



WFP EVALUATION

Midterm Activity Evaluation of USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Grant (LRP-442-2019-011-00) for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia

01 November 2019 to 30 September 2023

Decentralized Evaluation Report

[report number]
WFP Cambodia



World Food Programme

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Final Report - November 2022

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A list of acronyms used in this report is given in [Annex 13](#).

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Background

1. This report presents the findings from the midterm evaluation of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP)¹ programme for World Food Programme (WFP) School Feeding activities in Cambodia, covering the period 01 November 2019 to 30 September 2023.
2. This evaluation is the second of a series of three linked pieces of work² considering the USDA support to the WFP programme in the country. The series has been commissioned by the WFP Cambodia Country Office, based on the Terms of Reference (TOR) and a more recent Addendum which has slightly changed the focus of this current work to consider the effects of the pandemic on implementation. This work was conducted concurrently with an evaluation of the USDA-supported McGovern-Dole school feeding programme,³ which will produce a complementary set of reports. This midterm evaluation was planned for mid-2021, but due to delays in the baseline and the school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was moved to June 2022.
3. The LRP has a budget of US\$4.7 million, with almost half of this allocated for cash transfers to schools to enable them to procure local food commodities, to provide a daily breakfast to children in 163 institutions⁴ across three central provinces of Cambodia: Siem Reap, Kampong Thom and Kampong Chhnang. Other activities include stakeholders' capacity strengthening on procurement mechanisms; technical assistance on rural market engagement (addressed towards farmers and suppliers); and institutional capacity building (addressed towards school personnel and Government representatives at national and sub-national levels).
4. The programme objective is to improve the effectiveness of food assistance through local and regional procurement, to support the shift of target schools to a Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSP) model using locally produced commodities. There are three expected programme outcomes: improved cost-effectiveness, improved timeliness and better utilization of nutritious and culturally acceptable foods that meet quality standards.
5. This report aims to provide an independent assessment of the programme so far to enable WFP Cambodia, the Royal Government of Cambodia, and cooperating partners to feed its results and learning into the remainder of this programme and future programmes - in particular, the Government-led and managed National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) - while also contributing important information to the parallel McGovern-Dole School Feeding midterm evaluation.
6. Given the pandemic disruptions and funding decisions, the methodology developed for the midterm evaluation was modified from the original TOR to emphasize understanding of the mitigation measures taken during the pandemic, their effect on programming, and the progress towards handover and transition. Consequently, this evaluation focused on three evaluation criteria: relevance (especially of pandemic mitigation adaptations), effectiveness, and sustainability (with a focus on steps yet to be taken to ensure a smooth handover and transition by the end of the cycle).

Contextual Summary

7. In Cambodia, short-term hunger is a key factor affecting educational results, such as literacy, attendance, and concentration in schools.⁵ The USDA McGovern-Dole programme aims to encourage students' enrolment, attendance, and completion of their primary education, as well as reduce short-term hunger and improve the children's concentration in the classroom. The LRP supports this through the procurement of local and nutritious food commodities of good quality. The LRP has an ancillary impact in supporting rural development through the creation of a local market via school-level procurement.
8. WFP's school meals programme (SMP) started in Cambodia in 1999. In 2014, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), in collaboration with WFP, piloted a HGSP model. The Government's NHGSFP has been subsequently developed with the expectation that WFP-supported schools will transition to the programme and be managed by the Government after transition. As of March 2022, the MoEYS and WFP elaborated a Joint School Feeding Transition Strategy that outlines the handover of further schools and the remaining capacity building to be done. Handover is programmed to be completed by 2028.

¹ USDA Local and Regional Procurement (LRP-441-2019-011-00)

² The evaluation consists of a baseline (2020), midterm (originally planned for 2021) and endline assessment (2023).

³ USDA McGovern-Dole programme FFE-442-2019-013-00

⁴ All under the WFP Cambodia's USDA McGovern-Dole grant (FFE-442-2019/013-00) that will be implemented concurrently with LRP.

⁵ WFP/USDA LRP Proposal FY2019.

9. The COVID-19 pandemic had widespread impacts on socio-economic indicators, especially among poor households leading to increased poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Schools were closed between March 2020 and November 2021 with, inter alia, a temporary discontinuation of the school meals programme. The start of LRP activities was heavily impacted by the school closures, and certain programme sub-activities are yet to begin. During the closures WFP support continued through take-home rations (THRs) distributed to many of the most vulnerable households, in conjunction with the Government's social protection programme,⁶ and worked on health, hygiene and food safety issues with the MoEYS School Health Department.

Methodology

10. The evaluation included engagement with beneficiaries as key stakeholders in their work and was committed to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), through the participation and consultation in the evaluation by women and men from different groups, and to the Humanitarian Principles.

11. A mixed methods approach was used, combining document review, analysis of secondary quantitative data, interviews with national and sub-national level stakeholders, observation, and focus group. No primary quantitative data was collected during this midterm work, although secondary quantitative data was extracted from WFP reports and databases.

12. The team visited six districts across three provinces and 10 schools that had different school feeding modalities, including eight schools visited during the 2020 baseline; two more were visited to identify post-handover comparisons. In total, 425 persons were interviewed (58 percent women).

13. **The key midterm findings** are summarized below, structured according to the main evaluation criteria.

Criteria 1 – Relevance

14. The LRP is relevant because it provides an avenue for WFP to support the change from a McGovern-Dole SMP modality (based on imported in-kind commodities) to the HGSF modality adopted by the Government, based on locally purchased food commodities. During the pandemic, the repurposing of the decentralized procurement through the school cash transfer component to support the distribution of THRs was relevant to the Government's emergency response approach to support the vulnerable populations, targeted via the official *IDPoor* system.

15. The LRP activities support the Government's capacity building needs and are integrated into the Joint School Feeding Transition Strategy. The programme appropriately prioritizes schools in areas with high poverty and low education outcomes that are reliant on smallholder agricultural production. This makes the use of cash for local commodity procurement highly appropriate as it offers opportunities to support rural livelihoods and incomes in the areas around the targeted schools.

16. Technical assistance activities are appropriate for all stakeholders involved in the tendering process, although complementarity between the procurement and production sectors could be strengthened, specifically between the contracted suppliers and the farmers who participate in the Government's technical assistance trainings.

17. Alongside local procurement by schools (Activity 1, 2, and 4), the LRP includes an agricultural development component (Activity 3) that seeks to strengthen the Government's capacity so that sub-national authorities are better positioned to transfer skills on improved agricultural production to farmers, specifically smallholders. These activities are relevant and appropriate to help ensure that smallholders in the LRP target provinces (and later the NHGSFP in the same areas) are trained and supported to contribute to the HGSF model, which in turn supports the local economic and agricultural development.

18. One of the objectives of NHGSFP is to partner with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), but there are various obstacles that may need consideration during the remaining life of the programme. The LRP's approach to include technical assistance for improved production is well aligned with the extension system adopted by the MAFF, but it lacks any strategic linkages to the ministry's activities - the LRP programme is aligned with, but not embedded in, the agricultural sector's guiding strategies. Furthermore, there are gaps in the institutional arrangements for direct collaboration between the two key players, MoEYS and MAFF, because school feeding sits under the social protection framework, while food security (and MAFF) sit under a different framework. Consequently, because of its placement in the overall SFP/MoEYS education policy framework, the

⁶ THR Round 1 (April 2020): WFP reached 80,767 IDPoor households with children and the Government programme reached 11,506. The same was repeated in Round 2 (August 2020).

technical assistance contributions of the LRP programme are institutionally disconnected from both the social protection frameworks and the agricultural sector strategies.

Criteria 2 - Effectiveness

19. By mid-2022, the originally-designed LRP activities had only been operational for six months. WFP CO reports indicate that 46 percent of LRP indicators are on track or doing better than expected at midterm, which is a positive achievement. Some areas falling short, principally because of school closures, could improve significantly now that the LRP is operational. Although THR's were not foreseen in the programme design, 72 percent of the revised target numbers were reached, and WFP monitoring found that over 90 percent of the recipient households indicated acceptable levels of food consumption after distributions.

20. There is considerable variation among the four activity areas under the LRP, with Activity Area 1 (cash transfers) showing the most progress towards results with 84 percent of the indicators in the results framework on track or doing better than expected. In contrast, the technical assistance indicators under Activity Areas 2, 3, and 4 had less progress.

21. There have been improvements since the baseline in terms of local stakeholders' knowledge and familiarity with the LRP procurement processes and contracts. Despite the pandemic, about 45 percent of the midterm targets were still met in terms of training sub-national stakeholders, with plans to increase these numbers during the remaining time period of the current cycle. Monitoring data from WFP indicates that all LRP schools had signed their supplier contracts before the start of the school year. Technical assistance to farmers on agricultural production had not yet started at the time of the midterm evaluation due to contractual delays between WFP and FAO and the pandemic, but these activities are slated to now begin in remaining time period of the current cycle.

22. One consideration for effectiveness are the unintended outcomes to supply chain actors from the procurement processes. Although the LRP has an aspiration to prioritize smallholder engagement, requirements for pre-existing capital, price ceilings, and short timespans for responding to orders tends to exclude smaller suppliers from being able to fulfil contracts and leads to a procurement bias towards larger suppliers. Structural gaps within the national systems also still exist in terms of the access to market information and information management. There are also limitations around the successful procurement and utilization of fortified rice by schools for enhanced nutrition outcomes.

23. While the pandemic disruptions have had the largest effect on progress, there are other factors internal to WFP that have influenced the results. The Country Office staffing gaps at national and sub-national levels have affected the pace of activities, as well as affecting the institutional memory for the vision and approaches required to support transition, especially in the technical assistance activity areas. Regional Bureau resources, including technical manuals, strategies, guidance, and contracted experts, have helped mitigate the effects of these gaps, although not completely. Overall, with only one round of procurement (selection of suppliers) having occurred to date, a consequent reduction in being able to identify lessons learned for process improvement is noted.

Criteria 3 - Sustainability

24. The LRP is planned as a single-cycle programme in support of the school feeding activities. Given the multi-sectoral engagements of the HGSF model, the process of policy development and coordination is key to sustainability. The Joint Transition Strategy delineates roles and responsibilities of national stakeholders to enable implementation through multi-sectoral collaboration. Units within the MoEYS provide overall policy and strategy guidance which should include coordination across line ministries and with development partners, as well as advocacy for the NHGSFP. WFP is supporting the MoEYS to develop a monitoring framework for the NHGSFP, expected to be ready by the end of 2022.

25. Since the LRP resumed its original design activities, the CO has progressively increased the number of actions and engagements. At corporate level, WFP has used five SABER-SF dimensions of change to frame progress made by the COs towards complete transitioning to nationally owned and managed school feeding

programmes.⁷ These are replicated in Cambodia's Joint Transition Strategy⁸ which outlines the broad transition roadmap on national capacity building to implement, manage and monitor the NHGSFP.⁹

26. While there has been an increase in activities across all five SABER-SF dimensions, those related to programme design and implementation have assumed the greatest prominence and some gaps exist in the national institutional infrastructure with operational implications for the LRP. Without a framework that allows for an operational intersection between MAFF and MoEYS, WFP has nevertheless played an active convening role in bringing together the agricultural and school sectors. One critical LRP success factor is that it works with strong non-government organizations extended from, and financed by, the McGovern-Dole programme.

27. USDA has approved another McGovern-Dole programme cycle suggesting that continued capacity strengthening of national and sub-national stakeholders in NHGSFP processes can continue even though the LRP, as a stand-alone one-cycle programme will not continue. The McGovern-Dole support can provide continued support to linkages between farmers, suppliers, and school stakeholders, and strengthened inter-ministerial coordination required to support increased rural development and school feeding. One remaining consideration is how the next cycle will include the cash transfer component, possible from other funding sources, to sustain WFP-managed HGSF schools and build their capacity for receiving cash transfers and doing local procurement after full transition.

Conclusions

28. The following conclusions are oriented around three evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, and Sustainability.

Category 1: Relevance

29. As a consequence of both WFP's country strategic plan structure and the LRP design, the integration of the expected LRP activities has only been partially achieved, with missed opportunities to improve synergies between the education and agriculture programme stakeholders.

30. The LRP narrative emphasizes the importance of supporting smallholder local production, but the operational parameters restrict the participation of smallholders.

31. For gender considerations, there is potential for enhanced women's empowerment through the LRP due to women's traditional roles in vegetable production and cooperative membership, but gender empowerment is not attributable to the programme within the LRP Results Framework.

Category 2: Effectiveness

32. There has been progress in the LRP programming since the baseline, although with greater progress in the demand-side components (schools and school procurement) compared to the supply-side components (farmers and local agricultural production).

33. The LRP programmatic framework allowed for a flexible response to humanitarian engagements during the pandemic. The LRP framework allowed WFP to respond to the challenge of the pandemic promptly and effectively through its distribution of THRs.

34. Despite progress since the baseline, there will be insufficient time to achieve all end of cycle programme targets by the end of this cycle particularly with respect to the integration of smallholders and suppliers into the local procurement processes.

Category 3: Sustainability

35. Sustainability considerations have shown progress, though activities have been prioritized towards the more concrete components of schools' handover (degree of school readiness, developed guidelines, elaborated programme design and processes). But the appropriate systems to support the schools afterwards are not yet in place, so there should be a strengthened focus on three areas: policy framework, financial capacity, and institutional capacity and coordination.

36. Progress has been achieved towards handover of schools although more time is needed for ensuring sustainability of the transition of systems to the Government. One focus area would be on strengthening the

⁷ These include a) Policy Framework; b) Institutional Capacity and coordination; c) Financial capacity (Public Sector Financing and resourcing); d) Programme Design and Implementation; and e) Engagement of non-state actors.

⁸ The national home-grown school feeding programme aims to provide safe and healthy nutrition to Cambodian children to promote social protection, increase access to education services to contribute to the development of local economic and agricultural, and society.

⁹ The capacity building actions outlined in this strategy draws on the global guidance on assessing national capacity on school feeding developed by WFP/World Bank Systems Approach to Better Education Results (SABER-SF)

linkages with smallholder production in local procurement sustainably. A no-cost extension to utilize the unspent funds of the current LRP programme, combined in some way with new activities including cash transfer components (from other funding sources), would help support sustainability and transition.

Lessons Learned

37. Applicable lessons learned fall into three categories: procurement procedures, programme management, and monitoring and evaluation.

Lessons	
Procedures	
1	Adjustment of procurement activities to align with producer's production calendar. The one-month procurement period for schools to distribute food orders does not allow for suppliers to take the most advantage of obtaining products from small farm providers, who would require more time to schedule planting seasons. A three-month procurement window would allow for more locally obtained produce from smallholders.
2	Food fortification. Food fortification is relevant as an approach to improved nutritious food quality. However, rice fortification has limited demand for national scale-up and for the school meals programming, exploring other fortification approaches, such as sauce or fish, may have better opportunities for market expansion.
3	Payment mechanisms. The current payment mechanisms discourage small suppliers' participation. In order to keep credibility of the local procurement as a viable smallholder market, adjustments may be required in the Government's local procurement procedures, to either be able to provide advance funding to small suppliers or more timely, or phased, payment methods.
Programme Management	
4	Strengthening the capacity of women small farmers. There is potential to expand women's roles in the school procurement processes given that they constitute the majority of vegetable small farm producers. Adapting programme management targets and adapting training activities to suit women's situations (such as time or day, location, or topics) would improve the gender sensitivity of this component.
5	Continuous socialization. Given the high turnover of personnel within the school and government systems, the diversity of donor programmes for school feeding, and the relative complexity of the system, there is a need to develop a system of 'continuous socialization' to provide a standardized training and orientation approach to incoming personnel at different levels of Government, from schools and suppliers up to the Ministry level.
Monitoring and Evaluation	
6	Gender indicators. Developing outcome indicators specifically related to women's participation and empowerment in the procurement programming would provide greater visibility and intentionality of gender sensitivity and small holder attention in the LRP.

Recommendations

38. Based on the patterns in the findings and conclusions, the following seven recommendations are presented. Due to pandemic disruptions, two of the baseline recommendations (numbers 2 and 6) are still relevant for continued consideration.

Recommendation 1: If there are unspent funds, request a no-cost extension of the current LRP to utilize these, combined with a new activity including a cash transfer component from other donors, which would strengthen smallholder linkages and local government cash transfer processes for procurement.

Recommendation 2: WFP should support the MoEYS to undertake a systematic review of the national school meals implementation in schools handed over since 2019.

Recommendation 3: WFP, in collaboration with the MoEYS and NSPC, should conduct a systematic adjustment to the LRP procurement processes to identify what is feasible and possible within the existing Government situation and resourcing.

Recommendation 4: WFP, in collaboration with the MoEYS, MAFF, and NSPC, should ensure that the formalization of the sub-decree for school feeding does support the development of a mechanism or framework to allow for MAFF and MoEYS to intersect more naturally, to replace the current convening role played by WFP.

Recommendation 5: WFP, in consultation with MAFF, MOEYS and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, should seek to conduct a gender analysis to integrate increased gender sensitivity into local and regional procurement processes for school meals in HGSP and NHGSP schools to allow for the increased participation of smallholder women as suppliers.

Recommendation 6: WFP should seek to review and fill its current staffing gaps and consider the necessity of expanding its staffing profiles in preparation for a focus on the country capacity strengthening elements of the programme.

Recommendation 7: WFP, together with USDA and in consultation with MAFF, MoEYS and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, should seek to integrate and visibilize the LRP contributions to gender in the next McGovern-Dole programme cycle by improving gender visibility in the Results Framework.

1. Introduction

1. This report presents the findings from the midterm evaluation of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP)¹⁰ programme for World Food Programme (WFP) School Feeding activities in Cambodia, covering the period 01 November 2019 to 30 September 2023.
2. This evaluation is the second of a series of three linked pieces of work¹¹ considering the USDA support to the WFP programme in the country. The series has been commissioned by the WFP Cambodia Country Office (CO), based on the Terms of Reference (TOR) and a more recent Addendum which has slightly changed the focus of this current work (Annex 1).
3. This work was conducted concurrently with an evaluation of the USDA-supported McGovern-Dole school feeding programme,¹² which will produce a complementary set of reports. This midterm evaluation was planned for mid-2021, but due to delays in the baseline and the school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was moved to June 2022, with the report due by October 2022. The overall evaluation series timeline is found in Annex 2.

1.1. EVALUATION FEATURES

4. The evaluation series has the mutually reinforcing objectives and accountability and learning.
 - **Accountability:** the evaluation process assesses and reports on the performance and results of the USDA McGovern-Dole funded activities during the funding period by assessing whether targeted beneficiaries have received expected services, and whether the programme is likely to meet – or has met – its stated goals and objectives aligned with the results frameworks and assumptions.
 - **Learning:** the evaluation process also identifies reasons why certain results occurred or not, and draws lessons, and good practices for learning. The evidence-based findings are to inform operational and strategic decision making.
5. The entire series is being conducted by an evaluation team (ET) of independent consultants from the KonTerra Group in partnership with Indochina Research Limited, a local Cambodian research company.¹³ For this midterm work, a mixed methods approach was used combining document review, analysis of secondary quantitative data, key informant interviews (KIIs) with national level stakeholders, school and district level site visits including interviews, observation, focus group discussions (FGDs) with the range of stakeholders at local levels, including farmers and suppliers engaged in the procurement processes. The WFP principles for integration of gender in evaluation were applied across the methodology, which is presented in more detail in [Annex 3](#).
6. The evaluation serves the interests of a range of internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include the WFP CO in Cambodia, WFP headquarters (HQ) and the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific Region in Bangkok (RBB). External stakeholders include the Royal Government of Cambodia, particularly the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), and the departments and agencies engaged with and supported by the LRP programme implementation at central and decentralized levels, as well as cooperating partners, donors, other United Nations agencies, and other stakeholders (academia, private sector, etc.). The beneficiaries of school feeding activities are key stakeholders of this evaluation and of future WFP actions in the country. The main users for this evaluation report (ER) are expected to be the WFP CO, counterparts in the MoEYS and the MAFF, cooperating partners, other United Nations agencies and donors (mainly USDA).
7. The purpose of this ER is to provide an independent assessment of the programme so far to enable WFP Cambodia, the Royal Government of Cambodia, and cooperating partners to feed its results and learning into the remainder of this programme and future programmes - in particular, the Government-led and managed National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) - while also contributing important information to the parallel McGovern-Dole School Feeding midterm evaluation.
8. To be able to critically and objectively review whether the programme is on track to meet its stated goals and objectives, this midterm evaluation assessed: i) the remaining progress to be made to achieve the objectives

¹⁰ USDA Local and Regional Procurement (LRP-441-2019-011-00)

¹¹ The evaluation consists of a baseline (2020), midterm (originally planned for 2021) and endline assessment (2023).

¹² USDA McGovern-Dole programme FFE-442-2019-013-00

¹³ IRL was not involved in this midterm evaluation.

as outlined by USDA and WFP; ii) the issues or factors that need to be further strengthened to ensure that objectives are met; and iii) further efforts required to ensure handover preparedness and programme sustainability after USDA assistance has ended. In addition, progress against baseline recommendations were assessed, in particular with regards to the inclusion of gender-disaggregated indicators for the programme.

9. The evaluation adhered to the WFP commitment of accountability to affected populations (AAP) to include beneficiaries as key stakeholders in their work, and to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). The ET was committed to GEWE in the evaluation process, through the participation and consultation in the evaluation by women and men from different groups. The work also adhered to the Humanitarian Principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, and Independence throughout.

10. The evaluation findings were delivered via an initial Draft Report which was reviewed and commented on by the members of the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). The final version of the Report was circulated to all stakeholders, and WFP and the Government will identify and explore the opportunities to communicate the findings and recommendations of the evaluation exercises to communities and key stakeholders as part of their Accountability to Communities.

1.2. CONTEXT

11. **General Overview.** The Royal Government of Cambodia has established impressive economic growth over the past 20 years, bringing the country to lower middle-income status in 2016, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US\$1,561 in 2018, up from US\$1,043 in 2013. The high economic growth rate has been sustained above seven percent for over a decade,¹⁴ most recently at 7.5 percent in 2018 and 7.1 percent in 2019,¹⁵ making Cambodia one of the fastest growing economies in the world. However, this economic growth rate was seriously impacted¹⁶ by the global COVID-19 pandemic, although the Ministry of Economy and Finance programmes that it should reach 2.4 percent in 2022.¹⁷

12. From 2019, Cambodia ranked 144 in the global Human Development Index (HDI) out of 189 countries reporting and it was moved up to the medium human development category.¹⁸ Life expectancy at birth and the education index are also on a positive trend. However, health and education indicators both remain lower in comparison to neighbouring countries. The Government's targets on improved nutrition, ending stunting and increasing income (by 20 percent for the poorest) have not yet been achieved. The country's long-term development vision, the Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase IV (2019-2023), emphasizing strong commitment to education and children's nutrition, is viewed as a priority for "sustainable human resource development, economic growth, and social development."

13. **Demographics and Poverty.** Rapid economic growth in Cambodia has been accompanied by a significant reduction in poverty.¹⁹ Poverty indicators declined steadily by 1.6 percentage points per year between 2009 and 2019/20.^{20,21} About 18 percent of the population is identified as poor.²² Poverty rates vary considerably from 4.2 percent in Phnom Penh to 22.8 percent in rural areas.²³

14. According to the latest national statistics, the country has an estimated population of over 16.7 million (2022²⁴) with a young median age of 25.3 years. Nearly three-quarters of the population resides in rural areas where approximately 90 percent of the country's poor live.²⁵ These households mostly live on a small margin of poverty and are vulnerable to natural hazards, environmental or individual shocks. Estimates suggest that a loss in daily income of US\$0.30 per capita would double the poverty rate.²⁶ There remains a very limited social safety net system in the country. However, the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) 2016-2025 places a strong emphasis on human capital development, and the collaboration with WFP on school feeding through the

¹⁴ <https://www.adb.org/countries/cambodia/economy>.

¹⁵ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf

¹⁶ Negative (-3.1 percent) economic growth reported for 2020; <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=KH>

¹⁷ <https://mef.gov.kh/documents-category/publication/budget-in-brief/>

¹⁸ <https://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KHM>

¹⁹ Retrieved from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview>

²¹ <https://www.adb.org/countries/cambodia/poverty>

²² Exchange rate of KHR 4,000 = US\$1.00

²³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview#1> Last Updated: Mar 29, 2022

²⁴ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cambodia-population>

²⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview>

²⁶ World Bank Policy Note on Poverty Monitoring and Analysis, October 2013.

MoEYS and planned nationwide rollout is an integral part of the Government's efforts.²⁷ The economic situation caused by COVID-19 threatened a large number of these people with a return to poverty, as well as many thousands of workers from factories and tourism facilities who were laid off and unpaid.

15. **Gender** inequality persists in Cambodia, ranked 116 out of the 160 countries in the Gender Inequality Index (GII = 0.474²⁸)²⁹ and ranked 93 out of 149 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) 2018.³⁰ The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Cambodia reported (2015) that 70 percent of women in employment were engaged at lower levels and on less pay³¹ than men, with estimates that on average, women are paid 30 percent less for commensurate work.³² Women are also underrepresented in the public sector where 77 percent of employees and 85 percent of decision-making positions are occupied by men.³³ Nationally, 25 percent of women are illiterate compared to 13.5 percent of men (2015).³⁴ In contrast, in 2019, women owned 61 percent of businesses in the country, significantly higher than in many ASEAN countries.³⁵

16. To address gender inequality, the Royal Government of Cambodia has endorsed two strategic plans: the National Action Plan to prevent Violence against Women, 2019-2023; and the Neary Rattanak Strategic Plan, 2019-2023,³⁶ which together aim to: i) promote the role of women in society by enhancing their capacity and increasing the proportion of women in leadership; ii) streamline gender in development policies and plans at all levels, promoting women's entrepreneurship through expanded education, technical and vocational training for women, and assisting social mobility; and, iii) increase the proportion of women in leadership positions. Increasingly, more women are creating independent sources of income within the private sector through urban migration for work or by starting small businesses, particularly in the clothing sector, but gender inequality persists.³⁷

17. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets on gender equality on education and literacy (Goal 5) have been achieved at the primary school level.³⁸ Gender disparity is higher for secondary education as only 40 percent of girls complete secondary schooling. Due to poverty, girls in rural areas are at higher risk of dropout than boys, to care for younger siblings, to help their parents or to move to urban areas to work.³⁹ Based on the ToR, the evaluation is not required to deliver a full intersectional analysis although the approach to intersectionality is, de-facto, described in the gender methodology section later.

18. **Agriculture.** National agricultural resources include 3.7 million hectares of cultivated land, of which 75 percent is devoted to rice production.⁴⁰ From 2013, Cambodia became a significant rice exporter when it accounted for more than three percent of worldwide rice exports,⁴¹ with surplus rice production increasing from 4.7 million tonnes in 2014 to 5.8 million tonnes in 2018. Cambodia's agriculture sector is responsible for the generation of 22 percent of its GDP and employs around 30 percent of the population, with most rural Cambodians reliant on smallholder farming. Rural household incomes are mostly dependent on a single harvest, particularly of the staple food, rice. Agricultural sector documentation refers to three broad geographical production areas in the country: coastal (fisheries); upland (cash crops) and central plains (smallholder food crops).⁴² A large part of the national economy is dependent on fisheries and agricultural food processing.⁴³

²⁷ <http://inndec.com/library/docs/SPPF%20English%20-%20Final%20Ver.pdf>

²⁸ <https://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KHM>

²⁹ GI: Ratio of female to male HDI values. Gender Development Index scores range from 0 to 1 with a score of 1 indicating equality between men and women.

³⁰ Human Development Report, 2015, UNDP

³¹ <https://cambodia.ohchr.org/en/issues/gender-equality-and-human-rights>

³² CSO report on Cambodian gender issues. 2009

³³ <https://cambodia.ohchr.org/en/issues/gender-equality-and-human-rights>

³⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html>

³⁵ Exploring the Opportunities for Women-owned SMEs in Cambodia, 2019. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/9e469291-d3f5-43a5-bea2-2558313995ab/Market+Research+Report+on+Women_owned+SMEs+in+Cambodia.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mOU6fpx

³⁶ Five Year National Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2014-2018)

https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/democratic_governance/cambodian-gender-strategic-plan---neary-rattanak-4.html (NB: still valid, not updated)

³⁷ Commune Database 2013, Ministry of Planning

³⁸ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf

³⁹ UNESCO/UNICEF (2012) Asia Pacific: End of Decade Notes on Education for All – EFA Goal #5 Gender Equity. Bangkok: UNESCO and UNICEF.

⁴⁰ Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2019-2023 of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Cambodia

⁴¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3761e.pdf>

⁴² MoP, 2013; Agricultural census (MAFF, 2019); Agricultural Sector Development Plan (2019-2023)

⁴³ https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Cambodia/share_of_agriculture/

19. In spite of overall growth, the agricultural sector shows limited crop variety, with any diversification over recent years indicating more maize and cassava being cultivated rather than vegetables or nutrient dense crops.^{44,45} According to a 2019 estimate, there were 58,000 hectares planted with vegetables producing 68 percent of local market demand.⁴⁶ The Royal Government of Cambodia has encouraged the local production of vegetables to curb imports, and it is estimated that the planted vegetable area will increase to 63,000 hectares and will meet 76 percent of local market demand by 2023.⁴⁷ The potential for vegetables, among other crops, to generate greater profits for smallholder farmers is often not realized despite rising demand from local and international buyers;⁴⁸ access to land and irrigation for these farmers is often limited. Constraints further along the value chain include several elements: quality of seeds and other inputs; trust between value chain actors; extension services; consistent supply of produce throughout the year; smallholder skills and resources; access to finance; adoption of good agricultural practices; natural resource degradation; horizontal and vertical linkages; and post-harvest handling practices. Lack of proper market systems, high transportation and logistics costs are also limiting factors.

20. The fisheries sector contributes about 12 percent to GDP. Aquaculture is becoming economically more important as a way of increasing local fish production for food security. Aquaculture production is still very small compared to capture fisheries but has succeeded in producing high value species for the domestic and export markets. The aquaculture industry generates many other related businesses, including fish feed producers, chemical suppliers, storage, processing, and marketing. Logistics are also important to ensure product freshness and timely distribution. Together, these ancillary services generate substantial indirect employment.⁴⁹

21. **Food and Nutrition Security** and undernutrition remain important public health concerns in Cambodia,⁵⁰ and are most prevalent in rural areas. The Government has had policies and programmes developed to end hunger, including: i) the second National Fast Track Roadmap for Improving Nutrition (2014-2020);⁵¹ ii) The National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN, 2019-2023); iii) Cambodia's Roadmap for Food Systems for Sustainable Development (2022-2030); and iv) the National Action Plan for Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia (2016-2025).⁵²

22. The situation for nutrition and food security is still challenging with 14 percent of households consuming less than the minimum dietary energy requirement and 11.6 percent with inadequate dietary diversity.^{53,54} The National Voluntary Review by the Government in 2019⁵⁵ noted that although there have been improvements in nutrition indicators since 2010, Cambodia's national objectives set for the Millennium Development Goals were not met⁵⁶ and the figures for malnutrition remain higher than most countries in the region.⁵⁷ Challenges cited in the review included: i) the rapid context changes including population growth, urbanization, and migration; ii) dietary quality of pregnant women and children under five; iii) public budget deficits for sustainability; and iv) the need for more diversified agricultural production and the protection of natural resources.

23. Health and malnutrition data reveal an equity disparity in Cambodia, with stunting more common in rural areas (34 percent) than urban areas (24 percent), and least common among the children of more educated mothers and wealthier families. A primary cause of malnutrition in the country is limited consumption of nutritious foods and poor sanitation in households and the community (such as at primary schools). A drought in 2020 led to water shortages which affected sanitation and hygiene⁵⁸ and the COVID-19 pandemic also had a direct impact on health and nutrition. Malnutrition can have substantive economic consequences. In a landmark study, the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD), WFP and the United Nations Children's Fund

⁴⁴ Cambodian agriculture in transition: opportunities and risks (worldbank.org)

⁴⁵ WFP 2017 Fill the Nutrient Gap Full Report, also see World Bank report: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/805091467993504209/cambodian-agriculture-in-transition-opportunities-and-risks>

⁴⁶ <https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9176756/cambodia-boosting-domestic-vegetable-production-to-curb-imports/>

⁴⁷ ibid

⁴⁸ Commodity Value Chain Study - A Key to Accelerate Inclusive Markets for Smallholder Producers in Cambodia (FAO, 2019)

⁴⁹ http://www.fao.org/fishery/countrysector/naso_cambodia/en

⁵⁰ https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000112436/download/?_ga=2.113129794.71101732.1589421801-1848541966.1586381573

⁵¹ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf

⁵² http://ocm.gov.kh/ocmwinwin20/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/6-National_Action_Plan_for_the_Zero.pdf

⁵³ Cambodia Socioeconomic Survey, 2014, National Institute of Statistics; Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/6.Maternal.pdf>

⁵⁴ CSDG_Framework_2016-2030_English_LAST_FINAL.pdf (mosvy.gov.kh)

⁵⁵ Cambodia's National Voluntary Review 2019 of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; Kingdom of Cambodia; June 2019.

⁵⁶ Cambodia had an objective of reducing the prevalence of undernourished people to <10%. Other targets such as for wasting, stunting and anaemia were also not achieved.

⁵⁷ <https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/topics/sdg-2-zero-hunger/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.oneworld.net/updates/news/cambodias-food-insecurity-rises-due-covid-19>

(UNICEF) estimated that malnutrition costs Cambodia up to US\$400 million annually, or 2.5 percent of its GDP.⁵⁹ Cambodia, with CARD as the leading coordination body for food security and nutrition, continues to strengthen its multisectoral approach by integrating national policies and programmes that improve food security, health, nutrition coordination, and nutrition outcomes.⁶⁰

24. **Social Protection.** Social protection and safety net programmes are an increasingly important and recognized means of supporting food security and nutrition improvements by the Royal Government of Cambodia. The 2016-2025 National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) provided the policy context necessary to coordinate and build an effective system, which serves as a policy tool to reduce and prevent poverty, vulnerability, and inequality. The NSPPF aims at harmonizing, integrating, and strengthening existing schemes and expanding the social protection floor to respond to all contingencies throughout the population's lifecycle. These reforms represented an opportunity to expand Cambodia's social protection programme, the Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) concept and the MoEYS school scholarships programme that all form an important part of the NSPPF social assistance pillar.

25. In **education**, Cambodia has made positive strides in improving primary education and reducing gender disparity in schools, particularly in rural areas. The 2019-2023 Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and other national strategies are strongly committed to improving educational standards. Over the last two decades, the net primary school enrolment has risen from 81 percent (2001) to 98 percent (2019). The school completion rate is the bigger challenge for primary education today, and more so in rural areas.⁶¹ While repetition and dropout rates have steadily declined over the last five years,⁶² school dropout remains problematic.

26. Students are more likely to leave school than repeat a year if they do not qualify to pass at the end of the primary school cycle. In 2012, UNESCO reported repeating percentages in primary school of 6.38 percent (7.69 percent of boys, 4.98 percent of girls); in 2021, the repetition rate was 6.5 percent (7.1 percent of boys and 5.2 percent of girls).⁶³ In 2018, the national secondary education net enrolment rate was 55.21 percent.⁶⁴ The same stability is seen in lower secondary gross enrolment rates. In 2021, the MOEYS reported a lower secondary gross enrolment rate in 2021 of 55.3 percent for boys and 66.6 percent for girls.⁶⁵ Decentralization and deconcentration reforms have placed greater responsibility on sub-national authorities for planning and delivery of basic services, including education, but over the last two years, commune development budgets have been cut by 50 percent as the national budget was diverted to address critical needs created by the pandemic.

27. **Partnerships.** The Government strives to ensure that programmes supported by development partners (such as the SMP and education scholarship programmes) are embedded within its national strategies and the NSPPF and contribute to continuous improvement and implementation of key policies and mechanisms. The Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy (DCPS, 2019-2023)⁶⁶ provides a comprehensive framework for promoting development partnerships in Cambodia.

28. Government statistics indicate that Official Development Assistance (ODA) rose from US\$1.7 billion in 2019 to US\$2.1 billion in 2020, though reduced slightly to US\$1.77 billion in 2021.⁶⁷ The Royal Government of Cambodia strives to ensure that programmes (such as the SFP) supported by development partners are embedded within its national strategies and contribute to continuous improvement and implementation of key policies and systems. The Government and WFP are in alignment in their commitment to zero hunger as indicated in the National Voluntary Review,⁶⁸ and their partnership is implemented mainly through the education and social protection sectors.

29. WFP works in partnership with several Government ministries and non-Governmental organizations (NGOs); this is in alignment with commitments to the SDGs (Goal 17, in particular).⁶⁹ The DCPS provides a

⁵⁹ CARD, WFP, and UNICEF. 2014. The Economic Consequences of Malnutrition in Cambodia.

⁶⁰ www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Cambodia%20Policy%20Brief%20on%20Nutrition%202018%20by%20World%20Vision%20International%20-%20Cambodia.pdf

⁶¹ Heng, K. et al (2016) Research report. School Dropout in Cambodia: A case evaluation of Phnom Penh and Kampong Speu. Korea International Cooperation Agency, Cambodia Country Office. Royal University of Phnom Penh, Faculty of Education

⁶² Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023, MoEYS, May 2019

⁶³ Public Education Statistics and Indicators 2020-2021; MOEYS.

⁶⁴ <https://tradingeconomics.com/cambodia/net-enrolment-rate-lower-secondary-both-sexes-percent-wb-data.html>

⁶⁵ Education Congress Report; MOEYS.

⁶⁶ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf

⁶⁷ http://odacambodia.com/Reports/reports_by_updated.asp?status=0

⁶⁸ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_SDPM_Approved.pdf

⁶⁹ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-17-partnerships-for-the-goals.html>

comprehensive framework for promoting development partnerships in Cambodia while the Joint Transition Strategy stipulated the SFP specific partnerships.⁷⁰

30. The LRP is one component of WFP's wider portfolio of school feeding activities in Cambodia, all of which are either fully funded by USDA or co-funded with another donor. Alongside the USDA's McGovern-Dole programme, complementary activities funded by other donor contributions include from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA; US\$10 million over five years), the Japanese Government (in-kind contribution of canned fish) and various private sector entities (US\$1 million per year).

31. **Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.** According to a July 2021 report,⁷¹ the COVID-19 pandemic had widespread impacts on socio-economic indicators, especially among poor households. After a decade of steadily declining poverty rates, the COVID-19 pandemic led to increased poverty and inequality, caused by widespread unemployment among the lower paid (for example, amongst migrant and factory workers and tourism staff), price hikes and a breakdown in supply chains (agricultural inputs and produce), all due to the restrictions imposed at the height of the pandemic.⁷² Food shortages were exacerbated by floods experienced during the monsoon seasons in 2020 and 2021.⁷³ The scale up of social assistance to poor and vulnerable households, launched in June 2020, has moderated income losses due to the pandemic, which has helped limit the increase in the poverty rate to 2.8 percentage points.⁷⁴ A socio-economic impact assessment sponsored by United Nations agencies found that more than half of respondents experienced loss of income, and 90 percent of these lost at least 50 percent of their income.⁷⁵ Food security decreased between August 2020 and February 2021, leading to coping mechanisms such as consuming less-preferred foods and reduction in portion size and number of meals.

32. The pandemic (in conjunction with a number of other factors) deeply impacted the agriculture sector, resulting in a reversal of the positive developments made (related to SDG 8) of decent working conditions and economic growth with respect to its farming community, especially along the Mekong basin.⁷⁶ The MAFF reported that the impact of COVID-19 was less on production than on marketing of agricultural produce, due to restrictions on transportation that affected imports, and exports. Availability of rice has not been a concern, but supply has not met demand for other foods. For example, high price increases were recorded for vegetables (up to 60 percent) and eggs (up to 14 percent).⁷⁷ The Government's initial response to the crisis was to put a ban on exports on some food items (rice and fish) to protect local food security.⁷⁸ Between March and April 2020, rice prices increased by 33 percent in Siem Reap⁷⁹ and disruptions occurred in supply chains and due to labour scarcity. During the crisis, the Cambodian Farmers' Federation Association of Agriculture Producers reported that sales of farm produce had reduced for farmers, as traders faced transportation challenges and reduced market activity.⁸⁰ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reported that supply of agricultural inputs (such as seeds, fish fingerlings, and breeding chickens) were negatively affected by COVID-19.⁸¹

33. The pandemic led to the closure of schools in Cambodia for almost 20 months between March 2020 and November 2021, with significant impacts on learning loss as well as the temporary discontinuation of the school meal programme. After a period of hybrid partial re-opening from November 2021, schools fully reopened in January 2022, three months later than the normal new school year calendar. Prior to the resumption of school meals (January 2022), WFP worked closely with its implementing partners to ensure that health, hygiene and food safety and COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures were strictly followed, under the leadership of the MoEYS School Health Department. Other additional measures included vaccination for cooks, taking antigen tests for COVID-19 infection, and social distancing during food handling and at mealtimes.

⁷⁰ MoEYS, National Social Protection Council, Ministry of Economic and Finance (MEF), Ministry of Interior, MAFF, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Planning and

⁷¹ WFP-UNFPA-UN Women-UNAIDS-UNICEF. COVID-19 Socio-economic impact assessment. July 2021

⁷² <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/28/in-the-mekong-a-confluence-of-calamities/>

⁷³ For example, the extension of tax exemptions for basic food staff (until December 2022) and safety net cash transfers programme (until September 2022) Source: WFP Market Update (January, 2022)

⁷⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview#1> Last Updated: Mar 29, 2022

⁷⁵ WFP-UNFPA-UN Women-UNAIDS-UNICEF. COVID-19 Socio-economic impact assessment. July 2021

⁷⁶ <https://www.oneworld.net/updates/news/cambodias-food-insecurity-rises-due-covid-19>

⁷⁷ WFP Food Security and Markets Update (April 2020)

⁷⁸ <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/cambodia-to-ban-some-rice-exports-april-5-due-to-coronavirus>

⁷⁹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/28/in-the-mekong-a-confluence-of-calamities/>

⁸⁰ COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak: Overview of the impact on the agriculture sector. 2020. https://www.wfo-oma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID19-WFO-technical-assessment_005082020.pdf

⁸¹ SciDevNet. June 22, 2020.

34. The start of the LRP activities was heavily impacted by the school closures, and some activities under the programme were yet to begin (as of May 2022). Some 223,954 children (50 percent girls) under the SFP missed school meals over the last two years due to COVID-19, although WFP SFP support continued through take home rations (THRs) distributed to many of the most vulnerable households, in conjunction with the Government's *IDPoor* social protection programme.⁸²

35. A WFP Emergency Response and Recovery Programme⁸³ to address the effects of the pandemic was initiated to mitigate threats to food security due to floods (in five provinces) and the disruption of income sources faced by communities during the pandemic crisis (in three provinces). The FAO also had a similar Emergency Response and Recovery Programme within the agricultural sector to support families that have been forced to migrate due to loss of income.⁸⁴

36. Overall, Cambodia responded and has adapted well to COVID-19: approximately 83 percent of the population has received at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccines, and travel restrictions were relaxed after a decrease in cases in the fourth quarter of 2021. This has led to a strong recovery in the main economic sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture, and tourism is now picking up.⁸⁵ However, the country is vulnerable to potential economic disruptions due to new variants of the virus, and the current war in Ukraine has increased fuel and food prices, which in turn have led to increased inflation and a potential increase in poverty.⁸⁶

1.3. SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

37. **School Meals in Cambodia.** In Cambodia, short-term hunger is a key factor affecting educational results,⁸⁷ and school feeding is a major component of the WFP Cambodia Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019–2023, now being implemented in five⁸⁸ of Cambodia's 25 provinces. The WFP-managed school meals programme (SMP) started in Cambodia in 1999. In 2014, the MoEYS in collaboration with WFP piloted a Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) model, managed by WFP, to illustrate the potential of local procurement to support school meals provisions.⁸⁹ In May 2015, both parties subsequently signed a 'school feeding roadmap' in May 2015 whereby the management of the school meals programme would be transferred to the Government and would become a National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP).

38. Individual schools are intended to be supported through a four-phase process from a traditional WFP SMP school through a hybrid model combining both SMP and HGSF elements to a WFP-managed HGSF model and eventual transition into a government managed NHGSFP programme. The following Table 1 summarizes the distinct phases.

Table 1: Phases of Transition from SMP to NHGSFP

Model	Key Characteristics
SMP	WFP-managed procurement processes drawing on international food assistance.
SMP-Hybrid	WFP-managed processes combining international food assistance (managed by WFP) supplemented by local produced procured by the schools.
HGSF	WFP-managed processes supporting local schools to procure commodities within the national context with no food assistance provided.
NHGSFP	Government-managed processes whereby local schools, managed by the MOEYS, procure commodities within the national context.

