



## **Management Response from WFP Zimbabwe Country Office to the recommendations of the decentralized evaluation of R4 Rural Resilience Initiative in Masvingo and Rushinga Districts in Zimbabwe (DE/ZWCO/2020/025) from January 2018 to June 2021**

1. This document, finalized in July 2022, presents the management response to the recommendations of the evaluation R4 Rural Resilience Initiative in Masvingo and Rushinga Districts in Zimbabwe.
2. The evaluation, which was commissioned by World Food Programme (WFP) Zimbabwe Country Office (CO) covers all activities in the two districts implemented in the first phase (January 2018 to June 2021). The evaluation serves the dual purpose of learning and accountability (with more weight given to learning) and aims to produce new evidence for operational and strategic decision-making. The evaluation was timed to inform the planning of the second phase of R4. Primary users of the evaluation comprise the WFP CO and Regional Bureau (RB), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
3. The evaluation made a set of eight operational and strategic key recommendations with eighteen actions. The matrix sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or taken) actions, responsibilities and timelines.

<b>Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)</b> <i>[as per evaluation report – one (sub-) recommendation per row, deadline in brackets.]</i>	<b>Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)</b> <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division (/possibly external stakeholder in the case of Joint Evaluation). Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	<b>Management Response</b> <i>[Is (sub-) recommendation Agreed, Partially agreed or Not agreed? If Partially agreed or Not agreed, provide a brief reason for this.]</i>	<b>Actions to be taken</b> <i>[Briefly state what action(s) will be taken to address each sub-recommendation – one action per row.]</i>	<b>Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)</b> <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division/unit. Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	<b>Action Deadline</b> <i>[Month and year – not to exceed related (sub-) recommendation deadline.]</i>
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**RISK REDUCTION**

<p><b>Priority: Medium</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 1 (Operational):</b> – Investigate the relative utility and sustainability of ‘community built / individually owned’ and ‘community built / community owned’ assets.</p> <p><b>(January 2024)</b></p>	<p>CO (Implementing Partners)</p>	<p><i>Partially agreed</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Sub-recommendation 1.1.</b> This could be done by commissioning a study which looks at a range of assets of both types. Specific focus areas of any such study would include the utility to users, sustainability, cost benefit analysis, and the extent to which the assets resulted in increased community cohesion. The resulting findings could be used</p>	<p>CO (Implementing Partners)</p>	<p><i>Partially agreed</i> – the assets observed by the evaluation team included mostly individually built assets due to the particular circumstances of COVID-19 restrictions. These are not the standard operating</p>	<p>1 WFP will, together with partners use its regular monitoring activities to attain qualitative insights in the relevance of different asset categories to individual beneficiaries and communities.</p>	<p>WFP CO – M&amp;E team (WFP CO - Programme, CPs: Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) and FFA partners)</p>	<p>March 2023: preliminary review paper based on WFP and partner monitoring findings.</p>

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to inform donor and WFP policy with regard to Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) actions going forward. <b>(January 2024)</b>		model of the FFA/R4 programme. They will however be included in the proposed monitoring and study activities.	2 WFP will commission a dedicated study to investigate relative utility and sustainability of ‘community built / individually owned’ and ‘community built / community owned’ assets, and the cost benefit analysis of the assets <i>(This will be subject to availability of funding for future proposals as current grant agreements do not accommodate such a study).</i>	WFP CO Programme (WFP CO M&E team, CIMMYT)	December 2023: formal study report (funding allowing)
<b>Priority: High</b> <b>Recommendation 2 (Strategic):</b> Ensure that successes in mechanised Conservation	CO (CIMMYT)	<i>Agreed</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Agriculture (CA) are widely communicated and form the basis of advocacy to Government for support in this area. <b>(January 2024)</b>					
<b>Sub-recommendation 2.1.</b> Robust data and an effective communication strategy will be key to influencing Government policy on CA, particularly within their Pfumvudza programme. WFP should explore entry points in this area, bearing in mind the limitations and quasi-spiritual nature of the programme as it currently exists. The multi-agency Project Steering Committee proposed for the next phase of R4 should be the starting point for action in this area.	CO (CIMMYT)	<i>Agreed</i>	1 WFP will propose the inclusion of a standing item on the multi-agency project steering committee meeting agenda to review lessons learned and promote knowledge management, including external advocacy. WFP's quantitative and qualitative monitoring results (including on conservation agriculture) will provide	WFP CO - Programme (WFP CO - M&E and External Relations teams, CIMMYT)	31 December 2023 (first steering committee meeting). Followed by regular committee meetings every 6 months

