



WFP EVALUATION



World Food Programme

**SAVING
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Evaluation of Nepal WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Centralized evaluation report – Volume I

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Executive Summary

Introduction

EVALUATION FEATURES

1. The country strategic plan (CSP) evaluation assessed WFP's work in Nepal from 2019 to mid-2022 and had the dual objective of serving both accountability and learning purposes. It also considered WFP's transitional interim CSP (T-ICSP) in relation to the development of the CSP and the transition from WFP's previous operations in Nepal.
2. The evaluation applied a theory-based, mixed-methods approach. As well as a document review, the evaluation team conducted more than 126 interviews with WFP employees and external stakeholders, 13 focus group discussions (including in remote mountainous communities), site observations of (re)constructed assets and humanitarian staging areas¹ and an online survey. Findings, conclusions and recommendations were discussed with internal and external stakeholders at two stakeholder workshops.
3. Immediate users of the evaluation include the WFP country office and internal and external stakeholders, including beneficiaries.

CONTEXT

4. Nepal is a mountainous country with an ethnically diverse, predominantly rural (79 percent) population of 29.1 million.² It is classified as a "medium human development" country, but a quarter of the population lives below the national poverty line.³ The Government of Nepal places a strong emphasis on reducing poverty and food insecurity, as defined in its 14th⁴ and 15th three-year national development plans.⁵
5. Nepal is among the world's most disaster-affected countries, with flooding, landslides and drought. Recent studies suggest that Nepal faces losing 2.2 percent of its annual gross domestic product by 2050 owing to climate change.⁶
6. Employing more than 60 percent of all workers, agriculture accounts for 25.8 percent of the gross domestic product.⁷ The agriculture sector is dominated by subsistence farming, and reliance on food imports is on the rise.
7. Food insecurity in Nepal is associated with physical access constraints and natural disasters, affecting in particular women and certain ethnic and caste groups. Nepal's score on the Global Hunger Index improved from 37.4 ("very serious") in 2000 to 19.1 ("moderate") in 2022,⁸ but challenges persist, with more than 12 percent of households having inadequate food consumption.

¹ Humanitarian staging areas in Nepal are predefined facilities that are used for the storage of humanitarian relief and logistics items, to be used mainly at the onset of an emergency.

² National Statistics Office. 2023. [National Population and Housing Census 2021](#).

³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2022. [Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022. Unpacking deprivation bundles to reduce multidimensional poverty](#).

⁴ National Planning Commission. 2016. *The Fourteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2016/17–2018/19)*.

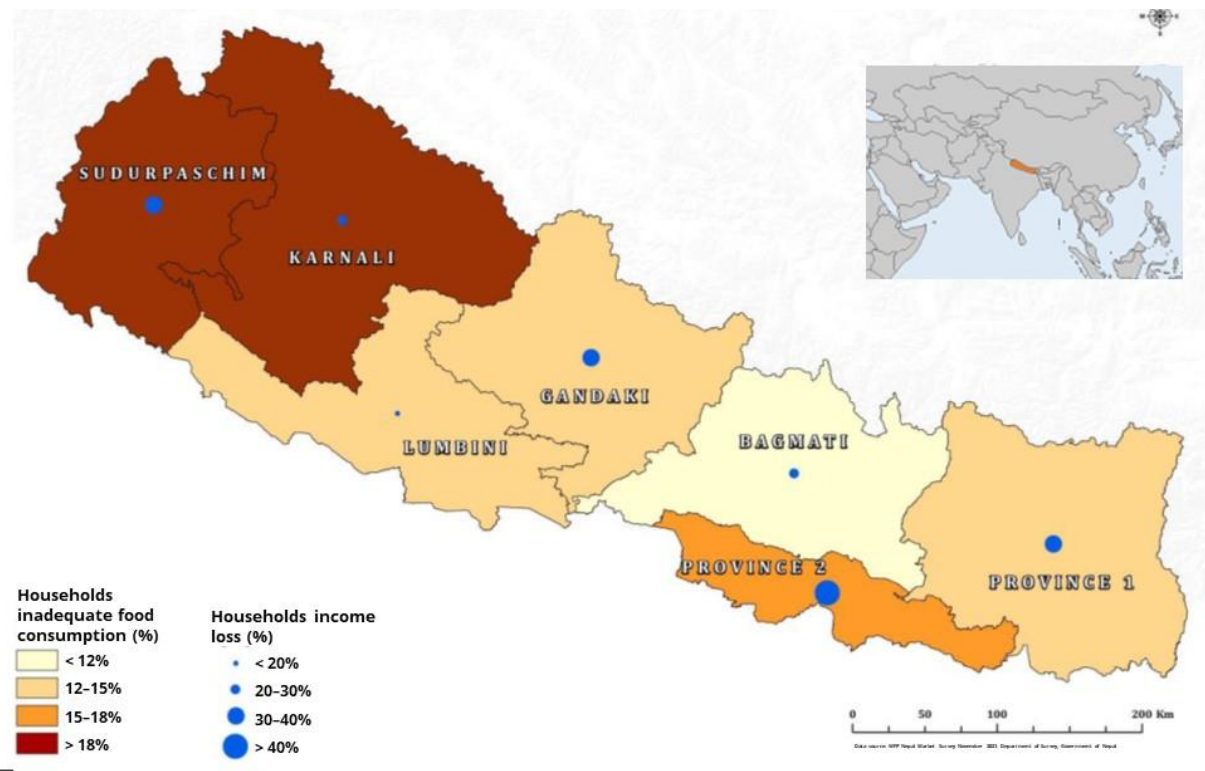
⁵ National Planning Commission. 2020. [The Fifteenth Plan \(Fiscal Year 2019/20–2023/24\)](#).

⁶ World Bank Group. [Climate Change Knowledge Portal – Nepal](#).

⁷ Ministry of Finance. 2021. [Economic Survey 2020/21](#).

⁸ [Global Hunger Index 2022: Nepal](#).

Figure 1: Nepal: households with inadequate food consumption (November 2021)



Source: WFP/UKaid. 2021. *The Impact of COVID-19 on Households in Nepal*.

8. Stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiencies, in particular anaemia, are major health issues. While 27 percent of children are underweight,⁹ overweight and obesity are also becoming health concerns.










9. The net enrolment rate in primary education reached 96.3 percent in 2019,¹⁰ but the poor quality of education and inequity in access to it persist.¹¹ There is a significant gender gap in adult literacy rates, which are 78.6 percent for men and boys and 59.7 percent for women and girls.¹² Gender, caste, class and their intersections are sources of discrimination.

⁹ United Nations Children’s Fund. 2021. *State of the World’s Children 2021: On my mind – Promoting, protecting and caring for children’s mental health*.

¹⁰ World Bank data, Nepal, 2022.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Institute for Statistics. [Country page: Nepal](#).

SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Total population (million) (1)	29.1	2021
	Total fertility rate (2)	2.1	2021
	Human Development Index (rank and score) (3)	143 of 191 countries 0.602	2021
	Rural population (% of total population) (4)	79	2020
	Population living in poverty (%) (5)	25.2	2016
	Agriculture as share of gross domestic product (%) (6)	25.8	2021
	Global Hunger Index (rank and score) (7)	81 of 121 19.1	2021
	Net enrolment rate in primary education (%) (4)	96.3	2019
	Gender Inequality Index (rank and score) (8)	113 of 191 0.452	2021

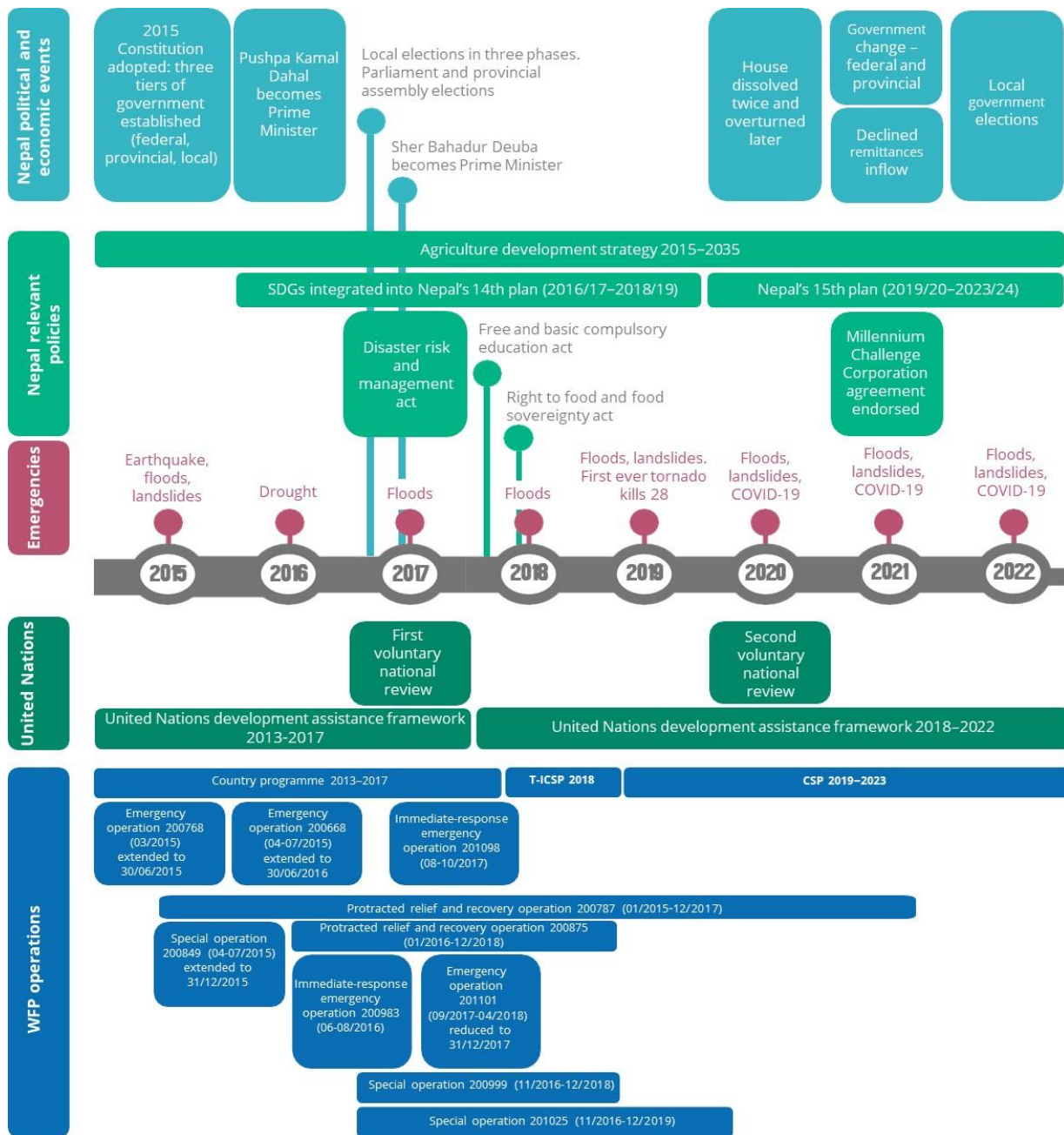
Sources: (1) National Statistics Office. 2023. *National Population and Housing Census 2021*; (2) United Nations Population Fund. *World Population Dashboard: Nepal*; (3) UNDP. *Human Development Report 2021/2022. Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*; (4) World Bank Data: Nepal; (5) UNDP. *2022 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022. Unpacking deprivation bundles to reduce multidimensional poverty*; (6) Ministry of Finance. 2021. *Economic Survey 2020/21*; (7) *Global Hunger Index 2022: Nepal*; (8) UNDP. *Gender Inequality Index*.

COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN

10. WFP has operated in Nepal since 1964 implementing a portfolio of country programmes and operations. The T-ICSP of 2018 brought those activities together under one umbrella. It aimed to intensify support for the strengthening of national capacities to respond to natural disasters, and to provide school feeding, nutrition and livelihoods support.

11. The CSP for Nepal for the period from 2019 to 2023 has six strategic outcomes (see figure 3) addressing primarily Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 17. It has undergone five budget revisions since 2019, all of which increased the CSP budget. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic called for a major scale-up and led to the addition of a sixth strategic outcome, encompassing service provision for partners.

Figure 2: Country context and WFP operational overview, 2015–2022



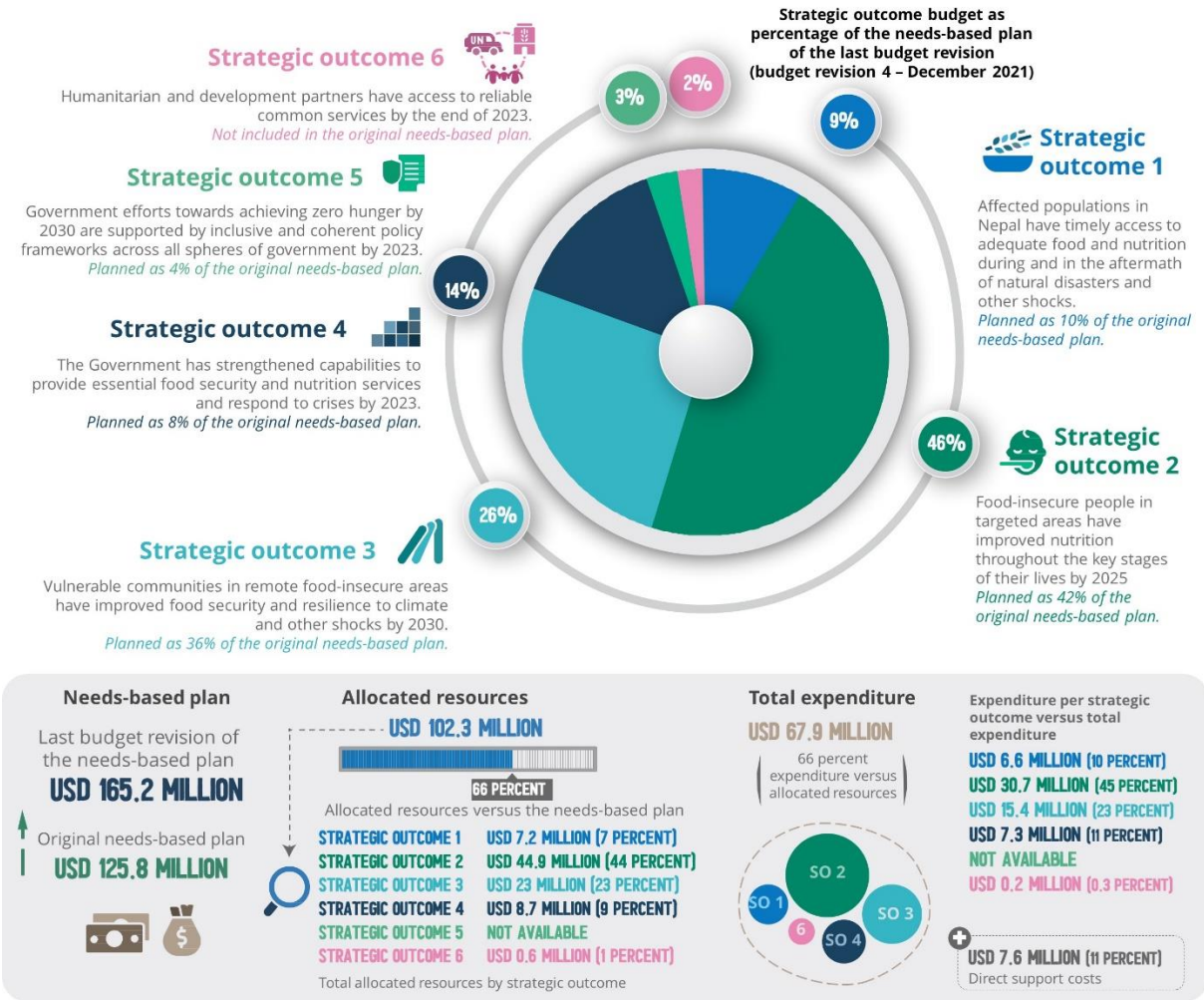
Source: Evaluation team.

12. The initial budget for the CSP was USD 125.8 million to support 1,675,993 direct beneficiaries.¹³ Four budget revisions increased that figure by 31 percent, to USD 165.2 million, to assist 8 percent more direct beneficiaries, bringing the total to 1,809,063 (see figure 4).¹⁴ In December 2022, the CSP was 66 percent funded, with the governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Japan being the major bilateral donors.

¹³ Overlaps in beneficiaries receiving assistance for more than one year and/or through more than one transfer modality were corrected in budget revision 1.

¹⁴ A fifth budget revision, approved in September 2022, increased the total budget to USD 169.9 million for a total of 3,247,119 beneficiaries. However, that increase is not within the scope of the evaluation as it was approved after the data collection phase of the evaluation.

Figure 3: Nepal country strategic plan (2019–2023) strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures (as at July 2022)



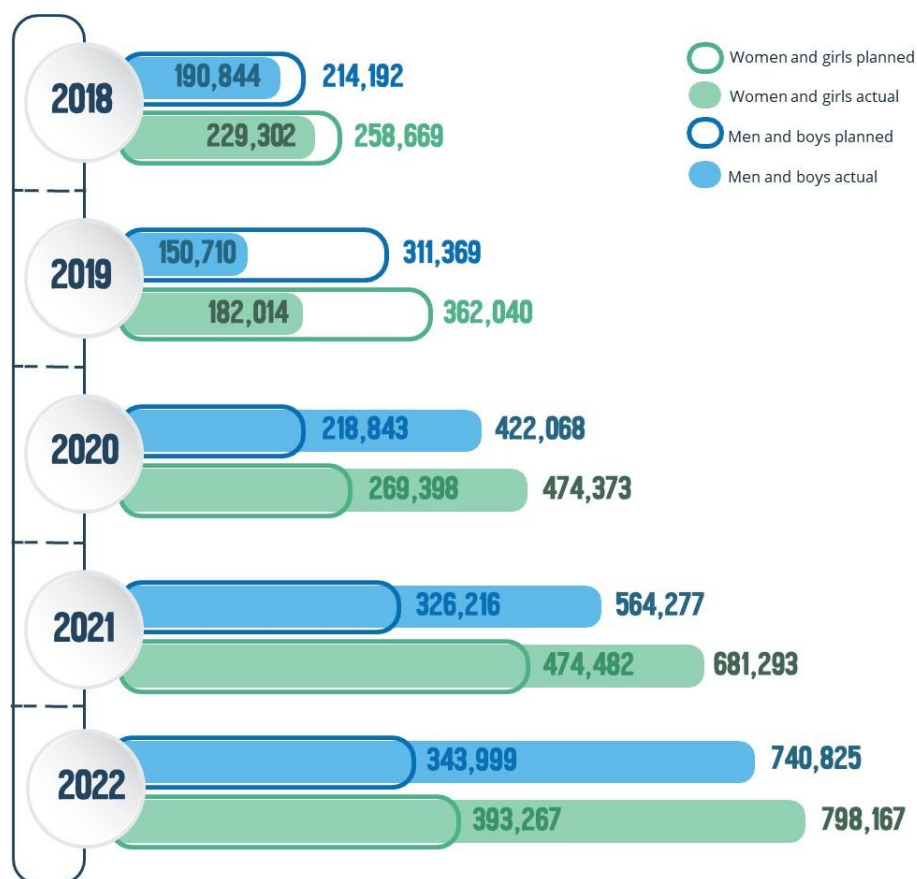
Sources: Nepal country strategic plan (2019–2023) and budget revision 4; country office EV_CPB resources overview report, data extracted on 4 July 2022 (not available online).

Notes:

The allocated resources by strategic outcome do not add up to USD 102.3 million because resources were also allocated to non-activity-specific purposes (USD 4.8 million) and direct support costs (USD 13 million).

Indirect support costs are not included in the allocated resources of USD 102.3 million. The percentages of resources allocated to each strategic outcome are calculated from the needs-based plan excluding indirect support costs.

Figure 4: Actual versus planned beneficiaries by sex, 2018–2022



Sources: COMET report CMR001b, for planned numbers for 2018–2022 and actual numbers in 2018–2021. Nepal country office for actual numbers in 2022.

Note: Planned beneficiaries reflect the most recent relevant budget revision. The actual numbers in 2022 cover the period from January to June 2022.

Evaluation findings

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN EVIDENCE-BASED AND STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED TO address the needs of the most vulnerable?

Alignment and relevance to needs

13. The T-ICSP and the CSP were based on a wide array of evidence sources and aligned with national SDG priorities and targets – particularly SDG 2 on zero hunger and SDG 17 on partnerships, but also SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5 and 13 – and with key national and sectoral strategies and plans. Extensive consultation with national and subnational governments helped to strengthen ownership by country stakeholders. Over time, implementation modalities were progressively aligned with Nepal’s new federal structure, which devolved responsibilities to various tiers of administration.

14. Support in areas such as disaster risk and food security monitoring capacity and the establishment of humanitarian staging areas was highly relevant. WFP addressed gaps in government social protection systems at times of disruption, such as disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, and addressed gender inequality, discrimination and bias for the most affected and vulnerable population groups. However, a strategic framework for WFP’s support for social protection in Nepal was lacking, and WFP’s strategic positioning as an actor addressing the food security-related consequences of climate change is still considered weak. Based on vulnerability analyses, an initial focus on rural communities was complemented by the targeting of urban communities in 2022.

Coherence with the wider United Nations system

15. The CSP was aligned with the United Nations development assistance framework for 2018–2022 in Nepal, although the latter does not provide a framework for WFP’s work at the humanitarian–development nexus. Currently, other United Nations entities do not recognize WFP’s contributions in the area of shock-responsive social protection beyond immediate safety nets, and interviews revealed limited recognition in Nepal of WFP’s efforts to channel its humanitarian assistance through national social protection systems. This situation was largely due to insufficient efforts to raise awareness.

16. Some joint initiatives and complementary activities, for example in nutrition and emergency preparedness, have been implemented with other United Nations entities, and WFP has provided engineering, logistics, procurement and administrative services to partners. However, WFP has not maximized the full range of potential partnerships with other United Nations entities, particularly the other Rome-based agencies – the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development – which share a common vision of ending hunger and malnutrition.

Internal coherence

17. The CSP design lacked an overarching theory of change, which would have shown interconnections among strategic outcomes and, if operationalized, would have helped to maximize synergies. That gap diminished the transformative potential of the CSP and led to “siloes” approaches. However, WFP did make efforts to promote internal coherence among certain programme components, for example by linking school infrastructure improvement and capacity strengthening for the Government, schools and farmer groups to the supply of school meals, and through the mainstreaming of gender equality and disability and social inclusion into activities. The integration of country capacity strengthening (CCS) interventions supplemented direct implementation efforts in specific thematic areas, such as school feeding, nutrition and resilience, but constrained national absorptive capacity and socioeconomic and political factors impeded the intended shift away from direct implementation and towards an “enabling” model. The positioning of strategic outcome 5 within the evidence, policy and innovations function in the country office was unfavourable to ensuring that policy support received attention under the other strategic outcomes.

Adaptation to changing circumstances

18. Evidence confirms WFP’s ability to adapt to an evolving situation throughout CSP implementation. WFP adapted its operations flexibly, for example by using humanitarian staging areas as logistics hubs for the international and government-led humanitarian response and providing transport and other services. In addition, WFP shifted from the provision of on-site school meals to take-home rations during school closures related to the pandemic.

19. The strong integration of CCS into the T-ICSP and CSP, combined with WFP’s extensive field presence, helped to ensure that technical assistance was based on a sound understanding of bottlenecks and government capacity gaps. However, capacity strengthening interventions were not always based on systematic evidence of the capacity needs and gaps within beneficiary institutions making it unclear whether priority gaps have been addressed and creating challenges for monitoring and the identification of required adjustments to approaches.

WHAT ARE THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF WFP’S SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES IN NEPAL?

20. **Strategic outcomes 1 and 6 – crisis response:** The incorporation of strategic outcome 1 dedicated to a dormant crisis response proved useful in helping WFP to respond swiftly to the needs emerging from monsoon-induced disasters and COVID-19 in the most affected districts. Significant yearly differences between actual and planned beneficiaries occurred under various modalities owing to changing food assistance needs, varying levels of contributions received, and varying costs of the minimum expenditure basket to which cash-based transfer values were linked.

21. Nutrition messaging, the distribution of wheat-soya blend plus and the outreach and targeting strategy used all contributed to overall positive food security-related outcomes from blanket supplementary feeding activities, although households continued to resort to consumption-based coping strategies in 2021. More modest outcomes from unconditional cash-based transfers suggest that cash might have been used to meet other urgent livelihood needs.

22. WFP contributed to more effective implementation of the activities of its humanitarian partners through the provision of services such as stock-handling, storage space, construction services and cash-

based transfer management support. Those services helped to augment the collective humanitarian response capacity when required and enhanced WFP's partnerships with other United Nations entities in accordance with SDG 17.

23. **Strategic outcomes 2, 3 and 4 – building resilience:** WFP's construction and rehabilitation of local infrastructure targeted food-insecure population groups in the most vulnerable communities. Activities resulted in strengthened resilience in those communities through the creation of improved local assets and enhanced livelihood coping strategies, and beneficiaries were sensitized to climate change adaptation. However, the decision – based on the preferences of donors and the Government – to cover a large number of communities with only one or a small number of interventions constrained the potential for wider transformative gains towards community resilience and enhanced food consumption.

24. The linkage of investments in training and the modelling of innovative climate-resilient agriculture to the school feeding programme led to improved nutrition in schools where the home-grown school feeding model was piloted. Benefits for the local economy are also expected to materialize. However, structural challenges – such as the Government's limited absorptive capacity and movement restrictions related to COVID-19 – and the focus on the breadth of coverage described in the previous paragraph impeded the larger food consumption benefits of asset creation, home-grown school feeding and social and behaviour change communication activities in 2020 and 2021.

25. In the area of emergency preparedness and logistics, WFP provided the humanitarian community with coordination support and services, including for the transport of medical aid and the production of maps showing access constraints. The established network of critical humanitarian staging areas proved useful, although the timing of the institutionalization of those areas remains unclear.

26. WFP worked closely with government partners to enhance emergency logistics and preparedness for the delivery of assistance during and in the aftermath of crises. This work included strengthening the emergency response logistics capacity of first responders, which, along with in-kind food contributions, was subsequently deployed for rescue operations during monsoon floods and landslides. The training events for which WFP provided technical assistance were accredited and institutionalized.

