WFP

World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Country capacity strengthening (CCS) policy update

June 2022

Introduction

This policy update aims to clarify and update concepts, terminology and corporate understanding related to country capacity strengthening (CCS) and sets out the purpose of WFP's engagement in CCS[1].

> **WFP defines CCS as activities structured around engagement with national and subnational stakeholder institutions and organizations with the intention of improving the sustainable functioning of systems and programmes that support populations with regard to their food security, nutrition and associated essential needs.**

CCS includes working with governments and private sector and civil society organizations working in these areas.

WFP's engagement in capacity strengthening was first described in the 2004 policy on building country and regional capacities;[2] the 2009 update on implementation placed greater emphasis on outcomes and the variety of approaches available.[3] This policy update builds on both documents.

Capacity strengthening discourse and practice inside and outside WFP have evolved since 2009. The commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other milestones highlight the importance of capacity strengthening in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the need for an updated organizational approach.

Amid these global developments, WFP created a corporate CCS framework in 2017 that focuses on supporting national systems and services, recognizing that reaching more food insecure people and achieving national development objectives depends on the transformative capacities of individuals, organizations and societies. The framework articulates a more holistic and systematic approach to CCS that engages with a range of actors across the whole of society. This policy update incorporates these elements into a WFP policy for the first time and describes them in more detail.

A 2021 synthesis of evaluations[4] highlighted CCS as critical to WFP's contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of its strategic objectives. It also underlined elements of CCS interventions that contributed to WFP's success and more sustainable results such as WFP's work in strengthening national ownership, building strong, trusted and effective partnerships (through prolonged engagement) and promoting good coordination. The synthesis also identified several shortcomings that had previously been noted in the 2016 audit and the 2017 evaluation

of the corporate policy[5] and recommended that WFP reaffirm its commitment to CCS through a new or updated policy. The synthesis also recommended that WFP further institutionalize tools, develop internal skills, improve monitoring and reporting of CCS results and enhance integration of gender, protection and accountability to affected populations.

The scope of this policy update responds to the synthesis of evaluation and other audit and evaluation recommendations. It has also been informed by a review of internal documents, global developments and a series of consultations across WFP. In the light of these, the update provides greater conceptual clarity on matters such as definitions, objectives, approaches and actors involved. Further, the policy update reaffirms WFP's commitment to CCS and its role in supporting the achievement of the objectives of the strategic plan for 2022 2025 and the SDGs.

WFP is committed to addressing the additional CCS-related shortcomings outlined in the operational recommendations of audits and evaluations.[6] Accordingly, and once the policy update has been approved, WFP will develop materials related to its implementation, including workforce planning and budgetary considerations, updated guidance and tools for embedding CCS in country strategic plans and a robust monitoring framework that builds on the corporate results framework.

The global context

The past decade has seen significant changes in the global discourse on capacity strengthening, reflecting the changing perceptions and approaches of the development and humanitarian community. A more holistic and contextualized approach to capacity strengthening has emerged, making national ownership, sustainability, inclusive participation and locally contextualized solutions central to any development process.

The terminology has also evolved,[7] shifting from capacity building to capacity development (and more recently to capacity strengthening within WFP[8]). This mirrors a broader change in the sector, moving away from a view that capacities need to be newly built or constructed afresh towards a strong appreciation of existing capacities, context and stakeholder priorities.

Clear global commitments have placed capacity strengthening at the heart of humanitarian and development action. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Core Humanitarian Standards, World Humanitarian Summit commitments, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Grand Bargain in relation to humanitarian action all promise to strengthen the capacity of local actors.[9] The United Nations system has also embraced localization, transparency and sustainable financing as new priorities in capacity strengthening. As highlighted in 2017 guidance issued by the United Nations Development Group, capacity strengthening is recognized as both "a means and a primary objective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".[10]

In programmatic terms, capacity strengthening has shifted from the layering of separate, one-way transfers of knowledge and expertise to an increasingly systems-based, integrated approach.

This change has been informed by sector-specific literature on complexity theory, which proposes different ways of understanding the dynamic relationships between system components and actors.[11]

The global discourse recognizes that complementary and interdependent factors determine public service outcomes;[12] navigating these systemic complexities has become central to the design and delivery of capacity strengthening initiatives.

Global practice has evolved to approach capacity strengthening as an endogenous process in which external agencies support nationally owned change initiatives.

Approaches that have gained traction recently include problem-driven iterative adaptation,[13] doing development differently, adaptive management[14] and development entrepreneurship. Capacity strengthening seeks flexible, adaptive solutions that are built on a strong understanding of context,[15] the identification and support of local actors closest to the issue under consideration[16] and iterative programming that facilitates complex change.

Contextual sensitivity is particularly important in fragile and conflict-affected states, where capacity strengthening can play a critical role in recovery and development. Capacity strengthening interventions in these scenarios must be sensitive to the specific challenges that they pose, such as the complex and mutually reinforcing relationship between conflict and weak institutions and the risk of exacerbating local tensions or compromising the protection of the humanitarian operating space.[17] Global literature highlights that capacity strengthening in fragile states must effectively engage partners, prioritize "do no harm" principles, work within a realistic understanding of the context, incorporate conflict sensitivity across the programme cycle and adapt as needed.[18]

Risk analysis and a careful examination of the root causes and political economy of conflicts provide a sound basis from which to consider engaging in capacity strengthening in conflict-affected states.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, WFP continued to work in 2021 in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in what were once conflict zones to provide integrated support to vulnerable communities. This included revitalizing and restructuring farmer organizations to strengthen their capacities in marketing, production, processing and post-harvest management. WFP also supported the Government in conducting food and nutrition security analysis and strengthening emergency preparedness capacity and social protection system components.[19]

WFP's engagement in country capacity strengthening

Strategic importance of country capacity strengthening to WFP

With global hunger on the rise with over 800 million people food insecure and an additional 270 million facing acute food insecurity, WFP must leverage its knowledge and expertise to reach more people in need.

