



**Final Evaluation of the SDG Fund Joint Program  
Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals in  
Malawi: Accelerating Inclusive Progress Towards the  
Sustainable Development Goals (2020-2021)**

**Decentralized Evaluation**

**Final Report**

**WFP, UNICEF, and ILO Malawi**



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# Executive Summary

1. This is the final evaluation report of the Joint SDG Fund Joint Program (JP) - Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals (SP4SDG) in Malawi: Accelerating inclusive progress towards the SDGs (2020-2021). The report was jointly commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Malawi under the WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS).
2. The SP4SDG aims to support the Government of Malawi (GoM) to enhance the Malawi social protection system to meet emergency food needs and reduce the vulnerability of those most at risk of food insecurity by 2022, while strengthening the social protection system for all vulnerable households across the lifecycle. The Joint Program (JP) combines advancing an innovative Shock-Sensitive Social Protection (SSSP) prototype with reinforced financial structures and the transformation of existing policies into the basis of a legal framework to enhance the existing social protection system to be more robust, comprehensive, and sustainable, leaving no one behind.
3. The specific objectives of the evaluation were to assess the extent of achievement of the targets set out in the JP Results Framework. The purpose of the evaluation was to meet commitments to determine the reasons why certain results occurred or not to draw lessons, derive good practices and pointers for learning and inform operational decision-making. The evaluation covers two levels: firstly, interventions on strengthening the national social protection system, and secondly implementation of project activities at local government district level. The evaluation covers the period January 2020 to September 2021.
4. The main stakeholders of the evaluation are the GoM, the country and regional offices of WFP, UNICEF and ILO. The evaluation findings will be used by GoM, WFP, UNICEF, ILO, and other key stakeholders to enhance Social Protection SDG targets in the design and implementation of other similar programs in future, including options for resourcing and financing.

## Context

5. Landlocked Malawi (see [Annex 14](#) for the map of Malawi) is a densely populated country with 18.6 million people of which over half are under 18 years of age. Poverty remains high in Malawi, with over half (50.7 percent) of the population living below the poverty line and 20.5 percent of it being in extreme poverty, as of 2019/2020. The economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, and 80 percent of the population depend on rain-fed smallholdings, which are vulnerable to climatic shocks. Majority of smallholder farmers are women, and gender inequalities affect all aspects of social, economic, and environmental development. Poverty rates are highest among households headed by women.

## Methodology

6. The evaluation was designed to assess the SP4SDG JP against the following evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness & coverage, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) as well as equity issues. The evaluation assessed the JP interventions using 7 core questions and 17 sub-questions adhering to the standard Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC/OECD) evaluation criteria.
7. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative criteria to collect both primary and secondary data using a range of techniques. The field data collection exercise was conducted in September 2021. The evaluation team (ET) carried out 874 household interviews with beneficiary and non-beneficiary households in Nsanje district to gather quantitative data. Qualitative data processes involved key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) with men and women beneficiaries and key national and district level stakeholders which included desk review of documentation related to the social protection sector.
8. There were several limitations, chiefly related to the timing of the evaluation which was undertaken during the period of implementation of the SP4SDG project as well as under COVID-19 restrictions. In this regard, the evaluation could not capture the anticipated full range of achievements envisaged in the JP

results framework. Delays in accessing acceptable baseline data sets were overcome by the ET exploring different options to fill gaps such as reviewing published reports by the UN agencies. The ET had to adapt to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis through conducting some qualitative data gathering processes remotely. Conducting remote interviews through consultations with key informants at the national level were not without significant challenges. The evaluation interviews extended well into the field work and data analysis phase causing delays.

## **Key Findings**

9. The key findings of the ET are summarised below, structured according to the main evaluation criteria, indicating the type and strength of evidence supporting the findings.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA 1: RELEVANCE**

#### **Evaluation question 1: To what extent were the objectives of SP4SDG valid and appropriate with UN and national policies and how have these remained relevant over time?**

10. The SP4SDG objectives remained valid throughout the implementation period under review. The JP retained relevance to the existing policy context environment and where appropriate adapted a number of development objectives, in response to GoM requests in relation to COVID-19 and refocusing of Outcome 3.

11. The JP's results framework is structured to ensure it underpinned the objectives of GoM and UN strategic policies. The Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP II) is the overarching social protection policy framework which places emphasis on three pillars: 1) consumption support, 2) resilient livelihoods, and 3) shock-sensitive social protection. The SP4SDG results framework components are intrinsically aligned to the MNSSP II policy pillars and through the JP it has generated, according to several key informant interviews, considerable learning for the Government to build upon in order to refine existing policy and programmatic processes.

12. The JP was instrumental in supporting the multi-agency government led Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) and Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) studies to identify of the most vulnerable communities requiring the Lean Season Response (LSR). In this regard, the JP provided technical support to key social protection organisations in Nsanje and Balaka Districts. The main ones in Nsanje, where the LSR of December 2020 to March 2021 was implemented, are the District Social Support Committee (DSSC), Government departments (disaster management affairs, agriculture, community development, education and the police). In addition, the JP built the capacity of various Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that are implementing social protection (SP) in the district. These include Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS), GOAL Malawi and Concern Worldwide. The same organisations were involved in the MVAC assessment of 2020 whose results informed the programming of the aforementioned LSR that the PUNOs implemented.

13. The COVID-19 pandemic increased and shifted the scope of the JP. The JP and its results framework were never intended to support an urban intervention. As a result of COVID-19, there was a necessity to re-design key areas of the original JP work plan. The Operational Steering Committee of the Joint SDG fund approved the option of re-purposing up to 20 percent of JP funding to respond to the pandemic to ensure SP interventions and Leave No One Behind objectives were maintained. The development partners (DPs) supported the GoM's COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI) in four cities and several districts while the JP supported the CUCI to 1,270 households in Nsanje.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA: COHERENCE**

#### **Evaluation question 2: How coherent is the program within the context of the social protection policy environment in Malawi, in what way are the PUNOs interventions aligned to support and fit within this policy space in the country?**

14. The JP resides and fits firmly within the social protection and humanitarian policy space in Malawi. The PUNOs interventions, informed by previous areas of engagement within the sector, attempted and in some areas succeeded in aligning with and supporting the GoM policy environment working in close collaboration with DPs. Key progress on systems strengthening, providing lessons for enhanced social protection service delivery, and influencing an increase in GoM financial resource allocations to social

protection, is work in progress.

#### **EVALUATION CRITERIA: EFFECTIVENESS & COVERAGE**

##### **Evaluation question 3: To what extent have the targeted outputs, outcomes, strategic results, and interventions been achieved, or expect to be achieved taking account of their relative importance?**

15. The JP approach, setting out its interventions to align with a cornerstone of GoM policy objectives, was broadly successful. It is envisaged that the new policy framework, currently under review by the JP, will lead to increased coverage of social protection through the inclusion of social insurance schemes which targets workers in the informal sector. The JP's lean season response (LSR) intervention achieved its goal of improving food security of the most vulnerable households in Nsanje, and the JP made a significant contribution to providing the GoM with the potential basis for a shock-sensitive social protection model to be replicated at scale.

16. The evaluation found that the JP's contribution to the lean season response has improved food security and reduced the use of negative coping strategies in the context of where the program was operational. Descriptive analysis of the evaluation household survey data shows that 97.4 percent of the households were either in the acceptable (food secure/mildly food insecure) or borderline (moderately food insecure) categories of food consumption score (FCS). This figure surpasses the 80 percent target for 2021 the program proposed at the outset by 17.4 percentage points. At baseline, only 1.6 percent of the households were food secure and as such the majority relied on negative coping strategies to survive.

17. Despite failure to reach the set reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) value of 12 by the project, the trend-line indicates a reduction in shocks experienced by vulnerable families. The reduction in rCSI can be attributed to the JP as well as other initiatives in Nsanje district. However, it is sufficing to say that the LSR support of December 2020 to March 2021 cushioned the beneficiary households from severe food shortages. The households dedicated their time to farming under rain-fed agriculture and residual moisture when the rainy season was coming to an end in March 2021. This helped them extend months of self-food sufficiency.

18. The JP utilized relevant data and information available to identify appropriate interventions to effectively respond in the context of the Lean season crisis. The JP was instrumental in providing critical support to the COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI) (CUCI) established in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This generated useful learning for responding to future pandemics.

#### **EVALUATION CRITERIA: EFFICIENCY**

##### **Evaluation question 4: Was the program efficiently implemented (specifically cost effectiveness / value for money), and how was this converted to results?**

19. Efficiency of the JP program was assessed to be relatively good. Through the field data collection process the evaluation heard from stakeholders who observed that the JP's LSR had been implemented in an efficient manner. The level of efficiency compares favourably with other similar national social protection programs. For example, the implementing costs of the LSR cash-based transfer in Nsanje is estimated at around 6.5 percent for the horizontal expansion. The vertical expansion component, implemented via the national system during a few months of the lean season, is estimated to be 1 percent. As for the regular Social Cash Transfer Program (SCTP) transfers, available data shows that implementation costs are less than 15 percent.

20. Utilizing the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) as the monitoring agent working in tandem with Logistics and Transport Services (LTS) as the financial service provider probably offered the best value for money option in the circumstances of time efficiency. The MRCS demonstrated compliance with all contract provisions. This includes timeliness in the delivery of cash transfers, timely submission of pay-out and funds reconciliation reports, and compliance with the approved distribution plans and full accountability for the funds advanced. No cases of misappropriation or abuse of funds were recorded.

21. The overall budget for the LSR Cash Based Transfer (CBT) consisted of four components:

- a) Unconditional cash transfers (direct manual cash payments to the selected beneficiaries)

- b) Administrative and capital budgets (program running costs, capital inputs including contract for LTS and honoraria for other actors)
- c) Contingency funds to allow for variations in need during the implementation phase, and payment of GoM value added tax (VAT)
- d) Capacity building budget to orient staff, social protection organizations and other stakeholders at the district and community levels

22. The overall JP's LSR CBT budget for Nsanje was US\$474,002. This was fully utilized by the time the LSR CBT intervention ended in March 2021. The proportion of the budget allocated to delivery or administrative costs, such as staff time, capacity building and other running costs, was US\$32,600. The JP spent 93.8 percent of this allocation (US\$30,588). This represents 6.5 percent of the total cash transfer value of US\$474,002 provided. The cost of delivery per direct recipient household for the whole LSR intervention period was therefore very efficient at US\$6.12. Other overhead costs included payments of MK575 per kilometer for mileage travelled by the financial service providers and 16.5 percent value added tax (VAT) to the government on all costs.

#### **EVALUATION CRITERIA: IMPACT**

##### **Evaluation question 5: What is the potential impact that can be envisioned, and what are the initial signs of evidence towards achieving development objectives?**

23. Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from the evaluation show that the JP has to a larger extent achieved its goal of accelerating inclusive progress towards the sustainable development goals.

24. In the context of outcome 1 adapting the SCT with a shock sensitive social protection LSR interventions, through the 4-month vertical and horizontal expansion of existing CBT benefits, made a difference in reaching vulnerable people. These people were reached using the government UBR system which identified the most vulnerable groups. The LSR was successful in reaching people who otherwise may not have been reached. This has a positive impact at both the household and community level. At household level, the government is also implementing SCT which usually target limited number of beneficiaries. The coming in of the JP increased the number of SCT beneficiaries. This had a significant impact at community level because number of families lacking food reduced. It is a demonstrable example to GoM that the existing social protection (SP) systems can be effectively adapted to meet specific crisis needs – both in terms of a periodic LSR and an urban CBT in response to public health emergencies such as COVID-19.

25. At the time of the evaluation fieldwork in September 2021, no household was receiving relief food or cash due to food insecurity. Households were able to both purchase food or replenish foods from their own production if this had been consumed or just to complement their stock provisions. The number of food self-sufficiency months based only on staple maize and sorghum from rain-fed agriculture in the 2020/2021 season was 2.48 for the beneficiaries and 2.78 for non-beneficiary households on average.

26. The capacity strengthening component initiative under outcome 1 has limited scope in terms of numbers of officials reached. However, within the resources and timescales available this initiative was valued by GoM stakeholders. There are still considerable challenges to roll out a more comprehensive strategy to reach across and down to all levels of government related to SP systems strengthening. Issues concerning SRSP is that it is still a relatively new concept in Malawi and, according to key GoM officials, the lesson from the JP is that there is a significant need to embed this approach into the District Councils work planning.

27. An additional notable change attributed to the JP, according to district level officials in Nsanje and Balaka, is the integration of social protection interventions such as school meals, social cash transfers (SCT), Village Savings and Loans (VSLs) and microfinance to enhance impact as required by the MNSSP II. These are the fundamental building blocks to improving the pathways out of poverty for many vulnerable families

#### **EVALUATION CRITERIA: SUSTAINABILITY**

##### **Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the benefits of the program likely to continue after program funding has ceased?**

28. The JP is inherently about sustainability and scalability of its interventions. The program has built institutional sustainability by working with and through social protection organisation and government frontline workers at the national, district and community levels. This factor has shown to be critical for successful phase-over of responsibility for activities introduced and supported by the program. Interviews conducted revealed that government departments and SP organisations that have been capacitated will be much able to continue implementing, monitoring and reporting activities of the JP in their routine daily work, in the absence of external backstopping services from the program, because they have the necessary experience and capacity.

29. At a policy and SP systems level the JP has successfully undertaken a number of key activities dedicated to capacity strengthening initiatives involving government officials across various government ministries. This highlights the potential to roll-out and scale-up this approach with a more robust interpretation for defining the systemic institutional capacity strengthening requirements throughout the SP sector. Leveraging the ongoing work of the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Project, the JP has supported the development of the SCTP Strategy, which provides a sound foundation for defining the scope, objectives and a legal framework for the social protection system in Malawi. The possibility of introducing old age social pensions and expanding contributory social protection has been considered in the SCTP Strategy. In this regard, the JP supported the introduction of an old age pension scheme analysis and a Bill has been submitted to parliament for review and consideration. In addition, the JP has contributed to assisting the GoM to increase its share of the social protection budget and undertake measures to improve efficiency and sustainability of spending, which will go a long way in ensuring continuity of SP activities.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA: GENDER DIMENSIONS**

### **Evaluation question 7: How did sp4sdg's actions affect the context of gender inequality and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people?**

30. The JP Results Framework and Theory of Change (ToC) are minimalist in defining gender and social inclusion performance targets. The JP's intervention through the LSR cash transfer component marginally contributed to empowering women, given that 70 percent of Social Cash Transfer Program beneficiaries are women, thus ensuring women equally participate in decision making processes at a household level. Despite the reasonable level of strategic gender policy targets set out by government the emphasis of the SP4SDG on gathering sex disaggregated data simplified the gender mainstreaming and inclusion objectives at low level. The absence of any specific tangible interventions on gender equality in the JP is a concern. The analysis and reporting on how the JP addressed and targeted other socially vulnerable groups is unclear.

### **Key Lessons**

31. The underlying ambition of the JP was to create a financing ecosystem that enhanced the national financing infrastructure with a trajectory towards increased GoM revenue mobilization for sustaining results in the SP sector. This is an area of work that requires further technical support, both in terms of strengthening institutional capacity and in policy formulation. The LSR CBT with its mix of adaptable interventions provides a useful and viable replicable model that can be integrated into existing SP programs and systems.

32. The performance and tracking of JP results would have benefited from better documentation of appropriate analysis of the assumptions underpinning the JPs stated in the ToC. Many of the concerns expressed in the ToC are still applicable. With the wealth of experience and knowledge on gender issues in Malawi the PUNOs could have articulated a more nuanced understanding of practical approaches of the interventions required for the SP sector to address the challenges of gender inequality and social exclusion which the evidence points to is both systemic and deeply rooted.

### **Overall Conclusions**

33. The JP proved to be responsive, reactive and adaptive to the needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic while also addressing the primary purpose of implementing a shock responsive social protection intervention model.

34. Adjusting existing government social protection program interventions ensured that the LSR cash-based transfer component of the JP has had both an economic multiplier effect on the local economy and

provides the basis for positive human development outcomes for many of its beneficiaries. In this regard, the JP LSR interventions improved food security and reduced the use of negative coping strategies for many vulnerable communities as required by pillars 1 (consumption support), 3 (shock-sensitive social protection) and 5 (systems) of the MNSSP II. This alignment with one of the Government of Malawi's (GoM) policy pillar objectives highlights a key achievement.

35. The disproportionate expenditure related to the JP partners' human resource costs compared to the actual transfers and grants element of the program highlights concerns of a fiscal sustainability model to inform government policy. A clearer rationale for the choice of interventions, with better value for money analysis is critical to shape and inform viable policy and programmatic processes.

36. In the context of the humanitarian-development nexus, there is a need to break the vicious cycle of disaster related vulnerability facing affected communities. This underlines the need for a more holistic, integrated and coordinated development approach.

37. The direction of travel for the policy analytical work element of the JP remains unknown given that most of the key outputs related to ensuring the SP system is more comprehensive and integrated are set at a low level and activities are on-going. This reinforces the need for a better political economy analysis of the SP sector as a whole to be undertaken to inform and prepare for the challenges ahead.

38. The JP capacity building initiatives for social protection systems, while being useful, leads to the conclusion that the scope and scale of institutional strengthening needs to be expanded to have a more sustainable impact. A thorough assessment of the institutional capacity strengthening requirements throughout the SP sector is urgently needed.

39. There is little explicit attention given to gender and inclusion aspects in the JP design and results framework. Despite the conducive policy levers contained within many GoM policies the absence of any specific noticeable interventions on gender mainstreaming and social inclusion throughout the JP was a missed opportunity.

## **Recommendations**

40. Based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation the ET presents the following operational summary recommendations.

**Outcome 1:** Malawi Social Protection System is adapted to meet emergency food needs together with the humanitarian sector

41. Recommendations for WFP and UNICEF

- i. Continue exploring and collaborating for the use of e-payment systems using electronic platforms by third parties such as banks and mobile money operators to reduce costs incurred in packing the money, transporting it to the districts, paying for mileage and daily subsistence allowances and providing security at every distribution point. E-payments will speed up transactions and enable beneficiaries receive their cash instantly in their bank accounts or on mobile wallets. Savings made through reduction of costs incurred when cash-in-transit model is used will enable the program to extend the support to more ultra-poor households. Irish Aid has been supporting the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) to implement SCTP in Balaka and Ntcheu since 2013. For the past 5 years (2017-2021), MoGCDSW has been reaching out to 23,000 households in the districts and payment of cash was done electronically through a bank-based e-payment model. UNICEF is already providing technical assistance to the government for Shock-Sensitive Social Protection (SSSP) e-payments through mobile money transfers in both urban and rural areas of Malawi. In this regard, UNICEF has been supporting implementation of e-payments for regular SCTP, urban mobile money payments under COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI), horizontal expansion mobile money payments for the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 lean season response and harmonized e-payments solutions. There is need for the JP to take advantage of this involvement and learn how categories of people like the elderly and those in remotest areas who may not have an account with any bank let alone a mobile phone can be served better with electronic platforms to ensure they are not left behind. Also, ensure that the costs of e-payments such as bank charges, opening account balances,

transport to and from the banks for the poorest households residing far away from towns are not pushed to the beneficiary.

- ii. **Share results of the MVAC for validation before final publication.** The MVAC conducts vulnerability assessment between May and August. The results are published in August to allow planning and timely implementation of SSSP from November or December. The time when the assessment is done people have food since harvesting takes place from April to May. "Almost every year, people are in disagreement with the results because by the time the report is released food insecurity has worsened and many more households are in need of support," said social protection organisations in Nsanje. Sharing of the MVAC results will also help to increase trust in the newly adopted Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR) as local people feel low coverage of the program is due to the use of the tool in selecting beneficiary households.
- iii. **Strengthen targeting capacity by validating the UBR yearly to ensure only deserving households benefit.** In Nsanje, the JP's LSR of December 2020 to January 2021 used the UBR's Proxy Means Test (PMT) to classify households into five categories: poorest, poorer, poor, better and rich. Most communities described it as a fair, transparent and unbiased way that should continue to be used to desist from favouritism in the selection of beneficiaries. The current UBR was compiled in 2019 and partially updated in 2020 through the validation exercise that helped to add new households and remove those that were no longer supposed to be on the list. EU funded both exercises and is expected to support a comprehensive update after 4 years e.g., around 2022. Meanwhile, the recommendation for WFP is to collaborate and ensure the UBR is updated before the coming LSR (November 2022-March 2023) and that the whole process involves district officers, community leaders and local committees upfront again to remove households that have migrated, relocated or moved out of poverty and as such do not deserve to benefit any more. According to the Malawi Red Cross Society, which was contracted to disburse the cash, the beneficiary data from the UBR had different information when compared to the information on the National Identity Cards. This was making it difficult for the distribution teams to identify actual beneficiaries. The validation exercise recommended will help address this problem as well.
- iv. **WFP and UNICEF should also intensify sensitization of all local leaders on the issue of beneficiary identification and selection** using the new UBR system as some households feel they are left out because of the system (thus, they still prefer community-based targeting). The evaluation found cases of money sharing imposed by local chiefs. WFP and UNICEF should use the same opportunity to sensitize local leaders and communities about repercussions of such malpractices, which in the LSR of 2020/2021 resulted in prosecution and tarnished reputations of the culprits and their families.
- v. **Support full recovery of the most vulnerable households.** Nsanje is prone to disasters like floods and drought which damage land, crops, livestock and household assets among other things. People need humanitarian assistance almost every lean season. The Joint Program has provided two LSR cash during its 2-year lifespan to meet immediate food needs of the people and it has succeeded. Nevertheless, interventions that can help the affected households recover fully from shocks caused by disasters can help bring more impact. In future programs, there is therefore need to include the following interventions as part of LSR to support recovery and graduation of vulnerable households from yearly support. This can be achieved through:
  - Continuing to provide consumption support to safeguard households' productive assets and prevent asset depletion during times of financial distress.
  - Strengthening linkages between cash transfers, village savings and loans (VSLs) and small businesses that can help the poor build back better.
  - Promoting linkages with other programs that support income generating activities and food security.
- vi. **Early planning is important to reduce pressure and work overload.** Planning for the LSR of December 2020 to March 2021 delayed until around the same time when cash transfers ought to start as reported by SP organisations in the district. A number of activities were done with

pressure within a very short period of time. It was very tight and other activities were reportedly circumvented in the process. The recommendation for WFP and UNICEF is to start planning in good time to reduce panic, work overload towards the start of the coming LSR and increase efficiency of service delivery.

- vii. **Provide arrears to households that are absent.** According to WFP policy, once a household is not available on the day for cash distribution due to other reasons beyond its control, it has no second chance of receiving its entitlement during the next distribution. The assumption is that the household has already managed to survive and there is no need to give it arrears thereafter as per beneficiaries FGDs. This created hatred and lack of trust between communities, financial service providers and SP organisations because communities thought the money was taken by them since under the social cash transfer program by the government, they receive arrears. The District Social Welfare Office (DSWO) suggested that WFP should show uniformity and provide arrears to such households because no household can choose to absent itself from cash distribution without real reasons. This recommendation applies to UNICEF as well, because depending on the contracts in place, there is also a risk that UNICEF is not able to pay arrears for beneficiaries of horizontal expansion. After the adoption of e-payments, the problem will be addressed.
- viii. **Increase gender equality and inclusion by improving the basket to include foods for pregnant and lactating women and young children.** Explore ways for adding super cereal and super cereal + to the current basket of maize, pulses and cooking oil for households with pregnant and lactating women, and children under 2 years of age, respectively (without retrogressing to food distribution which has proven to be costly to implement). These groups of people have additional food and nutritional needs and can be better served if the suggested or similar foods can be included to the food basket.
- ix. **Build sufficient technical capacity in the Gender, VAM and Monitoring and Evaluation units of UN partner agencies** to support program teams in operationalizing and mainstreaming gender and social inclusion performance targets in joint programs.

**Outcome 2:** Malawi Government increases its share of the social protection budget and undertakes measures to improve efficiency of spending

#### 42. Recommendations for UNICEF

The social protection sector in the country remains heavily dependent on donors. Main donors are the German government through Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the EU, the World Bank and Irish Aid. According to interviews with GoM stakeholders, Treasury increased its funding to the social cash transfer program (SCTP) from MK650 million in 2016/2017 to about MK2.5 billion in 2021/2022<sup>1</sup>, allocating a higher amount each year in the budget for SCTP, from about 0.06 percent of the total budget in 2016/2017 to 0.12 percent in 2021/2022.<sup>2</sup> Over the same period, Government contributions to the SCTP have averaged 5 percent of the total contributions to the programme, against 38 percent from the World Bank, 26 percent from KfW, 21 percent from the EU and 10 percent from Irish Aid. UNICEF should:

- i. **Continue to develop a strategy to increase Government financial contributions** to the social protection sector.
- ii. Support the design and operationalization of a common financing process for SCTP (and the wider array of social support programs) to ensure efficiency gains, allow for a diversified set of financing stream and additional GoM ownership.
- iii. **Secure additional funding for social protection programs;** Thus, allow for a diversified set of financing stream and lobby GoM for additional funding. There is need to continue engaging GoM in all the processes to promote greater participation and ownership.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/9016/file/UNICEF-Malawi-2020-2021-Social-Protection-Budget-Brief.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/10516/file/UNICEF-Malawi-2021-2022-Social-Protection-Budget-Brief.pdf>

- iv. **Strengthen financial management processes** of other key stakeholders beyond the government (CSOs, SP organisations on the ground etc.) to reduce the need for central staff to frequently travel to the districts.

**Outcome 3: Malawi Social Protection System is more comprehensive and integrated**

43. Recommendations for ILO

*Leveraging on the ongoing work of the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Project and the Enhancing Financial Management and Fiscal Sustainability for Social Protection project funded by the EU, the JP has supported the development of the Social Cash Transfer Program (SCTP) Strategy. The strategy provides a sound foundation for defining the scope, objectives and a legal framework for the social protection system in Malawi. ILO and its partners have proposed the introduction of an old age social pension scheme and expansion of contributory social protection in the SCTP Strategy. A Bill has been submitted to the parliament for review and consideration.*

- i. **ILO should take a leading role in continuing to support the development of the SCTP Strategy** and its full implementation in Malawi, having been involved in the development process. Additional consultations are needed to finalize the Policy Framework Document (PFD) and update the NSSP policy. After it is validated by the GoM, the PUNOs will have to support the GoM to disseminate the updated NSSP to stakeholders.
- ii. **ILO should continue to lobby for the introduction of old age social pensions and expansion of the contributory social protection in the SCTP Strategy.** The PUNOs will have to provide support for the GoM to finalize, launch, and disseminate the SCTP strategy.
- iii. **As part of dissemination work, train GoM staff at national and district levels on changes in the SCTP strategy and NSSP** to familiarize and further enhance their capacity to implement SP activities on the ground.

# 1. Introduction

1. This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the independent final evaluation of the SDG Fund Joint Program - Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals (SP4SDG) in Malawi: Accelerating inclusive progress towards the SDGs (2020-2021). The evaluation was jointly commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Malawi under the WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance Systems (DEQAS)<sup>3</sup>. The Joint UN Program<sup>4</sup> for Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals (SP4SDG) began implementation in January 2020 and although originally intended to end in December 2021 the SDG fund granted a no cost extension up to end February 2022. The evaluation covers the period of program implementation activities from January 2020 to September 2021. The final evaluation report is informed by the terms of reference (ToR), a summary is provided in [Annex 1](#).

2. The evaluation serves dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning. **Accountability** – To assess and report on the performance and results of the SP4SDG, guided by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC/OECD) evaluation criteria<sup>5</sup> of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. The evaluation included the gender dimension criterion to assess how the program has addressed constraints faced by women, girls and boys, the elderly and persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses. **Learning** – To determine the reasons why certain results occurred or not to draw lessons, derive good practices and pointers for learning and inform operational and strategic decision-making. In this regard, the evaluation will deepen knowledge and understanding of underlying assumptions that guided the design and implementation of the program. Findings will be actively disseminated and lessons incorporated into relevant lesson sharing systems in ways that will enhance the design and implementation of social protection activities to ultimately serve targeted beneficiaries and their communities better.

## 1.1. EVALUATION FEATURES

3. The purpose and rationale for the evaluation are underpinned by several factors including – the emphasis that the Joint Program funds are to be spent by December 2021, and lessons need to be adopted for potential successive program planning; many staff of the three participating UN organisations (PUNOs) and implementing partners are project funded, the implication being that several posts may not exist after the program ends and the institutional memory will be lost if there was a delay in conducting the evaluation *ex-post*; and finally, there is a risk that the Joint Program beneficiaries, specifically the recipients of the cash transfer component (up to March 2021) for the lean season response<sup>6</sup> may confuse the evaluation field data collection process (conducted in September 2021) with potential future lean season interventions. [Annex 2](#) provides details of the evaluation schedule.

4. The specific objectives of the SP4SDG evaluation are:

- To assess the extent of achievement of the results and targets set out in the Joint Program Results Framework
- To understand the extent to which the joint program has contributed to accelerating progress towards the sustainable development goals, focusing on social protection
- To meet commitments made to commission an evaluation for learning and accountability

5. The main stakeholders of the evaluation are the Government of Malawi (GoM), the country and regional offices of the WFP, UNICEF and the ILO. The evaluation findings will be used by GoM, WFP, UNICEF, ILO, and other key stakeholders to adjust enhance Social Protection SDG targets in the design and

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<sup>3</sup> DEQAS is a WFP guidance package that provides staff with a guide from initial planning, through preparation, inception, data collection and analysis, and reporting, to the dissemination of the evaluation report and utilisation of its findings

<sup>4</sup> Referred to throughout the report as the Joint Program (JP).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

<sup>6</sup> The lean season in Malawi is described as a period in the agricultural season between planting and harvesting during which smallholder households often face weaning stock supplies and/or revert to adverse coping strategies to make ends meet (2019-20 Lean Season Response: After Action Review)

implementation of other similar programs in future, including short-term, medium-term and long-term options for resourcing and financing. The Government of Malawi is likely to use the evaluation findings to understand the extent that the JP met its objectives and highlighted valuable lessons on what worked to inform policy development and implementation options including the current Malawi National Social Support Program II 2018-2023 (MNSSPII) and contribute to successive policy strategies going forward. The GoM and other stakeholders involved in the social protection sector in Malawi may use the evaluation to inform particular approaches to address capacity building challenges and support interventions underpinning broader policy development and institutional coherence and linkages with other national social protection programs.

6. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms, who coordinate the overall social protection policy environment in Malawi, have a key interest in assessing if the JP is aligned with the Government of Malawi's priorities and contributes to strengthen capacity to sustain results. The WFP, UNICEF and ILO Headquarters, Regional Bureau, Country Offices and the joint SDG fund are interested in the performance of the JP to learn from the evaluation and share findings with other UN agencies country offices. Furthermore, the mentioned key users are interested in using the evaluation findings in their regional offices. The results will provide strategic guidance, program support and oversight of country offices work.

7. The SP4SDG aims to support the Government of Malawi (GoM) to enhance the Malawi social protection system to meet emergency food needs and reduce the vulnerability of those most at risk of food insecurity by 2022, while strengthening the social protection system for all vulnerable households across the lifecycle. The JP combines advancing an innovative Shock-Sensitive Social Protection (SSSP) prototype with reinforced financial structures and the transformation of existing policies into the basis of a legal framework to enhance the existing social protection system to be more robust, comprehensive, and sustainable, leaving no one behind. The SDG Fund provided a financial contribution of US\$1,999,937 for the implementation of the two-year program<sup>7</sup>.

8. The scope of the evaluation, defined by the specific objectives, and as agreed during the inception period, focuses on two key issues. Firstly, the systemic changes the JP has contributed towards social protection policy development at a national level, building on the lessons and backdrop leading up to the program design. Secondly, to review the planned program implementation of activities at a district level in two specific locations.

9. The Evaluation was led by an international consultant with experience in project and program management and evaluation including Malawi. The evaluation team included two national consultants including a quantitative data expert and a social protection expert. Due to COVID-19 global travel restrictions the international consultant performed all tasks remotely and did not visit Malawi during the evaluation process. The evaluation timing comprised of several phases, these included:

- Preparation (3<sup>rd</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> May)
- Inception Phase (18<sup>th</sup> May -9<sup>th</sup> August)
- Data Collection & field work (31<sup>st</sup> August – 13<sup>th</sup> September)
- Data Analysis & Reporting (14<sup>th</sup> September – 13<sup>th</sup> December)
- Validation process & dissemination (14<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> December)

10. The evaluation timetable was altered due to COVID-19 situation in Malawi. At the time of the field mission planning travel restrictions were in place. Therefore, the evaluation field work was conducted in Nsanje District with the two national consultants working in collaboration with an outsourced monitoring partner<sup>8</sup> to undertake data collection. The evaluation team conducted virtual interviews with key stakeholders at central level, and in Balaka District. [Annex 6](#) provides details of the evaluation field work schedule.

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<sup>7</sup> The funding allocated among the participating UN organisations equates to: US\$1,240,237 (WFP), US\$378,780 (UNICEF) and US\$380,920 (ILO)

<sup>8</sup> WFP leads on the management of the evaluation on behalf of the PUNOs. Previously WFP have used the services of Bill Consulting, as the Outsourced Monitoring Partner, to undertake baseline data collection for Lean Season Response interventions. Bill Consulting enumerators worked with the two national consultants during the fieldwork process.

## 1.2. CONTEXT

11. Malawi is a densely populated landlocked country in sub-Saharan Africa with an estimated population of 18.6 million,<sup>9</sup> and with 192 persons per square kilometre of land, this represents a population growth rate of 2.6 percent per annum. Fifty-one percent of the population of Malawi is under 18 years of age.

### Poverty and vulnerability

12. With a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.483 Malawi is positioned 174 out of 184 countries.<sup>10</sup> The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. Malawi's 2019 HDI is below the average of 0.513 for countries in the low human development group and below the average of 0.547 for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>11</sup> The country's national poverty rate stands at 50.7 percent, with 20.5 percent of the population living in extreme poverty.<sup>12</sup> Malawi has high rates of vulnerability, with significant disparities between genders, between urban and rural areas and among regions. This equates to 56.6 percent of the rural and 19.2 percent of the urban population affected by poverty which is widespread and persistent and concentrated in the central and southern regions of the country.

### Gender and inequality

13. Malawi has a score of 0.614 on the UN's Gender Inequality Index (GII) of 2019, ranking it 145 out of 188 countries,<sup>13</sup> reflecting high levels of inequality in reproductive health, women's empowerment, and economic activity. Additionally, Malawi has the eighth highest child marriage rate in the world. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and harmful practices remain widespread and pose a serious obstacle to achieving gender equality. The Malawi National Gender Policy (2015) aims to strengthen gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment at all levels to achieve gender equality. This policy is an integral element of the national development process in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III to enhance participation of women and men, girls, and boys for sustainable and equitable development for poverty eradication.

### Economic development and climate shocks

14. Malawi's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, and 80 percent of the population depend on rain-fed smallholdings which are vulnerable to external shocks, particularly climatic shocks. Most smallholder farmers are women, and gender inequalities affect all aspects of social, economic, and environmental development with poverty highest among women led households.<sup>14</sup> Having shown signs of recovery following the devastating floods (2015), and the El-Nino drought (2016), the compounding effects of Tropical Cyclone Idai (2019) adversely impacted on the annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate.<sup>15</sup> This is rendering the country with insufficient access to financial resources. This affects government capacity to deliver basic services and respond to recurrent and seasonal shocks.

### Food and nutritional status

15. Although there has been a noted decline in undernutrition in Malawi within the past 20 years, from 62.3 percent in 1998, stunting levels remain stubbornly high at 37.1 percent (2019).<sup>16</sup> Interventions to address micronutrient deficiencies are essential. The National Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Policy (NMSNP),

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<sup>9</sup> National Statistical Office (NSO). 2019. The 2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census

<sup>10</sup> Human Development Report, 2020

<sup>11</sup> Human Development Report 2020

<sup>12</sup> National Statistical Office (NSO). August 2021. 2020 Malawi Poverty Report (generated from the results of the Fifth Integrated Household Survey (IHS5) conducted from April 2019 to April 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Malawi Government (GoM). June 2020. Malawi 2020 Voluntary National Review Report for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

<sup>14</sup> Government of Malawi. 2017. Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III: Building a Productive, Competitive and Resilient Nation.

<sup>15</sup> Government of Malawi, Malawi 2019 Floods Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), 2019

<sup>16</sup> National Statistic Office, 2016. The Malawi Demographic and Health Survey of 2015/2016, Zomba, Malawi.

2018-2022, identifies causes of stunting. These include undernutrition during pregnancy; stopping breastfeeding too early and introducing complementary feeding; delays in introducing nutritious complementary diets and meals to infants from six months to complement breast milk; insufficient quantities and frequency of complementary feeding, and insufficient micronutrients in the diet, such as vitamin A, iodine and iron for the child after six months of age. The high rates of stunting in the country present a challenge to reach the “No Poverty and Zero Hunger” targets of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2) by 2030. Poverty and Hunger are partly perpetuated by the intensity and frequency of climate shocks affecting Malawi. In this regard households fail to recover from one shock to the next, whilst simultaneously even low impact shocks (e.g., lean season) manifest into food insecurity crises and emergencies annually due to underlying vulnerabilities.

### **COVID-19**

16. Malawi’s economy has been severely impacted by COVID-19. The crisis is increasing poverty in urban areas and the service and industry sector is being hit hard. It is also having a disproportional effect on poor households. Using a Social Accountability Matrix multiplier model to assess the short-term impact of COVID-19 on the Malawian economy IFPRI suggests around 1.1 million people, the majority in rural areas, temporarily fell into poverty, although it is urban households who suffered the largest income losses<sup>17</sup>. The country’s growth rate is predicted to recover to 2.8 percent in 2021,<sup>18</sup> but the pandemic is likely to continue to be a major problem until the vaccine roll-out can reach a significant proportion of the population which is not expected to happen until well into 2022. As of 19 October 2021, 521,378 people have been fully vaccinated.<sup>19</sup>

### **Policy environment**

17. The National Social Support Policy, developed in 2012, provided a holistic framework covering the period 2011-2016 for designing, implementing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating Social Support interventions in Malawi. The policy landscape in Malawi has changed significantly since that time. Although work is on-going to develop a subsequent overarching policy framework to succeed the NSSP the current MNSSP II.

18. is the guiding strategy. Malawi’s social protection systems are therefore governed by the MNSSP II. The MNSSP II maintains the same prioritised interventions of the NSSP while placing emphasis on three pillars: 1) consumption support, 2) resilient livelihoods, and 3) shock-sensitive social protection. The three components of the SP4SDG are aligned to the pillars in the MNSSP II. The pillar on SSSP aims to advance a social protection system to meet seasonal needs, prepares for, and responds to shocks together with the humanitarian sector, and supports recovery and the return to regular programming. The shock responsive social protection element is the largest component of the JP. The JP performs a significant contribution to multi-stakeholder partnerships and enhancing policy coherence to bolster support for Malawi’s SDG 17 goals and targets.

## **1.3. SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED**

19. The situational analysis in the Joint Program Document (JPD)<sup>20</sup>, approved in November 2019, provides the basis of the SP4SDG design intervention. As stated above, the JPD states that each year Malawi registers on average 1.73 million people who are predictably food insecure over the lean season - even in times without a shock, or with surplus food reserves in the country. These people are clustered in the same districts in Southern Malawi, where compounding vulnerabilities are highest. Paradoxically, deserving households are frequently not targeted for emergency food assistance due to multiple factors. As such, those most vulnerable and in real need of humanitarian support are unable to meet their consumption needs. This retrogresses the already hard-won development gains through social protection. Financing of

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<sup>17</sup> Bob Baulch, Rosemary Botha, and Karl Pauw, June 2020, Short-term Impacts of COVID-19 on the Malawian Economy: Initial Results, International Food Policy Research Institute.

<sup>18</sup> Found at World Bank, Macro Poverty Outlook: <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/395451492188166005/mpo-mwi.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF Malawi COVID-19 Situation Report 20 October 2021

<sup>20</sup> The Joint Program Document is the agreement between the three UN agencies, the Resident UN Coordinator and the Government of Malawi. It was signed by all parties on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

social protection is heavily dependent on development partners according to the JPD. The coverage of support is therefore low in comparison to needs and not guaranteed. Government has committed to increase contribution to the social protection budget, but without a clear roadmap. Most Malawians in need are still left without protection and these issues are exacerbated by the lack of more robust legal framework for social protection. The NSSP, MNSSP II and MGDS III play important roles in policy direction and implementation, however they neither define minimal levels of protection that need to be offered, clearly recommend coordination, governance and accountability mechanisms nor compel the State to progressively allocate resources from annual national budget. The JP was designed to address these key issues in a bid to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country.

20. The JP is therefore expected to help ensure that future emergency food assistance (SDG 2.1) provides leverage to the social protection system, where applicable and appropriate (SDG 1.3). The JP is testing a prototype targeting shock-affected households with emergency food assistance, leveraging, and strengthening the social protection system in the process. The JP aims to provide the evidence base to help the Government of Malawi increase the allocation of domestic resources to social protection, ensuring a gradual increase and improved efficiency of the system (SDG 1.a, 17.1). The JP is expected to facilitate the development of a more comprehensive and integrated social protection system through an extensive policy review process. It is envisaged that these interventions, set out in the original Joint Program document, will define and streamline essential systems to enhance social protection throughout all stages of life for all, with due attention to women and marginalized groups (SDG 1.b) and advances the right to social protection in line with Malawi’s human rights treaty obligations (1.3).

21. Structured around three interlinked components the JP seeks to accelerate SDGs 1, 2, and 17 while at the same time promote Leave No One Behind (LNOB) commitments. The overall objective of the program is **“to advance the objective of the National Social Support Policy – by 2030, women and men in Malawi have enhanced quality of life and improved resilience to shocks”**.

22. The Joint Program three outcomes are:

1. The Malawi social protection system is adapted to meet emergency food needs together with the humanitarian sector.
2. The Government of Malawi increases its share of the social protection budget and undertaken measures to improve efficiency of spending.
3. The Malawi Social Protection System is more comprehensive and integrated.

23. To achieve these three outcomes, the joint program has the following eight outputs:

1. The social protection system is reviewed and updated in line with humanitarian response needs.
2. The Malawi social protection system, together with the humanitarian sector, contributes to assisting an emergency caseload as identified by the Malawi government.
3. The GoM social protection financing strategy finalized and informing domestic funding.
4. The GoM has improved knowledge and commitment to invest in social protection.
5. The GoM has improved capacity for social protection expenditure.
6. The National Social Support Policy (adopted 2012) is reviewed and analysed
7. Malawi has updated the scope and objectives for the social protection system.
8. The GoM is supported to advance an Old Age Pension Scheme.

24. A summary of the core activities across the three outcomes and eight outputs include:

Core activities <sup>21</sup>	
Outcome 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of operational guidance and backstopping</li> <li>• Testing accountability and agency strengthening</li> <li>• Learning for GoM capacity strengthening</li> <li>• Operational systems preparedness (M&amp;E, UBR)</li> </ul>

<sup>21</sup> The ET paraphrased these activities based details provided in JP work plan spreadsheet.

Core activities <sup>21</sup>	
Outcome 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing and expenditure brief</li> <li>• Social protection business case development</li> <li>• SP expenditure diagnostics and bottle neck analysis</li> </ul>
Outcome 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape analysis - mapping of existing instruments, coverage, adequacy, resources and structures; Review of NSSP 2012, lessons learnt and evidence compilation</li> <li>• Review of social protection including setting policy boundaries</li> <li>• Review of policy options and measures</li> </ul>

25. The SP4SDG PUNOs principal partners are the key government ministries leading on social protection policy development and program implementation. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms is the main partner for the program, given the ministry's role in coordinating social protection policy and monitoring interventions supported by external actors. The Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare perform a fundamental role in managing the SCTP, the country's flagship SP program (refer to [Box 1](#)) and leading on a task force for developing the old age pension program. The Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) is a key player leading on linkages between humanitarian interventions and shock responsive social protection.