27. WFP's support for the national food security monitoring system continued to contribute to a strengthened evidence base on food security. However, the full institutionalization of that system has not yet materialized owing to continued challenges related to the awareness, commitment and capacity of subnational authorities with regard to absorbing the system, putting in question the national food security monitoring system's sustainability.

28. WFP's investments in innovative rapid emergency assessments, early warning and anticipatory actions were appreciated and effective in addressing the increasing unpredictability and magnitude of climate-related disasters in Nepal, and in enhancing synergies among stakeholders. However, as is the case of the national food security monitoring system, the institutionalization of those tools has not yet been completed.

29. **Strategic outcomes 2 and 5 – root causes:** Maternal and child health and nutrition activities reached a high proportion of intended beneficiaries, and the improved infant and child feeding practices acquired by families benefiting from social and behaviour change communication activities offset reductions in wheat and soya blend plus distributions. Nutrition outcomes were achieved, with 76.9 percent of children aged 6–23 months found to have received a minimum acceptable diet in 2020 compared with the baseline of 27.9 percent in 2019. Constraints affecting the regularity of food transfers and the utilization of good-quality local health and nutrition services are being addressed by WFP.

30. School feeding activities supported by WFP achieved positive education and nutrition outcomes. The training of school and district authority staff, the provision of learning resources and local menus, the enhancement of school infrastructure and the implementation of deworming campaigns contributed to those achievements, as did a switch to take-home rations during school closures. The number of planned beneficiaries decreased between 2018 and 2021 as schools in some districts were phased out from WFP's in-kind food assistance.

31. WFP provided material and technical support, including through South–South cooperation, for rice fortification. Preparatory work was nearly completed at the time of the evaluation, but production and distribution had not yet begun. Progress was slowed by factors such as insufficient coordination, underfunding and COVID-19.

32. WFP provided valuable support to the Government for the formulation of rules and regulations related to the right to food and food sovereignty act and for setting up of multi-level structures facilitating the act's implementation. WFP also supported the formulation of sector policies, strategies and guidelines, including for scaling up nutrition interventions. WFP's brokering role fostered synergies and improved coordination among national stakeholders and with development partners, including at the international level (through dialogues for the 2021 food systems summit).

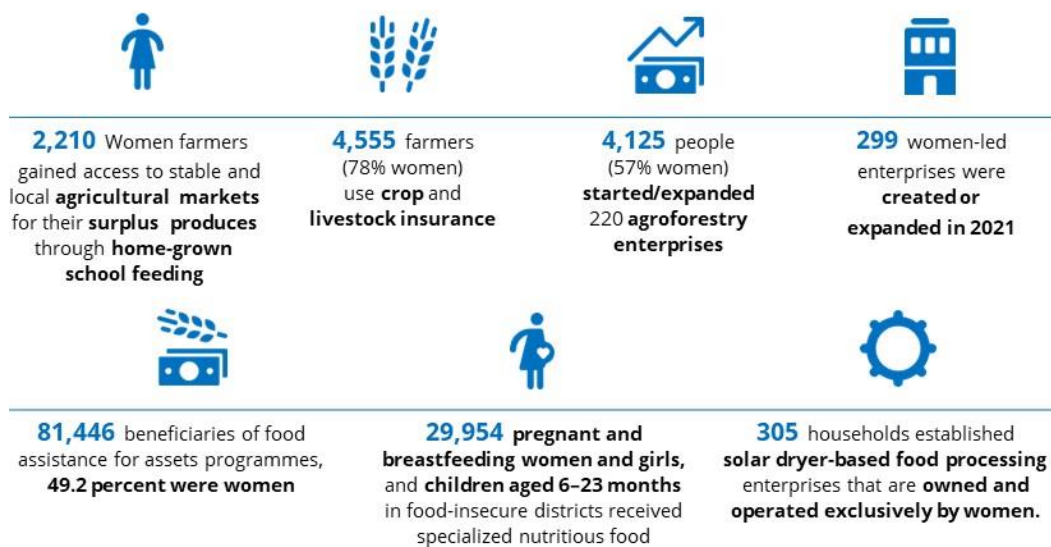
Humanitarian principles and protection

33. WFP activities were implemented in line with humanitarian principles. Standards for accountability to affected populations were applied throughout the design and implementation of activities. WFP's complaint and feedback mechanism was increasingly applied and used by partner agencies, but limited awareness among beneficiaries resulted in low frequency of use.

Gender

34. Gender equality was strongly mainstreamed throughout the design of the CSP and activities (with gender assessments) and in activity implementation, joint interventions and the monitoring cycle. The country office strengthened its capacity for gender equality, disability and social inclusion by appointing a dedicated employee and activating a country office gender equality and disability and social inclusion network. Despite having gaps in the gender-related indicators in its performance monitoring framework, the country office undertook analysis to inform a gender equality and disability and social inclusion strategy and approaches.¹⁵

Figure 5: WFP's gender equality and women's empowerment results at a glance



Source: WFP. 2022. *Gender Brief 2021 – WFP Nepal*.

35. However, a proper focus on disability was lacking. The country office has developed a disability inclusion initiative workplan, which lacks dedicated funding. The inclusion of ethnicity-based marginalized groups was a focus of activities under strategic outcome 3.

Environment

36. WFP's attention to environment protection principles was adequate and included several innovative interventions, such as climate-smart villages, innovative agricultural practices and climate-resilient infrastructure. Asset creation and smart agriculture interventions were informed by environmental screening. The country office took measures to decrease its environmental footprint, but climate change was not mainstreamed in all activities.

¹⁵ WFP Nepal country office. [2019 and 2020 annual country reports](#).

Sustainability

37. The intertwining of CCS, including through the provision of material support, with the provision of direct assistance enhanced the sustainability of achievements and their potential scale-up. However, progress was uneven among activities owing to a combination of the following factors: sector-specific constraints, challenges inherent to the federalization and decentralization process, and emerging climate-related challenges that are reversing food security gains.

Humanitarian–development nexus

38. Although the T-ICSP and CSP did not include explicit plans on how WFP would address the humanitarian–development nexus, the integration of emergency assistance and multidimensional CCS efforts helped to bridge the continuum of the two elements. The introduction of forecast-based financing reflects WFP's efforts to build links between preparedness, response and long-term resilience and development activities.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS WFP USED ITS RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY IN CONTRIBUTING TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUTS AND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES?

Timeliness

39. The use of anticipatory funding, the pre-positioning of commodities and the use of 72-hour assessments all helped to ensure timely disaster response. WFP support for humanitarian partners under strategic outcome 6 also helped to ensure a timely collective response. However, other CSP activities experienced delays in implementation due mainly to pipeline breaks, natural disasters and slower than optimal local-level adoption of national policies and procedures. WFP made efforts to address those challenges through continued improvement of internal procedures and the adaptation of activities as required.

40. Strong supply chain procedures enabled low post-delivery losses. Restrictions related to COVID-19 led to the suspension of most field activities in 2020, and continued disruption in 2021. Close collaboration with the Government helped to mitigate some of the challenges, but constraints, such as those affecting the local production of wheat–soya blend plus, could have been better addressed through partnerships with other United Nations entities.

Coverage and targeting

41. Geographic targeting was consultative, evidence-based and focused on the people and communities most in need, although coverage was ultimately based on resource availability, with prioritization required. There is room for improvement in the consultation of local entities, particularly when communicating the reasons for excluding certain areas. The choice of broad coverage did not sufficiently factor in the convergence among resilience-building activities, which diminished the impact of results.

42. The CSP was correctly focused on rural areas, given their high levels of food insecurity. Assessing and responding to food security needs in urban areas is an area for future attention.

43. Household and individual targeting were appropriate in reaching the most vulnerable, and were effective in avoiding overlaps, for example by using WFP's digital beneficiary information and transfer management platform.¹⁶

Cost-efficiency and -effectiveness

44. The delivery of WFP assistance reflects a well justified cost structure. Cost-efficiency was considered at relevant stages of CSP design and implementation, for example in the selection and contracting of cooperating partners, but further efficiencies depend on the availability of multi-year contributions. WFP achieved a reduction in the share of direct support costs in 2021, despite the high costs of transport in Nepal's hard-to-reach mountainous areas. Some efficiency challenges ensued from the underutilization of secondees, internal "silos" and a "project-based approach" in certain sectors.

45. Comparative cost-benefit analysis was undertaken to inform modality choice (in-kind food or cash-based transfers), and the cost-effectiveness of rice fortification in relation to its potential benefits was modelled. For the purpose of further improving cost-effectiveness, the structure was reviewed. The Gorkha

¹⁶ WFP Nepal country office. 2021. [2020 annual country report](#).

suboffice was closed and some staff posts were abolished while others were created. Additional cost-saving strategies included procurement from local vendors, implementation through grassroots organizations, and the use of remote monitoring and local enumerators for data collection.

WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT EXPLAIN WFP'S PERFORMANCE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT HAS MADE THE STRATEGIC SHIFT EXPECTED BY THE CSP?

Predictability, adequacy and flexibility of resources

46. Sustained efforts in resource-raising resulted in the mobilization of a high proportion of the total CSP budget, with funding obtained from current and new donors, including development banks. However, resources were heavily earmarked at the activity level, posing a particular constraint for resilience building and food security monitoring activities. The country office resource mobilization strategy rightly calls for a diversification of the donor base and an emphasis on flexible multi-year funding.

Performance monitoring and reporting

47. The collection and analysis of large amounts of performance data informed decision-making and enabled the country office to respond to WFP's corporate and donor requirements. The country office devised mechanisms for enhancing the cost-efficiency of data collection given its resource-intensity in remote areas of Nepal. The evaluation found some internal overlaps and unclear divisions of labour related to data management, reporting and dissemination among country office units.

Strategic partnerships

48. WFP partnered flexibly and openly with government authorities at all levels and is engaging increasingly in joint projects with other United Nations entities and fostering consultation with actors at the field level. WFP's responsiveness and efficiency in service provision and its local-level liaison on behalf of other United Nations entities are particularly appreciated. However, increased strategic engagement with development partners is only now gaining traction, mainly owing to strong CCS work with the Government. Collaboration with cooperating partners has been successful but is insufficiently consultative. Partnerships with the private sector and academia are emerging slowly.

Human resources

49. WFP's broad and stable staffing structure, with strong local presence, supports the effective delivery of results. The use of short-term contracts owing to funding limitations creates a somewhat unstable human resources situation. The country office is making continued efforts to enhance gender parity, including through a recently launched internship programme aimed at attracting young women professionals.

50. Realignment of the country office's organizational structure and the recruitment of specialized personnel have enhanced WFP's technical and oversight capacity. However, capacity gaps remain, including in CCS, and seconded employees are not consistently assigned to tasks in that area, being instead focused on other work requested by the Government.

Conclusions

51. The following nine conclusions are derived from the findings of the evaluation.

52. WFP's alignment with national priorities, adaptability and quick response to crises, including COVID-19, helped to address the needs of the most affected population groups while respecting humanitarian and protection principles. The targeting of communities and beneficiary groups was evidence-based and consultative, with an appropriate focus on remote rural areas. However, at the community level, consultations and information sharing could be improved. WFP's integration of direct assistance and CCS was appropriate. Environmental aspects were integrated, but the attention to disability was limited.

53. Gender equality concerns were mainstreamed in CSP design and implementation, with efforts to empower women as crucial actors in food security and ensure their inclusion in resilience building activities. Evidence building and efforts to integrate gender equality and disability and social inclusion throughout strategic outcomes were commendable, as were WFP's proactive efforts to attract and include more women experts in its team.

54. WFP's shift in role towards one focused more on development and CCS, while maintaining its fundamental humanitarian role, is aligned with Nepal's priority needs and policy direction. WFP has successfully positioned itself in the areas of evidence generation, CCS and shock-responsive social protection in Nepal, although the project-based nature of its funding has impeded the potential for more holistic approaches and constrained the potential impact at scale.

55. In terms of WFP's positioning, the CSP lacked an articulation of WFP's strategic vision for the integration of crisis response and work on resilience building and addressing root causes. The CCS portfolio lacks a systemic approach that informs the design and planning of activities and faces challenges in monitoring and reporting. This has impeded the understanding and visibility among development partners of WFP's role beyond its well-known emergency response mandate.

56. The effectiveness and sustainability of WFP's output- and outcome-level results from the delivery of direct support are mixed. Direct assistance has mostly been effective in providing for at least short-term income generation and basic gender- and shock-responsive social and nutrition services and in enhancing local infrastructure and climate-smart agricultural practices. The prioritization of breadth of coverage over convergence of activities has impeded the potential results of resilience building. Interventions addressing root causes, which combined direct support with technical assistance, showed overall good performance. Activities aiming at increasing the local availability of diverse micronutrient-rich foods were limited in scope, and in the case of rice fortification lacked funding. Unforeseen developments, including COVID-19, worsening socioeconomic prospects and the Government's limited uptake of WFP activities, constrained the overall delivery of sustainable results.

57. WFP's CCS interventions helped to enhance the capacities of national institutions and supported the formulation of relevant policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks and the delivery of basic services. Intensified strategic partnerships with development partners in nutrition and school feeding would have supported more transformative CCS outcomes in thematic areas. Evidence building activities have helped to enhance the national emergency preparedness and response system but the prospects for handover and scale-up are uncertain.

58. CSP activities were implemented efficiently and emergency response was timely. Swift adaptation was facilitated by a comprehensive monitoring system. However, the system is very resource-intensive owing to the remote mountainous location of many of WFP's implementation sites. Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness were considered, but not always systematically.

59. Resource mobilization has been successful, despite the limited availability of stable multi-year funding. High levels of earmarking, which can create challenges for operational continuity, persisted throughout CSP implementation.

60. WFP's partnership strategy in Nepal is comprehensive but has not been fully operationalized. Close cooperation with the Government has ensured relevance and enhanced results. Although WFP engaged in joint activities with other United Nations entities, more strategic partnerships with all stakeholders, including other development partners, the private sector and academia, have scope for improvement.

Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	The next CSP design should be based on a set of interconnected and coherent strategic outcomes that foster links between food systems and social protection in order to improve the food and nutrition security and resilience of the most disadvantaged population groups and promote opportunities and benefits for women in food systems.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of third quarter 2023
1.1	Analyse WFP's current portfolio from the perspectives of food systems, social protection, gender equality and disability and social inclusion, and CCS and elaborate a theory of change that prioritizes intervention pathways that are internally complementary and includes explicit synergy pathways across areas.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	April 2023
1.2	Develop a partnership action plan that lays out how new and existing synergies are deepened, prioritized and promoted with other United Nations entities, the Government and other national and development partners in food systems and in response to multidimensional poverty, climate change and social protection.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of third quarter 2023
2	Design an evidence-based CCS strategy that addresses policy and regulatory frameworks and the institutional capacities to plan and deliver sustainable programmes aligned with national strategies and priorities.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of fourth quarter 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
2.1	Building on existing assessments, conduct comprehensive capacity needs assessments of key partner national institutions.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of third quarter 2023
2.2	Based on the assessments, elaborate a set of needs-based, targeted CCS interventions		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of fourth quarter 2023
3	Support the Government in designing nutrition-specific and nutrition and gender-sensitive programmes aiming at the prevention of stunting and micronutrient deficiencies, drawing on lessons learned from existing interventions.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024
3.1	Support the review of existing nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programmes in order to help the Government develop an evidence-based, nutrition-sensitive social protection programme.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024
3.2	Increase or continue advocacy and partnerships to promote the national food fortification agenda and foster interventions that increase the production and availability of micronutrient-rich local foods.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024
4	Continue the hand-over of WFP-supported schools to the national school feeding programme while developing a strategy for supporting the national programme in terms of policy, context-adapted transfer modalities and the management capacity of all engaged actors.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024
4.1	Develop a five-year road map specifying the respective responsibilities of WFP and its development partners and the implementation timeline for the short-and medium-term interventions agreed to by the Government and WFP.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of fourth quarter 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.2	Expand advocacy efforts to generate support for the national school feeding programme from relevant government sectors, private sector representatives, development partners and donors.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024
5	<p>Deepen WFP's climate change and resilience building support for targeted climate-vulnerable locations and population groups by integrating CCS for national and subnational-level government, advocacy and direct support for the most vulnerable people and communities.</p> <p>WFP should review its approach to CCS with a view to providing better support to local governments for deeper resilience interventions while working with national and provincial governments and donor partners to explore avenues for resilience building initiatives at scale.</p>	Operational	Country office	Country office, donors	Medium	End of fourth quarter 2023
5.1	Support local governments' efforts to analyse, plan, design and implement integrated, inclusive and comprehensive resilience interventions that address a commensurate range of risks and vulnerabilities and promote the empowerment of women and other vulnerable population groups at the municipality level.		Country office	Country office, donors, Government	Medium	End of third quarter 2023
5.2	Based on lessons learned, WFP should work closely with national institutions to adapt and scale up integrated packages of climate change adaptation and resilience building interventions targeting climate-vulnerable locations and population groups, incorporating a watershed or natural boundary approach where appropriate.		Country office	Country office, donors, Government	Medium	End of fourth quarter 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
6	Support the enhancement of the Government's analytical capacities for optimal evidence-based policy formulation and operational response.	Operational	Country office	Country office, donors	Medium	End of first quarter 2024
6.1	Identify and systematize lessons generated from the implementation of food security monitoring activities and other innovative evidence-building methods tested during CSP implementation.		Country office	Country office, donors	Medium	End of fourth quarter 2023
6.2	Based on the lessons learned and best practices identified, determine WFP's framework of support for enhancing the Government's analytical capacities for evidence-based policy formulation and operational response.		Country office	Country office, donors	Medium	End of first quarter 2024

1. Introduction

1.1. EVALUATION FEATURES

1. This evaluation of the World Food Programme (WFP) Nepal Country Strategic Plan (CSP 2019-2023) (hereinafter CSPE) presents an opportunity to benefit from an independent and impartial assessment of the work of WFP in Nepal. As a learning input, it seeks to inform the organization's strategic decision making and design of the new CSP, and also serves for accountability to WFP stakeholders (Annex I). The evaluation was commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) and funded by the WFP Nepal country office (CO).
2. This evaluation of WFP performance in Nepal 2019-mid 2022 is organized around four standard evaluation questions (EQs) (Annex II). It covers the direct assistance of WFP to beneficiaries, as well as its country capacity strengthening (CCS) and service provision, and it examined the WFP transition towards an integrated CSP approach. It encompasses an assessment of targeting and coverage in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and equity criteria (including a focus on equity and gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) issues) and factors affecting persons with disabilities, and other most vulnerable groups. Compliance with humanitarian and accountability to affected population (AAP) principles was also assessed.
3. The evaluation started with an in-country inception mission in April 2022. Primary data collection (interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), site observations and an e-survey) took place at the onset of the monsoon season in the period between 6-23 June 2022. During two stakeholder workshops in December 2022 and February 2023, the Office of Evaluation quality-assured draft evaluation outputs were shared with external and internal stakeholders to collect feedback.
4. Proper use of this report will be ensured through the implementation of an official Management Response to the evaluation's recommendations; through the dissemination of various communication products; and by the integration of evaluation results in future evaluation summaries and synthesis.
5. Immediate users of the evaluation include the WFP country office, the regional bureau in Bangkok (RBB), headquarters (HQ) technical units and senior management, and the Executive Board (EB), the Government of Nepal (GoN), WFP cooperating partners (CPs), donors, the United Nations country team (UNCT) in Nepal, private sector partners and affected populations.

1.2. CONTEXT

6. Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia, bordering China and India (Annex V). The population amounts to approximately 29.1 million. Women and girls make up 51.04 percent,¹ 67 percent is under the age of 15-64 years and 27 percent is under 15 years old.² Life expectancy at birth is 70 years for men and 73 years for women in 2022.³ The adolescent birth rate per 1000 women is 63⁴ and the total fertility rate is 2.1.⁵ Nepal has significant cultural diversity, with over 123 languages spoken by 125 ethnic groups.⁶ Around three quarters of the country's population speaks the official language, Nepali, as their first or second language, while an estimated 2 million children speak little Nepali, which prevents them from effectively benefiting from education.⁷
7. Nepal's topography is characterized by hills and mountains, creating access challenges. Nepal's population remains largely rural with 21 percent living in urban areas with a recent steep growth (by 3.9

¹ Nepal National Planning Commission Central Bureau of Statistics. National Census 2021.

² United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA). 2022. World Population Dashboard, Nepal.

³ Ibid.

⁴ World Bank Data. 2020. Nepal.

⁵ UNFPA. 2021. World Population Dashboard, Nepal.

⁶ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2019. Nepal Education Programme 2018-2022.

⁷ Ibid.

percent only in 2020).⁸ Nepal is classified as a least developed country (LDC), ranking 147th out of 189, with a Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.579 in 2019,⁹ reaching 0.602 in 2021, ranking 143rd (out of 191).¹⁰ One quarter of Nepal's population lives below the national poverty line, on less than United States dollar (USD) 0.50 per day.¹¹ Of the population, 17.8 percent is vulnerable to multidimensional poverty, while approximately 4.9 percent suffer from severe multidimensional poverty.¹² Disparities related to poverty are very significant by rural/urban residence (28 and 12.3 percent respectively) and by province, with Karnali reporting the highest percentage of people living in multidimensional poverty (39.5 percent) followed by Sudurpaschim (25.3 percent) and Province 2 (24.2 percent).¹³ The GINI coefficient measuring (in)equality stood at 32.8 in 2019 and 2020,¹⁴ similar to other southern Asian countries. Inequalities in Nepal are frequently caste- and ethnicity-based. In recent years, Nepal recorded modest growth but brisk poverty reduction resulting in poverty being halved in seven years, achieving a status of lower middle-income country (LMIC) in 2020.¹⁵¹⁶ As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, both gross domestic product (GDP) and gross national income (GNI) declined in 2020 but increased in 2021.¹⁷

8. The informal sector employs 84.6 percent of the country's working population,¹⁸ with a higher share of informal employment among women (90.5 percent versus 81.1 percent for men).¹⁹ Almost half of the country's households has a member either working overseas or has returned.²⁰ Nepal has a strong reliance on remittances, which accounted to 24 percent of the GDP in 2020 (Figure 1).²¹ Dependence on remittances was challenged in light of COVID-19 restrictions and fluctuations in currency values.

⁸ World Bank Data, Nepal. 2020.

⁹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2019. *Human Development Report Nepal*.

¹⁰ UNDP, *Human Development Report Nepal. 2021/2022*.

¹¹ UNDP. 2018. Statistical Update.

¹² UNDP 2022. Global Multidimensional Poverty Index.

¹³ Oxford Poverty and Human Development Index (OPHI), UNDP, UNICEF. 2021. Nepal Multidimensional Poverty Index.

¹⁴ An index of 0 represents equality and 100 implies total inequality; source: UNDP, *Human Development Report.2019* and UNDP, *Human Development Report 2020*.

¹⁵ World Bank. 2021. [New World Bank country classifications by income level: 2021-2022](#).

¹⁶ The UN Committee for Development Policy recommended Nepal's graduation from the LDC category with preparatory period of five years; i.e. the graduation of Nepal would be effective in 2026.

¹⁷ World Bank Data. 2022. GDP and GNI Nepal.

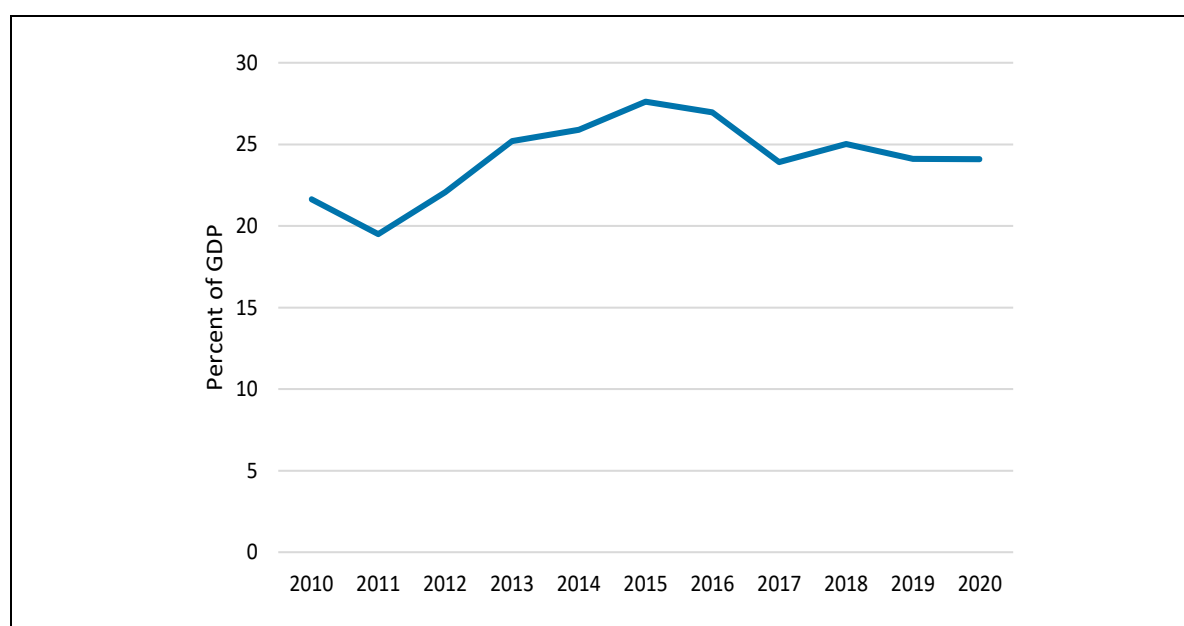
¹⁸ Government of Nepal, International Labour Organization 2019. *Report on the Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/2018*.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ International Organization for Migration. 2019. *Migration in Nepal, a Country Profile*.

²¹ World Bank Data, Nepal. 2020.

Figure 1: Personal remittances, received



Source: World Bank, personal remittances, received (% of GDP) – Nepal. 2020.

9. After 28 years of political instability with 27 governments in power, Nepal ratified its new constitution in 2015 in a peaceful process that introduced a decentralized federal structure with three tiers of government: federal, provincial and local. The constitution empowered local government bodies to exercise executive, legislative and judicial powers at their level. This federalization process created additional capacity strengthening demands of subnational government instances and the establishment of links across the three tiers of government and national and international stakeholders. Recent governmental changes in 2021 led to political turmoil and instability.

