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Evaluation of Democratic Republic of the Congo Interim Country Strategic Plan 2018-2020

Evaluation Report: Volume I



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Key personnel for the evaluation

OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Andrea Cook – Director of Evaluation

Michael Carbon – Evaluation Manager

Lia Carboni – Evaluation Analyst

EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Robina Shaheen – Evaluation Director, Action Against Hunger UK

Emery Brusset – Team Leader

Cleo Chevalier – Evaluation Analyst

Dr. Danielle Deboutte – Public Health and Nutrition Specialist

Pascal Mweze – Rural Development and Partnerships Specialist

Samuel Niki Niki – Efficiency and Gender Specialist

Blanche Renaudin – Food Security and Resilience Specialist

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation features

1. The evaluation of the interim country strategic plan (ICSP) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo was conducted between October 2019 and March 2020 and covered WFP strategy, interventions and systems for the period between 2017 and 2019. It served the dual purpose of accountability and learning by assessing the actual results achieved against plans while creating opportunities for learning at the national, regional and corporate levels. The results of the evaluation informed the preparation of the new country strategic plan (CSP) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
2. The evaluation took a utilization-focused and consultative approach. During the evaluation's inception phase, the evaluation team identified four thematic areas of particular relevance to the country that helped define the lines of enquiry for each evaluation question: WFP's adaptation to extreme conditions in the country; the integration of WFP's interventions within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; priority setting and targeting; and strategic partnerships.
3. The main evaluation mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo took place over three and a half weeks in November and December 2019. It included interviews with a variety of stakeholders in the capital and during two weeks of field visits to WFP intervention areas. The evaluation also included a community mini-survey to explore perceptions of WFP's performance in targeting and accountability to affected populations. Evaluation findings and recommendations were discussed internally at WFP during an online workshop in March 2020.
4. The evaluation focused on the gender dimension of programmes by recognizing cultural biases, achieving a gender balance in survey respondents, seeking out beneficiary groups of women and girls and analysing results from the perspective of women. Limitations of the evaluation were inconsistencies in outcome-level data among provinces, changes in reporting formats over the evaluation period and restricted access to some field locations and activities because of security constraints and Ebola-related travel restrictions. However, adequate data were available and sufficient sites were visited to offer insights on all priority themes, interventions and processes.

Context

5. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the second largest country in Africa, endowed with abundant natural resources and a young, highly diverse population of about 84 million people that is expected to double in the next twenty years. Agriculture employs 70 percent of the population and provides 40 percent of gross domestic product. Despite very favourable natural conditions for agriculture, the vast majority of farmers are subsistence farmers and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a food-deficit country. Decades of poor governance and foreign interference have created fragile situations throughout the country, characterized by dysfunctional institutions with widespread corruption, highly deteriorated public infrastructure and poor public services, recurring conflict and violence mostly linked to natural resources, forced movement of populations, disease outbreaks, limited access to agricultural land and markets and restricted humanitarian access.
6. The Congolese conflicts started in 1996 and constitute one of the world's most severe prolonged crises. Despite several peace agreements, intermittent cycles of severe conflict continue to affect the eastern provinces. Intercommunal and interethnic conflict is also frequent, and the number of internally displaced persons has steadily increased to 4.5 million. About 0.9 million Congolese have fled the country, while about 0.5 million refugees fleeing violence in neighbouring countries have taken refuge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since the start of 2018, the country has experienced two separate Ebola outbreaks, first in Equateur Province and then in North Kivu and Ituri provinces. The later outbreak is by far the country's largest on record and is classified as a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization (WHO). The country also experienced outbreaks of measles and cholera in 2019.
7. In this context, development indicators remain extremely low, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo ranked 179th of 189 countries on the Human Development Index in 2019 (table 1). An estimated

76.6 percent of the population lives on less than USD 1.90 a day. In 2019, 15.6 million people, including 4.6 million children, were in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) category 3 or higher (crisis and emergency levels). A further 27 million people were in IPC category 2 (stressed). Stunting affected 43 percent of children under 5, while 8 percent suffered from wasting and 22 percent were underweight. Internally displaced people and returnees affected by armed conflict are the groups most affected by acute food insecurity.

TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	2017	2019
1	Total population (1)	81 398 764	84 068 091 (2018)
2	GDP per capita (USD PPP) (1)	888.6	932.1 (2018)
3	Urban population as percent of total population (1)	43.88	44.46 (2018)
4	Human Development Index score and ranking (2)	0.435 (176th of 188) (2016)	0.459 (179th of 189)
5	Population < poverty line PPP USD 1.90 a day (%) (2)	77.1 (2016)	76.6
6	Population in severe multidimensional poverty (%) (2)	72.5 (2016)	74.0
7	Life expectancy at birth (2)	59.1(2016)	60.4
8	Percent of children under 5 who are stunted (2)	42.6 (2010–2015)	42.7 (2010–2016)
9	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) (2)	693 (2016)	693
10	Prevalence of HIV (percent of population age 15–49)	0.8 (2016)	0.7 (2018)
11	Gender Inequality Index (2)	0.663 (153rd of 160)	0.655 (156th of 160)
12	Percent of population age 25 and over with at least secondary education (2)	Women: 14.5 Men: 35.0 (2005–2015)	Women: 36.7 Men: 65.8 (2010–2018)
13	Labour force participation rate (percent of total population age 15+ and over) (2)	Women and girls: 70.5 Men and boys: 71.8	Women and girls: 60.8 Men and boys: 66.5

GDP = gross domestic product; PPP = purchasing power parity.

Sources: 1) World Bank; 2) human development reports and statistical updates 2016–2019.

1.1 The interim country strategic plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo

8. Prior to the ICSP, the bulk of WFP support was directed to delivering food assistance for victims of armed conflict and for other vulnerable groups and supporting logistics for the humanitarian community. In response to the changing political situation, it was decided that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a full CSP would be preceded by an ICSP covering the period from 2018 to 2020 without introducing any major strategic shifts. The ICSP has the aim of achieving the five strategic outcomes presented in table 2.

TABLE 2: STRATEGIC OUTCOMES OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO INTERIM COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN		
Strategic outcome	Percent of total	
	Original budget (% of total)	Budget revision 5 (% of total)
1: Targeted food-insecure populations affected by shocks are able to meet their basic food requirements in times of crisis	66	59
2: Food-insecure and vulnerable populations in conflict- and shock-affected areas have improved nutrition status in line with national protocols by 2020	7	22
3: Smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities in targeted and crisis-prone areas, especially in eastern parts of the country, enhance their productive livelihoods and improve their food security and resilience by 2020	9	8
4: National institutions have strengthened capacity to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition and respond to shocks by 2020	1	1
5: The humanitarian community has the capacity to respond to shocks through strategic partnerships by 2020	16	10
Total	100	100

Sources: Democratic Republic of the Congo interim country strategic plan (2018–2020) and Democratic Republic of the Congo interim country strategic plan, revision 5.

9. The original ICSP foresaw an overall budget of approximately USD 723 million and a total of 6.7 million beneficiaries over three years. The budget was revised upwards five times in 2018 and 2019 to align it with increases in need resulting from a deteriorating humanitarian situation, bringing the overall budget to USD 1.19 billion and almost doubling the number of planned beneficiaries to 11.7 million. WFP received funding from 24 donors during the evaluation period, with the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Germany the largest contributors.

10. In 2019, WFP intervened in 10 of the country's 26 provinces (figure 1). In addition to the country office in Kinshasa, WFP also had 19 area and suboffices in the country employing 643 staff members.

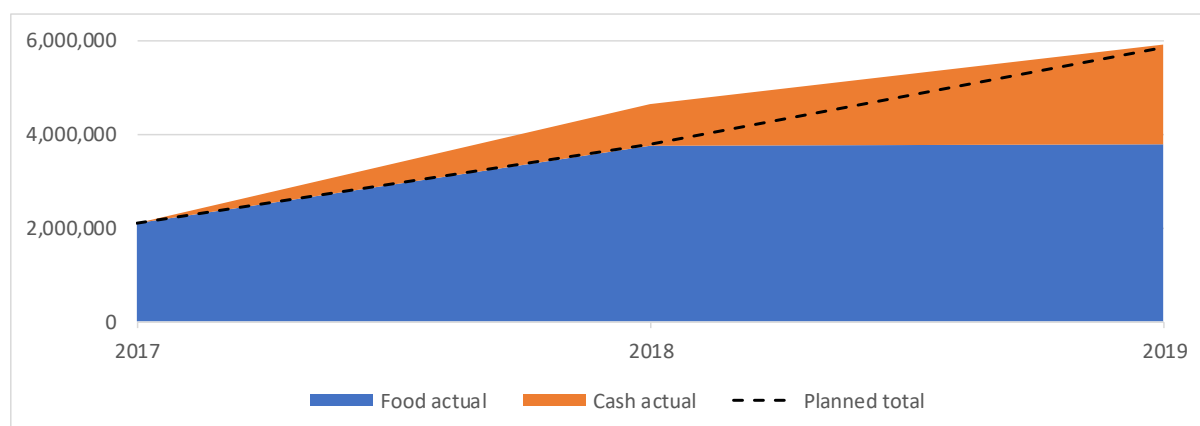
system, facilitating information exchange and coordination. WFP has a strong partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which is evolving further in the area of resilience programming. Partnerships with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are longstanding and clearly defined, and there is scope to strengthen the partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights are vital to the humanitarian community and pivotal in the Ebola response.

What is the extent and quality of WFP’s specific contribution to the strategic outcomes of the interim country strategic plan?

Delivery of outputs and contribution to outcomes

14. The number of beneficiaries reached increased consistently over the evaluation period and was about 90 percent of the target. However, the extent to which target numbers of beneficiaries and underlying outcomes were achieved varied by strategic outcome. The vast majority of beneficiaries reached were under strategic outcome 1, through which WFP provided food assistance (in-kind food and, increasingly, cash-based transfers) to people affected by conflict and other crises (figure 2). However, the total value of cash-based transfers and quantity of food distributed was markedly below planned amounts, as rations were selectively reduced to reach increasing numbers of targeted beneficiaries. Food security improved in areas where tensions abated but continued to deteriorate in areas affected by conflict or other shocks such as Ebola, although WFP assistance very probably reduced this deterioration. Over the period, WFP notably increased the number of schools supported with school feeding, mainly in the most food-insecure and conflict-affected areas.

Figure 2: Number of people affected by conflict or other shocks reached through unconditional food assistance



Sources: 2017 data from 2018 annual country report, 2018 and 2019 data from the country office management tool, COMET.

15. Under strategic outcome 2 (on nutrition) the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition through targeted supplementary feeding was emphasized, and there was a significant improvement in reaching targeted beneficiaries between 2018 and 2019. Prevention of acute and chronic malnutrition through blanket supplementary feeding consistently reached significantly fewer beneficiaries than targeted, owing to a lack of timely funding and logistics challenges. Health centre data appear to indicate that the efficacy of moderate acute malnutrition treatment was well above minimum Sphere standards in all provinces.

Under strategic outcome 3 WFP provided technical assistance to smallholder farmer organizations through purchase for progress initiatives, food assistance for assets and food assistance for training on nutrition. The prioritization of emergency assistance resulted in under-attainment of planned beneficiary numbers in resilience activities, although a significant increase in funding allowed an expansion of activities and beneficiary numbers over the evaluation period. Supported farmer organizations were mostly for women and were linked to home-grown school feeding initiatives. The home-grown school feeding programme suffered from underfunding and was drastically scaled down until 2019, when renewed donor support allowed WFP to expand it again. Food assistance for assets activities increased substantially in 2019,

strengthening long-term resilience through improved infrastructure and access to markets while addressing immediate food security needs.

16. To achieve strategic outcome 4, WFP set out to strengthen government capacity in relation to social protection, nutrition, food security, emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction and the provision of evidence-based analysis. Because of resource constraints, these activities were limited to training for government staff on food security monitoring and early warning and, in North Kivu, on disaster preparedness.

17. The main activities under strategic outcome 5 were the provision of technical support for logistics through coordination and information management platforms and UNHAS transport services. WFP supported humanitarian supply chains and telecommunications effectively, leading the logistics cluster, providing transport and storage services and, until October 2018, leading the emergency communications cluster. UNHAS also performed well in 2018 and 2019, demonstrating vital flexibility in scaling up services in response to the Ebola emergency.

Protection and accountability to affected populations

18. Humanitarian principles were generally well respected in WFP interventions. Protection is a growing priority for WFP and key measures have been put in place to enhance the protection of WFP target population groups, although the evaluation found a lack of risk analysis, monitoring and resources for this purpose. Accountability to affected populations gained momentum, but feedback and complaints were not systematically followed up on or addressed in time. There were weaknesses in the complaint mechanisms used, and affected populations were either unaware of them or reluctant to use them. However, steps have already been taken to address some of these weaknesses.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

19. Addressing gender inequality and gender-based violence is considered fundamental to addressing food insecurity and malnutrition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The ICSP was not grounded in a comprehensive country-level gender analysis. Gender considerations were integrated into food and cash-based transfers mainly through the preferential naming of women as beneficiaries on distribution lists, but this was insufficient to change gender dynamics. While interventions targeted a slightly larger number of women than men, the proportion of women reached relative to targets was consistently lower than that of men and decreased to 77 percent in 2019. However, there was better integration in resilience activities, which are considered more likely than other interventions to improve women's social and economic status in the community and household.

Sustainability and the triple nexus approach

20. Contributing to sustainability, WFP has engaged in extensive capacity building activities aimed at creating national capacity for food security assessment. Conditional food assistance allowed WFP to position itself at the triple nexus (figure 3) to some extent in some programmes. However, peacebuilding elements remained area-specific and were not explicitly embedded in strategy. Local exit strategies for moving from unconditional to conditional forms of assistance were often not clearly articulated, and there was insufficient tracking of and support for beneficiaries beyond emergencies with a view to strengthening their resilience and reducing dependency on emergency support in the long term. Environmental sustainability was poorly integrated into the ICSP and there is a need to strengthen technical expertise on environmental risk identification and mitigation.

Figure 3: WFP assistance within the triple nexus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo



Source: ICSP evaluation

To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to the outputs and strategic outcomes of the interim country strategic plan?

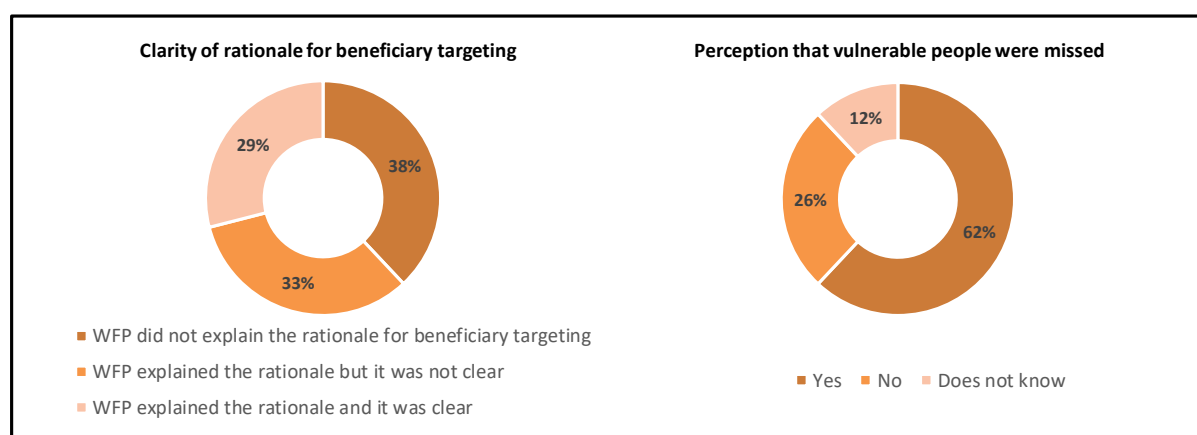
Timeliness

21. Despite a consistent effort to ensure the timely delivery of assistance, WFP programmes were affected by significant delays on the ground. These were attributed to the rapid expansion of operations in a particularly challenging setting, delays in obtaining funding because of limited multi-year funding and lengthy negotiations with donors, coordination issues and staffing shortages. The unintended consequences of delays were sometimes severe, forcing internally displaced persons and refugees to adopt harmful coping strategies with negative impacts on themselves and host populations, in the worst cases increasing the risk of starvation of the most food insecure.

Coverage and targeting

22. WFP operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo increased geographical coverage in response to the evolving food insecurity and malnutrition situation. However, the scale of needs in the country is vast and, despite the expansion of WFP's food assistance, unmet needs are significant, mainly owing to funding constraints. Effective assessment and targeting of the most vulnerable households relied heavily on the capacity of cooperating partners, which varied greatly, as did community perceptions of targeting effectiveness (figure 4). Sick people and those with disabilities tended to be excluded, particularly – but not only – from resilience building activities.

Figure 4: Target population perceptions of the clarity of targeting and the vulnerability of people not selected



Source: Community survey for the ICSP evaluation.

Cost efficiency

23. WFP was able to mobilize substantial resources by the end of 2019 but not to disburse all the available funds, mainly because of their late availability. The direct support cost ratio was difficult to forecast owing to unexpected local implementation costs. However, food distribution and cash-based transfer costs decreased since 2018 and costs per beneficiary were considerably lower than forecast, although this can largely be attributed to reduced rations per beneficiary.

24. Measures for keeping costs in check included the selection of appropriate assistance modalities based on operational costs and market analyses; mitigation of fraud risk, for instance through introduction of the SCOPE beneficiary registration system to eliminate multiple registrations in emergency and resilience activities; reduction of transport costs; assignment of responsibility for losses to cooperating partners; and pooling of resources with other United Nations agencies.

What are the factors that explain WFP's performance and the extent to which WFP has made the strategic shift expected under the interim country strategic plan?

Understanding of context and needs

25. WFP has made extensive use of assessment data on the food security situation, as reflected in the ICSP and the targeting and selection of interventions. WFP is the co-lead agency on food security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, overall, most of the evidence and analysis it produced was in this area. The ICSP was informed by context analyses and data provided by the Government, other United Nations agencies and other organizations.

Funding

26. As regards funding of WFP in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ICSP provides WFP a single frame of reference for dialogue with donors. Donors were highly attentive to the operational needs of WFP and provided funding in line with increases in target areas and numbers of people in need. At the same time, donor earmarking of funding increased compared with the period prior to the ICSP and contributions sometimes arrived late, limiting WFP's flexibility and ability to react quickly. Funding was directed mainly to crisis response, but donors expressed continued interest in promoting resilience and long-term approaches to addressing the root causes of vulnerability.

Monitoring and reporting

27. WFP has a highly decentralized operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo led by suboffices. At times, it suffered from unclear lines of accountability and limited information flows. WFP's monitoring systems were inadequate for effective data-driven decision making and adaptation to changing conditions. In line with corporate processes, the country office used multiple corporate information management

platforms to gather vast amounts of information. However, data analysis and information sharing with programme managers were limited. This, combined with a lack of evaluations and audits¹ since 2014, made it difficult for WFP to assess its performance and identify emerging issues to inform effective decision making.

Staffing and risks to operations

28. Significant staffing shortages had a negative impact on the timeliness and monitoring of operations. Substantial risks pertaining to fraud, security and human resource management highlight the need to strengthen operational risk management systems and address the limited awareness of staff of the WFP risk management system. The recruitment of a compliance adviser in August 2019 is expected to strengthen capacities in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

WFP is working in an exceptionally difficult environment with an unprecedented range of needs through an operation that is close to the limit of its capacity.

29. WFP interventions were broadly aligned with the ICSP, and the ICSP was coherent with current policies and strategies of national and international actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The scope of operations continued to increase in volume and geographical coverage over the evaluation period, in line with evolving needs in the country. In spite of the promising prospect of a new government and sustained donor support, the food security outlook in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is discouraging. WFP's response was based on comparatively strong supply chain management and its provision of common services, responding at scale to a continually evolving situation. Its field presence, technical expertise and broad donor base allowed WFP to engage effectively, at times using innovative approaches.

30. The evidence, however, also shows an operation that – while responding courageously to growing needs – was at times stretched to the limit of its capacities. This was primarily because of the ambitious objectives of the ICSP and the rapid increase in beneficiary needs in an extremely difficult physical, social and institutional environment. There were multiple delays and breaks in delivery in the field caused by discontinuities and lack of flexibility in funding, human resource gaps and pipeline breaks, among other factors. The structure of the ICSP encouraged “siloes” activities to the detriment of a more strategic, integrated and risk-focused approach that might have supported a more fluid transition from emergency response to resilience building.

The extent to which WFP is able to perform well is determined by its ability to understand emerging local needs and manage risks to operations and affected populations.

31. Strong food security and nutrition assessments helped WFP to establish priorities in a challenging environment without a detailed national policy framework. At the same time, beneficiary feedback mechanisms were insufficient, and while WFP strengthened considerably its capacity to address cross-cutting priorities regarding gender equality, accountability to affected populations, climate change and conflict sensitivity, implementation in all of these areas still lacked depth.

32. WFP's strongly decentralized approach in the Democratic Republic of the Congo allowed for close-to-the-field planning and monitoring and rapid decision making but also introduced important management risks, especially when information and control systems were not functioning well. There were also important risks to people and communities, which were analysed comprehensively. WFP staff in the country were fully aware of these risks, and measures to mitigate them were integrated into the design and implementation of programmes, with a special focus on gender dimensions. However, monitoring and reporting in relation to the protection, gender and environmental risks faced by assisted people were highly fragmented.

More strategic partnerships are required to better integrate resilience and peacebuilding so that WFP can make a greater contribution to addressing structural food security and nutrition vulnerabilities.

33. Most United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations highlight WFP's strong performance as a leader in humanitarian response. At the same time, a conceptualization of the triple

¹ In the first half of 2020, the WFP Office of Internal Audit conducted an Internal Audit of WFP Operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo focused on the period 1 January to 31 December 2019. This audit was published after the report for this CSPE was prepared.

humanitarian–development–peace nexus is emerging, with the ICSP spanning emergency response, development and (in some places) initiatives that promote social cohesion and peace. This work would be strengthened if WFP increased its joint engagement and support with partners while preserving the rapid response capacity for which it is highly regarded.

34. WFP has been operating in support of the Government, collaborating with several institutions and on various levels without a clear strategy. Consultations with the recently formed government provide a valuable opportunity to ensure that the priorities of the new CSP are aligned with the Government’s vision and priorities for the future of the country.

35. Delivery through cooperating partners has enabled WFP to deliver effectively. However, there is room for WFP to be more strategically engaged with partners through regular consultations and long-term collaboration agreements, which would enhance the continuity of programming on the ground.

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
1	Upgrade WFP's emergency response capacity, including through greater coverage of food security assessments, increased timeliness of response and better adaptation of food assistance modalities to beneficiaries' needs.	Strategic	Country office	High	2020-2022
1.1	Contribute to efforts to broaden the IPC to the whole country by supporting food security assessments in areas not currently covered.		Country office		2022
1.2	Increase the timeliness of WFP operations by sensitizing donors to the importance of early availability and more flexible allocation of funds and in-kind contributions and increasing the number and capacities of staff in line with the growing scale of interventions.		Country office - programme and donor relations and human resources units		2021
1.3	Adjust the length of food and cash-based transfer distribution cycles to the needs of the people assisted rather than adopting generic cycles.		Country office - programme unit		2020
1.4	Consider increasing the use of cash-based delivery mechanisms in partnership with private sector entities in areas such as mobile transfers, selected based on a thorough assessment of private sector partner capacity.		Country office - cash-based transfer team		2023

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
2	Use WFP's comparative advantages beyond humanitarian assistance to support partners engaged in the development and peacebuilding components of the triple nexus.	Strategic	Country office	Medium	2021-2022
2.1	Expand joint programming with FAO, WHO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Bank, particularly in conditional forms of assistance and the expansion of purchases from farmer organizations.		Country office - resilience and procurement teams		2022
2.2	Increase efforts to prevent acute and chronic malnutrition in partnership with UNICEF.		Country office - nutrition team		2022
2.3	Enhance the partnership with UNFPA aimed at supporting vulnerable young boys and girls, strengthening their ability to manage pregnancies and avoid sexually transmitted diseases.		Country office - social protection team		2022
2.4	Support interventions that offer diverse income generating opportunities for refugees, in collaboration with UNHCR.		Country office - purchase for progress and food assistance for assets teams		2022
2.5	Continue to support peacebuilding activities using the model piloted in Tanganyika Province.		Country office - programme unit		2021

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
3	Engage more strategically with donors, the Government and cooperating partners.	Strategic	Country office	High	2022
3.1	Build on WFP's central position in the humanitarian aid system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to advocate more donor funding for capacity and resilience building.		Country office - senior management		2022
3.2	Strengthen WFP's partnership with the Government, including at the provincial level, through targeted capacity building relevant to policy and strategy formulation and implementation, promoting stronger government leadership and participation where appropriate.		Country office – programme unit and field offices		2022
3.3	Develop long-term agreements with selected cooperating partners working in relevant sectors and geographic areas through preselection of capable organizations and longer-term partnership agreements.		Country office - senior management and procurement and programme units		2022
3.4	When field-level agreements with cooperating partners are signed, organize internal planning sessions at which to agree on activity and payment schedules. WFP should also ensure that the finance teams of cooperating partners receive closer support in expense and financial reporting.		Country office - senior management and procurement and programme units		2022

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
4	Strengthen monitoring and evaluation, internal management and control systems for reducing risks to operations by increasing the capability of internal control functions, particularly the systems by which they generate and use information and evidence, and defining common expectations regarding requirements in relation to monitoring coverage, data collection exercises, monitoring frequency and sampling.	Operational	Country office and Headquarters Human Resources Division, Corporate Planning and Performance Division and Information Technology Division	High	2021-2023
4.1	Strengthen human resource capacity for the first and second lines of defense by training personnel with responsibility relating to management systems and internal controls and by recruiting additional compliance specialists.		Country office - senior management and human resources unit Headquarters - Human Resources Division		2021
4.2	Seek to simplify and better integrate reporting platforms and databases and develop dashboards that provide easier access to information.		Headquarters - Corporate Planning and Performance Division and Information Technology Division		2022
4.3	Ensure data integration between the Logistics Execution Support System and the COMET monitoring and evaluation system in order to improve the tracking of performance, identification of gaps and potential remedial measures.		Headquarters - Corporate Planning and Performance Division and Information Technology Division		2022

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
4.4	Task the monitoring and evaluation team with conducting more decentralized evaluations that facilitate the documentation of best practices and help to generate knowledge on strengths and weaknesses in operations, and provide it with the necessary resources.		Country office - senior management		2023
5	Group protection, exclusion risks, environmental protection, conflict sensitivity and accountability to affected populations in a single “risks to populations” framework that gives such risks the same level of attention as risks to operations receive. This could build on ongoing work at headquarters on environmental and social safeguards.	Operational	Country office and Headquarters Emergencies and Transitions Unit (Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division)	High	2022
5.1	Create a single risks to population framework that integrates elements of protection, social cohesion, environmental sustainability and inclusiveness at the level of programme delivery, linked to more effective assurance of accountability to affected populations.		Headquarters Emergencies and Transitions Unit (Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division)		2022
5.2	Analyse risks to populations prior to the launch of programmes and integrate such risks into post-activity assessments and data systems through a systematic analysis of emerging issues and opportunities arising from implementation.		Country office vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation teams		2022

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
5.3	Improve targeting and, where necessary, adapt interventions so that the most vulnerable people, including those who are sick or have disabilities, are not excluded from WFP assistance.		Country office vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation teams		2022
5.4	Reduce the environmental footprint of WFP operations and support initiatives that help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve efficient use of water and protect forests and land.		Country office vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation teams and programme unit		2022
5.5	Strengthen accountability to affected populations through culturally appropriate communications for affected people on risks and opportunities. Broaden reporting to include qualitative data on gender and conflict sensitivity. Increase communications with beneficiaries on targeting criteria, financial amounts and the modalities and timing of assistance.		Country office - monitoring and evaluation teams		2022
6	Increase the focus on gender through greater attention to the concerns of women, men, boys and girls in the more vulnerable population groups and better use of opportunities presented by programming.	Operational	Country office	Medium	2021-2022
6.1	Systematically consider the specific needs of women and girls in each intervention setting.		Country office - programme unit, vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation teams		2022

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
6.2	Focus on acting on not only the visible aspects of gender inequality but also the underlying social and cultural causes.		Country office - programme unit, area and field offices		2021
6.3	To facilitate the activity in recommendation 6.2, strengthen WFP's strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Gender and other United Nations agencies such as UNFPA and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.		Country office - senior management and programme unit		2022
6.4	Make dedicated funding available for gender-specific activities, including in field offices.		Country office - senior management and programme and partnerships units		2022

1 Introduction

1.1 EVALUATION FEATURES

1.1.1 Rationale

1. Humanitarian operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) face extreme challenges. Chronic insecurity and the resurgence of inter-ethnic conflict leading to population displacements, combined with severe limitations to agricultural development, have caused a state of generalized food insecurity. Over five million people were displaced between October 2017 and September 2019, with the highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) located in North Kivu, Ituri, South Kivu, Kasai, Kasai Central and Tanganyika. Furthermore, provinces like Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu are also affected by the Ebola outbreak.

2. During the evaluation period WFP has provided emergency food assistance to conflict and Ebola-affected populations. WFP maintained its corporate level 3 (L3) emergency operation in the worst-affected provinces in the East (Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika) as well as in the Kasais (Kasai and Kasai Central) and continued to scale up food assistance in order to stem a further deterioration of the situation. It has done so by deploying the full range of modalities and programming approaches available to the organization.

3. Until the end of 2017, WFP activities in DRC were implemented through separate projects, each with their own focus. In line with the new corporate policies of the Integrated Road Map (IRM),² in 2016 the country office (CO) started the preparation of a three-year interim country strategic plan (ICSP) for the period 2018-2020, which was approved by the Executive Board in November 2017.

4. As part of this process, country strategic plan evaluations (CSPEs) were introduced by the WFP Policy on Country Strategic Plans.³ The results of this evaluation will be used to inform the preparation of the new DRC country strategic plan (CSP) for the period 2021-2024. A country portfolio evaluation was previously carried out in October 2014 covering the period of 2009-2013.

1.1.2 Objectives

5. A summary of the terms of reference (ToR) for this CSPE is presented in Annex 1. The evaluation serves the dual purposes of accountability and learning:

- **Accountability:** The evaluation findings are intended to demonstrate to WFP stakeholders the actual results achieved against the planned results, targets and allocated resources.
- **Learning:** The evaluation is intended to present opportunities for learning at the national, regional and corporate levels. The results of this evaluation are intended to inform the preparation of the new country strategic plan, which will be presented at the November 2020 Executive Board.

6. The evaluation will assess the contribution of WFP to ICSP strategic results, establishing plausible causal relations between the outputs of WFP activities, and the potential outcome level changes. At the same time, it is designed to create comparability between different WFP operations by using a standard evaluation question template applied across all WFP CSPEs, and to explore those aspects of the operation which have been more innovative.

1.1.3 Methodology and limitations

7. The evaluation was managed by the Office of Evaluation and commissioned to Action Against Hunger UK. It was conducted between October 2019 and March 2020 by a seven-person team: two national consultants (covering rural development and partnerships, efficiency and gender), two senior subject matter specialists (covering public health and nutrition, food security and resilience), one evaluation analyst and a team leader, plus an evaluation director from Action Against Hunger UK in charge of quality assurance.

² <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000037739/download/>

³ <https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfp286746.pdf>

Gender and cultural considerations, as well as technical expertise, were key factors in the selection of the external team.

8. The primary intended users of the evaluation are the WFP country office, the regional bureau in Johannesburg (RBJ) and relevant divisions and units at headquarters (HQ) as well as the Executive Management Group and Executive Board of WFP. Secondary users are national level and local partners in DRC, including government institutions, donors, international partner agencies and local cooperating partners.

9. The evaluation took a utilization-focused approach, based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to intended users. The process was therefore very consultative. The evaluation terms of reference were shared with internal evaluation stakeholders in May 2019 for comments. Inception meetings in Rome and Kinshasa were held in October 2019, and the team prepared an inception report (IR) considering specific areas of interest highlighted by evaluation stakeholders. The inception report was shared with the country office in November 2019. The main evaluation mission to DRC took place over 3.5 weeks in November and December 2019. It included multiple interviews in the capital and two weeks of field visits to WFP intervention areas. Early findings and hypotheses were tested and shared at various stages of the evaluation with WFP staff in DRC. At the end of the main mission, the team discussed preliminary findings with the country office and the regional bureau in Johannesburg, as well as with the Government and key donors in separate debriefing sessions.

10. The detailed methodology for the evaluation is presented in Annex 2 and the evaluation matrix is included in Annex 3. People met are listed in Annex 11 and documents consulted in Annex 10. The Office of Evaluation provided guidance and quality assurance to the evaluation team in conjunction with Action Against Hunger UK.

11. The evidence collected covers the period 2017-2019, spanning all WFP operations, systems and policies relevant to DRC. The object of the evaluation includes both the interim country strategy instrument and the country operations. The analytical framework is set by the evaluation questions and the related sub-questions, which look at 1) the strategic relevance of the ICSP; 2) the effectiveness of its interventions; 3) the efficiency of its interventions; and 4) the factors that affect the performance of WFP.

