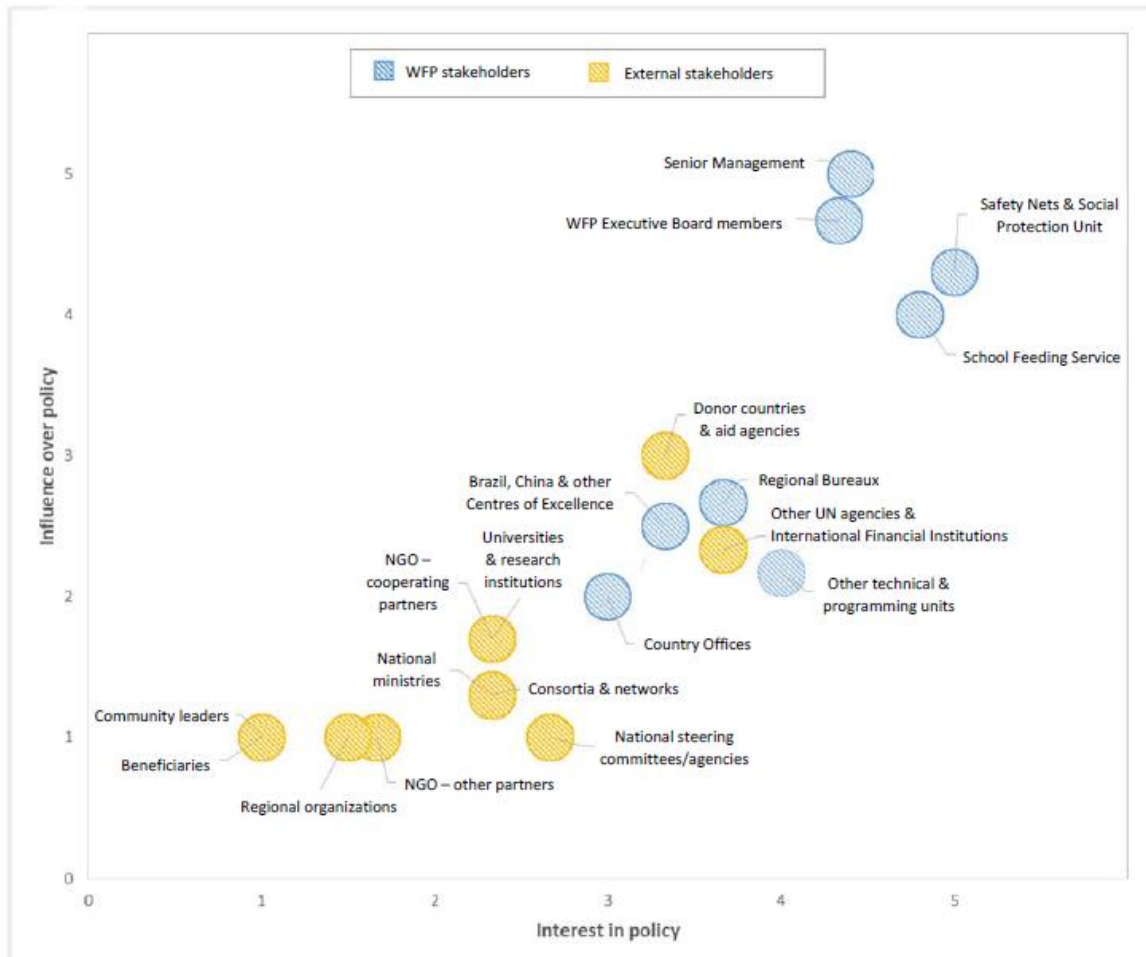
Source: Evaluation team analysis based on interviews and document review.

1.   The following considerations about stakeholders are noted:

▪ Stakeholders have different understandings of safety nets and the criteria that qualify interventions as such, both internally and externally. This was taken into consideration and accommodated during consultations.

▪ WFP's 2014 guidance on safety nets indicates that safety nets arrangements are country government owned, or in the process of handover, or in alignment with government. Accordingly, government entities are key stakeholders for assessing the relevance and results of the Policy Update; they include ministries and steering and/or inter-ministerial committees or agencies.

▪ Considerations for gender balance of consulted stakeholders were made, but were limited by a selection of interlocutors based on their respective role within WFP or partner organization.

▪ The 2014 guidelines call for gender-sensitive social protection in designing, implementing

and monitoring safety net interventions. More recent corporate guidance would call for gender-responsive programming and the 2015 Gender Policy calls for gender-transformative approaches. As in other WFP interventions, gender analyses should be carried out, as well as the incorporation of findings in programming, and the prioritization of gender requirements throughout the programme cycle. Particular attention was paid during consultations to assess the extent to which such an approach was adopted and promoted by internal stakeholders.

▪ Beneficiaries were not interviewed for the evaluation due to its global scope. Issues related to how programmes addressed accountability to affected populations (AAP) were considered through dedicated evaluation sub-questions (see Section 2.1 Finding 15).

▪ The Office of Evaluation established a governance structure for this evaluation, which included an internal reference group of subject-matter experts working on safety nets programming, a larger consultative group made up of senior WFP staff/Directors at the headquarters and regional bureaux level, and an expert technical panel composed of individuals external to WFP with technical expertise and experience with safety nets and social protection from a food security and nutrition perspective, including gender equality concepts and components.

Methodology

2.   The evaluation was conducted by an independent team of evaluators/experts (ten international and one national) between June and November 2018, with data collection in September and October 2018. It was guided by WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEV), which developed the terms of reference (see Annex 1), supported the evaluation team throughout the evaluation design and data collection and provided quality assurance for the evaluation process and key outputs.

3.   The evaluation methodology was designed to answer the questions in the evaluation matrix (see Annex 2). It used theory-based approaches, including reconstructing a theory of change based on two key pathways from the Policy Update, an adapted contribution analysis, global analysis of data from standard project reports (SPRs) and good practice comparisons. A detailed description of the methodological approach is found in Annex 3.

4.   Given data limitations, the evaluation relied considerably on primary source data from 250 key informants. The following data-collection methods were used:

▪ Twelve country case studies, five through field visits and seven through remote desk studies (including key informant interviews and review of documents and records)

▪ Global and regional key informant interviews covering all regional bureaux, relevant headquarter units, partners and other actors

▪ Review of global and regional WFP documents and records

▪ Analysis of 2016 and 2017 standard project report analysis conducted by the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit at headquarters[5]

▪ Review of external literature including studies, evaluations and the strategy and policy frameworks of other key organizations.

5.   Countries were selected for case studies based on a tiered approach. First, countries were

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[5] The Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit conducted an analysis of all SPRs from 2016 and 2017[5] to identify the landscape and nature of WFP work in safety nets and social protection. The 2017 SPR analysis differed in certain fields of analysis and notably added a layer of stakeholder feedback by soliciting the input of RBs regarding the categorization of CO work. This evaluation used the 2017 data given the additional validation by RBs.

excluded if they had not been included in the 2016 analysis of standard project reports conducted by the WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit. Next, countries were divided by WFP regional bureau to ensure geographic balance. Within each region, countries were then assessed to identify a diverse sample and good opportunities for learning. Selection criteria included: (i) the availability of data regarding WFP operations and national social protection systems; (ii) country capacity, stability and income; (iii) size of the country office; (iv) whether the social protection system was government owned or safety nets were WFP operated; (v) the activities employed by WFP; (vi) the number of recent evaluations and audits conducted; and (vii) stakeholder suggestions gathered during the inception phase. Figure 2 shows a map of the case study countries.

Figure 2: Map of case study countries
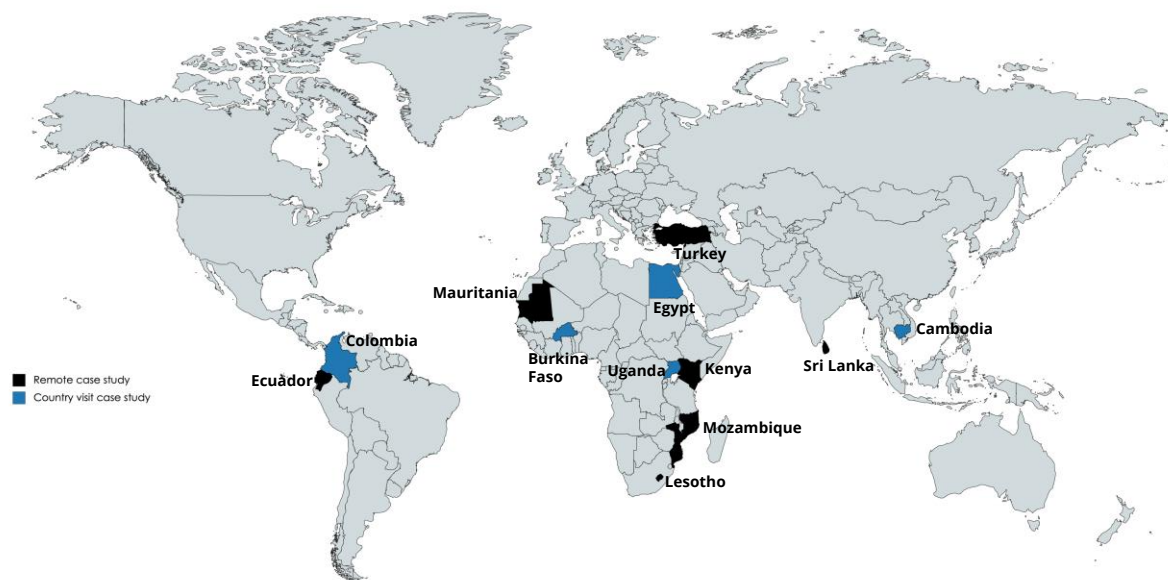
Source: Evaluation team

6. The evaluation considered gender equality and equity issues in its conduct by seeking sex- and age-disaggregated data and analysis. These issues were also considered in the focus of evaluation inquiry on the ways in which the Policy Update did or did not adequately promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The extent to which programmes considered the specific needs of people with disabilities was also assessed.

7. Key limitations included inconsistent conceptual clarity within WFP country offices regarding the classification of activities as safety nets, sometimes contradicting WFP guidance regarding connection to government systems, predictability and duration. Securing country offices' agreement to participate in case studies took longer to schedule than planned. As anticipated in the evaluation inception report, corporate reporting systems and results frameworks provided virtually no comparable data regarding the activities, outputs and outcomes of WFP programmes related to safety nets and social protection, thus limiting the ability of the evaluation to comprehensively assess related results. In consultation with the evaluation manager of the Office of Evaluation, the planned phone survey of a sample of country offices was deemed unrealistic after encountering challenges scheduling country offices for case study work and was thus not conducted. However, additional regional bureaux interviews were carried out to make up for this gap to some extent. The overall timeline for data collection and reporting was highly compressed, limiting some potential follow-up inquiries at all levels.

8. Despite these limitations, the evaluation findings have been developed based on triangulated evidence from multiple types of data and sources and are believed to be reliable.

Reliability was also enhanced through debriefs with each county office at the end of field missions to confirm impressions, a global debriefing held at the end of data collection, as well as an interactive feedback workshop with WFP stakeholders from headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices involved in the evaluation.

1.2 CONTEXT

9.   The use of safety nets and social protection by national governments has grown since 2012. By 2015, all governments around the world had at least one safety net mechanism in place.[6] Social protection is now covered explicitly in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under SDG 1, which calls for an end to extreme poverty including through ensuring social protection for persons who are poor and vulnerable.

10.   WFP's focus on safety nets and social protection has grown considerably as well, especially at the country level. WFP continues to directly implement safety net activities while it increasingly provides capacity strengthening and technical support to national government social protection systems, in line with the strategic shift from "implementer to enabler" as first set out in WFP Strategic Plan (2008-2013).

International Discussion, Trends and Events

11.   The global landscape on safety nets and social protection is constantly evolving and has undertaken some important shifts since the Policy Update in 2012. The following issues are relevant to the 2012 Policy Update:

- Expansion of safety nets: Governments and policy-makers increasingly see safety nets and, especially, cash transfers as a vital tool for poverty reduction and managing risk, including in fragile settings[7] . From 2000 to 2017, the number of developing countries with social safety nets increased from 72 to 149. The average spending on safety net programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean increased from 0.3 percent of GDP in 2000 to more than 1.5 percent in 2015[8]. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, many governments are creating and expanding flagship safety net programmes. However, low income countries lag in terms of coverage, benefit value and social assistance spending[9] .

- Increased experience and evidence on building on social protection systems in times of shock/disaster: Since 2012, national social protection systems have been used, modified or coordinated to respond to major shocks in places such as Ecuador, Mali, Philippines, Argentina, Haiti, Nepal, Ukraine, Lesotho, Mozambique, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka. The evidence base on this topic significantly increased as a result of a three-year study on shock responsive social protection[10] (in addition to other regional and global studies. The term "shock responsive social protection" is now more widely used but often loosely and inconsistently.[11]

- Global increases in humanitarian cash transfers: Increased WFP's provision of cash transfers and vouchers, notably in response to the Syrian crisis, has helped drive global increases in humanitarian cash transfers, which in 2016 amounted to USD 2.8 billion of

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[6] World Bank, State of Social Safety Nets, 2015 (page 1).
[7] Oxford Policy Management, Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Literature review, 2015
[8] World Bank, Closing the Gap: The State of Social Safety Nets, 2017
[9] World Bank, The state of social safety nets, 2018
[10] O'Brien et al. Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research, 2018
[11] Research has emphasized the importance of preparedness in relation to shock-responsive social protection. Taking measures to establish response capacities and links to national social protection systems in times when no disaster is occurring can facilitate more timely and adequate response.

the value of global humanitarian assistance[12]. WFP projects that, in 2018, 37 percent of its transfers will be through cash.[13] The common use of cash transfers via social assistance and humanitarian assistance provides potential entry points for using social protection systems to respond to shocks.

12.   Interest in social protection has been sustained since the Policy Update was adopted, including emphasis at key development and humanitarian events, creating opportunities for WFP to engage in key policy discussions on safety nets and social protection. Key events include:

- United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (2012): The Rio +20 conference led to the launch of the SDGs in 2015. For WFP, the result has been a shift in strategy and reporting to align with appropriate SDG 2 and 17 targets. For safety nets globally, the SDG 1.3 target signals a commitment to increasing social protection (including a social protection floor) as part of SDG 1 to end poverty.

- South-South learning fora on social protection (2012, 2014, 2015, 2018): These are World Bank events. Topics have included adaptive social protection (2018), social protection in urban contexts (2015), social protection and labour systems (2014) and building resilience (World Bank et al., 2018). WFP efforts in South-South cooperation align well with these topics.

- World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and the Grand Bargain (2016): the World Humanitarian Summit included the commitment to deliver humanitarian cash transfers through, linked to, or aligned with, social protection systems; donors also pledged to increase social protection programmes and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms to build resilience in fragile contexts[14] (Grand Bargain, 2016). WFP serves as a co-convener for the Grand Bargain work stream on cash.

- The International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement (2017): Led by UNICEF and the European Commission and co-organized by WFP, this conference sought to bring attention to the prospects of using humanitarian response to address the needs of forcibly displaced people by building upon or creating social protection systems.

Links to Gender Policy

13.   The WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020) provides the standards for ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment in "all types of interventions, from emergency to safety net and recovery programmes". The policy establishes four objectives, each of which is applicable to WFP work in safety nets and social protection:

- Food assistance adapted to different needs – women, men, girls and boys benefit from food assistance programmes and activities that are adapted to their different needs and capacities

- Equal participation – women and men participate equally in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-transformative food security and nutrition programmes and policies

- Decision-making by women and girls – women and girls have increased power in decision-making regarding food security and nutrition in households, communities and societies

- Gender and protection – food assistance does no harm to the safety, dignity and integrity

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[12] Cash Learning Partnership, the state of the World's cash report Cash transfer programming in humanitarian aid, 2018
[13] WFP Management Plan (2018-2020)
[14] The Grand Bargain, A shared commitment to better serve people in need, 2016

of the women, men, girls and boys receiving it, and is provided in ways that respect their rights.

14.   The Gender Policy (2015-2020) establishes requirements for analyzing and using sex- and age-disaggregated data in the design of programmes and policies and calls for mainstreaming of gender considerations into all phases of a programme cycle.

15.   Although the Gender Policy (2015-2020) does not make further explicit reference to social protection and safety nets, its four objectives apply to all WFP work including any related to safety nets and social protection. Additional gender-related guidance and tools were reviewed to examine the linkages to work in safety nets and social protection.

16.   The Policy Update notes that safety nets should be "gender sensitive" (sic) in the section regarding principles and lessons learned but does not provide further guidance on gender. Subsequent safety nets and social protection materials were analyzed for their coverage of gender (see Section 2.1).

Definitions

17.   The Policy Update did not provide a clear WFP-specific definition of safety nets. Like the 2004 policy, it relied on information/definitions from others and uses non-committal language that results in ambiguity about the exact position or beliefs of WFP.

18.   The Policy Update discussed the definition of safety nets by stating that "there is growing consensus in defining safety nets as 'formal or informal non-contributory transfers provided to people vulnerable to or living in poverty, malnutrition and other forms of deprivation'". This was generally consistent with the World Bank's use of the term in 2012 and since then. In its 2013 social protection strategy, UNICEF similarly noted the "emerging consensus that safety nets refer to non-contributory and publicly financed transfers including conditional and unconditional, cash and in-kind and public works programmes". Therefore, multiple key stakeholders (World Bank, WFP, UNICEF[15]) were using similar terminology on safety nets in 2012.

19.   However, there were different interpretations of the term "safety nets". The 2013 UNICEF strategy noted a lack of consensus on whether safety nets are poverty-targeted and whether they are temporary or long-term measures; that strategy used the term "social safety nets" to refer to temporary or short-term programmes and the term "social transfers" to refer to transfers that are a sub-set of social protection[16] . In 2012, the World Bank used the terms "safety nets", "social assistance" and "social transfers" relatively synonymously and the 2012 WFP Policy Update also noted that the three terms all refer to non-contributory transfers.

Table 1: Areas of consensus and ambiguity on the concept of safety nets in 2012[17]

Areas of consensus	Areas of ambiguity
• Safety nets are a subset of social protection • Safety nets provide support to poor and vulnerable households	• Whether safety nets are always government-owned • Whether safety nets are longer-term or shorter-term interventions

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[15] In 2012, the ILO adopted a recommendation regarding the establishment of Social Protection Floors (http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R202, accessed on 2 August 2018). ILO terminology at the time appears to focus more broadly on social security and social protection without reference to safety nets.

[16] UNICEF, Social Protection Strategic Framework, 2013

[17] Based on evaluation team analysis of the Policy Update and comparator documents from UNICEF (2013) and the World Bank (2012).

• Safety nets commonly take the form of schemes providing cash transfers, vouchers, and in-kind transfers, as well as school feeding and public works • Transfers provided can be conditional or unconditional	• Whether, and under which circumstances, humanitarian assistance can be classified as a safety net

Source: Evaluation team analysis.

20. This evaluation was guided by the definition of "safety nets" used in the Policy Update. In interviews and consultations, the evaluation team sometimes used the term "social assistance" in cases where stakeholders were less familiar with "safety net" terminology, given that the terms have the same or very similar meanings.

21. Although the Policy Update focuses on safety nets, it situates this work within the broader realm of social protection. Over the course of the period covered by the evaluation, WFP has increasingly framed its roles as contributing to social protection systems. The evaluation, therefore, explored both WFP's direct role in providing and supporting safety nets as well as its broader contributions to social protection (see Pathways in Figure 5). Table 2 provides definitions for other related terms that were used in the evaluation process.