Source: WFP Cambodia Country Office programme documents, synthesized by the evaluation team

39. Under the SMP model, the food commodities provided are predominantly imported from the United States, while the HGSF hybrid model provides schools with imported rice and fortified vegetable oil complemented with local procurement of animal proteins, iodized salt, and fresh vegetables. The national HGSF programme is fully home-grown, which means that the rice and oil are also procured locally although they are not fortified.

⁸² THR Round 1 (April 2020): WFP reached 80,767 *IDPoor* households with children and the Government programme reached 11,506. The same was repeated in Round 2 (August 2020).

⁸³ WFP progress reports (2021/2022)

⁸⁴ These were part of the Flood Response Plan coordinated by the Humanitarian Response Forum of Cambodia.

⁸⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview#1> Last Updated: Mar 29, 2022

⁸⁶ According to Ministry of Economic and Finance, fuel price increased by 49% in Q4 2021, while the price of pork and fish increased by 2.8% and 3.1%, respectively. In February 2022, the price of gasoline (regular) is +8% MoM and +33% YoY (Ministry of Commerce, February 2022).

⁸⁷ <https://www.worldnomads.com/responsible-travel/footprints/programmes/103/school-feeding-program-siem-reap-cambodia>

⁸⁸ Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Oddar Meanchey, Kampong Chhnang and Pursat provinces

⁸⁹ See [Annex 4](#) for details of distinction between the traditional WFP school meals programme and the HGSF model managed by WFP.

40. The cornerstone of the WFP Cambodia CSP is to support national and sub-national level systems for direct implementation of food security, nutrition, and social protection programmes by the national Government. In line with this, WFP has supported the MoEYS and the National Social Protection Council (NSPC) formulation and endorsement of national operational frameworks and guidelines for the national school meals programme. The overall school feeding programme aims at enabling national ownership, as set out in several relevant documents⁹⁰ (either under review or in the process of being formulated) such as the development of a School Meals Policy and the supporting sub-decree, both, initiated in 2019.

41. The expectation is that the WFP-supported HGSF schools will be slowly transitioned to government management within the NHGSFP. From school year (SY) 2019-2020, WFP started reducing its operational coverage as the MoEYS took over the WFP-piloted HGSF model to become the national programme, with an official budget allocation from SY 2019-2020. As of March 2022, the MOEYS and WFP elaborated a Joint School Feeding Transition Strategy that outlines the handover of further schools and the remaining capacity building to be done. Handover is programmed to be completed by 2028. The transition to a nationally owned school feeding programme is coherent with the 2019-2023 Education Strategic Plan and the 2016-2025 NSPPF. The transition to national ownership provides a contextual goal and has been a key focus of all WFP programming, including the USDA supported programmes for the McGovern-Dole School Meals Programme and the Local and Regional Procurement programme, the subject of this evaluation.

42. **Local and Regional Procurement (LRP).** The subject of this evaluation is the USDA Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) programme, Agreement number LRP-442-2019-011-00; running from 01 November 2019 to 30 September 2023.⁹¹ The Agreement was signed on 27 September 2019 and amended on 18 December 2019 and again on 24 April 2022 to include THRs.⁹² The LRP is included within WFP Cambodia's CSP as supporting the Strategic Objective 1 (School Feeding Programme). Activities under this Strategic Objective constitute approximately 69 percent of all WFP work in the country.⁹³ At WFP corporate level, the LRP falls under Strategic Objective 1 (SDG Goal 2).

43. **Alignment with United Nations frameworks and other partners.** The LRP contributes towards SDG 2 to “end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture” and is aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Cambodia (UNDAF, 2019-2023), Outcome 2 on Prosperity.⁹⁴ The LRP is also coherent with SDG 17 “strengthening partnerships” to allow a full transition to Government ownership and management. The LRP design includes engagement of the FAO as one of the coordinating partners to support the MAFF's Agricultural Strategic Development Plan (2019-2023).

44. **Geographic Coverage:** The LRP programme is implemented in the same five rural districts as the McGovern-Dole programme, across three central provinces of Cambodia (Siem Reap (SRP), Kampong Thom (KTM), and Kampong Chhnang (KCG)).⁹⁵ The three provinces targeted by the LRP fall in the central plains, characterized by a high proportion of smallholder farmers producing food crops with limited market access for their produce. The LRP programme targets 163 schools in the five target districts, with all these schools being supported by the McGovern-Dole programme.

45. Geographical and site school targeting (provinces and districts) for all WFP school feeding programmes is based on findings from Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (VAM) conducted by WFP, the Royal Government of Cambodia and development partners. Specific school selection draws on district level data on the following criteria: net admission rate; dropout rate; completion rate; performance; poverty rates; stunting; wasting; underweight, and ground truth check.

46. **LRP Programme Logic and Results:** The CO conducted analytical work prior to and during the elaboration of the current LRP to inform the design of the programme for this cycle. This included WFP evaluations in Cambodia and elsewhere as well as the endline evaluation of the previous McGovern-Dole cycle. The CO also conducted school assessments and consultations with suppliers and farmers. In addition to the

⁹⁰ Including HGSF operational guidelines, frameworks, policy, and legal documents

⁹¹ Although the USDA LRP programme is embedded within a larger school feeding programme, the findings presented in Section 2 relate to LRP specific activities and actions.

⁹² LRP-441-2019-011-00

⁹³ Source: WFP Cambodia Budget Unit

⁹⁴ <https://cambodia.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/CAMBODIA%20UNDAF-%202019-2023.pdf>

⁹⁵ A map of Cambodia indicating these provinces is provided in [Annex 7](#).

analytical studies included in the bibliography, a series of earlier works were developed to inform the LRP design.⁹⁶

47. The School Feeding Road Map (2015) initially laid out the strategic and operational stages towards handover to a Government-owned and operated school feeding programme, which was later updated (in March 2022) as part of the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme Transition strategy.⁹⁷ The Royal Government of Cambodia demonstrated its continued support to school meals by approving a contribution to WFP school feeding activities of 1,500 metric tonnes (MT) of rice and over US\$1 million for local procurement of the commodities for the school meals (2021).⁹⁸ Despite the pandemic, the Government reaffirmed its commitment by scaling-up its national programme to 290 schools for the 2021/22 school years, which reflect the importance it places on SFP as a key social protection instrument.

48. Strong community participation and engagement is identified as a major factor supporting national ownership in both WFP's School Feeding Policy and the USDA's Results Frameworks (RF; to be found in [Annex 4](#)). Under the LRP programme, through linkages with FAO, WFP works with MAFF to develop training programmes to support suppliers and farmers to meet the needs of the HGSP model sustainably.

49. Prior to the LRP, the HGSP pilot model had risen to 265 schools in 2019 as more institutions shifted from the SMP/traditional model to the hybrid model and the full HGSP model. Under the HGSP model, WFP's focus changed to a technical assistance role providing institutional and systemic capacity development to Government (policy, financial) and other stakeholders (implementation, coordination). The aim is to link provision of school meals to local and regional production (especially from smallholder farmers (SHFs)) and markets in preparation for eventual handover to the Government.

50. The LRP programme complements the McGovern-Dole programme through its focus on local procurement for provision of meals to specific schools by collaborating with local farmers (and suppliers) in the creation of functional supply chains and strengthened value chain systems⁹⁹ to produce and procure high quality local foods for the school meals ([Annex 4](#)).

51. The LRP has three strategic objectives: i) Improved Cost-Effectiveness of Food Assistance; Improved Timeliness of Food Assistance; and Improved Utilization of Nutritious and Culturally Acceptable Food that Meet Quality Standards.¹⁰⁰ To achieve the programme's objective, the LRP aims to strengthen the capacity of schools, suppliers, farmers, and Government authorities to implement procurement of regional and local food commodities through direct purchases led by the schools.

52. The Local and Regional Procurement programme has four activities:

- Activity 1: Cash transfers to schools for local and regional procurement of commodities for the HGSP programme;
- Activity 2: Strengthen capacity of HGSP stakeholders on procurement mechanisms.
- Activity 3: Technical assistance to producers and suppliers on enhancing production capacity to engage with HGSP market.
- Activity 4: Strengthen national institutional capacities and systems.

53. The LRP results framework includes a range of outputs to produce intermediate results on improved cost-effectiveness, timeliness and utilization of nutritious and culturally acceptable foods that meet safety and quality standards (Table 2).

⁹⁶ The full bibliography is given in [Annex 10](#) and a list of the additional analytical works mentioned is in [Annex 11](#).

⁹⁷ Now revised under the new Joint Transition Strategy (2022).

⁹⁸ LRP Semi-annual Report Narrative (1 April – 30 September 2021)

⁹⁹ Including agricultural production and safe food handling practices

¹⁰⁰ The Results Framework ([Annex 4](#)) specifies: i) Increased capacity of Government institutions (FR1): on procurement (rice fortification, HGSP model); information management and national food safety systems; operationalization processes (e.g. procurement guidelines); ii) Improved national policy and regulatory framework (FR2): support rice fortification and value chain actors on food safety systems (e.g. on production, handling, storage); iii) Improved capacity of relevant organizations (FR3): operationalize rice fortification pilot and HGSP procurement mechanisms (training, guidelines, management, processes) and access to market information; iv) Improved leverage of private sector resources (FR4): cash transfers for local food purchase.

Table 2: Overview of LRP Objectives

LRP Strategic Objectives: Improved Effectiveness of Food Assistance through Local and Regional Procurement				
	Immediate Objectives	Outcome	Outputs	Activities, partners, and technical assistance (TA)
1.1	Improved Cost-Effectiveness of Food Assistance	Improved Cost-Effectiveness of - Procurement - Delivery - Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened capacity of HGSF stakeholders on procurement mechanisms Technical Assistance to farmers and suppliers for strengthened HGSF market engagement Strengthened national institutional capacity and systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities 2.1, 3.3, 4.2 Partners: MoEYS, MAFF, FAO, Ministry of Commerce, Cambodian Rice Federation Participants: Local School Feeding Committee (LSFC), suppliers, farmers, local government. TA: operational guidelines; market systems; production, information management
1.2	Improved Timeliness of Food Assistance	Improved Timeliness of - Procurement - Delivery - Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved system of cash transfers to support HGSF Strengthened Capacity of HGSF stakeholders Strengthened national institutional capacity and systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities: 1, 2.1, 4.2. Partners: MoEYS, FAO, MAFF, Green Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Cambodian Rice Federation Participants: LSFC, suppliers, farmers, local government. TA: procurement systems management, information management, rice fortification.
1.3	Improved Utilization of Nutritious and Culturally Acceptable Food that Meet Quality Standards. ¹⁰⁹	Improved Access to Nutritious Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved system of cash transfer to support HGSF Strengthened national institutional capacity and systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities 1, 4.1 Partners: MoEYS Participants: LSFC, suppliers, farmers, TA Focus area: procurement systems management; information management; rice fortification
		Improved Access to Culturally Acceptable Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved food safety and quality in production and handling for suppliers and SHFs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 Partners: MoEYS, FAO Participants: LSFC, suppliers, farmers government officials TA focus area: enabling environment, local production & markets systems management.
		Strengthened Local and Regional Food Market Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess existing and potential procurement options for national HGSF model. Enhanced capacity for suppliers and SHF to engage more effectively in HGSF programme and access market information 	

Source: WFP LRP Results Framework, LRP Project Agreement Document and LRP Proposal

54. **Improved cost-effectiveness (1.1.).** The LRP programme supports McGovern-Dole/HGSF schools¹⁰¹ to procure foods through competitive bidding processes principally from farmers in the communities local to the schools, and other suppliers (local traders, millers, wholesalers) who may aggregate farmers' produce. Targeting smallholder farmers around HGSF schools supports the local economies while improving the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of the supplies, as well as ensuring a better nutritional content and quality of the school meals.

55. The technical assistance activities under the WFP-FAO agreement (in partnership with MAFF) aim to strengthen market linkages through capacity building of value chain actors (suppliers and farmers) along the commodity chains¹⁰² to meet the demand from HGSF schools (such as local meat, fish, and vegetables). [Annex 4](#) describes LRP activities in more detail.

56. **Improved timeliness (1.2.).** The LRP interventions for improved timeliness focus on improving the system of cash transfers to schools in support of the NHGSFP. This involves institutionalizing the procurement and management processes in alignment with the national systems and structures and ensuring that

¹⁰¹ Through the provincial departments of the MoEYS.

¹⁰² Procure, market, deliver and store local, culturally preferred, safe, and nutritious foods in a timely and cost-effective manner through cash transfers, technical assistance, and capacity building

stakeholders at all levels within Government, from national, sub-national and at local authority and school levels, are familiar with the procurement processes. In parallel, the LRP also is to support strengthening the capacity of suppliers in managing contracts, engaging with farmers, and ensuring timely responsiveness to school orders for local provision.

57. **Improved utilization (1.3).** The LRP interventions also include activities to strengthen the national HGSF, supporting institutions and the policy environment to facilitate the provision of locally fortified rice in the future. The LRP funds are utilized to develop a package of tools and training modules for procurement processes including support for coaching schools in record management, storage management, food and safety hygiene and resource mobilization.

58. **Foundational Results.** A set of foundational results (FRs) provide the mechanism for linkages of the LRP programme objectives to sustainable turnover and transition after USDA support ends. There are four FRs for the LRP (the full Results Framework is found in [Annex 4](#)).

- Increased capacity of Government institutions (FR1): the activities will include strengthening procurement (rice fortification, HGSF model); information management and national food safety systems, as well as operationalization processes (for example, developing guidelines for procurement options for the national HGSF programme);
- Improved national policy and regulatory framework (FR2): that will support rice fortification and support value chain actors on food safety systems including training and tools (for example, on production, handling, storage);
- Improved capacity of relevant organizations (FR3): strengthen stakeholders to operationalize the rice fortification pilot (blending, quality assurance) and HGSF stakeholders on procurement mechanisms (training, guidelines, management, processes) and access to market information;
- Improved leverage of private sector resources (FR4): cash transfers for local food purchase.

59. **Outputs and Planned Beneficiaries.** The LRP ultimately targeted supporting 163 schools over the life of the programme and 55,745 school children. There are four primary activities under the LRP. Activity 1 involved support to schools through cash transfers to support the HGSF programme procurement. Activity 2 focuses on the capacity building of school authorities and suppliers in local procurement. Activity 3 provides technical assistance to farmers and suppliers to strengthen HGSF market engagement while Activity 4 seeks to strengthen the national system and capacities. The full Results Framework, indicators, targets, and achieved values are found in [Annex 4](#).

60. **Resourcing requirements and funding situation.** The donor for the LRP is the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Foreign Agricultural Service. The finalized budget for the LRP programme totals US\$4.7 million. Per programme documents, other implementation expenses such as staff costs are borne by the WFP CO. Table 3 summarizes the overall LRP planned budget.

Table 3: LRP Planned Budget - Overview

Activity	Activity Name	Cost (USD)
1	Cash transfers to schools to support the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSF)	2,308,881 ¹⁰³
2	Strengthen capacity of HGSF stakeholders on procurement mechanisms.	213,024
3	Technical assistance to producers and suppliers on enhancing production capacity to engage with HGSF market.	557,218
4	Strengthen national institutional capacities and systems.	407,034
	Studies and Evaluation	480,000
	Activity Costs Subtotal:	3,966,157
	Adjusted Direct Support Costs	446,988
	Indirect Support Costs	286,854
	Grand Total	4,700,000

Source: WFP CO, Cambodia, Budget Unit

61. WFP ensures a comprehensive school feeding programme delivery through multiple complementary activities and donor funding sources. All the SFP operations are managed under one programme unit within WFP Cambodia which allows for an alignment and complementarity of the various contributions, for lessons and experience to be drawn and shared from each, avoiding replication. The WFP's wider portfolio of school feeding

¹⁰³ Incorporating US\$1,769,375 allocated for food commodity purchases.

activities in Cambodia receives contributions from 10 donors totalling US\$55,798,433,¹⁰⁴ including the Royal Government of Cambodia. The USDA is the largest contributor, covering 46.3 percent of the overall SFP budgets.

62. **Partners.** WFP implements the LRP programme in partnership with several ministries of the Royal Government of Cambodia. The MoEYS is the key official partner responsible for implementation of the programme in schools,¹⁰⁵ along with the Provincial and District Offices of Education, Youth and Sports. Other ministries involved in the programme include the MAFF, MEF, NSPC, and the Ministry of Commerce. The CARD, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, and the Cambodian Rice Federation are also key national partners.

63. The LRP is implemented in partnership with local commune councils who engage the farmers, suppliers and entrepreneurs as well as manage the competitive bidding process. Although not included in LRP's design, two NGO implementing partners (PLAN International and World Vision) play an important role in the implementation and promotion of good nutrition and gender practices pursued by both WFP and the Government.

64. **Gender Considerations.** WFP Cambodia is committed to GEWE, and the CSP describes engagement with GEWE throughout, as a precondition for effective and sustainable development, including commitment "to embed gender and disability analyses, including sex- and age-disaggregated data, in assessments, research, technical assistance and knowledge and information management, as appropriate."¹⁰⁶

65. Over the last decade, the CO has also undertaken several initiatives to better understand the gender context in the country,¹⁰⁷ and has conducted several studies recently to assess the barriers to participation and empowerment of women in the HGSF value chain.¹⁰⁸ The CO commitment is consistent with the global WFP Gender Policy (2022-2026) and aligned with the Government's Neary Rattanak IV, which emphasizes the importance of multi-sectoral action to improve GEWE. The Government has also drafted its third National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (NAPVAW III). These documents have been consulted to ensure overall alignment between the LRP programme and the wider gender policy context.

66. The LRP programme documents indicate that female suppliers and stakeholders should be prioritized, provided they either meet essential requirements or can be supported to attain eligibility and join the programme.¹⁰⁹ The overall mainstreaming of gender analysis into the LRP (and McGovern-Dole) studies represents progress from previous school feeding programme cycles.¹¹⁰ The LRP baseline highlighted the need to add gender considerations - retroactively - into the LRP design documents and monitoring plan for the subject to receive appropriate attention during implementation, and to be assessed in future evaluation rounds.

67. **Previous evaluation recommendations and analytical works.** The CO conducted a range of analytical work prior to and during the elaboration of the LRP (and current McGovern-Dole), which included WFP evaluations in Cambodia and elsewhere as well as the endline evaluation of the previous McGovern-Dole programme cycle and were used to inform the design of the current programme. The CO also conducted school assessments and consultations with other stakeholders.

68. Finally, the LRP baseline report also presented a number of recommendations for adjustments to be made to the programme implementation (see Table 4 below). These serve as a rubric to assess progress towards end of cycle objectives.

¹⁰⁴ Per Budget Revision 4, of the WFP Cambodia Country Strategic Plan (CSP), approved May 2021. https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000127753/download/?_ga=2.87260890.379391903.1660314165-1183078218.1581281713

¹⁰⁵ In particular its Primary Education Department's Scholarship Office (which supports the implementation and monitoring of the programme), School Health Department, and Policy Department, as well as the Teacher Training Department and the Curriculum Department (which participate in the literacy component).

¹⁰⁶ WFP Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (pp. 9-10).

¹⁰⁷ Including joining the programme partnership on gender mainstreaming with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS, 2015), engaging in a participatory action learning process with IDS (2016), conducting a review of gender in Cambodia's food security and nutrition policies, and an evaluation into gender in household decision-making.

¹⁰⁸ Such as a Gender Action Research (December 2021); a vegetable business model pilot programme for female suppliers to six schools (March 2022) and a study of the Gendered Nature of Intra-Household Decision Making in Cambodia (no date).

¹⁰⁹ See Table for gender breakdown of suppliers contracted to deliver local food commodities SY 2020/2021 – 2021/2022

¹¹⁰ Dunn et al (2020). Endline Evaluation of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Grant Food for Education Programme for WFP Cambodia FY 2017-2019.

Table 4: Recommendations from 2020 LRP Baseline Study

#	Recommendation
1	WFP CO and MoEYS should jointly update and consolidate activities into a comprehensive, gradual, evidence-based transition plan.
2	The WFP CO should coordinate with MoEYS, the MoH and MAFF to develop a capacity strengthening strategy that outlines clear roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the LRP for each of the ministries at national, sub-national and local levels.
3	The WFP CO, in collaboration with the MoEYS, MoH and MAFF, should seek to strengthen the mechanisms for coordination on LRP implementation as a complement to the capacity strengthening strategy.
4	Before the LRP midline, WFP should support the MoEYS to undertake a systematic review of the national school meals implementation that started in SY 2019/20.
5	WFP CO, drawing on existing tools and guidance and available technical support, should explore options for enhanced nutritional inputs to the school meals.
6	WFP CO, together with USDA, and in consultation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, should integrate specific gender indicators into the programme's Results Framework.

1.4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

69. **Evaluation Scope and Approach.** The evaluation methodology employed a theory-based, mixed methods approach. Full details are available in [Annex 3](#). Primary data collection prioritized qualitative methods (KII, FGDs and site visits). Qualitative data was gathered through KIIs and FGDs with a range of key stakeholders at national, sub-national and school/community level. Document review included secondary data and documents provided by the CO, and other documentation gathered before and during the fieldwork. These included relevant programme documents, annual reports, monitoring reports, previous evaluation reports, various assessments that formed the basis for the programme design, WFP and Government policies and normative guidance. Quantitative data was extracted from WFP sources.

70. Due to the absence of a quantitative data collection component in the midterm evaluation, to better track changes over time in schools qualitatively, the ET chose to use panel study approach for the school visits in the midterm evaluation. This meant that the ET again visited and interviewed staff at the same sample of eight schools selected for qualitative interviews in the baseline. In addition, two additional schools were included that had been transferred to the Government HGSF since the baseline. These were included to provide insights into the transition process and the sustainability of gains after transition. Thus, there were three different modalities found among the ten schools: SMP (only rice and oil provided by WFP), SMP+Hybrid (rice and oil provided by WFP and cash transfers for obtaining meat and vegetables through local procurement), and HGSF (transferred to national Government management of pure local procurement).

Table 5: Schools Visited During Site Visits

Province	District	Schools	Modality
Kampong Chhnang	Baribour	Chambak Raingsei	HGSF
Kampong Chhnang	Samaki Meanchey	Takeo	SMP+Hybrid
Kampong Chhnang	Samaki Meanchey	Meanok	SMP+ Hybrid
Kampong Thom	Santuk	Cheay Sbai	SMP
Kampong Thom	Baray	Banteay Chas	SMP+ Hybrid
Kampong Thom	Baray	Serei Sophoan	SMP+ Hybrid
Siem Reap	Soutnikom	Thnal Dach	SMP+ Hybrid
Siem Reap	Soutnikom	Trapeang Trom	SMP+ Hybrid
Siem Reap	Chikraeng	Thnal Kaeng	SMP
Siem Reap	Angkor Thom	Svay Chek	HGSF

71. The same stakeholder classes and positions interviewed during baseline were re-interviewed during the midterm. Full details of the sampling strategy initially developed at baseline are presented in [Annex 3](#).

72. Per the Addendum to the ToR ([Annex 1](#)), Cambodia experienced substantial COVID-19 related disruptions, including to the education systems. School closures over a 20-month period forced WFP and the Government to make adaptations to the school meals programme, resulting in many of the activities planned for the LRP (and McGovern-Dole) programming being delayed or reduced, with full implementation only since January 2022 after schools fully re-opened. Given the disruptions, it was determined that a midterm household, school, and supplier survey would not be productive and that instead, the preliminary results of programme indicators would be examined through a desk review of monitoring data and relevant secondary literature review.

73. Furthermore, at the time of the development of the TOR, USDA had informed the WFP CO that further support to the McGovern-Dole programme after the current agreement ends in October 2023 would not be forthcoming; this led to the inclusion of an evaluation question related to the implications of no continued USDA funding. However, since then, the McGovern-Dole USDA grant has been renewed for another cycle. While the LRP was designed as a single cycle programme, Recommendation 1 of this evaluation (see [3.3. Recommendations](#)) made later is for a no-cost extension of the current LRP to build on the current achievements.¹¹¹ The ET has also been advised that the new McGovern-Dole programme¹¹² will probably include 10 percent of its budget allocated for regional procurement of canned fish, but without the LRP's current support to smallholders and value chains.¹¹³

74. Given these pandemic disruptions and funding decisions, the methodology developed for the midterm evaluation was modified from the original ToR to emphasize understanding of the mitigation measures taken during the pandemic, their effect on programming, and the progress towards handover and transition. Consequently, this evaluation will be focused on three evaluation criteria: **relevance** (especially of pandemic mitigation adaptations), **effectiveness**, and **sustainability** (with a focus on steps yet to be taken to ensure a smooth handover and transition by the end of the cycle). Two general questions were also included to provide direction towards the elaboration of recommendations and considerations for sustainability. Table 6 indicates the revised questions for the midterm evaluation.

75. The revised ToR (Addendum for this midterm) heavily focused on the effects of, and adjustments made, by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic inevitably affected the programme and its ability to deliver against its targets. There is also benefit in assessing original programme design and requisite adjustments necessary in the remaining time to achieve sustainable transfer and this is reflected as well in the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The LRP has now - since January 2022 - reverted to its original design and therefore it is important for this evaluation report to also be forward looking in the findings presented.

76. The evaluation questions as amended in the Addendum are reproduced here in Table 6. USDA criteria for evaluation do not require gender specific questions in the TOR for this evaluation series. However, the ET did integrate gender considerations into the evaluation design including an analysis of the extent to which GEWE objectives and mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design and LRP implementation. Details of the approach are described further in [Annex 3](#).

Table 6: Midterm Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions

Evaluation Criteria	Midterm ToR Questions
Relevance	<p>1.1. To what extent were the programme adjustments, including the design of the re-purposed activities, appropriate in reaching the relevant beneficiaries with the right assistance and quality at the right time?</p> <p>1.2. To [what] extent were the repurposed activities designed and effective in complementing the Government's alternative learning mechanisms (ex. remote learning)?</p> <p>1.3. To what extent has the design of capacity strengthening activities met the needs and priorities of the Government?</p> <p>1.4. How relevant are the activities designed as the programme's Foundational Results in achieving the Strategic Objectives?</p>

¹¹¹ A no-cost extension has not yet been formally agreed, though WFP CO indicates a verbal confirmation that it should be fine from USDA's side (email from WFP; 18 November 2022)

¹¹² WFP proposal for USDA continued funding of the McGovern-Dole Programme FY 22 (Dated: 06 May 2022): "The proposed project is built around four key areas of support: 1) preparing the remaining USDA- supported schools for handover to the national programme through capacity strengthening and improving infrastructure to meet the newly developed criteria for handover; 2) providing capacity strengthening to the national programme on programme design and implementation, policy and coordination, budgeting, and monitoring to ensure a robust, sustainable NHGSFP; 3) supporting nutrition and hygiene promotion in line with national priorities to strengthen school-based programmes; and 4) supporting early grade literacy."

¹¹³ WFP is exploring the possibility that other donor funds can be used to continue the existing support to smallholder farmers and the value chain (email from WFP; 18 November 2022)

Evaluation Criteria	Midterm ToR Questions
Effectiveness	<p>2.1. To what extent has progress been made towards the achievement of results and targets despite COVID-19? ¹¹⁴</p> <p>2.2. Factors affecting results: How has the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influenced the ability of the programme to meet expected results and targets by agreed timeline? What are the recommendations and strategic action points based on this analysis?</p> <p>2.3. Factors affecting results: What were the major internal factors that have influenced the progress of the programme by the time of the midterm evaluation?</p>
Sustainability	<p>3.1. To what extent has progress been made against the overall handover process against the programme plan and handover plan/strategy agreed with and endorse by the Government?</p> <p>3.2. To what extent were the SFP implementation arrangements, including considerations for sustainability (handover to Government) at national and local levels, communities, and other partners for all programme components (school feeding, literacy, food safety, WASH, and hygiene, etc) agreed upon and endorsed by the Government and national stakeholders?</p> <p>3.3. To what extent has progress been made towards institutionalization of the measures planned as part of the technical assistance to the Government that is expected to support the sustainability of the intervention (including policy work, support to systems, institutional capacity, etc)?</p> <p>3.4. What progress has been made since the programme design stage (through strategic engagement, advocacy, and other efforts with Government and relevant stakeholders) in supporting financial sustainability of the SFP beyond WFP's intervention to the extent it can be evaluated by the midterm evaluation (national budget for SFP and other funding sources)?</p> <p>3.5. To what extent has SFP been successful in engaging Government and local communities (PTAs, farmer groups, etc) towards school feeding and education activities? Has the role of the communities and local stakeholders been institutionalized (at the Government policy, strategy and/or systems levels)?</p> <p>3.6. Based on the available evidence, to what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue beyond WFP's intervention for the targeted beneficiaries?</p> <p>3.7. What were the major factors and/or programme interventions that have both positively and negatively influenced the transition process?</p> <p>3.8. What are the likely and potential implications of a complete phase out of WFP's interventions implemented with USDA's funding to the National School Feeding Programme?</p>
General	<p>4.1. Based on the available evidence, to what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue beyond WFP's intervention for the targeted beneficiaries?</p> <p>4.2. What are the recommendations for mid-course corrections to improve the programme's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and/or sustainability?</p>

Source: WFP Cambodia McGovern-Dole and LRP Evaluation ToR FY19 Addendum Final

77. The inception phase was conducted remotely and was predicated on an in-depth review of documents and consultations with evaluation focal points for finalizing midterm adjustments to the approach. An evaluation matrix was prepared ([Annex 5](#)) around the three EQ including the respective sub-questions, indicators, data sources, and data collection techniques. Considerations around GEWE are mainstreamed into the evaluation criteria through the inclusion of sub-questions and indicators. A set of interview guides was developed to address the lines of inquiry drawing on multiple approaches ([Annex 6](#)). A detailed mapping exercise linking the findings, conclusions and recommendations is given in [Annex 8](#) (to be finalised after commenting).

78. **Field Mission Data Collection.** The data collection phase included an in-country field mission over a three-week period in June 2022, including selected site visits (schools, districts, and provinces), key informant interviews (KIIs) and FGDs with a range of stakeholders at national, sub-national, regional, and HQ levels including farmers and suppliers (full list given as [Annex 9](#)). In total, 425 persons were interviewed, with about 57 percent of these being women (Table 7).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Only indicators with available data will be reviewed. [Annex 1](#) (Addendum) outlines the programme indicators and their data source for desk review. The indicators without any data are also outlined.

¹¹⁵ Most vulnerable populations were included in the FGDs as representatives of parents whose children were receiving food rations.

Table 7: Stakeholders Interviewed by Type

Stakeholder	Men	Women	Total
WFP	12	35	47
National Government	20	7	27
Subnational Authorities	70	22	92
United Nations Agencies and Donors	10	4	14
NGOs	16	12	28
School Authorities	38	64	102
Parents	13	86	99
Suppliers and Farmers	4	12	16
Total	183	242	425

79. For the site visits, the team visited the Provinces of Siem Reap, Kampong Thom and Kampong Chhnang. The ET visited six districts (two per each Province) and the 10 schools listed in Table 5. Data collection tools are described in [Annex 6](#). Documentation, including previous evaluations and reviews, was also shared with the ET. After the data collection phase, two initial exit briefings were conducted presenting a summary of the LRP and McGovern-Dole programme findings – one with WFP CO stakeholders internally, followed by a second involving non-WFP stakeholders. Both exercises were intended to provide additional inputs and observations to the ET.

80. All findings were developed based on triangulation from multiple sources including cross-referenced document review, interviews, FGDs, observations, and primary or secondary qualitative data. An internal database of interview notes and additional evidence was used to identify answers to each of the EQs. No single source findings are presented, although in some instances a specific source is cited to reinforce a pattern. Achievements at midterm were compared against end of cycle (EoC) targets, and considered ‘over-achieved’ if exceeding 50 percent of the target, and ‘under-achieved’ when less than 50 percent of the target.

81. **Gender Considerations.** The methodology and the ET integrated gender considerations through eight streams: i) integrating a gender lens throughout all evaluation enquiry and analysis; ii) applying good practice in the collection, analysis, and reporting of gender sensitive and disaggregated data, both primary and secondary; iii) paying close attention to appropriate timing, location, facilitation, and enumeration of all consultations, interviews, and focus groups; iv) understanding of gendered impact on distinct stakeholder groups affected by the programme; v) understanding of the programme’s gender dimensions locally and how they relate to the national context, including other Government and WFP policies and programmes; vi) assessing any ways that transition plans may threaten GEWE objectives; vii) working in ways that were appropriate to the socio-cultural context and in accordance with the UNEG Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines. Finally, to ensure that the evaluation employed a gender-sensitive lens, the methodology was guided by the UNEG guidance on gender (UNSWAP). Further details on gender integration are found in [Annex 3](#).

82. **Data Availability and Reliability.** The midterm evaluation collected primary quantitative data and used the available WFP monitoring data.¹¹⁶ Schools reopened partially in November 2021 and fully in January 2022 after the closures due to COVID-19, and subsequent MOEYS data was available. Data from the Education Management Information System were available and disaggregated by gender. WFP monitoring data were complete and detailed, and it is clear that data were collected with a strong gender focus, including for the THRs. The limitations for relying on monitoring data and other secondary data are that this limits the degree to which the evaluation can assess outcome level results, the range of variables collected, and the independent verification of performance. Site visits played a key role in verification of secondary data. USDA criteria for results frameworks and programme indicators did not require the inclusion of specific gender related outcomes, outputs and indicators limiting the degree to which gender considerations, beyond gender disaggregated reporting of standard indicators, are made visible within the results framework.

83. **Ethics and Quality Oversight.** WFP decentralized evaluations must conform to WFP and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical standards and norms, and the evaluation was conducted according to the 2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines. Having signed the Pledge of Ethical Conduct, the ET members ensured ethical standards were adhered to throughout the evaluation through detailed protocols for interviews and field visits ([Annex 3](#)). This included, but was not limited to, ensuring 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 socially excluded groups), and ensuring that the evaluation

¹¹⁶ The evaluation matrix in [Annex 5](#) describes which types of WFP performance indicators can be assessed at midterm from monitoring data only.

results in no harm to participants or their communities. No children were interviewed alone as part of this evaluation.

84. The evaluation followed the WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS), and all deliverables were rigorously reviewed during and after drafting to ensure adherence to relevant guidelines. Gender considerations, and principles of inclusion, participation and non-discrimination were included in the design, questioning, data collection and reporting in line with UNEG Guidance on Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation.

85. **Assessing Country Capacity Strengthening contributions.** Although WFP has developed a corporate framework for articulating its work towards strengthening Government capacity for handover and transition, for school feeding programmes the corporate tool is still the Systems Approach for Better Education Results School Feeding (SABER SF). The SABER framework describes five Dimensions for strengthening national systems. These include i) policy framework, ii) financial capacity, iii) institutional capacity and coordination, iv) programme design and implementation, and v) the roles of non-state actors. A more detailed description of the SABER-SF framework and the evaluation approach can be found in para 199 and [Annex 3](#).

86. Although the WFP corporate SABER-SF framework is intended to guide overall CO programming rather than being linked to specific programmes, the framework can be a useful guidance for mapping the LRP activities and to assess potential Government capacity for sustaining handover and transition, including the continuation of school feeding and local procurement under Government management.

87. **Limitations to the Study.** The data collected was considered sufficient to assess the programme progress and performance, despite some limitations. The CO complies with programme requirements on data availability including the reporting of outcome, output and cross cutting indicators as described in the respective Results Framework. However, due to the pandemic, a percentage of RF indicators were not able to be measured prior to the midterm exercise (about 10 percent of the output indicators). In addition, there were limitations in the RF itself for tracking long-term development outcomes – capacity assessments of Government for handover and transition – and for tracking long term gains for beneficiaries and schools supported by WFP and for providing an assessment of collective progress beyond annual disaggregation, especially of disaggregated indicators. WFP does not have unique data for the disaggregates. While the semi-annual reporting periods report disaggregated indicator data for each individual reporting period, the semi-annual reports duplicate data across the semesters. Therefore, it is not possible to generate unique numbers on cumulative achievements for the disaggregated data indicators. Disaggregated indicator data is reported in [Annex 4](#) per each semi-annual reporting period but is not assessed against cumulative achievements. Furthermore, the justifiable absence of the school and farmer surveys at midterm did contribute to limiting the amount of quantitative data available to supplement the qualitative data streams. Additional details on limitations, including for gender considerations, are found in [Annex 3](#).

2. Evaluation findings

88. This section presents evidence guided by the evaluation questions given in the Addendum to the ToR and has been reviewed in conjunction with the LRP's Performance Monitoring Plan and the Results Framework ([Annex 4](#)), as outlined above. In the sub-headings below the questions have been summarized; the full questions are given in the corresponding footnotes. The findings have been derived from analysis of the primary qualitative data collected during the in-country field visits, WFP monitoring data and reports, plus secondary documents, and interview responses from stakeholders. A single TOR was prepared for both evaluations and some of the evaluation questions are more relevant for the parallel McGovern-Dole School Feeding evaluation with the LRP report providing only complementary inputs (the McGovern-Dole evaluation report findings are summarized in [Annex 12](#)).

2.1. RELEVANCE

EQ 1.1.: Appropriateness of Activities, Including the Repurposed Activities¹¹⁷

89. The LRP is relevant to school feeding in Cambodia because it provides an avenue for WFP to support the change from a McGovern-Dole SMP modality (based on imported in-kind commodities) to the HGSP modality adopted by the Government, which is based on locally purchased food commodities. The 163 LRP schools comprise a third of the 522 schools supported under the current cycle of the McGovern-Dole programme.¹¹⁸ To achieve the programme's objective, the LRP aims to strengthen the capacity of schools, suppliers, farmers, and Government authorities, to implement procurement of regional and local food commodities through direct purchases led by schools.

90. The repurposing of the cash-based transfer component during the COVID-19 crisis was relevant to the Government's emergency response approach to support vulnerable populations through the period of crisis. To align with the Government's initiatives, WFP (with USDA's approval) repurposed the main LRP activity, the cash transfers to procure food locally for school meals, which accounts for 50 percent of the budget. These LRP cash disbursements were used instead to provide take home rations (THRs) to children during the school closures. During this 20-month period, the SO1 target group changed from blanket coverage within school sites to vulnerable households identified through students within the LRP targeted schools.

91. Beneficiary targeting for the THRs was based on the Ministry of Planning's registration of the *IDPoor* under the national social protection programme then verified by WFP through context analysis and needs assessments (with gender considerations) and included in a list of recipient beneficiary households. A comparatively high proportion of households in all three targeted provinces fell into the poverty classifications of *IDPoor* 1 or 2 and qualified for the social assistance categories used by the Royal Government of Cambodia. WFP allocated funds from the LRP to support households in school already identified and targeted for the LRP to maintain geographic continuity with existing programme support. These schools had been recommended by the original VAM assessments used in designing the LRP programme in 2018.

92. The National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF, 2016-2025) makes a specific reference to school feeding as a social assistance instrument, which means that any programme contributing to the sustainability of SFP in Cambodia would be highly relevant to the Government's agenda. By using the school committees, established for managing the school feeding programme within the LRP schools, for allocating THR distributions, existing Government structures were able to identify and verify the most vulnerable families (women, girls, men, and boys) and to effectively implement a mitigation response efficiently and effectively.

93. In this context, it was appropriate to change the targeting to the households of school children that were most vulnerable, rather than the farmers, suppliers and the LSFCs who were the target of the LRP programme capacity development activities. Using the gender sensitive HGSP Implementation Guidelines, bidding for suppliers of food commodities to LRP schools had already taken place ahead of SY 2020/2021; however, with schools closed there were no food deliveries except for the THRs. Further details on the THRs are given in para 126.¹¹⁹

94. The switch to THR distributions affected the engagement and motivation of the suppliers. Only about half (35 of the 62) of the suppliers on the LRP list originally contracted to deliver commodities for school meals were used to supply and distribute THRs, with the remainder disappointed in their expectation to gain income from local school procurement.¹²⁰ Even among the suppliers contracted for THR distributions, the amount of food procured was considerably less than what would have been involved in a full year's worth of supply. As a consequence, both THR contracted suppliers and other suppliers considered the gains from engagement with the local procurement to have been considerably less than they had anticipated when joining.

95. Qualitative interviews confirmed that the THRs were well appreciated across all other categories of stakeholder, and the approach used to identify target households was reported as having been responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable population groups. Additional flexibility allowed for new households to qualify as

¹¹⁷ "To what extent were the programme adjustments, including the design of the re-purposed activities, appropriate in reaching the relevant beneficiaries with the right assistance and quality at the right time?"

¹¹⁸ Less than 20 percent of those under the overarching WFP SFP.

¹¹⁹ THR Round 1 (April 2020): WFP reached 80,767 *IDPoor* households with children and the Government programme reached 11,506. The same was repeated in Round 2 (August 2020). Round 2 of the THR included distribution under the LRP (number of specific LRP beneficiaries unknown).

¹²⁰ Fewer suppliers were required for the single round of THRs that included sourcing from LRP funding. The quantities involved were much lower than those planned for provision of school meals; and only dry foods were distributed (i.e. no fresh vegetables).

IDPoor, as quicker ways of verification were introduced to include families facing food crises arising from loss of income and enforced movement constraints.

96. The relevance of the THR response through the *ID-Poor* framework is triangulated through the absence of complaints around THR distributions. Internal WFP interviews noted that other household distributions in other SOs under the CSP usually resulted in a number of complaints (albeit small) to WFP regarding inclusion and exclusion of participants in the recipient list for the transfers. In contrast, there were no complaints received by WFP regarding these THR distributions.

97. Stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation confirmed that the THRs functioned as a valuable safety net for vulnerable households. WFP assessment findings report that over 90 percent of THR household beneficiaries indicated acceptable levels of food consumption after the distributions, without significant differences in relation to the gender of the head of household. Dietary diversity also increased compared to households not receiving THRs, with slight gender differences, albeit small. Women headed households consumed a slightly higher number of food groups.¹²¹ The assessments indicated that THR beneficiary households had received the food commodities at a time when they experienced extreme food shortages, and that only 0.3 percent of them had been forced to reduce their protein consumption compared to 20 percent in the general population.¹²²

98. Both the LRP and the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) have now restarted their school meal operations and have been fully operational since in January 2022. This has allowed the LRP to return to its sole purpose to support and accelerate change to full management of local procurement by schools and local authorities, enabling their eventual handover to the NHGSFP.

EQ 1.2.: Programme activity inputs to alternative learning methods¹²³

99. School-based learning is outside the scope of the LRP. The influence of THRs is addressed under the McGovern-Dole evaluation report, conducted concurrently with this evaluation exercise. The McGovern-Dole evaluation found challenges in supporting learning during the school closures (see [Annex 12](#) for the McGovern-Dole report summary). Alternative learning materials were distributed by WFP, but children faced additional learning challenges due to internet access and teaching quality. In addition, for the LRP contributions, parents interviewed did cite that receiving the THRs had allowed them to be home while their children were doing distance learning (or online where possible), and thus be able to support their children's school work.

EQ 1.3.: Did the programme activities meet the Government's needs in capacity strengthening?¹²⁴

100. WFP and its partners contributed to the development of a COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)¹²⁵ that helped school authorities ensure health, hygiene and food safety in schools opening after the pandemic. This was disseminated to all LRP schools as soon as they were authorized to officially reopen. WFP and the school health department within the MoEYS also developed readiness criteria to be used just before schools reopened, following the Government's prioritization of schools in low COVID-19 prevalence locations.

101. Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic adjustments, relatively few training activities were reported in the semi-annual reports. The LRP has only been operating for about six months at the time of this midterm evaluation. Programme staff focus has prioritized trainings for school feeding management and procurement processes – although not yet to the level originally planned. National level capacity development of systems, policies, and coordination for handover and transition are to be addressed in the coming year. For example, the School Feeding Information System (SFIS) sub-activity had only just started.

EQ 1.4.: Relevance of the activities identified in the Foundational Results¹²⁶

Activity 1: Cash transfers to schools:

102. The two USDA programmes overlap on the cash transfers with the operational aspects falling more within the scope of the McGovern-Dole than the LRP once food commodities are delivered to schools. Hence, more details on school-based operations on the provision of the school meals (with reference to storage, school

¹²¹ WFP, UNICEF, ADB. 2022. COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) in Cambodia.

¹²² WFP Semi-annual Report Narrative 1 April – 30 September 2021

¹²³ "To [what] extent were the repurposed activities designed and effective in complementing the Government's alternative learning mechanisms (ex. remote learning)?"

¹²⁴ "To what extent has the design of capacity strengthening activities met the needs and priorities of the Government?"

¹²⁵ The SOPs were aligned to the communicable diseases component of the National Policy on School Health

¹²⁶ "How relevant are the activities designed as the programme's Foundational Results in achieving the Strategic Objectives?"

menus and orders, cooks, and community contributions¹²⁷) can be found in the McGovern-Dole midterm evaluation report.

103. The LRP, through its support role for the McGovern-Dole programme, appropriately prioritizes schools located in geographic locations with high poverty rates and low education outcomes, and that are reliant on smallholder agricultural production. This makes the use of cash for local commodity procurement highly appropriate as it offers opportunities to support rural livelihoods and incomes in the areas around the targeted schools. This modality is aligned with the national programme (NHGSFP) which also uses a cash transfer component (from the Government) to support local procurement.