26. The largest component of the JP is the support to develop and adapt exiting social protection programs to be more responsive to shocks ([Outcome 1](#)). The definition of 'shock-responsive social protection' varies. According to the shock responsive social protection toolkit<sup>22</sup> all social protection interventions are in some senses shock-responsive, and in this regard designed to deal with chronic or sudden events that negatively affect households' livelihoods. Most social protection programs are created to support households experiencing shocks as a result of life cycle events such as a loss of income and reduction in the accumulation of productive assets, or the effects of illness or death, this is defined as idiosyncratic shocks. Shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) interventions however specifically focus on shocks that affect a large proportion of the population simultaneously, defined as covariate shocks. In this situation the response requires an adaptation of routine social protection programs and systems to cope with changes in context and demand following largescale shocks. Interventions for building shock-responsive systems, plans and partnerships can be undertaken in advance of an anticipated shock to better prepare for emergency responses; or after a particular event to support households once the shock has occurred. Therefore, social protection can complement and support other emergency response interventions. [Table 1](#) provides some context of the typology of shock responsive social protection program design and implementation options.

**Table 1: Typology of shock responsive social protection**

Options	Basic elements	Programmatic implications
<b>'Design tweaks'</b>	Making small adjustments to the design of routine social protection interventions.	Design of social protection programs and systems can be adjusted in a way that takes into consideration the crises that a country typically faces.
<b>'Piggybacking'</b>	Using elements of an existing social protection program or system while delivering a separate emergency response.	Mainly this occurs when an emergency response, delivered by either government or its partners, uses part of an established social protection system or program while delivering something new.
<b>'Vertical expansion'</b>	Temporarily increasing the value or duration of benefits for existing beneficiaries.	The benefit value or duration of the program is temporarily increased for some or all existing recipients (top-ups). Normally done via an adjustment of transfer amounts or values, or

<sup>22</sup> Shock Responsive Social Protection Toolkit, Oxford Policy Management, January 2018

Options	Basic elements	Programmatic implications
		through the introduction of extraordinary payments or transfers.
<b>'Horizontal expansion'</b>	Temporarily increasing the number of recipients in an existing social protection program.	The temporary inclusion of new beneficiaries from disaster affected communities. Three factors are normally considered: extending the program's geographical coverage; enrolling additional beneficiaries in geographical areas already covered, who meet the program's usual criteria (i.e., an extraordinary enrolment campaign); or, bringing in additional beneficiaries by modifying the eligibility criteria.
<b>'Alignment'</b>	Aligning social protection and/or humanitarian interventions with one another.	The development of one or more elements of a parallel humanitarian response that align as best as possible with those used in a current or possible future social protection program or Disaster Risk Management system. This could be an alignment of objectives, targeting methods, transfer value or delivery mechanism.

Source: Shock Responsive Social Protection Toolkit, Oxford Policy Management, January 2018

27. The MNSSP II refers to 'shock sensitive social protection'<sup>23</sup> as the means to respond to shocks in unison with the humanitarian sector and meets seasonal needs to support recovery and return to regular programming. This is also true of the GoM response to COVID-19 where urban communities were targeted for the first time with cash transfers in response to a national crisis (refer to para 16). The JP made some adjustments to the program outputs because of COVID-19. Table 2 briefly highlights the areas where the JP adapted some of the eight output areas in response to COVID-19.

**Table 2: Adaptations required to each Joint Program output areas in response to COVID-19**

Joint Program Output area	Response to COVID-19
1. The social protection system is reviewed and updated in line with humanitarian response needs.	The JP review process continued although government restrictions were in place that affected effective engagement with stakeholders. The LSR <sup>24</sup> and CUCI <sup>25</sup> interventions provide potentially valuable lessons to update humanitarian response needs throughout the country.
2. The Malawi social protection system, together with the humanitarian sector, contributes to assisting an emergency caseload as identified by the Malawi government.	The original case load of beneficiary households was increased in response to the government request for support to the GoM initiated CUCI program in urban areas. Double payment mechanisms were introduced for LSR beneficiaries to minimize social interaction.
3. The GoM social protection financing strategy finalized and informing domestic funding.	The JP work plan deliverables were not adversely affected by COVID-19. However, interface with key GoM officials and development partners was restricted, the work plan schedule for this area of work is on-going.

<sup>23</sup> The MNSSP II defines shock sensitive social protection as a social protection system which meets the needs, prepares for and responds to shock together with the humanitarian sector, and supports recovery and return to regular programming. The terminology shock responsive social protection and shock sensitive social protection are used interchangeably throughout the report.

<sup>24</sup> Lean Season Response

<sup>25</sup> COVID-19 Urban Cash Transfer Initiative

Joint Program Output area	Response to COVID-19
4. The GoM has improved knowledge and commitment to invest in social protection.	There was no basis to indicate that COVID-19 affected this JP output area. However, the lessons from COVID-19 SP interventions will contribute to improved knowledge on how GoM respond to the investment needs of the sector in times of shocks.
5. The GoM has improved capacity for social protection expenditure.	No evidence to indicate that COVID-19 affected timescales for the JP delivery of capacity strengthening training, which was conducted remotely.
6. The National Social Support Policy (adopted 2012) is reviewed and analysed	Meeting/gathering and travel restrictions adversely affected timescales for this JP output. Although there were planned face to face consultations at all levels including community level and adoption of virtual consultation was not feasible to all stakeholders. The work plan tasks for this area are outsourced and progress is on-going.
7. Malawi has updated the scope and objectives for the social protection system.	Meeting/gathering and travel restrictions adversely affected timescales for this JP output. However, GoM has been focusing on its COVID-19 response interventions which may have resulted in a shift of priorities.
8. The GoM is supported to advance an Old Age Pension Scheme.	No evidence to indicate that COVID-19 adversely affected timescales for this JP output. However, GoM priorities have understandably had to be adjusted during the JP implementation period. The work plan schedule for this area is on-going.

28. In the nine years up to 2018 on average 1.73 million people each year required emergency food assistance. This equates to 10 percent of the country's population. The Joint Emergency Food Assistance Program (JEFAP) guidelines, a standardized framework used by international humanitarian actors on behalf of government, have traditionally been deployed in Malawi to respond to food insecurity crises.<sup>26</sup> The MNSSP II sets out linkages between the humanitarian and social protection sectors with the aim to pursue more sustainable ways of reaching the most vulnerable. This approach, it is argued, aligns with the Grand Bargain<sup>27</sup> objectives. The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) conducts annual surveys to assess the food security and nutrition situation in the country. This information is then categorized under the IPC to determine the severity and characteristics of acute food and nutrition crises based on international standards.

29. With widespread chronic poverty and high vulnerabilities, even predictable, recurrent lean seasons and minor weather variations tend to develop into emergencies in Malawi. The MVAC assesses the severity of the vulnerabilities and humanitarian actors, including UN agencies and NGOs, repeatedly step-in to cover needs. The MVAC report of September 2020 identified that 2,617,986 people in 28 districts and four cities would require food assistance ranging from 2 to 5 months' period during the 2020/2021 lean season period and three of those districts Nsanje, Neno and Balaka were projected to be in crisis and therefore defined by

<sup>26</sup> JEFAP sets out guidelines for food distribution in Malawi during emergency programs. It aims to provide guidance for those involved in general food distribution program in Malawi. This includes all aspects of the program and the distribution cycle, providing guidance on issues such as conducting the first sensitization meetings at the village level; managing the food distribution sites; and completing a Post-Distribution Monitoring Form.

<sup>27</sup> The 'Grand Bargain' is an agreement between the biggest donors and aid organisations that aims to get more means into the hands of people in need. It is essentially a 'Grand Bargain on efficiency' between donors and humanitarian organisations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action. The Grand Bargain is the only agreement that has brought together donors and aid organisations, and it envisions a 'level playing field where all meet as equals'. It also promotes a 'quid pro quo' spirit of reciprocity as both sides commit to contributing their share. The Grand Bargain is intended to complement efforts to shrink needs and to broaden the resource base to enhance collaboration and trust among humanitarian actors.

IPC as in need of urgent action.

30. The process for identifying and verifying the LSR beneficiaries follows GoM procedures through the Unified Beneficiary Register (UBR). The UBR system is centrally done (does not use a community-based selection of beneficiaries) and is based on the Proxy Means Test (PMT) that verifies whether potential beneficiaries fulfil the ultra-poverty criteria using the same categorization by the JEFAP. Nevertheless, the UBR system has additional sets of criteria that are used to expand the poverty status ([Annex 16](#)). purpose of the UBR is to strengthen the harmonization of targeting approaches and processes for beneficiaries of social support programs in the country. The PMT uses income estimates to determine relative household poverty and provides 'scores' to determine wealth ranking, and classification into income brackets.<sup>28</sup> The PMT process is verified through community meetings. This aims to alert the communities of various wealth rankings and addressing grievances of misappropriated data anomalies. The GoM Social Cash Transfer Program was one of two government flagship social protection programs to take the UBR forward.

### **Box 1: Government of Malawi's Social Cash Transfer Program**

The Government of Malawi's Social Cash Transfer Program (SCTP) scheme is an unconditional transfer targeted to rural ultra-poor and labour-constrained households. The program began as a pilot in 2006 and as of 2020, the program reached over 290,000 households and 1.3 million individuals. The main objectives of the SCTP are to reduce poverty and hunger, and to improve children's human development. Transfer amounts vary by household size and number of school-aged children, and averaged MK9,500 (US\$12) in 2020. The specific benefit structure as of August 2020 was: MK2,600, MK3,300, MK 4,400 and MK5,600 for households of size one, two three and four or more respectively. An additional bonus of MK800 and MK1500 was provided to household members of school going age. The SCTP is the largest social protection intervention operational in all 28 Districts of Malawi. The program is implemented with support from various collaborating development partners, including the World Bank, EU, the German Government, through the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW); the European Union (EU) and the Irish Aid.

31. The SRSP prototype component ([Outcome 1](#)) of the JP originally aimed to target 5,000 beneficiary households in Nsanje District. However, according to the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) implementing partner reports the JP in Nsanje managed to reach 7,602 households with 1,266 of those beneficiaries being the recipient of the COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI).

32. The other two outcome areas of the JP, outcomes 2 & 3, (refer to results framework in [Annex 9](#)) do not specifically stipulate the expected numbers of beneficiaries the program intended to reach. The strategic focus of these two outcomes places greater emphasis on the broader systems strengthening and efficiency aspects of the program's contribution to the social protection sector. In this regard these two outcomes aim to provide the GoM with the evidence base to shape and influence effective policy and programmatic processes.

33. The SP4SDG JP is guided by the Theory of Change (ToC) (refer to [Annex 8](#)) and the results framework. The results framework of the JP is aligned with, and aims to contribute towards, the objectives of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III.<sup>29</sup> The ToC defines the JP aspirations for linking up humanitarian and social protection processes, actors, and systems while reinforcing the financial and policy framework of social protection. The intention is for the JP to pave the way to ensure adequate resources are allocated and efficiently used, to streamline policies, implementation and operational mechanisms, and enhance coordination and governance arrangements. The JP aims to provide the blueprint for a domestically financed, comprehensive and integrated social protection system which if implemented will enhance quality of life and improved resilience of vulnerable populations in Malawi.

34. The underlying assumptions of which the ToC is monitored against include:

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<sup>28</sup> The Integrated Household Survey (IHS) is one of the primary instruments implemented by GoM through the National Statistical Office to monitor the changing conditions of Malawian households. The IHS provides benchmark poverty and vulnerability indicators to monitor the progress of meeting the SDGs in addition to the goals within the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS). The IHS data is commissioned every 3 years. (<http://www.nsomalawi.mw/>)

<sup>29</sup> The MGDS III is the main strategy used to achieve the Malawi 2063 Vision, launched in January 2021, to transform Malawi into a wealthy and self-reliant industrialized upper middle-income country.

- i. Government, Development Partners (DPs) and private sector will have continued interest in social protection, including SRSP with targeted attention to the most vulnerable;
- ii. DPs and other actors are supportive of integration of systems for social protection;
- iii. Social protection components, such as the Management Information System, continues to function as normal;
- iv. Stakeholders freely share information critical for making a business case for social protection particularly on social protection expenditure;
- v. Donors and DPs support the Joint Program and therefore delineate the fragmented approach to social protection programming in the country; and
- vi. Government officials are available and supportive of the program implementation given the strained capacity in the relevant government departments.

35. Gender equality and inclusion are core to the JP objectives. The JP acknowledges that women constitute the majority of the recipients of cash transfers aimed at lean season consumption smoothing. The JPs original program document refers to figures estimating that around 75 percent of SCTP beneficiaries are female-headed households, confirming that women are over-represented among the most vulnerable. It is in this context that the JP's CBT component, of providing support directed to female-headed households, is estimated to represent around 23.6 percent of the total program budget. The JP design sets out how it will support women's empowerment through increased access to grievance and redress mechanisms related to cash transfer entitlements by implementing activities which aim to increase individual agency and community voice. The on-going NSSP policy review process is intended to provide for measures across the life cycle to improve gender equality. However, in the original JP design the activities linked to social accountability and individual agency strengthening represent about 8.5 percent of the total budget. The JP design reinforced the commitment that 32 percent<sup>30</sup> of the total budget is dedicated to activities that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Thereby, in principle, making the situation of girls and women and their specific needs at the forefront of its work.

36. In terms of implementation of the JP, WFP is the convening agency and technical lead for the JP coordination of the Joint Coordination Unit (JCU). The JCU was set up to support the day-to-day operational and programmatic coordination of the JPs activities. The JCU comprises of representatives of each of the three PUNOs. Each of the three JP outcomes are led by a separate PUNO. WFP being the overall lead agency is responsible for coordination of the program and to ensure that the Malawi's social protection system is adapted to meet emergency food needs together with the humanitarian sector under [Outcome 1](#). The core objective and added value of Component 1 was to advance the SSSP agenda in Malawi, support the Government and partners to test and roll out innovations, and enhance quality of the national responses to seasonal food insecurity (lean season) and the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 (COVID-19 Cash Response). UNICEF is responsible for implementation of [Outcome 2](#) to ensure that the Malawi Government increases its share of the social protection budget and undertakes measures to improve efficiency of spending and substantially contributes to outcome 1 in relation to shock-responsive social protection (SRSP). ILO is leading the implementation of [Outcome 3](#) which aims to transform existing policy frameworks in a bid to enhance the existing social protection system and make it more robust, comprehensive, and all-inclusive to avoid leaving anyone behind. The ET did not have any reference point to compare how the UN agencies previously coordinated SP activities prior to the JP. However, the JP required a renewed focus on strengthening collaboration.

#### **1.4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

37. The evaluation data collection approach aimed to build on the issues outlined in the Inception Report. Some adjustments in the approach had to be made due to the context in which the evaluation was operating.<sup>31</sup> However, the methodology is structured around the core evaluation questions, in line with the DAC criteria, that gives priority to relevance, coherence, effectiveness & coverage, efficiency, impact, and

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<sup>30</sup> The JP states that 8.5 percent of its allocated budget for gender and inclusion is committed to social accountability activities. The ET assume this to be related to the C4D component of Outcome 1 SRSP interventions. The JP reporting does not elaborate on what specific social accountability activities have been implemented.

<sup>31</sup> Refer to Tables 2 & 3

sustainability. A crucial priority thematic area of the evaluation framework is gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and equity issues. These thematic areas comprise a standard configuration for WFP led Decentralised Evaluation procedures allowing for cross-referencing of findings and approaches. [Annex 4](#) provides details of the relationship between the evaluation criteria and evaluation questions. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) undertaken during the evaluation fieldwork, and with key national stakeholders, aimed to assess the situation of women not only as beneficiaries but also as providers of services and their level of participation in the decision-making processes regarding social policies and broader equity concerns.

38. The evaluation places emphasis on lessons learned, emerging good practice and accountability. In this context the intended end users and stakeholders of the evaluation were identified, and consulted on their opinions to shape, and inform the evaluation findings. The evaluation attempted, with limited success, to produce evidence-based narratives to assess the basis of the JP Theory of Change ([Annex 8](#)) and review the causal pathways of interventions to achieve the program's objectives.

39. The evaluation adopted a mixed methods (MM) approach, a methodological design that integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches to theory, data collection, data analysis and interpretation. This approach was agreed in the inception report. Data was collected through a mix of primary and secondary sources using a range of techniques including desk study, household surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, participatory engagement and direct observation of the project's performance on the ground. Primary data was collected through household interviews with beneficiary and non-beneficiary households, key informant interviews with key informants in the CBT district, technical support district as well as those from central government, and focus group discussions in Nsanje district. The primary purpose of the approach was to strengthen reliability of the data, validity of the findings and recommendations, with an aim of broadening an understanding of the processes through which program outcomes and impacts are achieved, and how these were affected by the context within which the program was implemented. [Annex 3](#) provides details of the evaluation methodology guidance, while [Annex 5](#) provides information on data collection tools.

40. The evaluation deployed several instruments to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The instruments and methods the ET delivered included:

- Desk review checklist
- Semi-structured (SSI) Household Questionnaire (874)
- Checklist for Focus Group Discussions (FGD) (12)
- Checklist for Key Informants Interviews (KII) - Including community leaders, policy makers, NGOs and development partners (25)

41. Household Questionnaire was the main instrument used for collecting quantitative data through SSIs. In consultation with the PUNO evaluation managers the evaluation decided to adopt and adapt the original LSR intervention WFP baseline questionnaire for easy comparison of the relevant variables. The questionnaire consisted of questions that enabled the evaluation to assess the project outcomes at household level. The evaluation team developed guides and instruments used in the fieldwork in close consultation with the PUNOs evaluation managers. Checklists for FGDs and KIIs guided the discussions/interviews with communities and other stakeholders at district and national level (refer to [Annex 5](#) data collection tools). The ET together with the PUNO evaluation managers discussed and refined the instruments and used them to train the WFP appointed outsourced monitoring partner's team supervisors and enumerators. The pre-field training included pretesting the instruments with the field teams in Nsanje with the outsourced monitoring partner.<sup>32</sup>

42. The evaluation aimed to explore the underlying results chain linkages of the JP to assess if the program established the basis and foundation of a viable groundwork to consider potential impact scenarios. Sustainability issues were considered in the context of what the program intended to achieve within the duration of the program at the time of the evaluation. The focus of the evaluation is on learning,

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<sup>32</sup> WFP Malawi appointed an independent outsourced monitoring partner - Bill Consulting - to collect data from the field. Bill Consulting is responsible for everything from enumerator recruitment, vehicle hiring, and data collection. The budget for the outsourced monitoring partner field work for this evaluation is US\$13,730.

good practice replication and process. As such the above stated DAC criteria is the basis to assess the performance of the program.

43. GEWE and human rights issues were reflected throughout the evaluation design (including the tools), implementation (data collection and analysis), results, recommendations, dissemination, and utilization of findings. This included an analysis of whether and how GEWE objectives and mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design, and are regularly reported against, and whether this was guided by WFP/UN and system wide objectives on gender and women’s empowerment. For example, the data collection tools were designed in a way that they protected the respondent’s rights by not asking personal and sensitive information. Secondly during data collection, the outsourced consultant (Bill Consulting) was advised to complete data collection by 5 pm each day to allow the data collection team travel during daylight to their respective places of lodging. In addition, all data collectors obtained consent from the respondents before commencing the interviews and the respondents that were not willing to respond were left and no one was forced to respond to the survey questions. Furthermore, during analysis the data was treated with high level confidentiality and was not shared with any individuals apart from the UN agencies.

44. The evaluation experienced a number of limitations. A primary concern related to the timing of the evaluation which was undertaken before the implementation period of the SDG Fund grant had ended. Therefore, at the time of the evaluation the ET was not able to capture the anticipated full range of achievements envisaged. Mitigation actions were considered for each identified limitation, these are expressed in the [table 3](#) below. Despite these limitations, the ET believes that the evaluation obligations were reliably fulfilled, based on the data available. Despite these limitations the ET, with the support of the PUNOs, was able to adequately address these issues by triangulating information gathered from various sources in order to provide robust evidence-based analysis.

**Table 3: Methodological limitations and mitigation actions**

Limitation		Mitigation Actions	Comments/Caveat
1	Timing of the evaluation affecting the ability to fully assess and observe results of the Joint Program across all three outcome areas.	<p>The ET and PUNOs recognised the evaluation timing factor would never be ideal given the emphasis to complete the evaluation before the JP implementation end date. These issues are documented in paragraphs 38, 39 &amp; 41.</p> <p>The difference in baseline and endline timing was considered in the course of the evaluation approach. Key informant interview and FGDs results were used in the cases where information at household level could not be backdated to the original questionnaire.</p> <p>The ET considered timing of the data analysis in the context that some specific activities related to outcome 2 &amp; 3 will only be completed after the evaluation process. Where evidence was available the ET presented scenarios on the likely trajectory of certain interventions meeting their objectives.</p>	<p>In cases where focal personnel who were still implementing the project could not be reached, reports (annual and quarterly) were used as primary reference materials.</p> <p>Some program activity documentation and reports were not available within the timeframe of the ETs data collection and analysis phase to feed into the final report.</p>

Limitation		Mitigation Actions	Comments/Caveat
2	Availability and timely access to acceptable data sets related to the 3 outcomes and the 8 outputs in order to share with evaluation team within a reasonable cut-off time agreed with PUNOs.	Identified secondary data sources, and benchmark information, to assist in establishing best estimates possible, specifically in the context related to outcome 2 & 3 where baseline data was limited.  The ET explored different options to fill existing data gaps. ET established agreement with PUNOs on the limitations of data sets relevant to specific outputs and activities.	Some program reports not available to the ET due to sequencing of output activities and adjustments made to outcome 3 in dialogue with GoM.
3	Difficulties identifying and accessing government institutional partners and representatives due to staff turnover and adequate knowledge of the SP4SDG	The PUNO country offices used their existing relationships with the government colleagues to establish and identify appropriate GoM and DP representatives. The ET contacted over 19 national level stakeholders to interview but many did not respond or were not available. The ET considered alternative ways to engage with GoM officials due to challenges accessing (remote) Teams appointment schedules.	The reliability and integrity of perspectives of the JP by some key ministry collaborating partners was a concern expressed at inception phase. Many scheduled interviews did not take place as GoM officials were not available. Key informant interviews continued well into the analysis and final report writing phase.
4	Challenges traveling to and within Malawi due to COVID-19 restrictions	ET team leader worked remotely throughout the evaluation process. Two independent national consultants and the WFP appointed outsourced monitoring partner conducted the field work data collection including outsourced monitoring partner enumerators. Agreed to be flexible on ways and means of collecting data, including remote interviews with key informants in other Districts. ET set out data collection processes in close consultation with WFP, UNICEF & ILO.	Appointment of the outsourced monitoring partner was delayed due to WFPs procurement procedures which were beyond the control of the ET. Start of field work delayed as a result.  A number of key informant interviews continued after the agreed field work period.
5	Access to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries to gauge perceptions of the program.	Communicated through PUNOs contacts with cooperating partners and beneficiaries on dates when data collection was to be undertaken. The ET considered the sampling size for the fieldwork and included more beneficiaries to take into account potential non-response rates.	WFPs procurement rules determined the unit costs of outsourced services which had implications for the ET field work approach and the preferred sample size.

Limitation		Mitigation Actions	Comments/Caveat
6	Challenges for ET working alongside WFP's outsourced monitoring partner for the field work data collection.	WFP facilitated meetings to agree and clarify expected lines of accountability including rules and requirements of the relationship between ET national consultants and the WFP appointed outsourced monitoring partner.	This set-up of using independent consultants, directly hired by WFP Malawi, and outsourced data collection services in a viable working arrangement had not been tested to date. The ET consultants assumed responsibility for safeguarding principles of the conduct of field staff and report concerns to WFP. Codes of conduct agreements were discussed.

44. The evaluation conformed to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical standards and norms. The contractors undertaking the evaluations are responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. No particular ethical issues were encountered in the evaluation. However, the following safeguards and measures were applied: the selection of ET members with no conflicts of interest; ensuring informed consent from all key informants and FGD participants for the standard narrative used in verbally obtaining informed consent; protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants; ensuring cultural sensitivity; respecting the autonomy of participants; ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women); and ensuring that the evaluation results in do no harm to participants or their communities.

45. The approach, methodology and actual implementation of the evaluation adhered to the core humanitarian principles of impartiality and operational independence. Impartiality was assured by relying on a cross-section of information sources from different stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries.

46. This report aims to comply fully with the WFP DEQAS and quality assurance has been integrated throughout, initially by the team leader, internally by the three PUNO evaluation managers and externally by the independent quality assurance service managed by WFP.

## 2. Evaluation findings

47. The evaluation findings and the evidence to substantiate them are presented below. The findings are structured according to the seven core evaluation questions and the thematic criteria. [Annex 7](#) provides details of the connections between the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

### 2.1. EVALUATION CRITERIA: RELEVANCE

**Evaluation question 1: To what extent were the objectives of SP4SDG valid and appropriate with UN and National policies and how have these remained relevant over time?**

**EQ1 - Overarching observation:**

The SP4SDG objectives remained valid throughout the implementation period under review. The JP retained relevance to the exiting policy context environment and where appropriate adapted several development objectives, in response to GoM requests in relation to COVID-19 and refocusing of [Outcome 3](#).

**Sub-Question 1.1: Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the overall goal, objectives and intended impacts? How appropriate is the results framework in relation to the stated program interventions?**

48. **Finding 1.1a: The JP results framework aligns itself with relevant GoM SP policy goals and is in tune with the UNs strategic objectives.**

49. The JP's Results Framework is structured to ensure it underpinned the objectives of GoM and UN strategic policies. The MNSSP II is the overarching social protection policy framework which places emphasis on three pillars: 1) consumption support, 2) resilient livelihoods, and 3) shock-sensitive social protection. The SP4SDG Results Framework components are intrinsically aligned to the MNSSP II policy pillars and through the JP it has generated, according to several key informant interviews, considerable learning for the Government to build upon in order to refine existing policy and programmatic processes.

50. The JP was instrumental in supporting the multi-agency government led MVAC and IPC studies to identify of the most vulnerable communities requiring the LSR. In this regard, the JP provided technical support to key social protection organisations in Nsanje and Balaka Districts. The main ones in Nsanje, where the LSR of December 2020 to March 2021 was implemented, are the District Social Support Committee (DSSC), Government departments (disaster management affairs, agriculture, community development, education and the police). In addition, the JP built the capacity of various Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that are implementing SP in the district. These include Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS), GOAL Malawi and Concern Worldwide. The same organisations were involved in the MVAC assessment of 2020 whose results informed the programming of the aforementioned LSR that the PUNOs implemented.

51. The JP has provided technical assistance in supporting GoM's commitments for reforming the SP sector. This includes a legislative examination of the Malawi Pension Act of 2010, supporting the review process of the national social support policy to align it to comprehensive social protection system and, assessing social accountability mechanisms for strengthening social protection through the review of fiscal space for the SP sector in the country as encapsulated in the GoM Vision 2063. The JPs strategic relevance to the policy context in Malawi is presented in reference to [Table 4](#).

**Table 4: Summary of relevant GoM and UN policies with linkages to the Joint Program**

UN Policy Context	GoM Social protection policy and JP linkages
United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2019-2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pillar 3 - Outcome 7: Households have increased food and nutrition security,</li> </ul>	Coordination of UN agency support to implement SP through MNSSP II, underpinning shock responsive social protection (MNSSP II Pillar 3)

UN Policy Context	GoM Social protection policy and JP linkages
equitable access to WASH and healthy ecosystems and resilient livelihoods	
International Labour Organisation (ILO) Country Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) 2020-2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority 3 – Outcomes 3.1: Enhanced quality and coverage of social security schemes; and Outcome 3.3: Malawi’s social protection interventions and institutional capacity enhanced</li> </ul>	Commitments towards: (MNSSP II Pillar 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislative review of Malawi Pension Act 2010</li> <li>Social accountability mechanisms for SP strengthening</li> <li>Reviewing fiscal space for SP</li> <li>Review of the National Social Support Policy process</li> </ul>
World Food Programme (WFP) Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Outcome 1: Shock responsive hunger safety nets</li> <li>Strategic Outcome 2: Resilience Building – Malawi Vision 2063</li> </ul>	Support to multi-agency government led MVAC & post-harvest assessments (IPC) Support & coordinate food security and nutrition sensitive SP programs (MNSSP II Pillar 1); Capacity building on shock responsive social protection programs
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Social Policy Program in Malawi (Since 2006)	Support the Government through extensive technical assistance in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the <b>Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) II</b>

52. The JP interventions always intended to adhere to the GoM policy environment, which are conducive and have resonance with the UN agencies own global strategic priorities. This interface has worked well. All GoM and development partner stakeholders that the ET consulted with testify to the crucial work undertaken by the JP. The only observation noted by GoM stakeholders was the JP’s duration wasn’t sufficient to fully address the existing problems the country faces. In this regard the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to reducing time for program implementation due to restrictions.

53. **Finding 1.1b: The JP was responsive in adapting both to a change in policy directive and reacting speedily to the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic. However more could have been done to monitor gender concerns across the results framework.**

54. At the time of the program start up the original context and scope of the JP was validated by GoM and development partners at a launch event. At that time of the program launch, the results framework had a clearly defined program of work informed by lessons emerging from previous development partners’ interventions to support social protection systems strengthening in Malawi. The onset of COVID-19 was a game changer which perversely presented the JP with an opportunity to adapt the JP work plan to meet the GoM’s unexpected, revised policy priorities. The operational landscape shifted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased the scope, and the necessity, to re-design key areas of work. In addition, with the change of government in Malawi in June 2020 the new government’s policy priorities emphasized the aspiration to introduce an old age social pension. In response the JP provided relevant support to the advocacy efforts required for introducing an old age pension. The JP remained strategic to these demanding challenges and amendments to the results framework, and output level results indicators, while maintaining alignment with the government’s priorities.

55. Changes to several outputs under **Outcome 3**, resulted in the gender dimension performance indicators being removed from the original results framework. These gender and social inclusion indicators were not redefined elsewhere in the JP’s results framework following the changes in May 2021. This is a significant failing of the re-design aspect of the JP to address gender mainstreaming challenges which are systemic in Malawi,<sup>33</sup> so this was a missed opportunity at a strategic level. However, the review process for

<sup>33</sup> Malawi COVID Rapid Gender Analysis, CARE Malawi, May 2020 (<https://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Malawi-RGA-Brief.pdf>)

the draft NSS policy framework aims to respond to the needs of all people, children, youth, the elderly, women and girls, men and boys, the disabled, as well as workers in the informal sector, in this regard, it is argued, the gender dimension will be visible.

**56. Finding 1.1c: The design of the JP is, and still remains, appropriate within the limited timescale, scope and duration of the SP4SDG program's interventions.**

57. The overarching objective of the SP4SDG is broad and encompasses a multitude of ambitious interventions to support government policy and programmatic implementation. In this regard, according to several key informant interviews with senior GoM officials the JP is relevant and appropriate as it provides a platform where the UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, ILO, Residents Coordinators Office) and government ministries work together in a collaborative manner, and thereby highlighting this value-added aspect to the PUNOs coordinated approach.

58. The JP combined innovative SSSP prototype with reinforced financial structures and the transformation of existing policies into the basis for a legislative provision to enhance existing social protection systems to be more robust, comprehensive and sustainable. In this regard the JP technical assistance enabled the Government and implementing partners to develop Standard Operating Procedures<sup>34</sup> (SOPs) providing practical mechanisms for implementing Horizontal Expansion of existing SP CBT programs under a shock sensitive social protection approach. The JP is expected to help ensure that future emergency food assistance (SDG 2.1) is provided by leveraging the social protection system, where applicable and appropriate (SDG 1.3).

59. The JP provided technical assistance to support the GoM efforts to finalize its social protection financing strategy. In this context the JP has produced three critical documents. These include: the financing and expenditure brief, a budget brief and fiscal space analysis as indicated in the financing e-newsletter article. These documents combined provide an operational analysis of the financing trends in social protection in Malawi and examine both on and off budget allocations resources and explore the feasibility of increasing domestic resource coverage for the financial sustainability of the sector. As figure 1 below indicates most of the social protection financial support is dependent on donor assistance with the government only supporting 5 percent of the total budget of the SCTP. In addition, SCTP funding channels are fragmented with donors imposing their own funding modalities and conditions on the SP system (refer to figure 4). This is a drawback, both in terms of donor harmonization,<sup>35</sup> and for promoting accountability and transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the SP system.

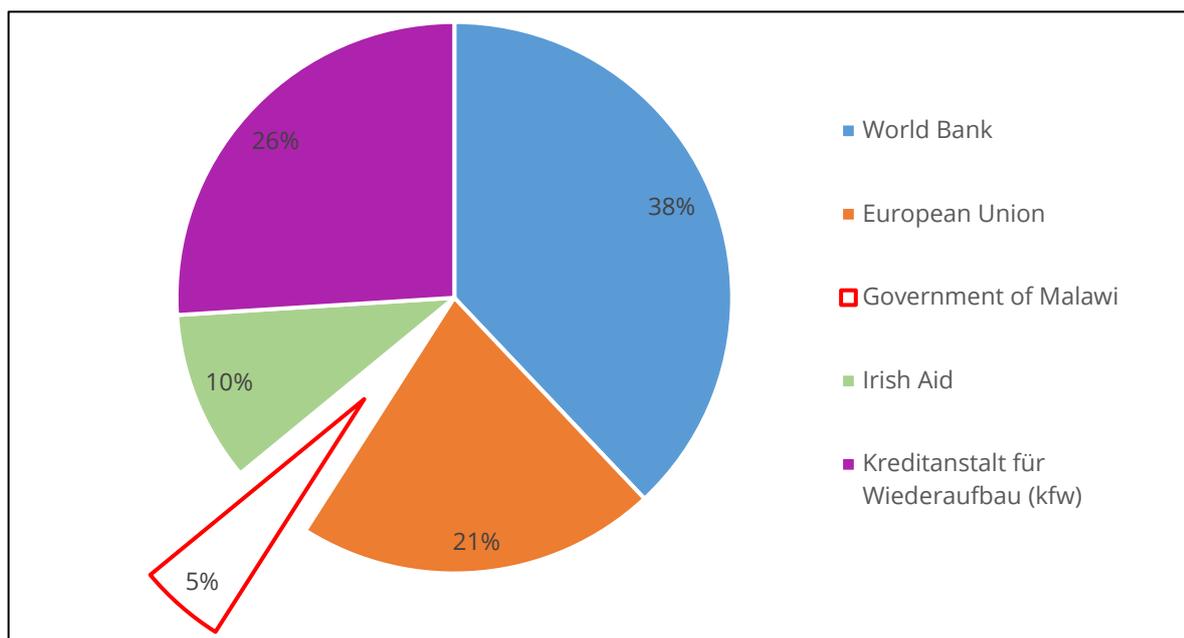
60. Through **Outcome 3** the JP is supporting the design of SP programs aimed at enhancing the quality and coverage of social security schemes where most (12 percent) of the JP targeted beneficiaries were 60 years old or above. The JPs inclusion of older people as beneficiaries contributed to the Governments goal of providing social support to old people as stipulated in the NSSP document. This supports the governments perspective that presently most older people do not have access to, or benefit from, formal social security system and they suffer when hit by disasters. Furthermore, **Outcome 3** of the JP is contributing towards enhancement of Malawi's social protection interventions, social accountability mechanisms, and institutional capacity.

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<sup>34</sup> SOP brief summary: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/doco-summary-brief-sop-implementation-march2016.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Harmonizing Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, 2003. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/20896122.pdf>

**Figure 1: Source of funding for vertical expansion (VE) of the LSR, average, 2017-2019**



Source: Social Protection Budget Brief, UNICEF, 2020-2021

**Sub-Question 1.2: How relevant is the program for addressing the needs and rights of the most vulnerable targeted groups: women, men, boys and girls, people with disabilities and older people?**

61. **Finding 1.2a: The cash-based transfer intervention component of the JP Lean Season Response was relevant as it met the immediate food needs of the most vulnerable groups, within the geographical focus of the program.**

62. At the community level in Nsanje district, the goal of the JP was to provide unconditional cash assistance and help food insecure and vulnerable households meet immediate food needs. The financial support given ensured that there was zero hunger during the lean season. As a result, people could afford nutritious food and therefore remained healthy with improved well-being. Table 5 provides a summary of the sampled beneficiary households. These include households that were female headed, disabled, child headed and those taking care of orphans.

63. The fieldwork data analysis indicates that majority (46.5 percent) of the sampled beneficiaries were female heads of their households whilst 43.6 percent of the sampled non-beneficiaries were female heads. Furthermore, 8.4 percent of both the sampled non-beneficiaries and beneficiaries were living with chronically ill people. In the households with chronically ill people, 72.2 percent were main income earners for the beneficiary households and 52.8 percent were main income earners in the non-beneficiary households. Furthermore, 24.4 percent of sampled beneficiary households were headed by the elderly (i.e., people 60 years old and above) whilst 18.3 percent of the elderly were heading the non-beneficiary households. Furthermore, 0.5 percent of the beneficiary households were child headed. In addition to the status of the household heads, the survey results indicate that 30 percent and 19.3 percent of the beneficiary and non-beneficiary households take care of orphans respectively. The differences indicate that the selected beneficiaries' households indeed received the support.

64. Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) with beneficiaries suggest that the JP unconditional cash-based transfers were therefore appropriate for households which were headed by women, included people with disabilities, the chronically ill and the elderly because by virtue of their physiological conditions they are unable to work and earn money for daily food consumption.

**Table 5: Sample of Non-beneficiary and beneficiary households**

	Proportion of households (%)					
	Female headed households	Child headed households	Households with chronically ill people	Households with disabled people	Elderly household heads (>60 years old)	Households with orphans
Beneficiaries (n=443)	46.5	0.5	8.4	5.2	24.4	30.0
Non-Beneficiaries (n=431)	43.6	0.0	8.4	6.5	18.3	19.3

65. **Finding 1.2b: The JP interventions at community level enhanced people’s coping strategies. However, the long-term benefits will require further monitoring.**

66. Various men and women beneficiary groups report that the JP LSR cash prevented them from hunger and eating less preferred food. The commonest less preferred traditional foods that communities eat in Nsanje are water lily bulbs (*Nymphaea Odorata*) locally known as *nyika* and wild water vegetables called *thove*. In order to gather the bulbs, people resort to high-risk strategies including wading in marshes exposing themselves to potentially fatal crocodile attacks (Box 2). In addition, when the bulbs are eaten in large quantities, they induce diarrhoea and other stomach related illnesses.

**Box 2: Selected case study in Nsanje District**

*“We spend most of our times in water in search of nyika and thove to bring home, prepare and give to our children. When they eat, some of them have stomach ache especially the youngest ones. There are people in the communities who lost their limbs and are physically challenged because they were attacked by crocodiles in the process of searching for the nyika. To collect enough nyika for the family, one needs to be strong and energetic. We leave early in the morning leaving our children behind with nothing to eat only to bring nyika and thove which only last us a day or two and we have to go back to the rivers. Nyika and thove are not nutritious, but what can we do, we have no other food during these times.”* FGDs with women beneficiaries in Chimombo TA.

67. The JP cash transfer payments came at the right time of year (between January and April 2021) when food was scarce. At that time of year families are desperate and the need for humanitarian assistance was at its greatest. Communities experienced little rains in the 2019/2020 season and, as a consequence, did not harvest enough food to take them to the next season.

68. With the LSR CBT intervention each beneficiary household received a cash top-up of MK23,100 (US\$27.84) per month for four months. The ET were informed that beneficiaries used this money to purchase essential food items such as maize, beans and cooking oil. The JP beneficiaries indicated they preferred the cash (to food) as it gave them greater flexibility on household purchases.

69. Beneficiaries conveyed stories of entrepreneurs taking advantage of the situation to sell maize near to the cash distribution centres. It was reported that a 50kg bag of maize which usually cost between MK5,000 and MK8,000 per bag at normal market rate is sold between MK10,000 and MK15,000 per 50kg bag as the lean period progressed. Higher prices during the lean season were driven by a combination of low maize supply in the communities and Nsanje district as whole, and by opportunistic behaviour.

70. In a bid to reduce social interaction meetings with communities as part of COVID-19 prevention the JP provided one-off double payments for January and February. The double payment enabled some households to buy livestock and non-food basic items like soap, sugar and to cover health care costs. This had the dual effect of building the economic capacity of households while also contributing to improved nutritional status.

71. During household interviews the JP beneficiaries expressed views that small livestock like goats and chickens acquired after receiving double cash transfers from the program are important assets. The cash-based transfers have started to help elevate households from extreme poverty, improve their diets and enabled them cope positively in hard times. Data from the household survey shows that beneficiary households, which were included in the LSR cash transfers partly because they had no livestock, reported owning more goats (13.5 percent) and chickens (56 percent) than the non-beneficiaries of the LSR cash (11.6 percent and 36.7 percent respectively).

72. Towards the end of the rainy season in March, households used some of their cash to invest in farming activities utilizing the residual moisture in the ground to plant crops that they harvest and consume from September onwards. During the time of the evaluation (September), households were harvesting their crops, these included staple maize, red beans, vegetables in particular pumpkins and okra, and white sweet potatoes.

73. As reported by FGDs, when food insecurity becomes worse during lean months, people in Nsanje migrate to other districts. The LSR cash has reduced such migration trends. These household and community level trends will require longitudinal monitoring to determine if the effects have long term benefits or are only a temporary respite.

74. **Finding 1.2c: The UBR system was effectively used for the LSR intervention. This assisted in solving beneficiary selection misunderstandings at the community level.** Through the community engagement processes there was reports of unanimous acceptance that the LSR selection process was transparent and honest as reported by local leaders, committees, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Similarly, other FGDs and key informant interviews confirm that the UBR and PMT processes were appropriately utilized in the selection of the most vulnerable households in need of food assistance.

75. **Finding 1.2d: For boys and girls, the JP household cash entitlement enabled them to stay in school and refrain from doing ganyu (casual work). In this regard the JP's LSR cash-based transfer also had some positive educational outcomes.**

76. The evaluation also found, through the analysis of the household survey data, that the SP4SDG has shown notable progress toward alignment and achievement of pillar 2 of the MNSSP (resilient livelihoods). It is reported that the cash provided has enabled 87.6 percent of boys and girls from beneficiary households to remain in school throughout the lean season period, which if sustained, has the potential to break inter-generational cycle of poverty and ensure resilient livelihoods and long-term pathways for graduation out of poverty (Box 3). The WFP school feeding program in Nsanje, while no doubt contributes to improved school enrolment and retention, but when households become food insecure in lean seasons children are forced to drop out to assist the household economy.

### Box 3 Shared experience by a youth

*"Families with school going children were able to send their children to school. Before cash transfers, the children went to school on an empty stomach and this had a negative impact on their performance because they were failing to concentrate in class. Many of them were simply dropping out and in the case of girls there were getting married"*

Key informant, Nsiyapanji youth club, TA Malemia-Nsanje.

### Sub-Question 1.3: How have civil society organizations, including employers' and workers' organisations, participated in the project design and implementation?

77. **Finding 1.3a: The JP has created an enabling environment for CSOs to strategically engage with some key areas of the SP4SDG. However, more needs to be done to support the transformational aspects of SP in Malawi in which CSO performs a critical role.**

78. Key informants indicate that ILO has been instrumental in creating a good platform for CSOs to engage in strategic SP policy debates. In the context of the social pension debate ILO has supported and financed different initiatives, and appointing consultants, all of which is creating the space for the legal basis of GoM initiative for a targeted cash transfer (CT) intervention. ILO has also facilitated NGO/CSO capacity building through support to engage communities and traditional leaders in national debates on

social protection. ILO has played a critical role providing support for capacity building and institutional strengthening for government officials. However, some in the NGO community are of the view that Malawi lags behind other regional African countries. This relates to Malawi's transition to ensure that the SP policy environment and specific SP programs move faster towards a rights-based approach in line with GoM's commitments to promote progressive human rights, including the right to social support outlined in Chapter IV of the Constitution and International Treaties that Malawi is signatory to.