Table 2: Definitions used by the evaluation

Term	Definition	Source	Notes
Safety net	Non-contributory transfers provided to people vulnerable to or living in poverty, malnutrition and other forms of deprivation. Examples: unconditional and conditional cash transfers, food and in-kind transfers, including school feeding and public works	WFP's Safety Nets Policy Update (2012)	The description in the Policy Update is narrower than World Bank's current use of the term, which includes not only transfers but also fee waivers and targeted subsidies
Social assistance	Non-contributory interventions that transfer resources or provide economic support to households, particularly those considered to be poor or vulnerable	Holmes and Lwanga-Ntale, (2012) Used in OPM (2015)	Social assistance includes social transfers, public works, fee waivers and subsidies. The World Bank uses "social assistance" and "safety net" synonymously
Social protection	The broad set of arrangements and instruments designed to protect members of society from shocks and stresses over their life-cycle	WFP and Social Protection – Options for Framing WFP's Assistance to National Social Protection in CSPs (2017)	Social protection includes non-contributory social assistance (i.e. safety nets), social care, social insurance and labour market policies. Interventions can be categorized under protective, promotive and transformative measures. (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004)

Term	Definition	Source	Notes
Shock responsive social protection[18]	The use of social protection systems to mitigate the impact of large-scale shocks and/or supporting households affected by such shocks	Based on research from OPM (2018)	Five options for shock-responsive adaptation are: (i) design tweaks, (ii) piggybacking, (iii) vertical expansion, (iv) horizontal expansion, and (v) alignment of social protection and humanitarian interventions. (O'Brien et al., 2018)
Public works	Social protection instruments with the dual objectives of providing temporary employment and generating and/or maintaining some labour-intensive infrastructure projects and social services. (Can include food assistance for assets if it meets these criteria)	World Bank (K. Subbarao et al., 2013)	Public works are labour-intensive and typically have objectives related to mitigating temporary or structural employment crisis, in response to economic shocks, for poverty relief and as a bridge to more permanent employment. (K. Subbarao et al., 2013)

Source: Evaluation team analysis of literature.

22.   The fit of WFP activities within broader national social protection systems, and the evaluand for this evaluation, can be seen in Figure 3.

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[18] Closely related to the concept of shock responsive social protection, the World Bank is exploring "adaptive social protection" to refer to efforts using social protection systems to build resilience of households and respond to major shocks.

Figure 3: Typology of social protection programmes[19]
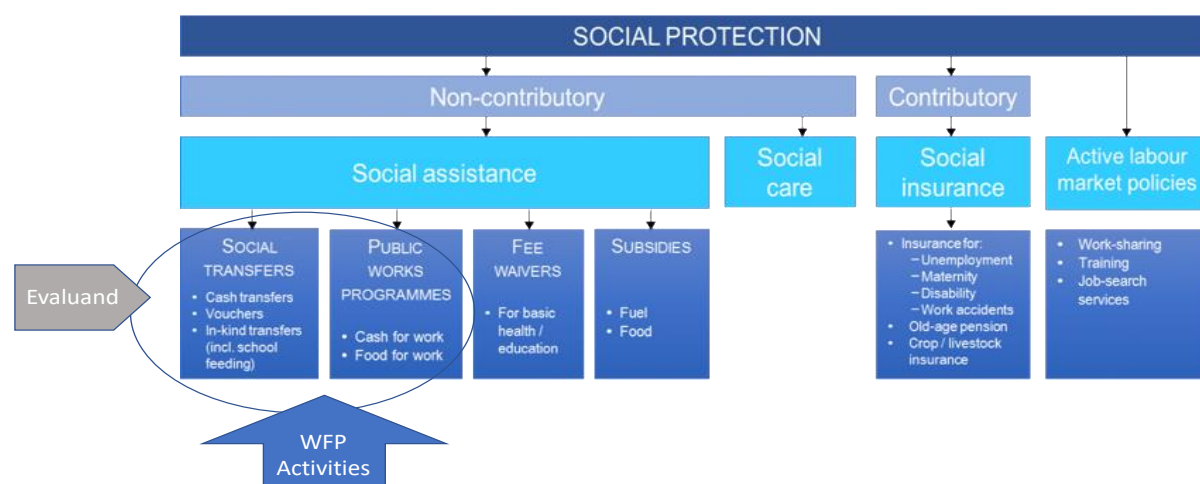
Source: Evaluation ToR, from Oxford Policy Management, Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems Research – Synthesis Report, 2018, p6.

1.3 WFP'S SAFETY NETS POLICY UPDATE (2012) AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

23. This section provides additional information on the implementation of the Policy Update comprising: (i) internal processes that influenced its implementation; (ii) the history leading up to its development; (iii) a constructed theory of change (ToC) based on it; (iv) its goals and objectives; (v) WFP activities to implement it; and (vi) how the Policy Update fits within WFP's hierarchy of normative guidance. The theory of change was developed to inform the sub-questions and indicators in the evaluation matrix (EM) and the approaches to be used in the evaluation.

Internal Processes

24. Internal processes within WFP have affected the Policy Update. The Integrated Road Map (IRM), adopted in late 2016, introduced a number of elements supporting longer-term programming including the Strategic Plan (2017-2021), alignment with SDGs 2 and 17 and the Policy on Country Strategic Plans. This last policy replaces project documents with five-year plans based on a thorough analysis of the country context (hunger and related needs and national systems/policies). A revised version of the accompanying Corporate Results Framework (CRF) was presented to the Executive Board in November 2018, with additional voluntary measures for WFP contributions to social protection, capacity strengthening and other SDGs (including SDG 1, which covers social protection). The organizational structure for WFP units relevant to the Policy Update has shifted multiple times since it was adopted. This includes growth in staff resources for the Social Protection and Safety Net Unit over the past two years and, more recently, the separation and elevation of the school feeding service with the establishment of a Director and increased investment to match its prioritization by WFP leadership. A global meeting on social protection was hosted by the unit in Rome for the first time in March 2018, including selected participants from regional bureaux and country offices. More information regarding key internal events and processes can be found in Section 2.1 and Annex 4.

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[19] Although the Policy Update emphasizes WFP activities in social transfers and public works, the evaluation will consider evidence of WFP contributions to broader social protection systems through its support of national actors.

Figure 4: Timeline of key WFP's safety nets and social protection milestones

2004-2010
1st Safety Nets Policy adopted by EB (2004)

Unveiling Social Safety Nets Paper (2009)

School Feeding policy (2009)

2011
Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Role in Social Protection and Safety Nets

2012
Safety Nets Policy Update adopted by EB

WFP joins newly formed Social Protection Inter-Agency Coordination Board

2013
Revised School Feeding Policy builds on Safety Nets Policy Update and situates School Feeding within SP frameworks

2014
Safety Nets Guidelines introduced

2015
RBP SP for Zero Hunger strategy and training

2016
Safety Nets e-learning course launched in English and Spanish

IDS survey on WFP role in SP

2017
WFP and Social Protection Guidance Note issued

OPM / WFP case studies on shock responsive SP in LAC

World Bank / WFP case studies on bridging SNs & humanitarian assistance

2018
Safety Nets e-learning course launched in Arabic and French

IDS Occasional Paper on SP and WFP

1st SP Global Meeting

2008-2013 Strategic Plan and SRF
Brief references to safety nets and SP, Shift from food aid to food assistance and from implementer to enabler, 2008 Cash & Voucher Policy

2014-2017 Strategic Plan and SRF
Safety nets and SP linked to 3 SOs in narrative, SRF includes 2 outputs under SO for nutrition, Fit for Purpose initiative

2017-2021 Strategic Plan and CRF
2017 focus on SDG 2 and 17, IRM, CSPs, CRF omits safety nets and SP
2018 Updated CRF with SP focused indicators and tagging options

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Safety Nets and Food Security Policy Unit

Safety Nets covered by cross-cutting OSZ staff

Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit (within a CCS and TA Directorate 2016-2018)

Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit created (with School Feeding)

School Feeding became a separate "Service"

Source: Evaluation team from document review and interviews.

Acronyms: Executive Board (EB), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Social Protection (SP), Regional Bureau Panama (RBP), Institute for Development Studies (IDS), Oxford Policy Management (OPM), Policy & Programme Division (OSZ), Strategic Results Framework (SRF), Corporate Results Framework (CRF), Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS), Technical Assistance (TA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

History of WFP'S Policies on Safety Nets and Social Protection

25.   A timeline depicting key WFP milestones is provided in Figure 4. WFP documented experience with safety nets dates to at least the 1990s. In 1998, the then Strategy and Policy Division at WFP headquarters developed a policy paper titled "Food-Based Safety Net Needs and WFP". The paper introduced safety net concepts, discussed the role of food-based safety nets, where they are appropriate and provided examples of WFP's engagement with safety nets. According to the 2011 strategic evaluation,[42] this paper helped inform the WFP Enabling Development Policy from 1999.

26.   The first effort to formalize WFP's role in safety nets and social protection came in 2004 when a policy was approved by the Executive Board titled, "WFP and Food-Based Safety Nets: Concepts, Experiences and Future Programme Opportunities".[43] This policy did not provide a clear WFP definition of safety nets, but included information on types of safety nets and social protection, good design principles, programming implications and illustrated WFP's experience with safety nets under three country stability and development scenarios: "transitioning towards", "establishing" and "improving" a national safety net. The policy recommended enhancing WFP knowledge and capacity related to safety nets, developing guidelines for safety net design and engagement, knowledge sharing and exploring funding mechanisms. Programming implications in "relief, recovery and development" contexts were also described with specific reference made to food for assets, training, education, health and nutrition and targeted unconditional food distribution. The 2004 policy clearly states that "emergency distributions ...lack the predictability and long-term perspective needed to protect and promote livelihoods in an institutionalized manner. These activities cannot therefore be characterized as safety nets".

27.   WFP headquarters staff developed several papers and presentations between 2004 and 2012 to help expand understanding and the evidence base on safety nets within WFP. Most notable was the occasional paper, published in 2009 called, "Unveiling Social Safety Nets". This paper provided "key messages" and served to update readers about social safety nets and social protection debates. It discussed the conceptual link between safety nets and social protection and the diversity of social protection systems in different countries. The paper highlighted the principle that social protection and safety nets should not be viewed in isolation and should consider the role of the state, the impact of foreign aid and trade-offs in equality and efficiency. It presented institutional, financial and administrative challenges encountered when introducing or expanding social protection. Finally, the paper discussed implementation issues, including conditionality and modality selection with emphasis on cash-based transfers, targeting and the importance of enhancing linkages between interventions in different sectors aiming at similar target groups.

28.   At the same time, WFP was actively considering its use of cash-based transfers, including adoption of its Cash and Voucher Policy in 2008. WFP began a strategic reframing of its work in terms of directly implementing programmes versus enabling other actors to provide assistance (including capacity development for national governments) with the WFP Strategic Plan (2008-2013).

29.   In 2010, the Office of Evaluation commissioned a strategic evaluation of WFP's Role in Social Protection and Safety Nets (completed in 2011) as part of a series of four strategic evaluations related to WFP's strategic shift from food aid to food assistance. The evaluation sought to examine current and past experience to enable learning about how WFP can most effectively contribute to social protection systems and the factors that enable it to do so. The evaluation concluded that WFP was already contributing to social protection and safety nets, particularly

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[42] WFP's Role in Social Protection and Safety Nets: A Strategic Evaluation, February 2011.
[43] WFP, "WFP and Food-Based Safety Nets: Concepts, Experiences and Future Programming Opportunities", Executive Board Third Regular Session, 11-14 October 2004, WFP/EB.3/2004/4-A

through activities such as school feeding. Yet, clear guidance was absent and further institutionalizing of a WFP social protection and safety nets approach would require changes to its planning, monitoring and financial systems, programme design and external collaboration. The evaluation also cautioned against simply relabeling projects and programmes as safety nets or social protection due to risks to WFP credibility. The evaluation offered six recommendations (see Annex 9). These were: focus on WFP's comparative advantages, develop organizational and staff capacities, position WFP in external fora, contribute to national social protection schemes; and adhere to good practice.

30.   The 2012 Policy Update noted that most of the 2004 policy paper remained relevant, but "various global and internal developments have generated the need to revisit the existing policy framework". Thus, the Policy Update sought to "clarify the concepts of safety nets and social protection and to illustrate how these relate to WFP's activities, while laying out the roles, opportunities and challenges for WFP".

Constructed Theory of Change

31.   The 2012 Policy Update was not accompanied by a theory of change[44] or logical framework clarifying the expected activities, outputs, outcomes and impact of WFP's work in safety nets and social protection. While certain potential results can be inferred, there are no specific results statements or indicators to measure progress.

32.   In order to construct a theory of change for the evaluation, the evaluation team has critically examined the content of the 2012 Policy Update and isolated key inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes that best represent the intention of the policy. After analyzing different options, the evaluation team elected to use the roles and comparative advantages described in the Policy Update as the basis for framing WFP activities, with two exceptions. An additional activity was added to represent the expressed focus on developing WFP's internal capacities (Evaluation Question B9) and another to represent the intention to build on government safety nets in emergencies (see Policy Update paragraph 39), given recent emphasis on shock-responsive social protection (Evaluation Question B7).

33.   The constructed theory of change is shown in Figure 5. It depicts two primary pathways to demonstrate how WFP aims to contribute to safety nets and social protection: (i) a provision pathway that includes direct WFP implementation activities to provide "safety net instruments and transfers"; and (ii) a support pathway that includes WFP "functions in support of nationally-led safety nets". A third set of inputs, activities and outputs are shown at the centre of the diagram, as they contribute to both pathways.

34.   All the elements identified along the horizontal activities axis provide the content for the results-related evaluation questions. The notations in red correspond to the results-related evaluation question ("Question B – What were the results of the policy?" See Annex 2 for the evaluation questions and full evaluation matrix).

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[44] In early 2016, the Social Protection and Safety Nets Unit developed a ToC for social protection as part of an initiative by the Performance Management and Monitoring Division to create ToCs to inform the development of the CRF. As this ToC was not explicitly linked to the 2012 Policy Update it was consulted for information only.

35.   The constructed theory of change also provides a high-level summary of the assumptions that could determine the progression from inputs to impact. These assumptions cover prerequisites related to the enabling environment, design and implementation factors, behaviour change, and impact.[45]

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[45] An additional assumption for measuring progress against the theory of change is data availability and systems. Data constraints were identified within WFP, and for the impact level between WFP and broader national data systems. The lack of indicators in WFP monitoring and reporting systems, and inability to tag programmes as safety nets or social protection contributions, limited the ability to directly identify attribute results to WFP work in safety nets and social protection.

Figure 5: Constructed Theory of change for the 2012 Update of WFP's Safety Nets Policy

National social protection systems ensure people are able to meet their food and nutrition needs and are protected from shocks

Impact

Outcomes

Outputs

Activities

Inputs

Provision of Safety Net Instruments and Transfers

Functions in Support of Nationally-led Safety Nets

Food and nutrition safety nets established

Improved food security and nutrition for targeted people

National safety net systems more efficiently and effectively meet food and nutrition needs of people

Resources mobilized and delivery arrangements in place

Food, cash and voucher transfers distributed in sufficient quantity and quality

Increased WFP knowledge, skills and capacity

Better partnerships, alignment, and integrated systems

Improved registration and targeting

Greater food security and nutrition knowledge and skills

Increased supply chain efficiency

Food and nutrition sensitive national policies / strategies

B5 – Design safety nets for food and nutrition security

B6 - Operationalize and implement safety nets (procurement, logistics and operational delivery of non-contributory transfers and public works)

B9 - Develop WFP internal safety nets capacities, resources and partnerships

B8 - Evaluating and generating evidence on safety nets

B4 - Collect, analyse and disseminate information and data (risk, vulnerability, food security and nutrition)

B7 - Build on government safety nets in emergency response

B1 – Country capacity strengthening

B2 – Technical, analytical advice

B3 - Advocacy to influence policy

Cross-cutting technical and analytical assistance and support

WFP technical expertise in School Feeding, CBT, GFA, FFA, SCM, VAM and Capacity Strengthening

WFP safety nets and other policies, internal guidance, staff, financial and other resources and partnerships

Provision Pathway

Elements Contributing To Both Pathways

Support Pathway

Impact assumptions
• Government safety nets (supported by WFP) are effective enough to enable impacts on hunger and nutrition
• Government safety nets have adequate coverage and are based on targeting criteria that enable impacts on hunger and nutrition

Behavior change assumptions
• Governments accept WFP support and influence based on its credibility, positioning and offer
• WFP systems, culture and resources support its 'enabler' roles

Design and implementation assumptions
• WFP/government assessment, targeting, modalities, programme design and delivery are appropriate and efficient
• Transfers are predictable, timely and adequate to meet needs
• Programme design and implementation is gender and age responsive
• Governments have the capacity and willingness to implement safety nets
• Guidelines developed are known, used and appropriate

Enabling assumptions
• WFP has the technical expertise to bring added value to governments through support to safety nets
• Donors will continue to fund WFP directly provided safety net programmes over time if circumstances / needs facing populations don't change

B# signifies related evaluation sub-question in evaluation matrix

Source: Evaluation Team analysis of 2012 Policy Update content.

Goals and Objectives of the Policy

36.   The Policy Update provided key elements used to frame the results that this evaluation assessed, based on its definitions, contributions (pathways), core roles (activities), priorities (activities), and scenarios. Where applicable, the linkages to the evaluation questions in the evaluation matrix (see Annex 2) and the theory of change are noted for these key elements in parentheses under "Activities" in paragraph 40.

37.   No explicit goals or objectives are provided in the Policy Update, though they can be inferred from the comparative advantages and priorities (see paragraphs 42 and 43 of the Policy Update). This has provided flexibility for broad engagement but also posed some challenges as the policy often uses equivocal language instead of clear declarations of intent.

38.   The Policy Update defines safety net transfers as including conditional transfers, unconditional transfers and public and community works, while reiterating that safety nets are only one component of a broader social protection system. It focuses on WFP's role in providing food and cash transfers as its entry point to supporting safety nets and social protection. It also positions WFP's interventions at the intersection of safety nets, social services and labour policy and insurance as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Social protection components and WFP activities
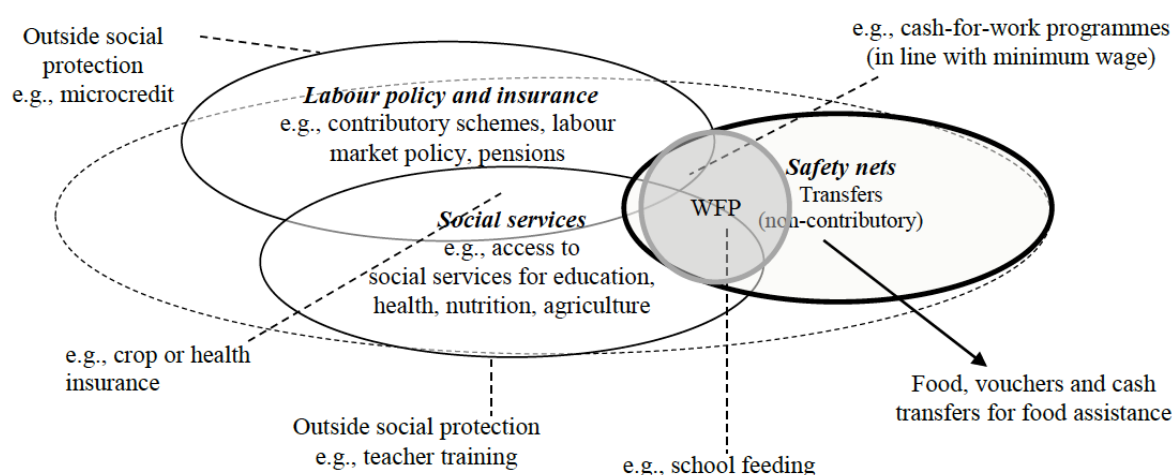
Source: 2012 Update of WFP's Safety Net Policy

39.   **Pathways:** Two overarching ways in which WFP can contribute to safety nets are briefly noted in the Policy Update: (i) activities that serve as safety net instruments or transfers; and (ii) other functions in support of safety nets. The importance of providing assistance that helps build and support national systems, whenever possible, is cited in the Policy Update as important for WFP future engagement in safety nets. These two pathways are used as a key organizing principle for the constructed theory of change (see Figure 5).

