

Crisis response revision of Sierra Leone country strategic plan (2020–2024) and corresponding budget increase

	Current	Change	Revised
Duration	1 January 2020– 31 December 2024	No change	No change
Beneficiaries	596 708¹	567 680	1 164 388
(USD)			
Total cost	65 847 700	28 359 943	94 207 643
Transfers	44 407 139	24 345 088	68 752 227
Implementation	9 368 174	1 783 397	11 151 571
Adjusted direct support costs	8 094 029	499 800	8 593 829
Subtotal	61 869 341	26 628 285	88 497 627
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	3 978 359	1 731 658	5 710 016

Gender and age marker code*: 3

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

Rationale

1. This third proposed budget revision to the Sierra Leone country strategic plan (CSP) (2020–2024) steps up WFP’s response in the country to the rapid changes brought by the COVID-19 crisis, challenges that require urgent adjustments to enable WFP to continue to respond effectively, and to scale up operations to meet the needs of increasing vulnerable populations affected by the pandemic as shown by recent food security monitoring data.
2. In its July 2020 update, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs put Sierra Leone’s total COVID-19-related assistance needs at USD 62.9 million.² As of 29 September, Sierra Leone had recorded 2,222 cases of coronavirus, with 72 deaths.
3. In Sierra Leone, “economic crisis and high inflation erode incomes and livelihoods,” WFP noted in the June 2020 global update. “COVID-19 is anticipated to further deteriorate livelihoods. Price monitoring data shows that prices are increasing, travel restrictions have disrupted domestic supply chains whilst fear of contracting COVID-19 is anticipated to have negatively impacted on agricultural production.”³
4. The most recent Emergency Food Security Monitoring System (E-FSMS)⁴ released in July 2020, confirms this grim assessment, reporting an estimated 5.1 million people currently food insecure, with the overall national level of food insecurity increasing from 47.7 percent in January 2020, to 63 percent in June 2020. The proportion of Sierra Leoneans categorized as severely food insecure more than doubled over the same period, from 4.6 percent (January 2020) to 10 percent (June

¹ Total revised beneficiary numbers as per budget revision 2 is 596,708, not 584,760. Table 1 in budget revision 2 had a calculation error which has been corrected.

² United Nations Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 – July 2020 Update.

³ WFP Global Response to COVID-19: June 2020.

⁴ E-FSMS, June 2020, funded by Japan and undertaken by WFP, FAO, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000118823/download/>.



2020), equating to 789,536 people. This budget revision seeks to meet the urgent needs of severely food-insecure Sierra Leoneans.

5. The direct health threat of COVID-19 coupled with a widespread indirect socioeconomic impact are growing already alarmingly high rates of food insecurity in Sierra Leone. The livelihoods of smallholder farmers and petty traders has been negatively affected by the inter-district lockdowns and market closures in some areas. The pandemic is compromising the long-term resilience of many vulnerable households, with 89 percent of households resorting to unsustainable coping strategies to survive, and 70.8 percent adopting crisis (e.g. sale of livelihood assets) or emergency (e.g. sale of lands) coping strategies.⁵
6. Pre-existing households' food insecurity and vulnerability levels have been exacerbated by COVID-19 through lockdown and movement restrictions, seasonal high food prices, and the collapse of household income to buy food. The E-FSMS shows a deterioration in overall food insecurity nationally, especially in rural districts of Port Loko, Bombali, Kambia, Falaba and the capital Freetown. Prioritizing support to severely food insecure households, WFP estimates around 500,000 people will require assistance.
7. Without emergency assistance and support to re-establish pathways to resilience, food security is expected to decline still further in the coming months.
8. Budget revision 3 is partially linked to WFP Global Response to COVID-19, and takes action across all three pillars of intervention⁶ as defined in WFP's medium-term programme framework. While aligned to the corporate frameworks, WFP is working in Sierra Leone with government institutions, other United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, donors, non-governmental organizations, and guided by the Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19, the United Nations framework for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19, and the national COVID-19 response plan.
9. The current United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework 2020–2023 in Sierra Leone was developed prior to the pandemic. To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations country team has proposed a United Nations socioeconomic development framework to inform a coordinated multisector United Nations COVID-19 response. WFP will provide a significant contribution to guide the geographical targeting of COVID-19 recovery support through implementing a comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment planned for October 2020 which will provide much needed data at the chiefdom level.
10. Budget revision 3 aims to meet the increasing food and nutritional needs in Sierra Leone precipitated by the COVID-19 outbreak through scaling up unconditional food assistance to severely food-insecure populations, expanding nutrition support to malnourished pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLWGs) and children aged 6–59 months, increasing school feeding coverage and scaling up food assistance for assets support.