79. Across the other JP output areas there was limited involvement of CSOs recorded in the JP reporting. However, a consultative meeting for CSOs and interest groups was organized under the policy review process. The discussion fed into the draft Policy Framework Document. Under the SRSP component of the JP the Communications for Development (C4D) implementing partner was only appointed in May 2021. The delay in commissioning this work is associated with COVID-19 social interaction restriction. It is understood that the C4D will focus on increasing the awareness and demand for accountability of social protection cash transfer program beneficiaries and their communities. It was reported that the JP LSR beneficiaries in Nsanje had previously benefitted from C4D activities linked to rights and entitlements to access cash-based transfers. This activity was financed through the PROSPER<sup>36</sup> program.

**80. Finding 1.3b: The JP worked effectively with all relevant social protection organisations in the targeted districts from the design, implementation and monitoring of activities related to the LSR intervention.**

81. In terms of participation of key institutions for the LSR intervention the JP carried out a one-week orientation in November 2020 for members of the District Social Support Committee (DSSC) and District Civil Protection Committees (DCPC). Participants included representatives from the DC's office, UNICEF, WFP, Department of Economic Planning and Development, MRCS and Ministry of Gender.

82. The district level orientation covered design issues of the LSR, including the beneficiary distribution plan arrangements, duration of the cash transfers, the beneficiary selection criteria using the UBR, beneficiary pay roll and development of the complaints-feedback mechanism.

83. In a cascade process for the orientation of CSO stakeholder involvement in the LSR cash transfer component WFP, together with social protection partners sensitized the Area Development Committees (ADCs) and Area Civil Protection Committees (ACPCs) who in turn sensitized Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Village Civil Protection Committees (VCPCs) about the design, implementation and monitoring of the LSR cash transfers.

84. Area Development Committees (ADCs), ACPCs, VDCs, VCPCs and local leaders all participated in the verification of names from the UBR and sensitization of communities undertaken by WFP and social protection organisations. After verification and validation exercises, the UBR unit in the Department of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms sent the list with PMT scores to WFP, who in turn shares data with the MRCS. Key informant interviews and FGDs at district and community levels revealed that the JP engaged with all relevant institutions throughout the LSR process. These key institutions are listed in [Table 6](#).

**Table 6: Social Protection District level Institutions**

Key institutions	Critical role
District Social Support Committee (DSSC)	Responsible for all SP programs. The DSSC is chaired by the Director of Planning and Development (DPD) and District Social Welfare Office (DSWO) is the secretariat.
District Civil Protection Committees (DCPC)	Works with area and village civil district committees to identify, assess and manage disasters
Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)	Support implementation of social protection

<sup>36</sup> Refer to Table 7

	programs. In context of Nsanje district CSOs included: Malawi Red Cross Society, Goal Malawi and Concern Worldwide
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85. The selection of the LSR beneficiaries was through the UBR data, where the PMT scores were used. The priority was households ranked as poorest going up the wealth quantiles. This process generates a pre-eligible list of beneficiaries. Key stakeholders at the district level, the MRCS, district council and District Social Welfare Office (DSWO), then take the list for validation and endorsement in the communities. In the event of other observations such as migration and death of beneficiaries on the list or failure to identify some names, replacements were made at this stage using names on the waiting list. Following which, a final list of beneficiaries was produced and households were notified.

86. WFP appointed the Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO) to receive, follow up and coordinate resolution of complaints and cases from the communities involved. YONECO utilized a toll-free line and set up suggestion boxes and a help desk at the distribution centres. Complaints were posted on the electronic dashboard which enabled WFP, MRCS and the district council to follow-up on cases. Notifications were also sent by email to responsible officers. The police escorted the representatives from these organisations to ensure security and protection when going to the communities to resolve the complaints. WFP, UNICEF, ILO, district social protection partners and CSOs, including YONECO participated in monthly joint monitoring of cash.

**2.2. EVALUATION CRITERIA: COHERENCE**

**Evaluation question 2: How coherent is the program within the context of the social protection policy environment in Malawi, in what way are the PUNOs interventions aligned to support and fit within this policy space in the country?**

**EQ2- Overarching observation:**

The JP resides and fits firmly within the social protection and humanitarian policy space in Malawi. The PUNOs interventions, informed by previous areas of engagement within the sector, attempted and in some areas succeeded in aligning with and supporting the GoM policy environment working in close collaboration with DPs. Key progress on systems strengthening, providing lessons for enhanced social protection service delivery, and influencing an increase in GoM financial resource allocations to social protection, is work in progress.

**Sub-question 2.1: How well were interventions coordinated between the PUNOs and key government stakeholders as well as among the government stakeholders at different levels of government structures?**

87. **Finding 2.1: The JP contributed to and supported existing GoM coordination mechanisms for implementing social protection interventions at various levels through GoM structures.**

88. The original JP project document, in the context of coordination between the PUNOs and GoM refers to the internal UN structure to manage ongoing operations in country, and external structures with GoM to support SP interventions. Internally the UN Country Team has oversight of all joint programs in Malawi. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms manages the on-going overall multi-sectoral coordination of the social protection sector. In the context of the external structures the MNSSP II sets out the GoM’s arrangement for the SP framework. Within this framework there are several committees both at a national and district level. At the national level - The Malawi National Social Support Steering Committee; the Malawi National Social Support Technical Committee; and, the Malawi National Social Support Pillars Working Groups, of which there are several. At district level there are the district social support committees and the community social support committees with responsibility for overseeing the coordination and implementation of the MNSSP II. The JP has effectively supported these coordination structures to influence interventions through JP Outputs 1 and 2. The review of the national social support policy is envisaged to contribute to effective coordination of the social protection sector – Pillar on enhancing linkages. However, the evidence to identify improved coordination leading to any substantial progress on outputs 3 to 8 is not present.

89. The JP interventions are defined by its results framework. The PUNOs state that the JP interventions were informed by evidence generated through analyses of various aspects of the SP policy and program environment undertaken previously by the UN agencies.<sup>37</sup> These include public expenditure reviews, local economy-wide impact evaluations, and cost efficiency of the SP system. While the ET is not in a position to dispute this basis of analysis to inform the JP design access to such documents were not available to the team. However, the JP interventions have resonance with the approaches undertaken by the DPs in Malawi thus providing a high degree of complementarity and harmonisation.

90. Building on previous interaction each of the three UN partners bring relevant experiences of effectively engaging with GoM at a strategic level, including engaging throughout the MW2063<sup>38</sup> envisioning and MIP1<sup>39</sup> process to support the SDGs. WFP and UNICEF co-chair key working groups with GoM including social protection and emergency food security. While ILO offers regional and global experience in financing and costing analysis of social protection measures, all of which have been instrumental in leading the debate with GoM on the legal basis for a universal social old age pension and a more comprehensive social protection system in Malawi. Given this close connection with GoM the PUNOs have a comparative advantage to engage and coordinate JP implementation interventions at various levels of government. However, the documented evidence available does not provide any basis to inform with confidence if this comparative advantage was successfully exploited.

91. The JP PUNOs perform a technical advisory role to the learning taskforce on coordination of social protection. This is an initiative led by department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) and Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms (MoEPDPSR) that aims to integrate implementation of the MNSSP II through harmonized SP and humanitarian action. Regarding the coordination within the humanitarian sector the following institutional arrangements include: The Food Security Cluster; Cash Working Group; JEFAP Taskforce; Shock-Responsive Social Protection Learning Taskforce; and, at district level the Civil Protection Committee.<sup>40</sup>

92. An MoU between the UN country team and parliament allows for the JP to engage with three parliamentary committees, legal, social welfare, budget and finance. In addition, ILO has an established joint coordination unit with GoM for the oversight on outcome 3 of the JP. Participation in these crucial committees and various taskforces provides the political traction to underpin the JPs three outcome areas. The JP has played a critical role in enhancing the coordination among key stakeholders responsible for implementing social protection interventions. This is in line with the National Social Support Policy (NSSP), and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) which calls for strong coordination within the social protection sector and is a critical means of improving the livelihoods and welfare of vulnerable people.

93. The coordination and collaboration with government agencies at national, district and community levels contributed positively to the JP implementation process, and in promoting ownership and sustainability of program impacts. In addition to the JP coordination structures (described in Figure 2), UNICEF is a member of Protection Cluster, Social Cash Transfers Program Coordination Committee, UBR Task Force, and Call Centre Task Force. While ILO is member of the SP Targeting Task Force, Old Age Pension Task Team, and the Malawi National Social Support Technical Committee (MNSSTC).

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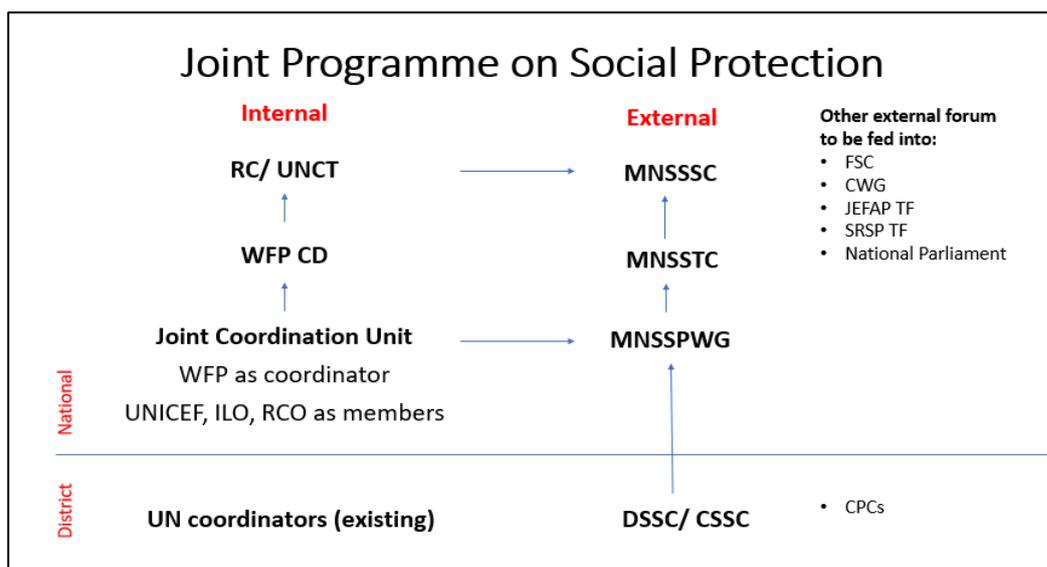
<sup>37</sup> Refer to the Joint Program Document: Joint SDG Fund, 5 November 2019

<sup>38</sup> Malawi Vision 2063 - <https://malawi.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/MW2063-%20Malawi%20Vision%202063%20Document.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> The Malawi first 10-year Implementation Plan (MIP-1) aims to meet two key milestones: i) to raise the country's income status to lower-middle income level by 2030; and ii) to meet most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) whose endline target is 2030.

<sup>40</sup> Responsibility for implementation of LSR at community level.

**Figure 2: Coordination of the Joint Program with government stakeholders at all levels**



Source: Joint Program Document

**Sub-question 2.2: To what extent did the Joint Program lead to stronger coordination mechanisms between implementing PUNOs?**

94. **Finding 2.2: The joint program leveraged the expertise of the PUNOs to ensure targets and outcomes were coherent and effective. However, there is room for strengthening coordination among the UN partners. Moreover, a more joint approach is required while working on joint projects.**

95. The JCU met approximately 16 times during the existing JP reporting period in which the parties discuss the JP activities, budget processes, and reporting arrangements. In terms of reporting on the SDG fund the JP is expected to provide results-oriented and evidence-based updates prepared in accordance with instructions and templates developed by the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat. The JP PUNOs meet on a quarterly basis, primarily with the purpose of updating each other on the progress of key activities and collating information to produce the required quarterly reporting arrangements. These reports are shared with GoM counterparts relevant to the outcome areas, although GoM stakeholders suggest the information in these reports is limited and doesn't provide a significant amount of detail from which to influence policy and programmatic processes.

96. There are differing perspectives from the PUNOs concerning the JP expected reporting requirements in relation to the programs stated Theory of Change (ToC). The JP ToC identifies three outcomes, defined as what the JP wants to achieve, and eight program outputs, as the actions that intend to contribute to the three outcomes. UNICEF report on activities related to outputs and not specifically reporting against the overall outcome results framework. It was suggested the current Work Plan budget tracking document is a useful tool to keep track of progress of what's been achieved. In this regard, by contrast, the JP results framework is seen as a plan of where the program wants to get to, and in some specific areas it may be difficult to report on progress as government leads on these areas and data is collected by national structures at different timing intervals. ILO stakeholders indicated that they report on progress against the three key outputs under outcome 3 for which they are the lead agency.

97. According to WFP the JP is accountable for output level reporting. The JP reports on progress of some activities, for example those stated in the original project document,<sup>41</sup> but mainly the reporting is against the results framework rather than a defined list of specific activities. On the other hand, the

<sup>41</sup> Joint Program Document: Joint SDG Fund, 5 November 2019

quarterly reports are intended to assess progress on activities. It was reported, this is less tracked against the original project document and the program's Theory of Change. The JP partners are allowed scope to report against issues that are relevant.

98. Although the PUNOs take a lead responsibility for each key outcome according to the budget tracking document, there is joint collaboration and coordination to work in partnership across output areas. These include output 1 – where WFP has overall lead, but some budget heads are allocated to other UN agencies, such as support provided by UNICEF on CUCI registration, and ILO providing support to CUCI targeting/registration; output 2 – led by UNICEF with ILO taking on budget briefs and fiscal framework analysis issues with the intention of providing support for the dissemination of these products; output 3 – where ILO leads on most of the activities, with the exception of gap analysis for the Nssp review which is jointly shared with UNICEF. The JP budget tracker<sup>42</sup> provides a useful overview on how the PUNOs jointly coordinate inputs on various activities. Given the minimum SDG Fund management reporting criteria conditions it was inevitable that each PUNO would have different perspectives on tracking progress.

99. The PUNO coordination mechanisms are well defined in the original program document. However, there is limited information in the JP regular reporting arrangements to adequately highlight how the PUNOs jointly monitor progress towards outcome level indicators or track budget expenditures. In addition, many of the outcome level indicators were set too low or lacked adequate detail to be truly meaningful to underpin the JP theory of change (Refer to [Annex 8](#) for details).

**Sub-question 2.3: How were interventions designed to complement, harmonise and coordinate with other development partners and what was the added value of these interventions?**

100. **Finding 2.3: The JP approach built on the PUNOs combined experiences of working with DPs to ensure harmonisation and continuity of SP interventions.<sup>43</sup> However, the absence of any finalised JP specific policy analyses products limits the perspective to prove these interventions are adding significant value at present.**

101. In addition to the government led national social protection institutional arrangements the DPs in Malawi are providing support to social protection coordinate interventions through regular fora to discuss issues of strategic importance. The PUNOs provide an intrinsic value to this process given their interface between GoM and the DPs. There are a number of strategic social protection programs currently being implemented in Malawi by DPs and GoM, with an estimated value of US\$400 million. The PUNOs have some level of engagement with over half of these social protection programs. Given that both social protection and the humanitarian sector are heavily donor funded the DPs have a vested interest to ensure coherence. However, through donor engagement in the SP sector in recent years the GoM has increased its funding to the Sctp by MK2.35 billion (US\$2,852,670) from MK650 million (US\$789,036) in 2016/2017 to about MK3 billion (US\$3,641,710) in 2020/2021. In relative terms, the GoM has been contributing an average of 5 percent funding of the Sctp between fiscal years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, with a significant amount (95 percent) of the Sctp resources coming from donors. Financial data from the treasury indicates that in the 2020/2021 financial year MK40 billion (US\$48,556,100) (92 percent) of the on-budget social protection resources were financed through an on-budget grant by donors (UNICEF, 2021)<sup>44</sup>, meaning that the government's contribution was 8 percent. This figure represents a 1 percent increase when compared to the contribution at the outset of the SP4SDG. However, general economic slowdown due to COVID-19 is having an impact on budget top up by the government. The PUNOs, through the JP, have not provided any analysis to assess how the DPs are adapting interventions and responding to the current SP environment in

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<sup>42</sup> This is an Excel spreadsheet containing the JP activities. This level of information is not included in the JP results framework document.

<sup>43</sup> The ET acknowledge that the Policy Review Process is ongoing and expected to complete early next year (2022) and the data collection under this evaluation cut off a few months before final closure of the project. The policy review process has benefitted from inputs from the PUNOs and many of the DPs working in SP, which the above findings recognize.

<sup>44</sup>

<https://www.unicef.org/malawi/media/5851/file/UNICEF%20Malawi%20Social%20Protection%20Budget%20Brief%202020-2021.pdf>

the wake of COVID-19 and, importantly, what are the implications for GoM financing of the SP sector going forward.<sup>45</sup>

102. The JP aimed to co-exist, coordinate and collaborate with social protection interventions by different DPs to leverage efforts, avoid duplication of activities and accelerate impact. Table 7 presents projects, the key DP funding partners, and value added of these projects with linkages to the SP4SDG.

**Table 7: SP4SDG collaboration on social protection projects with development partners and value added**

Project Name (Implementing Organizations)	Added Value to the SP4SDG	Budget and funding source
PROSPER (WFP, UNICEF, UNDP & FAO)	Leverage for SRSP in Balaka with a focus on Horizontal Expansion	US\$86m DFID
Learning Journey for Transformation & Leadership of Social Protection Systems. (UNICEF and ILO)	Provides a platform for promoting leadership skills in design and coordination of social protection system and Learning	US\$ 150,000 (Irish Aid, ILO, GIZ)
Malawi Social Support for Resilient Livelihoods Project (World Bank and GoM)	Includes Social Cash Transfer, Public Works, E-payment, Scalable Social Protection Financing	US\$187m (World Bank)
FARMSE (IFAD and GoM)	Broader LNOB through social accountability and individual agency	US\$52m
Graduation Program (Irish Aid and Concern Worldwide)	Leverage on emerging lessons on LNOB and SRSP	US\$20m
SoSuRe (EU, KfW, NGO Consortium, GIZ and Ministry of Finance)	Leverage on SRSP experiences from previous responses.	Euro73m EU
Operationalizing linkages between social protection and humanitarian action (UNICEF, ILO and WFP)	Leverage for SRSP in Balaka with a focus on Vertical Expansion	US\$420,000 Irish Aid
TRANSFORM (ILO, UNICEF, WFP and GIZ)	Aligns to the SRSP TRANSFORM Module	US\$250,000 (Irish Aid, GIZ, UNICEF)
Social Accountability (ILO, UNICEF and GIZ)	Align with the individual agency Strengthening of beneficiaries and testing Social accountability tools, including GRM	US\$80,000 (ILO/Irish Aid)
Systems Strengthening for SCTP Implementation (UNICEF and GoM)	Align to the SRSP prototype and social protection financing architecture	Euro400,000
Support to the Implementation of MNSSP II (ILO, UNICEF and WFP, CSOs/UN Agencies/Academia/ Donors/Private Sector)	Aligns to SRSP, financing and Draft law	US\$200,000 ILO, UNICEF and WFP
Support for the Creation of Social Pension Scheme for Elderly (ILO, CSOs and Help Age International)	Draft Law Financing	US\$40,000

<sup>45</sup> Lessons learnt from CUCI are feeding into discussions underway on how CUCI can be used in expansion/implementation of SP programs going forward.

Project Name (Implementing Organizations)	Added Value to the SP4SDG	Budget and funding source
Regional Program on Inclusive Growth Social Protection and Jobs (Irish Aid, ILO).	Leveraging work on systems strengthening to enhance access to adequate social protection benefits, delivered by an efficient and effective system.	US\$340,000 (Irish Aid)

103. As observed in several KIs there is a high degree of confidence and trust in the UN agencies to assist GoM to move the SP agenda in the right direction. However, some concerns were raised on what is perceived to be a deviation from their traditional respective UN agency mandate into a more implementation and operational role. Something that was expressed is not always relevant, appropriate or cost effective. While these may be relevant points there is a diminishing pool of donors in the SP sector. With the current donor dependency on bolstering SP interventions more needs to be done to effectively advocate and lobby government to increase its financial contribution to the SP Sector. This, it is argued by several DP stakeholders, is a necessary role that UN agencies should be investing more energy towards.

### 2.3. EVALUATION CRITERIA: EFFECTIVENESS & COVERAGE

**Evaluation question 3: To what extent have the targeted outputs, outcomes, strategic results, and interventions been achieved, or expect to be achieved taking account of their relative importance?**

**EQ3 - Overarching observation:**

The JP Outcome 1 was considered to be of the highest strategic and programmatic importance and based on JP targeted outputs this was achieved. Progress on Outcome 2 targeted outputs are less clear, and at present there is no evidence to claim any significant achievement. The original JP Outcome 3 was revised, and changes suggested by GoM started late. At this stage it is too early to state any strategic relevance of the three outputs areas associated with Outcome 3.

**Sub-question 3.1: What were the main factors (internal and external) influencing the achievement, or/and non-achievement of the SP4SDG objectives? How effective was the program approach to targeting of interventions under the SP4SDG?**

104. **Finding 3.1a: The JP approach, setting out its interventions to align with a corner stone of GoM policy on lean season response mechanisms, was broadly successful. Given its strategic importance the JP has made a significant contribution to providing the GoM with the potential basis for a SRSP model to be replicated at scale.**

105. The SP4SDG's Theory of Change's development objective sets out a commitment "to advance the objective of the National Social Support Policy – by 2030, women and men in Malawi have enhanced quality of life and improved resilience to shocks". This statement clearly aims to align the JP to, and is influenced by, the GoM's strategic policy agenda. Within the limited scope and duration of the JP a more realistic time bound development objective may have served to better define an incremental step change that the JP envisaged and anticipated could be achieved by the end of the 2-year program. However, there is evidence to suggest that the interventions under outcome 1 – the SRSP prototype for example – may lay the foundations for women and men in Malawi to achieve and aspire to enhanced quality of life with improved resilience to shocks. Outcome 1 is by far the most important intervention of the JP to meet its stated development objective. Conversely, the quantities of scale of the JP's SRSP prototype intervention in the pilot district highlight the harsh reality of the broader unmet ambitious commitments in the SP policy arena.

106. The JP's outcome 2 focused on the financing structures of SP. The PUNOs, led by UNICEF, aimed to conduct three key areas of analysis with the following objectives: The GoM SP financing strategy has been finalized and it informs domestic funding; GoM has improved knowledge and commitment to invest in SP; and, GoM has improved capacity for SP expenditure.

107. It is too early to say that the financial analysis<sup>46</sup> contained within the SP strategy has made any significant changes in strengthening the political commitment to increase GoM's proportion of domestic funding for the SP sector. Although there are signs of GoM increasing its allocation to the SP sector portfolio.<sup>47</sup> The improved knowledge and commitment objective was shifted in 2021 due to COVID-19 and the JP budget allocation for this was re-purposed to respond to the pandemic. The scope of this work was later confined to establishing a website for SP resource sharing. The activities and outputs for the improved capacity for SP expenditure component were delayed considerably and decisions on approaches to address this area only started in 2021. Among the issues to be considered are public expenditure tracking survey and a bottleneck analysis to assess the flow of government resources within the entire SP cash transfer system. This work is on-going.

108. Under the JP outcome 3 there was a considerable shift from the original design concept. The envisaged work on the legal framework for SP was jettisoned and replaced with a focus on policy support analysis and review, with the emphasis that the SP system is more comprehensive and integrated. There are three areas of work where some progress is noted. Policy Framework Analysis (Draft May 2021); National Social Support Policy Review, April 2021 (Draft); and, Old Age Social Pension, Brief Technical Note (August 2020).

109. The JP's three output areas under outcome 3 are very much low hanging fruit as all started from a zero baseline according to the revised JPs results framework. The JP has supported the participatory consultative process for the government-led review of the National Social Support Policy (NSSP), completed in 2020, followed by a draft Policy Analysis Document. The consultative process included the collection of community, district, and regional level stakeholders' views on how to define the scope and objectives of the social protection system in Malawi. It is envisaged the policy analysis will translate into a Policy Framework Document (PFD), which will complete the review of the NSSP. It is envisaged this will lead to a comprehensive social protection system in Malawi and lay the foundation for the anticipated draft legal framework.

110. In addition, the GoM's commitment to the development of social pension cash transfers (outcome 3) presents a step towards ensuring that the SP system is more comprehensive both in the context of a just society and supporting human rights obligations. However, as some stakeholders commented, in comparison to the neighbouring countries, Malawi is still several steps behind having transformational SP programs.

111. The JP interventions at outcome and output areas related to outcomes 2 & 3, would suggest there are signs the GoM is moving slowly towards more strategic ownership of the SP sector. However, the GoM Financial commitments (paragraph 106) are not yet put in place to underpin and support such interventions at a national strategic level. In this regard the JP's ToC underlying original assumptions are still relevant at this stage of implementation. Refer to table 8 below.

**Table 8: SP4SDG Theory of Change analysis**

ToC Assumptions	Critical factors
Government, Development Partners (DPs) and private sector will have continued interest in social protection, including SRSP with targeted attention to the most vulnerable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in SRSP among GoM and DPs still evident, need to build on this momentum at strategic level</li> <li>• Resource constraints remain a key challenge, specifically in context of Leave No One Behind commitments</li> <li>• Role of private sector at an operational level largely undefined in SP4SDG; scope to engage private sector more in the effectiveness of cash transfer modalities</li> </ul>

<sup>46</sup> Social Protection Expenditure and Financing brief for Malawi, November 2020

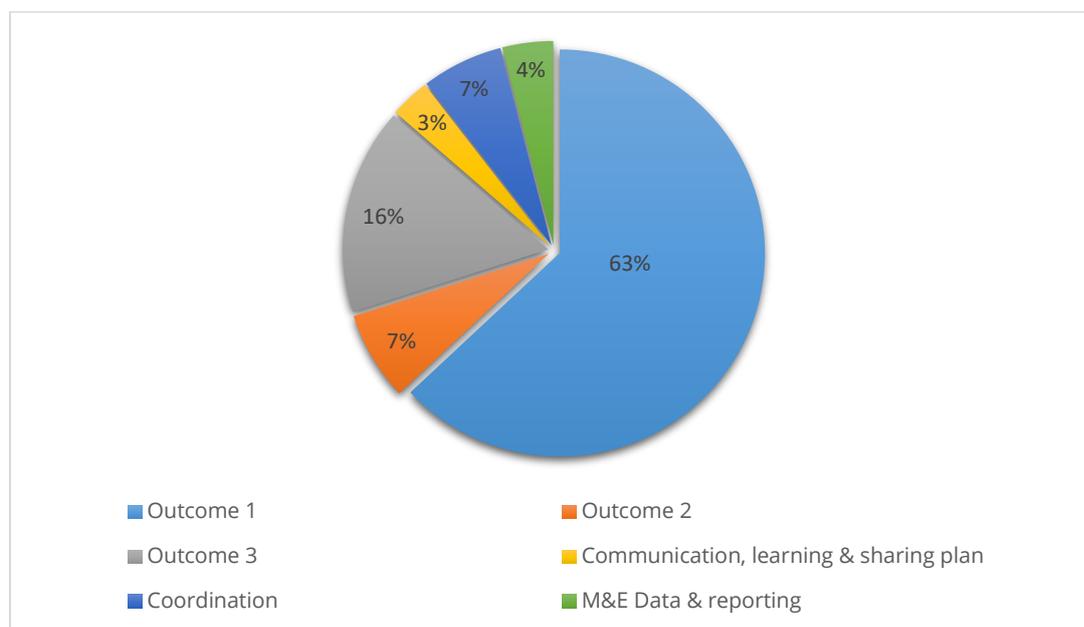
<sup>47</sup> The GoM has increased SP funding from 7 percent to 8 percent with further increases envisaged in the forthcoming budget financial year 2022/2023. Social Protection Budget Brief: Protecting and Transforming Social Protection Spending during and beyond COVID-19 (undated)

ToC Assumptions	Critical factors
DPs and other actors are supportive of integration of systems for social protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitments to increased integration goals, but not backed up with concerted actions.</li> <li>• Reluctance to pursue harmonization, this has an impact on effectiveness and coverage of SP interventions</li> </ul>
Social protection components, such as the Management Information System, continues to function as normal;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UBR needs to be regularly updated.</li> <li>• Continued risk of inclusion and exclusion errors remain, in context of LSR this could have significant implications for inter-generational persistent and prolonged poverty being the norm</li> </ul>
Stakeholders freely share information critical for making a business case for social protection particularly on social protection expenditure;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information exchange exists, crucial inputs presented to justify increased expenditures – political will unclear</li> <li>• Political economy factors remain an issue for commitments to move SP towards a transformational approach</li> </ul>
Donors and DPs support the Joint Program and therefore delineate the fragmented approach to social protection programming in the country;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little documentary evidence of co-financing of JP outcome areas.</li> <li>• DP fragmentation in SP approach remains a challenge</li> </ul>
Government officials are available and supportive of the program implementation given the strained capacity in the relevant government departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GoM capacity remains a challenge. Inputs to address the problem not of sufficient scale, no evidence interventions are integrated within a broader public sector reform agenda.</li> <li>• SP sector having to fight for relevance across government competing priorities</li> </ul>

112. **Finding 3.1b: The JP appears to be on the right trajectory to achieving what it set out to do, but the scale and coverage of interventions limits the potential to strategically influence GoM.**

113. The SP4SDG work plan budget and expenditures define the JP approach. Table 9 sets out the three outcome areas with three additional budget headings, referred to as cross-cutting in the original project document, relating to communication, coordination and monitoring of the program activities. Figure 3 shows that outcome 1 has the highest budget allocation (63 percent). Primarily as this component involved the development and testing of the SRSP prototype, with most of this outcome 1 expenditure occurring in the first year of program implementation in response to food insecurity challenges in various parts of the country. The majority of the expenditures relating to outcome areas 2 & 3 transpired in year 2 of the program, mainly as a result of timescales required to commission studies and hire consultants to undertake specific tasks, and in the context of outcome 3 the lead time for assessing the consultations for the policy review processes. The communications output is defined by the program documentation as relating to two annual target areas: events and products. Key events where expenditure has been recorded refer to media training and parliamentary field visits and training. According to the budget documents ILO was the lead agency managing these events. The product activity expenditures included website development, television and radio programming, infographics, videos and responding to additional communication requests from GoM. UNICEF and WFP mostly led on these product developments and work is continuing. The coordination output budget costs are evenly spread between each year of the program. The activities related to this output are mainly to support the WFP staff program coordination function. The monitoring and evaluation, data and reporting output is allocated solely to the impact evaluation design expenditures.

**Figure 3: Joint Program expenditure by components**



114. In interviews with several GoM stakeholders there is a view that the JP lacked sufficient profile beyond the SRSP component. However, there was recognition that the JP in relative terms had not been going on long enough to make a meaningful contribution to the SP sector.

**Table 9: Summary of SP4SDG Workplan budget and expenditures**

SP4SDG Joint Program Workplan Budget			
Outcome & Output Budget/Expenditures and core activities	Year 1	Year 2	Total
<b>Outcome 1</b>	\$1 046 087	\$214 288	<b>\$1 260 375</b>
Knowledge for SRSP managed			
Affected households targeted & enrolled			
<b>Outcome 2</b>	\$46 410	\$94 534	<b>\$140 944</b>
Fiscal space & budget analysis produced			
Evidence compendium produced			
Social protection expenditure diagnostics			
<b>Outcome 3</b>	\$134 356	\$193 564	<b>\$327 920</b>
NSSP analysis; Gender analysis of SP systems			
Policy framework drafted			
Old Age pension strategy			
<b>Communication, learning &amp; sharing plan</b>	\$28 480	\$34 541	<b>\$63 021</b>

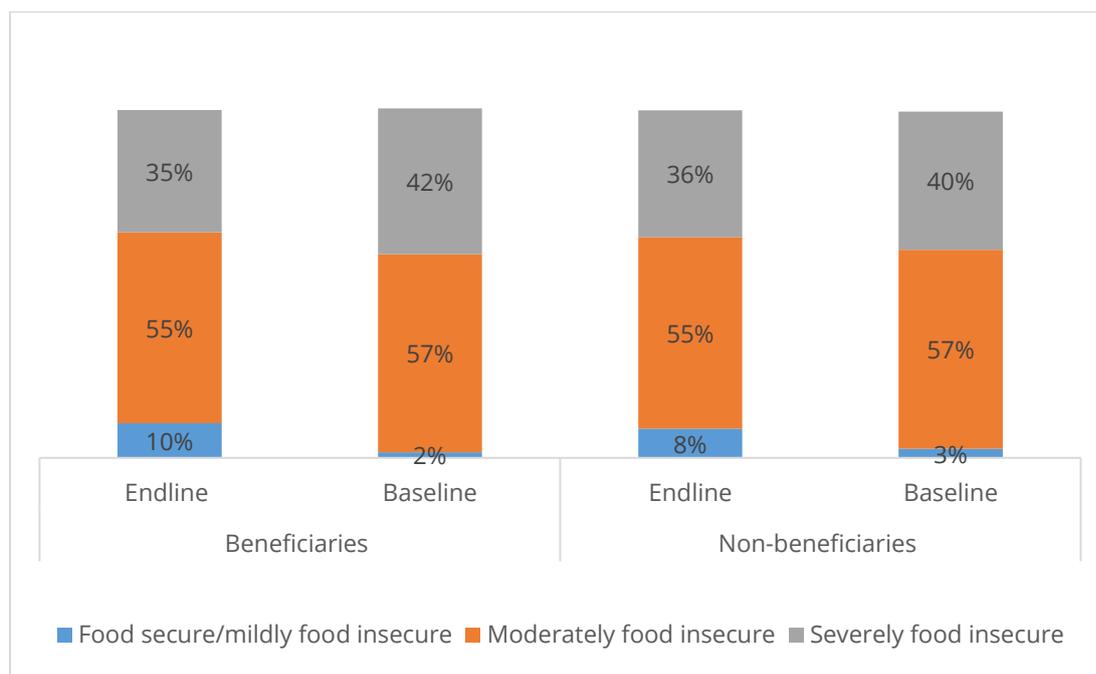
SP4SDG Joint Program Workplan Budget			
Outcome & Output Budget/Expenditures and core activities	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Coordination	\$64200	\$64 200	<b>\$128 400</b>
M&E Data & reporting	\$80 250		<b>\$80 250</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1 399 783</b>	<b>\$601 127</b>	<b>\$2 000 910</b>

115. **Finding 3.1c: The JP's contribution to the lean season response has improved food security and reduced the use of negative coping strategies in the context of where the program was operational.**

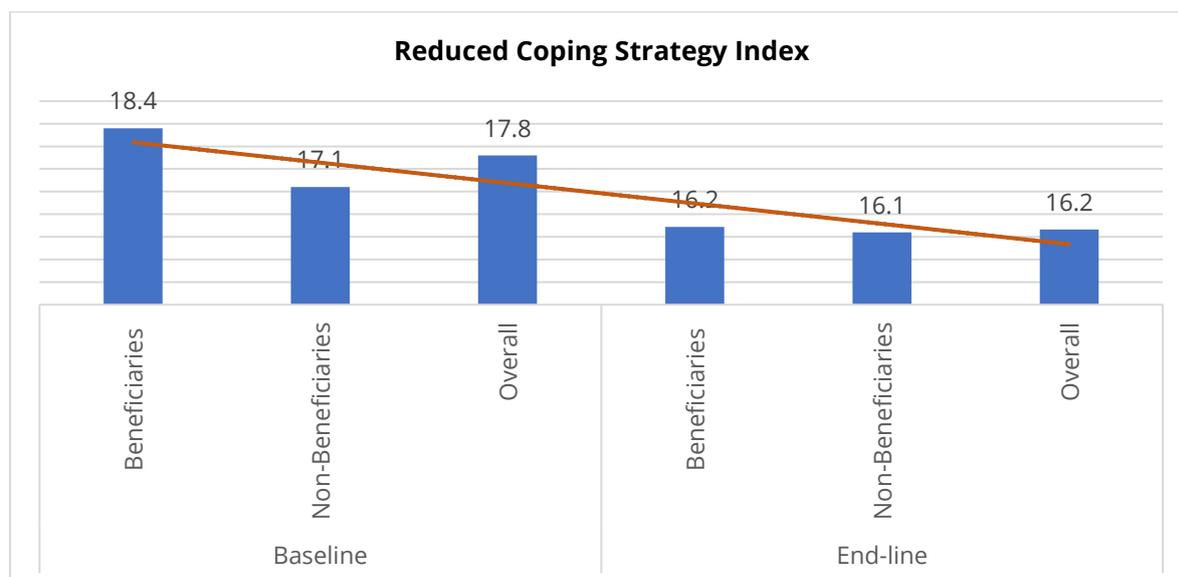
116. Analysis of the descriptive data from the evaluation shows that 9.9 percent of the beneficiary households were food secure/mildly food insecure and an additional 54.9 percent moderately food insecure and therefore using no or low coping for rCSI. Only 35.2 percent were severely food insecure at the time of the evaluation. Figure 4 shows that at baseline only 1.6 percent of the households were food secure and as such the majority relied on negative coping strategies to survive. It should be noted that the reduced coping strategy indicator (rCSI) is an experience-based indicator measuring the behaviour of households over the past seven days when they did not have enough food or money to purchase food. The end-line evaluation used five common strategies to measure the coping strategy of households in Nsanje as mentioned above. Therefore, higher rCSI values imply that the household is vulnerable to shocks that affect their consumption. In Figure 4, the overall values show relatively higher rCSI at baseline for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries compared to rCSI values at end-line. Despite failure to reach the set rCSI value of 12 by the project, the trend-line in the Figure 5 below indicates a reduction in shocks experienced by vulnerable families. Table 10 presents sex disaggregated data based on food security classifications. The reduction in rCSI can be attributed to the JP as well as other initiatives in Nsanje district. However, it is sufficing to say that the LSR support of December 2020 to March 2021 cushioned the beneficiary households from severe food shortages. The households dedicated their time to farming under rain-fed agriculture and residual moisture when the rainy season was coming to an end in March 2021. This enabled them to have a continuous supply of food. Confidence intervals of the data obtained show that women in households headed by men were more food secure (11.8 percent 7.7-15.9 95 percent CI) than their counterparts headed by women and men at baseline (1.6 percent 1.5-4.7 percent 95 percent CI). All other sex differences in food security (Table 10) were not statistically significant.

117. The reasons for improvements in food security are three-fold: 1) LSR cash transfers that enabled people to buy food baskets (maize, pulses and cooking oils) recommended by the program, 2) foods they harvested from rain-fed agriculture in April / May 2021 because they invested and concentrated in their fields during the lean period when they were receiving cash transfers instead of doing casual work in other people's fields as they usually do and 3) crops they grew in March / April 2021 with residual moisture from the rains and were harvesting from September to November 2021 (maize, beans, pumpkins, sweet potatoes and okra), which helped them extend months of self-food sufficiency.

**Figure 4: Categorical classification of food security based on the rCSI for Nsanje**



**Figure 5: rCSI classification for Nsanje**



**Table 10: Classification of the rCSI and food security by sex in Nsanje (%)**

Reduced Coping Strategies Index rCSI	Baseline (n=238)				End line (n=874)			
	Non-beneficiaries		Beneficiaries		Non-beneficiaries		Beneficiaries	
	Female (n=53)	Male (n=60)	Female (n=62)	Male (n=63)	Female (n=188)	Male (n=243)	Female (n=206)	Male (n=237)
FS/MFI*	1.89	3.33	1.61	1.59	7.45	9.05	7.77	11.81
Moderately food insecure	50.94	63.33	50.00	63.49	52.13	57.61	50.49	58.65

Reduced Coping Strategies Index rCSI	Baseline (n=238)				End line (n=874)			
	Non-beneficiaries		Beneficiaries		Non-beneficiaries		Beneficiaries	
	Female (n=53)	Male (n=60)	Female (n=62)	Male (n=63)	Female (n=188)	Male (n=243)	Female (n=206)	Male (n=237)
Severely food insecure	47.17	33.33	48.39	34.92	40.43	33.33	41.75	29.54
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100.	100	100

\*Food secure / mildly food insecure

### Percentage of targeted households not engaged in livelihoods-based coping strategies, disaggregated by age, and sex (Livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI))

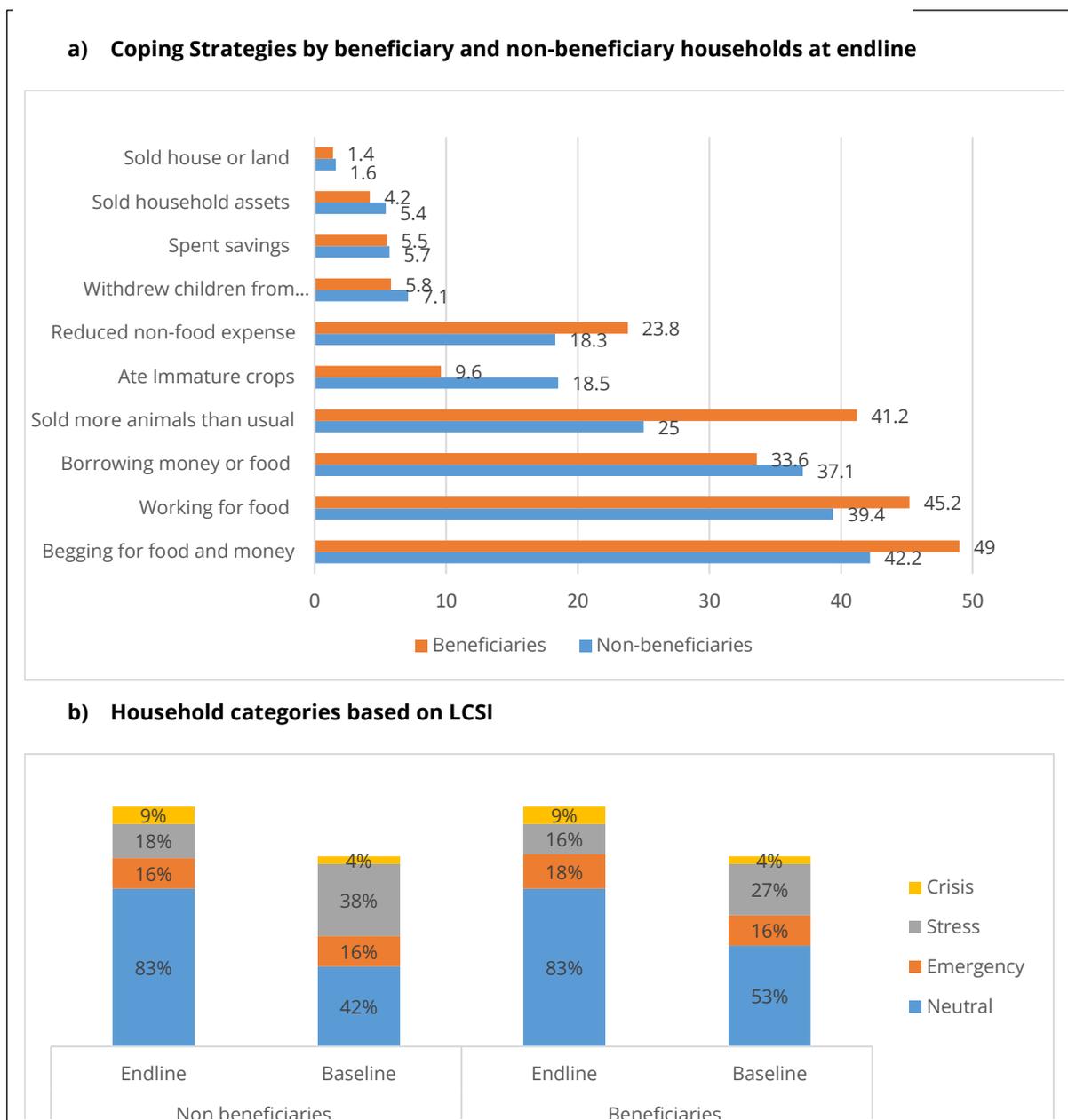
118. A core objective of the JP is to reduce the likelihood of households engaging in negative coping strategies. Chart (a) in figure 6 identifies longer term coping strategies used by beneficiary and non-beneficiary households in the past 30 days, (which largely fell into August 2021 given the fieldwork timing), to cope with the lack of food or absence of money to buy food. Chart (b) in figure 6 presents the severity of household level coping categories.