Activity 2: Technical assistance on procurement processes:

104. This component on procurement is appropriate for all stakeholders involved in the tendering process - the suppliers, school authorities, LSFC members and sub-national representatives. Almost all the LRP schools are new to local procurement (only 11 of the 163 had previous experience) and all midterm key informant suppliers and school authorities in the 10 schools visited (eight LRP and two NHGSFP), including those that had been handed over, requested for continued mentorship and coaching. The essential topics are all included in the HGSP Implementation manual and now that the LRP is operational again, training opportunities will be more frequent, thereby supporting small scale entrepreneurs to be able to procure and market local produce to the HGSP market.

105. The bidding process and contracting of suppliers overlaps between the two USDA-funded programmes and there is a specific linkage between contracted suppliers and the HGSP schools through the delivery of food commodities (Activities 1 and 2 of the LRP). The LRP design promotes that 70 percent of HGSP purchases should come from local farmers, but the evaluation finds that the linkages between the farmers and HGSP schools remain unclear; further, any linkages between the farmers who participate in technical assistance from the MAFF appears incidental.

106. Complementarity between technical assistance on procurement and production is weak (particularly important for food safety and quality) and could be strengthened. The MAFF conducts trainings on production to smallholders, but this is outside the scope and collaboration of the LRP. There is little connection between the LRP contracted school suppliers and the farmers who participate in the MAFF trainings, and therefore no guarantee that the food commodities provided to schools benefit from MAFF's trainings. The FAO is envisioned to provide strategic support through LRP-specific smallholder production trainings linked to the local suppliers, but delays in engaging with FAO have meant that this coordination role is not yet played.

Activity 3: Technical assistance for enhanced production:

107. In this area, the LRP design aims to strengthen the Government's capacity so that sub-national authorities are better positioned to transfer skills, via the MAFF and in partnership with FAO, on improved agricultural production to farmers, specifically smallholders; and, to engage more women in decision making. These considerations are relevant and appropriate to help ensure that smallholders in the LRP target provinces (and later the NHGSFP in the same areas) are trained and supported to contribute to the HGSP model, which in turn supports the local economic and agricultural development.

108. The bidding process is an annual event, where contracted suppliers can change with every new school year and in turn, the farmers they aggregate produce from. However, the LRP technical assistance activities for producers currently have very limited engagement with the school authorities, although this could change in the future when full implementation begins. WFP has started active consultations on these subjects with agricultural sector stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.¹²⁸

109. The LRP is supported by the FAO as the key United Nations partner on the production and supply side, with an agreement signed between WFP and FAO in April 2021 (after significant delays). WFP and FAO conducted a workshop (2021) to operationalize the agreement, set the ground for an effective collaboration in delivering the LRP activities and plan how to catch up on the delayed start-up of this component. This covered technical assistance related to agricultural production, local procurement, food safety and quality control through capacity development of farmers and suppliers with supply-side partners in the MAFF, and with the related provincial and

¹²⁷ The LRP Baseline reported that the average value of combined cash and in-kind community contributions (e.g. firewood) to HGSP schools to be US\$662 per annum.

¹²⁸ Monthly Report, WFP (February 2022)

district level offices.¹²⁹ Local Government and commune authorities involved in LRP implementation were included in all relevant HGSF trainings and marketing events.

110. One of the objectives of NHGSFP is to partner with the MAFF, but there are some obstacles that may need consideration during the life of the programme due to the overall government architecture for the coordination of school feeding. These are covered below in the evaluation questions related to sustainability.

111. Despite the programme indicators aiming for suppliers to obtain 70 percent of their produce from local sources, midterm interviewees suggested that one challenge suppliers are facing is that school orders are provided on a monthly basis, which does not allow a sufficient production period even for vegetables which have the shortest growth period.

Activity 4: National institutional capacity strengthening:

112. The LRP's procurement approach is considered highly appropriate since it uses the Government's own procurement regulations and decentralized structures which to commune authorities already have experience of. The LRP/HGSF procurement procedures are based on guidelines developed by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) for Commune Councils, and it is the same system used for bidding processes within the Government's own rural development programmes (for instance, infrastructure works). Ultimately, this contributes towards an easier handover of schools (and future transition of the SFP).

113. The LRP's approach to include technical assistance for improved production is well aligned with the extension system adopted by the MAFF (Cambodia Good Agricultural Practices (CAM-GAP)). It is also coherent on procurement and market engagement, which support the overarching SFP strategic objectives related to nutrition and transition to national ownership (such as fertilizer usage¹³⁰ on production and a vibrant local supply chain on procurement). WFP's partnership with the FAO to support the local agricultural sector components¹³¹ is therefore very relevant because of FAO's expertise and long working relationship with the MAFF.

114. However, the LRP's design lacked any strategic linkage with the MAFF and there are still gaps in the institutional arrangements for direct collaboration between these two key players, MoEYS and MAFF. This could have been addressed if MAFF had been involved in the design of the programme. Under the NSPPF (2016-2025), the social protection sector was transferred from CARD (which covered food security and nutrition) to a newly established NSPC. By default, this shift in the national umbrella body created new institutional structures for social protection that no longer includes the agriculture sector and food security.¹³² The drafted sub-decree on school feeding is intended to provide a framework to address this gap and outline how this collaboration will be implemented; only once it is being implemented will it be possible to determine how effective the sub-decree is in addressing this situation.

115. Consequently, while seated in the overall SFP/MoEYS education policy frameworks, the LRP's contribution is aligned to, but not embedded in, the agricultural sector's guiding strategies. The key policies in the agricultural sector (the Cambodia Industrial Development Policy (2015–2025) and the Agricultural Sector Development Plan (2019-2023)), prioritize the development of small and medium enterprises as well as skills training for producers, and the LRP's approach strongly supports these policies.

116. The National Policy on School Health¹³³ (April 2019) provides practical implementation guidance for the prevention of communicable diseases and aims to strengthen safe food and nutrition programmes in schools. Safe school meals directly depend on the source of the food. Once the FAO-supervised capacity strengthening activities roll out, to be delivered by the district level extension agents, the LRP will promote linkages to equivalent activities in the agricultural sector (for example, on post-harvest handling, quality control and similar activities).

117. **Rice Fortification:** Because of its role as the principal staple food in Cambodia, rice offers a good opportunity for large scale supplementation of micronutrients which would help address the current deficiencies

¹²⁹ Several other United Nations agencies (including UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and World Health Organization) will provide support in their own technical areas – education, agriculture (schools gardens), transition to Government ownership, and health and nutrition.

¹³⁰ The use of fertilizer inputs is reported by FAO to be widespread in Cambodia which raises potential health hazards and reducing the use of such pesticides on vegetables is, therefore, relevant to the HGSF school children

¹³¹ Related to improved agricultural production and post-harvest handling

¹³² "The NSPPF is a long-term roadmap focusing on two main pillars: Social Assistance and Social Security. The Social Assistance is divided into four components: (1) emergency response, (2) human capital development, (3) vocational training (4) welfare for vulnerable people. The Social Security consists of five components: (1) pensions, (2) health insurance, (3) employment injury insurance, (4) unemployment insurance (5) disability insurance." NSPPF (2016)

¹³³ National Policy on School Health (2019); Royal Government of Cambodia; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

in the diet across much of the population. A number of studies¹³⁴ have been undertaken on this topic. The LRP Baseline Report noted that the availability of locally blended fortified rice has the potential to replace in-kind contributions. However, introducing local processes is not straightforward, and local blending and/or fortification of rice is still being explored. Locally blended fortified rice (contributed by the Government of Cambodia and private sector) will be used in non-USDA supported areas to pilot a centralized procurement model for HGFSF.

118. The first trial study on the acceptability of fortified rice was conducted by WFP, PATH, and the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) in rural Kampong Speu Province in 2010 and reported positive feedback from teachers, parents and school children. This was followed by a large-scale randomized control trial on fortified rice¹³⁵ conducted by WFP, in collaboration with the Government, PATH, and IRD using three different types of fortified rice. The study analyzed the micronutrient status of 1,950 schoolchildren across 20 schools that had received fortified rice for six months. Results from this study demonstrated significant improvements in the nutritional concentration of key micronutrients, including zinc and folic acid, as well as improved cognitive performance of the students. Based on this research findings, the Royal Government of Cambodia approved the use of fortified rice in the school meals programme in 2016.

119. A complementary acceptability study was also conducted by WFP and IRD (2015) targeting women of reproductive age and school age children to test two different fortification technologies that produced rice with different features.¹³⁶ The findings showed that both fortification technologies were widely accepted and participants did not specify a preference between the two. However, the difference lay more in the nutritional value addition due to the common practice of washing pre-cooked rice, plus draining the excess water during cooking, which gave the extruded technology an advantage over the coated rice fortification technology.

120. The first in-country blending of fortified rice was successfully piloted in 2019 by WFP together with Green Trade, and in April 2022 a rice fortification community of practice was established under the SBN¹³⁷ and in close coordination with the Cambodian Rice Federation (CRF) and CARD. In May 2022, WFP, in collaboration with the CRF and with support from USDA and DSM,¹³⁸ conducted a technical training to 13 private sector milling operators to promote the scaling up of local blending of fortified rice, but subsequent market linkages have not yet been explored. WFP has also prepared a cost benefit analysis and business case which will soon be disseminated to further incentivize private sector investment and interest.

121. Although the Government has shown interest for the central procurement of rice, the LRP Baseline Report (2020) further noted that there was no systematic tracing of the food commodities delivered to HGFSF to accurately determine if suppliers/schools were meeting the 70 percent requirement from local sources.¹³⁹ There are ongoing discussions with the Government on the extent to which rice fortification, including for use in school meals, is realistic within the timeframe of the LRP, and indeed possible in Cambodia. More details on this initiative are included in Section 2 below.

Cross-cutting issues regarding relevance

122. **Gender:** The LRP Results Framework does not include specific gender outcomes, and analysis on gender issues were not prioritised through specific questions in the ToR for this evaluation series. Results for several indicators are disaggregated by gender and WFP Cambodia has conducted two important pieces of gender related work¹⁴⁰ which inform programme management. The targets set by the USDA results framework focus largely on the inclusion of men in the training activities (Table 15), which could provide a detrimental approach to women even though in practice, women are active stakeholders in the activities conducted in schools and those related to food procurement and production.

123. Of the 16 farmers and suppliers interviewed for this midterm evaluation, 12 of them (75 percent) were women (see [Annex 9](#)); the ET was further advised that women comprise almost 100 percent of participants in many livelihoods related activities. This was confirmed in interviews at the District Offices of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment and with other stakeholders (suppliers, local authorities), who explained that within rural communities, production and marketing of farm produce is often done by women as men frequently migrate in search of paid employment. This suggests that a focus on intentional recruitment of women suppliers

¹³⁴ Studies include WFP Rice Landscape Analysis (2019); Rice Fortification RoadMap (2019); Multi-nutrient Challenges and Solutions (2019).

¹³⁵ Fortified Rice for Schoolchildren in Cambodia (FORISCA) Study (2010-2014)

¹³⁶ Consistency, appearance, taste, smell and colour.

¹³⁷ The SUN (Scaling-Up Nutrition) Business Network in Cambodia.

¹³⁸ DSM is a global science-based company specializing in Nutrition and Health (including fortification)

¹³⁹ Through the provincial departments of the MOEYS.

¹⁴⁰ A review of gender in Cambodia's food security and nutrition policies, and a study into gender in household decision-making

and farmers is appropriate in the design, with a concerted effort to promote women having equitable opportunities to win the food supply bids.

124. **Complementarity within the overarching SFP programme:** Within the WFP CO, all multi-donor school feeding operations in the country are managed under SO1 which makes reciprocal complementarity inherent across the SFP operations. The two USDA funded programmes benefit from lessons learnt within other provinces and funded by other donors, and of course vice versa.

125. The ET understands the LRP's placement under SO1 because of the close links with the McGovern-Dole activities but considers that the prioritization it receives in areas like agricultural support and alignment with the MAFF, is weakened because of different skillsets and targets under each of the SOs of the CSP. This is discussed in more detail later in this report.

2.2. EFFECTIVENESS

126. The Addendum set out four questions under this criterion, and the ET has aimed to respond to them using a situational analysis of the current procurement context profiling the LRP stakeholders (disaggregated by gender where possible), and through an assessment of their current capacities for implementation. Details are also given on midterm values based on the LRP's Performance Monitoring Plan where possible, as well as the most recent information presented in the LRP Results Framework. Updated indicator data is given in [Annex 4.4](#).

127. The original programme design only became operational six months prior to this midterm evaluation and some of the Baseline's contextual findings still apply. Given that this round did not include a detailed quantitative survey, updated numbers given below are limited to monitoring and other data from WFP CO, and as indicated in the Addendum, only indicators with available data were reviewed.¹⁴¹ The sub-headings below are summarized; the full questions as included in the ToRs are given in the associated footnote.

EQ 2.1. Extent of progress towards achievement of results despite COVID-19¹⁴²

128. The semi-annual reports from the CO (as of March 2022) show that of the 30 (non-disaggregated) LRP indicators (see [Annex 4.4](#) for the full list of indicators and achievements) 40 percent are on track or feasible to meet end of cycle targets (see Figure 1). Given the pandemic delays, this is a positive achievement. The Activity 1 indicators are most on track to meet targets while Activities related to smallholder production, HGSP capacity development and policy frameworks are less on track. Take-Home Rations (THRs) assumed prominence during the pandemic although THRs were not foreseen in the programme design. THR distribution was relatively successful as the number of individuals who received THRs as a result of USDA assistance reached 72 percent of the new THR beneficiary targets, as recorded in the semi-annual reports to USDA. However, only 61 percent of the targeted metric tonnes of food were delivered to these beneficiaries.

129. There is considerable variation between the four activity areas, with Activity 1 showing the highest results. During the school closures (and afterwards with social distancing being enforced), Activities 2, 3 and 4 had low levels of operation. None of the results indicators under Activities 3 and 4 had reported achievements in the semi-annual reports. Each of the four Activities are discussed in more detail below.

Activity 1: Cash transfers to schools for local procurement

130. The Activity 1 indicators are those most on track to meet targets (Figure 1).¹⁴³ The ultimate beneficiaries for the overall WFP school feeding programme are pre-primary and primary school students who benefit from the provision of school meals, but the principal beneficiaries of the LRP programme are identified as the suppliers and farmers through their provision of food commodities and their involvement in skills development and technical assistance activities. Data provided indicate that the LRP activities reached 46,703 students, an 84 percent achievement against end of cycle target ([Annex 4](#)).

131. The budget for the cash transfers is calculated based on planned feeding days, the number of students in the school and any cash balance from the previous transfer. WFP provides quarterly cash transfers to provincial education offices that are then transferred to individual school accounts and this cash is then used for the procurement from their suppliers. Transfer amounts are calculated based on planned feeding days, student

¹⁴¹ It should be noted that all data presented here is drawn directly from WFP results frameworks and programme reports. However, due to the way that the overall SO1 programme is managed, there is some discrepancy between data quoted across different WFP documentation depending on whether it is highlighting the entirety of SO1 work or donor-specific supported actions. This explains variations among the PMP Indicators and Semi-annual Reports, Post Distribution Monitoring Reports. For the purposes of this midterm review, data is presented directly as shared by WFP to the ET.

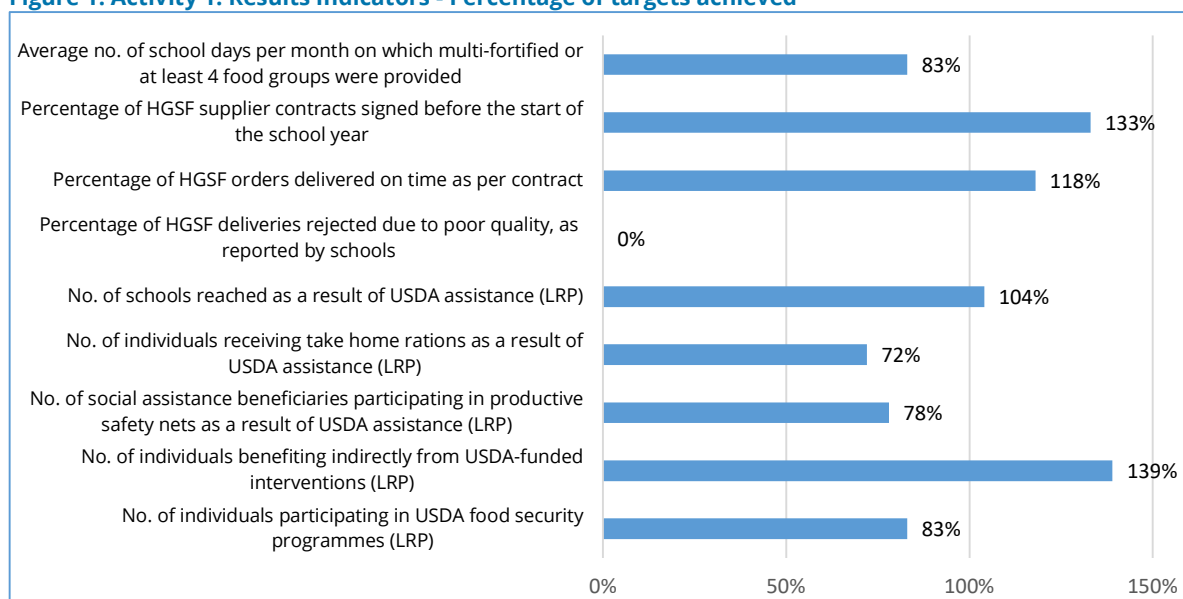
¹⁴² "To what extent has progress been made towards the achievement of results and targets despite COVID-19?"

¹⁴³ Results framework indicators do not include disaggregated indicators. Activity performance indicators are discussed in the following sections.

numbers and previous balances in schools, and a review of the bidding and other operational processes was part of the midterm enquiry. All LRP schools visited reported that they had received the cash transfer on time and of the amount expected.

132. Take-Home Rations (THRs) assumed prominence during the pandemic although they were not foreseen in the programme design. Distribution of the THRs was relatively successful as the number of individuals who received them as a result of USDA assistance reached 72 percent of the revised beneficiary targets, as recorded in the semi-annual reports to USDA. However, only 61 percent of the targeted metric tonnes of food were delivered to these beneficiaries. Figure 1 summarizes the results indicator achievement rates against final EOC targets.

Figure 1: Activity 1: Results Indicators - Percentage of targets achieved



Source: WFP Semi-annual reports (March 2022)

133. During the school closures, WFP and partners delivered THR commodities to a total of 184,546 vulnerable households,¹⁴⁴ identified through the existing Government *IDPoor* registration, and further verified by WFP through teachers' knowledge of the circumstances of school children's families. Three of these distributions, using funds from other donors, were undertaken during 2020, with two further rounds in April/May and August 2021. This represents 72 percent of the target of 6,785 MT in the revised indicators developed once THRs were initiated.

134. The April/May round used McGovern-Dole in-kind commodities distributed as THRs to 5,099 children at 163 schools; the August round used locally purchased commodities to provide THRs to 4,877 beneficiaries (4,542 vulnerable schoolchildren (2,402 girls / 53 percent) and 335 school cooks) at the same schools. The difference between the two rounds was due to a change in targeting, the first round targeting the IDPoor 1 & 2 groups + households identified as poor with no IDPoor card, and the second round targeting only the IDPoor 1 & 2 groups. For the August distribution, a total of 92.3 MT was procured (representing 52 percent of the 180 MT target) using LRP funding, consisting of 84.85 MT of rice (valued at US\$46,710) and 7.45 MT of fish.

135. When school meal deliveries resumed, initially only 85 (52 percent) of the 163 schools utilized LRP cash transfers because the remainder still had food stocks in storage, though these were complemented with fresh vegetables provided by the school community.¹⁴⁵ Key informants within WFP reported that all the 163 schools have since started providing a daily breakfast to school children.

136. According to WFP semi-annual reports (as of March 2022), the majority of schools engaged in the HGSF reported to be satisfied with the delivery and quality of food supplied from the LRP's local procurement – indeed,

¹⁴⁴ Among these beneficiaries, the Government financed the THRs distributed to 23,012 vulnerable households and the remaining 161,534 households used donor contributions through WFP.

¹⁴⁵ The LRP Baseline reported that the average value of combined cash and in-kind community contributions (e.g. firewood, spices) to HGSF schools to be US\$662 per annum.

WFP figures show that, on average, schools were provided with multi-fortified or at least four food groups on 16.5 out of a 20-day period. Monitoring data from WFP indicates that all LRP schools had signed their supplier contracts before the start of the school year.

137. All of the End of Cycle (EOC) achievement rates are on track to be reached by the end of the programme for Activity 1. This has been bolstered by a substantive over-achievement in FY 21/22 as the pandemic ended. Table 8 profiles the annual achievement rates against targets for the non-disaggregated indicators related to Activity 1.

Table 8: Activity 1 – Percentage of targets achieved

Activity	Performance Indicator	FY 20 Achievement Rate	FY 21 Achievement Rate	FY 22 Achievement Rate	Average Annual Achievement Rate	EOC achievement rate
1. Cash transfers to support the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSF)	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programmes	0%	55%	135%	63%	84%
	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	0%	57%	247%	101%	139%
	Number of USDA social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets	0%	56%	138%	65%	78%
	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	NA	72%	NA	72%	72%
	Number of schools reached as a result of USDA assistance	0%	123%	147%	90%	104%
	Percentage of HGSF deliveries rejected due to poor quality as reported by schools	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	Percent of HGSF orders delivered on time as per contract	0%	133%	125%	86%	118%
	Percent of HGSF supplier contracts signed before the start of the school year	0%	154%	143%	99%	133%
	Average number of school days per month on which multi-fortified or at least 4 food groups were provided	0%	45%	83%	43%	83%

Source: WFP Semi-Annual Reports (as of March 2022)

Activity 2: Strengthen capacity of HGSF stakeholders on procurement mechanisms

138. Indicators used to measure progress under Activity 2 largely concern funds provided to procure food, and the tonnages purchased. Table 9 shows that by June 2022 the actual cost and quantity of food commodities procured – excluding those bought for the THR activity - were well below the pre-COVID-19 targets, with expenditure (US\$259,090) at 19 percent and quantities (225 MT) at 23 percent of midterm targets.

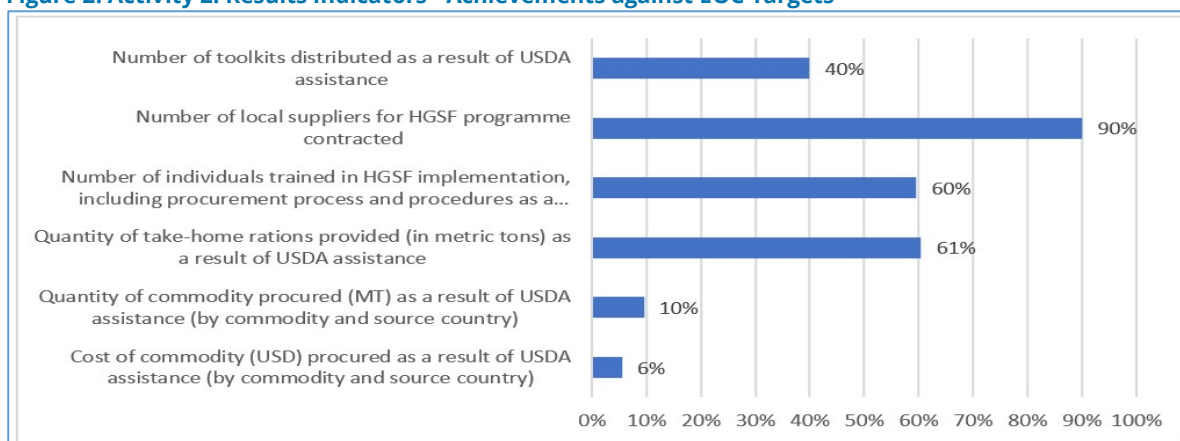
Table 9: Cost and Quantity of Food Commodities Procured

Activity	Performance Indicator	Target (FY21/22)	Achieved	% achieved
Strengthen capacity of HGSF stakeholders on procurement mechanisms	Cost of rice (US\$) procured as a result of USDA assistance	\$0	\$46,710	-
	Cost of iodized salt (US\$) procured as a result of USDA assistance	\$3,600	\$373	10%
	Cost of vegetables (US\$) procured as a result of USDA assistance	\$598,500	\$84,442	14%
	Cost of protein (US\$) procured as a result of USDA assistance	\$798,000	\$127,565	16%
	Cost of commodities (US\$) procured as a result of USDA assistance	\$1,400,100	\$259,090	19%
	Quantity of rice procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance	0	85	-
	Quantity of iodized salt procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance	12	1	10%
	Quantity of vegetables procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance	684	94	14%
	Quantity of protein procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance	266	44	17%
	Quantity of commodities procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance	962	225	23%
	Quantity of take-home rations (MT) provided as a result of USDA assistance (see para 8)	180	92	51%

Source: WFP Semi-annual reports, March 2022.

139. As with Activity 1, results indicators for Activity 2 were supported by the shift to Take-Home Rations (THR) as part of the COVID-19 response (Figure 2) (also see [Annex 4](#)).

Figure 2: Activity 2: Results Indicators - Achievements against EOC Targets



Source: WFP Semi-annual reports (March 2022)

140. Due to the school closures, many of the planned activities under Activity 2 were suspended or postponed, which affected the achievement rates of the performance indicators. Of the 14 performance indicators under Activity 2, only 35 percent are on track to meet their EOC targets (Table 10). The delivery of THRs and trainings to stakeholders (usually suppliers and school authorities) on HGSF processes comprise the majority of the over-achieved indicators.

Table 10: Activity 2 - Achievement Rates

Activity	Performance Indicator	Achievement percentage 19/20	Achievement percentage 20/21	Achievement Percentage 21/22	Av. Annual Achievement Rate	EOC achievement rate
2. Strengthen capacity of HGSF stakeholders on procurement mechanisms	Cost of commodity (USD) procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	0%	16%	30%	15%	15%
	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (rice)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (Iodized salt)	0%	6%	19%	8%	NA
	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (Vegetable)	0%	4%	32%	12%	NA
	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (Protein)	0%	3%	28%	10%	NA
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	0%	26%	31%	19%	18%
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (Rice)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (Iodized salt)	0%	6%	17%	6%	NA
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (Vegetable)	0%	4%	31%	10%	NA
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (Protein)	0%	4%	31%	10%	NA
	Quantity of take-home rations provided (in metric tons) as a result of USDA assistance	NA	61%	NA	61%	61%
	Number of individuals trained in HGSF implementation, including procurement process and procedures as a result of USDA assistance	0%	57%	97%	51%	60%
	Number of local suppliers for HGSF programme contracted	0%	111%	133%	81%	90%
	Number of toolkits distributed as a result of USDA assistance	0%	77%	76%	51%	40%

Source: WFP Semi-annual reports, March 2022.

141. The supplier support was affected by the pandemic both in terms of the numbers involved and the quality of trainings that they could receive. Due to the school closures, all suppliers previously contracted for SY 2020/21 were invited to extend their contracts when schools reopened in 2022. On the few occasions where suppliers chose not to extend their existing contract (largely due to their view that they could not provide the commodities required within the available budget), the runner-up from the previous supplier selection bidding process was invited to join the programme. At the midterm point, the number of farmers selling to suppliers is not accurately known since this activity, supervised by FAO, was not yet fully operational.

142. To be able to qualify for the LRP supplier role and succeed in it, a supplier (individual or business) needs to have sufficient financial reserves to be able to advance payments to farmers or for market purchases. Given the modest profits from the HGFS market and this need for capital, a supplier must also have networks of producers who trust them, or otherwise qualify for credit facilities offered by community-based lending facilities. Suppliers are more likely to face losses when their purchases directly from farmers is insufficient and they must purchase more supplies from markets (with higher prices) to meet their obligations to school orders.

143. After the bidding phase is completed, WFP monitors schools using an operational checklist to monitor the effectiveness of the school side component of the programme. Results are used to identify and follow on any corrective measures or mentorship required for some of the processes. Dimensions include record management, storage management, food and safety hygiene, and resource mobilization. Semi-annual reports indicated that the area requiring the most capacity building and support was related to food management at school level. WFP M&E quarterly bulletins also reported that 13 percent of the monitored schools had improper food storage. The checklist is not as well developed for monitoring the quality of the supply-side component of the programme because of limited implementation time.

144. The supplier bidding process conducted in SY 2020/2021 selected 62 suppliers to supply fresh food to 163 LRP-supported schools.¹⁴⁶ Table 11 shows the breakdown of 62 food suppliers (37 female, 25 male) currently contracted by LRP schools by province. Most suppliers deliver to more than one school – ranging between one and nine schools with the average being four schools per supplier.¹⁴⁷

Table 11: Type of LRP Suppliers by Province

Province (no. of districts)	No. of Schools	Types						Gender Distribution	
		Farmers	Retailers	Middlemen	Wholesalers	Other	Total	Male	Female
Kampong Chhnang (2)	30	2	11	4	1	0	18	7	11
Kampong Thom (3)	42	3	12	2	1	1	19	7	12
Siem Reap (3)	91	6	4	11	2	2	25	11	14
Total	163	11	27	17	4	3	62	25	37

Source: WFP HGFS List of Suppliers (11 August 2022)

145. In 2021, WFP supported the Local School Feeding Committees (LSFCs) to conduct rapid local market assessments and held meetings with existing suppliers to provide THR commodities not already included in the existing procurement contracts (rice and canned fish). Other stakeholders engaged in capacity strengthening activities include commune and school administrators who participate and support activities as part of the LSFC. They are responsible for managing the bidding process, awarding selected supplier(s), supporting food procurement and handling commodities delivered to schools.¹⁴⁸

146. School based key informants reported that supervision of the HGFS processes is frequently tasked to new staff who are on annual contracts, which could explain the high turnover seen with teachers, who often double up as storekeepers, and also the higher demand for training on record and storage management seen in the later monitoring rounds. Capacity building with the school personnel and the LSFCs will be an ongoing requirement because, as schools move from SMP to HGFS, the provision of school meals becomes more complex to operate. It is recognised that because of the standardization under the SMP, meals are easier to cook, food delivery is centrally organized, storage of dry foods is simpler, quality is consistent, and reporting is less onerous – all these areas become more challenging under the HGFS and require greater knowledge and understanding.

¹⁴⁶ Based on a list provided by WFP, the full HGFS currently has 77 suppliers identified, with 62 of them contracted to deliver food items to LRP schools in the three target provinces.

¹⁴⁷ WFP HGFS Suppliers: COVID-19 Suppliers Impact Assessment. May 2020.

¹⁴⁸ The actual number is unknown for now, but likely to correlate with the number of schools in the LRP programme.

147. As the shift in emphasis from the SMP to the HGSF (hybrid and full) progresses, school staff and district officials need enhanced management skills as they engage the various external stakeholders¹⁴⁹ before a school can manage a successful HGSF school meals programme. Many of the school staff, and most of the external participants, have had little, if any, previous business interactions with each other or with WFP.

148. WFP conducts annual operational workshops that help determine the key challenges faced in schools and draw lessons that then feed into the following year's workplans. The LRP support on technical assistance for procurement also involves developing a package of tools and training modules, and the CO annual work plan for 2021-2022 included plans to review the training tools and toolkits, as well as the existing bidding processes and food price information systems. By the midterm, M&E data indicated that 2,982 toolkits had been distributed, with a 40 percent achievement against the target (Figure 2). Some of these tools were converted to online trainings in response to enforced social distancing. WFP has also built the capacity of the LSFCs to be able to confirm the appropriate local market prices for products when developing their procurement calls for suppliers.

Activity 3: Technical Assistance on productivity and market engagement (local suppliers and farmers):

149. This activity sets the stage for farmers and suppliers to gain skills and linkages to markets, first through the HGSF school demand, but later that could also be applied to wider markets. The LRP baseline report (2020) noted that there was a need for continued capacity strengthening awareness among local stakeholders regarding the procurement processes and the requisite logistics on the part of suppliers to furnish timely deliveries to HGSF schools. Furthermore, the LRP Baseline Report (2020) noted that there was a need for i) training around food safety and quality control; and for ii) improvement of storage facilities and for schools to accept responsibility in storing food properly. Using USDA LRP funds, capacity strengthening focuses on policies and guidance, financial and operational procedures and structures, and local procurement processes for HGSF. As part of the McGovern-Dole programme, WFP developed a School Feeding Information System (SFIS) to improve the Government's data collection, management and reporting processes, and the system has now been rolled out across four provinces to support operations management and reporting (including the supplier quotation process) in 536 schools.¹⁵⁰

150. The LRP activities include a farmer mapping exercise to identify knowledge gaps against MAFF standards on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and on a Participatory Guarantee Scheme (PGS), which can then be used to guide the development of training materials for farmers, and activities on women's empowerment. The MAFF engagement in this area, with support from FAO, could ensure that those farmers working with the programme benefit directly from the technical support on improved food production practices.

151. However, the technical assistance on agricultural production was delayed for over two years, partially due to COVID-19 but also because it took time to harmonize corporate procedures between WFP and FAO in alignment with USDA terms and conditions. A contract between the two agencies was signed in April 2021; only then was FAO able to hire field personnel for implementation and to harmonize human resource protocols between the two institutions. Hence, Activity 3 was delayed and by the midterm no activities or achievements could be recorded in reports even though some preliminary groundwork had begun, such as identification of beneficiaries, developing the methodology for value chain analysis, and preparing training materials ([Annex 4](#)).

152. The LRP aims for two thirds of the participants trained to adopt the improved production practices. The main topics covered under the MAFF/FAO technical assistance are relevant to smallholder farmers' training needs and include participatory planning, production inputs, marketing information, storage, packaging techniques and transportation. Midterm interviewees suggested that the MAFF training could be made more gender responsive and raise the awareness of the extension agents to pay attention to the specific needs of women, such as in their ability to travel to markets. Interviews with district agriculture officers confirmed that women are the majority in MAFF cooperatives, comprising 70-75 percent of the common interest groups. The prospects of women continuing to play a prominent role in the supply of vegetables to schools appear to be strong.

153. At the time of the baseline, 58 of the selected farmers reported having previously received technical training in one or more of 11 topics (see Baseline report for more details). These workshops were conducted by district agriculture staff as part of their regular workplan and have a lot of similarity to those included under Activity 3 for the LRP supply side participants, which included plans to offer training to 1,950 farmers¹⁵¹ on commercial production of vegetables to meet the LRP quality and food safety standards. According to interviews,

¹⁴⁹ External stakeholders such as commune council, suppliers, farmers, MAFF

¹⁵⁰ Including the 163 schools under the LRP programme and 20 Government-supported schools.

¹⁵¹ 50 percent male, 50 percent female.

most of the attending farmers are women, typically older, and with lower levels of formal education. This is largely a function of the current context in Cambodia, where grandmothers are often the primary care givers for children whose parents work in salaried employment, so at the same time they can cultivate vegetables plots in or around the homestead.¹⁵²

154. Market prices could affect whether there is sufficient demand for suppliers to be interested in entering school contracts. WFP reviewed markets in January 2022 to update food commodity prices, and reported that the price analysis compared favourably with the prices that were already proposed by suppliers in their new contracts. However, food price increases due to global factors affected the viability of these signed contracts. WFP has since (July 2022) revised and rolled out new information on food prices.

155. Besides LRP suppliers, the farmers also have the option of selling in local market sites, but they reported that production was low during the wet season. Feedback from a similar agricultural programme, the IFAD-support programme *Aspire*,¹⁵³ noted that there were challenges in taking into account the conditions of small-scale suppliers and farmers, and that programme parameters tend to weigh more heavily in favour of compliance to standards rather than be supply-side driven.

156. Linking LRP programmes to build synergies was identified in programme documentation. As an example, one LRP status report states that *“value chain analysis under the LRP programme will also benefit from synergies with a programme aiming to develop Nutrition Guidelines and Standards, based on a holistic food system analysis,”* although this diverges from the LRP’s main goal of improved income generation for suppliers and farmers.¹⁵⁴ These actions have not yet taken place. The workshops conducted by district agriculture officers for the cooperative members and groups present another venue for creating partnerships with LRP farmers and suppliers to achieve LRP targets.

157. **Access to market information.** In partnership with MAFF,¹⁵⁵ WFP collects and monitors key food commodity prices on a monthly basis in 45 urban and rural retail and wholesale markets across the country.¹⁵⁶ Early 2022 saw a brief trend in reduced food prices explained by a government decision to extend tax exemptions on basic food items to December 2023,¹⁵⁷ although this trend reversed from the second quarter when the country experienced a surge in food prices associated with the global price hikes, particularly on fuel. To illustrate the marked change, the price of petrol increased by 39 percent between February (US\$1.03 per litre) and July 2022 (US\$1.43 per litre). Key informant suppliers reported the price surge had affected what they could afford to deliver over the previous couple of months. Some said that where they could, they were negotiating with schools and requesting adjustments on food orders, so that more of the local food items selected from the HGSF approved list could be found readily within the community.

Activity 4: Capacity strengthening of national institution and systems

158. Activity 4 involves components in the areas of capacity strengthening on information management and access to market information, a rice fortification pilot, operational guidelines as well as national policy and regulatory frameworks which are discussed below in the sustainability section. The activity was heavily delayed by the pandemic and no achievements are recorded against the Activity 4 performance indicators from the annual reports, even though preliminary initiatives had been started ([Annex 4](#)).

159. **Information Management.** The information management and monitoring systems connected with the LRP have not yet been sufficiently established to be able to track and monitor the overall functionality of the procurement system on the supply side with farmers and suppliers, beyond the simple measurements of activities and trainings implemented. However, on the demand side, the information management system can track the functionality of the procurement system itself. School reports include information that applies to the LRP on aspects such as stocks and delivery data (type of food items, volumes, contractual price, timeliness etc)

¹⁵² A rolling baseline survey of incoming farmers has recently been rolled out by WFP to assess technical assistance effectiveness and market engagement changes over time. These data will be reviewed in the endline phrase.

¹⁵³ *Aspire* was an IFAD-funded programme which aimed to improve household incomes by supporting women to grow vegetables on a contract farming basis for commercial traders and included equipping them with protective net house (anti-insect) structures. Reports from women involved in the programme indicate that the planned buyers’ quality standards were so high that they remained with a lot of produce that they had to sell on the open market. Programme’s objective (ASPIRE, IFAD, 2018 – 2021): to improve the extension services model in Cambodia by helping smallholder farmers to contribute to broad-based economic growth through profitable and resilient farm businesses.

¹⁵⁴ The Nutrition Guidelines and Standards project will look at nutrition as well as doing a food system analysis, including local production potential, and social and environmental aspects.

¹⁵⁵ The Agricultural Marketing Office (AMO), Department of Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)

¹⁵⁶ Market Update by WFP and MAFF (January 2022)

¹⁵⁷ Market Update by WFP and MAFF (January 2022)

and on quality checks. To date, the reports have been submitted either through a paper-based system or a digital system, KOBO.

160. Reporting for the school feeding programme changed to a new digital School Feeding Information System (SFIS – Version 1), recently introduced by WFP and expected to be progressively integrated into the MoEYS reporting system. The SFIS aims to assist its users (MoEYS, WFP and partners) to track supplies, generate reports, visualize relevant information, and make adjustments as needed. It has two main modules: for management of the SFP operation, and to facilitate supplier quotations. As part of supporting training materials, a user guide has been developed which is available virtually.

161. At the time of this midterm evaluation, the SFIS was undergoing its first round of implementation and some post-launch setbacks were reported by users. The WFP sub-office was still cleaning and verifying the data input from schools, two months behind their normal deadline for internal report submission. All primary focal points interviewed in the school visits expressed ongoing challenges with the SFIS, the majority related to the need for more practice to work out glitches in the system. However, in four of the schools, the concerns related to the system infrastructure, such as users not being digitally literate, having no functional computer equipment (even though all schools are supposed to have been supplied with a computer), or that they had difficulty accessing internet and/or electricity.

162. Several key informants¹⁵⁸ explained that not all schools are considered ready to manage the new system. In general, the more rural a school is, the lower the likelihood of success on integration. Once the SFIS application has gained some experience, an assessment will be required to determine levels of IT literacy, access to IT appliances (identifying which ones were most easily available to users, such as smartphones)¹⁵⁹ and other options where access to bandwidth infrastructure is a challenge. The system is yet to be developed on the supply side of the LRP, where lessons will also need to be drawn and fed into the next version before it becomes fully established.

163. **Operational guidelines.** The HGSF Implementation Guidelines are reasonably comprehensive in setting out the operational standards for Activities 1 and 2 and have now been distributed to all LRP schools. These cover most of the LRP procurement-related operations on tendering, bidding, contractual agreements and application, and food handling within HGSF schools (including food safety, food quality and diversified nutritional standards) and include other aspects on the provision of school meals that apply more to the McGovern-Dole programme.

164. **Rice fortification.** WFP and the Government have been in discussion about fortified rice for over a decade because rice is such an important contributor to the diet in Cambodia, and the obvious opportunities offered by use of fortified rice to address endemic micronutrient deficiencies in the population. In 2019, a WFP technical pilot programme established a rice fortification capacity and infrastructure within the Green Trade parastatal company. Using a donation of five MT of rice kernels, WFP also conducted a demonstrative workshop for experiential learning on rice fortification for 14 private sector participants, to explore possible further interest in expansion (May 2022, at the Green Trade facility).

165. Since 2019, WFP has supported, through technical assistance, the Government's procurement of three rounds of fortified rice (a total of 1,706 MT) for distribution to HGSF schools. In addition, using a government donation, 55,000 children received fortified rice under the NHGSFP in 2022. These have helped raise official awareness, and the Government's commitment to rice fortification is reported to have improved. However, there may be limitations to the potential to ensure rice fortification at scale as there are no other reliable markets identified beyond the school meals programme, which by itself may not be a significant enough consumer to create sufficient demand for investment in a viable fortification process.¹⁶⁰ This was triangulated by respondents who noted that attempts to engage millers and traders to add fortification to their supplies have had limited success, suggesting the lack of a wider demand for fortified rice in the country. Informants at school level noted that the fortified rice is more difficult to cook and is less palatable than unfortified rice.

166. A roadmap is currently being developed internally by WFP in consultation with the Ministry of Planning (MOP), which would outline steps towards a long-term objective of scaling up local rice fortification to create demand in Cambodia, but initially targeting the HGSF school market. Other studies suggest that there may be

¹⁵⁸ NHGSFP School authorities, district, and provincial education officers, MoEYS officials.

¹⁵⁹ While all schools have access to a computer, key informant school authorities sometimes reported having to use their own computers because they experienced some problems with the official computers.

¹⁶⁰ WFP. 2021. Final Report: McGovern-Dole and LRP Market Study.

more potential for national expansion beyond school meals for fortifying salt and sauces (fish and soy) because of existing private sector industries.¹⁶¹

167. Some key informants at MAFF suggested that USDA and WFP should consider whether further investment here is the best use of resources, compared to promoting broader nutrition-sensitive programming. In the remaining year of the LRP, the latter would seem more realistic in the context of the national HGSF where there are several other competing priorities on capacity strengthening which should receive greater emphasis and be beneficial to the wider programme if an increase in the national budget allocated to the NHGSFP is approved in the future.

168. **Gender considerations.** The LRP baseline recommended that gender considerations should be retroactively added into the programme design documents and monitoring plan for the subject to receive the appropriate attention during implementation, and this continues to apply. However, compared to previous McGovern-Dole cycles, progress has been made on gender analysis through studies conducted by WFP and their findings mainstreamed into the LRP implementation.

169. Using the data available, and findings from field interviews, this midterm evaluation sought to identify the extent to which the programme identified and targeted gender specific issues within school communities. As shown in Table 12 below, under Activity 1,¹⁶² the participation in the programme for women is strong, with high achievement rates against annual targets (disaggregated indicators do not have EOC targets). Overall, women substantially over-performed their targets compared to men. This is consistent with the relatively higher percentages of women involved in the school procurement systems, and that they are disproportionately represented in local vegetable production. The number of males targeted for these trainings was 85 percent of the total participants (Annex 4). These initial targets are reflective of the local Government and school authorities' gender representation rather than an intended male bias.

Table 12: Percentage of Beneficiaries / Participants by Gender¹⁶³

Performance Indicator	Achievement percentage 19/20	Achievement percentage 20/21	Achievement Percentage 21/22	Av. Annual Achievement Rate
Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (Male)	0%	50%	123%	58%
Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (Female)	0%	61%	151%	71%
Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (Male)	0%	50%	126%	42%
Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (Female)	0%	61%	154%	51%
Number of individuals trained in HGSF implementation, including procurement process and procedures as a result of USDA assistance (Male)	0%	42%	67%	36%
Number of individuals trained in HGSF implementation, including procurement process and procedures as a result of USDA assistance (Female)	0%	146%	267%	138%

Source: WFP Semi-annual reports, March 2022.