Agriculture and food and nutrition security

10. Agriculture represents 25.8 percent of GDP,²² employing 60.4 percent of all workers.²³ The agriculture sector is dominated by subsistence farming. Smallholder farmers produce up to 80 percent of the food consumed in the country.²⁴ Around 75.1 percent of the agricultural GDP is based on cereal (mainly paddy, maize, and wheat) and livestock (milk, meat, eggs and wool).²⁵ Production of fruits and vegetables is limited, and seasonality and prices are an underlying cause for their limited consumption.²⁶

11. Agriculture is regarded as a cornerstone of the 15th National Development Plan. Nepal's Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS 2015-2035) integrates the Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) Plan of Action (2014-2024), that aims to reduce hunger, malnutrition and poverty among the poorest households by improving sustainable agricultural-based livelihoods. However, Nepal is increasingly importing food products.²⁷ There has been a 65 percent jump in imports of key agricultural products between 2015 and 2020 (Figure 2),²⁸ exposing Nepal to a multitude of vulnerabilities when it comes to food and nutrition security.

²² GoN, Ministry of Finance. [Economic Survey 2020/2021](#).

²³ Idem.

²⁴ Joshi, Toyannath, et al. 2021. *Nepal at the edge of sword with two edges: the COVID-19 pandemics and Sustainable Development Goals*.

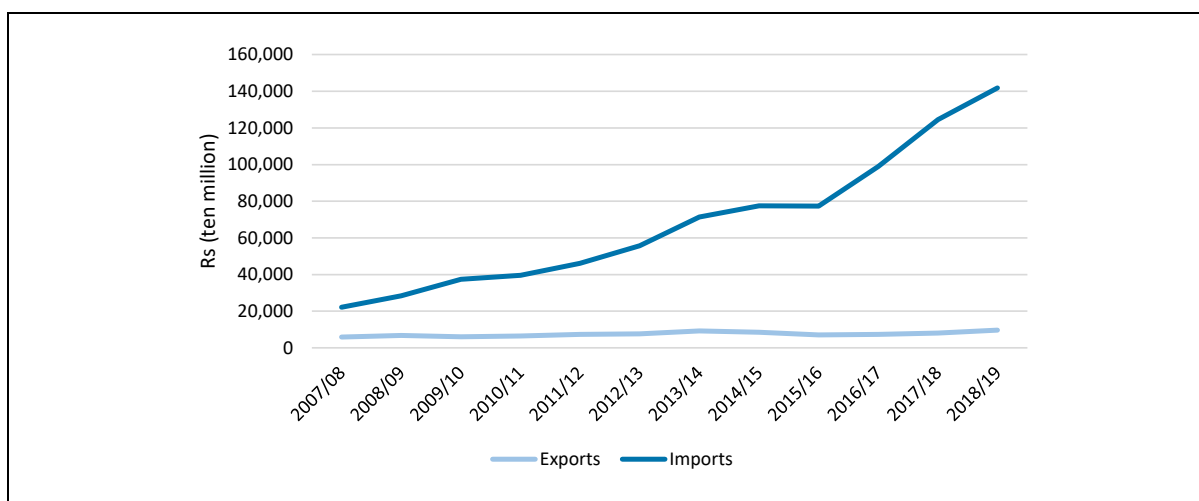
²⁵ GoN. 2021. National Economic Census 2018 Analytical Report Food and Beverage Industry.

²⁶ Wageningen University. 2021. *Scoping study on fruits and vegetables; results from Nepal*.

²⁷ Adhikari, Jagannath et.al. 2021. Nepal's growing dependency on food imports: A threat to national sovereignty and ways forward. *Nepal Public Policy Review*.

²⁸ GoN Ministry of Finance, Economic Survey 2019/2020.

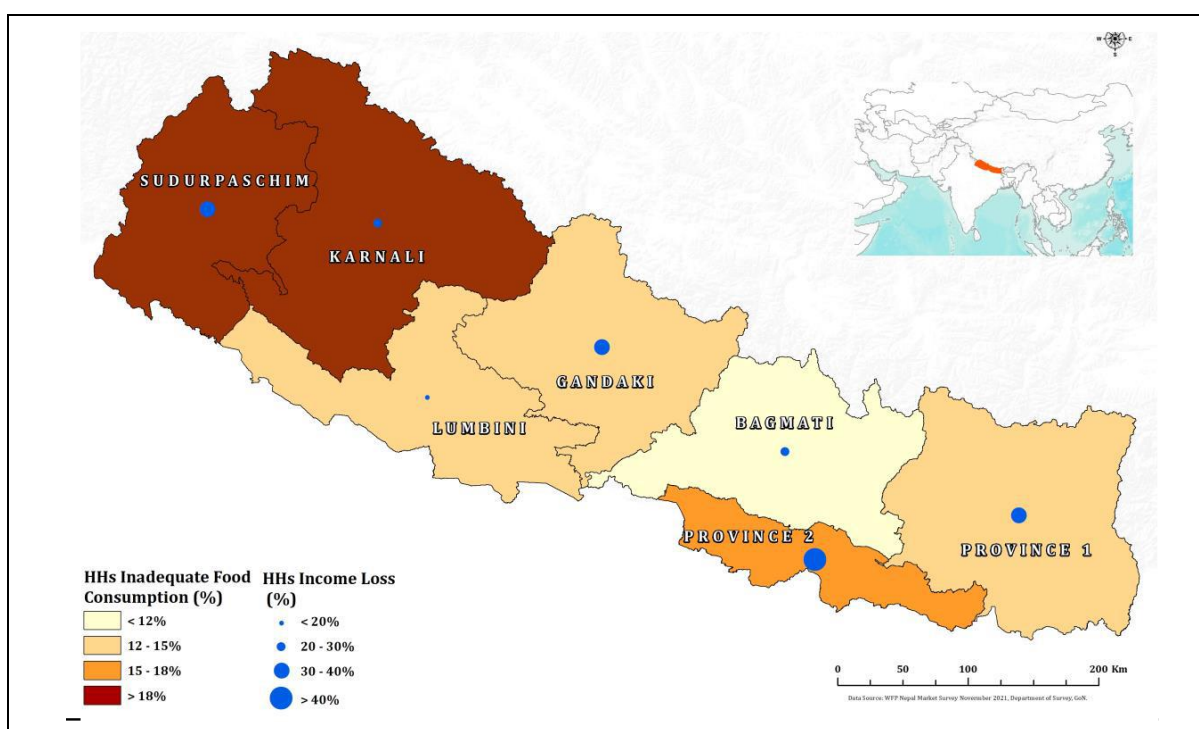
Figure 2: Overview of food export and import in Nepal



Source: Government of Nepal Ministry of Finance, Economic Survey 2019/20.

12. Food insecurity in Nepal is associated with physical access constraints and natural disasters, particularly affecting women and certain ethnic and lower-caste groups. Nepal’s Global Hunger Index improved from 37.4 (“very serious”) in 2000 to 19.1 (“moderate”) in 2021.²⁹ However, challenges persist with over 12 percent of households having inadequate food consumption in six out of seven provinces (Figure 3). According to the mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) survey conducted in 2021, food insecurity remained highest in Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces, with 19.5 and 18.8 percent of households consuming inadequate diets, respectively.³⁰

Figure 3: Nepal households with inadequate food consumption, November 2021



Source: WFP/UKAID. The Impact of COVID-19 on Households in Nepal. November 2021.

²⁹ Global Hunger Index. 2021. *Nepal*.

³⁰ WFP/UKAID. 2021. The Impact of COVID-19 on Households in Nepal.

13. Nepal did not make progress towards achieving the target for wasting (12 percent prevalence of moderate and severe wasting among children under 5 in 2020),³¹ but is “on course” to meet the stunting target, though stunting remains at 31.5 percent among children under 5, which is higher than the average for the Asia region (21.8 percent).³² About 27 percent of children are underweight.³³ Micronutrient deficiencies, in particular anaemia, are a major health issue in Nepal, especially among infants, children, and pregnant women who have low socioeconomic status, insufficient food intake and poor dietary habits. In 2017, 69 percent of children 6-23 months and 53 percent of children under 5 were reported to suffer from anaemia.³⁴ In 2019 anaemia affected 36 percent of women aged 15 to 49 years,³⁵ and 42.5 percent of pregnant women.³⁶ Being overweight and obesity are also becoming health concerns, with 22 percent of women and 2 percent of children³⁷ overweight or obese.

Natural disasters and climate change

14. Nepal continues to rank among the most disaster-affected countries in the world in terms of mortality, cost and number of events. The country ranks 10 (out of 176 countries) in the Climate Risk Index (2000-19).³⁸ Climate change (CC) has intensified the occurrence of flooding and landslides during the annual monsoon season, especially in the country's southern plains and has increased drought and soil erosion. Mountainous regions are also at risk of retreating glaciers and erratic rainfall patterns.

15. The impact of climate change is compounded by Nepal's dependence on subsistence farming. Recent studies suggest that Nepal faces losing 2.2 percent of its annual GDP due to climate change by 2050.³⁹ Nepal's Disaster Risk Management Act 2017 is the country's first act to recognize sudden-onset natural disasters, drought, famine and epidemics as disasters and includes provisions on disaster risk reduction (DRR). In 2019, Nepal enacted a National Climate Change Policy.

Education

16. In 2019, the net enrolment rate in primary education reached 96.3 percent;⁴⁰ the adult literacy rate was estimated at 67.9 percent with a significant gender gap (78.6 and 59.7 percent respectively for men and women)⁴¹ and at 92 percent for people aged 15-24.⁴² The Gender Parity Index in enrolment for primary schools was 1.06 against the target of 1.01 in 2019,⁴³ meaning that there were more girls in primary schools than boys. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that 700,000 children are out of school, out of which a large proportion are girls, suggesting a significant secondary school-level gender imbalance.⁴⁴ Despite progress in enrolment, poor quality of education prevails and inequity in access persists.⁴⁵ Key barriers to enrolment and attendance include poverty, social exclusion, disability, migration, child labour, social norms and gender bias.

³¹ UNICEF, State of the World Children (SOWC). 2021. Accessed on 25/09/2022.

³² Global Nutrition Report, *Country Nutrition Profiles*. N.d. <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/asia/> accessed on 14/09/2022.

³³ UNICEF, State of the World's Children (SOWC). 2021. Accessed on 25/09/2022.

³⁴ Nepal National Planning Commission, *Towards Zero Hunger in Nepal*, 2018.

³⁵ UNICEF. 2021. SOWC.

³⁶ WHO, 2022 Prevalence of anaemia in pregnant women (aged 15-49) (%). Accessed on 14/09/2022 at [https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/prevalence-of-anaemia-in-pregnant-women\(-\)](https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/prevalence-of-anaemia-in-pregnant-women(-)),

³⁷ UNICEF 2021.SOWC.

³⁸ German Watch. 2021. Global Climate Risk Index.

³⁹ World Bank, Climate Change Knowledge Portal – Nepal.

⁴⁰ World Bank Data. 2022. Nepal.

⁴¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Nepal.

⁴² Idem.

⁴³ Government of Nepal. 2020. National Planning Commission, *National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*.

⁴⁴ UNICEF. 2019. *Nepal Education Programme 2018-2022*.

⁴⁵ Idem.

Gender and inclusion

17. With a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.452, Nepal ranks a 113th out of 191 countries.⁴⁶ According to the Nepal Voluntary National Review 2020, the main challenge to gender equality in social and economic life is the prevalence of the patriarchal social ethos. Besides gender, caste and class and their intersections are causes of discrimination. Women face multiple obstacles as food producers, including inadequate access to land, extension services, financial services and markets. The restricted mobility and low literacy and overall education level of women and girls in rural areas hamper their ability to exercise their rights. Opposition to girls' education and traditions such as early marriage still exist. To address this situation, Nepal's system of gender-responsive budgeting and the President's Women Upliftment Programme were instituted in 2017 to contribute towards improved gender equality.⁴⁷

18. The national Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities Act of 2017 contains provisions for persons with disabilities to access basic services. Several other programmes have been established to promote inclusion of those left behind, like the Prime Minister's Employment Programme, the Poverty Alleviation Fund and the country's social security scheme, which targets marginal communities and vulnerable population groups.

Migration and refugees

19. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Nepal in 2021 hosted nearly 20,000 refugees, mostly Tibetans and Bhutanese.⁴⁸ Bhutanese refugees are compelled to live within camps in Jhapa and Morang districts, while the Tibetans are free to stay where they prefer.

Nepal and the COVID-19 pandemic

20. Two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020, April 2021) caused national lockdowns, an overwhelmed health care system and closure of schools. By the end of 2021, in Nepal a total of 827,763 people had been infected by COVID-19, with a death rate of almost 1.4 percent (11,588 people).⁴⁹ The largest concentration of cases was in Kathmandu and the surrounding valley, as well as in some other districts neighbouring India (Figure 4). According to UN Women, the closure of schools not only affected children but also increased the overall domestic drudgery for women who had to give up their paid jobs. Furthermore, socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic made many women susceptible to gender-based violence (GBV): the Asia Foundation reported a 2.7 percent increase in gender-based violence during the first wave alone.⁵⁰

21. In October 2021, 33.2 percent of households reported a reduction in income and a 5.4 percent job loss was attributed to the pandemic.⁵¹ A relatively higher proportion of job loss and income reduction was found among households having persons with disabilities and chronic illness.⁵² The household survey also reported that the food security levels in October 2021 had returned close to pre-COVID-19 levels, after a light decrease in October 2020.

⁴⁶ UNDP, *Human Development Report. 2021-2022*.

⁴⁷ Government of Nepal. [President Woman Upliftment Program - Office of the President of Nepal](#).

⁴⁸ UNHCR. 2021. Nepal July 2021 Factsheet.

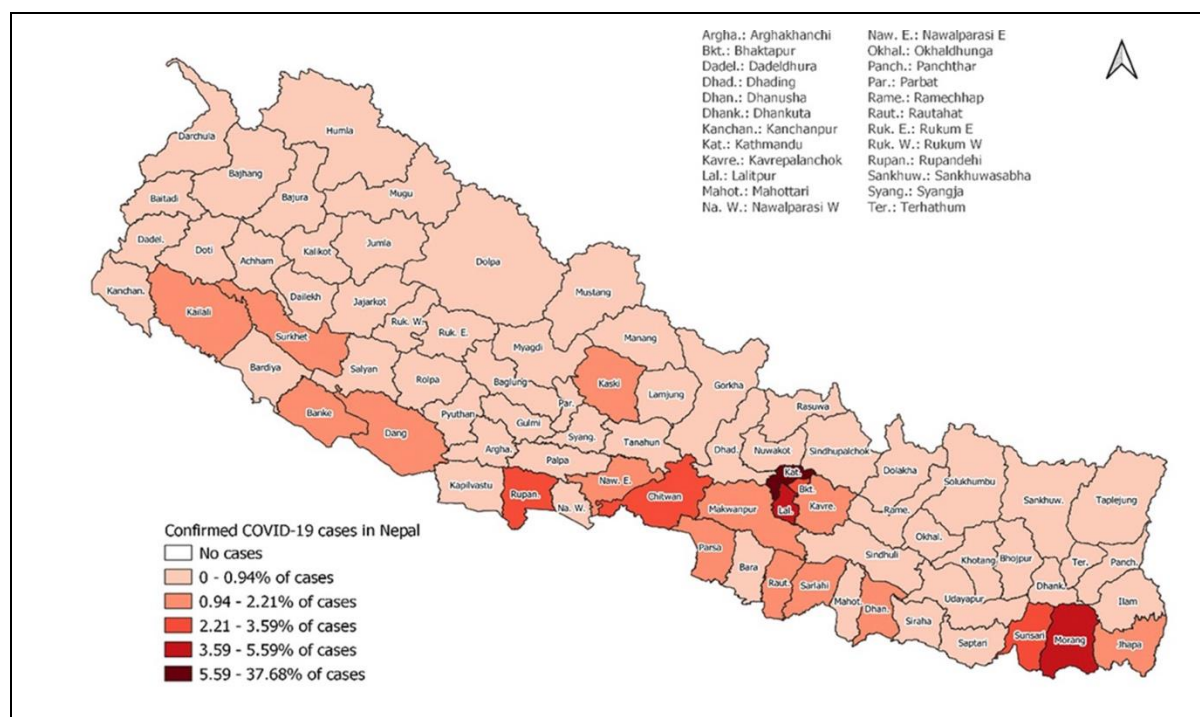
⁴⁹ Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal (MoHP) *COVID-19 dashboard*.

⁵⁰ The Asia Foundation. 2021. *COVID-19 Violence Dashboard Shows Nepal's "Shadow" Pandemic*.

⁵¹ WFP/UKAID. 2021. *The Impact of COVID-19 on Households in Nepal*.

⁵² Idem.

Figure 4. Cumulative COVID-19 cases by district



Source: Frontiers in Public Health, 2021.

National policies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

22. The Government places a strong emphasis on reducing poverty and food insecurity and has promoted policies and programmes targeting poverty reduction, nutrition, quality education and sustainable family agriculture while enhancing emergency preparedness in the short- and long-term. SDGs are mainstreamed in the 14th and 15th plan. For 2024, the country aims to have a per capita income of USD 1,595, a literacy rate of 95 percent (15 years and above) and 60 percent of the population covered by basic social security. According to the country's long-term vision, by the end of 2034, Nepal should have graduated to a middle-income country.⁵³

23. The 2018 Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act (RtF Act) provides a foundation for government and development partners' efforts in the field of food and nutrition security. Nepal's Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035) pursues: a sustainable increase of food production; reducing the vulnerability of farmers; improved preparedness and response to emergencies; and climate smart agricultural practices. It also envisions improving access to markets and food safety and accelerated growth of micro, small, and medium agro-enterprises, including those headed by women and disadvantaged groups.⁵⁴ The Agriculture Development Strategy acknowledges food and nutrition security challenges posed by increasing urbanization (for example, loss of some of the most fertile agricultural land in peri-urban areas, growing demand for a more diversified diet) and identifies solutions to better meet the diversified demand of the urban population. The Disaster Risk Management Act 2074 (2017) provides the basis for development partners' efforts in disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness and response (EPR).

24. The Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP) II (2018-2022) is the guiding document for nutrition-specific and -sensitive interventions, in line with SDGs 2 and 3.⁵⁵ The Free and Compulsory Basic Education Act of 2018, the 2019 Education Sector Policy and the School Education Sector Plan (2022-2032) govern national commitment to increase school enrolment and retention across all population groups and enhance gender equality in education in line with SDG 4. They consider school meals as a cross-cutting tool for achieving

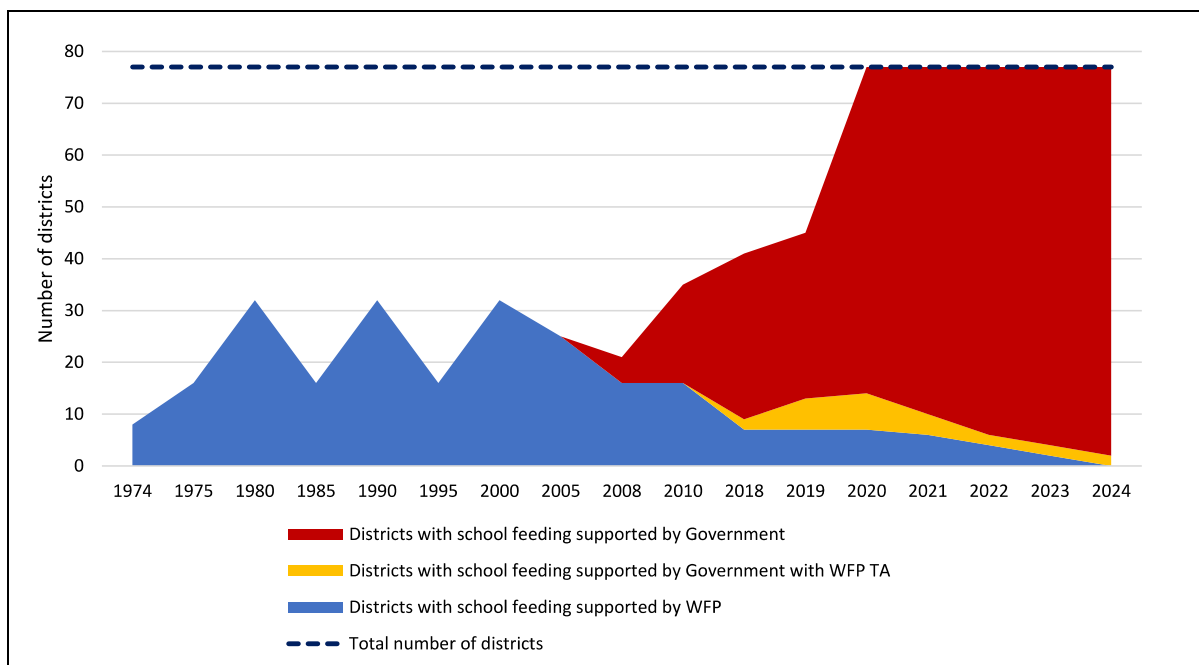
⁵³ Chandan Sapkota. 2021. Key highlights from Nepal's long term economic vision (FY2020 – FY2044) and Nepal's 15th five-year plan (FY2020 -FY2024). *Nepal Economic Forum*.

⁵⁴ Nepal Ministry of Agricultural Development. 2015. *Agriculture Development Strategy 2015-2035*.

⁵⁵ Nepal National Planning Commission. 2017. *Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan (2018-2022)*.

these goals and for improved nutrition and health. The Government has expanded its support to school meals under the national school meals programme (NSMP). The NSMP coverage increased from 34 districts (out of a total of 77) in 2019-2020 to 73 in 2022 while the WFP schools meals programme (SMP) coverage decreased from 9 to 4 over the period (Figure 5).⁵⁶ In total 3.9 million children (up to grade 6) in public/community schools benefit from school meals run by the Government and WFP.⁵⁷

Figure 5: Evolution of school feeding in Nepal



Source: Government of Nepal/WFP, Ensuring the Continuity of School Feeding in Nepal. 2022.

United Nations Development Assistance Framework

25. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in Nepal covers the period 2018-2022. WFP commits to all outcome areas, with a share of 17 percent of the UNDAF indicative budget of USD 643,309,106.⁵⁸

International development assistance

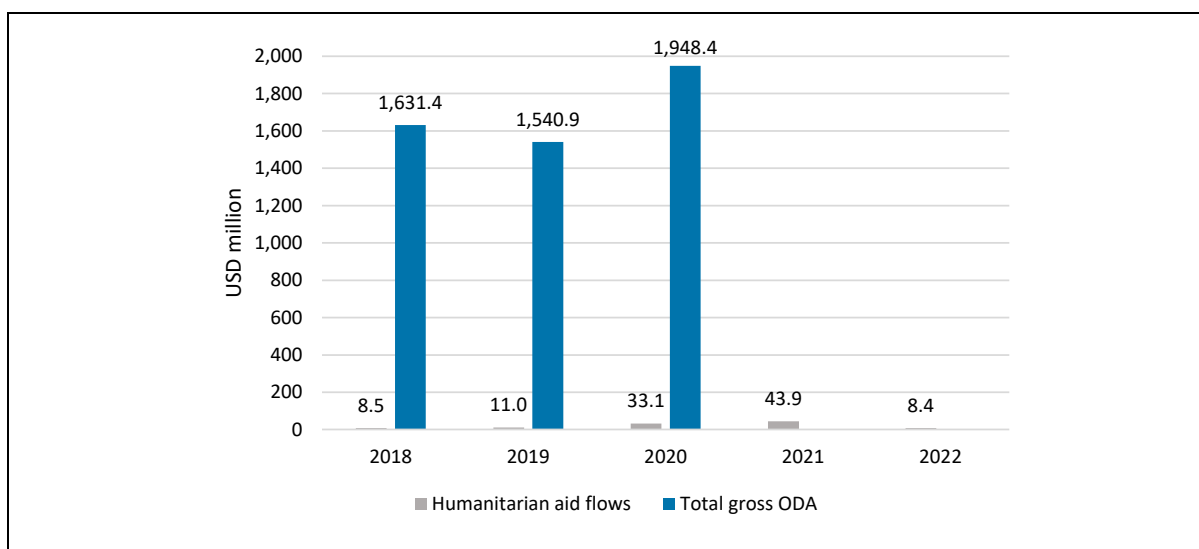
26. Official development assistance (ODA) reached about USD 1,948.4 million in 2020 (Figure 6). The most funded sector in 2019-2020 is other social infrastructure and services (28.4 percent), followed by economic infrastructure and services (21.3 percent) and health and population (15.8 percent) (Figure 7). On average 10.9 percent of official development assistance during the same years was allocated for humanitarian aid. The top five donors providing official development assistance to Nepal between 2019-2020 were the World Bank (International Development Association), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the United States of America (USA), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Japan (Figure 8).

⁵⁶ GoN/WFP. 2022. *Ensuring the Continuity of School Feeding in Nepal*.

⁵⁷ Data from Nepal country office, shared 15.11.2022.

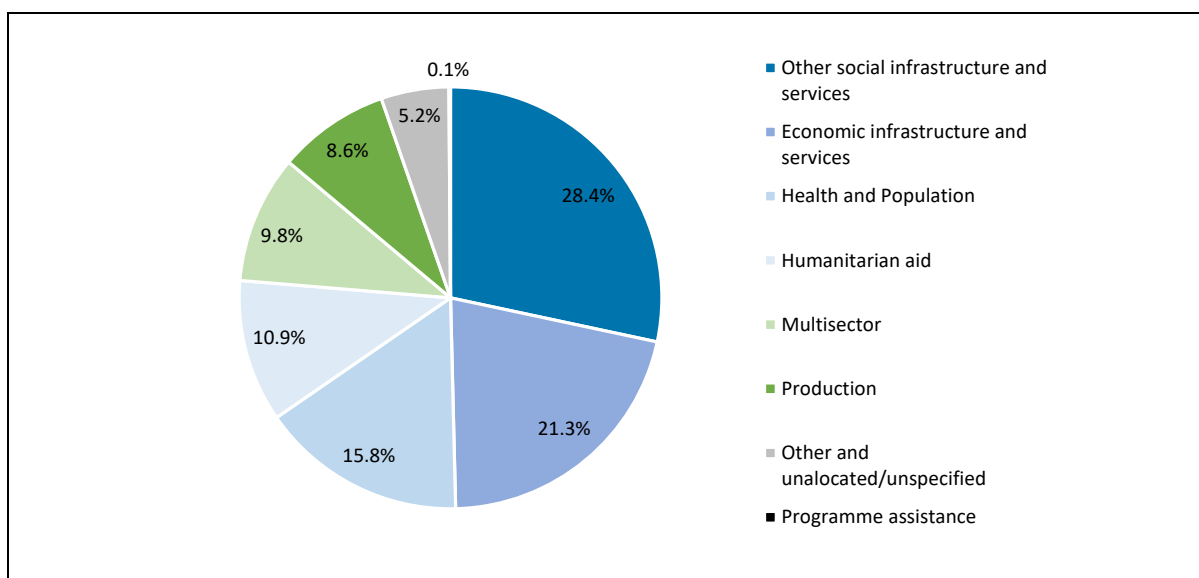
⁵⁸ United Nations in Nepal. 2018. [UNDAF for Nepal 2018-2022](#).