119. Nearly half of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries resorted to begging for food from relatives and friends who were harvesting their winter crops from riverbanks. More than one third of the LSR beneficiaries also coped up by working for others (ganyu) and borrowing after depleting their stock of staple food. Furthermore, figure 6 indicates there is a reduction in the proportion of households under stress, the proportion of those under emergency is almost the same as at baseline, implying that if there was no intervention the situation would be worse for beneficiaries. In addition, there is a 5 percent increase in households in the crisis category, however there is a significant increase of those who do not apply any coping strategies at the endline.

120. A total of 41.2 percent reported to have sold livestock they acquired through the LSR cash to buy food for their households. The evaluation found the use of negative coping strategies that have detrimental effects on personal dignity and on future livelihoods and consumption such as selling a house or land and household assets and withdrawing children from school was very low. Nearly one quarter of the beneficiary households (23.8 percent) could reduce non-food expenditures instead.

121. Generally, negative coping strategies were more prevalent among non-LSR households than they were among LSR recipient households. As figure 6 indicates the consumption of immature crops from winter cropping, spending accumulative savings, withdrawing children from school and selling of land all tended to be higher among the non-beneficiaries than beneficiaries.

**Figure 6: Livelihood coping strategies employed by households in Nsanje**



122. **Finding 3.1d: There are differences between JPs LSR Cash Transfer policy compared to the GoM SCT, particularly in the context of issues relating to rights and entitlements.**

123. The evaluation noted that after the MVAC assessment was completed and published (in August 2020) more households became vulnerable, and therefore requiring humanitarian assistance. The LSR reached all the targeted vulnerable households in Nsanje district as per the district’s budget allocation. The MVAC conducts the analysis twice a year. The first round of data collection is in July. It was reported that when sufficient funds are available the original (July estimated) caseload is sometimes adjusted to cover an additional caseload that are found to be vulnerable during the second round of MVAC data collection which normally happens in October/November.

124. This process of identifying beneficiaries, is in line with the harmonization of a Vertical Expansion (VE) and Horizontal Expansion (HE) SP approach to meet the needs of the most vulnerable (refer to paragraph 129 and Box 4). The support under SCTP ranges from MK2,500 - MK20,000 depending on multiple factors. It was noted that during the implementation of the JPs LSR CT, the SCTP beneficiary households received an additional top-up equivalent to the LSR amount of MK23,100. Stakeholders

conveyed a view that there was timing pressure to undertake all the preparatory activities prior to the onset of delivering the cash transfer by December 2020. In addition, it was noted even with VE and HE interventions not all households can be covered.

125. Another critical factor relates to the inability to distribute 100 percent of the cash allocated to the entitled LSR recipients. It was reported that some households were not available on the day of cash distribution due to multiple reasons. It has been suggested that WFP policy did not allow payment of arrears during the next distribution, a practice that is routinely undertaken during the regular SCT payment sequencing. By way of justification, it was argued, as those households had already survived the preceding month through other means there was no need to pay arrears. This created severe tensions and a lack of trust between the affected communities and the organizations managing the LSR. These differences and misunderstandings were reported using the existing complaints procedures. Beneficiaries of the VE component in Nsanje, implemented by GoM through the national program including GRM systems is different to complaints procedures for the beneficiaries of the HE. This is implemented by the JP and who operate a toll-free phone line as part of the programs GRM. It was noted that both GRM systems were not sufficiently developed to handle the larger influx of additional beneficiaries during the lifespan of the JP. Through KIs with YONECO representatives it was reported that although they received a lot of complaints, there was confidence these were all resolved during the project implementation. The absence of a harmonized GRM system is an area requiring further improvement.

**Sub-question 3.2: How has the program progressed towards achieving its objectives to ensure the target population were adequately identified and what factors influenced the coverage and reach of the program interventions?**

126. **Finding 3.2a: The JP utilized relevant data and information available to identify appropriate target groups with interventions to effectively support the Lean season crisis and responding to GoM COVID-19 coverage in urban areas.**

127. In the context of the JP's SRSP component, the initial target population was determined by LSR data and IPC categorization factors (refer to box 9 and box 10). As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, which saw a rapid reduced urban household income due to job losses, the GoM targeted urban population groups with a cash transfer intervention. This was the first time a cash transfer intervention was undertaken in an urban context in Malawi. Both of these groups were adequately identified, and coverage was influenced by GoM policy and targeting guidance. The PUNOs actively engaged with this process. The JP's targeted beneficiaries for the LSR are based on the recommendations by the MVAC annual food security forecast in August 2020. The MVAC report predicted that at least 2.6 million Malawians would be food insecure and require humanitarian assistance for 2-5 months in the 2020/2021 lean season period. This represented 15 percent of the population of Malawi.

128. The MVAC report (August 2020), estimated that a total humanitarian assistance of 56,544 metric tons was required with an approximate cash value of MK14 billion (US\$16,994,600) to ensure affected food insecure population survive up to the next harvest period. According to the MVAC report 54,465 households were listed as being in the IPC3 category in Nsanje district. A total of 12,103 households were covered by the LSR - 6,368 with HE and 5,735 through STCP-VE. In addition, due to COVID 19 another 1,270 households were reached at the Boma<sup>48</sup> making a total of 13,373 households covered in Nsanje.

129. The LSR employed both Horizontal and Vertical expansion of SP CT programs to reach the affected population in all the nine Traditional Authorities (TAs) in the Nsanje district. The operational differences are described below:

- i. Horizontal expansion: the JP contracted the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) to implement the LSR (from December 2020-March 2021) solely for 6,368 new beneficiary households who were not registered on the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) program. The LSR disbursed MK23,100 (US\$30) per household for four months. This amount was determined by WFP's estimates of a food basket (composed of maize, legumes and cooking oil) at prevailing market rates.

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<sup>48</sup> Around the district headquarters

- ii. **Vertical expansion:** the EU provided funds for cash top ups to 5,735 existing SCTP beneficiaries. Each VE beneficiary household received MWK23,100 (US\$30) per month, similar to HE beneficiary households. This amount was provided on top of the monthly cash transfers they were already receiving from GoM and was based on the WFP food basket prices.

#### **Box 4: Type of intervention to support SRSP prototype**

In order to build on previous investments<sup>49</sup> to fast-track the development of a SRSP proto-type the Joint Program provided support to the government's SCTP in two districts, Nsanje and Balaka. In **Nsanje** WFP supported GoM with a Vertical Expansion (VE) and a JEFAP approach. Meaning there was support for a VE, a cash top-up to existing households and recipients of the SCTP pegged to the value of a food basket.<sup>50</sup> In addition, in order to reach remaining affected households, WFP and its implementing partner MRCS, provided monthly assistance on behalf of GoM to beneficiaries on a bi-monthly basis using JEFAP guidelines<sup>51</sup> for the duration of intervention 4-month period. By contrast in **Balaka** district, WFP supported the GoM to advance a Horizontal Expansion (HE) "by leveraging the SP system" to provide monthly "emergency food" assistance to the remaining shock-affected households that the GoM wasn't able to reach. Due to financial rules WFP couldn't fund the HE through GoM systems but instead provided technical implementation capacity.

#### **130. Finding 3.2b: The JP demonstrated an efficient application of the GoM's beneficiary selection processes to identify appropriate households for the LSR interventions.**

131. Households were selected to participate in the LSR using the Unified Beneficiary Register (UBR) managed by the government. The list of selected beneficiaries from the UBR was shared with the MRCS through WFP for local leaders and community to approve. After verification and approval, the names were included on the pay roll for cash transfers.

132. Key informant interviews at the district and community levels corroborated that selection of beneficiaries using the UBR has demonstrated to reduce inclusion and exclusion errors that were common with community-based targeting (CBT) criteria.

133. The Proxy Means Test (PMT), which verifies whether potential beneficiaries fulfil the ultra-poverty criteria as specified in the MNSSP, was used to select beneficiaries of the LSR from the UBR. The National Social Support Program and PMT define ultra-poor as households that have no reliable source of income, are female-led (widowed or otherwise) and labour-constrained, have a higher dependency burden, host people with notable disability in the home and are living with a chronically ill or an elderly member. Additional sets of criteria are also used to ensure the target population was adequately and honestly identified in relation to the objective of the LSR, to address immediate food needs during the lean period (Refer to box 5 below).

#### **Box 5: Additional sets of criteria used to expand the poverty status**

Within the UBR system, additional sets of criteria are used to expand the poverty status. These include:

- a. Households with an average of only one meal per day
- b. Households that survive from begging
- c. Households that have undernourished members
- d. Households without any valuable assets
- e. Households that do not receive any monetary help, food, or gifts from others
- f. Households which survive on piecework
- g. Households without access to credit loans
- h. Households without a shelter or with a shelter in poor condition.

<sup>49</sup> Refer to - Malawi: Unpacking the issue of targeting in responses to slow-onset weather-induced food crises. WFP, June 2019

<sup>50</sup> According to the Malawi Red Cross project completion report (April 2021) each beneficiary household received a monthly sum of MK23,100 calculated based on 50kgs of maize, 10kg of pulse and 2 litres of cooking oil.

<sup>51</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/malawi/manual-provision-general-food-distributions-during-emergency-programprograms-malawi>

**Sub-question 3.3: Has the project addressed the COVID 19 consequences in the short and long term in the context of affecting the planned outcomes? What challenges were faced in the program?**

134. **Finding 3.3: The JP was instrumental in providing critical support to the COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI) established in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This generated useful learning for responding to pandemics.**

135. The COVID-19 pandemic increased and shifted the scope of the JP. The JP and its results framework were never intended to support an urban intervention. As a result of COVID-19, there was a necessity to re-design key areas of the original JP work plan. The Operational Steering Committee of the Joint SDG fund approved the option of re-purposing up to 20 percent of JP funding to respond to the pandemic to ensure SP interventions and Leave No One Behind objectives were maintained.<sup>52</sup> The DPs supported the GoM CUCI in four cities and several districts while the JP supported the CUCI to 1,270 households in Nsanje, refer to table 11.

**Table 11: Cash provided at Boma level in Nsanje (January to March 2021)**

Month	Planned			Reached			
	District Targeted Households	Cash to be distributed (MWK)	Total Cash to be distributed (MWK)	Actual Households Served	Balance Households	Actual cash distributed (MWK)	Progress %
January & February	1 270	23 000	29 210 000	1 264	6	29 072 000	99.6
March	1 270	11 500	14 605 000	1 266	4	14 559 000	99.7
Top Up	1 270	34 800	44 196 000	1 262	8	43 917 600	99.4
<b>Total</b>			<b>88 011 000</b>			<b>87 548 600</b>	<b>99.5</b>

136. In a fundamental shift from the original program design the JP responded by providing financial support to urban communities. This support was relevant because at the time COVID-19 rates were high in Malawi and GoM had imposed restrictions on population movement, and on businesses operating hours. People who live around small townships (at Boma), most of whom are small-scale traders and businesses, were hardest hit.

137. With JP resources, UNICEF supported the GoM to conduct additional beneficiary verifications for the cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Zomba. Part of the verification process consisted of validation of beneficiaries' data including their National ID and phone numbers in order to meet "Know-Your-Customer"<sup>53</sup> (KYC) requirements. The registration of proxy beneficiaries and verification was also conducted via the call centre. Part of these processes such as the KYC validations were conducted in collaboration with the private sector, in particular, with mobile network operators in charge of delivering the transfers in the four cities.<sup>54</sup> All of these additional verification and validation processes enabled over 78,800 CUCI beneficiary households to receive their transfer allowances, that otherwise may have resulted in funding being returned to the donor. These processes also contributed to strengthen the national social protection system.

138. The JP played a catalytic role in ensuring that critical elements of the COVID-19 response, other than the transfers, were included. In this regard, a CUCI Call Centre, established with UNICEF support, is now managed by the Government. The call centre was partly maintained with JP resources and was used both for GRM and monitoring purposes. In the context of GRM issues, it was reported that CUCI

<sup>52</sup> SP4SDG Note, dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

<sup>53</sup> A set of guidelines applied for monitoring financial risk and due diligence of business relations aimed at preventing criminal activity.

<sup>54</sup> CUCI CTs were implemented through national systems using mobile money payments. The costs of this operation were not available.

beneficiaries had access a call centre on a toll-free line. With reference to the monitoring aspects, the call centre was used by the JP for conducting remote CUCI post-distribution monitoring surveys. In addition, the call centre conducted various checks and verifications, including broadcasting SMS messages with key information for CUCI beneficiaries. The call centre was established in close collaboration with the private sector.<sup>55</sup>

139. The pandemic exposed knowledge gaps of the population responding to economic and health crisis in both rural and urban areas. It also highlighted the need for enhancing the social protection system to promote coverage extension, and introduction of range of SP benefits. The CUCI targeting processes also raised issues on the need to discuss the merits of categorical targeting approaches for regular social protection programs within the broader debate on the humanitarian-development nexus. Through UNICEF the JP supported the Government to explore categorical targeting approaches under CUCI. In particular, vulnerable categories of people such as street children and the elderly were prioritized. It is understood this work is ongoing. However, lessons learned suggests this information will feed into a broader national conversation about a potential shift to categorical targeting on key social protection and emergency response programs.

140. In several KIs with GoM there was a general view that JP reacted well to COVID-19 crisis. While there were some delays, these were more to do with process issues, data, targeting approaches. Responding in timely fashion was hampered by the need to collect data that wasn't available at an urban level. Processes for collecting data provided a good example of what could be deployed in future in the context of a specific urban CT intervention if required. Box 6 below provides an overview of the WFP supported COVID-19 master plan.

#### **Box 6: The Crisis Interventions to Address COVID-19 Effects Master Plan**

##### **The Crisis Interventions to Address COVID-19 Effects 5 step Master Plan:**

**Step 1:** Government of Malawi utilized UN Habitat data (2011) that classified areas into high, medium, and low density to identify general hotspots for urban response

**Step 2:** WFP undertook classification of city areas, classifying them as high, medium, and low income based on classification descriptions

**Step 3:** Triangulated WFP and UN Habitat data for cross-verification (other sources also checked)

**Step 4:** Government consulted City Councils on the area classifications for validation

**Step 5:** City Councils identified hotspots within area classifications and ranked from low to high

*Source:* Hotspot Verification: UN Support to Government for Urban COVID-19 Response, June 2020

## **2.4. EVALUATION CRITERIA: EFFICIENCY**

**Evaluation question 4: Was the program efficiently implemented (specifically cost effectiveness/value for money), and how was this converted to results?**

### **EQ4 - Overarching observation:**

ET not able to definitively state with any confidence if the JP was efficiently implemented. Several reasons, firstly ET did not have access to any previous cost-effectiveness or value for money analysis undertaken by the PUNOs. Secondly, the means of verification for many of the results in the results framework refer to documentation that either hasn't yet been produced or didn't adequately demonstrate there was any significant change in GoM policy processes as a consequence of the PUNO's engagement.

**Sub-question 4.1: What are the factors affecting the pace and quality of implementation and how were these mitigated? How were resources allocated and utilised?**

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/malawi/stories/call-centre-helps-urban-cash-transfer-beneficiaries>

141. **Finding 4.1: The JP implementation timeline was influenced by several priorities mostly as a result of the focus on LSR, which was largely addressed without compromising on timing. Assessing the efficiency aspects related to all the JP results areas was beyond the scope of the evaluation.**

142. A key aspect of efficiency, that the ET could not assess with the available JP documentation, was to ascertain if during the design phase of the JP whether there had been a thorough analysis to consider the costs for doing a certain type of intervention versus the costs of not doing anything. Getting this balance right for a SRSP LSR intervention will always remain a challenge. Particularly given the humanitarian need to intervene at the stage of an immediate crisis versus the trade-off of sustained engagement with GoM to promote long-term investment in social cash transfers which go beyond providing immediate consumption needs to avert regular hunger crises. What the SRSP CT intervention has demonstrated is that predictable and timely CTs over a longer period of time may contribute to transforming peoples' lives. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 restrictions that were put in place to double up on CT payments presented an opportunity for livelihood investments that some beneficiaries were able to successfully exploit. These livelihood investments include putting money in VSLs, small livestock, rain-fed agriculture, irrigation farming and education for young children for immediate and future benefits.

143. The JP implementation commenced in January 2020. In April 2020, COVID-19 became a changing factor in the way JP PUNOs could operate on two levels. Firstly, at a GoM strategic level, the lack of face-to-face meetings on policy and program dialogue deprived the JP of critical influencing opportunities required to shape policy-based discussions. Secondly, field visits to gauge implementation processes through the JPs operating partners were out of the question for several months at a crucial time in the program's implementation start-up timeline. An additional implementation challenge the JP faced was the change of Government in May 2020. This resulted in adjustments and re-purposing key strategic program outcomes areas. Responding to this changing environment meant the JP had to fundamentally make changes in advancing the commitment to pursue the legislative space for the SP Sector that had been previously envisaged.

144. In terms of efficiency of implementation of interventions to achieve results there are a number of issues to consider and reflect upon. In the context of the SRSP LSR intervention the use of different CT delivery mechanisms would have reduced transaction costs and fiduciary risks. The OPM study<sup>56</sup> in 2016 sets out clear recommendations for a way forward and step changes envisaged to establish an e-payment system across the SP sector. In addition, evidence known to the PUNOs through a study jointly commissioned by GoM and UNICEF in 2019 presented a viable road map with high-level recommendations which paves the way for a concerted set of actions for transitioning to e-Payment solutions.<sup>57</sup> These studies provide the landscape for reforming the SP payment processes to be more efficient. The issues raised in both studies could have been investigated further within the banner of the JP's outcome areas 2 & 3, with demonstrable and tangible linkages to operationalizing Outcome 1 objective of ensuring Malawi's SP systems adapt to meet emergency food needs.<sup>58</sup>

**Sub-question 4.2: What were the critical value for money considerations of the program's outputs and how did this influence expected results?**

145. **Finding 4.2: The JP struggled to demonstrate any meaningful measures for analysing value for money linkages across the program outcome areas. This was despite previous analysis presenting a viable business case for more efficiency.**

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<sup>56</sup> Malawi Social Cash Transfer Program, Recommendations for a strategy for using e-payments in social protection programs, Oxford Policy Management and The Centre for Social Research, April 2016

<sup>57</sup> Langhan, S., & Greenslade, M. 2019. The "Unity Card" e-Payment Solution Prototype: A Harmonised, Interoperable e-Payment Solution for Social Protection Payments in Malawi – A Solution for the First Mile, Development Pathways, UNICEF, Government of Malawi

<sup>58</sup> In the context of e-payments as a way forward, program designers need to be aware of affordability, limitations on mobile phone ownership, including telephone network coverage and/or banking presence outside of boma catchment areas.

146. A key efficiency driver is the extent to which the JP interventions deliver results in a timely and economic fashion. Table 12 defines the resource allocations against the eight UNDG<sup>59</sup> harmonized joint reporting categories. This table also highlights the differing staff costing allocations between each UN agency. The overall PUNO combined staff/personnel cost plus the unspecified contractual service costs equates to over 50 percent of the JP expenditure. This compares to 32 percent of the JP budget spent on transfers and grants to counterparts, which presumably includes the LSR CT intervention. There may be other hidden staffing and contract servicing costs within some of the PUNOs overall costs, as the table 13 highlights, which the ET could not assess financial budgets and actual expenditures.

**Table 12: Joint Program Budget Allocation of Expenditures by UNDG Categories**

UNDG BUDGET CATEGORIES	WFP	UNICEF	ILO	TOTAL
	Joint SDG Fund (US\$)			
1. Staff and other personnel (33%)	455 694	72 464	142 936	671 094
2. Supplies, Commodities, Materials (1%)	3 000	4 000	14 000	21 000
3. Equipment, Vehicles, and Furniture (including Depreciation)	-	2 000	-	2 000
4. Contractual services (21%)	120 000	225 961	79 500	425 461
5. Travel (1%)	6 000	2 000	14 500	22 500
6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts (32%)	510 000	43 840	87 064	640 904
7. General Operating and other Direct Costs (5%)	70 000	3 735	18 000	91 735
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>1 164 694</b>	<b>354 000</b>	<b>356 000</b>	<b>1 874 694</b>
8. Indirect Support Costs (Max. 7%)	75 543	24 780	24 920	125 243
<b>TOTAL Costs</b>	<b>1 240 237</b>	<b>378 780</b>	<b>380 920</b>	<b>1 999 937</b>
<b>1st year</b>	<b>1 040 147</b>	<b>181 579</b>	<b>178 057</b>	<b>1 399 783</b>
<b>2nd year</b>	<b>200 090</b>	<b>197 201</b>	<b>202 863</b>	<b>600 154</b>

**Table 13: PUNO staffing allocations for the Joint Program**

PUNO	WFP	UNICEF	ILO
<b>Staffing structure</b>	4 Staff – equivalent to 2.5 full-time posts	5 posts allocated to the JP, equivalent to 14 months for the 2-year duration.	4 staff – equivalent to 2 full-time posts.
<b>Staff function &amp; % of time</b>	Coordinator – 100% Social Protection Lead – 50% SP Officer (Data systems) – 50% SP Officer (SRSP Operational) – 50%	Social Policy Specialist – 1 month Social Policy Officer – 8 months Public Finance for Children Specialist – 3 months M&E Officer – 1 month Communication Officer – 1 month	National Project Officer based in Malawi – 100%. Finance & Administrative Assistant – 50% International Technical Officer, Social Protection – 50% International Technical Adviser, Social Protection – based in Lusaka, technical support

<sup>59</sup> In 2015 the UN harmonised joint UN program reporting categories to overcome the different rules and procedures between the various UN agencies for financial rules and procurement. The SDG Fund uses these eight categories in program reporting.

147. There is limited documented evidence to indicate that a full value for money assessments was undertaken to inform the options and operational considerations for the contribution of the JP to the national SRSP cash transfer intervention in Nsanje district. The three key components of any VfM consideration in the context of social cash transfers are described in box 7. However, as the SRSP utilizes existing national SCT program modalities there may have been limited scope, or flexibility, for the JP to adapt the system to ensure a more cost-efficient delivery process could be established.

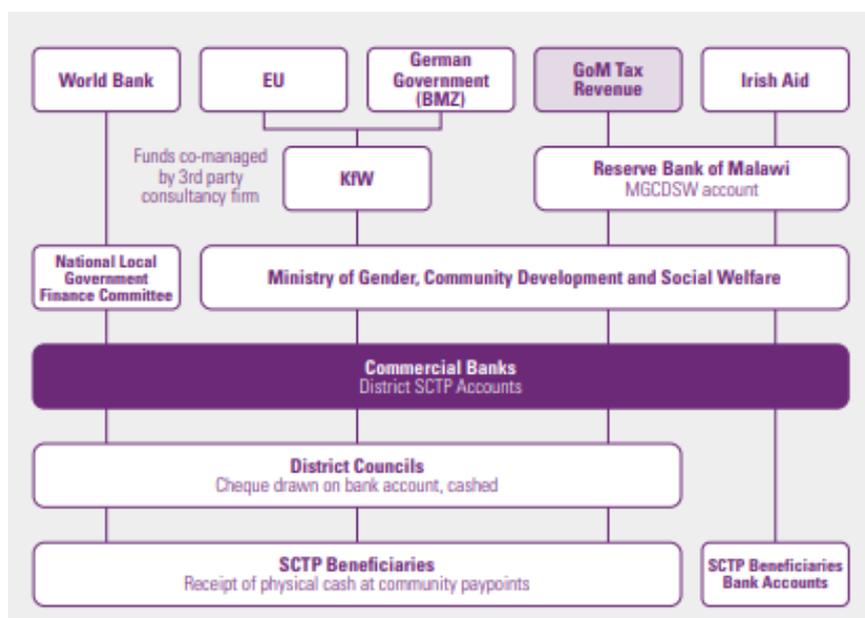
**Box 7: Three components of Value for Money analysis**

- Value for Money (VfM) refers to the optimal use of resources to achieve the best outcomes for people affected by crisis and disaster. VfM is made up of three components, referred to as the 3 e’s:
- **Economy** relates to the price at which inputs are purchased. Inputs can include the price of in-kind goods, banking fees, vehicle and storage rentals, staff salaries, truck rentals and the cost of consultants.
  - **Efficiency** relates to how well inputs are converted to the output of interest, which in the case of humanitarian programs is usually access to certain goods and services. Cost-efficiency analysis spans both economy and efficiency, focussing on the relationship between the costs of a program and the value of the assistance delivered to beneficiaries. Efficiency also includes costs to recipients, such as paying for transport or the opportunity cost.
  - **Effectiveness** relates to how well outputs are converted to outcomes and impacts, such as food consumption, food security, improved nutrition, school attendance, increased use of health services / improved health, improved livelihoods, asset accumulation, market impacts and social cohesion. Cost-effectiveness analysis examines the cost of achieving intended program outcomes and impacts and can compare the costs of alternative ways of producing the same or similar benefits.

Source: a) Value for Money of Cash Transfers in Emergencies, Venton. C, et al, 2015; b) Guidance on measuring and maximising value for money in social transfer programs, DFID, 2013

148. One of the critical cost drivers of social cash transfers relate to the implementation systems, and in particular in the SRSP case, the payment delivery mechanisms. The current payment mechanism used by the SCTP varies between districts and by the donor funding that particular district. Figure 7 highlights the fragmented approach.

**Figure 7: Fragmented Donor funding to the Social Cash Transfer Program<sup>60</sup>**



Source: MoGCDSW, 2019

<sup>60</sup> Since this figure was produced there have been changes to the DP funding arrangements. In this regard BMZ has replaced KfW.

149. Through the field data collection process the evaluation heard from stakeholders who observed that the JP's LSR had been implemented in an efficient manner. The level of efficiency compares favourably with other similar national social protection programs. For example, the implementing costs of the LSR cash-based transfer in Nsanje district is estimated around 6.5 percent for the horizontal expansion. The vertical expansion component, implemented via the national system during a few months of the lean season, is estimated to be 1 percent. As for the regular SCTP transfers, available data shows that implementation costs are less than 15 percent.<sup>61</sup> Utilizing the MRCS as the monitoring agent working in tandem with LTS as the financial service provider probably offered the best value for money option in the circumstances of time efficiency.

150. The MRCS demonstrated compliance with all contract provisions. This includes timeliness in the delivery of cash transfers, timely submission of pay-out and funds reconciliation reports, and compliance with the approved distribution plans and full accountability for the funds advanced. No cases of misappropriation or abuse of funds were recorded.

151. The overall budget for the LSR CBT consisted of four components:

- a) Unconditional cash transfers (direct manual cash payments to the selected beneficiaries)
- b) Administrative and capital budgets (program running costs, capital inputs including contract for LTS and honoraria for other actors)
- c) Contingency funds to allow for variations in need during the implementation phase, and payment of GoM value added tax (VAT)
- d) Capacity building budget to orient staff, social protection organizations and other stakeholders at the district and community levels.

152. The overall JP's LSR Cash Based Transfer (CBT) budget for Nsanje was US\$474,002. This was fully utilized by the time the LSR CBT intervention ended in March 2021. The proportion of the budget allocated to delivery or administrative costs, such as staff time, capacity building and other running costs, was US\$32,600. The JP spent 93.8 percent of this allocation (US\$30,588). This represents 6.5 percent of the total cash transfer value of US\$474,002 provided. The cost of delivery per direct recipient household for the whole LSR intervention period was therefore very efficient at US\$6.12. Other overhead costs included payments of MK575 per kilometre for mileage travelled by the financial service providers and 16.5 percent VAT to the government on all costs. Table 14 presents the breakdown of costs per administrative component.

**Table 14: Administrative costs of the Joint Program's Lean Season Response of December 2020 to March 2021 in Nsanje**

No	Administrative Cost	Amount per Cash Distribution Centre (CDCs) (MK)	Number of CDCs	Number of Distribution*	Total Amount Spent (MK)
1	Police	60 000	42	3	7 560 000
2	Cashiers	10 000	42	3	1 260 000
3	Cash collection	15 000	42	3	1 890 000
4	Cash delivery	15 000	42	3	1 890 000
5	Pre-packing - MK935 per each of the 6,368 beneficiaries			3	17 862 240

<sup>61</sup> The implementation modality and costs vary between regular SCTP transfers that are provided throughout the year and Lean Season Transfers. There is also a difference between Lean Season Transfers provided in different districts due to the variety of implementation approaches. For example, transfers provided by WFP in Nsanje under this JP might not have the same cost as transfers provided by ePayment in Balaka through a bank, or that of vertical expansion SP provided as a higher amount of cash handed manually during routine operations of the program (top-ups).

No	Administrative Cost	Amount per Cash Distribution Centre (CDCs) (MK)	Number of CDCs	Number of Distribution*	Total Amount Spent (MK)
	<b>Total (MK)</b>				<b>30 462 240</b>

\*Disbursements for January and February were combined; hence 3 distributions in total

153. The efficiency of the JP's LSR process was based on the ability to allocate significant sums of money to the manual cash distribution, while spending less on administrative costs. The implementation aspect of the CBT relied on existing civil society SP organizations, government systems and community structures to undertake substantial preparatory work on the ground after the necessary orientation procedures. These additional costs would need to be assessed to determine the overall efficiency aspect of the delivery mechanisms.

154. The MVAC 2020 report recommendations suggest interventions to support the LSR could be either cash, food or a mix of cash and food. The JPs choice of cash transfers over food distribution resulted in savings. The total amount spent on CBTs was equivalent to buying 1,000 metric tons of maize, 200 metric tons of pulses and 40,000 litres of cooking oil for the LSR beneficiaries under the joint program. However, the costs for transportation of food items, warehousing and storage, security and post-harvest management to prevent losses and maintain quality would have been both higher and presented more of a logistical challenge. These assertions assume that the value of the food and cash transfers are equivalent to ensure that any estimated savings are not due to differences in the value of the monthly cash or food distribution, but rather reflect efficiency gains in program implementation.

155. The efficiency considerations in the context of outputs and impacts related to outcomes 2 and 3 could not be fully assessed as activities are still under implementation. The ET could not find evidence of any trade-off on how resources were considered and spread among the PUNOs to hire consultants and appoint designated staff related to specific functions of the JP.<sup>62</sup> The timeliness of the human resource inputs to support outcomes 2 & 3 did have an impact on the JP deliverables in these areas.

## 2.5. EVALUATION CRITERIA: IMPACT

**Evaluation question 5: What is the potential impact that can be envisioned, and what are the initial signs of evidence towards achieving development objectives?**

### EQ5 - Overarching observation:

From the evidence collected the LSR component of the JP has the potential, through scalable actions, to bring about transformational change in shaping GoM systems in response to food insecurity challenges. The positive unintended economic effects of the LSR intervention suggests that bulk cash-based transfer payments can empower households to diversify livelihood strategies which enhance quality of life and improve household resilience to shocks. The potential JP envisaged chain of events in changes to the SP policy space remain unknown at this stage. This largely depends on mapping the political will pathways to drive the agenda.

**Sub-question 5.1: What changes has the program effected on the Malawi Social Protection System? What difference have the program interventions made to the wider social protection environment?**

156. **Finding 5.1: Within the duration of the JP there are mixed achievements across the three outcome areas, although it is too early to assess long term impact across and throughout the SP sector.**

<sup>62</sup> In some cases, staff positions are co funded by different programs with participating Agencies, whilst this is useful for leveraging human technical resources the ET could not ascertain overall cost sharing to assess efficiencies of interventions.

157. In the context of outcome 1 adapting the SCT with a shock sensitive social protection LSR interventions, through the 4-month vertical and horizontal expansion of existing CBT benefits, made a difference in reaching vulnerable people. These people were reached using the government UBR system which identified the most vulnerable groups (Refer to [annex 16](#) for details). The LSR was successful in reaching people who otherwise may not have been reached. This has a positive impact at both the household and community level. At household level, the government is also implementing SCT which usually target limited number of beneficiaries. The coming in of the JP increased the number of SCT beneficiaries. This had a significant impact at community level because the number of families lacking food reduced. It is a demonstrable example to GoM that the existing SP systems can be effectively adapted to meet specific crisis needs – both in terms of a periodic LSR and an urban CBT in response to public health emergencies such as COVID-19.

158. The JP supported the GoM to produce targeting tools and guidelines for the COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI). This involved identifying hotspots of vulnerability using survey data, and high-resolution satellite imagery to verify targeting processes, resulting in less than 5 percent exclusion errors. This innovative use of targeting and verification processes presents potential scope to apply to other social assistance interventions going forward.

159. The capacity strengthening component initiative under outcome 1 has limited scope in terms of numbers of officials reached.<sup>63</sup> However, within the resources and timescales available this initiative was valued by GoM stakeholders. There are still considerable challenges to roll out a more comprehensive strategy to reach across and down to all levels of government related to SP systems strengthening. Issues concerning SRSP is that it is still a relatively new concept in Malawi and, according to key GoM officials, the lesson from the JP is that there is a significant need to embed this approach into the district councils work planning (refer to box 8).

160. One notable change attributed to the JP, according to district level officials in Nsanje and Balaka, is the integration of social protection interventions such as school meals, social cash transfers (SCT), Village Savings and Loans (VSLs)<sup>64</sup> and microfinance to enhance impact as required by the MNSSP II. These are the fundamental building blocks to improving the pathways out of poverty for many vulnerable families. The Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) II has highlighted the concern that different social protection programs run independently from one another and are poorly coordinated. However, there are indications that social protection programs are beginning to coordinate at the district level. In this regard, the use of the UBR process to select beneficiaries has helped to avoid duplication and improve the efficiency and quality of service delivery (Refer to Box 8 as one key informant explain the change). “Working together has enabled us (DSWO) be more actively involved in SP work than we used to be in previous years,” Principal Social Welfare Officer.

#### **Box 8: Reflections of District Staff that received Technical Support**

*“Coordination of social protection was poor. The social cash transfer program for example has been working in isolation without being linked to VSLs to deepen impact. This has changed because of the training, which took place in Blantyre between 2019 and 2020 under pooled resources provided by the SP4SDG JP and GIZ, that taught us how to improve coordination and integration of the SP programs at the district level. The training emphasized on joint planning and monitoring of social protection activities to leverage efforts and outcomes. The impact is now huge and evident. Working together like this has also enabled government’s departments to be more actively involved than we used to do in the previous years,” Key Informant, Nsanje.*

#### **Sub-question 5.2: What real difference has the program made on the targeted beneficiaries (including specifically the most vulnerable groups) and their households? How did the program change their lives and livelihoods?**

<sup>63</sup> Refer to Finding 6.1.

<sup>64</sup> A Village Savings and Loan (VSL) Association is a self-selected and governed group of people, who pool their money into a fund, from which members can borrow. The money is paid back with interest, causing the fund to grow.

161. **Finding 5.2: The JP's LSR achieved its goal of improving food security of the most vulnerable households in Nsanje.**

162. The ET received scanty details of the operational set up to manage and implement the LSR cash transfer component in Nsanje district. Little information was provided to explain specific arrangements and relationship between the agent responsible for managing the overall distribution (MRCS) and that of the Financial Service Provider (FSP) - Logistics and Transport Services (LTS) - who manually hand out cash to the JP beneficiaries. According to the MRCS End of Project Narrative Report dated 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021, WFP contracted the MRCS to distribute cash to 60,668 vulnerable households in three districts of Mangochi, Zomba and Nsanje.<sup>65</sup> The MRCS report emphasizes that the engagement to undertake this task was based on the long-term working relationship between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and WFP at a global level. Also, another critical factor was due to the urgency of the intervention and because the MRCS has an extensive operational network with the capacity to undertake this role based on previous experience in country. Logistics and Transport Services (LTS) were contracted directly to manage the cash transfer disbursement in Nsanje. It is understood that WFP issues multi-year contracts to several FSPs based on an open tendering process. The MRCS worked directly with the Nsanje district council to facilitate the disbursement of cash to the communities. The police were responsible for ensuring safety and security during cash distribution.

163. The following information focusses on the findings of engaging directly with the primary stakeholders of the JP and does not provide any commentary on the effectiveness or impact of the MRCS and LTS' operation which is subject to WFPs own internal procedures. The first LSR cash distribution was undertaken between 19<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> December 2020.<sup>66</sup> The payment schedules for January and February were combined, due to COVID regulations, and these were implemented on 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The final cash disbursement was undertaken between 10<sup>th</sup> March-15<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Table 15 indicates a total of MK588,403,200 allocated for the LSR program. The MRCS and LTS actually disbursed MK579,093,900. Throughout the period December to March the LRS CT reached, on average, 98.4 percent of those eligible households (Table 15). The ET found that a total amount of undisbursed CTs, valued at MWK10,048,500 (US\$12,305.3) was returned to Logistics and Transport Services Limited (LTS). This was a result of several beneficiary household recipients not being available on the scheduled days for distribution. Each household received MK23,100 (US\$30) every month from December 2020 to March 2021 and the total cash entitlement for the four-month LSR period was MK92,400 (US\$120) per household. This undisbursed cash entitled would have affected the equivalent of 102 eligible households. The ET was unable to verify who was responsible for this operational error.

**Table 15: Cash distributed by the Joint Programmes' LSR from December 2020 to March 2021**

Month	Planned		Reached			
	District Targeted Household	Total Cash Entitlement (MWK)	Actual Households Served	Balance (Households)	Actual Cash Distributed (MWK)	Progress %
December	6 368	147 100 800	6 059	309	139 962 900	95%
January & February	6 368	294 201 600	6 337	31	292 769 400	99.5%
March	6 368	147 100 800	6 336	32	146 361 600	99.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>588 403 200</b>			<b>579 093 900</b>	<b>98.4%</b>

<sup>65</sup> In addition to the LSR cash transfer distribution in Nsanje district the MRCS was also contracted to deliver cash to CUCI beneficiaries in Mangochi and Zomba. The provision of cash was undertaken by a number of financial service providers identified by WFP.

<sup>66</sup> The MRCS contract covered a period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

## Box 9: Problems and update of the UBR database

1. The UBR database needs to be updated. It is possible some people have migrated out of their community and others may have died. Vulnerabilities have also changed. In some cases, people who were ultra-poor when the UBR was compiled may no longer be in the same category due to various factors. Prior to the coming lean season there is a need to undertake a substantial verification process to ensure only vulnerable and existing households benefit from the LSR. Although it is understood that a verification process is conducted before registration of beneficiaries the field work evidence would indicate that some changes at community level are more fluid and these require more frequent monitoring.
2. The current UBR database used for the recent LSR was compiled in 2019 with funding from the EU. The database lists all people / residents in the Traditional Authorities (Tas), Group Village Heads (GVHs) and villages in the district. The data collection process requires more than 150 enumerators. The database was partially updated in 2020 through the validation exercise that added new households and removed ineligible households from the list. The validation exercise, funded by the EU, involved district officers, community leaders and local committees.
3. The DSWO adhere to central level policy obligations in which the GoM have adopted the use of UBR to target new SCT beneficiaries. Identification of new potential beneficiaries happens every 4 years. A comprehensive update of the UBR database is scheduled for 2022.<sup>67</sup>

164. The JP has four key indicators to track progress on LSR objectives and outputs. These are:
- i. Percentage of targeted households with borderline to acceptable Food Consumption Score (FCS), disaggregated by age, and sex;
  - ii. Percentage of targeted households not engaged in negative coping strategies (Reduced Coping Strategies Index - rCSI), disaggregated by age, and sex;
  - iii. Percentage of targeted households not engaged in livelihoods-based coping strategies, disaggregated by age, and sex (Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI); and,
  - iv. Proportion of households identified to receive emergency food assistance (IPC<sup>68</sup>-based) served via government social protection channels. Refer to box 10 for a brief summary of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). The section below presents the effectiveness of the actions related to the four key indicators that are attributed to the JP.

### **The percentage of targeted households with borderline to acceptable food consumption (FCS), disaggregated by age, and sex**

165. The FCS is a composite indicator measuring dietary diversity, food frequency and the relative nutritional importance of food groups based on a seven-day recall of food consumed at household level (refer to Table 16). FCS focuses on frequency of consumption (in days) over a recall period of the past 7 days. The consumption frequency of each food group is multiplied by an assigned weight based on its nutrient content. Values obtained are then summed up to obtain the FCS. WFP guidelines classify households as having "poor" FCS (0-21 scores), "borderline" FCS (21.5 -35 scores) or "acceptable" FCS (35.5 scores and above).

166. Descriptive analysis of the evaluation household survey data shows that 97.4 percent of the households were either in the acceptable (food secure/mildly food insecure) or borderline (moderately food insecure) categories of FCS. This figure surpasses the 80 percent target for 2021 the program proposed at

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<sup>67</sup> In response to these challenges, it is understood that UNICEF commissioned a study, through the JP, for identifying potential solutions to maintain and keep the UBR information updated. The ET did not have access to the details of this study.

<sup>68</sup> The IPC scale is a tool for improving food security analysis and decision-making. It is a standardised scale that integrates food security, nutrition and livelihood information into a statement about the nature and severity of a crisis and implications for strategic response.

the outset by 17.4 percentage points.<sup>69</sup> The difference in the baseline and endline timing was considered in the course of the evaluation approach. In the case where issues could not be backdated to the original questionnaire the evaluation team solicited information through KIIs and FGDs. Respondents highly valued the project intervention as it provided a cushion in various ways. This includes examples where affected households were able to eat a variety of food at least three times a day and shunned less preferred foods. Prior to the LSR assistance a majority of households survived on consuming water lily bulbs, which presents serious health risks, both in terms of gastric problems, and physical danger due to risk of being attacked by crocodiles. In addition, harvesting these items was time consuming and labour intensive, requiring all members of the household. It was reported that through the LSR support the time spent in search for poor quality food was now more effectively allocated to investing in homesteads gardens. Furthermore, beneficiaries report that their children returned to school and dropout rates have drastically reduced. Therefore, despite the timing of the evaluation field data collection the evaluation team was able to trace the effects and impacts of the project support during and after the food crisis shock. Furthermore, the unintended benefit is that girls usually get pregnant at an early stage as reported by parents and local committees. With the LSR CT support, beneficiaries had access to food and therefore girls were able to go to school instead of working, or in many cases married off early as a coping strategy. According to some beneficiaries the project support has helped reduce teenage pregnancies and marriages.

**Box 10: Categories in the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)**

The IPC standardized scale categorizes the severity of acute food insecurity into five phases. Each phase has important and distinct implications for where and how best to intervene and therefore influences priority response objectives. The IPC phases are determined by analysing a range of outcomes based on international standards including food consumption levels, livelihoods changes, nutritional status, and mortality. These are triangulated with several contributing factors (food availability, access, utilization and stability, vulnerability and hazards) and analysed within local contexts. The IPC classification is based on a convergence of all this evidence and functions essentially like a thermometer that takes the 'temperature' of how severe the food security situation is. The IPC indicates the changing of a food insecure situation and, critically, changes in the required responses.