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<b>(January 2024)</b>			inputs into the consultations.		
<b>Priority: Medium</b> <b>Recommendation 3 (Strategic):</b> Strive to provide better opportunities for more young people to participate in the programme. <b>(January 2024)</b>	CO	Agreed	N/A	N/A	N/A

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<b>Sub-recommendation 3.1.</b> Levels of youth participation are relatively low because access to fields is required for crop production. A greater focus on actions which do not require access to land (such as intensive poultry production) and assembling young people into specific Village Savings and Loan (VSL) groups may go some way to addressing this issue. This approach has already been facilitated to a limited degree by SNV, and lessons from this could be used to inform further actions. Another option worth consideration is to work with village headmen and other stakeholders to facilitate young people's access to unused land. It is suggested that this issue is	CO (SNV, CIMMYT, FFA partners)	Agreed	1 WFP will scale up activities that attract particular youth interest and engagement through future funding proposals including mechanisation and food value chains (particularly value addition processes).	WFP Programme (RB – Programme and CPs: CIMMYT, SNV)	December 2023 (as the process will start by engagement of new Field-level Agreements (FLA)/partners in October 2022)
			2 Within the current programme, WFP and partners will make deliberate efforts to mobilize youth participation in vocational skills training, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and	WFP CO-Programme (CPs: CIMMYT, SNV)	December 2023 (as the process will start by engagement of new Field-level Agreements (FLA)/partners in October 2022)

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<p>driven forward by the WFP gender focal point, who should seek ways of strengthening Implementing Partners (IPs) ability to engage with and advocate for youth as well as providing the IPs with the guidance they need on mainstreaming GEWE within their organisations.</p> <p><b>(January 2024)</b></p>			<p>village savings and lending groups</p>		
<p><b>Priority: Medium</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 4 (Strategic):</b> Continue to ‘prime the pump’ for reliable supply of appropriate equipment and inputs through the provision of smart subsidies.</p> <p><b>(July 2022)</b></p>	<p>CO (Donors, CIMMYT, SNV)</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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<b>Sub-recommendation 4.1.</b> Smart subsidies – on a cost recovery basis – will be key to building reliable supply chains and effective demand for the inputs necessary for mechanized CA. It will be important to monitor the extent to which supply chains – particularly for spares – respond to the stimulus to demand. <b>(January 2024)</b>	CO (Donors, CIMMYT, SNV)	<i>Agreed</i> – though not in agreement with the proposed timeline	1 WFP CO will continue with the service provider model for mechanization where service providers receive a set of equipment on a lease-to-own basis, as well as trainings, to then provide services for a fee.	WFP CO - Programme [Donors (USAID, SDC, GCF) and CPs (CIMMYT, SNV)]	December 2023 (to have revolving fund in place, and initial engagement with private sector)
			2 WFP will pilot and test the use of smart subsidies (revolving funds) at smaller scale.	WFP CO - Programme [Donors (USAID, SDC, GCF) and CPs (CIMMYT, SNV)]	December 2023
			3 Further, with additional funding support, WFP will engage private sector actors in support of value chain financing	WFP CO - Programme [Donors (USAID, SDC, GCF) and CPs (CIMMYT, SNV)]	December 2023



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			exploring revolving funds, matching grant or grant based.		
<b>Priority: Medium</b> <b>Recommendation 5 (Strategic):</b> Subsequent Integrated Risk Management (IRM) actions should aim for a minimum of five years engagement with farmers. <b>(January 2024)</b>	CO (Donors)	<i>Partially agreed</i> WFP supports the observation and recommendation but emphasizes that funding cycles and horizons are largely outside WFP control and subject to local and global donor dynamics.	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Sub-recommendation 5.1.</b> Resilience building takes time – a minimum of five years, depending on the level of support provided and shocks experienced, and often more. Future programming should	CO (Donors)	<i>Partially agreed</i> WFP supports the observation and recommendation to consider enrolling a new cohort of farmers	1 Where possible WFP will advocate with donors for multiyear funding allowing a longer programme horizon. Most funding, however, particularly	WFP CO - External Relations (WFP CO - Programme)	December 2023 (to have done funding proposals for multiyear funding)