12. The ICSP strategic outcomes, expected outputs, key activities and related assumptions and indicators are presented in the ICSP narrative and its logical framework, and graphically presented in the "DRC - Line of Sight" document. The evaluation team has used these documents to reconstruct the theory of change (ToC) for the DRC ICSP (see Annex 4). The need for reconstructing the theory of change emerged from shortcomings identified in the "Logical Framework" and "Line of Sight" documents. Both were developed in accordance with WFP corporate procedures and guidance and clearly show the vertical pathways of expected changes at different levels (from activities to outputs to outcomes) for each strategic outcome. However, they do not show the horizontal and other linkages at various levels, nor do they indicate all the assumptions made (that is, the conditions needed to be in place) to enable the expected changes at various levels. "Activities" in the ICSP correspond to standard types of interventions by WFP under which different actual activities can be bundled. For instance, provision of food assistance encompasses vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) assessments; the selection and registration of beneficiaries; procurement, warehousing, transport and distribution of food or distribution of cash or vouchers; and post-distribution monitoring (PDM). An "activity" in the ICSP may even encompass different intervention modalities. For example, the provision of food assistance may be in the form of cash, food or vouchers. The bundling of actual activities is mainly driven by a desire to simplify financial planning and monitoring, but this makes it very challenging to quantify and assess the efficiency of actual activities.

13. During the inception phase, the evaluation team identified thematic areas of particular relevance to the country context. These priority thematic areas helped define the lines of inquiry for each evaluation sub-question, which were reflected in the evaluation matrix (Annex 3):

- **Theme 1: WFP adaptation to an extremely challenging country context:** DRC presents many characteristics of fragility. The approaches of WFP to overcoming diverse challenges, mitigating risks and adapting operations to this context were explored at all levels of programming.
- **Theme 2: Strategic positioning of WFP and integration of its interventions across the "triple nexus" (humanitarian assistance–development assistance–peace-building):** In light of the structural nature of food insecurity and vulnerability in DRC, the evaluation tried to

understand how the competing, but also complementing, strategic outcomes of emergency assistance and resilience strengthening were operationalized, for example, through shaping emergency assistance in such a way that it contributed to resilience or peace. Under this theme, specific attention was also given to accountability to affected populations (AAP), gender and protection.

- **Theme 3: Priority setting, coverage and targeting:** The evaluation examined the rationale behind the priorities set by WFP, that is, whether programme design and implementation approaches were determined by evolving beneficiary needs assessments, donor preferences or restrictions for use of funding, established modalities of assistance and target populations, or other factors.
- **Theme 4: Strategic partnerships:** Understanding how different partnerships facilitated or inhibited the achievement of WFP outcomes was central to the evaluation.

14. The priority themes helped identify appropriate sites to be visited by the evaluation team during the main mission. Seven locations were visited, with visits averaging two calendar days per site. The sites were further selected based on the strategic outcomes to which the operations in those sites were expected to contribute, and the spectrum of activities implemented in those sites, ranging from emergency response (where classed at L3 emergency level) to resilience and peacebuilding. The selection also considered the duration of WFP operations on-site.

15. The locations visited under each thematic area are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Sites visited by the evaluation team

	Geographical areas	Priority themes	Topics of focus
1	Bukavu (South Kivu)	Adaptation to context, and strategic positioning	Resilience activities (SO3) – including purchase for progress (P4P) and conditional food and cash transfers Coordination (SO5) and malnutrition (SO2)
2	Areas west of Kalemie (Tanganyika)		
3	Kananga (Kasai-Central)		
4	Ituri	Priority setting and strategic partnerships	Emergency food assistance to shock-affected populations (conflict and non-conflict, SO1), including cash and food transfers and school feeding Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) (SO2) where present
5	Bunia (Ebola-affected populations)		
6	Gbadolite and Ubangui (host populations)		
7	Gbadolite and Ubangui (refugee populations)		
8	Kinshasa and all field sites	All	Logistics, supply chains, financial management (most directly SO5 but functions are also cross cutting across the other SOs) The role of WFP within the United Nations response system (SO5) and collaboration with the Government (SO4) Cross cutting issues: Gender, protection, accountability to affected populations and environment

16. **Data sources:** The evaluation is based on primary and secondary evidence, combining desk review, interviews, direct observation and a community survey. Data-collection methods were interlinked, allowing the evaluation team to triangulate the evidence gathered.

17. The documents reviewed include relevant WFP corporate policies and guidance, needs assessments and country analyses developed with or used by WFP, strategy and programming documents, monitoring reports and programme-specific reports. Internal documents, such as risk matrices and costing tables for common services, were also analysed. The evaluation team had free access to all relevant material.

18. For the face-to-face, in-depth interviews during field visits, four questionnaire protocols were developed, and adapted to the context and the type of stakeholder, with the most relevant questions being selected by the interviewer.

19. The stakeholder mapping during the inception phase helped the selection of interviewees. The evaluation conducted 375 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, of which 18 were done remotely. Stakeholders included WFP staff at headquarters, the regional bureau in Johannesburg, the Kinshasa country office, six (out of 17) sub-offices, in addition to more than 20 cooperating partners, and approximately 120 beneficiary interviews either as a group or individually, ensuring gender balance and confidentiality of sources.

20. A quantitative community survey was conducted by a local data-collection agency. The survey was designed after the team visits, so that questions could be framed around areas that needed broader investigation and verification. These areas had emerged from prior evaluation team interviews with key informants and community groups. The survey was conducted over two weeks in December 2019 in three provinces (Sud-Ubangui, Kasai Central and Ituri⁴) in sites that had been previously visited by the evaluation team. A total of 300 community members were surveyed, based on random-walk sampling in villages, amounting to 100 in each province, of which 60 percent were women. The majority of these (79 percent) were recent WFP beneficiaries (within the last year) while 21 percent were other non-targeted members from the target communities.

21. The evaluation focused deliberately on the gender dimension of programmes, by recognizing cultural biases, achieving a balance of respondents, seeking out women beneficiary groups, and analysing outcomes from a woman's perspective. The evaluation systematically reviewed the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) in processes and policies, and through all WFP activities in-country, such as the process for selecting cooperating partners, or measures taken to improve the technical and institutional capacity of cooperating partners to contribute in terms of gender equality and empowerment of women.

22. **Limitations:** The constraints faced by the evaluation did not affect the findings in any major way. The most significant hurdle has been the lack of comparable outcome-level data across different provinces. The outcome indicators applied differ in areas with similar programming modalities, reducing intra-province comparability. Additionally, the introduction of the ICSP in 2018 led to corresponding changes in reporting formats, limiting comparability of performance data between the period prior to the ICSP (2017) and the period during the ICSP (2018-2019).

23. Another limitation was the restricted access to some field locations and activities, due to security constraints and Ebola-related travel restrictions. There were limited opportunities to visit operational distribution sites, as double distributions usually take place in November to factor in a break in December. The team was unable to visit several sites under level 3 emergency (in particular areas to the north of Goma in North Kivu, Ebola-affected areas in Ituri, and southern Tanganyika) due to insecurity and unforeseen changes in flight arrangements. However, the evaluation team feels that sites visited were adequate enough to offer insights in all priority themes and activities.

1.2 COUNTRY CONTEXT

1.2.1 Geography and demography

24. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the second largest country in Africa by surface (2,350,000 km²) and is endowed with incomparable natural resources. Located in central sub-Saharan Africa, it has a 25-mile coastline to the west but is otherwise landlocked. The population of DRC stands at an estimated 84 million,⁵ the third largest in sub-Saharan Africa, and the tenth fastest growing worldwide.⁶ The population is expected to more than double in the next 30 years (Figure 1). Various population groups with

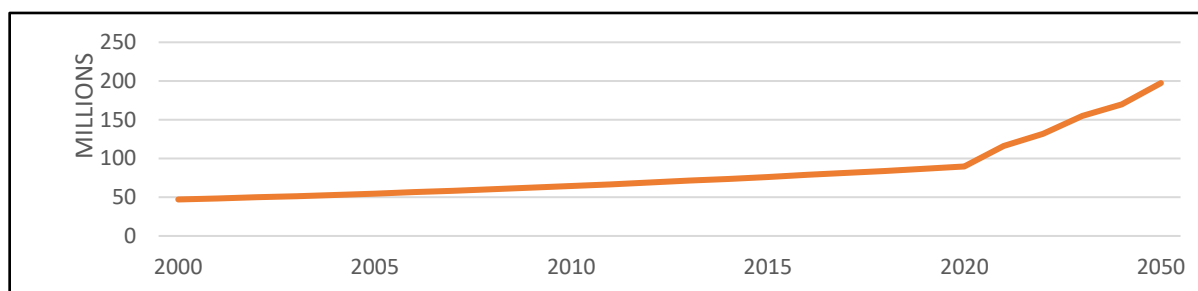
⁴ The locations reached were: Telega via Bunia, Hôpital Général de référence via Bunia (Ituri Province), Longadjo via Kananga, Nkonko via Kananga (Kasai Central), village on road from Mole to Zongo, village on road from Boyabu à Libenge (Ubangui).

⁵ State of the World's Children, UNICEF, 2019

⁶ Pocket World Figures'. The Economist, 2020 Edition

cultural specificities coexist across the territory, with several provinces maintaining closer ties with neighbouring countries than with provinces within DRC.

Figure 1: DRC population growth



Source: United Nations Population Division⁷

25. The total fertility rate is 5.95 per woman, which is the third highest rate in the world.⁸ Approximately 10 percent of total fertility rates are attributed to women aged 15-19. Life expectancy at birth is 60.2 years and the median age is 16. The maternal mortality rate in DRC is the 17th highest in the world, with 693 deaths/100,000 live births (2015 estimate). The infant mortality rate is the 12th highest in the world, with 71.47 deaths/1,000 live births.⁹

1.2.2 Government framework and governance

26. Joseph Kabila succeeded his father as President in 2001. While his election in October 2006 met general approval of international monitors, his re-election in November 2011 was criticized abroad and disputed by the opposition. In January 2019, after delayed elections, Felix Tshisekedi was sworn in as the new President of DRC. A coalition government was formed between the political forces of the new President and his predecessor, who retained the majority in Parliament and in the 26 provinces. The executive is composed of two thirds of the Common Front for Congo (FCC), the pro-Kabila coalition, and of one third of the Cape for Change (Cap) party of President Tshisekedi.

27. The Government's objective is to turn DRC into a middle-income country by 2022. The National Strategic Development Plan (PNSD) is the country's overarching strategy for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It relies heavily on agricultural development to boost the economy. Sector policies and strategies are, in general, poorly developed, inadequate or outdated. National policies and guidelines are complemented by regional policies such as the "Plan de stabilisation et de restauration des régions affectées par les conflits" (STAREC) and by common strategies with the other countries in the region such as those of the "Southern African development community". DRC has committed to presenting a voluntary national review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to the high-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2020.

28. Decades of poor governance have created acute fragility for about one third of the territory (and fragility for the whole country): dysfunctional institutions, widespread corruption, highly deteriorated public infrastructure and very poor public services, recurring conflict and violence mostly linked to natural resources, forced population movement, disease outbreaks, restricted humanitarian access, and reduced access to agricultural lands and markets. The strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)¹⁰ states that the lack of state authority and responsible state institutions fulfilling their protection responsibilities, limited decentralization, weak governance and rampant impunity, all feed a vicious circle of instability in DRC. The state has been affected for decades by powerful patronage networks. Corruption has allowed those at the top of the governance structures to become rich, while others struggle to survive. The country's legal framework for addressing corruption is not being implemented. In 2019, DRC ranked 5th of 178 countries on the 2019 Fragile States Index, placing it in

⁷ UN Population Division, 2020

⁸ UN Population Division, 2020

⁹ <http://www.familyplanning-drc.net/fiche-pays.php>

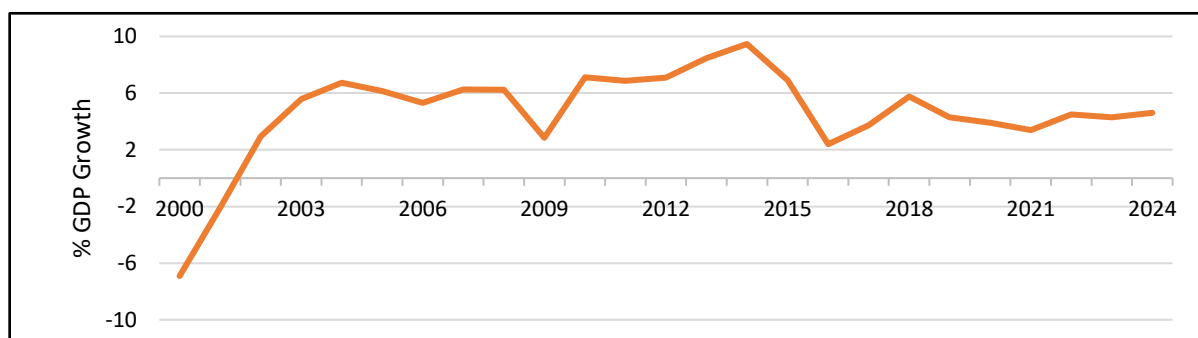
¹⁰ Letter of the Secretary General dated 24 October 2019 addressed to the President of the Security Council.

the highest category of risk (“very high alert”).¹¹ A lack of governance regarding food security is highlighted in the 2018 Zero Hunger Strategic Review (ZHSR) stating that the absence of a central government focal point undermines coordination.

1.2.3 Socio-economic overview

29. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) (in constant 2010 USD value) grew by an average of 7.8 percent per year between 2011 and 2014, slowing down to an erratic 2 to 5 percent since. Despite several factors favouring an acceleration of this growth, the economy of DRC remains dependent on world mineral prices and is highly affected by the security situation in the east of the country. The business climate is still far from attracting investors, and human development indicators (HDI) remain extremely low. The 2019 Human Development Index ranked the country 179th out of 189. In this context, achieving the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals is near impossible.

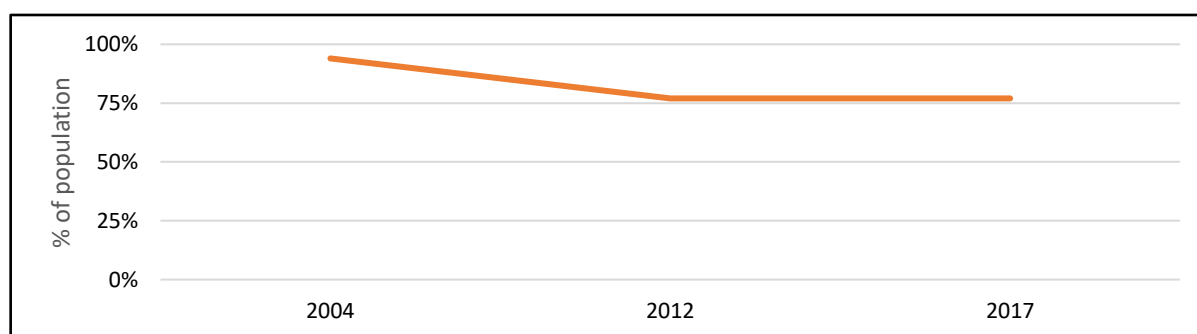
Figure 2: DRC annual gross domestic product growth rate¹²



Source: World Bank National accounts, OECD National accounts¹³

30. The incidence of poverty remains very high. As demonstrated in Figure 3, while the proportion of the population living in poverty, defined as living on less than USD 1.90 a day, has been steadily decreasing since 2004, it still stands at an estimated 77 percent of the total population. Per capita expenditure on social services, including health and education, is below the sub-Saharan Africa average.¹⁴

Figure 3: Proportion of the total population living in poverty



Source: World Bank, Development Research Group¹⁵

1.2.4 Infrastructure

31. Infrastructure in DRC is critically weak, in part due to physical challenges (vast territory, low population density, and the difficult terrain and wet climate of the Congo Basin with criss-crossing rivers) but also due to limited investment in infrastructure, chronic economic mismanagement and recurring conflicts, which seriously constrain maintenance and development of infrastructure. Although some progress has been

¹¹ <https://fundforpeace.org/2019/04/10/fragile-states-index-2019/>.

¹² World Bank.

¹³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2018&locations=CD&start=2000>.

¹⁴ World Bank.

¹⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GAPS?locations=CD>.

made since the early 2000s, a lot remains to improve, especially with regards to transport links and access to electricity. In 2010, paved road density in DRC was 16 times lower than the low-income country average.¹⁶

1.2.5 Agriculture and mining

32. Agriculture employs 70 percent of the population and produces 40 percent of its gross domestic product, yet receives less than 3 percent of public budgetary resources. DRC is classified as a low-income food-deficit country, even though it has outstanding natural conditions for the development of sustainable agriculture: around 80 million hectares of arable land benefitting from more than eight months of rainfall per year, a diversity of climates, a large hydrographic network, and enormous potential for fisheries and for livestock farming.¹⁷ Land under annual or perennial crops constitutes only 3.5 percent of the total land area.¹⁸ Only about 10 million of the country's 80 million hectares of arable land are under cultivation. Agriculture is divided into two sectors: subsistence agriculture, which employs the vast majority of the work force, and commercial (semi-industrial) agriculture, which is export-oriented and conducted on plantations. Subsistence farming involves four million families on plots averaging 1.6 hectares (four acres), usually a little larger in savannah areas than in the rain forest. Subsistence farmers produce mainly manioc and other tubers, maize and sorghum. The most significant challenges to the development of agriculture are limited access to productive inputs and markets and technical know-how. Agricultural value chains are poorly developed in particular due to severely constrained investment in transport, storage and processing capacity.

33. Mining and resource extraction also constitute an important industry. In 2018, although the extractive sector represented 98 percent of exports and 15 percent of gross domestic product, it only employed 11 percent of the active population.¹⁹ Mining is concentrated in Katanga, North Kivu and South Kivu. DRC holds about half of the world's cobalt reserves, and a significant portion of known coltan²⁰ reserves. In addition, DRC has large reserves of diamonds, gold and copper. Except for gold and copper, artisanal and small-scale mining account for a substantial portion of extracted raw materials.²¹

1.2.6 Conflict

34. Violent conflicts started with the Congolese wars (1996–1997 and 1998–2003) and led to one of the world's most severe prolonged crises. They have pitted rebel groups against each other and against government forces in a struggle for political control and representation, and even, in some cases, for forms of autonomy in the provinces as well as for territory, notably around mineral extraction zones.²² Despite several peace agreements, intermittent cycles of severe conflict continue to affect the eastern provinces.

35. An estimated 40 to 100 non-state armed groups are active in the eastern regions.²³ The United Nations peacekeeping mission MONUSCO has been present in the country for over 20 years.

36. Internal displacement has also been driven by periods of intercommunal violence, which have been more geographically diffuse. For example, ongoing inter-ethnic conflict between Twa and Bantu people in Tanganyika is believed to have displaced almost one million people²⁴ since 2016. In the western Yumbi Territory, the end of 2018 was marred by two days of conflict, during which hundreds of people were killed and thousands displaced.²⁵

¹⁶ The Democratic Republic of the Congo's infrastructure: a continental perspective, 2010.

¹⁷ USAID (<https://www.usaid.gov/democratic-republic-congo/agriculture-and-food-security>).

¹⁸ FAO <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en?iso3=COD>.

¹⁹ Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 2019 (<https://eiti.org/democratic-republic-of-congo#overview>).

²⁰ Tantalum from coltan is used to manufacture capacitors used for portable telephones, personal computers, automotive electronics and cameras.

²¹ DRC Ministry of Mining, 2019.

²² Armed groups and mineral extraction in the DRC, World Policy, 2016.

²³ The Landscape of Armed Groups in the Eastern Congo, Congo Research Group, 2015.

²⁴ A Silent Crisis in Congo: The Bantu and the Twa in Tanganyika, International Rescue Committee, 2018.

²⁵ DR Congo: 'New waves of violence' likely, UN warns, unless State acts to prevent intercommunal reprisals; UN News 2019.

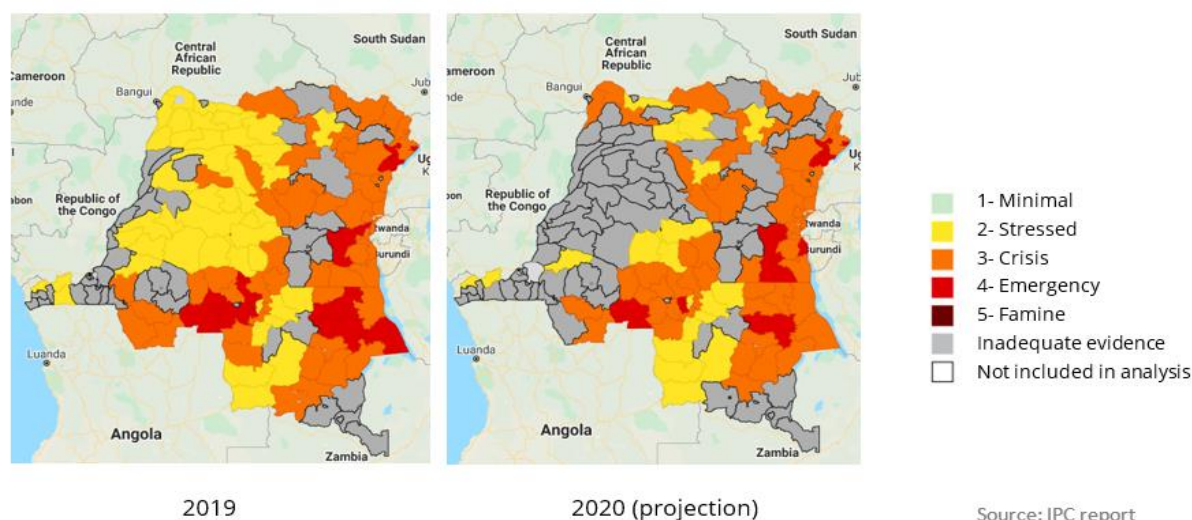
1.2.7 Internally displaced people and refugees

37. The number of internally displaced persons has been steadily increasing since 2015 and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) puts the latest number at 4.5 million²⁶ individuals. About 0.9 million DRC nationals have fled outside the country. In addition, approximately 0.53 million refugees from Rwanda (40 percent), Central African Republic (30 percent), South Sudan (20 percent) and Burundi (10 percent) have taken refuge within the borders of DRC.²⁷

1.2.8 Food security and nutrition

38. The food security and nutrition situation in the country is very worrying. The 2019 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), an annual exercise that analyses the level of acute food insecurity, details the degree of crisis in DRC. Most food insecure people live in Grand Kivu (Maniema, North Kivu, South Kivu), Grand Kasai (Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental, Lomami and Sankuru) and Grand Katanga (Haut Katanga, Haut Lomami, Lualaba and Tanganyika), as well as in Tshopo, Ituri, Bas Uele and Haut Uele. Out of the 109 surveyed territories, about half (52) were classified as level 3 (crisis) and 15 as level 4 (emergency). Of the rural population, 26 percent was identified as food insecure (levels 3 or 4) in 2019, which is a slight increase from 23 percent in 2018.²⁸ The main coping strategies households have adopted are reducing meals (91 percent), limiting portion size (90 percent), using less expensive food (79 percent) and restricting food consumption of adults (77 percent).²⁹

Figure 4: DRC Integrated Food Security Phase Classification maps (IPC)



Source: 2019 IPC report

39. The number of food insecure people is estimated to have increased year-on-year, with an estimated 15.6 million people, including 4.6 million children, in IPC categories 3 (crisis) and above.³⁰ A further 27 million people are categorized in IPC level 2. Stunting affects 43 percent of children under five, while 8 percent suffer from wasting and 22 percent are underweight.³¹

²⁶ <http://reporting.unhcr.org/drc>

²⁷ UNHCR DRC Monthly Refugee Statistics, September 2019.

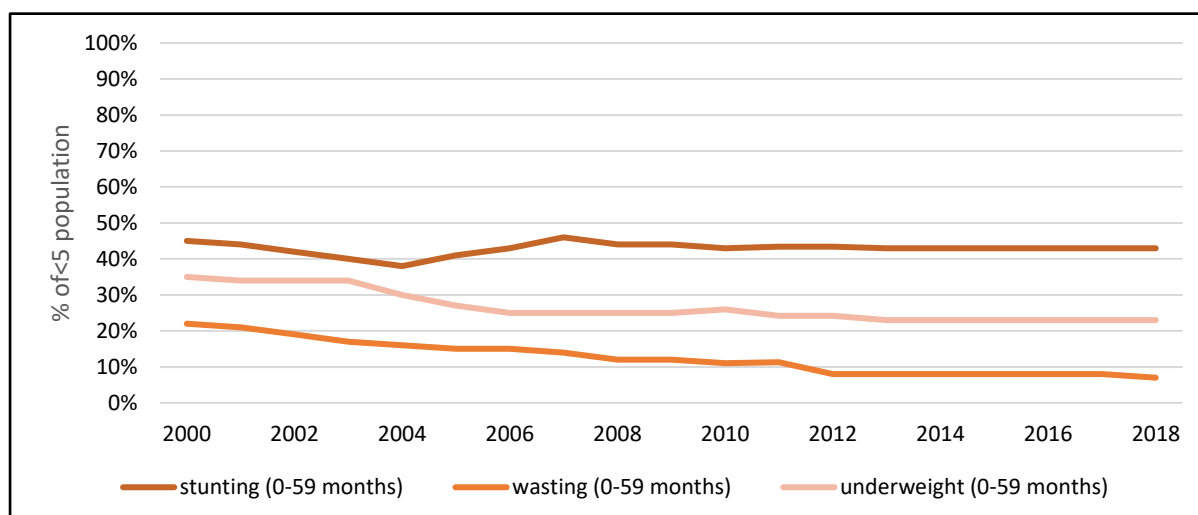
²⁸ IPC Report, 2019.

²⁹ WFP VAM, September 2019.

³⁰ Nutrition survey conducted by the Government of DRC and UNICEF in December 2017, as stated in budget revision 5 of ICSP.

³¹ UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2019.

Figure 5: Prevalence of wasting, stunting and underweight children under 5 years in DRC³²



Source: UNICEF Global Nutrition Report, 2018

40. Food insecurity levels have been linked with hikes in food prices, lack of rain in certain zones of the country, epidemics, poor road infrastructure, limited access to agricultural lands, poor implementation of agricultural policies and insecurity caused by conflicts and the presence of armed groups, which have led many people to flee and abandon their livelihoods. Internally displaced persons and returnees following armed conflicts are the groups most affected by acute food insecurity. Reduced agricultural yields, in part due to the resurgence of pests, significantly contribute to food insecurity. For example, an estimated 1.68 million tons of maize were lost in 2019 as a result of fall armyworm, double the volume lost the previous year. The net food deficit of DRC for 2017-2018 was estimated at approximately 6.9 million tons, representing 22 percent of national food needs. This shortfall is most prominent in cereals, at an estimated 10.7 million tons, which represents 83 percent of cereal needs.³³ These challenges are compounded by the aforementioned demographic projections, which would require at least a 60 percent increase in food production to meet the food needs for the increasing population.

41. As mentioned in the Zero Hunger Report (2019)³⁴ significant disparities in food insecurity are observed both between provinces and at the territorial level. For example, 16 of the 26 provinces in the country have food insecurity rates above the already high national average (49.5 percent), namely Sankuru, Maniema, Tshopo, Sud-Ubangui, Lower Uélé, Upper Uélé, Tanganyika, Kasai Oriental, Kasai Central, Ituri, Lomami, Kwango, North Kivu, South Kivu, Kasai and Mongala. Nine of them are in phase 4, namely the territories of Djugu in Ituri; Kalemie, Nyunzu and Manono in Tanganyika; Mitwaba and Pweto in Haut-Katanga; Tshikapa and Mweka in Kasai; and Miabi in Kasai Oriental. Thirty-one other phase 3 territories are scattered throughout the country.

1.2.9 Climate change and vulnerability

42. Climate change in DRC exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and further contributes to the degradation of the humanitarian situation. In 2016, DRC ranked 177 out of 181 countries in the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) index for climate vulnerability.³⁵ Climate change in DRC will translate into more frequent extreme temperatures, more dry spells during the rainy season, and shorter rainy seasons. Extreme events, such as floods and droughts, which are already experienced by communities living alongside the Congo and Ubangui rivers, will become increasingly common. Land and infrastructure will likely

³² UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, World Bank, Global Nutrition Report.

³³ Sécurité alimentaire, niveau de production agricole et Animale, Évaluation de la Campagne Agricole 2017-2018 et Bilan Alimentaire du Pays (2018 report), GoDRC, WFP, FAO.

³⁴ ICREDES, Éliminer la faim en République Démocratique du Congo, 2019.

³⁵ The ND-GAIN index measures a country's vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges, in combination with its readiness to improve resilience. Readiness measures a country's ability to leverage investments and convert them to adaptation actions by considering economic, governance and social readiness. (see <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/> for more details).

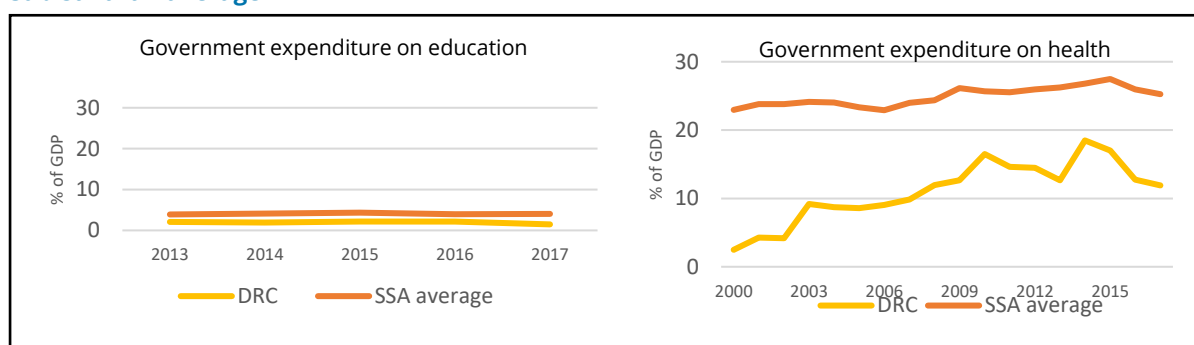
be affected by these events, through crop failures, landslides, livestock diseases, and reduced water availability.³⁶ The agricultural production and yields of DRC are particularly sensitive to changes in the climate with the aforementioned resurgence in pests also linked to climate change.³⁷ Besides agricultural activities, the charcoal trade, in a country where wood energy accounts for 80 percent of all domestic energy consumed by households, is a significant driver of deforestation in DRC.³⁸

43. The extensive slash-and-burn farming generally practised in DRC constitutes a significant risk of forest destruction. The Virunga region in particular is a hotspot for deforestation. The non-profit, Global Forest Watch, used satellite images to estimate that 24,378 hectares of forest was lost from 2001 to 2014.³⁹

1.2.10 Education and health

44. As illustrated in Figure 6, government expenditure on education and health in DRC has consistently been below the sub-Saharan Africa average since 2013 and 2000, respectively.

Figure 6: Percentage of gross domestic product spent on education and health in DRC relative to sub-Saharan average



Source: Education – UNESCO Institute for Statistics; Health – World Health Organization

45. Relatively few children in DRC receive a formal education. An estimated 3.5 million children of primary school age are not in school while 27 percent of minors engage in child labour.⁴⁰ High levels of poverty, conflict and displacement mean that many children are forced to work rather than attend school.⁴¹ After six years of education, only 47 percent of young people are literate, compared to 59 percent on average in comparable countries.⁴²

46. The government report “Rapport d’état du système éducatif” states that the Congolese education system is facing challenges marked by sustained demographic growth and social factors that, for many, are not favourable to school attendance. The national strategy for education, “Stratégie sectorielle de l’éducation et de la formation 2016-2025” was enacted in 2015 with widespread international support, comprising three main lines of action. One of these is focused on improving access by reducing the cost of attending, which is the policy anchor for WFP school feeding. This confronts an expanding level of need. The demographic pressure on the education system will continue in the coming years. The number of school-age children will increase for all age groups; thus, over the period 2012-2025, the number of children of primary school age (6-11 years) is expected to rise from 11.1 million to 14.8 million, and for those of secondary school age, from 9.2 million to 12.8 million. Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, Education for All, by 2025 would require an increase in the current capacity of the primary education system of at least 46 per cent.

³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2018.

(<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DRC%2B%28east%29.pdf>).

³⁷ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2018. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018.

³⁸ Forests and the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Opportunity in a time of crisis, by Nigel Sizer, Deanna M. Wolfire and Jake Brunner - June 1998, World Resources Institute 1998.

³⁹ See satellite evidence on <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/>.

⁴⁰ UNICEF State of the World’s Children (SOWC), 2019.

⁴¹ World Vision, 2019 (<https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/drc-conflict-facts>); UNICEF

(<https://www.unicef.org/drcongo/en/what-we-do/education>).

⁴² UNICEF, UNESCO, 2014. DRC National State Education System Report, Education serving growth and peace.

47. Since the start of 2018, DRC experienced two unrelated Ebola outbreaks: the first, in Equateur province, started in May 2018 and ended in July 2018. The other, affecting first North Kivu and later also Ituri provinces, was declared in August 2018 and was still ongoing at the time of the main evaluation mission. With more than 3,000 confirmed cases and 2,244 deaths as of January 2020, this latest outbreak is by far the country's largest on record. It is also the second-largest Ebola epidemic ever recorded, following the West Africa outbreak of 2014-2016.⁴³ Although the number of new cases has stabilized since the end of August 2019, the outbreak is still considered a “public health emergency of international concern” (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO).