Figure 6: International assistance to Nepal, 2018-2022



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Aid at a Glance - Nepal, accessed 09.08.2022; UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS)⁵⁹ Nepal, accessed 09.08.2022.

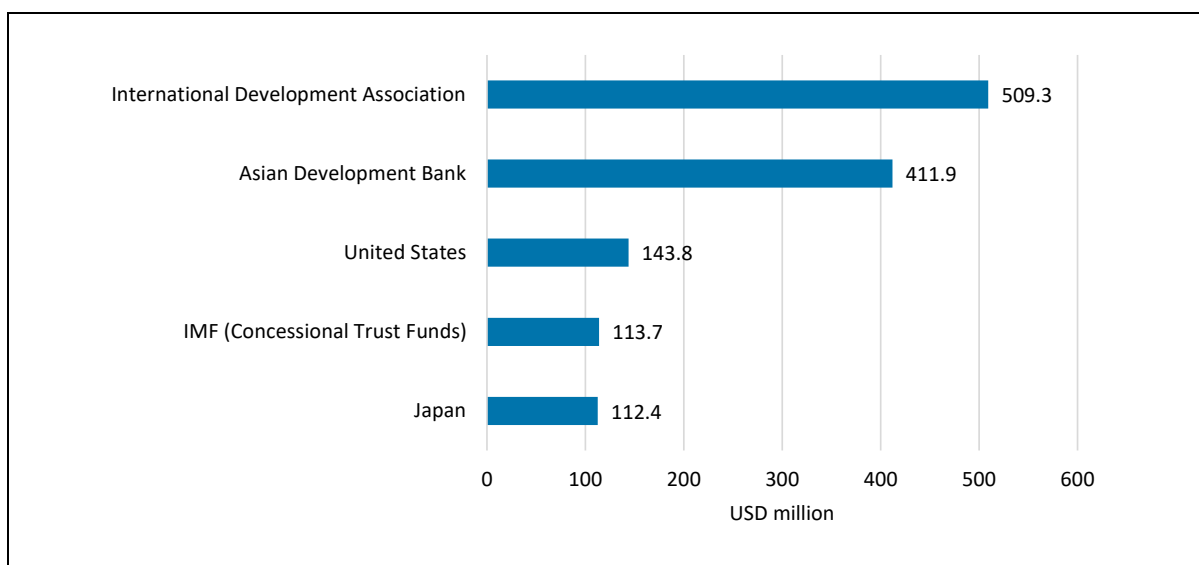
Figure 7: Nepal official development assistance by sector, 2019-2020 average



Source: OECD-DAC, Aid at a glance – Nepal. Accessed on 09.08.2022.

⁵⁹ UN OCHA Financial Tracking System (FTS): a voluntary reporting mechanism to which all humanitarian organizations can report. Contributions are reflected if they satisfy minimum quality standards. Contributions reported to the FTS might be lower than those received by WFP for a given country, given the voluntary reporting nature of the FTS, and different geographical scopes or activities, among others.

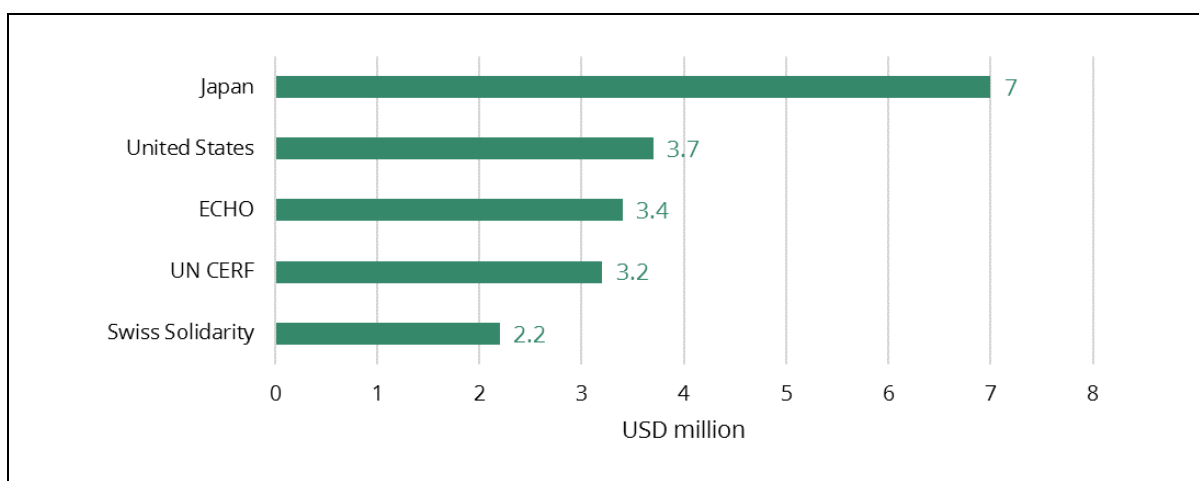
Figure 8: Top five donors of gross official development assistance for Nepal, 2019-2020 average



Source: OECD-DAC, Aid at a glance – Nepal. Accessed on 09.08.2022.

27. Major emergencies in recent years included recurrent (almost yearly) monsoon-induced floods and landslides and the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁰ Japan has been by far the largest contributor of humanitarian assistance to Nepal between 2018 and late 2021, followed by the USA and Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). Donations channelled through the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and contributions by Swiss Solidarity have been recorded as the fourth and fifth largest sources of international humanitarian assistance respectively (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Top five donors of humanitarian assistance for Nepal, 2018-2021 average



Source: OECD-DAC, UN OCHA – FTS. Accessed on 02.12.2021.

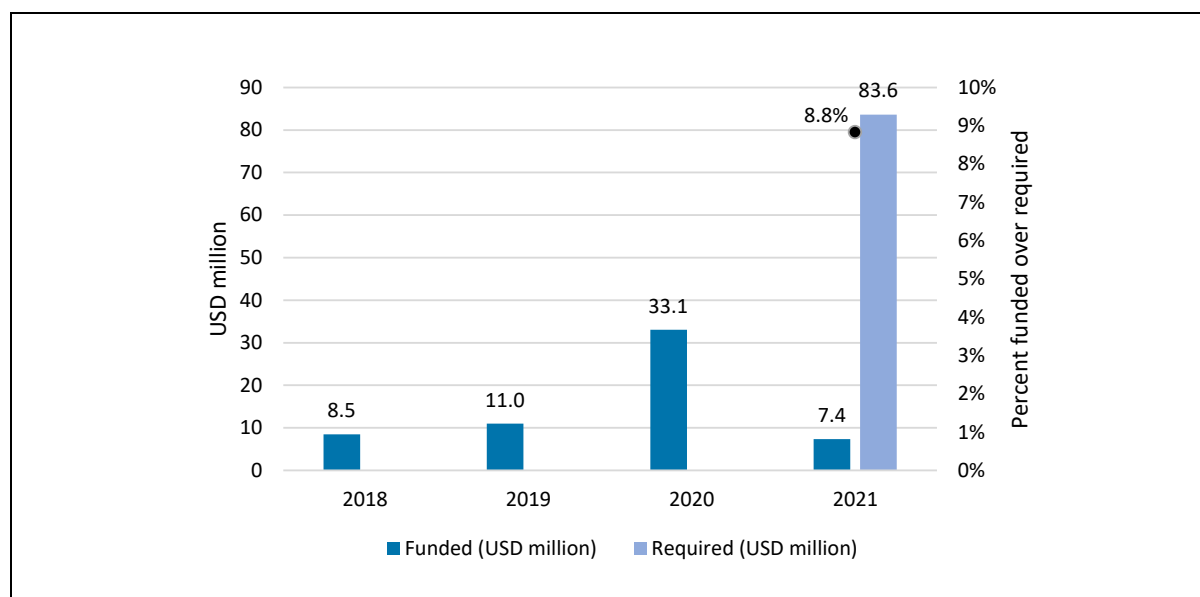
28. Since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, humanitarian aid flows tripled, amounting to USD 33.1 million and increasing further in 2021 (Figure 6). By 2021, the United Nations-wide Nepal COVID-19 Response Plan 2021 was only funded for 8.8 percent (USD 7.4 million)⁶¹ (Figure 10), while USD 36.5 million of COVID-19 pandemic-related contributions were received outside it.⁶²

⁶⁰ Foreign contributions to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were of a different kind and often were accounted for under ODA sectors other than ‘humanitarian aid’.

⁶¹ <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/1048/summary>.

⁶² OCHA. 2022. Data extracted on 09.08.

Figure 10: Nepal funding against United Nations-wide COVID-19 response plans and appeal, 2018-2021 (sub-component of total humanitarian assistance)



Source: OCHA FTS website, accessed 09.08.2022. Note: no data reported on response plans for 2018-2020.

1.3. SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED

29. WFP has operated in Nepal since 1964, through country programmes, emergency operations (EMOPs) and protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs). The Country Programme (2013-2017)⁶³ marked the organization’s shift towards a development approach in Nepal by combining direct implementation with CCS. Alongside the country programme, there were five EMOPs in response to floods (2014, two in 2017), drought (2016) and the earthquake (2015); two PRROs in support to Bhutanese refugees (2015-2017) and resilient livelihoods in earthquake-affected areas (2016-2018); three special operations on logistics and telecommunications, as well as the reconstruction of new country office premises after the earthquake (Figure 12); and four trust funds.⁶⁴

Strategic focus of the T-ICSP

30. The Nepal T-ICSP⁶⁵ (January–June 2018),⁶⁶ consolidated all programmes, operations and trust funds into one programme, in alignment with the 2016 policy on CSPs⁶⁷ and financial framework review.⁶⁸ The T-ICSP design was informed by the recommendations of the country programme evaluation conducted in 2016, which called for a greater focus by WFP on knowledge transfer and capacity development.⁶⁹ The direction, focus and intended impacts of the various country programme elements remained the same, though with a wider geographic footprint in response to the needs arising from the socioeconomic impact of the 2015 earthquake. The T-ICSP was structured along five strategic outcomes (SOs), addressing primarily SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 17 (partnerships).

31. Under the T-ICSP, support was intensified for strengthening national capacity to respond to natural disasters (emergency preparedness and logistics augmentation) and supporting government efforts to

⁶³ WFP. 2018. Nepal T-ICSP.

⁶⁴ Capacity strengthening subnational harvest outlook assessments; a community development programme; climate change adaptation in Karnali region; and strengthening of the Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NekSAP).

⁶⁵ WFP. 2018. Nepal T-ICSP.

⁶⁶ The shift from T-ICSP (initially planned for six months) to the CSP proved unrealistic; the T-ICSP was hence extended by six months.

⁶⁷ WFP. 2016. *Policy on Country Strategy Plans*.

⁶⁸ WFP. 2016. *Financial Framework Review*.

⁶⁹ WFP. 2016. *Nepal Country Programme, 200319: A Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP’s Operation (2013-2017)*.

tackle food insecurity through a focus on social safety nets in education, nutrition and productive assets for livelihood. Support to the NSMP was scaled up to 11 districts (mid- and far-western Nepal) with a switch from fortified blended foods to lunch meals consisting of rice, lentils and locally available fresh ingredients. Support was also provided to the Government for expanding the NSMP to additional districts. Moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment in the Terai region was discontinued in July 2018 due to funding shortfalls, with the intention to include it again in the CSP. The Mother and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) Programme targeting pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children aged 6-23 months was implemented in six districts of Karnali Province and Province 1. Additionally, WFP supported national plans for initiating and scaling up rice fortification, and continued technical and policy dialogue with government stakeholders.

Strategic focus of the CSP

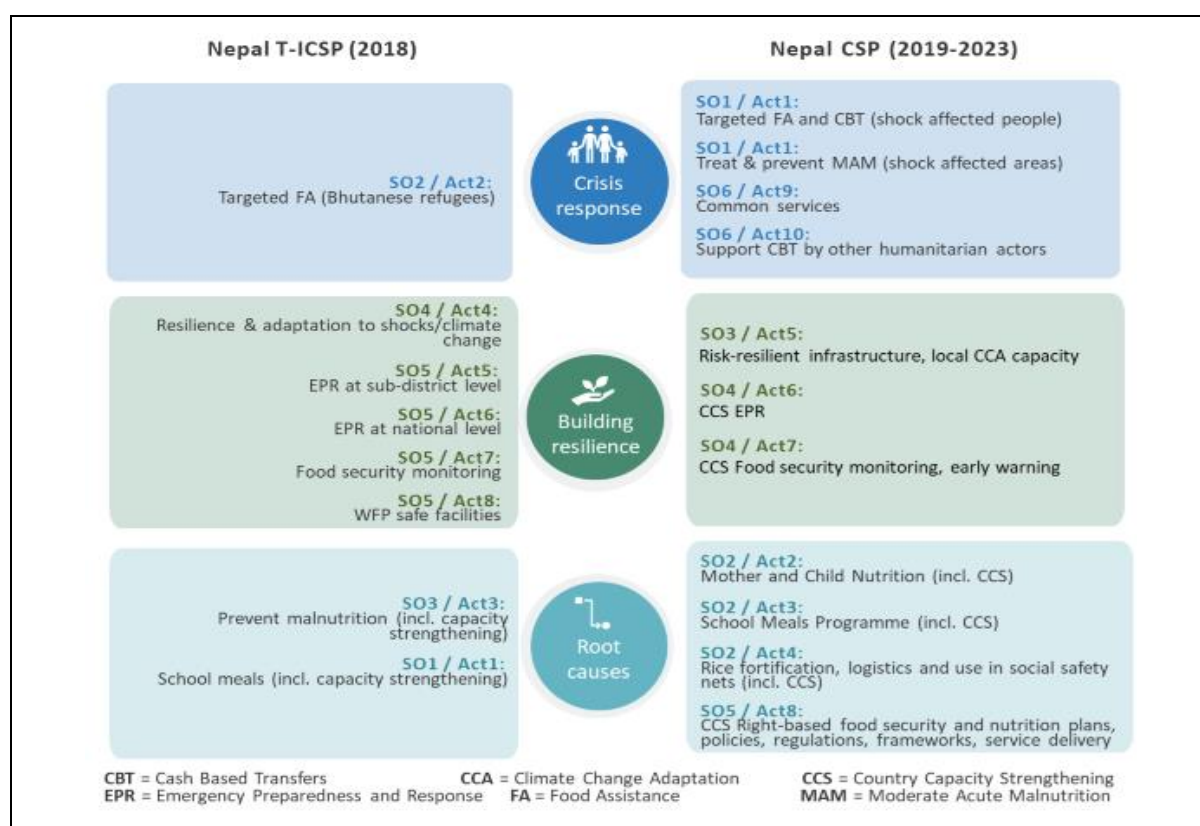
32. Nepal CSP 2019–2023 was approved by the Executive Board in November 2018 and implementation commenced in January 2019. The CSP has six related strategic outcomes addressing primarily SDGs 2 and 17:

- SO1: Access to food and nutrition for shock-affected people;
- SO2: Nutrition (nutrition, the school meals programme, rice fortification);
- SO3: Food security and resilience to climate and other shocks;
- SO4: CCS on emergency preparedness and response and food security monitoring;
- SO5: Support to government frameworks for achieving zero hunger by 2030; and
- SO6: Access to reliable common services for humanitarian and development partners.

33. The on-demand crisis response service provision to humanitarian agencies (SO6/Activity 9) was added in January 2021 under Budget Revision (BR) 3; and support services for cash transfer services (SO6/Activity 10) were added in December 2021 under BR4. The strategic focus of the CSP remained the same throughout other budget revisions, which related solely to minor increases in budget (less than 1 percent BR1 and BR2); adjustments in beneficiary numbers by removing overlap; addition of a cash modality for the forecast-based financing (FbF) activity (BR1); and an increase in the cash-based transfer (CBT) value under Activity 7 (BR2).

34. Figure 11 compares the CSP and T-ICSP activities along the three focus areas of the CSP line of sight: i) crisis response; ii) resilience building; and iii) root causes (Annex VI). The main changes of the CSP included: expansion of the crisis response category (addition of services to strengthen humanitarian capacities); re-inclusion of moderate acute malnutrition treatment, and clustering policy-related capacity strengthening under a dedicated strategic outcome (SO5). In reflection of the theory-based evaluation approach, a theory of change (ToC) and assumptions underpinning the CSP (Annex IV) were reconstructed, representing also the foundation for this evaluation.

Figure 11: Comparison T-ICSP and CSP activities



Source: Evaluation team (ET).

WFP Nepal country office analytical work

35. The country office conducted a wide range of upstream analytical work, such as: “Towards Zero Hunger, a strategic review of food security and nutrition, 2018” led by the Government's National Planning Commission (NPC); a decentralized end-term evaluation of the PRRO on the earthquake response; a nutrition review; and a Nepal Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) analysis (see paragraphs 43 and 149).⁷⁰ Evidence generation continued during CSP implementation; examples include: a 2019 mVAM food security survey;⁷¹ the Fill the Nutrient Gap (FNG) analysis in 2021;⁷² mVAM surveys on the impact of COVID-19 on households in 2020 and 2021;^{73, 74} mVAM markets surveys;⁷⁵ and a mid-term review of Nepal CSP in 2021.⁷⁶

Key changes in the external and internal environment

36. Major contextual developments occurred prior to and during the T-ICSP and CSP period, including natural disasters and the COVID-19 outbreak (Figure 12). Nepal encountered political and economic changes with the introduction of federalism and decentralization of governance in 2015. The WFP response to the recurrence of monsoon-induced disasters (various flood response EMOPs) led to the strategic decision by WFP to incorporate a crisis response strategic outcome (SO1) in the CSP. The COVID-19 pandemic led to the addition of SO6. In response to decentralization, WFP expanded capacity strengthening efforts to the subnational tiers of government.

⁷⁰ WFP. 2018. Nepal Gender equality, social inclusion and food and nutrition analysis.

⁷¹ WFP, mVAM Food Security Monitoring survey. January and June 2019.

⁷² WFP/ NPC. 2021. Fill the Nutrient Gap.

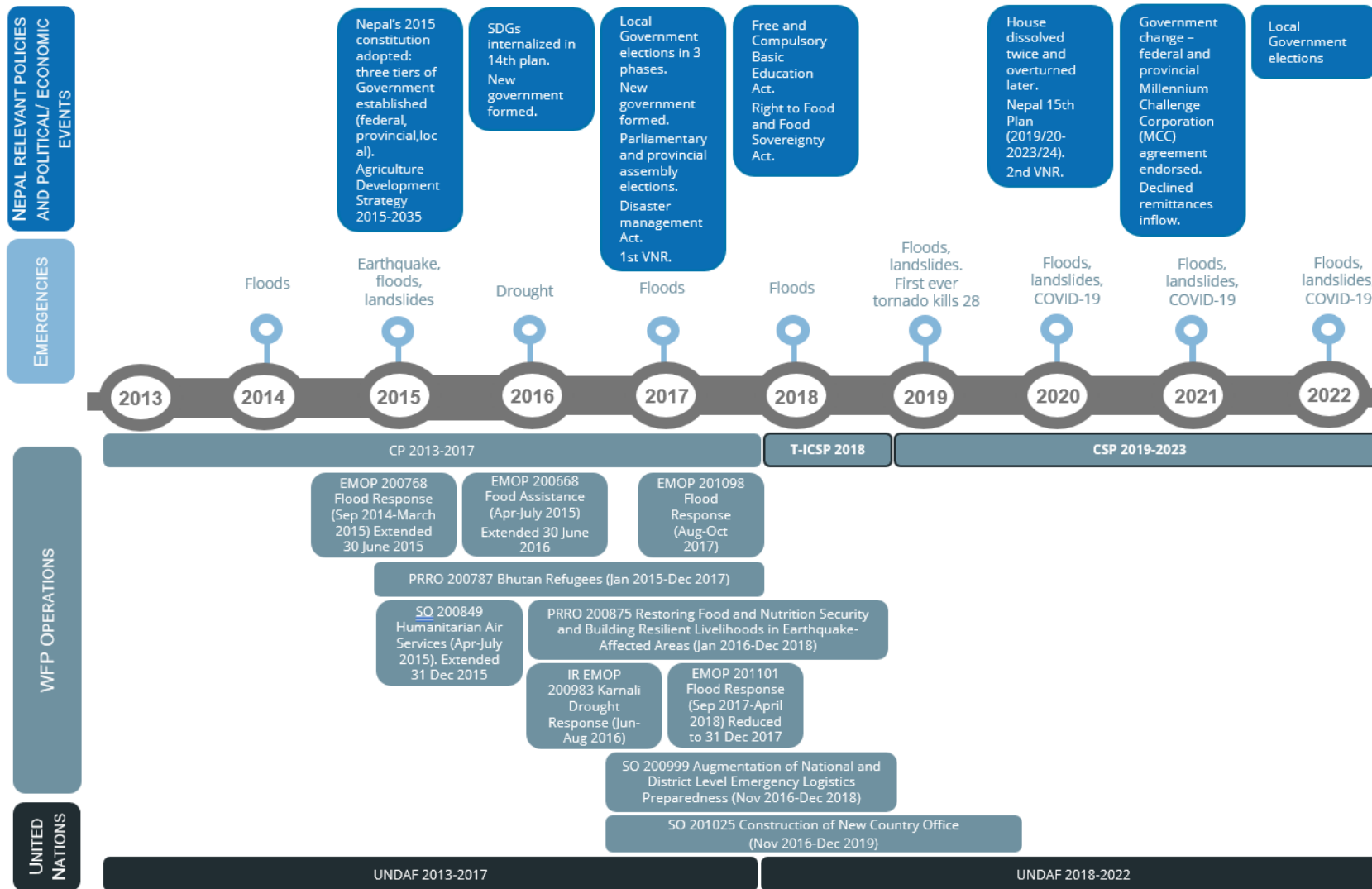
⁷³ WFP/MOALD/Australian Aid. 2021. *The impact of COVID-19 on Households in Nepal. May and September 2020.*

⁷⁴ WFP/UKAID. 2021. *The impact of COVID-19 on Households in Nepal.*

⁷⁵ WFP, mVAM Market Update. Eight in 2020 and three in 2021.

⁷⁶ WFP Nepal. 2021. *Mid-Term Review of WFP's Nepal Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023).*

Figure 12: Overview of major events in Nepal and WFP operations



Source: Evaluation team.

WFP delivery modalities and modes of engagement

37. Table 1 provides an overview of delivery modalities across the T-ICSP and CSP.

Table 1: T-ICSP and CSP delivery modalities

T-ICSP		CSP	
SO/Activity	Modality	SO/Activity	Modality
SO1/Act1	Food (on-site), CS	SO1/Act1	Food (unconditional household take-home rations (THR); BSFP for PLWs and children 6-23 months), CBT
SO2/Act2	Food (household THR), CBT	SO2/Act2	Food (BSFP), CS
SO3/Act3	Food (BSFP), CS	SO2/Act3	Food (on-site; THR), CS
SO4/Act4	Food, CBT	SO2/Act4	CS
SO5/Act5	CS	SO3/Act5	CBT, CS
SO5/Act6		SO4/Act6	CS
SO5/Act7		SO4/Act7	
SO5/Act8		SO5/Act8	
		SO6/Act9	Service delivery
		SO6/Act10	

Source: ET. CS = capacity strengthening, BSFP = blanket supplementary feeding programme, THR = take-home ration.

Original budgets and budget revisions

38. The T-ICSP initial budget of USD 24.3 million (1 January-30 June 2018) was increased to USD 42.7 million until 31 December 2018 through BR3⁹³ (for detailed T-ICSP data, see Annex VII). The initial budget of the CSP was USD 125.8 million with 1,675,993 direct beneficiaries.⁹⁴ While BR1 and BR2 increased the CSP budget very slightly, BR3 and BR4 in 2021 implied a considerable scale-up in response to COVID-19,⁹⁵ leading to a total budget of USD 165.2 million (31 percent increase) with 1,809,063 direct beneficiaries (8 percent increase). BR5, approved in September 2022, increased the total budget to USD 169.9 million and 3,247,119 beneficiaries. However, BR5 is not reflected in the analysis of the report given it was not approved at the time of data collection.

39. Relative budget allocation (excluding indirect support costs (ISC)) to crisis responses substantially increased, from 2.7 percent in the T-ICSP (SO2) to 11.7 percent in the CSP (SO1; SO6), while the proportion of the budget for resilience building declined from 60.8 percent in the T-ICSP (SO4; SO5) to 39.4 percent in the CSP (SO3; SO4). The share of the budget allocated to addressing root causes of food and nutrition insecurity increased from 36.5 percent in the T-ICSP (SO1; SO3) to 48.9 percent in the CSP (SO2; SO5). The T-ICSP had the largest focus on resilience and adaptation to shocks and climate change (SO4/Activity 4), while SO2 (MCHN and the school meals programme) became the largest under the CSP (Table 2 below and Table 4 in Annex VII).

⁹³ WFP. 2018. Nepal T-ICSP, Revision 3.

⁹⁴ Overlaps of beneficiaries receiving assistance over more than one year and/or through different transfer modalities were corrected through BR1.

⁹⁵ Entailing among others BSFP in selected areas from 11/2020 to 06/2021.