**Categories of IPC**

Phase	Description
1. Minimal - Generally Food Secure	More than 80 percent of households can meet basic food needs without atypical coping strategies
2. Stressed - Borderline Food Insecure	For at least 20 percent of households, food consumption is reduced but minimally adequate without having to engage in irreversible coping strategies. These households cannot fully meet livelihoods protection needs.
3. Crisis - Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis	At least 20 percent of households have significant food consumption gaps OR are marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with irreversible coping strategies such as liquidating livelihood assets
4. Emergency - Humanitarian Emergency	At least 20 percent of households face extreme food consumption gaps, resulting in very high levels of acute malnutrition and excess mortality; OR households face an extreme loss of livelihood assets that will likely lead to food consumption gaps.
5. Famine - Humanitarian Catastrophe	At least 20 percent of households face a complete lack of food and/or other basic needs and starvation, death, and destitution are evident; and acute malnutrition prevalence exceeds 30 percent; and mortality rates exceed 2/10000/day

<sup>69</sup> It should be noted that the ET fieldwork data collection process was undertaken at a different time of year to the original baseline commissioned by WFP and, in this regard, there may be additional variables that have not been considered. However, the JP target set was for 2021 and the program may need to monitor the accuracy of this data at a relevant time to draw suitable comparisons.

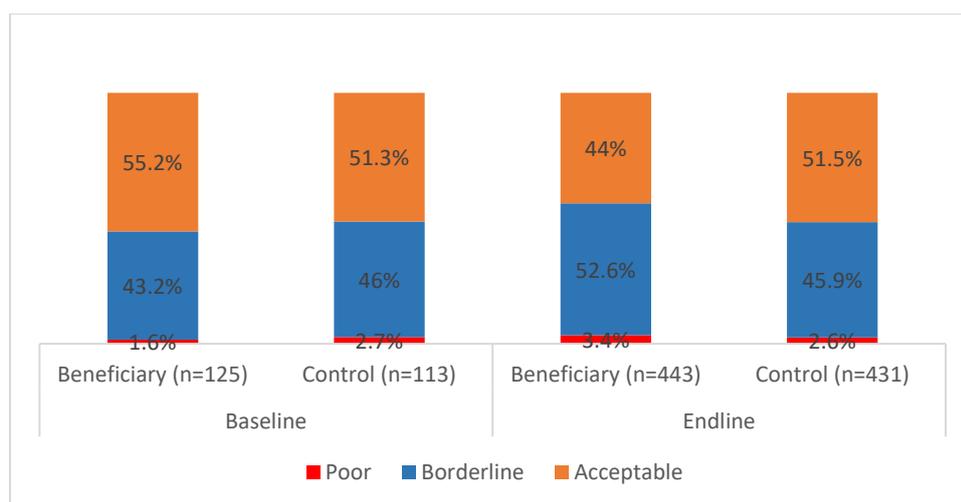
167. Overall, households headed by women were shown to consume better diets than recorded at baseline. Beneficiary households also reported improved diverse diets, similar to the non-beneficiaries who were not included in the LSR because they were, at that time, comparatively better off.

168. The LSR cash enabled the beneficiary households to refrain from ganyu (casual work) and concentrate on their homestead gardens from which they harvested the food they were consuming from April to August.

169. Data in figure 8 indicates the percentage of households with borderline and acceptable FCS was higher at end line. This may relate to the timing of the baseline field assessment that took place in January 2021 when the LSR had already started. Following publication of the MVAC report in August 2020, the JP utilized the months of September through to November planning for the actual disbursement of cash and, as a result, were not able to conduct the baseline within this period. From figure 8, the lower proportion of beneficiaries in the poor FCS score is mainly due to the timing of baseline as mentioned above. However, having 3.4 percent of the beneficiaries in the poor FCS category is still on the lower side after completion of the intervention. It is fair to assume that if the intervention hadn't happened that the indicated proportion would be significantly higher.

170. Beneficiary households in Nyachikadza Traditional Authority ranked lowest in terms of food availability and consumption. This is primarily a result of having to relocate to other communities after being displaced by the floods during the lean period and lacked access to farming land.

**Figure 8: Proportion of households with borderline and acceptable FCS**



**Table 16: Food consumption score by sex of the household head**

Food Consumption Score FCS	Beneficiary				Non-beneficiaries			
	Baseline (n=238)		Endline (n=874)		Baseline (n=238)		Endline (n=874)	
	Female (n=62)	Male (n=63)	Female (206)	Male (237)	Female (n=53)	Male (n=60)	Female (188)	Male (243)
Poor	1.61	1.59	3.88	2.95	5.66	0.00	4.26	1.23
Borderline	48.39	38.10	62.14	44.30	49.06	43.33	47.34	44.86
Acceptable	50.00	60.32	33.98	52.74	45.28	56.67	48.40	53.91
Total	100	100	100	100	100.00	100	100	100

### **Percentage of targeted households not engaged in negative coping strategies (rCSI), disaggregated by age and sex**

171. The Coping Strategy Index (CSI) measures food insecurity by considering the activities undertaken by households to manage food shortages. There are two main coping indicators used in the food security analysis: The reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) and the Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI).

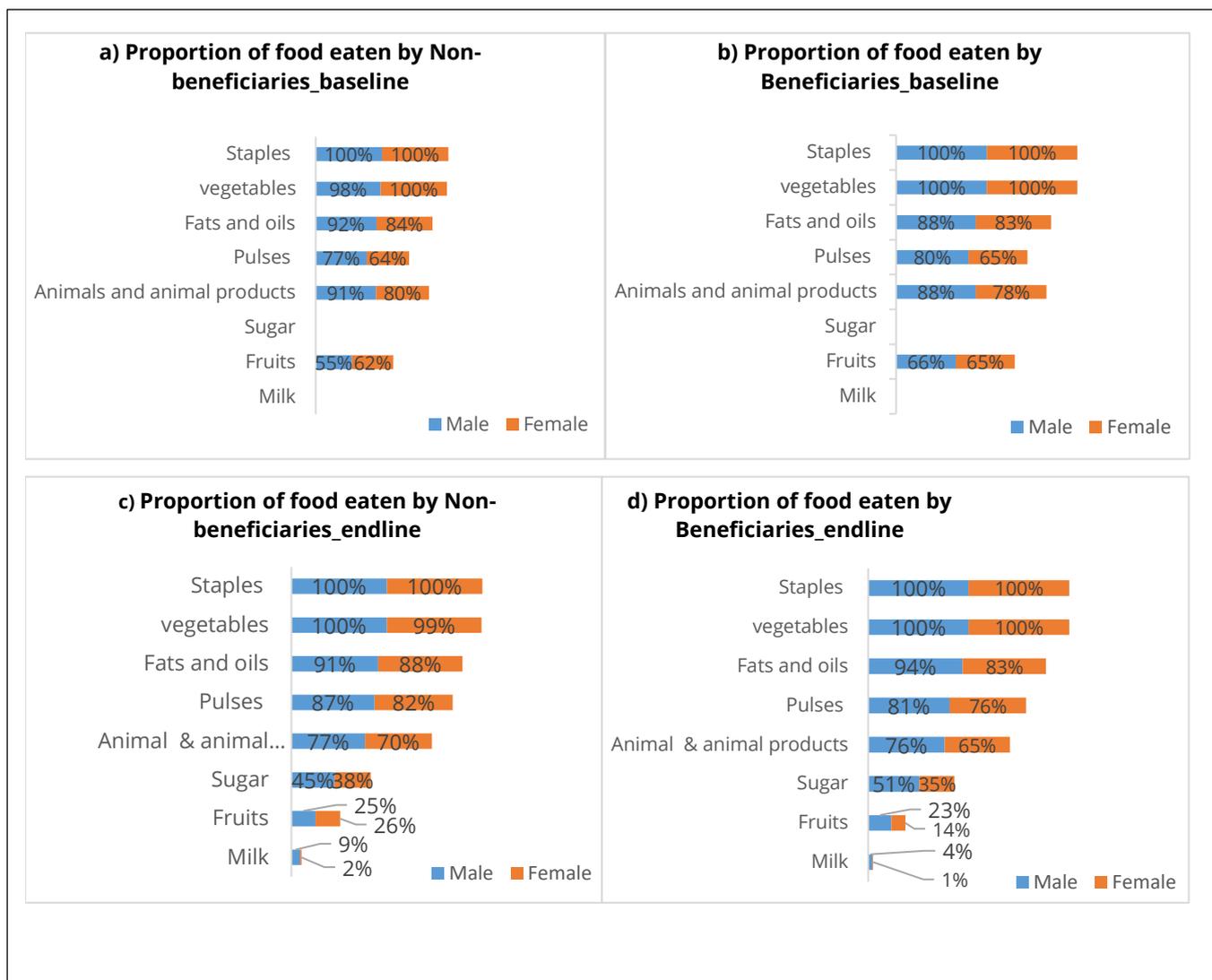
172. The rCSI is an experience-based indicator measuring the behaviour of households over the past seven days when there was not sufficient food or money to purchase food. Households were asked the question: "In the past 7 days, if there have been times when you did not have enough food or money to buy food, how often has your household had to resort to any of the five strategies listed below." The five strategies are assigned a standard weight in the analysis based on its severity. These weights are: Relying on less preferred and less expensive foods (1.0); Limiting portion size at mealtimes (1.0); Reducing the number of meals eaten in a day (1.0); Borrow food or rely on help from relatives or friends (2.0); Restricting consumption by adults for small children to eat (3.0).

173. Household CSI scores were then determined by multiplying the number of days in the past week each strategy was employed by its corresponding severity weight, and then adding the totals together. The CSI scores were used to determine levels of food security and coping strategies into three categories: food secure or moderately food insecure with no or low coping (CSI= 0-3), moderately food insecure and medium coping (CSI = 4-18) and severely food insecure and coping (CSI  $\geq$ 19).

174. **Finding 5.3: The JP has made a measurable and positive impact on household assets and investments in the context of its coverage.** The ET fieldwork primarily focused on the achievements of the LSR in Nsanje district where the SRSP intervention was undertaken. The following information captures the key identified impact areas.

175. At baseline there was a slight difference in terms of food consumption pattern and frequency for the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Overall, there was a high proportion of households consuming staple foods and vegetables everyday followed by fats and oils. Observing the endline results, the beneficiaries are consuming more of each food item. The only difference is observed in the consumption of animal products. At baseline animal products were consumed more frequently than at endline. This difference could stem from households coping strategies. During hunger times households resort to consuming their own livestock as a means to survive hunger. Refer to figure 9 (a-d).

**Figure 9: Proportions of food eaten by beneficiary and non-beneficiary households**



176. The targeted group consisted of both households headed by men and those headed by women with minimal differences as presented in table 17 below. Households received the CT at a time when food was scarce, and the hunger gap was critical. In this regard the cash transfer component was appropriate and covered costs associated with all necessary food items on the market (i.e., maize, beans and cooking oil). Several beneficiaries indicated that they preferred cash (compared to food) as it gave them greater flexibility on purchasing decisions.

177. Table 17, highlights that the JP target population increased by 4 percent for the women who benefited from the support and dropped by 4 percent for the men who were targeted by the support. This change in targets was supported by different implementing partners who indicated that the use of the UBR was efficient in selecting vulnerable groups of which most are female heads of their households. There is a drop in the average years of targeted heads of household and this could be the use of other variables in the

UBR for selecting vulnerable households. There is a slight increase in household size for the selected households. The following sections discuss the critical areas in assessing the impact of the LSR intervention.

**Table 17: Socio-Demographic Information for the Beneficiary Households**

Study	Sex of Household		Mean Age of Household		Mean Household Size	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Baseline (n=124)	43%	57%	52	47	4.5	5.4
Endline (n=443)	47%	53%	49	44	4.7	5.6

### Improved household food security

178. At the household level, food security refers to the ability of the household to secure, either from its own production or through purchases, adequate food for meeting the dietary needs of its members. The LSR improved food security and bridged the hunger gap for over 6,000 and 1,270 people in the villages and at the boma respectively.

179. Traders were bringing food items from within and outside Nsanje because they knew people had money to buy, and thereby contributing to enhancing local economic activities. This not only improved market functionality but also increased food access, diversity and consumption. The beneficiary families were able to eat balanced diets three times a day which they could not afford on their own during times of hunger.

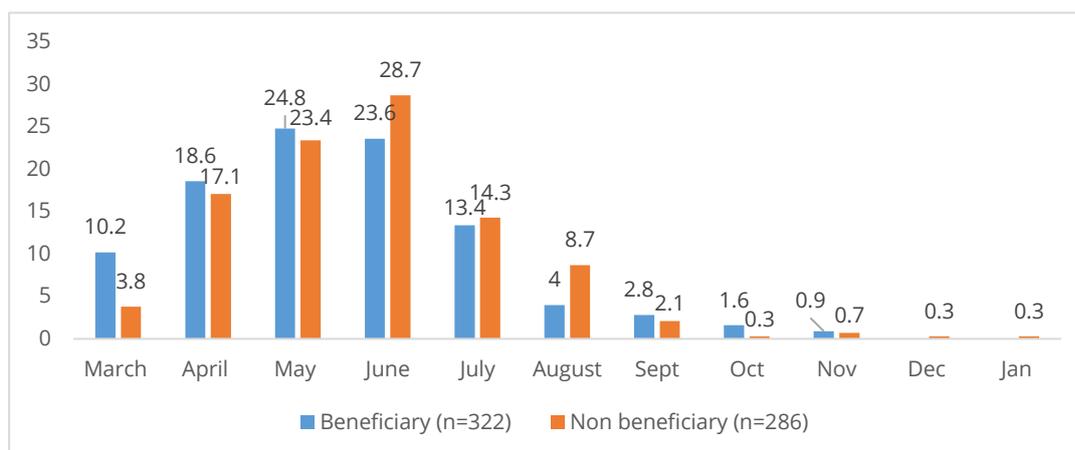
180. The LSR CT demonstrated that beneficiary households started relying on food from their own production with some having adequate food up to June and others extended until August (Figure 10). The proportion of households that reported having food supplies from own production for September and beyond was 5.3 percent for beneficiaries and 3.7 percent on-beneficiaries (Figure 10). These households are largely the ones that have land where they grew various crops using residual moisture from the rainy season of 2020/2021.

181. Based on the endline results, the LSR cash has uplifted beneficiary households to be at par and in some cases outperform non-beneficiaries who were initially better off by community standards. The Food Consumption Scores (FCS) have already shown that over 96.6 percent of the beneficiary households were either in the acceptable (consuming staples and vegetables every day, frequently accompanied by oil and pulses, and occasionally meat, fish and dairy) or borderline (consuming staples and vegetables every day, accompanied by oil and pulses a few times a week) categories compared to 97.4 percent for their counterparts in the control group.

182. At the time of the evaluation fieldwork in September 2021, no household was receiving relief food or cash due to food insecurity. Households were able to both purchase food or replenish foods from their own production if this had been consumed or just to complement their stock provisions. The number of food self-sufficiency months based only on staple maize and sorghum from rain-fed agriculture in the 2020/2021 season was 2.48 for the beneficiaries and 2.78 for non-beneficiary households on average.

183. In focus group discussions with communities, it was revealed that those involved in winter cropping using residual moisture in the ground were expected to have an additional month or two, making a total of 3-5 months of self-food sufficiency. These achievements are significant considering that the same households had literally no food in November before the LSR started.

**Figure 10: Months when food from own production will last (March 2021-January 2022)**



### Reduction in acute malnutrition

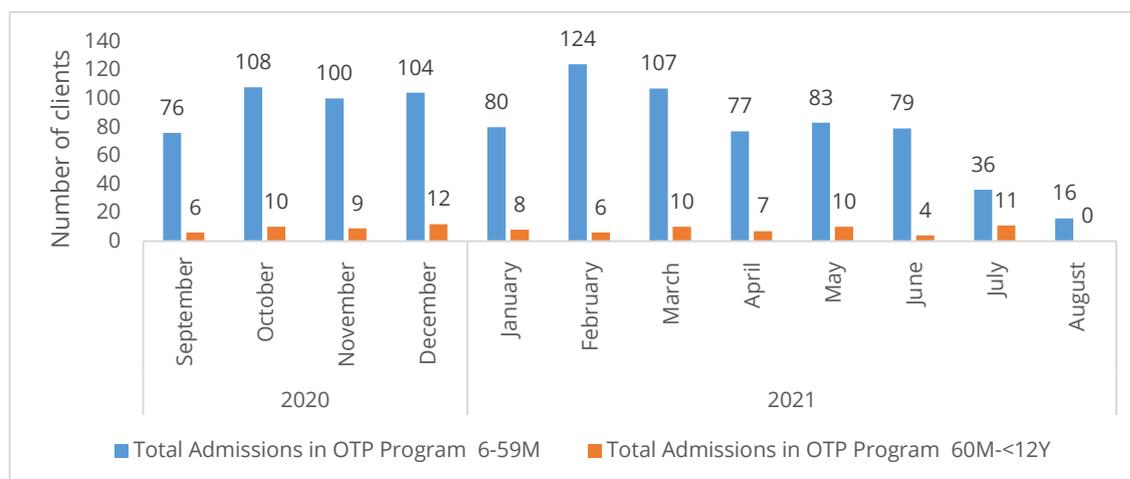
184. The Cost of Hunger in Africa Study<sup>70</sup> has confirmed the magnitude of the consequences that child malnutrition has on health, education as well as on the national economy. The total annual costs associated with child undernutrition are estimated at MK147 billion (US\$ 597 million), equivalent to 10.3 percent of GDP according to the report.

185. The Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS) of 2015/2016 found that 1.4 million children, more than one third of the young people in Malawi, are stunted. Nsanje district contributes to the bulk of the problem with stunting rate of 31.6 percent due to long term deprivation and food insecurity among other factors. The JP's Lean Season Response was well timed because child undernutrition increases during the lean season when food supplies are lowest.

186. The ET interviews with community members concluded the LSR intervention has reduced the risk of undernutrition in the district because the CT coverage was widespread, and it enabled people to buy food items like maize, pulses and cooking oil which are the Malawian six main food groups. Before the LSR in November 2020 many households had already started foregoing meals or eating once a day according to the findings of the MVAC and baseline report. Figure 11 shows reducing trends of children admitted in outpatient therapeutic program (OTP) from September 2020 to August 2021.

<sup>70</sup> WFP and African Union. 2012. The Cost of Hunger in Africa. This study was commissioned by the African Union and supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the World Food Program, March 2012. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/cost-hunger-malawi>

**Figure 11: Admissions into Outpatient Therapeutic Program from September 2020 to August 2021 in Nsanje District**



Source: District Health Office (DHO), Nsanje District

### Household asset creation

187. One of the eligibility criteria under the UBR system is to choose households without any valuable assets including livestock. Set against these criteria the majority of the beneficiaries of the LSR had no livestock at the outset. Analysis of descriptive data from the evaluation shows that 13.5 percent of the beneficiaries (compared to 11.6 percent of the non-beneficiaries) have acquired small livestock after participating in the LSR. A total of 36 percent also had chickens and 3.2 percent owned pigs as well. The large majority of them were able to buy small livestock when they received the double payment in February 2021.

188. Households owning livestock said that they are an important asset and sources of food and manure, thus promoting household gardening and contributing to improving nutritional status in households. *“Having livestock symbolizes wealth. We can sell them during hard times to earn money and address pressing needs including food, healthcare, and educational costs for their children”*. View expressed by an elderly woman beneficiary, GVH Chimombo.

### Household asset protection

189. Participation in the program’s LSR has increased growth in livestock holdings almost from zero to 13.5 percent in 2021 alone. FGDs also revealed injection of cash from LSR into rain-fed agriculture and winter cropping in places with residual moisture that have helped reduce food insecurity in the district. An increase in the numbers of small livestock is anticipated to continue decreasing food insecurity in future and making beneficiary households self-sufficient in food for some months.

190. A total of 95.8 percent of the households reported no distress sales of household assets to meet food needs, and 98.6 percent never considered the sale of a house or land as a remedy to acquiring food. Had their food insecurity situation been precarious, the LSR beneficiaries would have already sold these assets because they are usually in high demand and can sell quickly.

191. Households that participated in the LSR perceived themselves to be better off than they were at the outset of the intervention. Notably, this change in perceived welfare status was even higher among households that could not work or receive any remittances from relatives and friends such as the elderly, chronically sick and households headed by women.

## 2.6. EVALUATION CRITERIA: SUSTAINABILITY

**Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the benefits of the program likely to continue after program funding has ceased?**

**EQ6 - Overarching observation:**

It remains unclear if the JP has had any influence in creating the conditions for the program components to be taken forward within existing available GoM resources. Much of the JP interventions will require an increased commitment to building and sustaining the relevant institutional systems to make them more efficient and responsive to the prevailing environment.

**Sub-question 6.1: How has the program built capacities of the different stakeholders for the results to continue?**

192. **Finding 6.1: The JP has carried out some activities dedicated to capacity strengthening initiatives, with potential to roll-out and scale-up. However, a more robust interpretation for defining the systemic needs of institutional capacity strengthening is required throughout the SP sector.**

193. The whole sustainability premise of the JPs three outcome areas is underpinned on the assumption that there is both political willingness and financial resources available from GoM to take these issues forward. Crucially, and fundamentally, this requires sufficient absorptive capacity within GoM to drive this agenda forward in a self-sustaining manner.

194. Focusing on the capacity building and SP systems strengthening initiative element of the JP, there are two components that the program provided support to GoM. Firstly, 17 participants from across GoM SP ministries (6 women and 11 men) have been enrolled on an Adaptive SP course run by EPRI.<sup>71</sup> The course focus is on the conceptual framework understanding of SSP/SRSP with a five modular remote learning component. An end of program report was due in July 2021. Secondly, the PUNOs supported online training on shock responsive social protection programs and facilitated monitoring for shock sensitive SP with seven GoM officials from three separate ministries. The participants received training in website development as part of COVID-19 response in order to establish future SP programs in pursuit of linkages with the ongoing humanitarian–development nexus debate in Malawi.

195. The JPs documentation and regular reporting provides little evidence that the capacity strengthen component is able to assess how those various stakeholders, who received capacity building training, are now operating and performing at a higher level than before the capacity building training intervention happened.

196. It is reasonable to suggest there have been some inroads on the capacity strengthening work. It is not clear from the JP documentary evidence that there have been any robust discussions with GoM on a more strategic approach to embed this within the broader aspects of public sector reform and through existing government civil servants training and induction programs.

197. GoM stakeholders recognize that capacity constraints are a massive challenge throughout the SP system. The JP's interventions were minimalist and too limited to draw any conclusions that these interventions on their own are sufficient to bring about any meaningful and systemic change throughout the GoM SP sector.

198. In the context of interventions related to outcome 1, there is some evidence to suggest the SSSP prototype has produced findings that make it potentially scalable for GoM to utilize in future shock responsive scenarios. However, building on the recommendations of previous studies a systematic cost analysis needs to be undertaken to assess scenarios that future SP programs may encounter. Nevertheless, the conditions for sustaining a SRSP type intervention will depend on many issues; GoM financing of the SP intervention is an important and critical factor. The absence of gender analysis is a key concern in terms of SP CTS being the vehicle for transformational change and for informing how to reduce inequalities. In this

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<sup>71</sup> Tailored e-Learning course: Designing and Implementing Adaptive Social Protection Systems, Economic Policy Research Institution, South Africa.

sense, the JP did not sufficiently invest in the gender and inequality areas of social protection to provide any analytical framework.

#### **Sub-question 6.2: What systems are in place for the program to develop an exit strategy?**

199. **Finding 6.2: The discussions between GoM and development partners are moving ahead on assessing issues of long-term sustainability. However, these discussions need to be ramped up to learn lessons from the JP as part of a long-term strategy for engaging in the SP sector**

200. GoM KIIs suggested that, in their view, as the JP has only just started it is too early to consider how the UN partners have sufficiently enhanced the SP sector through their interventions to indicate the GoM could continue without further support. The JP interventions complement what GoM and other DPs are doing. Given that 90 percent of the SP programs are funded by DPs there is huge task ahead to get any realistic exit strategy in place.

201. Elevating the discussion to suggest that SCTP CTs provide the basis for poverty graduation is both premature and unrealistic. KIIs with CSOs suggested that most CTs only support basic food consumption due to the limited value of the CTs. Therefore, many, if not all SCT beneficiaries, will never have access to sufficient resources to cope and live comfortably unless there is more diversity in the categorical targeting of individuals per se and not at a household level. Such categories of vulnerabilities include households headed by women, children and the elderly, households hosting people with disabilities etc. After which, allocation of numbers of beneficiaries to be selected should be based on the household sizes to ensure better representation than when selection is done based on households.

202. The SRSP approach has being established and to a large extent grounded in GoM policy commitments. However, to consider the sustainable notions of SRSP with only GoM resources, is highly unlikely. The SP sector could remain donor dependent for some time.

## **2.7. EVALUATION CRITERIA: GENDER DIMENSIONS**

### **Evaluation question 7: How did SP4SDG's actions affect the context of gender inequality and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people?**

#### **EQ7 - Overarching observation:**

Changes to Outcome 3, in terms of removing specific actions to gather disaggregated data by age, sex and persons with disability had consequences for the JP to claim any positive results in achieving improved gender and social inclusion outcomes.

### **Sub-question 7.1: How did the Stakeholders interventions (1) improve the lives of women, girls, gender diverse people and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people? (2) How did the PUNOs challenge existing gender inequalities; and (3) did these interventions worsen or improve the circumstances for women, girls, gender diverse people and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people.**

203. **Finding 7.1: The JP Results Framework is minimalist on defining gender inclusion performance targets. The lack of any specific tangible interventions on gender equality is a concern.**

204. In consultation with the PUNOs the ET understood that the JP cross-cutting issues were set out and defined in the original project document. Accordingly, SP sector gender analysis was done jointly with the PUNOs to inform the design of the JP, although no formal report was produced.

205. Inputs to the program on gender and cross-cutting issues were meant to be performed by the UN Senior Human Rights Adviser, as reported this did not happen as envisaged in the project document. However, mainstreaming gender throughout the JP is each PUNOs responsibility for implementing their specific activities on gender (refer to box 11). In this regard the program implementation approach defers to standard gender sensitive approaches, i.e., women accessing CTs. The gender issues in UNICEF's outcome area are very minor, and by their own opinion, not strategic in focus. The unit of gender analysis is mainly on gender beneficiary targets being met through the social cash transfer component.

206. The JP does not have a specific gender coordinator as such. There was no budget allocation to appoint a gender coordinator. Given the size and scale of the program the PUNOs utilised existing staff and resources to mainstream gender in their activities. WFP has called upon their gender adviser to focus on CT disbursement mechanisms, to ensure interventions align with WFPs corporate requirements. There is no requirement in the system to record details of staff time allocate to the gender aspects of the program. UNICEF's output focus is on the financial policy space implications on gender impacts, but there is no reporting against the Project Document gender marker parameters. This meant gender monitoring was not routinely undertaken by the JP.

207. The JP reporting requirements are defined by the SDG fund. According to the PUNOs there have been no requests for any update from the Fund Managers on gender issues (gender marker) to date. Therefore, the JP regular reports have not specifically focused on this issue. The 2020 Annual SDG Fund Report had requested updates on certain issues, but nothing highlighting the gender aspects of the JP. It is argued that the SDG Fund managers have not triggered this request, suggesting it is not critical. However, according to the PUNOs they are implementing gender as set out in the project document. As a result, gender aspects of the JP at outcome level have not been fully assessed.

208. JP original documentation states that women's empowerment will be assessed through increased access to Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) in the LSR SP intervention; and by implementing activities which aim to increase agency and voice, and increased accountability. The project document suggests that 8.5 percent <sup>72</sup>of the JP total budget would be linked to activities that addressed social accountability and individual agency strengthening. The ET could not find details in the JP reporting on any activities undertaken for this component.

209. The original project document also stated that LNOB objectives would be pursued by "reviewing the effectiveness of the current poverty targeting mechanisms towards a life-cycle and gender sensitive approach". The original JP results framework had specific sex disaggregated monitoring commitments embedded in outcome 3. Given the changes to outputs 3.1 and 3.2 in 2020 on the original results framework it is not entirely clear how gender tracking at this outcome level has been monitored throughout the program implementation period.

#### **Box 11: UN Women: Defining gender mainstreaming**

*Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programs and projects.*

UN Women

210. It is difficult to ascertain either way if the JP improved the lives of diverse people as there wasn't any specific baseline to monitor. Placing emphasis on having outcome and output data disaggregated by sex does little in the way of assessing structural changes the JP is meant to address on gender equality and social inclusion.

211. With the changes to outcome 3 mid-way through the JP implementation period the gender and inclusion aspects were simply removed. The revised JP results framework did not stipulate any specific gender mainstreaming targets. As such this posed a challenge in the implementation of the project which stipulated a commitment to gender empowerment.

212. The policy landscape on gender and inclusion in Malawi is wide-ranging. The National Gender Policy (2015) aims to reduce gender inequality and enhance the participation of women, men, girls and boys in the socio economic and political development. The Disability Act (2012) builds on the national policy on equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The National Policy on Older Persons in Malawi (revised in 2016) highlights to limitation of the GoM's SCTP in which only 18 percent of the recipients

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<sup>72</sup> SP Budget Brief, UNICEF, 2020-21

are the elderly over 65 years of age. This, it is suggested, could be a result of ineffective targeting, such as eligible people being inadvertently excluded from the UBR process.

213. Stakeholder interviews suggest that gender inclusion objectives are often pursued through the positive selection of female beneficiaries was a deliberate pursuit by registering the female member of the household to be the recipient of the cash transfer interventions.

214. The ET could not find any specific evidence that the JP interventions actually worsened the existing circumstances for socially excluded groups. However, neither was there a plethora of information setting out how the JP would challenge existing norms and behaviours. There was a missed opportunity to invest more in monitoring.

215. According to the UN Women Malawi only 41.9 percent of indicators needed to monitor the SDGs from a gender perspective were available. As recorded in December 2020 the prevalence of severe food insecurity in the adult population was 88 percent for women, compared to 82 percent for men.

**Sub-question 7.2: What is the anticipated proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of social protection entitlements?**

216. **Finding 7.2: The JP's intervention through the LSR did marginally contribute to empowering women ensuring that they equally participate in decision making processes concerning social protection entitlements and other important household decisions. However, the analysis and reporting on how the JP addressed the needs of other socially vulnerable groups is unclear.**

217. Anecdotal data from local project staff and key personal from CSOs with experience of working in Nsanje revealed that less than 20 percent of families make joint decisions because of the patrilineal system and polygamy and cultural issues in the district. Most household decisions are monopolized by men because they are heads of families. Patrilineal system of marriage is followed in Nsanje in which women reside in their husband's village.

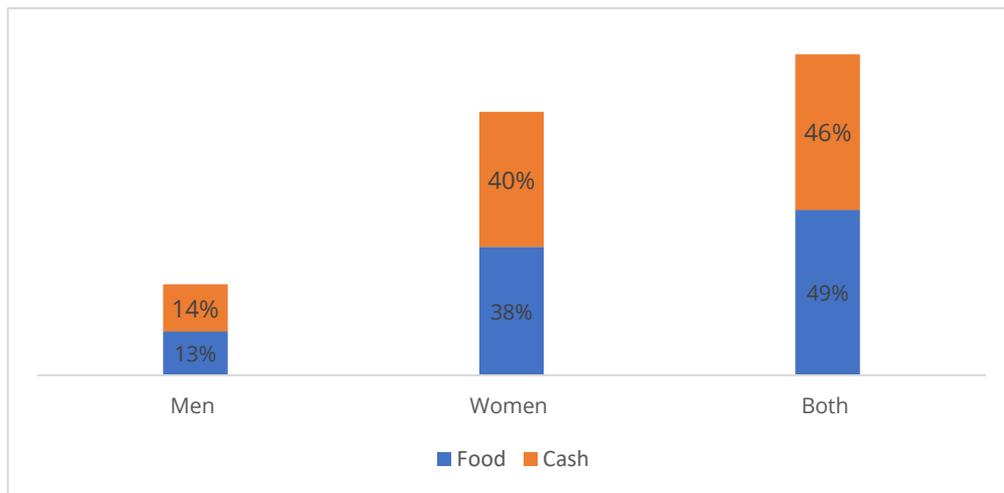
218. According to one key informant the LSR ensured empowerment by deliberately registering 60-70 percent women than men. Otherwise, it was suggested, when beneficiaries were men, the cash was spent with one household leaving the other wives destitute.

219. The MRCS appointed a Gender and Protection Officer who provided training. The local Food Management Committees in the communities were also involved so that they can facilitate protection issues and ensure the money was used largely by women to buy food.

220. The LSR recorded some cases of gender-based violence as reported by the DSWO and field staff for the project. Examples of cases encountered include polygamous men receiving the cash and being unable to share it among all the wives, during the next distributions the wives were complaining to the project staff. Another common complaint is husband and wife fighting after receiving the cash due to misunderstandings on how to use it, resulting in the local chiefs confiscating the cash from the recipients. Through the JP interventions communities were sensitized to avoid sharing of the cash with others and use it for buying food. However, many beneficiaries reported that they were forced to share the cash. *"Cases of chiefs getting the cash from recipients were common and we resolved them. Some of the chiefs were interrogated and prosecuted by the police and they paid back the money"* - DSWO, Nsanje.

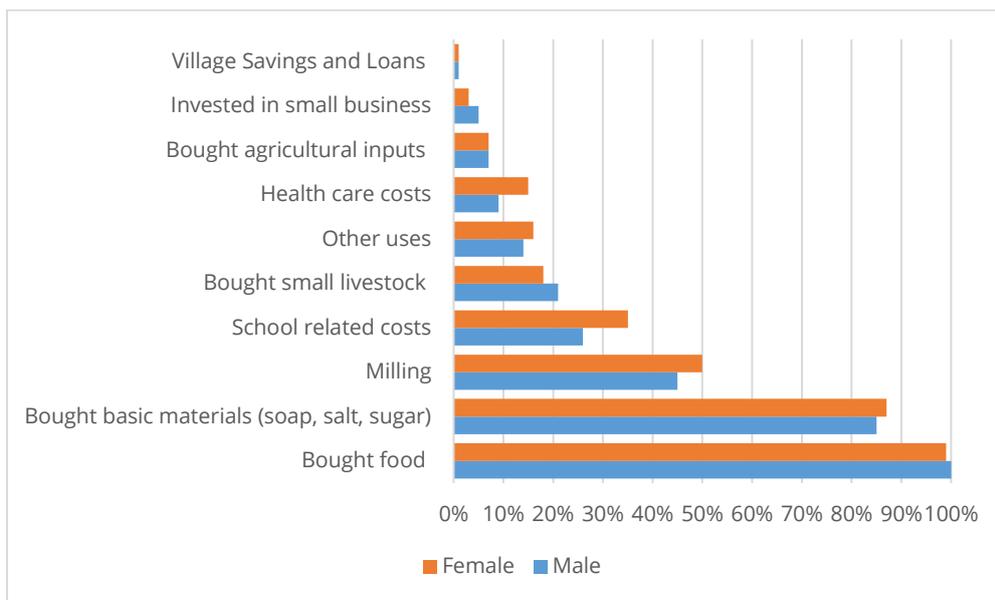
221. Analysis of descriptive data from the household survey of the evaluation revealed that close to two thirds of women (63.9 percent) in the sample were recipients of cash transfers. This finding, although slightly less, is consistent with the PUNOs statement that women constituted 70 percent to 75 percent of all the LSR cash transfer recipients in Nsanje district. In line with SDG gender equality goals the JP prioritized women due to the additional roles and responsibilities they perform. Women tend to have the primary responsibility of cooking at home and in the case of Nsanje where polygamy is common, giving cash assistance to women helped them take care of their households when men were tending to their other families. Figure 12 plotted using data from the evaluation household survey highlights that in terms of making decisions on use of cash entitlements women in general terms had a voice on decisions, but more common decisions were made jointly between women and men.

**Figure 12: Decision making at household level regarding food and cash at endline**



222. Results in Figure 13 indicate that the majority (100 percent) of the households (both households headed by men and those headed by women) used the social support money to buy food. This was followed by basic household materials like salt, sugar and then milling costs for the maize grain.

**Figure 13: Proportion of Utilisation of the Social Support - endline**



## 3. Conclusions and recommendations

223. Based on the findings presented in the previous section, an overall assessment that responds to the evaluation questions is provided below. The assessment is structured according to the evaluation criteria (as shown in the evaluation matrix [Annex 7](#)). Fifteen recommendations are presented to the PUNOs and interested stakeholders.

### 3.1. CONCLUSIONS

224. **Relevance:** The JP is aligned with key UN and GoM social protection policies and strategies. This was a key objective and achievement of the SP4SDG. The JP proved to be responsive, reactive and adaptive to the needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This required refocusing of JP resources in addition to adequately addressing the primary purpose of implementing a shock responsive social protection intervention in one of the most drought prone affected parts of the country. Relevant social capital networks and local government institutions were effectively mobilized in responding to the immediate food needs of the most vulnerable people. Adapting existing government social protection interventions ensured that the cash transfer component of the JP has had both an economic multiplier effect on the local economy and provided positive human development outcomes for many of its beneficiaries. This presents a potentially scalable model for GoM going forward.

225. **Coherence:** The PUNOs built on their previous experience of engaging and supporting existing GoM policy and program coordination structures. This provided the necessary synergy and ensured the JP's interventions were coherent and contributed to underpinning the UN's harmonization objectives. While the PUNOs undoubtedly worked to their individual agency strengths similar joint programs in future would require additional investment to working more coherently across program output and outcome areas, in particular to address critical cross-cutting issues that were neglected in the JP.

226. **Effectiveness and coverage:** The JP LSR intervention has contributed to improving food security and reducing negative coping strategies for many vulnerable communities in Nsanje district. This alignment with one of GoM's policy pillar objectives highlights a key achievement of the JP. However, while the model and approach is effectively aligned to support existing social protection programs there needs to be a thorough understanding of the costs to government for rolling out SSSP/SRSP interventions. A full costing analysis of the cash payment delivery mechanisms of a SSSP/SRSP intervention is critical to this process. The JP focus on the LSR intervention overshadowed the strategic significance of the other JP components relating to systems strengthening, financing and policy development. These are areas that the GoM will require further assistance.

227. **Efficiency:** The main factors affecting both achievement and efficiency is the use of consultants and staffing costs for the key deliverables of the program. From the scanty information available it seems there was a disproportionate expenditure on human resource costs compared to the actual transfers and grants element of the program budget. A clearer rationale for the choice of interventions, and a better cost benefit assessment, with value for money analysis justification is critical to shape and inform viable policy and programmatic processes.

228. **Impact:** The shock sensitive cash transfer intervention through the LSR was key and made a critical impact both at a household and community level. What the evidence suggests is that people need humanitarian assistance almost every lean season due to the frequent cycle of floods and droughts. The PUNOs have been providing humanitarian assistance over the two previous lean season periods. What is an issue for planners and advocates, in the context of the humanitarian-development nexus, is the need to sustain the recovery period to mitigate against the long-term inter-generational vicious cycle of disaster related vulnerability facing affected communities. This underlines the need for a more holistic integrated and coordinated development approach to what is a regularly occurring crisis. The JP has contributed to laying the framework for development of a comprehensive social protection legal and financing framework in Malawi. The direction of travel for the JPs policy analytical work remains unknown given that most of the

key activities related to outcome 3 are ongoing and may extend beyond the timescale of the JP. This reinforces the need for a better political economy analysis of the SP sector to be undertaken to inform and prepare for the challenges ahead.

229. **Sustainability:** Despite the JP activities to support capacity building initiatives for social protection being a move in the right direction more needs to be done on the scope and scale of institutional strengthening to have a meaningful impact. A more detailed assessment of the systemic institutional capacity strengthening requirements throughout the SP sector is urgently needed. In this regard capacity building interventions should be more strategic and embedded in the broader aspects of civil service induction and training events. Notwithstanding the capacity challenges for SP systems to be sustainable the GoM need to increase their investment in the sector to meet poverty reduction commitments.

230. **Gender:** There is little explicit attention given to gender and inclusion aspects in the JP design and results framework. Despite the conducive policy levers contained within many GoM policies the absence of any specific noticeable interventions on gender mainstreaming through the JP was a missed opportunity. Reports that the LSR did contribute somewhat to empowering women, (70 percent of Social Cash Transfer Program beneficiaries are women) essentially by assessing factors of perceived equality in household decision making processes, does little by way of demonstrating fundamental learning for informing and shaping gender sensitive social protection policy processes.

## 3.2. LESSONS

231. The JP places value on a shared institutional understanding of what the UN partnership collectively offer to address the key challenge of adapting existing SP systems to meet the needs of vulnerable people by 2022 under the guise of leave no one behind commitments. The underlying ambition of the JP was to create a financing ecosystem that enhanced the national financing infrastructure with a trajectory towards increased revenue mobilization for sustaining results. While there may be signs of optimism in the recent increase in GoM financial allocation to the SP sector a more pronounced pathway is required to hold the government to account to uphold its policy obligations.

232. Managing the JP performance and tracking results would have benefited from a workable theory of change. It would have been advantageous to the senior leadership within the PUNOs organizational set up if the JP ToC was revised regularly to determine causal pathways and check assumptions that underpin and manage the interventions. Many of the assumptions remain valid. The ToC was perceived as a formal requirement and not as a function of reflection and learning and adapting to the current set of circumstances and the operational environment.

233. There was scope for the JP to invest more energy in fostering strategic partnerships in order to promote collaborative working and presenting a unified UN front in its interface with government. A key organizational learning factor concerns the way and approach to how the UN agencies combine their collective respective skills to present a cohesive image to GoM ministries. In this context visibility is key. The JP could have benefited from investing more in nurturing its relations with GoM colleagues to demonstrate a viable partnership approach to achieve the JP objectives. The SP4SDG Joint Partners Donor event in September 2021, while no doubt a useful process to engage high-level officials to reflect on achievements of the JP does not address the need for closer engagement at an operational level. More frequent interaction between PUNO technical leads and their respective GoM counterparts at a program implementation level may lead to strengthened strategic partnerships and underpin efforts to support commitments to sustainability.

234. The GoM gender policy sets out the challenges facing the country, and how the multi-dimensional aspects of gender-based inequalities need to be overcome to guide Malawi's pathway to sustainable and equitable development. The evidence found that the PUNOs formal attitude to gender was to confine it to a conceptual understanding that it can be ticked-off, or reduced to a checklist approach, merely by stating commitments to gather disaggregated data, and aspiring to parity with men and women participating/benefiting from interventions and by adhering to positive selection processes targeting only women. The change of direction on a key policy outcome area of the JP should have been seized upon as an opportunity to ensure policy dialogue focused on leave no one behind commitments more clearly.

235. The PUNOs, with its collective wealth of experience on gender issues should be able to articulate a more nuanced understanding of practical approaches of the interventions required for the SP sector to

address gender inequality and social exclusion which the evidence points to is systemic. The responsibility to ensure gender is mainstreamed at every level of the JP fell between the gaps. Similar joint UN programs in future will need to create the space to challenge and ensure that gender equality and social inclusion issues are institutionalized and mainstreamed.

### **3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

236. Building on the key findings, conclusions and lessons learned, the evaluation recognizes the many positive changes brought about by the Joint Programme, while also observing opportunities to shape the operational direction for future planning. Fifteen operational recommendations are presented to guide future discussions with government.

