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Evaluation of Timor-Leste WFP Country Strategic Plan 2018-2020

Evaluation Report – Volume I

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Key personnel for the evaluation

OFFICE OF EVALUATION (OEV)

Catrina Perch	Evaluation Manager
Ramona Desole	Evaluation Officer
Sergio Lenci	Senior Evaluation Officer
Andrea Cook	Director of Evaluation

EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM

Stephen Turner	Team Leader
Brenda Kaijuka Muwaga	Evaluator
Javier Pereira	Evaluator and Research Coordinator
Esther Rouleau	Evaluator
Henriqueta da Silva	National Consultant

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Executive summary

INTRODUCTION

EVALUATION FEATURES

1. The Timor-Leste country strategic plan (CSP) covers the three-year period from 2018 to 2020. The scope of this CSP evaluation, however, covers 2015 to mid-2019, to take into account previous operations and thus assess strategic and operational continuity. It assesses WFP's strategic positioning and the extent to which WFP made the shift expected under the CSP; WFP's effectiveness in contributing to strategic outcomes; the efficiency with which the CSP was implemented; and factors explaining WFP's performance.

2. The evaluation was timed to inform the design of a second CSP for Timor-Leste, with field work conducted in November and December 2019. It employed mixed methods, drawing on monitoring data, document review and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Particular attention was paid to developing a methodology for the assessment of capacity strengthening, a core objective of the CSP. Attention was also paid to developing a systematic framework for assessing whether WFP engaged in gender-responsive programming. Both primary and secondary data were carefully triangulated to minimize dependence on any single source and ensure the validity of findings.

CONTEXT

3. Having gained independence in 2002, Timor-Leste is one of the world's newest states. Largely as a result of oil revenues, which account for 48 percent of gross domestic product,¹ Timor-Leste is now classified as a lower-middle-income country.²

¹ Timor-Leste Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. 2017. *2017 Reconciliation Report*. <https://eiti.org/files/documents/2017.tl-eiti.report.pdf>.

² World Bank. 2019. Data: Timor-Leste. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/timor-leste>.

TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS		
Year	Indicator	Value
2019	Total population	1.4 million
2018	Life expectancy at birth	69.0 years
2018	Gross domestic product per capita (purchasing power parity)	USD 3 154.92 (current USD)
2019	Human Development Index score	0.626
2014	Population living below income poverty line of USD 1.90 a day	30.3%
2014	Income Gini coefficient	28.7
2018	Gender Development Index score	0.899
2013–2018	Wasting – moderate and severe – among children 0–4 (weight for height)	11%
2013–2018	Stunting – moderate and severe – among children 0–4 (height for age)	51%
2013–2018	Overweight – moderate and severe – among children 0–4 (weight for age)	1%

Sources: United Nations Development Programme. 2019. *Human Development Report 2019*. <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2019.pdf>; World Bank. World Development Indicators; <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/world-development-indicators/>; United Nations Children's Fund. The State of the World's Children 2019: Children, food and nutrition, Growing well in a changing world. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-of-worlds-children-2019>; United Nations Population Fund. World Population Dashboard. <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population-dashboard>.

4. Agriculture, especially subsistence farming, is an important sector for most of the population, and particularly for poor people. However, productivity is low and agriculture accounts for only 17 percent of non-oil gross domestic product.³ Important gender inequalities persist, gender-based violence is a major concern and harmful social norms have resulted in unequal access to food for women and girls.

5. Timor-Leste faces severe malnutrition challenges (see table 1). It had the third highest rate of undernourishment in the Asia and the Pacific region during the period 2016–2018: 24.9 percent of the total population were undernourished, compared with 11.4 percent for the region as a whole.⁴ A 2018 study found that only 25 percent of the population could be considered food-secure.⁵

6. The national strategic development plan for 2011–2030 guides the country's development efforts and reflects its commitment to state building, social inclusion and economic growth. However, the conversion of policies into action has been challenged by several years of instability in government.

THE WFP COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN

7. The CSP focuses on two strategic outcomes (see figure 1) with the overall aim of continuing WFP's shift from the provision of food assistance to policy engagement and capacity strengthening for the Government:

- a) Children under 5, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women have improved nutrition towards national targets by 2025.

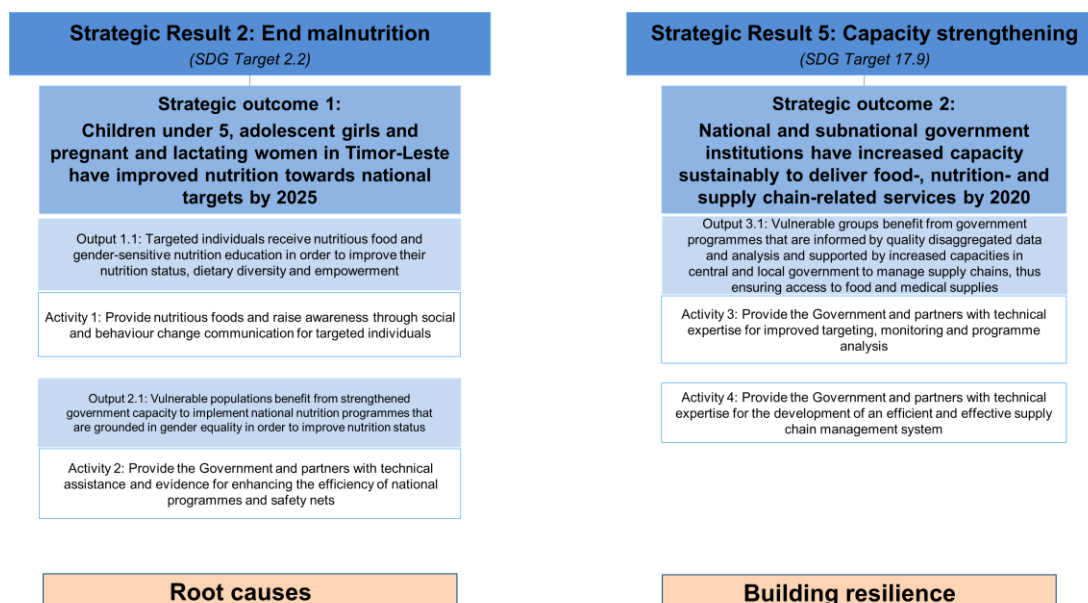
³ World Bank. 2018. Timor-Leste – Systematic Country Diagnostic: Pathways for a New Economy and Sustainable Livelihoods. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/524131528837983427/timor-leste-systematic-country-diagnostic-pathways-for-a-new-economy-and-sustainable-livelihoods>.

⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, WFP and World Health Organization. 2019. *The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*. pp. 125–127. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf>.

⁵ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis 2018–2023. <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1151924/>.

- b) National and subnational government institutions have increased capacity sustainably to deliver food-, nutrition- and supply chain-related services by 2020.

Figure 1: Timor-Leste country strategic plan “line of sight”



Source: WFP, 2017

8. According to the needs-based plan the CSP required USD 16.9 million. As of January 2020, however, the CSP was 30 percent funded, at USD 5.1 million. Direct nutrition interventions were more underfunded than capacity strengthening activities. In the absence of donor support, most funding for the CSP (66 percent, or USD 3.3 million) came through allocations from WFP’s Strategic Resource Allocation Committee. Other funding came from private donors (USD 319,000), the Government (USD 210,000), Australia (USD 140,000) and the Republic of Korea (USD 98,000).

EVALUATION FINDINGS

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE WFP’S STRATEGIC POSITION, ROLE AND SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION BASED ON COUNTRY PRIORITIES, PEOPLE’S NEEDS AND WFP’S STRENGTHS?

RELEVANCE TO NATIONAL POLICIES, PLANS AND STRATEGIES, AND STRATEGIC POSITIONING

9. The CSP was aligned with national policies, plans and strategies regarding food and nutrition security. National policy and strategies committed Timor-Leste to following a multisectoral approach to malnutrition. CSP activities focused largely on selected nutrition-specific elements. The CSP design was appropriately prudent in limiting WFPs direct interventions given the available resources, but relevance could have been enhanced by greater attention to complementarity and links with interventions of the Government and other development partners. While partnerships were recognized as “central”, the CSP did not focus on the strategic role of partnerships in leveraging WFP’s own efforts.

10. There was therefore a contrast between the broad challenges that the CSP was aimed at addressing and the narrow range of activities that it committed to undertaking. Focus was on the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and social and behaviour change communication (SBCC), with limited preventive activities beyond behaviour change and no clear links to nutrition-sensitive interventions. The lack of direct opportunities to promote nutrition for adolescents through school feeding was a constraint although the CSP included other activities that specifically targeted adolescents.

TARGETING

11. For the targeted supplementary feeding programme, the CSP targeted the most vulnerable by focusing on the municipalities with the highest malnutrition rates. However, WFP was not able to achieve full

coverage in target areas, and the CSP did not present a clear strategy for reaching the most remote populations.

12. The CSP was designed to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality through elements that were gender-specific, gender-sensitive and gender-transformative. A central feature of the CSP document was its strong focus on improving the nutrition status of all adolescent girls and breaking the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, although this was put into practice only indirectly – through SBCC.

ALIGNMENT AND COHERENCE WITH UNITED NATIONS PARTNERSHIPS

13. The CSP was aligned with the United Nations development assistance framework for 2015–2020, under which the country office collaborated with other United Nations agencies including the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on MAM, developing treatment guidelines, joint training and equipment support, the World Health Organization (WHO) on child and adolescent health, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on coordination of the food security sector. However, the framework did not serve its purpose of providing a platform for United Nations engagement with the Government, the leveraging of agencies’ comparative advantages, and its acting as a convener between the Government and donors for the mobilization of resources. During the evaluation period, United Nations agencies largely pursued individual rather than collective fundraising strategies, partly because of frequent changes in the Government, but also because of a lack of mechanisms that provided opportunities for regular dialogue and accountability.⁶

WHAT ARE THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF WFP’S SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOMES IN TIMOR-LESTE?

DELIVERY OF OUTPUTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO OUTCOMES

14. Strategic outcome 1: Children under 5, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women have improved nutrition towards national targets by 2025. The CSP identified two outputs under this outcome:

- a) Targeted individuals receive nutritious food and gender-sensitive nutrition education in order to improve their nutrition status, dietary diversity and empowerment.
- b) Vulnerable populations benefit from strengthened government capacity to implement national nutrition programmes that are grounded in gender equality in order to improve nutrition status.

15. Overall, the CSP did not reach its targets for the provision of fortified and specialized nutritious foods in 2018 and 2019 (see table 2). Both of these elements of the targeted supplementary feeding programme (TSFP) were severely underfunded. Other relatively low-cost output targets under strategic outcome 1, such as those for training and exposure to WFP-supported nutrition messaging, were met or exceeded.

TABLE 2: COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUT DATA: STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1, 2018 AND 2019							
Activity	Output indicator	2018			2019		
		Output	Target	% achieved	Output	Target	% achieved
1	Quantity of fortified food provided (mt)	110	866	12.7	108	432	25.0
1	Quantity of specialized nutritious foods provided (mt)	51	144	35.4	5	72	6.9
2	Number of training sessions and workshops organized	8	6	133.3	7	10	70.0
2	Number of counterparts trained in capacity development on mother and child health and nutrition and nutrition activities. Number of government and other national	180	160	112.5	51	58	87.9

⁶ United Nations. 2019. United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2015–2020 in Timor-Leste, Evaluation Report, p. 47.

TABLE 2: COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUT DATA: STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1, 2018 AND 2019							
Activity	Output indicator	2018			2019		
		Output	Target	% achieved	Output	Target	% achieved
	partner staff members receiving technical assistance and training						
2	Number of technical assistance activities undertaken	12	-	-	8	16	50.0
1	Number of men exposed to WFP-supported nutrition messaging. Number of men and boys reached through interpersonal SBCC approaches	5 603	6 000	93.4	6 377	7 200	88.6
1	Number of women exposed to WFP-supported nutrition messaging. Number of women and girls reached through interpersonal SBCC approaches	45 072	18 000	250.4	13 552	16 800	80.7

Sources: Annual country reports for 2018 and 2019.

16. At the outcome level, performance data show challenges in relation to default and recovery rates for MAM treatment and to numbers of children reached. Larger proportions of MAM patients defaulted from both treatment and recovery than planned, which is a common problem arising from the length of time that MAM treatment requires. Coverage of the target population of children under 5 was much lower than planned and fell in 2019: performance under this indicator was linked to pipeline breaks that resulted in nutrition supplies being unavailable, in turn leading to children not being brought to health facilities. Coverage of pregnant and lactating women, on the other hand, was above target levels, with significant improvements in 2019.

17. Strategic outcome 2: National and subnational government institutions have increased capacity sustainably to deliver food-, nutrition- and supply chain-related services by 2020. There was one output under this outcome:

- a) Vulnerable groups benefit from government programmes that are informed by quality disaggregated data and analysis and supported by increased capacities in central and local government to manage supply chains, thus ensuring access to food and medical supplies.

18. Output data were focused on training events and the provision of technical assistance and performance, and the indicators reported varied greatly (see table 3). Some targets were surpassed by 50 percent, while other indicators were at only 25 percent of target values. Most indicators do not specify the types of training or capacities that were strengthened.

TABLE 3: COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUT DATA: STRATEGIC OUTCOME 2, 2018 AND 2019							
Activity	Output indicator	2018			2019		
		Output	Target	% achieved	Output	Target	% achieved
3	Number of training sessions and workshops organized	8	4	200.0	2	4	50.0
3	Number of government and other national partner staff members receiving technical assistance and training	178	100	178.0	55	80	68.7
3	Number of technical assistance activities provided	4	6	66.7	7	8	87.5
4	Number of training sessions and workshops organized	3	12	25.0	15	20	75.0

TABLE 3: COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUT DATA: STRATEGIC OUTCOME 2, 2018 AND 2019							
Activity	Output indicator	2018			2019		
		Output	Target	% achieved	Output	Target	% achieved
4	Number of government and other national partner staff members receiving technical assistance and training	73	-	-	115	165	69.7
4	Number of technical assistance activities provided	10	12	83.3	6	8	75.0

Sources: Annual country reports for 2018 and 2019.

19. Despite recent revisions of WFP's Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021) there were no meaningful indicators for measuring achievement of this outcome at this stage. However, the evaluation assessed that CSP implementation made useful contributions to capacity strengthening relevant to supportive law, strategies and procedures, well-functioning organizations and educated and skilled people.

20. Successful advocacy of government funding for nutrition supplies was an unplanned achievement and highlights the Government's commitment to strategic outcome 1. Other examples of success included a rice fortification pilot study that led to the formation of a technical working group under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. WFP also provided support for the drafting of a law on food fortification, which awaits approval. In addition, the Government expressed interest in the integration of rice fortification into the school feeding programme.

21. A "Fill the Nutrient Gap" analysis carried out in 2019 was acknowledged by all national stakeholders as an important achievement in building awareness of core nutrition issues. Those foundations will be built on in the future, but the study has already been used to inform the United Nations 2019 common country analysis and is expected to inform a new national nutrition strategy. Results are being used to review the school feeding menu. Development partners referred to the advocacy value of the study's cost of diet analysis in showing that household incomes are too low to support nutritious diets, but there were also comments to the effect that the Fill the Nutrient Gap model is complex and difficult to explain.

22. WFP made an important contribution in strengthening the supply chain for medical supplies at the central level through improvements to systems and procedures. However, WFP underestimated the scale of the organizational capacity strengthening required in terms of the depth, quality and duration of the structural and procedural changes needed and the range of skills that WFP staff required.

23. WFP made substantial efforts to train government staff during CSP implementation in 2018 and 2019, but contributions to capacity strengthening at the individual level have so far been incremental rather than transformative.

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

24. During CSP implementation, WFP made notable progress in generating evidence of and advocating attention to the nutrition needs of adolescent girls, creating an opportunity for SBCC messages that tackle harmful gender norms in intra-household food distribution. However, more women than men were reached by WFP-supported nutrition messages, suggesting that there is a need to reach more men and boys with gender-sensitive nutrition messages that tackle harmful gender norms.

SUSTAINABILITY

25. The Government of Timor-Leste has the financial resources to sustain strategies and programmes supported by the CSP. The national budget for 2019 was larger than that for 2018. Excluding funds from development partners, most of the budget is funded from the country's Petroleum Fund, which had a balance of USD 15.8 billion in 2019.

26. In addition, national level programmes supported by the CSP represent a small share of the government budget. For example, the total allocation for the Ministry of Health in 2020, including support for WFP's targeted supplementary feeding programme (TSFP), is set at USD 59.6 million in the 2020 budget, but recent analysis suggests that nutrition policies and plans endorsed by successive governments were

insufficiently funded and relied on donor funding to fill deficits. The 2019 budget was heavily weighted towards investments in public infrastructure, while the health, agriculture and education sectors together accounted for just 12 percent of state budget expenditures.

27. In terms of technical capacity, there are practical challenges to a sustainable handover of TSFP coordination from WFP to the Ministry of Health. Despite the theoretical availability of funding, the resources actually provided for the TSFP were insufficient. WFP contributions to capacity strengthening are at an early stage and field observations suggest that facilities struggled with the distribution of supplies in the field and with reductions in the amount and continuity of supplies delivered.

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

DELIVERY OF OUTPUTS WITHIN THE INTENDED TIMEFRAME AND COVERAGE

28. WFP experienced delays and pipeline breaks in its supplementary feeding activities as a result of funding challenges. Delays were generally protracted, lasting from 3 to 10 months. Pipeline breaks affected procurement and food deliveries, which in turn affected attendance levels at health facilities. The TSFP had a total of 72,000 target beneficiaries; only 13,660 of the 48,100 beneficiaries targeted in 2018 were reached, but in 2019 the annual target of 24,050 was surpassed, with 26,321 beneficiaries reached. Lack of resources also affected the coverage of municipalities, and only 6 municipalities of the planned 13 were reached. Limited coverage of WFP-supported MAM treatment also led to an imbalance with the nationwide support for severe acute malnutrition treatment provided by UNICEF. While the geographic targeting of municipalities was correct, the coverage was considered insufficient for achieving the desired sustainable effects on malnutrition indicators.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND COST-EFFICIENCY

29. The cost-effectiveness of the TSFP increased during CSP implementation and compared favourably with that of similar interventions in other countries and regions. The average cost per recovered beneficiary was significantly lower under the CSP than under the previous development operation, for both beneficiary groups: for recovered children under 5 the average cost declined from USD 52.3 to USD 22.9 and for recovered pregnant and lactating women from USD 41.7 to USD 16.2.

30. The country office considered cost-efficiency in its staffing decisions and increased the use of volunteers from the United Nations and the Korea International Cooperation Agency and interns from the United Nations and the National University of Timor-Leste. However, the country office's heavy dependence on such low-cost staffing solutions did not necessarily enhance the cost-efficiency of CSP implementation given the need for staff with sufficient expertise for engagement at the policy level and for building partnerships.

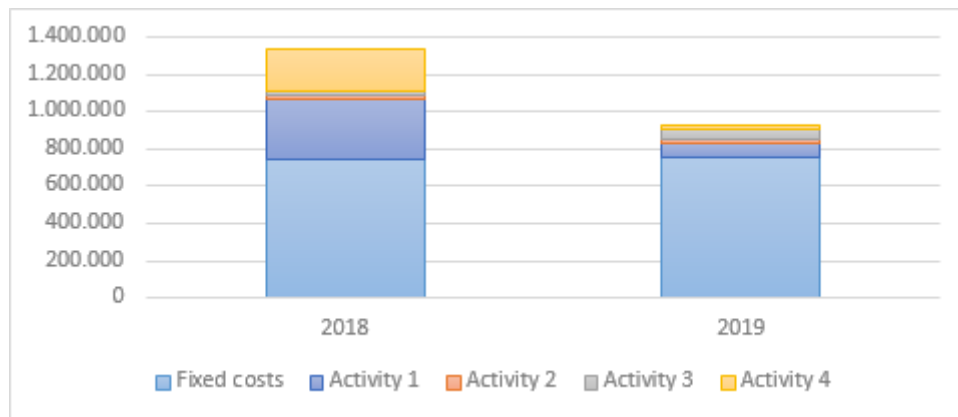
WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT EXPLAIN WFP'S PERFORMANCE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT HAS MADE THE STRATEGIC SHIFT EXPECTED UNDER THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN?

MOBILIZATION OF ADEQUATE, PREDICTABLE AND FLEXIBLE RESOURCES

31. The uncertainty of resource allocations resulted in the country office having to sacrifice medium- and long-term planning while frequently adjusting operations to available funds. Throughout most of 2019, the office experienced severe liquidity constraints and was able to operate only because it received advances from headquarters. Towards the end of 2019, contributions increased significantly with large transfers from the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee and two grants from China and Japan.

32. Budget analysis suggests that there is a critical point below which it becomes difficult for the country office to continue the implementation of the CSP. Figure 2 presents the country office's actual spending on fixed costs (defined as staff and direct support costs, adjusted for staff costs) and shows the balance for implementation of each activity. In 2018 the country office was able to implement some capital-intensive activities. In 2019, very little money was available for any activities and CSP implementation was severely constrained, with implications for WFP's presence and visibility at the operational level.

Figure 2: Timor-Leste country strategic plan: analysis of fixed versus free costs (USD)



Source: Country portfolio budget planned versus actual report, WINGS.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

33. The central partnerships were those with policy and governance partners: ministries and other agencies of the Government. Efforts to build such partnerships were a major undertaking for the small country office. When signed agreements are in place, the nature and value of the work undertaken depend on numerous factors, notably the availability of funding and the human resource capacity of WFP and the partner ministry or agency in the planning and management of joint activities.

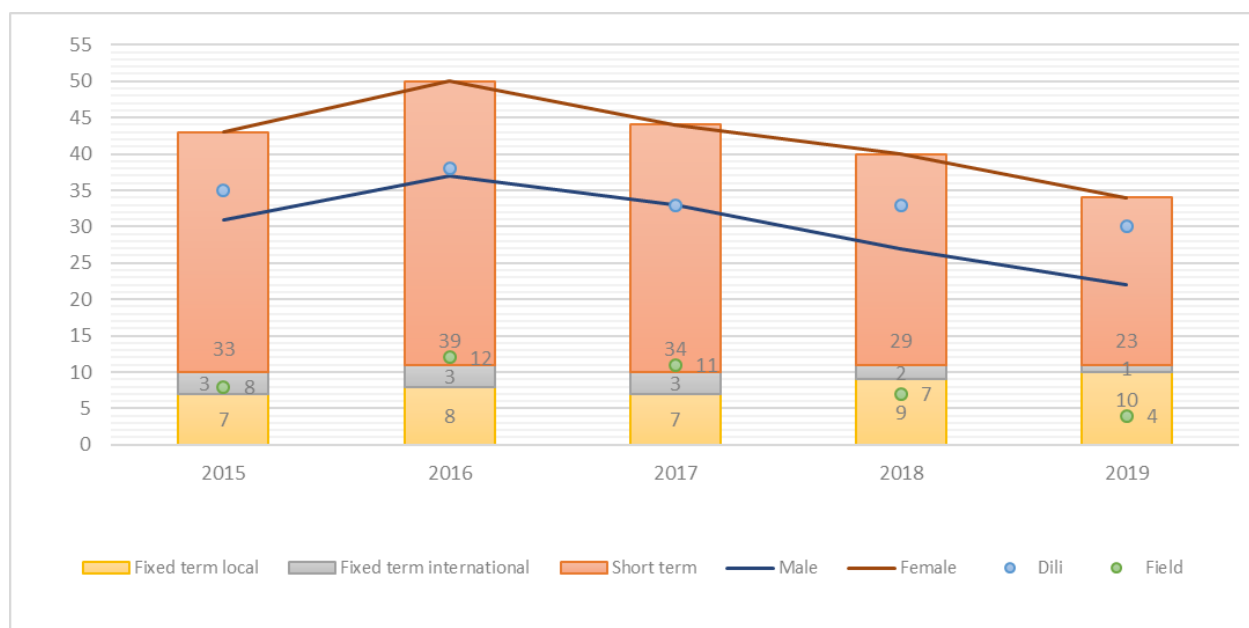
34. A number of potential partners on gender equality and women's empowerment were identified through a mapping exercise but with limited practical results. The country office also developed a proposal for working jointly with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNICEF on the European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative on combatting gender-based violence. However, WFP was not selected as a recipient of funding because donors did not see its comparative advantage in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

35. During CSP implementation, South-South cooperation and study tours were a key feature of WFP's strategy for strengthening the capacity of the Government. Representatives from several ministries visited Cambodia, China and India to exchange experiences and good practices in areas such as food security policy, school feeding, rice fortification and early warning systems. However, it is too early to assess the extent to which participants shared or applied the knowledge that they acquired.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND STAFF EXPERTISE

36. The country office organigram was reviewed and adjusted in the early stages of CSP implementation with a view to clarifying reporting lines, identifying and reclassifying core positions, merging administrative units and abolishing some positions. Reductions in overall staff numbers were driven mainly by operational field needs. While lack of funding did not significantly affect staff numbers, it influenced the ability of WFP to fill strategic positions – in particular, the country office lacked staff with the necessary expertise and seniority for engagement at the policy level and for building partnerships. The country office also faced rapid staff turnover, and most personnel served under short-term contracts. This inevitably detracted from the consistency of performance and reduced institutional memory (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Timor-Leste country office staff members by contract length, gender and location



Source: country office data.

RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

37. The use of monitoring data for results-based management was strong in WFP’s direct engagement in the TSFP but limited in other areas. Until late 2019 WFP collected data that tracked beneficiary numbers and food stocks in each facility, and monitoring data allowed the forecasting of distribution needs, the estimation of beneficiary numbers and other similar activities. Beginning in 2018, all other CSP activities focused on capacity strengthening, essentially sharing the same three indicators for the output level, which measured the number of training events, activities and participants. The indicators did not provide information on the nature of activities or on whether participants learned anything and were satisfied with the results. Changes introduced in 2019 will provide additional information, but some indicators are still very generic, making the demonstration of links between outputs and outcomes in results chains somewhat weak.

CONCLUSIONS

38. Achievement of the major institutional restructuring set out in the Integrated Road Map and the associated shift from implementation to enabling of programmes requires time. The challenge is in sustaining and directing the necessary efforts for sufficiently long periods. The period covered by this evaluation covered the first steps of what will be a long process.

39. In Timor-Leste, WFP continued its shift from a largely humanitarian role to one that spans the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, and from implementation to advice and capacity strengthening. The country office is undergoing a transition during which many of its operational structures, procedures, staffing and skills continue to reflect the conditions of the past and new monitoring systems and guidelines on, for example, capacity strengthening and gender issues, have not been fully adopted. This has heightened the challenges facing the country office in CSP implementation, despite the efforts of its committed and hardworking personnel.

40. The CSP represented both a significant innovation and an evolution of previous WFP strategy. It was innovative in introducing a new structure for the planning and management of WFP’s work, with consequent administrative, funding and human resource challenges. Those challenges could also be seen as opportunities for working more efficiently and transparently, both within WFP and in its relations with donors, the Government and development partners. Limited resources have restricted the extent to which such opportunities could be exploited, although there have been some administrative benefits. As the transition continues into the next CSP cycle, there is scope for a more fundamental reappraisal of WFP’s country presence in Timor-Leste.

41. Food and nutrition insecurity in Timor-Leste have been persistent over the last decade. The focus of the CSP during the evaluation period was relevant to country priorities and people's needs and built on WFP's strengths and experience in aspects of nutrition and logistics. However, some fundamental assumptions underpinning the design of the CSP and related to the readiness of the Government to fund and take over WFP workstreams did not hold true, partly because of changes in the national government. In addition, the focus on a few selected elements of a multisectoral food security and nutrition approach, without full specification of the roles of partners and of how WFP contributions were linked to them, led to a contrast between the broad challenges that WFP sought to address and the narrow scope of its contributions.

42. Severe underfunding has had a dominant influence on performance of the Timor-Leste CSP to date and has had impacts on several levels. Efforts were scaled down and not all targets were met, but the country office made useful contributions to outcomes such as SBCC and to capacity strengthening through studies and advocacy. It also helped strengthen supply chains, a central element of the Government's supplementary feeding strategy. While recognizing that capacity strengthening requires time, there are challenges to achievement of the required sustainable organizational and individual capacity in government agencies.

43. The geographic targeting of nutrition interventions was appropriate. Targeted supplementary feeding was more cost-effective under the CSP than previously and results compared well with those of similar interventions in other countries. However, lack of an adequate and regular flow of funding caused pipeline breaks that reduced the achievement of nutrition objectives and decreased coverage.

44. Adequate staffing and effective partnership building are critical factors for success, but both were constrained by a lack of financial resources. This limited the appointment of senior staff, which in turn constrained the country office's capacity for advocacy at the policy level. A lack of resources also meant that not all partnership commitments made by the Government and the country office resulted in practical action. As a result, while the country office recognized the importance of partnerships it could not exploit their full potential.

45. Despite positive steps taken by WFP to address the specific needs of women and girls, more could be done (in partnership with the Government and other United Nations agencies) to fully achieve gender-transformative results and nutrition outcomes for women and girls and to build on progress in highlighting the nutrition needs of adolescent girls.

46. The evaluation identified real benefits from collaboration between WFP and other United Nations agencies and it is in WFP's interest to strengthen these joint efforts as multisectoral, multi-stakeholder approaches become more necessary for the achievement of food and nutrition security goals. The United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) potentially provides a new framework for achieving this.

LESSONS

47. The evaluation notes a number of lessons that may be applicable in similar settings.

48. WFP should not underestimate the capacity strengthening challenges that it faces in lower-middle-income countries, especially at the local level in countries where governance is decentralized. Handover to a host government should be carefully assessed and carried out in a manner that avoids abrupt interruptions. WFP's profile, reputation and resources are stronger when it is engaged in implementation work at scale. This gives it greater credibility and acceptance among stakeholders as it shifts towards other roles and facilitates the resourcing of activities such as capacity strengthening.