Changes

Strategic orientation

11. Budget revision 3 requires no change in strategic orientation, with no new strategic outcomes. However, three strategic outcomes will be updated to scale up assistance to respond to increased needs.
12. Sierra Leone's previous two budget revisions are summarized as follows:

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ WFP's medium-term programme framework, June 2020. The three pillars are: i) national social protection systems; ii) basic social service - school-based programmes and nutrition; and iii) food systems.



- Budget revision 1 (an increase of USD 4.6 million approved by the country director in March 2020) made no changes to the CSP's strategic orientation, merged activity 3 into activity 2, and scaled up beneficiaries to be targeted under activity 5.
- Budget revision 2 (an increase of USD 7.91 million approved by the West Africa Regional Director in July 2020) represented WFP's initial COVID-19 operational response in Sierra Leone and added a new crisis response strategic outcome – strategic outcome 6, activity 7 – to enable WFP to undertake “service provision activities supporting national disaster preparedness and response in supply chain and emergency telecommunication”.

Strategic outcomes

13. Budget revision 3 represents the second phase of WFP's emergency response and scale up of resilience building programming and is expected to continue into 2021, subject to adjustments in line with WFP's global L3 declaration. It requires scale up of three CSP strategic outcomes that address SDG 2:
 - strategic outcome 1: unconditional food assistance to meet the crisis;
 - strategic outcome 2: school feeding to support resilience; and
 - strategic outcome 4: conditional food and livelihood support to build resilience.
14. Under strategic outcome 1, WFP will continue to target the most affected populations whose food security has been jeopardized without alternative options for assistance. The targeting approach of WFP and partners will be guided by the most recent food security analysis, ensuring WFP's assistance reaches over 450,000 extremely vulnerable beneficiaries in rural and urban settings from November 2020 to September 2021 most affected by the economic downturn, rising food prices and restriction of movement. In response to the increased prevalence of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) among PLWGs and children aged 6–59 months as indicated by data from the health information system, empirical evidence shows a high correlation between food insecurity and poor nutrition status. Based on the June 2020 E-FSMS assessment – which showed a food insecurity rate of 63 percent – in addition to the 2017 Sierra Leone National Nutrition Survey - which reported a global acute malnutrition prevalence of 5.1 percent and MAM prevalence of 4.1 percent - WFP has projected that the prevalence of acute malnutrition and MAM are 5.4 percent and 4.4 percent, respectively. This projection is based on available data, triangulated with the anticipated malnutrition burden aggravated by the impacts of COVID-19 including: reduced access to adequate food; loss of fragile livelihoods; and increased morbidity caused by reduction in health-seeking behaviour. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation data from March 2020 reported a reduction in accessing healthcare services from 90 percent to 85 percent (health management information system), implying increased prevalence of untreated childhood illnesses, including malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia, which is anticipated to further contribute towards increased malnutrition among children. WFP will treat MAM under activity 1, targeting 17,120 malnourished PLWGs and 25,917 children aged 6–59 months to stabilize their nutrition status and prevent further deterioration. Direct food support will be provided in the form of specialized nutritious food, comprised of 200g of Super Cereal and 25g of vitamin A-enriched vegetable oil (premix) for PLWGs, and 200g of Super Cereal Plus for children aged 6–59 months, for a maximum duration of 90 days. WFP with support from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS under the Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework will provide nutritional support to people living with HIV/AIDS through cash-based transfers (CBTs) to support adherence to their treatment regimens in light of their heightened vulnerability due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
15. Under strategic outcome 2, to respond to increased food insecurity found by the June 2020 E-FSMS and to overcome prospective barriers of schoolchildren from vulnerable households returning to school after reopening, WFP will scale up school meal beneficiaries by 67,330 across nine targeted districts.