**Table 18: Recommendations**

Recommendations	Type	Who	Prioritization	Duration
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Malawi Social Protection System is adapted to meet emergency food needs together with the humanitarian sector				
<b>Recommendation 1. Improve Value for Money (VfM) analysis of Shock Sensitive Social Protection cash transfer interventions</b>	Operational	WFP & UNICEF	High	1-3 years (2022-2024)
<p><b>Sub recommendation 1.1</b> Explore and adopt the use of e-payment system using electronic platforms by third parties such as banks and mobile money operators to reduce costs incurred in packaging the money, transporting to districts, paying for mileage and daily subsistence allowances and providing security at every distribution point. E-payments will also speed up transactions and enable beneficiaries to receive their cash instantly in their bank accounts or mobile wallet.</p> <p>Cases of forced sharing induced by local leaders as observed during the December 2020 to March 2021 Lean Season Response (LSR) will be eliminated since the money will go straight to rightful owners. Savings made through reduction of costs incurred when cash-in-transit model is used will enable the programme to extend the support to more ultra-poor households.</p> <p>Irish Aid has been supporting the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) to implement Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) in Balaka and Ntcheu since 2013. For the past 5 years (2017-2021), MoGCDSW has been reaching out to 23,000 households in the districts and payment of cash was done electronically through a bank-based e-payment model. UNICEF provides technical support to the implementation of the programme. There is need therefore for the JP to take advantage of this involvement and learn how categories of people like the elderly and those in remotest areas who may not have an account with any bank let alone a mobile phone can be served better with electronic platforms to ensure they are not left behind.</p> <p>Also, ensure that the costs of e-payments such as bank charges, opening account balance, transport to and from the banks for the poorest households residing far away from towns are not pushed to the beneficiary.</p>	Operational	WFP & UNICEF	High	1-3 years (2022-2024)

Recommendations	Type	Who	Prioritization	Duration
<p><b>Sub recommendation 1.2</b> In this regard, consult with other UN agencies, development partners and Government of Malawi (GoM) to develop guidelines and modalities for e-payments in Malawi.</p>	Operational	WFP & UNICEF	High	1 year (2022)
<p><b>Recommendation 2. Share results of the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) for validation before final publication.</b> The MVAC conducts vulnerability assessment between May and August. The results are published in August to allow planning and timely implementation of shock sensitive social protection (SSSP) between November and December. By the time the assessment is done, people have food in their stock since harvesting takes place from April to May. Social protection organizations complained during the evaluation that they get the results from the MVAC after being officially published as herein quoted; “Almost every year, people are in disagreement with the results because by the time the report is released food insecurity has worsened and many more households are in need of support”. One major recommendation they made is that there is need to involve SP organizations on the ground during vulnerability assessments and share the results for validation before being published. This will help to make the necessary adjustments on time and increase trust in the newly adopted Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR). Even though the LSR covered the whole district, the number of beneficiaries per Group Village Head (GVH) and Traditional Authority (TA) was considered lower than desired.</p>	Operational	WFP	High	Yearly
<p><b>Recommendation 3. Strengthen targeting capacity by validating the UBR yearly to ensure only deserving households benefit.</b> In Nsanje, the JP’s LSR of December 2020 to January 2021 used the UBR’s Proxy Means Test (PMT) to classify households into five categories: poorest, poorer, poor, better and rich. Most communities described it as a fair, transparent and unbiased way that should continue to be used to desist from favouritism in the selection of beneficiaries. The current UBR was compiled in 2019 and partially updated in 2020 through the validation exercise that helped to add new households and remove those that were no longer supposed to be on the list. EU funded both exercises and is expected to support a comprehensive update after 4 years e.g., around 2022. Meanwhile, the recommendation for WFP is to collaborate and ensure the UBR is updated before the coming LSR (November 2022-March 2023) and that the whole process involves district officers, community leaders and local committees upfront to remove households that have migrated, relocated or moved out of the poverty line. According to the Malawi Red Cross Society, which was contracted to</p>	Operational	WFP	High	Yearly

Recommendations	Type	Who	Prioritization	Duration
<p>disburse the cash, the beneficiary information from the UBR was different from what was recorded on the National Identity Cards (NID). This was distorting the identification of actual beneficiaries by distribution teams. The recommended validation exercise will help address the above stated problem as well.</p>				
<p><b>Recommendation 4. WFP should also intensify sensitization of all local leaders on the issue of beneficiary identification and selection</b> using the new UBR system and the consequences of forcing their subjects to share entitlements with others non-beneficiary households to reduce cases of prosecution which result in hatred among community members.</p>	Operational	WFP	High	2 years (2022-2023)
<p><b>Recommendation 5. Support full recovery of the most vulnerable households.</b></p> <p>Nsanje is prone to natural disasters like floods and drought which displace households, damage land, crops, livestock and household assets among other things. People need humanitarian assistance almost every lean season. The Joint Programme has provided two LSR cash transfers during its 2-year lifespan to meet immediate food needs of the people and it has succeeded. Nevertheless, interventions that can help the affected households recover fully from shocks caused by disasters can help bring more impact. In future programmes, there is therefore need to include the following interventions as part of LSR to support recovery and graduation of vulnerable households from yearly support. This can be achieved by: -</p> <p><b>Sub recommendation 5.1</b> Continuing to provide consumption support to safeguard households' productive assets and prevent asset depletion during times of financial distress.</p> <p><b>Sub recommendation 5.2</b> Strengthening linkages between cash transfers, village savings and loans (VSLs) and small businesses that can help the poor quickly recover.</p> <p><b>Sub recommendation 5.3</b> Promoting linkages with other programmes that support income generating activities and food security.</p>	Operational	WFP & UNICEF	High	1-5 years (2022-2026)
<p><b>Recommendation 6. Early planning is important to reduce pressure and work overload</b></p> <p>Planning for the LSR of December 2020 to March 2021 delayed until around the same time when cash transfers ought to start as reported by SP organisations in the district.</p>	Operational	WFP & UNICEF	High	Yearly

Recommendations	Type	Who	Prioritization	Duration
A number of activities were done with pressure within a very short period of time. It was very tight and other activities were reportedly circumvented in the process. The recommendation is to start planning in good time to reduce panic and minimize work overload towards the start of the coming LSR and increase efficiency of service delivery.				
<p><b>Recommendation 7. Provide arrears to households that are absent</b></p> <p>According to WFP policy, once a household is not available on the day of cash distribution due to some reasons beyond its control, the beneficiary household is not given a second chance to receive its entitlement during the next distribution. The assumption is that the household has already managed to survive and there is no need to give it arrears thereafter as reported by beneficiaries in FGDs. This created hatred and lack of trust between communities, financial service providers and SP organisations. The community members believe that the money is taken by stated organisations because under the SCTP by the government, the arrears were given. The District Social Welfare Office (DSWO) suggested that WFP should show uniformity and provide arrears to such households because no household can choose to be absent from cash distribution without any valid reasons. This problem can also reduce if the recommended e-payment is adopted.</p>	Operational	WFP & UNICEF	High	1-3 years (2022-2024)
<p><b>Recommendation 8. Increase gender equality and inclusion by improving the basket to include foods for pregnant and lactating women and young children</b></p> <p>Explore ways of adding super cereal and super cereal+ to the current basket of maize, pulses and cooking oil for households with pregnant and lactating women, and children under 2 years of age, respectively (without retrogressing to food distribution which has proven to be costly to implement). These groups of people have additional food and nutritional needs and can be better served if the suggested or similar foods can be included to the food basket.</p>	Operational	WFP & UNICEF	High	Yearly
<p><b>Recommendation 9. Build sufficient technical capacity in the Gender, VAM and Monitoring and Evaluation units of UN partner agencies</b> to support programme teams in operationalizing and mainstreaming gender and social inclusion performance targets in joint programmes.</p>	Operational	PUNOs (WFP, UNICEF & ILO)	High	2 years (2022-2023)
<p><b>Recommendation 10. Plan ahead of time on how to reach hard-to-reach areas</b></p>	Operational	WFP	High	Yearly

Recommendations	Type	Who	Prioritization	Duration
Among other areas, one distribution point at the East Bank namely Makhanga is a hard-to-reach area as it is on the Island. There is need to use a boat to reach there. In the LSR of December 2020 to March 2021, there were some logistical delays in the disbursement of the cash because the service provider was not comfortable in terms of safety and therefore waited to revise the contract agreement first with the donor before using this mode of transport.				
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Malawi Government increases its share of the social protection budget and undertakes measures to improve efficiency of spending				
<b>Recommendation 11.</b> The social protection sector in the country remains heavily dependent on donors in particular the German government through Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the EU, the World Bank and Irish Aid. According to interviews with GoM stakeholders, Treasury increased its funding to the SCTP from MK650 million in 2016/2017 to about MK2.5 billion in 2021/2022, allocating a higher amount each year in the budget for SCTP, from about 0.06 percent of the total budget in 2016/2017 to 0.12 percent in 2021/2022. Over the same period, Government contributions to the SCTP have averaged 5 percent of the total contributions to the programme, against 38 percent from the World Bank, 26 percent from KfW, 21 percent from the EU and 10 percent from Irish Aid. UNICEF should:	Operational	UNICEF	High	3 years (2022-2024)
<b>Sub recommendation 11.1</b> Continue to develop a strategy to increase Government financial contribution to the social protection sector.	Operational	UNICEF	High	3 years (2022-2024)
<b>Sub recommendation 11.2</b> Support the design and operationalization of a common financing process for SCTP (and the wider array of social support programs) to ensure efficiency gains.	Operational	UNICEF	High	2 years (2022-2024)
<b>Sub recommendation 11.3</b> Secure additional funding for social protection programs; Thus, allow for a diversified set of financing stream and lobby GoM for additional funding. There is need to continue engaging GoM in all the processes to promote greater participation and ownership	Operational	UNICEF	High	2 years (2022-2023)
<b>Sub recommendation 11.4</b> Strengthen financial management processes of other key stakeholders beyond the government (CSOs etc.) to reduce the need for central staff to frequently travel to the districts.	Operational	UNICEF	Moderate	2 years (2022-2023)

Recommendations	Type	Who	Prioritization	Duration
<b>Outcome 3: Malawi Social Protection System is more comprehensive and integrated</b>				
<b>Recommendation 12.</b> Leveraging on the ongoing work of the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Project and the Enhancing Financial Management and Fiscal Sustainability for Social Protection project funded by the EU, the JP has supported the development of the Social Protection Policy. The policy provides a sound foundation for defining the scope, objectives and a legal framework for the social protection system in Malawi. ILO and its partners have proposed the introduction of an old age social pension scheme and expansion of contributory social protection in the Social Protection Policy. A Bill has been submitted to the parliament for review and consideration	Operational	ILO (Lead)	High	2 years (2022-2023)
<b>Recommendation 13.</b> ILO should take a leading role in continuing to support the development of the Social Protection Policy and its full implementation in Malawi, having been involved in the development process. Additional consultations are needed to finalize the Policy Framework Document (PFD) and update the NSSP policy. After it is validated by the GoM, the PUNOs will have to support the GoM to disseminate the updated NSSP to stakeholders.	Operational	ILO (Lead)	High	3 years (2022-2024)
<b>Recommendation 14.</b> ILO should continue to lobby for the introduction of old age social pensions and expansion of the contributory social protection in the Social Protection Policy. The PUNOs will have to provide support for the GoM to finalize, launch, and disseminate the SCTP strategy.	Operational	ILO (Lead)	High	3 years (2022-2024)
<b>Recommendation 15.</b> As part of dissemination work, train GoM staff at national and district levels on changes in the SCTP strategy and NSSP to familiarize and further enhance their capacity to implement SP activities on the ground	Operational	ILO (Lead)	High	2 years (2022-2023)

# Annexes

## Annex 1. Summary TOR

### Final Evaluation of the SDG Fund Joint Program Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals in Malawi: Accelerating inclusive progress towards the SDGs (2020-2021)

#### Background

1. The United Nations Joint Program: Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals (SP4SDG) aims to support the Government of Malawi (GoM) to adapt the national social protection system to meet emergency food needs and reduce the vulnerability of those most at risk of food insecurity by 2022.
2. The Joint Program (JP) is expected to help ensure that future emergency food assistance (SDG 2.1) is provided by leveraging the social protection system, where appropriate (SDG 1.3). As part of the JP, a prototype will be tested, targeting approximately 5000 shock-affected households with emergency food assistance, leveraging, and strengthening the social protection system in the process. The JP is also expected help Government increase the allocation of domestic resources to social protection, ensuring a gradual increase and improved efficiency (SDG 1.a, 17.1). The JP is expected to ensure that the development of a legal framework for social protection defines and streamlines essential measures and systems to enhance protection throughout all stages of life for all, with due attention to women and marginalized groups (SDG 1.b) and advances the right to social protection in line with Malawi's human rights treaty obligations (1.3).
3. The Participating UN Organisations (PUNOs) responsible for the implementation of the SP4SDG in Malawi are World Food Program (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and International Labour Organisation (ILO). The UN Joint SDG Fund provided a total financial contribution to the program of US\$ 1,999,937. Implementation of SP4SDG started in January 2020 and is expected to end in December 2021.

#### The Joint Programme Objectives

The overall objective of the program is to advance the objective of the National Social Support Policy, that – *by 2030, women and men in Malawi have enhanced quality of life and improved resilience to shocks.*

The Joint Program is structured around three outcomes:

- The Malawi social protection system is adapted to meet emergency food needs together with the humanitarian sector.
  - The Government of Malawi increases its share of the social protection budget and undertakes measures to improve efficiency of spending
  - The Government of Malawi is advancing towards a more comprehensive social protection legal framework
4. To achieve these three outcomes, the joint program has the following eight outputs:
    - The social protection system is reviewed and updated in line with humanitarian response needs.
    - The Malawi social protection system, together with the humanitarian sector, contributes to assisting an emergency caseload as identified by the Malawi government.
    - The GoM social protection financing strategy finalized and informing domestic funding.
    - The GoM has improved knowledge and commitment to invest in social protection.
    - The GoM has improved capacity for social protection expenditure.
    - The National Social Support Policy is reviewed and analysed
    - Malawi has updated the scope and objectives for the social protection system.
    - The GoM is supported to advance an Old Age Pension Scheme.
  5. Objectives of the evaluation
    - The evaluation is required for the following reasons:

- To assess the extent of achievement of the results and targets set out in the JP Results Framework.
- To understand the extent to which the program has contributed to accelerating progress towards the sustainable development goals, focusing on social protection; and,
- To meet commitments made to commission an evaluation for learning and accountability

### **Evaluation scope and methodology**

6. The evaluation will apply the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and human rights will be mainstreamed and reflected throughout the evaluation design (including the tools), implementation (data collection and analysis), results, recommendations, dissemination, and utilization of findings. This will include analysis of whether and how GEWE objectives and mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design and whether this was guided by WFP/UN and system-wide objectives on gender and women's empowerment.

7. The evaluation will adopt a mixed methods (MM) approach; this implies a methodological design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to theory, data collection, data analysis and interpretation. In line with this approach data will be collected through a mix of primary and secondary sources using a range of techniques including desk study, household surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, participatory engagement and direct observation. The primary purpose of this approach is to strengthen the reliability of data, validity of the findings and recommendations, with an aim to broaden an understanding of the processes through which program outcomes and impacts are achieved, and how these are affected by the context within which the program is implemented.

8. The evaluation will answer the overarching question "To what extent were the SP4SDG joint program objectives achieved and how?"

9. The evaluation will focus on initial impacts, effects, and results of SP4SDG including:

- The design and implementation of SP4SDG will be considered, the aspects of which are covered under the evaluation questions listed below.
- Potential opportunities for scale-up.
- Potential linkages to other UN agencies and government programs.

### **Geographical coverage**

10. The evaluation will center on systematic changes made at the national level. There will also be a focus on program implementation at a District level. District selection will be made on the basis of prioritisation of needs evidenced from the analysis of Lean Season interventions.

### **Target**

11. The JP targets two categories: The Social Protection system as one target group, and in the context of program implementation, the second group is the Lean Season beneficiaries. The stakeholder groups within each of these categories will be identified in consultation with the PUNOs. The three outcomes will be covered during the evaluation, with an emphasis of cross cutting issues of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

### **Key Evaluation Questions**

12. The evaluation will assess all the three outcomes specifically on the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. The evaluation is structured around the following core questions:

**Questions 1: To what extent were the objectives of SP4SDG valid and appropriate with UN and National policies and how have these remained relevant over time?** The evaluation will reflect on the extent to which: the JP is relevant in supporting national social protection policies, and social safety net plans including the achievement of national sustainable development goals.

**Question 2: How coherent is the program within the context of the social protection policy environment in Malawi, in what way are the PUNOs interventions aligned to support and fit within this policy space in the country?** The evaluation will reflect on the extent to which: The JP promotes and fosters

harmonisation and coordination among key stakeholders and adds value to the interventions supporting policy coherence.

**Question 3: To what extent have the targeted outputs, outcomes, strategic results, and interventions have been achieved, or expect to be achieved considering their relative importance?** The evaluation will reflect on the extent to which: the JP has been effective in achieving the SP4SDG objectives particularly in the context of how the response to COVID-19 affected planned outcomes.

**Question 4: Was the program efficiently implemented (specifically cost effectiveness/value for money), and how was this converted into results?** The evaluation will reflect on the extent to which: the JP was able to identify the factors affecting the pace and quality of implementation and address any efficiency challenges encountered.

**Question 5: What is the potential impact that can be envisioned, and what are the with initial signs of evidence towards achieving development objectives?** The evaluation will reflect on the extent to which: the JP has made a meaningful impact on the social protection system and brought about improvements to the lives and livelihood outcomes of the targeted beneficiaries.

**Question 6: To what extent are the benefits of the program likely to continue after donor funding has ceased?** The evaluation will reflect on the extent to which: the JP contributed to strengthening the capacities of stakeholders to sustain SRSP interventions in future.

**Question 7: How did SP4SDG's actions affect the context of gender inequality and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people?** The evaluation will reflect on the extent to which: the JP interventions contributed to achievements in cross-cutting aims in gender equality, accountability and equity outcomes for the most affected populations.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

13. **Evaluation Team:** The evaluation will be undertaken by a gender-balanced and geographically diverse team of independent consultants, with relevant expertise in data analysis, and specific technical skills in social policy, food security, gender and evaluating capacity development of institutions delivering humanitarian aid.

14. **Evaluation Management:** This decentralised evaluation is managed by WFP Malawi Country Office with support from WFP Regional Bureau in Johannesburg, together with UNICEF Malawi and ILO Malawi and applying WFP management processes, systems, and tools. The lead contact person is Jason Nyirenda, WFP Evaluation Manager.

15. **Evaluation Reference Group:** Each of the PUNOs will have representation on the evaluation reference group. This group has oversight of the evaluation process and will review and comment on the various evaluation products and act as key informants to safeguard against bias and influence.

### **Communications**

16. The preliminary findings will be shared with the PUNO stakeholders in a de-briefing session at end of the fieldwork (detailed communication plan in [Annex 11](#)). A validation workshop will take place to ensure a transparent evaluation process and promote ownership of the findings and preliminary recommendations.

17. The findings of the evaluation will provide the Government of Malawi, WFP, UNICEF, ILO and other key stakeholders valuable lessons on what has worked and what has not worked in the acceleration of SDG targets for consideration in the design and implementation of other similar programs in future.

### **Evaluation phases and deliverables /outputs**

18. The final evaluation will be undertaken between May and December 2021 and consists of the following milestones:

**Preparation Phase:** 3<sup>rd</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Inception Phase:** 18<sup>th</sup> May – 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**Data collection Phase:** 9<sup>th</sup> August – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**Data Analysis & Reporting Phase:** 8<sup>th</sup> September – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021

**Learning workshop & Dissemination Phase:** 6<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021

## Annex 2. Detailed Timeline

Inception Phase			
No	Steps/Sequence	Key Dates	Who
1	Briefing Evaluation team	17 May 2021	EM/CO Prog
2	Evaluation design, including reviewing documents and existing data, interactions with stakeholders to understand the subject and stakeholder expectations	18-28 May 2021	ET
3	Draft inception report, including methodology, data collection tools and schedule	28 May – 11 June 2021	ET
<b>4</b>	<b>Submit draft 1 inception report (IR) to EM and Regional Evaluation officer</b>	<b>14 June 2021</b>	<b>TL</b>
5	Review draft 1 inception report, if NOT complete return to the team leader with specific things that needs to be done before it can be submitted	14-21 June 2021	EM
<b>6</b>	<b>Share draft IR with DE QS for review and feedback</b>	<b>22 June 2021</b>	<b>EM</b>
7	Review draft 1 IR against the DE QS quality matrix and provide recommendations	23 June – 01 July 2021	QS
8	Revise draft IR based on QS feedback and EM/REO additional comments	2-5 July 2021	ET
<b>9</b>	<b>Submit of revised Draft 2 IR based on DE QS and EM QA comments</b>	<b>6 July 2021</b>	<b>TL</b>
10	Review draft 2 IR against the QS recommendations to ensure that they have been addressed and for any that has not been addressed, a rationale has been provided	7-9 July 2021	EM/ REO
<b>11</b>	<b>Circulate draft 2 IR for review and comments to ERG and other stakeholders</b>	<b>12 July 2021</b>	<b>EM</b>
12	Review draft 2 IR and provide comments using the provided comments matrix	12-23 July 2021	ERG
13	Consolidate Stakeholder comments and submit to the team leader	26-27 July 2021	EM
14	Revise draft 2 IR based on stakeholder comments received to produce draft 3	27-31 July 2021	ET
15	Cut-off date for UN Partners to provide relevant data to the team leader	31 July 2021	EM
<b>16</b>	<b>Submit draft 3 IR to the evaluation manager</b>	<b>2 August 2021</b>	<b>TL</b>
17	Review draft 3 IR against stakeholder comments to ensure that they have all been addressed, and for those not addressed a rationale provided	3-5 August 2021	EM
<b>18</b>	<b>Submit the final IR to the internal evaluation committee for approval</b>	<b>6 August 2021</b>	<b>EM</b>
19	Share final inception report with key stakeholders for information.	9 August 2021	EM

Data collection			
20	Prepare for data collection phase [recruit research assistants, digitize data collection tools on tablets, finalize travel, accommodation and other logistical arrangements	9-30 August 2021	ET
21	<b>Evaluation team holds a detailed planning meeting with the Country Offices</b>	<b>30 August 2021</b>	<b>EM/CO Prog/ ET</b>
22	Conduct Fieldwork [enumerator training, quantitative data collection, interviews, FGDs etc.]	31 August – 13 September 2021	ET
23	<b>End of Fieldwork Debriefing to internal stakeholders (WFP, UNICEF &amp; ILO) and external government stakeholders from nodal ministries supported by PUNOs [Presentation should be submitted the day before]</b>	<b>21 September 2021</b>	<b>ET</b>
Data analysis and reporting			
24	Clean, analyse and triangulate data to produce <b>draft 1</b> of the evaluation report (ER)	14 September – 27 October 2021	ET
25	<b>Submit draft 1 of the evaluation report and all associated data sets</b>	<b>28 October 2021</b>	<b>TL</b>
26	Review draft 1 ER against the ER quality check list to ensure that it is complete	29 October – 5 November 2021	EM
27	<b>Share draft 1 ER with outsourced quality support service (DE QS)</b>	<b>8 November 2021</b>	<b>EM</b>
28	Review draft 1 ER against the DE QS quality matrix and provide recommendations	9 -15 November 2021	QS
29	Revise draft 1 ER based on feedback received by DE QS and EM to produce draft 2	16 - 21 November 2021	ET
30	<b>Submit draft 2 ER to the EM</b>	<b>22 November 2021</b>	<b>TL</b>
31	Review the draft 2 ER against the QS comments to ensure that they have been addressed, and for those that have not been addressed rationale has been provided	23 - 28 November 2021	EM/ REO
32	<b>Circulate draft 2 ER for review and comments to ERG/RB/other stakeholders</b>	<b>29 November 2021</b>	<b>EM</b>
33	Review draft 2 ER and provide comments using the provided comments matrix	30 November - 5 December 2021	ERG
34	Consolidate comments and submit to team leader for review	6 December 2021	EM
35	Revise draft 2 ER based on stakeholder comments to produce draft 3	7 - 10 December 2021	ET
36	<b>Submit draft 3 ER to the evaluation manager</b>	<b>10 December 2021</b>	<b>TL</b>
37	Review draft 3 ER against stakeholder comments to ensure that they have all been addressed, and for those not been addressed a rationale has been provided	11 – 13 December 2021	EM/ REO
38	Validation workshop with key stakeholders (ET to share PPT for a quick review before the workshop)	15 December 2021	ET

39	Incorporate comments from stakeholders at validation workshop into final report	15 -16 December 2021	ET
40	Prepare Summary Evaluation Report	17 December 2021	EM
41	<b>Submit final ER</b>	<b>21 December 2021</b>	ET
42	<b>Submit the final ER and summary evaluation report to the internal evaluation committee (and ILO HQ) for review and approval</b>	<b>22 December 2021</b>	<b>EM</b>
43	<b>Share final evaluation report with key stakeholders for information</b>	<b>23 December 2021</b>	<b>EM</b>

# Annex 3. Methodology Guidance

## Introduction

19. The evaluation adopted a mixed methods (MM) approach, a methodological design that integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches to theory, data collection, data analysis and interpretation. Data was collected through a mix of primary and secondary sources using a range of techniques including desk study, household surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, participatory engagement and direct observation of the project's performance on the ground. The primary purpose the approach was to strengthen reliability of the data, validity of the findings and recommendations, with an aim of broadening an understanding of the processes through which program outcomes and impacts are achieved, and how these were affected by the context within which the program was implemented.

20. Use of mixed methods enabled the evaluation team to ensure that women, girls, men, boys and vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities and older people from different stakeholder groups participated in the FGDs and their different voices heard and taken on board.

21. In the household survey, the evaluation used the difference in difference (DiD) approach and interview non-beneficiaries as well to deduce change and contribution by the program.

22. The evaluation was conducted in Nsanje, where the program provided the 2020/2021 Lean Season Response (LSR) for 2-4 months under Activity 1 and Social Protection under Activity 2 (provided cash and/or food transfers to the most vulnerable populations affected by seasonal shocks), and Balaka which received technical support to strengthen social protection systems.

23. This guidance summarizes seven thematic questions around the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and gender were used in key informant and group discussions at the national, district and community levels. The gender component covered key stakeholder groups and demonstrated how gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) was addressed in the evaluation. Collectively, the questions aimed at highlighting the performance and key lessons of the SP4SDG joint program, which could inform future strategic and operational decisions.

24. [Annex 4](#) presents details of indicators measured by each theme, sources of information, analysis techniques and quality of evidence whether they are available and reliable. [Annex 5](#) gives further information about data collection methods and tools to be used.

25. The guidance further presents definitions of key quantitative indicators of the program as outlined in the Results Framework ([Annex 9](#)).

26. To remain ethical in the whole process, all interviews included the following:

- A brief overview of the program.
- An outline of the evaluation purpose, approach and explaining how the information will contribute to the overall evaluation.
- Ensuring respondents and participants that the information will be confidential, and no personal quotes will be shared, unless permission is given and if so, will not be attributed.
- Explaining the process of evaluation: following checklists and using the evaluation matrix; asking for examples; the length of time planned for each interview will be between 45 minutes to an hour.
- Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of interviewees.
- An assurance that participation is voluntary, highlighting on people's rights to refuse participation, skip questions they do not want to answer and to discontinue their participation at any time. They will assure them that there will be no consequences for exercising these rights.
- Throughout the process, interviewers will follow COVID-19 preventive measures as part of observing the Do No Harm principle.

## Qualitative Methods

27. The KII/FDG template, questions and sub-questions are shown below.

**Table 1: Questions and sub-questions used in the evaluation**

Evaluation criteria/Questions	Sub-Questions
<i>Relevance</i>	
<b>1. To what extent were the objectives of SP4SDG valid and appropriate with UN and National policies and how have these remained relevant over time?</b>	1.1 Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the overall goal, objectives and intended impacts? How appropriate is the results framework in relation to the stated program interventions? 1.2 How relevant is the program for addressing the needs and rights of the most vulnerable targeted groups: women, men, boys and girls, people with disabilities and older people? 1.3 How have civil society organizations, including employers' and workers' organisations, participated in the project design and implementation?
<i>Coherence</i>	
<b>2. How coherent is the program within the context of the social protection policy environment in Malawi, in what way are the PUNOs interventions aligned to support and fit within this policy space in the country?</b>	2.1 How well were interventions coordinated between the PUNOs and key government stakeholders as well as among the government stakeholders at different levels of government structures? 2.2 To what extent did the Joint Program lead to stronger coordination mechanisms between implementing PUNOs? 2.3 How were interventions designed to complement, harmonise and coordinate with other development partners and what was the added value of these interventions?
<i>Effectiveness and coverage</i>	
<b>3. To what extent have the targeted outputs, outcomes, strategic results, and interventions been achieved, or expect to be achieved taking account of their relative importance?</b>	3.1 What were the main factors (internal and external) influencing the achievement, or/and non-achievement of the SP4SDG objectives? How effective was the program approach to targeting of interventions under the SP4SDG? 3.2 How has the program progressed towards achieving its objectives to ensure the target population were adequately identified and what factors influenced the coverage and reach of the program interventions? 3.3 Has the project addressed the COVID 19 consequences in the short and long term in the context of affecting the planned outcomes? What challenges were faced in the program?
<i>Efficiency</i>	
<b>4. Was the program efficiently implemented (specifically cost effectiveness/value for money), and how was this converted to results?</b>	4.1 What are the factors affecting the pace and quality of implementation and how were these mitigated? How were resources allocated and utilised? 4.2 What were the critical value for money considerations of the program's outputs and how did this influence expected results?
<i>Impact</i>	
<b>5. What is the potential impact that can be envisioned, and what are the initial signs of evidence</b>	5.1 What changes has the program effected on the Malawi Social Protection System? What difference have the program interventions made to the wider social protection environment?

Evaluation criteria/Questions	Sub-Questions
<b>towards achieving development objectives?</b>	5.2 What real difference has the program made on the targeted beneficiaries (including specifically the most vulnerable groups) and their households? How did the program change their lives and livelihoods?
<b>Sustainability</b>	
<b>6. To what extent are the benefits of the program likely to continue after program funding has ceased?</b>	6.1 How has the program built capacities of the different stakeholders for the results to continue? 6.2 What systems are in place for the program to develop an exit strategy?
<b>Gender Dimensions</b>	
<b>7. How did SP4SDG's actions affect the context of gender inequality and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people?</b>	7.1 How did the Stakeholders interventions (1) improve the lives of women, girls, gender diverse people and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people? (2) How did the PUNOs challenge existing gender inequalities; and (3) did these interventions worsen or improve the circumstances for women, girls, gender diverse people and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people 7.2 What is the anticipated proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of social protection entitlements?

## Quantitative Study

### 3.1 Household Survey

28. A survey of beneficiary and non-beneficiary households was conducted in Nsanje which enabled the evaluation team collect quantitative data as outlined in the Results Framework of the program ([Annex 9](#)). The evaluation adopted the baseline questionnaire of which comparison of the results were made. The questionnaire administered in Chichewa to ensure very good understanding and interpretation of questions by enumerators and respondents. The evaluation team submitted the questionnaire to the evaluation manager for review and input. The revised questionnaire was uploaded into Open Data Kit (ODK) or Kobo and answered by adult members (women or men) of the selected households in the district. **Table 2** defines selected indicators for the program measured and assessed in terms of performance.

**Table 2: Definitions of selected indicators measured**

Indicator	Indicator Definition
Percentage of targeted households with borderline to acceptable food consumption (FCS), disaggregated by age, and sex,	The FCS is a composite indicator that measures dietary diversity, food frequency and the relative nutritional importance of food groups based on a seven-day recall of food consumed at household level. FCS focuses on frequency of consumption (in days) over a recall period of the past 7 days. The consumption frequency of each food group is multiplied by an assigned weight that is based on its nutrient content. Values obtained are then summed up to obtain FCS. WFP's FCS guidelines will be used in this regard. The guidelines classify households as having "poor" FCS (0-21 scores), "borderline" FCS (21.5 -35 scores) or "acceptable" FCS (35.5 scores and above).
Percentage of targeted households not engaged in negative coping strategies (rCSI), disaggregated by age, and sex	The Reduced Coping Strategies Index (RCSI) is a proxy indicator of household food insecurity. It considers both the frequency and severity of five pre-selected coping strategies that the household used in the seven days prior to the survey. It is a simplified version of

Indicator	Indicator Definition
	the full Coping Strategies Index indicator. The indicator tracks a count of households not engaged in negative coping strategies such as sale of household assets expressed as a percentage of the overall target population. Results will be calculated as the percentage of households belonging in each rCSI category defined by the following cut-offs: 0-3, 4-18, and 19 and above which correspond to IPC Phases 1, 2 and 3 and above respectively.
Percentage of targeted households not engaged in livelihoods-based coping strategies, disaggregated by age, and sex (Livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI))	Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI), measures reliance on livelihood-based coping mechanisms to cope with lack of food. The indicator tracks the proportion of households that are not in livelihood based coping strategies over the beneficiaries' population. To assess the LCSI, the evaluation will use the Coping Strategies Index Field Methods Manual Second Edition of January 2008, written by Daniel Maxwell and Richard Caldwell under the auspices of USAID, WFP and CARE.
Proportion of households identified to receive emergency food assistance (IPC-based) served via government social protection channels	The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of analytical tools, and processes, to analyse and classify the severity of a food security situation according to scientific international standards. The indicator tracks households that have been determined food insecure based on IPC and have been identified to receive food aid. It is measured as the count of households determined food insecure expressed as a percentage over the beneficiary population
Proportion of households identified to receive emergency food assistance (IPC-based) served via government social protection channels	The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of protocols to classify the severity and causes of food insecurity and provide evidence-based, actionable knowledge to decision makers. The IPC standardized scale categorizes the severity of acute food insecurity into Five Phases. Each of these phases has important and distinct implications for where and how best to intervene and therefore influences priority response objectives. The IPC phases are determined by analysing a range of outcomes based on international standards including food consumption levels, livelihoods changes, nutritional status, and mortality. These are triangulated with several contributing factors (food availability, access, utilization and stability, vulnerability and hazards) and analysed within local contexts. The evaluation will categorise households into the following phases and compare with the baseline results to deduce change: 1 (Minimal) - Generally Food Secure 2 (Stressed) - Borderline Food Insecure 3 (Crisis) - Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis 4 (Emergency)- Humanitarian Emergency 5 (Famine) - Humanitarian Catastrophe

### Measuring the Food Consumption Score (FCS)

29. The WFP Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a composite score that measures dietary diversity, food frequency and relative nutrition importance of various food groups (WFP, 2008). Normally, the FCS uses a seven-day recall period (as compared to the Household Dietary Diversity Score which considers either 24 hours or a week) and considers eight weighted food groups as opposed to ten unweighted groups in the HDDS. The eight food groups, (table 3) used in calculating the FCS are staples; pulses; vegetables; fruits; meat, fish, and eggs; Milk, Sugar and Oils. Research has shown that the FCS is significantly positively

correlated with other food security indicators such as the Household Dietary Diversity Score, assets, the Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning and expenditure<sup>73</sup>.

**Table 3: Food Groups and Weights**

Food Group	Weight
Cereals & Tubers (Staples)	2
Pulses	3
Vegetables	1
Fruit	1
Meat & Fish	4
Milk	4
Sugar	0.5
Oil	0.5

Source: WFP (2008)

30. WFP assigns weights to each food group consumed in a space of 7 days (week) based on the food group's nutrition value. The consumption frequency of each food group is multiplied by its assigned weight, and the values are summed together to get the FCS<sup>74</sup>.

31. The evaluation collected end line survey data on household consumption of the 8 food groups and frequency of food consumption as in number of days the household has consumed any food item in the food group in the past survey week (7 days). Adhering to the WFP criteria<sup>75</sup> the FCS was then converted into the following consumption categories (Refer to Table 4): poor consumption (FCS, 0-21); borderline consumption (FCS 21.5-35) and acceptable consumption (FCS greater than 35). According to WFP, if over 90 percent of the sampled households consume sugar and oils on a daily basis, the thresholds must be adjusted as follows: Poor consumption (FCS 0-28); borderline consumption (FCS 28.5-42) and acceptable consumption (FCS greater than 42). The computed score was disaggregated by age, sex and disability status of the household.

**Table 4: Food Consumption Score Thresholds**

FCS category	Threshold
Poor food consumption	0-21
Borderline food consumption	21-35
Acceptable food consumption	>35

#### **Determining the Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI)**

32. The study used the Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) as illustrated in Table 5 below. The rCSI is an experience-based indicator measuring the behaviour of households over the past seven days when they did not have enough food or money to purchase food. Therefore, higher rCSI values imply that the household is vulnerable to shocks that affect their consumption. Calculation of the rCSI involves the following procedures:

- i. Calculating the score for each strategy based on the household answer (number of days out of seven when the household used the strategy) and multiplying the number of days the strategy

<sup>73</sup> FAO, World Food Program Programme (WFP), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). 2012. The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012. Rome: FAO; Pérez-Escamilla, R. (2017). Food Security and the 2015–2030 Sustainable Development Goals: From Human to Planetary Health: Perspectives and Opinions. Current Developments in Nutrition, 1 (7): 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.3945/cdn.117.000513>

<sup>74</sup> World Food Program, (2008). "Food consumption analysis: Calculation and use of the food consumption score in food security analysis."

<sup>75</sup> *ibid*

- was used (between 0 and 7) with the universal severity weight allocated for the strategy. If the household did not use the strategy the final score for that particular strategy is 0.
- ii. Summing up the scores for all five individual strategies in order to get the total rCSI score for the household.
  - iii. Calculating the percentage of households belonging in each rCSI category defined by the following cut-offs: 0-3, 4-18, and 19 and above which correspond to IPC Phases 1, 2 and 3 and above respectively.
  - iv. If food insecurity in the area is high, and percentage in Phase 3+ based on rCSI is elevated, it may be useful to separate the group in Phase 3 and higher into two groups based on a tentative cut-off developed for Phase 4. In this case the households should be divided in four categories: 0-3, 4-18, 19-42, and 43 and above. These categories correspond to IPC Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4 and higher respectively.

**Table 5: The Reduced Coping Strategies Index**

Reduced Coping Strategies	Weight
Rely on less preferred and less expensive food	1
Borrow food or rely on help from relative(s) or friend(s)	2
Limit portion size at meals	1
Restrict consumption by adults for small children to eat	3
Reduce number of meals eaten in a day	1

**Determining the Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI)**

33. To assess the LCSI, the evaluation asked the question, “In the past 30 days, has any member of your household performed any of the following actions to cope with a lack of food or lack of money to buy food?” Table 6 shows a combination of options that depict whether a household is in the stress, crisis or emergency condition and the results were compared to those from the baseline study.

**Table 6: Calculation of Average Livelihood Coping Strategy Index**

#	Question: In the past 30 days, has any member of your household performed any of the following actions to cope with a lack of food or lack of money to buy food?	Answers
	1 No; I did not face a shortage of food	1 No
	2 No; because I already sold those assets or have engaged in this activity within the last 12 months and cannot continue to do it	2 No
	3 Yes	3 Yes
	999 Not applicable	
1	Sold more animals (non-productive) than usual	
2	Sold household assets / goods (radio, furniture, refrigerator, television, jewellery etc.)	
3	Spent savings	
4	Borrowed money or food from a formal lender e.g., a bank	
5	Sold productive assets or means of transport (sewing machine, wheelbarrow, bicycle, car, etc.)	
6	Reduced non-food expenses on health (including drugs) and education	
7	Withdrew children from school	
8	Sold house or land	
9	Begging	
10	Sold last female animals	

34. In the analysis and interpretation, any of the first 4 indicators suggested that a household is under stress, the next 3 indicators suggest crisis level, and the final 3 indicators were for households under emergency.

**Determining the proportion of households identified to receive emergency food assistance (IPC-based) served via government social protection channels**

35. **Definition:** The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of protocols to classify the severity and causes of food insecurity and provide evidence-based, actionable knowledge to decision makers. The IPC is also a process for building technical consensus among key stakeholders from national governments, UN, NGO, and technical agencies.

36. The IPC provides systematic and consistent answers to the following questions: How severe is the situation? Where is there food insecurity? When will there be food insecurity? Who are the food insecure people? How many? What are the causes?

**Categories in the IPC**

37. The IPC standardized scale categorizes the severity of acute food insecurity into Five Phases. Table 7 below indicates the categories and phases. Each of these phases has important and distinct implications for where and how best to intervene and therefore influences priority response objectives. The IPC phases are determined by analysing a range of outcomes based on international standards including food consumption levels, livelihoods changes, nutritional status, and mortality. These are triangulated with several contributing factors (food availability, access, utilization and stability, vulnerability and hazards) and analysed within local contexts.

38. The IPC classification is based on a convergence of all this evidence and functions essentially like a thermometer that takes the 'temperature' of how severe the food security situation is. The IPC indicates the changing of a food insecure situation and, critically, changes in the required responses.

**Table 7: Categories of IPC**

Phase	Description
1. Minimal - Generally Food Secure	More than 80% of households can meet basic food needs without atypical coping strategies
2. Stressed - Borderline Food Insecure	For at least 20 percent of households, food consumption is reduced but minimally adequate without having to engage in irreversible coping strategies. These households cannot fully meet livelihoods protection needs.
3. Crisis - Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis	At least 20 percent of households have significant food consumption gaps OR are marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with irreversible coping strategies such as liquidating livelihood assets
4. Emergency - Humanitarian Emergency	At least 20 percent of households face extreme food consumption gaps, resulting in very high levels of acute malnutrition and excess mortality; OR households face an extreme loss of livelihood assets that will likely lead to food consumption gaps.
5. Famine - Humanitarian Catastrophe	At least 20 percent of households face a complete lack of food and/or other basic needs and starvation, death, and destitution are evident; and acute malnutrition prevalence exceeds 30%; and mortality rates exceed 2/10000/day

**3.1.1 Recruitment and Training of Enumerators**

39. Enumerators for the evaluation were recruited by the WFP's outsourced consultant. The evaluation team took a leading role in recommending qualifications, ensuring that people recruited met the qualifications and training enumerators on the methodology was done soon after recruitments. The training covered issues of work performance, ethics in data collection, getting consent from respondents prior to interviews, confidentiality, child protection, probing for answers and administration of electronic questionnaires in android tablets. The training involved enumerators going through each and every question in the questionnaire and agreeing on how to ask them and record responses. At the end,

enumerators were asked to play roles of the interviewer and interviewee to mimic the real-life survey situation. Fifty percent of the enumerators were female to balance up the team. Table 8 describes the field team's roles.

### 3.1.2 Pre-testing of the Survey Questionnaire

40. The questionnaire was pre-tested after the training of enumerators. This exercise involved administering the questionnaire in a real-life situation by visiting some villages of TA Chimombo in Nsanje. The pre-test subjects did not form part of the final sample.

41. The exercise helped enumerators get familiarized with the questionnaires, practice the methodology for the study and identify glitches in wording of questions, lack of clarity, misleading information and difficult to comprehend questions requiring revisions.

42. The results of the pre-test surveys were analysed case by case to ascertain questions that are working and those failing to attain their intended purpose. There were no major collections and thus the questionnaire was adopted and used to collect household data.

**Table 8: Roles and responsibilities of the field work team**

Team Member	Generic Responsibility
National consultants	Provided leadership in all the activities of the evaluation in full consultation with the evaluation's team leader from the WFP and the outsourced consultant.
Outsourced consultant	The outsourced consultant worked hand in hand with the national consultants ensuring quality of the data collected and was responsible for costs associated with the survey and enumerators
ICT Expert	An ICT expert provided by the WFP and worked with the outsourced consultant in uploading the paper questionnaire onto ODK. She/he also helped with training of enumerators, downloading of the electronic questionnaires and exporting the data to SPSS and MS Excel
Enumerators	Administered household survey questionnaires
	Participated in debriefing sessions
Supervisor	Ensured that the methodology was followed
	Helped with training of enumerators and booking of the villages and respondents
	Directed teams to the sampled households
	Took leading role in de-briefing sessions and working with the teams to address unforeseen challenges

### 3.1.3 Field Work

43. The national consultants together with the outsourced consultant supervised the enumerators. When enumerators settled, the national consultants conducted key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGDs) and participatory engagement discussions (PEDs). Supervision involved ensuring that the survey methodology was followed, checking completeness of android questionnaires on a daily basis, and discussing and rectifying any problems encountered in the field. Besides this, ensuring quality of the data collected the national consultants worked closely with the evaluation team leader and evaluation manager gave an update about progress and challenges faced, if any.