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<p>support resilience through an array of actions including Lean Season Assistance (LSA) and R4 over several years. The recently introduced qualitative data collection in M&amp;E processes should be continued to identify the reasons for observed long-term changes in outcome indicators. At the same time, where resources and capacity allow, WFP should consider enrolling a new cohort of farmers to the project every year. For efficiency purposes, these farmers would be selected from communities in existing wards, or those adjacent to current actions.</p> <p><b>(January 2024)</b></p>		<p>to the project every year, provided there is funding. Furthermore, WFP partially agrees to the recommendation of Integrating LSA and resilience activities over several years as the funding for LSA is usually year-on-year. Geographical targeting and household selection of LSA beneficiaries is also done on annual basis after every agricultural season hence it is difficult to align LSA activities using a multiyear approach.</p>	<p>for LSA, is year-on-year and will continue to limit multi-year engagement with selected communities and farmers.</p>		
			<p>2 WFP will continue applying qualitative monitoring tools within the programme to contextualize long-term outcome results.</p>	<p>WFP Country Office - M&amp;E</p>	<p>July 2023 (to have used outcome monitoring survey of July 2022 to identify and contextualize long-term results of programme)</p>
			<p>3 WFP will enroll a new cohort of farmers every year, based on proximity to existing community/wards, provided that additional funding is available</p>	<p>WFP Programme</p>	<p>June 2023</p>

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#### RISK TRANSFER

<b>Priority: High</b> <b>Recommendation 6 (Operational):</b> Encourage smallholders' uptake of crop insurance through a range of actions including communication, management and advocacy. <b>(September 2023)</b>	CO (Government)	<i>Agreed</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Sub-recommendation 6.1.</b> Increasing uptake will involve work on several fronts, including working with insurance providers to improve awareness and understanding of their product, making it easier for farmers to	CO (Government)	<i>Agreed</i>	1 WFP Zimbabwe will review and revise current financial education manuals for insurance to improve understanding of the products.	WFP CO - Programme (Government counterparts: Climate Change Management Department, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, Climate and Rural	December 2022

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buy insurance and receive payouts.  The use of locally based agents to process payments and claims could be piloted, and lobbying government to ease the electronic purchase of premiums should all be considered. WFP should also maintain a watching brief on the success of approaches that bundle insurance with the price of a bag of certified seeds and consider action in this area depending on observed success.  <b>(March 2022)</b>				Development, Meteorological Services Department, Insurance and Pensions Commission)	
			2 WFP will engage the private sector (insurance companies, seed companies etc.) in the identification of products and delivery channels that are sustainable in the context of Zimbabwe.  This will be based on findings from ongoing and continued assessment of the appropriateness of	WFP CO - Programme (Government counterparts: Climate Change Management Department, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, Climate and Rural Development, Meteorological Services Department, Insurance and Pensions Commission)	July 2023

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			<p>different channels to collect premiums and distribute payouts against prevailing context, feasibility and farmers' preferences. This assessment is done in collaboration with farmers, insurance company, partners, AGRITEX and other stakeholders.</p>		
			<p>3 WFP will explore complementarities with the Government-led initiative on Area Yield Index Insurance linked to the Presidential input distribution scheme.</p>	<p>WFP CO - Programme (Government counterparts: Climate Change Management Department, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, Climate and Rural Development, Meteorological</p>	<p>August 2023</p>

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				Services Department, Insurance and Pensions Commission)	

#### RISK RESERVES

<i>Priority: High</i> <b>Recommendation 7 (Strategic):</b> Explore the validity of assumptions relating to micro credit which underpin the R4 Theory of Change (ToC). <b>(January 2024)</b>	CO (Other UN agencies, e.g., IFAD)	<i>Agreed</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Sub-recommendation 7.1.</b> There is a lack of appropriate credit providers in Zimbabwe, a fact which is not adequately addressed (and therefore undermines) the R4 ToC, which	CO (Other UN agencies, e.g., IFAD)	<i>Agreed</i>	1 WFP will conduct an assessment in collaboration with FAO and IFAD to understand constraints and risks in the micro-credit market and identify credit solutions that work for	WFP CO - Programme (IFAD, FAO, SNV)	December 2023 (one year after signing of new FLAs with partners)