49. The assumption that implementation could begin promptly after approval of the CSP proved to be unrealistic, and the possibility of such delay should be considered when designing a CSP. A fundamental challenge to timely implementation of the CSP was the process of agreeing with relevant ministries exactly what support WFP would provide and the setting up of the necessary institutional arrangements with the host government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

50. Two of the recommendations arising from the evaluation are strategic in nature. They identify ways in which WFP can make effective contributions in Timor-Leste through its small country office with adequate and predictable funding and proactive work in partnership with the Government and – through the UNSDCF

- other United Nations agencies. Two operational recommendations have the aim of focusing WFP's contributions on areas where it can build on its established thematic strengths and on reinforcing the approach and methods that it uses to strengthen the capacity of its national partners. A commitment to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women is mainstreamed through the recommended partnership strategies and thematic approaches. In combination, the four recommendations envision a clearly focused, stable, synergetic and effective WFP contribution in Timor-Leste throughout the next CSP cycle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

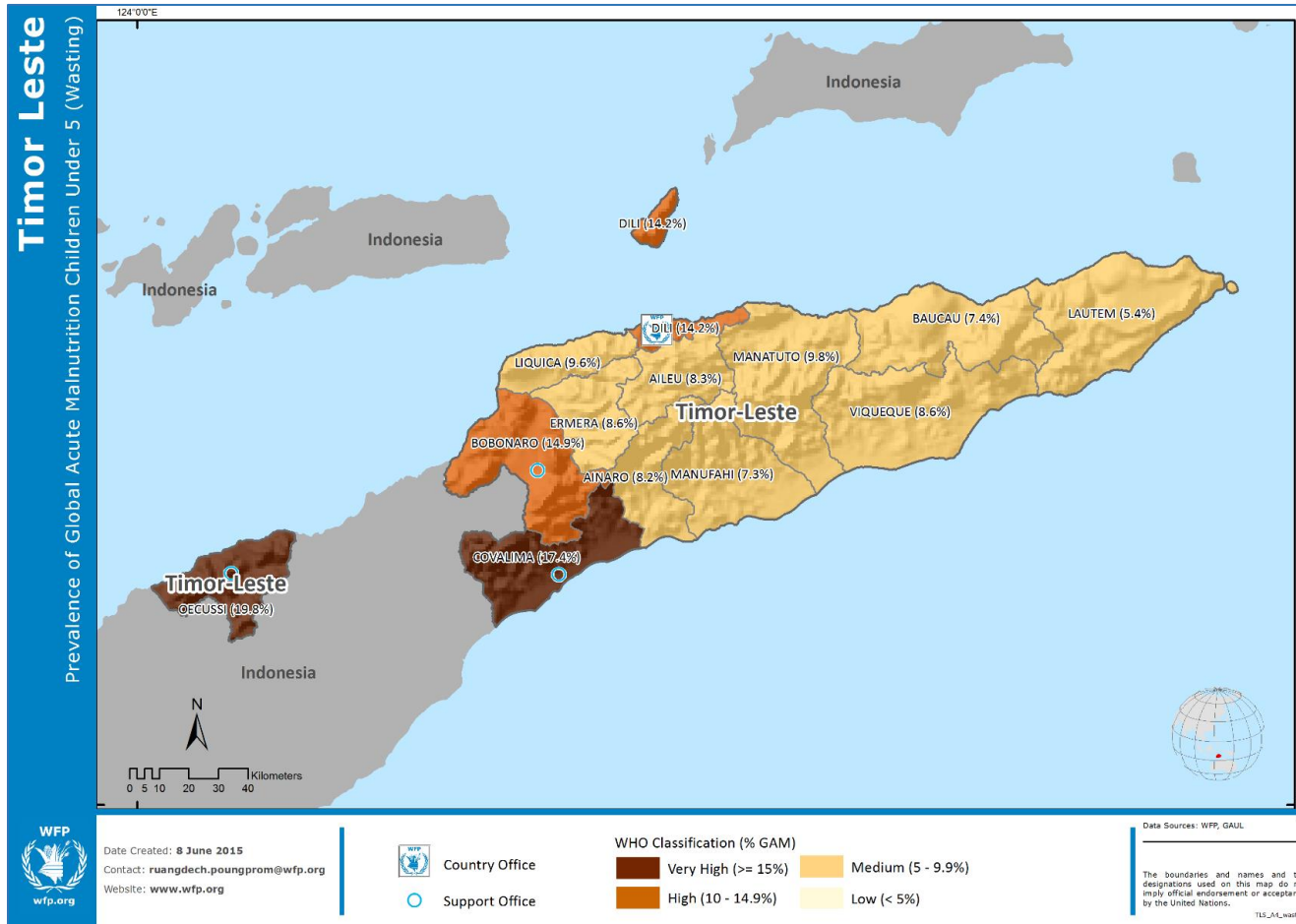
	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of prioritization	When
1.	For WFP to remain relevant and effective in Timor-Leste, headquarters should ensure a threshold of sustainable and predictable funding that guarantees a stable minimum core team in the country office. The team should be configured to engage in high-level policy dialogue and advocacy with the Government and other partners and to focus on leveraging domestic and international resources. Additional technical expertise and support services should be mobilized for specific initiatives once non-core funding is secured.	Strategic	Headquarters – Assistant Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, Resource Management Department; Corporate Finance Division	High	December 2021
2.	<p>The country office should work to strengthen CSP implementation through partnerships, focusing on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ WFP should build a closer, more focused relationship with the Government that benefits from stronger strategic interaction and a revised understanding of capacity strengthening and handover opportunities. Its core partners should be the Ministry of Health, the Autonomous Drug and Medical Equipment Service, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. ➤ WFP should work for stronger integration of its programming with that of other United Nations agencies under the UNSDCF, specifically with UNICEF on working with the Government to build and implement a multisectoral nutrition strategy and on further gender-sensitive work on MAM and related SBCC; with WHO and UNFPA on gender-sensitive support for school feeding (including adolescent health) and nutrition and food safety; and with FAO on the ongoing coordination of the food security and nutrition sector throughout the Government. 	Strategic	Country office, supported by the regional bureau and headquarters – Partnerships and Advocacy Department; Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, reflecting agreement on coordination among United Nations agencies	High	Mid-2021
3.	The country office should ensure focused technical advisory and capacity strengthening contributions in Timor-Leste that build on established WFP strengths and contribute effectively through broader sectoral and partnership frameworks in the following areas:	Operational	Country office, supported by the regional bureau	Medium	Mid-2021

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of prioritization	When
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ selected, focused elements of a multisectoral, gender-sensitive nutrition strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the strengthening of SBCC and other nutrition services at the field level (including within the integrated community health services system), with support for capacity strengthening and links to community outreach in other sectors such as agriculture and social protection; – supply chain and related logistics for the distribution of supplementary feeding commodities; – treatment of MAM, possibly through a new integrated protocol for MAM and severe acute malnutrition, starting with collaboration with UNICEF on the proposed operational research study; ➤ vulnerability analysis and mapping: building on recent initiatives, developing full vulnerability analysis and mapping and associated capacity strengthening services for Timor-Leste through a small dedicated unit in the country office supported by other WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping capacity in the region and linked to appropriate technical inputs for national food security monitoring and emergency preparedness and response systems; ➤ school feeding: developing a strong advisory support role and associated capacity strengthening services with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, with particular emphasis (aimed at maximizing benefits for gender equality and the empowerment of women) on food and nutrition standards; home-grown school feeding and its links to the development of food systems; supply chain and related logistics issues; the appropriate use of fortified commodities produced in Timor-Leste; school health, including for adolescents, with special attention to gender dimensions; support for monitoring and data management; and prioritization of school feeding in national budget allocations; and ➤ specific focused elements of food systems development: food fortification, food safety standards and regulation (in collaboration with WHO) and farm-to-market links for supplementary and school feeding, promoting opportunities and benefits for women in food systems. 				

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of prioritization	When
4.	<p>The country office should reappraise and reinforce WFP’s approach to and methods for capacity strengthening for relevant government and civil society agencies that supports achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The country office should undertake comprehensive capacity assessments as part of the design of the new CSP. ➤ To ensure the strategic management of capacity strengthening activities and sustainable outcomes WFP should define an appropriate monitoring framework in consultation with the Government and civil society organizations. In doing so, the country office should use relevant indicators from the corporate results framework and additional indicators (including those related to gender issues) agreed with counterparts. In consultation with beneficiary organizations, the country office should ensure that capacity strengthening work is carefully monitored and thoroughly implemented at the local and national levels. 	Operational	Country office supported by regional bureau and headquarters: Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service	High	Mid-2021

Map

Figure 1. Map of Timor-Leste showing prevalence of global acute malnutrition in children under five



Source: WFP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, 2015

1. Introduction

1.1. EVALUATION FEATURES

1. All WFP evaluations ‘serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning’. Therefore, as stated in the terms of reference (ToR), the purpose of this country strategic plan evaluation (CSPE) is twofold: “1) to provide evaluation evidence and learning on WFP performance for country-level strategic decisions, specifically for developing the next country strategic plan (CSP) and 2) to provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders.” CSPEs have a strategic focus and purpose. They are not operational evaluations of the individual activities making up the country strategic plan (CSP). They are higher-level assessments of the overall performance and direction of WFP in the country concerned. The WFP Policy on Country Strategic Plans says that CSPEs should “assess progress and results against intended CSP outcomes and objectives, including towards gender equity and other cross-cutting corporate results; and ...identify lessons for the design of subsequent country-level support”.⁷

2. **This evaluation should form part of the evidence that is expected to support the design of the following country strategic plan**, and offer the Timor-Leste country office (CO) an independent, constructive assessment of its performance, opportunities, challenges and potential future directions. The principal users of the evaluation will be the WFP country office, the regional bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBB), headquarters (HQ) and the Executive Board (EB); and WFP partners: the Government of Timor-Leste, donor agencies, and (non-governmental) organizations concerned with food security and nutrition in the country. The draft evaluation report was presented in a learning workshop in February 2020.

3. **The Timor-Leste country strategic plan covers three years (2018–2020)**. It follows implementation of a development operation (DEV), Capacity Development for Health and Nutrition (DEV 200770),⁸ which was planned to run for two years (2015–2016) but was extended to December 2017. From October 2016 to March 2017, WFP also carried out an immediate response emergency operation (IR-EMOP 201017)⁹ to provide specialized nutritious food to children aged 6–23 months and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) in three municipalities (local government authorities) severely affected by drought and food insecurity following the 2016 El Niño event. This evaluation is required to cover all these WFP activities between 2015 and 2019, in order to assess strategic and operational continuity or shifts between the earlier operations and the country strategic plan.

4. **The evaluation mission took place from 27 November to 13 December 2019**. It was preceded by an inception briefing at WFP headquarters and an inception mission to Timor-Leste, 15–17 and 21–25 October 2019 respectively. Data collection from documents and datasets began in early October. Along with supplementary interviews, it continued through January 2020. Annex IV shows the overall timeline for the evaluation, as well as the evaluation mission schedule. The evaluation team was required to comply with the provisions of the WFP Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System¹⁰ (CEQAS) and the evaluation will be subject to *post-hoc* quality assessment in terms of the WFP evaluation policy.¹¹

5. **Methodology for the evaluation** (described in more detail at Annex II) **included preparation of an evaluation matrix** (Annex III). This amplified the four standard evaluation questions (EQs) in the terms of reference with a series of subquestions, and specified dimensions of analysis, lines of enquiry, indicators, data sources and data-collection techniques. Lines of enquiry included: the factors, considerations and analyses that influenced design of the country strategic plan; the flexibility and responsiveness of WFP to

⁷ WFP, 2016. Policy on Country Strategic Plans. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/1/Rev.1., p. 19.

⁸ WFP, 2015. Timor-Leste development project number 200770. Capacity Development for Health and Nutrition. Rome: WFP.

⁹ WFP, 2016. Immediate Response Emergency Operation: Timor-Leste, EMOP ref. 201017: Prevention of moderate acute malnutrition in children 6 to 23 months and pregnant and lactating women. Project document. Rome: WFP.

¹⁰ WFP, 2017. CEQAS Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System. Guidance materials.

<https://www.wfp.org/publications/eqas-evaluation-quality-assurance-system-guidance-materials> [accessed 25 March 2020]. A number of more recent guidance materials have been produced to complement those shown on this web page.

¹¹ WFP, 2015. Evaluation Policy (2016–2021). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2015/4-A/Rev. 1, p. 10.

evolving circumstances and challenges; the ways in which country strategic plan design and implementation exploited partnerships with the Government, other United Nations agencies and the private and non-governmental organization (NGO) sectors; the relationship between sustainability and approaches to handover of WFP roles to the Government and others; the nature and level of country strategic plan resourcing, the challenges that these posed and the ways in which WFP responded to them; the extent to which cross-cutting issues and principles were respected in country strategic plan design and implementation; and, overall, the extent to which the shift to the country strategic plan modality affected the character and quality of WFP contributions in the country.

6. **The evaluation matrix and its methods guided data collection.** Intensive efforts were made to analyse, synthesize and validate available secondary data (see Annex XIX for a list of documents cited). An early task (launched during the inception phase) was to map all the work done so far to implement the country strategic plan, as shown at Annex VI. Data sources comprised: documentation (WFP corporate and country-specific, as well as a range of government policy statements and programme documents and analytical and programme documentation from development partners); Government and WFP datasets on nutrition, socio-economic variables and country strategic plan funding and performance; and informants. During the briefing, inception and evaluation missions, the team held interviews, meetings and focus group discussions with a wide range of informants within WFP, the Government, United Nations agencies, other multilateral and bilateral development partners, non-governmental organizations and local government agencies. The evaluation mission included field visits to four municipalities. A list of persons met and interviewed is shown at Annex XVIII. Data-collection techniques comprised: systematic review of documents and datasets; semi-structured interviews with informants; and outcome harvesting (OH) exercises with selected government institutions. Both primary and secondary data were carefully triangulated to minimize dependence on any single source for information or analysis.

7. **During the inception phase, particular attention was given to developing methodology for the assessment of capacity strengthening, a core objective of the Timor-Leste country strategic plan.** It is challenging to evaluate performance in this regard at this relatively early stage of country strategic plan implementation, particularly when (due to funding and other constraints) it has not been possible to implement the country strategic plan as fully as intended and reporting data on this work are limited. The approach adopted was to map the capacity-strengthening work done to date, with reference to the five country capacity-strengthening pathways that WFP recognizes: policy and legislation; institutional accountability; strategic planning and financing; stakeholder programme design and delivery; and engagement and participation of civil society and the private sector (Annex XIII). The mapping exercise was then combined with outcome harvesting – an approach often used to identify outcomes where few reporting data are available or when the results chain between outputs and outcomes is not clearly depicted. Outcome harvesting seeks to identify, describe and validate a set of outcomes, and then work backwards to understand how an organization or a programme might have contributed to that change. This exercise focused on selected planned capacity-strengthening outcomes under country strategic plan activities 1, 2 and 4.

8. **During the briefing, inception and evaluation missions, the team held interviews, meetings and focus group discussions with a wide range of informants** in WFP, the Government of Timor-Leste, United Nations agencies, other multilateral and bilateral development partners, non-governmental organizations and local government agencies. This followed detailed stakeholder mapping undertaken during the inception phase. The evaluation mission included field visits to four municipalities. In order to explore potential differences in approach or stakeholder experience across the review period, it was decided to visit one municipality where work started in 2018 with the launch of the country strategic plan (Aileu) and three municipalities with longer exposure to WFP interventions (Ainaro, Bobonaro and Ermera: see Figure 1). These three comprised half of the six core municipalities supported with targeted supplementary feeding programme (TSFP) interventions during the development operation and the country strategic plan. During field visits, the team visited municipal education and health offices, health facilities and schools. A list of persons met and interviewed is shown at Annex XVIII. A learning workshop was held in Dili on 26-27 February 2020 to discuss the draft findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation: first, with WFP staff, and secondly with the Government and development partners. It provided opportunities for WFP and its partners to discuss the purpose and performance of WFP contributions through its Timor-Leste country strategic plan, and to identify priorities and strategies for the future.

9. **Limitations faced during the evaluation** included incomplete or unreliable datasets. The evaluation team attempted where possible to reconcile discrepancies; where this could not be done, it pointed them out. The timing of the exercise meant that during the evaluation mission monitoring data were only available for the first year of the country strategic plan (2018). Data for 2019 were received very late in the evaluation process, but this has been incorporated where possible in this report. One key dataset, the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) of 2016,¹² is considered unreliable by expert informants,¹³ but in the absence of other data it was decided to cite it in this report. Trend analysis over time is challenged by the fact that different surveys did not use identical methodologies, although (with the limitations just mentioned) a comparison of survey data across time does remain valid and useful. Some reported indicators, such as the number of people exposed to messaging, are probably approximate at best and are impossible to verify. Rapid staff turnover in the Government of Timor-Leste and in WFP limit institutional memory and the number of informants able to recall key issues from the early part of the review period (including the development operation and IR-EMOP). The evaluation team made extra efforts to interview those who did have that memory. The evaluation mission schedule of appointments had to be adjusted many times. With flexibility from the team and strong support from the country office, most of the planned schedule was nevertheless fulfilled. But it did not prove possible to meet as many members of the nutrition target groups (particularly women) at health facilities and schools as was intended. However, adequate mitigation was possible for most of the limitations that were faced during the evaluation, and the evaluation team is therefore confident that its findings are valid.

1.2. COUNTRY CONTEXT

General overview

10. **Timor-Leste is a young country**, in two senses. Having gained independence in 2002, it is one of the world's newest states. It has a total population of 1.4 million people, of whom 43 percent are aged 0–14 and 4 percent are aged 65 or older.¹⁴ Life expectancy at birth is 67 for men and 70 for women.¹⁵ The sex ratio at birth is 1.04 males per female. The total fertility rate is 4.2 children per woman.¹⁶ The age-specific fertility rate of 52 live births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 in 2017 is slightly above the regional average for South-East Asia. Between 2010 and 2015, the percentage of women in this age group who had given birth fell from 6.3 to 5.6.¹⁷

11. **Tetum and Portuguese are the official languages of Timor-Leste.** Tetum has become the national *lingua franca*, although many other languages are spoken. As much as 98 percent of the population is reported as being Roman Catholic, with only 0.5 percent reporting a faith other than Christianity.

12. **Timor-Leste has an area of 14,874 km² and a coastline of 706 km** (Figure 1). It occupies the eastern half of the island of Timor in the Timor Sea, with the Pacific Ocean to the east, the Indian Ocean to the west, and the Java Sea to the north. Darwin, Australia is some 700 km to the south. The country includes two small islands (Atauro and Jaco) and Oecusse, a small coastal enclave in the Indonesian (western) half of Timor island. The terrain is mountainous, and the country has a tropical climate with wet and dry seasons. One quarter of Timor-Leste is classed as agricultural land and only 2.5 percent is urban land.¹⁸ Forest coverage is 47 percent. The population density is relatively low, although rapidly increasing. Most Timorese live in the western portion of the country, which includes the capital, Dili.

¹² General Directorate of Statistics (GDS) and ICF, 2018. 2016 Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey. Key findings. Rockville, Maryland, USA: GDS and ICF.

¹³ UNICEF, nd. Plausibility analysis for anthropometry. Timor-Leste DHS 2016. Dili: UNICEF: PowerPoint presentation and summary text (see also ¶20).

¹⁴ United Nations Fund for Population Activities, 2020. World Population Dashboard: Timor-Leste. New York: UNFPA. <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/TL> [accessed 24 March 2020].

¹⁵ World Health Organization, 2020. Timor-Leste. Geneva; WHO. <https://www.who.int/countries/tls/en/> [accessed 3 January 2020].

¹⁶ Ibid., p 19.

¹⁷ United Nations Fund for Population Activities, nd. Fertility. Summary of the thematic report. Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census 2015.

¹⁸ World Bank, 2018. Timor-Leste – systematic country diagnostic: pathways for a new economy and sustainable livelihoods. Dili: World Bank.

Economy and development

13. **The Timorese economy is highly dependent on oil**, which accounts for almost half (48 percent) of gross domestic product (GDP).¹⁹ Oil accounts for 61 percent of the country's exports, followed by coffee, with a share of 21 percent.²⁰ Due largely to oil revenues, Timor-Leste is now classed as a lower middle-income country (LMIC).²¹ Nevertheless, income inequality remains high: the country's Gini coefficient was 28.7 in 2014,²² and approximately 30 percent of the population live below the USD 1.90 per day international poverty line.²³ Over the years 2000 to 2007, average annual real gross domestic product growth was 2.4 percent per year and real gross domestic product per capita declined as a result of population growth.²⁴ From 2007 to 2016, gross domestic product growth performance changed markedly as a result of oil revenues: average growth per year was 6.5 percent and real gross domestic product per capita rose by 4 percent per year on average.²⁵ The future of oil revenues and the national Petroleum Fund depends on the finalization of agreements with Australia for the exploitation of the Greater Sunrise field in the Timor Sea, as well as decisions about the proposed Tasi Mane hydrocarbon processing facility in Timor-Leste, which critics describe as "high risk". Meanwhile, the Government of Timor-Leste will continue to draw down on the USD 17.50 billion Petroleum Fund, "as oil sector revenues dry up and non-oil revenues fall far short of the country's spending requirements".²⁶

14. **Job creation has mainly been driven by public-sector expansion.** Out of the 63,000 non-agricultural jobs created between 2004 and 2015, two-thirds were in the public sector while only one-third were created in the private sector.²⁷ These trends underline the importance of economic diversification for the future Timorese labour market. Gender-disaggregated data for the labour market are scarce and difficult to interpret, especially in rural areas. Employment rates in the non-agriculture sector are higher for men, and steadily increasing for women: from 11 percent of the working age population of women in 2004 to nearly 15 percent in 2015.²⁸

Food and nutrition security

15. **Timor-Leste faces severe malnutrition challenges.** After the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Afghanistan, it had the third-highest rate of undernourishment²⁹ in the Asia-Pacific region in 2016–2018: 24.9 percent of the total population, compared with 11.3 percent for the region as a whole.³⁰ The first Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis of Timor-Leste (in 2018) found that only 25 percent of the population could be considered food-secure (Figure 2). Three municipalities were assessed at IPC level 4 (severe chronic food insecurity). Overall, an estimated 430,000 people were considered to be severely and moderately chronically food insecure, i.e. 36 percent of the total population. The determinants of malnutrition are multisectoral and include poor maternal and child health and poor sanitation and hygiene conditions. The multiple causes of malnutrition in Timor-Leste are summarized at Annex XII.

¹⁹ Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 2017. Reconciliation report. Timor-Leste extractive industries.

²⁰ Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2019. What does Timor-Leste export? (2017). https://oec.world/en/visualize/tree_map/hs92/export/tls/all/show/2017/ [accessed 8 November 2019].

²¹ World Bank, 2019. Data: Timor-Leste. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/timor-leste> [accessed 8 November 2019].

²² World Bank, 2020. GINI index (World Bank estimate) – Timor-Leste. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=TL&view=map> [accessed 3 January 2020].

²³ World Bank, 2018. Timor-Leste – systematic country diagnostic: pathways for a new economy and sustainable livelihoods. Dili: World Bank.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Fitch Solutions, 2019. Timor-Leste: Tasi Mane project adds risks and uncertainty to fiscal outlook. <https://www.fitchsolutions.com/corporates/timor-leste-tasi-mane-project-adds-risks-and-uncertainty-fiscal-outlook-24-09-2019> [accessed 8 November 2019].

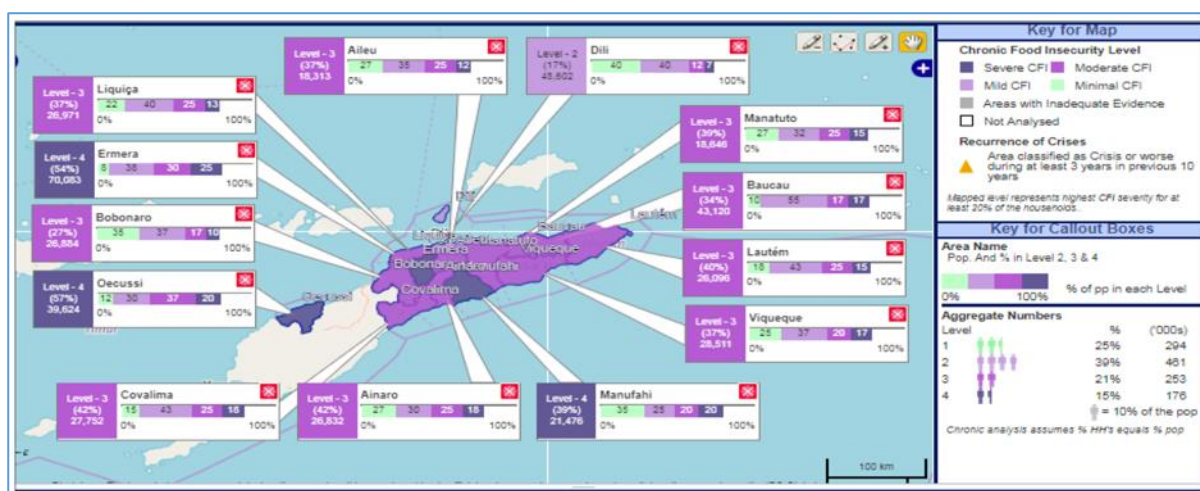
²⁷ World Bank, 2018. Timor-Leste – systematic country diagnostic: pathways for a new economy and sustainable livelihoods. Dili: World Bank.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Calculated on the basis of country-specific data comprising national food balance sheets, estimates of the distribution of food (household survey data) and data on age and sex of the population.

³⁰ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2019. The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns. Rome: FAO, pp. 126–127.

Figure 2. Integrated Phase Classification map of Timor-Leste



Source: Government of Timor-Leste, 2019. The first IPC analysis report on the chronic food insecurity situation in Timor-Leste. Evidence and standards for better food security and nutrition decisions. Dili: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, p. 1

16. **Timor-Leste has one of the highest rates of child stunting in the Asia-Pacific region and the world.**³¹ The 2013 Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey (TLFNS) indicated the prevalence of stunting, wasting and being underweight in children under five years of age (CU5) to be 50.2 percent, 11 percent and 37.7 percent respectively.³² The stunting rate in Timor-Leste is double the average in the South-East Asia region, which is 24 percent. Meanwhile, progress in stunting reduction in Timor-Leste has also been slow, with an average annual rate of reduction in stunting of 0.7 percent between 2002 and 2013 – compared to 2.1 percent globally between 1990 and 2011.³³ “Among children aged 0–59 months, total wasting prevalence... declined from 18.6 percent in 2009–2010 to 11 percent in 2013... [still above the 10 percent emergency threshold set by the World Health Organization (WHO)]. Severe wasting declined considerably between 2010 and 2013, from 7.0 percent to 1.9 percent, while moderate wasting decreased from 12 percent to 9.1 percent.”³⁴ Figure 1 shows the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (wasting) among children aged under five years according to the TLFNS 2013 data, and provides geographical representation of the wasting situation. This indicates that Oecusse and Covalima have the highest acute malnutrition rates, at 19.8 percent and 17.4 percent respectively, which are rates in the “very high” category. Bobonaro and Dili have rates in the “high” category at 14.9 percent and 14.2 percent respectively, while the rest of the country falls in the “medium” category (5–9.9 percent) of wasting. Timor-Leste “is on course to meet the global target for ‘under-five overweight’, but is off course to meet the targets for all other indicators analysed with adequate data”.³⁵

17. **Irrespective of survey or year, the indicators of stunting, wasting, underweight, anaemia in children aged under five and dietary diversity indicators (minimum acceptable diet (MAD) and minimum dietary diversity (MDD)) remain at critical levels in the country.** Table 1 summarizes nutrition trends since 2010, using data from two demographic and health surveys and from the 2013 TLFNS. As noted in paragraph 20, however, data from the Demographic and Health Survey 2016 must be treated with caution. Indicators highlighted in **bold italic** are at levels of public health significance in terms of WHO thresholds. A recent study found that low continued breastfeeding of children between 6 and 23 months and poor dietary diversity “are key constraining factors in achieving acceptable diets for infants and young children”.³⁶ It is difficult to be sure what improvements there have been, because of quality issues around the Demographic and Health Survey 2016. However, since 2010, there appear to have been improvements in stunting, those

³¹ Ibid, pp. 126–127.

³² Provo, A., Atwood, S., Brainne Sullivan, E and Mbuya, N., 2017. *Malnutrition in Timor-Leste: a review of the burden, drivers and potential response*. Washington: World Bank, pp. 16, 18.

³³ World Bank, 2018. Timor-Leste – systematic country diagnostic: pathways for a new economy and sustainable livelihoods. Dili: World Bank.

³⁴ Provo et al., 2017. *Malnutrition in Timor-Leste*, p. 18.

³⁵ Global Nutrition Report, 2020. Timor-Leste nutrition profile. <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/asia/south-eastern-asia/timor-leste/> [accessed 15 January 2020].

³⁶ Provo et al., 2017. *Malnutrition in Timor-Leste*, p. 26.

underweight and the percentage receiving a minimum acceptable diet, while deterioration has been observed for the indicators of wasting, anaemia in children, percentage with minimum dietary diversity, and overweight in both children and non-pregnant women.

Table 1. Trends in nutrition status since 2010 (%)

Nutrition indicator	2010 DHS	2013 TLFNS	2016 DHS
Stunting	58	50.1	46
Wasting	19 (7 SAM, 12 MAM)	10.5 (1.9 SAM, 9.1 MAM)	24 (9.8 SAM, 14.2 MAM)
Underweight (CU5)	45	37.7	40
Overweight (CU5)	5	1.4	6
Anaemia in children 6–59 months	38	63.2	40
Anaemia in women of reproductive age	21	39.5	23
Underweight in non-pregnant women 15–49 years (Body Mass Index <18.5)	27	24.8 (14–60 years)	27
Exclusive breastfeeding	52	62.3	50
Percentage met minimum acceptable diet (MAD)	Not available	17.6	13
Percentage met minimum dietary diversity (MDD)		27.5	34
Overweight in non-pregnant women (body mass index (BMI) >25)	5.1	10.2 (14–60 years)	10

Source: Demographic and Health survey 2010 and 2016, Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey 2013.

18. **While the prevalence of being overweight in both children and non-pregnant women in Timor-Leste is not as high as in neighbouring countries (Indonesia or Papua New Guinea) and currently not in the category of public health significance, it is a concern that the rates are increasing very fast,** particularly the number of women who are overweight, which has more than doubled since 2010. This is of concern due to the recent evidence³⁷ that undernutrition (stunting/wasting or being underweight) early in life (including *in utero*) may predispose to being overweight and developing non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease later in life. This underlines the importance of integrated action on malnutrition in all its forms.

19. **Overall, 62 percent of infants under six months are breastfed,** although this percentage is higher in rural areas and lower in urban areas. The prevalence of stunting, wasting and being overweight is slightly lower in girls (43 percent, 22 percent and 38 percent, respectively) compared to boys (48 percent, 26 percent and 43 percent, respectively). For adults, it is the reverse; being underweight (BMI<18.5) is slightly higher in women (27 percent) compared with men (26 percent); being overweight (BMI>25) is higher in women (10 percent) compared with men (6 percent).

20. **Anaemia rates for children are high** at 40 percent (DHS 2016) and slightly increased from the Demographic and Health Survey 2010 at 38 percent. Anaemia in women of reproductive age was found to be at 23 percent with minimal change observed since 2010. The Demographic and Health Survey 2016 data should be treated with caution. A careful United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) analysis concluded that “the breadth and depth of concerns in the Demographic and Health Survey 2016 Anthropometry dataset, with significant data quality issues and a large number of missing children, strongly suggests that the data is not representative of the nutrition status of children in Timor-Leste... the integrity of the dataset is

³⁷ World Health Organization, 2020. Double burden of malnutrition. <https://www.who.int/nutrition/double-burden-malnutrition/en/> [accessed 27 January 2020].

fundamentally compromised”.³⁸ The lack of valid, high-quality and recent nutrition status data in Timor-Leste is a major constraint in achieving a clear understanding of the nutrition situation in the country. Assessing the impact of nutrition and food security programmes is therefore challenging. There are plans for UNICEF and WFP to implement a joint nutrition survey in 2020.

21. **One-quarter of Timor-Leste’s population are adolescents** (10–19 years old). As global recognition of the importance of adolescent health and nutrition has increased, there has been an associated shift in attention in Timor-Leste, with a range of actors currently including adolescents in their focus. The nutritional status of adolescents in Timor-Leste is not optimal, although this has not been assessed at a national level. A school-based survey conducted by the World Health Organization in 2015 with students aged 13–17 years old showed that 21.8 percent of them were underweight – with a much higher prevalence among boys (28.0 percent) than girls (16.3 percent).³⁹ Only 4.4 percent of students were classified as overweight, and just 0.8 percent were obese – very low rates when compared to other low- and middle-income countries. A separate study found that 33.4 percent of girls aged 15–19 years were underweight, with 21.5 percent suffering from anaemia.

Agriculture

22. **Agriculture, especially subsistence farming, is an important sector for most Timorese, and for the poor especially.** Even though 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas, agriculture only accounts for 17 percent of non-oil gross domestic product.⁴⁰ Agriculture in Timor-Leste is challenged by a natural environment that is not conducive to farming across much of the country. Most of the agricultural activity is focused on subsistence farming. Eighty percent of poor households were dependent on agriculture in 2014, compared to 90 percent in 2007.⁴¹ The main crops grown by agricultural households are maize (87 percent), cassava (80 percent), sweet potato (69 percent), vegetables (65 percent), coconuts (64 percent), and beans (63 percent). Around 47 percent of households grow coffee, 47 percent are involved in timber, and 44 percent in rice production. Most households (87 percent) keep livestock of some kind.⁴²

23. **Agricultural productivity is low** “due to poor agricultural management practices, particularly with respect to soil and water management; inadequate public and private investment; limited access to credit; and substantial post-harvest losses due to inappropriate storage”.⁴³ Maize yields are below 2 metric tons per hectare (mt/ha), compared with 4 mt/ha or more in other South-East Asian countries. Rice yields are 3.0 mt/ha in Timor-Leste, and 5.0 mt/ha in Indonesia. Coffee yields are half those of Vietnam.⁴⁴

Climate change and vulnerability

24. **The unreliable climate of Timor-Leste, with its periodic droughts, is a factor in the food insecurity and livelihood vulnerability suffered by much of its population.** El Niño events are among the causes of climatic variation from year to year. One such event in late 2015 led to widespread food shortages and to the WFP IR-EMOP response in three municipalities in 2016–2017.