Table 2: Nepal CSP budget by focus area and strategic outcome (USD), based on Budget Revision 4

	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	Total
Focus area	Crisis response	Root causes	Resilience building		Root causes	Crisis response	
Transfer	11,678,600	53,939,699	29,317,196	17,414,608	3,202,821	2,783,045	118,335,969
Implementation	768,656	9,397,832	6,123,837	1,316,191	816,040	745,491	19,168,048
Direct support costs	1,807,773	8,161,514	4,733,146	2,254,987	527,390	400,414	17,885,224
Total	14,255,029	71,499,046	40,174,180	20,985,786	4,546,251	3,928,950	155,389,242
Share over total CPB	9.2%	46.0%	25.9%	13.5%	2.9%	2.5%	100.0%

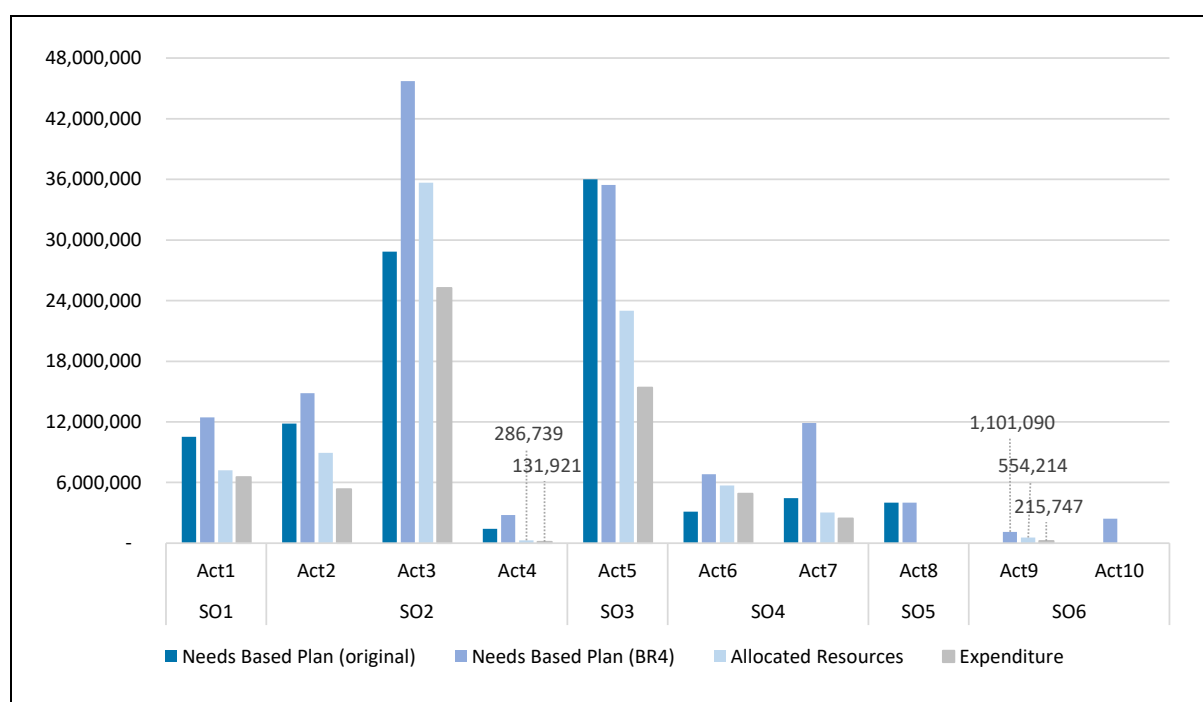
Source: WFP, Nepal CSP BR4. 2021. (adapted). Note: ISC not reflected.

Funding

40. The T-ICSP total allocated resources amounted to USD 18.97 million, 44.4 percent of the needs-based plan (NBP). At USD 18.96 million, total expenditures were very close to total allocated resources. For further T-ICSP funding data, see Annex VII.

41. CSP allocated resources amounted to USD 107.96 million, 65.3 percent of the total needs-based plan (USD 165.23 million). Expenditures at 4 July 2022, totalled USD 67.90 million, 62.9 percent of total allocated resources. Funding allocation and expenditure levels vary considerably between activities (Figure 13). Activities 3 and 5 show the highest levels (allocated resources USD 35.67 million and USD 23.01 million, respectively; expenditure USD 25.27 million and USD 15.40 million, respectively) while activities 8 and 10 show the lowest levels (with no allocated resources and expenditure).

Figure 13: Nepal CSP cumulative financial overview (USD)

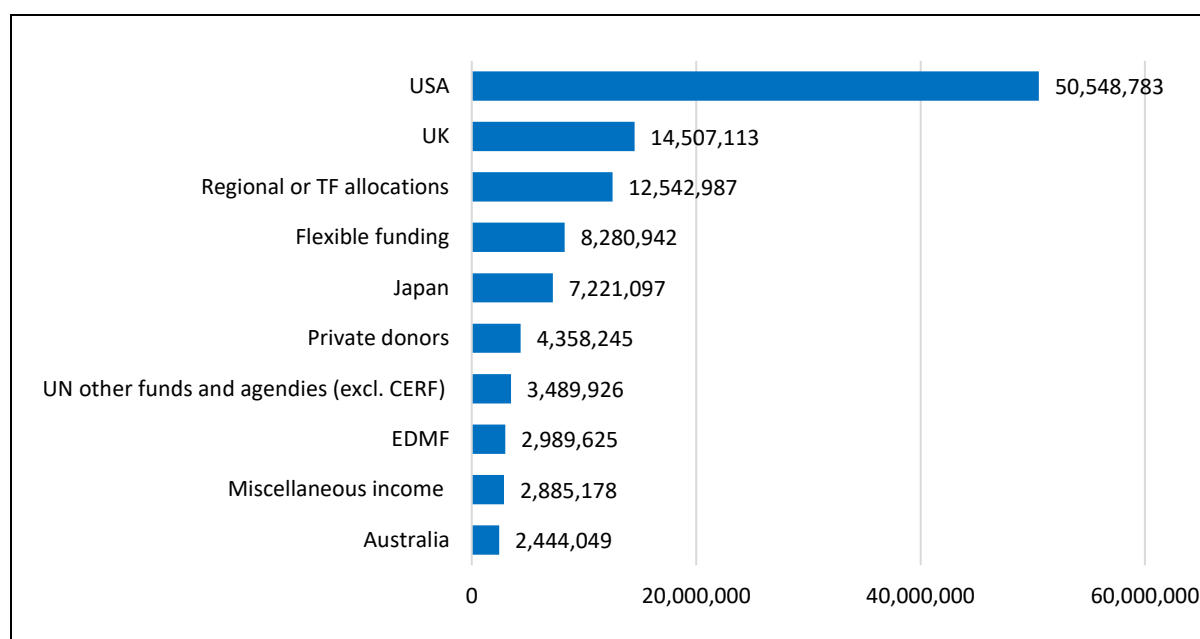


Source: WFP Nepal EV_CPB_Resources_Overview_4 Jul 2022. Note: NBP for full CSP cycle, allocated resources until Dec 2022, expenditures until date of extraction on 04.07.2022; the values do not include direct and indirect support costs.

Main donors

42. The USA (USDA/McGovern-Dole (MGD) and USAID) was the main donor by far for both the CSP (Figure 14) and the T-ICSP (Annex VII). As of 4 July 2022, the USA provided USD 50.5 million (30.6 percent of the needs-based plan and 44.4 percent of the total funding received for the CSP).⁹⁶ The main other bilateral donors to the CSP were the United Kingdom (UK) and Japan (providing respectively 8.8 percent and 4.4 percent of needs-based plan). Trust funds (mainly the United Nations Adaptation Fund and contributions from the German Federal Foreign Office), accounted for 7.6 percent of the needs-based plan for the CSP. The Government falls 11th place in top donors, accounting for 1.2 percent of the needs-based plan.

Figure 14: Top 10 WFP Nepal donors under the CSP, 2019-2023 (USD)



Source: WFP, Nepal CSP Resource Situation, FACTory extracted 04.07.2022.

Gender and accountability to affected populations

43. The GESI analysis of food and nutrition security of women, girls and people of excluded and vulnerable social groups was conducted in 2017 in order to inform CSP activities that could address the barriers faced by those groups. WFP was also guided by the United Nations GESI Profile for Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction, developed by UN Women and the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens. The T-ICSP was given a gender and age marker (GAM) of 2A, indicating that gender equality was mainstreamed into all activities together with targeted actions (for example, the Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (RWEE) Programme). The CSP received a GAM 3 constituting the average from individual activity ratings, which are shown in Table 3, with overall improvements in Activity 1 (emergency response), Activity 5 (resilience) and Activity 7 (food security monitoring) and a slight deterioration in Activity 2 (MCHN). GAM 4 was achieved by Activity 2 in 2019 and Activity 5 in 2021 as a result of integrating gender and age and including tailor-made activities with demonstrated evidence coming out of gender analysis. WFP Nepal also committed to undertaking a GESI analysis in all new project areas.

⁹⁶ The source of the data is the WINGS Finance Module, which might differ from the amount in the donor contract due to exchange rate fluctuations or other financial adjustments. Allocated contributions include both new grants and grants migrated from former projects to the CSP.

Table 3: Gender and age marker by CSP activity, 2019-2021

SO/Act	2019	2020	2021
SO1/Act1	1	1	3
SO2/Act2	4	3	3
SO2/Act3	3	3	3
SO2/Act4	0	0	n/a
SO3/Act5	3	3	4
SO4/Act6	3	3	3
SO4/Act7	0	1	1
SO5/Act8	0	0	n/a
SO6/Act9	n/r	n/r	n/a
SO6/Act10	n/r	n/r	n/a

Source: WFP Nepal ACRs, 2019-2021. Note: "n/a" = not applicable, as reported in the ACRs, and refers to the GAM not being integrated into the outcome; "n/r" = not reported, as implementation of SO6 only fully started in 2021, therefore there is no reported GAM for 2019-2021. Green shading indicates an improved GAM from the previous year; orange shading indicates a deteriorated GAM from the previous year.

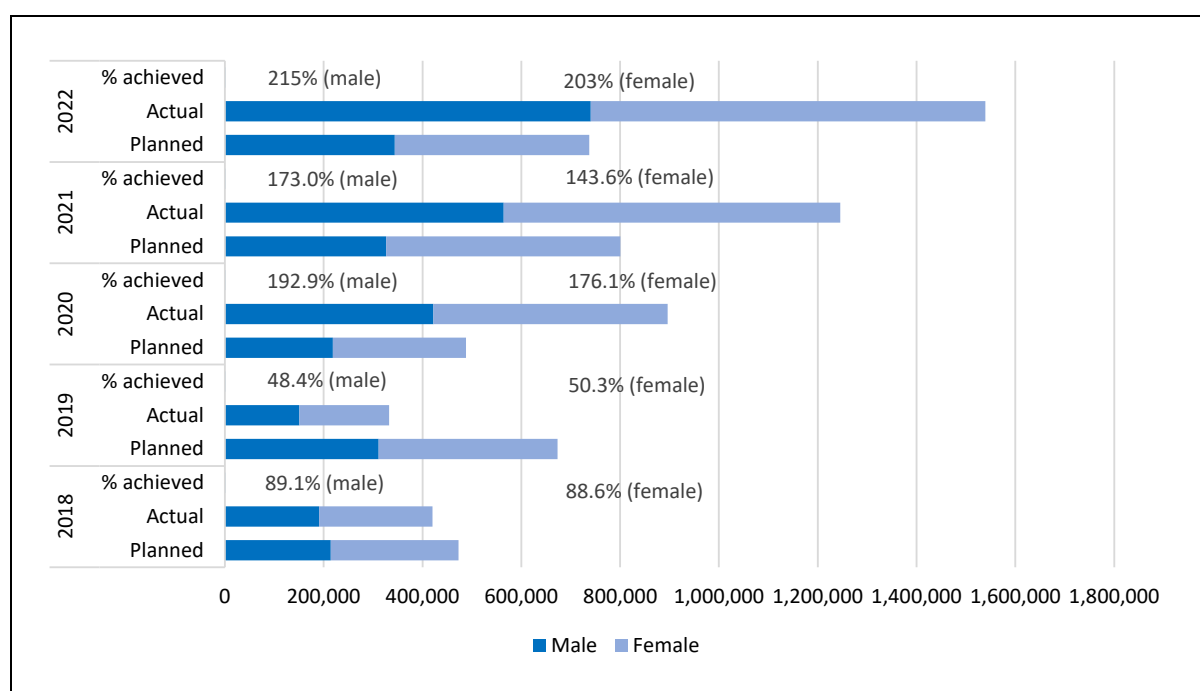
44. Accountability to affected population considerations are included in the CSP design and implementation through the NAMASTE community feedback mechanism (CFM) and gender-responsive feedback mechanisms, trainings to cooperating partners on WFP accountability to affected populations, and gender equality and protection commitments.

Beneficiaries⁹⁷

45. Figure 15 presents an overview of beneficiary outreach between 2018 and 2022. Actual beneficiaries have considerably increased from 2020 to 2022, exceeding the annual planning figures. From 2018 to 2020, women and girls represented close to 55 percent of planned beneficiaries and up to 60 percent in 2021. They constituted 53 percent of actual beneficiaries in 2020 and 55 percent in 2018, 2019 and 2021. In 2022, women and girls represented 53 and 52 percent of planned and actual beneficiaries respectively.

⁹⁷ Unless stated otherwise, 2022 planned beneficiaries and outputs reflect the whole year whereas actual figures are until June 2022.

Figure 15: T-ICSP and CSP planned and actual number of beneficiaries by gender, 2018-2022



Source: WFP, Nepal planned and actual beneficiaries - Country totals by gender and age; COMET CMR001b_Extracted on 05 April 2022 for the years 2018-2021. Note: Planned beneficiaries reflect the relevant latest BR. 2022 data shared by Nepal country office, 06.09.2022 are subject to change upon final annual country report (ACR) publication.

46. WFP progressed towards beneficiary targets for Activity 1 (prevention of acute malnutrition), Activity 2 (prevention of stunting), and Activity 3 (the school meals programme) despite the COVID-19 pandemic movement restrictions.⁹⁸ For Activity 5 on climate change adaptation (CCA)/disaster risk management, achievements were low in 2019 and 2020, but picked up in 2021, with 120 percent achievement (Table 4). For a comparison with the T-ICSP, see Annex VII.

Table 4: Planned versus actual number of beneficiaries and percentage achievement by CSP activity, 2019-2022

SO	Act	2019			2020			2021			2022		
		Planned	Actual	%	Planned	Actual	%	Planned	Actual	%	Planned	Actual	%
1	1	311,806	98,499	32	181,920	48,246	27	250,212	178,268	71	303,830	314,071	103
2	2	33,044	30,435	92	40,409	42,404	105	105,636	105,370	100	29,125	26,541	91
	3	249,000	203,790	82	173,114	757,937	438	241,621	859,480	356	270,746	1,184,180	437
3	5	77,916	0	0	69,251	18,045	26	73,226	87,833	120	20,000	14,200	71
4	7	1,649	0	0	23,550	13,638	58	143,205	34,900	24	142,690	0	0

Source: WFP, Nepal planned and actual beneficiaries by activity tag, COMET CMR020 extracted on 05 April 2022; WFP, Nepal Comet Reports CM-P015a and CM-R023 extracted on 26 April 2022; and data shared by country office on 02.05.2022. 2022 data shared by Nepal country office, 24.08.2022 are subject to change upon final ACR publication.

47. Annex VIII presents a detailed overview of outputs and outcomes, highlighting cash-based transfer values as underperforming across the 2019-2022 period under the CSP strategic outcomes (54 percent for

⁹⁸ A beneficiary is accounted for as one independently of how many rations he/she received throughout the year.

SO1, 29 percent for SO3, 4 percent for SO4). Food transfers show an overall average performance ranging from 56 to 80 for the 2019-2022 CSP period. Outliers are present, for instance SO3 exhibiting zero percentage achievement, and in 2020, SO1 underachieving (40 percent) while SO2/Activity 3 overachieving (101 percent). For a comparison with the T-ICSP, see Annex VII.

48. A detailed assessment of outputs and outcomes and factors influencing the delivery of results is presented under each strategic outcome under EQ2.1. The tables under that section highlight that some outcome indicators have reached their yearly targets (in green), with Activity 3 and Activity 5 showcasing the highest number of outcome indicators having reached respective targets. Only a very limited number of outcome indicators have already reached their end CSP target.

1.4. Evaluation methodology, limitations and ethical considerations

49. The evaluation followed a theory-based, mixed-methods approach in alignment with OECD DAC evaluation criteria (Annex IX). The qualitative research used the (non-probability) purposive sampling to ensure that feedback of selected key informants reflects the diversity and breadth of the sample population. The purposive sampling relied on several criteria including: the level of engagement in, and familiarity with, WFP interventions; experiences from receiving/benefiting from WFP support; understanding of WFP focus themes, approaches and their results; and ability to share the perspectives and priorities of their respective institutions in relation to WFP engagement. To ensure integration of the feedback of communities and final beneficiaries (in particular the most vulnerable women and men), the evaluation team (ET) organized focus group discussions and site observations in selected districts, as elaborated in the paragraph below. The feedback received from the final beneficiaries was analysed and served to triangulate data received from other sources, while the assessment of effectiveness and transformative potential of results also reflected the voices of the most vulnerable groups.

50. The inception phase included in-depth review of documents, and first rounds of interviews with selected stakeholders from WFP headquarters and the regional bureau, followed by an in-country inception mission, which took place in April 2022. Inception briefings were conducted with technical personnel of WFP headquarters and the regional bureau in Bangkok and with the country office's main office in Kathmandu, field offices, cooperating partners and the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC). There were no inception briefings with government stakeholders, due to restrictions during the election period. A total of 35 key informants (17 women; 18 men) were interviewed. A theory of change and CSP timeline workshop were also conducted (Annex IV). These meetings helped the evaluation team to familiarize themselves with the CSP interventions and reconstruct a theory of change; reconfirm the evaluation scope; and map relevant stakeholders. The evaluation team elaborated on the evaluation inception report, which included an overview of contextual issues and WFP T-ICSP and CSP interventions; and validated scope, evaluation design and methodology. The evaluation matrix (Annex II) was designed around four standard evaluation questions and a series of sub-questions, lines of inquiry, indicators, data sources, and data collection and analysis techniques.

51. In-country primary data collection (6-24 June 2022) included face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with WFP, central and subnational government representatives, donors, cooperating partners, United Nations agencies, other development actors, and beneficiaries (Annex XII). Field visits were undertaken in ten districts in three provinces sampled for the evaluation, where the evaluation team conducted interviews, focus group discussions and site observations of (re)constructed assets such as community centres, roads, schools, humanitarian staging areas (HSAs), etc. (Annex XI). The evaluation team conducted the remaining interviews with key informants remotely. A total of 126 key informants (37 women; 89 men) were interviewed,⁹⁹ while 13 focus group discussions (74 women; 39 men participants) and site visits were conducted (Annex XI and Annex XII).

52. An online survey was distributed to WFP country office and the regional bureau employees, national government institutions, non-government organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, donors and international finance institutions (IFIs). The purpose of the survey was to collect views and experiences regarding WFP engagement over the CSP period. Out of 114 invitees, 62 responded (25 women; 36 men; 1

⁹⁹ WFP, UN agencies, donors, government institutions, CPs, international finance institutions (IFIs) and others (schools, state-owned enterprises and volunteers).

other/prefer not to say) to the online survey (54 percent response rate) (Annex XIII). The online survey supplemented data collected through document review, interviews and focus group discussions.

53. In line with the principle of participation, an interactive process was maintained throughout the evaluation. Operational briefings included inception briefings in April and May 2022, an exit debrief with the Office of Evaluation and the country office in June 2022, followed by preliminary findings debrief in August 2022. Internal and external stakeholder workshops were held in December 2022 and February 2023, respectively. These events served to share and discussed evaluation outputs with key stakeholders. Issues arising from the discussions were taken into consideration in the finalization of this report.

54. The evaluation followed the WFP Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (CEQAS),¹⁰⁰ undergoing internal quality assurance before submission, the WFP Office of Evaluation and the evaluation's Internal Reference Group's quality assurance.¹⁰¹ An internal database of interview notes and documentary evidence was triangulated within and between different data sources leading to answers to evaluation questions. The report presents the findings per each key question.

55. The evaluation followed the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct and Guidance on Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation. Gender considerations, and principles of inclusion, participation and non-discrimination were included in the design, questioning, data collection and reporting. The evaluation team safeguarded ethical standards at all stages of the evaluation through detailed protocols for interviews and field visits.

56. Although the field mission coincided with the beginning of monsoon season, weather allowed in-country travel with the exception of a landslide road blockage impeding access to Bajura, which was replaced by another community with similar characteristics. Other limitations and challenges included the varying quality of community- and district-level data relating to programme components or thematic areas, as well as some issues with institutional memory due to high staff turnover both in WFP and across the different levels of government. To overcome them, the evaluation team conducted interviews with former WFP employees and government officials and collected additional historical records from other sources.

¹⁰⁰ WFP. 2021. *Country Strategic Plan Evaluations: Guidance for Process and Content. Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System.*

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

2. Evaluation findings

2.1. EQ1: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE CSP EVIDENCE BASED AND STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE?

EQ1.1 Extent to which the CSP was informed by existing evidence on the hunger challenges, the food security and nutrition issues prevailing in the country to ensure its relevance at design stage

Summary Finding 1. WFP has undertaken systematic evidence generation to inform the CSP design (choice of activities and targeting) and has adapted implementation to emerging needs and priorities (for example, COVID-19 and natural disasters), to the extent that resources and earmarking allow.

57. Documentary analysis shows that the CSP design and implementation, while being influenced by funding availability (paragraphs 83 and 168) and donor's earmarking (paragraphs 190 and 191), is well aligned with identified needs. Its geographic focus (provincial- and district-level targeting) was evidence-based and aligned with the Zero Hunger Strategic Review¹⁰² calling for greater focus of assistance programmes on remote areas in Karnali and Suduparschim hills and mountains. The choice of activities and sub-activities such as the "fair price shops" (FPSs) and humanitarian staging areas, target groups and transfer modality (cash versus in-kind food) have been guided by existing evidence (for example, the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey on malnutrition prevalence), the evaluation of previous WFP operations,¹⁰³ and an array of analytical work. For instance, rice fortification, which is well-grounded in policy (MSNP II), was guided by a landscape analysis¹⁰⁴ and a study in Bajura (funded by WFP) confirming acceptability of fortified rice in remote areas where social safety net rice is frequently consumed.¹⁰⁵

58. During CSP implementation, food and nutrition security and market surveys (paragraph 35) have informed crisis response activities, namely the choice of target communities, households (for example, migrant workers, daily wage labourers and households headed by women) and individuals (pregnant and lactating women) most affected by natural disasters and the COVID-19 crisis. A budget increase to reach an increased number of beneficiaries under SO1 and an increase in the cash-based transfer value under Activity 7 were introduced based on the findings of an mVAM survey (September 2020) and of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) exercise completed in consultation with the Government.

59. WFP has focused on rural areas on the basis of mVAM surveys, which showed much higher food insecurity in rural areas (19.3 percent as compared with 6.1 percent in urban areas), both in terms of inadequate food consumption and lack of food stocks to meet household needs.¹⁰⁶ Recent mVAM market updates conducted in 2022 revealed insufficient food stocks mainly in provinces with a relatively large number of consumers and urban markets.¹⁰⁷ Based on this evidence, WFP mobilized resources to specifically target the urban population.

EQ1.2 Alignment of CSP to national policies and plans and to the SDGs

Summary Finding 2. WFP considers government priorities in designing its strategic framework. WFP is positioned to support the operationalization of national legislative provisions and the implementation of sector priorities across relevant thematic areas.

¹⁰² Nepal National Planning Commission. 2018. *Towards Zero Hunger in Nepal*.

¹⁰³ WFP. 2016. Nepal Country Programme 200319: *A Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's Operation (2013-2017)*. Evaluation Report.

¹⁰⁴ WFP and GoN. 2018. *Landscape Analysis for Rice Fortification in Nepal*.

¹⁰⁵ Anjana Rai et al. 2019. *Consumption of rice, acceptability and sensory qualities of fortified rice amongst consumers of social safety net rice in Nepal*.

¹⁰⁶ WFP/UKAID. 2021. *The Impact of Covid-19 on Households in Nepal*.

¹⁰⁷ WFP. 2022. mVAM Market Update Nepal #2 June 2022.

60. The T-ICSP and CSP design were informed by national priorities as defined in the 14th and 15th three-year plans^{108, 109} and by the RtF Act and their implementation modalities have been progressively aligning with the new federal structure, which devolved responsibilities to different tiers of administration. CSP targeting (paragraphs 57 and 59), thematic focus and activities are all aligned with the outcomes, targets and recommendations set out in the Agriculture Development Strategy (Activity 5);¹¹⁰ the National Action Plan for Zero Hunger (geographic targeting; Activity 2 and Activity 4 aligned with Target 2.2; Activity 6 with Target 2.4 and Activity 7 with cross-cutting recommendations);¹¹¹ and MSNP II¹¹² (geographic targeting; Activity 2, Activity 3, Activity 4 and Activity 6 with outcomes 1 and 2; Activity 8 with Outcome 3). As regards Activity 3, the School Sector Development Plan¹¹³ mentions the education and nutrition justification and benefits of school feeding and its potential expansion, but there is no binding document that provides guiding and operational principles of the school meals programme and its expansion, as noted in the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) assessment, which concluded that SABER Goal 1 policy frameworks was still “emerging”.¹¹⁴

61. The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act¹¹⁵ and the National Climate Change Policy¹¹⁶ form the framework for addressing the country's environmental and climate change challenges. WFP work has been relevant to and underpinned these provisions, in particular by assisting the Government to strengthen its disaster risk and food security monitoring capacity (for example, the food security monitoring framework – NeKSAP, the Climate Information System, etc.). WFP support to the establishment of humanitarian staging areas has been closely aligned with, and contributed to, the Government's strategic priority to ensure emergency preparedness and response.

Summary Finding 3. The consultative approach taken by WFP with staff of government institutions at national and subnational levels for both the T-ICSP and CSP design and implementation has strengthened government ownership.

62. The evaluation found ample evidence of the strategic positioning of WFP as an inclusive strategic partner, designing interventions and ensuring appropriate targeting and coverage of the most vulnerable groups based on formal and informal meetings with government authorities¹¹⁷ at national and subnational (notably local) levels and through independent, analytical and consultative exercises such as the zero hunger review and the Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis (see paragraph 35). All these processes were considered by interviewed government stakeholders as a driver of their ownership of results across thematic interventions.

Summary Finding 4. The T-ICSP and CSP are consistent with national SDG priorities and targets, particularly with SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 17 (partnerships), but also SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5 and 13. Linkages and contributions of various CSP activities to social protection and shock-responsive safety nets are evident but not articulated by a country office strategy. The positioning of WFP as an actor addressing food security-related consequences to climate change is still weak.

63. Nepal adopted the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) in 2015 and mainstreamed SDGs into Nepal's national development framework,^{118 119} The 25-Year Long-Term

¹⁰⁸ GoN. 2016. *The Fourteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2017–2020)*.

