

Crisis response revision of Syrian Arab Republic interim country strategic plan (2019–2020) and corresponding budget increase

	Current	Change	Revised
Duration	January 2019– December 2020	No change	January 2019– December 2020
Beneficiaries	5 055 000	1 000 000	6 055 000
<i>(USD)</i>			
Total cost	1 386 306 865	335 856 622	1 722 163 487
Transfers	1 207 931 994	298 951 420	1 506 883 414
Implementation	57 791 410	7 506 054	65 297 464
Adjusted direct support costs	35 973 183	8 900 856	44 874 039
Subtotal	1 301 696 587	315 358 331	1 617 054 918
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	84 610 278	20 498 291	105 108 570

Gender and age marker*: 4

* <http://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/gender-in-programming/gender-and-age-marker/>.

Rationale

1. The main purpose of this budget revision is to: i) expand the number of targeted beneficiaries under strategic outcome 1 to respond to the deteriorating food security situation; ii) make adjustments to the number of beneficiaries in the nutrition programme; and iii) add a new United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) activity to strategic outcome 4. The revision also includes adjustments in the food ration, implementation and direct support costs in line with the expansion to the programme.
2. While large areas of the territory have returned under government control since 2018, persistent insecurity and displacement coupled with high food prices, currency depreciation, unilateral coercive measures and agriculture-related shocks continue to restrict meaningful improvements in the food security situation. The 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview preliminary figures indicate that a large share of people considered at risk in 2019 have now fallen into food insecurity, raising the food-insecure population to 7.9 million, a more than 20 percent increase compared to 2019.
3. Displacement numbers continue to grow, and most recent events witnessed nearly 875,000 new internally displaced persons (IDPs) since December 2019, mainly from southern Idlib Governorate.¹ The outbreak of fighting in north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic in October 2019 similarly resulted in an increase in humanitarian assistance requirements in Al-Hasakeh and Raqqa Governorates to IDPs and populations in camps.
4. Due to vast distances and road insecurity, air access is the safest and potentially only way for humanitarian workers to travel between Damascus and Qamishli. To date, aid agencies have relied on commercial airlines to travel to Qamishli. However, recent insecurity resulted

¹ Camp coordination and camp management report, 16 February 2020.



in the cancellation of scheduled flights, stranding humanitarian workers travelling between locations inside the Syrian Arab Republic. A needs assessments survey, conducted by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in December 2019, identified interest from 14 humanitarian organizations in the establishment of UNHAS in the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition to Qamishli, the survey shows the need to operate humanitarian flights to Deir-ez-Zor if feasible.

Changes

Strategic orientation

5. There are no changes to the strategic orientation of the current interim country strategic plan.

Strategic outcomes

6. This budget revision will add a UNHAS activity to strategic outcome 4.

[New] *Activity 9:* Provide passenger and light cargo services (United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)) to the humanitarian community.

[New] *Output:* Crisis-affected populations benefit from the availability of humanitarian air services for the safe transportation of humanitarian staff and the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Targeting approach and beneficiary analysis

7. Under strategic outcome 1, general food assistance will be scaled up from 3.5 to 4.5 million beneficiaries on a monthly basis in 2020, reflecting the increased needs. In addition, the WFP country office in the the Syrian Arab Republic will plan to cover the needs of an additional 500,000 beneficiaries for a period of three months as a contingency measure. This will allow WFP to address temporary displacements resulting from sudden escalations of violence, without being hampered by the three-month food procurement lead time.
8. Further, 50,000 of the children receiving in-kind snacks in schools will be shifted to the 'fresh meals' modality, by which they receive part of the snack in-kind, complemented by a fresh food component facilitated through cash-based transfers (CBTs). Consequently, school feeding beneficiaries under the CBT modality will increase from 100,000 to 150,000, while the overall school feeding caseload remains unchanged.
9. In 2020 under strategic outcome 3, based on the SMART survey results which revealed an increase in the prevalence of stunting, WFP's preventive nutrition programme will target 222,700 children (6–23 months of age) and 162,000 pregnant and lactating women. The programme will provide blanket preventive nutrition assistance in the 174 subdistricts with medium/high prevalence of stunting and micronutrient deficiencies and discontinue preventive nutritional feeding in 96 subdistricts with low prevalence of stunting. This will allow greater focus on the preventive efforts in areas with the highest needs and make the assistance more efficient.
10. Given that the prevalence of acute malnutrition is relatively higher among pregnant and lactating women yet remains overall relatively low, the caseload for nutritional treatment will be marginally increased from 20,000 to 25,000 beneficiaries in 2020. Similarly, the caseload of children age 6–59 months targeted through the nutrition treatment programme will be

