

# **Management Response from WFP Republic of Congo Country Office to the recommendations of the decentralized Mid-Term Evaluation of the McGovern-Dole Funded School Feeding Project in the Republic of Congo (DE/CGCO/2019/011) from September 2018 to September 2023**



1. This document, finalized in May 2023, presents the management response to the recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the WFP McGovern-Dole Funded School Feeding Project in the Republic of Congo
2. The evaluation, which WFP Republic of Congo commissioned, covers McGovern-Dole outputs and outcomes and assesses whether the baseline recommendations have been actioned and integrated into project implementation and, if so, whether these baseline recommendations were successful in strengthening project implementation. The evaluation serves the dual purpose of accountability and learning and informs the progress made so far towards achieving results, compared with the baseline and also looks at why certain results were achieved or not. It will draw lessons, derive good practices and pointers for learning. The purpose is to inform operational and strategic decision-making, including any course correction measures required by WFP.
3. The evaluation made six (6) key recommendations with twenty-three (23) actions. The matrix sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees, or disagrees with the recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or taken) actions, responsibilities and timelines.

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b></p> <p>WFP should work with schools and implementing partners to clearly define standards for monitoring of the McGovern-Dole programme so that implementation progress can be better established, and the effectiveness of the programme better evaluated. USDA<sup>1</sup> has a specific monitoring system that differs from WFP's standard ACR<sup>2</sup> monitoring indicators. The PMP<sup>3</sup> should be considered as the main M&amp;E tool to follow the implementation of the McGovern-Dole programme, together with the narrative report.</p> <p>Partners would benefit from harmonized template for</p>	<p>CO M&amp;E and programme team, National Directorate of School Feeding (DAS), Decentralized School Feeding Service (SAS), District Education Inspectors and communities (via the school management committees). McGovern-Dole sub-recipients (UNESCO and UNICEF).</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture

<sup>2</sup> Annual Country Report

<sup>3</sup> Performance Monitoring Plan

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<p>reporting on indicators, including required disaggregation for gender. This would allow WFP to follow the (PMP with accuracy in the semi-annual reports. Indicators need to be specific enough for the reader to understand what they stand for. All indicator data needs to be inserted in the PMP by WFP staff even if WFP is not the direct implementing actor of the activity the indicator relates to.</p> <p>The dashboard developed by WFP and the process monitoring could be updated to collect information more relevant to the specificities of the McGovern-Dole programme, which goes beyond a classic school feeding programme.</p>					
<p>Priority: High</p> <p><b>Sub-recommendation 1.1</b></p> <p>The RB should ensure that the WFP Congo, and especially the school feeding officer and M&amp;E</p>	<p>CO M&amp;E and programme team and RBJ monitoring team</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>1. To raise awareness of the standards of monitoring for the programme WFP will conduct a training for the National Directorate of</p>	<p>CO M&amp;E (HQ School Based Programme (SBP) Division, CO programme team,</p>	<p>30 September 2023</p>

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<p>officer, are well acquainted with the specificity of McGovern-Dole PMP indicators.</p> <p>Deadline: Within 3 months (By March 2023)</p>			<p>School Feeding (DAS), the Decentralized School Feeding Service (SAS) and other relevant partners on the indicators, their definitions and the frequency of measurement as defined in the USDA indicator handbook.</p>	<p>RBJ monitoring team)</p>	
			<p>2. WFP will develop a harmonized indicator reporting template for partners to report on the indicators on a semi-annual basis which are submitted alongside the narrative report.</p> <p>The disaggregation of gender data will be systematically reported on from the start of the implementation of the FY21 award.</p>	<p>CO M&amp;E (CO programme team, RBJ monitoring team)</p>	<p>30 September 2023</p>
			<p>3. With support of RBJ, the CO will undertake an analysis of the monitoring specificities of the</p>	<p>RB monitoring (School Based Programme Division (HQ), CO</p>	<p>30 September 2023</p>

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			McGovern-Dole Programme to determine the feasibility of inclusion of additional indicators in the dashboard.	programme team, CO monitoring team)	
			4. RB Monitoring and the School Based Programme Division (HQ) will facilitate sessions to re-orient/ Orient CO School Feeding Officer and M&E Officers on specificities of McGovern Dole PMP indicators		
<p>Priority: High</p> <p><b>Sub-recommendation 1.2</b></p> <p>WFP Congo should thoroughly go through each PMP indicator and consider how it can report on it. Indicators should be presented explicitly enough to be understood by people that may not be very familiar with the programme.</p> <p>Deadline: Before the end on the project (June 2023).</p>	CO M&E, programme team and McGovern-Dole sub-recipients (UNESCO and UNICEF).	<i>Agreed</i>	<p>5. In subsequent semi-annual reports, the CO will include a brief explanation of the indicator definition, where deemed appropriate, for non-technical readers.</p> <p>Actions under this sub-recommendation will be conducted during the revision of the 2023 CO</p>	CO M&E (CO programme team, RBJ Monitoring team)	30 September 2023