16. Under strategic outcome 4, to support recovery of agricultural production activities negatively impacted by the pandemic to increase food availability, WFP will scale up food assistance for assets by 27,000 beneficiaries to support development of irrigation systems in inland valley swamps from January to May 2021 in addition to in-kind food assistance for assets to support cultivation of nutritious vegetables during the 2021 lean season from May to August.
17. Key partners for strategic outcome 1 activities include the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and the National Civil Registration Authority. Given the significant scale up of emergency food assistance as CBTs, the country office would benefit from increased capacities in terms of CBT programming. Close coordination with the National Commission for Social Action will support transition of chronically vulnerable beneficiaries into the national social safety net programme. WFP continues to adapt its monitoring and reporting systems to limit the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for personnel, partners and beneficiaries, employing remote monitoring solutions where appropriate and rollout of qualitative methods to demonstrate impact. Remote food security monitoring will entail mobile phone-based interviews with urban and peri-urban populations to collect mobile and vulnerability data. This approach was used during the June 2020 E-FSMS given relatively higher caseloads of COVID-19 in urban localities to ensure that assessments did not contribute towards the spread of COVID-19, in addition to widespread phone ownership and network coverage. For rural populations, food security monitoring is to be undertaken through face-to-face interviews wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing to ensure that vulnerable populations (many of whom do not own phones/live out of coverage area) are not underrepresented to ensure data quality and fully represent needs. Monitoring and evaluation data will be routinely shared with programme staff and management to identify challenges and best practices to support continuous learning and guide decision making, including adjustments in project implementation arrangements.

Beneficiary analysis

18. Beneficiary numbers will increase according to the scale up in districts found to be most food insecure by recent food security analysis. WFP assistance will prioritize targeting of the most vulnerable, severely food-insecure populations, and will work in close coordination with complementary initiatives of other actors, including the Government's cash social safety net delivered through the National Commission for Social Action, as well as other actors' food security assistance (Catholic Relief Services and British Red Cross).



TABLE 1: DIRECT BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME, ACTIVITY AND MODALITY							
Strategic outcome	Activity and modality	Period	Women	Men	Girls	Boys	Total
			(18+ years)	(18+ years)	(0-18 years)	(0-18 years)	
1	1 (in-kind, GFD)	Current	13 435	25 409	16 604	15 954	71 402
		Increase	29 329	44 628	39 161	37 626	150 744
		Revised	42 764	70 037	55 765	53 591	222 157
1	1 (CBT, GFD)	Current	12 718	12 219	14 342	13 780	53 059
		Increase	60 541	58 167	68 269	65 592	252 569
		Revised	73 259	70 386	82 611	79 372	305 628
1	1 (MAM treatment)	Current	13 011	-	13 218	12 699	38 928
		Increase	17 120	-	13 218	12 699	43 037
		Revised	30 131	-	26 436	25 387	81 954
2	2 (in-kind)	Current	-	-	169 827	163 167	332 994
		Increase	-	-	34 338	32 992	67 330
		Revised	-	-	204 165	196 159	400 324
2	4 (in-kind)	Current	19 080	-	18 950	15 645	53 675
		Increase	-	-	-	-	-
		Revised total	19 080	-	18 950	15 645	53 675
4	5 (in-kind)	Current	6 388	6 137	7 204	6 921	26 650
		Increase	6 472	6 218	7 298	7 012	27 000
		Revised	12 860	12 355	14 502	13 933	53 650
4	5 (CBT)	Current	4 794	4 606	5 406	5 194	20 000
		Increase	6 472	6 218	7 298	7 012	27 000
		Revised	11 266	10 824	12 704	12 206	47 000
Total (without overlap)		Current	69 426	48 371	245 551	233 360	596 708⁷
		Increase	119 934	115 231	169 582	162 933	567 680
		Revised	189 360	163 602	415 133	396 293	1 164 388