25. **On the basis of available data, the annual average air temperature and sea-surface temperature will increase.** Long-term rainfall is expected to sustain current patterns of fluctuation, with significantly wet and dry years still affecting agriculture and livelihoods. Extreme rainfall days are likely to

³⁸ UNICEF, nd. Plausibility analysis for anthropometry. Timor-Leste DHS 2016. Dili: UNICEF: PowerPoint presentation and summary text.

³⁹ World Health Organization and Ministry of Health, Government of Timor-Leste, 2015. Report of the 2015 Timor-Leste global school-based student health survey (GSHS). New Delhi: WHO Regional Office for South East Asia.

⁴⁰ World Bank, 2018. Timor-Leste – systematic country diagnostic: pathways for a new economy and sustainable livelihoods. Dili: World Bank.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ World Bank, 2016. Project appraisal document on a proposed grant from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program Trust Fund in the amount of USD 21.0 million to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste for a Sustainable Agriculture Productivity Project. Washington, DC: World Bank, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Lopes, M. and Nesbitt, H., 2012. Improving food security in Timor-Leste with higher yield crop varieties. Paper prepared for presentation at the 56th AARES annual conference, Fremantle, 7–10 February (no page no.).

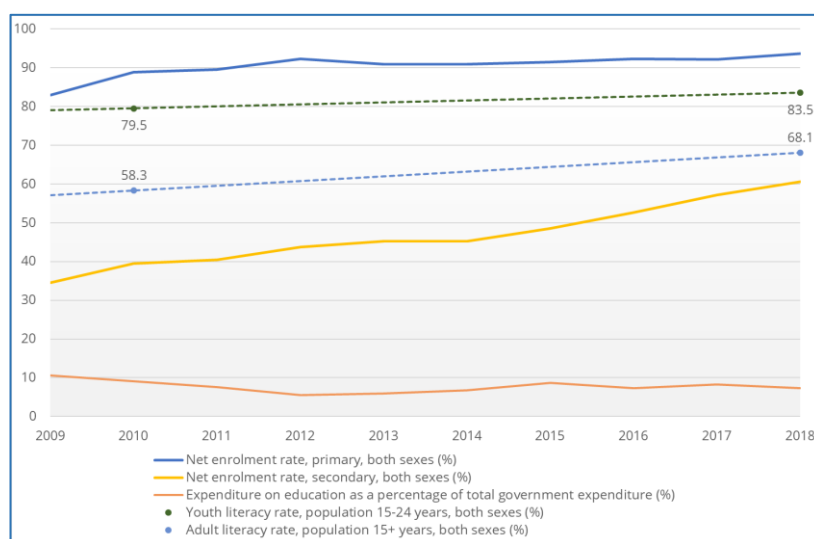
occur more often.⁴⁵ Another study stated that “the increasing frequency of extreme temperatures [is] likely to cause greater challenges for farmers... While increases in temperature and rainfall in Timor-Leste as a result of climate change over the next 40 years are considered to be modest..., the almost tripling of the population is likely to provide a challenge to maintaining food security.”⁴⁶

Education

26. **According to the 2015 Census, 13 percent of boys and 12 percent of girls aged 10–14 years are out of school.** This is higher for the older adolescents (15–19 years); 24 percent boys and 25 percent girls. Seven percent of adolescent girls (15–19 years) have begun child-bearing This is much lower than in other low- to middle-income countries (DHS 2016).

27. **Prior to independence, investments by Indonesia in the education system were limited.** After the country became independent, the shortage of skilled workers became an important challenge for the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, as well as for successive governments.⁴⁷ The country has made significant progress in education since independence. The Human Development Index ranks it number 131 in the Education component, up from position 153 in 2002.⁴⁸ Timor-Leste joined the Global Partnership for Education in 2005. Investment in education has increased in real terms as a result of the expansion of the national budget, but it has remained fairly constant as a percentage of all government expenditure (Figure 3). In 2017, the figure was 9.6 percent, still far from the 20 percent threshold recommended by the Global Partnership for Education.⁴⁹ Over the last ten years, enrolment rates have increased steadily, especially in secondary education, where initial figures reflected the lack of investment before independence (Figure 3). Gender differences in enrolment rates are small in primary education (1.2 percent lower for girl students in 2018), but substantially larger in secondary education (8.4 percent lower for girl students in 2018).⁵⁰ Literacy rates have also improved over the same period.

Figure 3. Timor-Leste: selected education indicators



Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO Institute for Statistics online database

⁴⁵ Timor-Leste National Directorate of Meteorology and Geophysics, Australian Bureau of Meteorology and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, 2015. *Current and future climate of Timor-Leste*. Dili: National Directorate of Meteorology and Geophysics (NDMG), p. 6.

⁴⁶ Molyneux, N., Rangel da Cruz, G., Williams, R.L., Andersen, R. and Turner, N.C., 2012. Climate change and population growth in Timor-Leste: implications for food security. *Ambio* 41: 823–840. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3492559/> [accessed 3 January 2020].

⁴⁷ World Bank, 2019. *Paths between peace and public service. A comparative analysis of public service reform trajectories in post conflict countries*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁴⁸ United Nations Development Programme, 2020. Human development data (1990-2018). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data> [accessed 13 January 2020].

⁴⁹ GPE, 2019. *Results Framework data for Timor-Leste*. Global Partnership for Education. Washington, DC: GPE.

⁵⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics online data.

Gender

28. **Important gender inequalities persist throughout Timor-Leste**, even though it became a party to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2003 and national legislation recognizes the rights of women and girls, including the right to work and to live a life free of violence. In 2018, Timor-Leste ranked 124th (out of 149 countries) in the global gender gap index.⁵¹ Patriarchal, social and cultural norms contribute to important power imbalances between women and men, with the latter generally responsible for decision-making. Although women occupy more than one-third of the seats in Parliament, women's political participation at decentralized levels remains very low (at approximately 4.7 percent). Men are widely considered to be responsible for generating income for the family and have control over household resources. Men usually engage in cash crop production, while women mostly practise subsistence farming with little or no associated revenue. Additionally, women in Timor-Leste have limited access to land, agricultural technologies and extension services that would allow them to increase their productivity. Harmful social norms have resulted in unequal access to food for women and girls. In poorer parts of the country, there is virtually no gender disparity in the labour market. In areas where households are richer and poverty rates are lower, men are more strongly engaged in the labour market than women.⁵² Many Timorese (70 percent) are engaged in vulnerable or informal employment, notably in subsistence or other small-scale agriculture, with 79 percent of women and 66 percent of men in this category of work.⁵³

29. **Gender-based violence (GBV) is a major concern in Timor-Leste**, and there is a national action plan to address it.⁵⁴ A recent study found that "59 percent of ever-partnered women aged 15 to 49 had experienced at least one act of physical or sexual violence, or both, by a male intimate partner in their lifetimes, and 47 percent had experienced it in the past 12 months".⁵⁵ Timor-Leste is also a destination country for sex-trafficking of women and girls, and forced labour among both adults and children is believed to be high. However, there are limited data on violence against children, sexual violence and sex-trafficking in Timor-Leste, curtailing the ability of the Government of Timor-Leste to develop evidence-based policies and programmes on child protection. Child labour is also a concern. In 2015, it involved 9.3 percent of children aged 10–14. The 2010 census showed that 11 percent of children in that age group in rural areas were economically active, compared with 3.8 percent of those living in urban areas.⁵⁶

National policies and the Sustainable Development Goals

30. **The Government of Timor-Leste's Strategic Development Plan (2011–2030) guides the country's development efforts** and is aligned with the Millennium Development Goals.⁵⁷ More recently, the Government has stated that the strategic development plan "is the primary vehicle for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)". In response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), a roadmap for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals was produced in 2017, outlining how the country's national plan aligns with them. The strategic development plan "reflects Timor-Leste's commitment to state-building, social inclusion and economic growth as it strives to become an upper middle-income nation by 2030".⁵⁸

31. **The Government's 2019 Voluntary National Review of Timor-Leste's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals identified four main areas in which implementation of the strategic development plan should be accelerated in order to achieve the goals.** The first area concerns "building

⁵¹ World Economic Forum, 2018. The global gender gap report 2018. Geneva: WEF, p. 11.

⁵² World Bank, 2019. A gender-sensitive insight of poverty mapping for Timor-Leste. Dili: World Bank, p. 13.

⁵³ Asian Development Bank, 2014. Timor-Leste country gender assessment. Manila: Asian Development Bank, with Government of Timor-Leste and UN Women, pp 71-72.

⁵⁴ Government of Timor-Leste, 2017. National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence (2017-2021). Dili: Secretariat of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women.

⁵⁵ Asia Foundation, 2016. Understanding violence against women and children in Timor-Leste: findings from the Nabilan baseline study. Dili: Asia Foundation.

⁵⁶ International Labour Organization, 2019. National Child Labour Survey 2016. Analytical report: Timor-Leste. Geneva: ILO, pp. 39–40.

⁵⁷ Government of Timor-Leste, 2011. Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030). Dili: GOTL, p. 10.

⁵⁸ Government of Timor-Leste, 2019. Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. From ashes to reconciliation, reconstruction and sustainable development. Voluntary national review of Timor-Leste 2019. Dili: GOTL, p. 21.

human capital". Underlining the grave impacts of stunting on society and the economy, the Voluntary National Review emphasizes that "accelerating improvements in nutrition will make a huge difference to child learning outcomes and productivity, supporting the building of human capital". The second area is "promoting sustainable growth" by strategic investments from the Petroleum Fund in "the drivers of growth – such as human capital and economic diversification". In the third area, "leaving no-one behind", the Voluntary National Review points to the adoption by the Government of "key legal instruments to promote inclusion, representation and the participation of women, youth and elderly". It emphasizes the continuing importance of sustaining peace in a nation that recently endured decades of traumatic conflict. The fourth area is "strengthening data collection and analysis", without which tracking progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals is difficult.⁵⁹

32. The Government has adopted a number of policies aimed at improving the welfare of its people. Among those most relevant to the WFP country strategic plan are the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, 2017;⁶⁰ the Zero Hunger Challenge Action Plan⁶¹ and the National Nutrition Strategy (NNS), 2014–2019,⁶² which is now due for revision. In 2016 there was a parliamentary resolution to prioritize nutrition. A Consolidated National Action Plan for SDG 2 is currently in development. The National Nutrition Strategy aims to expand the coverage of both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, with the latter to be implemented "mainly through non-health sectors i.e. Agriculture, Education, Local Development, Social Solidarity, and WASH- (water, sanitation and hygiene) related sectors".⁶³ It makes only incidental reference to the double burden of malnutrition.⁶⁴

33. A number of government ministries are responsible for sectors pertinent to the work of WFP in Timor-Leste. The Ministry of Finance has overall responsibility for the national budget and the possible allocation of government funds to WFP activities. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries hosts the National Council for Food Security, Sovereignty and Nutrition in Timor-Leste (KONSSANTIL), which has oversight of these key issues. The nutrition services that WFP seeks to support are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and the 13 municipalities to which a number of government services have been devolved. Schools and school feeding are coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion is responsible for social protection. It developed a Strategic Plan (2014–2017), nested within its Long-Term Strategic Plan (2011–2030). It is responsible for the Bolsa da Mãe social protection programme, which makes small cash transfers to targeted poor households if all their children aged 6–17 years are enrolled in school. The country strategic plan aims to support the efforts of the Government to strengthen this programme through provision of its system for cash operations (SCOPE) a digital beneficiary and transfer management system. It also envisages that Bolsa da Mãe could serve as a platform for nutrition-sensitive and gender-transformative social and behaviour change communication (SBCC).⁶⁵

34. Decentralization creates new opportunities and challenges in Timor-Leste. The process of administrative decentralization is transferring additional roles and budget allocations to the 13 districts or municipalities,⁶⁶ in accordance with constitutional provisions to which the nation has been committed since it gained its independence.⁶⁷ While the process enhances democracy and administrative efficiency by bringing government closer to the people, it creates new challenges of institutional development and capacity strengthening across the systems and structures of local government.

35. Converting policies into action has been challenged by several years of instability in Government. Disagreements within the Government have meant that, at the time of the evaluation mission, nine ministers had not been sworn in since the last elections; for example, there had been no formally appointed Minister of Finance or Health since mid-2018. No government budget for 2018 was agreed until

⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. 14-15.

⁶⁰ Government of Timor-Leste, 2017. National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. Dili: GOTL.

⁶¹ Government of Timor-Leste, 2014. Zero Hunger Challenge. National Action Plan for a Hunger and Malnutrition-Free Timor-Leste. Dili: KONSSANTIL.

⁶² Government of Timor-Leste, 2014. Timor-Leste National Nutrition Strategy (2014-2019). Dili: Ministry of Health.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 7.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 14.

⁶⁵ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3, p. 15.

⁶⁶ Fanzo, J., Boavida, J., Bonis-Profumo, G., McLaren, R. and Davis, C., 2017. *Timor-Leste strategic review: progress and success in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2*. Dili: CEPAD and Johns Hopkins University, p. 107.

⁶⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2013. Timor-Leste: National Programme for Village Development Support (PNDSSP): investment design summary. Canberra: DFAT, p. 59.

September of that year, when an emergency budget was passed at the same time that the 2019 budget was being drafted. The 2020 budget was withdrawn from Parliament in late 2019, amid uncertainty as to whether government Members of Parliament would support it. It was then presented early in 2020, but rejected by Parliament on 17 January. Senior civil servants and political leaders in ministries may hold opposing views on development strategy, meaning that initiatives prepared by civil servants and development partners are sometimes obstructed by (acting) ministers who decline to approve them. These complexities have become an increasing challenge for WFP as it seeks to intensify its focus on a joint commitment with the Government to a capacity-strengthening contribution through the country strategic plan.

1.3. WFP COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN IN TIMOR-LESTE

36. **The focus of this evaluation is the country strategic plan, which was approved by the Executive Board in February 2018.** As the terms of reference (Annex I) explain, the scope of the evaluation has been broadened, to “cover all WFP activities (including cross-cutting results) for the period 2015–mid-2019. The reason for a longer time frame (beyond the country strategic plan) is that it enables the evaluation to assess key changes in the approach.” In addition to the country strategic plan, this extended review period covers two previous operations: DEV 200770, 2015–2017, and an IR-EMOP 201017, 2016–2017 (see paragraph 3 above). The country strategic plan and the two earlier operations are summarized in Table 2. Annex VII presents summary financial data, and Annex IX provides details on the development operation and IR-EMOP. Detailed output and outcome data are at Annex XI. Figure 4 summarizes WFP work in Timor-Leste, and major changes in the external context, over the evaluation period. However, tracking the performance of WFP operations across this period is complicated by the inconsistency of the monitoring indicators that have been used and reported.

37. **The work of WFP in Timor-Leste has evolved as the country has stabilized.**⁶⁸ Early humanitarian activities were followed by longer-term, more developmental work. Following the recommendations of the Timor-Leste country portfolio evaluation (CPE) for 2008–2012,⁶⁹ WFP continued this trend from direct implementation to enabling and facilitation, by increasing its focus on capacity-strengthening activities.

Table 2. WFP assistance in Timor-Leste, 2015–2020

Operation type	Operation number	Title	Time-frame	USD required	USD received	Percentage funded
CSP	TL01	Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan	2018–2020	16 972 517	5 100 049	30.05%
IR-EMOP	201017	Prevention of moderate acute malnutrition in children aged 6–23 months and pregnant and lactating women	09/2016– 11/2016 Budget revision to 01/2017	847 040	857 169	101%
DEV	200770	Capacity Development for Health and Nutrition	01/2015– 12/2016 Budget revision to 12/2017	13 783 739 [including budget revision]	8 366 415	60.7%

Source: WFP, 2017. Moderate acute malnutrition in drought-affected areas. Standard Project Report 2017. Dili: WFP; WFP, 2017. Moderate acute malnutrition in drought affected areas. Standard Project Report 2017. Dili: WFP; WFP data (The FACTory: 9 January 2020)

38. **The fundamental assumptions underpinning WFP work in Timor-Leste since 2015 have been that direct and capacity-building support from WFP for enhanced nutrition would be effective because of competent WFP implementation, a supportive policy environment and constructive collaboration with the Government of Timor-Leste, other United Nations agencies and development partners.** On this basis it was assumed that WFP assistance, interlocked with complementary work by the

⁶⁸ WFP, 2019. 20 years of WFP operations in Timor-Leste. Dili: WFP.

⁶⁹ Mokoro Ltd., 2013. Timor-Leste: an evaluation of WFP's portfolio (2008–2012). Rome: Office of Evaluation, WFP.

Government and its partners, could contribute to enhanced nutrition and stronger government capacity to operate effective nutrition services. The same assumptions underpinned complementary WFP support for government supply chain and logistics services and capacity strengthening. A meta-assumption, spanning the whole review period, was thus that the time was right for WFP to start withdrawing from direct implementation and to focus more on facilitation and capacity strengthening for national implementation. A related assumption was that prompt implementation of the WFP policy on country strategic plans would give the Timor-Leste country office the ability to perform this different role effectively – moving beyond its traditional areas of expertise into new fields of competence in, for example, strategic advisory services, the promotion of multisectoral nutrition approaches and capacity strengthening at institutional and individual levels.

Figure 4. WFP in Timor-Leste, 2015–2019

	Pre-2015	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
WFP operations	2008-2011: PRRO 10388 Assistance to Vulnerable Populations	DEV200770: Capacity Development for Health and Nutrition				
	2009-2011: SO 107970 Logistics Augmentation and Capacity Building for the Government of Timor-Leste		IR-EMOP 201017: Prevention of moderate acute malnutrition in children 6 to 23 months and pregnant and lactating women			
	2011-2014: DEV 200185 Country Programme - Timor-Leste				CSP TL01: Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan	
WFP in Timor-Leste	2009: Evaluation of WFP Timor-Leste PRRO 10388.1 Assistance to Vulnerable Populations	Delays/pipeline breaks in Timor Vita supplies (January-November)	Delays/pipeline breaks in Timor Vita and RUSF supplies (3-months)	Delays/pipeline breaks in RUSF supplies (January-March)	Pipeline break in TSFP due to funding issues (6 months)	TSFP hand over completed in June. Monitoring of stocks continues for some months
	2011: Government takes over school feeding programme (PRRO 10388)			Workforce planning (Dec)	CSP's Activity 1 expanded to 4 additional municipalities at MOH's request	
	2013: CPE Timor-Leste: An evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2008 - 2012)				Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Timor-Leste 2015-2017	
Timor-Leste	1975: Independence from Portugal and Indonesian invasion	UNDAF Timor-Leste 2015-2019: Supporting Equitable and Sustainable Development in a Rising Young Nation				
	1999: Independence Referendum and hostilities			Elections: Presidential (March-April) and National Parliament (July)	Russian-Timor-Leste Treaty on Maritime Boundaries in the Timor Sea (March)	UNSDCF Preparation and design
	1999-2002: United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)			NZHSR: Timor-Leste Strategic Review. Progress & Success in Achieving SDG 2	Elections: National Parliament (May). 9 ministers not sworn in 2018-2019	
	1999-2012: UN peace-keeping mission		El Niño induced drought reduces food production			
	2001: First elections					
	2002: Constitution approved					
	2005: oil revenues start and creation of Petroleum Fund					
	2011: Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030					
	2014: Timor-Leste National Nutrition Strategy 2014-2019					
	2014: Zero Hunger Challenge National Action Plan: Eradication of Hunger & Malnutrition in TL					
WFP global	2013: WFP Strategic Plan (2014-2017)	WFP Gender Policy	WFP IRM & Strategic Plan 2017-2021	Corporate monitoring strategy 2017-2021	CRF Indicator Compendium	Updated CRF Indicator Compendium
	2014: SABER – School Feeding tool		Start of CSP pilots	WFP Nutrition Policy 2017-2021	Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot CSPs	
			WFP Gender Action Plan			

Source: Data assembled by evaluation team

WFP Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020)

39. **WFP guidelines for preparation of a country strategic plan include the requirement that a country-led National Zero Hunger Strategic Review (NZHSR) be carried out** – “inclusive consultative exercises providing comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced in achieving SDG 2”.⁷⁰ In Timor-Leste, WFP facilitated the execution of this review by a research team that was coordinated by the Centre of Studies for Peace and Development (CEPAD) and scholars from Johns Hopkins University, under the auspices of an advisory group under the Office of the Prime Minister.⁷¹ The country strategic plan makes numerous references to the analysis and recommendations of this NZHSR, which itself quotes the Zero Hunger

⁷⁰ Turner, S.D., Reynolds, M., Grabham, J., Hodson, E., Maunder, N., de Mel, R., Pereira, J., Piano, E. and Visser, M., 2018. Strategic evaluation of the Country Strategic Plan pilots. Evaluation report. Rome: WFP OEI, p. iii.

⁷¹ Fanzo et al., 2017. Timor-Leste strategic review: progress and success in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2.

Challenge National Action Plan of the Government of Timor-Leste.⁷² It also makes 12 recommendations to various government ministries for the achievement of SDG 2, targets 1–5, and 3 recommendations in the “political economy” arena: improving the coordination of food security and nutrition players through strengthening of KONSSANTIL; building human capacity in the food security and nutrition sectors; and increasing national investments in these sectors to 5 percent of gross domestic product.⁷³

40. **The country strategic plan for Timor-Leste (2018–2020) continues the WFP shift from the provision of food assistance to policy engagement and capacity strengthening of the Government and relevant parastatals and non-governmental organizations.** It foresees a gradual handover of targeted supplementary feeding programme activities to programmes run by the community and financed by the Government. Referring to the former, it says that “partnerships with local NGOs will continue to support the establishment of and collaboration with community groups such as mother support groups and youth groups in order to enhance understanding of nutrition at the community and household levels”.⁷⁴

41. **The concept note prepared during the design of the country strategic plan quoted the 2012 evaluation’s finding that “the country office was right to focus on nutrition issues and on capacity development... An agreed handover plan of evidence-based prioritized activities within a realistic timeline should be the long term goal.”**⁷⁵ It did not go into analytical detail about the intervention logic or the assumptions underpinning it. The country strategic plan itself asserted “the importance of continuing to provide food assistance in the short term while recognizing the longer-term need for WFP to strengthen national and local capacities and invest in sustainable food security and nutrition programmes to support the country’s progress towards middle-income country status and SDG 2”.⁷⁶ Like the development operation before it, it thus focused on capacity strengthening and handover (paragraph 39 above), and it was not explicit or detailed about its intervention logic, but stated that “the country strategic plan covers a transitional period and represents an important shift in WFP’s role, from the direct implementation of development programmes to the provision of capacity-strengthening support in the prevention of malnutrition, awareness raising and behaviour change activities”.⁷⁷

42. **The design of the country strategic plan assumed that the Government would provide an institutionally and fiscally stable platform for the development of the required capacity and that autonomous competence to provide the required services in the food and nutrition sector was a realistic mid-term prospect.** Stating risks rather than assumptions, the country strategic plan referred to economic instability if oil and gas revenues were not adequately sustained, and the consequent possibility of insufficient government funding for social development and human resources.⁷⁸ Its logical framework specifies some detailed assumptions about commitments on the part of the Government and the Ministry of Health to allocate resources and implement nutrition protocols and guidelines. It also refers to a conducive institutional context “for enabling discussions on policies and regulatory framework”.⁷⁹

43. **The country strategic plan therefore sets out a terminal phase of direct WFP engagement in TSFP (until 2019),** and specifies a number of areas in which capacity-strengthening support would be provided. It is divided into two strategic outcomes (SOs) and a total of four activities. Figure 5 below shows the “line of sight” structure of the country strategic plan, indicating how the four activities shown at the bottom of the diagram link up to the two strategic outcomes, which in turn should help WFP to achieve its corporate strategic objectives in support of SDG 2 and SDG 17.

⁷² Government of Timor-Leste, 2014. Zero hunger challenge. National action plan for a hunger and malnutrition-free Timor-Leste. Dili: KONSSANTIL.

⁷³ Fanzo et al., 2017. Timor-Leste strategic review: progress and success in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2, p. 14.

⁷⁴ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3, p. 20.

⁷⁵ WFP, nd. WFP Timor-Leste: Concept Note for Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Strategic Programme Review process (S-PRP). Bangkok: WFP.

⁷⁶ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3, p. 11.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 16.

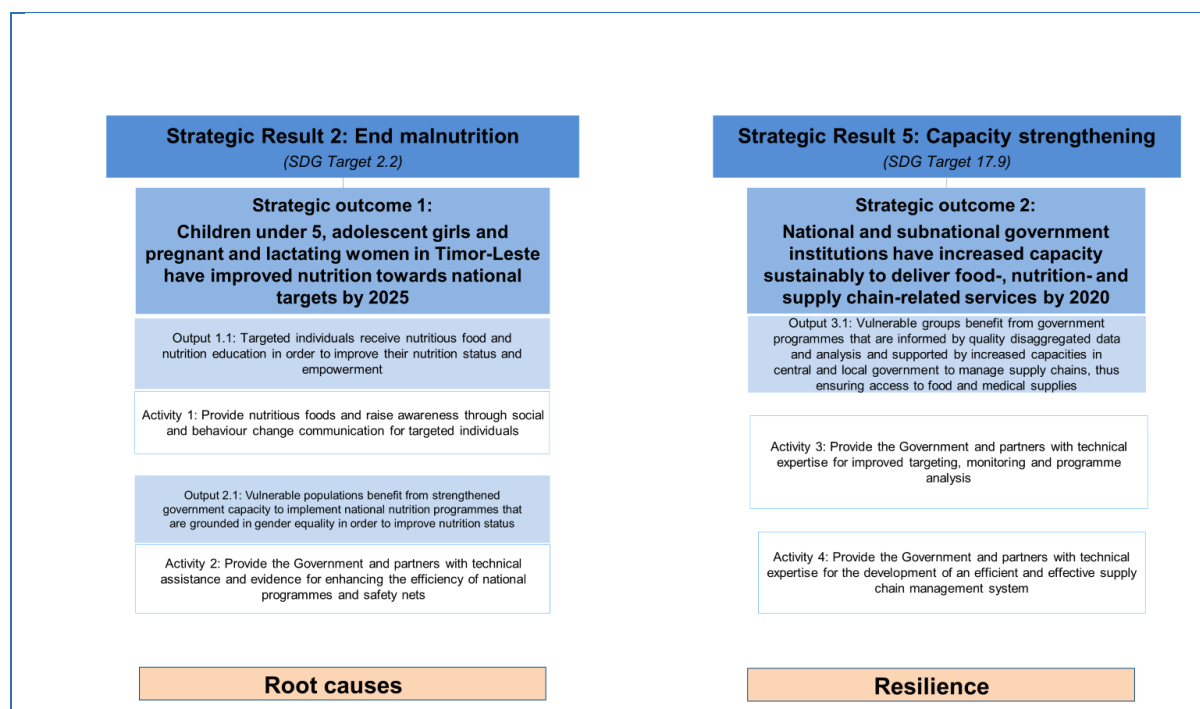
⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 21.

⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 24, 26.

Strategic Outcome 1

44. The country strategic plan's Strategic Outcome 1 is that "children under 5, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women have improved nutrition towards national targets by 2025". As Figure 5 shows, this links to Strategic Result 2 in the WFP Corporate Results Framework. Strategic Outcome 1 continued with many of the activities implemented under the development operation. Strategic Outcome 1 is to be achieved through two outputs: (1) targeted individuals (tier 1) receive nutritious food and gender-sensitive nutrition education in order to improve their nutrition status, dietary diversity and empowerment; (2) vulnerable populations (tier 3) benefit from strengthened government capacity to implement national nutrition programmes that are grounded in gender equality in order to improve nutrition status. While the more direct nutrition interventions of the country strategic plan fall under Strategic Outcome 1, improved nutrition is the clear underlying objective of the interventions by activities 3 and 4 under Strategic Outcome 2.

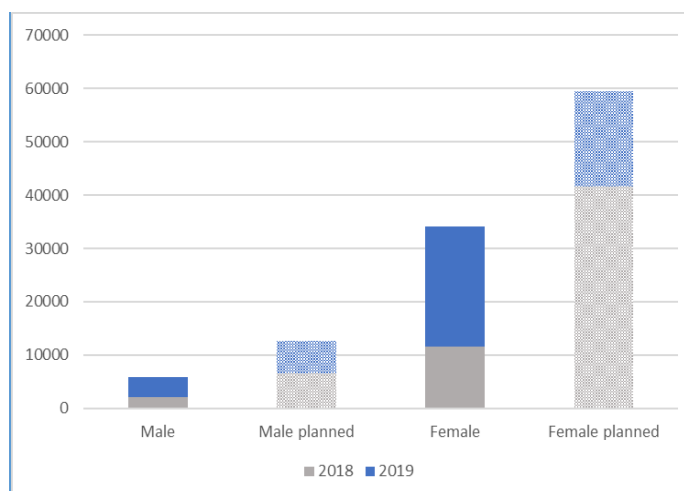
Figure 5. Timor-Leste country strategic plan "line of sight"



Source: WFP, 2017. TL01 "line of sight" 5.06.2017. Dili: WFP adapted to reflect final Country Strategic Plan

45. Under **Activity 1**, "Provide nutritious food and raise awareness through social and behaviour change communication for targeted individuals", WFP worked on the treatment and prevention of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) among children aged 6–59 months and pregnant and lactating women. This included both TSFP through health facilities and SBCC. The activity, originally planned to cover all 13 municipalities, was cut back to the same 6 municipalities targeted by the development operation. (Neither the country strategic plan nor the 2018 annual country report (ACR) says how many health facilities were targeted in these municipalities.) At the request of the

Figure 6. Country strategic plan: beneficiaries, 2018–2019, planned versus actual



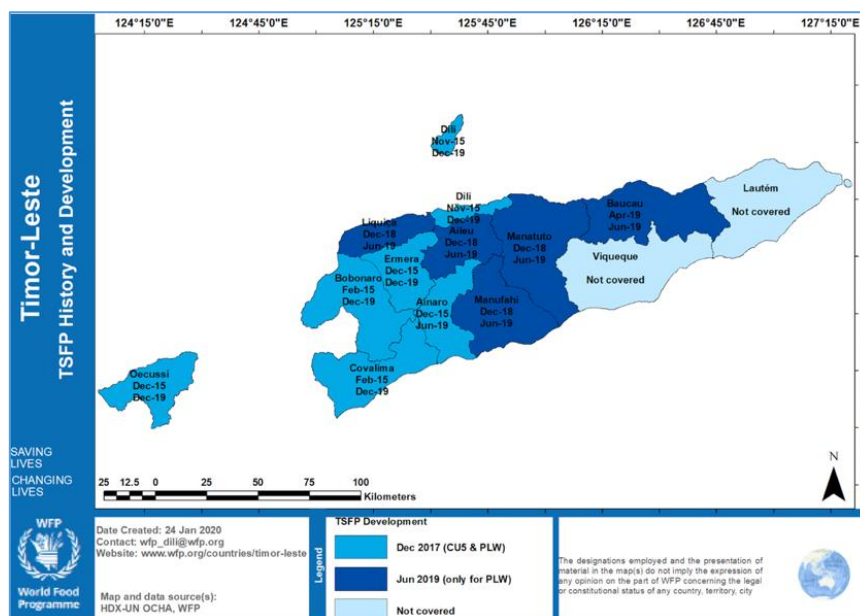
Government, WFP extended the activity temporarily to four other municipalities from December 2018 to June 2019, and to one other municipality from just April to June 2019 (Figure 7 below). In these additional municipalities, WFP received government funding for the procurement of food supplies. WFP TSFP activities were handed over to the Government in mid-2019 and WFP shifted the focus to capacity-strengthening activities. Activity 1 was expected to reach a total of 72,000 beneficiaries. In 2018, as Figure 6 shows, only 28.4 percent of the planned 48,100 beneficiaries for the year were reached, due to a pipeline break of Super Cereal.⁸⁰ Beneficiary data for 2019 show that the activity reached 26,321 beneficiaries, compared to a target of 24,050 beneficiaries (109.4 percent). Good performance was driven by the number of beneficiaries who were women, with 22,416 actual beneficiaries (17,912 planned). Of the planned 6,138 beneficiaries who were men, Activity 1 reached 3,895. Programme performance from March to June 2019 was lower than expected due to a pipeline break resulting from funding issues. Annex XII provides further information on nutrition performance and outcomes during the development operation and the country strategic plan to date.