**Table 9: A sample of fieldwork activity schedule and responsibilities**

Activities*	Daily schedule (Hours)									
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Introduction of the team to the communities and explaining the purpose of the survey	*									
Household survey	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Key informant interviews		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Focus group discussions		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Participatory engagement discussions		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

Debriefing session										*
*Assumes that the whole evaluation team will work in one community at a time to ease supervision and logistics										

### 3.2 Key Informant Interviews (KII)

44. The evaluation developed checklists with semi-structured questions around relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability and used them to assess whether the program met its goal and objectives. Key informants included, program staff and partners, community volunteers and leaders, government staff from line ministries and departments involved in the program, and representatives from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on the ground.

45. KIIs were open-ended and lasted between 50-60 minutes. The evaluation team will share the notes from the interviews with the WFP, UNICEF and ILO upon completion of the activity. The WFP, UNICEF and ILO assisted with identifying key informants that were interviewed (see [Annex 12](#) for detailed list of people who were interviewed) as well as facilitated introductions where required.

46. No incentives, like purchasing of beverages and other refreshments, were provided to the key informants to avoid bias and favouritism in the response to questions that were being asked.

47. The information collected was used to complement quantitative data from the household survey and provide an in-depth knowledge on how various interventions of the program have been able to support food, nutrition and livelihood security in the targeted districts. The information also helped gauge opinions, attitude and perceptions of key stakeholders about the SP4SDG program.

### 3.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

48. The evaluation conducted FGDs with groups of 10-12 people selected purposively for their first-hand information (in some cases mixed gender, other cases gender disaggregated). Discussions centered on selected topics, while allowing for interesting, new or unplanned follow up questions to be asked as well.

49. Semi-structured questionnaires with open ended questions were used to guide discussions. The discussions were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

50. Each focus group discussion typically lasted between 1-2 hours. Focus group discussion questionnaires were open-ended in nature and typically focus on a few key themes.

51. FGD facilitators and note takers were in this regard be expected to provide recordings of all discussions to WFP unfortunately due to windy weather all the days of the survey none of the interviews were recorded. The FGD teams provided very light snacks and beverages to all focus group participants. No incentives were paid to focus group participants.

52. FGD participants included community volunteers, change agents, women groups, men groups, youth groups and various committees involved in social protection.

53. The members in the group should:

- i. Have been in the program to participate well.
- ii. Be able to come to the designated time and place in the community for discussions
- iii. Be willing to verbally communicate their consent to participate, for the session to be recorded and for the results to be used for programmatic purposes as well as external publication by the WFP and its partners, if deemed necessary.
- iv. Preferably be diverse and represent different groups of people targeted by the program to enhance learning.

### 3.4 Participatory Engagement Discussions (PEDs)

54. Participatory engagement discussion (PEDs) involved conducting participatory in-depth discussions with targeted communities to solicit perspectives of the program on lessons learned, significant changes, challenges, and satisfaction with the interventions. The PEDs were conducted using the Most Significant Change (MSC) tool.

#### 3.4.1 Most Significant Change (MSC)

55. The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It involves the collection and selection of stories of change, produced by program or project stakeholders. It is a participatory technique which relies on engaging stakeholders in a process of discussing, analysing and recording change.

56. MSC can be used in projects and programs where it is not possible to precisely predict desired changes beforehand and is therefore difficult to set pre-defined indicators of change. In this evaluation, the MSC tool will be used to measure accountability e.g., the tool will enable the evaluation team to measure services provided by the SP4SDG program, understand change brought by the program and how this change has benefited targeted communities and beneficiaries (end users) in the long run.

57. Five steps were followed in the process: 1) Defining domains of change, 2) Deciding how and when to collect stories, 3) Collecting significant change stories, 4) Selecting the most significant stories and 5) Verify the stories.

### **3.4.2 Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis**

58. A stakeholder mapping and analysis ([Annex 10](#)) was conducted to enable the evaluation team to get a deeper understanding of the role those different institutions and individuals have been playing in relation to social protection in the program sites.

59. Stakeholder mapping and analysis included soliciting views and as much practical information as possible from beneficiaries based on their experiences with various institutions involved in the SP4SDG project. The use of Venn diagrams is proposed to enhance community participation in the institutional mapping process. The exercise involved identifying what institutions working with the SP4SDG projects are in the district, assessing their roles, importance and benefits, establishing interlinkages between or among institutions on service provision and analysis complementarity in service provision.

## Annex 4. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation criteria/ Questions	Sub-questions	Indicators	Main Source of Information	Data collection methods/ Data analysis	Quality of Evidence availability/ reliability
<i>Relevance</i>					
<b>1. To what extent were the objectives of SP4SDG valid and appropriate with UN and National policies and how have these remained relevant over time?</b>	1.1 Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the overall goal, objectives and intended impacts? How appropriate is the results framework in relation to the stated program interventions?	Assessment of compliance with the program's stated objectives	Quarterly and Annual Program reports; Program Design document	KIIs Portfolio analysis review	Availability of evidence: 3 (strong)
	1.2 How relevant is the program for addressing the needs and rights of the most vulnerable targeted groups: women, men, boys and girls, people with disabilities and older people?	% of program beneficiaries who claim services met their needs	Desk review; Data from interaction with program beneficiaries	Household Surveys, Data analysis of Participatory Engagement Discussions (PED); FGDs; KIIs; SSIs, disaggregated by sex and Districts.	Availability of evidence: 1 (weak)
	1.3 How have civil society organizations, including employers' and workers' organisations, participated in the project design and implementation?	The degree to which stakeholders perceive their interests have been met	Desk review; Program reports; data from key informants	Review of available documentation; KIIs; FGDs	Availability of evidence: 1 (weak)

<b>Coherence</b>					
<b>2. How coherent is the program within the context of the social protection policy environment in Malawi, in what way are the PUNOs interventions aligned to support and fit within this policy space in the country?</b>	2.1 How well were interventions coordinated between the PUNOs and key government stakeholders as well as among the government stakeholders at different levels of government structures?	The degree to which the program compliments or deviates from existing social protection policy commitments	Desk review of key policy commitments; data from interaction with government officials and cooperating partners	Strategic policy analysis assessment; KIIs; SSIs	Availability of evidence: 3 (strong)
	2.2 To what extent did the Joint Program lead to stronger coordination mechanisms between implementing PUNOs?	The degree to which an assessment of improved coordination is evident	Desk review; Program reports; data from key informants	Review of available documentation; KIIs; FGDs	Availability of evidence: 3 (strong)
	2.3 How were interventions designed to complement, harmonise and coordinate with other development partners and what was the added value of these interventions?	Assessment of the program's design processes; stakeholder perceptions on added value and appropriateness of interventions	Desk review; Program reports; data from key informants	Review of available documentation; KIIs; FGDs	Availability of evidence: 2 (fair)
<b>Effectiveness &amp; Coverage</b>					
<b>3. To what extent have the targeted outputs, outcomes, strategic results and interventions been achieved, or expect to be achieved taking account of their relative importance?</b>	3.1 What were the main factors (internal and external) influencing the achievement, or/and non-achievement of the SP4SDG objectives? How effective was the program approach to targeting of interventions under the SP4SDG?	Assessment of the program's documentation and reporting processes; stakeholder	Quarterly and Annual Program reports; desk review; Stakeholder engagement	KIIs; SSIs; FGDs with key cooperating partners	Availability of evidence: 2 (fair)

		perceptions on appropriateness of interventions			
	3.2 How has the program progressed towards achieving its objectives to ensure the target population were adequately identified and what factors influences the coverage and reach of the program interventions?	The degree to which Program design and results framework were realistic and achievable.	Review of data from Food Consumption Score (FCS), reduced coping strategy index (rCSI), Livelihood coping strategy index (LCSI), and household identification processes for receiving emergency food assistance (IPC-based) etc.	Household surveys disaggregated by sex and districts; comparative analysis;	Availability of evidence: 3 (strong)
	3.3 Has the project addressed the COVID 19 consequences in the short and long term in the context of affecting the planned outcomes? What challenges were faced in the program?	The degree to which the decisions on program activities were appropriately adapted and designed, implemented	Program intervention analysis; stakeholder dialogue; Quarterly/annual reports	Most Significant Change analysis (MSC); KIs; FGDs	Availability of evidence: 2 (fair)
<b>Efficiency</b>					
<b>4. Was the program efficiently implemented (specifically cost effectiveness/value for money), and how was this converted to results?</b>	4.1 What are the factors affecting the pace and quality of implementation and how were these mitigated? How were resources allocated and utilised?	The degree to how budget planning and prioritization of financial	Budget expenditure review; Program activity reports	SSIs and FGDs with key cooperating partners	Availability of evidence: 1 (weak)

		resources against set targets are having an influence on results.			
	4.2 What were the critical value for money considerations of the program's outputs and how did this influence expected results?	The degree to how cost-benefit and Value for Money analysis determined original design and implementation approach; Review of coordination mechanisms to assess interventions to reduce operational costs.	Value for Money assessment; implementing partner financial reports	FGDs with PUNOs	Availability of evidence: 1 (weak)
<b>Impact</b>					
<b>5. What is the potential impact that can be envisioned, and what are the initial signs of evidence towards achieving development objectives?</b>	5.1 What changes has the program effected on the Malawi Social Protection System? What difference have the program interventions made to the wider social protection environment?	Assessment of planning processes and program documentation; stakeholder perceptions regarding the degree to which various interests and needs have been met.	Quarterly and Annual Program and progress reports	Portfolio and data analysis; MSC analysis with implementing partners	Availability of evidence: 2 (fair)

	5.2 What real difference has the program made on the targeted beneficiaries (including specifically the most vulnerable groups) and their households? How did the program change their lives and livelihoods?	% of intended beneficiaries who identify significant transformation due to the interventions	Data from interaction with program beneficiaries	MSC; PED; FGDs	Availability of evidence: 1 (weak)
<b>Sustainability</b>					
<b>6. To what extent are the benefits of the program likely to continue after program funding has ceased?</b>	6.1 How has the program built capacities of the different stakeholders for the results to continue?	The degree to which stakeholders perceive improvement in access and accountability of institutions and services to meet on-going needs.	Data from interaction with stakeholders; partner training reports.	KIs; SSIs; Institutional analysis	Availability of evidence: 1 (weak)
	6.2 What systems are in place for the program to develop an exit strategy?	Evidence that interventions to enhance institutional capacity are appropriate; Evidence that gender sensitivity and equity has been integrated in to measures taken to address sustainability	Data from interaction with stakeholders	Institutional Framework analysis with key partners	Availability of evidence: 1 (weak)
<b>Gender dimensions</b>					

<p><b>7. How did SP4SDG's actions affect the context of gender inequality and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people?</b></p>	<p>7.1 How did the Stakeholders interventions (1) improve the lives of women, girls, gender diverse people and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people? (2) How did the PUNs challenge existing gender inequalities; and (3) did these interventions worsen the circumstances for women, girls, gender diverse people and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people</p>	<p>Measures taken to analyse and apply information on how gender equality and women's empowerment and vulnerability inform and support decision-making; Evidence of participation of women, men, girls and boys and other vulnerable groups in decision-making affecting implementation of activities</p>	<p>Program and progress reports on gender focused activities (Gender Marker); stakeholder engagement</p>	<p>Gender Assessment Tools; FGDs; KIIs</p>	<p>Availability of evidence: 1 (weak)</p>
	<p>7.2 What is the anticipated proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of social protection entitlements?</p>	<p>% of beneficiaries who perceive feedback mechanisms taken up and applied to design and implementation of CSP activities</p>	<p>Data from interaction with program beneficiaries</p>	<p>MSC; PED; FGDs</p>	<p>Availability of evidence: 1 (weak)</p>

# Annex 5. Data Collection Tools

## Overview of tools and methods

Data Collection Method	Sampling Technique	Data Collection Method	Description	Tools Used
<b>Quantitative</b>	Multi-Stage Cluster and PPS sampling	Household surveys	The household survey gathers detailed quantitative data to evaluate the SP4SDG project impact in Nsanje and Balaka districts. Data is collected from both beneficiary and non-beneficiaries	Electronic Household Survey Questionnaire
		Desk study	Review available documentation	Secondary data
<b>Qualitative</b>	Purposive Sampling	Desk study	Review available documentation	Secondary data
		Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	A facilitated discussion with carefully selected community structures such as village Development Committee (VDC), beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries	Checklists
		Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	SP4SDG project stakeholders, including District officials; CSOs, Farm Radio Program	Detailed Checklist
		Participatory Engagement Discussions	Participatory in-depth discussions with targeted communities to solicit perspectives of the program on lessons learned, significant changes, challenges, and satisfaction with the interventions.	Detailed Checklist
		Direct observations	A detailed observation form used to record what the enumerators see and hear in the sampled communities. These provide valuable information concerning project implementation processes and impact of the project.	Simple checklist
		Case studies – using most significant change analysis	Unique case studies (both positive and negative) on the implementation processes and sustainability of the project. This aims to provide valuable lessons for providing solutions to existing challenges.	Guide

## I. Interview guide for key stakeholders at district level

60. The SP4SDG Joint Program (JP) stakeholders at the district level included WFP district officers, Government staff from District Social Welfare Office (DSWO), Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), NGOs and District Civil Protection Committee members. The SP4SDG Joint Program (JP) stakeholders at community level consisted of community volunteers and local leaders. The evaluation team (ET) through WFP district officers identified the institutions and named individuals for the field work discussions.

61. At both the district and community levels, there were 18 key stakeholders that the JP engaged with and their roles involved implementation and supporting SP interventions and assisting the UN agencies at district level. In addition to the KIIs, men, women and youth (15-25 years of age) were engaged in 12 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). This enabled the ET to gather more information of how the SP interventions were implemented and how the program is perceived by the community. The ET aimed to conduct 9 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the district stakeholders in each of the two Districts of Balaka and Nsanje, and 12 FGDs in Nsanje only. [Annex 3: Methodology](#), provides a brief overview of how KIIs and FGDs were conducted.

### Indicative question guides

62. The following interview guides are illustrative and aimed at capturing vital information to assess the JP's performance. The guides were structured around the key evaluation questions outlined in [Annex 4](#). These were indicative guides only and the purpose was to steer the KIIs/FGDs with stakeholders to collect relevant information in the context of the key thematic areas of the evaluation. Data from each interview was inputted to the ET database in order to track the number of stakeholders reached at district level. Form A (below) provides a template to record interviews.

63. Not all the evaluation questions were relevant to all the key informants. In some cases, following the open-ended formulae, the KIIs were adapted if a particular line of enquiry emerged in the discussion which was considered relevant to document the JP learning outcomes. The indicative questions in relation to each group of key stakeholders are set out below.

#### A) Government of Malawi district officials (Government staff from DSWO, DoDMA)

1. What technical support did you receive through the JP? What was the content of the training?
2. After the trainings how have you been involved with the JP? What can you tell me about the JP?
3. What was happening in the Social Protection sector prior to the JP?
4. How has the JP responded to the environment at the time of its start-up? What role did you, or GoM colleagues you know of, play in shaping the objectives of the JP?
5. To what extent does the JP support and/or complement GoM's SP priorities? Which components of the JP are important to the GoM priority areas? What difference is this support making? What can you tell me about the impact this is having on the ground?
6. What mechanisms are in place to coordinate the various components of the JP support to GoM? How are these mechanisms different to the systems GoM has in place already?
7. What parts of the district does the JP operate in, and how does this link to existing government programs? What areas of the JP approach is innovative? Can you explain how?
8. What have been the major challenges facing the SP sector since the JP started in your district? How has the JP supported the GoM to address these challenges in your district? What have been the key lessons from these challenges?
9. What plans and strategies does the GoM have in place to build upon the experiences of the JP and other donor supported interventions? How will these donors supported interventions continue in future?

10. What can you tell me about how the JP has engaged on gender and social inclusion issues? What interventions and changes have happened as a result of the JP? How have the lives of women, girls and gender diverse people, people with disabilities and older improved since the JP began?

**B) Civil Society Organisations/NGOs and other key institutions**

1. What areas of SP do you engage with? What components of SP have you been supporting in the past? What plans in the future?
2. What are the key SP challenges facing in the district? What specific interventions do you think are working well and why is this?
3. What can you tell me about the SP policy environment in the country? Who are the key players from the development partners supporting both GoM and SP systems work?
4. Who are the key CSOs in Malawi supporting SP policy and programmatic processes? What role do these CSOs have in supporting government capacity strengthening work?
5. What do you know of UN agencies work related to SP, both at a systems and project implementation level? What good examples can you highlight? What lessons are evident? What do you think should be done differently?
6. What do you know of the SP4SDG JP? Are you involved? How? What? Where? Who with?
7. How are the needs of the most vulnerable groups being met? What SP interventions are reaching out to these groups? How are these groups targeted for support? Who leads on this targeting analysis work?
8. Who are the key players in promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming in the SP sector? What areas of gender mainstreaming and social inclusion do you consider as key priority areas? Who is best placed to undertake this role? What areas of expertise do UN agencies have in the context of gender and inequality? Can you name any specific programs where good initiatives are having an impact?

**C) WFP district officers participating in the SP4SDG program**

1. How are you involved in the JP? What is your specific role? How long have you been involved? How was the design of the JP developed?
2. What are the key components of the JP, and how do these complement and support GoM SP policy and program work in the district? Which of the JP components do you think is the most important to support GoM's strategic goals?
3. What are the key activities of the JP? How important are these in supporting national policy and SP program commitments? What key results of the JP have been achieved up to this point? How cost effective were the JP interventions? What evidence is available to support these results? What key commitment areas do you think will not be met by the end of the JP? What plans are in place to continue supporting these areas?
4. What mechanism are in place to support JP coordination across each of the 3 outcome areas? How is the JP UN agency coordination functioning? What lessons can you conclude about the coordination arrangements? How were challenges and differences resolved?
5. How have other key actors (name them) participated in the JP implementation? How will the initiatives set up by the JP continue in the future? What capacity constraints within GoM/Development Partners/CSOs exist that will impact on the JPs key outcome areas being achieved? What lessons can you share about this engagement?
6. What are the key gender inequality and social exclusion factors that the JP is aiming to address? Which groups have been the focus of the JP and why? How has the JP performed in improving the situation for these vulnerable groups? What challenges still exist in terms of the gender dimension of the JP approach?

**D) Traditional leaders and other key people at community level**

1. What areas of SP is your community supported? What key SP programs are you currently benefiting? What specific components? And who? Where? To what extent are the SP objectives in conflict or in duplication of complementing with other projects implemented in your community?
2. What are the crucial challenges facing participating in the SP project?
3. What can you tell me about the communities' commitments to utilising the benefits from the SP project? How did the community contribute to the SP project? Can this support continue over the long-term?
4. What areas of the JP do you consider to be successful at community level? What results and achievements can you mention?
5. What do think of the partnership and coordination arrangements of the UN agencies /GoM officials working in the SP sector? What examples of good practice can you highlight? What have been the challenges affecting these partnerships?
6. How much of a role does the community play in the SP sector in your community? What has been their strengths and what challenges do they face in their relationship with the project implementers?
7. Who are the key players in promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming within the community in the SP sector? What areas of gender mainstreaming and social inclusion do you consider as key priority areas? Who is best placed to undertake this role? What areas of expertise do you as community leaders have in the context of gender and inequality? Can you name any specific programs where good initiatives are having an impact?

#### **E) Focus Group Discussions at community level**

1. What areas of SP are you being supported? What specific components? And who? Where? To what extent are the SP objectives in conflict or in duplication of complementing with other projects implemented in your community?
2. What are the crucial challenges you are facing participating in the SP project?
3. What can you tell me about your commitments to utilising the benefits from the SP project? How did you contribute to the SP project? Can this support continue over the long-term?
4. What areas of the JP do you consider to be successful? What results and achievements can you mention?
5. What do think of the partnership and coordination arrangements of the UN agencies /GoM officials working in the SP sector? What examples of good practice can you highlight? What have been the challenges affecting these partnerships?
6. How much of a role do you play in the SP sector in your community? What has been your strengths and what challenges have you faced in your relationship with the project implementers?
7. Who are the key players in promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming within the community in the SP sector? What areas of gender mainstreaming and social inclusion do you consider as key priority areas? Who is best placed to undertake this role? What areas of expertise do you have in the context of gender and inequality? Can you name any specific programs where good initiatives are having an impact?

### **Qualitative Evaluation Tools**

#### **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): An overview guide**

64. The evaluation team (ET) and the WFP appointed Outsource Monitoring Partner (OMP) conducted Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in Nsanje and Balaka districts. In Balaka, the decision to conduct only KIIs was justified because the program interventions were related, and confined, to specific technical assistance support to GoM's social protection systems strengthening. During the KIIs, the ET conducted interviews with women who were part of the JP training and capacity development activities.

65. KIIs proved to be a useful tool for gathering stakeholders' perceptions of various issues concerning the program. This was particularly appropriate where certain information was difficult to derive from household interviews, including relevance; gaps and weaknesses of policies, strategies, and regulatory frameworks; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the program. KIIs included aspects of relevance, coherence effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and learning. An outline guide below highlights the process.

1. Key persons included, but were not limited to, program staff and partners, community volunteers and leaders, government staff from line ministries and departments involved in the program, and representatives from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on the ground.
2. KIIs were typically open-ended and lasted between no more than 30-60 minutes. The evaluation team will share the notes from the interviews as well as the recordings with the WFP, UNICEF and ILO upon completion of the activity.
3. No incentives, like purchasing of beverages and other refreshments, were provided to the key informants to avoid bias and favouritism in responding to questions that were asked.
4. The information collected was used to complement quantitative data from the household survey and provide an in-depth knowledge on how various interventions of the program have been able to support food, nutrition and livelihood security in the targeted districts. The information also helped gauge opinions, attitude and perceptions of key stakeholders about the SP4SDG program.

#### **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): An overview guide**

66. The ET conducted FGDs using pre-tested checklists, with **direct beneficiary** households in one sample village/cluster in each sampled Group Village Head (GVH). The ET used the same process for the non-beneficiary households in one non-beneficiary village/cluster under a GVH with no beneficiaries. The ET conducted FGDs in order to understand collective perceptions and opinions about the program interventions and performance. Only households that were not holding any social or political status (ordinary households) and were not respondents of the household survey participated in the discussions. The ET conducted four FGDs at the selected sample village/cluster: one FGD for men only; one FGD for women only, including those who have been part of the JP training and capacity development activities; one for the youth (age 15-25) and the other one for the elderly (>65 years old). This helped to capture any issues concerning disaggregated age and gender categories.

67. The ET conduct FGDs with groups of 8-12 people selected purposively for their first-hand information (in some cases mixed gender, other cases gender disaggregated). Discussions centered on selected topics with planned questions, while allowing for interesting, new or unplanned follow up questions to be asked as well. An outline guide below highlights the process.

1. Semi-structured questionnaires with open ended questions were used to guide discussions. The discussions were recorded and transcribed for analysis.
2. Each focus group discussion typically lasted between 1-2 hours, meaning that a total of 3-4 could be completed per day within one community. Focus group discussion checklists were open-ended in nature and typically focused on a few key themes.
3. FGD facilitators and note takers will provide recordings of all discussions to WFP. The FGD teams provided very light snacks and beverages to all focus group participants. No monetary incentives were paid to the participants.
4. FGD participants included community volunteers, change agents, women groups, men groups, youth groups and various committees involved in social protection.
5. The suggestion was that members in the group should:
  - i. Have been in the program to participate well.
  - ii. Be able to come to the designated time and place in the community for discussions
  - iii. Be willing to verbally communicate their consent to participate, for the session to be recorded and for the results to be used for programmatic purposes as well as external publication by the WFP and its partners, if deemed necessary.

- iv. Preferably be diverse and represent different groups of people targeted by the program to enhance learning.

**FGD and KII checklists used at community level**

68. The checklists below are for FGDs, Participatory Engagement Discussions (PEDs) and KIIs that the ET conducted in Balaka and Nsanje at the district and community levels. The national consultants used the afternoon of the training day, 31<sup>st</sup> August, to discuss them with the Outsourced Monitoring Partner’s (OMP) facilitators and note takers. The discussion dwelled on individuals and groups to be selected, numbers of people in the groups, questions to be asked and how to ask them, probing for answers as well as recording and taking notes in detail. The training also discussed transcription and how to summarize notes on the templates for the evaluation. The plan was to have part of everyday of data collection in the afternoon to summarize findings from the FGDs, PEDs and KIIs. Key informants interviewed at the district level were representatives from the government’s District Social Welfare Office (DSWO), Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), District Social Support Committees (DSSC), District Civil Protection Committees (DCPC) and any NGOs working on social protection on the ground (see [Annex 12](#) for detailed list of people who were interviewed. At the community level, interviews were planned for local leaders and leaders for similar committees e.g., Village Development Committee (VDC) and Village Civil Protection Committee (VCPC). The ET also held discussions with groups of women and men beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the lean season response (LSR), community volunteers and members of various committees available. Every interview was preceded by seeking of the consent from the participants.

**Seeking consent from the participants**

Good morning / afternoon. My name / Our names are..... We are speaking with individuals / groups like yours to learn more about the SDG Fund Joint Program titled the Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals (SP4SDG) in Malawi. Your participation is completely voluntary. Like we agreed before we started, I/we am/are going to be tape-recording our discussion so that we save time for writing and that I/we can be clear later on about our discussion. Nobody will be able to recognize your voice and your words will be written onto paper without your names on it. All the information that you share with me/us today will be kept confidential. Nobody will know that it was you who said these things. Here is a copy of an introduction letter that explains the reasons for this final evaluation. Let us go through it right now. Do you have any questions? To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, each one of us will seat at a distance, avoid handshakes, wash hands with sanitizer and put on masks. Do you have any questions before we begin? Are you willing to participate in the evaluation?

**The FGD / PED Checklists contained the following core questions**

**Women and men beneficiaries of the joint program**

1. Have you been participating in the program that WFP, UNICEF and ILO have been implementing here? What activities have you participated in?
2. Did you receive cash transfers in the January 2021 Lean Season Response (LSR)? Where / how were the people receiving the cash? How much did each beneficiary receive? Did you receive the cash once or for some months? Which months did you receive the cash? Who exactly was providing the cash? What was the mode used (Airtel money, Mpamba, ATM, Mobile Bank? hard cash etc.)?
3. How were the beneficiaries selected? Who selected them? What qualified them to be selected? Did the amounts of cash disbursed differ based on vulnerability? How did they differ? Were you satisfied with the amounts you received? How were you sensitized about the response? How did you know days when cash would be disbursed? How did the program ensure the elderly, people with disabilities and the other most vulnerable individuals are able to receive cash?
4. How did / have the cash transfers benefited your household? What else? What else? In what way? Were women able to make decisions at home on how to use the cash they received. How did / were they using the cash?

5. What would happen if WFP, UNICEF and ILO did not intervene? What has changed as a result of the cash transfers? How do you differentiate yourself from households that did not receive the cash? How did they cope up with the lean season?
6. What complaints were there and how were you communicating them to WFP, UNICEF and ILO. Were you being assisted? Were you being assisted on time? Were you happy with the feedback and feedback mechanisms used?
7. If there are other interventions, which ones are most impactful, low cost and sustainable? Which ones have worked well or failed to work as designed? Why and what have communities been doing to improve their performance? If food distribution was provided as well, ask for details. Who benefited? Where? How? What etc.
8. Give examples on negative and unintended impact of the LSR? What are / were the implications and how have you been able to minimize them. Have we learned anything from the LSR? What is it? How can it be scaled up in future?
9. What are your general recommendations for the future?

**Non-Beneficiaries (Women, men, the elderly etc.)**

1. Are you aware WFP, UNICEF and ILO distributed cash transfers in the lean period from January 2021? How did they selected households to benefit? What was the criteria? How do you describe the criteria used? Was the process transparent and honest? Was it community-based? Was the process not made to favour some households? What assets or activities differentiated you from the households that were selected? In your mind, why were you not selected?
2. What was the main problem? Flood? Drought? Pest outbreaks? How did this affect households? What mechanisms did you use to cope up? Facilitators: check if negative coping mechanisms were used as these households struggled on their own to survive? What are the examples of these negative coping mechanisms?
3. What were households that received cash transfers able to do that you couldn't. How did they benefit? What changed in their households? What other activities are taking place that you do not participate in? What are your remarks about what the WFP, UNICEF and ILO have been doing here? What are your recommendations for the future?

**Local committees / volunteers (VDC, ACPC and VCPC)**

1. What is the composition of your committee? How many males and females? What roles and duties do you play in the community?
2. Describe disasters that happened here from November 2020 to March 2021. Floods? Drought? Heavy wind? Pest outbreaks? WFP, UNICEF and ILO provided the Lean Season Response (LSR)? Did you participate in the design and implementation? What about monitoring? Describe what happened in the LSR. ET and facilitators: get as much details as possible. Verify information. Compare with information provided by individual beneficiaries. Probe What else? How else? In what way? Sure?
3. What were your roles in the LSR? What is your overall evaluation of the response? Was it needed? How / Why? Did it take place when people were in need of humanitarian response? Did it help the people as needed? Give examples of how people have benefited? What successes has the response registered on food security, nutrition and incomes? Was food distribution part of the LSR? Give more details.
4. What other activities are the WFP, UNICEF and ILO implementing? How do you help them? What evidence or examples (impact and change)? What is the impact. Impact for who? Are there any negative and unintended impact worth documenting? What are they? What have you been doing to minimize the negative impact? What lessons have we learned from the LSR. How can we do things differently in future?

**The Key Informant Checklists with district level stakeholders included the following key questions**

**DSWO, DoDMA, DCPC, WFP field staff etc.**

1. What are your roles on social protection in the district? Were you involved in the LSR that the WFP, UNICEF and ILO implemented in Nsanje from January 2021? How were you involved? Did you take part in the design, implementation and monitoring?
2. What was the LSR all about? What was provided (cash, food)? To what kind of people was the LSR provided and how were they selected? What is your overall rating of the LSR? Was it necessary to roll out such a response? Please explain? What problems prompted it? Floods? Drought? Food Insecurity? Undernutrition? Did the response come at a time when people were most vulnerable and needed it most to survive? Did it address people's needs? Give examples of any successes seen.
3. What kind of technical support have you received from the JP? Training? Backstopping service? How is this helping you now? How are you using the knowledge and skills acquired in your daily work? What else? what else?
4. What other activities have you been involved in? What activities are working well and what activities are lagging behind? Why and what has been done to improve performance?
5. Is the WFP, UNICEF and ILO's work impactful and sustainable? Please explain. What are the positive, negative, direct and indirect impact registered to date? What activities are low cost and community-driven to foster sustainability. What threatens sustainability of some activities? Have we learned anything from the design of the JP program? What is it? What needs to be done differently in future to accelerate impact? How can the program improve on gender dimension? What challenges remain and how can they be addressed?

#### **Local leaders and various community volunteers**

1. Are you aware of activities that the WFP, UNICEF and ILO are doing here? What are they? And how are / were you involved?
2. What challenges were faced here during the lean period from November 2020 to March 2021 (floods, drought, food insecurity etc.). How was the extent of the problem compared to other years? Who was affected most (female-headed households, the elderly, the poorest, people with disabilities etc.)? Did such people receive any cash or food from the WFP, UNICEF and ILO in January 2021? What exactly did they receive? Probe: where? how much? For how long?
3. What were your roles in the LSR of January 2021(targeting, design, implementation, monitoring etc.)? Was the targeting process fair? Was it wide encompassing and community-based? Provide more details on how the beneficiaries were selected since during lean season every household in the rural communities tend to require humanitarian assistance?
4. Do you think the LSR was needed and appropriate in the context of your communities? Did it help the people? How? Did the response come at the right time when people needed it most? What are some of the successes that people mention or you have seen? What about food security, investment in village savings and loans (VSLs) and nutrition? What would have happened if there was no such a response?
5. What is the impact of the LSR? What are the negative and indirect impact? Did / have women, the elderly and other vulnerable groups of people faced any negative impacts as a result of the response? What about gender-based violence? What about sharing of cash or food at community level.
6. How were people complaining? Was feedback provided by the WFP, UNICEF and ILO? Was the feedback provided on time? What challenges were the most vulnerable facing to use the complaint-feedback mechanism? I have in mind the elderly or people with disabilities for instance.
7. What other activities by the WFP, UNICEF and ILO are you being involved in? What activities are working well and what activities are lagging behind? Why and what has been done to improve performance?
8. Is the WFP, UNICEF and ILO's work impactful and sustainable? Please explain. What are the positive, negative, direct and indirect, intended and unintended impact registered to date? What activities are low cost and governed by the communities themselves, which can foster sustainability? What threatens sustainability of some activities? Have we learned anything from the design of the JP program? What is it? What needs to be done differently in future to accelerate performance? How can the program and the LSR improve on gender dimension?

## Form A: SP4SDG Evaluation Malawi: Key Informant Interviews Recording Template

Name of person interviewed	
Details: purpose of interview	Example: Understanding of JPs partnership with GoM.? Emphasis/Focus on specific EQs? (not all questions will be relevant to each stakeholder/interviewee).
General Background of KI (Status, role, relationship with the Joint Program)	
Date, time started, finished	
Key issues (bullet points) to be followed up if any	

Criteria	Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions
<b>Relevance</b>	<b>1. To what extent were the objectives of SP4SDG valid and appropriate with UN and National policies and how have these remained relevant over time?</b>
<b>Key points:</b>	
1.1 Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the overall goal, objectives and intended impacts? How appropriate is the results framework in relation to the stated program interventions?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
1.2 How relevant is the program for addressing the needs and rights of the most vulnerable targeted groups: women, men, boys and girls, people with disabilities and older people?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
1.3 How have civil society organizations, including employers' and workers' organisations, participated in the project design and implementation?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
<b>Coherence</b>	<b>2. How coherent is the program within the context of the social protection policy environment in Malawi, in what way are the PUNOs interventions aligned to support and fit within this policy space in the country?</b>
<b>Key points:</b>	
2.1 How well were interventions coordinated between the PUNOs and key government stakeholders as well as among the government stakeholders at different levels of government structures?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
2.2 To what extent did the Joint Program lead to stronger coordination mechanisms between implementing PUNOs?	

<b>Key points:</b>	
2.3 How were interventions designed to complement, harmonise and coordinate with other development partners and what was the added value of these interventions?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
<b>Effectiveness and coverage</b>	3. <b>To what extent have the targeted outputs, outcomes, strategic results, and interventions been achieved, or expect to be achieved taking account of their relative importance?</b>
<b>Key points:</b>	
3.1 What were the main factors (internal and external) influencing the achievement, or/and non-achievement of the SP4SDG objectives? How effective was the program approach to targeting of interventions under the SP4SDG?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
3.2 How has the program progressed towards achieving its objectives to ensure the target population were adequately identified and what factors influenced the coverage and reach of the program interventions?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
3.3 Has the project addressed the COVID 19 consequences in the short and long term in the context of affecting the planned outcomes? What challenges were faced in the program?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
<b>Efficiency</b>	4. <b>Was the program efficiently implemented (specifically cost effectiveness/value for money), and how was this converted to results?</b>
<b>Key points:</b>	
4.1 What are the factors affecting the pace and quality of implementation and how were these mitigated? How were resources allocated and utilised?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
4.2 What were the critical value for money considerations of the program's outputs and how did this influence expected results?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	5. <b>What is the potential impact that can be envisioned, and what are the initial signs of evidence towards achieving development objectives?</b>
<b>Key points:</b>	
5.1 What changes has the program effected on the Malawi Social Protection System? What difference have the program interventions made to the wider social protection environment?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
5.2 What real difference has the program made on the targeted beneficiaries (including specifically the most vulnerable groups) and their households? How did the program change their lives and livelihoods?	

<b>Key points:</b>	
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>6. To what extent are the benefits of the program likely to continue after program funding has ceased?</b>
<b>Key points:</b>	
6.1 How has the program built capacities of the different stakeholders for the results to continue?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
6.2 What systems are in place for the program to develop an exit strategy?	
<b>Key points:</b>	
<b>Gender Dimensions</b>	<b>7. How did SP4SDG's actions affect the context of gender inequality and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people?</b>
<b>Key points:</b>	
7.1 How did the Stakeholders interventions (1) improve the lives of women, girls, gender diverse people and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people? (2) How did the PUNOs challenge existing gender inequalities; and (3) did these interventions worsen or improve the circumstances for women, girls, gender diverse people and targeted people living with disabilities, and older people	
<b>Key points:</b>	
7.2 What is the anticipated proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of social protection entitlements?	
<b>Key points:</b>	

## II. Interview Guide for stakeholder groups at the national level

69. The SP4SDG Joint Program (JP) stakeholders at the national level were defined as Government officials; Development Partners; Civil Society Organisations and other key institutions; and key personnel representing the JP PUNOs.

70. In consultation with the PUNOs the ET identified and aimed to conduct up to a maximum of 19 KIIs/SSIs with the national stakeholders. Not all of the national stakeholders were available or willing to participate in the interviews. However, the ET conducted remote interviews with the following representatives. The representatives from key government ministries and departments, namely: Patricia Zimpita, Director, Poverty Reduction and Social Protection (PRSP) Division of the Economic Planning & Development (EP&D); Bessie Msusa Chief Economist, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development & Public Sector Reforms; and, Laurent Kansinjiro, Deputy Director, SCTP Program, MoGCDSW. These individuals were selected due to their close relationship to the JP and because of the strategic role they perform in the social protection sector.

71. Among the key development partners engaged in the SP sector there were five in particular who were identified as performing a role in strategic support to the GoM's SP interventions and assisting the UN agencies in SP program implementation. Due to issues of availability the ET conducted remote interviews with the following key DPs: European Union (EU) and Irish Aid.

72. There were an estimated six CSOs that the ET and PUNOs identified as performing a critical role both in terms of relevance to the JP objectives and supporting SP interventions throughout the country. Of

those who responded to the ETs request two CSOs were interviewed to provide insights from the CSO networks: Care International and MANEPO.

### **Indicative question guides**

73. The following outline interview guides were used to capture key information and to assess the JPs performance and learn lessons.

#### **Key stakeholders**

A) Government of Malawi officials and key ministries

##### **Relevance**

1. What involvement have you had with the JP? What can you tell me about the JP?
2. What was happening in the Social Protection sector prior to the JP?
3. How has the JP responded to the environment at the time of its start-up? What role did you, or GoM colleagues you know of, play in shaping the objectives of the JP?

##### **Coherence**

4. To what extent does the JP support and/or complement GoM's SP priorities? Which components of the JP are important to the GoM priority areas? What difference is this support making? What can you tell me about the impact this is having on the ground?
5. What mechanisms are in place to coordinate the various components of the JP support to GoM? How are these mechanisms different to the systems GoM has in place already?

##### **Effectiveness & Coverage and efficiency**

6. What parts of the country does the JP operate in, and how does this link to existing government programs? What areas of the JP approach is innovative? Can you explain how?
7. What have been the major challenges facing the SP sector since the JP started? How has the JP supported the GoM to address these challenges? What have been the key lessons from these challenges?

##### **Sustainability & Impact**

8. What plans and strategies does the GoM have in place to build upon the experiences of the JP and other donor supported interventions? How will these donors supported interventions continue in future?

##### **Gender dimension**

9. What can you tell me about how the JP has engaged on gender and social inclusion issues? What interventions and changes have happened as a result of the JP? How have the lives of women, girls and gender diverse people, people with disabilities and older improved since the JP began?

#### **B) Development Partners**

##### **General**

1. What areas of SP does your agency support in GoM? What key SP programs are you currently financing? What specific components? And who? Where? How does this support link to existing GoM SP policy commitments?

##### **Relevance & coherence**

2. What can you tell me about the JP? How are you supporting/working with the UN agencies related to SP, or other intervention areas? What support do you provide specifically to the JP? How long has this support likely to continue?

##### **Sustainability**

3. What are the crucial challenges facing GoM/UN agencies in terms of supporting SP systems capacity strengthening work?

### **Efficiency**

4. What can you tell me about the GoM's commitments to financing the SP sector through domestic revenue? What plans do you know of that are in place, or being developed, to assess the proportion of GoM's contribution to the SP sector over the long-term? What do you know of JPs support in this area of analysis?

### **Impact**

5. What areas of the JP do you consider to be successful? What results and achievements can you mention?

### **Effectiveness & coverage**

6. What do think of the partnership and coordination arrangements of the UN agencies working in the SP sector? What examples of good practice can you highlight? What have been the challenges affecting these partnerships?
7. How much of a role does CSOs/NGOs play in the SP sector in Malawi? What has been their strengths and what challenges do they face in their relationship with GoM?

### **Gender dimension**

8. Who are the key players in promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming in the SP sector? What areas of gender mainstreaming and social inclusion do you consider as key priority areas? Who is best placed to undertake this role? What areas of expertise do UN agencies have in the context of gender and inequality? Can you name any specific programs where good initiatives are having an impact?

## **C) Civil Society Organisations/NGOs and other key institutions**

### **General**

1. What areas of SP do you engage with? What components of SP have you been supporting in the past? What plans in the future?

### **Relevance**

2. What are the key SP challenges facing Malawi? What specific interventions do you think are working well and why is this?

### **Coherence**

3. What can you tell me about the SP policy environment in the country? Who are the key players from the development partners supporting both GoM and SP systems work?
4. Who are the key CSOs in Malawi supporting SP policy and programmatic processes? What role do these CSOs have in supporting government capacity strengthening work?
5. What do you know of UN agencies work related to SP, both at a systems and project implementation level? What good examples can you highlight? What lessons are evident? What do you think should be done differently?

### **Effectiveness & coverage**

6. What do you know of the SP4SDG JP? Are you involved? How? What? Where? Who with?
7. How are the needs of the most vulnerable groups being met? What SP interventions are reaching out to these groups? How are these groups targeted for support? Who leads on this targeting analysis work?

### **Gender dimension**

8. Who are the key players in promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming in the SP sector? What areas of gender mainstreaming and social inclusion do you consider as key priority areas? Who is best placed to undertake this role? What areas of expertise do UN agencies have in the context of gender and inequality? Can you name any specific programs where good initiatives are having an impact?