slightly decreased from 25,000 to 20,000 beneficiaries, reflecting the relatively low rate of acute malnutrition prevalence among this target group.²

Transfers

11. The WFP country office in the Syrian Arab Republic faces delays in the introduction of CBTs. However, due to negotiations and advocacy efforts with the Government, WFP estimates that a shift from in-kind to CBTs for 500,000 beneficiaries can be progressively achieved in the course of 2020. The procurement process for shifting to a bank-based transfer system is currently being finalized. Given the unstable exchange rate, WFP will consider upward adjustments in the transfer value up to 20 percent. Should inflation increase significantly however, WFP will maintain a more conservative approach to CBT expansion.
12. For in-kind assistance (activities 1 and 3), the food basket will expand to contain a wider range of cereals and pulses adapted to local consumption habits and corresponding to beneficiary preferences. Beneficiaries assisted through the cross-border operation, populations living in camps and populations living in highly vulnerable areas will receive an increased ration (under activity 1) covering 100 percent of the kcal needs (i.e. 2,100 kcal). All other beneficiaries under activity 1 will continue to receive the standard ration corresponding to 1,700 kcal, or 80 percent of the daily food requirements.

Supply chain challenges

13. As an essential response for sudden population moves, WFP will continue to ensure its capacity to pre-position ready-to-eat food (RTEs) in strategic locations. Due to the criticality of RTEs in the current volatile situation, the number of RTEs for pre-positioning will increase from 375,000 to 500,000.
14. The WFP country office in the Syrian Arab Republic is currently expanding its own and partners' pre-positioning capacity, particularly in the north-east and north-west, where needs are likely to be highest. A contingency plan for change in access to the north-west cross-border operation is also being developed.

In case of service provision

15. The timeframe of the new UNHAS operation is envisaged to last for six months or until the security situation improves and regular commercial services resume with sustainable access to flights.

Risk management

16. For UNHAS, the main possible risks include funding shortages and the need to closely monitor security changes in order to ensure passenger safety and operational demand. WFP will work closely with the United Nations Department for Safety and Security to monitor the security situation and the UNHAS Steering Committee to monitor operational changes and advocate for funding.
17. Regarding the use of CBTs, ongoing revisions of Central Bank regulations may affect WFP's ability to switch to bank transfers through financial service providers. As a mitigation measure, WFP will continue to engage and advocate with the relevant authorities on the benefits of CBTs. High price fluctuations and the decreasing availability of some staple commodities in the market might also affect the effectiveness of CBTs as a transfer modality. Mitigation measures include closely monitoring the market situation every month and

² Please note that the revised beneficiary targets for outcome 3 refer to the year 2020 only. The beneficiary figures in table 1, however, correspond to the entire ICSP, i.e. 2019–2020.

adjusting interventions as needed to ensure adequate purchasing power, or opting for a more progressive scale-up using a mix of in-kind and cash.