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
			VAM <sup>4</sup> / M&E / planning and budgeting tool.		
Priority: Medium <b>Sub-recommendation 1.3</b> USDA Semi-Annual Performance report (SAPR) Indicator Tracking table (ITTs) need to be established with more quality and rigor Deadline: Next SAPR, mid-April 2023	CO M&E and programme team	<i>Agreed</i>	6. WFP will establish quality and more rigorous SAPR Indicator tracking tables	RB Monitoring (CO M&E and programme team, SBP Division HQ)	30 September 2023
			7. WFP will strengthen the SAPR Indicator Tracking Tables ensuring a more quality and rigorous definition of programme indicators.	RB Monitoring (CO M&E and programme team, SBP Division HQ)	17 May 2023
<b>Sub-recommendation 1.4</b> WFP needs to be able to provide SAPR ITTs that are complete. Deadline: Before the end of the project (30 June 2023)	CO M&E and programme team	<i>Agreed</i>	8. WFP will complete and submit the SAPR to USDA. To be noted that annual indicators in the ITTs shall be reported annually The CO will review each PMP indicator during the revision of the 2023 Country Office VAM/ M&E Budgeting and Planning Tool and make suggestions for reporting	CO M&E and programme team	30 September 2023

<sup>4</sup> Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping

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<p><b>Priority: Medium</b></p> <p><b>Sub-recommendation 1.5</b> Standard Indicator # 15 on the number of daily school meals provided should be considered with more accuracy, as it is the indicator that best defines WFP's results in terms of food distribution. This number should not be calculated using the average monthly number of children having benefited from school meals multiplied by the number of school days over the reporting period. This number should come directly from the school canteens registries looking at the quantity of food coming out of the stock each day.</p> <p>Deadline: Before the end of the project (30 June 2023)</p>	CO M&E and programme team	<i>Agreed</i>	9. The CO have revised the calculation of standard indicator 15 based on the recommendation from the Evaluation Team.	CO M&E and programme team	Completed (September 2022)
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Sub-recommendation 1.6</b> The dashboard should be further developed for it to better inform PMP indicators.</p>	CO M&E team in coordination with CO programme and RBJ monitoring team	<i>Partially agreed</i> The CO partially agrees to this sub-recommendation as the analysis first needs to be conducted to understand the utility and practicality of further	10. With support of RBJ, the CO will undertake an analysis of the monitoring specificities of the McGovern-Dole Program to determine the feasibility of inclusion of additional	CO M&E and programme team (RBJ Programme and Monitoring)	30 September 2023

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
Deadline: Next 4 months (April 2023)		developing the indicators in the dashboard before committing to undertake this action.	indicators in the dashboard.  During the revision of the 2023 CO VAM / M&E / budgeting and planning tool, additional indicators related to McGovern-Dole will be included and budgeted for.		
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 2: WFP Congo should ensure that there is a complete infrastructure inventory of all McGovern-Dole assisted schools before the end of the programme. This will allow realistic planning of all necessary infrastructure components that are needed to assure a healthy environment at the school premises.</b> At this stage of the programme, this activity will be important to prepare for a potential second phase of the McGovern-Dole programme starting in July 2022. WFP should work with all</p>	CO M&E team in coordination with CO programme team	<i>Agreed</i>	<p>11. The CO will avail the necessary resources to expand monitoring capacity to undertake a full inventory of WASH infrastructure by the end of the school year (June 2023) *</p> <p>*Although the recommendation does not specify WASH infrastructure specifically (and is broader), the CO verified with the ET and the recommendation is related to WASH infrastructure only. ACTED is no longer present in Republic of Congo.</p>	CO M&E (CO Programme team)	30 June 2023



Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>implementing partners (ACTED, UNICEF and NSFD) on this inventory.</p> <p>Deadline: Before the end of the project (30 September 2023)</p>					
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 3: WFP Congo with support from RBJ should develop clear guidance on curriculum promoting dietary diversity. This includes defining the concept of food groups as an indicator for dietary adequacy. There is need to establish a working group which will put dietary diversity at the centre of its discussions.</b> This recommendation implies that WFP will have a nutritionist at CO level who is the focal point for all McGovern-Dole related activities. This has been absent during the current McGovern-Dole programme and has resulted in a lack of</p>	<p>CO programme team in coordination with RBJ nutrition team</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>coordination between all implementing partners.</p> <p>Deadline: Part of the application process (30 September 2023)</p>					
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Sub-recommendation 3.1</b></p> <p>The position of nutritionist needs to be considered when preparing for the current application for a second phase.</p> <p>Deadline: (30 September 2023)</p>	CO management	<p><i>Partially Agreed</i></p> <p>A fulltime nutrition position was not included in the proposal, however a "Special Study on the Development of Healthy Diet Indicators for School Age Children" was included and budgeted for under the FY21 project.</p>	<p>12. The CO, with support from RBJ will identify ways in which to promote nutrition in a systematic manner in the project, through enhanced coordination with the Ministry of Health and the sub-recipient UNICEF. Preparations for the study will commence in June 2023 and it is anticipated that the study will be finalized by the end of the FY21 project (September 2026).</p> <p>13. Nutrition capacities linked to this study will be leveraged to support on the nutrition related activities. Preparations for the study will commence in June 2023 and it is anticipated that the study</p>	<p>CO Programme Team, (RBJ Nutrition Team, Ministry of Health, UNICEF)</p> <p>CO management</p>	<p>30 September 2026</p> <p>30 September 2026</p>

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			will be finalized by the end of the FY21 project (September 2026).		
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 4: Regarding the McGovern-Dole programme in Congo, WFP should ensure that an action plan is developed to ensure that the programme contributes to the objective of improving the quality of literacy education for school-age children.</b> So late in the programme implementation, it is unrealistic to ask WFP to start implementing activities for curriculum development and training. However, given that the CO is planning to apply for a second round of USDA McGovern-Dole funding, the CO should be ready to properly engage in this direction. During proposal development, it is recommended that WFP include activities that specifically focus on improving the literacy of school-age children. At this stage, this is</p>	CO programme team in coordination with local education group partners	<i>Agreed</i>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>therefore a strategic recommendation rather than operational.</p> <p>Deadline: Before the end of the project (30 June 2023)</p>					
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Sub-recommendation 4.1</b></p> <p>With the support of the RBJ, the WFP CO in Congo should organise a meeting with key education stakeholders to ensure that school children benefit from improved literacy capacities for the next McGovern-Dole.</p> <p>Deadline: Before the end of the project (30 June 2023)</p>	<p>CO programme team in coordination with local education group partners</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>14. WFP has and will continue to work closely with its partners UNICEF and UNESCO, to ensure that literacy activities contribute to the achievement of the programme's objective.</p> <p>WFP will, through and with its education partners be an active participant in the education sector to ensure activities also align with and contribute to existing national programmes.</p> <p>WFP recognizes the importance of the programme's objective to improve the quality of literacy education for school-aged children.</p>	<p>CO programme team (UNICEF, UNESCO)</p>	<p>30 September 2026</p>

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			14. WFP will seek technical support from RBJ to gain lessons learned from other countries in the region who are working in partnership with education actors to promote literacy outcomes alongside school feeding activities.	CO programme team (RB School Feeding Team)	30 September 2026
			15. WFP will continue to leverage the existing Local Education Partners Group (GLPE) led by the Ministry of Education, with representation from technical and financial partners and the on-going "State of Education Review" as a platform to engage and coordinate on improving education system outcomes.	CO programme team	30 September 2026
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Sub-recommendation 4.2</b></p> <p>For the design of the next McGovern-Dole proposal, WFP and its literacy partners should revise partnership agreements</p>	CO programme team in coordination with local education group partners	<i>Agreed</i>	16. The agreements with literacy partners UNESCO UNICEF and CRS have been signed in accordance with the literacy objectives	CO programme team	Completed at the time of proposal development (December 2020).

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<p>to refocus activities on improving literacy of school age children</p> <p>Deadline: Before the end of the project (30 September 2023)</p>			<p>and activities planned in the FY21 project.</p>		
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 5: USDA should discuss with WFP RBJ, with the support of WFP HQ as necessary, the most appropriate ways to support school feeding in the region, with an emphasis on the growing interest in the home-grown school feeding model, which transfers cash to schools for local food purchase.</b> To sustain school feeding in the region, it will eventually be necessary to transition from McGovern-Dole programmes to the government's preferred models and better support economic development. Incorporating the pilot projects of cassava fortification and Mbala Pinda to all McGovern-Dole schools could be considered.</p>	<p>RBJ school feeding team, HQ SBP team</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
Deadline: Next 12 months (December 2023)					
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 5.1</b></p> <p>WFP must work closely with USDA to determine how best to support countries to transition their McGovern-Dole programme to the government preferred model.</p> <p>Deadline: Next 12 months (December 2023)</p>	CO programme team, RBJ school feeding team, HQ SBP team	<i>Agreed</i>	17. The CO will undertake discussions on the use of HGSF modalities and opportunities to support a food systems approach to school feeding in the region through the bi-annual meetings ahead of the Executive Board sessions with USDA and the Regional Director.	RBJ school feeding team (CO Programme, HQ School Based Programme Division)	30 September 2026
			18. WFP will maintain open communication with USDA via monthly meetings and the executive board to determine how best to transition the programme to the government preferred model. Deliverables such as evaluations, semi-annual project reports, and workplans will be leveraged to discuss progress and reflect on	CO programme team (RBJ school feeding team, HQ SBP team, Regional Evaluation Unit)	30 September 2026