46. **Activity 2**, “Provide the Government and partners with technical assistance and evidence for enhancing the efficiency of national programmes and safety nets”, is linked with capacity-strengthening goals. It comprises research and analysis to inform national approaches to nutrition prevention and management – for example, the recent “Fill the Nutrient Gap” (FNG) study⁸¹ and a pilot study of the acceptability of rice fortification. It also includes technical assistance (TA) and advocacy with key government stakeholders (for example, KONSSANTIL).

Strategic Outcome 2

47. **Strategic Outcome 2, “National and subnational government institutions have increased capacity sustainably to deliver food-, nutrition- and supply chain-related services by 2020”**, aims at developing the capacities of the Government of Timor-Leste through capacity-strengthening activities in areas where WFP has a comparative advantage. This links to Strategic Result 5 in the WFP Corporate Results Framework (CRF). Capacity strengthening is also central to the more direct delivery of nutrition-related interventions under Strategic Outcome 1. Strategic Outcome 2 is to be achieved through one output: “vulnerable groups benefit from government programmes that are informed by quality disaggregated data and analysis supported by increased central and local government capacity to manage supply chains, thus ensuring access to food and medical supplies”.

Figure 7. Targeted supplementary feeding programme coverage, 2015–2019



Source: WFP Timor-Leste country office

⁸⁰ WFP, 2019. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2018. Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Dili: WFP.

⁸¹ Government of Timor-Leste and WFP, 2019. Fill the Nutrient Gap Timor-Leste. Final report. Dili: KONSSANTIL and WFP. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/fill-nutrient-gap-timor-leste> [accessed 6 February 2020].

48. **Activity 3**, “Provide the Government and partners with technical expertise for improved targeting, monitoring and programme analysis” focuses on building capacity of the Government to implement, monitor and evaluate safety net programmes. The main government counterparts include the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in the context of the school feeding programme (Merenda Eskolar: see Annex XIV), and the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion in the context of a conditional cash transfer programme (Bolsa da Mãe) that is linked to children’s school attendance (paragraph 33).

49. **Activity 4**, “Provide the Government and partners with technical expertise for the development of an efficient and effective supply chain management system”, focuses on supply chain management, including the supply chain challenges faced by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in its school meals programme. The main government counterparts include Servico Autonomo de Medicamentos e Equipamentos de Saude (SAMES) (the medical and pharmaceutical supply agency) and the National Logistics Centre, which handles the storage and distribution of food supplies (mainly rice) across the country. WFP also partnered with the non-governmental organization, Help Logistics, to assess the supply chain of the school feeding programme.

Evolution of the country strategic plan

50. **The Timor-Leste country strategic plan was approved in February 2018. There has thus been relatively little time for it to evolve in response to external or internal circumstances.** There have been no major external events (in the political or environmental context, for instance) that would have triggered significant adjustments to the country strategic plan or changes in WFP work. However, the ongoing political instability (see Section 1.2) has been a challenge to the pace of implementation and to country strategic plan design assumptions about government funding and takeover of work carried out by WFP. Interaction with senior officials, and the pace and clarity of the relevant government decision-making, were sometimes impaired.

Funding

51. **Funding of the WFP Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020) has been low in relation to the country strategic plan needs-based budget and the implementation plan** (Table 3). While data for 2019 are partial, the table shows that activities under Strategic Outcome 1 are more heavily underfunded than activities under Strategic Outcome 2. Out of the available funding, approximately 77 percent is not formally earmarked by an external donor (see paragraph 172). This is because, in the absence of donor support, most of the funding for the country strategic plan to date (66 percent or USD 3.3 million) has come from WFP headquarters through the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC). Other funding to date has come from private donors (USD 319,000), the Government of Timor-Leste for the procurement of food (USD 210,000), Australia (USD 140,000) and the Republic of Korea (USD 98,000).

Table 3. Country strategic plan funding overview, cumulative 2018–2019, excluding indirect support costs

Strategic Outcome	Activity number	Needs-based plan (USD)	Implementation plan (USD)	Actuals (USD)	(%) Actuals versus implementation plan
SO1	1	8 996 151	2 680 882	548 517	20%
SO1	2	1 737 064	465 108	158 070	34%
SO2	3	1 186 548	478 749	357 816	75%
SO2	4	1 671 331	884 012	703 772	80%
Direct support costs		2 345 542	756 311	497 992	66%
	Total	15 936 636	5 265 062	2 266 166	43%

Note: the table shows the implementation plan data for 2018 and 2019 only.

Source: Country portfolio budget plan vs actuals report, IRM, 9 January 2020

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1. EQ 1: To what extent are the strategic position, role and specific contribution of WFP based on country priorities and people's needs as well as WFP strengths?

52. This section addresses the relevance of the Timor-Leste country strategic plan, and thus partly assesses its design. A key aspect of relevance, addressed first below, is the extent to which the country strategic plan is aligned with national priorities, policies and strategies, and relevant to the national context. More broadly, the evaluation considers the extent to which the country strategic plan addresses the needs of the most vulnerable citizens of Timor-Leste, ensuring that no one is left behind. Relevance is not a static concept; findings are therefore presented also on the extent to which the relevance of the country strategic plan has been sustained as circumstances changed. Finally, the relevance of the country strategic plan is assessed in terms of coherence and alignment with wider United Nations efforts in Timor-Leste, and inclusion of other strategic partnerships, based on the comparative advantage of WFP in the country.

Relevance of the country strategic plan

53. **The country strategic plan is well aligned with national policies, plans and strategies with regard to food and nutrition security.** As explained in paragraph 39 above,

its preparation was guided by the National Zero Hunger Strategic Review that WFP had commissioned in line with the provisions of its corporate Integrated Road Map (IRM),⁸² with the intention of improving alignment with national Sustainable

Development Goal targets and partners. Reflecting the views of informants from the Government of Timor-Leste, one senior official stated that “nutrition is a high national priority, the second priority after peace and stability”. The country strategic plan aims to address the national SDG 2.2 target of “a hunger and malnutrition free Timor-Leste by 2025”. Its Strategic Outcome 1, “children under five, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls in Timor-Leste have improved nutrition towards the national targets” shows good alignment with broad national nutrition development policies and plans, notably: the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan (2011–2030);⁸³ the 2016 national parliamentary resolution to prioritize nutrition; the National Food Security and Nutrition Policy;⁸⁴ the National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2011–2030);⁸⁵ the National Nutrition Strategy (2014–2019);⁸⁶ the Zero Hunger National Action Plan;⁸⁷ the Agriculture Policy and Strategic Framework;⁸⁸ and the National Social Protection Strategy (2019–2030). Annex V gives more detail on these policies, strategies and plans.

EQ 1.1. To what extent is the country strategic plan relevant to national policies, plans, strategies and goals, including achievement of the national Sustainable Development Goals?

54. Most pertinent to addressing food security and nutrition in Timor-Leste is the 2010 Comoro Declaration against hunger and malnutrition, to which seven line ministries committed in 2010 (Annex V). This commitment kick-started high-level action on nutrition in the country, at a time when the global Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) movement was being launched to accelerate action on nutrition, globally and at country level. (Timor-Leste, however, only decided to apply for SUN membership in late 2019.) Furthermore, the Comoro Declaration also spearheaded the formation of the multisectoral coordination body KONSSANTIL, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Directorate of Food Security. Other members of KONSSANTIL include the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Finance.

⁸² WFP, 2016. Policy on Country Strategic Plans. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/1/Rev.1.

⁸³ Government of Timor-Leste, 2011. Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan (2011-2030). Dili: GOTL.

⁸⁴ Government of Timor-Leste, 2017. National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. Dili: GOTL.

⁸⁵ Government of Timor-Leste, 2011. National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2011-2030). Dili: Ministry of Health.

⁸⁶ Government of Timor-Leste, 2014. Timor-Leste National Nutrition Strategy (2014-2019). Dili: Ministry of Health.

⁸⁷ Government of Timor-Leste, 2014. Zero Hunger Challenge: National Action Plan for a Hunger and Malnutrition-Free Timor-Leste. Dili: KONSSANTIL.

⁸⁸ Government of Timor-Leste, 2017. Agriculture Policy and Strategic Framework. Towards nutrition-sensitive, climate smart agriculture and food systems. Dili: Government of Timor-Leste. Draft.

55. **The strategic outcomes of the WFP country strategic plan are aligned with five of the nine priorities identified in the Consolidated Action Plan that was developed by the Office of the Prime Minister, with KONSSANTIL.** The action plan has identified nine broad priority actions across five sectors taken from the three key strategies: the National Nutrition Strategy, the Zero Hunger National Action Plan and the National Food Security and Nutrition Policy. The action plan priorities with which the country strategic plan is aligned are:

- The health sector: maternal, infant and young child nutrition (MIYCN), including the promotion of social and behaviour change communication, integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for good nutrition
- Education and youth: improve school feeding and the nutrition education programme
- Social protection: improve the nutrition sensitivity and targeting of Bolsa da Mãe
- Agriculture: promote diversity of homestead production
- Commerce and industry: create and implement a regulatory framework to support food fortification and regulate the food marketing environment.

56. **From a food security and nutrition perspective, there is a contrast between the broad challenges that the country strategic plan proposes to address and the narrow range of activities that it specifically commits to undertaking.** For Strategic Outcome 1, the country strategic plan proposes to contribute to improved nutrition of children aged under 5 years, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls. The direct service delivery under this strategic outcome (under Activity 1) focuses on the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition alongside SBCC, with limited preventive activities beyond behaviour change and no clear linkages with nutrition-sensitive programmes or activities. (The lack of direct opportunities to promote better adolescent nutrition through school feeding was a constraint.) Supporting production and consumption of a diversified diet is a relatively minor feature of the country strategic plan, but is a national priority. The country strategic plan does not refer to the production of nutritious foods or mention the need to review the previous collaboration with Timor Global factory⁸⁹ on the production of Timor Vita, to guide future support. A comprehensive review of the Timor Global support was a recommendation of the 2012 country portfolio evaluation, but up to 2019 this had not been done or planned.

57. **Given the restricted resources available to WFP in Timor-Leste, limiting the scope of the country strategic plan's direct intervention in food security and nutrition has been a prudent consideration.** But relevance could have been enhanced by more specific and more complementary linkages with the interventions of other government and development partner agencies and programmes. Ideally, the country strategic plan would have specified not only its alignment with national strategy but also how its limited contributions would complement others – through design linkages and operational collaboration. Anticipating limited resources, country strategic plan design should have put more emphasis on the central role of partnerships in optimizing the effectiveness of the contributions that WFP would make. Although it stated that “partnerships are central to all elements of the country strategic plan”,⁹⁰ it did not focus on the strategic role that they would play in maximizing the leverage of WFP efforts.

58. **Activity 2 is an attempt to broaden the scope of the country strategic plan by generating evidence and supporting the enabling environment,** for example, through the Fill the Nutrient Gap study,⁹¹ and supporting legislation around food fortification through a rice fortification pilot study. These important activities align well with national policy and strategy, and are more long-term, upstream areas of support.

59. **The wording of the country strategic plan's Strategic Outcome 1 implies a broader approach to malnutrition than evidenced by the work actually undertaken.** It implies a broader range of activities that will directly contribute to the improved nutrition status of children, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women, yet the main focus in practice has been on managing moderate acute malnutrition and

⁸⁹ A private company

⁹⁰ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018-2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3, p. 2.

⁹¹ Government of Timor-Leste and WFP, 2019. Fill the Nutrient Gap Timor-Leste. Final report. Dili: KONSSANTIL and WFP. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/fill-nutrient-gap-timor-leste> [accessed 6 February 2020].

developing SBCC. Activity 2 does not directly contribute to Strategic Outcome 1 outcome indicators, which detracts from the formal reporting of its achievements.

60. **National policy and strategies commit Timor-Leste to a multisectoral approach to malnutrition. The country strategic plan focuses largely on selected nutrition-specific elements of such an approach.** For example, Strategic Outcome 1 is more directly aligned with strategic priorities (SPs) 1, 2 and 5 of the National Nutrition Strategy. Within these priorities, the scope of WFP is limited to treatment of moderate acute malnutrition and SBCC only in relation to direct service delivery. Country strategic plan Activity 2 and Strategic Outcome 2 are only partially aligned with National Nutrition Strategy Strategic Priority 3 on food security in relation to capacity strengthening. Also, the WFP country strategic plan omits aspects of early warning on nutrition and food security systems. It thus does not contribute to achievement of Outcome 8 of the Food Security and Nutrition Policy (“an effective integrated food and nutrition security information system in place”).⁹² Again, country strategic plan design was appropriately prudent in limiting WFP direct interventions; but relevance could have been enhanced by explicitly mapping these interventions within an agreed national multisectoral programme that combined complementary resourcing and interventions from the Government and its development partners. This would, of course, have required all parties to be ready to specify such a multisectoral programme and agree their respective roles.

61. **Activities during the development operation were aligned to national priorities,** with a stronger emphasis on support for safe, quality local production and processing of nutritious food products. This is a key feature of the national development plan and of food security, nutrition, health and agriculture sector policies and strategies. The country strategic plan design maintained this alignment, and the overall relevance of WFP work in the country. But it did not benefit as strongly as it might have done from evaluation of the development operation, owing to the timing of the latter,⁹³ which reported after the country strategic plan had been approved. Furthermore, as argued above, prudence dictated narrow specification by the country strategic plan of the specific tasks that WFP would undertake within the broad and highly relevant set of food and nutrition security challenges it identifies; and linkages into a broader collaborative framework were not fully specified or achieved. Sustaining the carefully defined course of the country strategic plan has been made more difficult by funding shortages, which have led to a more fragmented approach to task definition (paragraph 138 below).

62. **The majority of stakeholders, including at municipality and health facility levels, acknowledge that WFP nutrition support, which is the most visible aspect of its country strategic plan, is well aligned with the broad priority of the Government of Timor-Leste to address malnutrition and end hunger.** The summary of findings from district health office and health facility visits (Annex XII) confirms this, as did interviews with stakeholders in the Government, at donors and non governmental organizations and in the United Nations.

63. **Inclusion of vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) (including early warning systems) would have made the country strategic plan more relevant to the national context.** Vulnerability analysis and mapping is one of the leading areas of corporate competence of WFP. However, due to funding constraints, the Timor-Leste country office has not had a vulnerability analysis and mapping unit since 2016. It is currently trying to strengthen links with the vulnerability analysis and mapping unit in the Indonesia country office, and (with support from RBB) is making vulnerability analysis and mapping outputs available to the Government from that source – for example, the recent food security analyses for the dry season 2019 and wet season 2019–2020.^{94, 95} Using interns (guided by RBB), the country office is also trying to strengthen its local capacity in the field of geographic information systems and vulnerability analysis and mapping. These measures should strengthen the provision of data to support decision-making by the Government and its partners.

⁹² Government of Timor-Leste, 2017. National food and nutrition security policy. Dili: GOTL, p. 19.

⁹³ Kouam et al., 2018 End-Term Evaluation of Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Timor-Leste, 2015 – 2017.

⁹⁴ WFP, 2019. Timor-Leste, start of rainy season 2019-2020. Dili: WFP.

⁹⁵ WFP, 2019. Timor-Leste dry season 2019. Dili: WFP.

Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, gender equality and the empowerment of women

64. **The development operation, the IR-EMOP and the country strategic plan targeted the most vulnerable in that they focused on the municipalities with the highest malnutrition rates.** High rates of malnutrition are common throughout Timor-Leste. According to WFP informants, the original intention was for the country strategic plan to provide

EQ 1.2. To what extent did the country strategic plan address the needs of the most vulnerable people in the country to ensure that no one is left behind?

supplementary feeding in all 13 municipalities. This was not possible due to lack of funding (paragraph 167-170 below). Within the selected municipalities, the aim was to reach all of the target groups by supporting service at all health facilities. In practice, this was constrained by the number of health facilities and by the fact that some people live far from any health facility and are not often reached by health or nutrition services. In 2010, more than half of women reported access or distance to health facilities as a main problem in seeking health services (Annex XII). WFP support for the Integrated Community Health Service (SISCa)⁹⁶ community outreach programme (paragraph 90) was meant to extend coverage, although this was not a complete answer to the challenge of a remote and scattered population. The country strategic plan does not present a clear strategy for reaching these most remote populations. Setting up mobile clinics as a strategy to improve the coverage of vulnerable beneficiaries was a recommendation made by the development operation evaluation.⁹⁷ WFP reporting does mention advocacy for mobile clinics during the first year of the country strategic plan, and they do exist in some areas as a responsibility of the Ministry of Health.⁹⁸ But, like the general services of the Ministry of Health, WFP has not been able to achieve full coverage in target areas due to the terrain and settlement pattern.

65. **The country strategic plan presents a strong gender analysis,** using sex-disaggregated data on the socio-economic and nutritional status of men and boys and women and girls. The socio-economic and nutritional status of (ultimate) beneficiaries is discussed through an intersectionality lens, comparing the situation of women and girls and men and boys from different age groups, of socio-economic status, and living in urban and rural areas. The gender analysis also discusses harmful gender norms in the country, most notably in terms of intra-household relationships and women's unequal access to nutritious foods. Issues related to women's economic empowerment are also discussed, including women's unequal access to land and productive assets, and women's limited access to agricultural income, which is due to their predominant participation in subsistence farming rather than cash crops, which are mostly exploited by men. The country strategic plan also presents a situational analysis regarding gender-based violence in the country and the legislative framework to address it.

66. **The design of the country strategic plan mainstreams gender equality with elements that are gender-specific, gender-sensitive and gender-transformative.** One of the key features of the country strategic plan is its strong focus on improving the nutritional status of all adolescent girls. While DEV 200770 focused on pregnant and lactating women and children under five, it did not target non-pregnant adolescent girls directly. The country strategic plan refers to the NZHSR, which emphasizes the importance of addressing the nutritional needs of adolescent girls to achieve SDG 2 and break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.⁹⁹ In the same vein, the development operation evaluation noted that nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of women in Timor Leste have children before the age of 20, and that including non-pregnant adolescent girls as a direct target group for prevention purposes is necessary for the country to achieve nutrition targets related to the first 1,000 days of life.¹⁰⁰ The country strategic plan also seeks to achieve gender-transformative change by aiming to integrate messages into SBCC material that challenge harmful gender norms and roles, and advocate women's empowerment and their equal participation in decision-making. The situational analysis identifies gender inequalities regarding women's unequal access to

⁹⁶ SISCa is an integrated health service involving the community. Launched in 2008, the programme is a key initiative of the Ministry of Health to extend the reach of basic primary health care services to community and household level. It is being implemented in the country's 13 municipalities, 65 sub-municipalities and 442 villages and hamlets, with a total of 602 SISCa posts nationwide (Government of Timor-Leste, 2020. SISCa health service. <http://www.moh.gov.tl/?q=node/82> [accessed 14 January 2020]).

⁹⁷ Kouam et al., 2018 End-Term Evaluation of Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Timor-Leste, 2015–2017, p. 47..

⁹⁸ WFP, 2019. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2018. Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Dili: WFP, p. 11.

⁹⁹ Fanzo et al., 2017. Timor-Leste strategic review: progress and success in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2.

¹⁰⁰ Kouam et al., 2018 End-Term Evaluation of Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Timor-Leste, 2015–2017, p. 47.

agricultural income. Because of resource constraints and the nature of the WFP mandate, the country strategic plan does not propose a strategy for increasing women's access to and control over productive assets; and in practice, staff acknowledge, more could be done to strengthen the gender-transformative content and emphasis of SBCC. The country strategic plan does discuss issues of gender-based violence in Timor-Leste and protection issues that confront women and girls. An initiative to work on these issues with other agencies did not receive funding (paragraph 191 below).

Relevance in changing circumstances

67. **The strategic positioning of WFP remained relevant throughout the review period.** Overall, the Timor-Leste context, capacities and needs did not alter significantly during this period. Malnutrition was as significant a challenge in 2019 as it had been in 2015. Design of the development operation and of the country strategic plan both recognized this as a central challenge, with the latter verifying it through its Zero Hunger Strategic Review.¹⁰¹

EQ 1.3. To what extent has WFP strategic positioning remained relevant throughout the implementation of the country strategic plan in light of changing context, national capacities and needs?

68. **The NZHSR (paragraph 39 above) provided a solid analytical base for design of the country strategic plan.** Later, the country office was involved in two other notable pieces of analytical work: the Fill the Nutrient Gap study (paragraph 46) and the study of adolescent health and nutrition carried out with the farming for prosperity programme *To'os ba Moris Di'ak* (TOMAK) paragraph 131). Neither of these analytical efforts has fed directly into the adjustment of ongoing strategy for country strategic plan implementation.

69. **The principal trend in strategic positioning, already emphasized in the design of DEV 200770, was to shift from direct implementation to capacity strengthening and related facilitation and advisory support.** In aggregate, this was a relevant change, given the resources becoming available to this lower middle-income country and available, in theory, for Timor-Leste to tackle its own problems. Looking in more detail, however, it is clear that the ways in which WFP moved to focus on capacity strengthening and reduce its direct implementation support were not well aligned with the continuing reality of limited national capacity.

70. **DEV 200770 was designed with reference to an ongoing 2014 capacity assessment.¹⁰² There was no such assessment ahead of the country strategic plan.** The 2014 assessment found a need to improve national capacity in transport contracting, warehouse keeping and commodity management, and called for the development of storage protocols as well as processes to avoid pipeline breaks at decentralized level. The development operation therefore sought to enhance the capacity of Ministry of Health staff in supply chain planning, procurement, storage, stocks quality control, and fleet management. The project document states that "the need for additional WFP support beyond the project timeframe will be based on a review of government capacity and the availability of resources".¹⁰³ WFP informants confirmed that a needs assessment was planned upon completion of the development operation, but that in the end it was not done. The design of the new country strategic plan was thus not informed by a recent assessment of the needs of the Government for capacity strengthening. However, WFP has undertaken detailed consultations with the Government in the course of the country strategic plan Activity 4, to ensure that its technical inputs are aligned with the highest priority needs.

71. **Government stakeholders and United Nations informants confirmed the continued relevance of WFP strengthening of capacity in supply chain management through country strategic plan Activity 4. However, the relevance of some other planned activities on capacity strengthening is less clear.** For example, some informants questioned the relevance of capacity-strengthening support in SBCC. Several stakeholders noted that WFP has been offering to support the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion on social protection, but the appetite of the ministry for this support is limited. The clearest reason for government reluctance to involve WFP in support for social protection is that there is already an extensive programme of assistance to the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion on this issue funded by the

¹⁰¹ Fanzo et al., 2017. Timor-Leste strategic review: progress and success in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2.

¹⁰² WFP, 2015. Timor-Leste development project number 200770. Capacity development for health and nutrition. Rome: WFP, pp. 7, 10.

¹⁰³ *ibid*, p. 10.

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (with three international advisers posted in the ministry). According to informants, that programme is already deeply engaged in the preliminary appraisal and design of potentially comprehensive restructuring of Timor-Leste's social protection system, which might render the country strategic plan's references to the Bolsa da Mãe programme superfluous. A scoping mission by RBB in 2018 confirmed the possibility of WFP advisory support to the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion on beneficiary registration, but was cautious about the potential complexities of working alongside other agencies also providing assistance to the ministry.¹⁰⁴ The World Bank is also likely to re-engage with the ministry on social protection. In Timor-Leste, the WFP case for engagement was not strengthened by the way in which it promoted its SCOPE beneficiary registration system, which some stakeholders perceived as insufficiently sensitive to local conditions and priorities. Elsewhere, some governments and partners have found SCOPE difficult to use and sometimes incompletely adapted to local conditions.^{105, 106}

72. **The country strategic plan acknowledges the capacity-strengthening needs that have emerged as a result of the ongoing decentralization process in Timor-Leste** (paragraph 34 above). For example, it states that the capacity of "staff in decentralized structures, including at the municipal level, will be strengthened to ensure equitable, effective and efficient delivery at the community level".¹⁰⁷ However, it does not present a concrete strategy for strengthening supply chain management capacity at municipal level, a major gap that has adversely affected the overall functioning of the supply chain and the ability of beneficiaries to access treatment in community health facilities, as further detailed under EQ 2.1 below. Aware of this need, WFP has provided some training to municipal-level staff, although this was constrained by funding shortages in 2018 and 2019.

73. **The political (and to a lesser extent the institutional) context has been dynamic throughout the review period.** Because the country office has lacked the resources to engage adequately at senior levels in this dynamic environment, it has achieved insufficient traction, and is viewed in some quarters of the Government and the development partner community as less relevant than when it focused its work (with more resources) on direct implementation support to food security. Continuing political instability has not altered the fundamental relevance of the core focus by WFP on malnutrition and related challenges. But it has strengthened the challenges to the increasing focus by WFP on a capacity-strengthening role, which requires strong and stable partnerships with the organizations whose capacity is being strengthened.

Coherence, alignment with the wider United Nations

74. **The DEV 200770 and country strategic plan documents made limited reference to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework** (UNDAF, 2015–2020, including a one-year extension).¹⁰⁸ The development operation document merely committed the country office to "work with UNDAF thematic groups and the Government to evaluate progress and achievement of [the] project's objectives in relation to national strategies/programmes".¹⁰⁹ The country strategic plan stated that "it is aligned with the national strategic development plan and supports the social capital and institutional development pillars of the UNDAF (2015–2019)", but did not offer any further detail about what this alignment would mean in practice.¹¹⁰

EQ 1.4. To what extent is the country strategic plan coherent and aligned with the wider United Nations and to what extent does it include appropriate strategic partnerships based on the

¹⁰⁴ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste scoping mission report: emergency preparedness and response; social protection; SCOPE. Bangkok: WFP RBB. Final draft, pp. 14–15, 19, 25–26.

¹⁰⁵ Parker, B., 2018. Audit exposes UN agency's poor data-handling. *The New Humanitarian*, 18 January. <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2018/01/18/exclusive-audit-exposes-un-food-agency-s-poor-data-handling> [accessed 26 January 2020].

¹⁰⁶ WFP, 2017. Internal audit of beneficiary management. Rome: Office of the Inspector General, WFP: Internal Audit report AR/17/17.

¹⁰⁷ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3.15.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations, 2015. United Nations Development Assistance Framework Timor-Leste (2015–2019). Supporting equitable and sustainable development in a rising young nation. Dili: United Nations.

¹⁰⁹ WFP, 2015. Timor-Leste development project number 200770. Capacity development for health and nutrition. Rome: WFP, p. 12.

¹¹⁰ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3, p. 11.

75. **The WFP country strategic plan, and the preceding development operation, were technically aligned with UNDAF.** However, United Nations informants describe UNDAF as a weak planning document that was unofficially shelved. The 2019 evaluation of UNDAF “found that the UNDAF outcomes and objectives were not commonly understood or known (in particular by national stakeholders, both government and civil society organizations (CSOs)), indicators in UNDAF results matrix were not SMART¹¹¹ or regularly monitored, baseline data was either set to zero or referenced from no longer verifiable sources, there were no annual reports or reviews available for the current UNDAF”. It found that, since UNDAF spanned almost every aspect of the development agenda in Timor-Leste, relevance was not an issue; and that UNDAF interventions contributed effectively to national development goals. “The absence of a UNDAF Joint Steering Group, formal annual work plan and as well as progress reports rendered the co-ordination and review process un-participative... In general, the interventions under UNDAF may have achieved mostly social and institutional sustainability, and to some extent financial sustainability.”¹¹² There was no genuine joint programming or implementation by United Nations agencies; the joint planning mostly ceased after UNDAF itself had been formulated. The office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator was small, and its ability to achieve genuine joint action was limited. WFP did engage in some useful bilateral collaboration with United Nations agencies, as outlined below.

76. **WFP and UNICEF signed a global memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2011 on their collaboration to address acute malnutrition. The two agencies collaborated in this way in Timor-Leste during the review period,** with WFP responsible for moderate acute malnutrition and UNICEF for severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Informants in health facilities at all levels were aware of this division of labour, and of the Joint UNICEF and WFP approach to developing treatment guidelines, joint training on IMAM and joint efforts in ensuring follow-up after training and equipment support. The nature of collaboration between these two agencies is expected to alter if plans now under review for a single treatment protocol for moderate acute malnutrition and severe acute malnutrition go ahead.

77. **WFP has also taken the initiative in collaborating with WHO on numerous activities,** more recently on joint advocacy on school child and adolescent health and a joint funding proposal to the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) on school health and nutrition (for implementation from 2021). The two agencies also developed a joint funding proposal on food safety, but later put it on hold.

78. **WFP has worked with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in supporting KONSSANTIL** on policy engagement, supporting multisectoral coordination efforts and development of the consolidated action plan (of prioritized food security and nutrition actions to achieve SDG 2) among other activities.

79. **WFP worked intensively with other United Nations agencies in 2019 to prepare the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF),** which (following the one-year extension of UNDAF and finalization of the framework document in 2020) will run from 2021 to 2026. In terms of the current United Nations reform, all agencies, in Timor-Leste and elsewhere, are now required to collaborate meaningfully through joint work plans under a UNSDCF and to take their planning priorities from it. By December 2019, the UNSDCF had been drafted to outcome and sub-outcome levels. The latest draft states that Cooperation Framework Outcome 1 will be “by 2025, nutrition, food security and agricultural productivity have improved for all, irrespective of the individual ability, gender, age, socio-economic status and geographical location”.¹¹³ There is clear scope here for continuity in the types of contribution that WFP can make within the new framework.

80. **Driven by the current United Nations reform process, the new arrangements are expected to mean that the next country strategic plan contributes directly to specified UNSDCF outcomes.** This is what senior WFP and other United Nations informants anticipate and what a draft of the UNSDCF states, with its reference to joint United Nations work plans of the proposed six inter-agency “results groups”, whose outputs will be delivered by one or more agencies.¹¹⁴ These arrangements would not lighten the WFP country

¹¹¹ Specific, measurable, achievable/attainable, relevant and time bound.

¹¹² United Nations, 2019. United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2015-2020) in Timor-Leste. Evaluation Report. Dili: United Nations, pp. 7–8.

¹¹³ United Nations, 2020. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). Dili: UNCT: final draft, p. 20.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 43-44. See also United Nations, 2019. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. New York: United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

strategic plan preparation load significantly; but they are expected to mean that the next country strategic plan should be visibly contributing to the overall United Nations framework, both on paper and in practice. It is also anticipated that, as Timor-Leste becomes a middle-income country, United Nations agencies will increasingly have to seek and manage funds jointly. This will be a significant contrast with the current scenario, in which external and United Nations observers perceive open competition between United Nations agencies for resources. That struggle for funding may explain the view of some informants that WFP has not been collaborative enough in its programming in Timor-Leste.

EQ 2.1. To what extent did WFP deliver expected outputs and contribute to the expected country strategic plan strategic outcomes?

2.2. EQ 2: what is the extent and quality of the specific contribution of WFP to country strategic plan strategic outcomes in Timor-Leste?

81. This section presents findings on the performance of the country strategic plan to date. It begins with the specifics of planned performance: whether WFP has so far delivered the intended outputs' targets, and made the planned contribution to country strategic plan outcomes. Performance also needs to be assessed more broadly, however. Findings are therefore presented on the extent of WFP contribution so far to its cross-cutting aims in Timor-Leste, for example, with regard to gender and humanitarian principles. Although this is an early date at which to assess sustainability, initial findings are reported on this issue, with particular reference to two key concerns for this country strategic plan: the prospects for government funding of activities initially funded through WFP; and the degree to which such activities were successfully handed over for government implementation. Finally, this section reviews the extent to which the country strategic plan has facilitated more strategic linkages across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP).

Delivery of outputs, contribution to outcomes

82. **This section focuses on the extent to which planned country strategic plan outputs and contributions to outcomes have been achieved to date.** Under the heading "Strategic Outcome 1", the section links the formally reported indicator data to analysis of the key objective of the country strategic plan: contributing to the improvement of the nutrition of the people of Timor-Leste (especially children under five years old, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls). Discussion under the heading "Strategic Outcome 2" reports and assesses progress with the key strategy for achieving this objective: strengthening the capacity of national institutions in the food security and nutrition sector.