National programmes & systems are strengthened

By strengthening national capacity to address food insecurity and malnutrition and its immediate and underlying causes, WFP can reach more people and create more long-term, more sustainable impact, resulting in a higher return on investment.

National governments are primarily responsible for ensuring food security in their countries; by enabling their efficient and effective work in this area, WFP can better leverage its knowledge and resources and increase its contribution to achieving the global goals of ending hunger, establishing food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture by 2030.

Capacity strengthening has long been part of WFP's approach to ending hunger in support of the Millennium Development Goals and the SDGs.[20] The new strategic plan focuses the work of CCS under strategic outcome 4: "National programmes and systems are strengthened". The outcome links to SDG 17 ("Partnerships for the Goals"), which contributes to the ability of countries to achieve SDG 2 ("Zero Hunger") along with the other SDGs.

In particular, the strategic plan highlights WFP's role in strengthening national systems, namely, emergency preparedness and response, food and social protection systems.[21] CCS is specifically applicable to this system-strengthening agenda and constitutes a fundamental component of WFP's contribution to sustainably addressing the underlying drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition.

CCS also supports WFP's commitment to localization, including the recognition that local actors are generally the first to respond to crises and often have better access to crisis-affected communities. Increasing investment in the institutional capacities of local as well as national responders is therefore key to WFP's localization agenda, which aims to make humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary.

WFP vision and approach

WFP's vision for CCS is as follows:

> # VISION
>
> Aligned with national/local priorities, WFP contributes to strengthened national capacities, resulting in effective and impactful in-country systems and programmes that sustainably support the food security, nutrition and associated essential needs of their populations.

WFP CCS interventions are typically characterized by technical support designed to strengthen capacities over the long term, enabling national and local actors to achieve sustainable development results.

WFP interventions can also involve capacity substitution, which consists of technical assistance temporarily filling gaps in local capacity such as when WFP experts produce deliverables on behalf of national or local actors. This time-bound support can be invaluable in enhancing the ability of a national system to deliver in the short term, provided the support is primarily designed to deliver specific predefined results; national or local expertise is missing yet needed urgently or specialized expertise is required on a temporary basis; and the immediate deliverables clearly fit into the broader national system, with opportunities to connect them to long-term CCS work.

WFP programmes often combine CCS and capacity substitution given their complementary nature whereby both types of interventions engage a common range of national counterparts and system components. WFP's choice of interventions is based on the demands, needs, abilities and priorities of different parts of the system.

In 2018, WFP's **Mauritania** office created an adaptive social protection unit to further engage the Government and ensure a progressive transition of adaptive social protection functions. Initially, the approach focused on capacity substitution, as WFP involved the Government in the revision of food monitoring questionnaires but systematized data collection and produced the monthly bulletins itself.

Simultaneously, however, initial steps were taken to initiate the institutionalization of the scheme and a capacity needs mapping exercise was conducted at the end of 2018.[22] By 2021, the balance had shifted more to CCS, with WFP focusing on strengthening the Government's ability to gather, manage and utilize information, for example in the context of the national early warning system. However, some capacity substitution remained, with WFP continuing to provide direct technical assistance on various tools used by the Government to track food security and nutrition.[23]

WFP's comparative advantages in country capacity strengthening

Working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus

WFP's ability to work across the nexus through its dual mandate of "saving lives" and "changing lives" presents opportunities to provide CCS in both fragile and more stable contexts. A report by the Rome-based United Nations agencies in 2016 highlighted how WFP's "ability to operate in volatile situations" enabled the organization to "[provide] [...] practical capacity strengthening of a range of local first responders, governments and food system actors [...] and [contribute] to policy development."[24]

Field footprint

Thanks to its unparalleled field presence in more than 120 countries and territories and with 280 field offices, WFP can engage not only with central governments and national-level entities but also at subnational administrative levels and in localities. The 2008 evaluation of the 2004 capacity building policy highlighted that WFP's field presence supports effective capacity strengthening by helping the organization form constructive long-term relationships with partners on the ground.[25]

In **Kenya**, WFP built on the strong partnership with the Government at the national and county levels and assisted the formulation of policies and legislative frameworks across various sectors in 2021 to support sustainable and inclusive government-led assistance programming. For example, WFP brought stakeholders together to start formulating new national policies for school feeding and relief assistance. Several counties also approved new bills and policies addressing the needs of the most vulnerable (e.g. Wajir county established a disaster risk management fund).[26]

In **Angola**, WFP sought to generate consensus at the institutional level among various actors on the importance of food fortification, leading the establishment of a Fortification Partners Group at the end of 2021. At the national level, WFP supported the elaboration of two key national food security and nutrition documents: the National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy 2030 and the National School Feeding and Health Policy. Both documents are in the process of approval by the Government.[27]

In **Chad**, WFP and government partners established an Integrated Resilience Technologies and Training Centre in Bagarine to bring together multiple stakeholders, such as farmers, development partners, and researchers, to test and disseminate context-specific agricultural technologies and practices. WFP equipped the training centre with greenhouses, essential training materials, and solar powered irrigation pumps. A preliminary survey showed that over 10 percent of farmers in the local area used technologies tested at the centre. WFP also continued its partnership with the University of N'Djamena to connect its work and the wider food security infrastructure with rigorous research.[28]

Operational experience

Building on its field footprint, WFP has a long history in analysis (e.g. research, assessments, data analysis), agile programming (e.g. social protection, school-based programming, cash-based programming) and the scaling of operations (e.g. emergency preparedness and response). Where WFP has areas of expertise, CCS engagements can build on them to develop, refine, adjust and scale national programmes and system components that can appropriately adapt to new or changing contexts and expand for greater impact. Increasingly, WFP's expertise in digital services and innovation supports stakeholders with technology-enabled programming that facilitates complex change.