48. Beyond Ebola, the population in DRC has also experienced outbreaks of measles and cholera in 2019. As a result, the Congolese Government has implemented mass immunization campaigns against both diseases.⁴⁴ DRC was one of the first African countries to recognize HIV, registering cases of HIV among hospital patients as early as 1983. However, there is a lack of evidence on the current level of key indicators of the epidemic in the country. It is acknowledged that DRC is experiencing a generalized epidemic of HIV/AIDS which is, however, not very expansive (national prevalence of 0.85 percent -1.14 percent and national incidence of 5-7 new infections per 10,000 person-years of observation), with an estimated 456,000 people living with HIV during 2017. Ten of its 26 provinces have so far experienced a concentrated epidemic.⁴⁵

1.2.11 Gender

49. In the latest gender inequality index, DRC ranked 156th out of 162 countries. Labour force participation rates for men and women are roughly equivalent, but there are significant discrepancies in educational attainment and for other socio-economic indicators. For instance, 37 percent of women age 25 and above have received at least some secondary education, compared to nearly twice as many men (66 percent).⁴⁶ Rural women usually have less access to land and to financial services than men, despite formal restrictions having been removed from civil law.⁴⁷

50. Access to food also differs by gender. Women are often expected to source cooking fuel and prepare food, but frequently face food discrimination, consuming the food that remains after men and boys in the household have eaten. Research shows that households headed by women in rural areas are more likely to include malnourished children, highlighting how women's limited access to food is linked to childhood malnutrition.⁴⁸

51. The national gender action plan⁴⁹ details a number of priorities, including: a) the establishment of forums for the exchange of experiences among actors in the field of women, peace and security in the Great Lakes sub-region; b) the popularization of the action plan and the legal texts that guarantee women's rights; and c) increased advocacy for the observance of the time limits for judicial proceedings and the monitoring of cases of sexual violence in the public prosecutor's office with a view to convicting the perpetrators.

1.2.12 Protection, humanitarian principles and access

52. Humanitarian action in the country is made difficult by the complex and fragile context. For decades, the country has been plagued by conflict and violence, partly rooted in competition for natural resources. Reduced access to agricultural lands and disease outbreaks have further exacerbated crises and led to large population movements. DRC has the world's second highest number of displaced persons after Syria.⁵⁰ Decades of political instability and poor governance have also contributed to increased fragility. The population of DRC faces multiple protection challenges, due to persistent unrest, conflict and the complexity of the food security crisis. Moreover, difficulties in accessing affected population groups, due to logistical challenges and security restrictions, further limit the reach of aid agencies and their implementing partners.

⁴³ MSF, 2020 (<https://www.msf.org/drc-Ebola-outbreak-crisis-update>).

⁴⁴ Outbreak Observatory, July 2019 <https://www.outbreakobservatory.org/outbreakthursday-1/7/18/2019/beyond-Ebola-drc-battles-measles-and-cholera>.

⁴⁵ *HIV / AIDS Epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Current Level of Key Indicators and Projection by 2030*. Central African Journal of Public Health, Volume 4, Issue 3, June 2018, Pages: 86-94.

⁴⁶ UNDP HDR, 2019.

⁴⁷ 2018 UNDP Human Development Index Report.

⁴⁸ DRC Interim Country Strategic Plan (2018-2020).

⁴⁹ Ministry of Gender of DRC, National Action Plan for Gender and the Implementation of Resolution 1325, 2019-2022.

⁵⁰ Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2019, Development Initiatives.

Humanitarian actors are limited by attacks and military operations. Weaknesses in state and judicial structures may also jeopardise efforts to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice.

53. Women and children are particularly vulnerable, hence the decision by the United Nations to operate not only a protection cluster but also sub-clusters focusing on gender-based violence (GBV) and on child protection.⁵¹ Despite the 2006 law forbidding sexual and gender-based violence, many cases of sexual violence are neither reported to local authorities, nor investigated.⁵² The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) gender-based violence cluster report of 2017 shows particularly worrying trends in provinces affected by crises regarding child marriages, sexual violence and partner violence.⁵³

54. Child soldiers are also an issue of great concern. After signing an action plan with the United Nations in 2012, the Congolese Government has stopped enlisting children into its armed forces. However, other armed groups continue to recruit children, with many instances of sexual and gender-based violence. Although a third of all children associated with armed groups in DRC are thought to be girls, they make up only about 7 percent of children released to date.⁵⁴

55. In 2004, the International Criminal Court opened an investigation on the alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in eastern DRC in the context of armed conflict since 1 July 2002, when the Rome Statute came into force.⁵⁵ The trial is ongoing.

1.2.13 The United Nations in DRC

56. In addition to periodical political instability and outbursts of violence, institutions in DRC are notoriously weak. The country hosts one of the largest United Nations peacekeeping missions, MONUSCO, with a budget of approximately USD 1 billion per year. The mission's key priorities are the support of the political process and the protection of civilians and human rights.

57. Since the 2002 Sun City Agreement,⁵⁶ and the end of the political transition in 2006, the lack of a political framework with national buy-in has posed challenges for the United Nations agencies' work in DRC. With the new Government, attitudes towards the United Nations may change.

58. While the United Nations has been present in DRC since 1962, combined humanitarian and peacekeeping United Nations presence in DRC started in 1999. This period is characterized by a limited development programme (with elements of sectoral coordination), mostly consisting of humanitarian funding, a large part of which is through pooled funding. For much of this time, WFP has been playing a central role in providing and facilitating life-saving interventions across the country.

59. The last United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) covers the period 2013-2017.⁵⁷ The successor to the UNDAF, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) covers the period 2020-2024. It puts increased emphasis on the humanitarian and development peace nexus, following three strategic pillars: 1) consolidation of peace, respect of human rights, protection of civil population, social cohesion and democracy; 2) inclusive economic growth, agricultural development, capturing of demographic dividend, social protection and sustainable management of natural resources; and 3) access to basic services and humanitarian assistance. The new WFP country strategic plan is expected to be aligned with the UNSDCF 2020-2024 but will start one year later.

⁵¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/gender-based-violence-situation-and-response-democratic-republic> and GBV violence Situation Report and response in DRC (Kasai region).

⁵² <https://2012-2017.usaid.gov/democratic-republic-congo/fact-sheets/usaiddrc-fact-sheet-sexual-and-gender-based-violence>.

⁵³ GBV Sub-Cluster DRC, Gender based violence situation and response in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): the Kasai Crisis, 2017 (https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1406032/5351_1504089825_gbvsc-drc-overview-on-the-kasai-response-25aug17.pdf).

⁵⁴ <http://democracyinafrica.org/leaving-girls-behind-child-soldiers-drc/>

⁵⁵ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/drc>

⁵⁶ Political Agreement signed in 2002, mediated by South Africa, which included neighbouring countries such as Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, as well as the main rebel groups and government of DRC.

⁵⁷ The five pillars of the 2013-2017 UNDAF were as follows: 1) governance and development of institutions; 2) inclusive and employment generating growth; 3) basis social services and development of human capital; 4) sustainable management of natural resources and response to climate change; 5) stabilization and consolidation of peace.

60. In eastern DRC, United Nations agencies are also coordinating their interventions under the “International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy” umbrella⁵⁸ (also known as ISSSS or I4S), which was developed in 2008 and revised in 2013, with the aim of supporting the implementation of the national stabilization and reconstruction programme and reinforcing the political process towards peace. The five pillars of the strategy are: democratic dialogue; security; restoration of state authority; return, reintegration and socio-economic recovery and fight against sexual violence.

61. There are also some wider United Nations initiatives covering the region, including the Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework (2016-2017), which aims to align the efforts in support for peace, security and cooperation at a regional level and which involved the United Nations country teams of DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

1.2.14 International assistance⁵⁹

62. During the period 2015-2017, DRC received a yearly average of USD 2.3 billion net official development assistance (ODA)⁶⁰, representing 6 percent of gross national income. One third of official development assistance was for humanitarian aid.⁶¹ The top five funding sources were the United States of America (USA), the World Bank, the Global Fund, the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain (UK). DRC is also one of the largest recipients of funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

63. In 2018, as a result of the significant increase in needs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) appeal for the first time broke the USD 1 billion ceiling: it requested USD 1.6 billion in funding, double the requested amount for 2017. In 2019, the request was once again USD 1.6 billion.⁶² OCHA also coordinates regional operational response plans⁶³ covering the following regions: 1) Kasai, Kwango, Kwilu and Lualaba; 2) South Kivu and Maniema; 3) Tanganyika, High-Lomani and High-Katanga; and 4) North Kivu and Ituri.⁶⁴

1.3 THE WFP INTERIM COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

64. In 2016, WFP introduced the Integrated Road Map (IRM)⁶⁵, an organizational transformation strategy to better position WFP to achieve sustainable development and zero hunger. The Integrated Road Map approach involves four interrelated processes: 1) the WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021); 2) the Policy on Country Strategic Plans; 3) the Financial Framework Review; and 4) the Corporate Results Framework, all of which were adopted in November 2016 by the Executive Board. The Integrated Road Map brought a significant shift for WFP in terms of strategic planning, process, and system changes throughout its 82 country offices, 6 regional bureaux and its headquarters. Country strategic plans represent an important transition away from country portfolios, which included country programmes, protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs), emergency operations (EMOPs), special operations and development projects.

65. The WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)⁶⁶ details the conceptual framework upon which country strategic plans and interim country strategic plans are developed, thereby ensuring that these align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal 2 (achieving zero hunger) and Sustainable Development Goal 17 (partnering to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals). Key expectations from the introduction of country strategic plans were: improved alignment with national priorities, including national Sustainable Development Goal targets; better harmonization with other United Nations agencies in-country; more strategic linkages between humanitarian

⁵⁸ <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/stabilization-strategy-issss>.

⁵⁹ Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm>.

⁶⁰ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm>.

⁶¹ This represents the 2016-2017 average.

⁶² <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/52/summary/2019>.

⁶³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/r-publique-d-mocratique-du-congo-plan-de-r-ponse-humanitaire-2017-0>.

⁶⁴ https://reliefweb.int/updates?search=%28primary_country.iso3%3A%22cod%22%29%20AND%20format%3A%22Appeal%22%20AND%20source%3A%22UN%20Office%20for%20the%20Coordination%20of%20Humanitarian%20Affairs%22.

⁶⁵ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000037739/download/>.

⁶⁶ <https://www.WFP.org/publications/WFP-strategic-plan-2017-2021>.

and development work; more flexibility to plan for and respond to dynamic operational contexts; reduced transaction costs; a more strategic approach to gender equality and other cross-cutting issues; simpler, more predictable resource allocation with funding at a higher level of results and less earmarking of funds; and a better articulation between resources and results, with a stronger focus on strategic outcomes (SOs) and greater accountability.

66. Prior to the ICSP, the bulk of WFP support was directed to delivering food assistance to victims of armed conflicts and other vulnerable groups through the use of PRROs; providing humanitarian air services through special operations; and delivering food assistance to conflict-affected populations in the Kasai regions and refugees from Central African Republic through three EMOPs. WFP also supported the humanitarian community through the logistics cluster and with logistics services, and co-coordinated the food security cluster through several smaller special operations (Annex 9 has a complete list of ongoing WFP support to DRC in 2017).

67. Due to its evolving political context, it was agreed that DRC would precede a fully fledged country strategic plan with an ICSP. The ICSP was prepared over the course of 2017 and covers the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020. It outlines how WFP will “focus on responding to large-scale displacement and other shocks while pursuing long-term recovery and resilience and addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition”. While expected to build on findings and recommendations emerging from the country portfolio evaluation⁶⁷ undertaken by the Office of Evaluation at the end of 2014, the ICSP indicates that it was not intended to introduce any major strategic shifts. Future strategic orientations would be determined based on the 2018 ZHSR.

68. The ICSP aims to achieve five strategic outcomes:

- **SO1: Targeted food-insecure populations affected by shocks are able to meet their basic food requirements in times of crisis.** Activities under this strategic outcome include the provision of food assistance (in-kind and through cash-based transfers (CBTs)) to conflict-affected populations and populations affected by non-conflict-related shocks. They include emergency school feeding in the most food-insecure and conflict-affected areas.
- **SO2: Food-insecure and vulnerable populations in conflict and shock-affected areas have improved nutritional status in line with national protocols by 2020.** Activities under this strategic outcome include treatment of moderate acute malnutrition through targeted supplementary feeding, and prevention of acute and chronic malnutrition among vulnerable groups through blanket supplementary feeding.
- **SO3: Smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities in targeted and crisis-prone areas, especially in eastern parts of the country, enhance their productive livelihoods and improve their food security and resilience by 2020.** Activities under this strategic outcome include technical assistance to smallholder farmer organizations through purchase for progress (P4P), food assistance for assets (FFA) to provide productive assets to smallholder farmers and food-insecure communities, and food assistance for training on nutrition.
- **SO4: National institutions have strengthened capacity to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition and respond to shocks by 2020.** Activities under this strategic outcome include government capacity strengthening in relation to social protection, nutrition, food security, emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction; and the provision of evidence-based analysis to national institutions and the humanitarian community. The ICSP recognizes that this outcome is likely to be attained only in the medium to long term.
- **SO5: The humanitarian community has the capacity to respond to shocks through strategic partnerships by 2020.** The main activities under this strategic outcome are the provision of logistics technical support through coordination and information-management platforms and the provision of United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) air transport services.

69. **ICSP budget:** The original ICSP foresaw an overall budget of USD 722.8 million (Table 2) and a total of 6.7 million beneficiaries (excluding “overlaps”). The budget was marginally revised upwards four times in

⁶⁷Bureau de l'évaluation du PAM, Évaluation du portefeuille de pays : La République Démocratique du Congo. Une évaluation du portefeuille du PAM (2009-2013), 2014.

2018, to align it with the increase in needs. As a result of the deteriorating humanitarian situation, including greater population displacement, deteriorating nutritional indicators and the effects of the latest Ebola outbreak (May 2018), in January 2019 a major budget revision of USD 452 million (61 percent of the overall ICSP budget) was approved, increasing the overall budget to USD 1.19 billion. The budget revision almost doubled the number of beneficiaries from 6.7 to 11.7 million. Most of the increase related to assistance provided under strategic outcomes 1 and 2. The new total value of food and cash-based transfers was USD 470.8 million, of which 46 percent was expected to be delivered through the cash-based transfer modality. The budget revision also included a USD 6.6 million budget increase for activities under Strategic Outcome 5, to provide additional logistics services to WHO, the Ministry of Health, and other partners who were supporting the Ebola response.

Table 2: Interim country strategic plan initial and revised budget per strategic outcome

Item	Budget by SO (USD million)		Change		Percentage of SO on total	
	Original budget	Budget revision 5	USD million	% of original	Original budget	Budget revision 5
SO1	448.0	706.0	258.0	58%	66%	59%
SO2	50.2	257.7	207.5	413%	7%	22%
SO3	60.4	99.8	39.4	65%	9%	8%
SO4	6.1	8.6	2.5	41%	1%	1%
SO5	110.8	117.4	6.6	6%	16%	10%
Total	675.5	1189.5	514.0	76%	100%	100%
Indirect support costs (7%)	47.3	72.6	25.3	53%		
Total needs-based budget	722.8	1262.1	539.3	75%		

Source: OEV summary from DRC ICSP (original and budget revision 5 in 2019)

70. A sixth budget revision, approved in January 2020,⁶⁸ shows the continued expansion of WFP interventions in DRC in response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the ongoing Ebola outbreak. Again, the intention is to almost double the total number of beneficiaries to 20.9 million people, of which 16.3 million fall under the scope of SO1: these include conflict-affected people, people affected by the Ebola outbreak and victims of recent flooding in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui provinces. In response to considerably higher needs than anticipated, interventions to treat and prevent acute and chronic malnutrition (SO2) would also be expanded to target 5.44 million young children, pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLW/G) and vulnerable patients receiving ART/TB-DOTS.⁶⁹

71. **Partnerships.** Over the evaluation period, WFP received contributions from over 60 different sources. The USA provided 54 percent of funding, mainly through the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Food for Peace programme. Other important donors were the United Kingdom (14 percent), Germany (10 percent), Canada (4 percent), the European Commission (4 percent) and CERF (4 percent). In refugee camps, WFP collaborated closely with UNHCR. The Rome-based agencies (WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) designed and launched a five-year joint resilience programme funded by Canada (2017-2021), which also covered Niger and Somalia.⁷⁰ Programme implementation began in 2018 and includes complementary programmes aimed at increasing agricultural production, linkages to markets, nutrition and women's empowerment. Germany and Sweden are funding additional resilience activities, which are implemented jointly by WFP, FAO, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNFPA. WFP further collaborated with WHO in the Ebola response and

⁶⁸ This budget revision falls outside the scope of the evaluation.

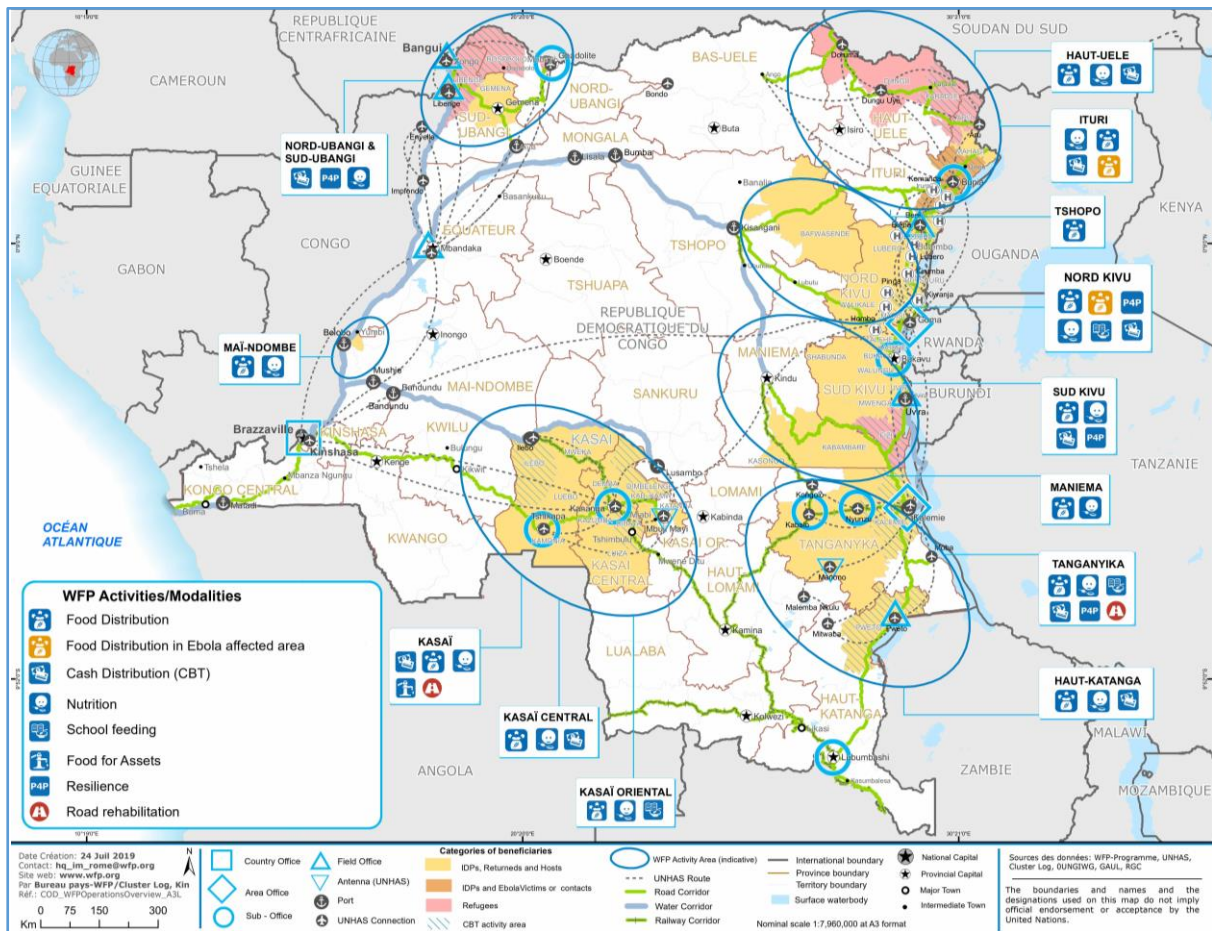
⁶⁹ Anti-retroviral therapy/tuberculosis-directly observed treatment.

⁷⁰ See <http://www.fao.org/3/i8673en/I8673EN.pdf> for additional information on the initiative.

participated in the inter-agency pilot project on the triple nexus/collective outcomes approach in the Kasai with UNICEF and the United Nations integrated office. Increasing partnerships with the private sector was one of the ICSP objectives.

72. **Intervention areas and WFP country presence:** WFP intervenes in 10 out of 26 provinces in the country, essentially where the largest concentrations of people affected by conflict and other crises are found (Figure 7). WFP has a large presence across DRC, with, in addition to the head office in Kinshasa, 19 offices in the country and 643 staff as at the end of 2019. WFP has adopted a three-level structure, including the country office in Kinshasa (around 160 staff), three area offices located in Goma (North Kivu), Kalemie (Tanganyika), and Kananga (Kasai-Central), seven sub-offices, seven field offices and two antenna offices. The main role of the two antenna offices is to monitor the implementation of programmes.

Figure 7: WFP operations in DRC (24 July 2019)



Source: WFP, 2019

2 Evaluation Findings

2.1 TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE WFP STRATEGIC POSITION, ROLE AND SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION BASED ON COUNTRY PRIORITIES, PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND THE ORGANIZATION'S STRENGTHS?

2.1.1 To what extent is the ICSP relevant to national policies, plans, strategies and goals, including achievement of the national Sustainable Development Goals?

73. **Summary of findings:** There is a strong alignment between WFP and national policies and objectives. Both are largely grounded on a shared framework, notably the Sustainable Development Goals. The primary form of consultation takes place at the technical level, where most targeting is done. There is good policy coherence between WFP and the Government. Engagement with the Government has generally been limited and more pronounced at the sub-national level than at the national level. Collaboration with national entities has been effective in the conduct of food security and vulnerability assessments. An example includes collaboration with the Government and World Bank to assess and strengthen home-grown school feeding as part of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER). There are some other examples of closer collaboration with specific ministries such as with the national Ministry of Gender in the formulation of nutrition-related policy.

74. **The ICSP has throughout remained coherent with national policies and objectives.** Both the ICSP and the National Strategic Development Plan (2018-2022) are geared towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The National Strategic Development Plan has four objectives and the ICSP is linked to two of these: the stabilization and reconstruction of conflict-affected areas (Objective 1) and the development and enhancement of human resources (Objective 4). The former is inherent in the WFP mandate while the latter is achieved through women's economic empowerment and the reduction of adult illiteracy through functional literacy programmes. The 2016 "Cost of Hunger in DRC"⁷¹ analysis also informed the ICSP although it was never formally and definitively approved by the Government.

75. **Historically, dialogue between WFP and the Government has been fairly weak,** in part due to persistent political uncertainty. WFP has continually informed the line ministries about its operations, but not necessarily been able to engage with them in programming or various other forms of collaboration. There are no structures designed to allow systematic consultations, although some donor programmes have provided useful platforms. These are primarily in the area of nutrition, such as the *Programme National de Nutrition* (national nutrition programme, known as PRONANUT). WFP is also working with the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen access to market information by establishing an agricultural market information system supported by the vulnerability analysis and mapping and resilience units. As a result, policy dialogue (such as through the national nutrition policy) is generally heavily influenced by personalities and by events dictating the current political transition. There is evidence of increased willingness by WFP and the Government to engage. This is, for instance, indicated by the Draft Protocol Agreement between the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and WFP. This is also demonstrated in the consultations undertaken by WFP around the next phase of the country strategic plan.⁷² Collaboration and dialogue between WFP and the Government has been stronger at the provincial level.

76. In 2018, WFP assessed national capacities for the implementation of a home-grown school feeding programme using the SABER exercise, in coordination with the National Multisectorial Social Protection Council⁷³ and the World Bank. An action plan for 2019 was developed, which included the drafting of a national school feeding strategy, as well as a draft national social protection policy. However, implementation of the action plan and validation of the national policy were halted by the political transition within DRC. A high-level advocacy event was organized by the Government, with technical and financial support from WFP,

⁷¹ The Cost of Hunger, DRC, 2016.

⁷² Consultations have included sharing the draft CSP early in the development process with key government officials followed by stakeholder workshops to provide feedback.

⁷³ Conseil National Multisectoriel de la Protection Sociale (CNMPS). For more info, please see "[Politique Nationale de Protection Sociale. Volume 1](#)", chapter 9.

to celebrate the Africa Day of School Feeding 2019. In response to a request from the Ministry of Health, WFP also trained 21 staff members on school meal safety.

77. **The principal form of coordination and engagement revolves around the humanitarian clusters.** The significant volume of funding allocated to humanitarian agencies has meant, however, that engagement has taken place using such forums as the country team, or through efforts by OCHA and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD is engaging with agencies to develop a framework of collective outcomes for the triple nexus. Coordination through cluster mechanisms extends to the provincial level whereby provincial ministers participate in the relevant clusters. In Tanganyika for example, the provincial minister for humanitarian affairs participates in the nutrition and food security cluster. The food security cluster more broadly has benefitted from active engagement of technical government entities from the Ministry of Agriculture, in particular at the field level. As WFP is a key member in these clusters, dialogue and coordination with provincial government is maintained. However, the extent to which ministries are active participants of clusters and by extension, the degree of coordination, varies between provinces and by cluster.

78. **For its annual planning, WFP collaborates with the Government and with other international agencies in the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC),⁷⁴** which combines data from different sources to annually assess food insecurity by territory.⁷⁵ The information collected covers agriculture and food markets, as well as indicators on public health and nutrition. The IPC currently covers 104/145 territories in DRC. Within that, acute food insecurity is rated on a scale ranging from 1 (generally food secure) to 5 (famine). Areas in IPC phase 3 (acute food and livelihood crisis) and 4 (humanitarian emergency) are targeted by WFP assistance. The latest IPC, published in July 2019, identified 14 territories as being in phase 4, representing approximately 3.9 million people. Those territories are targeted by WFP assistance.

79. **The national level and provincial level assessments in the area of food security and nutrition, conducted by WFP, are extensive and well-coordinated with national and international agencies.** DRC has conducted the IPC food insecurity analysis twice a year since 2007, and has, since 2016, rolled out the IPC chronic food insecurity analysis once a year. Nutrition data are obtained through sentinel surveillance by the Ministry of Health in dedicated health centres, with support from WFP and UNICEF. In addition, nationwide surveys, such as the demographic and health survey, and multiple indicator cluster surveys are conducted periodically by the government (National Statistics Institute) with WFP, UNICEF and donor support. In the event of shocks causing a rapid deterioration of nutritional status of affected populations, WFP cooperating partners already present in the area conduct local surveys to assess specific needs.

80. Distribution of assistance within provinces is further guided by access (roads and security), infrastructure, and developmental priorities. The latter are determined by the local authorities on the basis of territorial surveillance and analysis by the "*Cellule d'analyses des indicateurs de développement*" (CAID), a government body attached to the Office of the Prime Minister. CAID-led market price monitoring assessments also help WFP determine the appropriateness of cash or food transfer modalities. Under a two-year memorandum of understanding (MoU), WFP has supported CAID to strengthen its methodologies for remote market price monitoring. Those have been piloted in North Kivu.

81. **There is no significant divergence between WFP and the DRC Government in the working definition of vulnerability and need.** While at the ministerial level the new Government indicated considerable scepticism concerning the numbers of people in need, in Ituri in particular, the IPC and other assessments were agreed with the authorities. WFP, in collaboration with technical units from the Ministries of Agriculture and Planning, conducts emergency food security assessments (EFSAs) each year, which generate household and community data used in the IPC. The EFSAs are based on food security and vulnerability analysis, making use of standard questionnaires during visits to a representative sample of households, as defined by standardized methodologies. The assessments include gender-sensitive indicators.

⁷⁴ The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-partner initiative under the aegis of FAO to improve food security and nutrition analysis and decision-making. Participating agencies determine the severity and magnitude of acute and chronic food insecurity, and acute malnutrition situations in a country, according to internationally-recognized scientific standards.

⁷⁵ DRC is subdivided into several administrative levels: provinces, territories and cities, chiefdoms (or collectivities) and villages.

82. **WFP was extensively involved in the review process of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Policy (2013).** This included the designation of a dedicated focal point within WFP. WFP responded by providing a focal point for capacity building, which helped to increase awareness and understanding of the link between gender and nutrition within the Ministry.

83. **WFP and FAO also supported implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, which they had helped design in the course of 2017.** The policy mentions the creation of a national unit within the Ministry of Gender. This was effectively established by a ministerial order in November 2018. During the ZHSR in 2018, the ministries involved in the fight against malnutrition were all invited to discuss findings from the review. However, the gender and nutrition focal point of the Ministry of Gender was not aware of the WFP gender policy, nor of the gender focal point within the WFP country office, even though there is awareness of United Nations-wide efforts through the “One UN” gender team, of which WFP is a participant. It must be noted, however, that a number of the ministers are relatively new.⁷⁶

2.1.2 To what extent did the ICSP address the needs of the most vulnerable people in the country to ensure that no one is left behind?

84. **Summary of findings:** WFP has aligned its interventions with the diverse and challenging needs of its target groups who are clearly defined in the ICSP. The majority of WFP efforts for 2018 and 2019 were focused on responding to emergencies and the chronic needs of food insecure populations. These operations were determined on the basis of localized food security assessments followed by household vulnerability assessments. The extent to which needs were met was undermined by a lack of timely resources leading to reduced food and cash rations and short distribution cycles to maintain beneficiary reach. The selection of health centres supported with therapeutic foods for the treatment of malnutrition has been adjusted in line with changing population needs during the ICSP period.

85. **WFP target groups reflect the diversity of food security and nutrition challenges across the country.** These range from an acute lack of macro-caloric intake due to shocks, to acute and chronic malnutrition in children, to a lack of coping mechanisms should shocks arise. Coherent with these challenges, the target groups identified in the ICSP are:

- Food-insecure and vulnerable populations in conflict and shock-affected areas
- Those requiring treatment for moderate acute malnutrition and the prevention of acute and chronic malnutrition, in particular young children and pregnant and lactating women and girls
- Smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities in targeted and crisis-prone areas, especially in eastern parts of the country.

86. **Most of the WFP response in 2018 and 2019 was directed towards emergencies (SO1) and population groups suffering most from food insecurity.** WFP has responded in line with the disparities in food insecurity observed in the ZHSR, both between provinces and at the territorial level. It operates in a majority of the 16 provinces that have food insecurity rates above the already high national average. WFP interventions were concentrated in those areas that were, according to IPC analysis,⁷⁷ worst affected by food insecurity due to conflict, plant diseases and pests in agriculture, and communicable disease epidemics, in particular Ebola. The provinces worst affected by food insecurity were Ituri, the Kasai provinces, South Kivu and Tanganyika, where 12-15 percent of the population was classified as being in IPC phase 4. In addition, WFP provided assistance to refugees from Central African Republic and South Sudan in the north and north-west of the country and supported the Ebola response in North Kivu and Ituri, based on United Nations system assessments and response plans.

87. WFP assistance is further determined on the basis of localized food security assessment triggered by IPC prioritization. Since 2014, WFP has carried out several emergency food security assessments, including in the Kasai provinces, Tanganyika, Sankuru, Haut Lomami and Lualaba. In 2019, mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) was used in North Kivu and Kasai. Market assessments are used to choose the most

⁷⁶ Most of the current ministers are new, following a change in Government in 2019. This may be one of the reasons for the lack of knowledge regarding WFP gender work.

⁷⁷ Some stakeholders point to the flaw in IPC process; that broadening the depth and scope of the analysis tends to generate higher figures of people in a vulnerable condition, and so multiply the number of persons in need.

appropriate transfer modality (food or cash) to address the food insecurity needs of populations in shock and conflict-affected regions. Cash is frequently cited as the preferred modality by beneficiaries (due to the choice conferred to purchase food or non-food items (NFI)), and by WFP as more resources are transferred directly to beneficiaries.

88. **There is a disconnect between emergency needs and emergency assistance.** The extent to which needs were met through cash and food transfers in emergency contexts was significantly undermined by the availability of timely resources to provide complete rations to beneficiaries. As described in Section 2.2.1, the quantity of food and cash disbursed was significantly less than that which was planned for and was not proportionately matched by adjustments to beneficiary numbers (see paragraph 125). To manage insufficient resources, WFP reduced rations in order to maintain beneficiary reach. The reduction in ration sizes was found to be particularly acute in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, with serious consequences for women and girl refugees (see also paragraph 162).

89. Cash and food transfers were typically programmed for a duration of three months after the onset of an emergency, in accordance with food security cluster guidelines on provision of emergency food aid. However, across different provinces, programme staff could not provide a clear rationale driving this duration of programming and admitted that they did not expect to see any real changes in the context or in beneficiary food security at the end of only three months of transfers.⁷⁸ To overcome this, programme managers in some provinces have occasionally provided beneficiaries with multiple cycles of three-month distributions.