EQ 2.2a: COVID-19 Influence on Results and Implementation¹⁶⁴

170. As discussed earlier, the influence of the pandemic on all aspects of life in Cambodia had a very severe impact, from which the country is only slowly recovering. Most significant for the LRP programme was the closure of the schools for 20 months, meaning no school meals and therefore no food being sourced and delivered from the selected suppliers, except for THRs. Social distancing restrictions meant that planned training sessions had to be cancelled (although some were adjusted so that they could continue online); meetings to push forward on policies and other formal work at national level had to be held virtually or were also postponed. Under these

¹⁶¹ Laillou, Arnaud et. Al. 2019. Beyond Effectiveness – The Adversities of Implementing a Fortification Program. A Case Study on the Quality of Iron Fortification of Fish and Soy Sauce in Cambodia. *Nutrients*: 8 (2): 94.

¹⁶² Cash transfers to support the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSF)

¹⁶³ Individual lines cannot be summed as these tables are only abstracting certain relevant lines from the full performance results framework.

¹⁶⁴ "How has the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influenced the ability of the programme to meet expected results and targets by agreed timeline?"

conditions it is inevitable that achievement of anticipated midterm results would be impacted, and some of this has been explained above.¹⁶⁵

171. The most significant engagement of the USDA-support programmes was to redirect funding earmarked for school meals to instead purchase and distribute take home rations, closely aligned with the Government's social protection programme. The Government redirected part of its budget to support the most vulnerable households via the distribution of THRs, complemented by WFP's adjustment of all SFP activities, including the LRP. The Government also made a significant cash contribution (of over US\$1 million) to the WFP HGFSF programme, which was redirected to local procurement of school meals,¹⁶⁶ and made an in-kind contribution of 1,500 MT of rice which was supplemented by in-kind contributions from USDA and other donors. According to semi-annual reports, a total of 64,464 individuals (51 percent women) were supported with THRs as a result of USDA assistance.

172. Soon after the Government rolled out a phased school reopening strategy that initially prioritized areas with low COVID-19 prevalence rates, WFP and partners used a self-assessment checklist developed to assess the readiness of schools for reopening and the resumption of school meals. An updated COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for delivering and preparing school meals helped ensure health, hygiene and food safety and was disseminated to all LRP schools as soon as they were authorized to officially reopen.

173. The LRP's low achievement against the RF targets is also reflected in Table 15 below that presents a breakdown of LRP expenditures against funds received (note that the total LRP budget was US\$4.7 million). This indicates that only 33.6 percent¹⁶⁷ of the total funds received so far had been utilized by midpoint of the programme, whereas in a normal operating environment one would have expected closer to 50 percent. This spend rate is significantly lower for operational expenditures related to four activities under the LRP which range from 0.8 percent for Activity 3 percent to 28.3 percent for Activity 1 (Table 13).

Table 13: LRP Expenditures (US\$)

Cost Category	Received	Actual	% Actual vs Received	Comments
Activity 1: Cash transfers to schools shifted to the HGFSF model	1,684,223	476,263	28.3%	Cash to schools for local purchases was put on hold for most of years 1 and 2 of the LRP programme cycle.
Activity 2: Technical assistance to HGFSF stakeholders on procurement	154,452	33,922	22.0%	HGFSF supplier selection and trainings were disrupted by COVID-19.
Activity 3: Technical assistance to producers and suppliers	373,270	3,094	0.8%	Expenses incurred through FAO have not yet been cleared and do not appear in financial records.
Activity 4: Strengthen national institutional capacities & systems	289,045	33,915	11.7%	
Adjusted Direct Support Costs	258,115	97,342	37.7%	
Monitoring & Evaluation	380,000	213,968	56.3%	
Indirect Support Costs	286,854	286,854	100.0%	
Contribution Accounting and Donor Financial Reporting	9,768	9,768	100.0%	RMFC Special Account
Grand Total	3,435,727	1,155,126	33.6%	

Source: WFP Cambodia, Budget Unit (June 2022)

EQ 2.2b: What are the recommendations and strategic action points based on this analysis?

174. This evaluation question better fits for guiding recommendations and lessons learned which are presented in Section 3 of this report. However, in summary, actions related to improving the participation of smallholder farmers and suppliers and more formalized linkages between these supply side actors and the capacity development of the demand side actors would improve the rural development aspirations described in the LRP programme. This may include an array of strategies. For example, upgrading of the SFIS should continue to allow it to capture additional data related to participating suppliers and farmers, and for the schools. A more detailed mapping of suppliers and farmers involved in the HGFSF supply could identify the barriers of engagement faced by supply chain actors, with attention paid to their ability to access advance capital, the effect that price

¹⁶⁵ Delays in Activity 3 (technical assistance on production) were also due to elongated processing in inter-agency protocols that were required before headquarters approvals were issued.

¹⁶⁶ WFP Semi-annual Report Narrative 1 April – 30 September 2021

¹⁶⁷ This percentage would be even lower if compared to the programme budget

fluctuations have on them, and to broaden opportunities for women to participate, especially in the trainings on procurement processes. Finally, a more formal link between and the MAFF with MOEYS and the demand side of the HGSP would be beneficial, though this now included in the draft sub-decree.

EQ 2.3.: Internal Factors¹⁶⁸

175. Within WFP, there were several factors that contributed both to supporting and/or inhibiting programme progress.

176. **Regional Resources.** One positive factor, especially related to handover and transition, was the input of resources available from the Regional Bureau to support the CO. Of particular support was the publication of the Regional School Feeding Implementation Plan (2021-2025), elaborated after inception of the current LRP and McGovern-Dole programme cycles, which provided key directions for school feeding programmes in the region. In particular, the plan identified the corporate strategic shift towards investing in the transition to “nationally-led high quality, sustainable school feeding programmes” including a conceptual shift in WFP CO programming from a focus on implementation towards an enabling role that sought to strengthen the national systems necessary for school feeding. The plan articulated the five Dimensions in systems building mentioned earlier. The RBB also was able to support the CO through the provision of expert advisors to provide guidance to CO staff in shifting to this systems-strengthening, enabling role. The RBB has also been instrumental in development of the rice fortification pilot, in developing the Joint Transition Strategy (2022-2025) and in the ongoing M&E framework for the NHGSFP.

177. **CO National Level Staffing Gaps and Profiles.** At the national level, the degree of operational requirements still necessary for food delivery within the SO1 school feeding programme has meant that the majority of staffing attention was focused on the operations and logistics for SMP implementation. As a result, the primary mandate, and vision, for transition and handover was left to be conducted by relatively few individuals, in turn leaving the CO vulnerable to institutional memory loss in the event of transitions of these few staff. Recent turnover of WFP national level staff has indeed reduced institutional memory for the transition and handover components and has placed excess time requirements on the remaining staff, limiting their ability to provide the focused attention needed for these elements.¹⁶⁹

178. The impact of these vacancies is unintentionally exacerbated by the CSP architecture at CO level. On the positive side, the CO has a well-established relationship with the MoEYS, a good working relationship with FAO, a strong programme management team and supportive senior CO management personnel. However, school feeding, agriculture, and nutrition expertise are all located under different SOs in the WFP CSP, which each have SO leads and dedicated delivery teams within the CO. The LRP is managed by SO1, but its focus on agricultural development makes it functionally more connected to the expertise found in SO2. Having an agricultural programme managed by education experts limits the degree to which the country office agricultural development expertise can be provided to support the programme. This housing of an agricultural programme under education complicates internal collaboration and reduced the opportunities for the CO to maximize inhouse capacities as the components may not necessarily be led by the most relevant individuals in terms of expertise.

179. **CO Sub-national Staffing Gaps and Profiles.** At the field operations level, the staffing of the sub-national structure did not always reflect the complexity of a shift to a country capacity strengthening approach for transition and handover of schools to the NHGSFP. For example, at this level the number of programme monitoring assistants (PMAs) is commensurate with the responsibilities related to the SMP modality. However, the extra time investment required for preparing schools for shifting to a home-grown model, and the extra responsibilities and skills required for engaging with sub-national district and provincial authorities in support of schools undergoing the modality shift and the cross-sectoral engagement with MAFF and producers,¹⁷⁰ will require more staff time and some more specific skills.

180. Based on a review of the staffing profiles and the organizational chart, the current staffing numbers and profiles within WFP and the IPs have insufficient capacity in terms of time and skillsets to engage in the required activities with the range of LRP stakeholders as outlined above, and indeed also on the systems-related productivity and supply chain support for the HGSP market (Activities 3 and 4).¹⁷¹ Staff time allocation (supported

¹⁶⁸ “What were the major internal factors that have influenced the progress of the programme by the time of the midterm evaluation?”

¹⁶⁹ The Joint Transition Strategy was developed before transfer occurred which helped set up the next steps in the transition process

¹⁷⁰ As well as the technical assistance needed to accompany sub-national officials after handover for on-the-job a support which falls under the McGovern-Dole

¹⁷¹ This is discussed in more detail later in this section.

by verbal feedback from interviewed staff) prioritize the implementation of activities related to the provision of school meals and procurement, as well as supporting assessments, monitoring and reporting, with less time allocated to the production systems linkages.

181. The Area Office's monitoring staff (together with implementing partners) are required to deliver a broad range of technical inputs to successfully promote each LRP school through the change process, and engage in intense coaching, experiential learning and follow-up monitoring that goes with it. Due to the pandemic delays and school closures, there is a need to substantively increase the number of persons trained at the sub-national level as seen in the increases in achievement rates in 2021-2022. However, according to WFP workplans, there is an intention to substantially increase the number of people trained in the remaining time period of this cycle to attempt to meet targets.

182. Until now, only a small percentage of schools have been shifted from SMP to HGSP, but as the planned number of HGSP schools increases through the remainder of the cycle, there will be a need for additional sub-national staff and other skills which are not reflected in the current numbers (or profiles¹⁷²) of the PMAs. Besides the PMAs, the LRP also draws on the support from the two McGovern-Dole funded implementing partners.

183. **Internal Communications.** A recent staff departure was reported to have resulted in a fragmented understanding of the step-by-step requirements leading towards eventual transition and their consequences if the steps are not acted upon. In stakeholder interviews, a pattern could be seen of decreasing clarity on what this involved across multiple levels of the CO. As the communication moved down through the CO to the field levels, the capacity of staff to articulate the objectives and requirements necessary for operational modality shifts was very clear, but for handover and transition their understanding became more fragmented. For example, although a scoring system and checklist for assessing school capacity in readiness for handover to the NHGSP does exist ([Annex 4.5.](#)), during interviews with PMAs, respondents claimed not to be aware of such a checklist. As another example, staff in the Area Office were not always able to articulate the rationale behind decisions made at the CO level (so too with implementing partners), reflecting limited ownership of the requirements needed for handover.

184. **Monitoring Post-Handover.** The criteria for assessing school readiness for handover mentioned above assesses the capacity of school level stakeholders and infrastructure. A similar assessment for tracking the capacity of sub-national stakeholders to supervise and mentor HGSP schools (including LSFCs, commune councils, suppliers, and producers) once the school is handed over to the NHGSP, does not yet exist. In addition, follow-up of each school's capacity after handover is not maintained and these schools are removed from the WFP monitoring database – reducing the degree to which sustainability can be assessed.

EQ 2.4. External Factors Affecting Results¹⁷³

185. Beyond (or because of) the factors mentioned above directly caused by the pandemic, the ET can identify a number of other external areas that have in some way influenced the delivery of the LRP activities. None of these is within the ability of the LRP team or WFP CO to directly influence, but they should be noted as potential opportunities to address them can perhaps be identified during the remainder of the programme cycle.

186. Only one procurement round (selection of suppliers) has been achieved to date, so potential lessons from multiple rounds have not been identified to help improve the process. With only six months of effective food procurements to date, it is also quite early to see much progress in the areas of technical assistance and capacity strengthening which need to be worked on to ensure suppliers are adequately supported. Social distancing restricted the ability to deliver many of the planned trainings on technical assistance and capacity strengthening to school authorities and Government staff. The needs and urgency have been compounded because of a (reported) high turnover of Government staff and school personnel, who take any knowledge gained through training with them when they leave. This indicates a scaled-up number of trainings will continue to be required to give the programme a chance of real success in the last part of its cycle. In addition, sub-national authorities reported they did not have sufficient budgets allocated for administration and operational and monitoring, which limits their capacity to implement the NHGSP.

187. A reallocation of the Government budget to address emergency interventions has meant that ministry budgets were correspondingly reduced, resulting the number of schools handed over from WFP to the MoEYS

¹⁷² PMA profiles generally come from the education or development sectors. While this makes the PMAs highly suitable for providing technical support on the implementation of the school feeding programme, this is not necessarily the skillset necessary for the transition to the Government and mentoring of Government staff in this process. Collaborating with the authorities in a mentoring role may require additional political skills and capacities.

¹⁷³ "How has the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influenced the ability of the programme to meet expected results and targets by agreed timeline? What are the recommendations and strategic action points based on this analysis?"

being below the expected target number, and in turn changing the whole of the planning expectations into the future. Additionally, the geographical areas in which the McGovern-Dole and LRP programmes operate include schools with varying degrees of capacity and infrastructure within each district, affecting the ability and speed of absorption and integration of various HGSF ventures.

188. Low levels of production from small-scale farmers who predominate in the three target provinces is compounded by the fact that Cambodia frequently suffers natural disasters that impact on production, as experienced with flooding across numerous provinces in 2020. As elsewhere in the world, the country is experiencing an upsurge in prices in general (including food commodities) connected to global price increases and higher fuel prices. This has only been partly ameliorated by the Government's tax exemptions on basic food items, which have now been extended to December 2023. These price shifts may affect the viability of the set prices signed in the contract. The suppliers may request updated contract prices or even seek to terminate their agreements.

2.3. SUSTAINABILITY

189. The LRP is planned as a single-cycle programme in support of the school feeding activities, due to end in late 2023, but the local procurement processes and support to local markets and smallholder production are integral components of the NHGSFP. Much of the consideration in the overall midterm evaluation work concerned the question of readiness for the modality shift towards the handing over of schools to the Government. Comments on sustainability specific to the LRP programme are given below although some elements will be intertwined with the MGD findings.¹⁷⁴

EQ 3.1. Handover of Schools¹⁷⁵

190. This evaluation question is most relevant to the overall school feeding programming (covered in the McGovern-Dole report and summarized in [Annex 12](#)). The LRP programme is a component of the overall school feeding programme.

191. In SY 2019/2020, WFP handed over 205 of its school feeding schools to the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) which was below the pre-COVID-19 agreement of 268 schools. Of these, 63 were (previously) supported by McGovern-Dole.¹⁷⁶ During the current SY 2021/2022, WFP and the Government have agreed on the handover of an additional 85 schools, 46 of which are McGovern-Dole supported schools.¹⁷⁷ Senior officials at the MoEYS considered the most recent round of school handover to have been premature. Learning from this experience, WFP and MoEYS have developed a readiness checklist (2022),¹⁷⁸ although a challenge remains in that handover is done geographically by districts within which schools have varying degrees of readiness.

192. The intent is to gradually scale up the number of schools funded by the MoEYS under the NHGSFP to 1,113 schools by SY 2027/28 (Figure 3).

¹⁷⁴ Questions 3.6 (Sustainability of Benefits) and EQ3.8 (Implications of USDA funding decisions) are better suited to guide the development of the conclusions as they are summative observations based on the findings described in the rest of this section

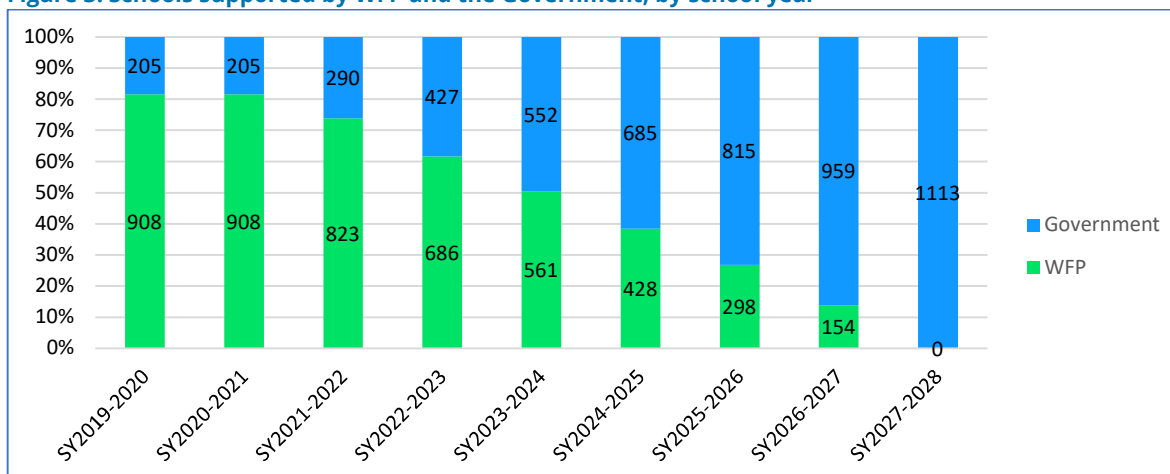
¹⁷⁵ "To what extent progress has been made against the overall handover process against the programme plan and handover plan/strategy agreed with and endorsed by the Government?"

¹⁷⁶ No data available on revised gradual hand over plans specific for LRP supported schools.

¹⁷⁷ In SY 2020/21, 522 schools remained in the programme, pending confirmation from the Government on handover of schools, including the pending 71 schools from SY 2020-21. Of the 85 schools the Government confirmed it would take over in SY 2021-22, 46 USDA supported schools were pending from SY 2020-21 (while WFP continued to support the remaining 25 schools with other donor resources). Hence, the total number of schools handed over to the Government for FY19 was 77 schools, but only 46 of these were USDA supported.

¹⁷⁸ "Criteria and Plan for Handover of WFP-Supported School Meals to the National HGSFP" (2022)

Figure 3: Schools supported by WFP and the Government, by school year



Source: WFP CO data

193. The HGSF model itself began as a hybrid in 2014, but only 27 percent of the total schools under the current USDA McGovern-Dole cycle (522 schools) had had any experience with the model when the LRP began (2019). The LRP Baseline reported that only 11 of the 163 LRP schools had contracted suppliers (10 in Siem Reap and one in Kampong Thom) and had started receiving deliveries of food commodities over a five-month period before the school closures. With less than two years remaining from the original four-year programme cycle, the CO has had to accelerate the number of schools being shifted upwards on the modalities in readiness for handover to the NHGSFP. Because of the pandemic delays, there is limited time for WFP to advance all 522 the McGovern-Dole supported schools (163 LRP) from SMP to the full HGSF model by the end of the current programme cycle.¹⁷⁹

194. Over the current programme life cycle, only a proportion of the LRP supported schools are planned for gradual handover to the Government and/or transferred to the full HGSF model. Of the 163 schools targeted for handover in the remainder of the programme cycle, 104 are due to be supported by the HGSF hybrid model under USDA funding until the end of the LRP programme in 2023 (Table 14).^{180,181}

Table 14: Planned Handover for LRP Schools by 2022-2023 at the time of design

SMP activity status as planned by SY 2022-2023	HGSF-Hybrid (McGovern-Dole + LRP only)
Handover to Government	47
Transferred to full HGSF (other donors)	12
HGSF-Hybrid (McGovern-Dole + LRP) in 2023	104
Total schools in SY 2020-2021	163

Source: LRP proposal

195. Due to the pandemic delays, no handover of LRP-supported schools occurred in 2020/2021 and the handover timeframe has been revised as described below but the data available does not differentiate LRP specific schools (163) from the McGovern-Dole pool of schools (522).¹⁸² Table 15 shows the plans for handover of USDA McGovern-Dole schools, as well as the actual implementation to date.

¹⁷⁹ USDA-funded schools handed over so far have all been in Siem Reap (31 in Y1 & 46 in Y3) and the handover of 71 USDA schools planned for Y2 did not take place (SRP (46) & KPT (25))

¹⁸⁰ World Food Programme Cambodia. Financial Year (FY) 2019 USDA LRP Proposal.

¹⁸¹ The targets for schools have been amended from the original design following the revision of transition targets in the Joint Transition Strategy. By the end of the programme cycle in 2023, 181 of these schools are expected to be handed over to the Government. Thus, the remaining 341 schools were to be supported by the USDA grants: HGSF-Hybrid (McGovern-Dole + LRP - 58 schools) and HGSF-Hybrid (McGovern-Dole + other donors - 283 schools).

¹⁸² Joint Transition Strategy Towards Nationally Owned HGSF Programme (Phase 1, 2022).

Table 15: Planned versus actual handover plans of McGovern-Dole supported schools

Handover plan McGovern-Dole supported schools according to agreement																
Province	SY 2019-20				SY 2020-21				SY 2021-22				SY 2022-23			
	SMP	HGSF-H	HO	Total WFP	SMP	HGSF-H	HO	Total WFP	SMP	HGSF-H	HO	Total WFP	SMP	HGSF-H	HO	Total WFP
KCG	0	71	0	71	0	71	0	71	0	42	29	42	0	0	42	0
KTM	77	145	0	222	77	83	62	160	0	139	30	139	0	139	0	139
SRP	243	63	0	306	218	63	25	281	0	204	77	204	0	158	46	158
Total	320	279	0	599	295	217	87	512	0	385	127	385	0	297	88	297

Handover of McGovern-Dole supported schools; implementation to date																
Province	SY 2019-20				SY 2020-21				SY 2021-22				SY 2022-23			
	SMP	HGSF-H	HO	Total WFP	SMP	HGSF-H	HO	Total WFP	SMP	HGSF-H	HO	Total WFP	SMP	HGSF-H	HO	Total WFP
KCG	46	61	0	107	0	97	0	97								
KTM	75	144	0	219	75	82	25	157								
SRP	208	90	31	267	151	117	46	268								
Total	329	295	31	593	226	296	71	522								

Key: KCG: Kampong Chhnang; KTM: Kampong Thom; SRP: Siem Reap; SMP: School meal programme; HGSF-H: Home grown school feeding – hybrid; HO: Handover
 Source: WFP CO data

196. In January 2020 (school year 2019-20), 31 McGovern-Dole supported schools in Siem Reap province were handed over to the Government. These schools continued to receive WFP support until the end of 2019. While the original agreement was to hand over an additional 87 schools in the SY 2020-21, this was adjusted to 71 schools because of the pandemic. However, in reality the Government was not ready to take over any schools and WFP continued to support them using funds from other donors because these 71 schools had already been taken off the list of USDA support. The remaining 522 schools continued to receive support through the McGovern-Dole funding. In late 2021, the Government confirmed the takeover of 85 schools from WFP (including 46 USDA supported schools pending from SY 2020-2021). The “Total WFP” column in the table above refers to the total number of schools supported by McGovern-Dole after the handover during that school year.¹⁸³

EQ 3.2. Sustainability Considerations for Transition¹⁸⁴

197. At corporate level, WFP has used the SABER-SF dimensions to articulate the five pillars for framing progress made by country offices towards complete transitioning¹⁸⁵ to nationally owned and managed school feeding programmes.¹⁸⁶ These are replicated in the Joint Transition Strategy (March 2022)¹⁸⁷ which outlines the broad transition roadmap on national capacity building to implement, manage and monitor the NHGSFP.¹⁸⁸

198. As the LRP resumed its original design activities during early 2022, the CO has progressively increased the number of actions and engagements, especially within the dimensions related to programme design and implementation.

199. Figure 5 below quantifies the number of activities mentioned in LRP semi-annual reports within each of the five SABER-SF dimensions (see paras 85 and 86). Although all dimensions have seen some increases in

¹⁸³ The data presented in this report were provided by the Country Office as of the time of data collection in June 2022. There are variations among the data in terms of handover schools because of how the data is tracked at the Strategic Outcome level of the CSP. For example, although a donor’s funding may allow for supporting a certain number of schools, the specific schools under that funding will shift over time as new donors emerge or schools are transitioned, dropped, or re-allocated to new donors. As a result, discrepancies will emerge between numbers reported in donor-specific reporting in semi-annual reports compared with the overall school numbers managed within the CSP school feeding programme.

¹⁸⁴ “To what extent [did] the LRP implementation arrangements include considerations for sustainability (handover to the Government) at national and local levels, communities, and other partners for all programme components agreed with and endorsed by the Government and national stakeholders?”

¹⁸⁵ The five pathways are not given equal emphasis under the LRP. Two of the five apply much more to the McGovern-Dole than the LRP: a) Policy Framework; and c) Public Sector Financing (resourcing).

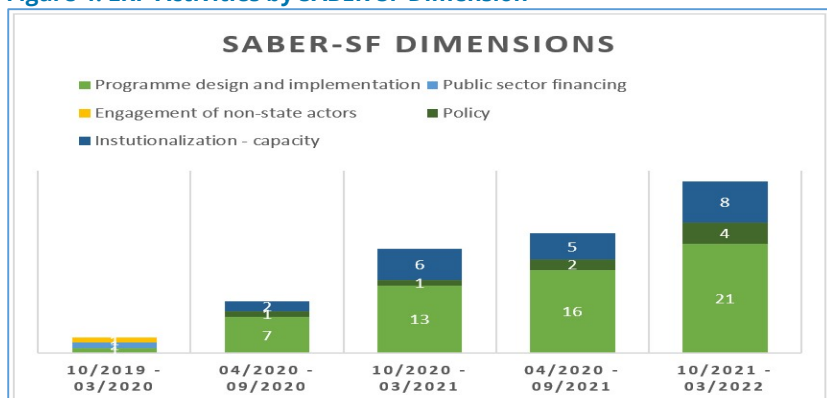
¹⁸⁶ These include a) Policy Framework; b) Institutional Capacity; c) Public Sector Financing (resourcing); d) Programme Design and Implementation; and e) Engagement of non-state actors.

¹⁸⁷ The national home-grown school feeding programme aims to provide safe and healthy nutrition to Cambodian children to promote social protection, increase access to education services to contribute to the development of local economic and agricultural, and society.

¹⁸⁸ The capacity building actions outlined in this strategy draws on the global guidance on assessing national capacity on school feeding developed by WFP/World Bank Systems Approach to Better Education Results (SABER-SF)

numbers of activities cited over time, the predominance has been within the programme design and implementation aspects (such as those related to cash transfers, procurement, and the provision of school meals). Given the limited time left for implementation, less progress may be achieved within the other dimensions related to public sector financing, policy development, institutionalization of systems, and the engagement of civil society. This is further impeded because the targets for handing over of schools (as well as the timeline to transition to the NHGSFP) have become rather ambitious¹⁸⁹ which reduces the amount of time and energy WFP staff can devote to these additional components.

Figure 4: LRP Activities by SABER-SF Dimension



Source: WFP LRP Semi-annual Reports Oct. 2019 through March 2022

200. There has been some progress towards transitioning schools (and LRP processes). The MoEYS began direct cash transfers to 205 schools for the provision of school meals in six provinces (SY 2019/20),¹⁹⁰ 32 of them formerly funded by USDA until FY 2016 (Battambang province).¹⁹¹ However, all MoEYS stakeholders met, and some school level interviewees, were categorical as to how important it was for WFP to continue to provide technical assistance even after schools have been handed over to Government.¹⁹² Most schools supported in the current McGovern-Dole/LRP cycle will get only one, and at most two, academic years of operational experience before the programme ends next year, which is not sufficient for the participants to become fully adept with implementation.

EQ 3.3. National Level Engagement and EQ3.4 Financial sustainability¹⁹³

201. **National policy and regulatory frameworks:** Given the multi-sectoral engagements of the HGSF model, the process of developing strong policy documents is critical, and the process itself is as important as the end product. It provides opportunities for broad consultation among the various stakeholders and thereby strengthening liaison and cross-sectoral engagements. The most recent outcome on regulatory frameworks that guide the LRP has been the newly approved Joint Transition Strategy (March 2022 and discussed in more detail in the McGovern-Dole report) but there are other key documents in the process of being drafted such as the national school meals policy and the associated sub-decree.

202. WFP actively plays a convening role in strengthening collaboration between agricultural sector stakeholders and school feeding activities. For example, as part of the global food systems summit in 2021, WFP, FAO, MoEYS, MAFF and CARD¹⁹⁴ convened a consultation workshop with over 100 participants from various development partners and line ministries. Part of the dialogue was centred around the HGSF programme, on how it could better contribute to stronger nutritious value chains and linkages within local food systems.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ Over 230 FY 2022 and 226 more in 2023

¹⁹⁰ The provinces of Banteay Meanchey, Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, Battambang, Preah Vihear and Stung Treng

¹⁹¹ In Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap.

¹⁹² Criteria and Plan for Handover of WFP-Supported School Meals to the National HGSFP (2022)

¹⁹³ These EQ are combined because they both make reference to national level systems per the country capacity strengthening framework: "To what extent [has] progress been made towards institutionalization of the measures planned as part of the technical assistance to the Government that is expected to support the sustainability of the intervention (including policy work, support to systems, institutional capacity etc)? What progress has been made since the programme design stage (through strategic engagement, advocacy and other efforts with Government and relevant stakeholders) in supporting financial sustainability of the LRP beyond WFP's intervention to the extent it can be evaluated by the midterm evaluation (national budget for LRP and other funding sources)?"

¹⁹⁴ CARD is based at the Council of Ministers.

¹⁹⁵ WFP Semi-annual Report Narrative 1 April - 30 September 2021

203. Some gaps exist in the national institutional infrastructure with operational implications for the LRP, which include the LRP not being embedded in the agricultural sector policy frameworks, the MAFF being excluded from social protection policy frameworks which house the SFP and having no national stakeholder to play the convening role between the education and agricultural sectors. Premised by the LRP's contribution towards transition, the fact that the budget allocation to NHGSFP omits to include costs related to institutional infrastructure (administration, implementation, capacity building) affects the LRP's line of sight beyond the life of the programme.

204. WFP's engagement in the social protection sphere includes activities related to food security, improved livelihoods, and community asset creation. Under the Cambodian Government's current institutional framework, social protection falls under the National Social Protection Council, and the MAFF is not directly linked to social protection as it previously was when social protection was under the umbrella of CARD which included food security and nutrition. As a consequence, the LRP has no natural policy home in Cambodia and there is no framework that allows for an operational intersection between MAFF and MoEYS, besides having a common presence at sub-national level, and, in turn, wider coordination meetings but with no direct contribution to the HGSF. Being a temporary programme, a policy home may not be a priority for the LRP per se; however, the convening role it plays that supports the linking of local production and supply side stakeholders to the demand in HGSF schools, will continue to be pertinent even under the Government's NHGSFP.

205. Some work was done during the pandemic period regarding transition to national ownership, including policy aspects such as an advanced drafting of the sub-decree that will accompany and define the operational aspects of the future school meals policy. While not yet official, the drafting process has included some rounds of consultations that engaged a wide range of stakeholders and in turn raised awareness of the LRP across the ministries. The role and responsibilities of MAFF are outlined in the draft sub-decree.

206. **Financial Capacity.** Although the release of funds to schools is reported to have been slow, the Government's financial commitment to receive handed-over schools has been firmly articulated to cover cash transfers to schools for local food procurement – but only after WFP completes the shift from SMP to HGSF modalities. However, the funds allocated only partially cover the system-wide implementation costs required to operationalize the NHGSFP. For sustained implementation, a remodelling of the HGSF operations may be necessary that is better fitted to the Government's human and resource capacity and less driven by WFP/USDA's programming approach and standards.

207. The regular quarterly high-level coordination and progress meetings held between WFP and the MoEYS, as well as quarterly meetings for technical staff from both sides, were disrupted during the pandemic but resumed in early 2022.

208. The Joint Transition Strategy delineates roles and responsibilities of national stakeholders to enable implementation through multi-sectoral collaboration. Within the MoEYS, through its Programme Coordination Committee (PCC) and School Feeding Task Force (SFTF), the ministry provides overall policy and strategy guidance which should include coordination across line ministries and with development partners, as well as advocacy for the NHGSFP. WFP is supporting the MoEYS to develop a monitoring framework for the NHGSFP expected to be ready by the end of 2022.

209. At provincial level, for the NHGSFP, the Provincial Offices of Education develop and submit plans for mainstreaming into the National Education Action Plan that then leads to the budget allocation to schools. While the system is in place, certain key informants indicated reservations regarding the Government's capacity to implement the growing HGSF programme, based on the level of financial support allocated for this activity. Furthermore, neither of the two Government-funded schools visited by the ET, both recently handed over to the NHGSFP, had received the cash transfers to pay their suppliers after six months of deliveries.

210. The Government is currently working through its Decentralization and Deconcentration (D&D) policy, which gives progressive delegation from line ministries to sub-national levels under provincial and district governors. An integral part of the D&D plans is to build supporting management systems at national, provincial and district levels for service delivery at the commune level. Being mainstreamed at the level of the commune council, the LRP complements the MoEYS efforts by utilizing agricultural produce from local communities for provision of school meals. The LRP procurement process is based on the Government's own systems, which facilitates joint planning and resource allocation at sub-national levels.

211. The fact that the D&D process is not yet fully established does raise some challenges for the LRP since the roles, responsibilities, and finances it requires are same ones undergoing transition within the Government structures itself. The ambiguity in what the D&D process implies was given as another reason why certain key

informants voiced their reservations about taking on too many HGSF schools too hastily. Plans to scale up Government inputs to more than US\$6 million after 2020 were reversed as budget cuts were enforced on all sectors in response to the pandemic.

EQ 3.5. Engagement at sub-national authority and school community level¹⁹⁶

212. The LRP has been successful in its engagement with sub-national authorities, including school stakeholders, in rolling out local procurement processes but has been less systematic in engaging with the supply side in terms of small farmers groups and intentionally integrating them into school procurement value chains. The Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFF) conducts technical assistance activities through agricultural cooperatives but there is no formal connection between these activities and the LRP programming.

213. There are several sub-national Government structures to support the LRP activities. At the provincial level, the MoEYS draws on existing structures of school feeding committees to develop HGSF implementation plans, which are then submitted for local procurement budget allocation, either by the Government for the NHGSFP or by WFP for the LRP/HGSF. Provincial offices develop and submit plans for mainstreaming into the National Education Action Plan that then leads to the allocation of a budget to schools. To facilitate greater collaboration and involvement of the sub-national authorities within the agricultural and health sectors for HGSF/LRP activities, joint inter-ministerial efforts would be required at the highest level.

214. At sub-national level, an annual workshop is facilitated by WFP and the MoEYS to identify existing gaps and lessons learnt that feed into annual plans, while quarterly coordination and progress meetings are organized and managed by the MoEYS.

215. Under the ongoing process, protocol indicates that provincial staff are functionally under the Ministry of Interior and hence report to the provincial governor (or deputy governor) but refer to their line ministries on technical matters. The degree to which responsibility over financial resources has been transferred from the line ministries to Governors varies between sectors, and the LRP has an added layer of coordination and communication challenges at the sub-national level since it crosses between sectors.

216. An HGSF Operational Guideline was developed before the launch of the NHGSFP and this needs to be reviewed once the NHGSFP has had time to implement and adjusted based on the experience. A review by the Government, with WFP's support, would also offer a good opportunity to draw lessons on the procurement process, including linkage to local production. For example, the HGSF Operational Guidelines requires that 70 percent of the food commodities be purchased from the local community, though this is not tracked. Key informant suppliers explained that availability of produce directly from local farmers can be unstable and/or seasonal so they often need to buy from market sites where the source was unknown (and thus side-lining smallholders from participation in the school procurement). Key informants suggested that processing of orders three months in advance would increase the chances that the local farming community could produce the food required and that suppliers could purchase directly from them rather than needing to go through the markets. Furthermore, if suppliers lacked sufficient credit, they struggled to be able to pay farmers (or markets) in advance and often had to absorb long debt periods because of slow dispersal processes from the communes.

217. School orders are for a standard selection of vegetables, pulses, protein (eggs, pork, fish) and salt, as well as rice and oil for schools that have shifted to the full HGSF model, but the quantities ordered are considered too low to attract cooperatives. Key informants from the district offices of agriculture suggested that one way to overcome this would be for several schools to be clustered at commune level (as they are for bidding), combining individual school orders into a larger supplier order, which would also be easier for MAFF to work through its cooperative membership. This may require more standardization of menus, as was mentioned during the baseline.

218. One critical success factor for the LRP is that it benefits from partnering with strong implementing partners extended from, and financed by, the McGovern-Dole programme, notably Plan International and World Vision. Several key informants from these partners indicated to the ET that the impending end of that

¹⁹⁶ "To what extent has LRP been successful in engaging Government and local communities (PTAs, farmers groups, etc) towards school feeding and education activities? Has the role of the communities and local stakeholders been institutionalized (as the Government policy, strategy and/or systems levels)?"

programme in late 2023 underpins their own human resource decisions which will have implications on their capacity to perform in the future, should there be an extension of the McGovern-Dole.¹⁹⁷

EQ 3.6. Benefits of Programme continuing beyond WFP's Interventions, and EQ 3.8 USDA Funding

219. Questions 3.6 (Sustainability of Benefits) and EQ3.8 (Implications of USDA funding decisions) are better suited to guide the development of the conclusions as they are summative observations based on the findings described. The TOR evaluation question 3.8 assumed there would be no further funding and may no longer be relevant to address in the evaluation since USDA has since approved another round of McGovern-Dole funding for school feeding, although the LRP itself is only a single cycle programme.

EQ 3.7. Factors affecting results of the transition process¹⁹⁸

220. The key factors that have affected the transition process are the fact that due to COVID-19 generated delays, the LRP, which is a single cycle programme, will be unlikely to be able to meet the targets for strengthening and consolidating the supply side of local procurement (small farmers) and that because of the current policy framework gaps, there is no natural home for integrating supply side activities into the overall school feeding institutional architecture.

221. Affecting this is that the lack of a natural policy home for the LRP within the partner ministries is a weakness in terms of being able to influence and leverage appropriate inputs and activities to support the LRP rollout. The LRP makes a direct contribution to the agricultural sector, but its activities are not embedded in MAFF's policy frameworks and do not have a strategic alignment that allows for LRP activities to be systematically integrated in to MAFF's plans. This is likely to impede programmatic integration of LRP activities into MAFF's annual workplans and lead to ad hoc rather than strategic collaborations between MAFF and the MoEYS, without the commensurate line ministry and sub-national budget allocations to support LRP agricultural sector activities. In addition, as discussed above, MAFF is not included in to the national coordination mechanisms on social protection where the LRP is located as part of the SFP.

222. The delayed start-up of the LRP limits the number of operational rounds possible for programme participants to gain experience and master LRP operations. Following the low levels of implementation during the school closures, the over 80 percent of the budget that remains for the delivery of activities, it is unrealistic to expect that the full range of activities, and therefore budget usage, can be properly planned and delivered in the remaining time.

223. Despite the McGovern-Dole programme's recently announced renewal, the LRP will end in late 2023, so transition and sustainability for the LRP components, especially the cash transfers and the smallholder engagement and capacity strengthening for production, are dependent upon how much technical and capacity building work can be done in the remaining time to ensure a strong continuation without a formal LRP programme.

2.4. GENERAL QUESTIONS

EQ 4.1.: How are the benefits of the programme likely to continue beyond the LRP?¹⁹⁹

224. Based on the five SABER-SF dimensions profiled earlier, the benefits of the programme are not likely to continue beyond the LRP programme cycle. While progress has been made on the different dimensions, there are still ongoing gaps among the dimensions that would impede sustainability. There has been good progress in the programme design and implementation and for preparing the schools themselves for handover. There has been some preliminary work in the policy framework, institutionalizing systems at the sub-national and national levels, and financial resourcing post transition, but these dimensions are naturally slower to develop and require more time.

225. In the policy dimension, the rural development component of the LRP activities lack a natural policy home – being aligned with, but not embedded in, MAFF strategies and approaches and there is still more that can be done in terms of intentionally linking the engagement of non-state actors (suppliers and farmers) with the capacity development strategies under MAFF and MOEYS. Institutionalizing capacity is still needed that can

¹⁹⁷ As this report was being finalized, the ET was informed that the USDA has approved a new cycle for the McGovern-Dole support (from October 2023 to September 2027), which should enable WFP to give more clarity on future collaboration to these partners.

¹⁹⁸ "What were the major factors and/or programme interventions that have both positively and negatively influenced the transition process?"

¹⁹⁹ "Based on available evidence to what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue beyond WFP's intervention for the targeted beneficiaries?"

provide continuous orientation and training as government personnel enter and leave positions at national and sub-national levels and as new suppliers and farmers engage in the school procurement processes.

226. Public sector financing represents another barrier to sustainability. Government financing for the NHGSFP is for cash transfers to schools for provision of school meals through local procurement of food commodities. It does not include administration and other implementation costs that are necessary to complete transition, and it is not known how such support costs will be financed and what level of commitment there is during the annual budget negotiations to provide the necessary allocations to support this administrative infrastructure that can provide the necessary coordination with MAFF and the ongoing training and support functions to schools and suppliers and farmers, particularly as more, or new, suppliers join the procurement processes.

EQ 4.2.: What are [any] suggested mid-course recommendations?²⁰⁰

227. The MAFF is a key counterpart for LRP's success, and the programme has components that directly contribute to MAFF's policies and strategies, but the whole school feeding programme of WFP, including the LRP, falls under the MoEYS. While the agreement with FAO can to some extent assist WFP in this relationship, this aspect will need to be given consideration before complete transition to the national HGSF programme. An assessment of the NSFC social protection and MAFF food security mandates could help identify opportunities for an expanded definition of social protection and allow a strategic partnering with MAFF. In turn, this could facilitate MAFF's access to public financing to support the smallholders targeted under the LRP, to strengthen their access to the existing MAFF extension services and build increased synergies between HGSF schools and their local farms.

228. Under the LRP, FAO works through MAFF, and the LRP technical assistance topics are closely aligned with the latter's objectives, some of which have already been conducted through other donors such as IFAD and may not need to be replicated. The delayed start-up of the LRP limits the number of operational rounds possible for programme participants to gain experience and master LRP operations. Following the levels of implementation during the school closures, the over 80 percent of the budget remains for the delivery of activities, and it is unrealistic to expect that the full range of activities, and therefore budget usage, can be properly planned and delivered in the remaining time.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1. CONCLUSIONS

229. The following conclusions are oriented around three evaluation criteria – relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability. Evaluation sub-questions presented under these categories are synthesized within the separate conclusions.

Category 1: Relevance

230. **Conclusion 1:** Within the LRP design and the allocation of attention and capacities, the demand-side elements (schools and school processes) have greater prominence compared to the supply-side elements (farmers and local agricultural production). Under the current CSP structure, the LRP is located in the SO1 which is where the school feeding programme is housed. Under the SO1 – which is led by the School Feeding Unit - WFP's primary beneficiaries and focus is (appropriately) on the students and the schools and the SO1 primary expertise revolves around school systems and structures through partnerships with the MOEYS. Because of this prioritization, the key beneficiaries of the LRP – farmers and suppliers – are only indirectly affiliated with the SO1 primary stakeholders, and the primary connection and relationship with the farmers is seconded to another United Nations agency, the FAO. The technical support from FAO is appropriate but presents constraints in creating synergies between the demand-side stakeholders (schools and MOEYS) and the supply-side stakeholders (farmers and MAFF).

231. Within the design itself, this emphasis is also apparent, considering that the primary LRP objectives are principally school-based priorities (timeliness, utilization, nutrition, and cost-effectiveness). It is only in the lower-level activities in the RF where interventions focused on the supply-side stakeholders appear. As a consequence

²⁰⁰ "What are [any] recommendations for mid-course corrections to improve the programme's relevance, effectiveness, and/or sustainability?"

of both the CSP structure and the LRP design, the integration of the expected LRP activities has only been partially achieved, with missed opportunities to improve synergies across the supply- and demand- side stakeholders.

232. **Conclusion 2:** The LRP narrative emphasizes the importance of supporting smallholder local production, but the operational parameters restrict the participation of smallholders. Through leveraging diversified food production and strengthening supply chain partnerships, the LRP has the potential to position WFP to change lives by increasing market access for farming communities within schools' catchment areas. Due to specific programme parameters, smallholders are often excluded from participation in the LRP – either as suppliers or farmers. Suppliers require a certain level of investment capital to participate and need to have access to sufficient cash flow to accommodate delays in school procurement payments while still making payment advances to small farmers. In addition, the lead time for procurement announcements is too short for small farmers to produce at the time of demand – the suppliers can either work with bigger farmers who have multiple commodities available constantly, or they purchase on the market. Refined processes and procedures would facilitate increased smallholder farmer participation and further consolidation, drawing lessons from schools that are already being handed-over.

233. **Conclusion 3:** For gender considerations, there is potential for enhanced women's empowerment through the LRP due to their traditional roles in vegetable production and cooperative membership, but gender empowerment is not attributable to the programme within the LRP RF. The LRP considers gender as a priority in terms of women's empowerment as programme participants, but the programme has the potential to further enhance their levels of empowerment. WFP does track gender disaggregated data regarding participation but there are no overall gender results statements in the programme framework. Recommendations on gender from the baseline were not able to be addressed due to the pandemic disruptions and staff transitions.