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
			next steps in conversation with USDA.		
<p><b>Recommendation 6: WFP should give more emphasis on women's empowerment and gender sensitisation.</b> School feeding programmes are a perfect opportunity to promote women's empowerment and recognise their work in society by paying them for their work. Regarding gender sensitisation, WFP Congo with support from RBJ, UNICEF and other partners as appropriate, should ensure that gender transformative approaches are an integral part of the primary school curriculum using the already developed module by the Ministry of Women.</p> <p><b>Deadline:</b> This task needs to be done in preparation for a potential second McGovern Dole project phase.</p>	CO programme team in coordination with implementing partners and National Directorate of School Feeding (DAS), Decentralized School Feeding Service (SAS), District Education Inspectors and communities (via the school management committees) and relevant UN agencies.	<i>Agreed</i>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 6.1</b></p>	CO programme team in coordination with the National	<i>Agreed</i>	19. Using schools as a platform, WFP will conduct awareness-raising sessions	CO Programme Team (RBJ Gender Team)	30 September 2026



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<p>The RBJ together with the CO should take a clear stand regarding their positioning on how the payment (excluding payment by the community) or non-payment of cooks agrees with their overall GEWE policy.</p> <p><b>Deadline:</b> This task needs to be done in preparation for a potential second McGovern Dole project phase.</p>	<p>Directorate of School Feeding, RBJ gender team</p>		<p>through forum theatre and dialogue clubs on the prevention of gender-based violence to promote social and behavioural change.</p>		
			<p>20. The CO will provide a health and hygiene kit to cooks on an annual basis starting from October 2023 to recognize their contributions to the programme. This is deemed more suitable from a sustainability point of view and to avoid any unintended consequences associated with the payment of the cooks.</p> <p>The CO has consulted with national stakeholders and analysed the context for the implementation of this recommendation.</p>	<p>CO Programme Team</p>	<p>30 September 2026</p>
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 6.2</b></p> <p>If WFP CO and RBJ are willing to promote GEWE by paying school cooks, determine the</p>	<p>CO programme team in coordination with the National Directorate of School</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>21. The CO will establish processes and mechanisms to enable the distribution of health and hygiene kits to the cooks under the FY21 project</p>	<p>CO Programme Team (RBJ Gender Team)</p>	<p>30 September 2026</p>

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<p>best ways of proceeding with other actors, taking the national context into consideration</p> <p><b>Deadline:</b> This task needs to be done in preparation for a potential second McGovern Dole project phase.</p>	Feeding, RBJ gender team		starting from October 2023.		
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 6.3:</b> Approach donors willing to promote GEWE interventions in Congo</p> <p><b>Deadline:</b> This task needs to be done in preparation for a potential second McGovern Dole project phase.</p>	CO partnerships and communications team in coordination with RBJ partnerships and RBJ gender team	<i>Agreed</i>	22. The CO will leverage the donor mapping conducted by RBJ partnership to potential interested donors for the funding of GEWE interventions.	CO Partnerships and Communications Team (RBJ Partnerships and Gender Teams)	30 September 2026
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 6.4:</b> In collaboration with the respective ministries, WFP should start brainstorming how to integrate the existing gender module into the school curriculum.</p> <p><b>Deadline:</b> This task needs to be done in preparation for a</p>	CO programme team in coordination with implementing partners and National Directorate of School Feeding (DAS), Decentralized School Feeding Service (SAS), District Education Inspectors and communities (via the school	<i>Agreed</i>	23. WFP will reach out the Ministry of Gender and Women's empowerment focal point to obtain a copy of the gender module and identify opportunities for integration into the school curriculum and broader project activities.	CO Partnerships and Communications Team (RBJ Gender Team, Ministry of Gender and Women's Empowerment)	30 September 2026

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potential second McGovern Dole project phase.	management committees).				