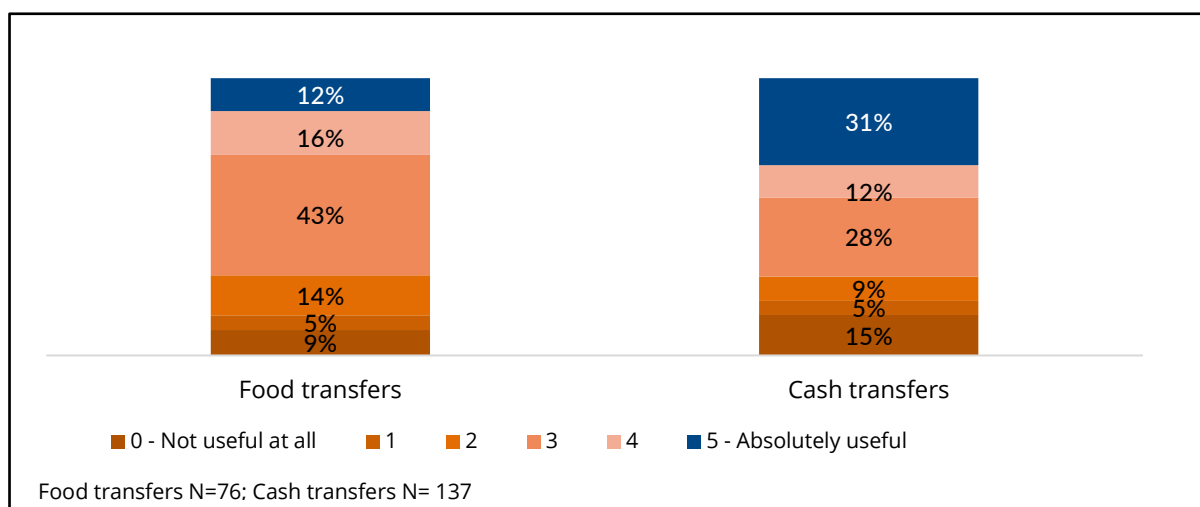
90. There have also been significant delays between the initial shock and the receipt of the first food or cash transfer. Beneficiaries in Kananga for example described receiving three months' worth of food transfers after having been displaced for a year. During this period, they established basic coping mechanisms, notably subsistence farming. The lack of alignment between the food transfers and crop cycles meant that their food security was improved only during the transfer period of three months – but this was not sustained.

91. The critique that three months of distributions is not well aligned to beneficiary needs also applies to cash-based transfers. However, for this modality it is less acute. As is frequently reported in the sector, when asked about their preference for cash or food transfers, beneficiaries in Kananga expressed a clear preference for cash transfers as beneficiaries were able to purchase non-food items such as tools, which would last beyond the three-month period.

92. This was corroborated by the community survey, which found that more than twice the proportion of those who received cash transfers said the support had been absolutely useful compared to food transfers (Figure 8). The principal reasons for which the support was described as not being useful related to its timeliness after the period of most acute need. For example, one survey respondent stated, "we had too many needs but it's the way they give it [the distribution] that really hurts, they give it at the moment when they want to". The evaluation notes that a preference for cash over food is influenced by a number of factors, such as proximity of markets, which have not been captured in the community survey.

⁷⁸ When discussed with WFP programme staff, it was explained that this policy was put in place many years ago without a clear rationale in programming, and that it was under reconsideration.

Figure 8: Extent to which beneficiaries found the support received useful according to transfer modality



Source: CSPE community survey

93. **Nutrition (SO2) receives increasing attention by WFP.** The IPC in 2016 emphasized the risk of irreversible and long-term effects of severe malnutrition on children, and thus the need to provide a large-scale emergency response to treat and prevent childhood malnutrition. It also recommended implementing a nutrition education programme, treating moderate acute malnutrition and addressing micronutrient deficiencies for pregnant and lactating women and HIV-positive people. An estimated 2.8 million children in DRC suffer from moderate acute malnutrition. The ICSP appropriately targets treatment of moderate acute malnutrition to young children (6-59 months) and pregnant and lactating women and girls, and prevention of acute and chronic malnutrition to infants (6-23 months) and pregnant and lactating women and girls. People being treated for tuberculosis or HIV infection are also targeted in the ICSP for treatment of moderate acute malnutrition.

94. However, despite the inclusion of a strategic outcome on the improvement of nutritional status through treatment of moderate acute malnutrition and prevention of acute and chronic malnutrition, under the original ICSP budget, Strategic Outcome 2 represented just 7 percent of the overall budget. With Budget Revision 5, the budget for Strategic Outcome 2 was multiplied by five to 22 percent of the total planned budget. With this increase, nutrition activities were expected to reach about three times more beneficiaries by the end of 2020 (over 3.55 million) than initially planned.

95. After the Ebola crisis in the northeast of DRC, resources for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition were reallocated geographically to territories and administrative health zones (the lowest territorial unit) that had not previously been targeted, as they were not classified as food insecure. This shows the ability of WFP to adjust targeting and respond to crises that were not anticipated in the ICSP.

96. **Resilience interventions (SO3) remain modest but are receiving increasing importance.** The IPC in 2016 identified the need to implement social safety nets for the most vulnerable households (an idea increasingly gaining popularity worldwide for chronic situations), and to support sustainable intensification of agricultural production of smallholder farmers. It mentioned the need to have a multi-sectoral approach (related to education, health, etc.) through strong partnerships, to significantly reduce food insecurity in the country. This is partially addressed by the resilience approach proposed under Strategic Outcome 3 of the ICSP relating to enhanced productive livelihoods for smallholder farmers. Nonetheless, this remained a relatively under-prioritized area as reflected by the proposed beneficiary number and budget allocation in the ICSP and its consecutive budget revisions. However, as discussed in Section 2.2.1, resilience activities were notably under-funded relative to emergency activities, reducing the extent to which these could be scaled up.

2.1.3 To what extent has the strategic positioning of WFP remained relevant throughout the implementation of the ICSP in light of changing context, national capacities and needs?

97. **Summary of findings:** Humanitarian supply chain and common services provision capacity gave WFP a significant comparative advantage in adapting to an evolving context. WFP had the technical and

logistical capacity to target and deliver assistance with speed and at scale. It also showed an ability to remain flexible and to respond to emerging needs, as evidenced by its involvement in the triple nexus discussions and its specialized response to the Ebola crisis. However, the extent to which WFP could be flexible and its decision to expand support to resilience were strongly determined by donor support.

98. **The unique capability of WFP, which revolves around supply chains and common services, enables it to respond at scale and speed.** WFP is one of the three principal United Nations humanitarian agencies within the country (alongside UNICEF and UNHCR) with a capacity to target, mobilize and deliver humanitarian assistance to where it is most needed. Its strategic positioning is strongly related to its ability to manage supply chains and provide common services. WFP field presence (manifested by 17 sub-offices), food security vulnerability assessment capabilities, logistical capabilities (for example the management of a 120-truck fleet) and extensive donor relations (grants received from 26 multilateral and bilateral agencies), give it a unique position amongst humanitarian agencies working within DRC, comparable only to MONUSCO. Managing six food pipeline corridors in the region, it is operating at full capacity in a very high-risk environment.

99. **WFP has the ability to adapt to evolving needs, as reflected for example in the case of its deliberate involvement with the triple nexus⁷⁹ in contexts that have transitioned to post-conflict.** The broad remit of WFP in the humanitarian aid system in DRC, with the core of its activities around food and cash distribution, allows it to move into resilience activities as the need arises. WFP has also, to a certain extent, integrated conflict sensitivity into resilience programmes, for instance, to address the factors that contributed to displacement in Tanganyika, which was related to inter-ethnic tensions. Target groups and modalities for peacebuilding initiatives were selected in accordance with donors and partners that are specialists in this thematic area. More details on WFP engagement across the triple nexus are provided in Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.

100. **Donor support towards resilience and peacebuilding activities enabled WFP to expand some specific operations.** An example of this is the response to the large increase in displacement related to the Kamwina Nsapu conflict. This led to the declaration of a level 3 emergency in the Kasai region in October 2017, with WFP leading the humanitarian response. This resulted in the opening of a WFP area office in a challenging operating environment, and in part justified the budget increase for DRC through Budget Revision 5, approved in January 2019. Similarly, ethnic conflict in Tanganyika province gradually eased, with a decreasing number of internally displaced persons recorded in 2018. This led to a shift in programming in Tanganyika province.

101. **The response to the Ebola crisis is a demonstration of the flexibility of WFP to respond to a public health emergency in a highly unstable and complex environment.** WFP has responded to two Ebola outbreaks⁸⁰ since the beginning of 2018, with the 10th outbreak declared in August 2018, after the formulation of the ICSP. As such, the role and response of WFP had not been included in the strategy. The increased budget required to respond to the crisis was validated in Budget Revision 5. The Ebola response differs from other activities, as it is designed from a public health perspective. WFP assistance to the Ebola response includes three distinct aspects, all of which highlight the organization's ability to remain flexible and adjust its operations according to evolving needs in DRC:

- General food and nutritional assistance is provided to survivors to help their recovery and to contact patients to reduce the risks of spreading the disease. WFP is currently present in Mambasa, Beni and Biakato and around 700,000 people have benefitted from food assistance.⁸¹

⁷⁹ "The concept 'triple nexus' is used to capture the interlinkages between the humanitarian, development and peace sectors. Specifically, it refers to attempts in these fields to work together more coherently in order to more effectively meet peoples' needs, mitigate vulnerabilities and move towards sustainable peace." Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Connecting the dots on the triple nexus, November 2019.

⁸⁰ The frequency of confirmed Ebola outbreaks in DRC appears to be increasing. There were ten outbreaks since 1976 of which four have been in the last ten years. Source: <https://www.who.int/ebola/historical-outbreaks-drc/en/>.

⁸¹ Contacts of patients receive weekly family rations for four weeks and survivors receive monthly family rations for one year plus individual nutritious foods for three months. Health surveillance teams compile lists of contacts by health zone

- Logistics support to WHO (transport of medicine and equipment, cold chain, storage units) and other emergency response organizations (for example through temporary accommodation).
- UNHAS air transportation (including emergency flights) to and from affected areas.

102. The operational hub is located in Goma, and the emergency coordinator in charge of the Ebola response reports directly to the WFP Country Director in Kinshasa. Both are members of the Ebola Task Force, guided by the Emergency Preparedness Unit in Rome. Exchanges by teleconference are taking place on a regular basis (initially weekly, now every two weeks).

2.1.4 To what extent is the ICSP coherent and aligned with the wider United Nations and to what extent does it include appropriate strategic partnerships based on the comparative advantage of WFP in the country?

103. **Summary of findings:** WFP interventions, for the period 2017-2019, are grounded in the UNDAF which ended in 2017, the 2019 Common Country Assessment, and the Humanitarian Response Plan (2017-2019). Well-developed mechanisms exist to ensure coherence among United Nations agencies, with the cluster system facilitating information exchange and coordination. WFP has a strong partnership with FAO which is further evolving with increasing resilience programming. The partnerships with UNICEF and UNHCR are longstanding and clearly defined, and there is scope to strengthen the partnership with UNFPA. UNHAS flights are vital to the humanitarian community and continue to be pivotal in the Ebola response.

104. **The WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021) is aligned to the Agenda 2030, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 2 on ending hunger (Strategic Goal 1), and Sustainable Development Goal 17 on revitalizing global partnerships (Strategic Goal 2).** The first three strategic outcomes, focusing on emergency food assistance, nutrition and agricultural production, are expected to contribute directly to Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger). Strategic Outcome 4 and Strategic Outcome 5 contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnerships) by supporting national institutions and the humanitarian community.

105. **The United Nations cluster system predominantly facilitates information exchange.** Assessments carried out by WFP and cooperating partners are shared through the cluster system. WFP is the co-lead agency on food security (with FAO), the lead on the logistics and telecommunications cluster, and a member of the nutrition and education clusters. Each cluster operates as a forum for information exchange but has not been used for decision-making or joint planning. Information regarding the achievement of the Humanitarian Response Plan is collected and analysed by OCHA and shared actively at cluster level and various other forums. The logistics cluster provides a platform for partner coordination and information sharing, strengthening the response capacity in the event of disaster. In some provinces however the clusters do not operate at all, such as the logistics cluster in Kasai.

106. At the sub-national level, sudden shocks can trigger a “crisis alert,” which is brought to the *Comité Régional/Local* Inter-organization for discussion and decisions for subsequent action. If an alert is validated, a household vulnerability assessment will follow. Findings from these assessments are used to provide emergency assistance to an area that was not included in the annual plan.

107. **Collaboration with global initiatives, such as “scaling-up nutrition” (SUN) and “renewed efforts against child hunger and malnutrition” (REACH) are still at the planning stage.** WFP supported the establishment of the SUN Business Network in DRC with the Ministry of Health. It provides a platform for the Government, the private sector and humanitarian partners to fight malnutrition. WFP convened and hosted a workshop attended by Government (including PRONANUT), academics, leading national and international researchers and United Nations agencies, to discuss options for the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition. This led to the constitution of a road map promoting simplified management of moderate acute malnutrition at community level, food fortification and the local production of specialized

on the basis of which WFP organizes food distributions. Contacts are invited to go weekly to the distribution site, where hand-washing facilities are available. Crowding is avoided, and contacts are instructed to stay at a distance of 1 metre from the service provider. People admitted for observation and released after two negative tests receive a family food ration for one month once they are discharged.

nutritious food. A list of staple foods, suitable for fortification, has been drawn up. The next step will be to identify interested private companies to produce and market fortified food items.

108. **To respond to longer-term food security needs, under a multi-sectoral approach, WFP achieves the greatest reach by collaborating with other agencies.** This is especially visible with FAO, in an arrangement whereby, as soon as the need for emergency assistance (food or cash) is over, vulnerable persons who have access to land are assisted via a joint resilience programme. Under the ICSP, WFP has established a formal strategic and operational partnership with FAO to collectively reach Strategic Outcome 3.1 on resilience in relation to the “purchase for progress” programme of WFP. In order to base these resilience interventions on the comparative advantages of each of the two organizations, FAO has been assigned with strengthening farmers’ organizations and developing their production, while WFP has been assigned with supporting social cohesion, commercialization, women empowerment and post-harvest management. This is a strategic partnership, as division of tasks between FAO and WFP have been defined at national level.

109. **At organizational level, the sharing of provincial offices and sub-offices between the WFP and FAO teams contributes to coordination, planning, and implementation of common interventions between the two organizations.** Moreover, it has facilitated cordial relationships. The strong collaboration between WFP and FAO has been highlighted and appreciated by both organizations. However, there are still challenges, such as delays in seed distribution and lower levels of FAO funding, which hamper joint implementation and weaken the perception of the quality of the partnership.

110. **The collaboration with UNICEF was framed in 2017.** An annual memorandum of understanding with UNICEF defines the role and responsibilities of each agency regarding prevention and treatment of malnutrition. UNICEF is responsible for treatment of severe acute malnutrition, while WFP provides supplementary feeding to treat moderate acute malnutrition. It has been difficult to find funding support for WFP treatment (and prevention) of moderate acute malnutrition with ready-to-use therapeutic foods, noting that other treatment options could be explored, including local foods.

111. Joint programmes existed between WFP and UNICEF such as the “Integrated approach to tackle stunting in South Kivu-DRC” (2015-2017). This, however, was restricted to a specific geographical area and implemented for a short period of time. A new joint resilience programme funded by Germany and involving WFP, FAO and UNICEF was designed in the course of 2019 to increase resilience of vulnerable populations in North and South Kivu. Strengthening the health system, and integrated child protection, are other possible areas for greater collaboration between WFP and UNICEF.

112. **In refugee camps, WFP has established an operational partnership with UNHCR.** The refugees’ dependency on food is conditional on their medium-term capacity to earn income or cultivate food themselves. However, empowering refugees with a livelihood is under the responsibility of UNHCR. The activities implemented so far by UNHCR in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, for example, are limited in scale as compared to the needs. As a result, the vast majority of refugees continue to be dependent on support from WFP, even though they have been there for six years.

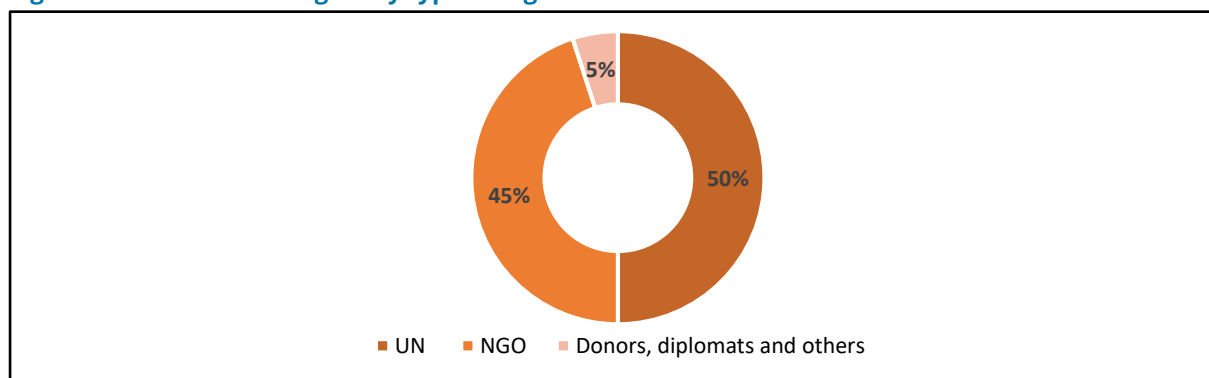
113. **Collaboration with UNFPA could be more strategic.** There are no strategic and operational partnerships between WFP and UNFPA listed in the ICSP. There are, nonetheless, examples of collaborative programming which capitalize on the existing reach of WFP to integrate UNFPA activities. For example, in Tanganyika there is collaboration in resilience activities with dignity kits and sensitization provided by UNFPA alongside WFP activities. Scale-up of this collaboration to other provinces is needed to further address issue such as early pregnancies, number of children born into each family, and HIV infection, which contribute greatly to the deterioration of household food and nutritional security.

114. In Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, these issues have been systematically mentioned as a priority concern by refugees and host communities. During the evaluation fieldwork, many young women and girls discussed a high prevalence of survival sex due to lack of income to fulfil their basic needs (food, sanitary items etc.). As WFP support is designed mostly to addresses food needs, it is not sufficient to cover other basic needs, which poses a real risk to these populations. The UNHCR does not provide basic sanitary items, and income-generating activities, which would strengthen purchasing power, are limited for women and girls. A stronger collaboration with UNFPA would ensure a joint, shared and complementary countrywide intervention to reduced rates of unwanted pregnancies, HIV infection, and prostitution.

115. **The services offered by UNHAS provide an example of a highly appropriate partnership with other United Nations operations.** UNHAS operates as a common resource in close coordination with other

United Nations agencies through a four-monthly meeting of the steering committee and user group meetings across the country, moving 6,400 persons, and 900 metric tons of cargo per month. In 2019, UNHAS supported 159 organizations (selected on the basis of vetting done by OCHA) and executed 653 emergency evacuations, with no reported safety incidents within the period under evaluation. UNHAS charges a fee at cost, based on a cash-flow plan. The only comparable operations are those of the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) “Flight”, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Mission Aviation Fellowship, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). ECHO also funds UNHAS. Its distribution of services is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Use of UNHAS flights by type of organization



Source: UNHAS monitoring data

116. Among the United Nations agencies, the biggest user has been WHO, reflecting the importance of WFP to the Ebola crisis far beyond its food assistance role. UNHAS has been engaging in capacity building of the *Régie des Voies Aériennes*, the Congolese administration dealing with revenue collection and airport maintenance, in terms of safety and standards and security screening with the aim of encouraging the humanitarian agencies to increasingly use national airlines, one of which already conducts international flights and the other of which is becoming certified for this.

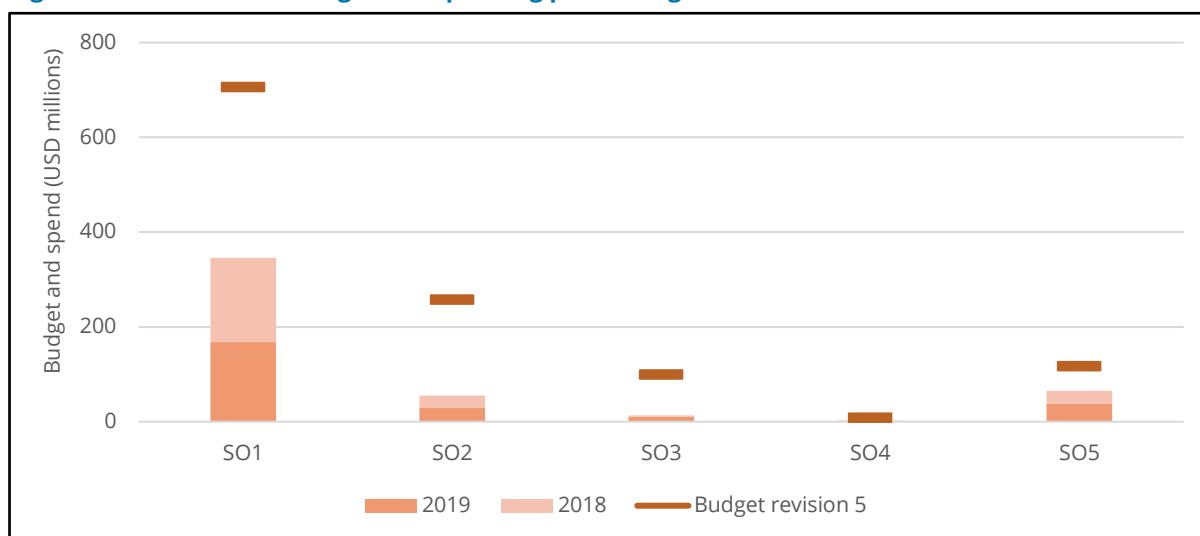
2.2 WHAT IS THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF THE SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION OF WFP TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO?

2.2.1 To what extent did WFP deliver expected outputs, and contribute to the expected ICSP strategic outcomes?

117. **Summary of findings:** The number of beneficiaries reached has increased consistently from 2017 to 2019 and was around 90 percent of target. However, the extent to which the number of beneficiaries and underlying outcomes were achieved varies by strategic outcome. The vast majority of beneficiaries reached were under Strategic Outcome 1 (emergency assistance), whereby cash transfers were significantly scaled up in 2019. However, the total value of cash and food disbursed was markedly below planned quantities. Under Strategic Outcome 2 (nutrition) emphasis was given on the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition. Prevention of acute and chronic malnutrition have consistently and significantly reached fewer beneficiaries than those targeted. There was evidence of successes under Strategic Outcome 4 regarding capacity strengthening of government officials and processes, but this has been under-resourced. Support to the humanitarian sector under Strategic Outcome 5 was a notable strength of WFP and targets were often exceeded.

118. **Strategic outcomes.** As presented earlier (paragraph 68) there are five strategic outcomes in the ICSP. Figure 10 shows that the vast majority of resources were channelled towards Strategic Outcome 1 to provide food assistance in emergency contexts. This was reflected by the budget allocation of USD 706 million (in Budget Revision 5) and spending of USD 345 million in 2018 and 2019 combined. The detailed budget is presented in Table 2.

Figure 10: Needs-based budget and spending per strategic outcome

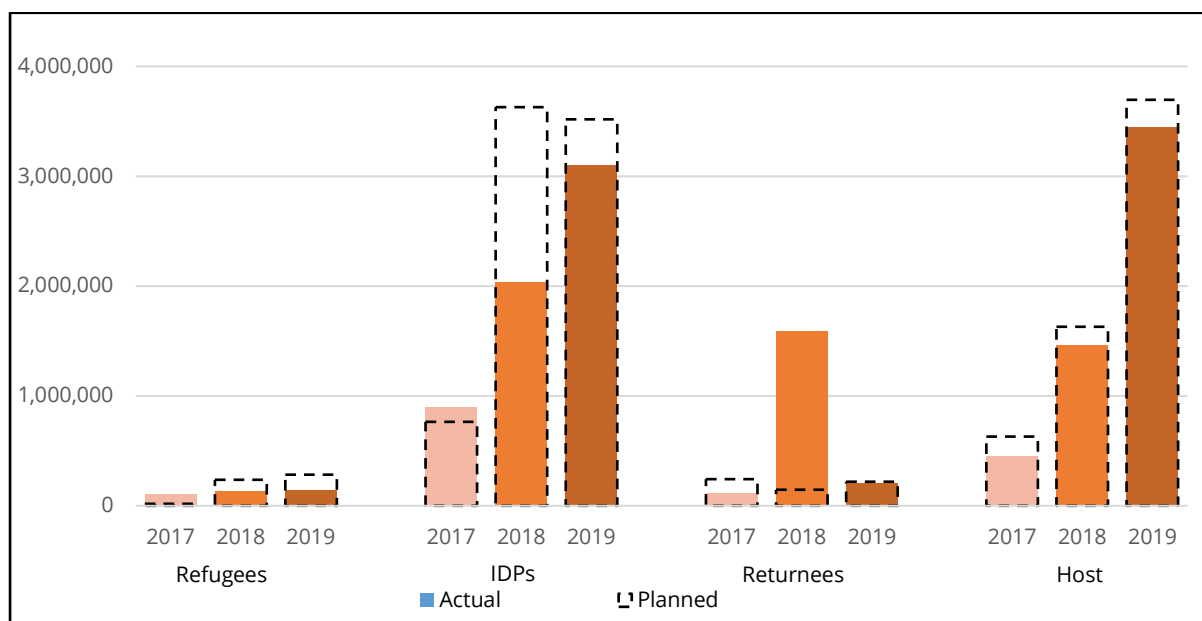


Source: WFP finance data (Wings)

119. **Beneficiaries reached.** The number of beneficiaries reached, relative to planned targets, enables a broad assessment of the extent to which outputs and outcomes are likely to have been achieved. Although the percentage of planned beneficiaries reached decreased in 2019 relative to 2018, from 93 percent to 89 percent, the planned number of beneficiaries increased significantly from about 5.64 million to 7.71 million. Hence, the marginal decrease in the proportion of beneficiaries reached represents effective scale-up in programming in response to increasing needs and financial resources.

120. Host communities and those internally displaced constituted the greatest proportion of planned beneficiaries in 2018 and 2019 by a notable margin (Figure 11). In 2018 there was a significant under-attainment of internally displaced persons at only 56 percent, while during this time the number of returnees reached greatly exceeded those who were planned for, with the target being exceeded by 1075 percent. The significant increase in returnees followed the repatriation of Congolese nationals from Angola. In 2019, the number of returnees reached decreased in line with forecasting to 95 percent of target. This correlated with an increase in the proportion of internally displaced persons reached (88 percent). The number of host community members planned for more than doubled in 2019 relative to 2018, from about 1.46 million to 3.45 million. Importantly, there was only a marginal decrease in the proportion reached, from 93 percent to 89 percent. The number of refugees reached stayed relatively consistent between 2018 and 2019, even though a 20 percent increase in refugee beneficiaries had been planned for.

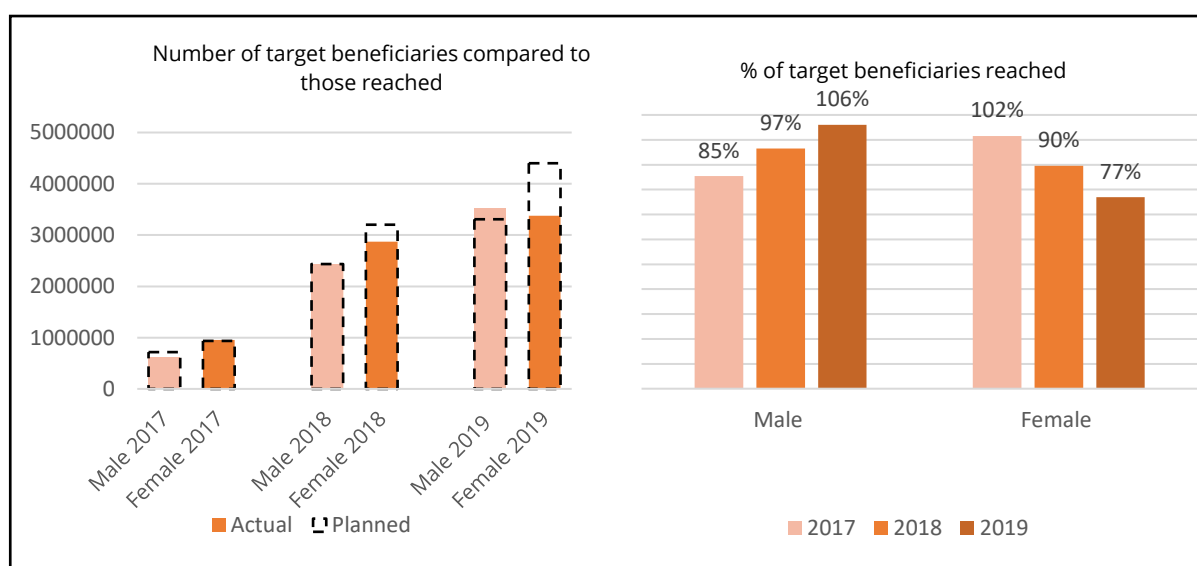
Figure 11: Number of planned and actual beneficiaries reached by displacement status



Source: WFP monitoring data (COMET)

121. Programming targeted a slightly greater number of women than men in 2018 and 2019, however the proportion of women reached relative to targets was consistently lower than men and decreased notably in 2019 to 77 percent (Figure 12). This is suggestive of the need for improved gender-sensitive approaches, which may enable better access to programmes for women.

Figure 12: Number and percentage of beneficiaries reached by gender



Source: WFP monitoring data (COMET)

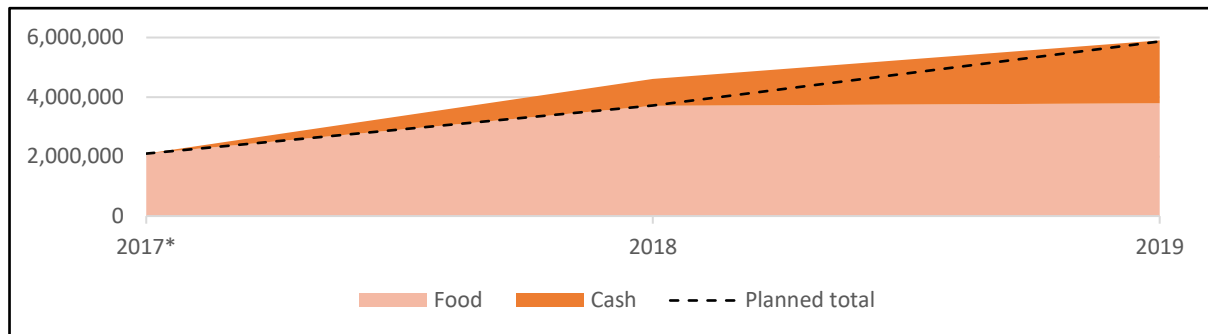
122. **Strategic Outcome 1: Targeted food insecure populations affected by shocks in DRC are able to meet their basic food requirements in times of crisis.** Two activities were expected to contribute to this outcome, aiming to ensure that food insecure populations could meet basic food requirements during times of crisis:

- **Activity 1:** Provide food assistance to conflict-affected populations
- **Activity 2:** Provide food assistance to populations affected by non-conflict shocks.

123. **The total number of beneficiaries reached through food and cash-based transfers in shock-affected regions (conflict and non-conflict) has gradually increased since 2017 from 2.1 million to 5.8 million (Figure 13).** There was a marked increase from 2017 to 2018 in the number of beneficiaries receiving

food transfers to 3.7 million. This total number was maintained in 2019. Across the same period, there has been a steady increase in the number of beneficiaries receiving cash transfers from 900,000 beneficiaries reached and USD 43 million disbursed in 2018 (mostly in Kasai and Tanganyika provinces), to 1.9 million beneficiaries reached and USD 53 million dispersed in 2019. The increase is, in part, the result of strategic decision making to prioritize cash programming wherever appropriate. These figures also show how cash amounts per beneficiary were reduced. This happened in a selective manner. For example, for Central African Republic refugees in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, WFP adapted the amount of cash transferred per person (initially around USD 30 per person and per month for everyone) to the funding available from donors. To do so, WFP has categorized households into three categories (very poor, moderately poor and poor) and halved the amount per capita for the last category.

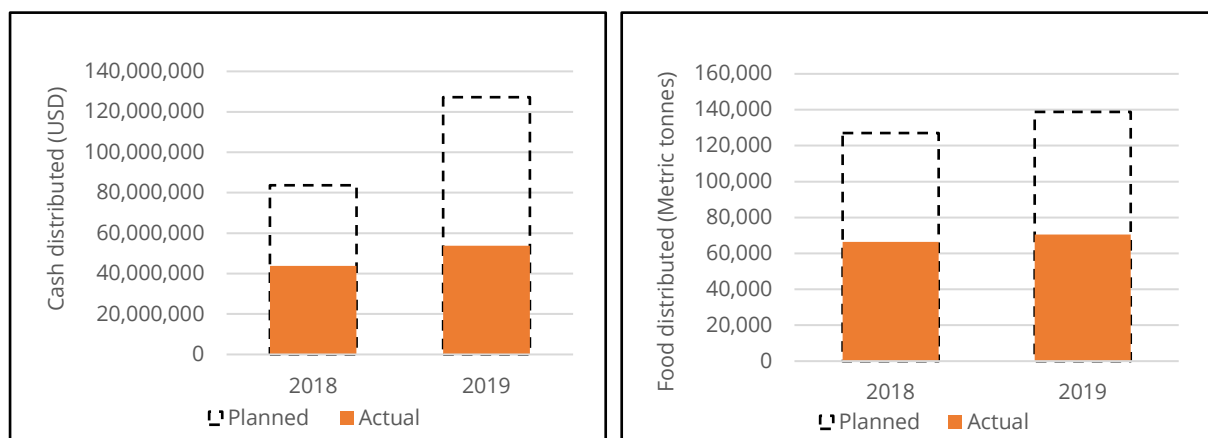
Figure 13: Number of beneficiaries reached through activities 1 and 2 from 2017 to 2019



Source: 2017 data from 2018 annual country report total value, 2018 and 2019 data from COMET

124. **Despite the marked increase in cash-based transfers, the beneficiary count in 2018 and 2019 was lower than initially planned, while the contrary was true for food transfers.** Cash transfers reached 54 percent and 70 percent of the target number of beneficiaries in 2018 and 2019 respectively, while food transfers reached 109 percent and 101 percent of targets. This is due largely to a change in modality following market assessments. As the recruitment of vetted retailers is fundamental for well-functioning cash programmes, this is suggestive of a conducive context for functional cash programming once other market assessment criteria are met.