¹⁰⁹ GoN. 2020. *The Fifteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2019/20–2023/24)*.

¹¹⁰ Nepal Ministry of Agricultural Development. 2015. *Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035)*.

¹¹¹ Nepal Ministry of Agriculture. 2016. *Nepal Zero Hunger Challenge National Action Plan (2016-2025)*.

¹¹² Nepal National Planning Commission. 2017. *Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan (2018-2022)*.

¹¹³ Nepal Ministry of Education. 2016. *School Sector Development Plan (2016-2023)*.

¹¹⁴ World Bank. 2020. *Nepal School Feeding SABER Country Report*.

¹¹⁵ Nepal Ministry of Home Affairs. 2019. *Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2074*.

¹¹⁶ Nepal Ministry of Forest and Environment. 2019. *National Climate Change Policy, 2076*.

¹¹⁷ WFP and the Government consult closely through bilateral meetings, workshops or other types of consultative events, convened by the Government or UN. Secondees also serve a consultation purpose, informing on needs and capacity gaps.

¹¹⁸ NPC. 2016. *Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030*.

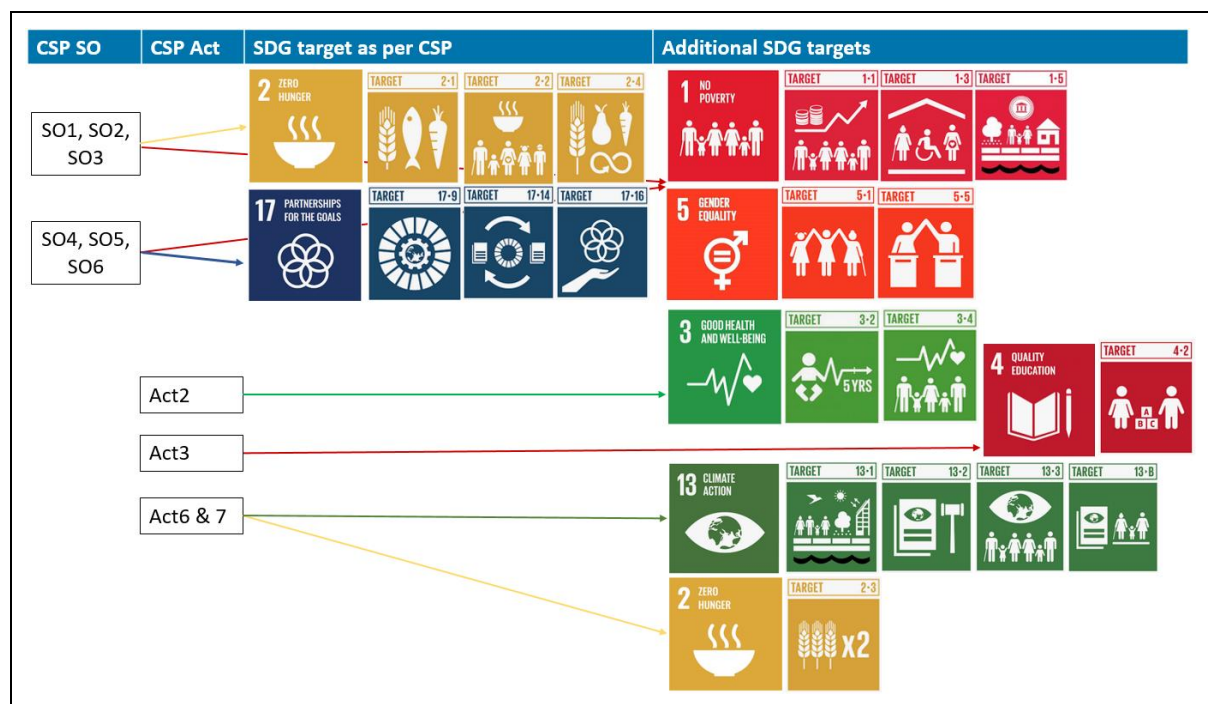
¹¹⁹ NPC. 2018. *Needs Assessment, Costing and Financing Strategy for Nepal's Sustainable Development Goals*.

Vision 2043 and the 15th Plan mainstream the SDGs, assigning SDG codes to all national development programmes through medium-term expenditure frameworks and subnational periodic plans with monitoring and evaluation (M&E) guidelines.

64. WFP interventions underpin national efforts to progress towards achieving national SDG milestones, as illustrated in Figure 16, though not all linkages between SDGs and WFP work are mentioned in the CSP. Online survey analysis shows that WFP and partners consider that WFP had strong positioning to contribute to SDG 2; while respondents from WFP and NGOs/civil society organizations (CSOs) were more positive on the positioning of WFP regarding climate change, as compared to the national Government, United Nations agencies, donors and international finance institutions (Annex XIII).

65. WFP efforts to mainstream gender into various activities is expected to contribute to SDG 5 (GEWE). In addition to these recognized contributions to SDGs, the CSP makes contributions to other SDGs as summarized in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Contribution of the CSP to the Sustainable Development Goals



Source: Evaluation team.

66. An analysis of WFP contributions to the advancement of social protection in Nepal through its “five service offerings”¹²⁰ undertaken by the evaluation team (see Annex XIV), feedback from interviews and the online survey substantiate the positioning and contribution of WFP to social protection/safety nets and shock responsive social protection¹²¹ (SRSP) (SDG 1/Target 1.3), though only limited reference to these was made in the CSP. WFP contributes to SRSP through its evidence-based targeting of the most vulnerable and its choice of assistance modalities (food or cash-based transfer), whereby WFP addressed gaps in the Government’s social protection systems at times of disruption (for example, disasters, COVID-19) through food assistance for assets (FFA) and cash assistance for assets (CFA). WFP interventions also addressed gender inequality, discrimination and bias for the most affected and vulnerable groups. However, the country office has not set a strategic framework for its support to social protection in Nepal in line with the WFP Corporate Social Protection Strategy.¹²²

¹²⁰ WFP. 2017. *WFP and Social Protection – Options for Framing WFP assistance to National Social Protection in Country Strategic Plans*.

¹²¹ As defined in the WFP corporate strategy, SRSP promotes the use of the capacities and competencies of governments’ social protection systems to contribute to emergency response.

¹²² WFP. 2021. *Strategy for Support to Social Protection*.

EQ1.3 CSP coherence and alignment with the wider United Nations, including appropriate strategic partnerships based on the WFP comparative advantage

Summary Finding 5. The CSP makes links to the UNDAF 2018–2022 in Nepal. However, operational linkages are not explicit particularly as regards the WFP humanitarian-development nexus, as the current UNDAF focuses entirely on development, peace and governance. WFP could have done more to build understanding on how its mandate translates into practical engagement in the SRSP domain.

67. The CSP makes several references to the UNDAF 2018–2022,¹²³ and is in alignment with UNDAF outcome areas, that is to say: sustainable and inclusive economic growth; social development; resilience; disaster risk reduction; and climate change. The WFP CCS interventions also indirectly contribute to UNDAF governance and human rights outcomes, though these lack explicit linkages in WFP programming documents. For the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) cycle, WFP will co-lead with the Government one of the four priority areas (Priority Area 3 – environmental sustainability, climate and disaster resilience).

68. The UNDAF does not provide a framework for WFP and other agencies' work across the humanitarian-development nexus (for example, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and UNICEF), although WFP humanitarian work is aligned with the humanitarian country team's contingency plan. Furthermore, WFP SRSP contributions beyond immediate safety nets (for example: early warning; emergency preparedness and response; forecast-based anticipatory action; strengthening national social protection delivery systems through support mechanisms such as SCOPE;¹²⁴ and analysis regarding the minimum expenditure basket) are also not readily recognized by other United Nations agencies. Interviews reveal limited recognition in Nepal of WFP efforts to channel its humanitarian assistance through national social protection systems, largely due to insufficient promotion and awareness-building on this approach.

Summary Finding 6. Some joint initiatives, and the harmonization of approaches with other United Nations agencies beyond service provision, have been achieved but not all opportunities have been exploited.

69. Positive examples of joint initiatives with United Nations entities include: the UN Women/FAO/IFAD/WFP "Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment" (JP RWEE)¹²⁵ and the United Nations common humanitarian cash response framework,¹²⁶ as well as joint resilience-building initiatives with United Nations agencies such as JP RWEE, the Women in Value Chain (WiVC) initiative and the Local Infrastructure Support Programme (LISP) pilot. As mentioned in the Nepal CSP and confirmed by interviews, WFP invested efforts in harmonization and complementarities with UNICEF (nutrition),¹²⁷ UNDP (for example, LISP and procurement of medical equipment as part of COVID-19 response) and UNFPA (joint project called Strengthening Humanitarian Preparedness in Nepal 2019-2023). As acknowledged by all interviewees, WFP field offices have been promoting the "One UN" principles, building links and supporting other United Nations agencies in their work at provincial, district and local levels. Interviewed United Nations agencies considered field coordinators and secondees as 'gate keepers' and supporters of their efforts, in particular, during natural disasters (for example, floods in the Karnali district) when WFP field employees and secondees are among the first responders, providing up-to-date information on the needs and assisting in the delivery of assistance.

70. WFP provides several services to other United Nations agencies. In particular, under SO1 and SO6, WFP provided on-demand engineering services, storage and logistics services and procurement of non-food items (NFI), as well as common administrative services to other United Nations agencies, humanitarian sector partners and the Government in response to COVID-19. Additionally, WFP leads the cash

¹²³ UNCT Nepal. 2017. *UNDAF for Nepal 2018-2022*.

¹²⁴ WFP's digital beneficiary information and transfer management platform.

¹²⁵ A global initiative covering various countries including Nepal with support from Norway and Sweden, focusing on improving rural women's livelihoods.

¹²⁶ Developed in line with the global United Nations Common Cash Statement.

¹²⁷ WFP taking the lead on prevention of malnutrition in emergency response and within the health system (BSFP), with UNICEF focusing on MAM management.

coordination group and logistics cluster, co-leads with FAO the food security cluster, actively participates in nutrition cluster meetings, and fosters coordination of United Nations agencies in Karnali district. WFP is also set to lead the climate change cluster for the new UNSDCF cycle.

71. Notwithstanding the above examples, the WFP mid-term review (MTR) as well as other stakeholders (interviews and online survey) acknowledge that WFP has not maximized the full range of potential partnerships with United Nations agencies; and particularly with fellow Rome-based agencies FAO and IFAD, which share a common vision of ending hunger and malnutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture and rural transformation¹²⁸ in order to ensure cost-effectiveness and complementarity within each sector as well as multisector approaches in light of the shrinking donor space in Nepal.¹²⁹ Despite efforts to develop partnerships and prepare joint proposals, these have not attracted relevant funding, such as on rice fortification, and there is scope for greater collaboration with the private sector, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN),¹³⁰ WHO and FAO.

EQ1.4 Extent to which CSP design was coherent internally and based on a clear theory of change articulating WFP role and contributions in a realistic manner, based on its comparative advantages as defined in the WFP strategic plan

Summary Finding 7. The CSP design lacks an overarching theory of change, and the CSP logical framework does not reflect cross-strategic outcome interlinkages. This approach limits definition and operationalization of causal linkages within and across programme components and constrains potential synergies. The lack of defined cross-sector/cross-strategic outcome synergies diminishes the transformative potential of the CSP. There have been some, albeit limited, efforts to promote internal coherence across programme components.

72. The CSP line of sight presents a clear-cut division of duties and activities but lacks interconnections or synergies. The country office devised activity-level theories of change for all activities, but no strategic outcome-level or overarching theory of change that would have identified cross-cutting themes or synergies. Document review and, in particular, stakeholder interviews with the country office, suggest that this structure is not conducive to thinking cross-sectionally, exploring cause-effect linkages, and identifying how interventions may leverage each other. The consequence of this for the CSP is isolated interventions with little mutual interaction. For instance, synergies and convergence could have been built between: emergency preparedness and response and climate change; nutrition and the school meals programme; resilience building and nutrition or emergency preparedness and response; and nutrition and value chain-building, bringing together resilience, addressing micronutrient deficiencies and women empowerment. One consistent example where synergies were built was for home-grown school feeding (HGSSF).

73. WFP CCS interventions are integrated and are coherent with and supplement direct implementation efforts within specific themes by supporting the Government (for example, the school meals programme and nutrition; emergency preparedness and response; climate change and resilience), as elaborated in findings 2 and 3 above. The need to slowly move from the programme delivery/direct implementation or service delivery model to the technical assistance (TA) provision/enabling model, as globally encouraged by WFP,¹³¹ is recognized but remains difficult to achieve in the implementation of the current CSP. This is due to challenges related to national and subnational government institutions' absorption capacity and socioeconomic and political factors.

74. The evaluation found that positioning SO5 solely under "evidence, policy and innovations" (EPI) unit within the country office was unfavourable to ensuring that policy support would receive attention across the different strategic outcomes. This is explained by the fact that, due to siloed approaches that were persistent in the country office, the work under SO5 was also done somewhat in isolation from other interventions. Furthermore, the work under SO3 was not optimized sufficiently to ensure strong coordination across different strategic outcomes and thematic leads. Given that climate change is a cross-

¹²⁸ WFP, September 2021. *Mid-Term Review of WFP's Nepal Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)*.

¹²⁹ WFP. 2020. *Nepal Resource Mobilization Strategy Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)*.

¹³⁰ WFP. 2022. *WFP Nepal Partnerships Action Plan (2022-2023)*.

¹³¹ WFP. 2016. *WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)*.

cutting issue, it would have been helpful to have it mainstreamed across programming areas, or to adopt a dedicated strategic outcome to the issue.

75. As a positive development, gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) have been increasingly mainstreamed across strategic outcomes, with the inclusion unit's focus being seen as innovative in comparison with other WFP country offices, as noted by WFP stakeholders at country office and regional bureau levels (see paragraph 148). Other cross-cutting issues (for example, environment and climate change) were also considered, as elaborated in EQ2.2.

EQ1.5 Ongoing relevance of WFP strategic positioning throughout the implementation of the CSP considering changing context, national capacities and needs, in particular in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Summary Finding 8. There is evidence confirming the ability of WFP to adapt to the evolving context and needs throughout the CSP implementation, pointing to continued relevance of the chosen strategies and interventions.

76. The adaptive capacity of WFP was facilitated by the use of flexible strategies, such as the activation of emergency response under SO1, humanitarian staging areas and prepositioned commodities, as well as instituted partnerships (for example, partnerships with district/local authorities, other United Nations and development partners, international financial institutions and cooperating partners) in the field that could swiftly be activated (see EQ2.1 below for details). WFP flexibly adapted its operations to organize and implement its COVID-19 response and flood response by utilizing humanitarian staging areas (the main one in Kathmandu and provincial ones in Nepalgunj and Dhangadhi) as logistics hubs for the international and government-led humanitarian response, while also providing other services, such as transport services and refilling oxygen cylinders. In addition, during school closure, WFP shifted its own school meals programme intervention towards organizing take-home ration distributions.

Summary Finding 9. WFP strongly integrates country capacity strengthening (CCS) into the T-ICSP and CSP, demonstrating how it can accompany and boost national efforts, particularly given the slow decentralization process in Nepal. The presence of WFP in the field helps to base technical assistance on understanding bottlenecks and government capacity gaps. However, systematic CCS needs assessments have not been conducted.

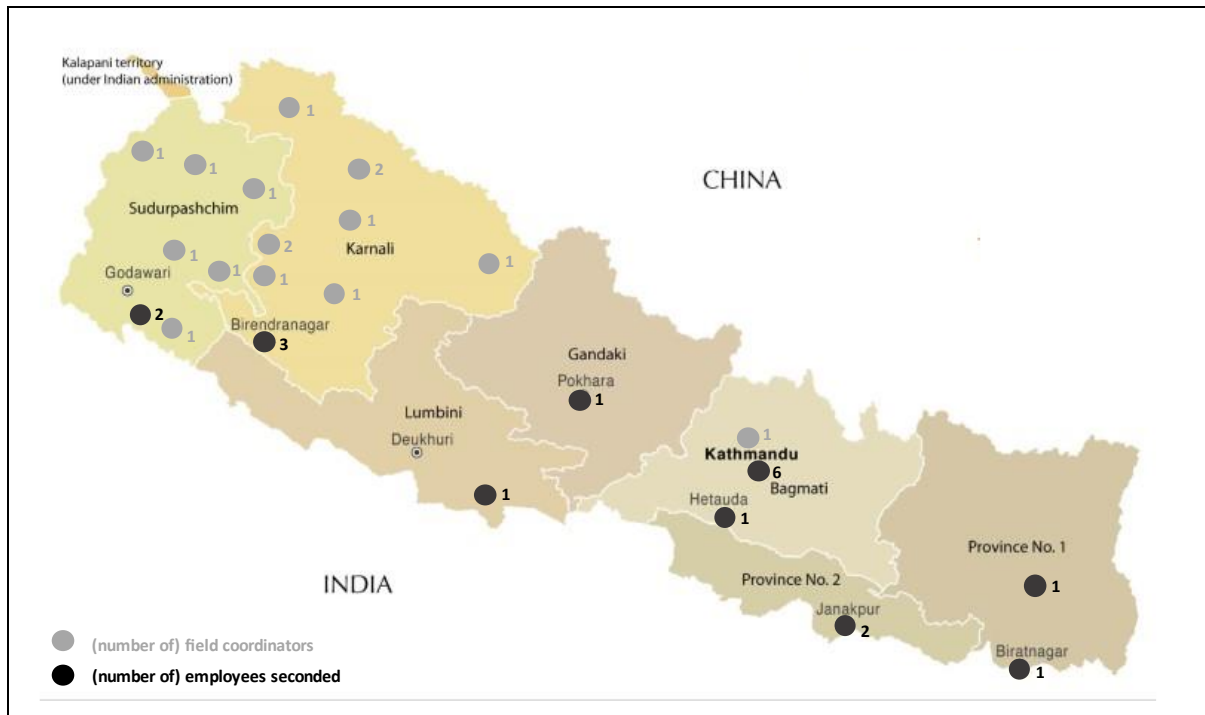
77. The T-ICSP and CSP demonstrate strong integration and mainstreaming of CCS across thematic areas, combining direct support with interventions implemented in partnership with the Government (for example, related to CCS approaches in general, and regarding the content of theories of change and the placement of secondees in particular). WFP provided advisory and CCS support (including advising, mentoring, training and modelling support) at national and subnational (provincial, district and local) levels across all thematic areas, as detailed in EQ 2.1 below. The evaluation found that such CCS interventions were not always based on systematic evidence of capacity needs/gaps of beneficiary institutions. It is therefore not clear whether priority gaps have been addressed. In addition, this created challenges for monitoring and identifying required adjustments in approaches to the institutional development of government institutions and also adjustments to secondment placement and theories of change, as evidenced through document review and stakeholder interviews with WFP and government institutions.

78. The country office also placed seconded personnel in provincial offices (mainly provincial-level ministries) and field coordinators at district levels in support of key national institutions and to also serve as a 'bridge' between WFP and key government interlocutors (Figure 17). Two field offices in the two most vulnerable provinces of Nepal (Karnali and Suduprachim) contribute to better understanding of needs and priorities in these geographical areas, and also help coordinate engagement with, and support to, subnational governments. This approach is particularly relevant and effective in light of new institutional strengthening needs coming out from the federalization process,¹³² as well as government priorities across WFP thematic areas as set out in key national strategies listed under EQ1.2 above (Finding 2). Document review findings, corroborated by stakeholder interviews, point to high relevance of the WFP structure at

¹³² See paragraph 9 above in Section 1.2 Context.

field level to the national decentralization efforts, though as noted the lack of monitoring makes it difficult to ascertain this definitively.

Figure 17: WFP employees seconded to the Government and WFP field coordinators by location in Nepal, by district



Source: Map adapted by the evaluation team, data from WFP Nepal country office, shared 8 August 2022; original map from Nations Online, Map of Provinces in Nepal.

2.2. EQ2: WHAT IS THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF WFP'S SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES IN NEPAL?

79. The analysis of WFP contributions is conducted based on WFP strategic outcomes and the reconstructed theory of change of the CSP, with indicator analysis obtained from WFP output and outcome reporting triangulated with other evidence during the evaluation's data collection phase. Related findings are presented under the subheadings of: crisis response, building resilience and root causes.

EQ2.1 WFP activities and outputs contributions to the expected outcomes of the CSP and to the UNSDCF and positive or negative unintended outcomes

80. As further detailed in the next subsections, WFP support, notably its CCS interventions, helped to strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks and had direct positive effects on access to essential services. WFP added value to the developmental assistance delivered in Nepal thanks to its presence in the most vulnerable regions and its responsiveness to new challenges posed by natural hazards and COVID-19. However, the assumption that WFP contributions would be complemented by government inputs did not materialize, limiting the planned leveraging capacity of WFP support.

Crisis response

81. This section presents key findings of WFP work under SO1 (Activity 1/emergency response, which was activated each year upon government requests) and SO6 (provision of services and support to other humanitarian actors, based on full cost-recovery basis) added to the CSP following BR2 in 2020. Given the unpredictability of the scale of disasters, WFP opted for large projections in order to be prepared for any eventuality, on the understanding that more refined estimates would be obtained through 72-hour assessments and consultation with the Government. This explains significant differences between actual

and planned beneficiaries, as in 2020 when Nepal was less affected by natural disasters (Table 5). The forecast-based financing and anticipatory action were also used (see more in assessment of SO4).

SO1/Activity 1 (Emergency response)

Summary Finding 10. Incorporation of a dormant crisis response strategic outcome proved useful as it helped WFP to respond swiftly to needs emerging from natural disasters and the impact of COVID-19 in the most affected districts. Significant differences between actual and planned beneficiaries occurred from year to year and for different modalities. Food security-related outcomes were overall positive for BSFP and more modest for unconditional cash-based transfers.

82. The emergency response supported by WFP through the cluster system was organized under SO1, even though other specific nutrition, emergency preparedness and response and school meals programme activities also contributed to SO1 results. For instance, unconditional food and/or cash and BSFP were provided in response to monsoon-induced disasters in 2019-2021 and to the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-early 2022 at national and subnational levels (WFP sub-offices in Surkhet and Doti led multi-cluster coordination). Although moderate acute malnutrition treatment was not undertaken, since WFP and UNICEF agreed that it would be covered by UNICEF, WFP effectively collaborated with all nutrition cluster partners, in particular UNICEF under the emergency nutrition response.

83. The total number of planned and actual SO1 beneficiaries was lowest in 2020, as Nepal was less affected in this year by natural disasters than in 2019 (Table 5). Unconditional food distribution, which accounted for 54 percent of total SO1 beneficiaries in 2019, was not implemented in 2021. Unconditional cash-based transfer beneficiaries increased in 2021 compared to 2020, facilitated by additional funding for the COVID-19 response.¹³³ BSFP actual beneficiaries increased, representing the largest share of SO1 beneficiaries in 2020 (79 percent) and 2021 (88 percent). Actual BSFP beneficiaries (combining children 6-23 months and pregnant and lactating women) exceeded targets in 2020 and 2021.

84. Women represented 51 percent of beneficiaries in 2019 and 52 percent for 2020 and 2021 for unconditional cash; and 48 and 51 percent for unconditional food in 2019 and 2020 respectively. Women are the main beneficiaries under SO1 (see tables 8 and 9 in Annex VIII). Actual BSFP beneficiaries (combining children 6-23 months and pregnant and lactating women) exceeded targets between 2021 and 2022, reaching 173 percent in 2022 thanks to the availability of resources that allowed coverage of a larger number of vulnerable municipalities than planned in different provinces.

Table 5: Activity 1 beneficiaries by assistance modality, 2019-2022

	General distribution cash			General distribution food			Prevention of acute malnutrition (BSFP)			Total		
	Planned	Actual	%	Planned	Actual	%	Planned	Actual	%	Planned	Actual	%
2019	107,500	8,305	8	107,500	53,660	50	61,250	36,534	60	276,250	98,499	36
2020	43,000	6,540	15	73,000	3,870	5	52,500	38,324	73	168,500	48,246	29
2021	43,000	21,599	50	43,000	0	0	150,792	156,669	104	236,792	178,268	75
2022	232,640	256,193	110	32,250	0	0	33,375	57,878	173	298,265	314,071	95

Source: WFP, Nepal 2019-2021 ACRs and planned and actual beneficiaries by activity tag COMET CMR020. 2022 data from Nepal country office, shared 17.08.2022.

85. With regards to food transfers, about half of planned commodities (54 percent consisting of rice and split peas) were distributed to half of planned beneficiaries through unconditional food distribution (Figure 18) in 2019. The consonance between these figures indicates that beneficiaries duly received the planned entitlement. Actual transfers of Wheat Soya Blend Plus (WSB+) are also congruent with actual beneficiaries

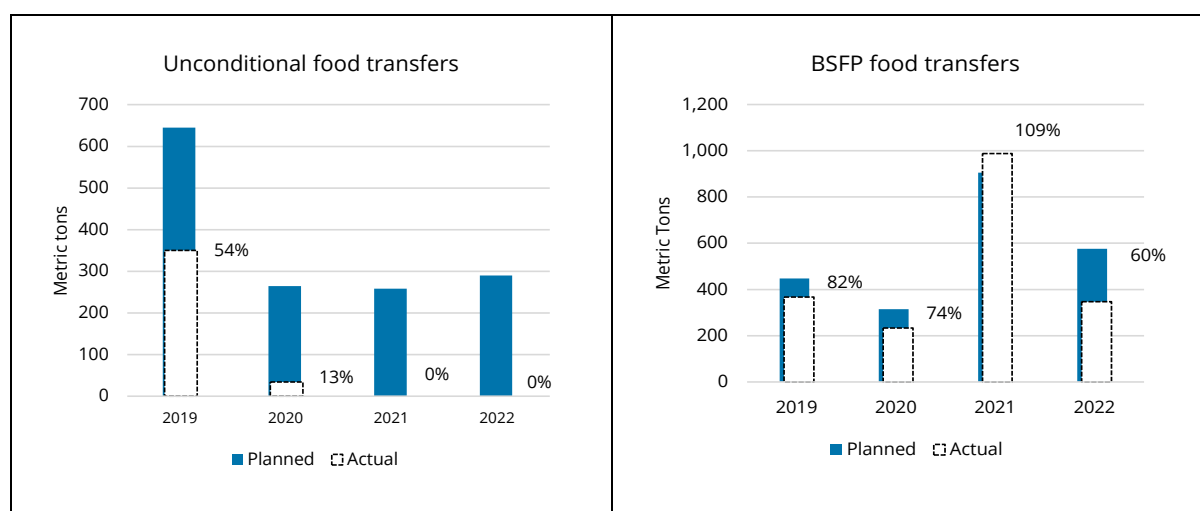
¹³³ WFP, Nepal 2021 ACR.

in 2020 and 2021. The BSFP ration size was higher in 2019 (three-months ration of 3 kg/month as compared to a two-months ration in subsequent years) in line with the BSFP standard operating procedure (SOP).