40.   **Activities:** Five core roles for the work of WFP in safety nets are articulated in the Policy Update based on WFP comparative advantages:

- Collecting, analyzing and disseminating information and data on risk, vulnerability, food security and nutrition (EQ B4)

- Designing safety nets that provide food assistance for food and nutrition security (EQ B5)

- Operationalizing and implementing safety nets (EQ B6)

- Evaluating and generating evidence on safety nets (EQ B8)

- Cross-cutting technical and analytical activities (EQs B1, B2, B3).

41.   Eight priorities and their implications are presented towards the end of the Policy Update. They include:

- Providing technical support and practical expertise (EQ B2)
- Ensuring food and nutrition security objectives are embedded (EQ B3)
- Supporting governments in building systems (EQ B1)
- Helping to strengthen institutional mechanisms (EQ B1)
- Ensuring that safety nets are informed by solid and context-specific evidence (EQs B4, B8)
- Forging strategic partnerships for safety nets (EQ B9)
- Mobilizing resources (EQ B9)
- Strengthening internal decision-making (in WFP) (EQ B9).

42.   The last of these priorities includes internal capacity-development activities under the framework of a Safety Nets in Practice (SNIP) initiative. The Policy Update envisioned SNIP to be a collaborative effort of WFP with external partners aimed at developing programming guidelines, tools and operational research, enhanced technical skills and information and knowledge management. The policy concludes with an "indicative SNIP budget (preliminary)" totaling USD 3.77 million over a three-year period. The degree to which, and to what effect, these internal capacity-building efforts were implemented was assessed through the evaluation (EQ B9).

Figure 7: Social protection scenarios and potential roles for WFP
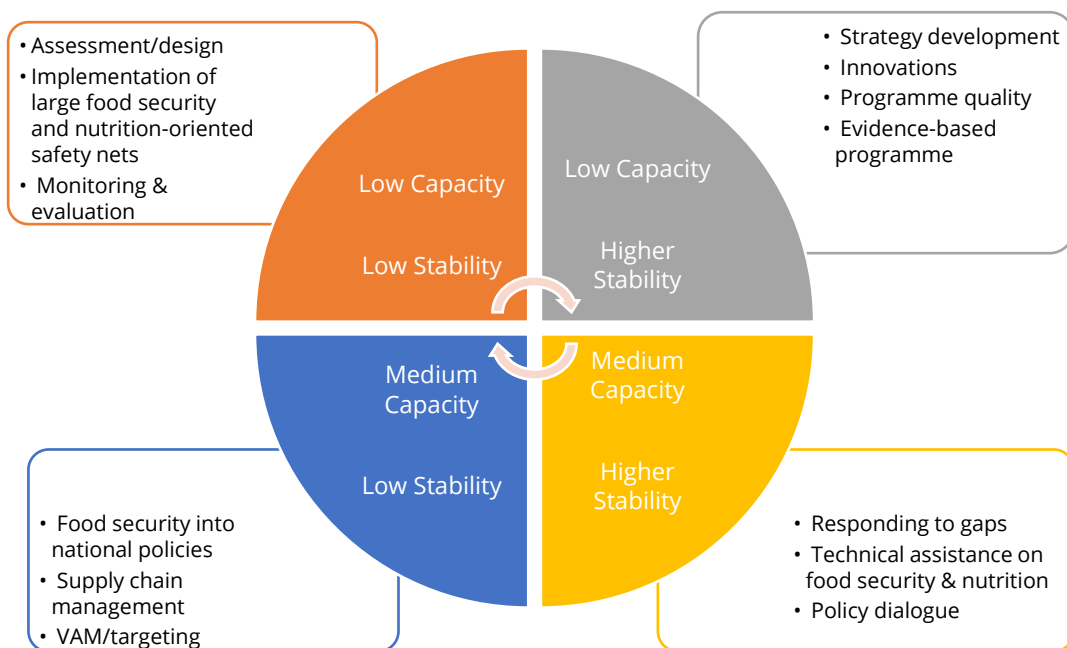
Source: Evaluation ToR derived from 2012 Update of WFP Safety Nets Policy.

43.   **Scenarios:** Building on the approach taken in the 2004 policy, the Policy Update presents five (instead of three) scenarios, under which it discusses the factors that influence WFP's choices for safety net programming. The first four scenarios and related roles for WFP are summarized in Figure 7, while the fifth scenario relates to high stability and capacity contexts. The factors defining these scenarios were used to assess patterns related to WFP's contribution to results, positioning and enabling/inhibiting factors through case studies - see Section 2.3.

WFP Activities to Implement the Policy Update

44.   This section identifies the specific activities undertaken to implement the Policy Update, how they are covered by the evaluation and then highlights issues related to the availability of data on WFP's overall portfolio of safety net programmes and activities.

45.   To assess the quality of the policy, the evaluation considered the Policy Update itself and all its implementation mechanisms, including dissemination efforts, business processes, guidance, tools, systems, agreements, training, and learning and accountability products. Annex 6 presents a policy hierarchy depicting the elements that were considered in relation to the quality of the policy. An inception phase review of the key activities related to policy dissemination, guidance and development of learning products is presented in Annex 7.

46.   Three key products were developed to support policy dissemination and provide guidance.

47.   **2014 WFP Safety Nets Guidelines**: The 2014 guidelines consisted of three main modules intended for staff at headquarters, regional bureau and country office levels.

- Module A - Safety Nets and Social Protection Basics and Concepts - provided a conceptual overview and definitions and key terminology. It included an overview of what it meant for WFP (rationale, entry points, roles, distinctions for middle-income countries, links to WFP programme activities, arrangements with governments, what is and isn't a safety net, lessons from evaluations and a toolbox). Furthermore, it discussed links to resilience, disaster risk reduction, emergency response, agriculture, climate change adaptation and nutrition. It concluded with a section on deciding "to safety net or not to safety net".

- Module B – Engagement with Governments and Partners - discussed how to engage with governments including scanning the social protection context, internally reviewing WFP strengths, advantages and needed skills and establishing plans and expectations. It went on to cover preparing for dialogue, the resources needed to engage, and funding of safety nets programmes.

- Module C – Design and Implementation - provided guidance on how to design and implement safety nets, an overview of external resources for design, and analytical approaches. It also covered gender and protection issues, seasonal livelihoods programming, factors regarding community participation and planning, targeting, transfer selection, enrolment and registration, complaints and feedback mechanisms, conditionality, monitoring, evaluation and learning, management information systems, local supply chains, school feeding, risk financing and transfer, and national ownership and phase-out.

- Eleven annexes to the guidelines were also produced. They covered nutrition-sensitive social protection, gender-sensitive (sic) social protection, HIV (and TB)-sensitive social protection, diagrams for navigating through the programme cycle and mapping the WFP toolbox on safety nets, talking points, acronyms, frequently asked questions, an overview of key resources on social protection, and a safety nets diagnostic tool.

48.   **2016 Safety Nets E-Learning Course**: This e-learning course consisted of three modules closely following the content of the 2014 guidelines. The course has been hosted on WFP's internal learning management system (LMS) and now known as "WeLearn". It has been targeted for use by staff in headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices.

49.   **2017 WFP and Social Protection – Options for Framing WFP Assistance to National Social Protection in Country Strategic Plans:** This 2017 guidance note provided information to assist country offices in understanding social protection and WFP's role so they could assess whether and how to include related activities in their country strategic plans and how to frame

them. It covered support expectations from headquarters and regional bureaux, and examples of safety nets and social protection activities and outcomes for each strategic objective and strategic result in the Strategic Plan (2017-2021).

50.   The programmatic results of the policy were assessed based on an examination of how WFP activities related to safety nets and how social protection contributed to outputs and outcomes. The definitions in Table 2 and the typology in Figure 1 have been applied to key WFP activities to determine what the evaluation will include and exclude in its examination of results as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Inclusion/exclusion of WFP activities for this evaluation

Activity	Coverage by evaluation	Exceptions	Result sub-questions
WFP capacity strengthening of national safety nets and social protection systems	Included	None	B1, B4, B9
WFP technical support to national safety nets and social protection systems	Included	None	B2, B4, B9
WFP advocacy to influence policy	Included	None	B3, B8, B9
WFP efforts to collect, analyze and disseminate information and data (such as VAM)	Partially included	When information is not utilized to inform WFP provision of safety nets or to support national government social protection systems	B4
WFP efforts to evaluate and generate evidence on safety nets	Included	None	B8
WFP school feeding/school meals	Partially included	Emergency school feeding programmes	B5, B6
WFP humanitarian programmes providing cash transfers or vouchers for general food assistance (GFA)	Partially included	When not provided through, or as a means to expand coverage of or align with, national safety nets	B5, B6, B7
Nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programmes	Partially included	When not provided through, or as a means to expand coverage of or align with, national safety nets	B5, B6
WFP food assistance for assets	Partially included	When not provided through, or as a means to expand coverage of or align with, national safety nets	B5, B6
WFP food assistance for training	Partially included	When not provided through, or as a means to expand coverage of or align with, national safety nets	B5, B6
WFP climate, crop and micro-insurance	Partially included	When provided as non-contributory measure	B5, B6

Source: Evaluation team analysis of documents.

Fit of the Policy with WFP Strategic Plans, Results Frameworks and Policies

51.   The evaluation of the Policy Update spans three WFP corporate strategic plans and their related results frameworks. The Policy Update was developed towards the end of Strategic Plan (2008-2013), which introduced the shift from WFP as an implementer to an enabler and included a few brief references to safety nets under two strategic objectives (SO) and included a separate strategic objective for capacity development of national governments. Strategic Plan (2014-2017) and the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) presented more references to safety nets and social protection aligned to three strategic objectives and "mainstreamed" the separate strategic objective for capacity development. Strategic Plan (2017-2021) marked a major shift for WFP by aligning its strategic goals to SDG 2 and 17. It leaves the setting of specific strategic results to county offices so they can be aligned with national priorities as part of the country strategic plan development process. Two strategic objectives contain references to safety nets or social protection. Further details on the inclusion of safety nets and social protection in corporate strategic plans and results frameworks is contained in Annex 4.

52.   Many WFP policies refer to safety nets and social protection, which emphasizes the cross-cutting nature of the evaluation subject. Current policies that were reviewed are: WFP Policy on Capacity Development (2009),[46] WFP Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction (2009),[47] WFP School Feeding Policy (2009),[48] WFP HIV and AIDS Policy (2010),[49] Revised School Feeding Policy (2013),[50] Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition (2015),[51,52] South-South and Triangular Cooperation Policy (2015),[53] Gender Policy (2015-2020),[54] Emergency Preparedness Policy (2017),[55] Nutrition Policy (2017),[56] and Climate Change Policy (2017).[57] These policies were analyzed regarding their coverage of safety nets and social protection, the complementarity of their content vis-a-vis the Policy Update and their role in helping further the results of the Policy Update (see section 2.1).

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[46] WFP, "WFP Policy on Capacity Development – An Update on Implementation", Executive Board Second Regular Session, 9-13 November 2009, WFP/EB.2/2009/4-B

[47] WFP, "WFP Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction", Executive Board First Regular Session, 9-11 February 2009, WFP/EB.1/2009/5-B

[48] WFP, "WFP School Feeding Policy", Executive Board Second Regular Session, 9-13 November 2009, WFP/EB.2/2009/4-A

[49] WFP, "WFP HIV and AIDS Policy", Executive Board Second Regular Session, 8-11 November 2010, WFP/EB.2/2010/4-A

[50] WFP, "Revised School Feeding Policy", Executive Board Second Regular Session, 4-7 November 2013, WFP/EB.2/2013/4-C

[51] WFP, "Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition", Executive Board Annual Session, 25-28 May 2015, WFP/EB.A/2015/5-C

[52] WFP work on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is acknowledged but did not feature in the data collection for this evaluation. However, the evaluation team notes the following: "Based on a growing body of work in a number of countries in crisis, WFP is making all possible efforts to ensure that humanitarian action is a platform for longer-term interventions that will support countries and communities transition out of crisis. Contexts where this approach has yielded clear dividends in reducing humanitarian requirements have prompted WFP to deepen engagement in the development sphere, notably around social protection, local and national capacity strengthening, and resilience-building in fragile communities and contexts." WFP Emergencies and Transitions Unit, *WFP and the Triple Nexus: Briefing Note on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*. June, 2018; p. 2.

[53] WFP, "South-South and Triangular Cooperation Policy", Executive Board Annual Session, 25-28 May 2015, WFP/EB.A/2015/5-D

[54] WFP, "Gender Policy (2015–2020)", Executive Board Annual Session, 25-28 May 2015, WFP/EB.A/2015/5-A

[55] WFP, "Emergency Preparedness Policy – Strengthening WFP emergency preparedness for effective response", Executive Board Second Regular Session, 13-16 November 2017, WFP/EB.2/2017/4-B/Rev.1*

[56] WFP, "Nutrition Policy", Executive Board First Regular Session, 20-23 February 2017, WFP/EB.1/2017/4-C

[57] WFP, "Climate Change Policy", Executive Board First Regular Session, 20-23 February 2017, WFP/EB.1/2017/4-A/Rev.1

Social Protection Policies, Frameworks and Strategies of Other Relevant Actors

53.   This evaluation conducted a search of existing social protection frameworks, strategies, positions and policy documents of United Nations agencies, main donors and other institutions (for example OECD). [58] Eleven entities[59] that were found to have such documents in place and details about their contents are included in Annex 5. A common feature is that each provided a definition and rationale for supporting social protection, and most included content on priorities and goals.

54.   Definitions of social protection similarly related to instruments to address poverty, risks and vulnerabilities. Some were tailored to the specific focus of the agency (for example, a 2016 UNDP "primer" refers to protection from deprivation and social exclusion, and the 2017 FAO definition references food insecurity and livelihoods). Similarly, identification of priorities was often linked to mandates and broader development strategies.

55.   The sampled documents varied in form and content. The level of detail ranged from the World Bank Social Protection and Labor Strategy (2012-2022), which was based on consultation with over 2,000 individuals, to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) 2014 framework for social protection – a six-page document that complemented existing thematic strategies. The sampled documents included frameworks (for example from UNICEF and FAO), strategies (for example from Germany and Ireland), policy statements/communications (for example from the European Commission), general guidance (for example from UNDP) and standards (the International Labour Organization (ILO) has developed and adopted 16 up-to-date social security standards that guide national social protection policies). The United States, United Kingdom and Canada did not have specific policy documents supporting social protection, whereas Germany, Ireland and Australia did.

56.   FAO and UNICEF support social protection and, specifically, social assistance. As such, they are the most natural "comparator" agencies to WFP.[60] Their frameworks on social protection indicated organizational positions and priorities. The UNICEF 2013 Social Protection Strategic Framework outlined positions on certain issues (for example universal coverage), focus areas for social protection support and key principles. The 2017 FAO Social Protection Framework provided a vision, rationale, approach, key strategies and guidance on translating its principles into FAO programmatic work.

57.   Few of these donor or United Nations frameworks and strategies included results frameworks or theories of change by which to gauge progress on supporting social protection. Of the six entities[61] that had a dedicated framework or strategy on social protection (as opposed to guidance, statements, etc.), half included results frameworks and/or indicators,[62] and none included a specific theory of change.

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[58] The USA, EC, Germany, UK and Canada were included as the five largest donors to WFP (based on 2017 figures). Ireland and Australia were included as they had specific social protection policies, as identified in Devereux and Roelen (2016).
[59] These entities include the World Bank, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, European Commission, United Nations Children's Fund, International Labour Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization, United Nations Development Programme, UK Department for International Development, Australia, Germany.
[60] UNICEF and FAO were used as comparators because both support social assistance and have policies on social protection. UNDP does not have a specific policy, strategy or framework on social protection though it does have a "primer" or guidance. ILO is unique in its tripartite structure and focus on social security.
[61] World Bank, UNICEF, FAO, Germany, Ireland, Australia.
[62] World Bank, Germany, Australia.

2. Evaluation Findings

58.   The findings of the evaluation are presented in this section for each of the primary evaluation questions. They draw upon evidence from global, regional and country levels collected from documents, records and literature, key informant interviews, country visits and remote desk studies.

2.1 QUALITY OF THE POLICY

59.   The evaluation assessed the quality of the Policy Update and the related guidance and tools developed to implement it. This section presents the findings for the evaluation sub-questions linked to Evaluation Question 1 as shown in the evaluation matrix in Annex 2. These findings stem primarily from an analysis of evidence from documents and literature, stakeholder interviews of country office, regional bureaux, and headquarters staff as well as external partners.

> **Finding 1:** The content of the Policy Update was generally aligned with the prevailing concepts at the time related to safety nets and social protection. While emphasizing the rationale for WFP support to safety nets, it neglected other opportunities for supporting social protection, lessening its relevance and utility today. Guidance from 2014 and 2017 somewhat bridged this gap.

60.   Analysis of other organization's policies and strategies from the 2012 period showed that the Policy Update drew on global evidence and organizational definitions and sought to inform WFP audiences about the state of safety nets at the time of its adoption, helping to encourage alignment with other actors. The focus on safety nets within social protection was grounded in a clear rationale related to WFP activities and comparative advantages and recognition that other actors may play a more significant role in supporting social protection systems and policies.

61.   An emphasis on safety nets was based on WFP's role in providing food and cash transfers, which are a key component of safety nets and, therefore, a logical entry point for support to social protection systems. The Policy Update provided a clear framing of safety nets within social protection, distinguished the roles WFP could play based on the capacity and stability of contexts and highlighted potential linkages between safety nets and emergency mechanisms – a topic that evolved substantially during the policy implementation period. The focus on safety nets was well grounded in WFP's established food assistance mandate. However, by focusing on safety nets, the Policy Update somewhat neglected to identify how WFP capacity strengthening and technical assistance inputs could contribute more broadly to social protection systems, rather than to specific social assistance instruments. This limited the durability of the Policy Update given WFP's shift towards enabling roles and its utility for guiding country offices as they were called upon to provide technical support to social protection systems.

62.   In recent years, the Policy Update itself has been eclipsed by subsequent developments in the broader global context and specifically in relation to evolving social protection concepts. While its core background coverage of safety nets remained relevant, global discussions on strengthening overarching social protection systems under government ownership, establishing better concrete links between humanitarian assistance and social protection and expanding access to, and coverage of, social protection instruments have advanced.

63.   The WFP Safety Net Guidelines from 2014 looked more widely at WFP engagement in social protection, focusing primarily on basic concepts, roadmaps for engagement and how to design safety nets. The outlining of concepts, good practices (for example, importance of building government systems) and policy goals (advocating for safety nets that address food security and nutrition) provided insights and possible entry points for engagement with safety nets and social

protection, but at a general level.

64.   In 2017, the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit issued additional guidelines that more clearly situate how WFP activities and strategies related to social protection (and vice versa). This showed responsiveness to evolving internal and external dynamics and indicated that WFP continued over the life of the policy to develop how the agency frames and positions its engagement with safety nets and social protection.

> **Finding 2**: The relevance and utility of the Policy Update was diminished due to the lack of key elements of policy quality. It did not establish a clear conceptual framework, vision, purpose, outcomes or outputs and, as a result, is less practical and feasible than it could be. It did not give much consideration to gender or disability, though the latter may not have been expected at the time. It did outline the scope of engagement, evidence, lessons and priorities.

65.   The evaluation assessed the quality of the Policy Update against the policy formulation lessons identified by an Office of Evaluation analysis of ten policy evaluations conducted between 2008 and 2018.[63] The details of this analysis are provided in Annex 8.

66.   Overall, the assessment of the Policy Update's quality found that it rated equal to, or below, the average rating of the ten policies previously analyzed by the Office of Evaluation.[64] The evaluation found that the Policy Update provided neither evidence of a clear vision or theory of change nor illustrations of integrated monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems into the policy.