Figure 14: Amount of cash and food distributed in 2018 and 2019 under Strategic Outcome 1



Source: 2019 data from COMET

125. **Beneficiaries received reduced rations to cope with food and cash shortages.** While the number of beneficiaries reached through food transfers exceeded those planned for by 50 percent, only 51 percent of planned food was disbursed over 2018-2019. This implies that beneficiaries received significantly reduced rations. Interviews with WFP programme staff confirmed that quite frequently half-rations were provided to cope with stock shortages. Similarly, while 78 percent of planned beneficiaries were reached through cash transfers in 2019, only 40 percent of planned cash was disbursed. The volume of cash and food transferred

in 2019 was almost equal to that transferred in 2018, despite an increase in planned transfers, particularly for cash. This indicates that WFP was not able to swiftly adjust distributions to meet the increased plans, in part due to the late confirmation of funding.

126. **The effect of distributions on food security was variable and related to ongoing conflict and non-conflict shocks.** In North Kivu for example, there was an increase in beneficiaries reporting poor food consumption from 56 percent to 76 percent in 2019. This was attributed to ongoing armed conflict and the disruption to harvesting caused by the Ebola virus, demonstrating that in spite of distributions, underlying vulnerabilities persist and deteriorate. There are no comparable figures from 2018 to assess whether 2019 presented a particularly challenging year. In contrast, however, post-distribution monitoring in Kasai and Kasai Centrale showed a marked decrease in the proportion of households with poor food consumption in 2018 and in 2019. This period includes a decrease in conflict shocks following a reduction in tensions since the Kasai Crisis of 2017 but includes non-conflict shocks, notably the return of approximately 400,000 Congolese nationals from Angola in 2018 and 2019. In Kasai in 2018, poor food consumption was measured at 57 percent pre-distribution, which decreased to 18 percent following cash and food transfers. In 2019, this trend continued with figures standing at 53 percent and 27 percent respectively. Similarly, in Kasai Centrale poor food consumption decreased from 76 percent to 35 percent in 2018 and from 76 percent to 41 percent in 2019. However, as transfers mostly constituted three months of distributions that were not harmonized with agricultural cycles, it is unlikely that these improvements persisted beyond the distribution.

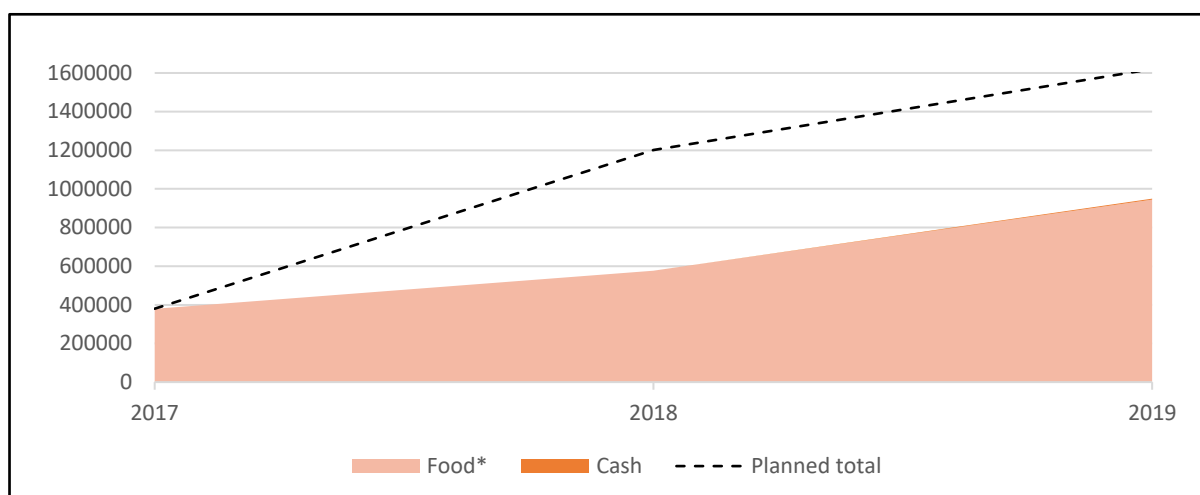
127. **Although the number of provinces reporting on outcome level indicators for Strategic Outcome 1 has increased, there remains notable variation between provinces and contextual factors may play an important role in measured changes.** For example, in 2019, 13 provinces reported on the change in the consumption-based coping strategy index following food and/or cash transfers. In contrast, nine provinces reported on changes in the food expenditure share and only two on “economic capacity to meet essential needs”. This reduces the extent to which programming effectiveness can be assessed across provinces. An improvement in the consumption-based coping strategy index (lower scores indicate better coping strategies) was measured in Haut Katanga in 2019 for food and cash recipients (12.67 and 14.77 respectively) compared to 2018 (13.9 and 16.2 respectively). A similar improvement was measured in the food expenditure share, which decreased from 69.5 percent of expenditures in 2018 to 51.5 percent in 2019 for recipients of food transfers (See Annex 8 for the complete table of outcome indicators for each province). This may be indicative of an improvement in the security context and population movement.

128. **Beyond food and cash transfers, in 2019 there was a notable increase in the number of schools supported with school feeding.** In 2018 this stood at 74 schools (67 percent of target) primarily in North Kivu supported through home-grown school feeding projects whereby local farmers provide schools with maize and yellow peas. In 2019 the number of schools assisted increased to 235 (66 percent of target) and included both home-grown school feeding projects and food donations. This increase in the number of schools reached was particularly important as it coincided with the removal of school fees for state primary schools. This offered new opportunities to vulnerable children who may previously have been excluded for financial reasons. Additionally, as a result of WFP engagement with the Government, a dedicated budget line for school feeding has been included in the 2020 finance law voted by Parliament and promulgated by the President.

129. **Strategic Outcome 2: Food insecure and vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas have improved nutritional status in line with national protocols by 2020.** Three activities were expected to contribute to this outcome, aiming to improve the nutritional status of food insecure and vulnerable populations in the conflict-affected areas of Greater Kasai, Tanganyika, Haut Katanga and North and South Kivu:

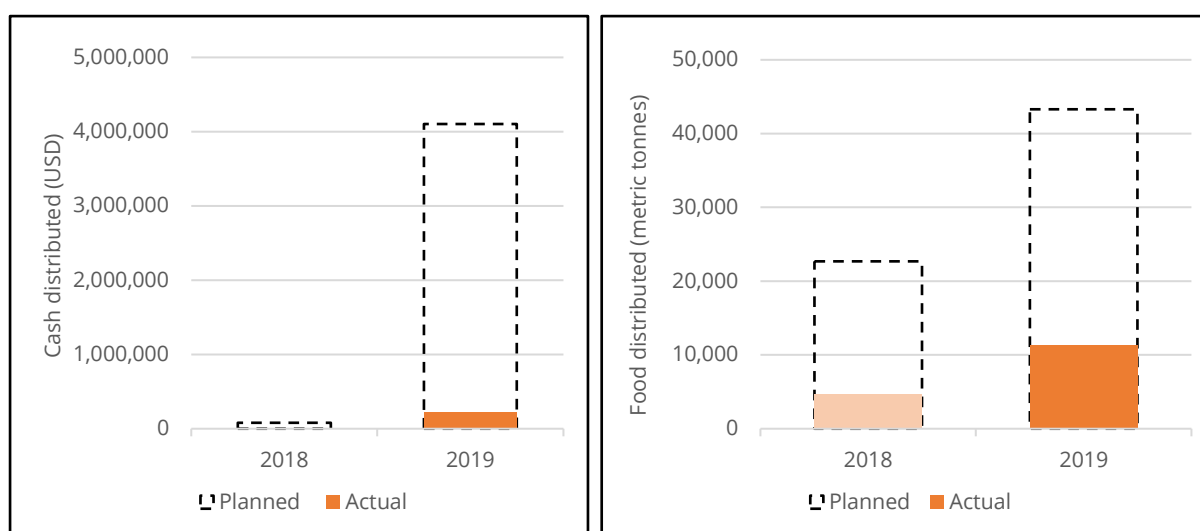
- **Activity 3:** Treat moderate acute malnutrition among vulnerable people, including children aged 6-59 months, pregnant and lactating women and girls, people living with HIV on anti-retroviral therapy (ART)/ TB patients on directly observable treatment (TB-DOTS) clients
- **Activity 4:** Prevent acute malnutrition among vulnerable groups including children aged 6-23 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls
- **Activity 5:** Prevent chronic malnutrition among vulnerable groups including children aged 6-23 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls.

Figure 15: Number of beneficiaries reached through activities 3, 4 and 5 from 2017 to 2019



Source: 2017 data from 2018 annual country report and represents total value, 2018 and 2019 data from COMET

Figure 16: Amount of cash and food distributed in 2018 and 2019 under Strategic Outcome 2



Source: 2019 data from COMET

130. **There has been a steady increase in the numbers of beneficiaries reached through malnutrition treatment and prevention activities, though those numbers remained far below targets.** Most of the increase was in Activity 3 relating to the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition. Despite this increase, there was a significant under-attainment of planned beneficiaries, which was particularly significant for the prevention-related activities 4 and 5. This is partly due to the lack of available cash and food resources to meet the targeted number of beneficiaries (Figure 16). Only 5 percent of planned cash was dispersed in 2019 while food transfers, in spite of more than doubling in volume, nonetheless remained at 25 percent of those planned for. This mostly resulted from a significant lack of and late financing of Strategic Outcome 2 compounded by contextual logistical challenges.

131. **Of the three activities, the majority of resources were focused on the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition among vulnerable people.** The late confirmation of funding in 2018 contributed to only 60 percent (384,330 individuals) of planned beneficiaries being assisted. This increased notably in 2019 to 92 percent of planned beneficiaries representing 750,694 cases; however, due to the possible relapse of patients, these figures do not necessarily represent the number of unique individuals. Moreover, as a result of insufficient funding, only 3 percent of planned ready-to-use therapeutic foods were distributed. Children and

pregnant and lactating women and girls were prioritized amongst the vulnerable groups and nutritious foods were not provided to people living with HIV/AIDS or tuberculosis (TB) in 2019.

132. **The number of health centres supported in 2019 relative to 2018 decreased slightly from 684 to 662.** However, adjustments to planning meant that this represented a greater proportion of the planned number of health centres, which increased from 85 percent of the target in 2018 to 94 percent of the target in 2019.

133. **Across all provinces, the efficacy of moderate acute malnutrition treatment was well above minimum Sphere standards for all indicators in 2018 and most in 2019.**⁸² However, health centre data for malnutrition has quality challenges. The high levels of population movement across the provinces, compounded by supply chain issues, occasionally led to stock-out of therapeutic foods. The particularly high level of performance should, therefore, be taken with caution particularly given the aforementioned lack of therapeutic foods. For example, the Sphere standard for the default rate stands at less than 15 percent of cases whereas the average default rate across all provinces was measured at 0.23 percent in 2018 and 0.56 percent in 2019. Coverage of moderate acute malnutrition treatment was reported for Haut Katanga and Tanganyika only. In 2019, coverage of treatment programmes decreased to below Sphere standards of 50 percent in Haut Katanga to 44 percent from 64 percent for children under 5, and from 55 percent to 21 percent for pregnant and lactating women and girls. In Tanganyika there was an increase in coverage of children under five from 59 percent to 66 percent, but a decrease in coverage of pregnant and lactating women and girls from 67 percent to 59 percent.

134. **There has been a consistent under-attainment of beneficiaries for prevention activities.** A blanket supplementary feeding programme more than doubled the number of beneficiaries reached in 2018, to 190,000, relative to 2017 and this increased further in 2019 to 234,144. However, these both represent only 36 percent of the target caseload due to the prioritization of resources for moderate acute malnutrition treatment. In 2019 cash transfers were introduced under prevention activities for chronic malnutrition in Tanganyika. Of the 12,828 planned beneficiaries, 5,163 were reached, representing 40 percent of the target.

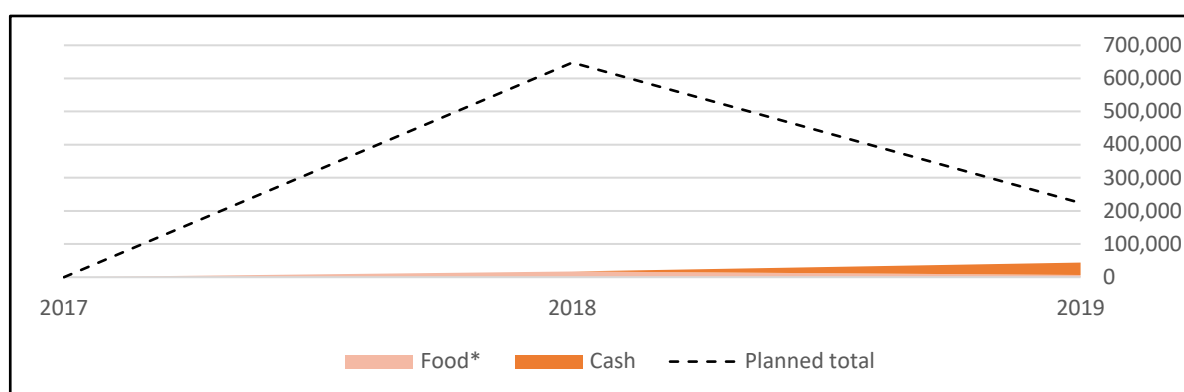
135. **Strategic Outcome 3: Smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities in targeted and crisis-prone areas, especially in eastern DRC, increase their productive livelihoods and improve their food security and resilience by 2020.** Two activities were expected to contribute to this outcome, aiming to increase resilience of smallholder farmers. In 2018, these were conducted exclusively in Tanganyika and extended to Haut Katanga and South Kivu in 2019. Plans for programming in Sud-Ubangui have been delayed until 2020:

- **Activity 6:** Provide capacity strengthening to smallholder farmers
- **Activity 7:** Provide productive assets to smallholder farmers and food-insecure communities.

136. **The prioritization of life-saving activities relative to life-changing needs has resulted in a consistent and significant under-attainment of planned beneficiaries in resilience activities** although the total beneficiary number has increased from 17,250 to 44,165 between 2018 and 2019 (Figure 17). The marked increase in beneficiary count in 2019 is a result of a significant increase in financing for this strategic outcome, which enabled 79 percent of planned cash to be transferred (Figure 18). However, this was undermined by the almost complete absence of food transfers in 2018 and 2019 under this Strategic Outcome 3.

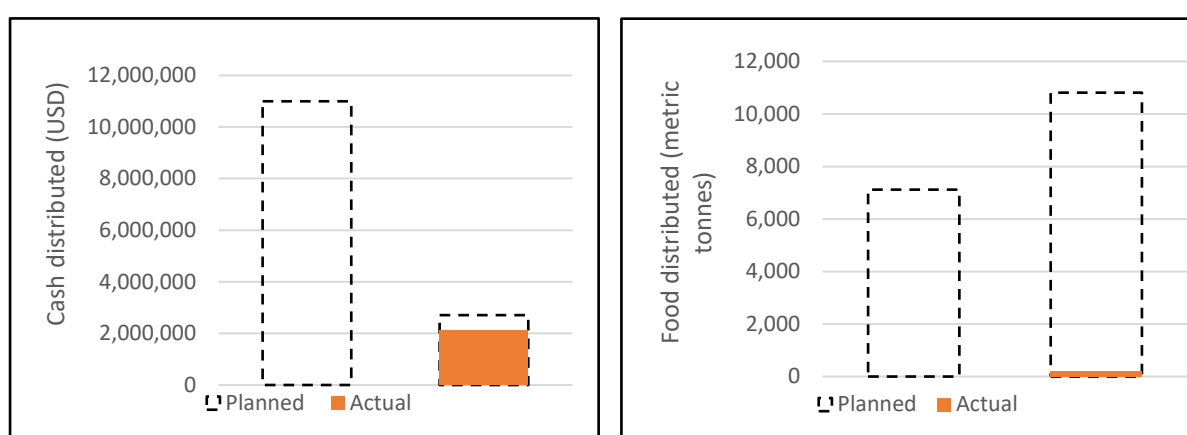
⁸² All WFP MAM treatment programmes are required to monitor the four MAM treatment performance indicators. Indicator targets are based on the Sphere standards: mortality rate (beneficiaries dying during the programme) <3%; default rate (beneficiaries not returning to the programme) <15%; non-response rate (beneficiaries not recovering from acute malnutrition) <15%; and recovery rate (beneficiaries successfully recovering from acute malnutrition) >75%. These are globally accepted standards for MAM treatment programming endorsed by WHO, UNICEF and WFP. Source: WFP, Nutrition in Numbers: An Overview of WFP nutrition programming in 2017, May 2018.

Figure 17: Number of beneficiaries reached through activities 6 and 7 from 2017 to 2019



Source: 2017 data from 2018 annual country report and represents total value, 2018 and 2019 data from COMET

Figure 18: Amount of cash and food distributed in 2018 and 2019 under Strategic Outcome 3



Source: 2019 data from COMET

137. **Capacity-strengthening activities are delivered largely through farmer organizations and are aimed mostly at women**, to deliver training and strengthen community mobilization, as shown in Figure 19. The number of farmer organizations mobilized increased from 700 in 2018 to 816 in 2019. Through joint WFP and FAO programming, nutrition-sensitive functional literacy programmes are combined with seed and crop distributions. Importantly, in 2019 WFP purchased 1,200 metric tons of food from these farmer organizations as part of home-grown school feeding initiatives.

Table 3: Number of beneficiaries per resilience activity

Provinces	Start of activity	Functional literacy		Income-generating activities		Dimitra clubs ^a		VSCAs ^b	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
North Kivu	2018	255	2 425	166	2 640	2 425	4 730	1 542	4 109
South Kivu	2019	N/A	2 500	N/A	2 500	2 216	5 124	4 263	6 960
Tanganyika	2019	N/A	2 800	N/A	800	1 460	1 439	5 212	2 880
South Ubangui	2018	N/A	800	N/A	N/A				

^a) Self-help groups promoted by FAO

^b) Village Savings and Credit Associations (called AVEC in French)

Source: 2019 data from COMET

138. **The volume of assets created increased substantially in 2019, addressing immediate food security needs and strengthening longer-term resilience through improved infrastructure and access to markets.** Smallholder farmers were supported to rehabilitate 333km of feeder roads in 2019 (out of 414km planned) compared to only 33km in 2018 (out of 300km planned). In addition, 11 bridges, five markets and ten community trading complexes (including warehouses and drying areas) were also constructed. However, WFP did not manage to build or rehabilitate the 821 community centres that had been planned for 2019.

139. **Strategic Outcome 4: National institutions in DRC have strengthened capacity to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition and respond to shocks by 2020.** Two activities were expected to contribute to this outcome:

- **Activity 8:** Provide capacity strengthening to the Government of DRC on social protection, nutrition, food security and emergency preparedness/disaster risk reduction
- **Activity 9:** Provide evidence-based analysis to relevant national institutions.

140. **WFP support essentially involved the training of government staff on food security monitoring.** In 2018, WFP supported the training of 350 government experts (out of a planned 400) in food security monitoring and early warning. Government participants were both national and provincial level officials from the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Planning, and CAID. In 2019, all of the planned 200 participants were trained. Of this same target group, 50 were trained in 2018 on using food security monitoring systems. This had some notable achievements that included facilitating CAID in using the WFP mVAM approach. However, this nonetheless represented only 17 percent of the planned number of people to be trained.

141. **Support was also provided to the Government of DRC by harnessing the logistical strength of WFP to strengthen disaster risk reduction.** Technical support in the form of population maps and analysis of viable access routes were provided as part of response planning to volcanic eruptions. These have been included in protocol arrangements between the Government of DRC and the Government of Rwanda for evacuations of at-risk populations. Technical support was also provided in flood simulation exercises in North Kivu.

142. **Strategic Outcome 5: The humanitarian community in DRC have the capacity to effectively respond to shocks through strategic partnerships by 2020.** Four activities were expected to contribute to this outcome, aiming to fill critical gaps to ensure the coherent and effective delivery of assistance, enabling partners to achieve humanitarian and development objectives:

- **Activity 10:** Provide humanitarian platforms to the humanitarian community in DRC
- **Activity 11:** Provide humanitarian air services (UNHAS) to the humanitarian community in DRC
- **Activity 12:** Provide supply chain services to the humanitarian community in DRC
- **Activity 13:** Provide emergency telecommunication cluster services to the humanitarian community in DRC.

143. **WFP effectively supported humanitarian supply chains and telecommunications.** Almost all targets were reached or exceeded in 2018 and 2019. The logistics cluster, led by WFP and funded by the United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund, enabled better humanitarian access to vulnerable communities by rehabilitating some 1,200 kilometres of road, 40 road ‘hotspots’ and two bridges in Tanganyika and North Kivu provinces. WFP provided more than 9,400 square metres of storage space to United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, including 16 warehouses and 70 mobile storage units. In particular, WFP provided storage services to the United Nations Office for Project Services on behalf of the Ministry of Health, facilitating the storage of 34 speed boats to support the distribution of medical items in hard-to-reach health areas in Equateur and Mai-Ndombe provinces. As for transport services, WFP transported over 6,400 cubic metres of goods, including food and non-food items, in 2019 overall.

144. From November 2017 to May 2019, the emergency telecommunications cluster led by WFP established vital security telecommunications in eight areas within the Kasai, South Kivu and Tanganyika regions. Services included the upgrade and expansion of the radio communication network, radio programming of humanitarians’ handheld radios and training for radio operators from the United Nations

Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the wider humanitarian community. The cluster was deactivated in October 2018.

145. **UNHAS similarly performed well in 2018 and 2019 with all indicators exceeding targets.** This was particularly notable in 2018 whereby UNHAS provided the principal mode of air transport for the Ebola response. During this time 45,922 passengers (173.9 percent of target) and 938 metric tons of cargo were transported (2084 percent of target). This demonstrates vital flexibility to scale up services to adjust to changing needs of the humanitarian sector. To respond to the Ebola emergency, the planned numbers of passengers and cargo for 2019 were increased to 43,200 individuals and 298 metric tons. These were again exceeded by 127 percent and 116 percent respectively. Additionally, a greater number of destinations were served in 2019 than planned for (92 against 73 planned).

2.2.2 To what extent did WFP contribute to the achievement of cross-cutting aims (humanitarian principles, protection, accountability to affected populations, gender equality and other equity considerations)?

146. **Summary of findings:** Humanitarian principles are generally well respected. While protection is a growing priority for WFP there is a lack of risk analysis and inadequate budget allocation for this purpose. Existing indicators and tools also fail to capture protection-related concerns. Accountability to affected populations is gaining momentum, but feedback/complaints are either not followed up and addressed or not addressed in time. There are weaknesses in the complaints mechanisms used, and affected populations are either unaware of these or are reluctant to use them. However, measures are being taken to address some of these weaknesses.⁸³ There is a concerted effort to achieve gender equality, and this is better integrated in resilience activities than in emergency assistance. For food-related interventions, any reduction in ration sizes particularly impacts women and girls. Environment, as a cross-cutting issue, is poorly integrated in the ICSP. The WFP country office recognizes the need to strengthen technical expertise on environmental risk identification and mitigation.

147. **Humanitarian principles appear generally well upheld by WFP in DRC.** WFP, primarily through its partners, provides food assistance on a significant scale in difficult contexts. There was no evidence that WFP has or would deliberately discriminate against any groups or types of individuals. In interviews, neither staff nor cooperating partners, nor organizations that do not work directly with WFP, mentioned any examples of deliberate discrimination. WFP enjoys a very positive reputation on this score among affected populations, partners, and staff.

148. **Protection is a growing priority, but there is still a lack of risk analysis within the DRC context.** The protection challenges faced by populations in DRC are numerous given persistent unrest and conflict, and the complexity of the food security crisis.⁸⁴ Ongoing displacement deprives affected populations of access to arable land and to means of production, as mentioned in Section 1.2 (country context). Like in all humanitarian crises, children and women are the most affected. However, in DRC, women and girls are particularly vulnerable due to the prevalence of gender inequality and sexual and gender-based violence.

149. Emphasis on protection is embedded into the results framework at the highest level, as defined by the corporate indicator “affected populations are able to benefit from WFP programmes in a manner that ensures and promotes their safety, dignity and integrity”. WFP operationalizes this by implementing activities that sensitize communities to protection issues and provides mechanisms to report on protection challenges encountered. There has also been a considerable strengthening of the capacity to conduct protection-related activities. WFP has recruited four gender and protection experts over the evaluation period, and there is an extensive training programme for WFP staff, where voluntary attendance numbers have been increasing over time.

150. WFP also conducted awareness-raising sessions for beneficiaries on the hotline and its confidentiality, encouraging them to report any issues there. Memorandums of understanding between WFP

⁸³ The country office reports that in 2020 efforts are being made to better record and analyse complaints and feedback from beneficiaries through the SugarCRM software. There are also efforts to better understand communication preferences by beneficiary groups by surveying beneficiary groups by sex and other considerations, to understand which modes of communication they prefer.

⁸⁴ WFP Annual Report 2018.

and its cooperating partners set out the parameters and conditions within which food assistance must be provided. All cooperating partners are required to act in accordance with these provisions in order to ensure that assistance is only granted to those beneficiaries who are entitled to receive it. WFP staff present at distribution sites are expected to ensure that WFP partners respect humanitarian principles, including "do no harm", and WFP policies prohibiting fraud and corruption and promoting protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Training is also provided to cooperating partners to build capacity in this regard.

151. However, a lack of specific budget lines for protection activities undermines the extent to which protection officers can fully exercise their role and integrate protection across all operational activities, as reported during three interviews with relevant personnel in separate field offices. The absence of this means that protection staff have no independent means of transport and must accompany other staff during monitoring visits. This reduces the extent to which protection issues can be fully and independently investigated and addressed.

152. For example, in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, notably in Inke and Molé camps, a few refugees expressed significant concerns about retaliatory practices amongst service providers when they reported fraud. Some have mentioned that people who make complaints may risk not receiving their cash transfers, and one mentioned the case of a refugee being imprisoned for denouncing cases of fraud. These concerns related to cooperating partners not WFP staff, but they do indicate a duty of care and a proximity of protection risks to WFP operations. These issues could not be further investigated nor validated by the evaluation team due to time shortage, although they were communicated to the WFP country office, and discussed during the provincial debriefing.

153. **Current tools and indicators do not accurately capture the scope in which programme-related protection concerns can occur.** Currently, issues relating to protection are addressed in post-distribution monitoring reports using the indicator "did you have any concerns or threats relating to coming to and from the distribution site". This does not adequately capture potential protection issues related to distributions and programming that extend beyond the distribution activities themselves. This is particularly pertinent as WFP increases its cash programming. Such an increase requires more nuanced indicators to better capture differential risks related to different transfer modalities. For example, protection issues could be related to programming activities but not the distribution site and so would not be captured.

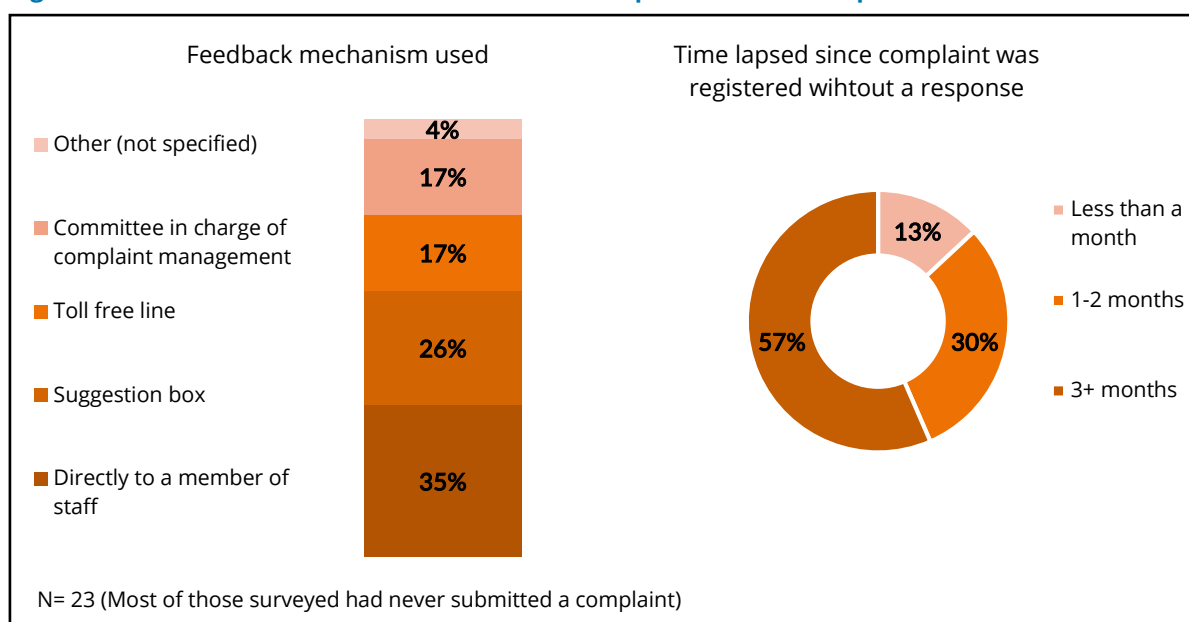
154. **Accountability to affected populations is a growing practice but remains a one-way communication channel.** Accountability to affected populations appears very prominently in the ICSP. Over the years, WFP has gradually increased its efforts to obtain feedback from beneficiaries through its monitoring tools. There are three formal mechanisms for providing complaints and feedback: (1) Ligne Verte (toll-free hotline); (2) suggestion and complaints boxes positioned at distribution sites; and (3) feedback committees. There are also informal routes, notably verbal communication with any point of contact. Of these, WFP has direct oversight of the management of complaints by a local call centre received through the Ligne Verte. Complaints and feedback received through this route are managed using approved standard operating procedures. Key data on these complaints are then gathered and presented in daily and monthly reports.

155. **There are, however, a number of shortcomings with current complaints and feedback mechanisms.** The first relates to the low level of understanding of, and cultural compatibility with, the complaints and feedback mechanisms. CSPE interviews and in particular the community survey showed that complaints were made by relatively few people whilst a significant proportion remained unaware of these mechanisms. For example, 61 percent of the survey respondents reported that they were not aware that they could register a complaint about the action and/or behaviours of WFP and its partners. This relates to all the mechanisms put in place, from the complaints box to the Ligne Verte. Most people reported a preference for face-to-face interaction (speaking to staff or committee members), which does not require the ability to write (as is necessary for complaint boxes) or access to a phone.

156. Follow-up on calls to the Ligne Verte were slow and poorly monitored. There are perceptions, collected during the evaluation visits (including the community survey), that complaints were not addressed through appropriate and timely remedial actions. For example, over half of the 27 respondents who reported submitting a complaint stated that their complaint had been registered for over three months without response. There is a lack of follow-up data on the tracking of complaints submitted through the toll-free hotline. However, there are plans to address this through measures such as the implementation of a customer relationship management software to facilitate tracking of actions taken to address complaints.

157. The Ligne Verte was highlighted by WFP staff as the preferred feedback and complaints mechanism even though it currently poses several challenges for beneficiaries attempting to use it. At present, most callers to the toll-free number terminate the call before speaking to an operator (an average of 40,000 calls per month over the past 12 months for an average of 8,000 listed requests per month). It was reported that this is mainly due to the long waiting time resulting in people giving up and trying again later, which inflates the number of calls made. Barriers such as poor telephone reception, lack of access to a mobile phone and individual preferences for communicating sensitive complaints (some beneficiaries preferred the anonymity between themselves and the phone operator while others found this unsettling) mean that for many, in particular the more vulnerable beneficiaries, this mechanism is not suitable.

Figure 19: Use of feedback mechanisms and time elapsed without a response



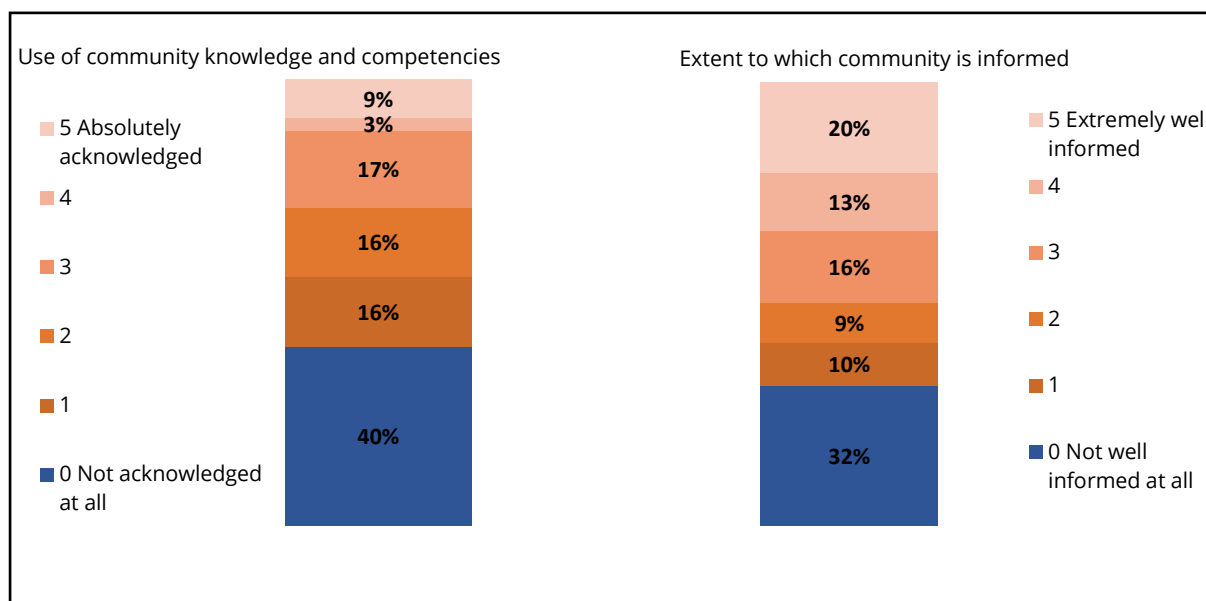
Source: CSPE community survey

158. **Cooperating partners manage the other complaints mechanisms without WFP guidelines.** For the other mechanisms, such as feedback boxes and complaints committees, the feedback and complaints cycle was managed by cooperating partners. There were no WFP-endorsed standard operating procedures detailing the types of complaints to be managed by cooperating partners and those which should be escalated immediately to WFP focal points. Large international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) such as World Vision, had their own procedures in place, but other cooperating partners described a less systematic process to decide how complaints should be addressed or escalated. Without clear guidelines it was difficult for WFP to hold cooperating partners to account. Complaints and feedback mechanisms are vital routes through which to maintain a dialogue with communities. Ineffective systems pose a significant threat to the reputation of WFP and its relationship with communities.