86. In terms of cash-based transfers, in 2021 WFP, which leads the Nepal cash coordination group, increased the transfer value of the cash-based transfer based on findings from post-distribution monitoring (PDM) surveys and the minimum expenditure basket (as per WFP corporate guidance).¹³⁴ This explains the apparent inconsistency between actual cash transfers exceeding planned (127 percent, Figure 19) versus actual beneficiaries (50 percent, Table 5).¹³⁵

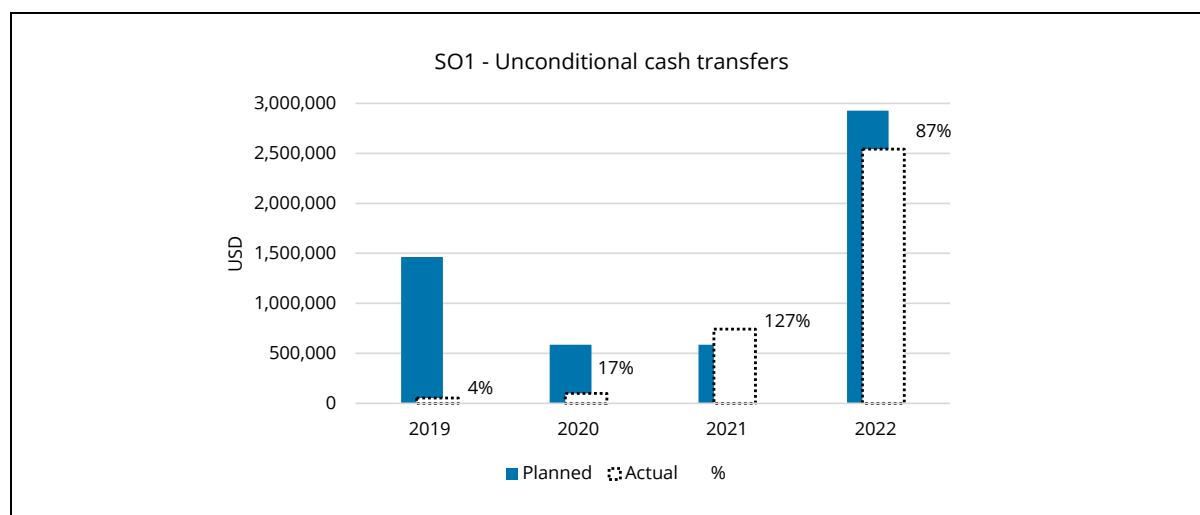
87. Nutrition messaging accompanied BSFP distribution by cooperating partners and female community health volunteers (FCHVs) and through radio messaging and flyers in local languages with information on COVID-19 prevention, WSB+ preparation and infant feeding distributed.

Figure 18: Planned and actual Activity 1 unconditional and blanket supplementary feeding programme food transfers, 2019-2022



Source: WFP Nepal. 2020. Planned and actual transfers food and CBT_COMET CMR014. 2019-2021. 2022 data from Nepal country office, shared 24.08.2022.

Figure 19: Planned and actual Activity 1 unconditional cash transfers, 2019-2022



Source: WFP Nepal, planned and actual transfers food and CBT_COMET CMR014. 2019-2021. 2022 data from Nepal country office, shared 24.08.2022.

¹³⁴ WFP. 2020. *Setting the Transfer Value for CBT Interventions – Transfer Value Interim Guidance*.

¹³⁵ WFP, Nepal ACR 2021.

88. A trend analysis of outcomes is not possible as beneficiary groups may be completely different across various emergency responses across the years.¹³⁶ The expected outcome - prevention of malnutrition - is assessed through proxy food security indicators.¹³⁷ As shown in Table 6, 95 percent of BSFP beneficiaries had an acceptable food consumption score (FCS) in 2020 and 2021 just below respective yearly targets. The high BSFP adherence (100 percent) and the very satisfactory food consumption score indicate that the outreach/targeting strategy, WSB+ and nutrition messaging were effective as far as direct beneficiaries are concerned. However, the coping strategy index (CSI) in 2021 indicates that households still resorted to consumption-based coping strategies relying on less preferred food or borrowing food from relatives or friends.¹³⁸

89. For general unconditional distribution, in 2021 76 percent of households (people affected by monsoon-induced disasters and by the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods) assisted with cash-based transfer had only an acceptable food consumption score, significantly below the target for the year. In addition, the target established for the coping strategy index (consumption-based) was not achieved either, suggesting that the cash was conceivably used to meet other urgent livelihood needs.

90. There were mixed perceptions from respondents of the survey regarding the extent to which WFP support enabled beneficiaries access to adequate food and nutrition during emergencies (about 50 percent reported that this was the case to a great extent, see Annex XIII).

Table 6: Activity 1 outcome indicators, 2019-2021

Outcome Indicator	Sex	Baseline	End-CSP Target	2019 Target	2019 Follow-up	2020 Target	2020 Follow-up	2021 Target	2021 Follow-up
Target group: all unconditional transfer beneficiaries/General distribution									
Consumption-based CSI (Average)	Overall	0.47	=0	Not Reported (NR)				≤0.47	1.16
% households Acceptable FCS	Overall	94.1	≥96.6	NR				≥96.2	76
% households Borderline FCS	Overall	5.9	≤3.4					≤3.8	23
% households Poor FCS	Overall	0	=0					=0	1
Target group: children and PLWs/Prevention of acute malnutrition									
Consumption-based CSI (Average)	Overall	0.47	=0	NR		NR		≤0.47	0.82
% households Acceptable FCS	Overall	94.1	≥96.6			≥95.7	95.2	≥96.2	95
% households Borderline FCS	Overall	5.9	≤3.4			≤4.3	4.8	≤3.8	5
% households Poor FCS	Overall	0	=0			=0	0	=0	0
% target population participating in adequate number of distributions (adherence)	Overall		≥66	NR		≥66	100		

Source: WFP Nepal 2019-2021 ACRs. Green shading represents achievement (100 percent of target or better); red shading represents severe underachievement (less than 50 percent of target).

SO6/Activity 9 and Activity 10 (On-demand services and cash-based transfer management support)

Summary Finding 11. WFP has contributed to more effective implementation of other humanitarian partners' activities through the provision of an increasing number of services to partners on a full cost-recovery basis.

¹³⁶ The different nature of the crisis (natural disaster versus COVID-19 impact) makes comparison irrelevant.

¹³⁷ The FCS is calculated using the frequency of consumption of different food groups consumed by a household during the 7 days before the survey.

¹³⁸ WFP. 2021. LERP BSFP in Province 2 - PDM.

91. The COVID-19 crisis brought important lessons concerning difficulties relating to procurement, storage and the distribution of non-food items and cash-based transfers that humanitarian actors encounter in provision of assistance to most-affected populations. In efforts to expand its emergency preparedness and response activities to respond to emerging needs, WFP added SO6 to the CSP, offering stock handling, storage and construction services and cash-based transfer management support to United Nations agencies, with total value rendered amounting to USD 156,619.¹³⁹ WFP also provides office space and common administration support to IFAD. The evaluation found that humanitarian staging areas and the provincial equivalents were effectively used for storage services,¹⁴⁰ and that interviewed partners also considered cash-based transfer management and services to IFAD to be effective.

92. WFP on-demand services have proven highly useful, enriching the palette of services to humanitarian partners and the Government, as corroborated by interviewed United Nations and government stakeholders and survey responses. Integration of such services into what WFP offered in Nepal was perceived as helpful to augment the collective humanitarian response capacity when required and to enhance partnerships with United Nations agencies, contributing particularly to the SDG Target 17.16. For illustration, WFP provided assistance to UNICEF in installing reefer containers and to the World Health Organization (WHO) in constructing acute respiratory infection medical facilities and additional warehousing, both useful for the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP). Additionally, WFP provided two COVID-19-related medical evacuation services to the WHO and UNDP in 2021, which were considered timely and effective.

Table 7: Activity 9 on-demand services

Type of service	Rendered value of service (USD)
Handling services	6,630
Storage services	51,532
Construction	98,457

Source: WFP country office.

Building resilience

SO3/Activity 5 (Resilience)

Summary Finding 12. The WFP approach to rehabilitation or construction of local infrastructure has resulted in strengthened resilience in targeted communities. Interventions have contributed to improved local assets and livelihood coping strategies. COVID-19 and related socioeconomic challenges, however, prevented larger food consumption benefits. The choice to adopt a broad coverage of communities benefiting from solely one or few interventions has limited the potential for wider transformative gains.

93. Interventions under SO3's sole activity (Activity 5) were organized through some of the projects continued from previous cycles to the T-ICSP and CSP, including: the Saemaul Zero Hunger Communities Project (SZHCP-Phase II); the protracted earthquake relief and recovery project; the Adaptation Fund; the Climate Change Adaptation for Food Security (CAFS)-Karnali; cash assistance for assets in Jajarkot; RWEE; LERP; and the PURNIMA project. During the T-ICSP period, WFP focused on food assistance for assets interventions, while the progressive shift towards integration of CCS is visible during the CSP period through a combination of hardware support (investment in infrastructure, asset creation and material support) and software support (training, capacity development and information systems) aimed at strengthening sustainable food systems and building resilience for vulnerable and marginalized groups to climate change and other shocks.

94. WFP identified the target population by applying a set of vulnerability criteria, allowing WFP to prioritize beneficiaries based on their level of food insecurity. The evaluation found that, through close consultation with local authorities and communities, WFP reached the most vulnerable and marginalized

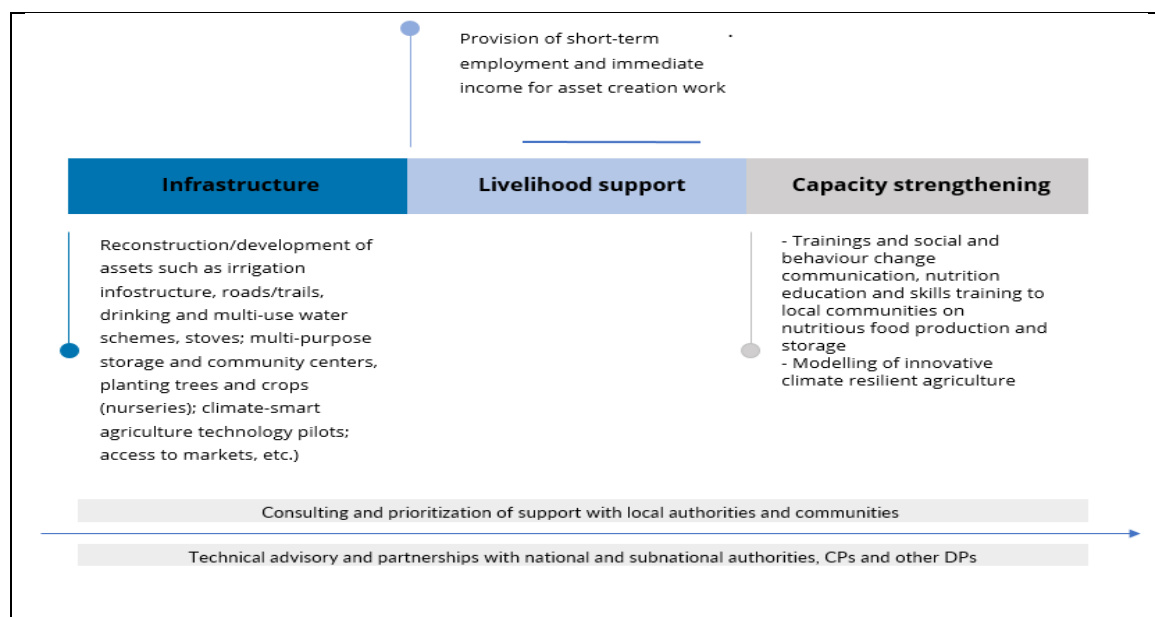
¹³⁹ Data obtained from WFP CO on 12.07.2022.

¹⁴⁰ HSA provision was part of SO3/Act6, but their use was noted also in support to activities under this SO.

communities, particularly women, children and groups who suffer a high prevalence of food insecurity and undernutrition.

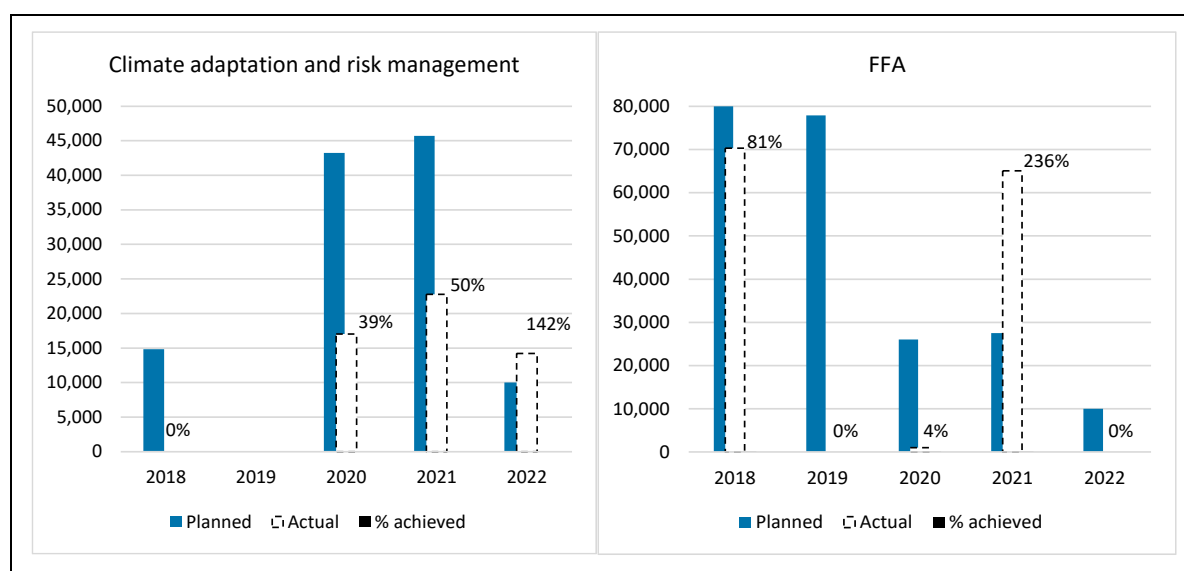
95. WFP reached 116,704 most-vulnerable food insecure beneficiaries over the 2019-2022 period¹⁴¹ through food assistance for assets, transferring almost USD 3.2 million of cash. To enhance climate risk resilience, WFP also provided sensitization and training for 13,845 beneficiaries on climate-induced threats and mitigation strategies regarding food production and security (see Figure 20 for a presentation of the approach and Figure 21 for the beneficiaries of Activity 5).

Figure 20. The WFP resilience-building approach



Source: evaluation team reconstruction based on WFP data.

Figure 21. Planned and actual CSP Activity 5 and T-ICSP Activity 4 beneficiaries, 2018-2022



Source: WFP Nepal ACRs, 2019-2021; COMET report CM-R020 extracted 05.04.2022. 2022 data from Nepal country office, shared 24.08.2022.

96. Analysis of available data and feedback received through interviews, focus group discussions and site observations reveals a high level of satisfaction among targeted local communities regarding WFP support

¹⁴¹ WFP country office data shared 19.07.2022.

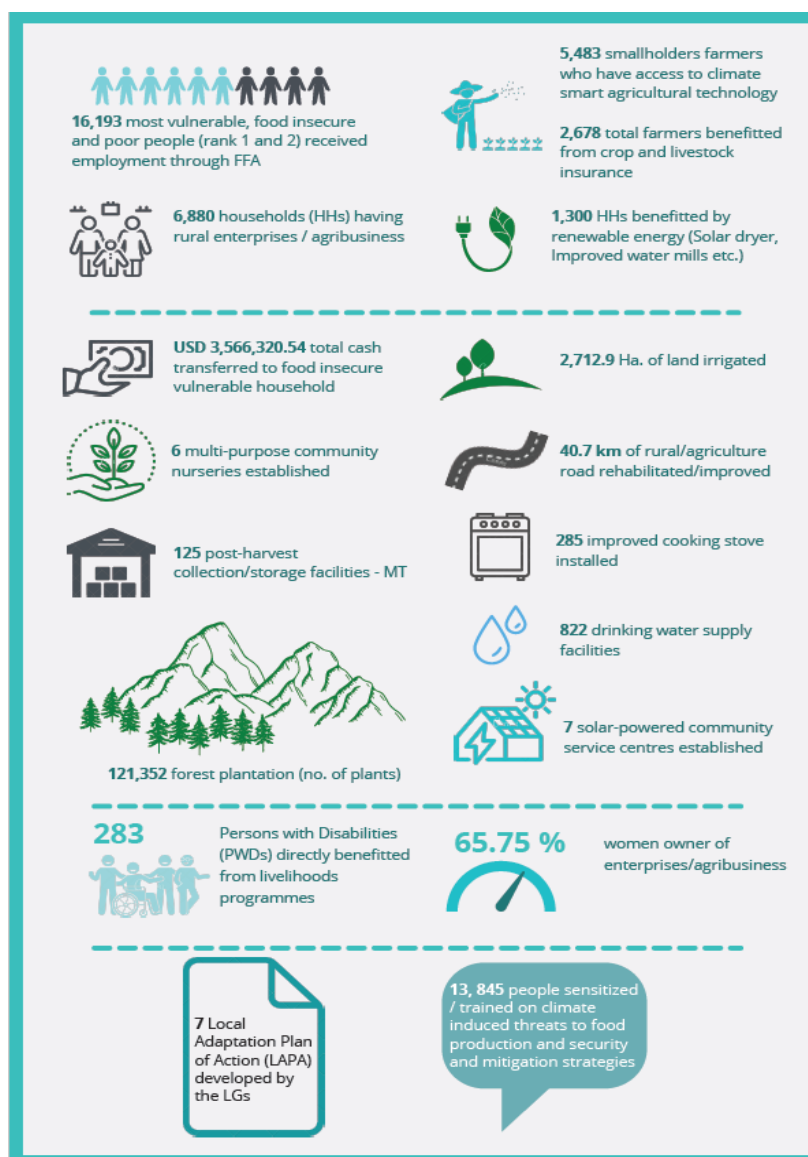
to asset creation, noting its utility in improving livelihoods and generating income. WFP data show that enhanced irrigation facilities (for example, small irrigation canals) and agriculture roads enabled better use of 2,712.9 ha of land for agriculture.¹⁴² Field observations and interviews confirmed improvements in the use of agricultural land in visited communities and community commitment to maintain the assets. The latter contributes to the sustainability of rehabilitated assets. The SO3 approaches also exemplified the added value of partnerships with cooperating partners, other United Nations agencies, development partners and local authorities for the design and implementation of interventions.

97. However, due to donor and government preferences, communities covered by the above-mentioned WFP interventions were spread widely, with most communities receiving only one or few support interventions.¹⁴³ Therefore, full integration of all aspects of resilience building was not possible. The fact that WFP could not consistently implement all aspects (asset creation, training, modelling, etc.) in all communities, diminished the potential to achieve stronger resilience, which leads to better food consumption by people. This was considered a missed opportunity by interviewed local-level stakeholders.

¹⁴² WFP country office data shared 19.07.2022.

¹⁴³ WFP Nepal SO3 projects list August 2022; and documents and stakeholder interviews with WFP, donors and government partners active under SO3, showed that both donors and government partners had a preference for covering a wider number of communities with at least one activity. This was to ensure that the wider population could benefit from assistance.

Figure 22: Overview of Activity 5 output indicator achievements, 2019-mid 2022



Source: Evaluation team, data from Nepal country office, shared 08.08.2022.

98. The intersection between investment in training and modelling of innovative climate resilient agriculture and the school meals programme also contributed to the transformative potential of WFP, despite the fact that WFP did not do systematic needs assessments (see Finding 9). The HGSF project implemented in 12 communities in Nuwakot is a good example of WFP CCS interventions and also of integrated approaches. The WFP HGSF framework integrated school infrastructure improvement capacity strengthening of local government, schools and farmer groups/cooperatives enabling them to supply school meals¹⁴⁴ and to enhance school feeding governance. All 440 schools of Nuwakot were capacitated to implement HGSF.

99. According to WFP data, the pilot HGSF implemented in Sindhupalchok and Bardiya districts resulted in an increase in frequency of meal provision and meal quality in schools in terms of dietary diversity and nutrient content. Key drivers for these improved outcomes were: the use of standard meal options; building the capacity of cooks and teachers; strengthening community ownership and accountability; and the linkage to the local food supply chain.¹⁴⁵ In contrast, interviewed stakeholders in Sudurpaschim (still

¹⁴⁴ Data from Nepal country office, shared August 2022.

¹⁴⁵ Shrestha et al. 2020. HGSF: assessment of a pilot programme in Nepal BMC Public Health.

covered by WFP in-kind support) and Nuwakot (covered by the NSMP), were concerned as to their ability to provide nutritious meals as per the menu planner (see paragraph 132) with the allocation of 15 Nepalese rupees (NPR)¹⁴⁶ per child per day in view of market prices, distance to markets and transport costs. Besides benefits to school children, HGSF is expected to contribute to the local economy: in 2021, 2,045 farmers benefited from farmer organizations' sales to HGSF or other structured markets.¹⁴⁷ Women participating in the WiVC project in Sudurpaschim met by the evaluation team, reported selling about two-thirds of their produce to schools.

100. The evaluation found that asset creation with the use of food assistance for assets as a model for engaging the most vulnerable in works, as well as HGSF and social behavioural change communication (SBCC) on nutrition, have the potential to contribute to enhancing the food security, nutrition and households' livelihood-based coping strategies of these most vulnerable groups, at least in the short-term. However, while food consumption score and coping strategy index outcome indicators were achieved in 2018 with respect to their yearly target, they show overall underachievement in 2020 and 2021 (Table 8). Factors affecting the latter included structural challenges such as the Government's limited absorption capacity, delays or slow response by subnational government institutions, etc. and the COVID-19 pandemic-related movement restrictions, which affected the number and intensity of activities. Furthermore, WFP interventions in each targeted community did not include a combination of support elements, but only one or a few activities, as discussed above. As such, they were not sufficient to shift the food consumption score and coping strategy index, considering the difficult contexts in such targeted areas (in Nepal, WFP targets the most deprived and remote communities as per Section 1.3 above).

101. Other reasons for underperformance in 2019 (Table 8) noted in WFP reports and corroborated by interviewed WFP employees, included challenges in sourcing adequate skilled government and local human resources (engineers, construction workers), as well as challenges in the respective government institutions' competencies with regards to selection and execution of project activities. In 2020, COVID-19 restrictions also impeded progress. However, the full implementation of planned activities in 2021 reflects the ability of WFP to adjust to contextual change.

102. Worsening socioeconomic conditions due to COVID-19 and the consequential decrease of remittances also affected the results (see Section 1.2 Context).

¹⁴⁶ Approximately 0.12 USD

¹⁴⁷ WFP, Nepal 2021 ACR.

Table 8: CSP Activity 5 and T-ICSP Activity 4 outcome indicators, 2018-2021

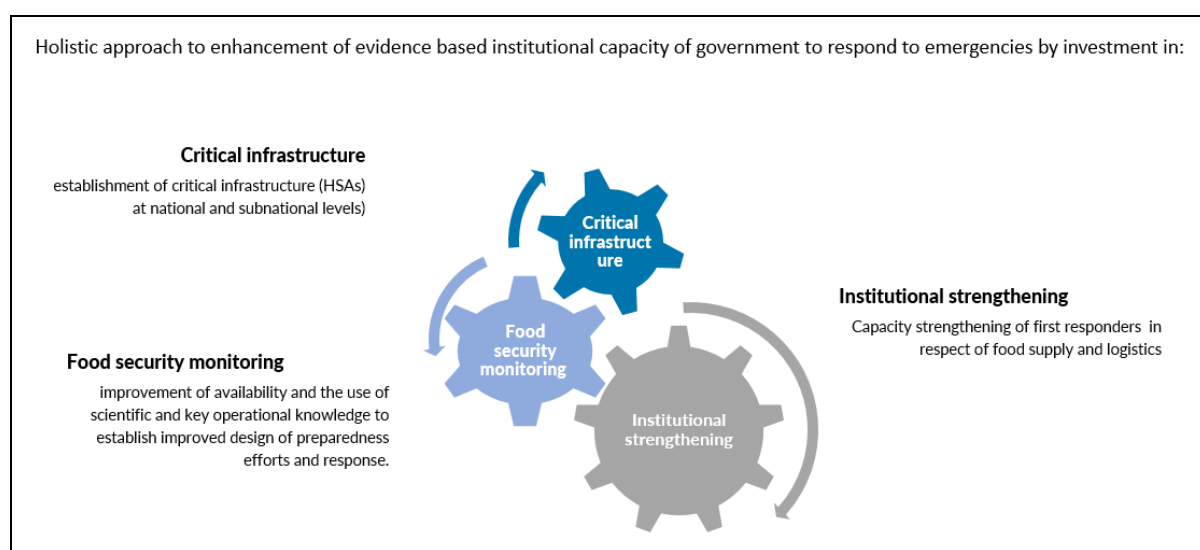
Outcome Indicator	Sex	T-ICSP				CSP							
		Baseline	End T-ICSP Target	2018 Target	2018 Follow-up	Baseline	End-CSP Target	2019 Target	2019 Follow-up	2020 Target	2020 Follow-up	2021 Target	2021 Follow-up
Target group: LERP FFA Conditional Cash Distribution (2021) / Target group: CAFS Karnali (2020)													
% households Acceptable FCS	Overall	68.10	>70	>70	87.80	92.8	≥95 (2021) ≥97 (2020)	NR	≥94	87.8	≥95	85	
% households Borderline FCS	Overall	30.30	<25	<25	11.80	7	≤5 (2021) ≤3 (2020)		≤6	12.2	≤5	15	
% households Poor FCS	Overall	1.60	<4	<4	0.40	0.2	=0		=0	0	=0	0	
Target group: CFA Jajarkot (2021) / Target group: CAFS Karnali (2020)													
% households not using livelihood based coping strategies	Overall	40.50	75	75	53	46.8	≥55 (2021) ≥58.9 (2020)	NR	≥50	40.7	≥55	16	
% households using crisis coping strategies	Overall	13.30	≤0	≤0	3	1.8	<1		≤1	1.5	≤1	14	
% households using emergency coping strategies	Overall	3.70	≥0	≥0	2	5.3	<4		≤4	1.8	≤4	5	
% households using stress coping strategies	Overall	42.60	25	25	42	46.1	≤40 (2021) <36.1 (2020)	NR	≤45	56.1	≤40	65	
Economic capacity to meet essential needs	Overall	NR				62.3	≥70	NR	≥64.3	89.3	NR		
% population in targeted communities reporting benefits from an enhanced livelihoods asset base	Overall	NR				41.7	≥50	NR				≥46	73
Rate of smallholder post-harvest losses	Overall	NR				4.2	≤0.2	NR	≤3.2	1.42	NR		

Source: WFP Nepal 2018-2021 ACRs. Note: values across years may not be comparable given the different target groups.