Beneficiary analysis

TABLE 1: DIRECT BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME, ACTIVITY AND MODALITY							
Strategic outcome	Activity and modality	Period	Women (18+ years)	Men (18+ years)	Girls (0-18 years)	Boys (0-18 years)	Total
1	1. General food assistance - food	Current	695 360	668 160	936 640	899 840	3 200 000
		Increase/decrease	391 140	375 840	526 860	506 160	1 800 000
		Revised	1 086 500	1 044 000	1 463 500	1 406 000	5 000 000
	1. General food assistance - CBTs	Current	173 840	167 040	234 160	224 960	800 000
		Increase/decrease	-43 460	-41 760	-58 540	-56 240	-200 000
		Revised	130 380	125 280	175 620	168 720	600 000
	1. General food assistance - Total	Current	869 200	835 200	1 170 800	1 124 800	4 000 000
		Increase/decrease	217 300	208 800	292 700	281 200	1 000 000
		Revised	1 086 500	1 044 000	1 463 500	1 406 000	5 000 000
	2. School meals programme - food	Current	0	0	563 500	586 500	1 150 000
		Increase/decrease	0	0	0	0	0
		Revised	0	0	563 500	586 500	1 150 000
	2. School meals programme - food - CBTs	Current	0	0	49 000	51 000	100 000
		Increase/decrease	0	0	24 500	25 500	50 000
		Revised	0	0	73 500	76 500	150 000
2. School meals programme - Total	Current	0	0	612 500	637 500	1 250 000	
	Increase/decrease	0	0	0	0	0	
	Revised	0	0	612 500	637 500	1 250 000	
2	3. Livelihood and resilience - food	Current	173 840	167 040	234 160	224 960	800 000
		Increase/decrease	0	0	0	0	0
		Revised	173 840	167 040	234 160	224 960	800 000
	3. Livelihood and resilience - CBTs	Current	239 030	229 680	321 970	309 320	1 100 000
		Increase/decrease	0	0	0	0	0
		Revised	239 030	229 680	321 970	309 320	1 100 000
	3. Livelihood and resilience - Total	Current	412 870	396 720	556 130	534 280	1 900 000
		Increase/decrease	0	0	0	0	0
		Revised	412 870	396 720	556 130	534 280	1 900 000

TABLE 1: DIRECT BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME, ACTIVITY AND MODALITY							
Strategic outcome	Activity and modality	Period	Women (18+ years)	Men (18+ years)	Girls (0-18 years)	Boys (0-18 years)	Total
3	4. Nutrition prevention - food	Current	0	0	184 518	177 282	361 800
		Increase/decrease	0	0	0	0	0
		Revised total	0	0	184 518	177 282	361 800
	4. Nutrition prevention - CBTs	Current	150 000	0	0	0	150 000
		Increase/decrease	82 004	0	0	0	82,004
		Revised total	232 004	0	0	0	232 004
	4. Nutrition prevention - Total	Current	150 000	0	184 518	177 282	511 800
		Increase/decrease	82 004	0	0	0	82 004
		Revised total	232 004	0	184 518	177 282	593 804
	5. Nutrition treatment - Total	Current	40 000	0	26 000	24 000	90 000
		Increase/decrease	5 000	0	-2 600	-2 400	0
		Revised	45 000	0	23 400	21 600	90 000
Total (without overlap)	Current	1 054 348	993 888	1 528 752	1 478 012	5 055 000	
	Increase/decrease	219 800	208 800	291 400	280 000	1 000 000	
	Revised	1 274 148	1 202 688	1 820 152	1 758 012	6 055 000	