159. **Community information and consultation appeared limited.** In addition to providing effective feedback and complaints mechanisms, the concept of accountability to affected populations also emphasises the need for a strong dialogue with target communities whereby information on the processes and assistance provided is clearly communicated. The CSPE community survey showed that communities did not feel that their knowledge and skills were well capitalized on for programme design and implementation (Figure 20). In response to the question "to what extent do you rate WFP's use of your skills and knowledge", 40 percent of survey respondents stated that their skills were not acknowledged at all. Similarly, 32 percent of survey respondents felt that they were not kept well informed by WFP and cooperating partners throughout activities; this was in response to the question "how do you rate the level of information you have about WFP assistance". However, there are a few distinct examples of extensive community consultation and consequential adaptation to programming. For example, in South Kivu, value vouchers were changed to

unrestricted cash in 2019 following consultations with target communities. Broadly, the three-pronged approach (3PA)⁸⁵ used for resilience programming allows for greater integration of community consultation.

Figure 20: Extent to which communities feel their skills and knowledge were used and that they were well informed about activities



Source: CSPE community survey

160. **There was a growing effort to achieve gender equality, but the concrete implementation of the policy remained limited.** The ICSP was not grounded on a comprehensive country level gender analysis conducted by WFP, nor did it draw upon conclusions and recommendations of gender analyses carried out by other agencies. However, the ICSP does state that “in recognition of the relationship between gender inequality and malnutrition, a gender analysis should inform the design, targeting and implementation of activities”. Addressing gender inequalities and sexual and gender-based violence is fundamental to addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. Since 2016, WFP has piloted its approach to integrating gender and age into its food insecurity and vulnerability assessments, however a full assessment of the impacts of gender on food insecurity is yet to be conducted.

161. **Gender was principally integrated into food and cash transfers through the preferential naming of women as the beneficiary on distribution lists, but this was insufficient to change gender dynamics.** Targeting women as the primary beneficiaries on distribution lists is not a sufficient measure to target women and children, let alone change decision-making dynamics within the household. The rationale for placing women as the primary beneficiaries on distribution lists was to ensure distributions reached targeted households and children in a context of polygamy. Women were not necessarily able to keep the distributions even when they were named directly on the distribution lists. For example, women participating in a group interview at Telega distribution site complained that their husbands would ask them to sell some of the food received in order to buy cigarettes. As long as the man remains the main decision-maker in the household, the fact that the woman visits the distribution site to collect rations, often queuing up in the sun and enduring long waits, may actually reinforce inequalities rather than reduce them. There was also evidence that registering women as principal beneficiaries was prevented in refugee camp contexts as the evaluation team understood that UNHCR only provided details of households headed by men. Beyond naming women as the primary beneficiaries on distribution lists, there was little evidence of how gender was

⁸⁵ 3PA is an innovative approach developed by WFP to strengthen the design, planning and implementation of programmes in resilience building, safety nets, disaster risk reduction, and preparedness. It includes: (1) Integrated context analysis (ICA) at provincial level, (2) seasonal livelihood programming (SLP) at territorial level and (3) community-based participatory planning (CBPP) at the community level.

integrated into food or cash transfers. At the internally displaced person sites, communication on positive masculinity, for example, was not systematically implemented.

162. **There was also evidence that ration sizes were inadequate for women and girl refugees.** In Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, survival sex was mentioned in all group interviews as a means through which to supplement cash transfers from WFP and partner agencies. It was estimated by the interviewed participants that between 70 percent and 80 percent of young girls practice survival sex. The risks related to prostitution are many and varied including psychological trauma, unwanted pregnancies, early pregnancies and increased HIV transmission rates.

163. **Gender-sensitive and gender-transformative approaches were better integrated in resilience activities.** These were likely to improve women's status in the community and household. Examples of these initiatives are given below:

- Functional literacy supported women to read, write and calculate, but also to increase their participation in decision-making processes in villages and in the organizations of which they are members. This has resulted in a more active and effective participation of women in leadership and decision-making bodies within their local and village level forums and organizations. For example, Dimitra self-help groups (Clubs d'écoute) discussed village problems and helped identify community-based solutions. Village Savings and Credit Associations (called AVEC) provided their members with revolving credit and promoted mutual support.
- Support for income-generating activities, of which the majority of beneficiaries were women, helped them develop a source of income other than agriculture, providing them with personal financial resources outside harvesting periods and potentially contributing to their empowerment within their household. Income-generating activities were also expected to increase the capacity for households head by women to take care of their family members. For example, breeding of guinea pigs is managed by women and children, and women take decisions regarding sale or consumption of these small, nutritious animals. Other types of livestock (cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, and poultry) are more often managed by men.

164. **Environment is poorly integrated as a cross-cutting issue in the ICSP.** Environment is mentioned as a cross-cutting issue in the very last point of the log frame, but not developed in the narrative part as a key one. It is defined as a cross-cutting result (together with gender, protection and accountability to affected populations) but in contrast with the three others, not as a cross-cutting indicator. Moreover, in discussions with the WFP team it was confirmed that the environment was not integrated into WFP emergency interventions. It was, however, taken into consideration while conducting the three-pronged approach (paragraph 159). The 2018 annual country report and draft report for 2019 mention some efforts related to environment, such as the process of consultation to ensure environmental and social concerns are identified while developing joint resilience projects, and the promotion of fuel-efficient stoves. Yet, the WFP Environmental Policy (2017) has a much wider perspective of mainstreaming environment, by stating that "All WFP operations (...) will be supported in identifying, rating and managing environmental risks", which has not been the case so far in DRC. However, as mentioned in the annual country reports and as transpired from discussions with the country office, awareness is growing among the WFP team as well as among the humanitarian community (for example, ECHO will make strong efforts on this issue in the coming years).

165. **Importantly, there is a lack of expertise relating to environmental risk and mitigation within the WFP country office.** Currently, engineering functions do not include comprehensive assessments of environmental impacts, such as energy and water efficiency as well as risk assessments of land erosion and wood depletion. As an illustration, in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, environmental issues were poorly analysed and understood by WFP staff and key stakeholders interviewed. For example, the rate and consequences of deforestation; the extent, causes and consequences of soil erosion; and the potential link between deforestation, erosion and flooding, were unknown in the area. Flooding has been widely amplified by deforestation and erosion. The evaluation team noted that erosion was visible in all sites visited. In addition, the clearing and burning of land in preparation for cultivation or to hunt game, the use of wood for cooking in all the villages visited and more specifically around refugee camps, and the legal and illegal commercial exploitation of wood, all contribute to increasing deforestation.

166. Only the three-pronged approach,⁸⁶ carried out as part of the resilience project launched in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, has provided information on the natural environment situation, its potential degradation and consequences, such as conflict between refugees and indigenous people due to fish and caterpillar resources depletion. Conflicts between refugees and indigenous people were mentioned in connection with the refugees not taking due care of local species.

167. In all the sites visited in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, improved stoves have been deployed and commercialized only to a very limited extent. Some donors, such as ECHO and the Department for International Development (DFID), have mentioned their strong commitment to the preservation of natural resources, such as the preservation of wood resources around refugee camps, and their willingness to support reforestation as well as climate change adaptation (CCA).

168. WFP has not focused its interventions (for example, food assistance for assets) to reduce the risk of flooding and to maintain soil fertility and ensure sustainable and peaceful management of natural resources. Opportunities to train and support communities to build fuel-improved stoves for commercialization and wood depletion reduction have not been explored. All of this could enable WFP to position itself as a committed actor to protecting the environment.

2.2.3 To what extent are the achievements of the ICSP likely to be sustainable?

169. **Summary of findings:** WFP has engaged in extensive capacity-building activities to create a lasting food security assessment capacity in DRC. It has endorsed a triple nexus approach to programmes that can contribute to sustainability. There is, however, insufficient tracking and support to beneficiaries beyond emergencies with a longer-term view to strengthening their resilience and reducing dependencies on emergency support. The idea of transitioning from unconditional forms of assistance to conditional forms is not clearly articulated in the ICSP and may therefore affect the ability of WFP to develop sustainability strategies and plans. The home-grown school feeding programme has a good potential for sustainability but has suffered from underfunding and has been drastically scaled down until 2019 where renewed donor support enabled a scaling-up.

170. **WFP has engaged in extensive capacity-building activities to create a lasting food security assessment capacity in DRC.** Throughout 2019, WFP provided training and technical assistance to 555 government stakeholders on food security and emergency preparedness. This included training in preparation for the IPC survey for 2019. Workshops were conducted in five provinces, providing training on food security indicators and analysis to staff members primarily from the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Institute of Statistics and non-governmental organization partners. Results were used to determine the level of food insecurity within 109 territories in DRC, and support prioritization of resources.

171. **Unconditional food assistance is critical to save lives and combat malnutrition in the short term but cannot be extended indeterminately and does not fundamentally address structural causes of vulnerability.** Many respondents have spoken of the value to them of receiving general food distributions and cash-based transfers. However, many remained in a situation of vulnerability after receiving food assistance, particularly those who received only three months of assistance, which was not prolonged. The capacity of the Government or other national actors to take over in areas where WFP would withdraw remains very weak. As discussed before, national capacity building was not focused on social safety nets and has been hampered by government institutional and financial constraints.

172. **WFP has broadly endorsed the notion of the triple nexus, which is being promoted by some other agencies and by donors.** This goes beyond the traditional linking of relief, rehabilitation and development, which is widely regarded as having failed.⁸⁷ The triple nexus should not be seen as a linear continuum from humanitarian assistance over development to peacebuilding, but as a triangular system, where each component directly affects the other two. WFP interventions in DRC, while largely focused on humanitarian assistance, cut across into the realms of development and peacebuilding as shown in Figure 21.

⁸⁷ Several evaluations and studies point to this, in particular: SIDA and Channel Research, A Ripple in Development: Evaluation of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development After the Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2010; and GSDRC Applied Knowledge Services, Relationship between Humanitarian and Development Aid, 2015.

Figure 21: WFP assistance in DRC across the triple nexus



Source: CSPE

173. A recent SIPRI assessment⁸⁸ points out that, when it comes to the reality of implementing the triple nexus, practitioners in the humanitarian sector point to a disconnect between high-level declarations and policy frameworks. Some organizations and agencies interpret the triple nexus as an attempt to implement top-down coordination. Others see it as an attempt to train humanitarian practitioners in the methods of development and peace, and vice versa. Interviews with WFP staff in-country reveal, on the contrary, a relatively structured understanding of the pursuit of sustainable forms of assistance, whereby resilience replaces, quite realistically given the situation, development.

174. **There is room for a more systematic connection of emergency assistance and resilience interventions.** WFP resilience activities have been boosted over 2019, but these remain discrete activities within a system that has parallel lines of activity. The purchase for progress programme aims to support local production by small farmers so that they can improve their income and living conditions as well as become food providers for WFP during an emergency. Purchase for progress, implemented in partnership with FAO, is appreciated by donors because of its effectiveness in creating a linkage between humanitarian assistance and development through actions aimed at strengthening community resilience. WFP, FAO and IFAD obtained multi-year funding (2017-2021) from Canada for joint resilience activities in North Kivu with an emphasis for WFP on food assistance for assets, where food assistance is leveraged to reinforce productive assets.⁸⁹ Similarly, a programme of resilience activities in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui and Tanganyika were funded by Sweden. Germany has approved the extension of the joint resilience programme with FAO in North and South Kivu, adding UNICEF to the partnership, where purchase for progress and food assistance for assets activities will be continued.⁹⁰

175. **Home-grown school feeding has shown a good potential for sustainability.** School feeding provides a significant contribution to school retention while supplying nutritious foods to children, two achievements that can prove to be particularly challenging in conflict-affected areas. However, the school feeding programme is suffering from underfunding reducing the extent to which it can be scaled up.

⁸⁸ SIPRI, Connecting the Dots on the Triple Nexus, November 2019.

⁸⁹ "The Rome-Based Agencies Resilience Initiative in DRC, Niger and Somalia".

⁹⁰ "Strengthening socio-economic resilience of smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations to support peace and stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

Currently, the school feeding programme is supported in Tanganyika, North Kivu and Kasai Oriental with 121,400 school children reached in 2019.⁹¹

2.2.4 In humanitarian contexts, to what extent did the ICSP facilitate more strategic linkages between humanitarian, development and, where appropriate, peace work?

176. **Summary of findings:** Peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity are included, to an extent, in some programmes. The third element of the triple nexus, peacebuilding, however, remains quite area-specific, and has not been explicitly embedded into the strategy. The ICSP has allowed the development of effective projects to deal with conflict, and staff are aware of the possible effects of their activities on local tensions and conflict. In this section the report focusses on the linkages with peacebuilding. Resilience/development work is already elaborated upon under the “sustainability” section.

177. **There were efforts to consider the local power dynamics and tensions.** For example, cash-based transfers normally target refugees in camp settlements. However, Muslim refugees from Central African Republic requested not to be settled with Christians in the Molé camp (Sud-Ubangui) for protection reasons. WFP carried out off-camp distributions to those refugees living outside the camp.

178. **There is one documented case of a successful initiative to defuse inter-ethnic tensions by relying on the community mechanisms created as part of the delivery of WFP assistance.** This relates to the case of Tanganyika where, in partnership with Search for Common Ground, specific activities have been implemented to promote peace between Twa and Bantu communities. This includes approaches to appease inter-community conflict around the management of natural resources and by promoting informal Dimitra groups, which develop activities supported through food assistance for assets or purchase for progress.

179. **In the other provinces, WFP interventions to promote peace are more implicit.** For example, interviews of WFP staff reflect that the operations are working under the assumption that distributing larger volume of resources in a targeted manner will ultimately result in reducing tensions. In addition to this, by promoting agricultural production and helping to fight against poverty, WFP is subtly targeting some of the underlying factors of conflict in its intervention areas. Engaging communities (in particularly youth) via income-generating activities may also help tackle factors that drive young people to join armed groups and engage in other criminal activities.

180. **However, the integration of the peace component is not yet fully embedded within WFP resilience outcomes.** The Tanganyika activities remain unique within the country, and there are no other examples of activities to deal proactively with conflict. This would require the development of an explicit approach integrating peacebuilding in WFP intervention objectives, in line with a long-term triple nexus perspective. The way in which the ICSP is currently formulated does not articulate a particular logic with regards to the triple nexus, which means that it could be overlooked in the broader food security efforts.

2.3 TO WHAT EXTENT HAS WFP USED ITS RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY IN CONTRIBUTING TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUTS AND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES?

2.3.1 To what extent were outputs delivered within the intended timeframe?

181. **Summary of findings:** Despite a consistent effort to ensure the timely delivery of assistance, WFP programmes are affected by significant delays on the ground. These are attributed to the large scale of operations within a particularly challenging context, delays in access to funding due to limited multi-year funding and lengthy donor negotiations, and coordination issues and staffing shortages. The unintended consequences of delays on affected populations, in particular the most vulnerable, were sometimes severe.

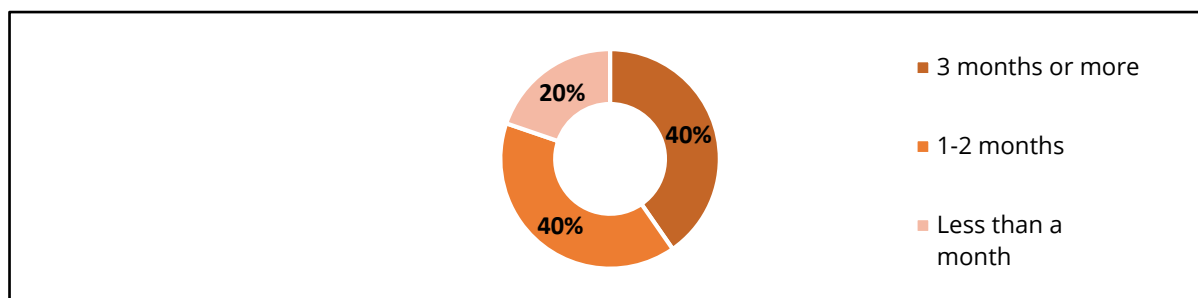
182. WFP does not track information on programme timeliness to ascertain the extent to which activities and outputs were delivered within the planned timeframe. The information presented here is based on interviews and observations conducted by the evaluation team.

⁹¹ In partnership with FAO, WFP plans to expand its home-grown school feeding model from North Kivu to other parts of the country where FAO will provide agricultural techniques and quality seeds while WFP and UNICEF work on a safe school environment for the provision of meals for quality education.

183. **WFP tried in all cases to intervene in a timely manner, under the principle that the most recent crises take priority.** Two innovative approaches have been introduced, in particular the local cash procurement of food (50 percent of food is purchased in the region), and the Global Commodity Management Facility, which operates as a form of revolving fund. DRC is the fourth largest user of this facility. This reduces the response time by allocating food to an operation prior to WFP receiving the expected donor contribution.

184. **However, timeliness of delivery of emergency assistance was a considerable challenge.** Despite the intent of WFP to react promptly, delays were encountered between the time that an alert was confirmed and the effective arrival of assistance in the field. Respondents in the CSPE community survey reported that in 40 percent of the cases, assistance was received more than three months after initial beneficiary registration took place (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Time elapsed between beneficiary registration and the first distribution



Source: CSPE community survey

185. Cases have been reported where beneficiaries spent three months without food before WFP assistance arrived. Some internally displaced persons are registered on lists as potential beneficiaries but spend months without being assisted. Internally displaced persons in Ituri reported waiting six months for the first distribution of food assistance. Internally displaced persons met in Telega noted that the three-month cycle is not systematically followed. At times only half of the rations for the 15 days were received and distribution dates were not communicated in advance. This affected the families' abilities to manage their rations until the next delivery. In addition, on the day of distribution, beneficiaries didn't know in advance who among them would be on the distribution list for that day. In Nord- and Sud-Ubangui, cash distributions to refugees in the four camps were often slightly delayed. Out of 11 distributions during 2019, 4 were delayed, some for more than ten days, creating tensions and loss of confidence by refugees towards humanitarian actors, due to food insecurity and poverty. Reasons given include a recurring delay in the signing of agreements between UNHCR, WFP and the cooperating partners as well as delays in receiving the distribution lists from UNHCR. There have also been food stock shortages and a lack of nutrition-related supplies for treatment of children under five suffering from moderate acute malnutrition. In North Kivu, shortages of nutritious and ready-to-use therapeutic food were due to a higher than expected number of beneficiaries treated at targeted health centres, as malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women and girls living in nearby non-targeted areas also came to the health centres where treatment was provided.

186. **Activities have been hampered by the large scale of operations and huge contextual challenges.** The transport network in DRC is in very poor condition. It currently takes 32 days for a WFP 4x4 vehicle to be driven from Kinshasa to Kalemie, in Tanganyika province. In addition, security incidents, particularly against transporters, occur every week. These factors dramatically increase the time needed to transport food from other countries and national suppliers to the main storage locations in DRC, and from there to distribution sites.

187. **Delays in funding availability have seriously delayed operations.** While 83 percent of the funds needed for emergency (SO1) activities were available in 2019, these were received very late in the year and therefore only 59 percent could be disbursed by year-end. This was a strong contributing factor in not achieving beneficiary targets: in 2019 the amount of cash and food distributed was 42 percent and 51 percent of the need-based plans, as WFP provided reduced rations for most of the year.⁹²

⁹² Annual Country Report, 2019.

188. **WFP could not always swiftly adapt to sudden changes in needs on the ground.** In the case of malnutrition treatment, the planned number did not take account of recent population movements. Nutritionists in North Kivu reported that malnourished children from non-targeted health areas would be taken for treatment to health centres in targeted areas. As the number of children treated was higher than expected, there were shortages and supply gaps. Resource adjustments for such situations were very difficult to obtain.

189. **Donor earmarking contributed to delays in programming.** As mentioned below (paragraph 224), where funding is earmarked for a specific activity and sometimes for implementation within a particular location, it takes time for donors to give permission for the reallocation of resources when there are increased needs in other locations/activities. This can lead to delays in the transfer of resources between activities, even when these are under the same strategic outcome.

190. **There were frequent delays in the payment of invoices.** All the cooperating partners, including government departments, reported delays in disbursement of funds and payment of invoices. This was due to the structure of field-level agreements, which stipulate payments based on programme milestones, which, if not well synchronized with payments, led to disruptions in delivery. Delayed payments to cooperating partners could affect staff motivation and efficiency, as their salary payments were ultimately delayed. They also influenced the type of organizations that would actively apply for WFP funding. Those organizations with sufficient cash-flow, other funding sources, and the ability to endure delays, were at an advantage.⁹³ Furthermore, the selection and contracting of cooperating partners occasionally ran into important delays, allegedly due to a shortage of good quality partners on the ground – an issue that could have been addressed by the use of more strategic forms of partnership and capacity development.

191. **In some cases, implementation was delayed due to a need to agree in advance on a common approach with other partners.** For example, UNHCR and WFP had to agree on standardized tools and formats before being able to exchange updated monthly beneficiary lists from the four refugee camps in Nord- and Sud-Ubangui. This caused delays in cash distributions. Lack of frequency in coordination meetings has also affected partners' efforts to clearly define their roles and responsibilities. All this has impacted on the timely implementation of various activities.

192. **Another cause of delays was the difficulty for WFP in meeting its human resources needs.** As presented in more detail in paragraph 249, WFP has not been able to maintain staffing levels in high-risk locations despite the dramatic increase in activity volumes and complexity.

193. **There was a very limited availability of resources that would allow WFP to be more reactive in case of unpredictable shocks.** The last two budget revisions (5 and 6) meant that there was a dependence on rapid donor funding allocations. This was, for example, the case in Yumbi (located outside the planned geographic coverage area), which required specific, time-consuming fundraising efforts before the intervention.

194. **The consequences of delays on affected populations could be serious.** WFP target populations affected by new crises were generally the most vulnerable, with limited coping strategies. Delays in assistance contributed to harmful coping strategies, such as prostitution and theft with negative impacts both on the refugees/internally displaced persons and the host populations. Significantly delayed assistance increased the risk of starvation. Other effects of the delays experienced by target groups included:

- Increased risk of displaced persons not being well accepted by host populations due to perceived pressure on local resources (access to fields, to firewood, price of food items)
- Risks of conflict between displaced populations and the host populations following incidents such as theft by the displaced populations
- Increased food insecurity due to host populations' low-income levels and poor access to food. Without assistance, host populations are expected to assist the displaced, which means reduced food supplies for them.

⁹³ Cooperating partners also reported delays in disbursement due to WFP requiring extensive justifications for the use of already received funds, but this may reflect poor administrative management on their side.

2.3.2 To what extent was coverage and targeting of interventions effective?

195. **Summary of findings:** WFP operations in DRC have ensured a reasonable geographical coverage according to food insecurity and malnutrition. However, the scale of needs is vast and unmet needs remain significant, mainly due to funding constraints. Effective assessment and targeting of the most vulnerable households relies heavily on the capacity of cooperating partners, which varies greatly, as do community perceptions of targeting effectiveness. Sick people and people with disabilities tend to be excluded, particularly, but not only, from resilience-building activities.

196. **Throughout the country, the scale of the needs was matched by the reach of the WFP response.** The IPC in 2018 detected 13.1 million food insecure people and 6 million malnourished children. In the 2019 IPC, the number of severely food insecure people (IPC 3-4) had risen to 15.6 million of whom 3.9 million were classified as IPC 4 (critical). The total number of people receiving WFP food assistance (food and cash) was an impressive 4.5 million in 2018 and 6.8 million in 2019. At the end of 2017, the estimated number of internally displaced persons in DRC was 4.5 million. Over 2 million and 3.1 million among them received food assistance respectively in 2018 and in 2019, although it should be noted that some of the persons counted may have received support during repeated distribution cycles (of three months) over the year, and hence may have been double counted.⁹⁴

197. **Coverage of treatment for moderate acute malnutrition and prevention of malnutrition was well below needs.** In 2018, 260,500 children were treated, increasing to 750,700 children in 2019.⁸³ There is a lack of coverage assessments (such as the Semi-Quantitative Evaluation of Access and the Coverage/Simplified Lot Quality Assurance Sampling Evaluation of Access and Coverage), conducted in order to give rigorous and valid assessments of the coverage of nutrition treatment programmes. Coverage of prevention activities is even lower given the prioritization of life-saving rather than life-changing activities and the scale of need in DRC with an estimated 40-50 percent of children age 6 to 59 months affected by chronic malnutrition. Prevention of chronic malnutrition has been consistently underfunded relative to treatment activities significantly impacting on coverage. Distributions to children aged 6-23 months (SO2) were also limited due to the Government's decision to stop the use of ready-to-use supplementary food for acute malnutrition prevention interventions.⁹⁵ However, as discussed earlier resource constraints led to reduced ration sizes, undermining the extent to which the needs of beneficiaries were met.

198. **Effectiveness of social targeting was affected by several factors.** The delivery of assistance took place through a significant number of cooperating partners. Cooperating partners varied in terms of capacity and size. Some were international organizations benefitting from other funding, while others were local actors for whom WFP is a major funder. The cooperating partners were expected to consider the local dynamics that could hinder a relevant response to the population's needs. To reduce the risk of fraud, WFP separated roles amongst cooperating partners and emphasised reporting. The cooperating partners doing the targeting were not the same as those delivering the assistance. National non-governmental organizations external to the community were tasked with targeting, under WFP supervision. The selection of households is a three-phased process starting with geographical targeting of territories categorized as IPC phase 3 or 4 followed by selection of villages based on displacement status of residents. For household selection, door-to-door assessments are used to determine the vulnerability status of households and in turn select beneficiaries. In Ituri they relied on information provided by local authorities, and the use of local community workers (*réseau communautaire*, known locally as "ReCo") to carry out household-level vulnerability assessments. The reliability of cooperating partners to ensure inclusion of the most vulnerable and avoid inclusion of non-vulnerable households was considered variable.

199. Across all sites visited by this evaluation, community members reported that if they were absent on the day the household vulnerability assessments took place, they would be excluded for the duration of the programme. They stated it was not possible to be included on the beneficiary lists once vulnerability

⁹⁴ WFP DRC Annual Country Report 2018, Draft WFP DRC Annual Country Report 2019.

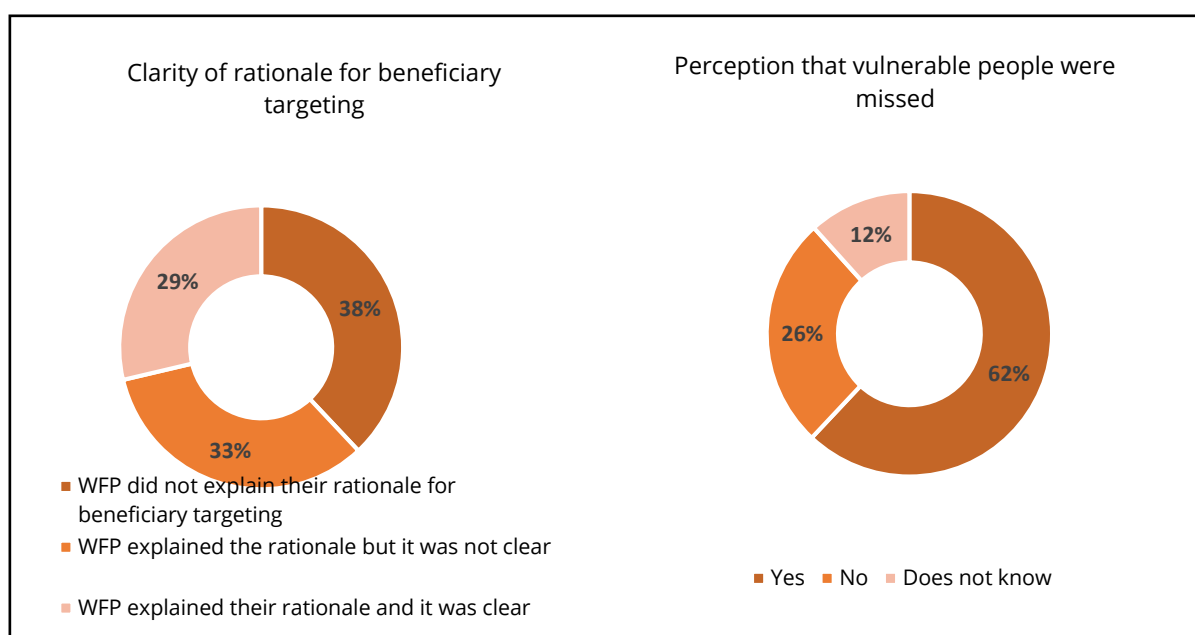
⁹⁵ Draft WFP Annual Country Report, 2019.

assessments in the community had been completed even if a complaint was made to raise a perceived error.⁹⁶

200. **The CSPE community survey shows that, at the household level, there was considerable lack of clarity regarding beneficiary targeting and a perceived lack of fairness in the way that assistance was provided.** The majority of respondents reported that they were not provided with any or with clear explanations for the way in which WFP was targeting beneficiaries. The cooperating partners themselves stated that due to a time lag between the time when one cooperating partner came to establish the lists of the most vulnerable, and another cooperating partner came to deliver the assistance, the conditions and even the population itself could have changed.

201. Similarly, almost two thirds of respondents reported that vulnerable people did not receive any support (Figure 23). This implies that the concept of vulnerability, as defined by WFP, may not have been well understood, targeted or aligned with community perceptions of vulnerability.

Figure 23: Target population perceptions on the clarity of targeting and vulnerability of those not selected

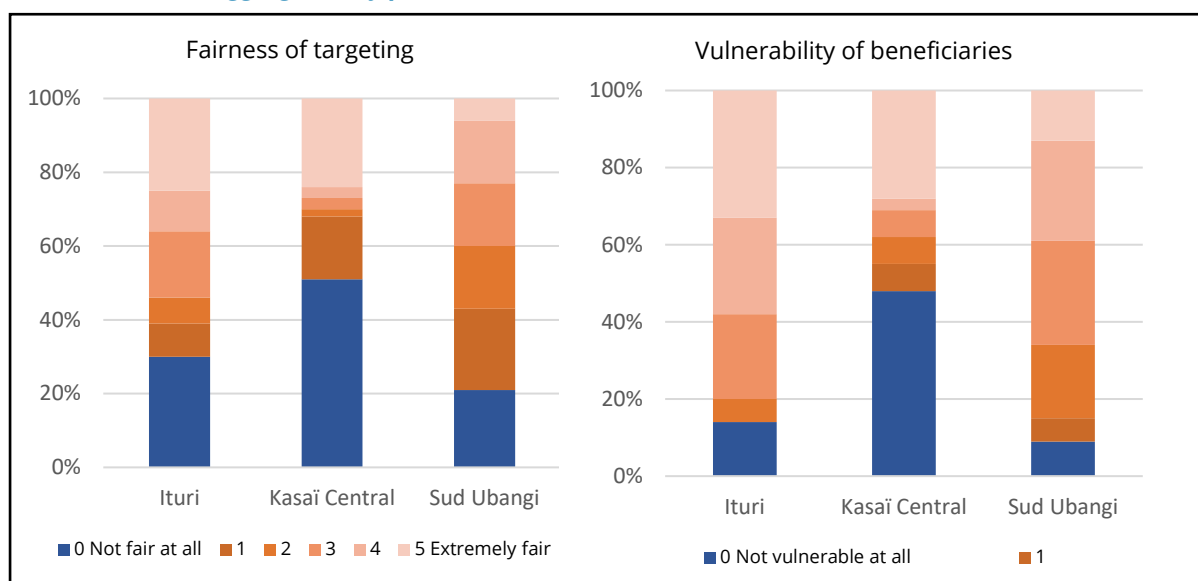


Source: CSPE community survey

202. The CSPE community survey showed that 50 percent of those surveyed gave a score of 0 or 1 out of 5 (scores ranging from 0 = “not fair at all” to 5 = “totally fair”) for perceived fairness of registration/targeting processes (Figure 24). Disaggregation by age and gender did not elucidate any different trends in the responses to fairness of the beneficiary selection processes. A similar number of male and female beneficiaries and beneficiaries of different age categories stated that selection was unfair. Respondents from post-conflict and resilience settings seem to have the highest perception of unfair targeting. The extent to which respondents felt that targeting processes were fair closely aligned with the extent to which they felt that the beneficiaries reached were vulnerable (Figure 24). By extension, tools used to identify those considered to be most vulnerable are least aligned with community perceptions of vulnerability in contexts that fall outside the core operational functions of WFP, notably in post-conflict and resilience contexts rather than emergency contexts. The relationship between perceived fairness of targeting and vulnerability is considered notable, given the potential for unfair targeting to trigger or compound community tensions. Mainstreaming of conflict-sensitive approaches requires that targeting be aligned with community perceptions as well as needs.