GFD = general food distribution

Risk management

19. To safeguard the health and wellbeing of beneficiaries and WFP and partner personnel, WFP will ensure strict adherence to COVID-19 infection prevention control measures to manage risks. This will include, but is not limited to, sensitization of beneficiaries and community leaders on infection prevention control measures and display of COVID-19 prevention pictorial posters, ensuring effective social distancing during community engagements and prior to distributions, provision

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of handwashing facilities for programme activities and during distributions and use of personal protective equipment by WFP and partner personnel during all community engagements. To ensure adherence by partners, a standard operating procedure on programming and food distributions during COVID-19 will be included as an annex to partnership agreements, and WFP will provide practical training to partner personnel on infection prevention control measures.

Transfers

20. There is no change in food rations. Transfer arrangements remain unchanged from budget revision 2.

TABLE 2: TOTAL FOOD/CASH-BASED TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS AND VALUE						
	Current budget		Increase		Revised budget	
	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Cereals	25 232	9 308 325	9 644	3 472 797	34 876	12 781 123
Pulses	5 945	2 378 064	1 649	0	7 594	2 378 064
Oil and fats	2 056	2 042 101	709	632 313	2 765	2 674 414
Mixed and blended foods	4 760	3 772 884	1 291	1 291 110	6 051	5 063 994
Other	945	136 897	179	34 457	1 125	171 354
Total (food)	38 938	17 638 272	13 472	5 430 677	52 410	23 068 950
Cash-based transfers		2 705 300		14 200 819		16 906 118
Total (food and cash-based transfer value)	38 938	20 343 572	13 472	19 631 496	52 410	39 975 068

Cost breakdown

21. This revision seeks the additional operational costs needed to implement the CSP (as revised by budget revisions 1 and 2), to meet the increased assistance and operational needs posed by the COVID-19 context, in line with the World Health Organization and national guidance, and not limited to the following critical investment area:
- responding to the additional assistance needs – the food transfer budget is upwardly revised in tandem with increased needs to provide food assistance to vulnerable populations.

TABLE 3: COST BREAKDOWN OF THE REVISION ONLY (USD)							
	Strategic Result 1/ SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 1/ SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 2 / SDG Target 2.2	Strategic Result 3/ SDG Target 2.3	Strategic Result 5/ SDG Target 17.9	Strategic Result 8/ SDG Target 17.16	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	Strategic outcome 4	Strategic outcome 5	Strategic outcome 6	
Focus area	Crisis response	Resilience building	Root causes	Resilience building	Resilience building	Crisis response	
Transfers	22 881 044	240 804	- 310 085	1 533 324			24 345 088
Implementation	1 068 805	361 340		186 454	166 798		1 783 397
Adjusted direct support costs							499 800
Subtotal							26 628 285
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)							1 731 658
Total							28 359 943

TABLE 4: OVERALL CSP COST BREAKDOWN, AFTER REVISION (USD)							
	Strategic Result 1/ SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 1/ SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 2/ SDG Target 2.2	Strategic Result 3/ SDG Target 2.3	Strategic Result 5/ SDG Target 17.9	Strategic Result 8/ SDG Target 17.16	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	Strategic outcome 4	Strategic outcome 5	Strategic outcome 6	
Focus area	Crisis response	Resilience building	Root causes	Resilience building	Resilience building	Crisis response	
Transfers	28 023 435	24 410 896	5 311 588	6 273 884	4 232 423	500 000	68 752 227
Implementation	1 845 260	3 851 197	1 976 891	2 280 983	1 149 740	47 500	11 151 571
Adjusted direct support costs	2 037 979	3 521 689	1 094 492	1 104 617	731 325	103 726	8 593 829
Subtotal	31 906 674	31 783 782	8 382 971	9 659 484	6 113 489	651 226	88 497 627
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	2 073 934	2 065 946	544 893	627 866	397 377	0	5 710 016
Total	33 980 608	33 849 728	8 927 865	10 287 351	6 510 865	651 226	94 207 643



Acronyms

CSP	country strategic plan
MAM	moderate acute malnutrition
PLWGs	pregnant and lactating women and girls