Multi-stakeholder engagement

The breadth of WFP's activities presents opportunities to adopt a systemic approach to CCS that extends beyond central governments, capitalizing on the diverse and crucial roles of government at subnational levels as well as the private sector, academia and civil society. Building on these extensive relationships helps WFP deliver on its commitment to localization and enables a "whole-of-society" approach that prioritizes working across society through engagement and support to multiple stakeholders. Recognizing their active role in designing, delivering and benefiting from food security and nutrition programmes and systems is critical to achieving sustainable change and national development objectives.

Convening of stakeholders

Alongside its operations, WFP plays an important role as broker for hunger and food security solutions, convening actors around common problems to facilitate and catalyse collective, intersectoral responses. With the aim of strengthening national capacity, WFP can support the mobilization of high-level and technical groups that represent various sectors and actors to catalyse interest and resources for long-term engagements. As highlighted by the 2015 South–South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) policy evaluation, WFP leverages this brokering role to help channel and expand knowledge transfer and collective action among countries from the global South.

Internal alignment with WFP policies, strategies and frameworks

The policy update aligns with and builds on relevant WFP policies and strategies approved by the Executive Board since 2009 and outlined in the 2022 compendium of policies.[29] In doing so, it advances corporate thinking, presenting a forward-looking perspective on how CCS connects to the strategic plan and WFP's work long-term.

Complementing the 2021 social protection strategy, the policy update underscores the importance of interrelated and systemic programming in support of collective efforts to achieve long-term national goals.[30] It also builds on the 2020 priorities of the school feeding strategy,[31] seeking to strengthen systems and provide technical support that facilitates the transition of WFP programmes to national ownership. It aligns with the 2017 nutrition policy,[32] which underlines the importance of effective, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and with the 2015 policy on SSTC, which promotes national ownership and leadership wherever possible.[33]

WFP's corporate documents on emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction, climate change and resilience, cash-based transfers, supply chain and information technology all inform WFP's approach to addressing people's needs while strengthening country capacities to manage future shocks and risks, build resilience and facilitate the successful transfer of innovative initiatives.[34]

The policy update also aligns with the 2021 protection and accountability policy and the 2022 gender policy, which describe the strengthening of national capacities and local-level engagement as factors that enable WFP to deliver on its commitments to affected populations and gender equity.[35]

Complementary to these corporate efforts, the policy update highlights more possibilities for integrated programming through CCS and capacity substitution interventions and encourages consideration of CCS in various operational contexts, including fragile and less developed settings.

The policy update will in turn inform other WFP policies, currently being formulated, for which CCS is relevant, such as the forthcoming SSTC and cash-based transfer policies.

Partnerships and complementarity with other stakeholders

The strategic plan highlights partnerships as a critical enabler for ending hunger and realizing the SDGs, citing WFP's support to national governments, other United Nations entities, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector.[36] This includes partnerships at the global, regional, national, and local levels.

The preparation of country strategic plans presents country offices with a unique opportunity to review country portfolios, recognize the CCS expertise and resources of other actors and develop multi-year CCS strategies in alignment with national priorities and United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks. As part of this, stakeholder mapping and integration of systematic capacity needs assessments help to identify national and local capacities and gaps, in turn informing the kind of investments to be undertaken by WFP, national counterparts and its partners. Consideration of joint contributions to United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks common country analyses may also highlight opportunities to leverage capacity assessments of government institutions, along with opportunities to solidify partnerships for CCS by facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues as part of the assessments.

WFP continues to lend its operational experience and leverage the competencies of other entities to enable collective achievement.[37] WFP leads collaborative efforts in its strongest areas, such as supporting logistics, emergency preparedness and response and cash-based programming of other actors, leveraging its mandate across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, its scale and its operational expertise at various field levels. Conversely, WFP takes a secondary role in areas where others have more relevant or specialized technical competencies. This complementary approach can create mutually reinforcing CCS activities in which various actors consider how to best layer and position their work to enhance their collective impact. It also provides WFP with opportunities to engage with wider sector and systems strengthening agendas.

In its collaborative endeavours, WFP strives for clear, effective and efficient task distribution to avoid duplication, adding value to work already undertaken by other actors and addressing gaps. Where appropriate, WFP also acts as a facilitator, such as by brokering SSTC.

In **Libya** in 2021, WFP supported the Government in assessing the performance of its national social protection system using a highly technical assessment tool (the Core Diagnostic Instrument). In this World Bank funded initiative, WFP, as the only United Nations entity with field presence, was uniquely positioned to interview government officials, social workers and beneficiaries. While well placed to review existing programmes, assess the delivery system and validate data with the Government, WFP did not have the capacity on its own to deliver all components of the assessment tool. It therefore engaged closely with the International Labour Organization and UNICEF, which managed other components in accordance with their respective strengths; the International Labour Organization's expertise lent itself to reviewing the policy and legislation framework, whereas UNICEF was better equipped to analyse financing and planning. This interagency collaboration was essential in delivering a qualitative diagnostic of the Libyan social protection system and laid the ground for potentially reforming the system to provide the necessary support for the poorest and most vulnerable Libyan households.

In **Jordan**, WFP supported the development of the national food security strategy led by the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with FAO and other partners.[38] WFP is also partnering with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Statistics and local research institutions to coordinate related policies and programmes, create linkages to other sectors, promote food security and nutrition research and support adequate monitoring of SDG 2 indicators.[39]

In **the Niger**, in coordination with the World Bank and UNICEF, WFP is implementing a multi-year capacity strengthening plan with the National Food Crisis Prevention and Management Facility to ensure that the Government's social protection system is shock-responsive and nutrition-sensitive. Building on the World Bank and UNICEF engagement to support the national social protection policy and in response to COVID-19, WFP strengthened national capacities that support the operationalization of this policy framework through advancing national assessments and analysis, strengthening coordination at the national and regional levels and supporting the roll-out of the single social protection registry. Moving forward, together with the World Bank and UNICEF, WFP will be engaged in reviewing the national social protection policy to strengthen the nutrition and shock response components.