## Annex 6. Evaluation Field Mission Schedule

Day	Dates	Time	Activities	Who, Work schedule & tasks	Households, KIIs & FGDs Interviewed
1	Tuesday 31 August 2021	Full day	<b>Enumerator training at St Kizito Parish in Lilongwe</b> Location of training facilities to be arranged by OMP Refer to separate document with training agenda	Ruth & William assisted with training facilitation	Training
2	Wednesday 1 September 2021	Full day	<b>ET national consultants travel to Nsanje District.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting on fieldwork logistics in Nsanje</li> <li>Courtesy call with relevant Nsanje government officials</li> <li>Booked GVHs in TA Chimombo for the household survey</li> <li>Booked KIIs for Nsanje</li> </ul>	Ruth & William and OMP in separate vehicles	Arrival in Nsanje
3	Thursday 2 September 2021	08:00-12:00  13:00-17:00	<b>Nsanje District</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pretesting survey tools with enumerators in villages from GVH Mbango in TA Malemia.</li> <li>Reviewed &amp; assessed pretesting survey process and revise tools/guides</li> <li>Field work from 2-6 September involved GVH's locations in TA Chimombo arranged on 1<sup>st</sup> September</li> </ul>	Ruth, William & OMP field staff  Questionnaire review, providing feedback to enumerators  Ruth & William and OMP	Pre-testing
4	Friday 3 September 2021	08:00 - 12:00  13:30 - 17:00	<b>Day 1: Nsanje District Fieldwork.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey work in GVHs Sabawo, Tizora and Kachasu of TA Chimombo.</li> <li>Monitoring, sampling and administering of household survey data</li> <li>Booking &amp; scheduling of KIIs for Balaka District Officials</li> <li>De-briefing with the OMP household survey team</li> </ul>	Ruth & William OMP staff  Ruth & William OMP staff  Ruth & William	94 households

Day	Dates	Time	Activities	Who, Work schedule & tasks	Households, KIIs & FGDs Interviewed
5	Saturday 4 September 2021	Full day	<b>Day 2: Nsanje District Fieldwork.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey work at Tizora, Muyang'anila and Fransiku in TA Chimombo.</li> <li>Monitoring sampling and administering of household survey data</li> <li>De-briefing with the OMP household survey team</li> </ul>	Ruth & William and OMP field staff  Ruth & William	105 households
6	Sunday 5 September 2021	Full day	<b>Day 3: Nsanje District Fieldwork.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey work in GVH Chimombo and Msamba (TA Chimombo)</li> <li>Monitoring sampling and administering of household survey data</li> <li>Booked households for TA Nyachikadza</li> </ul>	Ruth & William and OMP field staff Ruth & William OMP staff	113 households
7	Monday 6 September 2021	Full day	<b>Day 4: Nsanje District Fieldwork.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey work in GVHs Nyachikadza, Meke, Kandeya, Msusa, Mlemba and Monyo in TA Nyachikadza</li> <li>Monitoring sampling and administering of household survey data</li> <li>De-briefing with the OMP household survey team</li> </ul>	Ruth & William and OMP field staff  Ruth & William	85 households
8	Tuesday 7 September 2021	08:00-16:30  13:30-14:30  14:30-17:00	<b>Day 5: Nsanje District Fieldwork and Balaka District interviews.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey work at in GVHs Nyachikadza, Meke, Msusa, Mlemba and Monyo in TA Nyachikadza</li> <li>Conducted 3 virtual KIIs in Balaka (William and Ruth)</li> <li>Transcribing Balaka KIIs interviews</li> <li>Booking households for TA Malaemia</li> <li>De-briefing with the OMP household survey team</li> </ul>	OMP field staff  Ruth & William  Ruth & William and OMP staff Ruth & William and OMP staff	71 households  <b>KIIs Balaka (Virtual)</b> 1. District Social Welfare Office (DSWO) 2. Program Associate (WFP) 3. UN District Coordinator (WFP)

Day	Dates	Time	Activities	Who, Work schedule & tasks	Households, KIIs & FGDs Interviewed
		17:00-17:30		Ruth, William & OMP staff	237.
9	Wednesday 8 September 2021	08:00- 16:30  08:00-10:00  10:00-12:30  12:30-13:00  13:00-14:00  14:00-17:30	<p><b>Day 6: Nsanje District Fieldwork and Balaka District interviews.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey work in GVHs Meke, Msusa, Mlemba and Monyo in TA Nyachikadza; and in GVHs Chiphwembwe and Malemia in TA Malemia</li> <li>FGD &amp; KII work</li> <li>Conducted 2 virtual KIIs in Balaka</li> <li>Travelled to the field and arranged for FGDs Nsanje</li> <li>Conducted 4 FGDs Nsanje at GVHs Mwanda, Chimombo and Muyang'anira</li> <li>Travel</li> <li>Conducted 3 KIIs Nsanje</li> <li>Transcribing KIIs and FGDs interviews</li> <li>De-briefing with the OMP household survey team</li> </ul>	<p>OMP field staff</p> <p>Ruth (1 hour each)</p> <p>William and OMP staff</p> <p>Four different FGDs probably in three or four different locations OMP staff, William to supervise</p> <p>Ruth &amp; William &amp; OMP staff</p> <p>Ruth &amp; William &amp; OMP staff</p> <p>Ruth &amp; William &amp; OMP staff</p>	<p>80 households</p> <p><b>KII Balaka (Virtual)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DRR Officer (DoDMA)</li> <li>District Information Officer (Government)</li> </ol> <p><b>FGDs / PEDs in Nsanje</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village Development Committee (VCPC) – at GVH Mwanda - TA Malaemia</li> <li>Mwanda Youth Club, GVH Mwanda - TA Malemia</li> <li>Women beneficiaries – at GVH Chimombo, TA Chimombo</li> <li>Men beneficiaries – at GVH Muyang'anira, TA Chimombo</li> </ol> <p><b>KIIs in Nsanje</b></p>

Day	Dates	Time	Activities	Who, Work schedule & tasks	Households, KIIs & FGDs Interviewed
					<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local leader – At GVH Mbango, TA Malaemia</li> <li>Program Associate (WFP)</li> <li>Program Coordinator (Red Cross)</li> </ol>
10	Thursday 9 September 2021	08:00- 10:00  08:00-10:00 10:00-12:30  12:30-13:30  13:30-15:30  15:30- rest of the day	<b>Day 7: Nsanje District Fieldwork and Balaka District interviews.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey work at GVHs Mwanda, Chiphwembwe and Malemia (TA Malemia)</li> <li>Conducted 3 virtual KIIs in Balaka</li> <li>Conducted 2 FGDs Nsanje</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted 3 KIIs in Nsanje</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transcribing KIIs and FGDs interviews</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>De-briefing with the OMP household survey team</li> </ul>	OMP field staff  Ruth & William & OMP staff (1 by Ruth and/or William 2 by OPM staff)  OMP staff – Ruth & William to supervise  Ruth &/or William and OMP team divide tasks (check times)  Ruth & William & OMP staff  Ruth, William & OMP staff  Ruth & William & OMP staff	71 households  <b>KIIs in Balaka (Virtual)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Coordinator (Find Your Feet)</li> <li>Project Officer (Find Your Feet)</li> <li>Director of Planning &amp; Development (Government)</li> </ol> <b>FGDs / PEDs in Nsanje</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village Development Committee (VDC) – at Chiphwembwe GVH, TA Malemia</li> <li>Village Development Committee, GVH Malemia, TA Malemia</li> </ol> <b>KIIs in Nsanje</b>

Day	Dates	Time	Activities	Who, Work schedule & tasks	Households, KIIs & FGDs Interviewed
					<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal Social Welfare Officer (DSWO)</li> <li>VDC Chair, GVH Msusa, TA Nyachikadza</li> <li>Vice Chair, Food Management Committee (FMC), Nyachikadza</li> </ol>
11	Friday 10 September 2021	<p>08:00- 17:00</p> <p>08:00-10:00</p> <p>10:00 – 10:30</p> <p>11:00-13:30</p> <p>13:30-the rest of the day</p>	<p><b>Day 8: Nsanje District Fieldwork.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey work at GVH Mwanda, Mwangu, Chiphwembwe and Malemia (TA Malemia)</li> <li>Conducted 3 KIIs Nsanje</li> <li>Ruth &amp;/or William arrange for FGDs</li> </ul> <p>• Travelled to the field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted 2 FGDs Nsanje</li> <li>Transcribing KIIs and FGDs interviews</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>De-briefing for the household survey</li> </ul>	<p>OMP field staff (travel before 8:00)</p> <p>Ruth &amp;/or William and OPM staff</p> <p>Ruth &amp; William and OMP field staff</p> <p>OMP staff, Ruth and William to supervise</p> <p>Ruth &amp; William and OMP staff</p>	<p>82 households</p> <p><b>KIIs in Nsanje</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DoDMA)</li> <li>GVH Gochi2, TA Nyachikadza</li> <li>VCPC chairperson, Gochi GVH, TA Nyachikadza</li> </ol> <p><b>FGDs in Nsanje</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nsapilanji Youth Club, GVH Chiphwembwe, TA Malemia</li> <li>Women beneficiaries, GVH</li> </ol>

Day	Dates	Time	Activities	Who, Work schedule & tasks	Households, KIIs & FGDs Interviewed
					Ntholera, T/A Malemia
12	Saturday 11 September 2021	08:00- 11:00  11:00-14:30  14:00-17:00	<p><b>Day 9: Nsanje District Fieldwork.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey work at GVH Mwangu, Nthole and Malemia (TA Malemia)</li> <li>Conducted 3 FGDs Nsanje</li> <li>Transcribing KIIs and FGDs interviews</li> <li>Consolidating OMP and ET reports</li> <li>Debriefing session for the household survey</li> </ul>	<p>OMP field staff</p> <p>Ruth, William and OMP staff</p> <p>Ruth &amp; William travelled back to Lilongwe by 12 noon after doing one FGD each to abide by security protocols and days approved for field work for the national consultants</p> <p>OMP field staff remained and continued with the work. They finished on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September and travelled back to Lilongwe.</p>	<p>68 households</p> <p><b>FGDs in Nsanje</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Female-headed households, GVH Mwanda, T/A Malemia</li> <li>VCPC, GVH Ntholera, T/A Malemia</li> <li>Non-beneficiary women at GHVs Kothera, Guta and Tchapo, T/A Nyachikadza</li> </ol>
13	Sunday 12 September 2021	Full day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey interviewing at GVHs Nthole and Malemia (TA Malemia)</li> <li>Conducted 1 FGD in Nsanje</li> <li>Transcribing KIIs and FGDs interviews</li> </ul>	<p>OMP and field staff</p> <p>OMP and field staff</p>	<p>86 households</p> <p><b>KIIs in Nsanje</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-beneficiary men, at Nthole GVH, TA Malemia</li> </ol>

Day	Dates	Time	Activities	Who, Work schedule & tasks	Households, KIIs & FGDs Interviewed
14	Monday 13 September 2021	Full day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household survey interviewing at GVHs Nthole and Malemia</li> <li>Conducted 1 KII with YONECO in Balaka</li> <li>Transcribing the KII conducted (OMP staff)</li> <li>OMP and field staff travelled back to Lilongwe</li> </ul>	<p>OMP and field staff</p> <p>OMP and field staff</p>	<p>19 households</p> <p><b>KII for Balaka (Virtual)</b></p> <p>1. District Coordinator, YONECO</p>

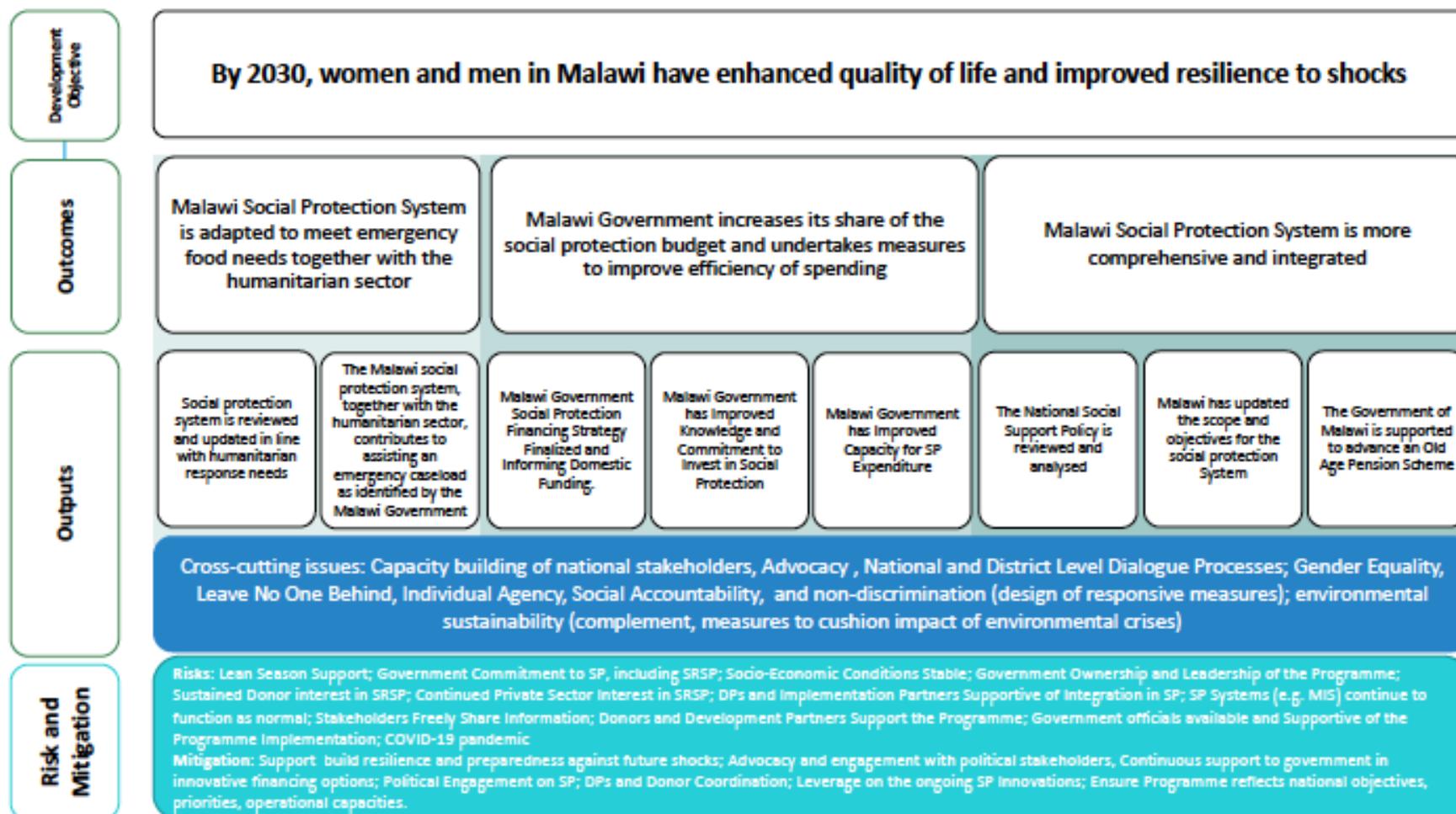
# Annex 7. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations Mapping

Recommendation	Conclusions	Findings
<b>1.</b> Enhance UN strategic partnerships to achieve joint program results. UN agencies should:	Para 232; para 234	1.1a; 1.1b; 1.1c; 1.3a; 1.3b; 2.1.
1.1 Strengthen operational guidelines and procedures for participating UN agencies on Joint Program management; set out clear roles and responsibilities among joint operating teams with greater clarity on chain of command for reporting and financial management.	Para 226; para 231; para 235	2.1; 2.2; 2.3.
1.2 Strengthen investment in dialogue with CSO networks and private sector partnerships to identify opportunities for resource effectiveness, working on comparative strengths, defining areas of competency and complementarity to pursue strategic goals in the social protection sector.	Para 224; para 231; para 235	1.3a; 3.1c; 3.1e; 3.3.
1.3 Support the development of operational and value for money guidance for carving out a role for private sector actors, and build more business relation opportunities to complement development program interventions – with a focus on linking financial services to support pro-poor investment, and accessible banking services	Para 229; para 231	4.1; 4.2; 5.1; 5.2.
1.4 Engage and facilitate dialogue with development partners and key GoM ministries to promote harmonization on social protection funding mechanisms	Para 229; para 230	3.1a; 3.1d; 3.1e; 3.2a; 3.2b.
<b>2.</b> Improve Value for Money (VfM) analysis of Shock Sensitive Social Protection cash transfer interventions. UN agencies should:	Para 229; para 231	3.1a; 3.1b; 4.1; 4.2.
2.1 Building on current initiatives led by UN agencies enhance and step-up engagement with key strategic stakeholders to fast track and roll-out the government-endorsed harmonized e-payment solution within the Social Cash Transfer Program, including preparation for future pandemic related scenarios and Lean Season Response interventions.	Para 227; para 228; para 229; para 230; para 231	1.2a; 1.2b; 1.2c; 1.3a; 1.3b; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3.
2.2 Consult with multi agency UN, development partners and GoM Ministry working groups to consider establishing fit for purpose value for money guidelines for designing cash transfer delivery modalities.	Para 227; para 228; para 229; para 230; para 231	1.2a; 1.2b; 1.2c; 2.3; 4.1; 4.2.

Recommendation	Conclusions	Findings
<p><b>3.</b> Promote integrating of development interventions to sustain recovery for the most vulnerable households. UN agencies should:</p>	<p>Para 226; para 227; para 229; para 230; para 232; para 234; para 235</p>	<p>1.2b; 1.2c; 1.2d; 1.3a; 3.1a; 3.1e; 3.2b; 3.3; 5.1; 5.2.</p>
<p>3.1 Strengthen collaboration with relevant stakeholders to explore integration of development interventions to complement, maximize and sustain household economic opportunities in post crisis recovery.</p>	<p>Para 226; para 227; para 229; para 230; para 232; para 234; para 235</p>	<p>1.2b; 1.2c; 1.2d; 1.3a; 3.1a; 3.1e; 3.2a; 3.2b; 3.3; 5.1; 5.2.</p>
<p>3.2 Working with key stakeholders review strategies to improve the frequency of updating Unified Beneficiary Register processes to mitigate risks of exclusion of vulnerable communities.</p>	<p>Para 226; para 227; para 229; para 230; para 232; para 234; para 235</p>	<p>1.2b; 1.2c; 1.2d; 1.3a; 3.1a; 3.1e; 3.2a; 3.2b; 3.3; 5.1; 5.2.</p>
<p>3.3 Working with relevant government institutions reconsider timelines for preparing and planning for Lean Season Response interventions to maximize impact and minimize resourcing costs prior to shock responsive interventions.</p>	<p>Para 226; para 227; para 229; para 230; para 232; para 234; para 235</p>	<p>1.2b; 1.2c; 1.2d; 1.3a; 3.1a; 3.1e; 3.2a; 3.2b; 3.3; 5.1; 5.2</p>
<p><b>4.</b> Enhance capacity strengthening strategies and investment. UN agencies should:</p>	<p>Para 228; para 229; para 231; para 232; para 233; para 234</p>	<p>2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1a; 3.2a; 5.2; 6.1; 7.2</p>
<p>4.1 Ensure greater linkages and alignment between each UN Agency's country capacity strengthening guidance to achieve an effective approach to capacity strengthening; and provide relevant technical support in compliance and alignment with the UN agency's global policy commitments to capacity strengthening.</p>	<p>Para 228; para 229; para 231; para 232; para 233; para 234</p>	<p>2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1a; 3.2a; 5.2; 6.1; 7.2</p>
<p>4.2 Review skills audits for key UN technical staff to determine specific competency requirements on how to effectively and strategically engage with government partners to meet their on-going and future training needs.</p>	<p>Para 228; para 229; para 231; para 232; para 233; para 234</p>	<p>2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1a; 3.2a; 5.2; 6.1; 7.2</p>
<p>4.3 Reassess costs and benefits of outsourcing institutional capacity strengthening training support for social protection against analysis of investing in support to develop home-grown training facilities linking up with civil service induction and technical refresher training.</p>	<p>Para 228; para 229; para 231; para 232; para 233; para 234</p>	<p>2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1a; 3.2a; 5.2; 6.1; 7.2</p>
<p><b>5.</b> Strengthen gender equality and social inclusion interventions for vulnerable communities. UN agencies should:</p>	<p>Para 232; para 233; para 234;</p>	<p>6.1; 6.2; 7.1; 7.2</p>
<p>5.1 Strengthen the design, implementation and qualitative monitoring of gender equality and inclusion for social protection program interventions, including appropriate well-being indicators for older people and people living with disabilities.</p>	<p>Para 232; para 233; para 234;</p>	<p>6.1; 6.2; 7.1; 7.2</p>

Recommendation	Conclusions	Findings
5.2 Ensure gender advisers and UN agency support units are engaged in the gender transformation, and social inclusion commitments in program monitoring as enshrined in UN policy guidance.	Para 232; para 233; para 234; para 234; para 234	6.1; 6.2; 7.1; 7.2
5.3 Build sufficient technical capacity in the Gender, VAM and Monitoring & Evaluation units of UN partner agencies to support program teams in operationalizing and mainstreaming gender and social inclusion performance targets in joint programs.	Para 232; para 233; para 234; para 234	6.1; 6.2; 7.1; 7.2
5.4 Enhance support to upgrading and refining exiting cash transfer program grievance redress mechanisms to ensure these systems are compatible and work in harmony and are accessible and understood by program beneficiaries.	Para 232; para 233; para 234; para 234	6.1; 6.2; 7.1; 7.2
<b>6.</b> Strengthen performance management processes and systems for documentation and reporting in Joint Programs. UN agencies should:	Para 227; para 228; para 229; para 230; para 231; para 232; para 234; para 235; para 236	1.1a; 1.1b; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1a; 4.1; 4.2; 5.1; 7.1; 7.2.
6.1 Improve monitoring and reporting process to ensure transparency of program's intended theory of change assumptions and challenges are regularly updated and are relevant.	Para 227; para 228; para 229; para 230; para 231; para 232; para 234; para 235; para 236	1.1a; 1.1b; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1a; 4.1; 4.2; 5.1; 7.1; 7.2.
6.2 Encourage closer integration of UN agency units for M&E, VAM, gender and inclusion program teams to inform design and planning processes with GoM partners.	Para 227; para 228; para 229; para 230; para 231; para 232; para 234; para 235; para 236	1.1a; 1.1b; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1a; 4.1; 4.2; 5.1; 7.1; 7.2.
6.3 Improve timing and sequencing of MVAC publication to ensure effective planning in emergency responsiveness.	Para 227; para 228; para 229; para 230; para 231; para 232; para 234; para 235; para 236	1.1a; 1.1b; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1a; 4.1; 4.2; 5.1; 7.1; 7.2.

# Annex 8. Theory of Change



## Annex 9. Results Framework

Result / Indicators	Baseline	2020 Target	2021 Target	Means of Verification	Responsible partner
<b>Outcome 1: Malawi Social Protection System is adapted to meet emergency food needs together with the humanitarian sector</b>					
1.1 Percentage of targeted households with borderline to acceptable food consumption (FCS), disaggregated by age, and sex.	Male=76% Female=75% Overall=76%	60%	80%	Dedicated food and nutrition surveys	WFP
1.2 Percentage of targeted households not engaged in negative coping strategies (rCSI), disaggregated by age, and sex.	Male=37% Female=26% Overall=32%	60%	70%	Dedicated food and nutrition surveys	WFP
1.3 Percentage of targeted households not engaged in livelihoods-based coping strategies, disaggregated by age, and sex (Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI)).	Male=39% Female=33% Overall=37%	60%	70%	Dedicated food and nutrition surveys	WFP
1.4 Proportion of households identified to receive emergency food assistance (IPC-based) served via government social protection channels	67%	n/a	90%	Dedicated food and nutrition surveys	WFP
<b>Output 1.1: Social protection system is reviewed and updated in line with humanitarian response needs</b>					
1.1.1 Percentage completed of operational guidance informing how the social protection system can be used with the humanitarian sector to address emergency needs	30%	50%	100%	Operational Guidance	WFP
<b>Output 1.2: The Malawi social protection system, together with the humanitarian sector, contributes to assisting an emergency caseload as identified by the Malawi government</b>					

Result / Indicators	Baseline	2020 Target	2021 Target	Means of Verification	Responsible partner
1.2.1 Proportion of target beneficiaries to receive emergency food assistance reached through government social protection channels disaggregated by age, and sex, as a % of planned	0%	95%	95%	M&E reports, SCOPE, FSP reconciliation	WFP
1.2.2 Proportion of cash transferred to targeted beneficiaries disaggregated by age, and sex, as % of planned	0%	95%	95%	M&E reports, SCOPE, FSP reconciliation	WFP

<b>Outcome 2: Malawi Government increases its share of the social protection budget and undertakes measures to improve efficiency of spending</b>					
2.1: Percentage Share of Government Contribution to Social Protection Programs.	7%	10%	10%	PER	UNICEF
<b>Output 2.1: Malawi Government Social Protection Financing Strategy Finalized and Informing Domestic Funding.</b>					
2.1.1 Social Protection Financing Strategy Finalized.	0	50%	100%	Strategy Document	UNICEF
<b>Output 2.2: Malawi Government has Improved Knowledge and Commitment to Invest in Social Protection</b>					
2.2.1: Proportion of total transfer value going to beneficiaries in relation to total program costs	15%	10%	8%	Evaluation/PER	UNICEF
<b>Output 2.3: Malawi Government has Improved Capacity for Social Protection Expenditure</b>					
2.3.1: Proportion of Social Protection Payments delivered through Harmonized Payment System by sex	7%	15%	50%	PER/Evaluation	UNICEF

<b>Outcome 3: Malawi Social Protection System is more comprehensive and integrated.</b>					
3.1: A comprehensive, inclusive, and adaptable social protection policy is adopted.	0	0	100%	Evaluation	ILO
<b>Output 3.1: The National Social Support Policy is reviewed and analysed</b>					
3.1.1: A consultative process is conducted for the review of the National Social Support Policy	0	30%	100%	Policy Analysis Document	ILO
<b>Output 3.2: Malawi has updated the scope and objectives for the Social Protection System</b>					
3.2.1: The National Social Protection Policy is updated	0	50%	100%	Policy Framework Document (PFD)	ILO
<b>Output 3.3: The Government of Malawi is supported to advance an Old Age Pension Scheme</b>					
3.3.1: A strategy for an Old Age Pensions Scheme is developed	0	0%	100%	Old Age Pensions Scheme Strategy	ILO

## Annex 10. Stakeholder Analysis – Joint Program

Stakeholders	Interest in the evaluation and likely uses of evaluation report to this stakeholder
<b>INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
WFP, UNICEF and ILO Project implementation teams	Responsible for the overall planning and coordination of the evaluation exercise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the extent to which the objectives of the program have been achieved.</li> <li>• Learn what has worked well and what has not worked well including reasons for each scenario to inform decision-making for scaling up, planning and improvement for the future.</li> <li>• Identify positive and negative unexpected results</li> <li>• Identify lessons learned and good practices</li> <li>• Demonstrate accountability and transparency to the beneficiaries, partners, donors, and other stakeholders in the use of project resources and achievement of planned results.</li> <li>• Assess impact, sustainability, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the project intervention and their results.</li> <li>• Evidence-based analysis</li> </ul>
Government of Malawi (GoM), Ministry of Economic Planning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GoM has a direct interest in knowing whether program interventions were aligned with its priorities, harmonized with the action of other partners and met the expected results.</li> <li>• Demonstrate extent to which the objectives of the program have been achieved concerning the baseline and set targets.</li> <li>• Learn what has worked well and what has not worked well including reasons for each scenario to inform decision-making for scaling up, replicating in other sectors, planning and improvement for the future.</li> <li>• Assess the extent of capacity development and sustainability of program results and benefits beyond program implementation period and donor support.</li> </ul>
WFP- Johannesburg Regional Bureau (RB)	Responsible for oversight of COs, technical guidance and support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Regional Bureau/Office Management has an interest in an independent/impartial account of the operational performance of the program as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to apply to other country offices.</li> </ul>

Stakeholders	Interest in the evaluation and likely uses of evaluation report to this stakeholder
UNICEF – East and Southern Africa Regional Office  ILO – Regional Office for Africa (ROAF) and the Eastern and Southern Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Regional Evaluation Officers support Country Office/Regional Bureau Management to ensure quality, credible, and useful decentralized evaluations.</li> </ul>
Decent Work Team (DWT) Pretoria	<p>The ILO DWT Pretoria covers East and Southern Africa technical support to ILO Country Offices (CO).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is interested in an independent/impartial account of the operational performance of the program as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to apply to other COs, as well as in the work with ILO constituencies in each country, the Regional Economic Commissions and the Africa Union work towards improved social protection, particularly in the policy implications of the COVID 19 for Africa.</li> </ul>
WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) and Executive Board (EB) - (HQ-Rome); ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) and UNICEF Office of Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OEV has a stake in ensuring that all decentralized evaluations commissioned by WFP Country Offices deliver quality, credible and useful evaluations respecting provisions for impartiality as well as articulating roles and responsibilities of various decentralized evaluation stakeholders as identified in the evaluation policy.</li> <li>The WFP Executive Board has an interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP operations and progress in the implementation of the WFP evaluation policy (2016-2021). This evaluation will not be presented to the WFP EB, but its findings may feed into annual syntheses and corporate learning processes. The successful completion of this evaluation will contribute towards achievement of the evaluation coverage norms which is a key performance indicator reported to the WFP EB annually.</li> <li>EVAL/ILO considers the purpose of accountability, learning, planning, and building knowledge for all evaluations (such as ILO managed, joined or external). The three purposes apply for this evaluation following the DAC criteria. Its findings may feed into annual syntheses and corporate learning processes. The successful completion of this evaluation will contribute towards achievement of the evaluation responsibility of EVAL to be presented to the ILO Government Body and will be made public through the EVAL repository of all ILO projects (e-discovery).</li> <li>The UNICEF Evaluation function helps UNICEF deliver results for children by fostering evidence-based decision-making. Conclusions and recommendations from these evaluations are essential for shaping policies, programs, advocacy and partnerships at all levels of the organization. The UNICEF Evaluation Office is also a key factor in strengthening evaluation capacity at the country level.</li> </ul>

Stakeholders	Interest in the evaluation and likely uses of evaluation report to this stakeholder
<b>EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS</b>	
Individual beneficiaries ((women, men, boys, girls and persons with disabilities, the elderly as well as indigenous, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the ultimate recipients of assistance, beneficiaries have a stake in WFP, UNICEF, and ILO determining whether their assistance is appropriate and effective. As such, the level of participation in the evaluation and their interest in the findings of the evaluation will be determined and their respective perspectives will be sought. As rights holders, the beneficiaries will use the evaluation process as an opportunity to provide their views on the design, implementation, outputs and outcomes of this project.</li> </ul>
Joint SDG Fund	<p>The program is voluntarily funded by the Joint SDG Fund. As a donor, they have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if the program has been effective and contributed to their strategies and programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifically, the donor is interested in the following:</li> <li>Value for money by comparing key achievements/benefits of the program with resources invested.</li> <li>Whether achievements of the program have contributed to their goal and mission on social protection in Malawi.</li> <li>Evidence of what worked to inform decision-making for future funding priorities and programming.</li> <li>Impact, sustainability, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the program</li> <li>Evidence and learning for the development of new programs and expansion of current program.</li> </ul>
UN Country Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generate evidence for effectiveness, efficiency and additional value of joint programming and delivering as one in addressing development objectives.</li> </ul>

# Annex 11. Communication And Knowledge Management Plan

## Final Evaluation: Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals in Malawi, 2021

When- Evaluation stage	What- Communication product/ information	Which -Target audience (e.g., country office staff, technical staff etc.)	What level Organizational level of communication (e.g., strategic, operational, field etc.)	Who & How -Office staff -Communication means	Why? -Purpose of communication (e.g., solicit comments, seek approval, share findings for organizational learning)
Planning	Tentative time and scope of evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malawi country office Management</li> <li>CO Program and M&amp;E staff</li> <li>Regional Evaluation Officer</li> </ul>	Management and technical	Evaluation Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting</li> <li>Document showing timelines sent via email</li> </ul>	To ensure evaluation is reflected in work plans for the office, and relevant teams, including the evaluation managers of the collaborating UN agencies (ILO, UNICEF)
Preparation/ TOR	Draft TOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key stakeholders through the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)</li> <li>Malawi country office management and program staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Protection staff</li> <li>M&amp;E staff</li> <li>Gender focal person</li> </ul>	Evaluation manager on behalf of the Evaluation Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> </ul>	To get comments
	Final TOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country Office Management</li> <li>Key stakeholders through the ERG</li> <li>Program staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management</li> <li>Technical (Social Protection, M&amp;E &amp; Gender)</li> <li>Support staff (procurement/HR officer)</li> </ul>	Evaluation manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> </ul>	To Inform relevant staff of overall plan for the evaluation, including critical dates and milestones.  To inform support staff on the selected option for contracting teams
Inception	Draft Inception report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key stakeholders through the ERG</li> <li>Program staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management</li> </ul>	Evaluation manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> </ul>	To get comments

<b>When- Evaluation stage</b>	<b>What- Communication product/ information</b>	<b>Which -Target audience (e.g., country office staff, technical staff etc.)</b>	<b>What level Organizational level of communication (e.g., strategic, operational, field etc.)</b>	<b>Who &amp; How -Office staff -Communication means</b>	<b>Why? -Purpose of communication (e.g., solicit comments, seek approval, share findings for organizational learning)</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical (Social Protection, M&amp;E &amp; Gender)</li> </ul>		
	Final Inception Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country Office Management</li> <li>Key stakeholders through the ERG</li> <li>Program staff</li> <li>Field office staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management</li> <li>Technical (Social Protection, M&amp;E &amp; Gender)</li> <li>Support staff (procurement/HR officer)</li> <li>Operations staff</li> </ul>	Evaluation manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> </ul>	To inform the relevant staff of the detailed plan for the evaluation, including critical dates and milestones; sites to be visited; stakeholders to be engaged etc.  To inform support staff (especially administration) of required logistical support  To notify the Outsourced WFP contracted company for scheduling & agreeing timelines
Data collection	Debriefing power-point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country Office Management</li> <li>Program staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic</li> <li>Operation/technical levels</li> </ul>	Team leader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual Meeting (Teams)</li> <li>Email</li> </ul>	Allow reflection on the preliminary findings before the scheduled debriefing.
Data Analysis and Reporting	Preliminary results presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ERG</li> <li>Program staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management</li> <li>Technical (Social Protection, M&amp;E &amp; Gender)</li> </ul>	Team leader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual Meeting (Teams)</li> <li>Email</li> </ul>	Discussion of preliminary results before draft evaluation report
	Draft Evaluation report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key stakeholders through the ERG</li> <li>Program staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management</li> <li>Technical (Social Protection, M&amp;E &amp; Gender)</li> </ul>	Evaluation manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> </ul>	Request for comments on the draft report

<b>When- Evaluation stage</b>	<b>What- Communication product/ information</b>	<b>Which -Target audience (e.g., country office staff, technical staff etc.)</b>	<b>What level Organizational level of communication (e.g., strategic, operational, field etc.)</b>	<b>Who &amp; How -Office staff -Communication means</b>	<b>Why? -Purpose of communication (e.g., solicit comments, seek approval, share findings for organizational learning)</b>
	Final evaluation Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country Office Management</li> <li>Key stakeholders through the ERG</li> <li>Program staff</li> <li>Field office staff</li> <li>Global WFP</li> </ul>	All levels	Evaluation manager through the Evaluation Committee  Head of Resilience to all partners  Head of Partnerships, Reports and Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> </ul>	To inform internal stakeholders of the final main product from the evaluation  To make the report available publicly
Dissemination & Follow-up	Draft Management Response to the evaluation recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country Office Program and M&amp;E staff</li> <li>Senior Regional Program Adviser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management</li> <li>Technical</li> </ul>	Evaluation manager, through the Evaluation Committee  Head of Social Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> <li>organized face-to-face session</li> </ul>	To communicate the suggested actions on recommendations and elicit comments  To discuss Malawi CO's action to address the evaluation recommendations
	Final management Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country Office Management</li> <li>Country Office Program and M&amp;E staff</li> <li>Global WFP</li> </ul>	All levels   -Users of WFPgo	Evaluation manager  Head of Social Protection to all partners  Head of Partnerships, Reports and Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email, plus shared folders</li> <li>Posting report and MR on WFPgo</li> </ul>	To ensure that all relevant staff are informed on the commitments made on taking actions  To make Management Response accessible across WFP

## Annex 12. List of People Interviewed

Key Informant Interviews – National level			
#	Name	Organisation	Position
1	Patricia Zimpita	Poverty Reduction and Social Protection (PRSP) Division of the Economic Planning & Development (EP&D)	Director
2	Bessie Msusa	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development & Public Sector Reforms	Chief Economist
3	Laurent Kansinjiro	Ministry of Gender, Community Development & Social Welfare (MoGCDSW)	Deputy Director, SCTP Program
4	Arnold Chikavanga	European Union	Program Manager – Social Protection and Resilience
5	Phina Rocha-Rebello	Irish Aid	
6	Clement Bisai	CARE International Malawi	Graduation Program
7	Andrew Kavala	MANEPO - Malawi Network of Older Persons' Organisations	Executive Director
8	Francesca Lange	World Food Program, Malawi	Joint Program Coordinator
Key Informant Interviews - Nsanje			
#	Name	Organisation	Position
1	Kumbukeni Kauwa	DSWO	Principal Social Welfare Officer
2	Penjani Banda	WFP	Program Associate
3	Patricia Gadi	Malawi Red Cross Society	Program Coordinator
4	Madalitso Msusa	VDC. Zayedo Village, GVH Msusa, TA Nyachikadza	VDC Chair
5	Joseph Viano Biseck	Food Management Committee, Nyachikadza	Vice Chair
6	Lawrence Bande	GVH Mbango, T/A Malemia	Chief Representative
7	Blessings Kamtema	DoDMA	Relief Officer
8	GHV Gochi2	GVH Gochi 2, T/A Nyachikadza	Group Village Headman
9	Jose Biseki Nathando	VCPC, GHV Gochi, T/A Nyachikadza	VCPC Chairperson
Key Informant Interviews - Balaka			
#	Name	Organisation	Position
1	Davie Chibani	Government	DRR Officer
2	Mary Makhiringa	Government	District Information Officer
3	Steven Khuleya	Find Your Feet	District Coordinator
4	Anthony Chingala	Find Your Feet	Project Officer
5	Alinafe Kandonyo	WFP	Program Associate
6	Wongani Mwandira	WFP	UN PROSPER Coordinator
7	Jacob Phiri	YONECO	District Coordinator
8	Edgar Chihana	Government	Director of Planning & Development
9	Mphatso Chisepa	Government	SCTP Officer
Focus Groups Discussions in Nsanje			
#	FGD/PEDs	Location	

Key Informant Interviews – National level			
#	Name	Organisation	Position
	Beneficiary Men	VH Muyang'anira, GVH Muyang'anira, T/A Chimombo	
	Beneficiary Women	VH Chimombo, GVH Chimombo, T/A Chimombo	
	VCPC	GVH Mwanda, T/A Malemia	
	Mwanda Youth Club	GVH Mwanda, T/A Malemia	
	VDC Committee	GVH Chiphwembwe, T/A Malemia	
	VDC Committee	GVH Malemia, T/A Malemia	
	Nsapilaji Youth Club	GVH Chiphwembwe, T/A Malemia	
	Women Beneficiaries	GVH Ntholera, T/A Malemia	
	Widows (Beneficiaries)	GVH Mwanda, T/A Malemia	
	VCPC	GVH Ntholera, T/A Malemia	
	Non-Beneficiary Women	VH Tchapo, Malikapo and Magulugu; GHV Kothera, Guta and Tchapo; T/A Nyachikadza	
	Non-Beneficiary Men	VH Balaka, GHV Nthole, T/A Malemia	

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# Annex 14. Map of Malawi



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 Map Reference:  
 MWL\_District Boundaries

**Legend**

- District Boundary
- City
- Water Body

Data source: NSO, URGDWS, Geomatics, GAZI.  
 The designers engaged and the presentation of material in the maps do not imply the acceptance of any opinion on the part of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory, city or sea, or concerning the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries.  
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# Annex 15. Acronyms

ADC	Area Development Committees
ACPC	Area Civil Protection Committee
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
C4D	Communications for Development
CBT	Community-based Targeting
CBTC	Community-Based Targeting Criteria
CDC	Cash Distribution Centre
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CT	Cash Transfer
CSSC	Community Social Support Committees
CUCI	COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention
DAC/OECD	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
DEQAS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
DC	District Council
DCPC	District Civil Protection Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DoDMA	Department of Disaster Management Affairs
DP	Development Partner
DSPS	Directorate for Social Protection Services
DSSC	District Social Support Committee
DSWO	Department of Social Welfare Office
DWCP	Decent Work Country Program 2020-2023
DWT	Decent Work Team
EB	Executive Board
EU	European Union
EM	Evaluation Management
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
ET	Evaluation Team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	Financial Service Provider
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GoM	Government of Malawi
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GVH	Group Village Headman
HDI	Human Development Index
HE	Horizontal Expansion
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
JEAP	Joint Emergency Food Assistance Program
JEFAP	Joint Emergency Food Assistance Guidelines

JCU	Joint Coordination Unit
JP	Joint Program
JPD	Joint Program Document
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
KII	Key Informant Interview
KYC	Know Your Customer
LCSI	Livelihood Coping Strategy Index
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
LSR	Lean Season Response
LTS	Logistics and Transport Services
MDHS	Malawi Demographic and Health Survey
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MNSSP	Malawi National Social Support Programme
MRCS	Malawi Red Cross Society
MVAC	Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee
MoEPDPSR	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NMSNP	National Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Policy
NSSP	National Social Support Policy
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation Committee
OMP	WFP's Outsourced Monitoring Partner
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PED	Participatory Engagement Discussion
PMT	Proxy Means Test
PROSPER	Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience
PUNOs	Participating United Nation Organisations
rCSI	Reduced Coping Strategy Index
SCTP	Social Cash Transfer Program
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SP	Social Protection
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SP4SDG	Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals
SRSP	Shock-Responsive Social Protection
SSIs	Semi-Structured Interviews
SSSP	Shock-Sensitive Social Protection
TA	Traditional Authority
TL	Team Leader
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UBR	Unified Beneficiary Register
UN	United Nations
UNDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
US\$	United States Dollar
VE	Vertical Expansion
VCPC	Village Civil Protection Committee

VDC	Village Development Committee
VfM	Value for Money
VSL	Village Savings and Loans
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program
YONECO	Youth Net and Counselling

# Annex 16. Description of UBR, PMT and JEFAP criteria

74. LSR used the UBR for the first time to select most vulnerable households. Previously, the PUNOs were using the criteria agreed by members of the Joint Emergency Food Assistance Program (JEFAP). JEFAP's taskforce meets ad hoc throughout the year. It is chaired and co-chaired by DoDMA and WFP respectively. It is comprised of technical members from the Government, UN, DPs, and NGOs regarding the design of the lean season response (called 'JEFAP'). JEFAP uses the community-based targeting criteria (CBTC) criteria that involves communities to choose households they consider most vulnerable and eligible for humanitarian support. The process of JEFAP includes community mobilization, community-based selection of beneficiaries, public verification and validation of the beneficiary list and establishment of local structures to ensure full community participation. JEFAP's vulnerability criteria prioritizes households without reliable sources of income. These include female-led (widowed or otherwise), elderly and child headed households, those that are labour-constrained and have a higher dependency burden, host people with notable disability in the home and are living with a chronically ill member, food insecure, the ultra-poor and households with orphaned children among others.

75. In practice labour-constrained households have been operationalized as:

- those whose breadwinners have died
- which have no able-bodied person of working age
- have old, very young, disabled or sick persons in the household or
- have a dependency ratio of bigger than three

76. According to the SCT Targeting Manual, an eligible household should meet the following eligibility criteria to be identified:

**a. Ultra- Poor:**

- The household has on average only one meal per day and/or
- The household survives from begging and/or
- The household is undernourished and/or
- The household does not possess any valuable assets and/or
- The household does not receive any monetary help, food, or gifts from others

**b. Be "Labour-constrained" (based on the following characteristics:**

- No member in the age bracket 19-64 years fit for work
- Members in the age bracket 19-25 years attending school
- A not fit for work – fit for work (dependency) ratio > 3.

77. Conversely, the UBR system is centrally done (does not use a community-based selection of beneficiaries) and is based on the Proxy Means Test (PMT) that verifies whether potential beneficiaries fulfil the ultra-poverty criteria using the same categorization by JEFAP. Nevertheless, the UBR system has additional sets of criteria that are used to expand the poverty status, and these include:

- The household has on average only one meal per day; and/or
- The household survives from begging and/or
- The household is undernourished and/or
- The household does not possess any valuable assets and/or
- The household does not receive any monetary help, food, or gifts from others.
- The household survives on piecework
- The household has no access to credit loans
- The household has no shelter or the house is in poor condition

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