Category 2: Effectiveness

234. **Conclusion 4:** There has been progress in the LRP programming since the baseline, although there are gaps in terms of progress towards the 2020 LRP baseline recommendations. Of the six recommendations, none are yet in full implementation, although two are close, while two have not been implemented at all. The following Table 16 summarizes the progress against the recommendations.

Table 16: Progress against Baseline Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Progress
1	WFP CO and MoEYS should jointly update and consolidate activities into a comprehensive, gradual, evidence-based transition plan.	Significant Progress. Significant milestone in the elaboration of joint transition strategy. Handover of schools has occurred before larger national systems fully in place.
2	The WFP CO should coordinate with MoEYS, the MoH and MAFF to develop a capacity strengthening strategy that outlines clear roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the LRP for each of the ministries at national, sub-national and local levels.	Some Progress. Significant progress within MOEYS on roles and responsibilities although less evidence on shared understanding of roles and responsibilities in MOH and MAFF stakeholders, especially at sub-national levels.
3	The WFP CO, in collaboration with the MoEYS, MoH and MAFF, should seek to strengthen the mechanisms for coordination on LRP implementation as a complement to the capacity strengthening strategy.	Some Progress. NSPC provides important framework architecture. The formalization of the sub-decree should, in theory, address some institutional and coordination gaps for MAFF.
4	Before the LRP midline, WFP should support the MoEYS to undertake a systematic review of the national school meals implementation that started in SY 2019/20.	No Progress. Important consideration given sustainability questions after WFP support ends.
5	WFP CO, drawing on existing tools and guidance and available technical support, should explore options for enhanced nutritional inputs to the school meals.	Some Progress. Rice fortification efforts have been most significant component under LRP, but some question on potential sustainability of markets.
6	WFP CO, together with USDA, and in consultation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, should integrate specific gender indicators into the programme's Results Framework.	No Progress. Important future consideration.

235. Overall, within the programme, there has been greater progress in the demand-side components (schools and school procurement) compared to the supply-side components (farmers and local agricultural production). The LRP continues to be aligned with the direction of the Government and has remained a relevant approach to supporting the authorities to meet the food and nutrition needs of the country. It is also well aligned with national and development partner policies as well as United Nations plans. There has also been progress

regarding the understanding of gender issues in programme implementation including the active role of women in school and procurement processes.

236. Due to various factors, including the COVID pandemic, school closures, and the delays in establishing the agreements with FAO, the aspects of the LRP related to the supply-side are less advanced, especially those related to supporting farmers and production. Since the baseline, stakeholders at all levels, but especially at the school levels, were more aware of the procurement processes and of the overall programme existence, standards, expectations, and a general recognition of the potential market demand for local procurement in schools. There is a greater shared understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities for LRP processes within the Government and civil society stakeholders.

237. **Conclusion 5:** The LRP programmatic framework allowed for a flexible response to humanitarian engagements during the pandemic. The LRP framework allowed WFP to respond to the challenge of the pandemic promptly and effectively through its distribution of THRs. This action, under the social protection framework, was considered a positive contribution to the national COVID response. Using the national vulnerability registries (*ID Poor*) for integrating WFP's assistance within the overall COVID response also worked well, with a substantive drop-off in complaints compared to other cash-based programmes. This demonstrated WFP's comparative advantage in contributing to humanitarian action in Cambodia.

238. **Conclusion 6:** In spite of progress since the baseline, there will not be enough time to achieve programme targets set pre-COVID 19 by the end of this cycle. Within the RF, more than half of the target indicators are unlikely to be achieved. More importantly, what the LRP is trying to do is a complex and ambitious support to create behavioural and system change among two separate sectors of stakeholders (demand-side and supply-side), engaging with a complex arrangement of stakeholders from several sectors who have limited history working together before (farmers, suppliers, MAFF, MOEYS, NSPC, school and district and provincial stakeholders) and who are not necessarily automatically connected through existing frameworks. To put all these pieces together - and make it work - requires more than just this cycle because HGSF has not yet been very widely applied in Cambodia.

239. The LRP start-up activities, with schools moving from SMP to HGSF modalities, have been time-consuming, and given the short time remaining after the pandemic delays, the LRP is unlikely to reach the target results on preparedness of schools for handover during the current implementation phase. This has been complicated within WFP through staff transitions and filling staffing gaps with appropriate profiles for LRP support.

Category 3: Sustainability

240. **Conclusion 7:** The current programme cycle for the LRP has prioritized the more concrete components of handover of schools but there has been less progress towards the achievement of the transition elements (systems and institutions). The implicit programme approach in this cycle has been to get the schools ready for operationalizing HGSF in order for schools to be handed over to the Government. The elaboration of the Joint Transition Strategy was a key milestone and a good use of the pandemic period (as well as advancement in the drafting of the sub-decree).

241. WFP also made good progress on promoting the current results of the LRP and the potential of the LRP for local farmers and suppliers to demonstrate the added value of the national HGSF programme in Cambodia. However, transition components, the establishment of the appropriate policy frameworks, systems, and resourcing commensurate with the SABER-SF dimensions, have not seen as much progress due to a variety of internal and external factors. This imbalance between the handover and transition components led to a significant number of schools being handed over to Government despite some of the necessary transition components not being in place.

242. The imbalance has been due partly to the internal and external factors affecting results and partly due to the greater time required for larger system building processes. The repurposing of activities during the COVID response overshadowed the transition elements related to building national and local capacities (for example, on joint monitoring and food safety at the supplier and farmer points of intersection). In addition, WFP's capacity to play an enabling role related to transition (as opposed to handover) was limited by its staffing profiles where the SF Team was tasked with an extended workload, the number of staff and limited expertise on national and local governance processes.

243. **Conclusion 8:** Sustainability considerations have shown some progress, with the next steps requiring focus in three areas: policy framework, resourcing, and institutional systems. Progress is observed in the degree of school readiness, guidelines are in place, and a set of programme design and processes have been elaborated.

Schools are getting ready for handover but the appropriate systems to support the schools afterwards are not yet in place. There are still factors among the SABER-SF dimensions for country capacity strengthening that need to be continued to be addressed and are unlikely to be achieved within the remaining time of the programme cycle.

244. The country capacity strengthening part has not yet had sufficient attention and application. For transition to be complete, WFP would need to shift to longer term accompaniment and technical assistance for transition. Available resources have been allocated for handover but there is an ongoing need for further investments in transition support. These include:

245. **LRP coherence and integration within Government frameworks.** The primary partner for the supply-side farmer element of the LRP is the MAFF, but the LRP school-based objectives are not aligned with MAFF priorities. Hence the MAFF, although important, becomes a peripheral stakeholder in the overall school feeding programme despite the fact that they are central to the LRP success. WFP has played an important convening role in bringing together important stakeholders from the agricultural and education sectors, but this is not yet systematized in the Government structures. There is no direct policy home for LRP activities, and although they contribute to various policy frameworks indirectly, MAFF is not part of the NSPC. Even though school feeding is defined as a social protection contribution, there are no strategic linkages of MAFF trainings directly to school-procured produce – there is no official connection between MAFF trainees and their produce being delivered to schools. In addition, establishing a system for retraining new stakeholders in LRP (and McGovern-Dole), and creating formal convening linkages between MAFF, MOEYS, and MOH, are still to be addressed. WFP has overcome these natural barriers with its presence, but these connections are not likely to be sustained after the programme ends.

246. **LRP Resourcing.** At the national level, the current financial model for the NHGSFP needs stabilizing through a more strategic funding approach guided by gaps and priorities identified in the management of the schools that have already been handed over. Districts do not have a budget for monitoring. Government resources provided to schools as cash transfers are only to be used for the procurement of commodities; and do not cover administrative, monitoring, reporting or other costs involved, indicating that a broader and more flexible, predictable financing for non-food related costs needs to be developed during the technical assistance period of post-transition support.

247. **Conclusion 9:** Progress has been achieved towards handover of schools although more time is needed for ensuring sustainability of the transition of systems to Government. The ultimate aspiration of the two USDA programmes is ensuring transition has been achieved. However, up until 2023, the programme elements are planned to be substantively focused on the handover of schools and their preparation. This pacing is appropriate in establishing the baseline capacities and standards for SF and local procurement with subsequent greater emphasis in transition to be conducted after 2023 until the end of the joint transition strategy in 2028.

248. One focus area would be on strengthening the linkages with smallholder production in local procurement sustainably and to enhance government experience with cash transfers for managing local procurement. A no-cost extension to utilize the unspent funds of the current LRP programme combined in some way with new activities including cash transfer components (from other funding sources) would help support sustainability and transition. This could support the preparation of schools for handover as programmed in this phase. If applied *after a no-cost extension*, the approval of a new cycle of funding from USDA would provide much needed time and resources to focus the current phase on the handover of schools and preparation in system building; then the next phase could focus on transition-related system building.

249. Furthermore, within the LRP, the systems developed by WFP are still responding to the demands of donors and WFP's own internal systems and standards for programme implementation. This is conducive to establishing systems for high quality programme implementation but may not be feasible for modelling systems that can be feasibly implemented by the Government. WFP has provided a model for a school-based school feeding programme through supporting an upward modality shifting of schools from SMP, to hybrid to full HGSF as a process for building their capacity for handover. However, as noted by the calls from Government stakeholders for continued post-handover accompaniment and monitoring (i.e. technical assistance), there is further potential for ongoing support to developing what a Government-appropriate HGSF would look like.

250. For the LRP, post transition technical assistance through accompaniment may be required to support the remaining systems of HGSF implementation (and reporting processes) in order to fine-tune appropriate systems that match the national context (i.e. available resources and capacities) and ensuring that the comprehensive monitoring system used to report both to WFP and USDA is aligned with the Government's own

system. Furthermore integrating more indicators related to gender into a revised Results Framework would contribute to improving gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation of future interventions for both WFP and the Government.

251. If funding or programme implementation ends prior to the end of the current line of sight (2028 for school handover and 2030 for full focus on national HGFSF), the entire programme progress is at risk, because of the current shortcomings in the national system infrastructure and resourcing. From the end of this programme cycle in 2023, WFP would need to shift towards a greater emphasis on technical assistance and national systems strengthening, through accompaniment from the current emphasis on the operational and school level preparation elements. Because of these factors, terminating the programme in 2023 would be too abrupt for the handover of schools to be completed, let alone for the components of transition to be fully established.

3.2 LESSONS LEARNED

252. Lessons learned for individual programme components have been reflected throughout the narrative. There are lessons learned applicable to the particular implementation practices of the LRP while others are related to programme monitoring or evaluation. Table 17 summarizes the key lessons learned noted above.

Table 17: Lessons learned by category

Lessons	
Procedures	
1	Adjustment of procurement activities to align with producer's production calendar. The one-month procurement period for schools to distribute food orders does not allow for suppliers to take the most advantage of obtaining products from small farm providers, who would require more time to schedule planting seasons. A three-month procurement window would allow for more locally obtained produce from smallholders.
2	Food fortification. Food fortification is relevant as an approach to improved nutritious food quality. However, rice fortification has limited demand for national scale-up and for the school meals programming, exploring other fortification approaches, such as sauce or fish, may have better opportunities for market expansion.
3	Payment mechanisms. The current payment mechanisms discourage small suppliers' participation. In order to keep credibility of the local procurement as a viable smallholder market, adjustments may be required in the Government's local procurement procedures, to either be able to provide advance funding to small suppliers or more timely, or phased, payment methods.
Programme Management	
4	Strengthening the capacity of women small farmers. There is potential to expand women's roles in the school procurement processes given that they constitute the majority of vegetable small farm producers. Adapting programme management targets and adapting training activities to suit women's situations (such as time or day, location, or topics) would improve the gender sensitivity of this component.
5	Continuous socialization. Given the high turnover of personnel within the school and government systems, the diversity of donor programmes for school feeding, and the relative complexity of the system, there is a need to develop a system of 'continuous socialization' to provide a standardized training and orientation approach to incoming personnel at different levels of Government, from schools and suppliers up to the Ministry level.
Monitoring and Evaluation	
6	Gender indicators. Developing outcome indicators specifically related to women's participation and empowerment in the procurement programming would provide greater visibility and intentionality of gender sensitivity and small holder attention in the LRP.

3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

253. Based on the patterns in the findings and conclusions, Table 18 below presents seven recommendations. Due to pandemic disruptions, Nos 2 and 6 of the baseline recommendations (Nos. 2 and 7 below) are still relevant for continued consideration.

Table 18: Table of Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping:	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities	Priority	By when
1	Recommendation 1: A no-cost extension (for the existing LRP project) plus renewal of McGovern-Dole programme. WFP should continue to be engaged in supporting the Government in the implementation and transition of the HGSF beyond the current programme cycle timeline. More time is needed for transition and sustainability. Given the delays caused by the pandemic, in addition to the recently approved USDA support for the next cycle, if there are unspent funds from the current LRP, there should be a request for a no-cost extension to utilize these funds, combined with a new activity including cash transfer components from other donors, that would help strengthen the linkages of the SMP with smallholder procurement, and strengthen local government cash transfer processes for local procurement.	Strategic	CO Senior Management	SF Unit	High	Quarter 4 2022
2	Recommendation 2: NHGSFP Review and Lessons Learned. In alignment with the baseline report recommendation, WFP should support the MOEYS to undertake a systematic review of the national school meals system in schools handed over since 2019. This review should draw on the five SABER-SF dimensions to identify the challenges that need to be addressed, key lessons learned, and an assessment of the systems (beyond school level stakeholders) that are necessary for NHGSFP implementation. An important component for consideration in the review should be to identify operational processes that inhibit smallholders' local participation and explore adjustments to increase local their participation.	Strategic	SF Unit	MOEYS, MAFF, MOH, NSPC, FAO	High	Quarter 1 2023
3	Recommendation 3: Joint post-transition accompaniment. Based on the lessons learned from the midterm evaluation and an NHGSFP review, WFP, in collaboration with the MOEYS and NSPC, should conduct a systematic adjustment to the LRP processes to identify what is feasible and possible within the existing Government systems, structures, policies, and resourcing to support local procurement. This may include the adjustment of the NHGSFP processes and systems, including procurement, implementation, monitoring, and reporting processes to match the national context (i.e. available resources and capacities). However, this process should also identify the areas for ongoing WFP technical assistance to Government after handover and transition and should include a dedicated time period for WFP to continue to accompany Government in the Government's implementation of its NHGSFP.	Strategic	SF Unit	MOEYS, NSPC, MAFF, FAO	High	Quarter 1 2023

4	Recommendation 4: Joint MAFF/MOEYS coordination mechanism. WFP, in collaboration with the MOEYS, MAFF, and NSPC, should determine whether the formalization of the sub-decree for school feeding supports the development of a mechanism or framework to allow for MAFF and MoEYS to intersect more naturally , and that would replace the current convening role played by WFP in supporting MAFF and MOEYS intersectionality. This may include assessing the Government's food security mandates (under CARD) and the SFP social protection mandates, to identify if there are opportunities for an expanded definition of social protection that would allow for MAFF inclusion under the NSPC.	Strategic	SF Unit, CO Senior Management	MOEYS, MAFF, NSPC	High	Quarter 2 2023
5	Recommendation 5: Gender sensitive procedures. WFP, in consultation with MAFF, MOEYS and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, should conduct a gender analysis to seek to integrate increased gender sensitivity into local and regional procurement processes for school meals in HGSP and NHGSP schools by concentrating training and capacity building efforts on suppliers and smallholder farmers on women and their organizations, improve access to credits if needed, and other potential organizational support. Procurement processes should be adjusted to better match smallholder women production cycles, and payment mechanisms should be adjusted to allow for the participation of smallholder women as suppliers.	Strategic	SF Unit, CO Senior Management	Gender Focal Point, RBB, MOEYS, MAFF, NSPC	High	Quarter 2 2023
6	Recommendation 6: WFP staffing adjustments. For the remainder of the programme cycle, WFP should seek to review and fill its current staffing gaps and consider the necessity of expanding its staffing profiles in preparation for a focus on the country capacity strengthening elements in systems strengthening required post-transition. The SF Unit and AO should consider upgrading staff capacity to better understand the D&D process, to contribute towards continuing engagement in the Government's processes and provide a wider WFP ownership of a transition and technical assistance accompaniment role to Government and governance.	Operational	CO Senior Management		High	Quarter 4 2022
7	Recommendation 7: Visibilizing LRP gender contributions. In alignment with the baseline report recommendation, WFP, together with USDA and in consultation with MAFF, MOEYS and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, should seek to integrate and visibilize the LRP contributions to gender by improving gender visibility in the results framework for the next programme cycle of school feeding (even if it does not include an LRP programme itself). This would include the identification of gender indicators that not only measure gender participation but also gender transformative change.	Operational	SF Unit	Gender Focal Point, RBB	Medium	Quarter 4 2022

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of Reference Addendum

The original Terms of Reference supplied by the WFP CO are retained as a separate file and are available if required. The following presents the Addendum to the original TOR updated to consider the adjustments to be integrated into the midterm evaluation.

Terms of Reference (Addendum)

ACTIVITY EVALUATION of USDA McGovern Dole Grants FFE-442-2019-013-00 and USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement LRP-442-2019-011-00 for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia from 2019 to 2023

WFP Cambodia Country Office

Terms of Reference (Addendum)

1. Since the baseline evaluations, Cambodia has gone through a prolonged period of COVID-19 related disruptions, including school closures between March 2020 and November 2021. Although WFP, together with the government and other partners, was able to adapt the school meals programme to take-home rations for households affected by COVID and has continued the capacity strengthening activities, many of the activities outlined in the both the McGovern-Dole and LRP agreements have been implemented in full only since late 2021 with the full re-opening of schools.
2. Given these changes, the following modification on the mid-term evaluation scope and methodology (outlined in Section 4. Evaluation Approach of the original TOR) will be made :
3. Evaluation Scope and Criteria
 - a. The scope of the mid-term evaluations will be limited to the three evaluation criteria, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability.
 - b. The preliminary results of project indicators will be examined through a desk review of existing monitoring data and through a secondary literature review in light of the limited project implementation due to the school closures. The project effectiveness will measure to what extent the COVID-19 disruptions have affected the projects' ability to meet final targets and provide recommendations.
 - c. The relevance of the project will be examined specific to the interventions that continued during the evaluated project period, such as the COVID-19 repurposed activities (Take Home Rations) and the transition to the National School Feeding Programme.
 - d. The sustainability criteria will be thoroughly and rigorously evaluated qualitatively to inform the full transition of the school-feeding programme to national ownership scheduled in the near future. The evaluation will review the progress of the transition of the school-feeding programme to national ownership, including the development of a transition strategy and operational guidelines, on-going capacity strengthening to (sub)national counterparts on implementation support and programme monitoring as well as an M&E capacity needs assessment conducted by WFP among national education authorities.
4. Evaluation Questions
The evaluation questions will be revised to the following:

	Original Questions	Revised Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the SFP appropriate to the needs of the target beneficiaries on men, women, boys and girls? To what extent has the design of capacity strengthening activities met the needs of the government? • To what extent is the SFP aligned with overall USDA objectives as well as strategies, policies and normative guidance; and Government's relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent were the programme adjustments, including the design of the re-purposed activities appropriate in reaching the relevant beneficiaries with the right assistance and quality at the right time? To which extent were the re-purposed activities designed and effective in complementing the Government's

	<p>stated national policies, including sector policies and strategies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the SFP aligned with frameworks of UN agencies and relevant development partners? To what extent is it aligned with WFP's overall strategy and related guidance? • To what extent has the SFP sought complementarities with interventions of other donor-funded initiatives, as well as initiatives of humanitarian and development partners operational in the country? 	<p>alternative learning mechanisms (ex. remote learning)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the design of capacity strengthening activities met the needs and priorities of the government? • How relevant are the activities designed as the Project's Foundational Results in achieving the projects' Strategic Objectives ?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent at the mid-term point progress has been made towards reaching the overall objectives of the SFP (outlined in attachment A of the Agreement) for various beneficiary groups (by gender where applicable) and by type of activity? • What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives and outcomes of the SFP by the time of the mid-term evaluation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has progress been made towards the achievement of results and targets despite COVID-19? Only indicators with available data will be reviewed. Annex 1 of the Addendum outlines the project indicators and their data source for desk review. The indicators without any data is also outlined. • How has the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influenced the ability of the programme to meet expected results and targets by agreed timeline? What are the recommendations and strategic action points based on this analysis.? • What were the major internal factors that have influenced the progress of the programme by the time of the mid-term evaluation?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent progress has been made against the overall handover process against the project plan and handover plan/strategy agreed with and endorsed by the Government? • To what extent were the SFP implementation arrangements include considerations for sustainability (handover to the government) at national and local levels, communities and other partners for all project components (school feeding, literacy, Food safety, WASH and hygiene, etc) agreed with and endorsed by the Government and national stakeholders? 	<p>All evaluation questions from the original TOR and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the major factors and/or project interventions that have both positively and negatively influenced the transition process? • What are the likely and potential implications of a complete phase out of WFP's interventions implemented with USDA's funding to the National School Feeding Programme?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent progress has been made towards institutionalization of the measures planned as part of the technical assistance to the Government that is expected to support the sustainability of the intervention (including policy work, support to systems, institutional capacity etc)? What progress has been made since the project design stage (through strategic engagement, advocacy and other efforts with Government and relevant stakeholders) in supporting financial sustainability of the SFP beyond WFP's intervention to the extent it can be evaluated by the mid-term evaluation (national budget for SFP and other funding sources)? • To what extent has SFP been successful in engaging Government and local communities (PTAs, farmers groups, etc) towards school feeding and education activities? Has the role of the communities and local stakeholders been institutionalized (as the Government policy, strategy and/or systems levels)? • Based on available evidence to what extent are the benefits of the program likely to continue beyond WFP's intervention for the targeted beneficiaries? 	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the activities implemented in line with the SFP implementation plan and in a timely manner? What factors impacted the delivery process (cost factors, WFP and partners performance, external factors)? • Were the activities undertaken as part of SFP cost-efficient? • What factors impacted the cost efficiency of the program implementation? What measures can support enhancement of the SFP efficiency for the remaining implementation period? • What extent have information supplied by the monitoring and Beneficiary/Stakeholder Complaint and Feedback mechanisms been utilized for the SFP corrective measures? 	None
General	1. Based on available evidence to what extent are the benefits of the program likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remains the same within the new scope of the evaluation

	to continue beyond WFP’s intervention for the targeted beneficiaries? 2. What are recommendations for mid-course corrections to improve the project’s relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and/or sustainability?	
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5. Methodology

While a detailed methodology will be developed by the hired evaluations consultants during the inception stage, the methodology will generally include:

- i. Desk Review of WFP Cambodia’s own monitoring data, secondary literature review, which include but is not restricted to:
 - a. School Feeding Programme output data (for only the periods when schools re-opened)
 - b. Commodities distribution data
 - c. Take Home Ration output and outcome monitoring data
 - d. School Reopening Readiness Self-Assessment data
 - e. COVID-19 Socio-economic Assessment data, where data from project target areas can be extracted to examine food security and nutrition outcomes
 - f. Ministry of Education’s annual EMIS data
- ii. The limitations of using secondary data will be clearly outlined in the Inception Report.
- iii. Qualitative methods will include in-person FGDs and KIIs of an exhaustive list of all relevant stakeholders to be able to sufficiently answer the evaluation questions. Qualitative data will be collected until data saturation. The key respondents for primary qualitative data collection is outlined in Table 4 of the original TOR (Section 4.4. Methodology). The number of FGDs and KIIs is expected to resemble or exceed the baseline sample size, which was 81 at the national and 247 at the sub-national level.

6. Timeline

The duration of the data collection will be modified as below. A full updated timeline is attached as Annex 2 of the Addendum:

	Agreed timeline	Modified
Data Collection	10 June – 11 July	13 June – 1 July

Updated Evaluation Time

*New rows in this column are the adjusted timeline during baseline due to COVID-19

**Modified during mid-term evaluation TOR revision

	Phases, Deliverables and Timeline	Period	Timeline	Baselines	Mid-term	End-line(***)	Led By
	Phase 1 - Preparation						Up to 15 weeks
	Desk review, draft of TOR and quality assurance (QA) using ToR QC	3 weeks	Original	8 Nov 2019			EM & EC
			New*	N/A			
	Sharing drafted ToR with outsourced quality support service (DE QS) & ERG, RB, and relevant WFP Headquarters divisions for comments	2 weeks	Original	6 Dec 2019			EM & EC
			New*	N/A			
	(1) Reviewing and revising the draft ToR based on comments received, (2) submitting the revised TOR to the internal evaluation committee for approval and (3) sharing the revised TOR with key stakeholders	1 week	Original	6 Dec 2019			EM & EC
			New*	N/A			
	Sharing the revised TOR with USDA for comments	4 weeks	Original	3 January 2020			USDA
			New*	N/A			
	Selection and recruitment of evaluation team	2 weeks	Original	17 Jan 2020			WFP RBB and CO
			New	N/A			
	Planning/reconfirming the schedule of the exercises with the selected evaluation Team		Original		19 Mar 2021	17 March 2023	EM & ET
			New*			20 Mar 2022	
	Provision of the data/electronic library to the Evaluation Team	3 weeks	Original	07 February 2020	9 April 2021	7 April 2023	EM & ET
			New*	N/A		07 April 2022	

Phase 2 - Inception							Up to 10 weeks
Briefing TOR to evaluation team	1 day		10 Feb 2020				EM & EC
Remote desk review and submission of a draft inception report (IR)	3 weeks	Original	28 Feb 2020	30 Apr 2021	28 Apr 2023	ET	
		New*	N/A	29 April 2022	26 May 2023		
Sharing the draft IR with DE QS and ERG, RB, donor (as required/agreed with the donor) and relevant WFP Headquarters divisions for comments		Original	6 Mar 2020	7 May 2021	30 May 2023	EM & EC, ERG, DEQs, RB	
		New*	N/A	2-20 May 2022	02 Jun 2023		
Revise draft IR based on feedback received from DE QS and ERG, RB and submit final revised IR	1 week	Original	13 Mar 2020	14 May 2021	12 May 2023	EM & EC	
		New*	N/A	21-27 May 2022	09 Jun 2023		
Review final IR and submit to the evaluation committee for approval	1 week	Original	20 Mar 2020	21 May 2021	19 May 2023	ET	
		New*	N/A	May 30-03 June 2022	16 Jun 2023		
Phase 3 - Data collection							Up to 7 weeks
Briefing of evaluation team at CO	1 day	Original	23 Mar2020	24 May 2021	22 May 2023	ET & WFP CO	
		New*	N/A	10 June 2022	20 Jun 2023		
Data collection	4 weeks	Original	10 Apr 2020	11 June 2021	9 June 2023	ET	
		New*	21 Sept 2020	13 June 2022**	07 Jul 2023		
Debriefing of evaluation team at CO	1 day	Original	10 Apr 2020	11 June 2021	12 June 2023	ET & WFP CO	
		New*	19 Oct. 2020	1 July 2022**	11 Jul 2023		
Phase 4 - Analyze data and report							Up to 16 weeks
Draft evaluation report (ER)	4 weeks	Original	1 May 2020	2 July 2021	30 June 2023	ET	
		New*	30 Oct 2020	10 Aug 2022	28 Jul 2023		

	Sharing the draft ER with DE QS and ERG, RB, and relevant WFP Headquarters divisions for comments	2 week	Original	8 May 2020	9 July 2021	7 July 2023	EM & EC
			New*	06 Nov 2020	11-24 Aug 2022	04 Aug 2023	
	(1) Reviewing and revising the draft ER based on comments received, (2) submitting the revised ER to the internal evaluation committee for approval and (3) sharing the revised ER with key stakeholders	2 week	Original	15 May 2020	16 July 2021	14 July 2023	EM & EC
			New*	13 Nov 2020	07 Sept 2022	11 Aug 2023	
	Revise the drafted ER based on stakeholder comments	2 week	Original	22May 2020	23 July 2021	21 July 2023	ET
			New*	20 Nov 2020	21 Sept 2022	18 Aug 2023	
	Sharing the revised ER with USDA for comments	4 weeks	Original	19 Jun 2020	20 August 2021	18 August 2023	USDA
			New*	18 Dec 2020	19 Oct 2022	15 Sept 2023	
	Revision of the draft ER based on stakeholder comments	2 week	Original	26 Jun 2020	27 August 2021	25 August 2023	ET
			New*	9 Apr 2021	02 Nov 2022	22 Sept 2023	
Phase 5 - Dissemination and follow-up (WFP only)							Up to 6 weeks
	Prepare management response	4 weeks	Original	24 Jul 2020	24 Sept 2021	22 Sept 2021	EM, EC, WFP Program and Mgt
			New*	9 Apr 2021	30 Nov 2022	20 Oct 2023	
	Sharing final ER and management response with OEV for publication	2 weeks	Original	7 August 2020	8 Oct 2021	6 Oct 2023	EM & EC
			New*	9 Apr 2021	14 Dec 2022	03 Nov 2023	

Annex 2: Timeline

Note: The overall timeline for the three phases of the evaluation is included in [Annex 1](#).

PLANNING	2022
Planning/reconfirming the schedule of the exercises with the selected evaluation Team	20-Mar-22
Provision of the data/electronic library to the Evaluation Team	7-Apr-22
INCEPTION	
Briefing TOR to evaluation team	
Remote desk review and submission of a draft inception report (IR)	29-Apr-22
Sharing the draft IR with DE QS and ERG, RB, donor (as required/agreed with the donor) and relevant WFP Headquarters divisions for comments	20-May-22
(1) Reviewing and revising the draft IR based on comments received, (2) submitting the revised IR to the internal evaluation committee for approval and (3) sharing the revised IR with key stakeholders	27-May-22
Revision of drafted IR based on stakeholder comments	3-Jun-22
FIELD / DATA GATHERING	
Briefing of evaluation team at CO	13-Jun-22
Data collection	13-30 June
Debriefing of evaluation team at CO and with external stakeholders	30 June & 1 July 22
ANALYSIS / REPORTING	
Draft evaluation report (ER)	10-Aug-22
Sharing the draft ER with DE QS and ERG, RB, and relevant WFP Headquarters divisions for comments	24-Aug-22
(1) Reviewing and revising the draft ER based on comments received, (2) submitting the revised ER to the internal evaluation committee for approval and (3) sharing the revised ER with key stakeholders	7-Sep-22
Revise the drafted ER based on stakeholder comment	21-Sep-22

Annex 3: Methodology

3.1. OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS AND APPROACH

Per the Addendum to the ToR ([Annex 1](#)), Cambodia has experienced substantial COVID-19 related disruptions, including to the education systems. School closures over a 20-month period from March 2020 through October 2021 forced WFP and the Government to make adaptations to the school meals programme. The disruptions meant that activities planned for the LRP (and McGovern-Dole) programming were delayed or reduced, with full implementation only since late 2021 after schools re-opened. Given the pandemic disruptions, it was determined that a midterm household, school, and supplier survey would not be productive and that instead, the preliminary results of programme indicators will be examined through a desk review of monitoring data and relevant secondary literature review.

Furthermore, at the time of the development of the TOR, the WFP CO had been informed by USDA that further support to this programme after the present agreement ends in September 2023 would not be forthcoming which led to the inclusion of an evaluation question related to the implications of no continued USDA funding. However, since then, the McGovern-Dole USDA grant has been renewed for another cycle. The LRP is still a single cycle programme, and this will have implications for sustainability and progress towards handover, even with a renewal of the other funding source.²⁰¹

Given these pandemic disruptions and funding decisions, the intended scope of the midterm evaluation has been modified from the original ToR to emphasize understanding of the mitigation measures taken during the pandemic, their effect on programming, and the progress towards handover and transition. Consequently, this evaluation will be focused on three evaluation criteria: relevance (especially of pandemic mitigation adaptations), effectiveness, and sustainability (with a focus on steps yet to be taken to ensure a smooth handover and transition by the end of the cycle). The following table describes the revised questions for this midterm evaluation.

Evaluation TOR Questions

Evaluation Criteria	Midterm TOR Questions
Relevance	1.1. To what extent were the programme adjustments, including the design of the re-purposed activities appropriate in reaching the relevant beneficiaries with the right assistance and quality at the right time? 1.2. To which extent were the re-purposed activities designed and effective in complementing the Government’s alternative learning mechanisms (ex. remote learning)? 1.3. To what extent has the design of capacity strengthening activities met the needs and priorities of the Government? 1.4. How relevant are the activities designed as the programme’s Foundational Results in achieving the Strategic Objectives?
Effectiveness	2.1. To what extent has progress been made towards the achievement of results and targets despite COVID-19? ²⁰² 2.2. Factors affecting results: How has the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influenced the ability of the programme to meet expected results and targets by agreed timeline? 2.3. What are the recommendations and strategic action points based on this analysis? 2.4. Factors affecting results: What were the major internal factors that have influenced the progress of the programme by the time of the midterm evaluation?

²⁰¹ Discussions are underway between USDA and WFP to have the LRP as part of a new McGovern-Dole cycle (10 percent of the McGovern-Dole budget) but redesigned for regional procurement of canned fish without the current level of LRP support to smallholders and value chains. Ref: WFP proposal for USDA continued funding of the McGovern-Dole Programme FY 22 (Dated: 06 May 2022). The support to smallholders and value chains will be funded from other donors).

²⁰² Only indicators with available data will be reviewed. [Annex 1](#) (Addendum) outlines the programme indicators and their data source for desk review. The indicators without any data are also outlined.

Evaluation Criteria	Midterm ToR Questions
Sustainability	<p>3.1. To what extent progress has been made against the overall handover process against the programme plan and handover plan/strategy agreed with and endorsed by the Government?</p> <p>3.2. To what extent were the SFP implementation arrangements include considerations for sustainability (handover to the Government) at national and local levels, communities, and other partners for all programme components (school feeding, literacy, Food safety, WASH, and hygiene, etc) agreed with and endorsed by the Government and national stakeholders?</p> <p>3.3. To what extent progress has been made towards institutionalization of the measures planned as part of the technical assistance to the Government that is expected to support the sustainability of the intervention (including policy work, support to systems, institutional capacity etc)?</p> <p>3.4. What progress has been made since the programme design stage (through strategic engagement, advocacy and other efforts with Government and relevant stakeholders) in supporting financial sustainability of the SFP beyond WFP's intervention to the extent it can be evaluated by the midterm evaluation (national budget for SFP and other funding sources)?</p> <p>3.5. To what extent has SFP been successful in engaging Government and local communities (PTAs, farmers groups, etc) towards school feeding and education activities? Has the role of the communities and local stakeholders been institutionalized (as the Government policy, strategy and/or systems levels)?</p> <p>3.6. Based on available evidence to what extent are the benefits of the program likely to continue beyond WFP's intervention for the targeted beneficiaries?</p> <p>3.7. What were the major factors and/or programme interventions that have both positively and negatively influenced the transition process?</p> <p>3.8. What are the likely and potential implications of a complete phase out of WFP's interventions implemented with USDA's funding to the National School Feeding Programme?</p>
General	<p>4.1. Based on available evidence to what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue beyond WFP's intervention for the targeted beneficiaries?</p> <p>4.2. What are recommendations for mid-course corrections to improve the programme's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and/or sustainability?</p>

Source: WFP Cambodia McGovern-Dole and LRP Evaluation ToR FY19 Addendum Final

The change in focus for the evaluation to readiness for handover (sustainability) shifted the midterm study to a mostly qualitative approach (with support of secondary data) and a quantitative survey was not undertaken. The evaluation used a theory-based, participatory, and gender-responsive evaluation approach. A theory-based evaluation²⁰³ is appropriate since the programme is based on the LRP theory of change (the Results Framework) explaining how the intervention is expected to produce its results. A theory-based approach will therefore enable the evaluation analysis to determine whether the theory of change (Results Frameworks) holds true.

Evaluation analysis involved the mapping of potential pathways from interventions to results to identify how WFP contributions have evolved over time and to what degree observed changes can be linked to WFP interventions or other externalities. This included understanding the interlinkages between the national level country capacity strengthening work with local level direct implementation and the decentralized capacity development. To effectively examine capacity strengthening, reference was made to WFP corporate capacity strengthening framework, adapting it to the needs of this assignment.

The full evaluation series will aim to answer the evaluation questions as listed in the TOR and amended in the Addendum ([Annex 1](#)).²⁰⁴ These questions are grouped under the key evaluation criteria developed by the

²⁰³ Theory based evaluation is an approach to evaluation (i.e., a conceptual analytical model) and not a specific method or technique. It is a way of structuring and undertaking analysis in an evaluation. A theory of change explains how an intervention is expected to produce its results.

²⁰⁴ WFP Cambodia Country Office. Terms of Reference (Addendum) Activity Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grants FFE-442-2019-013-00 and USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement LRP-442-2019-011-00 for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia from 2019 to 2023

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee:²⁰⁵ relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. These criteria are used to provide a standardised framework for addressing the objectives of accountability and learning, as outlined in paragraph 4 above. However, for this midterm evaluation, not all criteria were appropriate²⁰⁶ as described in the scope of the evaluation, and the ET focused on the main evaluation criteria and questions of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability. In particular, this midterm evaluation also focused on Government engagement and capacity building to manage and implement the school feeding programmes and local procurement processes.

The questions proposed in the TOR have been further expanded during the development of the Evaluation Matrix ([Annex 5](#)). This matrix formed the basis for the data collection in Phnom Penh (national level) and in the three target provinces (Siem Reap, Kampong Thom and Kampong Chhnang). The matrix added sub-questions relevant to each area, and traced a path from question to answer, providing the ET with information about how to answer the questions. It provides measures and indicators for the answer, sources of information likely to provide the answers, and how the ET were to collect and analyse the data as well as a brief note on the expected quality of the data. The matrix was based on the indicators from the Results Frameworks, against which to measure achievements. All subsequent tools and methodologies were based on the evaluation matrix.

While the overall evaluation series (baseline, midterm, and endline) will employ a quasi-experimental case-control (comparison) evaluation design, such as was used in the 2017-2019 baseline/endline evaluations, the midterm evaluation focused on the case schools due to time limitations and the context of the pandemic and its impact on the programme.^{207,208} The midterm evaluation methodology used mixed data collection methods and triangulate information from different methods and sources to enhance the validity of findings. The 2020 baseline study was used as context to assist with determining the attributability of midterm (and endline) results to the programme intervention and the pandemic.

The midterm methodology prioritized qualitative approaches to collect primary data, as well as a review of secondary data and documents provided by the CO, and other documentation gathered before and during the fieldwork. These included relevant programme documents, annual reports, monitoring reports, previous evaluation reports, various assessments that formed the basis for the programme design, WFP and Government policies and normative guidance.

Qualitative data was gathered through KIIs and FGDs with a range of key stakeholders at national, sub-national and school/community level (see [Annex 9](#)). The variety of stakeholders was intended to promote the participation of diverse groups, including beneficiaries such as farmers and suppliers, and school-based authorities such as cooks, teachers, and other school staff, as well as other stakeholders at the national, provincial and district levels.

During the baseline, the ET had developed a rigorous sampling process to better track the contributions of the USDA-supported programme over the entire cycle. The school list for WFP's school feeding activities in the three provinces totals 522 institutions.²⁰⁹ Based on the original design, 302 schools were to be supported by the USDA grants through the entire programme cycle while the others were gradually transitioned to government.²¹⁰ There were three different modalities found among the schools: SMP (only rice and oil provided by WFP), SMP+Hybrid (rice and oil provided by WFP and cash transfers for obtaining meat and vegetables through local procurement) and HGSF (transferred to national government management of pure local procurement). To enable evaluation of the USDA-supported programme over the entire programme cycle, the sample for intervention schools was drawn from these USDA supported institutions that would be present throughout the cycle. From this list of schools, two different samples were taken. The one for the quantitative survey (not repeated in the midterm evaluation period) and another for the qualitative data collection. Four main criteria were used to select the site visit schools at baseline: Information richness (are the schools (and stakeholders associated) sufficiently familiar with SMP activities to provide insights?), accessibility (can the schools be accessed by the evaluation team?), gender (does the mix of schools and stakeholders adequately represent gender diversity?), and diversity (does the mix of schools

²⁰⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

²⁰⁶ As per the amended evaluation questions, no information will be collected on efficiency and impact.

²⁰⁷ Dunn et al., 2017. Baseline Report for WFP Cambodia and the USDA/McGovern-Dole Food for Education Programme 2017-2019.

²⁰⁸ Dunn et al., 2020. Endline Evaluation of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Grant Food for Education Programme for WFP Cambodia FY 2017-2019 FINAL Evaluation Report: Volume 1 – Main Report.

²⁰⁹ Detailed school lists only provided for SY 2020-2021 onwards, not for 2019-2020. School list final 20-05-2020.xls, shared on 21 May 2020. Updated school list available for 2021-2022.

²¹⁰ The targets for schools have been amended from the original design following the revision of transition targets in the Joint Transition Strategy. By the end of the programme cycle in 2023, 181 of these schools are expected to be handed over to the Government. Thus, the remaining 341 schools were to be supported by the USDA grants: HGSF-Hybrid (McGovern-Dole + LRP - 58 schools) and HGSF-Hybrid (McGovern-Dole + other donors - 283 schools).

represent the diversity of SMP schools?). In addition, quality of performance was also included as a second level criteria selecting a mix of high performing and low performing schools. Based on these criteria and the selection of the specific programme site visits. The final selection was made in consultation with WFP personnel during the baseline to ensure that the final selection represented the important stakeholder groups and the diversity of the schools affected by the interventions.

At the midterm evaluation, the sampling mimicked the baseline process. Due to the absence of a quantitative data collection component in the midterm evaluation, to better track changes over time in schools qualitatively, the ET chose to use a panel study approach for the school visits in the midterm evaluation. This meant that the ET again visited and interviewed the same sample of eight schools selected for qualitative interviews in the baseline. In addition, two additional schools were included that had been transferred to the government HGSF since the baseline. These were included to provide insights into the transition process and the sustainability of gains after transition at the school level. Thus, there were three different modalities found among the ten schools (profiled in following table). For the key informant interviews, the same stakeholder classes were used as were identified during the baseline.

Schools Visited During Site Visits (Midterm Evaluation)

Province	District	Schools	Modality
Kampong Chhnang	Baribour	Chambak Raingsei	HGSF
Kampong Chhnang	Samaki Meanchey	Takeo	SMP+Hybrid
Kampong Chhnang	Samaki Meanchey	Meanok	SMP+ Hybrid
Kampong Thom	Santuk	Cheay Sbai	SMP
Kampong Thom	Baray	Banteay Chas	SMP+ Hybrid
Kampong Thom	Baray	Serei Sophoan	SMP+ Hybrid
Siem Reap	Soutnikom	Thnal Dach	SMP+ Hybrid
Siem Reap	Soutnikom	Trapeang Trom	SMP+ Hybrid
Siem Reap	Chikraeng	Thnal Kaeng	SMP
Siem Reap	Angkor Thom	Svay Chek	HGSF

For the qualitative work, the international team members travelled to Cambodia, and the entire ET was directly involved in the primary data collection (including face-to-face key informant interviews, field visits and observation). The data collection phase comprised a field mission of three weeks. The full ET visited Siem Reap province for three days, and then, due to time constraints, the full team split into two smaller teams to visit Kampong Thom and Kampong Chhnang. The smaller teams in each province represented members of the LRP evaluation team and the McGovern-Dole School Feeding evaluation team as well to collaborate in the data collection to ensure that information related to both evaluations was collected in all three provinces.

In the final days of the data collection phase, two exit briefings were held, one with WFP staff and one with external stakeholders, to present an overview of the preliminary findings and gather additional insights and inputs from the stakeholders. PowerPoint presentations of these summary findings were made available to WFP. These workshops were held virtually due to concerns over COVID-19 restrictions.

Gender Considerations. Although the results framework does not contain specific gender related outcomes, outputs, and indicators, the ET analysed the extent to which GEWE objectives and mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design and aligned with the SDGs and other system-wide commitments enshrining gender rights. Gender equality and women's empowerment can potentially be evaluated and incorporated into activities in four ways, based on social criteria within a network of interconnected power structures (such as policies, laws, and the media): (i) adapting food assistance to the specific needs of men, women, girls, and boys; (ii) ensuring equal participation of women and men in food security and nutrition programmes; (iii) increasing women and girls' participation in household, community, and society decision-making; and (iv) a fundamental strategy that respects their right to ensure the safety, dignity, and integrity of women, men, girls, and boys.

Gender analysis assessed the extent to which different voices, vulnerabilities, capacities and priorities of women, men, girls, and boys are reflected in the LRP programme's design, selection, implementation, and monitoring – and how these distinct groups might benefit from the programme socially and materially. This detail was gathered through discussions and interviews with school administrators, teachers, parents, and other key stakeholders as part of qualitative data collection. Analysis included a review of LRP implementation and participation and feedback mechanisms to identify potential gender issues identified and to be addressed during implementation.