A United Nations strategic framework for nutrition was drafted in **Tajikistan** as a result of a consolidated effort of WFP, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and FAO. The framework helps the Government of Tajikistan to sustain and adapt existing nutrition services. It sets the foundation for a joint work plan for coordinating and harmonizing nutrition-related activities and strengthening collaboration through recognition of the comparative advantages of various actors.
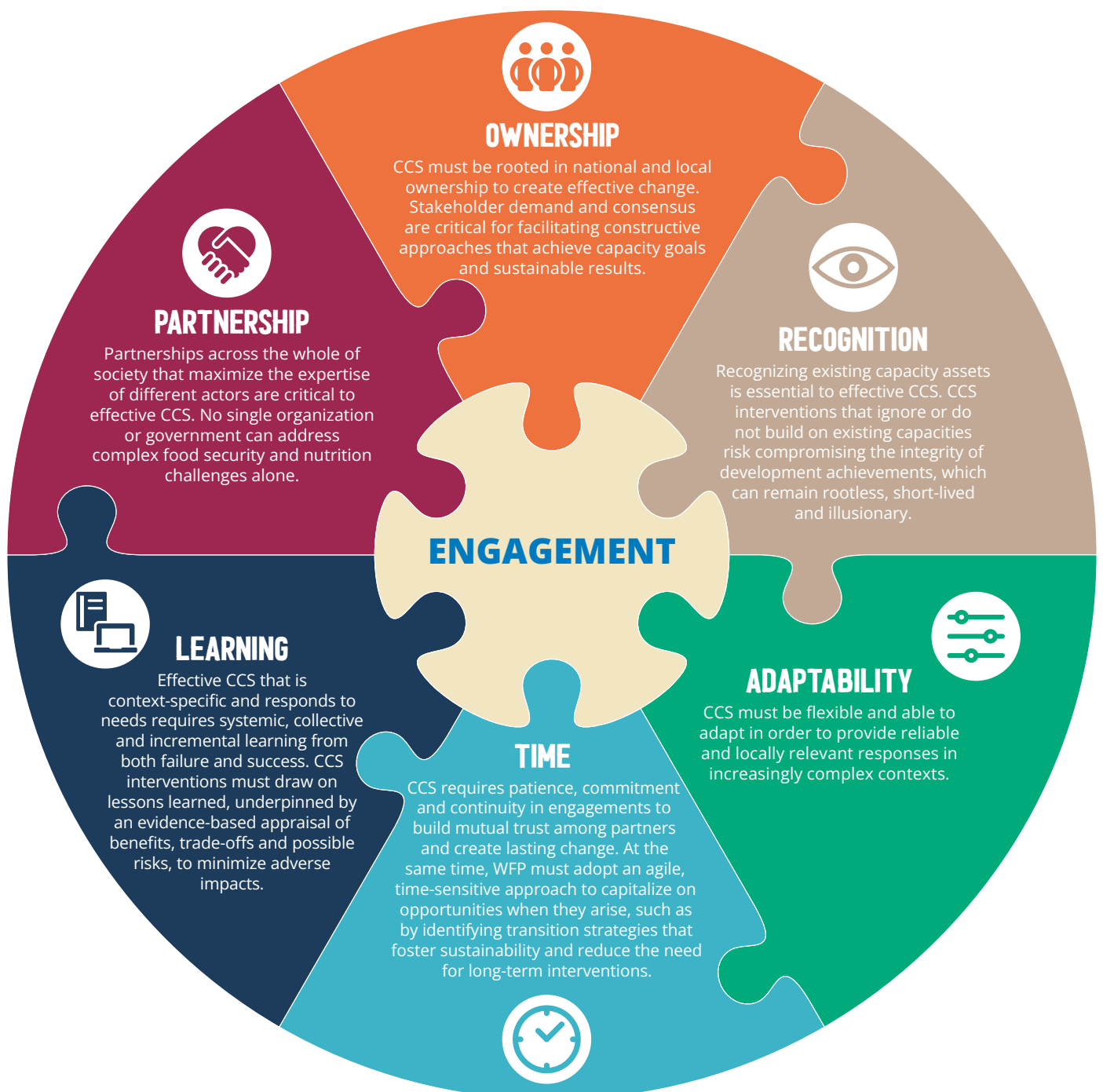
WFP's strategic framework for country capacity strengthening

Principles of engagement

Building on the principles set out in the 2017 CCS framework, which were recognized in the 2021 decentralized evaluation report as necessary for successful CCS interventions, the following core principles govern WFP's engagement in CCS.[40]

Adherence to these principles provides a conceptual basis for mitigating risks and fostering sustainability.

OWNERSHIP
CCS must be rooted in national and local ownership to create effective change. Stakeholder demand and consensus are critical for facilitating constructive approaches that achieve capacity goals and sustainable results.

PARTNERSHIP
Partnerships across the whole of society that maximize the expertise of different actors are critical to effective CCS. No single organization or government can address complex food security and nutrition challenges alone.

RECOGNITION
Recognizing existing capacity assets is essential to effective CCS. CCS interventions that ignore or do not build on existing capacities risk compromising the integrity of development achievements, which can remain rootless, short-lived and illusionary.

ENGAGEMENT

LEARNING
Effective CCS that is context-specific and responds to needs requires systemic, collective and incremental learning from both failure and success. CCS interventions must draw on lessons learned, underpinned by an evidence-based appraisal of benefits, trade-offs and possible risks, to minimize adverse impacts.

TIME
CCS requires patience, commitment and continuity in engagements to build mutual trust among partners and create lasting change. At the same time, WFP must adopt an agile, time-sensitive approach to capitalize on opportunities when they arise, such as by identifying transition strategies that foster sustainability and reduce the need for long-term interventions.

ADAPTABILITY
CCS must be flexible and able to adapt in order to provide reliable and locally relevant responses in increasingly complex contexts.

Pathways for capacity change

WFP takes a systemic view of local and national capacities for CCS, identifying complementarities and interdependencies across five different pathways to foster transformative capacity change that enhances programmes and systems.