67.   The Policy Update's scope was defined to some extent and the priorities it articulated could help to set clear boundaries. External coherence was somewhat facilitated by the Policy Update's content as it informed readers about the experience of other organizations as of 2012, though it did not detail the similarities and differences of the policy against international benchmarks, nor did it state a clear WFP position or set of beliefs.

68.   Internal and strategic coherence was not well supported by the Policy Update as it did not discuss alignment with other policies, only briefly mentioned the WFP strategic plan and did not cover gender well. Little evidence was provided on the engagement of key stakeholders in the policy development process. At the same time, the emphasis on support pathway activities was broadly aligned with WFP's growing focus on country capacity strengthening in its strategic plans.

69.   While an annex to the Policy Update outlined the resource requirements for a limited internal capacity-development initiative, it did not provide a detailed assessment of the technical skills and systems changes needed or plan of action for addressing these.

> **Finding 3**: While the findings and conclusions of the 2011 Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Role in Social Protection and Safety Nets are broadly covered in the policy, progress against the recommendations remains incomplete.

70.   The 2011 strategic evaluation[65] included six recommendations to strengthen WFP policy, capacities, positioning and contributions to safety nets and social protection. This evaluation analyzed the extent to which the Policy Update considered the findings and recommendations from the strategic evaluation, as well as progress made since 2011 on the management response

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[63] WFP Office of Evaluation, "Top 10 Lessons for Policy Quality in WFP". Lessons established for policy quality were: include a context analysis to ensure timeliness and wider relevance; define the scope and prioritize; develop a vision and a theory of change; ensure external coherence; ensure internal and strategic coherence and integrate gender; develop evidence-based policies; validate and create ownership through internal consultation; invest in effective institutional frameworks, systems, guidance and accountability arrangements; identify financial and human resources requirements; and integrate monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems.

[64] Policies were rated using a five-point rubric ranging from "negative or no evidence" to "strong evidence or results".

[65] Majewski et. Al., "Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Role in Social Protection and Safety Nets", February, 2011, OE/2011/06.

to the recommendations, all of which were agreed to. Details are provided in Annex 9.

71.   Whereas formal records indicate that all management responses to the strategic evaluation recommendations[66] were implemented by December 2014, this evaluation found that some of the reported implementation fell short of meeting the full intent of the recommendations.

72.   The strategic evaluation recommended content for the Policy Update, including incorporating broader social protection concepts, clarifying WFP roles, explaining the importance of purpose and desired outcomes, coverage of partnerships and standards of good practice and emphasis on both operational and non-operational activities for food-based safety nets. To a large extent, the 2012 Policy Update covered these topics.

73.   Recommendations regarding organizational and staff capacities were found to be incomplete or have limited progress.[67] A lack of senior management leadership for developing organizational and staff capacities was cited by key informants. The recommended advanced skills development did not appear to have been undertaken at a corporate level.

74.   The recommendation on WFP positioning in safety nets and social protection platforms and engagement of policy makers was partially completed. The 2014 guidance provided tools for engagement at country-level. Since 2016, WFP has participated in global platforms such as the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) and global and regional social protection conferences. Promising examples of regional and country-level engagement were found (see Section 2.2). However, engagement has not been part of a deliberate corporate agenda and remained somewhat ad hoc.

75.   Some progress was found regarding contribution to the development of national social protection systems. [68] Although the Policy Update did not focus on a systems approach, many country offices have found ways to contribute to national systems and policies (see Section 2.2). The country strategic plan development process also reinforced the importance of analyzing national systems and ways in which WFP could contribute to their improvement or development. Eight of the 12 country strategic plans or country strategic plan concept notes reviewed for evaluation case study countries demonstrated a fundamental focus on social protection while the other four had some substantial focus on particular safety nets or aspects of social protection (see Annex 10).

76.   Progress was also noted on the strengthening capacity of national social protection systems at country office and regional bureau levels. Between 2012 and 2018, WFP headquarters' investment in capacity strengthening remained low[69] and progress in this area seemed to be based on the initiative of particular country office and regional bureau leaders. WFP staff consulted for this evaluation pointed out that, as of 2018, there were no fixed-term staff and only one consultant at headquarters dedicated to supporting capacity-strengthening work.

77.   Limited progress was found regarding the recommendation to improve adherence to social protection good practice standards. This is despite the coverage in the Policy Update of good practice through its section on "principles and lessons learned" and the 2014 guidelines' inclusion

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[66] WFP, Management response database contents, extracted on 29 November 2018.
[67] According to the ACE database, ten trainings were held in 2012 for 250 WFP staff mainly in field functions in addition to separate awareness trainings for RB and CO directors. The completion of the 2014 guidance and development of e-learning were also cited as evidence of implementation.
[68] The ACE database noted in 2012 that a toolkit for capacity development provides COs with resources to "conduct national capacity assessments and plan and design integrated capacity development programmes". The tracking also reported that COs had received "support through a number of field missions".
[69] The evaluation of the 2009 Capacity Development Policy found that "WFP's existing funding and resource allocation model is not conducive to engagement in capacity development" and noted that corporate resources had "consisted almost exclusively of an approximately $4 (USD 4) million trust fund". The evaluation noted an insufficient number of dedicated staff at RB and CO levels to support capacity development work.

of standards of good practice.

78. The recommendation regarding monitoring of WFP activities and performance in safety nets and social protection have not advanced between 2012 and 2017. There were no requirements for monitoring in the strategic results frameworks and corporate results framework during this time, though changes to the corporate results framework in late 2018 introduced some new voluntary measures (see paragraph 198).

> **Finding 4**: The Policy Update encouraged alignment with national governments. It marked the beginning of a shift in focus from direct implementation to support of government-led safety nets. The emphasis on using WFP's comparative advantages to contribute to gaps in national systems is further emphasized in the subsequent guidance.

79. One of the most notable changes between the 2004 policy and the 2012 Policy Update is increased focus on alignment with national governments. The Policy Update was found to incorporate more specific examples of how WFP had, and could still, leverage its expertise and skills to help governments improve or develop various aspects of safety nets.

80. The Policy Update continued to refer to WFP's direct implementation of safety nets but gave increased attention to activities in support of nationally led safety nets (see Figure 3).

81. The 2014 guidelines further strengthened the idea of WFP support to national governments. Module B of the guidelines provided specific tools for analyzing institutional contexts and key stakeholders, assessing country-specific WFP comparative advantages, identifying entry points, and providing information on WFP positions on key debates. Module C provided tools for developing a phase-out strategy to enable national ownership and handover.

82. The 2017 guidance note focused on framing WFP assistance to national social protection systems as part of the development of country strategic plans. It looked more holistically at these systems and provided the rationale for WFP contributions based on WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021), the SDGs and as a means to achieve results at scale. The guidance further refined the WFP service offerings under five key headings: advising on or directly implementing safety nets; making social protection food security- and nutrition-sensitive; strengthening the shock responsiveness of national programmes; strengthening national social protection delivery systems; and maximizing sustainability, efficiency and local economic impact of national safety nets. However, the guidelines raised questions on the extent to which WFP is able to take national social protection systems, rather than WFP activities and strategies, as the starting point for engagement in a given country. The 2018 Strategic Evaluation of Pilot Country Strategic Plans[70] also found that, while consultative approaches to developing country strategic plans resulted in greater alignment with national priorities, funding constraints and short-term, activity-specific funding can result in continuing pre-country strategic plan activities. This evaluation also noted that in emergency situations, and where general food assistance is the primary need, country strategic plans "have essentially been a reformat of ongoing activities".

83. Government policies and frameworks reviewed for case study countries varied considerably in how recent they were, their form and the level of detail regarding the specific safety net instruments and social protection systems to which WFP might contribute. In some cases, food security, school-feeding programmes, registration systems, assessment protocols and distribution approaches are specified, while in others only the broad outlines of government programmes and commitments are provided. While the Policy Update, 2014 guidelines and 2017 guidance note provided tools to analyze these policies and frameworks and engage in dialogue, key informants stressed that alignment requires constant attention.

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[70] WFP, Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans, October 2018

> **Finding 5**: The Policy Update was coherent with WFP policies at the time of its adoption, but more recent WFP policies on other subjects reflect updated, in-depth thinking and coverage of social protection concepts and how WFP relates to them.

84.   At the time of its adoption, the Policy Update was found to be coherent with other WFP policies. However, since 2012, many other WFP policies have been updated and some include specific coverage of social protection concepts that are better aligned to recent debates and positions.

85.   The 2013 Revised School-Feeding Policy built on the Policy Update by discussing ways that school-feeding activities can contribute to national systems and influence national policy. The 2015 Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition spoke to how WFP can contribute to productive safety nets. The 2017 Emergency Preparedness Policy called for WFP to take a role in working with governments and partners to make national social protection systems more responsive to shocks. The 2017 Nutrition Policy included many references to social protection and considered large-scale targeted national social protection systems an "important opportunity for delivering nutrition-sensitive programming" that sustainably can "help tackle the underlying causes of malnutrition". The 2017 Climate Change Policy considered the effects of climate change on national social protection systems and called for WFP to "work with national governments and other partners to support the establishment of national programmes and services, including adaptive and shock-responsive safety nets".

86.   WFP guidance developed to support these other policies also articulated more detailed thinking on social protection and safety nets. The Gender Toolkit had two modules on social protection including a guide on how to integrate gender in social protection and a guide on the ways gender relates to social protection system purposes, actors and design. At least seven communications products and tools developed to support the 2013 Revised School-Feeding Policy have been produced to inform staff about developments in social protection and how to design programmes and national strategies in line with social protection principles.

> **Finding 6**: Six years after the adoption of the Policy Update, most WFP staff remain unfamiliar with it and few are aware of the 2014 and 2017 guidelines.

87.   Given the lack of familiarity with the policy, the evaluation found little direct use of its contents. Overall, few WFP staff interviewed for the evaluation reported having read the Policy Update prior to scheduling of evaluation visits and interviews (21 percent of WFP staff in country visit cases). Staff reported feeling a "great distance between WFP policies and the situation on the ground" with 10 out of 12[71] country offices stating that the Policy Update had low utility as practical guidance for programme design, implementation, and for engagement with national social protection actors.

88.   Those that had read the policy (including just ahead of visits and interviews) noted that its contents are not specific enough to be of use. At the same time, staff expressed more familiarity with activity-specific policies that relate directly to their functional roles, especially when headquarters and regional bureau focal points have worked to actively disseminate a policy.

89.   Nevertheless, WFP Country Directors, Deputy Country Directors and Heads of Programme in all 12 case study countries felt that the subject covered by the policy is relevant to the work of their office. During discussions for all case studies, to varying degrees, country office staff framed some of their activities as relating to safety nets or social protection. Project documents and country strategic plans reviewed showed an evolution towards discussing WFP work as contributing to safety nets or social protection during the period of the evaluation.

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[71] Assessed in initial CO briefings with large groups of staff in country visits and individual interviews for remote studies.

90.   Project documents remained organized by WFP's core activity areas and corporate strategic objectives as per required frameworks of the time, but narrative sections showed some increasing focus on safety nets and social protection over time. Six out of 12 county offices framed their work as related to safety nets or social protection in project documents, two included a focused pillar of activity, two more shifted from passing references to safety nets or social protection to a more overarching focus, while two only included passing references throughout the period. Country strategic plans or country strategic plan concept notes in all 12 countries included substantial or fundamental focus on safety nets or social protection.

91.   In general, WFP staff expressed concerns about the ability of country offices to absorb the high volume of WFP policies, strategies, and guidance, especially in conjunction with the many planning, reporting and systems changes that have taken place during the period of the evaluation.

2.2 POLICY RESULTS

Finding 7: The results of WFP safety nets and social protection activities are indirectly linked to the Policy Update through the influence of subsequent guidance, training and other initiatives.

92.   The evaluation sought to assess the results stemming from the Policy Update. Although awareness of the Policy Update was low, the evaluation found that most results observed through case studies are indirectly attributable to the Policy Update. While key informants in these case studies expressed a belief that their activities were influenced primarily by WFP capabilities, opportunities, and local context and needs, some felt strongly that their efforts to implement safety nets and support social protection systems would not have been as effective without the corporate backing of a policy. The 2014 guidance was developed as a result of the policy and then used as the basis for the e-learning course. The development of the Policy Update was likely both influenced by, and supported continued conversations about, WFP's engagement with social protection. The creation of a dedicated headquarters Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit, efforts to generate a global evidence base and initiatives to establish partnerships likely would not have occurred without the Policy Update. Section 2.3 provides additional evidence on the factors found to influence results.

93.   Case study countries were selected on the basis of criteria that made them more likely to have been engaged in activities related to safety nets and social protection, factors which may have predated the policy. It is possible that the Policy Update may have more directly or indirectly influenced WFP's choice of activities in other contexts.

94.   This section begins with an examination of the results observed at a global level that are most likely directly linked to the Policy Update. It then goes on to consider the country level results observed from WFP work on safety nets and social protection in support of the learning objective of the evaluation, regardless of a clear link to the Policy Update itself.

Global Results

Finding 8: The development of the 2014 guidelines and 2017 guidance note provided more tools for programme design and implementation but focused considerably on broad cross-cutting programme topics rather than just specific social protection and safety nets issues.

95.   The content of the 2014 guidance covered fundamental conceptual information on safety nets and social protection. It also devoted considerable focus to broad topics related to engaging with national governments, other stakeholders, and donors or ways to plan for longer-term programming and capacity strengthening.

96. Among key informants in country offices that were aware of the 2014 guidelines, most suggested that the content is more useful than the policy but remains too general to be of practical use for most programme design and implementation activities and decisions.

97. Awareness of the 2017 guidance note on Framing WFP Assistance to National Social Protection in Country Strategic Plans was found to be very low. This note provided an updated tool that explains how key social protection and safety nets concepts can be applied to the country strategic plan development process.

98. Many of the topics covered by the 2014 guidance included information that WFP staff need for country capacity-strengthening work, general engagement with governments and other actors, and overall programme design. For example, conducting context and stakeholder analysis, planning for and initiating dialogue with governments, and identifying potential funding sources are ostensibly relevant for any WFP programme activity. Given the cross-cutting nature of much of the guidelines content, it is unclear whether such topics may be better provided for in cross-functional programming guidance, such as the previous WFP Programme Guidance Manual.

> **Finding 9**: The safety nets e-learning course has been used by staff across WFP, but its delayed development in multiple languages and roll-out may have limited its utility and relevance.

99. The Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit developed a three-module safety nets e-learning course based upon the contents of the 2014 guidelines, which is now available in Arabic, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. The course was developed by an outside vendor beginning in 2016 at a cost of approximately EUR 160,000 excluding the time of WFP staff, with funding provided by the Russian Federation.

100. Based on an analysis of training statistics provided by headquarters' Human Resources Division, Capacity Development Branch, 531 WFP staff and consultants (361 national staff and 167 international staff with 3 unknown) have completed at least one module of the e-learning package. This equates to 5 percent of the WFP total internationally recruited workforce and 3 percent of its locally recruited employees.[72] English and Spanish modules of the course were first completed by staff in August 2016, while the first French modules were completed in January 2018 and Arabic in April 2018.

Table 4: : Individual WFP staff participating in safety nets e-learning

Office	Women	Men	Total
Country Offices (84% total staff)	165	283	448
COs - RBB (12)	36	64	100
COs - RBC (14)	36	75	111
COs - RBD (17)	13	46	59
COs - RBJ (10)	14	13	27
COs - RBN (8)	38	65	103
COs - RBP (11)	28	20	48
Regional Bureaux (9% total staff)	24	23	47
RBB	3	2	5
RBC	3	3	6
RBD	2	4	6

Office	Women	Men	Total
Headquarters (7% total staff)	19	17	36
GEN		1	1
GVA	1		1
HRM	1	2	3
OEV	1	1	2
OSE		1	1
OSN		1	1
OSO	2	2	4
OSZ	6	8	14
PGG	1		1
PGP	1		1
RM	1		1

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[72] Total WFP employee figures found in WFP Annual Performance Report for 2017, Annex V: WFP Employees as at 31 December 2017.

RBJ	4	3	7		RMP	2	1	3
RBN	2	2	4		RMT	2		2
RBP	10	9	19		(blank)	1		1
					Grand Total	208	323	531

Source: Training statistics from WFP Human Resources Division, Capacity Development Branch.

101.   A total of 441 staff have completed Module A, which covers safety nets and social protection essentials. In addition, 330 completed Module B covering safety nets design. Finally, 225 staff completed Module C, which focuses on engagement and partnerships. In total, 52 percent of participating staff completed only one module, whereas 24 percent completed two modules and another 24 percent completed all three modules.

102.   Analysis of training statistics for other WFP e-learning courses[73] suggests that interest in the safety nets and social protection course is above average. A course on south-south and triangular cooperation was completed by 134 WFP staff (64 percent of whom were national staff) between May 2017 and February 2019. A total of 874 WFP staff completed a course on cash-based transfer programmes (75 percent of whom were national staff) between May 2017 and February 2019. Finally, 286 WFP staff completed a WFP e-learning course called "Implement and Facilitate your Programme" (52 percent of whom were national staff).

103.   Of staff who completed at least one of the training modules, 67 percent were identified as working for programme and policy functions, followed by 6 percent in field operations management, 6 percent in logistics and 4 percent in administration.

104.   The e-learning course saw an initial surge of interest in September 2016 when staff completed 259 individual modules of the course. Since that time, participation has fluctuated with spikes in May 2017, April 2018 and June 2018. The spike in June 2018 corresponded with known communications about the availability of the e-learning, including a message from the Director of Policy and Programme in early June 2018 and a posting to the community on social protection two weeks later.

105.   Officially the development of the training was considered complete in the first quarter of 2018 when the last language modules were finalized. The reason for delayed completion was reportedly due to staff turnover at headquarters and gaps in project management.

> **Finding 10**: Since 2016, increased efforts to develop a global base of evidence have generated useful learning for WFP and established a foundation for knowledge management but this has not been part of a broader knowledge management and learning strategy.

106.   Following the establishment of the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit at WFP headquarters in early 2016, existing information and knowledge-management practices were assessed and a knowledge management unit work-plan was developed. The work-plan was updated in 2017 and again in 2018. Half of one staff person's time was devoted to implementing it, with the other half devoted to school feeding. The results of this effort included: re-establishing an internal document repository; creating a community of practice on school feeding and social protection; launching related information hubs on the WFP intranet; and sending regular email communications and newsletters to regional bureaux and country office social protection focal points.

107.   Two research efforts were also launched to develop case studies for learning. WFP and the World Bank initiated a strategic collaboration to study ways of "Bridging Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection Systems", resulting in twelve country-specific case studies. In Latin America and the Caribbean, WFP partnered with Oxford Policy Management (OPM) to develop a series of

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[73] Training statistics from WFP Human Resources Division, Capacity Development Branch

case studies on shock-responsive social protection. In addition to posting information on WFP internal platforms, the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit has also shared case studies through external knowledge hubs, including socialprotection.org, an SDG2 online knowledge platform (SSMART for SDGs), and contributed to United Nations system-wide reports such as the report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation presented in January 2019.

108.   The Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit at headquarters also engaged the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), based at the University of Sussex, to conduct a global survey and develop an occasional paper on WFP's role in social protection in 2017. The IDS contract has provided technical support to the country strategic plan development processes in Mozambique, Colombia, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Rwanda and Zambia. In addition, IDS participated as external experts in meetings convened by RBJ and RBC. In its 2018 occasional paper for WFP,[74] IDS explicitly called for strengthening WFP's social protection knowledge management function, including rigorous monitoring and evaluation of pilot initiatives, as both a means to improve internal capacity and to better position WFP as a key social protection actor and partner.