Complementary tools and data sources were used for this approach, building on the evaluation matrix to mainstream gender analysis in the tools developed for the evaluation (Annex 6). This was triangulated with secondary sources, including WFP monitoring data, direct observation and perceptions discussed with local authorities and WFP staff (especially women).

The ET ensured that the data collection process includes active participation of women and men to inform a better understanding of the programme from their distinct perspectives at school, household, and Government/WFP levels. This included timing the FGDs appropriately, recognising the distinct time obligations of different gender groups. Similar steps were taken to ensure all respondents felt that consultations are conducted in appropriate locations at appropriate times of day. During data analysis, the ET ensured that the perceptions and priorities of women and men were represented in the findings. Data disaggregation is included for all indicators as available.

The ET therefore: i) integrated a gender lens throughout all evaluation enquiry and analysis, led by the International Evaluator (Mike Brewin); ii) applied good practice in the collection, analysis, and reporting of gender sensitive and disaggregated data, both primary and secondary; iii) pay attention to appropriate timing, location, facilitation, and enumeration of all consultations, interviews, and focus groups; iv) sought to understand gendered impact on distinct stakeholder groups affected by the programme; v) sought to understand the programme's gender dimensions locally and how they relate to the national context, including other Government and WFP policies and programmes; vi) assessed any ways that transition plans may threaten GEWE objectives; and vii) worked in ways that are appropriate to the socio-cultural context and in accordance with the UNEG Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines.²¹¹ Finally, to ensure that the evaluation employed a gender-sensitive lens, the methodology was guided by the UNEG guidance on gender (UNSWAP).

3.2. EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

Evaluability is the extent to which an activity or a programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible manner. During the inception phase, the ET identified five key evaluability challenges. The primary constraint to evaluability has been the disruptions in the planned programming due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has had a cascade effect on multiple dimensions of the evaluation including limiting the degree to which programme activities have been implemented, limiting the utility of the implied theory of change in the results framework, and reducing the amount of time available for outcome level indicators to be affected. The ET identified mitigation measures that were applied to inform the selection of the data collection methods and their application. Despite the challenges, the evaluability of the LRP programme is feasible pending the integration of certain mitigation measures.

Summary Evaluability Challenges and Mitigation Measures

Evaluability Challenge	Methodological Mitigation
COVID-19 disruptions forced activity adaptations to respond to the pandemic delinking activities from original results framework.	Elaboration of a re-assessment of the results framework taking into account the adapted activities and tracing potential contributions through qualitative interviews. The combination of a re-assessment of modified activities within the results framework causal pathways and critical assumptions can be used to develop a plausible explanation regarding the degree to which WFP activities can be associated with contribution to strategic outcomes.
School closings led to delays in implementing targeted activities.	In addition to comparing activity and output achievements to established targets, identify mechanisms that were employed to overcome limitations to school closing and their potential relevance for ongoing implementation. This leads into the assessment of the remaining progress to be made and identification of aspects that need strengthening to enable objectives to be met.
Pandemic disruptions created delays in intended capacity development activities for handover and transition.	Inputs from qualitative interviews and document review combined with the application of the SABER-SF dimensions to develop a post-facto assessment of progress.

²¹¹Available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/547> and <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/3625>

Insufficient timeframe for outcome indicator changes to be reflected	Inputs from qualitative interviews and document review combined with the reconstructed contributions to results framework to assess potential future changes and cascade effects in outcome indicators.
GEWE issues not reflected in the Results Frameworks so internal WFP data on this may be thin or lacking	Although gender is not explicit in the Results Frameworks, the ET will, through qualitative interviews, develop perceptions of the extent to which girls benefit from, and may continue to benefit from literacy, health, and dietary outcomes relative to their male counterparts. In addition, the ET will pay special attention to assess the extent to which a gender lens is applied to the approach towards handover and sustainability.

At the time of the midterm evaluation, certain assumptions have been made with implications for evaluability: i) that the current travel rules in many countries will remain in place or be eased slightly in the coming months; ii) that current working possibilities within Cambodia – no restrictions on movement or meetings - will not be tightened; iii) that schools will remain open and that contact with communities and meetings with school and Government officials will remain possible with some advance planning. These assumptions held true throughout the data collection phase.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION INTERVIEWS AND ANALYSIS

Data Collection Tools: Three data collection methods were used to answer the evaluation questions: i) document review; ii) primary qualitative data collection through interviews, focus group discussions, and iii) programme site visits and observations. The bulk of the tools designed fell under category ii. For understanding performance towards SABER-SF framework, a review of LRP activities against the Corporate SABER-SF dimensions was used to map intervention patterns. The data collection tools can be found in [Annex 6](#).

Document review. The ET reviewed relevant reports from secondary sources including both internal WFP documentation and external sources such as Government policies or publications. Monitoring data, assessments, studies, previous evaluations were all included. The review included the following documentation: i) programme proposals, programme budget and budget revisions, and progress reports; ii) donor agreements and reports; iii) assessment reports and previous evaluation reports; iv) Monitoring and Evaluation Unit reports and associated gender disaggregated data; v) Cooperating partners' programme monitoring reports and data; vi) WFP corporate policies and strategies on school feeding, education, nutrition, health, and gender; vii) strategic and annual plans and reports; viii) school level data and reports. [Annex 10](#) provides the complete document list.

Qualitative Data Collection. The qualitative data elicited stakeholder perceptions that addressed all the criteria and the main guiding questions, focusing on relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability. The ET members conducted the field mission together; translators were hired locally to assist the international ET members as needed. Detailed daily discussions among all ET members were used to guide the data collection and processing, culminating in a two-day internal ET workshop to synthesize key findings and patterns. The itinerary for the qualitative data collection and the final programme of meetings was arranged and managed in cooperation with the CO and the Siem Reap Area Office.

Qualitative information was gathered through KIIs with principal informants, formal and informal interviews with others, FGDs, observation and other means, with the following groups (List of interviewees is provided in [Annex 9](#)):

- Beneficiaries, particularly ensuring gender balance among the informants, including school administrators and teachers, school cooks, parent members of the School Supporting Committee;
- Local School Feeding Committee (LSFC) (men and women as possible);
- Local leaders and other significant community stakeholders, such as the Commune Council;
- National, provincial & local Government officials, including representatives of relevant Government agencies & departments;
- Key WFP staff at different levels, including at the WFP Regional Bureau or Headquarters as necessary;
- Staff of implementing partner organizations;
- Staff of other relevant United Nations agencies, donors, and NGOs.

The ET used a semi-structured interview guide tailored to the expertise and relevance of each respondent group to ensure that all areas of interest are covered during an interview ([Annex 6](#)). The interview guides are based on the questions outlined in the Evaluation Matrix ([Annex 5](#)). The FGD guides were used to assist the facilitation of the discussions, and to ensure the opinions of the various stakeholders, both collectively and individually, are gathered. The qualitative data was analysed using a narrative thematic approach.

Daily team debriefs will guide the data collection and adjustments were conducted as feasible. Evidence was verified and corroborated through systematic triangulation as described below. When contradictions are found between different data, the ET engaged with WFP staff and other informants to identify the reasons for contradictions between various sources. Details of reporting dates are found in [Annex 2](#).

For the data collection phase, 425 persons (58 percent women) were interviewed through FGDs and KIIs ([Annex 9](#)) from national, provincial, district, and school levels. The following table provides the summary by category of stakeholder. Map of site visits is described in Annex 7.

Persons Interviewed by Category

Category	Number	Percent Women
National Government	25	23%
Provincial and District Authorities	98	23%
NGOs (and implementing partners)	22	38%
School Stakeholders	103	62%
Parents	99	86%
Suppliers and Farmers	16	75%
WFP (CO and Internationally)	47	73%
United Nations Agencies and Donors	15	29%
Total	425	58%

Quantitative Data: The performance figures presented in the report tables ([Annex 4.5](#).) were derived from data provided in the semi-annual reports (October 2019 - March 2022) from the CO. Two methods of calculation were used: for results related to student numbers, the results were calculated by taking the highest number reported in any of the semi-annual reports between October 2019 and March 2022, then a sixth of the total of student numbers reported for the other periods was added. All other results simply use the highest number reported in all of the semi-annual reports over the same reporting period (October 2019 - March 2022).

Data Analysis: Each data collection method had its own analytical approach. Quantitative data collection relied on existing WFP-compiled quantitative information including the in-country databases, and semi-annual reports including indicator accomplishments. The quantitative data were analysed primarily through descriptive and frequency analysis with cross tabulation for indicators or criteria of interest.

The document review relied on thematic narrative analysis for highlighting key themes from the documents and connect them to the relevant points in the evaluation matrix. A review tool was used to organize analysis for a more systematic identification of themes and allow for comparison across document sources. To ensure data quality in the document review, the ET relied on triangulated comparisons of findings from multiple ET members referenced against the review tool.

Quantitative analysis was primarily descriptive statistics based on the targets and achievements reported in the semi-annual reports to USDA. While the data is accurate for individual six-month reporting periods, this leads to challenges when determining cumulative achievements. There are duplicates between individual reporting periods. This limits the degree to which cumulative achievements can be assessed against the end of cycle targets. The evaluation relied on the country office internal calculations for determining cumulative achievements. Based on discussions with the CO, two methods of calculation were used: For results related to student numbers, the result was calculated by taking the highest number reported in the semi-annual reports in any six-month period between October 2019 and March 2022, and adding that to a sixth of the total of student numbers reported for the other periods. All other results simply use the highest number reported in all of the semi-annual reports over the October 2019 - March 2022 reporting period.

Qualitative analysis was based on an iterative process of identifying key thought units related to each evaluation question from the KIIs, organizing these thought units into clusters and identifying the key themes within each cluster. The data sources for this analysis were the interview notes from the interviews conducted during the data collection phase by the ET. Data quality was assured through triangulation of interviewers, sources, and feedback sessions which rely on iterative qualitative analysis.

Since outcome level indicators in the programme are not sufficient to capture the range of potential WFP contributions to country capacity strengthening for handover and transition, the ET supplemented the available data with the adaptation of the dimensions from the SABER-SF Framework to map the range of WFP contributions to handover and transition across the five dimensions (more details on the sustainability rubric below).

Sustainability analysis was used to combine the five dimensions highlighted in the evaluation matrix: i) policy framework; ii) institutional capacity and coordination; iii) program design and implementation; iv) financial capacity; and v) role of non-state actors. To assess sustainability, the SABER-SF uses a four-category rubric for each of the dimensions with four classifications: latent, emerging, established, and advanced. The full rubric is found in the SABER-SF manual:

http://wbgfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/Background/SHN/SABER_SchoolFeeding_Manual.pdf.

Additional analysis exercises included an ET-only analysis workshop at the end of the data collection phase, the presentation of key emerging findings at the end of the data collection mission, the presentation of preliminary findings to country office management and with Government stakeholders at the end of the data collection mission. These exercises were intended to both present preliminary findings, but also to generate additional insights, triangulate patterns, and elicit feedback from stakeholders on patterns and conclusions.

3.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, RISKS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

WFP's decentralised evaluations must conform to WFP and UNEG ethical standards and norms. Accordingly, KonTerra is responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent (including for recording of the interviews), protecting privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups), and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.

Interviews were conducted in accordance with UNEG's 2008 Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, notably to ensure that informants understand that their participation in the qualitative interviews was voluntary and that data collection from individuals would proceed on the basis of informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. Participants were informed of the purpose of the evaluation and how the information and perspectives they provide will be used. WFP staff did not take direct part in interviews or FGDs beyond introductions, unless they were themselves direct participants. All data collected was solely used for the purpose of this evaluation, and field notes remained confidential and were not to be turned over to public or private agencies, including WFP.

Procedures were in place in the case that unanticipated effects of the intervention on human rights or gender equality were identified. However, no such cases were identified during the field data collection, and these did not need to be activated

The ET found that this midterm study encountered minimal limitations and risks. With the COVID-19 pandemic on the decline, access to schools and all stakeholders was no longer limited. The possibility of a flare-up due to new variants remained real but did not affect processes except for shifting the exit briefings to online format as a precaution. As the schools were reopened, data was readily available and of acceptable quality.

Commune level elections took place on 5 June 2022. The data collection took place after these are over and the process was therefore not be affected. However, when planning the interviews, there were challenges when newly elected individuals were not fully aware of the programme. Even when the stakeholders were new and unfamiliar with the programme, the ET conducted interviews to obtain perspectives of incoming stakeholders that would have implications for sustainability.

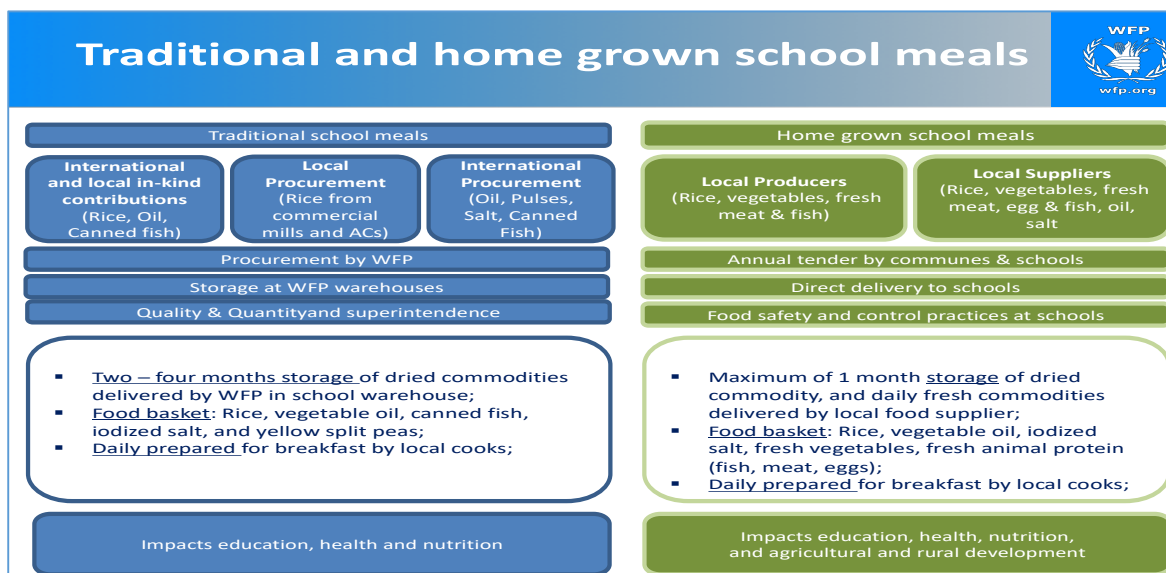
To minimize the risks of exposure to COVID-19, the ET paid particular attention to health guidelines in force, in accordance with WFP technical guidelines and CO practices.²¹² The situation in Cambodia was closely monitored, and flexibility – or postponement – of the work was an option, although did not become necessary. The ET took periodic COVID-19 rapid tests throughout the data collection phase to monitor the likelihood of contraction. These were always negative. To mitigate time limitations, the LRP ET and the McGovern-Dole ET collaborated and split up so that data on both programmes can be collected in all three provinces within the available time, and national level interviews relevant to both were conducted simultaneously.

²¹² WFP OEV. Technical Note for Planning and Conducting Evaluations during COVID-19. April 2020.

Annex 4: LRP Results Framework

4.1. PROGRAMME LOGIC

School Meals in Cambodia. In Cambodia, short-term hunger is a key factor affecting educational results,²¹³ and school feeding is a major component of the WFP Cambodia Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019–2023, now being implemented in five²¹⁴ of Cambodia’s 25 provinces. The WFP-managed school meals programme (SMP) started in Cambodia in 1999. In 2014, the MoEYS in collaboration with WFP piloted an Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) model, managed by WFP, to illustrate the potential of local procurement to support school meals provisions.²¹⁵ In May 2015, both parties subsequently signed a ‘school feeding roadmap’ in May 2015 whereby the management of the school meals programme would be transferred to the Government and would become a National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP).



Source: WFP Cambodia USDA LRP Proposal, 2019.

Individual schools are intended to be supported through a four-phase process from a traditional WFP SMP school through a hybrid model combining both SMP and HGSF elements to a WFP-managed HGSF model and eventual transition into a government managed NHGSFP programme. The following table summarizes the distinct phases.

Model	Key Characteristics
SMP	WFP-managed procurement processes drawing on international food assistance.
Hybrid-HGSF	WFP-managed processes combining international food assistance (managed by WFP) supplemented by local produced procured by the schools.
HGSF	WFP-managed processes supporting local schools to procure commodities within the national context.
NHGSFP	Government-managed processes whereby local schools, managed by the MOEYS, procure commodities within the national context.

Source: WFP Cambodia Country Office programme documents, synthesized by the evaluation team

In support of the USDA McGovern-Dole programme, the LRP is formulated to contribute to the provision of diversified meals to pre-primary and primary students by helping schools shift to a local procurement modality (HGSF). The green boxes in Figure 6 below indicate the LRP’s relationship to the broader McGovern-Dole programme. This modality is designed to establish cost-effective supply chain linkages that enable timely delivery of locally procured, high quality food commodities to schools. The LRP has three strategic objectives: i) Improved

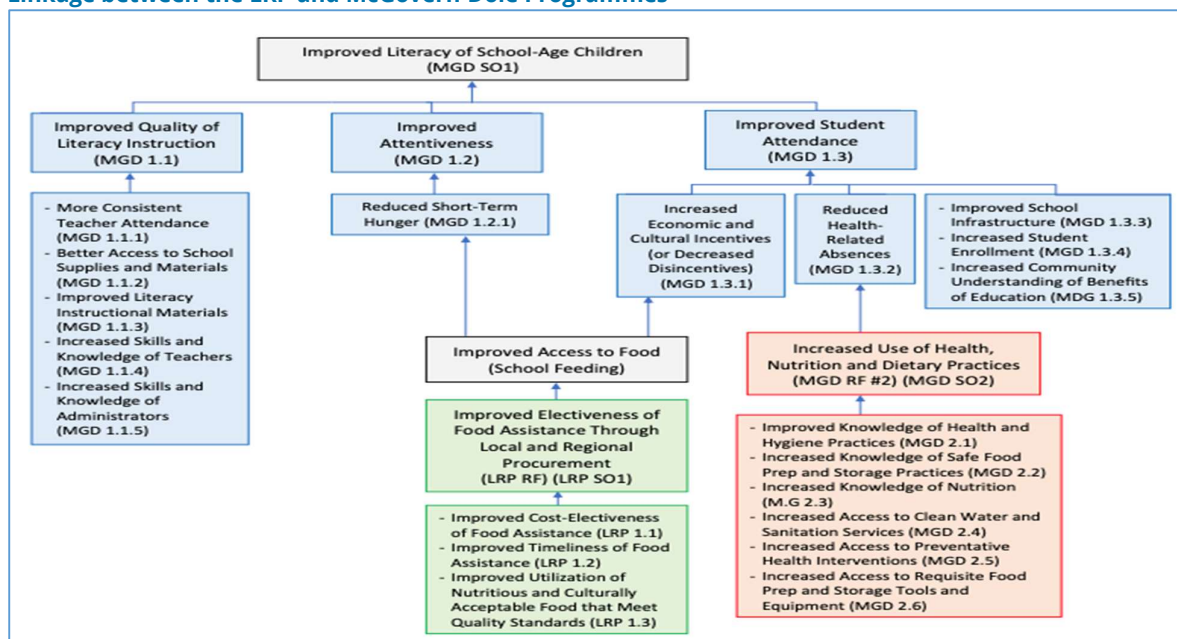
²¹³ <https://www.worldnomads.com/responsible-travel/footprints/programmes/103/school-feeding-program-siem-reap-cambodia>

²¹⁴ Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Oddar Meanchey, Kampong Chhnang and Pursat provinces

²¹⁵ See Annex 4 for details of distinction between the traditional WFP school meals programme and the HGSF model managed by WFP.

Cost-Effectiveness of Food Assistance; Improved Timeliness of Food Assistance; and Improved Utilization of Nutritious and Culturally Acceptable Food that Meet Quality Standards.²¹⁶

Linkage between the LRP and McGovern-Dole Programmes



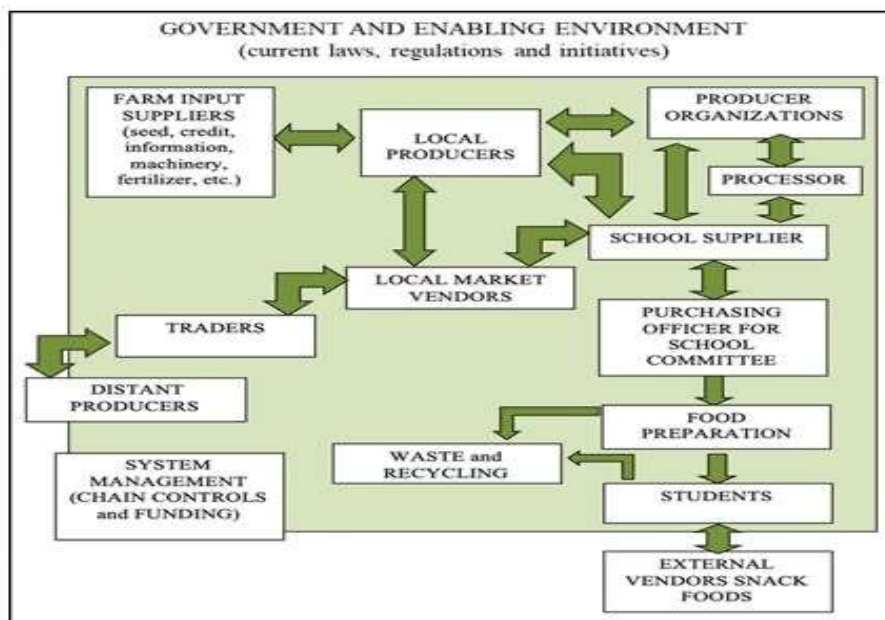
Source: Developed for the Baseline Evaluation Report (2020). Key: blue and red boxes: McGovern-Dole programme; green boxes: LRP programme

LRP Programme Design. The LRP design to support schools to use a local procurement model relevant to the needs of women and girls, men, and boys, who are the primary beneficiaries and the most vulnerable. The direct involvement of HGSP with Government line ministries (such as the MoEYS and MAFF), provincial departments (the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFF), the Department of Education, Youth, and Sport (DOEYS)) and local commune councils ensures that the activities are aligned with Government priorities and local needs. The model is aligned to national Government official plans to adopt the HGSP model for the national school feeding programme and it uses the Government's own established procurement mechanism. The LRP design envisions the provision of WFP support to stakeholders in support of the transition to national ownership.

The LRP programme complements the McGovern-Dole programme through its focus on local procurement for provision of meals to specific schools by collaborating with local farmers (and suppliers) in the creation of functional supply chains and strengthened value chain systems²¹⁷ to produce and procure high quality local foods for the school meals.

²¹⁶ The Results Framework (Annex 4) specifies: i) Increased capacity of Government institutions (FR1): on procurement (rice fortification, HGSP model); information management and national food safety systems; operationalization processes (e.g. procurement guidelines); ii) Improved national policy and regulatory framework (FR2): support rice fortification and value chain actors on food safety systems (e.g. on production, handling, storage); iii) Improved capacity of relevant organizations (FR3): operationalize rice fortification pilot and HGSP procurement mechanisms (training, guidelines, management, processes) and access to market information; iv) Improved leverage of private sector resources (FR4): cash transfers for local food purchase.

²¹⁷ Including agricultural production and safe food handling practices



Source: WFP Cambodia USDA LRP Proposal, 2019.

The programme supports McGovern-Dole/HGSF schools²¹⁸ to procure foods through competitive bidding processes principally from farmers in the communities local to the schools, and other suppliers (local traders, millers, wholesalers) who may aggregate farmers' produce. Targeting smallholder farmers around HGSF schools supports the local economies while improving the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of the supplies, as well as ensuring a better nutritional content and quality of the school meals.

Local Procurement (HGSF)

- WFP makes money available into school programme budget account, following planning from school;
- Commune council get together with schools and community organize bid committee and process;
- Quotation announcement/Disseminate information on bidding schedule and process to community, suppliers and producers;
- Organize pre bid meetings to interested suppliers
- Bid meetings with relevant membership and interested suppliers;
- Tripartite agreement between commune council, school, and supplier for food supply to school;

Stakeholders in local procurement

Commune:

- Chair bid committee;
- Manage the contract whole year;
- Information sharing on bid schedule and process;

Suppliers & producers

- Participate in pre-bid and bid meeting;
- Prepare their bid format for bid meeting;

Schools

- Participate in pre-bid and bid meeting;
- Information sharing on bid schedule and process;

Community

- Information sharing on bid schedule and process; and witness the process;

Source: WFP Cambodia USDA LRP Proposal, 2019.

Four foundational results are embedded in the programme logic including:

1. Building the capacity of Government institutions
2. Improving the policy and regulatory framework
3. Improving the capacity of HGSF stakeholders including school authorities, support committees, suppliers, and farmers.
4. Increase private sector resourcing.

²¹⁸ Through the provincial departments of the MOEYS.

The LRP capacity development component is relevant because schools, suppliers and farmers transitioning to the HGFSF modality have relatively little experience and familiarity with the procurement processes. The LRP capacity development component for national level stakeholders is relevant because of the need for a stronger coordination mechanism and clear roles and responsibilities among line ministries and sub-national departments. The capacity development component for suppliers and farmers is relevant to their needs and is perceived as having the potential to increase their economic development through increased markets for agricultural produce.

The LRP considers gender to be a priority with regards to increased women's empowerment among programme participants under activities 2 and 3 (that is suppliers, farmers, bidding committee members). To achieve these foundational results, WFP focuses on a range of activities including cash transfers, capacity development, technical assistance to a range of stakeholders, and system strengthening. The specific activities conducted for transition and handover to Government were agreed upon within the original programme MOU and later integrated into the overall 2022 Transition Strategy.

Key assumptions potentially affecting the success of the LRP include political stability and sufficient political will to support LRP transition and handover, resourcing stability and availability, stable environmental conditions to reduce shocks to local producers and suppliers, and quality systems for programming to mitigate price fluctuations and diversions.

The discrete activities agreed upon in the MOU and the critical assumptions will be used as a framework for assessing the feasibility of achieving the LRP targets by the end of the current cycle given the pandemic disruptions and other factors.

4.2. DESCRIPTION OF LRP ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Cash transfers to schools for local and regional procurement of commodities for the HGFSF program.

Description: Activity 1 supports local producers, school suppliers, school administrators, students, and system management.

Contribution to LRP Results: Local purchase of commodities from smallholder farmers will improve cost-effectiveness and timeliness of food assistance as well as provide access to culturally acceptable and nutritious foods.

Activity 2: Strengthen capacity of HGFSF stakeholders on procurement mechanisms.

Activity 2.1: Train HGFSF stakeholders on program implementation process including procurement process and roll-out of operational guidelines developed in 2019.

Description: Activity 2.1 supports school suppliers, purchasing officers for school committees, system management, and Government and enabling environments.

Activity 2.2: Undertake supplier consultation events to inform strategy around building capacity of supply-side actors in engaging in HGFSF procurement process.

Description: Activity 2.2 will intervene primarily with school suppliers, local market vendors, and purchasing officers for school committees. Partnerships: FAO, district-level officials from MAFF and local bidding committees.

Contribution to LRP Results: Activity 2 will increase capacity of Government institutions and relevant organizations and increase leverage of private-sector resources through partnerships and community contribution as well as improved policy and regulatory frameworks. This will be facilitated using training modules that focus on local procurement, distribution, and delivery of commodities for home grown school meals. Strengthened capacity of HGFSF stakeholders on procurement mechanism will improve cost-effectiveness and timeliness of food assistance.

Activity 3: Technical assistance to producers and suppliers on enhancing production capacity to engage with HGFSF market.

Activity 3.1: Improve food safety and quality in production and handling for suppliers and smallholder farmers (SHFs).

Description: Develop tools for safe food production and handling for suppliers and SHF and strategic dissemination of safe food production and handling learning tools.

Activity 3.2: Assess existing and potential procurement options for national HGFSF model.

Activity 3.3: Enhance suppliers' and SHFs' capacity to effectively engage in HGSF program and access to market information.

Contribution to LRP Results: The HGSF procurement platform connects schools to local producers, which increases cost-effectiveness and timeliness of procurement, and increase agriculture productivities. The platform is also a government-driven and community-owned mechanism increases capacity of Government institutions such as the local authority, Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, district level staff, schools, community, and relevant organizations such as commune councils and procurement committees. This Activity will improve policy and regulatory frameworks by establishing a common national procurement process for HGSF, and increasingly leverage of private-sector resources through partnerships, community contribution, and engagement with local entrepreneurs. The development of safe and nutritious food production and handling guidelines and Training-of-Trainers module led by the MAFF in partnership with FAO will increase value added to post-production agricultural products.

Activity 4: Strengthen national institutional capacities and systems.

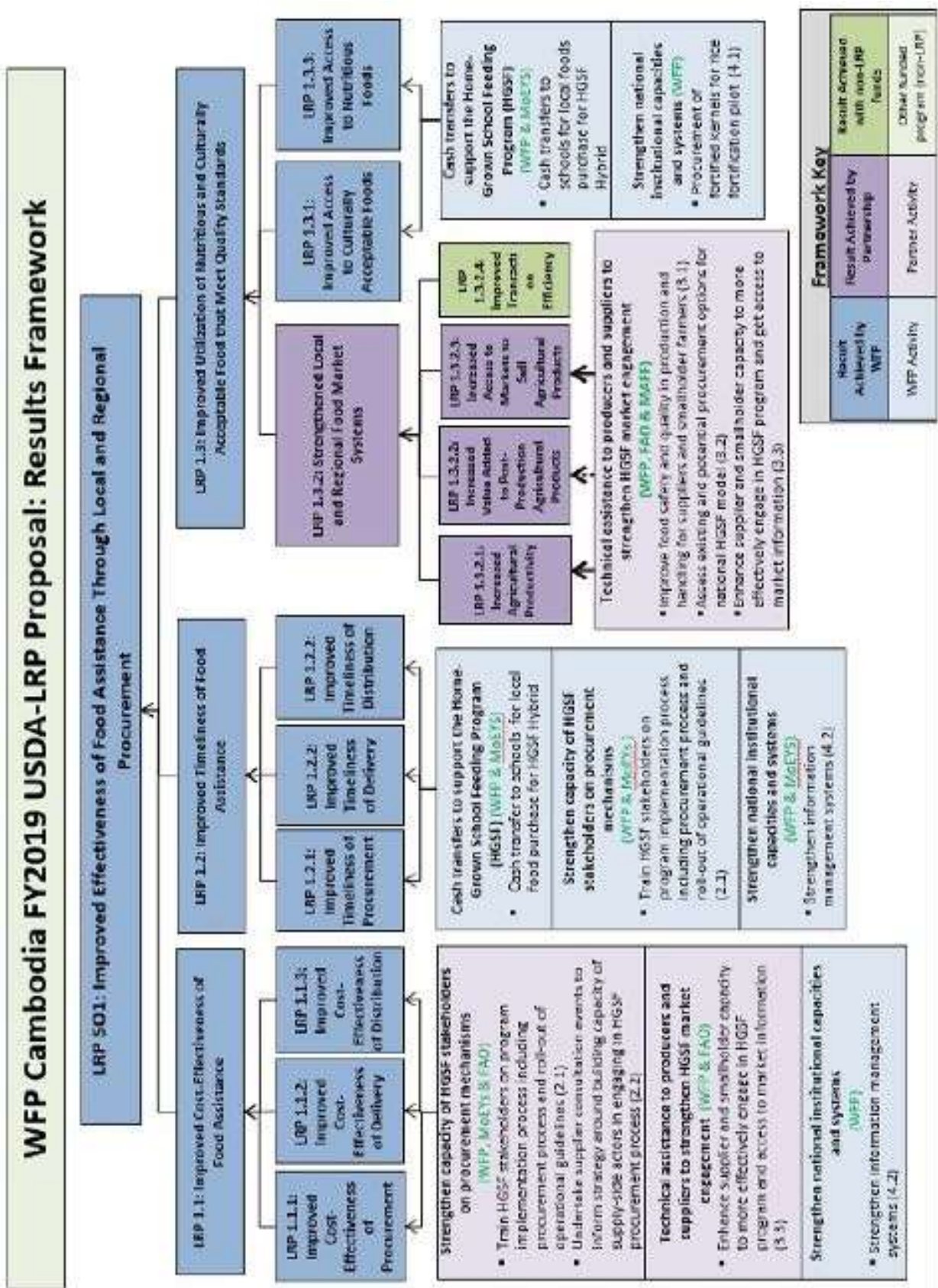
Activity 4.1: Procurement of fortified kernels for rice fortification pilot.

Activity 4.2: Strengthen information management systems.

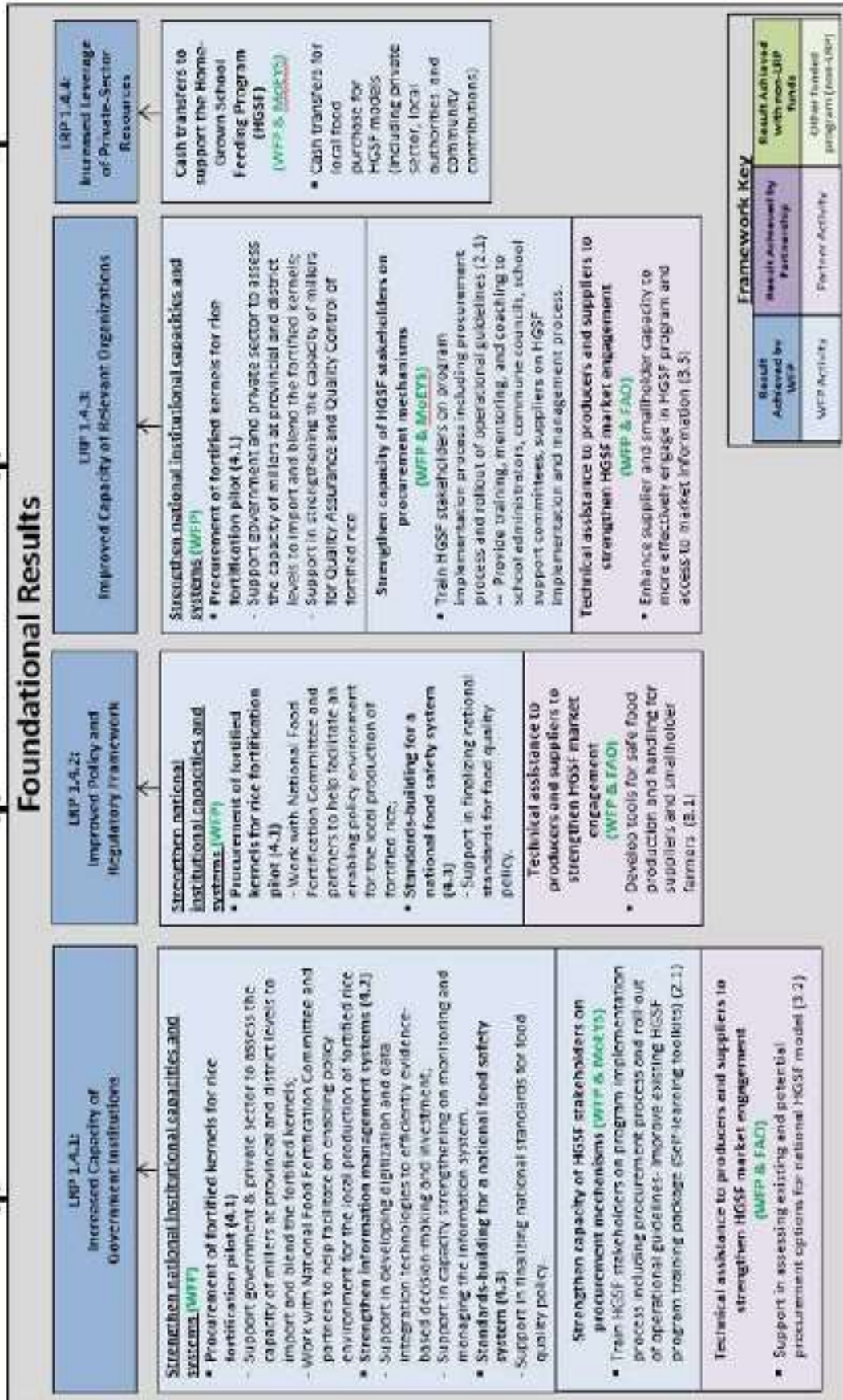
Activity 4.3: Standards-building for a national food safety system.

Contribution to LRP Results: The introduction of locally blended fortified rice improves access to nutritious food. The development of online and mobile tools for HGSF adapted to the existing information management system enhances responsive program management and accountability through real-time information, increasing the capacity of Government and school officials. Efficient reporting improves cost-effectiveness and timeliness of the procurement process. The activity also contributes to the intermediate results of improved policy and regulatory framework, improved capacity of relevant organizations and increasing leverage of private-sector resources.

4.3. LRP RESULTS FRAMEWORK



WFP Cambodia FY2019 USDA-LRP Proposal: Foundational Results



WFP Cambodia FY2019 USDA-LRP Proposal: Critical Assumptions



The Project-Level RF must be accompanied by narrative text that identifies critical assumptions and describes the project's theory of change, referring to existing research that supports the proposed causal linkages, where possible.

1. Political Assumptions:

- Continued and increasing levels of national commitment through budget and in-kind support to run a national school feeding program.
- Sufficient capacity of national and subnational bodies to increasingly take on and scale up a national program.

2. **Environmental Assumptions:** The impact of climate change, and other weather-related or economic shocks do not disrupt ongoing program activities.

3. **Funding Assumptions:** Funding availability from both international and domestic sources allows for the successful continuation of the transition of the school feeding program to government.

4. Programmatic Assumptions:

- Food price fluctuations are not significant to impact program planning and implementation.
- Existing controls for diversion, corruption and fraud are sufficient to ensure oversight of subnational management and decentralized procurement processes in HGSF.
- Food safety guidelines and supply chain mechanisms in place are sufficient to mitigate new/different food safety risks associated with the transition to home grown school meals, decentralized procurement and increased use of perishable products

5. Other Assumptions:

- Natural disasters and/or macro-economic shocks could effect the communities' abilities to contribute to the program
- Sufficient capacity of commune councils to effectively manage school feeding (especially HGSF) and integrate into local planning processes.

4.4. RESULTS FRAMEWORK INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Result	Indicator	End of Cycle Target
Improved Effectiveness of Food Assistance Through Local & Regional Procurement	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs	55,745
	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (Male)	NA
	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (Female)	NA
	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (New)	NA
	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (Continuing)	NA
	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	69,201
	Number of USDA social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets	54,372
	Number of schools reached as a result of USDA assistance	157
Improved Cost-Effectiveness of Procurement	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	1,769,375
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	1,216
	Number of toolkits distributed as a result of USDA assistance	7,536
	Percent of HGSF orders in compliance with contract criteria	3%
	Percent of HGSF orders delivered on time	85%
Strengthened Local and Regional Food Market Systems	Value of annual sales of farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	+30 percentage points
	Volume of commodities sold by farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	+30 percentage points
Improved Policy and Regulation Framework	Number of policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance	1-Stage 5
Improved Capacity of Relevant Organizations	Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance	900
	Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance	600
	Value of new USG commitments, and new public and private sector investments leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition	57,769

4.5. LRP ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENTS

The following data are abstracted from the semi-annual reports between October 2019 and March 2022. Disaggregated indicators do not have end of cycle (EOC) targets and cumulative achievements due to how data is reported across the semester reporting periods. The 2022-2023 reporting period not shown as it has not yet happened.

The figures presented below were derived from data provided in the semi-annual reports (October 2019 - March 2022) from the CO. Two methods of calculation were used: For results related to student numbers, the results were calculated by taking the highest number reported in any of the semi-annual reports between October 2019 and March 2022, then a sixth of the total of student numbers reported for the other periods was added. All other results simply use the highest number reported in all of the semi-annual reports over the same reporting period (October 2019 - March 2022).

Activity	Performance Indicator	Target 19/20	Achievement 19/20	Achievement percentage 19/20	Target 20/21	Achievement 20/21	Achievement percentage 20/21	Target 21/22	Achievement 21/22	Achievement Percentage 21/22	Average Annual Achievement Rate	Achievement to date	EOC Target	EOC achievement rate
1. Cash transfers to support the Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGFSF)	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs	40,558	0	0%	35,557	19,636	55%	31,569	42,692	135%	63%	46,703	55,745	84%
	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (Male)	22,414	0	0%	19,897	9,941	50%	17,879	21,988	123%	58%	NA	NA	NA
	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (Female)	18,144	0	0%	15,660	9,485	61%	13,690	20,704	151%	71%	NA	NA	NA
	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (New)	40,558	0	0%	5,968	15,094	253%	5,413	15,094	279%	177%	NA	NA	NA
	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (Continuing)	0	0	0	29,589	4,542	15%	26,156	36,049	138%	51%	NA	NA	NA
	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	50,880	0	0%	44,426	25,448	57%	39,043	96,386	247%	101%	96,386	69,201	139%
	Number of USDA social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets	39,977	0	0%	34,906	19,435	56%	30,677	42,410	138%	65%	42,410	54,372	78%

Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (Male)	21,972	0	0%	19,448	9,740	50%	17,330	21,821	126%	42%	NA	NA	NA
Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (Female)	18,005	0	0%	15,458	9,360	61%	13,347	20,589	154%	51%	NA	NA	NA
Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (New)	39,977	0	0%	5,818	19,435	334%	5,113	6,643	130%	43%	NA	NA	NA
Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance (Continuing)	0	0	0	29,088	0	0%	25,564	35,767	140%	47%	NA	NA	NA
Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	NA	6,785	4,877	72%	0	NA	NA	72%	4,877	6,785	72%
Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (Male)	0	0	0	NA	2,203	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance (Female)	0	0	0	NA	2,674	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of schools reached as a result of USDA assistance	157	0	0%	132	163	123%	111	163	147%	90%	163	157	104%
Percentage of HGSF deliveries rejected due to poor quality as reported by schools	10%	0	0%	8%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	100%
Percent of HGSF orders delivered on time as per contract	70%	0	0%	75%	100%	133%	80%	100%	125%	86%	100%	85%	118%

	Percent of HGSF supplier contracts signed before the start of the school year	60%	0	0%	65%	100%	154%	70%	100%	143%	99%	100%	75%	133%	
	Average number of school days per month on which multi-fortified or at least 4 food groups were provided	20	0	0%	20	9.00	45%	20	16.5	83%	43%	16.5	20	83%	
2. Strengthen capacity of HGSF stakeholders on procurement mechanisms	Cost of commodity (USD) procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	231,475	0	0%	621,500	97651.00	16%	547,125	161,440	30%	15%	259,091	1,769,375	15%	
	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (rice)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (Iodized salt)	600	0	0%	1,500	89.00	6%	1,500	284	19%	8%	373	NA	NA	
	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (Vegetable)	98,875	0	0%	266,000	9,873	4%	233,625	74569	32%	12%	74,569	NA	NA	
	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (Protein)	132,000	0	0%	354,000	9,779	3%	312,000	86588	28%	10%	86,588	NA	NA	
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	159	0	0%	427	109.01	26%	376	115.85	31%	19%	225	1216	18%	
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (Rice)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (Iodized salt)	2	0	0%	5	.32	6%	5	0.87	17%	6%	0.9	NA	NA	
	Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (Vegetable)	113	0	0%	304	12.07	4%	267	82.4	31%	10%	82	NA	NA	

Quantity of commodity procured (MT) as a result of USDA assistance (Protein)	44	0	0%	118	4.33	4%	104	32.59	31%	10%	33	NA	NA
Quantity of take-home rations provided (in metric tons) as a result of USDA assistance	NA	NA	NA	180	109	61%	NA	NA	NA	61%	109	180.15	61%
Number of individuals trained in HGSF implementation, including procurement process and procedures as a result of USDA assistance	431	0	0%	351	201	57%	292	282	97%	51%	282	473	60%
Number of individuals trained in HGSF implementation, including procurement process and procedures as a result of USDA assistance (Male)	367	0	0%	299	125	42%	249	167	67%	36%	NA	NA	NA
Number of individuals trained in HGSF implementation, including procurement process and procedures as a result of USDA assistance (Female)	64	0	0%	52	76	146%	43	115	267%	138%	NA	NA	NA
Number of local suppliers for HGSF programme contracted	78	0	0%	66	73	111%	55	73	133%	81%	73	81	90%
Number of toolkits distributed as a result of USDA assistance	2,512	0	0%	2,112	1,630	77%	1,776	1352	76%	51%	2,982	7536	40%

Activity	Performance Indicator	Target 19/20	Achievement 19/20	Achievement percentage 19/20	Target 20/21	Achievement 20/21	Achievement percentage 20/21	Target 21/22	Achievement 21/22	Achievement Percentage 21/22	Average Annual Achievement Rate	Achievement to date	EOC Target	EOC achievement rate
3. Technical assistance to producers and suppliers to strengthen HGSF market engagement	Value of annual sales (USD) of farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	+5 percentage points	0		+15 percentage points	0		+20 percentage points	0		0%	0	plus 30 percentage points	0
	Volume of commodities sold by farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	+5 percentage points	0		+15 percentage points	0		+20 percentage points	0		0%	0	plus 30 percentage points	0
	Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance	150	0	0%	300	0	0%	600	0	0%	0%	0	900	0%
	Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance (Male)	75	0	0%	150	0	0%	300	0	0%	0%	NA	NA	NA
	Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance (Female)	75	-	0%	150	0	0%	300	0	0%	0%	NA	NA	NA
	Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance	100	-	0%	200	0	0%	400	0	0%	0%	0	600	0%

4. Strengthen national institutional capacities and systems	Number of policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance	1-Stage 3	Not measured	NA	1-Stage 5	Not measured	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1 stage 5	NA
	Develop safe food production and handling knowledge transfer tools and approach.	1-Stage 3	Not measured		1-Stage 5	Not measured	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	600	NA
	Value of new USG commitments, and new public and private sector investments leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition	18,471	Not measured	NA	16,098	Not measured	NA	12,693	Not measured	NA	NA	Not measured	57769	NA

4.6. CRITERIA AND PLAN FOR SCHOOL HANDOVER

Background

Since 1999, WFP and the Royal Government of Cambodia have worked together to provide school meals to the most vulnerable schoolchildren in the country, as a tool to promote Cambodia's human capital development. School feeding in Cambodia aims to provide safe and healthy nutrition to Cambodian children to promote social protection, increase access to education services to contribute to the development of local economy, agricultural, and society. In 2022, 280,000 schoolchildren in 1,113 schools in 10 provinces receive school meals every school day.