83. **A fundamental challenge to country strategic plan implementation was the apparent design assumption that implementation would be able to begin quite promptly after approval of the plan.** In fact, in addition to funding shortages, implementation during the first year was constrained by the need to negotiate and agree with the relevant government ministries exactly what support WFP would provide. In the dynamic institutional context of the Government, this was a complex challenge that cut back on the organization's delivery of the country strategic plan outputs and its contribution to outcomes, especially during 2018. This is reflected in the data on performance indicators for that year. Meanwhile, ongoing funding challenges affected performance in 2019 too.

Strategic Outcome 1

84. **At output level (Table 4), the country strategic plan did not reach the targets for fortified food provided (12.7 percent of target in 2018 and 25 percent in 2019) and specialized nutritious foods provided (35.2 percent in 2018 and 7 percent in 2019).** Both these TSFP elements contribute to the country strategic plan's Strategic Outcome 1, which was severely underfunded: up to 31 December 2019, only 7 percent of its needs-based plan and 22 percent of its implementation plan (Table 3) was realized. Other, lower-cost output targets under Strategic Outcome 1 (for example, training and the numbers exposed to WFP-supported nutrition messaging) were met or exceeded.

Table 4. Summary of country strategic plan output data by activity and year: Strategic Outcome 1

Activity	Indicator	2018			2019		
		Output	Target	Percentage achieved	Output	Target	Percentage achieved
1	Quantity of fortified food provided (mt)	110	866	12.7%	108	432	25.0%
1	Quantity of specialized nutritious foods provided (mt)	51	144	35.4%	5	72	6.9%
2	Number of training sessions/workshop organized	8	6	133.3%	7	10	70.0%
2	Number of counterparts trained in capacity development on maternal and child health and nutrition (MCHN) and nutrition activities/Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training	180	160	112.5%	51	58	87.9%
2	Number of technical assistance activities provided	12	-	-	8	16	50.0%
1	Number of men exposed to WFP-supported nutrition messaging/Number of people reached through interpersonal SBCC approaches (men)	5 603	6 000	93.4%	6 377	7,200	88.6%
1	Number of women exposed to WFP-supported nutrition messaging/Number of people reached through interpersonal SBCC approaches (women)	45 072	18 000	250.4%	13 552	16,800	80.7%

Note: This table is based on the output indicators described in the ACRs for 2018 and 2019.^{115,116} Where two indicators are shown, separated by a slash (/), these are for the first and second logical frameworks in use for the country strategic plan, respectively.

Source: Detailed data at Annex XI.

¹¹⁵ WFP, 2019. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2018. Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Dili: WFP.

¹¹⁶ WFP, 2020. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2019. Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Dili: WFP.

Table 5. Summary of country strategic plan Strategic Outcome 1 data by activity and year

Act-ivity	Indicator	Target group	Target	2018 value	2019 value
1	MAM treatment default rate (%)	CU5	<15	23	23
1	MAM treatment mortality rate (%)	CU5	<3	0	0
1	MAM treatment non-response rate (%)	CU5	<15	9	7
1	MAM treatment recovery rate (%)	CU5	>75	67	70
1	Proportion of eligible population that participates in programme (coverage)	CU5	>50	44	19
1	Proportion of eligible population that participates in programme (coverage)	PLW	>50	58	89
2	Number of national food security and nutrition policies, programmes and system components enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening		1*	-	0

* New logical framework, applies to the full country strategic plan period.

The four MAM treatment indicators are based on Sphere standards (Sphere Association, 2018. *The Sphere handbook: humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*. Geneva: Sphere Association.).

Source: detailed data at Annex XI

85. **At outcome level, (Table 5), performance data show some challenges in relation to moderate acute malnutrition treatment default and recovery rates, as well as child coverage.** Similar problems were reported under the development operation (Table 6 and paragraph 8 of Annex IX). Larger proportions of moderate acute malnutrition patients defaulted from the treatment than planned, which is a common problem arising from the length of time that moderate acute malnutrition treatment takes. The same challenge is reflected in moderate acute malnutrition treatment recovery rates, which improved but had not yet reached the target in 2019. Coverage of the target population of children aged under five remained much lower than planned, and fell in 2019: performance on this outcome was probably linked to the levels of commodity delivery outputs that were achieved (Table 4). Coverage of pregnant and lactating women, on the other hand, was above target level, with significant improvements in 2019.

86. **Nutrition interventions 200770 under the country strategic plan followed similar efforts under the preceding DEV (2015–2017: Annex IX). Since 2015, most outcome targets related to supplementary feeding have not been reached,** except the moderate acute malnutrition treatment mortality rate, and programme coverage for pregnant and lactating women in two years (see Table 6, which draws on country office internal monitoring data in addition to external reporting). The evaluation of DEV 200770 found that “recovery rates and default rates did not meet recommended standards for treatment of MAM in children”.¹¹⁷ There are some discrepancies between the data quoted by the development operation evaluation and those shown below, for example on non-response rates. New country strategic plan outcome indicators were introduced in 2019, following revision of the Corporate Results Framework in late 2018.

Table 6. Trends in country strategic plan nutrition outcome data

Indicator	Target group	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Target
MAM treatment default rate (%)	CU5 + PLW	32.8	33.7	27.35	18.45	22.07	<15
MAM treatment mortality rate (%)	CU5 + PLW	0.3	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	<3
MAM treatment non-response rate (%)	CU5 + PLW	7.2	11.5	12.49	21.48	16.9	<15
MAM treatment recovery rate (%)	CU5 + PLW	59.7	54.8	60.15	60.06	61.02	>75

¹¹⁷ Kouam et al., 2018 End-Term Evaluation of Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Timor-Leste (2015–2017), p. vi.

CU5: proportion of eligible population that participates in programme (coverage)	CU5				44	19	>50
PLW: proportion of eligible population that participates in programme (coverage)	PLW				58	89	>50

Source: WFP country office

87. **The level of performance of nutrition interventions by WFP is driven by a combination of factors.** The 2018 annual country report refers to shortages of supplementary feeding commodities (caused by pipeline breaks due to logistical failures and underfunding), “poor understanding of the importance of completing the course of treatment within four months; distance to health facilities; competing engagements in other activities (farming or cultural ceremonies); and insufficient follow-up from health staff [...and] intra-household sharing of supplementary food”.¹¹⁸ According to informants at national and municipality levels, the factors affecting performance fall into several groups. First, the nature of moderate acute malnutrition treatment requires effective communication with beneficiaries so that they understand the importance of completing that treatment and are willing to make the effort (including repeat visits to collect rations). Second, WFP and government performance in efficient and timely delivery of the required commodities directly affects whether moderate acute malnutrition treatment can be provided as planned. Indirectly, it affects beneficiary confidence in treatment, if health facilities are sometimes unable to provide it. During direct WFP involvement in the supply process, the main cause of these pipeline breaks was lack of funding. When national and municipal agencies have lead responsibility, logistical inefficiencies (reflecting incomplete capacity strengthening) are more significant, although government funding has not been adequate or continuous either. Third, the nature of beneficiary livelihoods is a challenge. Remote and scattered settlements mean that full coverage of the target population is difficult to achieve. Poverty and the competing demands of an agrarian livelihood may prevent beneficiaries from attending health facilities even when they know it is important and do not live impossibly far from them.

88. **Attendance at health facilities was significantly reduced during pipeline breaks and delays in food deliveries to health facilities.** Overall, fortified food deliveries through the development operation and country strategic plan only met their target in one out of the four years for which data are available (Annex XII). Incomplete deliveries under the country strategic plan may have been linked to the temporary transfer of responsibility for distribution to the Government during that year. However, WFP support for supplementary feeding since 2015 is likely to have caused higher attendance at health facilities, with a range of consequent health and nutrition benefits.

89. **Nutrition-related training work by WFP came closer to, and sometimes exceeded, output targets,** as Table 4 shows. Much of the training was carried out in collaboration with the National Health Institute (INS), as part of the Specific Nutrition Intervention Package (SNIP), in association with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health. Particularly notable are the data on the number of women exposed to WFP-supported nutrition messaging in 2018: more than twice the target number. With adequate funding, WFP and its government partners were clearly able to deliver training and SBCC interventions at scale. Strong output data in this field do not, of course, automatically lead to fully satisfactory outcomes. Those depend on the quality of training and communication and the range of socio-economic factors affecting its uptake. As discussed above, a number of factors constrain the contribution that nutrition training and SBCC work are able to make to nutrition outcomes in Timor-Leste. It should also be noted that the quality and consistency of output indicators and reporting were not optimal. Indicators have changed during the review period, making trend analysis difficult, and reporting on indicators has not been fully consistent across the period: there have been gaps in reporting, and different approaches to the presentation of data at municipality level (paragraphs 200-204 below).

90. **A key element of an IMAM programme is the community component.** This involves community mobilization, screening for malnutrition, identification and referral of malnourished clients. In Timor-Leste, all these activities are integrated into the SISCa programme, which is supposed to take place once a month in each *suco* (village). WFP facilitated the implementation of integrated outreach through SISCa. **Cooking demonstrations were a widely appreciated intervention.** Many informants at the municipality and local

¹¹⁸ WFP, 2019. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2018. Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Dili: WFP, p. 8.

health facility levels felt that these demonstrations were the most beneficial part of WFP support, providing practical help to communities in making the best use of locally available foods. However, few of these SBCC activities are currently operational (except facility-based counselling and education), due to lack of funding.

91. **SBCC materials were a significant output in the nutrition sector**, although not formally reflected in the performance indicators. These posters, booklets, etc., were frequently seen during field visits to health facilities. But despite its significance, WFP SBCC work is not universally endorsed. SBCC is not generally seen as a leading area of WFP competence or mandate. Coordination of WFP inputs in this field with other agencies has not been optimal, leading to queries about the rationale for WFP engagement.

92. **Overall, according to project reports, the number of people exposed to WFP nutrition messaging in 2015–2018 far exceeded those planned**, at 455,000 versus 200,000 (although these numbers may be approximate). It was only in 2017 that the numbers did not exceed the targets, at 44 percent. Data from 2018 indicate that the number of women receiving this messaging far exceeded the number of men (45,072 compared with 5,603).¹¹⁹ According to municipality and local health facility staff, WFP support significantly increased participation in community and facility education sessions through the SISCa programme.

93. **The role and performance of WFP programme assistants at municipality level were greatly appreciated.** But informants at that level expressed concern about what was seen as the rapid withdrawal of these WFP staff, with what they considered to be an incomplete process of handover to government personnel.

94. **Success in advocating government funding for nutrition supplies has been a significant unplanned achievement.** This has led to the commitment by the Ministry of Health since 2018 of more than USD 500,000 for supplies used for the treatment of acute malnutrition (including MAM).

95. **WFP has contributed to analysis of the potential for a single product for the management of both moderate and severe acute malnutrition.** As part of the process of building the case to increase the contribution of the Government towards nutrition supplies, WFP undertook a comparative analysis in 2019 of costs for moderate acute malnutrition treatment using Super Cereal, Timor Vita, ready-to-use supplementary food (RUSF) and Plumpy’Nut. Based on this, the Government would reportedly like to move forward on using a single product (ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF)) for both severe and moderate acute malnutrition cases. The recommendation from both WFP and UNICEF headquarters is that this approach should be implemented as an operational research model that will feed into the current global evidence base on the application of the integration strategy.

Strategic Outcome 2

96. **The country strategic plan’s Strategic Outcome 2 focuses on strengthening the capacity of national and subnational government institutions. Output data for Strategic Outcome 2 focus on training events and the provision of technical assistance activities.** The new logical framework has brought significant changes to output reporting, though indicators remain broadly comparable. Overall, **Strategic Outcome 2** is better funded, with (up to 31 December 2019) 37 percent of the needs-based budget and 78 percent of the implementation plan for 2018–2019 (Table 3).

Table 7. Summary of country strategic plan output data by activity and year: Strategic Outcome 2

Activity	Indicator	2018			2019		
		Output	Target	Percentage achieved	Output	Target	Percentage achieved
3	Number of training sessions/workshops organized	8	4	200.0%	2	4	50.0%
3	Number of government/national partner staff receiving	178	100	178.0%	55	80	68.7%

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 17.

	technical assistance and training						
3	Number of technical assistance activities provided	4	6	66.7%	7	8	87.5%
4	Number of training sessions/workshop organized	3	12	25.0%	15	20	75.0%
4	Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training	73	-	-	115	165	69.7%
4	Number of technical assistance activities provided	10	12	83.3%	6	8	75.0%

Source: detailed data at Annex XI

97. **In terms of the formally reported output indicators, performance in capacity strengthening varied greatly** (Table 7). Some targets were surpassed by more than 50 percent, while other indicators are only at 25 percent of target values. However, most indicators refer to training or technical assistance in general, without specifying the type of training or capacities that were strengthened. This makes it difficult to assess in which area WFP has made (or not made) progress in strengthening government capacity. Also, several elements linked to WFP capacity-strengthening efforts are not reflected in output indicators.

98. **The country strategic plan lacks appropriate outcome indicators to measure its contribution to strengthening government capacity.** Country strategic plan outcome indicators mostly measure performance under Strategic Outcome 1, with just two for Strategic Outcome 2 (Table 8). Following the updated logical framework, outcome data and baseline figures were first released in early 2020.¹²⁰ Most of the outcome indicators focus on the results of moderate acute malnutrition treatment. The revised logical framework does include outcome indicators for capacity strengthening, but as Table 8 shows these are broadly and not very meaningfully defined. Nor are there any outcome indicators linked to Activity 4. Overall, linkages between output and outcome indicators are weak.

Table 8. Summary of the country strategic plan Strategic Outcome 2 data by activity and year

Activity	Indicator	Target group	Target	2018 value	2019 value
3	Number of national food security and nutrition policies, programmes and system components enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening	National	1*	-	0
4	Number of national food security and nutrition policies, programmes and system components enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening	National	1*	-	0

* New logical framework, applies to the full country strategic plan period.

Source: detailed data at Annex XI (see Table 34 and Table 36)

99. **It is more meaningful to assess progress with the core capacity-strengthening function of the country strategic plan by reviewing performance in each of the three capacity-strengthening domains:** the enabling environment (supportive laws, strategies and procedures), the organizational domain (well-functioning organizations) and the individual domain (educated, skilled people).¹²¹ Therefore, using an outcome harvesting approach (described at Annex II) guided by its initial mapping of country strategic plan

¹²⁰ WFP, 2020. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2019. Country Strategic Plan (2018-2020). Dili: WFP.

¹²¹ WFP, 2017. WFP Corporate Approach to Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS). Rome: WFP CCS Toolkit Component 1, p. 3.

implementation,¹²² the evaluation team assessed progress towards capacity-strengthening results using carefully triangulated qualitative data extrapolated from focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with government institutions as well as United Nations and other partners. Data collection and analysis were structured by reference, as far as possible, to the five pathways along which WFP supports stakeholder capacities (paragraph 7 above).¹²³ The findings of this exercise are presented below.

Enabling environment

100. **Country strategic plan implementation has made useful contributions towards strengthening the enabling environment for achieving nutrition objectives in Timor-Leste.** The new outcome indicators on achievements in the enabling environment domain (Table 5 and Table 8) do not show what progress is being made, but the following evaluation findings offer some insights:

- **The rice fortification pilot study provided useful information on the acceptability of fortified rice,** showing positive results in this regard. WFP worked with KONSSANTIL on a national consultation on the subject, leading to the formation of a technical working group that WFP regularly attends. It also provided support for the drafting of a law on food fortification, which has been shared with a number of ministries and agencies in the Government of Timor-Leste. The law awaits approval. Additionally, there is interest from the Government to integrate rice fortification into the school feeding programme. KONSSANTIL informants acknowledged that WFP advocacy efforts and technical support have been instrumental in raising awareness of the importance of rice fortification in the country. But despite much progress in advocating food fortification and setting up coordination mechanisms, Ministry of Health informants noted that government capacity on food fortification remains limited, and that staff require more training in this area.
- **The Fill the Nutrient Gap study was acknowledged by all stakeholders at the national level as an important achievement,** building awareness of key nutrition issues that should help to reinforce the enabling environment for appropriate action. The report was finalized in December 2019¹²⁴ following exchange of comments and responses between stakeholders and the Rome-based lead authors, and finalization of the report in Rome. This study laid important foundations for strengthening the enabling environment. Work to build on those foundations lies in the future. The United Nations country team (UNCT) has already used preliminary results from the Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis to inform its 2019 common country analysis (CCA).¹²⁵ Ministry of Health staff confirmed that they expect the results to feed into the new National Nutrition Strategy (2014–2019). Some ministries stated that they are already using the study to inform guidelines and programming. For example, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport explained that they are using preliminary results to review the content of the school feeding menu. Development partner informants referred to the advocacy value of the study's cost of diet analysis in showing that many household incomes are too low to support nutritious diets (although there were also comments that the Fill the Nutrient Gap model is complex and hard to explain). Although the majority of stakeholders appreciated the new evidence generated by the study, KONSSANTIL had requested that the scope of the study be expanded beyond the six municipalities that it covered. However, WFP did not have sufficient budget to address this request.
- **Studies and advocacy by WFP and partners have helped raise the policy profile of adolescent health and nutrition** (paragraph 130), with a particular focus on the appropriate nutrition of adolescent girls (which is now emphasized in the draft UNSDCF). This has built a foundation for further action by the Government and, if a funding application is successful, by WFP and WHO through a project that would start in 2021.
- **WFP facilitated attendance by government officials at international events on SBCC and school feeding,** (in Indonesia and Cambodia respectively) and on study tours to review a range of food and nutrition security issues and strategies in the framework of increased South–South cooperation

¹²² Annex VI.

¹²³ See also Annex XIII.

¹²⁴ Government of Timor-Leste and WFP, 2019. Fill the Nutrient Gap Timor-Leste. Final report. Dili: KONSSANTIL and WFP. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/fill-nutrient-gap-timor-leste> [accessed 6 February 2020].

¹²⁵ United Nations, 2019. *Common Country Analysis. Timor-Leste*. Dili: UNCT, p. 27.

(paragraph 193). This support strengthened participants' individual capacities and is helping to build commitment to a stronger enabling environment.

- **WFP participated in a 2019 joint United Nations presentation to Parliament on food and nutrition security**, which is credited with raising government interest in joining the global Scaling Up Nutrition movement. If this proceeds, active Timor-Leste participation in the Scaling Up Nutrition movement should significantly strengthen the enabling environment for food security and nutrition in the country.

101. **WFP work with KONSSANTIL has spanned the enabling environment and the organizational domains of capacity strengthening.** Informants see WFP as an agency that did its best to engage with the concept of multisectoral governance for food security and nutrition in Timor-Leste and that has been proactive in supporting KONSSANTIL to strengthen the enabling environment and to build its own capacity. Neither of these tasks is easy, given KONSSANTIL's limited budgetary and human resources, its lack of legal authority and its hosting by a line ministry (the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries) rather than the Office of the Prime Minister. These factors limit the contribution that WFP can make in the enabling environment domain of capacity strengthening.

102. **Food safety is a major issue in Timor-Leste. There is currently no regulatory framework in place on food safety, and ministries have limited capacity in this field.** The National Logistics Centre (NLC) would like to receive support from WFP on food safety and stock management. As part of Activity 4, WFP planned to work with WHO and FAO to support the development of food safety policy and quality standards in food production. (Food safety is also a concern for Activity 2.) No progress has been observed in this area yet. WHO and WFP have developed a joint proposal to obtain funding from the Government of China to address food safety issues. The proposal was not submitted, but another proposal will be submitted to China in 2020. Government of Timor-Leste stakeholders and United Nations partners agree that insufficient attention is given to food safety and that this is an area where WFP should focus its efforts in future.

103. **As part of its commitment to strengthening the enabling environment, WFP has recognized the scope for strengthening local research on food and nutrition security**, and has signed a memorandum of understanding with the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTLE). Due to lack of funding and capacity on both sides, however, that has so far only resulted in a limited number of student internships. The partners have recognized the potential for joint work on a national research agenda, but have not yet been able to act on it.

104. **Country strategic plan implementation has only made a limited contribution to strengthening the capacities of civil society, the private sector and academia.** Few partnerships are currently active with civil society (paragraph 187, Section 2.4). Through the development operation and country strategic plan periods, WFP worked closely with a private-sector entity, Timor Global, with potentially significant results for sustainable local production of supplementary foodstuffs for use in the TSFP. As explained in paragraph 189, a sustainable outcome has not been achieved.

105. **The enabling environment is the domain of capacity strengthening where it has been possible to make useful contributions at relatively low cost, but where sustainable results depend on factors beyond WFP control.** The proactive stance, participation and advocacy of WFP across various institutions and issues have built awareness, understanding and a degree of technical commitment – key ingredients of an enabling environment. They have been limited by the restricted budget available and, more significantly, by the complexities of government decision-making. Many informants argue that constructive engagement for sustainable capacity strengthening in this arena requires senior strategic capacity (above the technical level), close to and respected by high levels in the Government. WFP has not been able to deploy enough of this capacity. It is needed in order to promote government legislation for and funding of adequate multisectoral nutrition programmes. Clearly, too, it takes time to achieve sustained enhancement of the enabling environment. Undertaken less than two years after the launch of the country strategic plan, this evaluation can only offer an interim assessment of the progress made.

The organizational domain

106. **In the organizational domain, WFP made an important contribution through Activity 4 of the country strategic plan by strengthening the supply chain for medical supplies at central level through improvements to systems and procedures.** However, limited capacity for supply chain management and

logistics at local level continues to affect the overall supply chain of nutrition items. SAMES is responsible for distributing nutrition items from Dili to the municipalities, which are then responsible for distributing these items to local health facilities. There have been improvements to facilities and operations at central level. But limited capacity in supply chain management and logistics at the local level continues to affect the timely delivery of supplies to health facilities. Forecasting capacities at local level remains a major problem. SAMES often receives requests from municipalities very late and has to destroy supplies in central storage because they have expired. When visiting health facilities, the evaluation team observed several pipeline breaks. Nearly all community health centres (CHCs) visited were lacking treatment items, and some could therefore only offer counselling services to beneficiaries. Informants explained that distribution was not working properly and that items stored in the municipalities would often not make their way to health facilities on time.

107. **Significant challenges thus remain in the organizational domain in SAMES, a key partner.** In a related initiative started during DEV 200770, WFP provided support to SAMES for the implementation of mSupply (a system used for procurement, inventory management system and tendering), thus building institutional capacity for supply chain management. However, the Government later rejected mSupply because it wished to use its own nationally developed information system, AdenBox.

108. **WFP also took steps to strengthen organizational capacity in SBCC,** by working with partners of the Government to develop a “repository” of mapping data on organizations engaged in this work (Annex XII, paragraph 32). Owned by the Ministry of Health, the platform is currently housed under Catalpa International, a non-governmental organization. Owned by the Ministry of Health, the platform is currently housed under Catalpa International, a non-governmental organization.

109. **Because of the delay in signing a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, little progress has been made toward the intended contribution to Strategic Outcome 2 through Activity 3.** Currently, the ministry's registry system is centralized, and information on beneficiaries is kept on paper at the municipal level. Although this was not specifically recommended by a 2018 scoping mission from RBB (which called for collaboration with partner agencies and avoidance of duplication of effort),¹²⁶ WFP is reported to have offered its support to the ministry to adopt its corporate digital beneficiary and transfer management platform (SCOPE), which would allow the ministry to better collect and monitor sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries. However, other agencies have similar systems (for example, the World Bank and its SIGAS system) and have also offered their support to the ministry. It is unlikely that the ministry will wish to adopt SCOPE, and unclear whether the memorandum of understanding with WFP will be signed (paragraph 71 above and Table 11).

110. **Under the country strategic plan, WFP has re-engaged in school feeding, in a limited way.** Activity 4 is meant to include advisory and training support on supply chain issues for the Ministry of Education's school meals programme. Between 2005 and 2011, WFP supported school feeding in Timor-Leste more directly.¹²⁷ School feeding remains a priority for the Government, but there have been implementation difficulties since it was handed over to them¹²⁸ (see also Annex XIV). In 2018, WFP developed an updated set of guidelines on school feeding and was preparing to pilot them in Oecusse with local government support and in partnership with Oxfam; but (possibly reflecting strategic differences between the Special Administrative Region and the national Government) the Oecusse authorities have not yet provided authorization for this, despite follow up by WFP. In 2019, WFP reviewed the school feeding programme in partnership with Help Logistics.¹²⁹ The report identifies some gaps in logistics and budget management and complements a national review of the school feeding programme conducted by the Ombudsman.¹³⁰ The Ministry of Education would like to receive support from WFP for the development of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for its school feeding programme. There have been discussions with WFP in this

¹²⁶ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste scoping mission report: emergency preparedness and response; social protection; SCOPE. Bangkok: WFP RBB. Final draft, p. 25.

¹²⁷ Mokoro Ltd., 2013. Timor-Leste: an evaluation of WFP's portfolio (2008–2012). Rome: Office of Evaluation, WFP.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 25.

¹²⁹ WFP and Help Logistics, 2019. School Feeding Programme Assessment in Timor-Leste. A Joint Assessment by HELP Logistics, World Food Programme (WFP) Timor-Leste, and Ministry of Education (MoE) Timor-Leste. Dili: WFP and HELP Logistics. Draft.

¹³⁰ Government of Timor-Leste, 2019. *Monitorizasaun Programa Merenda Eskolar*. Dili: Office of the Ombudsman: Provedoria de Direitos Humanos e Justiça.

regard and a memorandum of understanding was approved in July 2019 (Table 11). There has also been a request for WFP to review the school feeding manual, and planning for a home-grown school feeding pilot. Apart from the pilot trials of rice fortification at two schools in Dili, however, lack of resources has precluded much practical progress with these intentions. There are other partners active in the sector, but there is still space for a stronger WFP contribution.

111. **In February 2020, WFP undertook further analysis of school feeding issues and opportunities** through a scoping mission fielded by its regional bureau in Bangkok. The mission concluded that “there is not only an appropriate but also an urgent and much-needed gap to be filled by WFP in bridging all relevant stakeholders and providing strategic and technical leadership. The stakeholders see a strong association between WFP and the NSFP with its multiple challenges, which poses a reputational risk for WFP and the UN... WFP should consider building its capacity to more proactively respond to the Government’s continued efforts to sustain NSFP [the National School Feeding Programme] despite persistent challenges, this should be done however based on comprehensive analysis and longer-term planning approach.”¹³¹

112. **WFP has made some attempts to strengthen the capacity of government ministries and agencies to integrate gender into their national programming, but with limited success.** T complaint and feedback mechanism (CFM) by the Ministry of Health, and by the Office of the Prime Minister in connection with its work on gender-based violence. There have been no formal results so far.

113. **Like the strengthening of the enabling environment, strengthening organizational capacity is a long-term challenge.** Both strategic outcomes 1 and 2 of the country strategic plan were posited on the assumption that, building on previous efforts through the development operation, significant and sustained improvements in organizational capacity could be achieved relatively quickly and would warrant (under SO1) the withdrawal of direct WFP engagement in the TSFP well ahead of country strategic plan termination. There were two weaknesses in this assumption. The first concerned the scale of the organizational capacity-strengthening challenge, in terms of the depth, quality and duration of the structural and procedural changes that key partners like SAMES and the Ministry of Health would need to achieve. The second, related weakness was the need to carry this change through to the local government (municipality) level of the relevant organizations, which was only achieved to a limited extent through supply chain training for some municipality staff. Much remains to be done at this level. As discussed further below (paragraph 139–140), WFP contributions to Strategic Outcome 2 through organizational capacity strengthening have not yet achieved sustainable results.

114. **Beyond this fundamental design assumption, other constraints on progress in the organizational domain have been the lack of funding and skilled human resources within WFP to provide the levels of effort that would be needed for a comprehensive, multi-year strengthening of SAMES, in particular.** A related weak design assumption is that WFP staff are not only experts at implementation in their various fields, but are also experts at capacity strengthening. While country office personnel have had some success with SAMES colleagues in identifying issues and working to address them together, they do not necessarily have qualifications or a background as trainers, and they have received little orientation from WFP in how to perform in this different role.

The individual domain

115. **WFP made substantial efforts to train government staff during country strategic plan implementation in 2018 and 2019.** Over that period, 231 counterparts and national/government staff are reported to have received nutrition-related training under Strategic Outcome 1 (the aggregate target for the two years was 218). Under Strategic Outcome 2, 421 government/national partner staff are shown as having been trained over the same period (against an aggregate target of 345: Table 4 and Table 7 above).

116. **In 2017, under DEV 200770, WFP started to strengthen the capacities of SAMES staff on procurement and distribution in preparation for the handover of the TSFP programme to the Government.** At that time, commodities were still being stored by WFP and, in 2018, through the country strategic plan, WFP trained SAMES staff on storage and warehouse management. SAMES informants confirmed that WFP support has effectively strengthened their capacities in storage and distribution. They noted that they are now knowledgeable about the composition of nutrition items and their shelf life. WFP has also taught them how to repackage commodities so that they can be more easily distributed and to better

¹³¹ WFP, 2020. Scoping mission report. Bangkok: WFP RBB, p. 1.

manage distribution lead time. However, they explained that they are still experiencing difficulties in the procurement of items from suppliers and require more support in this area. Additionally, limited capacity in supply chain management and logistics at the local level continues to affect the timely delivery of supplies to health facilities (paragraph 106).

117. **WFP has undertaken a number of other staff training activities for ministries and agencies in the Government.** Under the country strategic plan's Activity 1, it worked with UNICEF to provide staff training through the National Health Institute on the integrated management of acute malnutrition, monitoring and evaluation, and SBCC. Activity 2 has included training on data collection and analysis for personnel engaged in the Fill the Nutrient Gap study. WFP also organized a study tour to China for senior staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, KONSSANTIL and the National Logistics Centre. Under Activity 3, it provided training on mobile data collection and analysis (MDCA) and on nutrition results measurement to staff of three ministries and the National Logistics Centre. In addition to the work with SAMES described above, Activity 4 efforts have included training on food safety for stakeholders from government and private institutions, and on humanitarian supply chain management for staff of World Vision in Timor-Leste.

118. **So far, WFP has not yet provided training to the National Logistics Centre, which is anxious to receive support.** Activity 4 also seeks to strengthen the supply chain capacity of the National Logistic Centre at both national and subnational levels on matters related to disaster preparedness and commodity distribution as well as local agricultural production and the provision of local rice for the school feeding programme. In August 2019, WFP signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Logistics Centre to strengthen its supply chain capacity to respond to emergency situations, to address the needs of social programmes (such as the school feeding programme), and to develop local capacity for agriculture production and the management of aflatoxin on locally grown foods.

119. **To date, contributions through the country strategic plan to capacity strengthening in the individual domain have been incremental rather than transformative.** Work in this domain was a comparatively easy task for WFP, and it was able to report substantial numbers of training activities and persons trained. But to achieve substantial, sustained results, any work in this domain must be integrated with broader contributions in the organizational domain. The best integration achieved so far has been in support to SAMES – although, as noted above, much more remains to be done with that organization, and with its counterparts at municipality level. Any such integration should include long-term planning for the maintenance and refreshing of individual capacity as careers and challenges evolve and as staff turnover inevitably brings in new personnel, who require training. Again, this should link the organizational and individual domains of capacity strengthening. To date, country strategic plan implementation has made limited progress in building such linkages.

120. **Overall, country strategic plan progress toward the intended capacity-strengthening results has been affected by substantial challenges in all three domains.** Restricted funding has meant that capacity-strengthening work has been small-scale (Annex VI). There were no substantive outcomes to be identified at this relatively early stage. Even if implementation had been better resourced, it would have been too early – after less than two years of the country strategic plan – to attempt a definitive assessment of outcome achievement in this field. Meaningful capacity-strengthening results always take time to consolidate. Attaining training and capacity-strengthening targets depends on the state of relations with the intended beneficiary agencies within the Government, as well as unpredictable factors such as staff availability when competing work priorities intervene, and on the ability of WFP to field trainers as planned. Since the launch of the country strategic plan, none of these factors has been fully conducive to optimal progress. However, experience to date suggest that the country strategic plan's capacity-strengthening strategy does not have to mean a binary choice between upstream and downstream roles for WFP. Indeed, the country office has retained a field service unit within the Dili office so as to maintain some advisory support to government counterparts at municipality level (paragraph 205). Keeping a "foot in the field" can be beneficial for WFP understanding of food security and nutrition challenges, and for its credibility as an agency that advises on implementation at field level. An implication of capacity-strengthening experience so far is that handover and withdrawal from the field may not always be irreversible. Conditions could arise in which a stronger WFP field presence might again be justified.