109.   The base of evidence generated by these efforts supported potential learning across WFP. However, dissemination and use of the results remained isolated, largely because corporate knowledge-management efforts in different units remained ad hoc and lacked organization-wide consolidation. Staff in case study countries were mostly unaware of the results of these efforts to develop a base of evidence, except where case studies had been conducted in their own countries or regions. Thus, all headquarters units, regional bureaux and country offices are left to develop their own knowledge-management approaches and mobilize the funding required to implement them. In 2019, the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit plans to hire a full-time knowledge manager to further their own efforts.

110.   Regional bureaux have also commissioned research, developed case studies and, in one case, initiated training to facilitate learning. In RBB, WFP developed a series of case studies for ASEAN on risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection in collaboration with UNICEF, FAO, ILO and UNISDR. RBC commissioned IDS to conduct a series of case studies and scoping studies on safety nets and social protection in nine countries. RBP developed the most advanced set of learning initiatives, including a training programme for national and international staff to support its dedicated strategy, "Social Protection for Zero Hunger: WFP's Role in Latin America and the Caribbean". The regional strategy included facilitation of experiences between countries led by RBP staff and additional plans for evidence generation in support of advocacy.

Country and Regional Results

111.   Across case studies conducted for the evaluation, the evidence shows that WFP contributed to safety nets and social protection through both the direct provision and the support pathways identified in the constructed theory of change. Key informants for the evaluation almost universally viewed WFP work in safety nets and social protection as a key means of fulfilling its strategic goals of supporting countries to achieve zero hunger and partnering to support implementation of the SDGs. In a January 2018 report,[75] IDS similarly noted that the opportunities for WFP engagement are likely to continue growing as "all governments now have a commitment to focus on food security and nutrition. This provides an entry point for WFP to advocate for food security-oriented safety nets and nutrition-sensitive social protection".

112.   Categorizing WFP activities as safety nets or related to social protection proved difficult throughout the evaluation. WFP guidance suggested the importance of long-term, predictable interventions that are connected to national government systems and programmes. However,

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[74] Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, Institute for Development Studies, "Social Protection and the World Food Programme", WFP Occasional Paper No. 25, January 2018.
[75] IBID

many country office level key informants framed activities that are disconnected from safety nets, often due to ambiguity in terminology or lack of conceptual clarity as to what can be considered a safety net activity and what cannot.[76] Table 5 summarizes where WFP was engaged through the direct provision and/or support pathways for different types of WFP activities.

Table 5: Activities where WFP engaged in direct provision versus support 2012-2017

P = provision S = support	Country visits					Desk studies						
	Burkina Faso[77]	Cambodia[78]	Colombia	Egypt	Uganda	Ecuador[79]	Kenya	Lesotho	Mauritania	Mozambique	Sri Lanka	Turkey[80]
Income level[81]	LIC	LMIC	UMIC	LMIC	LIC	UMIC	LMIC	LMIC	LMIC	LIC	LMIC	UMIC
School feeding	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	
Nutrition	P/S	S		P/S	P/S		P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S	
Food security		S		S	P/S	P/S	S	P/S	P	P/S		P/S
Livelihoods, smallholders	P	P		P	P/S		P/S	P/S	P	P/S	P/S	
Emergency preparedness & response	P	P				P/S	P/S		P/S	P/S	P/S	P/S
TA & capacity strengthening		S	S	S		S	S					S
Shock responsive social protection						S	S	S		S	S	S

Note: Light gray shading signifies activities that were not directly linked to government systems.

Source: Evaluation team analysis based on case study document review and interviews.

113. Evidence was consolidated to identify key attributes of country office connections to national social protection systems, perceptions of stakeholders about WFP's role and contributions, the degree to which WFP operations and country strategic plans focused on safety nets and social protection, overall emphasis on direct provision or support and country office structural factors. A summary of the cross-case analysis is provided in Annex 10.

114. The cross-case analysis shows no clear relationship between a country's income level, fragility or risk rating and the degree to which WFP supports governments' safety nets and social protection systems or WFP provides them. Furthermore, these key factors from the Policy Update also seem to have no relationship to WFP assessed links with central national social protection agencies or government and partner perspectives on the value of WFP contributions.

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[76] It is possible that key informants identified WFP activities as safety nets or linked to social protection only because they were asked about what activities contributed to related results, rather than because they regularly think of them as such.
[77] In Burkina Faso, most WFP staff consulted viewed FFA as a safety net; government interviewees and World Bank review on safety nets also included seasonal/emergency food assistance.
[78] In Cambodia, FFW/FFA work during 2012-2017 went from large scale work that the government considered as part of its social protection system to small scale work that falls outside the national system.
[79] In Ecuador, programme links small farmers' associations to school meals.
[80] In Turkey, the ESSN is specifically oriented towards meeting basic needs through multi-purpose cash. WFP monitors food security and nutrition outcomes. The programme serves an emergency function and is coordinated with national disaster-management authorities. It is also implemented in partnership with social protection ministries and aligned with their systems.
[81] Source: World Bank (http://data.worldbank.org/country).

115.	Since WFP adopted the Policy on Country Strategic Plans in November 2016, there has been an increase in the level of country office focus on social protection. The number of cases studied with substantial or fundamental cross-cutting focus on safety nets or social protection in country strategic plans increased over those in the project documents used before country strategic plans. Overall the country strategic plan process itself increased the ability of, and interest in, WFP thinking holistically about how it can contribute to national systems and priorities, as confirmed by the 2018 Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans.[82]

Support Pathway[83] Contributions

> **Finding 11**: WFP country offices made relevant and useful contributions to national social protection systems through cross-cutting technical and analytical support and advice. While aligned with the activities noted in the Policy Update, WFP capacities for support may not always meet the broader system needs of governments.

116.	 Case studies conducted for this evaluation found many examples of WFP contributions to safety nets and national social protection systems through the provision of technical assistance, analytical support, policy advice and capacity-strengthening activities.[84] Key informants reported that WFP engagement in efforts directly linked to safety nets and social protection, has grown in recent years in line with WFP global strategic shifts and the development of country strategic plans.

117.	All 12 country strategic plans in case study countries include reference to WFP work in social protection and safety nets. Four country strategic plans directly noted recommendations from the National Zero Hunger Strategic Reviews regarding the need for engagement in social protection. Eight of the 12 country strategic plans discussed social protection or safety nets as opportunities for WFP. All 12 country strategic plans mention social protection or safety nets either directly in their strategic outcome statements or in the accompanying activities and outputs. Shock responsive social protection is noted as a key activity in 10 of the 12 country strategic plans.

118.	Analysis of 2017 standard project reports (SPRs) conducted by the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit[85] shows that 72 WFP country offices supported government-led initiatives as shown in Figures 8 and 9.

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[82] WFP, Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans, October 2018

[83] Support pathway activities included technical assistance, analytical support, policy advice and capacity strengthening activities as per the constructed ToC and based on the Policy Update content.

[84] While the Policy Update separately listed these activities, the distinction was found to be often blurred. They are more frequently simply referred to in today's WFP parlance as country capacity strengthening or technical assistance.
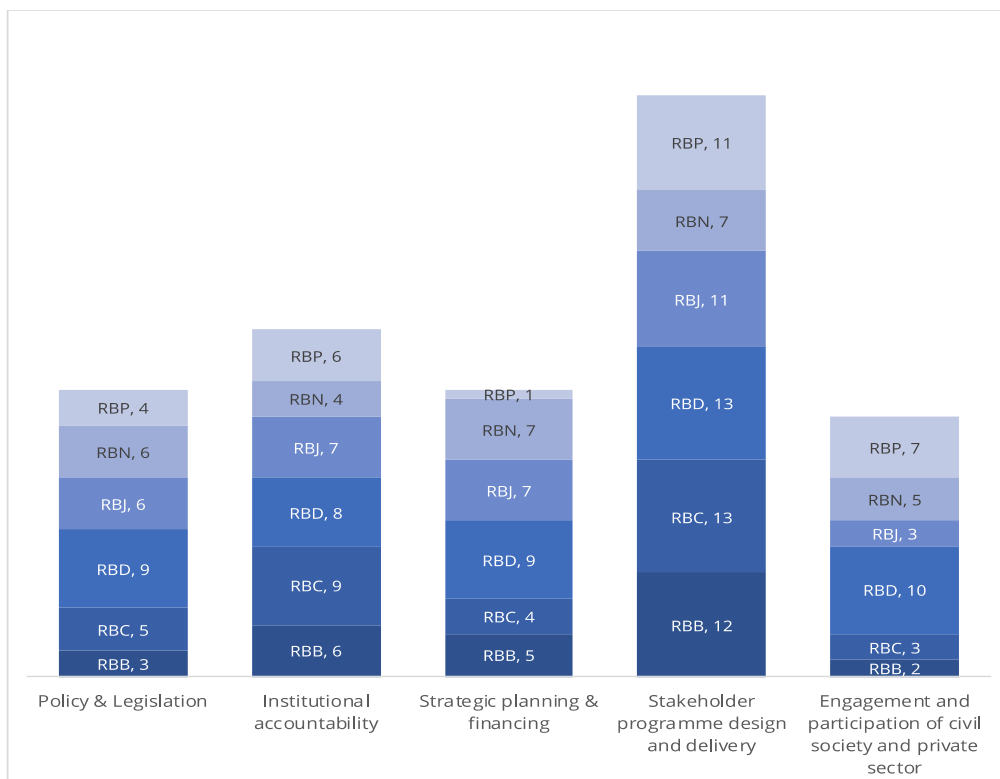
[85] WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit, SPR analysis 2017

Figure 8: WFP support to government safety nets or social protection initiatives by type (2017)
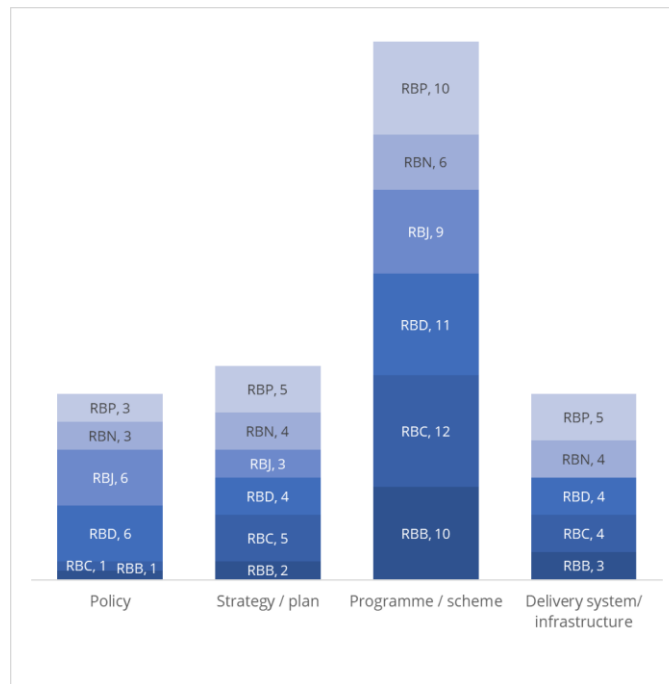
Source: Evaluation team analysis of WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit 2017 SPR analysis data.

Figure 9: WFP support to government safety nets or social protection initiatives by country capacity strengthening (CCS) pathway (2017)

Source: Evaluation team analysis of WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit 2017 SPR analysis data.

119.   Figure 9 shows the number of country offices identified as supporting government safety nets or social protection initiatives based on the country capacity strengthening pathway to which

they contributed. These five pathways were identified as the critical ways in which WFP supports stakeholder capacities as part of the corporate approach to country capacity strengthening.[86]

120. Examples of the support pathway activities from case studies are provided in Table 6, grouped by the outputs from the constructed theory of change to which they contributed.

Table 6: Types of WFP activities in support of nationally led safety nets or social protection systems[87]

Types of activities	Examples from case studies
Activities that directly contribute to developing national social protection systems	**Technical support to government structures** In Kenya, WFP provides direct support to the development of the National Safety Net Programme as well as technical support to newly devolved government structures to strengthen their early warning, food security assessment and emergency preparedness and response capacities. In Sri Lanka, WFP provides technical support to the development of "Samurdhi", a national social welfare programme that disburses cash through a community level banking network **Support to development of registries** Examples of WFP work to support single registries were found across multiple case studies. For the provision of lean season food assistance in Burkina Faso, WFP and its partners used a common targeting tool informed by nascent government efforts to create a single registry. WFP is also working with governments on national databases in Mauritania, Sri Lanka, and Uganda. In Kenya, WFP funded the enhancement of the National Social Protection Single Beneficiary Registry System launched in 2016, which aims to consolidate different safety nets' distinct beneficiary information databases, support harmonization, and reduce duplication The application of WFP's SCOPE system as a potential tool for government use was seen in Uganda for the safety net in Karamoja. Some other country offices noted the potential use of SCOPE to help government efforts to build single registries, though a few internal and external key informants stressed challenges in applying a system developed for WFP to complex government social protection systems. One noted concerns among international partners that SCOPE is not open source and would give WFP, rather than governments, control of beneficiary data
Activities that contribute to greater knowledge and skills	**Food security and nutrition analysis** Expertise stemming from VAM analytical work on vulnerability and food security also continues to provide a foundation for many WFP technical and analytical contributions. Since 2012, this area of WFP's work has grown to include increasingly technological platform contributions where WFP goes beyond simply providing data and transferring knowledge on how to use it into developing data collection and management systems

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[86] WFP, "WFP Corporate Approach to Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) – CCS Toolkit Component 001", April 2017
[87] The term "social protection systems" encompasses individual social protection programmes, delivery systems underpinning the programmes (databases, payment mechanisms, etc.) and the social protection sector (mandates, policies, regulations etc.) (O'Brien et al., 2018).

Types of activities	Examples from case studies
	with government partners that can be used for decision-making, prioritization, targeting and monitoring purposes
	Development of national guidelines
	In Lesotho, WFP provided technical support to new integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) guidelines, to nutrition monitoring and evaluation guidelines and to training workshops for ministries from central government, district and community levels (although nutrition services are not clearly within the government's social protection policy). The Lesotho country office also jointly drafted guidelines on effective management and implementation of public works with the Ministry of Forestry. To some extent, however, it is difficult to discern how much of these efforts to influence policy were intended as contributions to social protection or were simply a normal part of WFP food security and nutrition work
Activities that contribute to increased supply chain efficiency	**Cash-based programming**
	There are increasing opportunities for technical support and advice linked to social protection based on WFP's expertise in large-scale, cash-based programmes, work on payment and registration systems and experience in food distribution
	In Turkey, the country office has drawn on WFP capacities in cash transfers to implement the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in partnership with the Turkish Red Crescent and the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS), through national social protection systems. The ESSN provides multi-purpose cash to support the basic needs of Syrian and other refugees in Turkey. It leverages experience of working with the Turkish Red Crescent in refugee camps in Turkey as well as global experiences. The programme is aligned with national social protection systems (including registrations, targeting and applications) with the direct involvement of MoFLSS
	Supply chain management
	Supply chain management expertise has been employed to provide governments with advice and support to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of government social protection programmes. In Uganda supply chain advice was provided on storage to school meals providers. In Sri Lanka, WFP supported the Ministry of Health in conducting a supply chain assessment and supported production of "Thriposha", a locally-produced fortified blended food which was provided to beneficiaries as part of a government social protection programme. In Egypt WFP's supply chain unit has conducted efficiency studies and offered technical assistance to the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade, formalized in a 2018 memorandum of understanding, to improve the quality and effectiveness of the different systems that support the food and nutrition security

Types of activities	Examples from case studies
Activities that contribute to national policies and strategies	**National social protection policies and strategies** WFP has participated in the development of many national strategies and policies related to social protection, most frequently with the aim of increasing prioritization and coverage of food security and nutrition interests. In Ecuador, WFP designed and implemented its cash-based response to the 2016 earthquake in coordination with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES). Cash transfers to earthquake-affected households were channeled through the payment platform used by MIES to deliver its flagship social transfer progamme, social pensions and disability grants. The 2016 earthquake response has provided the springboard for country office strategic engagement with shock-responsive social protection debates in country, generation of evidence (see OPM study), and ongoing capacity building and technical assistance to the MIES and other national social protection actors. Other examples of WFP directly contributing to national social protection strategies were found in Cambodia, Colombia, Burkina Faso, Kenya, and Mauritania **Sectoral policies and strategies** Other examples were identified of WFP planned or actual contributions to national school meals, nutrition and school health policies in Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Kenya (where the country office also supported a national social protection sector review) and Lesotho (where WFP had a lead role in development of the school feeding policy)

Source: Case study document review and interviews.

121.   In many instances, support pathway activities were implemented together with other direct provision activities. The 2017 standard project report analysis found that WFP both implemented safety nets and provided country capacity strengthening/technical assistance in 60 out of 83 countries analyzed.

122.   The most frequent example of such bundling related to school feeding. In multiple cases[88] WFP was engaged in: training of Ministry of Education staff; support for developing national school feeding policies; analytical support for targeting; technical advice on food safety and logistics; and direct implementation of partial or whole school feeding programmes, which often have clear ambition and sometimes well-developed plans for the handing over of remaining implementation duties.

123.   WFP has also invested in South-South cooperation to support governments in school feeding. The Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil, jointly launched by WFP and the Government of Brazil in 2011, has served as a hub for sharing knowledge and policy innovations with other countries based on the Brazilian experience with home-grown school feeding and social protection. Since its creation, the centre has hosted 58 study visits from other countries and regional organizations. As of the end of 2018, 30 countries received direct technical support from the centre, 21 of which now have action plans for developing national school feeding programmes.

124.   Similar examples were found in Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Lesotho, Mauritania, Sri Lanka and Uganda of combined activities related to nutrition programmes. In Egypt, for example, WFP worked with the government to implement a "1,000 days" nutrition programme for children and

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[88] Examples noted in Cambodia, Colombia, Kenya, Lesotho, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Burkina Faso.

provide dietary support to pregnant and lactating women with a view to prevent chronic malnutrition. As part of the 1,000 days programme, the country office worked with multiple ministries and social protection instruments, including: (i) the national social protection programme, Takaful and Karama, to target women already receiving assistance, (ii) the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade to utilize the government's ration card as a transfer distribution modality, and (iii) the Ministry of Health on the nutrition aims of the programme, including advice for a planned national nutrition policy.

125.   While all evaluation case studies provided some examples of WFP contributions through cross-cutting technical and analytical advice and support, it is difficult to quantify the importance of such contributions, identify how dependent the government was on WFP support and compare this to the support of other international organizations. In cases where it was possible to interview key government stakeholders, it was clear that they appreciated WFP support and contributions. However, the evaluation also found that in some countries, WFP contributions typically focused on food security and nutrition, unlike organizations such as the World Bank, UNICEF and, to some extent, ILO, which focused more on social protection systems as a whole and related policies.

126.   While WFP focus is clearly aligned with the food-based focus of the Policy Update, it may not always fully align with the broader social protection system needs of national governments. Promoting WFP successes in providing a wide range of technical support related to vulnerability analysis and targeting and contributing to policy development can help identify ways of aligning with government priorities at broader levels. In certain cases, WFP has demonstrated a new focus on safety net and social protection programming that supports objectives broader than food security and nutrition, such as the multi-purpose cash approach of the ESSN in Turkey. As noted by IDS "WFP needs to demonstrate its value-added as a technical and advocacy agency in the social protection area, so that governments and agencies are more willing to engage with WFP for technical assistance, policy advice and capacity building". [89]

Provision Pathway[90] Contributions

Finding 12: WFP country offices designed, operationalized and implemented activities that they considered to be safety nets, sometimes with a clear ambition to demonstrate activities that could become components of national social protection systems. However, some activities seem to operate in parallel with national systems, particularly general food assistance and food assistance for assets.

127.   All country offices studied for this evaluation directly implemented activities that they consider to be safety nets or link to national social protection systems. The evaluation team also identified that in each country at least one activity was linked to long-term national instruments and government priorities. However, in multiple cases, other activities were described as safety nets even though they were not linked to government programmes or systems, and were limited in duration and predictability, particularly for general food assistance and food assistance for assets.