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<p>hypothesizes that farmers can be linked with relevant institutions.</p> <p>A thorough analysis of the constraints and risks which characterize the micro credit market in Zimbabwe, and how to address these- possibly in collaboration with specialist agencies like the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)- is required. Additionally, a greater focus on collecting qualitative data which surfaces the constraints that farmers face in accessing finance, and the reservations they have about taking credit from formal lenders, would also support learning and possible action pathways in this area.</p>			<p>targeted beneficiaries. Joint RBA financing will be sought for this assessment and for joint solutions to address key constraints and risks.</p> <p>2 WFP will continue to collect qualitative and quantitative data through the outcome monitoring initiated in 2021, identifying constraints that farmers face in accessing finance. The qualitative data collection tool will be updated for July 2023 outcome monitoring survey, based on</p>	<p>WFP CO - M&amp;E team (WFP CO – Programme, IFAD, FAO, SNV)</p>	<p>July 2023 (one year after signing of new FLAs with partners)</p>

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<b>(January 2024)</b>			lessons learnt from previous assessments.		
			3 WFP will disseminate findings through appropriate platforms including the multi-agency project steering committee.	WFP CO – Programme (WFP CO – M&E, IFAD, FAO, SNV)	December 2023 (one year after signing of new FLAs with partners)

**INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COORDINATION**

<b>Priority: Low</b> <b>Recommendation 8 (Strategic):</b> Strive to ensure smallholder productivity is given the budgetary priority required. <b>(January 2024)</b>	CO (Government)	<i>Agreed</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
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<b>Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)</b> <i>[as per evaluation report – one (sub-) recommendation per row, deadline in brackets.]</i>	<b>Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)</b> <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division (/possibly external stakeholder in the case of Joint Evaluation). Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	<b>Management Response</b> <i>[Is (sub-) recommendation Agreed, Partially agreed or Not agreed? If Partially agreed or Not agreed, provide a brief reason for this.]</i>	<b>Actions to be taken</b> <i>[Briefly state what action(s) will be taken to address each sub-recommendation – one action per row.]</i>	<b>Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)</b> <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division/unit. Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	<b>Action Deadline</b> <i>[Month and year – not to exceed related (sub-) recommendation deadline.]</i>
<p><b>Sub-recommendation 8.1.</b> WFP should explore ways to use the evidence generated by R4 and its convening power, to lobby for the (politically neutral) issue of greater government support for agricultural extension staff. Zimbabwe has a long tradition of government intervention in agriculture – including land reform, and various national programmes such as Command Agriculture, and the Presidential Inputs scheme. However, these have largely been geared around the provision of inputs rather than technical support, and they have not always benefited smallholder farmers of the profile that R4 works with. The successes that the R4 project has realised with supporting farmers</p>	<p>CO (Government)</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>1 WFP will leverage the Green Climate Fund (GCF) programme governance structure which brings together multiple Government bodies to advocate (based on evidence) for the integrated approach to resilience building to facilitate greater Government support to agricultural extension staff who are critical for the sustainability and scalability of the model in order to improve farmer’s technical skills.</p>	<p>WFP CO - Programme (WFP CO - M&amp;E, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Climate, Water and Rural Development – Department of Crop and Livestock (formerly Agritex); CPs (CIMMYT, SNV)</p>	<p>December 2023 (one year from new FLAs to allow us to explore and pilot how evidence can be used to approach government and lobby for more support)</p>

<b>Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)</b> <i>[as per evaluation report – one (sub-) recommendation per row, deadline in brackets.]</i>	<b>Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)</b> <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division (/possibly external stakeholder in the case of Joint Evaluation). Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	<b>Management Response</b> <i>[Is (sub-) recommendation Agreed, Partially agreed or Not agreed? If Partially agreed or Not agreed, provide a brief reason for this.]</i>	<b>Actions to be taken</b> <i>[Briefly state what action(s) will be taken to address each sub-recommendation – one action per row.]</i>	<b>Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)</b> <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division/unit. Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	<b>Action Deadline</b> <i>[Month and year – not to exceed related (sub-) recommendation deadline.]</i>
<p>in technology transfer – which is more sustainable than donation of inputs – provides the basis for an argument that resources would be better allocated to improving farmers’ technical skills rather than one-off actions such as distribution of fertilisers. The multi-agency Project Steering Committee proposed for the next phase of R4 should be the starting point for action in this area as well.</p> <p><b>(January 2024)</b></p>					