The home-grown school feeding (HGSF) programme is an important social assistance intervention within the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) (2016-2025) with its implementation being managed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). Schools have been used as the platform to deliver this critical intervention with multisectoral benefits which was first launched as a government funded and managed programme in 2019 in 205 schools with potential to be scaled up, including a plan for gradual handover of schools WFP currently manages. However, when schools closed for most of the last two school years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the timeline for the transition has been delayed. An additional 85 schools were handed over in the school year 2021/2022, bringing the national HGSF programme to a total of 290 schools. Although this effort signals strong commitment from the Government to a national programme, the handover rate is more conservative than anticipated prior to the pandemic.

In 2021, WFP and the MoEYS developed a transition strategy aiming to articulate the handover of all the WFP-supported schools to the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), while building the capacity of the MoEYS to implement, manage and monitor the programme. To align the plans of both WFP and the Government, and as part of the process to finalize the transition strategy, the MoEYS, WFP, NSPC and MEF held a workshop at the beginning of February. The objective was to agree on a process to identify schools that should be handed over. The participants agreed that schools would be handed over to the Government only once they have achieved an appropriate readiness. The process would be a 3 staged approach: (1) define criteria to evaluate readiness, (2) assess the current readiness of schools following these criteria and (3) agree on a handover plan.

Step 1 – Define relevant criteria

WFP and the MoEYS have discussed key considerations for the readiness of schools to be handed over to the Government. 3 main criteria have been considered essential for the successful transition of schools:

1. The **capacity** of implementers. This criterion refers to the experience and knowledge of stakeholders (school directors, suppliers, commune council, cooks, storekeepers, school management committee members) to run the HGSF programme according to the national guidelines. The capacity of implementers is built through trainings, mentoring and coaching, and experience running the programme.
2. The **infrastructure**. This criterion refers to the necessary infrastructure required at school level to safely prepare meals for children and ensure adequate hygiene practices are adopted. It refers to water systems, kitchens (with fuel-efficient stoves), storerooms and hand-washing stations.
3. The **equipment**. Each school would be equipped with the necessary items for the safe preparation of meals, including cool boxes, scales, and a set of kitchen utensils.

Step 2 – Assess and rank schools' readiness for handover

Based on these 3 criteria, the MoEYS and WFP developed a scoring system to prioritize districts according to the readiness of schools. Each of the 823 schools receiving support from WFP received a score, which was then averaged by district. The data was retrieved from a school assessment conducted in 2019 and completed with data from WFP's tracking of trainings, infrastructure and equipment distributed to schools between 2019 and 2022. Every year, a self-assessment will be conducted to review the readiness of schools to be handed over and a process will be set up between WFP and the MoEYS to agree on actions to be taken.

Step 3 – Agree on a handover plan

A handover plan has been developed and is presented in the map below. It considers the above criteria for readiness, but also prioritizes commitments to donors to handover schools (USDA). Districts with an average score

of >75 will be considered ready. In parallel, WFP will invest in districts that are not yet ready with a focus on capacity strengthening, infrastructure building, and providing equipment. For ease of programme management, all schools in a district are handed over at the same time.

It is important to note that WFP will continue to provide technical assistance even after schools have been handed over. A technical assistance roadmap will clarify the areas in which WFP can support the MoEYS programme.

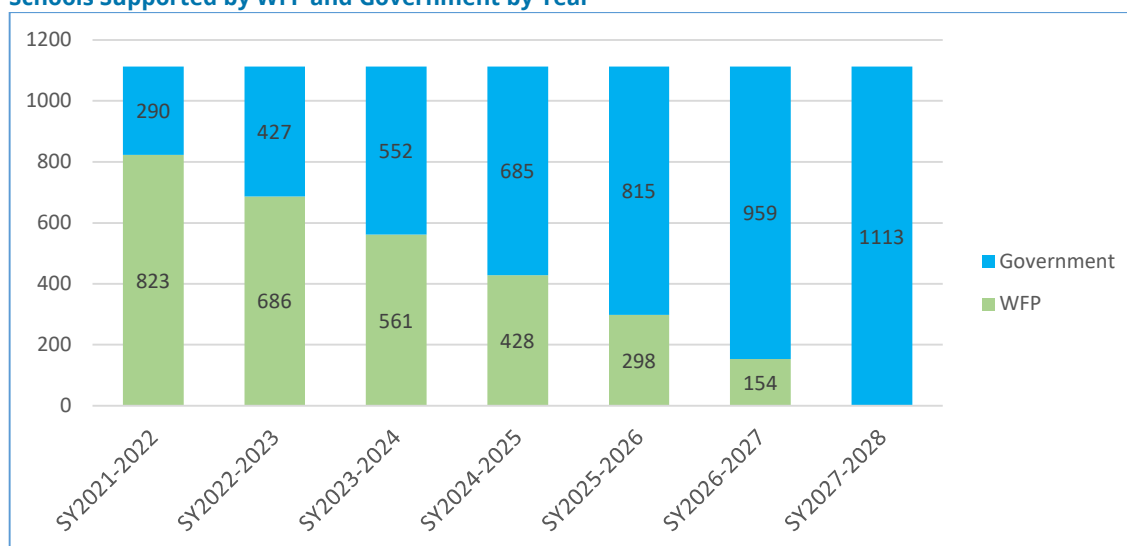
As WFP is a voluntarily funded organization, WFP is unable to commit on long-term funding to support the handover plan. WFP is nonetheless committed to undertake all reasonable efforts to raise the resources to continue supporting school feeding according to the handover plan.

Summary of School Handover Plan by Year

Summary hand over to the Government	Up to SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	SY 25-26	SY 26-27	SY 27-28	Total
Number of districts	18	4	4	6	3	6	5	46
Number of schools	290	137	125	133	130	144	154	1,113
Number of children	72,678	33,507	30,240	31,483	38,357	34,355	38,573	279,193

Source: Criteria and Plan for Handover of WFP Supported School Meals to the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme.

Schools Supported by WFP and Government by Year



Source: Criteria and Plan for Handover of WFP Supported School Meals to the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme.

School Scoring System

Dimension	Description	Scoring
	Average Capacity, Infrastructure, and Equipment to implement School Feeding Programme	
Capacity	The capacity strengthening focuses on experience and knowledge of HGSF programme.	
	School with more than 3 years' experience with HGSF programme and received 4 core training courses	100
	School with more than 2-year experience with HGSF programme and received 3 core training courses	75-99
	School with a year experience with HGSF programme and received 2 core training courses	50-74
	School with experience with traditional SMP programme and received 1 core training course	25-49

	School without experience with any programme and not receive training course	0-24
Infrastructure	The infrastructure is the average of water system, hand washing station, fuel efficient stove, kitchen, and storeroom.	100
	Water system: school with available water source	100
	Water system: school with not available water source	0
	Hand washing station using ratio "Total students divided by # of hand washing station": < 50 students per hand washing station	100
	Hand washing station using ratio "Total students divided by # of hand washing station": 51 to 75 students per hand washing station	50
	Hand washing station using ratio "Total students divided by # of hand washing station": 76 to 100 students per hand washing station	25
	Hand washing station using ratio "Total students divided by # of hand washing station": > 100 students per hand washing station or no hand washing station	0
	Fuel-efficient stove: Have fuel-efficient stove available in school	100
	Fuel-efficient stove: Have not fuel-efficient stove available in school	0
	Kitchen: Build by WFP fund and the rest based on type of materials used to build the kitchen based on school assessment	100
	Kitchen: Build by Community fund and the rest some type of materials used to build the kitchen based on school assessment	50
	Kitchen: Have not kitchen building available in school	0
	Storeroom: Have storeroom available in school	100
	Storeroom: Have not storeroom available in school	0
	5 extra score for school with eating hall	
	Equipment	The equipment refers to kitchen utensils and other materials used in the school kitchen.
school received full 14 items of kitchen utensils from WFP fund		90
school received scale from WFP fund		5
school received cool box from WFP fund		5
school received food tray from WFP fund		5 extra
For schools not received kitchen utensils from WFP fund, but reported under school assessment in 2019, the new scoring is provided as follows:		□ 75
school with the report of having kitchen utensils for food preparation "Yes"		40
school with the report of having kitchen utensils for food distribution "Yes"		40
school with the report of having kitchen utensils for food preparation "There's some, but manageable"		20
school with the report of having kitchen utensils for food distribution "There's some, but manageable"		20
school with the report of having kitchen utensils for food preparation "No"		0
school with the report of having kitchen utensils for food distribution "No"		0
school received scale from WFP fund		5
school received cool box from WFP fund	5	
school received food tray from WFP fund	5 extra	

Source: Criteria and Plan for Handover of WFP Supported School Meals to the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme.

Annex 5: Evaluation Matrix

To guide the complete evaluation process (baseline, midterm and endline evaluations), the Evaluation Matrix elaborates key questions within the six OECD-DAC criteria. **This midline evaluation is based on the revised evaluation questions which emphasize the dimensions of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability.** The emphasis is on analysing what steps and systems have been established to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and progress towards handover and transition under sustainability. The reliability and validity of data will be assessed through triangulation (source, method, and investigator).

The TOR addendum includes two additional general evaluation questions which are summative in nature based on the findings from the OECD-DAC criteria questions:

- Based on available evidence to what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue beyond WFP's intervention for the targeted beneficiaries?
- What are recommendations for mid-course corrections to improve the programme's relevance, effectiveness, and/or sustainability?

The first question is a summation of the set of questions found in the sustainability section. The second general question is a request for recommendations based on the findings described through the matrix.

Regarding data quality and availability, programme documentation and policies are available for design although fewer documents are available for tracking subsequent COVID-19 pandemic adjustments. Data from semi-annual reports including indicator tracking and targets are available for results framework indicators although important considerations, such as gender empowerment or livelihood changes through local economic production which are not in the results framework are not able to be captured to the same extent. Information sources relying on government information systems are less reliable for tracking outcomes and activity accomplishments.

Sub Question	Measure/Indicator	Main Sources of information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods
1.0 RELEVANCE: to determine if the LRP objectives and design respond to the needs of stakeholders and institutions.				
1.1: To what extent were the programme adjustments, including the design of the repurposed activities, appropriate in reaching the relevant beneficiaries with the right assistance and quality at the right time?	<p>Extent to which LRP addresses identified needs of target populations (e.g., local schools feeding committee smallholders and suppliers, gender specific needs).</p> <p>The LRP programme adjustments were designed based on context analysis, and needs assessment</p> <p>Gender analysis report for pandemic adjustments available</p> <p>Evidence of gender perspective in programme documents</p> <p>Guidelines and criteria used in bidding and tendering processes.</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,</p> <p>WFP monitoring and records (e.g. Complaints feedback mechanisms.)</p> <p>Records in sample school sites, and with LSFC suppliers, farmer groups, commune officials, Government offices.</p> <p>WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners</p>	<p>Desk review In-depth interviews</p> <p>Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews</p> <p>Quantitative analysis of existing WFP monitoring data</p>

Sub Question	Measure/Indicator	Main Sources of information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods
1.0 RELEVANCE: to determine if the LRP objectives and design respond to the needs of stakeholders and institutions.				
1.2: To which extent were the re-purposed activities designed and effective in complementing the Government's alternative learning mechanisms (ex. remote learning)?	<p>Extent to which LRP programme adjustments identified Government's alternative learning mechanisms in justification.</p> <p>Stakeholder perceptions regarding complementarity of repurposed activities to Government measures.</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports, annual and semi-annual reports, monitoring, and records (e.g. Complaints feedback mechanisms.)</p> <p>Staff of WFP CO, MOEYS, DOEYS, and cooperating partners.</p> <p>Records in sample school sites, and with LSFC suppliers, farmer groups, commune officials, Government offices.</p>	<p>Desk review In-depth interviews</p> <p>Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews</p> <p>Quantitative analysis of existing WFP monitoring data</p>
1.3: To what extent has the design of capacity strengthening activities met the needs and priorities of the Government?	<p>Extent to which LRP programme adjustments identified Government's needs and priorities for capacity strengthening in justification.</p> <p>Stakeholder perceptions regarding relevance of capacity strengthening activities for meeting Government priorities.</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,</p>	<p>Desk review In-depth interviews with WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews</p>
1.4. How relevant are the activities designed as the Programme's Foundational Results in achieving the programmes' Strategic Objectives?	<p>Extent to which LRP programme adjustment activities and output achievements can be linked to commensurate results in results framework.</p> <p>Stakeholder perceptions regarding relevance of activities for contribution to results and/or gaps in framework for achieving Strategic Objectives.</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports, annual and semi-annual reports, monitoring, and records (e.g. Complaints feedback mechanisms.)</p> <p>Staff of WFP CO, MOEYS, DOEYS, and cooperating partners.</p> <p>Records in sample school sites, and with LSFC suppliers, farmer groups, commune officials, Government offices.</p>	<p>Desk review In-depth interviews</p> <p>Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews</p> <p>Quantitative analysis of existing WFP monitoring data</p>

2.0 EFFECTIVENESS: to determine if LRP activities are likely to achieve objectives and results, including possible differences across groups or institutions

<p>2.1. To what extent has progress been made towards the achievement of results and targets despite COVID-19?²¹⁹</p>	<p>Achievements by activities, indicators, and results (as appropriate, disaggregated by gender, geography, and strategic outcome, among others). Number and percentage of indicators meeting targets. (as appropriate, disaggregated by gender, geography, and strategic outcome, among others). Documentation evidence cites the extent to which implementation adjustments led to unexpected positive results. Stakeholder perceptions regarding programme results as having been achieved and contributing to overall strategic objectives Stakeholders are able to identify unintended positive outcomes from programme interventions or unintended outcomes are included in programme documentation.</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports, annual and semi-annual reports, monitoring, and records (e.g. Complaints feedback mechanisms.) Staff of WFP CO, MOEYS, DOEYS, and cooperating partners. Records in sample school sites, and with LSFC suppliers, farmer groups, commune officials, Government offices.</p>	<p>Desk review In-depth interviews Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews Quantitative analysis of existing WFP monitoring data</p>
<p>2.2a. <Factors affecting results> How has the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influenced the ability of the programme to meet expected results and targets by agreed timeline?</p>	<p>Implementing partners are able to identify a range of factors from the pandemic influencing results and can cite mitigation measures taken to improve achievements. Evidence from documentation citing Political, economic, and security factors from the pandemic affecting implementation and describing mitigation measures taken. Evidence of analysis of Government and local institutions in the targeted geographical areas for identifying factors brought about by the pandemic influencing results.</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports, annual and semi-annual reports, monitoring, and records (e.g. Complaints feedback mechanisms.) Staff of WFP CO, MOEYS, DOEYS, and cooperating partners. Records in sample school sites, and with LSFC suppliers, farmer groups, commune officials, Government offices. WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners</p>	<p>Desk review In-depth interviews Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews Quantitative analysis of existing WFP monitoring data</p>

²¹⁹ Only indicators with available data will be reviewed per adjusted TOR addendum.

2.0 EFFECTIVENESS: to determine if LRP activities are likely to achieve objectives and results, including possible differences across groups or institutions				
2.2b. What are the recommendations and strategic action points based on this analysis?	<p>Stakeholders can cite potential mitigation measures for implementation</p> <p>Stakeholders can identify gaps for continued focus in future programming</p> <p>Government and programme documentation reflect lessons learned and identify recommendations for future actions.</p>	WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews
2.3. <Factors affecting results> What were the major internal factors that have influenced the progress of the programme by the time of the midterm evaluation?	<p>WFP staff are able to identify a range of internal factors influencing results and can cite mitigation measures taken to improve results achieved</p> <p>Evidence in documentation of appropriateness of staff numbers and skill sets compared to intended results to be achieved.</p> <p>Evidence in documentation of CO capacity for managing and ensuring quality of implementation through Implementing partners – such as quality control mechanisms, monitoring reports, and quality data sets.</p>	WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews

3.0 SUSTAINABILITY: to determine if LRP programme results, benefits, and outcomes are likely to continue after the programme concludes				
3.1 To what extent progress has been made against the overall handover process against the programme plan and handover plan/strategy agreed with and endorsed by the Government?	<p>Programme documents include handover strategy with updates for progress against expected results.</p> <p>Stakeholders can articulate the agreed upon handover plan and strategy and identify points of completion.</p> <p>Stakeholder perceptions regarding overall handover progress and identify gaps in handover plan to be addressed in updated strategy with Government.</p>	WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews

3.0 SUSTAINABILITY: to determine if LRP programme results, benefits, and outcomes are likely to continue after the programme concludes (continued)				
3.2 To what extent were the LRP implementation arrangements include considerations for sustainability (handover to the Government) at national and local levels, communities, and other partners for all programme components agreed with and endorsed by the Government and national stakeholders?	<p>Existence of an exit strategy outlining the timing, allocation of responsibilities on handover to the Government and/or other agencies articulated in LRP implementation arrangements.</p> <p>Stakeholders can identify sustainability consideration in national and sub-national implementation components.</p>	WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,	Desk review Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.	Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews
<p>3.3²²⁰ To what extent progress has been made towards institutionalization of the measures planned as part of the technical assistance to the Government that is expected to support the sustainability of the intervention (including policy work, support to systems, institutional capacity etc)?</p> <p>3.4 What progress has been made since the programme design stage (through strategic engagement, advocacy and other efforts with Government and relevant stakeholders) in supporting financial sustainability of the LRP beyond WFP's intervention to the extent it can be evaluated by the midterm evaluation (national budget for LRP and other funding sources)?</p>	<p>Evidence exists from documentation citing technical capacity achievements according to Capacity Strengthening Framework progress milestones</p> <p>WFP, Government, and other key stakeholders' consensus perceptions regarding WFP contribution to strengthened Government capacity</p> <p>Evidence exists from documentation citing political will and ownership considerations compared against Capacity Strengthening Framework</p> <p>Existence of a LRP line in the MOEYS budget</p> <p>Number of sustainable delivery models taken over by Government</p>	WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,	Desk review Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.	Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews

²²⁰ EQ3.3 and EQ3.4 are combined into single row because these are both related to national level systems for sustainability as per the country capacity strengthening framework.

3.0 SUSTAINABILITY: to determine if LRP programme results, benefits, and outcomes are likely to continue after the programme concludes (continued)

<p>3.5 To what extent has LRP been successful in engaging Government and local communities (PTAs, farmers groups, etc) towards school feeding and education activities? Has the role of the communities and local stakeholders been institutionalized (as the Government policy, strategy and/or systems levels)?</p>	<p>Evidence in documentation of effects on sub-national Government capacity through capacity strengthening approach including: PTAs, farmers, suppliers, and local communities. – disaggregated by capacity dimension (individual, institutional, and enabling environment)</p> <p>Number and type of initiatives taken by local stakeholders at large to support LRP activities</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports, MOEYS statistics (for LRP)</p>	<p>Desk review Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	<p>Quantitative analysis of existing WFP monitoring data</p> <p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews</p>	
<p>3.6 Based on available evidence to what extent are the benefits of the LRP program likely to continue beyond WFP's intervention for the targeted beneficiaries?</p>	<p>WFP, Government, and other key stakeholders' consensus perceptions regarding Government ownership, technical capacity, political will, resourcing, and integration into policy frameworks.</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,</p>	<p>Desk review Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews</p>	
<p>3.7 What were the major factors and/or programme interventions that have both positively and negatively influenced the transition process?²²¹</p>	<p>WFP, Government, and other key stakeholders can identify factors affecting transition processes – both positively and negatively.</p> <p>Programme documentation outlines factors affecting results for transition including lessons learned and recommendations.</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,</p>	<p>Desk review Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews</p>	

²²¹ This question overlaps with EQ 2.2 and 2.3. The differentiation will be that 2.2 and 2.3 focus on factors affecting WFP implementation while 3.6 will focus on factors influencing policy, resourcing, ownership, political will, and national technical capacity.

3.0 SUSTAINABILITY: to determine if LRP programme results, benefits, and outcomes are likely to continue after the programme concludes (continued)

<p>3.8 What are the likely and potential implications of a complete phase out of WFP's interventions implemented with USDA's funding to the National LRP Programme?</p>	<p>WFP, Government, and other key stakeholders can identify implications of phase out affecting transition processes – both positively and negatively.</p> <p>Programme documentation outlines implications of phase out for affecting results for transition including lessons learned and recommendations.</p>	<p>WFP Reports, including assessment reports WFP CO, MOEYS and cooperating partners, annual and semi-annual reports,</p>	<p>Desk review Key informant interviews with WFP CO and MOEYS staff, DOEYS staff, cooperating partners, school personnel, local authorities, suppliers, smallholder farmers and their groups.</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis – secondary document review triangulated with key informant interviews</p>
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Annex 6: Data collection Tools

These guides are designed to be a “semi-structured” interview guide. A semi-structured interview guide is one that is intended to provide guidance to a conversation, but it is not intended to be read word for word nor followed exactly such as a fixed-response questionnaire.

A single guide has been developed which is to be tailored to each stakeholder group. All notes are recorded in a response matrix and all responses for a particular evaluation matrix theme will be analysed in combination at the end of the field phase to determine emergent themes and patterns across the responses.

In Semi-Structured guides, the interviewer has the discretion to re-phrase the questions to make them appropriate for their audiences. The interviewer can also omit questions if they are not relevant to the group or if they do not seem to be generating good data and responses. Semi-structured interview guides should be seen as general skeletons, but it is up to the interviewer to provide the “meat” to the conversation. A normal semi-structured guide is organized as follows:

- General, open-ended, questions that allow respondents to answer in whatever form comes to their mind first.
 - It is important to note what people say first and to allow them to express themselves in their own words.
- Underneath each open-ended question is a series of short checklists called “probes.”
 - These are not to be read as part of the question. Probes are intended to serve to remind the facilitator about items they may wish to inquire about more deeply as follow up.
 - It is important to elicit concrete examples or instances from respondents as much as possible to be able to later illustrate themes identified in the evaluation report.

Depending on the stakeholder and its knowledge/degree of engagement with the SMP, the interviewer should foresee about 1 hour on average for each KII interview.

The interviewer should introduce itself and clarify the purpose of the evaluation, as well as the confidentiality of the interview (i.e., when quoting KIs, attribution will be made to categories of stakeholders, not individuals or organizations)

Sampling Criteria: The selection will depend on purposive sampling for the qualitative interviews and will focus on those key partners within agencies, ministries, and organizations most closely connected to WFP as indicated by the stakeholder analysis. Criteria for selecting individuals within each organization and entity include:

- Information richness (are the respondents sufficiently familiar with the activities to provide insights?),
- Accessibility (can the stakeholders be accessed by the evaluation team?),
- Gender (does the mix of stakeholders represent gender diversity?)
- Diversity (Does the mix of stakeholders represent of the diversity of national and sub-national stakeholders?).

Based on these criteria, during the baseline study, a sample of Government stakeholders were identified at the national level, plus additional WFP stakeholders at National and Regional levels and stakeholders representing multi-lateral and regional entities, as well as stakeholders at sub-national level. The midline replicated the same interviews and school visits to understand changes over time since the baseline.

Introduction (to be read at the beginning of each interview): We are members of an evaluation team commissioned by WFP to conduct a midline review of WFP’s support to the Local and Regional Procurement to support school meals.

The Evaluation: The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the progress, results, lessons learned, and recommendations for future improvement of WFP’s support through this program for the Royal Government of Cambodia. We are asking you to participate in the evaluation because you are in a position to contribute a relevant and valuable perspective on the functioning of this program so far. If you decide to participate, the interview may last an hour.

Participation is voluntary: Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You can withdraw from the interview after it has begun, for any reason, with no penalty.

Risks and benefits: This evaluation is designed to help improve future WFP programming in Cambodia by learning from the perspectives of everyone involved. None of your feedback will bear any negative consequences for future support from WFP, for your district, your community or yourself.

Confidentiality: The reports from this and the other meetings will collect and summarize the views and opinions of participants without connecting them to specific individuals and without using names at any time. Any report of this research will be presented in a way that makes it as difficult as possible for anyone to determine the identity of individuals participating in the evaluation.

If you have any questions, now or at any time in the future, you may call <insert agreed upon phone number of complaints mechanism>

Are you willing to be part of this interview? (Verbal response only requested)

A sample introduction for interviews at subnational level is provided below:

My name is _____. I am a researcher contracted to support a company – KonTerra – that is conducting a midline study of the work that WFP has done supporting the Royal Government of Cambodia in its Local and Regional procurement for the School Meals Programme. We are talking with a number of people from different levels who are connected to the LRP to understand how the LRP is implemented. We will then analyse the information provided by all respondents.

We would like to collect your thoughts on this work which has supported <your school/the schools in your District/Province>. Your experience is very valuable, and your feedback will help WFP and the Royal Government of Cambodia to improve their support to Schools in the future. WFP very much welcomes negative feedback as it will help the organization improve its support. And none of your feedback will bear any negative consequences for future support from WFP, for your district, your community or yourself.

If you agree to participate, at any moment you can stop participating without any penalty. The interview will last about 1-2 hours. Your participation is voluntary, you can refuse to join, or you can withdraw after it has begun with no penalty. Your participation in this discussion or not will not affect the benefits to the school, District, Province or elsewhere.

We will keep your inputs anonymous. Your inputs will be kept absolutely confidential.

This evaluation is designed to help improve the LRP component in the School Meals Programme programming by gathering opinions from everyone involved. You or your <school/community/District/Province> may not necessarily benefit personally from being in this discussion. If there are any problems with the way the facilitator has conducted the discussion, any problems should be reported to

If you have any questions, now or at any time in the future, you may call <insert agreed upon phone number of complaints mechanism>

Are you willing to be part of this interview? (Verbal response only requested)

Interviewers should take care to note the date, time, location/institution, name, gender and position of the respondent, their contact information, and the identification of the interviewer for each interview.

National Stakeholders (WFP, Government, UN, Donors)

OPENING AND ROLE
First of all, what is your relationship to, or the way you are connected to the LRP? What is your role? How long have you been involved?
GENERAL EFFECTS
1. Results: Thinking back to 2020 (or when you first became involved in this role) when this phase of the LRP began, what do you see have been the major changes as a result of the LRP programme activities? (Focus on any or all that are applicable to the stakeholder interviewed) a. Can you give an example of specific achievements?
2. Successes: What, if anything, do you see as having been the most successful actions? Which have been the main shifts or outcomes in the LRP from WFP support? (Focus on any or all that are applicable to the stakeholder interviewed)
3. Challenges: What, if anything, have been some of the biggest challenges facing the LRP programme towards successful implementation, empowerment of women, and successful handover to Government? a. How were these overcome? b. Which challenges still remain?
4. Capacity Strengthening: What are your perceptions regarding how the capacity strengthening efforts at the national level and sub-national levels have gone? How effective , has the WFP LRP activities been in creating national and sub-national capacity among the Government stakeholders? What are some barriers to capacity strengthening? (Focus on the dimensions that are applicable to the stakeholder interviewed)
5. In your experience, what would be WFP's comparative advantage in the context? a. What is the added value of WFP interventions in the LRP?
6. In your experience, how has the LRP been able to adapt to changing contexts and emergent needs? What have been some of the bottlenecks for adaptation and flexibility? a. How have you seen gender considerations mainstreamed into the LRP (farmer groups, committees, etc)?
7. In your opinion, what is the quality of the partnerships of WFP with implementing partners regarding the LRP activities? Partnership with the Government? (ask for examples, evidence of meetings, agreements etc)?
8. How do you see the cooperation on information sharing between the Government and WFP?
9. In your experience, what have been some of the unintended effects of the LRP programming approach during this cycle?
10. In your experience, how do you see the funding situation? Is the LRP programme funded? Are there gaps?
11. In your experience, what efforts have been made towards the handover process of the LRP with the Government? Where do you see bottlenecks for handover yet?
12. In your experience, have been some of the biggest challenges and programme adjustments made in response to the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic ?
13. In your experience, what do you foresee as being some of the challenges to sustainability of the Government implementation of the LRP component moving forward?
RELEVANCE
14. To what degree have you seen the national and local Government authorities involved in the LRP?
15. How does the LRP align with key Government policies and strategies? a. Relationship to other agencies?
16. What LRP programme adjustments and the design of the re-purposed activities appropriate and relevant for continued LRP implementation during the pandemic? a. Available evidence integrated into the adjustments? b. Complementing Government's alternative learning mechanisms? c. Relevant to the SMP foundation results and SMP strategic objectives?
17. To what extent have the capacity strengthening activities that were implemented met the needs and priorities of the Government for the LRP (national and sub-national levels)?
EFFECTIVENESS (ask only if not already covered in general questions)
18. What is your experience, on with the tender, registration, and bidding process for the LRP? How has it worked for the suppliers who applied?

19. To what degree are the operational, human, and financial resources in the programme been sufficient to ensure adequate implementation of the activities in the context?
20. What are some gaps or challenges that have come through the monitoring and complaints system?
21. In your opinion, to what extent has progress been made towards the achievement of results of transition to the LRP despite the COVID-19 pandemic?
22. How have you seen the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influencing the ability of the programme to meet expected results and targets?
23. What are major internal factors within WFP that have influenced the progress of the LRP by the midline?
SUSTAINABILITY
24. In what way have the programme interventions contributed to ensure the sustainability of the LRP? What is missing yet? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Alignment with Government priorities b. Resource availability c. Technical capacity development (individual, institutional, enabling environment) d. Policy environment e. Political will and ownership (Government) f. Others
25. Cascade: In what way have the programme interventions contributed to ensure the sustainability of the LRP at the sub-national levels? What is missing yet? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. District authorities and directorates b. Commune level stakeholders c. School stakeholders (Parents, Local PTAs, teachers, directors) d. Farmer groups
26. Exit and Transition: To what extent has progress been made against the overall handover process of the LRP based on the agreed upon handover strategy endorsed with Government?
27. What were the main factors that have both positively and negatively influenced the transition process for the LRP?
28. What are the potential implications of a complete phase out of WFP's interventions in the LRP after this cycle? Can the gains be sustained?
RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED
29. In your opinion, what would you suggest for mid-course corrections to improve the LRP for the remainder of the cycle? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adjustments based on COVID-19 impacts to meet targets and results b. Sustainability and transition factors and gaps c. Key bottlenecks for transition and handover

Sub-National Stakeholders (Provincial, District and Commune Levels)

Prior to the school visits, in each province it will be necessary to request one meeting with the Province Education administration, as well as with the District Education Office(s) relevant to the schools to visit. The meetings can provide opportunities to explore: the role of the Province and District administrations within the SMP, partnerships, achievements of programme results, recommendations and lessons learned.

Interviews should focus on the interview guide sections related to general effects and sustainability/transitions and wrap up with recommendations. If time permits, other details can be integrated as well.

OPENING AND ROLE
<p>First of all, what is your relationship to, or the way you are connected to, this LRP? What is your role? How long have you been involved?</p> <p>Can you tell us more about the role of the Provincial/District Education Office in the LRP? Are other Government institutions involved as well?</p>
GENERAL EFFECTS
<p>1. Results: Thinking back to 2020 (or when you first became involved in this role) when this LRP with WFP began, what do you see have been the major changes as a result of the LRP programme activities? (Focus on any or all that are applicable to the stakeholder interviewed)</p> <p>a. Can you give an example of specific achievements?</p>
<p>2. Successes: What, if anything, do you see as having been the most successful actions? Which have been the main shifts or outcomes in the LRP from WFP support? (Focus on any or all that are applicable to the stakeholder interviewed)</p>
<p>3. Challenges: What, if anything, have been some of the biggest challenges facing the LRP programme towards successful implementation, empowerment of women, and successful handover to Government?</p> <p>a. How were these overcome?</p> <p>b. Which challenges still remain?</p>
<p>4. Capacity Strengthening: What are your perceptions regarding how the capacity strengthening efforts at the national level and sub-national levels have gone? How effective, has the WFP LRP activities been in creating capacity among the Government stakeholders? What are some barriers to capacity strengthening? (Focus on the dimensions that are applicable to the stakeholder interviewed)</p>
<p>5. In your experience, what would be WFP's comparative advantage in the context?</p> <p>a. What is the added value of WFP interventions in the LRP?</p>
<p>6. In your experience, how has the LRP been able to adapt to changing contexts and emergent needs? What have been some of the bottlenecks for adaptation and flexibility?</p> <p>a. How have you seen gender considerations mainstreamed into the SMP?</p>
<p>7. In your opinion, what is the quality of the partnerships of WFP with implementing partners regarding the LRP activities? Partnership with the Government? (ask for examples, evidence of meetings, agreements etc)?</p>
<p>8. How do you see the cooperation on information sharing between the Government and WFP?</p>
<p>9. In your experience, what have been some of the unintended effects of the LRP programming approach during this cycle?</p>
<p>10. In your experience, how do you see the funding situation for the LRP? Is the entire programme funded? Are there gaps?</p>
<p>11. In your experience, what efforts have been made towards the handover process of the LRP with the Government? Where do you see bottlenecks for handover yet?</p>
<p>12. In your experience, what have been some of the biggest challenges and programme adjustments made in response to the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>
<p>13. In your experience, what do you foresee as being some of the challenges to sustainability of the LRP component moving forward?</p>
RELEVANCE
<p>14. To what degree have you seen the programme adjustments and the design of the re-purposed activities appropriate and relevant for continued LRP implementation during the pandemic?</p> <p>a. Available evidence integrated into the adjustments?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Complementing Government’s alternative learning mechanisms? c. Relevant to the LRP foundation results and SMP strategic objectives?
15. To what extent have the capacity strengthening activities that were implemented met the needs and priorities of the Government for the LRP?
EFFECTIVENESS (District stakeholders only)
16. How many primary schools are in the District? How many participate in the LRP? When did the LRP first come to the District?
17. How would you describe the overall goal of the LRP? What does the LRP do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are the benefits of the LRP?
18. Is there a body/system at District level where stakeholders come together to discuss education issues? Are LRP issues covered there?
19. How have you seen the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influencing the ability of the programme to meet expected results and targets within the LRP?
MONITORING AND REPORTING
20. Did you receive any training on LRP monitoring and reporting? When and what was covered?
21. If you participate in the reporting on LRP, what types of reporting do you do for LRP? (topics, rates of submission, who it is sent to, etc)
22. What are the main challenges or gaps you experience for monitoring and reporting on LRP?
23. How has the monitoring and complaints mechanism information been used , if at all, to address programme implementation bottlenecks or improve performance of delivery of activities? What might be improved?
SUSTAINABILITY
24. What are the potential implications of a complete phase out of WFP’s interventions in the LRP after this cycle? Can the gains be sustained?
RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED
25. In your opinion, what would you suggest for mid-course corrections to improve the LRP for the remainder of the cycle? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adjustments based on COVID-19 impacts to meet targets and results b. Sustainability and transition factors and gaps c. Key bottlenecks for transition and handover

(Group) Interviews Guides at the schools

Group Interviews to be conducted with parents who are actively involved in the LRP.

Interviews with members of the school feeding programme committee members

The guide below presents a set of questions that could be asked at school level during focus group discussions or group interviews with representatives of the school feeding committee members. Based on the SABER approach and although covering a broader scope, these questions will serve the main purpose of assessing the community participation and ownership in schools where the LRP is implemented.

To prevent bias, it will be made clear since the beginning that the principal and teachers do not attend the meeting with parents. The interview format will follow a standard introduction of the team and explanation of the evaluation purpose. The team's independence, neutrality and confidentiality of responses will be noted, as well as the approximate time (40-50 minutes) of the meeting/interview.

OPENING AND ROLE
First of all, what is your relationship to, or the way you are connected to, this LRP? What is your role? How long have you been involved? When did LRP activities start in the school?
GENERAL EFFECTS
1. In your own words, what do you know about the WFP LRP programme? What do you see they are hoping to achieve?
2. To what extent have you been involved in deciding which commodities are provided? What types of criteria used?
3. How many suppliers did your school utilize for LRP provision during the past year?
4. What types of problems did you have with any of the tenders?
5. What kinds of activities do LSFC members do each day related to LRP? Please describe a typical day/week/month
6. Timing of tender process, delivery, - when do these processes occur, how frequently?
7. According to you, what do you see as the main benefits of the LRP?
8. Is there a need for improvement of the LRP? What would you suggest?
9. What types of adjustments have you seen to take into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic? Were these adjustments useful? Relevant?
RELEVANCE
10. To what degree have you seen the programme adjustments and the design of the re-purposed activities appropriate and relevant for continued LRP implementation during the pandemic? <ol style="list-style-type: none">Available evidence integrated into the adjustments?Complementing Government's alternative learning mechanisms?Relevant to the SMP foundation results and SMP strategic objectives?
EFFECTIVENESS
11. What have been the best aspects of purchasing through tender within the LRP? What have been some challenges?
12. How transparent and well understood do you see the current procurement process?
13. How is your experience with the timeliness of the local procurement?
14. In what ways do you see that the procurement process could be improved?
15. Approximately how many traders did you use to purchase and deliver the local food commodities and what was the approximate volume/value of the commodities procured for the school meals?
16. What other costs did the school have related to school meals? (transportation, storage, unloading, etc).
17. How have you seen the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influencing the ability of the LRP programme to meet expected results and targets?
18. Was your school able to provide meals every day during the most recent academic year? If no, what were the factors that prevented this?
19. When did the school start providing school meals this academic year? Was there a delay and if yes, why?
MONITORING AND REPORTING
20. Did you receive an LRP training? When and what was covered?
21. Did any of the school local procurement PTA members receive LRP training? When and what was covered?
22. If you participate in the reporting on LRP, what types of reporting do you do for LRP? (topics, rates of submission, who it is sent to, etc)
23. What are the main challenges or gaps you experience for monitoring and reporting on LRP?

24. How has the monitoring and complaints mechanism information been used , if at all, to address programme implementation bottlenecks or improve performance of delivery of activities within the LRP? What might be improved?
SUSTAINABILITY
25. What are the potential implications of a complete phase out of WFP's interventions in the LRP support after this cycle? Can the gains and process be sustained?
RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED
26. In your opinion, what would you suggest for mid-course corrections to improve the LRP for the remainder of the cycle?

Suppliers and traders

The guide below presents a set of questions that could be asked at group interviews with representatives of suppliers, traders, and farmers. Based on the SABER approach and although covering a broader scope, these questions will serve the main purpose of assessing the community participation and ownership in schools where the LRP is implemented.

To prevent bias, it will be made clear since the beginning that the evaluation team is independent and will not share their information with District stakeholders, or parents. The interview format will follow a standard introduction of the team and explanation of the evaluation purpose. The team's independence, neutrality and confidentiality of responses will be noted, as well as the approximate time (40-50 minutes) of the meeting/interview.

OPENING AND ROLE
First of all, what is your relationship to, or the way you are connected to, this LRP? What is your role? How long have you been involved? When did LRP activities start in the school? Do you supply to clients outside of your District?
GENERAL EFFECTS
1. In your own words, what do you know about the WFP LRP programme? What do you see they are hoping to achieve?
2. How familiar are you with the tender process?
3. Were you given any guidance on the type of food to be purchased? Or quality?
4. What do you find easiest about the tender process? Did you get any support when entering your bid?
5. What do you find the most difficult?
6. What foods have the school feeding committees most regularly purchased from you?
7. Where are your suppliers and your buyers based?
8. How can WFP better support the use of local food commodities in the schools?
9. What types of changes have there been to your business, practice, or payment procedures as a result of the LRP?
10. Positive impacts?
11. Negative impacts?
12. According to you, what do you see as the main benefits of the LRP?
13. Is there a need for improvement of the LRP? What would you suggest?
14. What types of adjustments have you seen within the LRP to take into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic? Were these adjustments useful? Relevant?
RELEVANCE
15. To what degree have you seen the programme adjustments and the design of the re-purposed activities appropriate and relevant for continued LRP implementation during the pandemic?
EFFECTIVENESS
16. What was the approximate volume/value of the commodities that you procured for the school meals?
17. Is this a major component of your business?
18. How have you seen the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influencing the ability of the LRP programme to meet expected results and targets?
RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED
19. In your opinion, what would you suggest for mid-course corrections to improve the LRP for the remainder of the cycle?

Farmers

The guide below presents a set of questions that could be asked at group interviews with representatives of farmers. Based on the SABER approach and although covering a broader scope, these questions will serve the main purpose of assessing the community participation and ownership in schools where the LRP is implemented.

To prevent bias, it will be made clear since the beginning that the evaluation team is independent and will not share their information. The interview format will follow a standard introduction of the team and explanation of the evaluation purpose. The team's independence, neutrality and confidentiality of responses will be noted, as well as the approximate time (40-50 minutes) of the meeting/interview.

OPENING AND ROLE
First of all, what is your relationship to, or the way you are connected to, this local procurement process for school meals? When did LRP activities start in the school? Do you supply to clients outside of your District?
GENERAL EFFECTS
1. In your own words, what do you know about the WFP LRP programme? What do you see they are hoping to achieve?
2. How familiar are you with the tender process? Have you been involved in the bidding process and if yes, how?
3. Have you ever directly applied for school feeding or other large tenders? Why or why not?
4. What is your relationship with the local supplier?
5. Were you given any guidance on the type of food to be purchased? Or quality?
6. What foods have the supplier most regularly purchased from you? Are these the same types of foods that you yourself would consume?
7. What do you find easiest about the tender process?
8. What do you find the most difficult?
9. How can WFP better support the use of local food commodities in the schools?
10. What types of changes have there been to your farming as a result of the LRP tenders?
11. Positive impacts?
12. Negative impacts?
13. According to you, what do you see as the main benefits of the LRP?
14. Is there a need for improvement of the LRP? What would you suggest?
15. What types of adjustments have you seen within the LRP to take into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic? Were these adjustments useful? Relevant?
RELEVANCE
16. To what degree have you seen the programme adjustments and the design of the re-purposed activities appropriate and relevant for continued LRP implementation during the pandemic?
EFFECTIVENESS
17. Approximately what was the approximate volume/value of the commodities procured for the school meals?
18. What is the seasonality of the commodities you provide to the supplier for the school meals??
19. How have you seen the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent restrictions influencing the ability of the LRP programme to meet expected results and targets?
20. Was your school able to provide meals every day during the most recent academic year? If no, what were the factors that prevented this?
RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED
21. In your opinion, what would you suggest for mid-course corrections to improve the LRP and the tendering process for the remainder of the cycle?

Qualitative Data Analysis for Key Informant Interviews

Research texts typically make a distinction between data collection and analysis. For data collection based on surveys, standardized tests, and experimental designs, the lines are clear. However, the fluid and emergent nature of naturalistic inquiry makes the distinction between data gathering and analysis less absolute. In the course of fieldwork, ideas concerning directions for analysis will emerge. Patterns take shape, and additional themes are identified for further exploration. In general, the earlier stages of fieldwork tend to be generative and emergent while later stages move towards confirmatory data collection – deepening insights into patterns and confirming or disconfirming trends. The data analysis depends on thick description and drawing out multiple voices among the stakeholders.

Raw field notes and transcripts constitute the raw material for developing context analysis. For qualitative analysis, the mechanical work of analysis involves coding the data into discrete thought units and identifying themes and patterns emerging from the collection of thought units. The ET will review their notes and code their notes into discrete units of thoughts.