128.   Analysis of data from 2017 standard project reports compiled by the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit[91] shows that 67 WFP country offices defined activities that they implemented as safety nets serving over 41 million direct beneficiaries (Figure 10). RBC and RBN represented outliers with substantially greater direct (Tier 1) beneficiaries for general distribution than other regions. This was understood to be due to the heavy concentration of emergency and protracted

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[89] Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, Institute for Development Studies, "Social Protection and the World Food Programme", WFP Occasional Paper No. 25, January 2018.

[90] Provision pathway includes technical assistance and capacity strengthening efforts linked to government-led safety nets or social protection systems.

[91] WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit, SPR analysis 2017.

crises among the portfolio of countries in these regions. RBC was an outlier in school feeding beneficiaries due to the case load stemming largely from the Syria crisis. RBN had a disproportionate number of direct beneficiaries in food assistance for assets/food assistance for training, likely due to a significant focus on working with smallholder farmers in this region.

Figure 10: WFP implementation of safety nets (2017)[92]
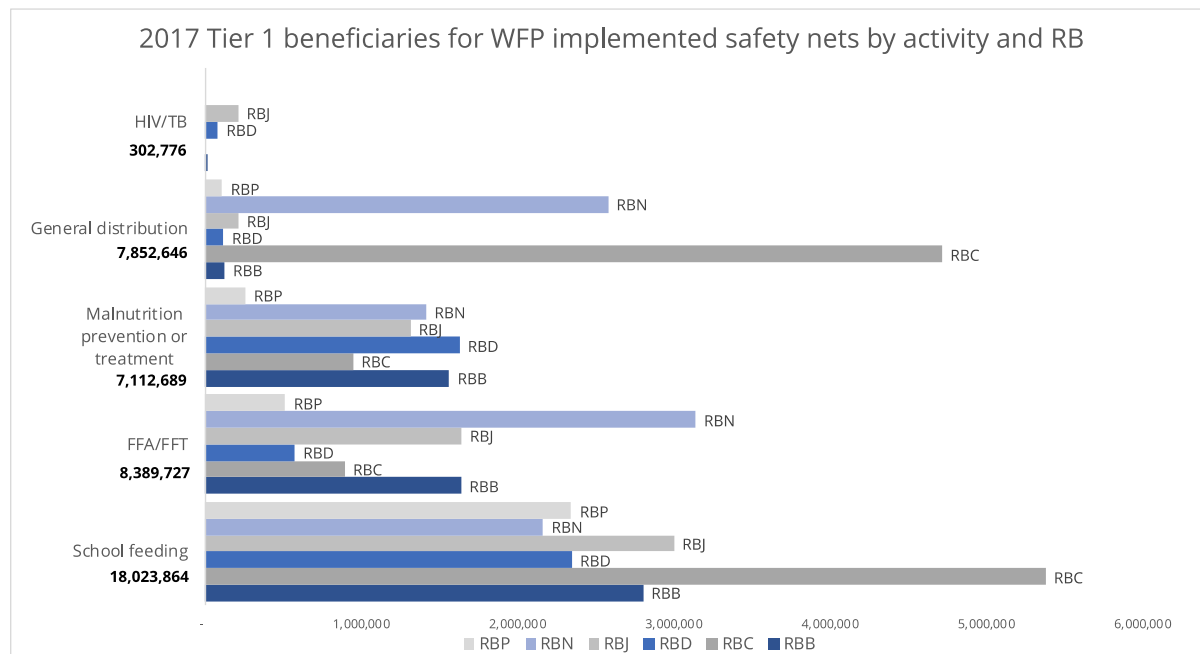
Source: Evaluation team analysis of WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit 2017 SPR analysis data.

129.   According to the analysis of 2017 standard project report data, school feeding is the safety net activity where WFP serves the greatest number of direct beneficiaries. RBN is the only region where WFP serves more direct beneficiaries with food assistance for assets and for training and general distribution than with school feeding.

130.   In some case studies, certain activities were described as safety nets even though they were of short duration, small-scale and/or not linked to national safety net programmes or systems. WFP staff primarily framed their work based on WFP activity categories first and foremost. Issues around the boundaries of what is, and is not, a safety net tended to only come up when key informants were directly asked about whether certain activities qualify and appeared linked to different and context-specific interpretations of the term "safety net". Table 7 illustrates examples of direct provision activities based on further delineation of the outputs in the constructed theory of change.

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[92] According to the WFP Management Plan 2018-2020 (WFP/EB.2/2017/5-A/1/Rev.1) Tier 1 beneficiaries are those that benefit directly from WFP assistance, whereas Tier 2 and 3 beneficiaries benefit indirectly.

Table 7:Types of WFP direct implementation activities and examples

Types of activities	Examples from case studies
Designing, operationalizing and implementing safety nets on behalf of the government or to complement or fill gaps in government coverage	**School feeding** – Country offices provided school meals in rural environments or portions of a country's geography not covered by an existing national school feeding programme, such as in Egypt (community schools), Colombia, Burkina Faso (in the remote Sahel region), Kenya (arid counties) Lesotho (provided with government funding), Mauritania (south), Mozambique, Uganda (Karamoja), and Sri Lanka (northeast)

Nutrition – Programmes designed to provide targeted nutrition assistance to women and children on top of existing government social assistance mechanisms and in close coordination with relevant health and social protection ministries. Country offices in Egypt, Lesotho, Uganda, Mauritania, Mozambique, and Uganda provided such examples, sometimes combined with HIV/TB programmes

General food assistance/basic needs – In certain cases governments worked in a more integrated manner with WFP to provide large-scale assistance whether through in-kind food or cash-based transfers. The ESSN in Turkey was a good example of such a hybrid approach (with a basic-needs purpose) with strong involvement of the government and national actors. In Ecuador WFP provided food assistance for migrants and refugees based on the government's request. Small-scale integrated support in Mauritania also served as an example |
| Designing, operationalizing and implementing safety nets to demonstrate models for potential inclusion in national social protection systems | **School feeding** – WFP school feeding programmes have traditionally started as direct implementation activities while steadily working to build government capacity, policy frameworks and willingness to eventually implement a national school feeding programme themselves, with WFP then shifting to a technical support role. Such examples were found in Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mozambique (with the design of a home-grown school feeding model using local procurement for a small proportion of schools)

Other examples of such activities in some stage of transition included Burkina Faso (handover to government underway; now operating in two of the most remote districts), Kenya (handover to government completed in October 2018 – with nationally owned, led and resourced home-grown school meals programme), and Sri Lanka (handover completed March 2018)

Nutrition – In Kenya, the country office was piloting Kilifi, an education effort to encourage a balanced diet alongside cash disbursements from a national programme in one county

General food assistance – Lean season assistance programmes in Mozambique including a cash pilot that provided a model that could be adopted by the government to provide predictable seasonal social assistance |

Types of activities	Examples from case studies
	Livelihoods – In certain cases governments were inclined to add a more promotive or transformative approach to their national social protection systems. WFP livelihoods activities may in some cases be of interest to governments where they can be made predictable and long-term as they look for models to adapt. Livelihoods activities observed in Egypt and Ecuador (linked to the 2016 earthquake response) seemed to fall into this category

Sources: Country office programme documents and key informant interviews conducted for case studies.

131.   Little evidence was found that WFP country offices were rebranding a broad range of existing activities as safety nets, which was cited as a concern in the Policy Update and 2014 guidance. However, some activities described as safety nets by key informants were not linked to national safety nets.

132.   With general food assistance, most WFP emergency food assistance operated in coordination with, but parallel to, government systems with limited expectation that the national government would absorb such levels and types of assistance in the future, especially in conflict and refugee situations. For example, some key informants from government and WFP described a large-scale lean season intervention supporting the government's annual response plan as a safety net, though it was linked to WFP's preemptive declaration of a Level-3 emergency and implemented with the national council in charge of emergency relief.

133.   With regards to livelihoods, resilience and livelihoods projects, often employing food assistance for assets and other elements, were often funded for one year or less. They sometimes only worked with a particular community for a short duration and often offered a temporary livelihoods benefit (beyond the intended economic effects of assets created). At one point, food assistance for assets in Uganda was working in parallel to the government. In Kenya, there was a plan to develop a system for moving cash assistance for assets activities to a national safety net programme. While the data is integrated in the national single registry, a planned complementary initiative will still need to incorporate food assistance for assets within the national safety net system.

> **Finding 13**: Some country offices, with the support of regional bureaux, engaged with social protection systems for emergency response or worked with national governments to make existing social protection systems more shock responsive. However, in some contexts, there is a risk of country offices seizing on the concept of "shock responsiveness" without an adequate analysis of opportunities and challenges.

134.   The term "shock-responsive social protection" was used by WFP to describe efforts aligned with accepted definitions (for example, increasing the number of people reached by social assistance in response to shock, such as in Turkey, Latin America and the Caribbean) but it was also sometimes used for efforts that do not (for example, rice banks, seasonal food assistance not linked to social protection systems). In RBP efforts have been informed by analysis, development of an evidence base and joint discussions with multiple stakeholders (including the World Bank and UNICEF). In some contexts, however, there are risks of re-labeling disaster risk management activities as shock-responsive social protection and of advocating for modifications to existing government systems and programmes without sufficient analysis as to whether those changes are in fact appropriate.

135.   In Latin America and the Caribbean, the regional bureau has promoted shock-responsive social protection and supported the creation of an evidence base, largely through the OPM studies

conducted in the region. In 2017, a regional workshop on shock-responsive social protection was held in Peru with 21 governments from the region. In early 2018, a similar national-level workshop was organized in Ecuador, during which the government committed to developing shock-responsive social protection systems and, with WFP support, has recently articulated a roadmap to guide this process. Work in this region is strategically driven forward by the regional bureau as part of WFP's capacity-building role in social protection[93] in the region[94] and is facilitated by: the existence of strong social protection systems and disaster management mechanisms; willingness; the relatively good capacity of national governments to engage with this agenda; and regional bureau management buy-in and prioritization of social protection.

136.   There are numerous examples of WFP promoting the shock-responsiveness of social protection systems or utilizing these systems for emergency assistance. Following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, WFP supported the Department for Social Welfare and Development to provide "top-up" cash and goods transfers to beneficiaries of an existing conditional cash transfer programme. In Kenya, the Complementary Initiative, supported by WFP, has sought to ensure that food assistance in arid and semi-arid lands is integrated into Kenya's safety net systems. In Lesotho, WFP helped to convene a workshop bringing together social protection and disaster risk management (DRM) staff from government and key institutions to analyze opportunities for shock-responsive social protection.

137.   In Turkey, the ESSN works in partnership with the Ministry of Families, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS) through existing social protection administrative and complementary delivery systems. The combination of strong existing social protection systems, substantial donor funding and strong partnership with the Turkish Red Crescent and MoFLSS enabled WFP and its partners to take forward the single largest humanitarian programme ever funded by the European Commission.

138.   In Sri Lanka, a lessons-learned exercise was undertaken in 2016 to review WFP use of the Diveneguma social safety net ("Samurdhi") and its community banking system in response to Cyclone Roanu. The lessons-learned exercise led to the adoption of standard operating procedures to enable effective and efficient assistance for those affected by disasters. WFP is currently providing support to guide technical steps for setting up an emergency response unit in Samurdhi and providing financial and human resource support to develop "shock-agile safety nets" for future disaster response.

139.   The focus on shock responsiveness also risks shifting attention away from strengthening routine social protection. While shock responsiveness has a logical link to WFP expertise in emergency relief, focusing on how WFP could support national social protection systems to perform these functions may not be the most appropriate starting point, when routine social protection systems are not in place. Some country offices were found to be undertaking a nuanced analysis to take this into consideration, while others were including shock-responsive social protection in their plans without understanding the implications.

Partnerships

> **Finding 14**: WFP has engaged in efforts to work in partnership with other social protection actors but heavy competition for resources and positioning continue to limit optimal collective impact and poses challenges for national governments.

140.   The Policy Update acknowledges that certain partners have comparative advantages in particular activities and contexts and suggests that WFP should adapt its roles based to the

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[93] Note that in RBP reference is explicitly made to social protection not safety nets.
[94] WFP, Strengthening capacities in Food Security and Nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean. Analyzing the past, building the present, looking into the future, 2016, Page 9.

contexts where it operates. The evaluation found examples of WFP working well with key partners, such as in Colombia, Egypt and Ecuador, as well as instances where WFP and other agencies seem to be in direct competition for space and influence vis-a-vis the national government.

141.   Overall, key informants at country and global levels note that WFP seems to have the strongest partnership with the World Bank, based on mutual respect for one another's capacities and expertise. The World Bank is often very well positioned to influence and support systems-level policy and design initiatives for social protection, while it views WFP's operational expertise and field presence as a complementary value to its work.

142.   In certain instances, at country, regional and global levels, WFP was found to coordinate well with other key social protection actors, including FAO, ILO, UNAIDS and UNICEF among others, if not directly partner with them. One such example was the development of the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) tools[95] that help countries analyze strengths and weaknesses and develop options for improving their social protection systems. In 2018, WFP was designated by UNAIDS as co-convener with the ILO to coordinate the Inter-Agency Task Team on HIV-sensitive social protection. Donors have recognized WFP potential to contribute to a broader set of actors as evidenced by a two-year ECHO grant that funded WFP technical assistance for social protection to inter-agency teams in nine countries.

143.   At the same time, due to competition for resources from the same donors (such as traditional bilateral government donors and newer mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund), these relationships were characterized by tension in some places. The evaluation found instances of direct competition for donor and national government support based on each agency's programme approaches for activities, especially related to nutrition and work with smallholders.

144.   Some national government stakeholders expressed concerns about the inability of WFP and international actors to coalesce around common priorities for social assistance. They noted that this leaves the governments to decide how to work and coordinate with different international actors and which programming models and outcome priorities to adopt, often in situations of scarce resources and limited capacity. In practice, the evaluation observed that the ideas and approaches adopted by governments were most often influenced by the ability of an agency to build and sustain relationships, understand government systems and position themselves strategically.

Gender, Disability and Accountability to Affected Populations

> **Finding 15**: There is little evidence that WFP work in safety nets and social protection has contributed to gender transformative outcomes, specifically identified or addressed the needs of people with disabilities or enhanced accountability to affected populations in the cases studied.

145.   As noted previously, the Policy Update and subsequent guidance provided little specific direction on gender and almost no coverage of how to address people with disabilities in safety nets programming. The Policy Update itself did not reference the 2009 WFP Gender Policy, nor set out to encourage gender transformative outcomes, likely reflective of the state of gender guidance in WFP at the time when it was adopted.[96] Over the period covered by the evaluation, terminology has evolved. In 2019, gender transformative outcomes would mean addressing the underlying causes of gender inequality. At the time of its approval, "gender-responsive" programming would have been a more widely used term, meaning to accommodate and acknowledge the differences

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[95] See: ispatools.org – WFP is one of the 25 named partners in the initiative to develop these tools.
[96] In the same year that the Policy Update was released, Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler influentially stressed the role of transformative social protection and highlighted the need to go beyond protective, preventive and promotive activities to include measures aimed at transforming structural discriminatory policies and practices. (Devereux, S. and Sabates-Wheeler, R. (2004) Transformative Social Protection, IDS Working Paper 232, Brighton: IDS)

that exists by gender in society but not necessarily trying to influence or change power relationships and the access or ownership over resources and opportunities.

146.   The Gender Office produced and issued specific guidance for integrating gender into social protection programming in 2017. Sex and age disaggregated data is collected for indicators in the corporate reporting systems but cannot be isolated for work in safety nets and social protection, as WFP activities are not tagged as such in its systems. Some standard project reports include sections on gender but data and findings cannot be isolated for safety nets and social protection interventions. In a few cases, examples were identified of school feeding programmes prioritizing the needs of girls. Some nutrition programmes specifically target women and their children. Nevertheless, examples of programmes truly designed to lead to gender transformative outcomes were not found in case studies despite changes at headquarters.

147.   However, in RBP gender-sensitive (sic)[97] social protection was prioritized and has been embedded in social protection training since 2016. The regional bureau had a dedicated specialist on staff for gender-sensitive social protection and developed a publication "Gender-Sensitive Social Protection 4 Zero Hunger" that was disseminated through socialprotection.org. Regional key informants reported that this has influenced the content of country strategic plans in the region, including a dedicated strategic outcome in the Nicaragua country strategic plan for gender-transformative approaches for zero hunger.

148.   No specific policy on persons with disabilities exists within WFP. Certain vulnerabilities linked to disability are sometimes taken into account, particularly in the assessment and targeting stage of programme design. However, most programmes reviewed do not seem to offer differentiated transfer levels or auxiliary programmatic support linked to such specific needs.

149.   The Turkey country office was a positive outlier in terms of disability and inclusion. Under the ESSN the country office incorporated targeting criteria to identify and differentiate persons with disabilities by providing a top-up to their cash transfers. Barriers to access for persons with disabilities were considered in the programme design and challenges monitored with follow-up actions taken. Outreach and sensitization efforts were developed for programme staff and partners and protection referral mechanisms support persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the country office engaged in advocacy and coordination with other actors to ensure access to assistance for persons with disabilities with relevant government authorities and inter-agency coordination structures.

150.   Accountability to affected populations is similarly absent in the policy and guidelines. As with other WFP programming corporate policies and guidance, accountability to affected population guidance applies to WFP work in safety nets and social protection. Accountability to affected population-specific sections were included in some standard project reports, but data reviewed and findings cannot be isolated for safety nets and social protection interventions.

151.   In a few cases the evaluation found country offices that were offering governments support in developing feedback and complaints mechanisms that could contribute to accountability to affected populations. This includes the Mozambique cash pilot, which showcased feedback mechanisms and the establishment of a complaints and grievance system in Kenya. The more fundamental element of accountability to affected populations related to meaningfully consulting potential programme participants. Involving them in the design and implementation of programmes seemed to remain elusive, with the exception of some small-scale community planning efforts for livelihoods and resilience work.

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[97] Gender-sensitive is viewed as an outdated term today as "sensitive" is thought to reinforce inequalities whereas "responsive" seeks to address them. The term "gender-sensitive" is used in the report only where it directly references the terms used in specific instances and times.

2.3 FACTORS EXPLAINING RESULTS

152.   The evaluation collected and analyzed evidence on the various factors influencing results through stakeholder interviews, a review of WFP documents and triangulation of the results observed with various characteristics of countries and WFP capacities and resources. This section identifies the primary internal and external factors enabling and hindering WFP's work in safety nets and social protection.

> **Finding 16**: WFP's comparative advantages and creative response to gaps in national social protection systems create opportunities for it to contribute to sustainable, government-led programmes that alleviate hunger, improve nutrition and mitigate the effects of poverty and vulnerability. Yet, there is a perceived risk that the systems and tools that WFP has developed for its own programming may not be compatible with, or appropriate for, government systems.

153.   The 2011 Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Role in Social Protection and Safety Nets identified WFP comparative advantages in safety nets and social protection, which included "field presence, a delivery orientation, effective logistics and project management, links to grassroots organizations and civil society, the ability to deliver at scale in complex environments, and analytical capacities such as vulnerability analysis and mapping". This evaluation confirms that governments and other external stakeholders continue to view these advantages as supporting WFP's potential to contribute to safety nets and social protection.

154.   WFP expertise and tools for the analysis of food security and nutrition, market analysis, and drivers of vulnerability continue to be a key strength of the organization as it seeks to support national safety nets and social protection systems, as confirmed in a 2018 IDS report.[98] Provision of evidence-based analysis, as well as capacity strengthening to enhance the ability of partners to , analyze vulnerability and translate such analysis into decision-supporting tools were found to be key entry points for WFP. These "offers" served to enhance its credibility in social protection circles.