Contribution to achievement of cross-cutting aims

121. **The instability of indicators and logical frameworks across the period 2015–2019 has also affected cross-cutting indicators.** Of the eight cross-cutting indicators used in the development operation, only one was carried over to the country strategic plan (Table 28, Annex X). Moreover, the country strategic plan contained three cross-cutting indicators when it was launched, but these were expanded to nine in the revised 2019 logical framework. No cross-cutting data were reported in 2015.

EQ 2.2. To what extent did WFP contribute to achievement of cross-cutting aims (humanitarian principles, protection, accountability to affected populations, gender equality and other equity considerations)?

122. **The instability of indicators, combined with a narrow focus and some reporting gaps, make it difficult to use cross-cutting indicators to compare performance across WFP operations.** In the country strategic plan, cross-cutting indicators only apply to Activity 1. This means that 2019 will be the only year these new indicators will be reported on, since the TSFP has been handed over to the Government. In this context, the continuous changes in the reporting of cross-cutting indicators also represent a waste of resources and reporting effort for the country office, which must work hard on the collection and analysis of data that have limited use beyond inclusion in an annual country report.

123. **The only indicator for which data are available shows that the proportion of assisted people who are informed about the programme has generally been very close to the target** (which was 90 percent during DEV 200770 and 100 percent in the country strategic plan) with the exception of 2019, when it fell to 86 percent. Pipeline breaks and the fact that the operation was being handed over to the Government probably explain this.

Humanitarian principles

124. **There has been limited direct cause for WFP to apply its humanitarian principles during the review period.** The core principles in question are humanity, neutrality and impartiality. WFP considers the foundations of effective humanitarian action to be respect, self-reliance, participation, capacity building, coordination, accountability and professionalism.¹³²

125. The activities under review comprise development rather than humanitarian operations, with the exception of the IR-EMOP in 2016–2017. Standard project reports (SPRs) on that operation make little direct reference to the application of humanitarian principles, other than arrangements for accountability to the affected populations, which led to arrangements for a review by CARE International “with the intention of gathering feedback from the beneficiaries on the nutrition services provided and on how to improve service delivery in future interventions... The review aimed to contribute to improved accountability to affected populations in line with the commitments of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, by ensuring that an effective process for participation and feedback was in place and that programme design and management decisions were responsive to the views of affected communities and people.”¹³³ Most of the feedback from this review appears to have concerned supplementary feeding strategy in general rather than the application of humanitarian principles by WFP during the operation. A standard operating procedure (SOP) on complaints and feedback mechanisms was drafted in 2019.

Protection

126. **Certain protection measures were also taken during IR-EMOP implementation,** “to avoid exposing beneficiaries and other community members to safety or security risks when participating in the activities, by organizing the distributions and other community events during day time, so that women and children would not have to travel long distances in the dark, and by organizing the night events at the most decentralized level possible”.¹³⁴ During the implementation of the country strategic plan, WFP sought to reduce these risks further by advocating more mobile clinics that would allow beneficiaries to receive services

¹³² WFP, 2004. Humanitarian Principles. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.A/2004/5-C, p. 7.

¹³³ WFP, 2016. Immediate Response Emergency Operation: Timor-Leste, EMOP ref. 201017: Prevention of moderate acute malnutrition in children 6 to 23 months and pregnant and lactating women. Standard Project Report 2016. Dili: WFP, p. 16.

¹³⁴ Ibid, pp. 15–16

closer to their homes. Even so, some beneficiaries were required to travel long distances and some could not follow up with treatment, owing to lack of transportation.¹³⁵

Accountability to affected populations

127. The WFP Strategy for Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) seeks to “facilitate participation of affected people in WFP’s programmes by ensuring that programme design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation processes and decisions are informed by and reflect the views of affected people”.¹³⁶ It does so by providing information to beneficiaries on the assistance that it provides and by seeking their feedback throughout the project cycle. Additionally, it establishes complaints and feedback mechanisms through which beneficiaries can safely provide feedback and make complaints.

128. **WFP implemented its activities in accordance with accountability to affected populations principles.** As it made the transition to developmental work, WFP made attempts to support the Government of Timor-Leste to adopt accountability to affected populations mechanisms, but with limited success. During the IR-EMOP, WFP held sessions with nutrition focal points and other health staff to inform them of the operation’s objectives and monitoring tools that would be used, and shared information regarding the programme with village leaders. WFP also sought feedback from beneficiaries on the acceptability of food items as well as challenges in accessing specialized nutritious food. In the development operation, it supported the Government to implement accountability to affected populations mechanisms. With WFP support, health staff disseminated information at health facilities about the programme and the Nutrition Department developed a checklist to gather beneficiary feedback on the programme.¹³⁷ During the implementation of the country strategic plan, WFP established a standard operating procedure that formally established the Timor-Leste country office complaints and feedback mechanism, which covers WFP operations under the country strategic plan such as the TSFP and joint Ministry of Health/WFP programmes. The standard operating procedure establishes systems and procedures to follow (roles and responsibilities of staff, hotline, communications channels, case management, etc.). However, performance data for 2019 indicate that only 20 percent of project activities documented, analysed and integrated beneficiary feedback to improve programming, against a target of 100 percent (Table 30, Annex XI). Now, the country strategic plan no longer has the tier 1 beneficiaries on whom the complaints and feedback mechanism focuses. According to WFP informants, there have been several attempts by WFP to embed the complaints and feedback mechanism in line ministries. The Office of the Prime Minister expressed interest in integrating the mechanism with its work on gender-based violence, but this has not yet happened. WFP also tried to convince the Ministry of Health to adopt the complaints and feedback mechanism, but the ministry reportedly showed little interest.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment

129. The country strategic plan states that, in accordance with the Gender Policy and WFP Gender Action Plan, WFP will promote the “engagement of women, men, girls and boys – including persons with disabilities – to foster equality outcomes and advance gender equality”. The 2018 gender partnership mapping exercise (paragraph 190 below) identified a number of non-governmental organizations (CARE, Marie Stopes, World Vision) with which WFP could collaborate to address disabilities, but collaboration has not yet materialized. The country strategic plan also seeks to address the needs of vulnerable groups, including vulnerable women, persons with disabilities and orphans, through activities with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion – and more particularly the Bolsa de Mãe programme,¹³⁸ but no progress has been made in that regard.

130. **During the country strategic plan, WFP has made notable progress in generating evidence and advocating attention to the nutrition needs of adolescent girls,** creating an opportunity for SBCC messages to tackle harmful gender norms related to intra-household food distribution. The content of SBCC materials and other communications was gender-sensitive and proactive in building awareness about the responsibilities of men as well as women in promoting the good nutrition of children; about the importance of good nutrition for adolescent girls; and about the importance of gender equity in the intra-household distribution of food.

¹³⁵ WFP, 2019. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2018. Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Dili: WFP, p. 11.

¹³⁶ WFP, nd. The WFP Strategy for Accountability to Affected Populations. Rome: WFP, p. 1.

¹³⁷ WFP, 2018. Capacity development for health and nutrition. Standard Project Report 2018. Dili: WFP, p. 16.

¹³⁸ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3, p. 15.

131. **However, more women (45,072) were reached by WFP-supported nutrition messages than men** (5,603: Table 4 above), suggesting that there is a need for further outreach to men and boys with gender-sensitive nutrition messages to tackle harmful gender norms. The formative research conducted jointly by WFP and TOMAK on adolescent nutrition in Timor-Leste shed light on the high levels of malnutrition and anaemia among adolescent girls that contribute to the delivery of low birthweight (LBW) babies and the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, as well as cultural taboos that limit intra-household distribution of nutritious foods to women and girls.¹³⁹ (Low birthweight was found to be 10 percent in the Demographic and Health Survey 2016; however, this is not representative, since only 53 percent of births had a reported birth weight.) According to government and United Nations informants, information generated through this study constitutes a particular achievement, considering that adolescent girls have not been specifically targeted by nutrition interventions. Ministry of Health informants confirmed that they are considering findings from the study in order to review SBCC messages and training material developed with support from UNICEF.

132. **United Nations informants confirmed that research supported by WFP and its partners informed the gender analysis presented in the 2019 common country analysis for Timor-Leste as well as the design of the new UNSDCF.** The gender analysis of the common country analysis refers to findings from the formative research conducted jointly by WFP and TOMAK (paragraph 68 and 131). The common country analysis also refers to the Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis and the cost of nutritious diets for adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women.

133. **Under the country strategic plan, WFP has not directly supported interventions aimed at increasing women's access to and control over productive agricultural assets.** Evidence indicates that increased agricultural productivity and income-generating opportunities are linked to greater food consumption and improved nutritional status within the household.¹⁴⁰ The importance of supporting women's empowerment to achieve food and nutrition security is also highlighted in the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021).¹⁴¹ By the same token, to fully achieve nutrition benefits for women and girls, the development operation evaluation identified the need for more nutrition-sensitive GEWE interventions.

134. Further analysis of WFP Timor-Leste performance with regard to GEWE is provided at Annex XV.

Sustainability of country strategic plan achievements

Funding

EQ 2.3. To what extent are the achievements of the country strategic plan likely to be sustainable?

135. **From a financial perspective, the Government of Timor-Leste has the capacity to sustain strategies and programmes supported by the country strategic plan.** On the one hand, the government budget is likely to expand in coming years, and this is arguably affordable for the country. As shown in Figure 8, the national budget expanded in 2019 compared to 2018. A further expansion is proposed for 2020,¹⁴² but Parliament has contested it on the grounds that the Government underspent in 2019. The 2020 budget had not been passed at the end of 2019. Independently of the ability of the Government to spend the budget, Timor-Leste has room to expand it. Excluding funds from development partners, most of the budget is funded through withdrawals from the Petroleum Fund, which had a balance of USD 15.8 billion in 2019.¹⁴³ Over the period 2015–2019, the Government consistently withdrew more than the estimated sustainable income, defined as withdrawals that would preserve the present value of the Petroleum Fund (Figure 8). In spite of this, and even if no new oil fields come into production in future years, the Petroleum Fund can absorb the current level of withdrawals until the early 2030s.¹⁴⁴

136. On the other hand, **national-scale programmes supported by the country strategic plan or previous WFP operations represent a small share of the government budget.** The whole allocation to the Ministry of Health for 2020, which includes running the TSFP programme, is set at USD 59.6 million in the

¹³⁹ Bonis-Profumo, G. and Meyanathan, S., 2018. Adolescent nutrition in Timor-Leste: a formative research study. Dili: WFP and TOMAK.

¹⁴⁰ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2019. The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns. Rome: FAO, p. 101.

¹⁴¹ WFP, 2016. The WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2016/4-A/1/Rev. 2, p. 19.

¹⁴² Government of Timor-Leste, 2019. Draft State Budget 2020. Book 1: Budget Overview. Dili: GOTL.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

2020 budget.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, the budget for the Merenda Eskolar programme was estimated at USD 17.8 million/year in 2019.¹⁴⁶ A recent analysis by FAO and the European Union (EU) found that “while successive governments have endorsed food security and nutrition policies and plans, they have been insufficiently funded and thus reliant on donor funding to fill the deficits. For example, the cost of implementing the activities of the National Zero Hunger Action Plan (PAN-HAM-TIL) at scale is estimated at an average of USD 176 million per year over ten years. A cost assessment found that it would cost USD 9.5 million to fully implement the National Nutrition Strategy in 2017, of which almost USD 6 million was unfunded, and much of the funding that was available came from donors (in particular the European Union)... despite promised support for the social sectors, the 2019 budget is heavily weighted toward front-loading investments in public infrastructure... health, agriculture and education together account for just 12 percent of appropriated spending in the 2019 state budget.”¹⁴⁷

Figure 8. Timor-Leste national budget and withdrawals from Petroleum Fund, 2015–2020



*Preliminary or tentative data for 2020.

Source: Government of Timor-Leste, 2016. State Budget 2017. Book 1: Budget Overview. Dili: Government of Timor-Leste; Government of Timor-Leste, 2017. State Budget 2018. Book 1: Budget Overview. Dili: GOTL; Government of Timor-Leste, 2019. Draft State Budget 2020. Book 1: Budget Overview. Dili: GOTL.

137. **The willingness of the Government of Timor-Leste to continue funding strategies and programmes supported by the country strategic plan is uncertain.** Precedents of the Government taking over or supporting WFP programmes exist (the Merenda Eskolar school feeding programme and, more recently, the TSFP supported by WFP in six municipalities). In 2008, WFP also received a grant from the Government to set up the production of Timor Vita. Moreover, the country strategic plan is well aligned with government priorities (Section 2.1), which should encourage close collaboration and common interests. However, there are a number of obstacles to continued government funding, or takeover, of existing programmes. In the current context of political instability and the lack of consensus among government partners, it is difficult to ensure the support of all different levels of the Government (from technical to ministerial level), as well as Parliament. Uncertainties and delays in approving the budget also make it difficult for the Government to commit financial resources. In the absence of these two elements, it is difficult to ensure the sustainability of the Government’s decisions.

¹⁴⁵ Government of Timor-Leste, 2019. Draft State Budget 2020. Libro 2: Planos de Acção Anual. Dili: GOTL.

¹⁴⁶ WFP and Help Logistics, 2019. School Feeding Programme Assessment in Timor-Leste. A Joint Assessment by HELP Logistics, World Food Programme (WFP) Timor-Leste, and Ministry of Education (MoE) Timor-Leste. Dili: WFP and HELP Logistics. Draft.

¹⁴⁷ Grieve, H., nd. Food security and nutrition. Policy effectiveness analysis. Setting priorities through evidence-based policy dialogue. Timor-Leste. Dili: FIRST: FAO-EU Partnership Programme: Policy Assistance Facility, p. 79.

Commitment and capacity

138. **Whether the achievements of the country strategic plan (and previous operations under review) are sustained in practice depends on several other factors, which suggest that sustainability is not assured.** One factor is the depth of those achievements. WFP certainly had substantive engagement with TSFP work over an extended period; but in other areas, the stakeholder view – particularly during the implementation of the country strategic plan – has been that WFP engagement has been fragmented. A primary reason for this has been the lack of funding. A related factor has been the scarcity of senior strategic expertise in the country office, meaning that senior counterparts in the Government are not convinced that approaches and activities promoted by WFP should be taken forward. This capacity challenge has also led to uncertainty about the WFP mandate or the rationale for its strategic direction, reducing clarity about what exactly the WFP achievements are that might be sustained. Ownership of country strategic plan achievements is not always strong enough, and in the case of nutrition, the strength of support for the sector is not uniform across the Government.

139. **More practical challenges to sustainability have concerned the nature of handover.** Before the review period, the handover of the Merenda Eskolar school feeding programme in 2011 was abrupt and poorly coordinated,¹⁴⁸ but this was due to decision-making within the Government rather than WFP performance (see also Annex XIV). As noted above (paragraph 93), there are more recent concerns about the handover of TSFP coordination functions from WFP field staff to the Ministry of Health. These link to inaccurate design assumptions about the conditions for effective and sustainable handover. Despite the theoretical availability of funding, the money provided in practice for TSFP and related work is insufficient. WFP contributions to capacity strengthening in the enabling environment, organizational and individual domains are still at an early stage (paragraphs 100-119 above).

140. **The core strategy of the country strategic plan was progressive handover of all direct implementation functions from WFP to the Government,** on the assumption that those functions would be sustainable. “The vision is for WFP to continue to shift from the provision of food assistance to policy engagement and capacity development for a gradual hand-over to community-run and Government-financed programmes.”¹⁴⁹ In practice, this handover has not gone as smoothly as it might (paragraph 139), and sustainability is not yet assured. Observations during field visits suggested a local stakeholder perception of incomplete communication to municipality and health facility staff about the handover process, late preparation of a handover plan (January 2019) and what is seen at municipality level – despite preparatory consultations by WFP – to have been the abrupt termination of WFP staff in the field. It was already evident during the evaluation mission that the facilities are struggling with supply distribution to field level, as well as with a reduction in the continuity and regularity of delivery of supplies (Annex XII). In addition, health facilities and district health teams expressed concern about the reporting challenges they continue to experience since the WFP staff support ended. Effective handover and consequent sustainability depend on appropriate strategy and actions on both sides. In this case, the Government was not able to ready itself fully or engage completely with WFP handover planning. Good intentions on both sides did not convert to the type of handover that was planned.

141. **The instability in the Government and high turnover of senior government officials have made it difficult for WFP to establish relationships with ministers and achieve sustainable results.** At the time of the evaluation mission, there were nine ministries that had had interim ministers for the past year (paragraph 35, Section 1.2). Government reshuffles bring more uncertainty into the relationship between WFP and the Government. These conditions have caused a number of shifts in government priorities, adversely affecting the sustainability of WFP results. A good example of this is the mSupply inventory system, which the Government rejected (but might ultimately adopt again).

142. **The position of KONSSANTIL within the Government, falling under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, is a challenge to the sustainability of WFP contributions.** KONSSANTIL has no legal status and its formal influence is correspondingly limited. In June 2019, WFP and FAO supported a proposal to transfer the KONSSANTIL Secretariat to the Office of the Prime Minister, but this did not succeed. WFP has generated evidence and provided technical advice to KONSSANTIL for the development of policies and regulations. However, most of these (for example, regulation of rice fortification) are pending approval. This

¹⁴⁸ Mokoro Ltd., 2013. Timor-Leste: an evaluation of WFP's portfolio (2008–2012). Rome: Office of Evaluation, WFP, p. 26.

¹⁴⁹ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3, p. 11.

has also limited the ability of WFP to influence financing for food and nutrition security, despite important needs for increased financial commitments in this area. For example, budgetary allocations for nutrition within the Ministry of Health are inadequate. Furthermore, technical staff of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport explained that they have recently submitted a proposal to increase budget allocations for the school feeding programme; but it is not yet clear whether it will be approved. A recent joint United Nations presentation to parliamentarians (led by WHO and including WFP) aimed to raise awareness of food and nutrition security issues in Timor-Leste. According to informants, this presentation was probably a factor in the Government's recent decision to join the SUN movement (paragraph 54, Section 2.1). Membership of SUN should strengthen national commitment and capacity across the multisectoral nutrition spectrum, in turn improving the sustainability of WFP country strategic plan achievements.

Facilitation of linkages between humanitarian, development and peace work

143. **Peace remains the Government's highest priority. The nation still lives in the shadow of the conflict that preceded its independence. But, according to senior government informants, the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus is not yet a familiar concept in Dili.** This is despite the potentially strong value of the concept for the country, given its history and its central role in the G7+ initiative to spearhead cooperation among fragile states – whose headquarters is in Timor-Leste. The HDP nexus concept could make a strong contribution to sustainable development strategy (which also means sustainable peace strategy) in the country. WFP has not been directly involved in any such process yet, although the Government of Timor-Leste clearly recognizes the contribution that the United Nations has made in building peace and stability in Timor-Leste.¹⁵⁰

EQ 2.4. In humanitarian contexts, to what extent did the country strategic plan facilitate more strategic linkages between humanitarian, development and, where appropriate, peace work?

144. **Country strategic plan design referred to humanitarian-development linkages and to peace as the potential third element of the HDP nexus:** “recognizing Timor-Leste's transition from conflict to peace, and the G7+ effort..., WFP will facilitate the sharing of experiences in overcoming conflict and fragility”.¹⁵¹ There is no evidence that such facilitation has occurred, however, and there is not yet full clarity at country office level about how to apply the HDP nexus concept in the country.

145. **Technically, the context for the review period in Timor-Leste was developmental, rather than humanitarian** – with the partial exception of the period in 2016–2017 when the IR-EMOP helped vulnerable children and adults in three municipalities who were severely challenged by malnutrition because of the El Niño event (paragraph 1, Annex IX; see also paragraph 124). Although the development and IR-EMOP continued with nutrition work that had its roots in WFP humanitarian tradition, the development operation MCHN interventions (on a much larger scale than those of the IR-EMOP) were already framed in developmental terms, as a way to develop the Government's capacity to assure the good nutrition of its own citizens.

2.3. EQ 3: to what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to country strategic plan outputs and strategic outcomes?

146. Efficiency is a wide-ranging concept in evaluation, and assessments of it are often compromised by incomplete data sets on cost effectiveness. Elaborating EQ 3 for this evaluation, the matrix at Annex III poses four subquestions. One dimension of efficiency is timeliness of implementation. Another is the appropriateness of targeting and coverage; targeting the wrong beneficiaries or achieving incomplete coverage mean that resources are not optimally used or deployed. A further subquestion asks, to the extent that data permit analysis, how cost-efficient country strategic plan implementation has been. Finally, there is a question about the effort made to identify alternative, more cost-effective measures. The following four sections address these subquestions in order to offer an aggregate assessment of efficiency in contributing to country strategic plan outputs and strategic outcomes.

¹⁵⁰ Government of Timor-Leste, 2017. Speech by His Excellency Francisco Guterres Lú Olo, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, at the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly. New York: GOTL.

¹⁵¹ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3, p. 19.

Delivery of outputs within the intended timeframe

147. **Supplementary feeding activities implemented by WFP have experienced delays throughout the 2015–2019 review period.** Table 9 provides an overview of all delay episodes, by WFP operation. Under the development

EQ 3.1. To what extent were outputs delivered within the intended

operation and the IR-EMOP, according to the standard project reports, there were several pipeline breaks in the provision of RUSF due to high international demand. These delays affected the supplementary feeding activities for children under five. Activities targeting pregnant and lactating women also suffered pipeline breaks due to low production of Timor Vita by the local company, Timor Global. Problems stemmed from poor cash flow practices, management difficulties, challenges in sourcing quality raw materials in Timor-Leste and time required to import substitutes.¹⁵²

148. **Under the country strategic plan, delays and pipeline breaks were the result of WFP funding challenges.** Limited funding resulted in pipeline breaks and interrupted implementation of TSFP. The process of programming funds once they are granted also contributed to increase the delays.^{153, 154} In 2018, the country office mitigated the problem by using the WFP advance financing mechanism against Timor-Leste's pledged contribution of USD 210,000.

149. **Pipeline breaks over the period 2015–2019 resulted in lower participation of beneficiary populations (pregnant and lactating women and children aged under 5 years).** Delays were generally protracted, lasting anywhere from three to ten months (Table 9). Reports from health facilities show a significant impact on attendance levels. Pipeline breaks affected procurement and food deliveries in late 2016 and early 2017. Analysis of the country office's internal monitoring data shows that attendance levels for children aged under 5 years and for pregnant and lactating women, across all six municipalities targeted by WFP, dropped by 43 percent in the first semester of 2017 compared with the same period in the previous year. In the second semester of 2017, they increased again by 43 percent.

Table 9. Delays experienced in WFP food deliveries by operation, 2015–2019

Operation	Delays	Trigger
CSP TL01	2019: Delays Super Cereal 2018: Delays Super Cereal (Mar–Sep)	Funding and programming Funding and programming
DEV 200770	2017: Delays RUSF (Jan–Mar) 2016: Delays RUSF & Timor Vita (3–4 months) 2015: Delays Timor Vita (Jan–Nov)	Import delays Import delays (RUSF) and slow production (Timor Vita) Slow production (Timor Vita) and transportation issues
IR-EMOP 201017	2017: Delays RUSF (Jan) 2016: Delays RUSF & Timor Vita	Import delays Import delays (RUSF) and slow production (Timor Vita)

Source: DEV SPRs 2015–2017, IR-EMOP SPRs 2016–2017, ACR 2018 and ACR 2019

150. **Lack of funding has also delayed or put on hold WFP engagement with partners in Timor-Leste.** Although this is difficult to quantify in the absence of a clearly defined work plan and implementation timelines, there are many examples of delays across all country strategic plan activities. Further work on rice fortification is on hold and pending the approval of a grant proposal submitted to KOICA. Similarly, engagement with several partners has been very limited or non-existent despite the signature of memorandums of understanding with them (Table 11).

Appropriateness of coverage and targeting

151. **Given limited resources, the targeting of TSFP interventions was appropriate.** As noted in Section 1.3 (paragraph 6), nutrition interventions under DEV 200770

EQ 3.2. To what extent were coverage and targeting of interventions

¹⁵² WFP, 2016. Immediate Response Emergency Operation: Timor-Leste, EMOP ref. 201017: Prevention of moderate acute malnutrition in children 6 to 23 months and pregnant and lactating women. Standard Project Report 2016. Dili: WFP.

¹⁵³ WFP, 2019. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2018. Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Dili: WFP.

¹⁵⁴ WFP, 2020. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2019. Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Dili: WFP.

were focused on 6 of the 13 municipalities in Timor-Leste. The IR-EMOP appropriately focused on the three municipalities worst affected by the El Niño event. The country strategic plan was carefully worded not to specify the geographic coverage of its support for TSFP, beyond saying, “For prevention of malnutrition, data from nutrition surveys and the national demographic and health survey will be used to identify geographic areas with high stunting rates and low proportions of girls and boys aged 6–23 months with minimum acceptable diets.”¹⁵⁵ According to several informants (and limited documentation, for example, and limited documentation, for example, Figure 24, Annex VIII), the country office planned that coverage would be nationwide. Lack of resources then necessitated a contraction of Activity 1 to the six municipalities that had been supported by the development operation.

152. **Some government informants continue to feel that the coverage of the TSFP is insufficient for the desired, sustainable effect on malnutrition indicators in this small country.** As noted in paragraph 64 above, difficult access to remote and scattered populations restricted coverage even in the municipalities that were targeted. WFP support for the SISCa community-level outreach programme was an attempt to reach more of the target group. During implementation of DEV 200770, working through non-governmental organizations also broadened the interface with target beneficiaries. Limited coverage of WFP-supported moderate acute malnutrition treatment also meant an imbalance with the nationwide (but logistically smaller-scale) support for severe acute malnutrition treatment by UNICEF. Integrated national coverage of moderate and severe acute malnutrition would be promoted by the single-protocol approach that is now being considered, assuming that the Government can meet national demand for the required commodities.

153. **Beneficiary targeting for broad nutrition support (children aged 6 months to 5 years, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls) was appropriate** and in line with the globally recognized need to tackle malnutrition during the first 1,000 days of life and through a life cycle approach that gives special attention to adolescent girls. However, the TSFP has not directly targeted the latter group, instead approaching them indirectly through SBCC (for which the recent research on adolescent nutrition has provided guidance).¹⁵⁶

154. **The integration of operational support, technical assistance and resource mobilization that the WFP Policy on Country Strategic Plans intended to achieve has not yet been realized in Timor-Leste.** The policy intended that “national zero hunger strategic reviews systematically integrate strategic, resource and technical assistance planning that is informed by analyses of resourcing and capacity constraints. Country strategic plans ensure targeted institutional capacity enhancement to support governments in designing and managing their nationally owned hunger solutions, and to equip WFP country offices with information, skilled staff and required capacities in line with the WFP People Strategy.”¹⁵⁷ Despite the merits of its NZHSR, this positive impact has not yet been achieved in Timor-Leste.

Cost-efficiency

155. The available data do not suffice for a comprehensive analysis of the cost-efficiency of WFP assistance in Timor-Leste. The findings below are based on the information that could be obtained.

EQ 3.3. To what extent were WFP activities cost-efficient in delivery of its

156. **The cost-effectiveness of the TSFP has increased under the country strategic plan, compared to the development operation.** Table 10 shows that the average cost per beneficiary who recovered is significantly lower under the country strategic plan for both beneficiary groups (children aged under 5 years and pregnant and lactating women). The significant difference can be explained by important improvements in the cost-efficiency of the development operation during its implementation. In 2017, the cost per recovered beneficiary under the development operation was USD 27.7 for children aged under 5 years and USD 23.7 for pregnant and lactating women.¹⁵⁸ Since the country strategic plan essentially continued the development operation’s TSFP, it is possible that some additional efficiency gains were achieved under the country strategic

¹⁵⁵ WFP, 2018. Timor-Leste Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.1/2018/6-A/3, p. 17.

¹⁵⁶ Bonis-Profumo, G. and Meyanathan, S., 2018. Adolescent nutrition in Timor-Leste: a formative research study. Dili: WFP and TOMAK.

¹⁵⁷ WFP, 2016. Policy on Country Strategic Plans. Rome: WFP: WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/1/Rev.1, p. 15.

¹⁵⁸ Kouam et al., 2018 End-Term Evaluation of Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Timor-Leste (2015–2017).

plan. Contributing factors may be that the more expensive Timor Vita is no longer used, and the moderate acute malnutrition treatment recovery rate has improved steadily, especially for children aged under 5 years.

157. **The average costs of the TSFP under the country strategic plan also compare favourably to similar interventions in other countries and regions.** UNICEF has estimated the cost per recovered moderate acute malnutrition child at USD 56.5 in Kenya¹⁵⁹ and USD 21 in Pakistan.¹⁶⁰

158. The cost effectiveness of other activities under the country strategic plan cannot be evaluated on a quantitative basis. There are insufficient data to assess the cost of advocacy activities, training provided, and research efforts. In addition, one of the most important drivers of costs is staff emoluments, which are very difficult to attribute to individual activities in Timor-Leste as some staff costs were shifted across categories in the budget to manage liquidity problems (Section 2.4).

Table 10. Cost-effectiveness of the targeted supplementary feeding programme in the development and country strategic plan operations (USD/recovered beneficiary)

Municipality	Recovered children <5		Recovered PLW	
	DEV	CSP	DEV	CSP
Ainaro	44.7	19.4	53.6	37.6
Bobonaro	35.9	23.9	45.2	11.9
Covalima	40.5	20.8	65.1	9.4
Dili	79.6	29.4	41.3	26.5
Ermera	49.9	17.0	59.3	12.5
Oecusse	64.7	22.0	48.0	13.7
All 6 municipalities	52.3	22.9	41.7	16.2

These calculations are based on food costs and exclude transportation and handling costs.

The methodology is consistent with that used in the development operation evaluation.

Source: Kouam *et al.*, 2018, End-Term Evaluation of Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Timor-Leste (2015–2017) and WFP CO.

Consideration of alternative, more cost-effective measures

159. **The WFP country office paid attention to cost-effectiveness in the design of TSFP operations under the country strategic plan.** The 2012 country portfolio evaluation concluded that cost-effectiveness was not sufficiently examined when the engagement with Timor Global for the production of Timor Vita started.¹⁶¹ Subsequently, the cost-effectiveness of Timor Vita was assumed in the development operation evaluation, on the basis that local products should be cheaper than imported ones,¹⁶² but no comparative figures were offered. Internal calculations by the country office at the request of the Government show that as of 2018, Timor Vita was 17 percent more expensive than imported “Super Cereal” (USD 1,934.8/mt compared to USD 1,660.5/mt). Under the country strategic plan, purchases of Timor Vita have been discontinued.

EQ 3.4. To what extent were alternative, more cost-effective measures considered?

160. **WFP and the Government assessed the cost-effectiveness of procuring different food supplements.** WFP supported the Ministry of Health with costings for this purpose (paragraph 95). It has worked with SAMES to compare the cost of procuring RUSF and “Super Cereal” through the two organizations’ networks. The analysis shows that it is 2.4 times more expensive for SAMES to procure any of the products than for WFP. This is most likely the result of WFP expertise, broader network of suppliers and potential ability to procure larger quantities. In comparison, SAMES remains a small agency in budget terms, representing a small market. The analysis prompted the Government to award WFP a grant of USD 210,000 for the procurement and delivery of food supplies to the central warehouse of SAMES in Dili.

¹⁵⁹ UNICEF, 2012. Evaluation of Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM): Kenya Country Case Study. Evaluation report. New York: UNICEF Evaluation Office.

¹⁶⁰ UNICEF, 2012. Evaluation of Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM): Pakistan Country Case Study. Evaluation report. New York: UNICEF Evaluation Office.

¹⁶¹ Mokoro Ltd., 2013. Timor-Leste: an evaluation of WFP’s portfolio (2008–2012). Rome: Office of Evaluation, WFP.

¹⁶² Kouam *et al.*, 2018 End-Term Evaluation of Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Timor-Leste (2015–2017).

161. **There are international debates about the cost-efficiency of treatments for moderate and severe acute malnutrition** (see, for example the World Bank 2013 report on multisectoral approaches to improving nutrition).¹⁶³ Both interventions are often necessary, of course, and for many years the global agreement has been that WFP takes the lead in support for the former, and UNICEF for the latter. Moderate acute malnutrition typically presents a much larger caseload, and requires longer adherence in an outpatient context, which may make it appear less cost-efficient. Ongoing debate about these issues will probably be adjusted if a single treatment protocol for both moderate and severe acute malnutrition is adopted.