The pathways are:

Policy and Legislation

Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability

Strategic Planning and Financing

Programme Design and Delivery

Engagement of Non-Government Actors

Since 2017, WFP has tested the pathways and confirmed their suitability for a range of areas relevant to the achievement of zero hunger, including emergency preparedness and response, supply chain, social protection, nutrition and resilience. The pathways have also been informed by the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)[41] school feeding tool.

The pathways provide a robust framework for assessing existing capacities and in-country priority areas for improvement, planning coherent CCS support and monitoring the performance of local actors and development outcomes at the system level.

The pathways are not intended to be prescriptive; they are points of departure for CCS programming that can be tailored in collaboration with local stakeholders to their specific needs.

In **Colombia**, WFP has launched the Innovation for Nutrition agenda, working with the Government to reset the nutrition agenda and connect high-level decision makers to communities, the private sector and academia. This collaboration strengthened institutional effectiveness and accountability while capitalizing on the whole-of-society approach.
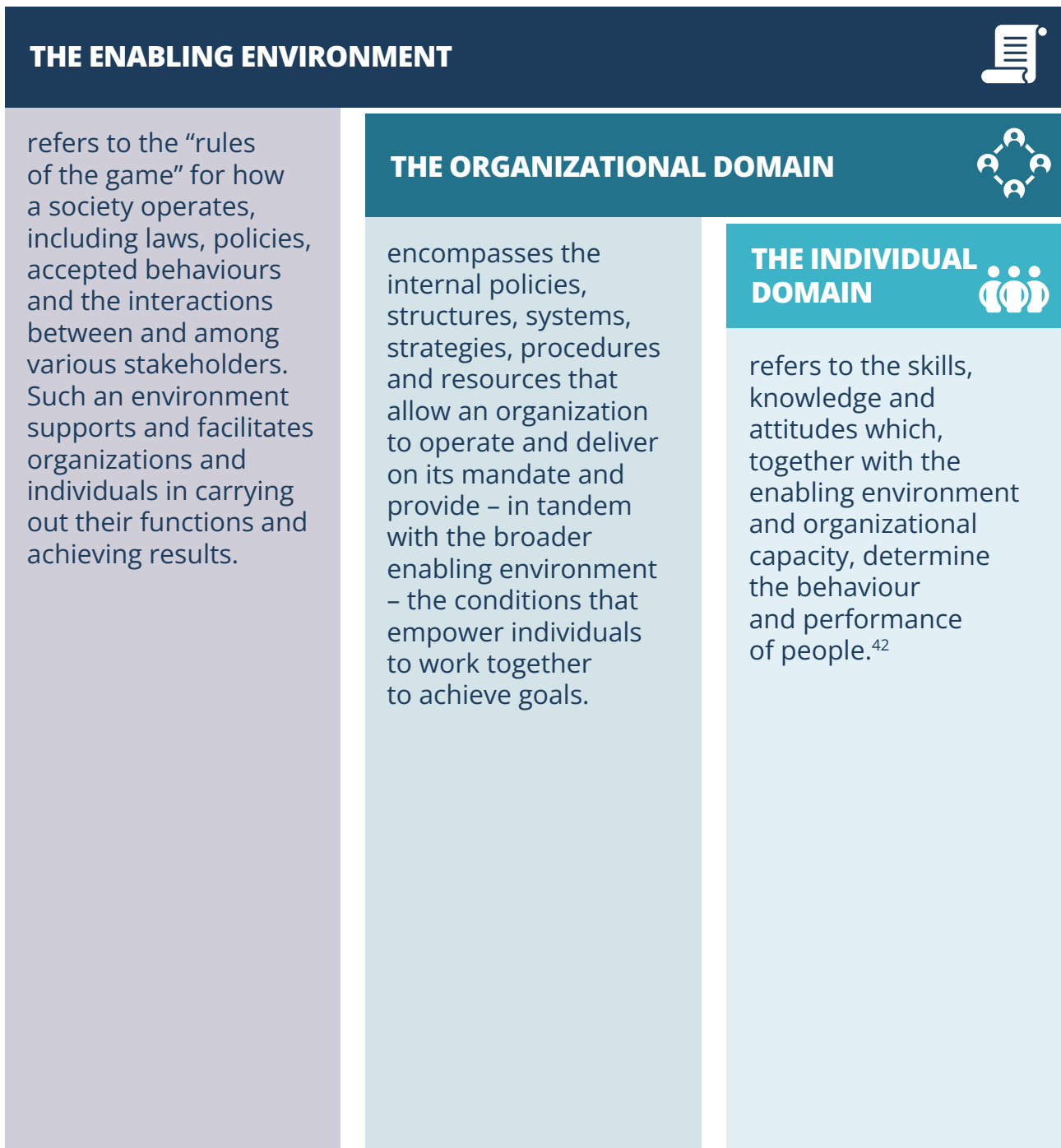

In the **Philippines**, WFP has strengthened government capacity to respond in the aftermath of natural disasters by supporting programme design and implementation for mechanized food packing systems that accelerate response times and require fewer human resources. The Government now runs the systems autonomously.