155.   Since 2012, WFP has developed some additional areas of expertise that support its work in this realm. WFP's experience implementing large-scale cash programmes, and the related tools, processes and payment-system expertise that have been developed, are widely viewed as equipping WFP with the skills, reputation and credibility to provide technical assistance, advice and support to national social protection systems and instruments.

156.   WFP has also advanced its use of technology to develop global tools for registration and beneficiary management (e.g. SCOPE) and tailored tools for data management and visualization. In some cases, WFP has effectively leveraged these tools and expertise to provide support to governments to enhance their social protection programmes' efficiency, effectiveness and equity, while also positioning WFP well with national social protection entities. Often, the opportunities to provide such technology-based advice and support grow from relationships established by sharing vulnerability analysis and mapping data and food security and nutrition studies. While these contributions can take many years to mature and are relatively small in financial scale, they appear to be highly appreciated by governments.

157.   In Sri Lanka, as part of efforts to support the development of shock-agile government safety nets, WFP assisted the Ministry of Disaster Management to establish a monitoring system called "Platform for Real-Time Information and Situation Monitoring" (PRISM) supporting its efforts to deal with droughts. In addition, government systems adopted the WFP rapid 72-hour impact assessment methodology.

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[98] Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, Institute for Development Studies, "Social Protection and the World Food Programme", WFP Occasional Paper No. 25, January 2018.

158.   In Egypt, WFP has assisted the government with its data-collection capabilities and developed a data visualization and decision-support platform (Geo Portal) that integrates vulnerability, food security and nutrition data in a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) enabled platform. The country office has recently worked with the government to integrate national census data into the system and had started developing complementary systems for a number of ministries with the ambition of creating a multi-ministry integrated government data management platform. This initiative grew out of a collaboration that began years ago with the presentation of food security studies and vulnerability analysis and mapping data to various government ministries.

159.   There is a perceived risk, however, that WFP offers products and services designed and developed for WFP operations that may not be best suited to government social protection systems, as opposed to transferring skills for building capacity to conduct and use analysis, as vulnerability analysis and mapping units have done for many years. As noted in the 2018 IDS report:[99] "Challenges in realizing WFP's potential contribution in [social protection] relate to the need to shift from building and employing capacity within WFP and delivering knowledge products to expanding the ability to enable and facilitate capacity building of others." Transferring SCOPE to governments was cited as an example where conveying the process and ability to develop the product, rather than the product itself, may be most appropriate. This is particularly true as transferring SCOPE can pose challenges because the data protection and privacy controls and verification processes that WFP is committed to[100] may differ from those in a particular government.

> **Finding 17**: The suggestion in the Policy Update that a country's stage of development, stability, capacity and risk exposure determines WFP's roles was not fully confirmed. While these factors influenced the need for WFP's support, there was no simple formula to determine how WFP can best contribute.

160.   The Policy Update presented five scenarios linked to a country's capacity and stability as a framework for guiding the type of activities and roles WFP could play related to safety nets. Although key stakeholders generally agree that these factors play a part in determining the space and opportunities for WFP contributions, the analysis of case study evidence shows that these factors neither clearly predicted what WFP could or would contribute nor how successfully it would do so.

161.   The evaluation team conducted an analysis of the 2017 standard project report data to look for patterns in the roles played by WFP compared to available indicators for a country's capacity and stability - per capita GDP and the Inform Risk Rating. This analysis is shown in figure 11.

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[99] Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, Institute for Development Studies, "Social Protection and the World Food Programme", WFP Occasional Paper No. 25, January 2018.
[100] See: WFP, Office of the Inspector General, "Internal Audit of Beneficiary Management", Internal Audit Report AR/17/17, November 2017.

Figure 11: WFP roles in safety nets and social protection by GDP and risk rating
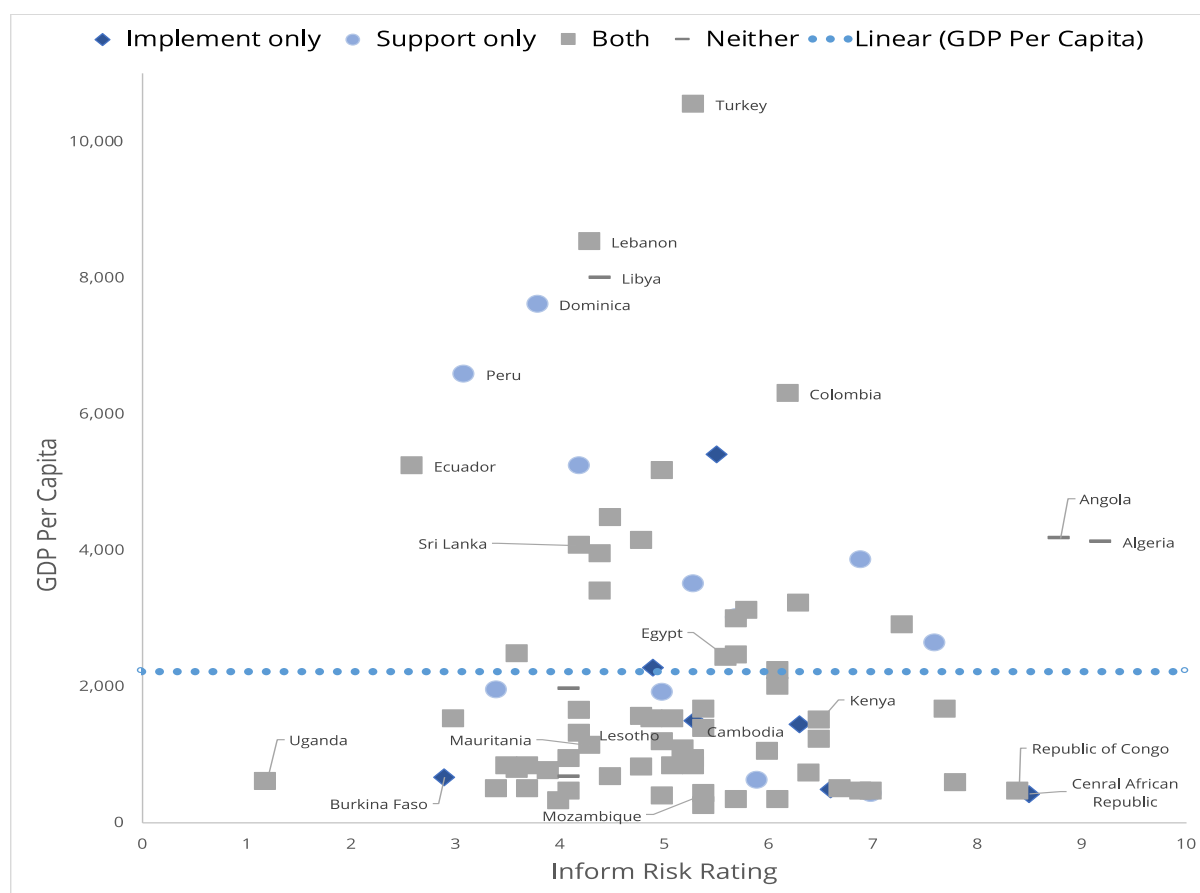
Source: Evaluation team analysis of 2017 SRP data compiled by WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit, 2017 risk ratings from inform-index.org.

162.   Figure 11 shows a number of patterns related to the roles WFP plays in different contexts:

▪   A total of 64 percent of the countries analyzed fell below the average per capita GDP of USD 2,220 while 51 percent fell below the average Inform Risk Rating of 5.3

▪   For the seven countries where WFP only implemented safety nets, the average per capita GDP was USD 1,747 (range USD 418 to 5415) and the average Inform Risk Rating was 5.7 (range 2.9 to 8.5)

▪   For the 11 countries where WFP only supported government safety nets and/or social protection systems, the average per capita GDP was USD 3,388 (range USD 415 to 6,571) and the average Inform Risk Rating was 5.3 (range 3.1 to 7.6)

▪   For the 60 countries where WFP was both implementing safety nets and supporting national systems, the average per capita GDP was USD 1,930 (range USD 237 to 10,540) and the average Inform Risk Rating was 5.1 (range 1.2 to 8.4)

▪   In the five countries where WFP was neither implementing nor supporting, the average per capita GDP was USD 3,784 (range USD 660 to 7,998) and the average Inform Risk Rating was 6.1.

163.   This analysis suggests that WFP is more likely to only implement safety nets or both implement and provide support in countries with lower GDP per capita. In countries with higher GDP per capita, WFP is likely to either only provide support to the government or not be engaged

with safety nets and social protection systems. No clear pattern is evident regarding the influence of risk ratings on predicting the role WFP may play.

164.   A review of the types of activities and roles WFP played in the 12 country cases found no complementary pattern linked to the level of country income, fragility, or risk rating. Case study key informants and a review of country office programme documents suggest that the historical programme portfolio, relationships with government actors, country office leadership, roles of other partners and funding patterns were found to have more bearing on the nature of engagement and type of activities WFP can employ to successfully contribute to social protection.

> **Finding 18**: WFP's ability to analyze, understand and relate to government structures, political developments and overarching social protection systems determines how relevant and influential it can be.

165.   Understanding government systems, policy-making and public administration issues were found to have a significant influence on WFP's ability to position itself and contribute effectively in this domain. Perhaps more importantly, such understanding was identified as critical for enabling WFP to adjust its offerings of support in the face of political and systems changes that influence national social protection schemes. Country offices that reported more direct connections to central social protection bodies and successful positioning as a relevant contributor to social protection systems had dedicated staff resources to monitor and analyze legislative and budgetary developments, administrative structures and political priorities. A combination of long-term national staff and international staff with experience in policy analysis and public administration appeared to be needed to ensure national and cultural understanding and mitigate turnover, while also bringing experience from other contexts. Although programme and policy units were the most logical place to situate such responsibilities, country office staff reported that job profiles and recruitment rarely considered the analytical skill sets and experience needed to understand government systems.

166.   At the same time, capacity to analyze and understand government systems was found to be only one half of the formula for successful positioning. Country office key informants stressed the importance of investing in relationship development with key government ministry staff as well as partners. Relationships with government actors take time to develop and continuous engagement and versatility are needed to best leverage them in dynamic and rapidly changing contexts. Continuity is a key challenge, both among WFP international staff and government counterparts and stakeholder analysis needs to be continuously updated and new relationships developed. Heads of Programme, Deputy Country Directors and Country Directors most frequently held key relationships, but in some country offices new emphasis was being given to empowering high-level national staff with past government experience to help maintain relationships.

167.   In Egypt, WFP effectively managed to keep pace with rapid political changes during the period of the evaluation by maintaining and establishing new relationships as political changes led to rotation in key ministries. After the establishment of a new constitution and the creation of a new national social protection system, WFP effectively leveraged on-going support activities to demonstrate its practical ability and willingness to assist the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

168.   In Cambodia, political and systems changes had the opposite effect on WFP roles and positioning. Prior to 2016, WFP played a critical role in co-facilitating a national social protection coordination mechanism and contributed to activities the government considered important to social protection through school feeding and food assistance for assets. Although WFP had previously worked to build capacity within the Ministry of Education, signed a school feeding handover agreement and integrated this plan into the new government framework, political changes shifted decision-making authority to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, where WFP

had no pre-existing relationships. Given the changes in government staff and responsibilities, the country office will need to establish new relationships, in some cases with actors that are more familiar with other international partners.

169.   In Turkey, WFP has revamped its approach to partnership by working closely with the Turkish Red Crescent and MoFLSS to support their role in ESSN – including setting up a joint management cell and sharing an office with the Turkish Red Crescent. WFP has used evidence from monitoring and accountability to affected population mechanisms to advocate with the government for measures to promote the inclusion of households of refugees who lacked official addresses and adequate transfer values in the face of inflation.

170.   In Kenya, WFP seized on opportunities to position itself in social protection work when Kenya adopted its 2010 constitution, with its strong framework for social protection and the subsequent establishment of the National Social Protection Secretariat. The related devolution to county structures was also an opportunity for WFP to support government structures at an operational level. WFP established county programmes to strengthen the decentralized capacity to implement safety net programmes.

171.   Where WFP has a well-developed understanding of government systems, policies and politics it can influence national social protection systems incrementally by supporting the development of programmes and systems over time and also be positioned to advise during larger systems changes when such systems are undergoing a major revision. Changes in government structures, policies and leadership pose risks to WFP positioning if not anticipated, yet also provide opportunities if WFP can nimbly adjust to new actors and changes.

> **Finding 19**: The low level of corporate investment and leadership prioritization for WFP work in social protection has limited efforts to build internal capacity. WFP's potential to credibly and consistently position itself and contribute to social protection results requires greater attention from WFP global leadership and resources to be fully realized.

172.   Since 2012, the corporate investment in internal capacity for work in safety nets and social protection has reportedly been minimal.[101] Beyond the core staff costs at headquarters, corporate resources were allocated to fund development of the e-learning course (EUR 159,867) and to fund strategic resource allocation committee grants to RBP (of USD 400,000 per year for social protection and resilience). Under the Programme and Policy Division, coverage of safety nets was handled by two WFP staff until 2015, when the combined School Feeding and Safety Nets Unit was formed. Safety nets and social protection resources since 2012 reportedly were limited to two headquarters-based staff positions and, more recently, a few dedicated consultants.

173.   Centralized efforts to build internal capacities, disseminate knowledge and learning and provide technical support to regional bureaux and country offices have been limited to projects for which WFP could raise earmarked money from donors. These have included the development of the e-learning training modules, and evidence generation and technical support provided by IDS (see para 110). Other technical support to country offices is prioritized based on whether funding is available from the country level to fund technical support missions by headquarters staff.

174.   The limited corporate funding for safety nets and social protection parallels the even more limited corporate support for country capacity-strengthening efforts, as found in the Evaluation of the Capacity Development Policy (2009) and corroborated by key informants for this evaluation

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[101] Staff turnover and lack of systematic consolidated tracking of funding sources and amounts for HQ and RB investments in safety nets and social protection capacity building limited the ability of the evaluation team to fully analyze financial trends during the period.

who highlighted that the headquarters function has only been resourced through the support of one consultant.

175.   Since 2012, five out of six regional bureaux have created social protection functions (a few as recently as 2017) to help support country offices. The specific roles were found to vary across regional bureaux, some of which have more than one staff person working on social protection, with others managing multiple functions in addition to social protection. In some regional bureaux, the social protection officer has taken an active role in developing a regional strategy, disseminating information to country offices and creating knowledge-management platforms, while in other regional bureaux, positions have responded to ad hoc requests.

> **Finding 20**: WFP's human resources systems and investments remain ill-suited to an increased role in supporting government-run social protection systems.

176.   Realigning WFP's workforce to ensure it includes the skills and experience needed to support its strategic objectives, including capacities for engaging in policy dialogue and working with governments, has been the focus of numerous strategies and audit findings since the Fit for Purpose initiative was launched in 2012, followed by the People Strategy in 2014. Despite these efforts and a recent workforce-planning initiative, standard job profiles rarely specify the types of specialized skills and experience that could enhance the ability of WFP to contribute to safety nets and social protection. WFP's approach to allocating international staff depends on a rotational system among available positions in headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices. Moreover, networking and political influence is a cumulative process at a senior level to which staff rotation is ill-suited.

177.   In the absence of a pool of internal social protection experts and given limitations on staffing, country offices sometimes resort to filling specialized posts with external consultants. While consultants may temporarily fill key gaps, they generally do not enable WFP to build sustainable internal capacities and technical expertise related to safety nets. Capacity, continuity and long-term perspectives are necessary to engage effectively with government processes and structures.

178.   National staff play a critical role in enabling WFP work in social protection. They serve as the institutional memory and continuity in light of the rotation system and frequently hold key government relationships and insights into the culture and government policy and administrative systems.

179.   Although many past evaluations have identified a range of skills needed within WFP to support its shift to food assistance and serving in more enabling roles, the evaluation did not find substantial progress to systematically recruit people from outside WFP into regular staff positions with key expertise. While the types of training seen in the e-learning course and RBP efforts can serve to build a foundational understanding of social protection among existing staff, outside expertise will need to be brought into WFP to overcome these gaps.

180.   The 2018 IDS report on Social Protection and WFP[102] notes that "repositioning WFP as an agency that engages with social protection policy processes as well as delivering safety net programmes requires strengthening in-house capacity, or hiring relevant expertise….New staff need to be hired with experience in social protection policy analysis, and existing staff need to receive training in social protection that will empower them to engage confidently and credibly in national dialogues about social protection policy formulation and implementation issues".

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[102] Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, Institute for Development Studies, "Social Protection and the World Food Programme", WFP Occasional Paper No. 25, January 2018.

Finding 21: Most funding for WFP activities in safety nets and social protection remains limited to one year in duration, limiting predictability and challenging its ability to commit to longer-term programming with partners and contribute to country capacity strengthening.

181.   In most cases, key informants stated that it is difficult to convince donors that WFP has a key role to play in long-term programming, including social protection. Yet, in Kenya and Sri Lanka, key informants reported that repositioning their programmes to support well-aligned government initiatives led to increased donor interest.

182.   WFP country offices continue to rely mostly on short-term, earmarked funding. This is despite donor commitments in the Grand Bargain to support national priorities and predictable multi-year funding. It also conflicts with the WFP Executive Board (including donor countries) approval of the Policy on Country Strategic Plans and its related five-year budgeting process. For direct implementation of safety nets, short-term funding poses a clear problem for predictability, which is a core principle of effective social protection.

183.   The 2018 IDS report on Social Protection and WFP[103] also notes that unpredictable short-term funding puts WFP at a competitive disadvantage vis-a-vis other donor agencies and multilateral financial institutions, which use their funding as "leverage to build strong relationships with government ministries as strategic partners". This makes "it very difficult for WFP to engage with planning and supporting long-term social protection programmes that require reliable, predictable and sustainable flows of funding over an extended period of time".

184.   In certain contexts, especially middle income countries (MICs), WFP may be requested to provide technical support to a national social protection system funded by that government's own domestic funding. Although this was not evident in the cases included in the evaluation, it is an increasing trend, particularly for country offices in RBB and RBP. In such cases, the predictability of funding may be greater and country offices with little potential for raising operational resources can continue to apply the comparative advantages of WFP through technical assistance and country capacity strengthening.

185.   Although some support pathway activities can be undertaken with relatively modest budgets, they often take place over an extended period of time. Key informants stressed that his makes it difficult for country offices to commit to support for social protection systems. Key informants also believed that the size of WFP's operational portfolio in a country has a direct influence on its ability to engage in support activities and it remains easiest for WFP to consistently invest in capacities and support when a country office also has a large and stable operational budget.

186.   However, the current strategic plan gives prominence to SDG 17 and supporting national governments: the relevance of WFP in doing so often extends beyond the need for its direct implementation. Analysis of the 2017 standard project report data did not corroborate evidence from key informant that the size of a country office's budget influences their ability to engage in providing governments support for their safety nets or social protection systems. Figure 12 shows the results of this analysis.

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[103] Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, Institute for Development Studies, "Social Protection and the World Food Programme", WFP Occasional Paper No. 25, January 2018.