Transfers

TABLE 2: FOOD RATIONS (g/person/day) OR CASH-BASED TRANSFER VALUES (USD/person/day) BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY									
	Strategic outcome 1				Strategic outcome 2		Strategic outcome 3		
	Activity 1		Activity 2		Activity 3		Activity 4	Activity 5	
Beneficiary type	Vulnerable Syrians (inside the Syrian Arab Republic)	Vulnerable Syrians (cross-border)	Pre-primary and primary schoolchildren	Out of school children	Vulnerable Syrians (inside the Syrian Arab Republic)	Vulnerable Syrians (cross-border)	Children age 6-23 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls	Children age 6-59 months	Pregnant and lactating women and girls
Modality	Food/CBTs	Food	Food/CBTs	CBTs	Food/CBTs	Food	Food/CBTs	Food	Food
Cereals	233	300	62.5		233	273			
Pulses	120	120			120	153			
Oil	36	49			36	49			
Salt	7	7			7	7			
Sugar	33	40			33	40			
Fortified date bars			80						
Yeast			0.375						
Lipid-based nutrient supplement - LNS-MQ							50		
Lipid-based nutrient supplement - LNS-LQ								100	100
Total kcal/day	1 700	2 055	344		1 700	2 055	255	510	510
% kcal from protein	12.4	11	5.6		12.4	11	10	10	10
Cash-based transfers (USD/person/day)	0.4		0.4	0.83	0.4		1		
Number of feeding days per year	360	360	220	300	180	180	360	90	120

Food type/ cash-based transfer	Current budget		Increase/decrease		Revised budget	
	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Cereals	289 576	132 539 457	135 459	64 923 602	425 035	197 463 059
Miscellaneous	53 422	21 901 035	26 722	9 224 323	80 144	31 125 358
Mixed and blended	66 900	128 974 323	3 845	9 050 377	70 745	138 024 700
Oils and fats	47 516	60 820 507	24 969	31 960 296	72 485	92 780 803
Pre-packaged parcels	212 552	142 558 928	173 914	97 878 662	386 467	240 437 590
Pulses	156 646	99 261 491	81 811	50 112 325	238 458	149 373 815
Total (food)	826 613	586 055 741	446 721	263 149 585	1 273 333	849 205 326
Cash-based transfers		378 550 000		-45 278 560		333 271 440
Total (food and cash-based transfer value)	826 613	964 605 741	446 721	217 871 025	1 273 333	1 182 476 766

Cost breakdown

18. The ICSP budget will increase from USD 1.4 billion to USD 1.7 billion across four strategic outcomes. The revision provides for an additional USD 336 million in life-saving food, malnutrition treatment and prevention activities including additional CBT support and provision of safe air transport for humanitarian workers under strategic outcome 4.

	Strategic Result 1	Strategic Result 1	Strategic Result 2	Strategic Result 8	Total
	SDG target 2.1	SDG target 2.1	SDG target 2.2	SDG target 17.16	
Strategic outcome	1	2	3	4	
Focus area	Crisis response	Resilience building	Resilience building	Crisis response	
Transfer	259 674 132	1 423 845	33 920 744	3 932 699	298 951 420
Implementation	7 630 595	-86 945	-37 595	-	7 506 054
Adjusted direct support costs					8 900 856
Subtotal					315 358 331
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)					20 498 291
Total					335 856 622

TABLE 5: OVERALL ICSP COST BREAKDOWN, AFTER REVISION (USD)					
	Strategic result 1	Strategic result 1	Strategic result 2	Strategic result 8	Total
	SDG target 2.1	SDG target 2.1	SDG target 2.2	SDG target 17.16	
Strategic outcome	1	2	3	4	
Focus area	Crisis response	Resilience building	Resilience building	Crisis response	
Transfers	1 147 344 904	223 957 157	116 554 006	19 027 348	1 506 883 414
Implementation	49 959 445	9 674 452	5 663 567	-	65 297 464
Adjusted direct support costs	34 174 797	6 664 603	3 491 433	543 205	44 874 039
Subtotal	1 231 479 146	240 296 212	125 709 007	19 570 553	1 617 054 918
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	80 046 144	15 619 254	8 171 085	1 272 086	105 108 570
Total	1 311 525 291	255 915 466	133 880 092	20 842 639	1 722 163 487

Acronyms

CBT	cash-based transfer
ICSP	interim country strategic plan
RTE	ready-to-eat food
SMART	standardized monitoring and assessment of relief and transitions
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service