Domains for intervention

Within each of the five pathways, country capacity change can occur through interventions in the individual, organizational or enabling environment domain. These domains represent nested levels in society through which WFP engages to deliver its CCS interventions:
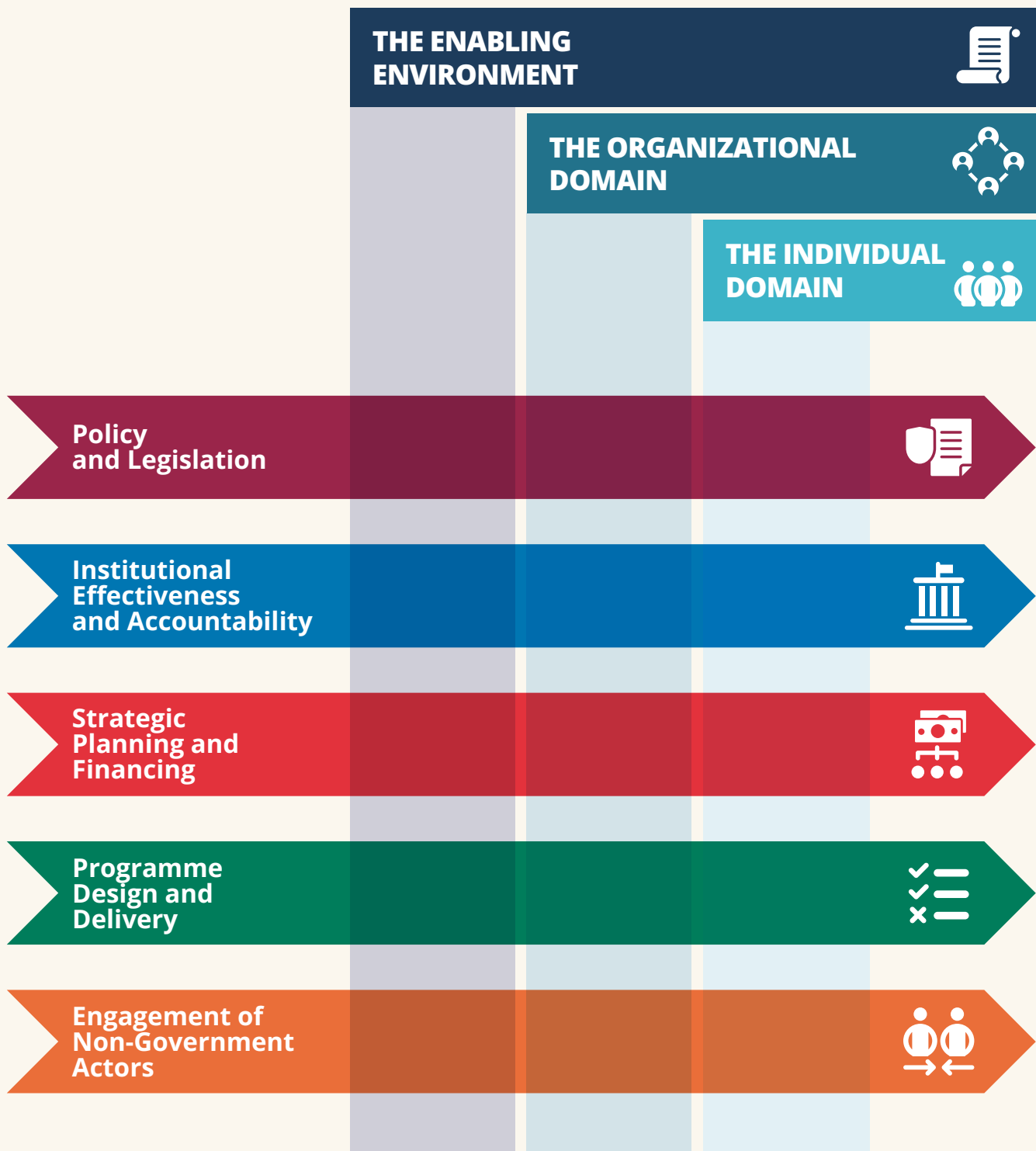
The three domains are interdependent and mutually reinforcing – the strength of each one depends on and determines the strength of the others. For example, knowledge can be enhanced at the individual level through on-the-job coaching, stimulated at the organizational level through a knowledge management system and supported in the enabling environment through legislation on access to information.

THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

refers to the "rules of the game" for how a society operates, including laws, policies, accepted behaviours and the interactions between and among various stakeholders. Such an environment supports and facilitates organizations and individuals in carrying out their functions and achieving results.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL DOMAIN

encompasses the internal policies, structures, systems, strategies, procedures and resources that allow an organization to operate and deliver on its mandate and provide – in tandem with the broader enabling environment – the conditions that empower individuals to work together to achieve goals.

THE INDIVIDUAL DOMAIN

refers to the skills, knowledge and attitudes which, together with the enabling environment and organizational capacity, determine the behaviour and performance of people.[42]

While the five pathways for capacity change provide the framework for determining which areas of the system require strengthening, the three domains help pinpoint the nature of capacity gaps and potential interventions, identifying problems and solutions.

Most CCS initiatives are likely to require activity in more than one domain to foster sustainable social change.

	THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	THE ORGANIZATIONAL DOMAIN	THE INDIVIDUAL DOMAIN
Policy and Legislation			
Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability			
Strategic Planning and Financing			
Programme Design and Delivery			
Engagement of Non-Government Actors			

In **Peru**, WFP's advocacy and technical assistance successfully supported the approval of a rice fortification law promoting the consumption of fortified rice, which should prove a remarkable milestone in the fight against anaemia.[43] This law sets an outstanding example for bottom-up policymaking, in which a regional government with WFP's active capacity strengthening investment assumed a leading role to transform a local policy into a national tool for achieving zero hunger. In 2021, WFP facilitated capacity strengthening initiatives involving 220,000 individuals from national stakeholder organizations and provided seconded expertise to nearly 500 national institutions such as national statistical committees, national disaster management agencies and ministries of education in countries such as Armenia, Kenya, India, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste.

Portfolio of work

Based on its mandate, the context in which it is working and the needs it is working to meet, WFP offers CCS in key technical and functional areas, in line with the systems strengthening approach outlined in the strategic plan, notably in the areas of social protection, emergency preparedness and response and food systems. Building on its experience, results, areas of expertise and competencies vis-à-vis other actors, the organization also engages in CCS in areas such as nutrition, school-based programmes, research, assessment and monitoring, supply chains and cash-based programming. While this policy update aims to support CCS's integration across all relevant areas, each WFP technical unit is the custodian of its respective area.

Once the policy update has been approved, WFP will produce materials related to its implementation such as guidance for country offices on embedding CCS in country strategic plans. These materials will also explore CCS approaches in various technical and functional areas in greater depth.