Figure 12: Relationship between WFP country office expenditures and number of country capacity strengthening support pathways
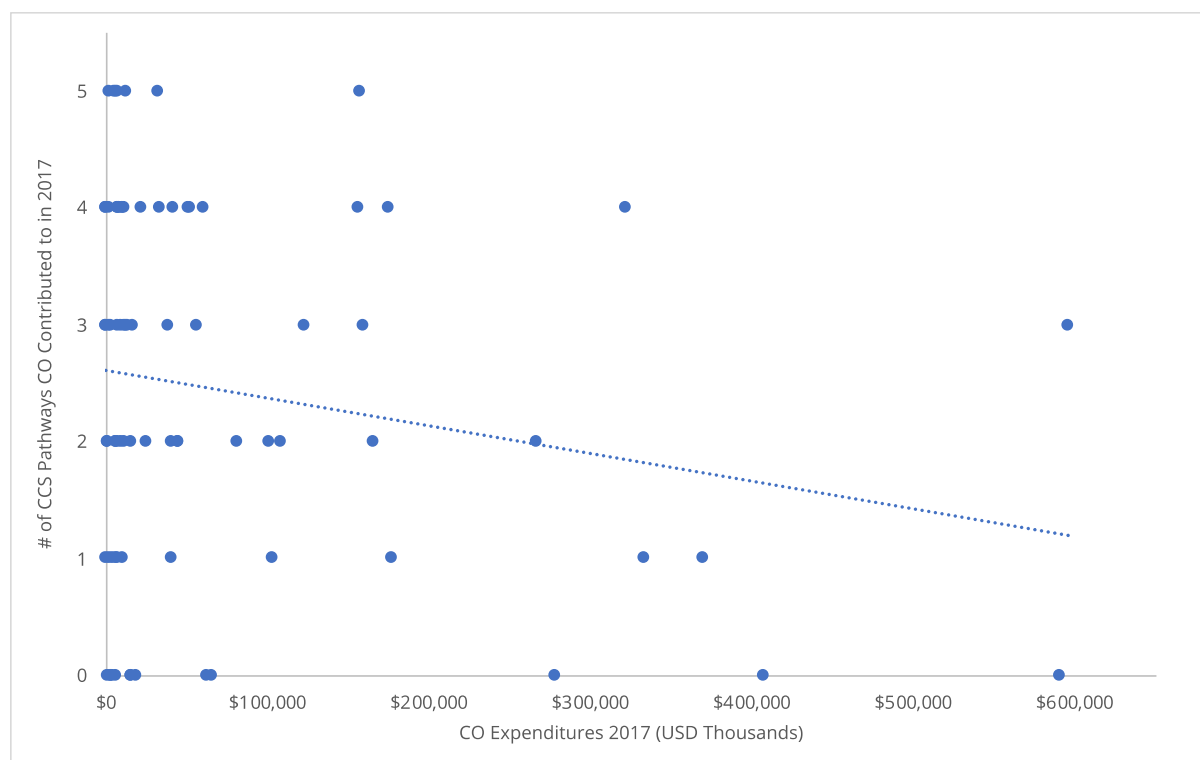
Source: Evaluation team analysis of 2017 SRP data compile by WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit.

187.   Country offices with 2017 expenditures under USD 10 million were engaged in providing support on average to 3.39 of the six country capacity strengthening support pathways.[104] Those with expenditures between USD 10 and USD 50 million were providing support in an average of 3.5 pathways and between USD 50 and USD 100 million, 3.14 pathways. Those with expenditures over USD 100 million provided support through an average of 2.94 pathways.

188.   While the standard project report data did not show a relationship between the number of country capacity strengthening pathways a country office is engaged in and its expenditures, it remains likely, given the emphasis noted by key informants, that country office country capacity strengthening work is more substantive and predictable in places where a country office has more flexibility to allocate resources due to larger budgets. The number of pathways supported may also not represent the significance of WFP contributions to capacity strengthening as a time-limited low budget activity would still "check the box" for that country capacity strengthening pathway. It is likely that the roles WFP plays in different contexts, such as in middle income countries, would be based on gap-filling support and narrower demand for the full array of country capacity strengthening support pathways.

> **Finding 22**: The current strategic plan and country strategic plan processes have created an important opportunity to partner with governments and other partners to consider better ways to contribute to zero hunger through national systems and in alignment with national priorities. Yet, other WFP systems, processes and structures remain unsupportive of a coherent shift towards contributing to national social protection systems.

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[104] The six CCS pathways are (i) WFP strengthens capacity on safety nets, (ii) policy & legislation, (iii) institutional accountability, (iv) strategic planning & financing, (v) stakeholder programme design and delivery, and (vi) engagement and participation of civil society and private sector.

189.   Country strategic plans are intended to be developed based on participatory strategic reviews of a country's food security and nutrition situation, national priorities and systems and the contributions of a wide range of actors. They cover a five-year period and are expected to allow country offices to thoughtfully examine first the national context and outcomes WFP should contribute to and then the combinations of activities that could support the achievement of these outcomes.

190.   The process of developing country strategic plans was found to encourage country offices to consider how they could contribute to the provision of, or support to, safety nets and national social protection systems. The 2017 guidance note on WFP and Social Protection further encouraged such considerations. Key stakeholders felt that strategic reviews and other consultations to develop country strategic plans provided a good opportunity to engage with government actors to discuss ways in which WFP could support their social protection schemes. The links to SDG 17 and freedom to commit to other strategic development goals, including SDG 1, also provide an opening for WFP to identify opportunities to strengthen social protection.

191.   Some corporate systems and processes still continue to hinder work in safety nets and social protection. The strategic results frameworks and Corporate Results Framework in place during the period covered by this evaluation did not adequately provide a way for country offices to record and monitor their contributions to safety nets or social protection. This continues to reduce the ability to systematically analyze the extent to which WFP is contributing to social protection. It may also create some disincentives if the axiom that "what gets measured matters" is true.

192.   New social protection indicators were approved by the Executive Board in November 2018 in the revised Corporate Results Framework along with the option to tag activities as related to social protection. These include the following indicators:

Outcome indicators

- Number of people assisted by WFP, integrated into national social protection systems as a result of WFP capacity strengthening (disaggregated by sex and age)
- Proportion of cash-based transfers channeled through national social protection systems as a result of WFP capacity strengthening support

Output indicators

- Number of tools or products developed or revised to enhance national food security and nutrition systems as a result of WFP capacity strengthening support
- Number of national institutions benefitting from embedded or seconded expertise as a result of WFP capacity strengthening support
- Number of policy engagement strategies developed or implemented
- Number of policy reforms identified or advocated
- Number of national coordination mechanisms supported

SDG-related indicators

- Number of people reached (by WFP or governments or partners with WFP support) to improve access to, or the quality of, social protection floors or systems (by sex and age).

193.   While a step forward, these additions to the monitoring system will remain voluntary, likely limiting the utility of data.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

194.   Engagement in safety nets and social protection is a cross-cutting element in much of the work of WFP rather than a theme for specific programmes. The evaluation identifies the challenges that this poses, particularly given the strong focus by WFP on implementation of specific programmes and the early stages of its shift towards more integrated, long-term programming through country strategic plans. The findings of the evaluation present evidence of clear strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges as WFP looks to its future roles in social protection and safety nets.

195.   **Strengths**: The Policy Update was relevant when adopted and the topic remains important to stakeholders throughout WFP. The Policy Update outlined a clear rationale for WFP engagement in safety nets, created authorization for such work and provided legitimacy to support country office programming and positioning. The policy also introduced dual approaches through which WFP supports national government efforts while also continuing to implement activities directly.

196.   Creation of the Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit reinvigorated implementation of the policy. The guidance produced to support policy implementation was generally good quality. The e-learning modules supported learning and provided a link between the policy and practice. The recent dissemination of knowledge products, establishment of a community of practice and increased partnerships and efforts to engage in global social protection fora further enhanced policy implementation.

197.   The expansion of WFP experience of implementing safety nets at scale and the enhancement of country offices' abilities, through capacity strengthening and partnerships, position WFP well to continue contributing to social protection systems. The successes of country offices and regional bureaux in using social protection to improve food security and nutrition can be leveraged to expand work in this area.

198.   **Weaknesses:** The Policy Update had a narrow focus on WFP's role in safety nets rather than on WFP's the position in relation to broader social protection systems. It neglected gender-responsive social protection and disability considerations. Equivocal language in the Policy Update and lack of a clear results framework reduced its value as a tool for providing direction. Poor dissemination of the Policy Update and guidance resulted in weak uptake throughout WFP.

199.   Investments in the building of internal capacity to support policy implementation were limited and there was little evidence of senior management focusing on safety nets and social protection. This was coupled with an overall lack of resources for country capacity strengthening throughout WFP. Human resource limitations and gaps in expertise for upstream policy analysis and engagement pose challenges for WFP work in social protection. No overall knowledge management and learning strategy for social protection was in place and the monitoring and reporting systems of WFP did not consistently or adequately capture results related to safety nets and social protection.

200.   **Opportunities:** Social protection is an essential means of sustainably working towards zero hunger. Commitments in the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021), country strategic plans and the 2030 Agenda affirm the centrality of national governments in their countries' development, which will require WFP to support the development and enhancement of national social protection systems.

201. The growing experience of social protection among country offices and regional bureaux provides a platform for further development of the WFP approach. WFP strengths can complement those of other international actors, potentially leading to partnerships based on a clear WFP "offer". The overall growth in instruments for national social protection and emphasis on increasing access to, and coverage and quality of, social protection programmes present opportunities for greater WFP contributions. As noted in the 2019 Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Support to Enhanced Resilience,[105] global interest in bridging humanitarian response and social protection and a focus on the humanitarian–development–peace nexus further increase the relevance of WFP work in this area.

202. **Threats:** Senior management's prioritization of WFP's work in social protection is unclear. As a cross-cutting topic rather than a programme activity, it is difficult to define and operationalize WFP's social protection work and ensure that it is coordinated throughout the organization. Such definition and coordination are prerequisites for a coherent approach and for ensuring that appropriate resources are allocated to delivering concrete results in this area.

203. WFP culture remains largely operational rather than systems- or policy-oriented. Social protection work requires a systems-oriented approach and alignment with government priorities. Interest in shock-responsive social protection is growing but, without proper context analysis, may lead to overestimation of the capacities of national systems. Another perceived risk is that WFP will try to transfer tools developed for its own programmes, rather than strengthening the capacities of governments to design and implement tools and systems that are appropriate to national situations.

204. Working in partnership with other actors will be critically important in avoiding unnecessary competition with them and fragmentation of support for governments. Unpredictable short-term funding and donors' perceptions of WFP's role present further threats to the expansion and enhancement of WFP social protection work.

205. **Summary.** When aligned with national systems, WFP work in social protection can play an important role in sustainably addressing food and nutrition needs at scale. To achieve the vision of a world free of hunger, WFP needs to expand its engagement with social protection actors and systems. Country offices and regional bureaux have demonstrated interest in, and a willingness to rethink, how WFP can contribute to social protection for more lasting and sustainable results. Recent investments and organizational changes to enhance staff capacity and systems will support continued results. Greater leadership attention and prioritization of social protection work is needed to amplify and support these efforts and thereby maximize WFP contributions to social protection systems.

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[105] WFP/EB.1/2019/7-A.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

206.   The following recommendations draw on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation. They were informed by inputs provided by a wide array of stakeholders, including at a January 2019 workshop with WFP staff from headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices. Additional information on the input received from this workshop is provided in Annex 13.

Table 8: Recommendations

	Action by	Implementation deadline and priority
Recommendation 1: Prioritization and leadership. WFP leadership should confirm and sustain its commitment to supporting nationally-led social protection programmes. A strategy for engagement in social protection should be developed and widely disseminated. The strategy should include: • a clear definition of social protection endorsed by WFP with an outline of the boundaries of WFP's work; • a theory of change that articulates the implications of social protection as defined by WFP, including what it means for WFP's activities and programmes; and • a costed implementation plan, budget and resource mobilization strategy, which could be embedded in a broader programming strategy for WFP's support to national systems and country capacity strengthening.	• Assistant Executive Director of Operations Services Department (OS), Director of Policy and Programme Division (OSZ)	December 2019 High priority

Linked to findings: 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 19, 20, 22

Rationale:

▪ The policy created permission and justification for engagement and guidance without setting a clear direction amongst other competing priorities and interests

▪ Adoption of the policy was not followed by a sense of urgency and/or change management initiative (as opposed to the cash for change efforts or follow-up by HQ and RB to implement the gender and school feeding policies)

▪ While this may have been intended to avoid pushing WFP too far too fast along the national system-support spectrum in the eyes of enabling stakeholders, it is not strategic

▪ Developments in social protection engagement have been coming mainly "from the ground up", driven by the visions of individuals, context-specific opportunities and supported by the Policy on Country Strategic Plans and the need to support national systems under the current strategic plan and aligned with the SDGs, rather than by specific corporate priorities for social protection and safety nets

▪ Gaps in corporate investment and clarity of prioritization parallel similar issues with country capacity strengthening in WFP. Together these challenges pose risks for the ability of WFP to fulfil its commitments under the current strategic plan

	Action by	Implementation deadline and priority
Recommendation 2: Cross-functional coordination and coherence. Strengthen mechanisms for coordination in social protection in order to ensure coherent cross-functional approaches. Disseminate guidance on implementation of the strategy and incorporate the guidance into other activity-specific and overarching programme strategies, policies and guidance, especially those related to country capacity strengthening, in coordination with other units at headquarters – including those for operation services, human resources, performance management and reporting, supply chains, emergency preparedness and response and information technology – and in consultation with regional bureaux and country offices.	• Assistant Executive Director of OS, Director of OSZ	Mid-2020 Medium priority

Linked to findings: 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 22

Rationale:

- WFP school feeding and nutrition activities play a clear role in supporting national safety nets/social protection, by filling gaps, forming the basis for national schemes and advising on improved effectiveness and are therefore highly relevant
- The implementation of those activities (and government capacity strengthening around them) is most strongly guided by policies that are their natural home (e.g. school feeding policy). They create entry points for social protection that are not systematically recognized or seized
- The inclusion of good practice standards in the safety nets policy did not consistently change the way that WFP operates and the other policies could not concretely identify issues such as how school feeding activities provide an entry point for government capacity building
- Gender, disability and accountability to affected population considerations for safety nets and social protection have not been adequately covered
- Overarching and integrated programme guidance that looks holistically (across and above activities) at WFP potential contributions to national governments, including social protection systems, does not seem to exist

	Action by	Implementation deadline and priority
Recommendation 3: Knowledge management and positioning. WFP should develop a knowledge management component of the social protection strategy that builds on existing activities, consolidates evidence, learning and good practices and facilitates adaptation to changes in the environment, including advances in food security-focused, nutrition-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches to social protection.	• Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit (OSZIS) in consultation with the Innovation and Change Management Division and regional bureaux	Mid-2020 High priority

Linked to findings 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 18, 20

Rationale:

- The Policy Update provides overviews of key issues and debates but does not clarify WFP positions

- Guidance and training provide additional clarity but have not been widely used and may not represent official stances on issues (e.g. description of social protection floor in policy versus guidance)

- Gaps remain in relation to improving WFP's ability to analyze and engage with social protection at systems levels rather than discreet activities

- The strategic plan notes the potential for WFP to contribute to SDG 1 but without explanation

- Country strategic plans and the UNDAF process have noted an aspiration of engaging governments in joint strategy and plan development but remain largely driven by individual agency priorities

- Global partnership discussions and agreements with organizations such as the World Bank are not always understood and implemented by country offices

- The emergence of shock responsive social protection creates opportunities for WFP to contribute but misapplication of the term or promoting approaches prematurely pose risks to WFP credibility

- WFP experience with vulnerability analysis, data management and registration systems is valuable but contributing to national systems requires distinguishing between supporting processes and tailored solutions versus offering pre-developed products

	Action by	Implementation deadline and priority
Recommendation 4: Internal capacity. Identify the dedicated human, technical and financial resource requirements for building sustainable internal capacities in social protection, including the resources needed for shared, cross-functional activities: • Provide additional resources and training opportunities to WFP staff in all relevant functions with a view to enhancing their understanding of and engagement in policy, public financing, public administration systems and debates on aspects of social protection such as targeting and conditionality. • Develop an approach to human resources that enables units to establish the best balance among the building, buying or borrowing of human resources and is based on a review of standard national and international job profiles, a mapping of social protection competencies and gap analysis against the strategy, development of additional specialist job profiles for social protection as needed, training plans, recruitment of experts from outside WFP to fill gaps and adjustments to human resource policies as needed. • Identify the core capacity requirements and submit a financial request for these to be included in the next management plan.	• Assistant Executive Director of OS and OSZ with support from the Human Resources Division	March 2020 High priority

Linked to findings: 3, 6, 9, 10, 13, 18, 19, 20, 22

Rationale:

- Human resources expertise in areas critical for engagement in social protection are limited or inconsistent at the HQ, RB and CO levels
- Internal training and guidance can build awareness and familiarize staff with concepts but is not a substitute for in-depth expertise and experience, which must be recruited from outside WFP into fixed positions, beyond reliance on external consultants
- Current approaches to human resources, internal technical support and knowledge management are often driven by individual initiative and available resources, rather than corporate systems and consistent strategic approaches
- Standardized tools and solutions must be adapted to fit context specific needs and the priorities of national governments to have a positive influence on social protection systems

	Action by	Implementation deadline and priority
Recommendation 5: Monitoring and reporting. Standardize monitoring of and reporting on WFP's contributions to social protection in order to establish a reliable base of quantitative and qualitative evidence on WFP's role and added value and enhance learning. Building on recent revisions to the corporate results framework, WFP should: • require the tagging of activities that contribute to social protection based on clear quality standards such as timeliness, predictability and links to national strategies and systems in order to enable analysis of outputs and outcomes disaggregated by category of vulnerability such as sex, age and disability; • engage with custodians of SDG Target 1.3 with a view to identifying ways of reporting on WFP's contributions and supporting country offices in reporting on country-specific contributions in national and global SDG reporting formats; • develop a monitoring framework for further improving performance measurement of social protection activities linked to the strategy and theory of change, and use this as a basis for future evaluations with mandatory reporting on standard indicators and tagging in the next corporate results framework; and • produce an annual or biannual summary report on WFP's social protection contributions (or standardize a format for integrating such a report into the annual performance report) that supports internal learning and external positioning.	• Performance Management and Monitoring Division with support from OSZIS	March 2020 High priority
Linked to findings: 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 19, 22 Rationale: ▪ WFP does not have reliable and consistent data on its activities, outputs and outcomes related to safety nets and social protection because WFP monitoring reporting requirements do not tag activities as such or require specific social protection indicator reporting. ▪ Proposed changes to the corporate results framework add new optional tagging and indicators for social protection and country capacity strengthening but their voluntary nature will not yield systematic evidence that can be analyzed to confirm and provide evidence of WFP contributions to social protection		

Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AED	Assistant Executive Director
CaLP	The Cash Learning Partnership
CBT	Cash-Based Transfers
CCS	Country Capacity Strengthening
CO	Country Office
CRF	Corporate Results Framework
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EB	Executive Board
EC	European Commission
ECHO	The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net (in Turkey)
ET	Evaluation Team
EUR	Euros
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
FFT	Food Assistance for Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEN	Gender Unit
GFA	General Food Assistance
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GVA	Geneva Office
HIV/TB	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Tuberculosis
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
HRMT	Talent Service

HRM	Human Resources Division
IDS	Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMAM	Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition
IRM	Integrated Road Map
ISPA	Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LIC	Lower Income Country
LMIC	Lower-Middle Income Country
MIC	Middle Income Country
MIES	Government of Ecuador Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion
MoFLSS	Government of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEV	Office of Evaluation
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
OSE	Emergency Preparedness and Support Response Division
OSN	Nutrition Division
OSZ	Policy and Programme Division
OSZIS	Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit
PGG	Government Partnerships Division
PGP	Executive Board Secretariat
PRISM	Platform for Real-Time Information and Situation Monitoring
RB	Regional Bureau
RBB	Regional Bureau Bangkok
RBC	Regional Bureau Cairo
RBD	Regional Bureau Dakar
RBJ	Regional Bureau Johannesburg
RBN	Regional Bureau Nairobi
RBP	Regional Bureau Panama
RM	Resource Management Department
RMP	Performance Management and Monitoring Division

SCOPE	Beneficiary Identity and Benefit Management System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SN	Safety Nets
SNIP	Safety Nets in Practice
SO	Strategic Objective
SP	Social Protection
SPIAC-B	Social Protection Inter-Agency Coordination Board
SPR	Standard Project Report
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TA	Technical Assistance
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UMIC	Upper Middle Income Country
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
USD	United States Dollars
VAM	Vulnerability Anaysis and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

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