162. **Cost-efficiency has also been considered in other activities, especially in a context of restricted funding.** WFP has built a partnership with HELP Logistics, a not-for-profit organization specializing in logistics that provides assistance for free. In addition, the country office has increased the use of United Nations and KOICA volunteers, as well as United Nations and UNTL interns. Heavy country office dependence on these low-cost staffing solutions does not necessarily enhance the cost-efficiency of implementation, as less qualified or experienced personnel may take longer to perform tasks, and/or not achieve them to as high a standard as more senior staff.

2.4. EQ 4: what are the factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the country strategic plan?

163. The evaluation identifies a range of factors that explain WFP performance to date through its Timor-Leste country strategic plan, and the extent to which the expected strategic shift has been achieved. The extent and manner in which existing evidence on hunger, food security and nutrition were used help to explain the design and relevance of the country strategic plan. The mobilization of adequate, predictable and flexible funding has been a dominant influence on performance, as explained below. Another set of explanatory factors concern the ways in which partnerships with Government, other United Nations agencies, civil society and the private sector were developed and exploited. This section also assesses the extent to which the country strategic plan enhanced flexibility in dynamic operational contexts; country office awareness and use of the corporate guidance and tools available to it; the quality of results-based management; and the adequacy of country office human resources and staff expertise.

Analysis and use of existing evidence on hunger, food security and nutrition

164. **The design of the country strategic plan took careful account of the National Zero Hunger Strategic Review** ¹⁶⁴ (see also paragraph 39 above), government policies and the analysis of other relevant evidence (Section 1.3). The country strategic plan built on the analysis conducted in the NZHSR, discussed the main priorities and recommendations in relation to food and nutrition security contained in the document, and used this information to identify the main opportunities for WFP in Timor-Leste. Informants perceive the NZHSR as a solid piece of work developed through a very open and consultative process. The country strategic plan also provided a good overview of the policy framework in relevant areas. It also referred to other sources of evidence, including the Government, international donors and agencies and academia.

EQ 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 country strategic plan?

165. **The country strategic plan referred to previous evaluations and lessons learned**, within the limitations imposed by the length and format of the document (although it did not adopt all of those evaluations' recommendations). It discussed some key recommendations of the WFP Country Portfolio Evaluation (2008–2012)¹⁶⁵ in relation to increasing the focus on capacity strengthening and the weak incorporation of gender issues in the WFP country portfolio. The country strategic plan also discussed recommendations and lessons learned from reviews, surveys and the implementation of projects. For example, it considered the experience of WFP with Timor Vita in some detail.

¹⁶³ World Bank, 2013. *Improving nutrition through multisectoral approaches*. Washington, DC: World Bank, p. 124.

¹⁶⁴ Fanzo et al., 2017, *Timor-Leste Strategic Review: Progress and Success in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2*.

¹⁶⁵ Mokoro Ltd., 2013. *Timor-Leste: an evaluation of WFP's portfolio (2008–2012)*. Rome: Office of Evaluation, WFP.

166. **The country strategic plan's prioritization of WFP interventions and focus areas could be stronger.** The continuation of TSFP activities was justified based on the NZHSR and "on consultations with the Government, development partners and communities". However, the NZHSR presented a wide-ranging discussion of food and nutrition, while the country strategic plan's reference to consultations was not supported by any direct or indirect references nor through a discussion of the results of such consultations. At the same time, the country strategic plan simply assumed that WFP would continue the TSFP as it was done under the development operation. There was no discussion of the geographical scope. The country strategic plan offered a more specific rationale for activities 3 and 4, for which it discussed target institutions and partners. The presentation of Activity 2 contained some discussion on this (KONSSANTIL), but some of the actions proposed only defined targets and partners in general terms.

Mobilization of adequate, predictable and flexible resources

167. **The country strategic plan has been severely underfunded in its first two years of implementation.**

According to the needs-based plan, implementation of the country strategic plan would require USD 16.97 million. The resource situation at the start of 2020 shows that a total of USD 5.1 million has been allocated, representing 30 percent of

the needs-based plan.¹⁶⁶ The implementation of the country strategic plan has been severely affected by this lack of funding. As illustrated in Table 17 (Annex VII), there is a remarkable difference between the needs-based plan and actual spending levels. Actual spending represented under 20 percent of the needs-based plan in both 2018 and 2019. The annual implementation plans also reflect the stark reality faced by the office: quite ambitious in 2018 (USD 4.4 million), but much more conservative in 2019 (USD 0.83 million).

EQ 4.2. To what extent has WFP been able to mobilize adequate, predictable and flexible resources to finance the country strategic plan?

168. **The development operation and IR-EMOP were better funded.** At the end of the development operation, allocated funds accounted for 61 percent of the needs, that is, the approved budget.¹⁶⁷ The IR-EMOP was fully funded (Table 2, Section 1.3).

169. **Funding for the country strategic plan has mainly come from within WFP.** As shown in Figure 17 (Annex VII), the main source of funding for the country strategic plan (66 percent of allocated funding) has been in the form of allocations from the WFP Strategic Resource Allocation Committee. SRAC is the WFP body that reviews and oversees the prioritization and allocation of multilateral funding.¹⁶⁸ SRAC prioritizes the use of multilateral funding according to an established set of quantitative and qualitative criteria. Grant funding from donors, including governments and the private sector, accounts for a further 29 percent of all funding allocated to the Timor-Leste country strategic plan to date. The remaining 5 percent is made up of resource transfers from previous operations (3 percent) and other locally generated funds such as insurance recoveries (2 percent).

170. **In comparison, funding for the development operation came mostly from external sources.** Figure 18 (Annex VII) shows that 96 percent of the funding allocated to the project came from directed contributions from donors (Directed Multilateral). The IR-EMOP was almost entirely funded through a grant from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (UN-CERF).

171. **The fluidity and uncertainty of allocated resources over the country strategic plan implementation period resulted in the country office having to sacrifice medium- and long-term planning while constantly adjusting operations to available funds.** Analysis of WFP contribution data helps to illustrate this (Figure 9). It is important to note that contribution data differ from allocation data presented elsewhere in the report, but this is the only information that is dated. Following some seed contributions in early 2018, mostly from SRAC, the country strategic plan received limited funding until well into 2019. This forced the country office to constrain spending in 2018 in order to set aside some funds for 2019. Through most of 2019, the office experienced severe liquidity constraints and was only able to operate based on advances from headquarters. At the end of 2019, contributions increased significantly thanks to the arrival in the third and fourth quarters of the year of large SRAC transfers and two grants from China and Japan (Annex VII). Consequently, the available balance at the start of 2020, the last year of country strategic

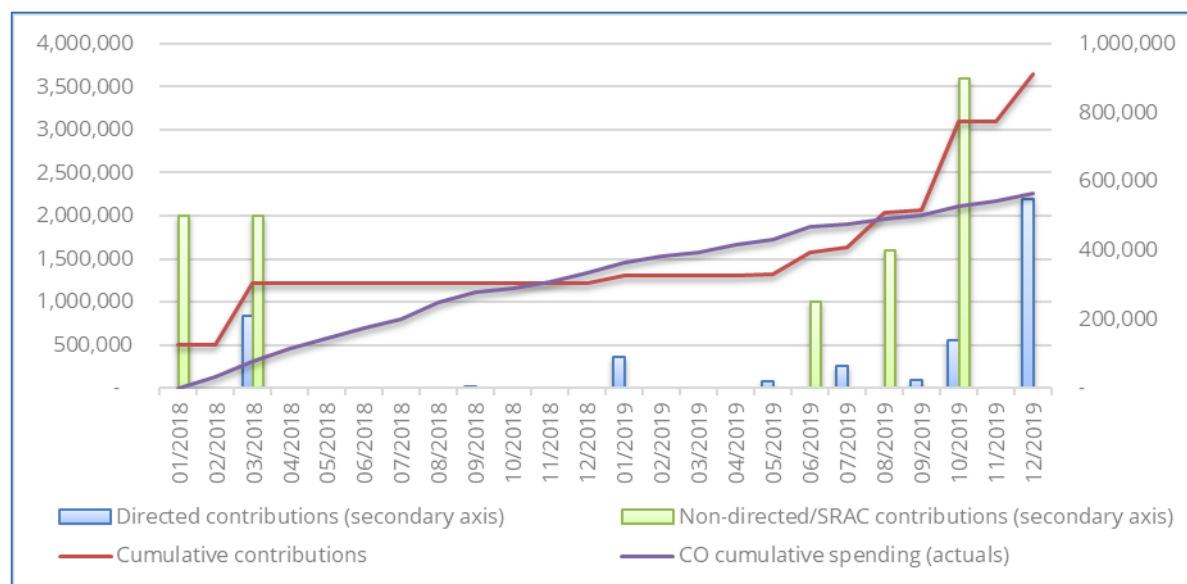
¹⁶⁶ WFP, 2020. Timor-Leste Resource Situation. Rome: WFP.

¹⁶⁷ WFP, 2018. Capacity development for health and nutrition. Standard Project Report 2018. Dili: WFP.

¹⁶⁸ WFP, 2015. WFP's Use of Multilateral Funding. 2014 Report. Rome: WFP.

plan implementation, is USD 2.37 million according to WFP country office. This means that expenditure will have to increase 2.4 times in 2020 in order to spend allocated resources. The uncertainty is particularly interesting in the context of Timor-Leste, where SRAC accounts for most of the allocated funds (66 percent). In this context, it would be interesting to explore whether it is possible to increase the predictability of SRAC funding or make upfront payments.

Figure 9. Contributions to Timor-Leste country strategic plan and country office spending (actuals) (USD)



Note that data refer to contributions, which can differ from allocations. This explains some differences. The figures also fail to reflect advances made by headquarters to the country office.

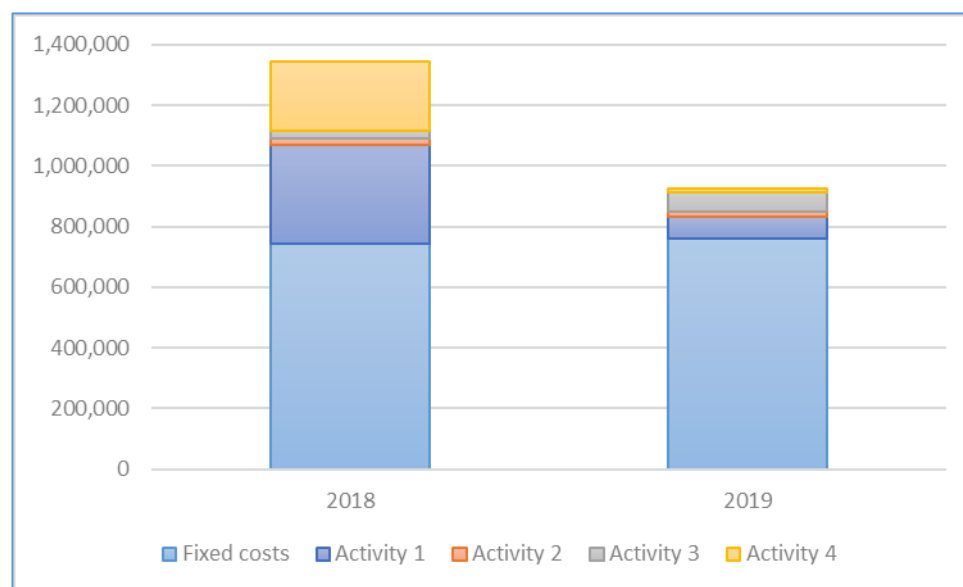
Source: WFP distribution contribution and forecast statistics, BO/WINGS and SRAC tracking list, CPB plan versus actuals

172. **Earmarking of funds for the Timor-Leste country strategic plan has been limited.** SRAC allocations are generally more flexible than direct contributions. Figure 19 (Annex VII) shows the earmarking of SRAC contributions to the Timor-Leste country strategic plan per donor. In terms of volume, the largest contributions to the country strategic plan have been earmarked at the strategic outcome level. Some contributions remain earmarked at the activity level, but the volume is small. All direct multilateral contributions to the country strategic plan are earmarked at the activity level (Figure 20, Annex VII)). Out of the four activities in the country strategic plan, Activity 4 and Activity 1 have received the most funding. As shown in Figure 21 (Annex VII), the largest direct contributor to country strategic plan implementation is China, but funds have not been programmed yet (the grant was approved at the very end of 2019). The second most important source of resources is private funding. The Government of Timor-Leste is the third largest contributor to the country strategic plan with a focus on food procurement (Activity 1). Directed multilateral contributions to the development operation were mostly earmarked (Figure 22, Annex VII). All IR-EMOP funding was essentially earmarked (being provided by UN-CERF).

173. **Budget analysis suggests that there is a critical point below which it becomes difficult for the WFP country office to continue the implementation of the country strategic plan.** To further assess the impact of budget constraints on WFP operations, Figure 10 below presents the country office's actual spending on fixed costs (defined as staff and direct support costs adjusted for staff costs) for the whole office and shows the free balance for implementation for each of the activities. As discussed above, 2018 can be considered a difficult year in relation to expectations. Nonetheless, it is clear that the country office was able to implement some capital-intensive activities. For example, Activity 1 (TSFP) was able to run, albeit with delays and pipeline breaks. Similarly, Activity 4 also included a number of training events and technical assistance activities in 2018. In comparison, 2019 figures show that there was very little money available for any of the activities. Although the country office tried to compensate through the use of WFP staff to perform the work (for example, training), engaging volunteers or doing work for free (see above), country strategic plan implementation was severely constrained. This also had implications for the presence and visibility of WFP at the operational level.

174. **Despite the financial difficulties, the WFP country office has not suffered a major reduction in staff numbers.** It had 34 staff as of mid-October 2019, compared to 40 at the end of 2018 (see paragraph 205, Figure 11 and Annex VIII). The number of fixed-term contracts (11) has remained the same. The reduction in personnel numbers can be explained by the end of the contracts of several staff members working in the field support units after handing over the TSFP to the Government. While reducing staff numbers is often considered an effective way of reducing fixed costs, the protection of WFP staff, and by extension the country office's skillset, is very natural when the financial situation is considered – and was taken into account during a 2017 country office staffing review (paragraph 206). As discussed above, a substantial amount of funding will become available for implementation in 2020. In addition, there is a need for WFP to retain a minimum critical mass in order to fundraise and continue engaging with partners.

Figure 10. Timor-Leste country strategic plan: analysis of fixed versus free costs (USD)



Source: CPB plan vs actual report, WINGS

175. **The country office has come up with creative solutions to ensure liquidity at activity level while keeping its staff in post.** The analysis of the 2019 budget shows a significant overspending in direct support costs compared to the implementation plan (287 percent spending, see Table 17). This is the result of movements across different cost categories to guarantee liquidity at the activity level as well as the payment of staff wages. Direct support cost is the most flexible and readily available cost element within the country strategic plan budget. In a context of budget constraints, it is easier to increase the liquidity of underfunded activities, by moving staff costs at activity level (considered as implementation costs) to direct support costs. Creative budget management to solve liquidity problems was already documented in the evaluation of the country strategic plan pilots.¹⁶⁹

176. **The Timor-Leste country strategic plan does not include a gender equality budget.** In terms of the WFP Gender Policy, country offices should develop a gender budget to measure financial resources allocated to activities contributing to gender equality.^{170, 171} This should improve monitoring and encourage country offices to increase the volume of resources targeting activities contributing to gender equality, toward the corporate target of 15 percent by 2020. Out of the 32 country strategic plans operational in 2018, only 19 had developed a gender budget.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Turner, S.D., Reynolds, M., Grabham, J., Hodson, E., Maunder, N., de Mel, R., Pereira, J., Piano, E. and Visser, M., 2018. Strategic Evaluation of the Country Strategic Plan Pilots. Evaluation report. Rome: WFP OEV.

¹⁷⁰ WFP, 2015. WFP Gender Policy (2015–2020). Rome: WFP.

¹⁷¹ WFP, 2019. Update on the Gender Policy (2015–2020). Rome: WFP.

¹⁷² Ibid.

Partnerships and collaboration

177. **The national institutional context has been complex throughout the review period**, making it difficult for external agencies like WFP to engage effectively with the Government and to get traction at policy level for the initiatives on which they wish to work with it. The situation has been particularly difficult through most of the country strategic plan implementation period, during which there have been several elections but no approved government budget for many months at a time and no officially endorsed ministers in nine ministries (paragraph 35, Section 1.2 above). In December 2019, there had been no Minister of Finance or Minister of Health over the previous 18 months. Decentralization broadened the number of interfaces that WFP needed with the Government, including the Ministry of State Administration, and intensified the need for capacity-strengthening efforts to focus on local levels. At all levels, the stronger focus of the country strategic plan on capacity-strengthening partnership with the Government meant that the complexity of the institutional context became an increasingly significant constraint on implementation.

EQ 4.3. To what extent did the country strategic plan lead to partnerships and collaboration with other actors that positively influenced performance and

178. **The character and performance of WFP partnerships and collaborations with other actors depend, in various ways, on the level of support available from resource partners.** Throughout the review period, the central partnerships have been those with policy and governance partners: ministries and other agencies of the Government of Timor-Leste. It is a standard government requirement in Timor-Leste that a formal written agreement be concluded with a development partner like WFP before any significant joint action can proceed. Depending on the nature of the proposed collaboration, this formal document may be a memorandum of understanding, a letter of understanding or a cost-sharing agreement. Table 11 below summarizes the status of WFP Timor-Leste agreements with the Government of Timor-Leste and other partners in December 2019 (almost two years after the launch of the country strategic plan).

179. **Achieving these signed agreements with the Government has been a complex challenge for WFP**, due partly to the intricacies of relationships within government structures, where senior technical staff and the leadership may hold differing views on strategic direction and related partnerships. Efforts to build partnerships are a major effort for the small country office. When signed agreements are in place, the nature and value of the work done then depends on numerous factors – notably the availability of funding and the ability of WFP and the partner ministry or agency to engage. The pending agreements with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion and the Secretary of State for Civil Protection are instances of unclear negotiating status linked to the complexities mentioned above. The country office is more confident about the status of discussions with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

Table 11. Status of agreements with partners, December 2019

MoU or agreement with:	Status
Government partners	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation	CSP partnership agreement signed
Secretary of State for Civil Protection	MoU prepared, not yet signed
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport	MoU signed, some activities
Ministry of Health	MoU signed, joint activities undertaken (including INS)
National Logistics Centre	MoU signed, limited activities
Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion	MoU prepared, not yet signed
National University of Timor-Leste	MoU signed, limited activities
Other partners	
Agora Food Studio	MoU signed, no activities
Catalpa International	MoU signed, some activities
East Timor Development Agency	MoU signed, no activities
Timor Global	Draft MoU to replace the one that expired Dec. 2019
TOMAK	MoU signed, some joint activities

Source: Interviews

180. **The availability of resources concerns how much funding WFP or the partner agency can provide for practical collaboration once an agreement has been signed. But it also concerns the human resource capacity available on the two sides** to plan and manage such joint activity. Most

fundamentally, in order for collaborative agreements to be signed at all, both parties must be able to field sufficient senior capacity with appropriate strategic skills and insight – able to frame agreements in a manner politically practicable and operationally acceptable to all.

181. **Slow progress with the conclusion of these agreements reflects the shortage of such capacity in WFP and in the Government of Timor-Leste.** It also reflects the view that has developed among some (potential) partners, from both the Government and elsewhere, that WFP lacks the capacity to perform consistently and to sustain partnerships reliably at present. Some existing partners have been disappointed by what they perceived as inappropriate planning or operational decisions by the country office – and have become wary of deepening relationships with WFP. The extent to which partnerships and collaborations have positively influenced country strategic plan performance and results is therefore not optimal.

182. **United Nations informants say that, despite limited resources, WFP has remained an active member of the United Nations country team** in Timor-Leste – although, as noted below, collaboration within the UNCT is not always optimal. The United Nations has played a central role in the independence and development of Timor-Leste, giving it a special place in the country's history but making its current status uncertain in the perception of some Timorese, who are unclear about the roles it can or should now play. During the review period, all sides were continuing their adjustment to a more conventional mode of United Nations presence – and the collaboration (or lack of it) within the United Nations system took on some of the more conventional characteristics that are seen in other countries. WFP has cooperated with other United Nations agencies and processes through participation in general structures and activities (notably the recent intensive work on the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework); and through sectoral partnerships to plan and implement activities with the Government. With regard to the former, WFP is seen as having been particularly proactive in engaging with the formulation and intent of the UNSDCF.

183. **Notable examples of sectoral partnerships include the longstanding collaboration by WFP with UNICEF in the nutrition sector,** although some informants feel that has not always been complete. Communications have not always been optimal – for example in decisions around WFP work on SBCC (paragraph 91 above). There were reportedly discussions among several agencies about a joint initiative for the sector, but these were overtaken by the intensive work in 2019 on preparation of the UNSDCF, which was seen as a higher priority.

184. **WFP has collaborated well with FAO in support for KONSSANTIL,** and is seen as an agency that did its best to engage with the concept of multisectoral governance for food security and nutrition in Timor-Leste, for example through its work on rice fortification and on the Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis. Overall, however, the closer collaboration among the Rome-based agencies that their headquarters have been promoting has not occurred in Timor-Leste.

185. **WFP has also worked closely with WHO to prepare and submit a proposal to KOICA for a two-year school health and nutrition project,** starting in 2021, and undertakes joint advocacy with WHO to the Government of Timor-Leste and the private sector, for example in a recent video for World Food Day.

186. **During the review period, the United Nations system was often an open arena for opportunistic collaboration between WFP and other agencies, rather than structuring or driving that collaboration in ways that might have made the organization's resourcing stronger or its performance more effective.** Stakeholders hope that, from 2021, the UNSDCF will allow the whole United Nations in Timor-Leste to be more than the sum of its agency parts. This might strengthen WFP implementation of its next country strategic plan. There is also significant potential for WFP and its United Nations partners to facilitate beneficial linkages between Timor-Leste and the United Nations Nutrition Network REACH mechanism (UNN-REACH).¹⁷³

187. **WFP currently has fewer non-government partners than it had during implementation of DEV 200770 and IR-EMOP 201017.** The development operation, like much WFP work worldwide at the time, was largely delivered through field-level agreements (FLAs) with a range of implementing partners, which included the Alola Foundation, World Vision International and CARE International. Most notable from this engagement was the success of WFP support in facilitating the Integrated Community Health Service (SISCa) programme, which delivers monthly integrated health and nutrition community outreaches at *suco* (village) level (Annex

¹⁷³ Scaling Up Nutrition UN Network, 2020. UNN-REACH facilitation. <https://www.unnetworkforsun.org/unn-reach-facilitation> [accessed 5 February 2020].

XII). CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Hiam Health, Liga Inan and Cinema Loro Sa'e were implementing partners for the IR-EMOP. More recently, WFP established a memorandum of understanding with the National University of Timor-Leste (Table 10), through which it developed an internship programme. This past year, WFP has invited four UNTL students to complete an internship during which they participated in the Fill the Nutrient Gap study. The memorandum of understanding also states that WFP and the UNTL would conduct joint research. This has not yet been done (paragraph 103). Additionally, despite the engagement with CEPAD while the country strategic plan was being drafted (paragraph 39, section 1.3), the evaluation team found little evidence that WFP has built strategic partnerships with civil society, especially advocacy with non-governmental organizations that could help WFP achieve greater policy influence.

188. **During country strategic plan implementation to date, WFP partnerships have focused more on government ministries and parastatals** – partly because of the shift from direct implementation (through non-governmental partners) to advice and facilitation, and partly because partnerships outside the Government more directly require funding, which the country office has lacked. As Table 11 shows, the country office has signed some partnership agreements outside the Government, but it has mostly been unable to put them into operation. The selection of government partners for the country strategic plan was broadly relevant and appropriate, although the opportunities for collaboration with some of these partners are restricted by their engagement with other donors and agencies and/or a related reluctance to engage with WFP at this point.

189. **WFP engagement with a key private-sector partner for the local production of a supplementary feeding product had limited success.** The Singapore-based firm Timor Global has a processing facility in Railaco. Its main business is coffee, but as far back as 2009 WFP established a partnership with it for the production of Timor Vita, a super cereal used for supplementary feeding of pregnant and lactating women from 2010. This partnership encountered a number of production and logistical problems over the years. Ultimately, WFP concerns about the safety of the product led to the suspension of purchases from Timor Global in 2017.¹⁷⁴ Relations with the Timor-Leste private sector are complicated by politics and economics. There is an understandable desire on the part of the Government to stimulate local enterprise using local ingredients; but the small size of the Timorese economy and the proximity of far larger producers and markets like Indonesia mean that imported commodities are usually cheaper. Although there is strong local interest in reviving the production and therapeutic use of Timor Vita, WFP has no plans for further engagement. There have been several proposals for a detailed review of the Timor Vita experience and the lessons that can be learned from it, but no such study has been commissioned to date.

190. **Thorough exploration of partnership opportunities in the field of GEWE has only had limited practical results.** Soon after the launch of the country strategic plan (May 2018), the country office (with RBB support) undertook a partnership mapping exercise. The resulting report recommended that the country office consider World Vision, Plan, Marie Stopes, TOMAK, The Asia Foundation's Nabilan programme, the Alola Foundation and Rede Feto for possible joint activities/research/community implementation/advocacy activities. Oxfam and Handicap international were also identified as potential GEWE partners, especially for inclusion-related issues. There has been some collaboration with non-governmental organizations that address GEWE issues, including TOMAK more recently and the Alola Foundation during the development operation. However, the country office has not yet initiated strategic partnerships with other non-governmental organizations, apart from Agora Food Studio. The mapping also found opportunities for WFP to partner with the UNTL on gender-related research, although, as explained above (paragraph 103), no such research has yet been conducted with the UNTL. An important element of the memorandum of understanding with the university is that the selection of WFP interns should be gender-balanced.

191. **The mapping also found strong opportunities for partnering with United Nations agencies with a strong GEWE mandate** (the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women). The country office made substantial attempts to partner with United Nations agencies around gender. For example, WFP has regularly attended meetings of the United Nations gender thematic group and participated in joint advocacy initiatives, such as the 16 Days of Activism campaign. It also developed a proposal to work jointly with UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF on the United Nations Spotlight Initiative on gender-based violence. However, WFP was not selected to receive funding for this proposal. WFP staff explained that agencies with

¹⁷⁴ Kouam et al., 2018. End-Term Evaluation of Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Timor-Leste (2015–2017), p. 28.

a traditionally stronger gender focus were selected and that United Nations agencies, as well as donors, do not see the comparative advantage of WFP in the field of GEWE. Furthermore, the departure in August 2019 of the Deputy Country Director, who also served as the country office's gender specialist (paragraph 211), has left WFP inadequately represented within the United Nations Gender Thematic Group.

192. **Finally, the mapping identified opportunities of funding for GEWE interventions** with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, USAID, KOICA and the European Union. So far, the country office has made progress toward securing funding from KOICA, but it is unclear how far GEWE will ultimately be integrated, as the project is still at draft proposal stage.

193. **During country strategic plan implementation, South-South cooperation and study tours became a key feature of the WFP strategy to strengthen the capacities of the Timor-Leste Government.** In the development operation period, WFP did not offer South-South cooperation opportunities to the Government. In 2019, representatives from several ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the Secretary of State for Civil Protection, the National Logistics Centre, KONSSANTIL, and the Office of the Prime Minister were assisted to visit China, India and Cambodia to exchange experiences and good practices in areas such as food security policy, school feeding, rice fortification and early warning systems. It is still early to assess the extent to which participants have shared or applied the knowledge that they have acquired. In 2020, additional study tours will be financed through funding from the China Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, to send representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Civil Protection and the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion to China, India, and Indonesia. Topics will include rice fortification, agro-climate analysis and food vouchers.

194. **Among past, current and potential partners in Timor-Leste, there is a spectrum of perceptions of WFP at present. It shows WFP as a valued and respected partner, but one whose profile and purpose are no longer fully clear to those who work with it or might seek to do so.** In the **Government**, there are those who maintain a strong technical respect for WFP, and wish it to play a bigger role in the food security and nutrition sector. There are also areas of misunderstanding about how WFP is funded and why it is increasingly appropriate for the Government to pay for its work, leading to occasional suspicion or resentment about the organization's attempts to engage and develop joint activities. Among **development partners** (including some United Nations agencies), some informants are concerned by what they perceive as an increasingly small-scale set of activities. They urge WFP not to spread itself so thinly, and to "go all the way" in selected fields of work, rather than just taking what they see as small steps for which they have succeeded in obtaining some small-scale funding. There is also a view that an impoverished WFP must make the struggle for funds its constant top priority, diminishing the structural coherence and direction of what it is trying to contribute in Timor-Leste. Linked to both the above sets of perceptions is a concern that WFP communications and engagements with (potential) development partners have been sub-optimal. Some informants say they do not understand some WFP decisions or actions, or heard about them too late or through unexpected channels. **At field level in the municipalities**, informants feel that the quality and effectiveness of the nutrition programmes that WFP supported has deteriorated. The absence of the six recently departed programme assistants, and the coordinating, advisory support that they provided, is already keenly felt. Government staff at this level do not yet have the systems, skills and resources to implement supplementary feeding efficiently.

Flexibility in dynamic operational contexts

195. Evaluation question 4.4 is assumed to refer to the country strategic plan as a new structure for WFP work. Since the country strategic plan was launched a little under two years ago, the kinds of dramatic change in context that WFP often encounters around the world – such as natural disasters or major political instability - have not occurred in Timor-Leste.

EQ 4.4. To what extent did the country strategic plan provide greater flexibility in dynamic operational contexts and how did it affect results?

The principal challenges of malnutrition, weak national food systems and poorly developed capacity have been relatively constant. From another perspective, however, the Timor-Leste country strategic plan must be implemented in a constantly dynamic operational context.

196. **The institutional environment is one aspect of the Timor-Leste context that is perpetually dynamic.** This poses challenges for WFP and other development partners as they seek to gain traction, engagement and progress with joint programmes of work. The country strategic plan did not achieve greater

flexibility in this regard. It did not significantly improve the ability of WFP to deal with this kind of dynamic context – which, as argued above, requires senior strategic skill that, in turn, requires funding. Such changes might be achieved, after due consideration, through a more fundamental restructuring of country presence and staffing than has been contemplated to date: creating a country office with a lighter and more flexible profile that is better matched to the roles of advisory support and facilitation, with a stronger emphasis on working through partnerships.

197. **Conversely, WFP experience during implementation of its country strategic plan has been a new kind of dynamic context in its human resourcing** (see paragraph 205-212). Lack of funds has meant rapid turnover and short-term contracts for most personnel (two-thirds of all staff in October 2019). This inevitably detracts from consistent performance and reduces institutional memory, even though the structure of strategic outcomes, activities and activity managers should in theory enhance management performance. The two Timorese nutrition staff currently working in the country office were both recruited since the country strategic plan was launched and received limited handover and orientation. During implementation of the development operation, there was a larger nutrition team supervised by an internationally recruited specialist who was in post from December 2015 to July 2018. That level of capacity is no longer available.

Other factors influencing performance

Guidance and tools

198. **WFP tools and guidance for capacity strengthening are little known in the country office.**

Where they are known, they are considered too complex. Most staff are not familiar with the WFP capacity development policy, the new country capacity-strengthening (CCS) framework and its accompanying toolkit. Informants with some familiarity feel that the system is as yet too complex for easy implementation. There have been no formal initiatives from the country office or elsewhere in WFP for them to be applied in Timor-Leste.

EQ 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 country strategic plan?

199. **Staff are aware of the WFP gender toolkit and believe that it is well designed**, although they also mentioned that some tools are more adapted to contexts where WFP is the implementer, rather than an actor that supports governmental capacity-strengthening processes. Heavy workloads mean, however, that staff do not feel they are able to use the toolkit, despite their familiarity with it. Nevertheless, the toolkit was used to integrate gender equality into supply chain management training provided by WFP to SAMES.