Social protection: In Haiti, WFP strengthened government capacities when serving as lead technical partner in the development of the national social protection and promotion policy adopted in June 2020. In a participatory process, WFP guided the drafting of the text, acted as the secretariat for key committees, assisted in putting in place the national social protection governance structure and continued to support the conversion of an existing beneficiary database into a national social registry.[44]

Supply chain: WFP has partnered with the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency, working to enhance end-to-end supply chain management in emergency preparedness and response systems. This included helping to roll out a new regional logistics system for managing relief items in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines after the eruption of the La Soufrière volcano in April 2021, which helped ensure that almost 18,000 evacuees received essential supplies.[45]

Annex I - Lexicon of key terms

Term	Definition
Capacity	The ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. (Ref.: OECD, 2006)
Capacity development	See capacity strengthening.
Capacity domains	Refers to the three nested levels in society within which capacity strengthening interventions may be called for: • The enabling environment refers to the "rules of the game" for how a society operates, including laws, policies, accepted behaviours and the interactions between and among organizations and individuals in government, the private sector, academia and civil society (including inter-faith and religious groups, communities and formal and informal networks) that support and facilitate these organizations and individuals in carrying out their functions and achieving results. • The organizational domain encompasses the internal policies, structures, systems, strategies, procedures and resources that allow an organization to operate and deliver on its mandate and provide – in tandem with the broader enabling environment – the conditions that empower individuals to work together to achieve goals. • The individual domain refers to the skills, knowledge and attitudes that, together with the enabling environment and organizational capacity, determine the behaviour and performance of people.
Capacity levels	See capacity domains. Some sources refer to "capacity domains" as "capacity levels". (Ref.: OECD, 2006)
Capacity strengthening	The process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. (Ref.: OECD, 2006) Note: This definition corresponds to the industry definition of capacity development. In external references, the terms "capacity development" and "capacity strengthening" are often used interchangeably. Capacity strengthening is the preferred current usage at WFP, superseding alternative terms such as capacity building or capacity development. WFP coined the term "country capacity strengthening" in 2015 to refer to all its work in capacity strengthening. See country capacity strengthening.

Capacity substitution	Refers to technical assistance provided by an external agency or donor in which functions or roles are performed or deliverables produced on behalf of national or local actors to temporarily fill gaps in local capacity when a government or other organization needs specific inputs, sometimes urgently, rather than with the intention of developing sustainable national capacity.
Country capacity strengthening	Activities structured around engagement with national and subnational stakeholder institutions and organizations with the intention of improving the sustainable functioning of systems and programmes that support populations with regard to their food security, nutrition and associated essential needs.
Institutional capacity strengthening	See country capacity strengthening.
Localization	Refers to one of the two "enabling priorities" in the United Nations Grand Bargain process, which recognizes that local actors are generally the first to respond to crises and often have access to affected communities that international actors cannot achieve; it entails making humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary and increasing investment in the institutional capacities of local as well as national responders. In a broader development context, it refers to the idea that subnational governments' proximity to local communities should make them the key actors in delivering services, economic development and public investment and that they are therefore central to inclusive and sustainable development.
Pathways for capacity change	Aspects that are critical for strong programme and system performance and should be considered when assessing and appreciating existing capacity, identifying priority areas for strengthening local and national capacity, planning and implementing capacity strengthening interventions. Pathways are considered entry points or points of departure.
	WFP identifies abilities, needs and demands with regard to five critical aspects of governance known as the five pathways: policy and legislation; institutional effectiveness and accountability; strategic planning and financing; programme design and delivery; and engagement of non-state actors (e.g. communities, civil society, inter-faith and religious groups, formal and informal networks, academia and the private sector).

South-South and triangular cooperation	A process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how, and through regional and inter-regional collective actions, including partnerships involving governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit within and across regions. South–South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North–South cooperation. (Ref.: WFP South–South and triangular cooperation policy)
Systems strengthening	Refers to interventions, including capacity strengthening and capacity substitution, directed towards improving the ways in which elements of key national systems, especially those for emergency preparedness and response, food and social protection, work together to deliver the desired results.
Technical assistance	Refers to non-financial assistance provided by local or international specialists. Technical assistance can take the form of sharing information, expertise and working knowledge through secondment, short-term consultation, instruction, skills training or consulting services, and may also involve the transfer of technical data. Technical assistance may be a means of supporting country capacity strengthening but may also be provided in a form that constitutes capacity substitution.
Whole-of-society approach to country capacity strengthening	The application of a systemic approach that prioritizes working across society through engaging and supporting multiple stakeholders (a range of actors across government, the private sector, academia and civil society, including inter-faith and religious groups, communities and formal and informal networks) when identifying needs and solutions and designing and delivering interventions while benefiting from national food security and nutrition plans, programmes and systems.

Annex II - Examples of country capacity strengthening interventions by domain and pathway

	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	ORGANIZATIONAL DOMAIN	INDIVIDUAL DOMAIN
	Laws, policies, accepted behaviours and interactions	Internal policies, structures, systems, strategies, procedures and resources	Knowledge, skills, attitudes
Pathway 1 Policy and legislation	Supporting the development of a multisectoral food security policy	Supporting a ministry of health in establishing dissemination procedures for a law on food fortification	Sensitizing parliamentarians on global and regional commitments on school feeding
Pathway 2 Institutional effectiveness and accountability	Supporting formalization and stakeholder recognition of a national vulnerability assessment committee's mandate	Supporting development of a digital commodity accounting system for government food-based social assistance	Coaching public officials on effective emergency cluster coordination practices
Pathway 3 Strategic planning and financing	Supporting reform of a national budget system to ensure the tracking of multisectoral budget allocations for nutrition-sensitive interventions	Advising a prime minister's office on the development of an investment case/ value proposition for mobilizing resources for a national home-grown school feeding programme	Facilitating a South-South exchange visit for ministry of agriculture staff on strategic planning processes for the diversification of agricultural production and value chain development
Pathway 4 Programme design and delivery	Fostering commitment to transparency and data sharing to reduce fragmentation of social protection programmes	Assisting a government in integrating anticipatory actions into disaster contingency plans	Providing on-the-job training to government officials on targeting and registration processes for an emergency cash-based transfer programme
Pathway 5 Engagement of non-governmental actors	Co-convening a neutral platform for brokering partnerships and collaboration between actors in the business community and all actors on nutrition	Collaborating with local higher education institutions to develop and roll out curricula on food quality and safety	Training local non-governmental organization staff on how to integrate gender and nutrition into market analysis