⁹⁶ For instance, in Kananga, a community member reported being in hospital during the vulnerability assessments, resulting in the exclusion of her family from the beneficiary list. Similarly, IDPs in Telega (Ituri) reported that beneficiary targeting was flawed by the fact that the head of household might be absent on the day of the assessment.

Figure 24: Target population perceptions on fairness of registration process and vulnerability of beneficiaries, disaggregated by province



Source: CSPE community survey

203. **Sick and disabled people tend to be excluded from WFP assistance.** The ICSP does not give precise criteria of long-term disability for inclusion into programmes, and monitoring reports provide no data related to these groups although disability is included in vulnerability assessments. Targeting of people with HIV/TB treatment was limited to malnourished patients who lived in an area covered by WFP food assistance. People with disabilities were frequently cited in the CSPE community survey as one of the principal groups who were not reached by WFP programming. This included unconditional cash and food distribution programmes, whereby people with disabilities often couldn't access distribution sites, as well as conditional forms of assistance in the resilience programmes, whereby cash/food assistance for assets activities were often dependent on being able-bodied.

2.3.3 To what extent were WFP activities cost-efficient in the delivery of assistance?

204. **Summary of finding:** WFP was able to mobilize substantive resources by the end of 2019, but unable to disburse all the available funds, mainly due to their late availability. The direct support cost ratio has been hard to forecast due to unexpected local implementation costs. Food and cash distribution costs have decreased between 2018 and 2019 and were, respectively, on par or slightly lower than in comparator countries with similarly challenging contexts.

205. **WFP was able to mobilize 82 percent of the required resources over 2018-2019** (Table 4).

Table 4: WFP resource needs and mobilized resources

	Year	
	2018	2019
Needs-based plan (resource needs) (in USD)	520,977,939	575,228,362
Available resources (in USD)	415,722,706 (80% of needs-based plan)	485,309,953 (84% of needs-based plan)

Source: Annual country report - internal version, DRC Country Portfolio Budget 2019 (2018-2020), annual financial overview for the period 1 January to 31 December 2019

206. **There was a considerable underspending of available resources.** In 2019, 84 percent of required resources were mobilized (about USD 485 million) but only 57 percent of available resources (about USD 275 million) were disbursed, down from an already low 60 percent in 2018 (Table 5). The main reasons identified for this underspending were late confirmation of funding and late transfer of food commodities from donors. For example, in 2018, almost 60 percent of the required funds were received during the last quarter of the

year⁹⁷ resulting in the majority being spent in 2019 rather than 2018. Other reasons for underspending included:

- More use of cash-based transfers, which would have reduced direct support costs
- Appearance of shocks in non-targeted areas (for example, in Kasai and Yumbi).

Table 5: Budget cost structure (USD)

	Year			
	2018		2019	
	Available	Expenditure	Available	Expenditure
Total direct costs	396,962,843	231,289,059	469,082,174	258,817,887
Direct support costs	14,693,590	7,175,183	14,877,111	12,395,671
Indirect support cost	18,759,863	18,759,863	16,288,812	16,288,812
Overall budget	415,722,706	250,048,922 (60% of available)	485,309,953	275,045,666 (57% of available)
Direct support costs/ total direct costs ratio	3.7%	3.1%	3.2%	4.8%

Source: IRM analytics platform- annual country report - internal version, DRC Country Portfolio Budget 2019 (2018-2020), annual financial overview for 2018 and 2019

207. **Direct support costs have been difficult to forecast.** The ratio of direct support cost to total direct costs has increased to about 5 percent in 2019 from 3 percent in 2018 (Table 5). “Direct support costs” are costs at the country level that directly support transfer of assistance and implementation of programmes – they are proportionate to the scale of activities in the country. In DRC these costs have been hard to forecast accurately, as the implementation context sometimes imposed additional expenses not foreseen during planning or even when signing the field-level agreements with cooperating partners. This is, for example, the case for road rehabilitation works in South Kivu, which required the use of machines in addition to the high intensity manual labour initially programmed under the food assistance for assets approach.

208. **Costs per beneficiary.** The evaluation carried out an analysis of costs per beneficiary for the overall ICSP and specifically for strategic outcomes 1, 2, and 3 for which beneficiary information was available and where direct assistance was provided. Table 6 summarizes the data.

Table 6: Costs per beneficiary analysis (USD)

	Year			
	2018		2019	
	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved
Beneficiaries overall	5,639,563	5,221,065 (92.6%)	7,711,861	6,896,977 (89%)
Overall budget (available resources)	415,722,706	261,695,225 (62%)	485,309,953.2	275,045,666 (57%)
Overall intervention cost per beneficiary	73.7	50.12	62.9	39.9
Beneficiaries SO1	3,790,333	4,643,924 (122.5%)	5,867,557	5,847,415 (99.6%)
Expenditures SO1	250,505,232	177,860,527 (71%)	282,936,565	167,757,350 (59%)
Cost per beneficiary for SO1	66.1	38.3	48	28.7
Beneficiaries SO2	1,201,430	577,141 (60.3%)	1,620,142	1,005,397 (62%)

⁹⁷ According to WFP staff interviews

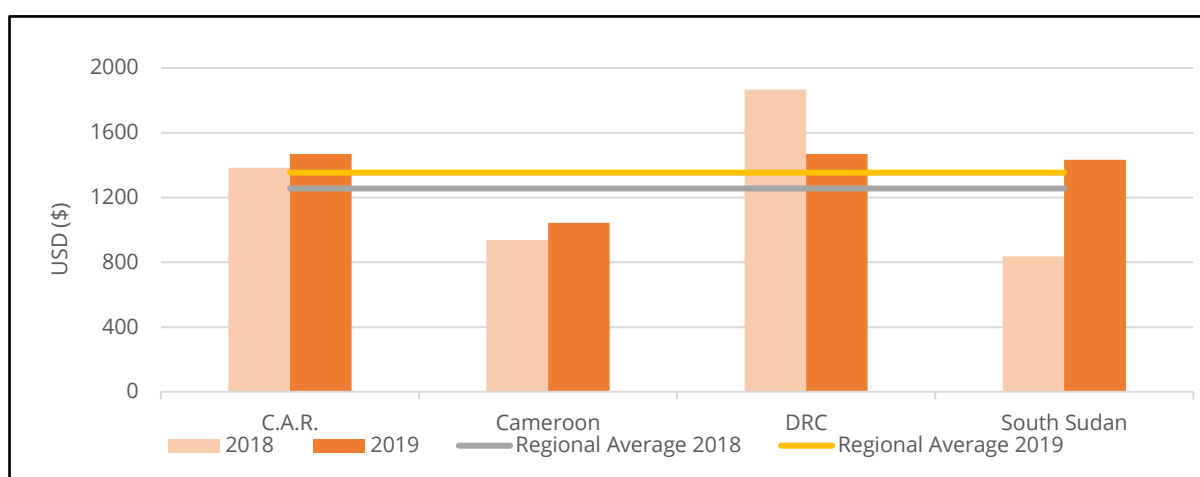
Expenditures SO2	53,752,795	26,134,924 (48%)	59,385,803	29,134,698 (49%)
Cost per beneficiary for SO2	44.7	45.2	66.7	50
Beneficiaries SO3	647,800	No data	224,164	44,165 (20%)
Expenditures SO3	32,301,482	2,681,229 (8%)	40,712,809	10,322,466 (25%)
Cost per beneficiary for SO3	49.8	-	181.6	233.7

Source: Annual country report - internal version, DRC Country Portfolio Budget 2019 (2018-2020), annual financial overview for the period 1 January to 31 December 2019

209. The overall number of beneficiaries reached in 2018 exceeded the planned target (as per the ICSP) by 9 percent while for 2019, 89 percent of planned target beneficiaries were reached (as per Budget Revision 5). For both years, the overall cost per beneficiary (for all outcomes) was considerably lower than forecast, which can largely be attributed to reduced rations per beneficiary. The overall cost per beneficiary has decreased between 2018 and 2019 by approximately 20 percent due to a considerable decrease in cost per beneficiary under Strategic Outcome 1 (emergency food assistance) under which the vast majority of beneficiaries were reached. This is due to decreased rations, in particular for cash-based transfers, with cash transferred per beneficiary reduced by 41 percent (from USD 49 to USD 29) and increased efficiencies in food distributions as discussed below. Cost per beneficiary was considerably higher for Strategic Outcome 3, which is to be expected from resilience-related activities, as these span a longer time period and imply more technical assistance costs.

210. **Food distribution costs have decreased but remained comparable to countries with similar contexts to DRC.** Figure 25 shows a decrease of almost USD 400 in the cost per metric ton of food distributed in 2019 relative to 2018. Strengthened supply chains and increased purchasing from local producers, thus reducing the transporting costs, led to food transfer efficiencies in 2019 relative to 2018. This was also a result of the increasing use of contractual arrangements whereby transport risks were borne by the cooperating partners. As such, the cost of spoiled or lost stocks was absorbed by partners, increasing efficiencies. In spite of these efforts, the cost of food transfers remained similar to countries with similar extreme contextual challenges such as Central African Republic and South Sudan.

Figure 25: Ratio of total expenditure on food distributed relative to metric tons of food distributed

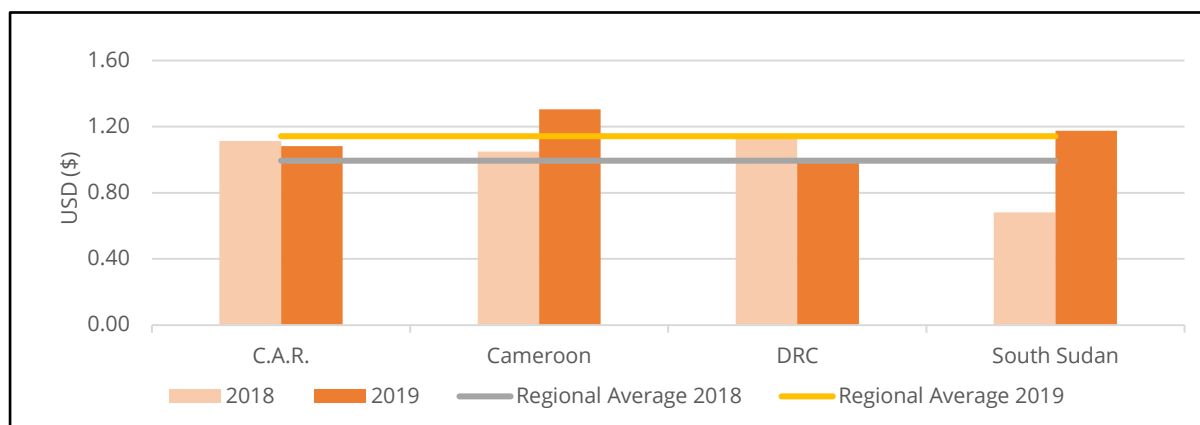


Source: WFP financial data (WINGS)

211. **Similarly, the efficiency of cash transfer programmes increased in 2019 relative to 2018** with the cost per dollar transferred decreasing from USD 1.13 to USD 1.01 (Figure 26). This suggests that in 2019, almost all of the resources used for cash transfer programmes were transferred directly to beneficiaries as a result of economies of scale. This figure should be treated with caution and is probably indicative of some misallocation in reporting, as programming costs, such as workforce, limit the extent to which all resources can be directly transferred. In spite of this, Figure 26 shows that from an efficiency perspective, DRC

performed relatively well compared to countries with similar challenges. However, it remains important to assess whether certain costs, such as transport, have been transferred in part to beneficiaries.

Figure 26: Ratio of total expenditure on cash transfers relative to value of transfers



Source: WFP financial data (WINGS)

2.3.4 To what extent were alternative, more cost-effective measures considered?

212. **Maintaining lower costs was one of the prevailing concerns of WFP within the ICSP and has been successfully implemented.** Various measures have been taken to promote programme efficiency. WFP has undertaken cost analysis of various options resulting in efficiency gains. Cost saving measures implemented by WFP in DRC included:

- **A greater use of cash-based transfers to reduce operational costs.** This included the proposed pilot of a mobile money programme in South Kivu in March 2020. Although mobile money transfers are currently more expensive than cash transfers, there is scope for reduced costs as scale grows. The decision to select the appropriate assistance modalities (cash-based transfer or food) was based on a preliminary analysis of the operational costs and timelines, in addition to market analyses
- **Mitigating risk of fraud by separating distribution-related operations and by introducing the System for Cash Operations (SCOPE) beneficiary registration system** for both emergency and resilience activities, allowing the elimination of multiple registration of the same recipients
- **Reducing transport costs and transport-related losses by hiring local transporters and making cooperating partners responsible for losses.** This allowed interventions to be implemented more rapidly, including in areas that are difficult to access. Cooperating partners were responsible for loss of goods, as is stipulated in the field-level agreements. This encourages them to better monitor goods during their journey between the warehouse and the distribution site. As a result, food losses by transporters have been minimal, which is remarkable considering the operating environment
- **Promotion of income-generating activities** other than agriculture for the beneficiaries of the resilience programme
- **Pooling with other United Nations agencies,** making it possible to save resources, including sharing of sub-office spaces to reduce rent and utilities bills, as well as sharing beneficiary lists to reduce the number of assessments needed
- **Direct involvement of beneficiaries in resilience interventions as labour for the rehabilitation of agricultural feeder roads** enabling two different needs to be met with the same budgetary envelope, increasing access to markets and improving the beneficiaries' direct incomes
- **Requesting cooperating partners to contribute to intervention budgets** (20 percent to 25 percent of the intervention budget, particularly in the case of nutrition). This saved costs for WFP, promoted the responsibility of cooperating partners and encouraged them to take better ownership of their actions and to better understand the importance of resource management
- **Attention to the costs borne by other stakeholders in the context of joint interventions, to avoid duplication and ensure an efficient allocation of resources.** For example, in the context of

the Ebola response, this resulted in an adjustment in plans for food assistance for people on treatment who had initially been considered by WFP but for whom WHO was, at the same time, invoiced by the Ministry of Health.

2.4 WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT EXPLAIN WFP PERFORMANCE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT HAS MADE THE STRATEGIC SHIFT EXPECTED BY THE INTERIM COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN?

2.4.1 To what extent did WFP analyse or use existing evidence on the hunger challenges, the food security and nutrition issues in the country to develop the ICSP?

213. **Summary of findings:** Food security assessments are well integrated into the ICSP with needs matched by prioritization of activities. The “Cost of Hunger” study launched in 2016 is also well reflected in ICSP outcomes by emphasizing the need for a focus on nutritional status in relation to chronic and acute malnutrition. ICSP design was further informed by information from the Government and United Nations agencies and other international and national organizations.

214. **WFP has made extensive use of data and assessments concerning the food security situation.** The recommendations of those assessment are reflected in the ICSP and the targeting of interventions. WFP is the co-lead agency on food security in DRC and, overall, produces the most evidence and analyses in this area, such as the CFSVA, Crop and Food Security Mission (CFSAM), IPC, Cost of Hunger study, market analysis, and emergency food security assessments.

215. **The most recent CFSVA for DRC informed the ICSP, and WFP used IPC reports and lower-level assessments to target its interventions.** The 2014 CFSVA provided mapping of food crises in the five provinces in which it was carried out, assessed their causes, and recommended strategies to meet the needs of the people affected by food insecurity, including: (a) promotion of agricultural production by smallholder farmers; (b) promotion of agricultural innovation; (c) food safety nets (conditional cash transfer, school canteen services, pension systems, etc.); and (d) promotion of microfinance (credits and savings).⁹⁸ The ICSP strategic outcomes and interventions are in line with the recommended actions from the CFSVA to the extent that these fall within the WFP mandate. Consecutive IPC reports and lower-level assessments have allowed WFP to target its interventions to areas and communities most in need.

216. **Key issues highlighted by the Cost of Hunger study are also reflected in the ICSP outcomes.** The Cost of Hunger study was launched in 2016. It highlighted that 31.5 percent of under 5 child mortality was due to undernourishment. It also analysed the consequences of chronic malnutrition on children's academic performance and on adult productivity, showing that it can reduce gross national product by about 4.56 percent. Among the recommendations made, several concerned the need to support multi-sectoral national policies and strategic plans, as well as to advocate and communicate on these key issues with the Government. Another recommendation concerned the need to promote food security and nutrition good practices at community levels and mobilize them to take appropriate action. In the ICSP, WFP has integrated these key national issues well.

217. **Information from the Government and United Nations agencies and other international and national organizations were also a major source of information in the ICSP design.** Context and perspectives analyses, crisis alerts and data collected by these organizations enabled WFP to adjust target areas and activities to respond to changing needs.

218. **In 2019, WFP conducted multi-sectoral analyses and assessments, including a baseline survey and three-pronged approach analysis.** This included integrated context analysis with other United Nations agencies at the provincial level, focusing seasonal livelihood programming at territorial level and community-based participatory planning at community level. WFP reports that implementation, based on assessment findings, will need to be further scaled up in 2020.

⁹⁸ The 2014 CFSVA was designed and led by WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Nutrition Programme, the National Institute of Statistics, FAO, UNICEF, NGOs, national and international members of the food security cluster. Based on the survey of 24,884 rural households in 10 provinces, survey data for the 2014 CFSVA were mainly collected in 2012.

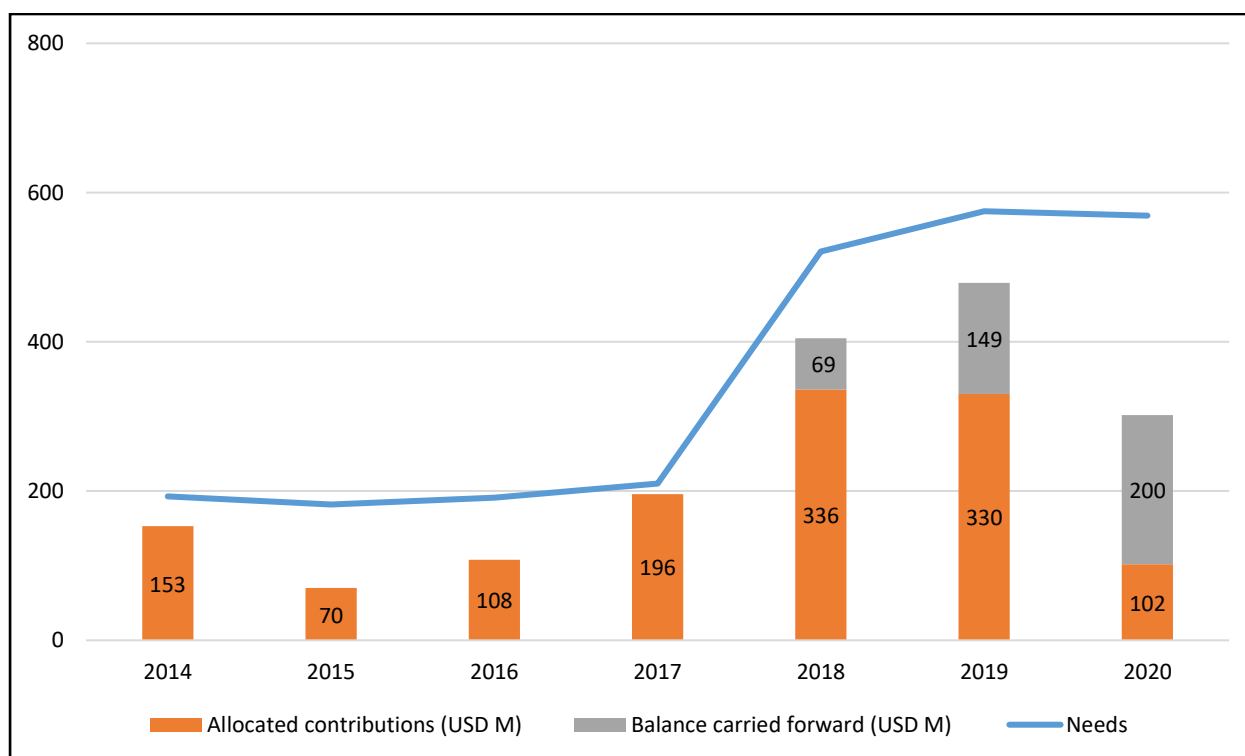
2.4.2 To what extent has WFP been able to mobilize adequate, predictable and flexible resources to finance the ICSP?

219. **Summary of findings:** The ICSP has provided WFP a single frame of reference for dialogue with its donors. The donors have been highly attentive to the operational needs of WFP. They have responded by providing funding in line with the increase in target areas and populations in need. At the same time, donor earmarking of funding has significantly increased compared to the pre-ICSP period, even if it has again decreased for 2019 compared to 2018. There has been a strong shift in funding from resilience to crisis response, but donors met showed an interest in continuing to promote resilience and longer-term approaches in their funding, especially for resilience programmes that adopt innovative approaches. WFP has also been experiencing increased donor scrutiny in reporting. This reflects broader trends, globally, calling for a focus on outcome-level evidence.

220. **The donors based in DRC have been highly attentive to the findings emerging from assessments and the operational needs of WFP.** They have responded by providing funding in line with the increase in target areas and populations in need. While there are about ten substantial and constant donors in DRC (including United Nations pooled funds), there is also a significant number of other contributions. These are difficult to plan for, and it is only due to the significant donor base (60 donors are listed in total over the evaluation period) that a certain degree of predictability is achieved. The most important challenge is that of relatively large contributions to specific regions or programmes, such as the above-mentioned contribution from Germany to WFP, UNICEF and FAO, which in effect led to shifts in the planned level of effort in a single year. The ICSP formulation, however, has allowed these to be absorbed relatively well.

221. **Funding has increased to respond to increasing needs, but a growing proportion of funding is being carried forward from one year to the next.** Figure 27 shows the evolution of WFP DRC financing. It reflects, in particular, the increase in needs in 2018 subsequent to the arrival of Central African Republic refugees and the conflicts in Kasai and Tanganyika. Then, in 2019, there was the Ebola crisis. It also shows an increasing balance carried forward from previous years, with close to 38 percent of funding received in 2019 being carried over to 2020. As discussed before, funds and in-kind donations were often received late in the year, which, combined with delays in implementation, resulted in increasing sums being carried forward into the following year.

Figure 27: Financial resources versus needs by year

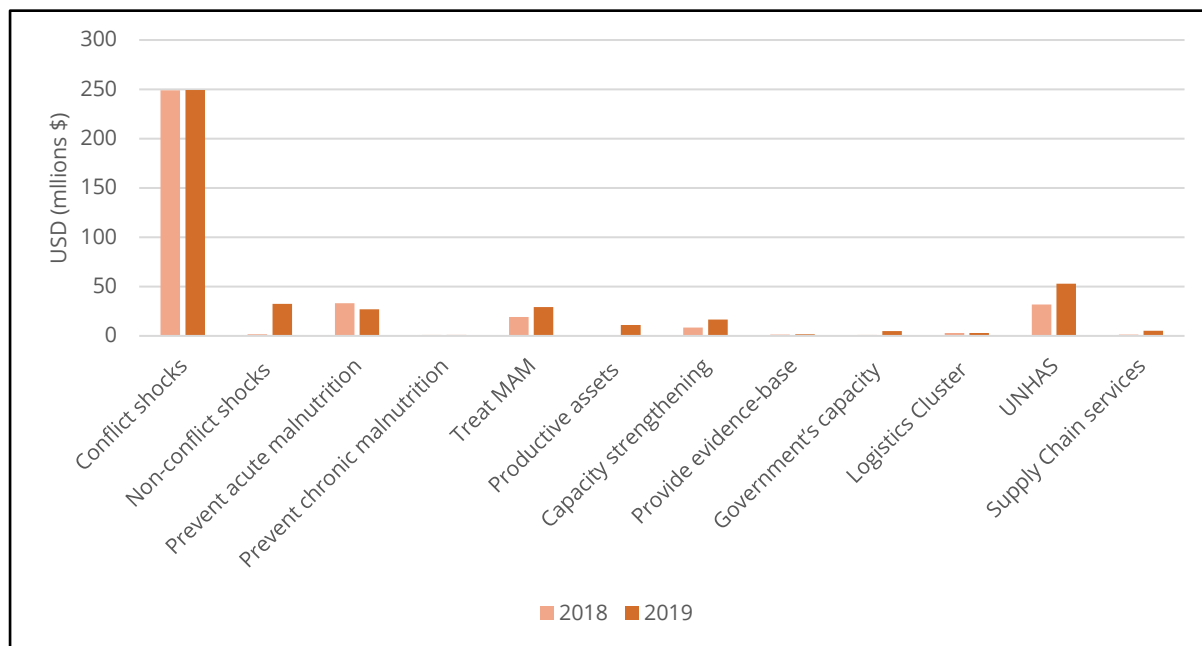


Source: the FACTory- the FACTory shop (CSP-project details)

222. Interviews with various stakeholders indicate that there have been broader stabilization efforts and support for a successful political transition, namely those pursued through interventions by MONUSCO and the World Bank. These factors are likely to have contributed to increasing levels of funding provided to WFP over the life of the ICSP.

223. The occurrence of the Ebola crisis and the consecutive request to WFP to support interventions triggered increased funding for non-conflict shocks and UNHAS air support services in 2019, as can be seen in Figure 28.

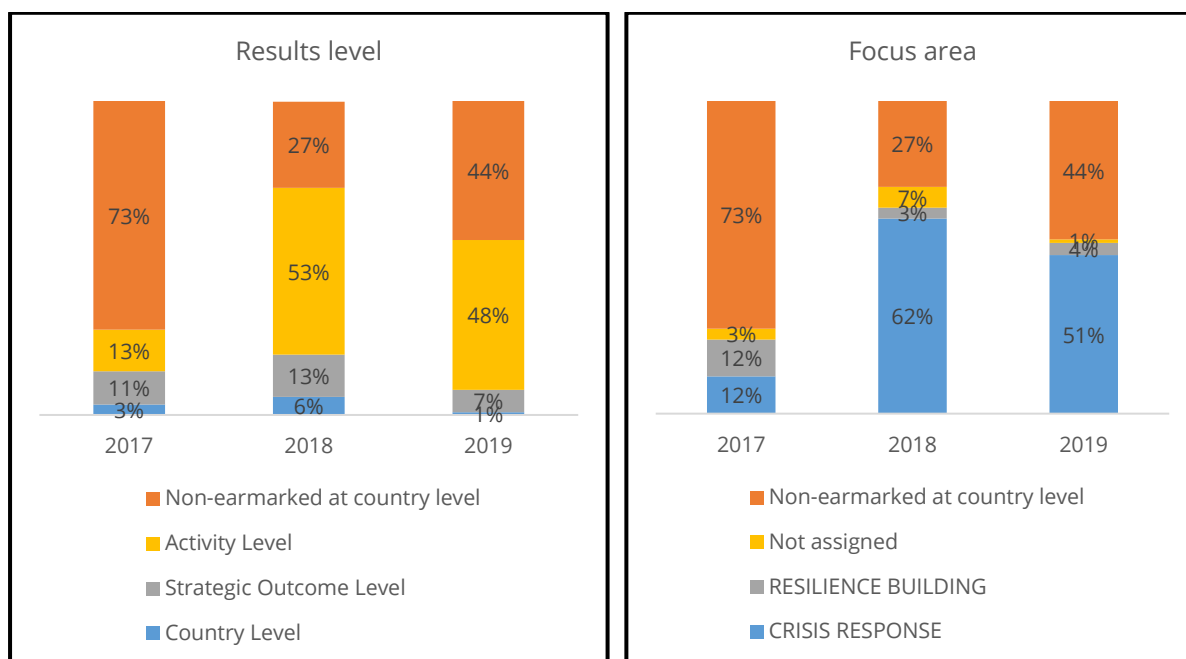
Figure 28: Financial resources available for each type of programming activity



Source: WFP financial data (WINGS)

224. **The ICSP does not appear to have led to more flexible funding agreements with the main donors in DRC.** Since the ICSP period, donor earmarking has considerably increased at the activity level, in particular for crisis response activities, reducing the country office's flexibility to assign country-specific funding amongst different activities within the same strategic outcome or within the overall ICSP (Figure 29). This level of earmarking contributes to delays in programming, particularly in response to changes in context. Renegotiation of funds and goods earmarked for specific locations or activities can be lengthy and reduce the ability of WFP to be reactive.

Figure 29: Evolution of earmarked funding according to results level and focus area



Source: WFP financial data (WFP FACTory)

225. **Donors expressed a continued interest for non-emergency assistance activities** even though funding earmarked for resilience-building activities has decreased relative to funding earmarked for crisis-response activities since the ICSP (Figure 29). Evaluation interviews showed a considerable willingness amongst the donors in DRC to support resilience using innovative approaches, such as providing more food assistance for assets-type resources for the rehabilitation of infrastructure (such as small roads) and more broadly to support farmers’ technical and organizational capacities, as well as food-producing agricultural value chains, in partnership with other organizations such as FAO. There is also a stated intent to expand the funding allocated for “transition” type modalities (for example, greater use of cash-based transfers). Some donors, such as Germany, Sweden and Canada, have specifically designed large-scale programmes that are deliberately framed to target resilience-building programmes and the triple nexus. This provides WFP with opportunities to expand its resilience interventions and to better contextualize proposed actions.

226. **WFP has been experiencing increased donor scrutiny in reporting.** This reflects broader global trends calling for a focus on outcome-level evidence. This increased emphasis on reporting and evidence is due to the higher levels of funding WFP receives. For example, it received 80 percent of the requested amount from consolidated appeals, as compared to the 40 percent that other agencies were able to mobilize. The increased emphasis on evidence of outcomes achieved could also result in calls for renewed policy dialogue within DRC. The direct involvement of many donors, such as ECHO and DFID in specific programmes, such as monetary transfers, has also created new opportunities, for example, logistical outreach, and also for linkages within the triple nexus.

2.4.3 To what extent did the ICSP lead to partnerships and collaborations with other actors that positively influenced performance and results?

227. **Summary of findings:** WFP has worked in partnership with a wide array of organizations, including the Government of DRC, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and the private sector. The budget dedicated to government capacity-building partnerships has been considerably reduced and therefore the added value of the ICSP in terms of improving the nature, practices and results of partnerships still needs to be realized. The partnerships have remained similar to what they were before the ICSP. Partnerships with the Government, particularly at national level, remain weak whilst provincial level collaboration is stronger.

228. Under the ICSP, WFP worked in partnership with the following categories of partners:

- **State actors at national and provincial level**, as an implementer for asset building and rehabilitation and, at times, contracting local authorities to build agricultural service roads; making contributions in carrying out EFSA data collection, post-distribution monitoring and market assessments (with CAID); and being a key partner in food quality certification of food items (with the Congolese Office of Control)
- **United Nations Agencies**, in particular FAO and UNHCR, for implementation of activities including support for small producers to promote resilience and assistance to refugees in camps under the management of UNHCR. UNICEF is a key partner in nutrition-related interventions. A triple partnership between FAO, UNICEF and WFP in South Kivu emerged to better address chronic malnutrition
- **Private companies**, for example with banks for cash-based transfers; acting as contractors, in particular for enabling access to rural areas; transport of food to warehouses and to distribution sites; and the provision of cash to beneficiaries
- **Non-governmental organizations** as implementing partners (cooperating partners).

229. **The budget dedicated to government capacity-building partnerships (under SO4 of the ICSP) has been considerably reduced** from USD 36 million in 2018 to USD 6 million in 2019. The cause for this decline in budget is attributed by WFP personnel to a dissatisfaction over inter-agency collaboration and a lack of interest by state agencies in capacity-building initiatives and engagement, compounded by a lack of donor funding.

230. **As WFP has been implementing its programmes, further synergies and various forms of collaboration have been triggered.** For example, there has been collaboration for assessments that feed into the IPC, and technical assistance on strengthening the revenue collection of the *Régie des Voies Aériennes* at airports.

231. **WFP has struggled to engage with the Government at the national level** due to the political transition that has affected the country over the evaluation period. However, at provincial levels there is considerable cooperation with local authorities through various collaborations to deliver activities. Responsibility for cultivating partnerships is allocated to specific WFP staff at the country office. These staff members combine this function with other roles, hence there is no staff dedicated to partnerships alone. Nevertheless broad statutory arrangements create a solid foundation for cooperation, an example of which would be the fact that WFP has benefitted from tax exemptions from the Government for humanitarian supplies.⁹⁹ This is combined with voluntary partnerships such as support for strengthened safety around airstrips across the country.

232. **There was considerable demand for a structured form of collaboration with local authorities and cooperating partners.** However, this has not been articulated in the ICSP, which focuses on partnerships with United Nations agencies and national Government. Whilst there were ample indications of collaboration and partnerships, data and trends related to this were not systematically recorded. The sub-offices were driving a significant number of decisions on engagement with local partners, while the country office had limited capacity to frame these into a broader workplan that would reflect the Strategic Outcome 4 aspirations.

233. **The ICSP did not have a strong impact on partnerships and collaborations with the central Government.** The latter was not directly involved in the implementation of WFP interventions nor was it formally involved in the process of formulating the ICSP. However, at technical levels, the Congolese Office of Control has been one of the key players in the quality assurance of interventions, particularly through the certification of the quality of food to be distributed to beneficiaries. WFP has also undertaken capacity-building activities for government staff such as the focal point for the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children. This has led to better understanding of the relationship between gender and nutrition issues in the whole Ministry. Government offices also lack capacities, tools and basic infrastructure such as computers and access to emails. A strong partnership has not yet been developed with the Ministry of Social and Humanitarian

⁹⁹ WFP is exempt from paying taxes based on its status as a United Nations agency as per the Privileges and Immunities Act and the Basic Agreement between WFP and the Congolese Government. The Basic Agreement was established in 1968.