Individual units of thoughts are then collected into clusters by looking for recurring regularities in the data. These regularities reveal patterns that are labelled as themes. The themes are then examined to develop categories. This process for classifying and coding qualitative data produces a framework for organizing and describing what was collected during the field phase. This descriptive analysis builds a foundation for the interpretive phase when meanings are extracted from the data and comparisons are made with conclusions drawn.

Validity and reliability are addressed through considerations of substantive significance of the conclusions and categories:

- How solid, coherent, and consistent is the evidence in support of this category of findings?
- To what extent or in what ways do the findings in this category increase or deepen understanding of this aspect of the programme?
- To what extent are the findings consistent with other sources of data?
- To what extent are the findings useful?

The evaluation team will work together to ensure consensual validation of the thought units, themes, patterns, categories, and conclusions generated to mitigate against subjectivity bias.

Document Review

The Document Review process is similar to the KII analysis, except that the raw data are the document narratives rather than raw notes or transcripts from interviews. The same processes of identifying discrete thought units, clustering to identify emergent themes, identifying patterns, and building categories for conclusions are followed. In both cases, the conclusions are generated against a review based on the evaluation matrix.

Annex 7: Fieldwork Agenda

The data collection schedule was an in-person field mission conducted from 13 June to 01 July 2022, with the exit briefings on 30 June (internal) and 01 July (external). Field visits to sub-national sites were scheduled for the second full week of the mission. Table 15 provides descriptions of the specific activities each day. The country map shows the approximate locations of evaluation team visits.

Fieldwork Daily Calendar

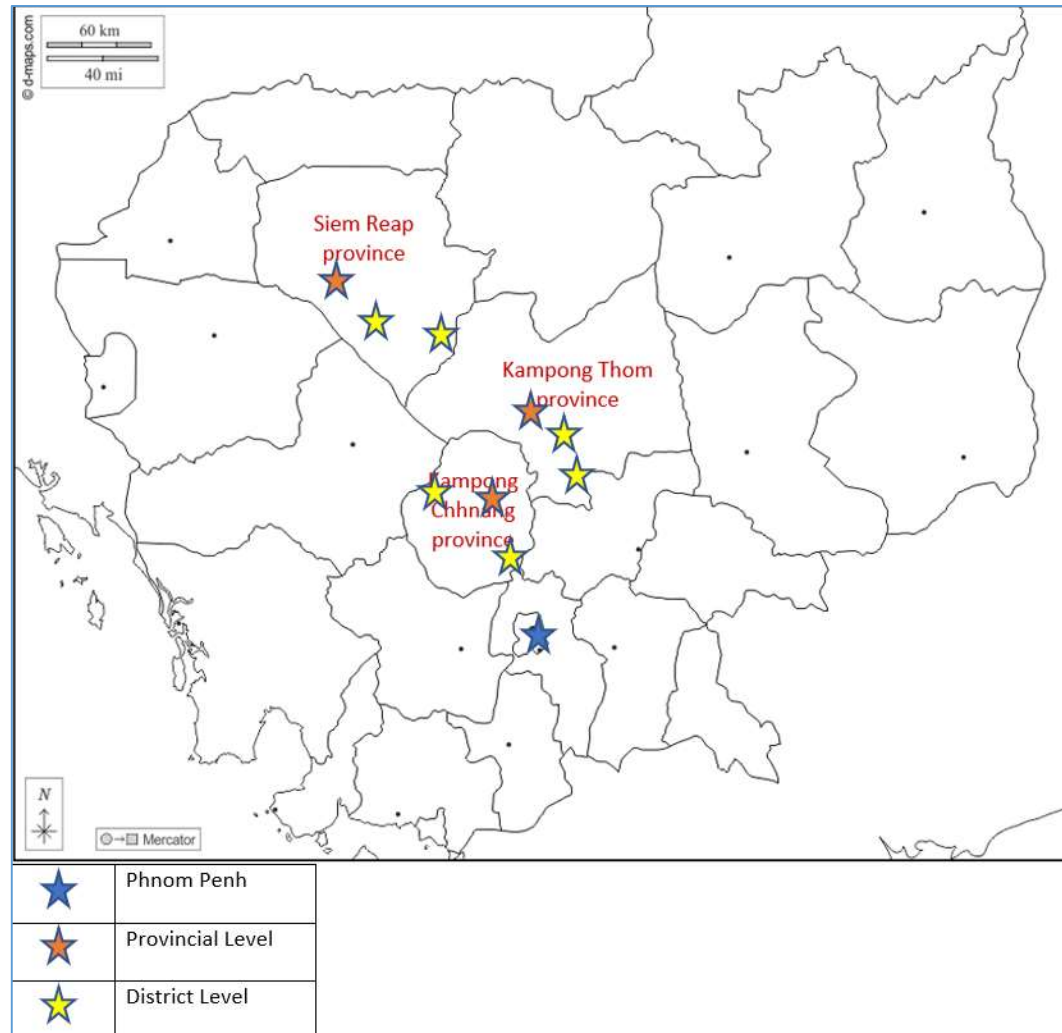
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Weds	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
June	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Evaluation Team (All)	Phnom Penh ET arrivals Evaluation Team Meeting (evening)	Phnom Penh WFP Internal Orientations, debriefings, and Interviews	Phnom Penh WFP Internal Interviews (in person and remote) Implementing partners	Phnom Penh Ministry of Education KII Donors WFP internal interviews (in person and remote)	Phnom Penh Ministry of Agriculture KII Ministry of Education KII NSPC KII CARD KII MOSAVY KII Implementing Partners	Phnom Penh Donors Implementing Partners UN agencies WFP Internal interviews (in person and remote)	Travel to Siem Reap
June	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Evaluation Team #1²²²	Siem Reap ET Debriefings and Analysis	Siem Reap WFP Orientations Provincial Stakeholders WFP Internal Interviews UN Agencies Implementing partners	Siem Reap School Visits Trapeang Trom	Siem Reap District Authorities and Stakeholders – Chikraeng	SRP/KTM School Visit Thnal Kaeng – Soutnikom Travel to Kampong Thom Provincial authorities KII	Kampong Thom School visits – Serei Sophoan Provincial Authorities KII Implementing partners	KTM School Visits – Banteay Chas School Visits – Cheay Sbai District Authorities – Santuk District Authorities – Baray Travel to PNH

²²² Evaluation team split into two groups with representatives from both McGovern-Dole School Feeding and LRP evaluation teams in each sub-group

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Weds	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
June	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Evaluation Team #2 ²²³	Siem Reap ET Debriefings and Analysis	WFP Orientations WFP Orientations Provincial Stakeholders WFP Internal Interviews UN Agencies Implementing partners	Siem Reap School Visits Thnal Dach School Visits Svay Chek (national)	Siem Reap District Authorities and Stakeholders – Soutnikom	Kampong Chhnang Travel to Kampong Chhnang Provincial Level KIIs	Kampong Chhnang School visits – Meanok Provincial Authorities KIIs	Kampong Chhnang School visits – Takeo School visits – Chambak Raingsei (national) District Authorities – Samaki Meanchey Travel to Phnom Penh
June/July	26	27	28	29	30	1	2
Evaluation Team (All)	Phnom Penh Team Debriefing and Analysis	Phnom Penh Ministry of Education KIIs WFP Internal KIIs (in person and remote)	Phnom Penh WFP Internal KIIs (in person and remote) Team Preliminary Findings Workshop	Phnom Penh Team Preliminary Findings Workshop Internal PPT construction	Phnom Penh Exit Briefing – Internal WFP Revisions to ppt	Phnom Penh Exit Briefing – External WFP Debriefing and lessons learned on evaluation process	ET Departure

²²³ Evaluation team split into two groups with representatives from both McGovern-Dole School Feeding and LRP evaluation teams in each sub-group

Mapping of Site Visits (National, Provincial, and District)



Annex 8: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations Mapping

Recommendations	Conclusions ²²⁴	Findings – paragraph numbers
<p>Recommendation 1: A no-cost extension plus renewal of McGovern-Dole programme. WFP should continue to be engaged in supporting the Government in the implementation and transition of the HGSF beyond the current programme cycle timeline. More time is needed for transition and sustainability. Given the delays caused by the pandemic, in addition to the recently approved USDA support for the next cycle, this should also be done through the request of a no-cost extension for the LRP followed by the development of the new USDA McGovern-Dole supported programme cycle which prioritizes emphasis on the system-building components of the NHGSFP.</p>	<p>Conclusion: There has been progress in the LRP programming since the baseline, with greater progress in the demand-side components (schools and school procurement) compared to the supply-side components (farmers and local agricultural production).</p>	<p>125-154, 205-207</p>
	<p>Conclusion: The LRP programmatic framework allowed for a flexible response to humanitarian engagements during the pandemic. The LRP framework allowed WFP to respond to the challenge of the pandemic promptly and effectively through its distribution of THRs.</p>	<p>96-102, 165-168</p>
	<p>Conclusion: In spite of progress since the baseline, there will not be enough time to achieve programme targets by the end of this cycle.</p>	<p>127-129, 165-168, 189-188,</p>
	<p>Conclusion: Progress has been achieved towards handover of schools although more time is needed for ensuring sustainability of the transition of systems to Government beyond the timeline of the current cycle. A no-cost extension combined with a new cycle that emphasizes the cash transfers and local procurement components would provide considerable support to sustainability and transition.</p>	<p>189-198, 205-207</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: NHGSFP Review and Lessons Learned. In alignment with the baseline report recommendation, WFP should support the MOEYS to undertake a systematic review of the national school meals implementation in schools handed over since 2019. This review should identify the challenges that need to be addressed, key lessons learned, and an assessment of the systems (beyond school level stakeholders) necessary for NHGSFP implementation. The review should incorporate the five pathways of change to ensure that these key elements can be</p>	<p>Conclusion: The current programme cycle for the LRP has prioritized the more concrete components of handover of schools but there has been less progress towards the achievement of the transition elements (systems and institutions). WFP made good progress on promoting the current results of the LRP and the potential of the LRP for local farmers and suppliers to demonstrate the added value of the national HGSF programme in Cambodia. However, transition components, the establishment of the appropriate policy frameworks, systems, and resourcing commensurate with the pathways for change, have not seen as much progress due to a variety of internal and external factors.</p>	<p>130-162, 189-204, 206-208</p>

²²⁴ Conclusions may be relevant to more than one recommendation. When this occurs, conclusion is cited twice.

<p>monitored and institutionalized. An important component for consideration in the review should be to identify operational processes that inhibit smallholder local participation and explore adjustments to increase local smallholder participation.</p>	<p>Conclusion: Sustainability considerations have shown some progress, with the next steps requiring focus in three pathways of change: policy framework, resourcing, and institutional systems. Progress is observed in the degree of school readiness, guidelines are in place, and a set of programme design and processes have been elaborated. Schools are ready for handover but the appropriate systems to support the schools afterwards are not yet in place. There are still factors among the pathways of change for country capacity strengthening that need to be continued to be addressed and are unlikely to be achieved within the remaining time of the programme cycle.</p>	<p>185-188, 189-204, 206-208</p>
	<p>Conclusion: The LRP narrative emphasizes the importance of supporting smallholder local production, but the operational parameters inhibit the participation of smallholders.</p>	<p>136-140, 149, 180-182,</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Joint post-transition accompaniment. Based on the lessons learned from the midterm evaluation and an NHGSFP review, WFP, in collaboration with the MOEYS and NSPC, should conduct a systematic adjustment to the LRP processes to identify what is feasible and possible within the existing Government situation and resourcing. This may include the adjustment of the NHGSFP processes and systems, including procurement, implementation, monitoring, and reporting processes to match the national context (i.e. available resources and capacities). However, this process should also identify the areas for ongoing WFP technical assistance to Government after handover and transition and should include a dedicated time period for WFP to continue to accompany Government in the Government's implementation of its NHGSFP.</p>	<p>Conclusion: Sustainability considerations have shown some progress, with the next steps requiring focus in three pathways of change: policy framework, resourcing, and institutional systems. Progress is observed in the degree of school readiness, guidelines are in place, and a set of programme design and processes have been elaborated. Schools are ready for handover but the appropriate systems to support the schools afterwards are not yet in place. There are still factors among the pathways of change for country capacity strengthening that need to be continued to be addressed and are unlikely to be achieved within the remaining time of the programme cycle.</p>	<p>185-188, 189-204, 206-208</p>
	<p>Conclusion: The current programme cycle for the LRP has prioritized the more concrete components of handover of schools but there has been less progress towards the achievement of the transition elements (systems and institutions). WFP made good progress on promoting the current results of the LRP and the potential of the LRP for local farmers and suppliers to demonstrate the added value of the national HGSF programme in Cambodia. However, transition components, the establishment of the appropriate policy frameworks, systems, and resourcing commensurate with the pathways for change, have not seen as much progress due to a variety of internal and external factors.</p>	<p>130-162, 189-204, 206-208</p>

<p>Recommendation 4: Joint MAFF/MOEYS coordination mechanism. WFP, in collaboration with the MOEYS, MAFF, and NSPC, should support the development of a mechanism or framework to allow for MAFF and MoEYS to intersect more naturally, and that would replace the current convening role played by WFP in supporting MAFF and MOEYS intersectionality. This may include assessing MAFF's food security mandates and the SFP social protection mandates to identify if there are opportunities for an expanded definition of social protection that would allow for MAFF inclusion under the NSPC.</p>	<p>Conclusion: Within the LRP design and the allocation of attention and capacities, the demand-side elements (schools and school processes) have greater prominence compared to the supply-side elements (farmers and local agricultural production). As a consequence of both the CSP structure and the LRP design, the integration of the expected LRP activities has only been partially achieved, with missed opportunity to improve synergies across the supply- and demand-side stakeholders.</p>	104-120, 123-124, 149, 127-129
	<p>Conclusion: The LRP narrative emphasizes the importance of supporting smallholder local production, but the operational parameters inhibit the participation of smallholders.</p>	136-140, 149, 180-182,
<p>Recommendation 6: WFP staffing adjustments. For the remainder of the programme cycle, WFP should seek to review and fill its current staffing gaps and consider the necessity of expanding its staffing profiles in preparation for a focus on the country capacity strengthening elements in systems strengthening required post-transition. The SF Unit and AO should consider upgrading staff capacity to better understand the D&D process, to contribute towards continuing engagement in the Government's processes and provide a wider WFP ownership of a transition and technical assistance accompaniment role to Government and governance.</p>	<p>Conclusion: Within the LRP design and the allocation of attention and capacities, the demand-side elements (schools and school processes) have greater prominence compared to the supply-side elements (farmers and local agricultural production). As a consequence of both the CSP structure and the LRP design, the integration of the expected LRP activities has only been partially achieved, with missed opportunity to improve synergies across the supply- and demand-side stakeholders.</p>	174-181, 142-143,
	<p>Conclusion: The LRP narrative emphasizes the importance of supporting smallholder local production, but the operational parameters inhibit the participation of smallholders.</p>	136-140, 149, 180-182,
<p>Recommendation 5: Gender sensitive procedures. WFP, in consultation with MAFF, MOEYS and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, should conduct a gender analysis to seek to integrate increased gender sensitivity into local and regional procurement processes for school meals in HGSP and NHGSP schools by concentrating training and capacity building efforts on suppliers and smallholder farmers on women and their organizations, improve access to credits if needed, and other potential organizational support. Procurement processes should</p>	<p>Conclusion: For gender considerations, there is potential for enhanced women's empowerment through the LRP due to their traditional roles in vegetable production and cooperative membership, but gender empowerment is not attributable to the programme within the LRP RF.</p>	121-122, 147-148, 163-164,

be adjusted to better match smallholder women production cycles, and payment mechanisms should be adjusted to allow for the participation of smallholder women as suppliers.

Recommendation 7: Visibilizing LRP gender contributions. In alignment with the baseline report recommendation, **WFP, together with USDA and in consultation with MAFF, MOEYS and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, should seek to integrate and visibilize the LRP contributions to gender** by improving gender visibility in the results framework. This would include the identification of gender indicators that not only measure gender participation but also gender transformative change.

Annex 9: List of People Interviewed

Note: Per USDA guidance on personal identifiable information (PII), any information leading to being able to identify an interviewee is excluded from the list.

National and International Levels

No	Position	Organization
1	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/ School Feeding Unit
2	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/M&E Unit
3	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/School Feeding Unit/Operation
4	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/ School Feeding Unit
5	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/ School Feeding Unit
6	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/VAM
7	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/VAM
8	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/Food Systems Unit (SO2)
9	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/RAM Unit
10	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/M&E Unit
11	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/M&E Unit
12	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/M&E Unit
13	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/School Feeding Unit
14	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/ Supply Chain
15	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/VAM
16	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/VAM
17	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/Nutrition
18	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/ Finance unit
19	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/Finance unit
20	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO
21	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/management
22	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO/ Logistics
23	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO
24	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO
25	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO Area Office
26	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO Area Office
27	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP CO Area Office
28	Programme Monitoring Assistant	WFP CO Area Office
29	Programme Monitoring Assistant	WFP CO Area Office
30	Programme Monitoring Assistant	WFP CO Area Office
31	Programme Monitoring Assistant	WFP CO Area Office
32	Programme Monitoring Assistant	WFP CO Area Office
33	Programme Monitoring Assistant	WFP CO Area Office
34	Programme Monitoring Assistant	WFP CO Area Office
35	Programme Monitoring Assistant	WFP CO Area Office
36	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP RBB
37	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP RBB
38	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP RBB
39	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP RBB
40	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP RBB
41	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP RBB
42	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP RBB
43	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP RBB
44	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP RBB
45	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP HQ
46	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP HQ
47	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WFP – Washington Office
48	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Ministry of Planning
49	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOEYS/Teacher Training Center
50	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOEYS
51	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOEYS
52	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOEYS
53	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOEYS
54	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOEYS/ Education Quality Assurance

55	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOEYS/ Education Quality Assurance
56	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOEYS
57	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOEYS
58	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	NSPC (MEF)
59	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	NSPC (MEF)
60	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries – General Director Agriculture
61	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOI/CARD
62	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOI/CARD
63	Director of Technical Development	Green Trade
64	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Green Trade
65	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Green Trade
66	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MoEYS
67	Quality Assurance	MoEYS
68	Curriculum Department	MoEYS
69	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MoEYS/ Teacher Department
70	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MoEYS/ School Health Department
71	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MoEYS
72	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MoEYS
73	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MoEYS
74	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MoEYS
75	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MoEYS
76	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	MOSAVY
77	Programme Advisor	FAO
78	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	UNICEF
79	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	UNICEF
80	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	UNICEF
81	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	World Education
82	Specialist	World Education
83	M&E Unit	World Education
84	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	GIZ
85	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	GIZ
86	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Hellen Keller International
87	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	PLAN International
88	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WVI
89	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	WVI
90	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	USDA
91	Project Officer	USDA
92	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	USAID
93	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	USAID
94	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	USAID
95	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	USAID
96	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Japanese Embassy
97	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	KOICA
98	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	KOICA

Sub-national Levels

No	Position	Organization
Siem Reap Province		
1	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	POEYS
2	Officer, Primary Education	POEYS
3	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	POEYS
4	Provincial Manager	PLAN International
5	Programme Officer	PLAN International
6	Programme Officer	PLAN International
7	Programme Officer	PLAN International
8	Programme Officer	PLAN International
9	Programme Officer	PLAN International
10	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	UNICEF
11	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	PDAFF

12	Vice Chief of Office	PDAFF
13	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Chikraeng District
14	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Chikraeng District Office of Education
15	Officer - School Feeding	Chikraeng District Office of Education
16	Officer - Administration	Chikraeng District Office of Education
17	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Chikraeng District Office of Agriculture
18	Deputy Head	Chikraeng District Office of Agriculture
19	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
20	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
21	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
22	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
23	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
24	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
25	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
26	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
27	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
28	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
29	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
30	Commune Chief	Chikraeng District
31	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Soutnikom District
32	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Soutnikom District
33	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Soutnikom District
34	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Soutnikom District
35	Community chief	Soutnikom District
36	Commune Council Member	Soutnikom District
37	Commune Council Member	Soutnikom District
38	Commune Council Member	Soutnikom District
39	Commune Council Member	Soutnikom District
40	Commune Council Member	Soutnikom District
41	Commune Council Member	Soutnikom District
42	District School Meals Committee Member	Soutnikom District
43	District School Meals Committee Member	Soutnikom District
44	District School Meals Committee Member	Soutnikom District
45	District School Meals Committee Member	Soutnikom District
46	District School Meals Committee Member	Soutnikom District
47	District School Meals Committee Member	Soutnikom District
48	District School Meals Committee Member	Soutnikom District
49	District School Meals Committee Member	Soutnikom District
50	District School Meals Committee Member	Chikraeng District
51	District School Meals Committee Member	Chikraeng District
52	District School Meals Committee Member	Chikraeng District
53	District School Meals Committee Member	Chikraeng District
54	District School Meals Committee Member	Chikraeng District
	Kampong Chhnang Province	
55	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Provincial Government
56	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Provincial Government
57	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Provincial Government
58	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Provincial Government
59	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	POEYS
60	Redacted due to Personal Identifiable Information Policy	POEYS
61	Redacted due to Personal Identifiable Information Policy	POEYS
62	Officer of Primary Education Office	POEYS
63	Officer of Primary Education Office	POEYS
64	Redacted due to Personal Identifiable Information Policy	PDAFF
65	Vice Chief	PDAFF
66	Officer	PDAFF
67	Head	Kampong Chhnang Agricultural Cooperative
68	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Kampong Chhnang Agricultural Cooperative
69	leadership	Samaki Meanchey District
70	Redacted due to Personal Identifiable Information Policy	DOE - Samaki Meanchey District
71	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	DOE - Samaki Meanchey District
72	Officer	DOE - Samaki Meanchey District

73	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Samaki Meanchey District
74	Commune Council Member	Samaki Meanchey District
75	Commune Council Member	Samaki Meanchey District
76	District Education Officer	DOE - Boribo District
Kampong Thom Province		
77	Provincial Manager	World Vision International
78	Programme Officer	World Vision International
79	Programme Officer	World Vision International
80	Programme Officer	World Vision International
81	Programme Officer	World Vision International
82	Programme Officer	World Vision International
83	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Provincial Government
84	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Provincial Government
85	Officer	Provincial Government
86	Redacted due to Personal Identifiable Information Policy	POEYS
87	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	POEYS
88	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	POA
89	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	POA
9	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	POA
91	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	POA
92	Deputy Director	District Office of Education - Baray
93	Officer	District Office of Education - Baray
94	Commune Chiefs	Baray District
95	Commune Council Member	Baray District
96	Commune Council Member	Baray District
97	Commune Council Member	Baray District
98	Commune Council Member	Baray District
99	District School Meals Committee Member	Baray District
100	District School Meals Committee Member	Baray District
101	District School Meals Committee Member	Baray District
102	District School Meals Committee Member	Baray District
103	District School Meals Committee Member	Baray District
104	Vice Governor	Santuk District
105	Redacted due to Personal Identifiable Information Policy	District Office of Agriculture - Santuk District
106	Deputy Head	District Office of Agriculture - Santuk District
107	Commune Chief	Santuk District
108	Commune Council Member	Santuk District
109	Commune Council Member	Santuk District
110	Commune Council Member	Santuk District
111	Deputy Director	District Office of Education - Santuk
112	Officer	District Office of Education - Santuk
113	Officer	District Office of Education - Santuk

School Levels (including Farmers and Suppliers connected to the schools)

No	Position	Organization
Siem Reap Province		
1	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Trapeang Trom School
2	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Trapeang Trom School
3	Teacher	Trapeang Trom School
4	Teacher	Trapeang Trom School
5	Teacher	Trapeang Trom School
6	Teacher/Storekeeper	Trapeang Trom School
7	LSFC Member	Trapeang Trom School
8	LSFC Member	Trapeang Trom School
9	LSFC Member	Trapeang Trom School
10	LSFC Member	Trapeang Trom School
11	LSFC Member	Trapeang Trom School
12	Supplier	Trapeang Trom School
13	Farmer	Trapeang Trom School
14	Farmer	Trapeang Trom School

15	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Thnal Dach School
16	Teacher/Storekeeper	Thnal Dach School
17	Teacher	Thnal Dach School
18	Cook	Thnal Dach School
19	Cook	Thnal Dach School
20	Supplier	Thnal Dach School
21	Farmer	Thnal Dach School
22	LSFC Member	Thnal Dach School
23	LSFC Member	Thnal Dach School
24	LSFC Member	Thnal Dach School
25	LSFC Member	Thnal Dach School
26	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Svay Check School
27	Storekeeper	Svay Check School
28	Deputy Director	Svay Check School
29	LSFC Member	Svay Check School
30	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Thnal Kaeng School
31	Teacher/Storekeeper	Thnal Kaeng School
32	Teacher	Thnal Kaeng School
33	Teacher	Thnal Kaeng School
34	Teacher	Thnal Kaeng School
35	Teacher	Thnal Kaeng School
36	Teacher	Thnal Kaeng School
37	Teacher	Thnal Kaeng School
38	Teacher	Thnal Kaeng School
39	Cook	Thnal Kaeng School
40	LSFC Member	Thnal Kaeng School
41	LSFC Member	Thnal Kaeng School
42	LSFC Member	Thnal Kaeng School
Kampong Thom		
43	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Serei Sophoan School
44	Teacher	Serei Sophoan School
45	Teacher	Serei Sophoan School
46	Teacher	Serei Sophoan School
47	Teacher/Storekeeper	Serei Sophoan School
48	Cook	Serei Sophoan School
49	Cook	Serei Sophoan School
50	LSFC Member	Serei Sophoan School
51	LSFC Member	Serei Sophoan School
52	LSFC Member	Serei Sophoan School
53	LSFC Member	Serei Sophoan School
54	LSFC Member	Serei Sophoan School
55	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Banteay Chas School
56	Deputy Director	Banteay Chas School
57	Librarian	Banteay Chas School
58	Teacher	Banteay Chas School
59	Teacher	Banteay Chas School
60	Teacher	Banteay Chas School
61	Teacher	Banteay Chas School
62	Teacher	Banteay Chas School
63	Teacher	Banteay Chas School
64	Teacher	Banteay Chas School
65	Teacher	Banteay Chas School
66	Cook	Banteay Chas School
67	Cook	Banteay Chas School
68	Cook	Banteay Chas School
69	LSFC Member	Banteay Chas School
70	LSFC Member	Banteay Chas School
71	LSFC Member	Banteay Chas School
72	LSFC Member	Banteay Chas School
73	LSFC Member	Banteay Chas School
74	Supplier	Banteay Chas School
75	Farmer	Banteay Chas School

76	Farmer	Banteay Chas School
77	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Cheay Sbai School
78	Teacher	Cheay Sbai School
79	Teacher	Cheay Sbai School
80	Teacher/Storekeeper	Cheay Sbai School
81	Cook	Cheay Sbai School
82	Commune Chief Assistant	Cheay Sbai School
83	Commune Council representative	Cheay Sbai School
84	LSFC Member	Cheay Sbai School
85	LSFC Member	Cheay Sbai School
86	LSFC Member	Cheay Sbai School
87	LSFC Member	Cheay Sbai School
Kampong Chhnang Province		
88	Deputy director	Meanok Primary School
89	Storekeeper	Meanok Primary School
90	Cook	Meanok Primary School
91	Cook	Meanok Primary School
92	LSFC Member	Meanok Primary School
93	LSFC Member	Meanok Primary School
94	LSFC Member	Meanok Primary School
95	Supplier	Meanok Primary School
96	Farmer	Meanok Primary School
97	Farmer	Meanok Primary School
98	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Takeo Primary School
99	Teacher	Takeo Primary School
100	Storekeeper	Takeo Primary School
101	LSFC Member	Takeo Primary School
102	LSFC Member	Takeo Primary School
103	LSFC Member	Takeo Primary School
104	LSFC Member	Takeo Primary School
105	LSFC Member	Takeo Primary School
106	LSFC Member	Takeo Primary School
107	LSFC Member	Takeo Primary School
108	LSFC Member	Takeo Primary School
109	LSFC Member	Takeo Primary School
110	Supplier	Takeo Primary School
111	Farmer	Takeo Primary School
112	Farmer	Takeo Primary School
113	Redacted Personally Identifiable Information	Chambak Raingsei School
114	Storekeeper	Chambak Raingsei School
115	Cook	Chambak Raingsei School
116	Cook	Chambak Raingsei School
117	Cook	Chambak Raingsei School
118	LSFC Member	Chambak Raingsei School
119	LSFC Member	Chambak Raingsei School
120	LSFC Member	Chambak Raingsei School

(Grand)Parents FGDs

No	Position	Organization
4	4 Women	Trapeang Trom School
26	22 Women, 4 Men	Thnal Dach School
23	21 Women, 2 Men	Thnal Kaeng School
19	19 Women	Serei Sophoan School
10	8 Women, 2 Men	Banteay Chas School
4	4 Women	Meanok School
13	10 Women, 3 Men	Takeo School
Total	99 (86% women)	Total

Annex 10:

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Annex 11: List of Analytical Works

The following documents were used in the design of the programme (e.g. needs assessments, research, past evaluations/reviews etc.).

Title
Cambodia Country Portfolio Evaluation Reports, 2011-2017
Baseline, midterm, and Endline evaluation reports of the USDA McGovern-Dole FFE Programme, 2017-2019, including survey tools.
School Assessment Study Report, 2015-2016. (NB: Assessment in 2019-20 in drafting process at Baseline)
School Feeding Roadmap between WFP and MoEYS (signed in May 2015)
midterm Strategic review of the NSFSN, 2014-2018 (Progress inventory 2016, situation update 2017, & strategic directions towards 2030).
Guideline on Food Safety in Schools-May 2019_Khmer version
HGSF supplier's consultation findings, 2018-19
Successes and Challenges of Implementing USDA McGovern-Dole Funded Food for Education Programs in the Asia/Pacific Region (A review of key findings from WFP Program Evaluations in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Nepal during 2013-2018)
Take-home ration (THR) lesson learnt report (During Covid-19)
Cambodian Rice Landscape Analysis_Generic-20190618
Fill Nutrition Gap Cambodia
Micronutrient challenges and solutions 20190722
Anthropological WFP Cambodia summary report FINAL
Case Study _ HGSF and benefit pathways_Oct 17-V3
HGSF supplier assessment report 220620 final 1
Cambodia_Market_Update_JUNE-2020_final
Baseline_FFE_Kampong Chhnang Feb 6, 2020
UN Cambodia framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 AUGUST 2020
Cambodia school feeding evaluation findings 2010-2020
LRP Evaluations: Kenya, Rwanda, Benin, Laos (reference samples)

Annex 12: McGovern-Dole Report Summary

Introduction and Background

This report presents the findings from the midterm evaluation of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) McGovern-Dole School Feeding Programme²²⁵ for World Food Programme (WFP) School Feeding activities in Cambodia, covering the period 01 November 2019 to 30 October 2023. This work was conducted concurrently with an evaluation of the USDA-supported Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP) programme,²²⁶ which will produce a complementary report. This midterm evaluation was planned for mid-2021, but due to delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was moved to June 2022.

The USDA McGovern-Dole programme supports WFP's overall SMP programme and aims to support the provision of quality education; promote good nutrition practices; and enable the school feeding program's transition to national funding, management, and overall ownership.²²⁷

The current McGovern-Dole programme is a continuation of the previous phases (2013-2016 and 2017-2019) and is being implemented in three provinces of Cambodia: Siem Reap and Kampong Thom (which both received support in the previous phase of the programme), and Kampong Chhnang which was added in this phase.

This report aims to provide an independent assessment of the programme so far to enable the WFP Cambodia, the Royal Government of Cambodia, and cooperating partners to feed its results and learning into the remainder of this programme and future programmes - in particular, the transition to the Government-led and managed National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP).

Given the pandemic disruptions, the methodology developed for the midterm evaluation was modified from the original TOR with this evaluation focused on three evaluation criteria: relevance (especially of pandemic mitigation adaptations), effectiveness, and sustainability (with a focus on steps yet to be taken to ensure a smooth handover and transition by the end of the cycle). The main expected users for this evaluation report include USDA, the WFP Country Office and Regional Bureau, and WFP's main partner the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS).

Contextual Summary

In Cambodia, short-term hunger is a key factor affecting educational results, such as literacy, attendance, and concentration in schools.²²⁸ WFP's school meals programme (SMP) started in Cambodia in 1999. In 2014, the MoEYS, in collaboration with WFP, piloted a Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) model. The Government's NHGSFP has been subsequently developed with the expectation that WFP-supported schools will be taken over by the national programme and be managed by the Government after transition. As of March 2022, the MoEYS and WFP elaborated a Joint School Feeding Transition Strategy (JTS) that outlines the handover of further schools and the remaining capacity building to be done.²²⁹ Full national ownership is projected to be completed by 2028.²³⁰

The COVID-19 pandemic had widespread impacts on socio-economic indicators, especially among poor households, leading to increased poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Schools were closed between March 2020 and November 2021 with, inter alia, a temporary discontinuation of the school meals programme. The SMP activities were heavily impacted by the school closures, but WFP support continued through take-home rations (THRs) distributed to the most vulnerable households, in conjunction with the Government's social protection programme,²³¹ construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure in schools. Community awareness campaigns used

²²⁵ USDA McGovern-Dole programme FFE-442-2019-013-00

²²⁶ USDA Local and Regional Procurement (LRP-441-2019-011-00)

²²⁷ WFP/USDA MGD Proposal

²²⁸ WFP/USDA LRP Proposal FY2019.

²²⁹ Joint Transition Strategy towards a Nationally Owned Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, Cambodia, Phase 1: 2022-2025, 17 March 2022, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport / World Food Programme.

²³⁰ More details can be found in [Annex 12](#).

²³¹ THR Round 1 (April 2020): WFP reached 80,767 *IDPoor* households with children and the Government programme reached 11,506. The same was repeated in Round 2 (August 2020).

mobile awareness events rather than mass events. When schools reopened, health, hygiene, and food safety trainings with the MoEYS School Health Department.

Methodology

The evaluation included engagement with beneficiaries as key stakeholders and was committed to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), through the participation and consultation in the evaluation by women and men from diverse groups, and to the Humanitarian Principles.

A mixed methods approach was used, combining document review, analysis of secondary quantitative data, interviews with national and sub-national level stakeholders, observations, and group discussions. Primary quantitative data collection was postponed until endline.

The team visited six districts (two per province) and 10 schools across the three provinces, with a range of school feeding modalities, including eight schools visited during the 2020 baseline; two more were visited to identify post-handover comparisons. In total, 425 persons were interviewed (58 percent women).²³²

The key midterm findings are summarized below, structured according to the main evaluation criteria.

Criteria 1 – Relevance

The McGovern-Dole SFP provides an avenue for WFP to support the change to the HGSP modality adopted by the Government. The SMP activities support the Government's capacity building needs and are integrated into the JTS. The programme appropriately prioritizes schools in areas with prevalent poverty and low education outcomes. The repurposing of the activities to support the distribution of THRs was relevant to the Government's emergency response approach to support the vulnerable populations, targeted via the official *ID Poor* system.

The multi-dimensional capacity strengthening is aligned with Government priorities. Joint capacity building activities were designed and conducted together with Government bodies, using a cascade training approach. Technical assistance targets are most advanced with stakeholders involved in the SMP process at the school levels. Since baseline these have contributed to increased clarity of benefits, roles, responsibilities, and management of the SMP. While the design remains relevant, there are challenges to achieving activity targets in the remaining timeframe.

Criteria 2 - Effectiveness

The ET has observed positive changes compared to the baseline. At the national and sub-national levels there is more clarity and structure related to the SMP and school feeding committees have been established at all levels (school, commune, district, and province). A significant percentage (65 percent) of results framework indicators are on track to meet or exceed targets by the end of the cycle. Over-achievements were most common regarding trainings and literacy materials. The number of meals provided is only at 15 percent of end of cycle target, due to the school closures. Although THRs were not foreseen in the programme design, 72 percent of the revised target numbers were reached, and WFP monitoring found that over 95 percent of the recipient households reported acceptable levels of food consumption after distributions.

Internally, the Country Office staffing gaps at national and sub-national levels have affected the pace of activities, as well as affecting the institutional memory for the vision and approaches required to support transition, especially in the technical assistance activity areas. Regional Bureau resources have mitigated these effects.

Criteria 3 - Sustainability

At corporate level, WFP has developed a framework for school feeding programmes capacity development – the Systems Approach for Better Education Results School Feeding (SABER SF – which describes five dimensions of change to identify sustainability considerations in handover to government management and frame progress made by the COs towards complete transitioning to nationally owned and managed school feeding programmes.²³³ These are implicitly replicated in Cambodia's JTS.²³⁴

²³² Among these 153 participated in FGDs.

²³³ These include a) Policy Framework; b) Institutional Capacity; c) Public Sector Financing (resourcing); d) Programme Design and Implementation; and e) Engagement of non-state actors.

²³⁴ The national home-grown school feeding programme aims to provide safe and healthy nutrition to Cambodian children to promote social protection, increase access to education services to contribute to the development of local economic and agricultural, and society.

The JTS delineates roles and responsibilities of national stakeholders to enable implementation through multi-sectoral collaboration. Units within the MoEYS provide overall policy and strategy guidance for the education sector which should include coordination across line ministries and with development partners, as well as advocacy for the establishment of the NHGSFP. WFP is supporting the MoEYS to develop a monitoring framework for the NHGSFP, expected to be ready by the end of 2022.

Sustainability according to the SABER-SF dimensions mentioned earlier implies the presence of a sufficient policy framework, the institutional systems established for management of the programme, and adequate resourcing. Development of policies and institutional systems, as well as community engagement are in progress to different degrees. A sub-decree – necessary for cross-sectoral programmes – is expected to be approved within the next few months. The school feeding policy is also in its final stages of development. Public sector resourcing and accurate costing still require more attention. While there has been an increase in activities across all five dimensions of capacity strengthening, those related to programme design and implementation have assumed the greatest prominence.

Given the contributions of the HGSF model to social protection, the process of HGSF policy development and coordination within the social protection frameworks is key to sustainability and is naturally situated within social protection and the National Social Protection Council (NSPC). The transition process was positively influenced by high-level supporters for school feeding in the Government. While their engagement is particularly important, it does indicate the system is not strong enough to function without them. The position of the NSPC within the Ministry of Economy and Finance supports well-functioning coordination between the various Government ministries and institutions involved. The NSPC has the authority to convene multiple stakeholders and to determine financial support for the programme because of its social protection contributions. However, the government decentralization process creates ambiguities and longer communication and resource allocation processes. There are also gaps within the NHGSFP after transition in terms of information management, sub-national capacity for transition management of existing sub-national structures, and long-term resourcing of the NHGSFP.

Institutional systems have been set up at the sub-national level - school feeding committees are established at all levels although at varying levels of involvement by the committees. However, while national Government officials are fully aware of the programme and handover, this is not the case for all sub-national staff. Communities are supportive of the programme, but the programme is still highly dependent on the cooperating partners and volunteers at community and school levels. Thus, while institutional systems have been set up at the decentralized level, they lack the overarching policy framework and the guaranteed resourcing at necessary levels. There is a strong demand from the Government for further technical assistance from WFP post-transition with schools and transitioned districts and provinces.

Indications that USDA has approved another McGovern-Dole programme cycle suggest continued capacity strengthening of national and sub-national stakeholders in NHGSFP processes can go on, with strengthened inter-ministerial coordination required to support school feeding.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are oriented around three evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, and Sustainability.

Category 1: Relevance

Conclusion 1: The school feeding programme will be continued by the Government, but the national version of the programme will be different from the WFP supported HGSF programme.

Conclusion 2: An important gap in the transition process is a post-transition technical assistance phase between WFP and MoEYS.

Conclusion 3: The programme design assumes that the school feeding programme equally impacts girls and boys, but three adjustments could be made to further improve the profile of gender in the programme.

Category 2: Effectiveness

Conclusion 4: Overall, there has been progress towards handover despite the delays caused by the COVID-19 disruptions, and more than 75 percent of programme indicators have reached or surpassed targets.

Conclusion 5: There are policies and structures in place, but continued rollout of the SFP still depends on the support of high-level advocates.

Conclusion 6: The McGovern-Dole programmatic framework allowed WFP to respond to the challenge of the pandemic promptly and effectively through distribution of THRs.

Category 3: Sustainability

Conclusion 7: The transition process is complicated by the ongoing decentralization process of the Government, which affects sub-national transitions, as lines of command and financial flows are less established.

Conclusion 8: The current cycle for the McGovern-Dole programme has prioritized the more concrete components of handover of schools but there has been less progress towards the institutionalization elements to maintain the schools (systems and institutions).

Conclusion 9: The next steps for building sustainability should focus on three SABER-SF dimensions: policy framework, resourcing, and institutional systems.

Conclusion 10: More time is needed beyond the current cycle for the transition of systems to Government.

Lessons Learned

Applicable lessons learned fall into three categories: handover, project management and Monitoring and Evaluation.

No.	Lessons
Handover	
1	WFP should integrate increased staffing for national staff with expertise in government procedures. Providing technical assistance to the Government will become increasingly core to WFP's presence as the organizations moves away from direct implementation. The presence of preferably national staff who have a thorough understanding of the workings of the government is essential.
2	Finalize government management systems prior to school handover. In order to provide good management of schools, government personnel rely on the presence of clear policy frameworks and procurement systems in place to ensure programme sustainability.
3	The Government requires a complete costing analysis for supporting school meals that integrates all ancillary management costs. This will enable them to make realistic budget allocations to implement the national school feeding programme. This in turn will increase a sense of ownership of the programme and reduce dependence of external sources of funding.
Project Management	
4	Continuous socialization. Given the high turnover of personnel within the school and government systems, the diversity of donor projects for school feeding, and the relative complexity of the system, there is a need to develop a system of 'continuous socialization' to provide a standardized training and orientation approach to incoming personnel at different levels of government from schools and suppliers to Ministry level.
5	Management training for school principals has been shown to be an enhancing factor for the school feeding programme. Collaboration with other stakeholders who provide general management training can leverage the impact of the school feeding programme.
6	Implementation of SFIS using computers and web-based application is difficult in remote settings. The development of software in Khmer that can be used on smartphones could solve some of the issues.
7	Repurposing school meals to THR is feasible and improves food security of the most vulnerable households. Transparency regarding the targeting of the support and the use of established registers of poor is essential for community acceptance.
Monitoring and Evaluation	
8	Gender indicators. Developing outcome indicators specifically related to women's participation and empowerment would provide greater visibility and intentionality of gender sensitivity.

Recommendations

Based on the patterns in the findings and conclusions, the following six recommendations are presented. Due to pandemic disruptions, two of the baseline recommendations (numbers 1 and 7) are still relevant for continued consideration.

Recommendation 1: WFP should support the MoEYS to undertake a systematic review of the national school meals implementation in schools handed over since 2019.

Recommendation 2: WFP, in collaboration with the MoEYS and NSPC, should conduct a systematic adjustment to the school meal programme processes to identify what is feasible and possible within the existing Government policies, strategies, and resourcing.

Recommendation 3: WFP, in collaboration with the MoEYS and NSPC, should support the development of a mechanism or framework to strengthen the institutionalization of the NHGSFP.

Recommendation 4: WFP, in collaboration with MOEYS and NSPC, should construct and use a structured and transparent tool to assess subnational system readiness for transition.

Recommendation 5: WFP should seek to review and fill its current staffing gaps and consider the necessity of expanding its staffing profiles in preparation for a focus on the country capacity strengthening elements of the programme.

Recommendation 6: WFP, in consultation with MOEYS and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, should seek to conduct a gender analysis to integrate increased gender sensitivity into the next programme cycle programming.

Recommendation 7: WFP, together with USDA and in consultation with MoEYS and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, should seek to integrate and visibilize the McGovern-Dole contributions to gender by improving gender visibility in the results framework during the next cycle.

Annex 13: Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CARD	Council for Agriculture and Rural Development
CO	Country Office
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DCPS	Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy
DEQAS	(WFP) Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ET	Evaluation team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus group discussion
FR	Foundational Result
FY	Financial year
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
HDI	Human Development Index
HGSF	Home-grown school feeding
HQ	(WFP) Headquarters
IR	Inception Report
KCG	Kampong Chhnang province
KII	Key informant interview
KTM	Kampong Thom province
LRP	Local and Regional Procurement programme
LSFC	Local School Feeding Committee
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MT	Metric Tonne
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
NGO	Non-Governmental organization
NHGSFP	National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme
NSFSN	National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition
NSPC	National Social Protection Council
OEV	(WFP) Office of Evaluation
PDAFF	Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

PMA	Programme Monitoring Assistant
RBB	Regional Bureau in Bangkok
RF	Results Framework
SABER-SF	Systems Approach for Better Education Results – School Feeding
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SFIS	School Feeding Information System
SFP	School Feeding Programme
SHF	Smallholder Farmer
SMP	School Meals Programme
SO	Strategic Objective
SRP	Siem Reap province
SY	School year
THR	Take Home Rations
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	The United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	The United Nations Children’s Fund
US\$	United States dollar (currency)
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	(United Nations) World Health Organization

WFP Cambodia

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