Acronyms

CCS   country capacity strengthening
FAO   Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
SABER   Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SDG   Sustainable Development Goal
SSTC   South–South and triangular cooperation
UNICEF   United Nations Children's Fund

Endnotes

1 Country capacity strengthening is a WFP-specific term introduced in 2015 to differentiate country capacity strengthening from internal capacity strengthening, now known as internal capability development, which refers to learning and training programmes for WFP staff. For consistency, the policy update continues to use the term country capacity strengthening to refer to WFP's work in capacity strengthening.

2 "Building Country and Regional Capacities" (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-B).

3 "WFP Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation" (WFP/EB.2/2009/4-B).

4 "Synthesis of evidence and lessons on country capacity strengthening from decentralized evaluations" (WFP/EB.A/2021/7 C).

5 WFP Office of the Inspector General. 2016. Internal Audit of WFP's Country Capacity Strengthening; "Summary Evaluation Report of WFP Policy on Capacity Development" (WFP/EB.1/2017/6-A/Rev.1); and "Synthesis of evidence and lessons on country capacity strengthening from decentralized evaluations" (WFP/EB.A/2021/7-C).

6 Ibid.

7 European Parliamentary Research Service. 2017. Briefing note: Understanding capacity-building/capacity development.

8 Capacity strengthening was mainstreamed in the strategic plan for 2014–2017, as explained on page 3 of the WFP Office of the Inspector General Internal Audit of WFP's Country Capacity Strengthening (2016).

9 United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. 2015. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

10 United Nations Development Group. 2017. Capacity Development: UNDAF Companion Guidance.

11 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2017. Systems Approaches to Public Sector Challenges.

12 Mansoor, Z. and Williams, M.J. 2018. Systems Approaches to Public Service Delivery: Lessons from Health, Education, and Infrastructure.

13 Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., Woolcock, M. 2017. Building State Capability: Evidence, Analysis, Action.

14 Cox, M., and Norrington-Davies, G. 2019. Technical assistance: New thinking on an old problem.

15 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2006. Presentation: Capacity Development: Working towards good practice.

16 Pritchett L., Woolcock, M. and Andrews, M. 2012. Looking Like a State: Techniques of Persistent Failure in State Capability for Implementation.

17 Other practical challenges to capacity strengthening in these contexts include the difficulty of collecting reliable evidence and the likely absence of long-term government engagement to support interventions.

18 United Nations Development Programme and World Bank. 2011. International support for capacity development in post-conflict states: Reflections from two case studies in West Africa; United Nations Development Programme. 2015. Supporting Capacity Development in Conflict and fragile Contexts; Asian Development Bank. 2021. Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations and Small Island Developing States Approach.

19 WFP. Democratic Republic of the Congo Annual Country Report 2021.

20 "WFP Strategic Plan (2004-2007)" (WFP/EB/3/2003/4-A/1); "WFP Strategic Plan (2008-2011)" (WFP/EB.A/2008/5 A/1/Rev.1) (extended to 2013); "WFP Strategic Plan (2014-2017)" (WFP/EB.A/2013/5-A/1); "WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)" (WFP/EB.2/2016/4-A/1/Rev.2).

21 "WFP strategic plan (2022-2025)" (WFP/EB.2/2021/4-A/1/Rev.2).

22 WFP. Mauritania Annual Country Report 2018.

23 WFP. Mauritania Annual Country Report 2018.

24 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development and WFP. 2016. Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda, p. 3, paragraph 10.

25 WFP Office of Evaluation. 2008. Evaluation of WFP's Capacity Development Policy and Operations.

26 WFP. Kenya Annual Country Report 2021.

27 WFP. Angola Annual Country Report 2021.

28 WFP. Chad Annual Country Report 2021.

29 "Compendium of policies relating to the strategic plan" (WFP/EB.1/2022/4-D).

30 Set out in WFP's 2021 strategy for support for social protection.

31 Adopted by WFP in its 2020 school feeding strategy.

32 "Nutrition policy" (WFP/EB.1/2017/4-C).

33 "South-South and Triangular Cooperation Policy" (WFP/EB.A/2015/5-D).

34 "Emergency preparedness policy" (WFP/EB.2/2017/4-B/Rev.1), "WFP Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management" (WFP/EB.2/2011/4-A), "Climate Change Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2017/4-A/Rev.1), "Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition" (WFP/EB.A/2015/5-C); WFP. 2016. WFP Corporate Information Technology Strategy 2016 2020.

35 "WFP protection and accountability policy" (WFP/EB.2/2020/4-A/1/Rev.2) and "WFP gender policy 2022" (WFP/EB.1/2022/4-B/Rev.1).

36 "WFP strategic plan (2022-2025)" (WFP/EB.2/2021/4-A/1/Rev.2), p. 36.

37 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network. MOPAN 2017–18 assessments: World Food Programme (WFP), p. 46.

38 WFP. Jordan Annual Country Report 2020.

39 Ibid.

40 These principles are in addition to the corporate principles outlined in the WFP strategic plan for 2022–2025 and to the humanitarian principles governing WFP's engagements.

41 WFP, World Bank Group and the Partnership for Child Development. 2014. SABER School Feeding: Towards Nationally Owned School Feeding Programmes.

42 For the purposes of this policy, the individual domain refers to people in society who contribute to achieving zero hunger through work-related roles. It does not include individual citizens or members of households who improve their own food security and nutrition status, nor the development of WFP personnel's own internal capabilities.

43 WFP. Peru Annual Country Report 2021 (website).

World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy
T +39 06 65131 wfp.org