Results-based management

200. **The country strategic plan monitoring framework is not stable and it is difficult to get a clear picture of trends or compare the country strategic plan with previous operations.** Only five outcome indicators and one output indicator (in addition to the number of beneficiaries and food distributed) can be tracked throughout the period 2015–2019 (Annex X). In addition, changes introduced in the Corporate Results Framework in November 2018 led to the revision of the country strategic plan logical framework in 2019, with the introduction of three new outcome indicators (although there are still none linked to Activity 4) and several new output indicators. At output level all six indicators are new for activities 2, 3 and 4 and only three of them are comparable – but not equivalent – to pre-existing ones.

201. **Reporting generally follows the indicators in the logical framework, but there are some gaps and the approach is not always consistent across years.** In 2018, the country office only reported data for five out of the nine outcome indicators in the country strategic plan logical framework.¹⁷⁵ The geographic breakdown at indicator level is not the same across the period 2015–2019. For example, some development operation standard project reports generally provide outcome data for Dili and aggregated data for the other five municipalities. Under the country strategic plan, reported indicators are aggregated for the six municipalities. Ensuring the comparability of data required going back to the original datasets in order to harmonize approaches.

¹⁷⁵ WFP, 2019. Timor-Leste Annual Country Report 2018. Country Strategic Plan (2018–2020). Dili: WFP.

202. **The use of monitoring data for results-based management (RBM) has been strong under Activity 1, but limited in other areas.** Under Activity 1, until late 2019, WFP collected data that allowed the precise tracking of beneficiary numbers and food stocks in each facility. At the same time WFP presence on the ground allowed for the verification of data collected. Monitoring data were an integral part of the management of Activity 1 in the sense that they allowed for forecasting distribution needs, assessing beneficiary numbers etc. Strong results-based management under Activity 1 probably reflects the fact that reaching beneficiaries and logistics have long been core strengths of WFP. As of 2018, all other country strategic plan activities focused on capacity strengthening essentially share the same three indicators at output level. These indicators measure the number of training events/activities and participants (Annex X). These data are not particularly useful from a results-based management point of view. They only show whether the intended numbers were achieved. They do not provide any information on the nature/objectives of the activity and whether participants learned something or were satisfied with the results. Changes introduced in the logical framework in 2019 will offer some additional information in relation to the nature/objectives of the activities, but some of the indicators are still very generic – making results chain linkages between outputs and outcomes very weak. It is not possible to assess whether this will improve results-based management as 2019 data have just been compiled for the first time.

203. **Results-based management of performance regarding GEWE is hindered by inconsistency and lack of clarity about monitoring indicators.** The age categories used for sex- and age-disaggregated data are not fully aligned with WFP standards (Table 42, Annex XV). The revised country strategic plan logical framework includes two corporate cross-cutting indicators on gender: the proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of food/cash/vouchers or income generated through programme activities; and the type of transfer (food, cash, voucher, no compensation) received by participants in WFP activities, disaggregated by sex and type of activity. Data on these indicators were collected in 2019.

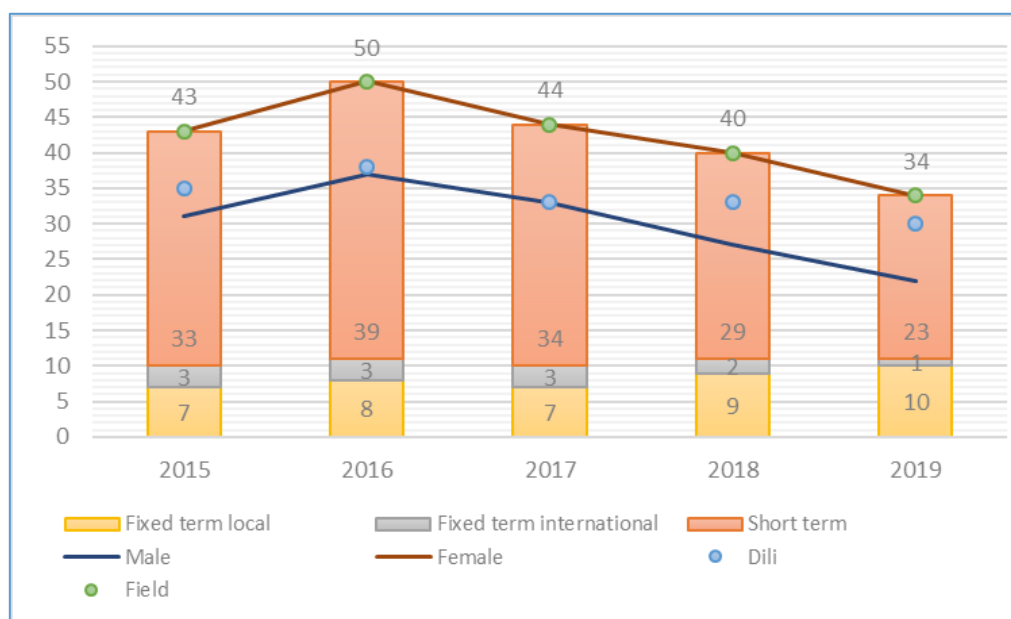
204. **Overall, monitoring data and reporting were useful in the operational management of Activity 1 while WFP was directly engaged in the targeted supplementary feeding programme, but had limited value to date in the strategic management of the country strategic plan** (paragraph 202). The inconsistency of indicators and the overall lack of resources meant that management of the country strategic plan focused mainly on efforts to secure more resources and to distribute what was available across the four activities so that at least some of the planned work could be undertaken. It was not possible to practise more comprehensive risk-based management, adjusting activities and taking strategic decisions in the light of monitoring data that would support ongoing (re)assessment of risk and direction.

Adequacy of country office human resources and staff expertise

205. **The adequacy of WFP country office human resources has been a significant factor in the implementation of the country strategic plan and preceding operations.** Staff levels follow the evolution of WFP operations. Figure 11 shows that total staff numbers, including field staff, have decreased since the maximum reached in December 2016, when there were two simultaneous operations running and WFP was targeting nine municipalities. The decrease in total staff numbers is mostly explained by a reduction in the number of staff in field offices. The handover of TSFP operations was completed in 2019 and there are now no field staff based outside Dili, although some are retained at the country office for limited ongoing engagement with government colleagues at municipality level. The number of staff working in the office in Dili has remained fairly constant over the whole period 2015–2019. In 2019, there were 30 staff members working there, compared with 33 in both 2018 and 2017. The figure was slightly larger in 2015 (35) and 2016 (38). The proportion of women in the workforce ranged from 25 percent (2017) to 35 percent (2019).

206. **The WFP organigram was reviewed and adjusted in the early stages of country strategic plan implementation.** At the end of 2017, the regional human resources (HR) officer led a workforce planning exercise in the country office. As a result of this exercise certain adjustments to the organigram were proposed (see Figure 24 at Annex VIII). The exercise simplified and reorganized the structure in order to clarify the reporting lines for performance reporting purposes, identify and reclassify core positions, merge and consolidate some administrative units (budget and programming with finance/resource management), abolish some posts and outsource gardening and security jobs.

Figure 11. WFP Timor-Leste country office staff levels by contract length, gender and location



Source: WFP country office data

207. **Lack of funding has not significantly affected staff numbers, but it has affected the ability of WFP to fill strategic positions.** As seen in Figure 11, staffing levels in the Dili office have remained fairly constant and the reduction in overall staff numbers is best explained by operational field needs. Nonetheless, some strategic positions could not be filled due to the shortage of funds. The Deputy Country Director position has been vacant since August 2019 and no recruitment process had been launched at the end of 2019. This explains why the number of international staff is at its lowest level since 2015. Similarly, the Activity 4 manager position was vacant for several months. The “liaison officer” position created with the country strategic plan and designed to facilitate engagement with the Government had to be cut in February 2019 due to lack of funding. The country office also lacks a dedicated partnership officer.

208. **Vacant strategic positions increase the workload of some personnel and make the assignment of clear tasks and responsibilities more difficult, especially among operational staff.** Programme policy officers had to step up to fill the gap left by the lack of a programme manager (a position fulfilled by the former Deputy Country Director). In logistics, the lack of an Activity 4 manager also increased the pressure on subordinate associates and officers. The weak funding situation of WFP in 2019 led to some blurring of the lines in the organigram. The need to fundraise, combined with staffing gaps discussed above, means that when it comes to writing proposals, the responsibility does not necessarily fall directly with an (acting) activity manager. In practice, it has often involved significant inputs from other staff, often international consultants. The WFP country office team has also benefitted from some support from RBB. Rapid turnover in the country office increases the need for comprehensive guidelines, standard operating procedures and orientation on how the (still new) country strategic plan roles, systems and procedures are meant to work. The workloads of those in post have constrained this.

209. **WFP thematic focal points are in place, but it is difficult for them to fulfil their role.** Within the country office, it is generally intermediate-level staff who act as WFP thematic focal points. As discussed above, intermediate staff levels are already struggling to fill the gaps in the organigram and lack time to fulfil their activities as focal points (for example, capacity development and awareness raising). Among the existing focal points within the country office, monitoring and evaluation and gender are the most visible ones. There is also concern that the new programme staffing structure, linked to the four activities, is causing staff to work more in “silos” than they did before the launch of the country strategic plan.

210. **The country office does not have a senior policy adviser and WFP staff do not have enough expertise and seniority to engage at the policy level. Its expertise for capacity strengthening is therefore limited.** In an effort to help country offices recruit professional and national staff who have the expertise needed to strengthen government capacities and influence the enabling environment, WFP

headquarters has recently developed generic job descriptions – which have not yet been applied at country office level. These include, depending on the level of seniority, experience shaping operational strategies/partnerships, experience providing input to policy discussions and the ability to develop and maintain networks with a variety of stakeholders. In the current job descriptions of activity managers and other country office staff, requirements for capacity strengthening are mostly at the technical level (with experience sought in providing training and technical support to the Government). They do not call for experience developing and nurturing strategic relationships, influencing policy processes or other types of expertise that could be useful in strengthening the enabling environment.

211. **The country office developed expertise and systems on gender issues, but capacity in this area has recently diminished.** The former Deputy Country Director had previously worked at headquarters on gender issues and therefore had a strong understanding of the WFP gender policy and gender toolkit. When he arrived, he started putting in place processes to ensure that WFP staff were better equipped to integrate gender into their programming. To make sure that gender became “everybody’s business” a gender results network composed of five WFP staff was created, as well as a gender action plan to measure progress in staff training on gender, the use of the WFP gender toolkit, WFP participation in gender promotion events, etc. A KOICA volunteer now acts as gender focal point. The country office’s status report on its gender action plan for June 2019 shows limited progress towards most targets.¹⁷⁶ Finally, it is worth highlighting that none of the country office job descriptions reviewed identifies gender expertise as a job requirement. Overall, it has not proved possible for the country office to adopt or apply the full suite of GEWE tools, instruments and procedures that WFP now has at its disposal corporately.

212. **The RBB has provided some support to the country office on GEWE.** In 2018, the RBB adviser visited Timor-Leste to conduct a mapping exercise of potential partners with which the WFP country office could further its work on gender equality. However, the gender adviser has recently left the RBB and the position is vacant. According to some informants, headquarters support on gender has been limited. For example, unlike some other agencies, the WFP country office did not receive support from headquarters in the development of the proposal for the United Nations Spotlight initiative. However, the structure of WFP advisory capacity on gender provides for headquarters to supply technical assistance at higher policy levels, rather than on country office-specific planning issues like this

¹⁷⁶ WFP, 2019. WFP Timor-Leste Country Office Gender Action Plan achievement status. Dili: WFP.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

213. **In Timor-Leste, WFP is continuing its shift from a largely humanitarian role to one spanning the humanitarian-development-peace nexus**, and from implementation to advisory and capacity-strengthening mode. The country office is at a transitional stage when many of its operational structures, procedures, staffing and skills still reflect the earlier mode, and new systems, frameworks and guidelines have been incompletely transferred. This has heightened the challenges for the country office in implementation of the current country strategic plan – despite the best efforts of committed, hardworking personnel.

214. **Overall, the focus of the country strategic plan in Timor-Leste during the review period was relevant to country priorities and people's needs**, and built on WFP strengths and experience in aspects of nutrition and supporting logistics. But some fundamental assumptions underpinning the design of the country strategic plan, particularly related to the readiness of the Government to fund and eventually take on WFP streams of work, did not hold true during implementation. This was partly due to changes in the national Government. In addition, the focus of working on a few selected elements of a multisectoral food security and nutrition approach, without fully specifying the complementary roles of partners and how WFP contributions linked to them, meant that ultimately there was a contrast between the broad challenges that WFP sought to address and the narrower scope of WFP contributions.

215. **Severe underfunding has been a dominant influence on the performance of the WFP Timor-Leste country strategic plan to date and has had impacts on several levels, which are interlinked.** In terms of the achievement of the two strategic outcomes - improving nutrition towards national targets and increasing capacity of national and subnational government institutions - both had to be downscaled and as a result not all targets were met. The country office, however, made useful contributions to both outcomes such as the SBCC work and capacity strengthening in the enabling environment, which, however, are not reflected in formal indicators. While recognizing that capacity strengthening takes time, challenges remain in achieving the required depth of sustainable organizational and individual capacity in the relevant government agencies.

216. **The targeting of nutrition interventions was appropriate.** Targeted supplementary feeding under the country strategic plan has been more cost-effective than in the previous development operation and compares well with similar interventions in other countries. However, the lack of an adequate and regular flow of funding caused pipeline breaks that reduced performance towards nutrition objectives and decreased beneficiary attendance at health facilities for other purposes.

217. **Adequate staffing and effective partnership building are critical factors for success, both of which were constrained by the lack of financial resources. This ultimately affected performance.** The restricted funding limited senior staff appointments, which in turn constrained country office capacity for advocacy at policy level. Similarly, the lack of resources meant that not all the partnership commitments that the country office made could be converted into practical action. So while the country office recognized the importance of partnerships, it could not exploit their potential optimally.

218. This overall assessment of the Timor-Leste country strategic plan is developed further below in terms of three interrelated sets of factors: the context for the country strategic plan; its design; and its implementation.

Context

219. **Achieving the major institutional restructuring of the sort required by the Integrated Road Map and the associated shift from implementation to facilitation and advice takes time.** The challenge is to sustain and direct the necessary effort for long enough. The review period, and this evaluation's assessment, cover just the first steps in what will, at best, be a long road – if all are determined to stay on it.

220. **While there has been no major change in the context for WFP work in Timor-Leste over the review period, there has been an important shift in the significance of that context.** Issues in the institutional context have remained broadly similar, but they have become more important for WFP. Strategic interaction with the Government of Timor-Leste is often difficult, in a dynamic political environment. As WFP moves from direct implementation to more upstream roles in closer advisory partnership with the Government, this is an increasingly significant issue. Challenges in government organizational capacity persist, underlining the importance of a strong role for WFP in the country and the need for appropriate strategies to strengthen capacity and achieve effective handover. But these strategies depend on clear and stable relations with the relevant government ministries and agencies, in a broader suite of partnerships under the country strategic plan than previously. The difficulty of achieving this clarity and stability is a constraint on country strategic plan efficiency and effectiveness.

221. **There was no major change in the food security context for WFP work in Timor-Leste as the country strategic plan was being designed. Nor has there been since.** The country continues to face major challenges of food security and nutrition, as it did at the beginning of the review period in 2015. The contributions that WFP can make remain highly relevant. The need for a strong and effective WFP presence in Timor-Leste is still clear. But donor interest in supporting WFP in the country has continued to decline.

Design

222. **In Timor-Leste, the country strategic plan was both a significant innovation and a development of previous strategy.** It was innovative in introducing a new structure for the planning and management of the organization's work, with consequent administrative, funding and human-resource challenges. Those challenges could also be seen as opportunities to work more efficiently and transparently, both within WFP and in its relations with donors, the Government and development partners. Limited resources have restricted the extent to which those opportunities could be exploited, although there have been some administrative benefits.

223. **Thematically, the country strategic plan was a significantly new way of building on existing approaches** – a logical development, with the resources thought likely to be available, of ongoing strategies, to which some refinements and extensions were added. The country strategic plan intensified the existing emphasis by WFP on nutrition interventions integrated with capacity strengthening, with additional focus on its strategy of moving upstream from direct implementation towards enabling and advisory roles.

224. **The theory underlying the strategy of capacity strengthening and withdrawal was that handover of WFP traditional implementation functions to national authorities could proceed with sustainable results:** that the national and local structures and systems of the Government would be able to deliver nutrition services effectively after a relatively brief transition period. This theory has proved not to be valid. More capacity strengthening (and related resourcing) are needed at all levels for fully efficient and effective government implementation of targeted supplementary feeding interventions. Because handover implies that good progress has been made, the Government and WFP may have been keen to achieve handover before the time was optimal.

225. **Design of the country strategic plan was framed by assumptions about the evolving role of WFP in Timor-Leste.** Corporate decisions about adoption of the Integrated Road Map and a move upstream contrasted with continuing government and partner assumptions about the organization's traditional humanitarian strengths; uncertainty about its broader mandate and capacity to address food security and nutrition; and a perceived narrowing of WFP engagement as it withdrew from direct implementation roles. Although the Government and WFP agreed on the design of the country strategic plan, neither fully appreciated the evolving modalities that it implied – which was not surprising at this time of innovation and transition for WFP.

226. **Design also assumed early implementation.** In fact, despite some ongoing relationships in the nutrition sector, much of the first year of the country strategic plan was spent in detailed preparatory discussions with the Government. Compounded by funding challenges, this inaccurate design assumption meant that progress was significantly slower than expected.

227. **Despite the apparent centrality of partnerships in the country strategic plan design, there was insufficient emphasis on the role that partnerships would have to play in maximizing the leverage of the limited contributions that WFP itself would be able to make.** Country strategic plan

design anticipated limited resourcing. So far, actual funding has been even more limited. In these circumstances, it was even more important for the efforts of WFP to be combined with those of government and development partners in joint contributions to the intended outcomes.

228. **As the transition continues, there is scope for a more fundamental reappraisal of WFP country presence in Timor-Leste.** Design of the first country strategic plan, building on established strengths and structures, did not offer this. Realistically, it did not attempt the significantly different structure and presence that upstream roles would imply for the organization. Instead, after a thorough and consultative review of the national context and challenges, the actual work it planned comprised activities that were largely in the existing framework of WFP operations in the country and continued to develop existing approaches with much of the country office structure and staffing that were in place.

Implementation

229. **Implementation of the Timor-Leste country strategic plan has been strongly affected by the level of resourcing that WFP has been able to secure for it.** There was a significant step forward with the provision of some funding from the Government of Timor-Leste for targeted supplementary feeding rations. But government support was more restricted than had been hoped. Donor resourcing was very limited. It was only partially compensated by vitally important, but irregular, inputs from central WFP sources. It has not been possible to implement the country strategic plan as consistently as was planned, or at the intended scale. Uneven and sometimes unpredictable funding allocations disrupt strategic planning and consistent delivery. Operations must constantly be adjusted to match available funds across periods of liquidity crisis and comparative abundance. This significantly compromises the depth, direction and quality of the WFP contribution in the country. At the end of the review period, WFP thus has a lower profile and a smaller substantive work output in Timor-Leste than it did at the start, in 2015.

230. **Despite these adversities, WFP has made valued initial contributions during the first two years of country strategic plan implementation** – not all of them reflected by the formal performance indicators, either because the indicators are not fully suitable or because, at outcome level, other factors continue to affect nutrition results. The enabling environment dimension of capacity strengthening for zero hunger in Timor-Leste still requires much reinforcement, and many aspects of the desired outcomes are beyond the control of WFP. Weak overall coordination of the food security and nutrition sector remains a concern. But country strategic plan implementation made useful contributions through studies, advocacy and partnership with the Government and other agencies. It also helped to strengthen some organizational capacity, notably through supply chain and related training support to SAMES, a central instrument of the supplementary feeding strategy that has been handed over to the Government. Valued contributions were made to individual capacity strengthening, but more is needed to take it beyond the simple provision of conventional staff training within a longer-term framework that provides for mentoring, refresher training and staff turnover. In nutrition, WFP and national authorities share strategies and commitment, and country strategic plan implementation has made important contributions – despite concern that not all the progress will be sustained following full handover to the Government. While WFP contributions to SBCC are widely visible at local level, targeted supplementary feeding by the Government continues to suffer from pipeline breaks and related logistical challenges. This again reflects the incomplete progress of capacity strengthening in the organizational and individual domains.

231. **A number of mutually reinforcing factors create the potential for a downward spiral of WFP funding, capacity and influence.** Many of them are linked to corporate trends and issues. One example is the fact that, with less funding, the country office has fewer senior staff and is less able to develop or lobby for funding proposals to a donor community whose priorities have shifted, and to a Government that it has been unable to convince fully about what WFP can offer. The Timor-Leste country office has not had the resources to gain traction at the policy level to make an optimal contribution. Conversely, WFP also loses credibility if it no longer has a detailed understanding of realities in the field. For this, some degree of ongoing field presence, for example through close advisory relationships with selected government personnel on specific technical issues, remains important.

232. **Effective implementation of capacity strengthening is central to successful implementation of the Timor-Leste country strategic plan. But WFP does not yet have the appropriate tools or skilled capacity to perform this key function effectively.** Linked to faulty design assumptions about the feasibility

of handover into sustainable implementation by the Government, these shortcomings suggest the need to reappraise how WFP approaches this core task.

233. **The core shortcoming and opportunity in WFP implementation of nutrition interventions has been its incomplete engagement, with partners, in fully multisectoral approaches** that deliver the complete spectrum of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions. It is clearly not the organization's task to support the full range of nutrition effort. But WFP fulfilment of its largely nutrition-specific roles can only contribute effectively to improved nutrition of the population if it is better integrated in multisectoral, multi-stakeholder nutrition strategies. WFP can help to advocate and facilitate such strategies. This requires a level of inter-agency cooperation that is not yet in place.

234. **Despite positive steps taken by WFP to address the specific needs of women and girls, more can be done (in partnership with the Government and other United Nations agencies) to fully achieve gender-transformative results and nutritional outcomes for them**, and to build on the progress made in highlighting the nutritional needs of adolescent girls.

235. **The nature of WFP partnerships in Timor-Leste has evolved since the launch of the country strategic plan**, with fewer partnerships outside the Government and the United Nations system: previous use of field-level agreements with implementing partners has fallen away, and lack of resources has been one reason for incomplete linkages with non-governmental and civil society organizations. Partnership with government ministries and agencies remains central to WFP contributions, but is slow and complex to develop and sustain, due partly to institutional dynamics in Dili and partly to the need to harmonize expectations about the nature and resourcing of WFP roles through its country strategic plan. WFP has sought partnerships with numerous government ministries and agencies. This reflects its commitment to contributing to shared objectives, but imposes a substantial burden on the small country office and risks diluting its efforts and effectiveness.

236. **With a weak UNDAF and sometimes more competition than cooperation in fundraising, WFP collaboration with other United Nations agencies has been a partial rather than a central factor in the effectiveness of country strategic plan implementation to date.** There were bilateral partnerships for specific purposes, some of them effective and beneficial for the target groups and the participating agencies. How fully the expectations of integration and collaboration under the UNSDCF will be realized remains to be seen. But this evaluation has also identified some real benefits from collaboration between WFP and other United Nations agencies, including the ability to lobby the Government more effectively. It can only be in WFP interests in Timor-Leste to strengthen such joint efforts. This is increasingly true as multisectoral, multi-stakeholder approaches become more necessary for the achievement of food and nutrition security goals. WFP needs the ability to build and work within coalitions of agencies. The UNSDCF provides a new framework for this.

3.2. KEY LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

237. **For the standard country office model that WFP operates in Timor-Leste, a certain threshold level of capacity must be maintained.** If the country office falls below that threshold, it may not only fail to move country strategic plan implementation forward; it may actually fall backwards and incur significant losses. The Timor-Leste country office is now below that threshold. As the pressures of low funding and insufficient human resources mount, the programme of work fragments, communications suffer, and the profile and reputation of WFP in the country deteriorate. This concept of a threshold size for the conventional mode of country office operations deserves further exploration.

238. **A clear lesson running through this evaluation is the need for senior strategic skills to manage and build the interface between a WFP country office and the host Government.** Often it is preferable that at least some of that skill be vested in experienced and respected country nationals, who know their way around the Government and are well regarded there. The Timor-Leste country office has not had enough of these skills, which is one reason why some of its initiatives have made slow progress.

239. **The shift to country strategic plans not only represents the transformation of roles and structures to which WFP has committed itself; it also raises the stakes significantly in terms of expectations and risks.** The Timor-Leste experience to date is an example: the shift to a more developmental role implies a different set of technical skills and ability to excel in new fields of endeavour. Not surprisingly, other stakeholders in the development sector may not be readily convinced that WFP can

transform itself in that way, given its solid reputation in other modes of work; and when WFP falls short in some of these new performance areas, they may be quick to criticize, inflicting reputational damage. As argued above, the depth and breadth of the organization's intended transformation mean that the change will take more than one country strategic plan cycle to achieve; and that evaluations of the first cycle should recognize the difficult times of transition in which it has been implemented.

240. **A new way of working that is focused on technical assistance and capacity strengthening requires significantly different human resources.** The number of personnel required is likely to be significantly lower than in a country office that is engaged in field-level implementation. The more senior, skilled individuals required will cost more per person. But there will be fewer of them. Although the total operating cost of a country office may be markedly lower in this new model, it is important to factor in the cost of (probably reinforced) advisory and support capacity at regional bureaux and headquarters. The challenge of reorientating country office structures and staff profiles for these new purposes should not be underestimated, of course. Nor, as argued above, should the number of years of sustained commitment and investment required to make the transformation effective.

241. **Moving from implementation to enabling, facilitation and capacity-strengthening roles is a bigger challenge for WFP if attempted when implementation has already been cut back.** WFP has a stronger profile, reputation and resources when it is still engaged in implementation work at scale. This gives it better credibility and acceptance as it develops its profile towards these other roles, and makes it easier to resource such activities as capacity strengthening.

242. **A country's transition to (lower) middle-income status does not necessarily mean a major or immediate improvement in any of the three domains of capacity strengthening that WFP identifies.** The enabling environment for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 may still be weak; organizational and individual capacity may still be inadequate. Development partners like WFP should not underestimate the capacity-strengthening challenges that remain. Any handover of implementation roles to the host government should be carefully assessed, thoroughly planned and carefully delivered – all conditions for which WFP funding schedules are often unhelpful. A long road of capacity strengthening is likely to lie ahead in Timor-Leste.

243. **Capacity strengthening must succeed at local levels in order to achieve national objectives.** Especially in contexts of full or partial decentralization, like Timor-Leste, the capacity-strengthening task is far from complete if it focuses only on national government ministries and agencies. In Timor-Leste, much does remain to be done. For example, national systems for the distribution of nutrition commodities depend for efficient performance on competent management and demand forecasting at local level – which are still lacking – and the school feeding programme has experienced similar challenges at the local level.

244. **When resources are limited for WFP operations in a country, it is important to focus them on a limited number of activities.** It is advisable to stay focused with whatever small funding is available; and to maintain that focus on areas of established WFP expertise. However bold and comprehensive new thinking about WFP contributions may be, it is important to ensure that the foundations of its reputation remain strong and that, where resources are limited, WFP sticks to relatively simple fields of work in its known areas of excellence, such as vulnerability analysis and mapping, supply chain management and related logistics.

245. **This evaluation has served as a reminder that WFP corporate standardization inevitably poses some constraints** – although there are obvious reasons for seeking uniformity, in the interests of comprehensible and comparable global reporting. When all country offices are required to report on the same Corporate Results Framework performance indicators, the result is bound to be an incomplete representation of what each country office has actually achieved (although country offices are also at liberty to add their own indicators to the compulsory Corporate Results Framework ones – if they have the resources to collect and report on them). It is difficult for the country office to report meaningfully against some of the indicators now required by the latest Corporate Results Framework revision. Conversely, there is no space for formal reporting of some of the genuine accomplishments of the country office, despite constraints, through the commitment and hard work of its staff.

3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

246. This evaluation makes four recommendations, as set out in Table 12 below. Two are strategic in nature. They identify ways for WFP to make effective contributions in Timor-Leste through a small country

office that would be adequately and predictably funded and would work proactively through partnerships with the Government and (through the UNSDCF) with other United Nations agencies. Two operational recommendations seek to focus WFP contributions in ways that build on its established thematic strengths and reinforce the approach and methods that it uses to strengthen the capacity of its national partners. A commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women is mainstreamed through the recommended partnership strategies and thematic approaches. In combination, these four recommendations envision a clearly focused, stable, synergetic and effective WFP contribution in Timor-Leste through the next country strategic plan.

Table 12. Recommendations

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of prioritization	When
1.	In order for WFP to remain relevant and effective in Timor-Leste, headquarters should ensure a threshold of sustainable and predictable funding to guarantee a minimum core stable team in the country office. The latter should be configured to engage in high-level policy dialogue and advocacy with the Government and other partners, and to focus on leveraging of domestic and international resources. Additional technical expertise and support services should be mobilized for specific initiatives once non-core funding is secured.	Strategic	HQ (AED & Chief Financial Officer Resource Management Department; Corporate Finance	High	Dec 2021
2.	The country office should work to strengthen country strategic plan implementation through partnerships, focusing on the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP should build a closer, more focused relationship with the Government that benefits from stronger strategic interaction and a revised understanding of capacity strengthening and handover opportunities. Its core partners should be the Ministry of Health; SAMES; the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport WFP should work for stronger integration of its programming with that of other United Nations agencies within the UNSDCF, specifically: with UNICEF in working with the Government to build and implement a multisectoral nutrition strategy, and within that framework for further gender-sensitive work on moderate acute malnutrition and related SBCC; with WHO and UNFPA for gender-sensitive support to schools (including adolescent health) and nutrition and food safety; and with FAO for ongoing promotion of food security and nutrition sector coordination across the Government. 	Strategic	CO supported by RBB and HQ, (Partnership and Advocacy Department; Programme - Humanitarian and Development Division) reflecting agreement on coordination among United Nations agencies	High	Mid 2021
3.	The country office should ensure focused technical advisory and capacity-strengthening contributions by WFP in Timor-Leste that build on established WFP strengths and contribute effectively through broader sectoral and partnership frameworks in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected, focused elements of a multisectoral, gender-sensitive nutrition strategy focusing on: 	Operational	CO supported by RBB	Medium	Mid 2021

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of prioritization	When
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strengthening of SBCC and other nutrition services at field level (including the SISCa system), with support for capacity strengthening and linkages with other sectors' community outreach (such as agriculture and social protection) • Supply chain and related logistics for the distribution of supplementary feeding commodities • The treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, possibly through a new integrated protocol for moderate and severe acute malnutrition (starting with collaboration with UNICEF on the proposed operational research study) • Vulnerability analysis and mapping: building on recent initiatives, developing full vulnerability analysis and mapping and associated capacity-strengthening services for Timor-Leste through a small dedicated unit within the country office, supported by other regional WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping capacity, linked to appropriate technical inputs to national food security monitoring and emergency preparedness and response systems • School feeding: developing a strong advisory support role and associated capacity-strengthening services with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport with particular emphasis (always aimed to maximize benefits for GEWE) on: food and nutrition standards; home-grown school feeding and its links to food systems development; supply chain and related logistical issues; the appropriate use of fortified commodities produced in Timor-Leste; school health, including for adolescents, with special attention to its gender dimensions; support for monitoring and data management; and prioritizing school feeding in national budget allocations • Specific, focused elements of food systems development: food fortification, food safety standards and regulation (in collaboration with WHO), and farm-to-market linkages for supplementary and school feeding purposes, promoting opportunities and benefits for women in food systems. 				

	Recommendation	Type	Who	Level of prioritization	When
4.	<p>The country office should reappraise and reinforce the WFP approach and methods for capacity strengthening of relevant government and civil society agencies to support achievement of SDG 2, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The country office should undertake comprehensive capacity assessments as part of the design of the new country strategic plan • To ensure strategic management of the programme and sustainable outcomes, WFP should define an appropriate monitoring framework in consultation with the Government and civil society organizations. In so doing, the country office should use relevant indicators from the Corporate Results Framework and additional indicators agreed with counterparts (including gender-related indicators). The country office should ensure, in consultation with the beneficiary organizations, that capacity-strengthening work is carefully monitored and thoroughly implemented at local as well as national levels. 	Operational	CO supported by RBB and HQ (Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service)	High	Mid 2021

Photocredits

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Office of Evaluation

World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70

00148 Rome, Italy

T +39 06 65131 wfp.org