Affairs, even though this was intended in the ICSP for nutrition activities. More information can be found in the section on collaboration on food and nutrition security policy (paragraph 83).

234. **The ICSP does not seem to have changed the way WFP was previously working with United Nations partners.** Collaborations have continued with major United Nations humanitarian and development partners such as UNHCR, FAO and UNICEF, but this does not seem to be a consequence of the formulation of the ICSP. Rather, it appears to be the result of engagements over several years, and the overall willingness to work together to take better advantage of each other's strengths and to respond to donors' requests.

235. **The ICSP does not appear to have contributed to the creation of strategic partnerships within the framework of global planning, although it has facilitated these at activity level.** Prior to the implementation of the ICSP, WFP was working with various partners to better operationalize plans and reach beneficiaries. This has been a key WFP intervention approach in the country. A broader reflection on strategic partnerships does not seem to have been carried out in a formal and explicit manner at the time of the formulation of the ICSP.

236. **Partnerships with the private sector beyond farmer cooperatives and purely contractual relationships have not been developed.** In the development of local food production, WFP has created partnerships with cooperatives and small enterprises, but has not developed partnerships with private-sector actors interested in promoting rural development, which is where farmers often face difficulties in selling their crops. The evaluation team met mining companies, for example, that sought to promote farming on a large scale to help address issues of population influx and unemployment. WFP could support such initiatives to boost agricultural value chains and increase the quality and quantity of locally purchased food.

237. **WFP tended to view non-government organizations as implementing actors rather than partners.** WFP has not defined adequate mechanisms for discussion and consultation with its strategic and other partners on the measures required to improve the quality of its services. It was instead seen to impose its decisions. The introduction of multi-year field-level agreements has decreased the rigidity of the arrangements, while at the same time short field-level agreement periods make planning and retaining high capacity staff difficult for the cooperating partner. One larger partner in particular stated in writing that "as a cooperating partner, (the organization) would expect some influence and input on geographic scope, beneficiary selection criteria and modality but this is rarely the case". Cooperating partners are not consulted for choice of food assistance modalities nor for the setting of targetting criteria, which are strategic decisions taken by WFP alone. Selected non-governmental organization partners were, however, consulted for the preparation of the new country strategic plan.

2.4.4 To what extent did the ICSP provide greater flexibility in dynamic operational contexts and how did it affect results?

238. **Summary of findings:** The ICSP did not resolve all the challenges that confront WFP responses in the context of a fragile country such as DRC and with heavily earmarked funding. It did, however, provide the flexibility to define country needs in a comprehensive and articulate manner. There were problems of poorly structured information flows through WFP functions, which may have impeded well-informed decision making and adaptation of WFP programming based on available data.

239. **WFP has been flexible in its response to changing operational needs within DRC.** The ability of WFP to conduct various types of food security, emergency, nutrition, and market assessments allows the organization to be up-to-date in terms of data on needs, and to define associated interventions appropriate to the multi-crisis, fast-moving scenarios that prevail in DRC. The lead position of WFP on conducting qualitative context and data analysis provides good opportunities to justify propositions for flexible interventions.

240. **Moreover, WFP has taken into consideration requests from the communities concerned, and in many instances was able to modify its interventions to respond to these needs.** As an illustration, in Nord-Ubangui, WFP has conducted a market analysis, which concluded that WFP should continue distributing food in-kind in refugee camps to avoid inflation in food prices on the local market. However, the pressure exerted by the refugees (they refused food and in-kind distributions for four months) in preference for cash transfers compelled WFP to modify the modality despite its own market analysis. One should, however, note that as WFP had predicted, this led to an increase in market prices, which still creates tensions. Similarly,

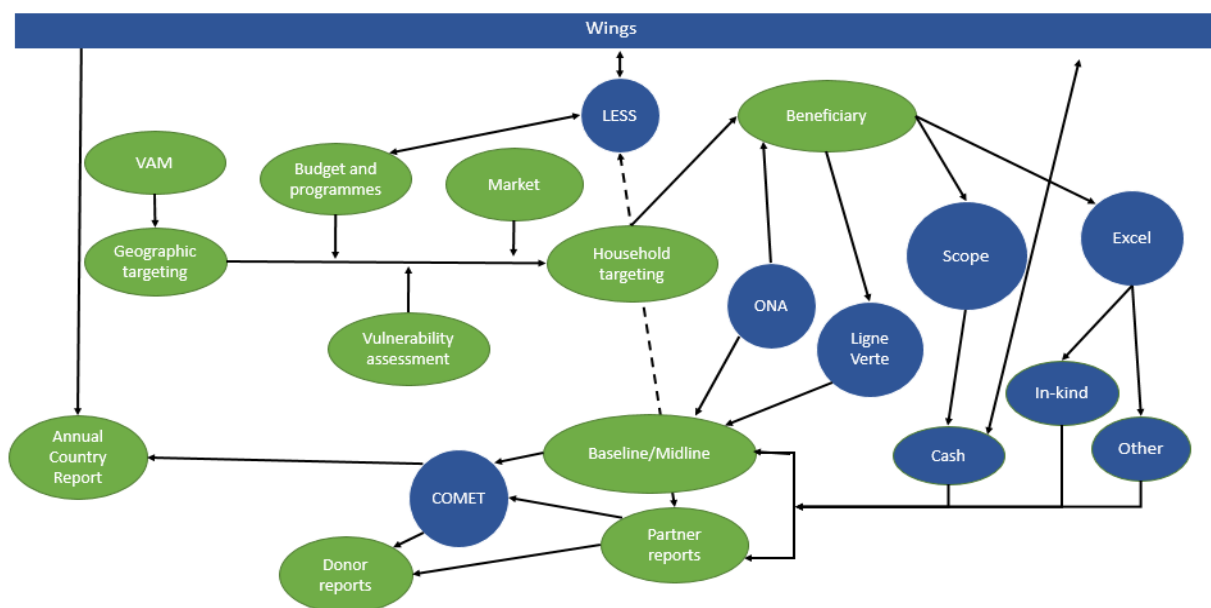
following consultations with beneficiaries in South Kivu, value vouchers were transitioned to unrestricted cash.

241. WFP was also able to respond quickly to the floods that occurred in November 2019 based on a rapid needs analysis. The aid was provided within one month after the natural disaster occurred, in a timely manner, in the form of cash transfer, as requested by affected communities.

242. **There remained a significant constraint on the ability of WFP to adapt its programming due to the traditional problem of excessive donor earmarking.** The ICSP has not reduced this issue (paragraph 224). Some donors appreciate the ability of WFP to absorb projects originating from donor strategies within the broader framework set by the ICSP. However, it has been difficult to shift resources away from ‘spotlight’ emergencies, towards less well understood emergencies. This was the case for Kasai in 2017-2018, which required considerable lobbying on the part of WFP, as the donor focus remained fully on the east of the country.

243. **WFP monitoring systems did not allow for effective programme-data driven decision making and adaptation.** In line with corporate processes, the country office uses multiple platforms including the WFP Information Network and Global System (WINGS), the Country Office Monitoring and Assessment Tool (COMET), SCOPE and the Logistics Execution Support System (LESS), which produce vast amounts of information. However, in the absence of data analytics and information pooling, it has been difficult for WFP to understand its performance and the emerging gaps. Figure 30 shows the various data sources and reporting requirements in relation to each other.

Figure 30: Data systems and processes



Source: CSPE

244. **Data has not been systematically shared or discussed with programme managers, ultimately undermining the possibility for data-led programme adaptation.** Programme data was reported in post-distribution monitoring carried out by monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams. Monitoring and evaluation focal points described writing an average of 12 post-distribution monitoring reports per quarter of 15-20 pages in length. This was considered by some programme managers to be a very large volume of information that was not systematically analysed and therefore of limited use for programming. A significant proportion of quantitative data was collected for donor reporting rather than for programme management.

245. **Price market assessments were conducted regularly and helped prevent potential inflationary impacts of cash-based programming on local markets.** Price market assessments were conducted by CAID, using mobile phone communications from market actors. These were carried out at call centres in Kinshasa and were validated by local representatives. CAID described having a strong working relationship with WFP. This has included working with WFP to validate results and strengthen methodologies. Importantly, as CAID is an independent public institution, it is not associated with any given ministry or

minister. As such, it is less at risk to changing government structures. As WFP grows its cash programming it is essential to have timely and quality price data.

2.4.5 What are the other factors that can explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the ICSP?

246. **Summary of key findings:** WFP has a highly decentralized operation and at times lines of accountability are unclear. Staff shortages have a negative impact on timeliness and monitoring of operations. Additionally, there has been a lack of evaluations and audits that could help to facilitate reflections and provide remedial measures. There is also a limited awareness of the WFP risk management system, primarily the so-called “first line of defense”, and use of the risk matrix.

247. **The ICSP is being implemented in an extremely fragile context.** WFP has been deploying increasing resources to respond to growing needs. However, despite its achievements in the outreach and delivery of assistance, the evaluation noted a number of factors that have affected operations.

248. **The WFP operation was highly decentralized, with operations led by the sub-offices, and at times unclear lines of accountability and limited information flows.** Personnel were expected to address multiple issues, including those of a geographical, technical and thematic nature. The prevalent matrix structure that created multiple reporting lines was compounded by difficulties in communication (including severe challenges with internet connectivity).

249. **The country office has been affected by staff shortages and has met difficulties in deploying staff with appropriate levels of experience and expertise in the most challenging sub-offices.** According to senior management there have been severe constraints in finding and deploying personnel. Staffing numbers have increased over the last year from 530 staff in 2018 to 643 by the end of 2019,¹⁰⁰ but this was not commensurate with the rapid expansion of the volume of operations over the period. The proportion of women WFP staff is 32 percent, which is similar to countries with comparable hardship conditions, but shows an upward trend.¹⁰¹

Table 7: Staffing figures for 2018 and 2019 disaggregated by gender

	International		National		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
December 2018	56	16	354	104	530
Percentage	78%	22%	77%	23%	
December 2019	67	24	383	169	643
Percentage	74%	26%	69%	31%	

Source: WFP DRC country office

250. Staff allocations across locations have dramatically changed over the period with an important increase of staffing numbers in Kinshasa and Goma, while in most other locations staffing numbers only marginally increased, reflecting difficulties for WFP to incentivize staff willing to operate in areas of greater risk. For example, it took many months for WFP to recruit a head for the Kananga field office in Kasai as well as other key staff. In Bunia, the supply chain management unit continued to work with their team of 14 members, implementing regular food-related activities as well as being involved in the Ebola response.

251. **There has been a lack of evaluations and audits since 2014 to facilitate strategic reflection and ameliorate approaches and systems.** The previous country portfolio evaluation covered the period

¹⁰⁰ Source: WFP DRC country office email dated 18 April, 2020.

¹⁰¹ The proportion of women WFP staff is 29% in Central African Republic, 27% in South Sudan and 39% in Cameroon. Source: WFP OPweb.

2009-2013 and the last internal audit¹⁰² covered the period 2012-2013.¹⁰³ There have been no decentralized evaluations for DRC in the last decade. A decentralized evaluation of the purchase for progress programme was planned in the ICSP but has not, so far, been initiated. As such, ICSP implementation could not benefit from recent recommendations to operations and strategies and this CSPE, expected to inform the next country strategic plan, could not draw on any pre-existing evaluative evidence. The recent “School Feeding in Emergencies” decentralised evaluation addresses some of the evidence gap. An internal audit is scheduled for early 2020.

252. **Evidence showed a limited awareness of the WFP risk management system, primarily the so-called “first line of defense”.** At the first line of defense, operational managers own and manage risks. This involves putting in place necessary controls to mitigate risks. They also are responsible for implementing corrective actions to address process and control deficiencies. The WFP DRC Risk Register (2019) contains a list of 13 risks, with a prioritization based on the effect on operations. The key risks are supply chain common services, security, management and communications (in relation to the donor base and other international stakeholders), and the establishment of adequate food security and nutrition-related government structures and policies.

253. **Since late 2019, risk analysis is increasingly used in a strategic manner by the country office.** At the same time, WFP staff appear to have limited understanding of how the corporate risk management system calls for consideration of risks to populations and risks to operations, and a careful balancing of the two.¹⁰⁴ There have been few probing studies within the Oversight Framework.¹⁰⁵ “First line of defense managers” have weak fraud detection/anti-fraud controls knowledge. For this reason, a compliance adviser was recruited in August 2019 and is providing innovative knowledge and training in those areas.

254. **The WFP risk appetite¹⁰⁶ appeared little known in DRC, and the first line of defense shows limited ability to detect risks.**¹⁰⁷ Staff working on supply chains, security, and in compliance have spoken of high levels of risk to operations that WFP personnel are not equipped to detect and prepare for. The broad risks that confront the population (the evaluation team have noted threats to the health of young refugee women, the risk of fraud and reprisals by partners of WFP) were not captured through a clear monitoring system. The accountability to affected populations function, as noted earlier, lacked depth in the way in which it was used in programming, while at the same time the operations have shown that they could indeed adapt. While there were parallel efforts in the area of humanitarian access, accountability to affected populations, protection, gender, and to some degree climate change, there was an absence of a common framework to understand threats or opportunities facing people, other than food insecurity.

255. **Due to the fragile environment in DRC, WFP constantly finds itself managing new and multiple crises in the absence of public services.** At times this involvement is determined by these crises rather than the ICSP, which show the ability of WFP to be flexible and act according to required needs. However, the scarcity of reliable data and difficulty in transmission of data have led to a lack of in-depth analysis of factors beyond the current indicators against which the organization reports. The current information systems contain significant gaps in the degree to which risks to the population are captured. There are several risks

¹⁰² WFP Office of the Inspector General, Internal Audit of WFP Operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Internal Audit Report AR/14/21, 2014. In the first half of 2020, the Office of Internal Audit conducted an Internal Audit of WFP Operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo focused on the period 1 January to 31 December 2019. This latest audit was published after the report for this CSPE was prepared.

¹⁰³ Please note that this comment refers to evaluative analysis. There have been some useful baselines, mid-line and follow up surveys. Some of these have been done jointly with FAO and are thorough as regards resilience. However they are not considered to be analytical in terms of performance.

¹⁰⁴ “The humanitarian imperative obliges WFP to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed or requested. While it seeks to do so, it is committed to protecting its beneficiaries, staff and the resources entrusted to it. WFP recognizes that the benefits of engagement outweigh the risks of failing to engage. WFP’s decisions to engage will incorporate analysis of the benefits of engagement and the costs of mitigation actions.” WFP Risk Appetite.

¹⁰⁵ “WFP Risk Oversight Framework” Executive Board Annual Session, Rome, 18–22 June 2018.

¹⁰⁶ The WFP risk appetite reflects its overall approach to risk management. It is presented in WFP’s Risk Appetite Statement (WFP/EB.1/2016/4-C).

¹⁰⁷ “Management oversight of IRM risks will continue to include a holistic assessment of the impact of the new financial framework, the transition from old to new strategies and the clarification of roles and responsibilities in the first and second line of defense.” WFP Oversight Framework, 2018.

related to accountability to affected populations that are currently not being adequately mitigated through effective complaints and feedback mechanisms, as described in Section 2.2.2.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

WFP is working in an exceptionally difficult environment, with an unprecedented scope of need, through an operation close to the limit of its capacity

256. The performance assessment carried out in the preceding sections shows an operation that is broadly aligned to the ICSP, and an ICSP that is itself fully coherent with current policies of national and international actors in DRC. The delivery of the activities is broadly in line with what was planned, while five budget revisions over the evaluation period, fully justified by evolving needs in the country, have seen successive expansions of the scope of operations in size and geography.

257. **The needs to which the ICSP is expected to respond are very vast.** Areas of DRC are seeing continued movements of internally displaced persons, many returning with significant needs for assistance, and multiple pockets of insecurity over the period 2017-2019. DRC hosts the largest population of internally displaced persons of any African country – currently about 4.5 million people. Some half a million refugees from neighbouring countries are being hosted in DRC while 0.9 million Congolese refugees continue to be hosted in neighbouring countries.

258. **The context remains very fragile.** Notwithstanding the promising outlook of a new Government and a sustained level of donor support, the food security outlook is pessimistic. The stabilization of populations remains uncertain in the context of the country's very weak governance, and there is an ongoing security and protection crisis in the six provinces affected by conflict: North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri and, to a lesser degree, Tanganyika, Kasai Central, and Kasai Oriental. The activity of armed groups, the involvement of state actors in human rights abuses and the potential further spread of Ebola are major risks to the population that must be factored into WFP strategy and interventions. DRC is also exposed to many hazards creating sudden-onset emergencies including earthquakes, floods, droughts, and volcanic eruptions. All 26 provinces are affected by epidemics, including epidemics of cholera and measles. Ebola continues to pose important challenges in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces.

259. **The WFP response is based on comparatively strong supply chain management and unique common services, responding at scale to a continually evolving situation.** Its field presence manifested through its 19 offices and around 70 cooperating partners, logistical capabilities, and broad donor base (24 donors of which 10¹⁰⁸ are very consistent donors), allows it to engage using proven and, at times, innovative approaches. The latter include a growing proportion of assistance made up of monetary transfers and a peacebuilding programme in Tanganyika province.

260. **The evidence, however, also shows an operation that, while responding courageously to these needs, is stretched to the limit of its capacities.** This is due primarily to the ambitious nature of the objectives in the ICSP and rapid increase in beneficiary target figures in consecutive budget revisions, with implementation confronted by high dispersion in an extremely difficult physical, social and institutional environment.

261. **Humanitarian access is hampered all over the country by insecurity and bureaucratic impediments, which also affect the work of cooperating partners and local civil society actors.** There is, at the same time, a remarkable openness to WFP operations on the part of the communities, which contrasts for example with the way in which other actors in the Ebola response have been greeted. Exacerbated by political manipulation and threats, this active resistance has hindered containment. Humanitarian agencies, including WFP, maintain a higher degree of access than United Nations peacekeeping missions.

262. **The manifestation of the fact that WFP in DRC is reaching the limit of its capacity is seen in multiple breaks and gaps in delivery in the field.** There are delays in delivery, disconnects between cooperating partners and lines of activity, and in some cases a lack of handover from one component to another. These disconnects and lack of cross-activity handover can be partly explained by the extremely

¹⁰⁸ Annual Financial Overview for the period 1 January to 31 December 2019.

challenging nature of the operating environment. The evaluation has noted the discontinuities in funding, the pipeline breaks, the lack of capable cooperating partners, and the absence of continuity at the central levels of the state.¹⁰⁹ They also relate to the way in which the structure of the ICSP, encapsulated in the “line of sight” with vertical, seemingly disconnected, sectors of intervention without cross-cutting elements, encourages parallel lines of activity to the detriment of a more strategic, risk-focused approach. The need to ensure a fluid transition from emergency response to resilience, or from resilience to emergency response, points to the relevance of a more interconnected approach.

The extent to which WFP is able to perform well is determined by its ability to better understand the emerging local needs and to manage risks to both operations and affected populations.

263. **WFP operates with an array of functions and assessment tools but there are limitations that prevent a complete overview and awareness of the context.** For example, the WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping team contributes to the production of different types of assessments and reports including the IPC. These help WFP to establish priorities in an environment where the state has not been able to create a detailed policy framework. At the same time, the operation has very limited beneficiary feedback mechanisms and accountability to affected populations for those communities with which it interacts, as reflected in multiple points in the report, such as, for example, perceptions of fairness and the quality of public communication. While it has been considerably strengthening its capacity to address cross-cutting priorities as regards gender, accountability to affected populations, climate change, and conflict-sensitivity, implementation for all these objectives is lacking in depth.

264. **As reflected in the country office risk review, the most obvious risks pertain to fraud, security, and human resource management, that is, risks to operations, highlighting the need to strengthen operational risk-management systems.** The detection and management of risk to operations pertains primarily to what is called the “first line of defense”, under the responsibility of operations managers. In DRC, WFP has adopted a strongly decentralized approach which allows for close-to-the-field planning and monitoring and rapid decision making, but also introduces important management risks, especially when information and control systems are not functioning or used in an optimal manner. There is both a clutter of data of limited use, and a limited ability to probe beyond the data provided, as well as a persistent lack of data integration.

265. **There are also important risks to populations, which are analysed in a comprehensive manner but monitored inconsistently by WFP.** Indeed, as stated in the WFP risk appetite¹¹⁰ and noted in Section 2.4.4, WFP is aware that in-kind or cash-based distributions may endanger beneficiaries unless they are managed properly. WFP staff in DRC are fully aware of this. The operation aims to mitigate this risk by ensuring that WFP and its partners are conscious of the protection and nutrition needs of beneficiaries and that they design and implement programmes accordingly, with a special focus on women, men, girls and boys.

266. Integrated Road Map risks are accurately reflected in the corporate risk register and regularly monitored as part of senior management’s consolidated discussions on risk and oversight. However, monitoring and reporting in relation to protection, gender and environmental risks faced by the population remain highly fragmented.

More strategic partnerships are required to better integrate resilience and peacebuilding in the objectives and operations of WFP in DRC, so that it provides a larger-scale contribution to addressing structural food security and nutrition vulnerability

267. **The ICSP covers a rare blend of activities in emergency response, quasi-development and (some) peacebuilding.** The third major conclusion of the evaluation resides in the emerging conceptualization of the triple nexus within WFP operations in DRC. The building of resilience would be

¹⁰⁹ Disconnects are a transversal, recurring issue for ICSP implementation in DRC. Other disconnects discussed in the report include: delays in resource allocation and availability and insufficient funding flexibility (2.1.2 and 2.4.4), disconnects between how protection and APP are addressed and the risks faced by the population (2.2.2), disconnects in the relations with cooperating partners (2.3.1), limited connections along the triple nexus (2.2.4), the tension between targeting mechanisms and delivery (2.3.2), and disconnects in the complicated reporting and accountability systems (2.4.5).

¹¹⁰ The risk appetite states “WFP recognizes that the benefits of engagement outweigh the risks of failing to engage”.

strengthened through a shift to conditional assistance, resting upon joint support with other partners, consolidating a triple nexus approach while preserving the capacity for rapid response for which WFP is highly regarded.

268. **The perceived organizational strengths of WFP make it a strong and desirable partner.** These strengths include its wide-ranging field presence and the “can-do” attitude, technical expertise and skills of its staff, especially in such areas as vulnerability analysis and mapping, logistics, supply chains and transport. Most United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations highlight the strong performance of WFP as a leader in humanitarian response.

269. **Stronger partnerships would be essential for strengthening the triple nexus and for better integrating social cohesion and conflict-sensitivity in WFP programming.** Humanitarian, development and peace interventions all share the same broad objectives of achieving human security and strengthening resilience, but require specific expertise, which WFP alone cannot provide. Relying on strong strategic partners to support resilience, such as was the case in DRC in a few joint programmes with FAO, proved critical for success. WFP support within its own domains of expertise (purchase for progress and food assistance for assets) has added a lot of value to those programmes, without spreading WFP capacities too thin and allowing it to retain its capacity for rapid response. There is also room for further integration of social cohesion and conflict risk-reduction activities in WFP interventions, with the help of actors specialized in this field.

270. **WFP has been operating in support of the Government creating multiple collaborations without a clear strategy.** Collaboration with public institutions has been most effective at the provincial and district levels. However, there was a lack of intent to these partnerships. They were undermined by the absence of a cohesive state. Consultations with the recently formed Government are just beginning, with a view to ensuring that the future priorities of the country strategic plan align with the vision and priorities of the Government for the future of the country. There is considerable scope to involve the state to facilitate the work of WFP, reducing the multiple challenges referred to in this report.

271. **Most of WFP partnerships in DRC are transactional, which prevents WFP from further exploring and utilizing all the skill sets and experiences that partners may be able to offer.** This enables WFP to deliver the required support to the affected populations via organizations that are familiar with the context and hence contribute to reduced contextual risks. This type of partnership is, however, a concern for cooperating partners. They have expressed the need for WFP to be more strategically engaged with them through regular consultations, which would give greater programming continuity on the ground, as well as a insight into the risks involved and the possibilities of responding to them.

272. **The development of effective partnerships with regional organizations and international financial institutions will be critical to reduce current financing and engagement challenges.** As the new country strategic plan reframes WFP presence in response to evolving needs, the ability of WFP, as part of the United Nations country team, to support the Government depends on the resources available and operational capabilities. Many WFP objectives would be served by developing stronger localized partnerships with existing operations of other humanitarian and development actors, benefitting from convergent types of activities in relation to a particular need.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

273. Based on the conclusions above, the evaluation makes six recommendations – half of which are strategic, half of which are operational. The first two strategic recommendations deal with the strategic positioning of WFP in DRC and the need to maintain its critical lead role in emergency food assistance and build on partnerships to address structural vulnerabilities. To enable this, the third strategic recommendation is for WFP to engage more strategically with donors, the Government and cooperating partners. The first operational recommendation regards the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation and risk controls. The second and third operational recommendations are for WFP to increase attention on important issues that cut across all interventions: gender equity, protection of people and the environment, conflict sensitivity and accountability to affected populations.

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
1	Upgrade WFP’s emergency response capacity, including through greater coverage of food security assessments, increased timeliness of response and better adaptation of food assistance modalities to beneficiaries’ needs.	Strategic	Country office	High	2020–2022
1.1	Contribute to efforts to broaden the IPC to the whole country by supporting food security assessments in areas not currently covered.		Country office		2022
1.2	Increase the timeliness of WFP operations by sensitizing donors to the importance of early availability and more flexible allocation of funds and in-kind contributions and increasing the number and capacities of staff in line with the growing scale of interventions.		Country office - programme and donor relations and human resources units		2021
1.3	Adjust the length of food and cash-based transfer distribution cycles to the needs of the people assisted rather than adopting generic cycles.		Country office - programme unit		2020

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
1.4	Consider increasing the use of cash-based delivery mechanisms in partnership with private sector entities in areas such as mobile transfers, selected based on a thorough assessment of private sector partner capacity.		Country office - cash-based transfer team		2023
2	Use WFP's comparative advantages beyond humanitarian assistance to support partners engaged in the development and peacebuilding components of the triple nexus.	Strategic	Country office	Medium	2021-2022
2.1	Expand joint programming with FAO, WHO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Bank, particularly in conditional forms of assistance and the expansion of purchases from farmer organizations.		Country office - resilience and procurement teams		2022
2.2	Increase efforts to prevent acute and chronic malnutrition in partnership with UNICEF.		Country office - nutrition team		2022
2.3	Enhance the partnership with UNFPA aimed at supporting vulnerable young boys and girls, strengthening their ability to manage pregnancies and avoid sexually transmitted diseases.		Country office – social protection team		2022
2.4	Support interventions that offer diverse income generating opportunities for refugees, in collaboration with UNHCR.		Country office - purchase for progress and food assistance for assets teams		2022
2.5	Continue to support peacebuilding activities using the model piloted in Tanganyika Province.		Country office - programme unit		2021

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
3	Engage more strategically with donors, the Government and cooperating partners.	Strategic	Country office	High	2022
3.1	Build on WFP's central position in the humanitarian aid system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to advocate more donor funding for capacity and resilience building.		Country office - senior management		2022
3.2	Strengthen WFP's partnership with the Government, including at the provincial level, through targeted capacity building relevant to policy and strategy formulation and implementation, promoting stronger government leadership and participation where appropriate.		Country office – programme unit and field offices		2022
3.3	Develop long-term agreements with selected cooperating partners working in relevant sectors and geographic areas through preselection of capable organizations and longer-term partnership agreements.		Country office - senior management and procurement and programme units		2022
3.4	When field-level agreements with cooperating partners are signed, organize internal planning sessions at which to agree on activity and payment schedules. WFP should also ensure that the finance teams of cooperating partners receive closer support in expense and financial reporting.		Country office - senior management and procurement and programme units		2022

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
4	Strengthen monitoring and evaluation, internal management and control systems for reducing risks to operations by increasing the capability of internal control functions, particularly the systems by which they generate and use information and evidence, and defining common expectations regarding requirements in relation to monitoring coverage, data collection exercises, monitoring frequency and sampling.	Operational	Country office and Headquarters Human Resources Division, Corporate Planning and Performance Division and Information Technology Division	High	2021-2023
4.1	Strengthen human resource capacity for the first and second lines of defense by training personnel with responsibility relating to management systems and internal controls and by recruiting additional compliance specialists.		Country office - senior management and human resources unit Headquarters - Human Resources Division		2021
4.2	Seek to simplify and better integrate reporting platforms and databases and develop dashboards that provide easier access to information.		Headquarters - Corporate Planning and Performance Division and Information Technology Division		2022
4.3	Ensure data integration between the Logistics Execution Support System and the COMET monitoring and evaluation system in order to improve the tracking of performance, identification of gaps and potential remedial measures.		Headquarters - Corporate Planning and Performance Division and Information Technology Division		2022

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
4.4	Task the monitoring and evaluation team with conducting more decentralized evaluations that facilitate the documentation of best practices and help to generate knowledge on strengths and weaknesses in operations, and provide it with the necessary resources.		Country office - senior management		2023
5	Group protection, exclusion risks, environmental protection, conflict sensitivity and accountability to affected populations in a single “risks to populations” framework that gives such risks the same level of attention as risks to operations receive. This could build on ongoing work at headquarters on environmental and social safeguards.	Operational	Country office and Headquarters Emergencies and Transitions Unit (Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division)	High	2022
5.1	Create a single risks to population framework that integrates elements of protection, social cohesion, environmental sustainability and inclusiveness at the level of programme delivery, linked to more effective assurance of accountability to affected populations.		Headquarters Emergencies and Transitions Unit (Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division)		2022
5.2	Analyse risks to populations prior to the launch of programmes and integrate such risks into post-activity assessments and data systems through a systematic analysis of emerging issues and opportunities arising from implementation.		Country office vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation teams		2022

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
5.3	Improve targeting and, where necessary, adapt interventions so that the most vulnerable people, including those who are sick or have disabilities, are not excluded from WFP assistance.		Country office vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation teams		2022
5.4	Reduce the environmental footprint of WFP operations and support initiatives that help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve efficient use of water and protect forests and land.		Country office vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation teams and programme unit		2022
5.5	Strengthen accountability to affected populations through culturally appropriate communications for affected people on risks and opportunities. Broaden reporting to include qualitative data on gender and conflict sensitivity. Increase communications with beneficiaries on targeting criteria, financial amounts and the modalities and timing of assistance.		Country office - monitoring and evaluation teams		2022
6	Increase the focus on gender through greater attention to the concerns of women, men, boys and girls in the more vulnerable population groups and better use of opportunities presented by programming.	Operational	Country office	Medium	2021-2022
6.1	Systematically consider the specific needs of women and girls in each intervention setting.		Country office - programme unit, vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation teams		2022

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of priority	When
6.2	Focus on acting on not only the visible aspects of gender inequality but also the underlying social and cultural causes.		Country office - programme unit, area and field offices		2021
6.3	To facilitate the activity in recommendation 6.2, strengthen WFP's strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Gender and other United Nations agencies such as UNFPA and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.		Country office - senior management and programme unit		2022
6.4	Make dedicated funding available for gender-specific activities, including in field offices.		Country office - senior management and programme and partnerships units		2022

Acronyms

3PA	Three-Pronged Approach
AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
ACF	Action Contre la Faim / Action Against Hunger
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
BR	Budget Revision
CAID	Cellule D'analyses des Indicateurs de Développement
CAR	Central African Republic
CBT	Cash-Based Transfers
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFA	Communauté Financière d'Afrique
CFSAM	Crop and Food Security Mission
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security Vulnerability Analysis
CO	Country Office
CP	Cooperating Partner
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
CSPE	Country Strategic Plan Evaluation
COMET	Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Tool
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DOTS	Directly Observed Treatment
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department
EFSA	Emergency Food Security Assessment
EQAS	External Quality Assurance Service
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCC	Common Front for Congo
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
FLA	Field-Level Agreement
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEEW	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
GFD	General Food Distribution
GoDRC	Government of DRC
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HQ	Headquarters
ICREDES	Institut Congolais de Recherche en Développement et Études Stratégiques
ICSP	Interim Country Strategic Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IR	Inception Report
IRG	Internal Reference Group
IRM	Integrated Road Map
ISSSS	International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
KfW	Kreditanstalt Für Wiederaufbau
L3 emergency	Level 3 Emergency

LESS	Logistics Execution Support System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MONUSCO	Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en RD Congo
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MT	Metric Ton
mVAM	Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
ND-GAIN	Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEV	Office of Evaluation
ONG	Organisation Non Gouvernementale
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PAM	Programme Alimentaire Mondial
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
PLW/G	Pregnant Lactating Women and Girls
PNSD	National Strategic Development Plan
PRONANUT	Programme National de Nutrition
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
RB	Regional Bureau
RBj	Regional Bureau in Johannesburg
RDC	République Démocratique du Congo
RMP	Performance Management and Reporting Division
SCOPE	System for Cash Operations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SER	Summary Evaluation Report
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SO	Strategic Outcome
SOWC	State of the World's Children
SPR	Standard Project Report
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STAREC	Programme de Stabilisation et Relèvement Economique à l'est
SUN	Scaling-Up Nutrition
TB	Tuberculosis
ToC	Theory of Change
TN	Technical Note
ToR	Terms of Reference
TP	Thematic Priority
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association

WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global System
ZHSR	Zero Hunger Strategic Review

Office of Evaluation

World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70

00148 Rome, Italy

T +39 06 65131 WFP.org