SO4 Activity 6 (emergency preparedness and response country capacity strengthening)

103. For both Activity 6 and Activity 7 (see next sub-section) under SO4, WFP envisioned a holistic approach aiming to sustainably enhance national-, provincial- and local-level logistics emergency preparedness and response capacities (Figure 23). The work built on the response to Nepal's 2014 floods and the 2015 earthquake. Under the current CSP, WFP continued to collaborate with the Government on food security monitoring. WFP work to institutionalize the NeKSAP food security system was also continued within the CSP.

Figure 23. The WFP emergency preparedness and response approach under Activity 6



Source: Evaluation team.

Investments in critical infrastructure

Summary Finding 13. The established network of humanitarian staging areas at national and provincial levels has proven its usefulness in response to COVID-19 and natural disasters. The timing and timelines for institutionalization and sustainability of humanitarian staging areas is still unclear, despite WFP efforts.

104. In recognition of the high vulnerability to natural disasters in remote areas, WFP worked closely with government partners to enhance emergency logistics and preparedness to deliver assistance during and in the aftermath of crises. Support was provided to establish a network of critical infrastructure, these being, the humanitarian staging area (Kathmandu, close to the international airport); provincial humanitarian staging areas (PHSAs) (Nepalgunj, Surkhet, Dhangadi, Birgunj, Iratnagar and Bhairahawa) and mobile humanitarian staging areas (MHSAs) (Jumla, Bardibas, Therathum and Baitadi). This network was intended for humanitarian logistics coordination, storage and distribution of food and non-food items to the most vulnerable from the most strategic locations up to remote areas. Through a staged approach, WFP managed to establish a network of 10 out of 11 planned PHSAs and MHSAs over the reference period. WFP also constructed a warehouse for the Food Management and Trading Company (FMTC) in Nepalgunj, which augmented the Government’s capacity to store food to be distributed in emergency in the western part of the country.

105. Government institutions and development partners during interviews emphasized the utility of humanitarian staging areas for storage and pre-positioning of food, non-food items and medical items (see paragraph 76). In 2019, six humanitarian organization and three government entities used humanitarian staging areas for pre-positioning of relief items.¹⁴⁸ In 2020 and 2021, humanitarian staging areas were activated for COVID-19 and the monsoon, playing a central role in storing and pre-positioning of the aid and its onward transportation to hospitals across the country.¹⁴⁹

106. As the co-lead agency for the logistics cluster, WFP supported the Government and humanitarian actors in 2020 and 2021 to coordinate and contribute to the supply chain management of 4,684 m³ of COVID-19-related medical aid (refilling of 14,200 oxygen cylinders, provision of oxygen concentrators, procurement and installation of two pharma-grade containers in provinces 1 and 2 and contribution to the construction of one oxygen plant in Karnali; procurement of intensive care beds, vaccines, personal protective equipment, and testing kits, etc).¹⁵⁰ In response to the 2021 monsoon season, WFP produced 42

¹⁴⁸ WFP, Nepal ACR 2019

¹⁴⁹ WFP, Nepal ACR 2020-2021.

¹⁵⁰ WFP, Nepal ACR 2021.

access-constraints maps, which were disseminated to the wider humanitarian community, facilitating transport of some 503 m³ of non-food items.¹⁵¹

107. Available WFP data shows high utility of humanitarian staging areas and satisfaction of users, along with an increase in the emergency preparedness capacity index (EPCI) (Table 9).

Table 9: Activity 6 outcome indicators, 2019-2021

Outcome Indicator	Sex	Baseline	End-CSP Target	2019 Target	2019 Follow-up	2020 Target	2020 Follow-up	2021 Target	2021 Follow-up
User satisfaction rate	Overall	56.29	≥80	NR		≥70	76.3	≥70	79
Emergency preparedness capacity index	Overall	2.3	≥2.7	NR				≥2.7	2.6

Source: WFP Nepal 2019-2021 ACRs.

108. WFP encountered challenges in establishing, handing over and securing financial and operational sustainability of humanitarian staging areas, despite their utility. Main challenges included land allocation and ownership of established infrastructure due to different competencies and interests at provincial and district levels, as well as financial and human resources allocation and capacities at federal/district levels. WFP worked closely with the relevant government authorities to overcome these difficulties, managing to set up humanitarian staging areas, although site observations in Jumla in June 2022 showed that the respective humanitarian staging area is dormant as planned, while the Surkhet humanitarian staging area was used for pre-positioning relief items during COVID-19, floods and recent landslides. Humanitarian staging areas were integrated in the organigram of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management authority, which is a step forward in ensuring their sustainability.¹⁵² However, the humanitarian staging areas are still managed by WFP and development partners still pay for the services, and the handover is still pending.

Institutional strengthening of first responders

Summary Finding 14. WFP has strengthened first responders' emergency response logistics capacity. The resulting capacities of first responders have been deployed for rescue operations during monsoon floods and landslides. Trainings were accredited and institutionalized.

109. WFP provided a comprehensive package of trainings, mentoring and advisory services to first responders (security forces, armed police forces, Nepal police and Nepal army) at national and subnational levels, with the aim to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response capacity. This is the only CCS area that was based on assessments of the capacity needs of provincial governments as the basis of CCS efforts, in close coordination with the federal Government. WFP also provided technical assistance to Tribhuvan University in designing and launching an elective postgraduate course on "Emergency Logistics and Telecommunications", aiming to increase the number of professionals qualified to support emergency response in 2021. Other training components encountered a significant reduction in the number of people trained due to COVID-19 restrictions, especially in 2020; however, trainings picked back up in 2021 and 2022.¹⁵³

110. WFP CCS efforts led to a significant increase in the capacity of first responders, which was utilized during monsoon response across 2020 and 2021, as illustrated by their swifter and coordinated action cited by key stakeholders. The 2021 user satisfaction data show 96 percent satisfaction rate with emergency logistics training, which received the best feedback rating in the survey. Moreover, accreditation of the training module as part of a postgraduate master's course at Tribhuvan University Centre of Disaster Studies and institutionalization of the course through partnership agreements with armed police forces, the

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² WFP, Nepal ACR 2020.

¹⁵³ As per comparative review of WFP Nepal's ACRs 2020-2022.

Nepal police and the Nepal army provided for a sustainable framework for their own future capacity strengthening efforts. Available WFP data show that 20 students attended the course in 2020.

111. WFP investment in logistics capacity through updated and accurate trail and infrastructure mapping under the Open Street Map platform contributed to emergency planning and localization of authorities' and humanitarian agencies' response. Over the reference period, over 3,626 km of trails were mapped across seven districts of Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces to better understand how remote communities can be accessed faster in order to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. Stakeholder interviews pointed to the high relevance and contribution of these maps and the platform to emergency response, in particular locations of health or emergency services, food banks, etc., which are useful for local populations and first responders in times of crisis. WFP also provided in-kind support to first responders (for example, a donation of 28 rescue boats to the Ministry of Home Affairs delivered to 12 flood-prone districts in the Terai region as an emergency preparedness measure).¹⁵⁴ These proved helpful to respond to flash floods triggered by annual monsoon rains in the southern plains, where boats were used by local authorities as part of their rescue operations.

SO4 Activity 7 (Food security monitoring)

Summary Finding 15. WFP support to the food security monitoring system (NeKSAP) contributes to a strengthened evidence base on food security, although this has not yet been fully institutionalized. Challenges regarding awareness, commitment and the capacity of subnational authorities persist.

112. WFP has been supporting NeKSAP for decades, with the support of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) funding. The piloting and support to the food security monitoring system was based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and resulted in transitioning to the government-owned NeKSAP in 2016, with continued capacity strengthening support from WFP. However, the federalization process led to changes in monitoring and reporting competencies, moving them to subnational levels. This brought challenges and gaps to scaling up the system across districts and *palikas* (municipalities) due to proliferation of decision-making instances and responsibilities, as evidenced through document review and stakeholder interviews with WFP, government institutions and development partners.

113. The country office received stopgap funding from headquarters to continue supporting the Government to re-establish the NeKSAP model under the new federalized government framework. This consisted of a two-pronged approach, whereby: i) national-level food security monitoring would continue to be provided by WFP; and ii) subnational-level NeKSAP would be piloted by supporting the setup of food security information centres (FSIC) in three provinces and 12 municipalities. The most food-insecure municipalities were selected based on criteria developed by WFP and the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD). To strengthen the FSIC's capacity, WFP organized food security monitoring trainings with financial contributions from WFP and the Government. Nevertheless, capacity strengthening activities on food security monitoring remained far below target in 2021.¹⁵⁵ Within the framework of support, 13 municipalities collected and compiled baseline food security information for their centres.¹⁵⁶ With its own resources and a network of evidence, policy and innovations unit personnel outposted across provinces, WFP continued to lead and provide technical support to national and subnational governments by collecting, analysing and utilizing food security data.

114. Stakeholder interviews with relevant government partners at national and subnational levels, as well as WFP employees and online survey responses, point to the effective capacity strengthening and evidence generation efforts by WFP to inform activity and budgetary planning. Interviewees note joint bulletins produced by the Government based on the technical assistance provided by WFP being used to allocate spending, which accordingly helps to improve the food security portfolio in the country. An example of such efforts is presented in Table 10 below, in which data from Karnali province show an increase of the *palikas'* budget allocation in agriculture and food security sectors as a result of FSIC work. The fact that the

¹⁵⁴ WFP, Nepal ACR 2020.

¹⁵⁵ WFP, Nepal ACR 2021.

¹⁵⁶ WFP, Nepal ACR 2019, p. 15.

Government committed funds to the system strengthening reflected its commitment. However, handover plans or institutionalization of NeKSAP has not yet happened at any governance level, putting NeKSAP's sustainability in question.

Table 10. Allocation of resources based on FSIC data

Palika	FSIC setup	Budget (NPR)		
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Tila, Jumla	01-Dec-18	3,000,000	4,000,000	5,000,000
Tatopani, Jumla	13-Mar-19	1,000,000	4,800,000	5,300,000
Patarasi, Jumla*	16-Mar-18	1,000,000	500,000	2,500,000
Khadachakra, Kalikot*	19-Mar-19	8,500,000	9,000,000	11,000,000
Total		13,500,000	18,300,000	23,800,000

Source: WFP country office data, shared 15.06.2022. Note: * including support from the federal Government.

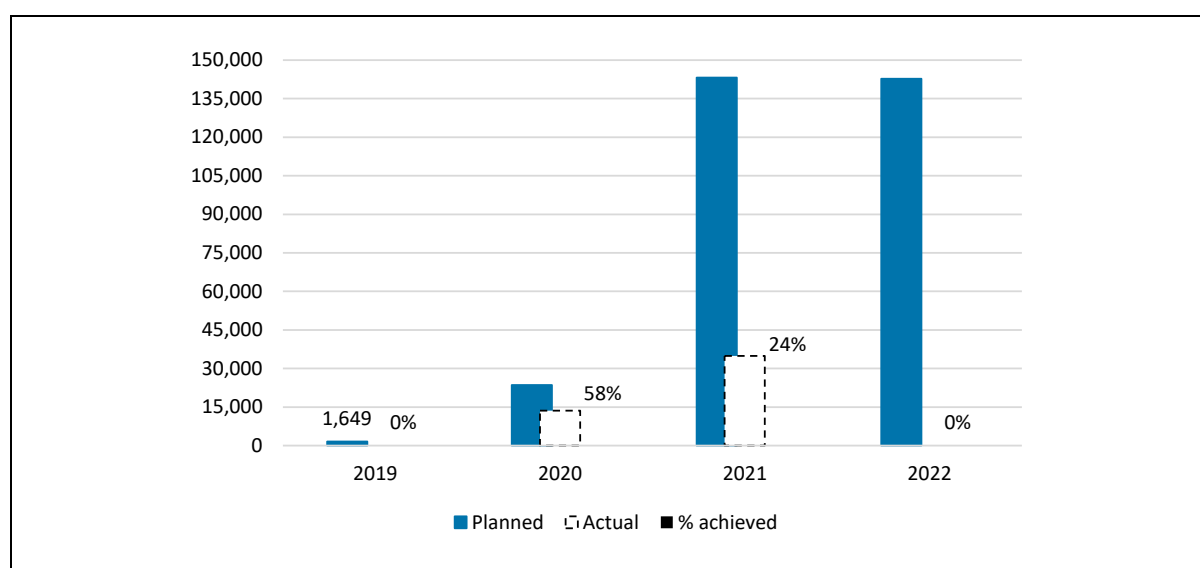
Summary Finding 16. WFP investment in innovative rapid emergency assessments, early warning and anticipatory actions are valuable and appreciated. They present effective tools to address the increasing unpredictability and magnitude of climate-related disasters in Nepal. However, the institutionalization of such tools has not yet been completed.

115. As part of WFP emergency preparedness and response support (Activity 6), the EPCI was developed for 11 municipalities in four provinces in 2018 (T-ICSP), working towards a total of seven provinces to be covered by 2022 as a means of assessing local capacity in emergency preparedness. Such efforts were continued with the introduction of 72-hour assessments within the innovation acceleration efforts of WFP. They were intended as a means to forecast potential disasters and identify and assist households at risk through anticipatory cash-based transfers or other forms of support before the occurrence of a potential disaster. The 72-hour assessments¹⁵⁷ built on innovative electronic tools and data collection approaches, including: pre-crisis market functionality assessments; a disaster risk assessment at the community level in selected hard-to-access locations; and updates of a database and vulnerability categories. The 72-hour assessment was first tested during 2019 monsoon floods in highly affected communities located in or near the disaster in order to estimate how many would potentially need assistance based on their vulnerability. Review of documentary evidence and stakeholder interviews confirmed its functionality to estimate affected households, resulting in more targeted and faster delivery of aid.

116. WFP introduced forecast-based financing as a model to more effectively mobilize resources before a disaster hits an area of the country. Through modelling of the approach, WFP provided anticipatory cash support to 2,700 households at risk of floods in 2020, although it reached fewer people than planned due to a combination of factors (including: (i) incorrect citizenship identification; (ii) duplication of beneficiaries; and (iii) bank account information not matching the beneficiary registration information), which led to delays and obstacles in funds transfer. With this cash assistance, those targeted households at risk were able to purchase food and medical supplies in advance of a crisis (Figure 24). In 2021, WFP engaged with partners to conduct another 72-hour assessment, which helped to identify needs across affected areas. When the predefined forecast threshold had been met, anticipatory cash assistance of NPR 13,500 (USD 114 per household) was provided to 1600 pre-registered vulnerable households.

¹⁵⁷ WFP. 2018. *The 72-hour Assessment Approach: A guide for vulnerability and spatial analysis in sudden-onset disasters*.

Figure 24. Planned and actual Activity 7 beneficiaries, 2019-2022



Source: WFP Nepal ACRs, 2019-2021. 2022 data shared by Nepal country office, 24.08.2022. The figures represent the beneficiaries assisted within the households mentioned in the narrative above. 2021 and 2022 values also include capacity strengthening beneficiaries.

117. As noted in document review and emphasised by interviewed stakeholders, forecast-based financing and 72-hour assessments offer more effective, accurate and sustainable ways to generate evidence on the needs of the population and roll out an actual response. Currently, the 72-hour assessment approach is available not only for WFP operations, but also for the Government and all other humanitarian organizations working in the field, which enables synergies in addressing the population in need.

118. However, these models are still applied by WFP and their sustainability is uncertain. Most capacity-building efforts planned on forecast-based financing, especially at the local level, were cancelled due to the pandemic and subsequent funding constraints.

Root causes

SO2/Activity 2 (MCHN)

Summary Finding 17. The MCHN activity reached a high proportion of its intended beneficiaries though with less than planned WSB+ distributions. Nevertheless, it improved infant and child feeding practices and hence nutritional outcomes have been achieved. Constraints affecting the regularity of food transfers and the quality/utilization of health/nutrition services are being addressed by WFP.

119. This activity combines food provision (WSB+ to pregnant and lactating women and 6-23 months old children) and SBCC through health facilities in five districts of Karnali province with capacity strengthening at all levels.

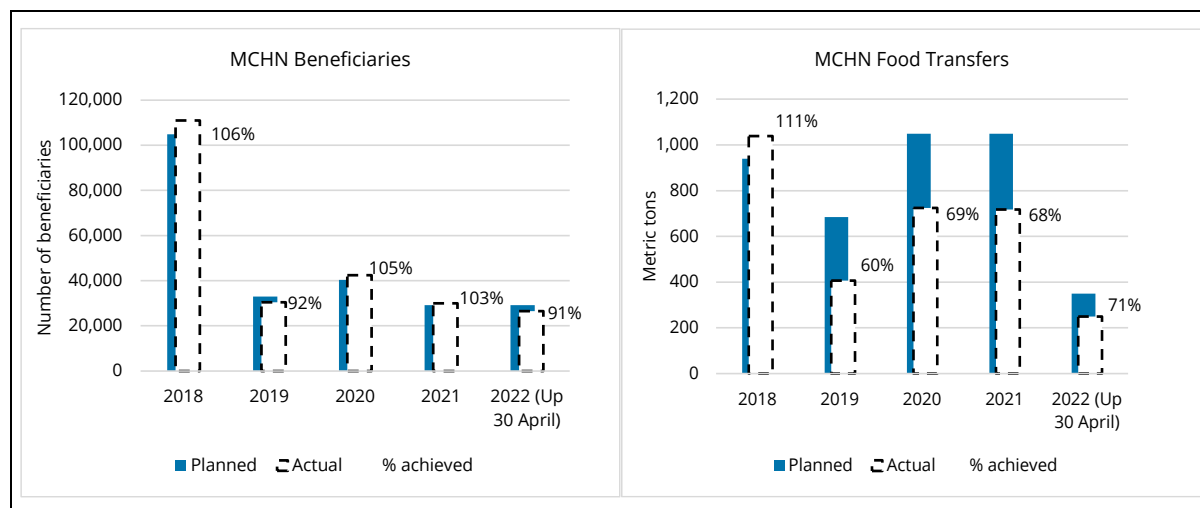
120. Actual beneficiaries (combining children and pregnant and lactating women) amounted to 92 and 91 percent of planned in 2019 and 2022 and exceeded targets in 2018, 2020 and 2021. However, actual food transfers were less frequent than planned throughout; only for five months in all five districts in 2019 (Table 14 in Annex VIII). Significant variations in monthly amounts for the same districts are also observed. As explained by the country office, the needs-based plan foresaw 12 distributions whereas available commodities were sufficient for a maximum of nine months, yet no adjustments were made (for example, targeting and/or duration of assistance). Such information should arguably have triggered a review of approach.

121. Pipeline breaks were due to funding shortfalls in 2018¹⁵⁸ and delays in procurement (length of time in the release of the Government's budget); and interruptions in availability of WSB+ (non-conformity with

¹⁵⁸ WFP. Nepal ACR 2018.

quality standards and/or insufficient quantity such as between April-October 2019).¹⁵⁹ Weather-related events (for example, landslides) occasionally affected the timely delivery from extended delivery points (EDP) to health facilities.

Figure 25: Planned and actual CSP Activity 2 and T-ICSP Activity 3 beneficiaries and food transfers, 2018-2022



Source: WFP, Nepal ACRs 2018-2021; planned and actual beneficiaries by activity tag COMET CMR020 extracted on 05.04.2022; WFP, planned and actual transfers food and CBT_COMET CMR014. 2018-2021; 2022 data from Nepal country office shared 17.08.2022. Note: the higher number of planned and actual beneficiaries in 2018 is explained by the higher geographic coverage (see paragraph 31).

122. WFP capacity strengthening activities, which were aimed at enhancing the quality and utilization of mother and child health/nutrition services, included: the secondment of employees to health service directorates in Karnali¹⁶⁰ province, to provinces 1 and 2, and to the Family Welfare Division/MoHP at the central level;¹⁶¹ and orientation/training sessions for government staff (districts, municipalities, health facilities), FCHVs and cooperating partners, encompassing beneficiary identification, supply chain, record-keeping and SBCC.¹⁶² Interviewed health staff indicated its positive impact on their management abilities and SBCC messaging.

123. However, the high MCHN coverage successfully achieved throughout 2018-2021 (Table 11) has not necessarily translated into improved utilization of MCHN services. According to WFP process monitoring in 2020 only 41 percent of pregnant and lactating women reported receiving antenatal and postnatal health services in conjunction with WSB+ distribution; among those, 80 percent of pregnant and 77 percent of lactating women reported receiving all essential services.¹⁶³

124. There are two issues: the first relates to the health system's insufficient capacity to deliver quality services. For instance, two cooperating partners' completion reports mentioned inadequate human resources and the lack of equipment (weighing scales) in health facilities.¹⁶⁴ ¹⁶⁵ WFP is attending to these in the MCHN project launched in provinces 1 and 2 (see first bullet under paragraph 157). The second issue is an operational matter arising when a single day/month is assigned for WSB+ distribution; such a modality geared to WSB+ distribution is not conducive to quality and complete health services in view of the very

¹⁵⁹ WFP, Nepal ACR 2019.

¹⁶⁰ SAPPROS 2022. Project Completion Report MCHN March 2021-February 2022.

¹⁶¹ WFP, Nepal ACR 2021.

¹⁶² SAPPROS. 2020. Project Completion Report MCHN Programme (November 2019-October 2020).

¹⁶³ WFP. 2020. Process Monitoring Report for MCHN Programme (Remote Survey) (p.13).

¹⁶⁴ Manahari Development Institute (MDI. 2022., Project Completion Report MCHN (Jumla, Kalikot and Dolpa districts) 3 March 2021-2 February 2022.

¹⁶⁵ SAPPROS. 2022. Project Completion Report MCHN 3 March 2021-2 February 2022.

large number of beneficiaries visiting on those days, as witnessed by some stakeholders.¹⁶⁶ To address this issue, WFP is testing the integration of WSB+ distribution into routine MCHN services in the districts of Jumla and Mugu. Results show that the pilot functioned well, as indicated by positive feedback from health staff.¹⁶⁷

125. The combination of WSB+ with SBCC, including cooking demonstrations and monitoring the growth of children, are aimed at improving health/hygiene/nutritional practices in order to achieve sustainable improvements in nutritional status. Cooperating partner reports and the WFP 2020 process monitoring show improvements in infant feeding knowledge and practices, as also observed during focus group discussions with beneficiaries: during the 3-month pipeline break that occurred, beneficiaries reported preparing home-made flour mixes. This good practice learned through SBCC has likely offset disruptions in WSB+ supply. In 2021, WFP expanded SBCC (without food distribution) in Province 2, Karnali and Sudurpaschim reaching 33,000 pregnant and lactating women and caretakers.¹⁶⁸

126. In terms of nutritional outcomes, 76.9 percent of children aged 6–23 months were found to have received a minimum acceptable diet in 2020 as compared to the baseline of 27.9 percent in 2019 (Table 11).

127. Cooperating partner progress reports indicate low prevalence underweight (3 to 5 percent among various districts based on growth monitoring data) among beneficiary children,¹⁶⁹ but the reports do not specify whether these measurements were made on admission or at discharge, limiting the usefulness of these data. All children aged 6-23 months are eligible regardless of their nutritional status. Nevertheless, a systematic analysis of growth monitoring records can inform nutritional impact as well as relevance of design/implementation modalities. The lack of such information may explain why donor, international finance institution and United Nations online survey respondents had fewer positive perceptions about the contribution by WFP to the increased capacity of the Government for prevention and management of malnutrition than respondents from WFP, NGOs and the Government, who were very positive (see Annex XIII).

¹⁶⁶ This was not the case in the health facilities visited by the evaluation team in Karnali, which assigned four days per month.

¹⁶⁷ SAPPROS. 2022. Project Completion Report MCHN 3 March 2021-2 February 2022.

¹⁶⁸ WFP, Nepal ACR 2021.

¹⁶⁹ SAPPROS. 2022. Project Completion Report MCHN March 2021-February 2022; and MDI, Project Completion Report MCHN 3 March 2021-2 February 2022.

Table 11: CSP Activity 2 and T-ICSP Activity 3 outcome indicators, 2018-2021

Outcome Indicator	Sex	T-ICSP				CSP							
		Baseline	End T-ICSP Target	2018 Target	2018 Follow-up	Baseline	End-CSP	2019 Target	2019 Follow-up	2020 Target	2020 Follow-up	2021 Target	2021 Follow-up
Target Group: Children & PLW													
Proportion of eligible population that participates in programme (coverage)	Female	96	100	100	119	100	=100	=100	93	=100	98.64	=100	94.05
	Male	96	100	100	110	100	=100	=100	92	=100	99.91	=100	100
	Overall	96	100	100	114	100	=100	=100	92	=100	99.27	=100	97.03
Prevalence of stunting among targeted children under 2 (height-for-age as %)	Overall	NR				31.2	≤27.2	NR					
Proportion of children 6–23 months of age who receive a minimum acceptable diet	Overall	NR				27.9	≥70	NR		>37.9	76.9	NR	
Target Group: Private Producers & Local farmers													
Percentage increase in production of high-quality and nutrition-dense foods	Overall	NR					=100	NR				≥0.9	0.87

Source: WFP Nepal 2018-2021 ACRs.

SO2/Activity 3 (school meals programme)

Summary Finding 18. Positive education and nutritional outcomes were mostly achieved, despite long school closures due to COVID-19 lockdowns: take-home rations were distributed in lieu of on-site meals (from 2020 to early 2022).

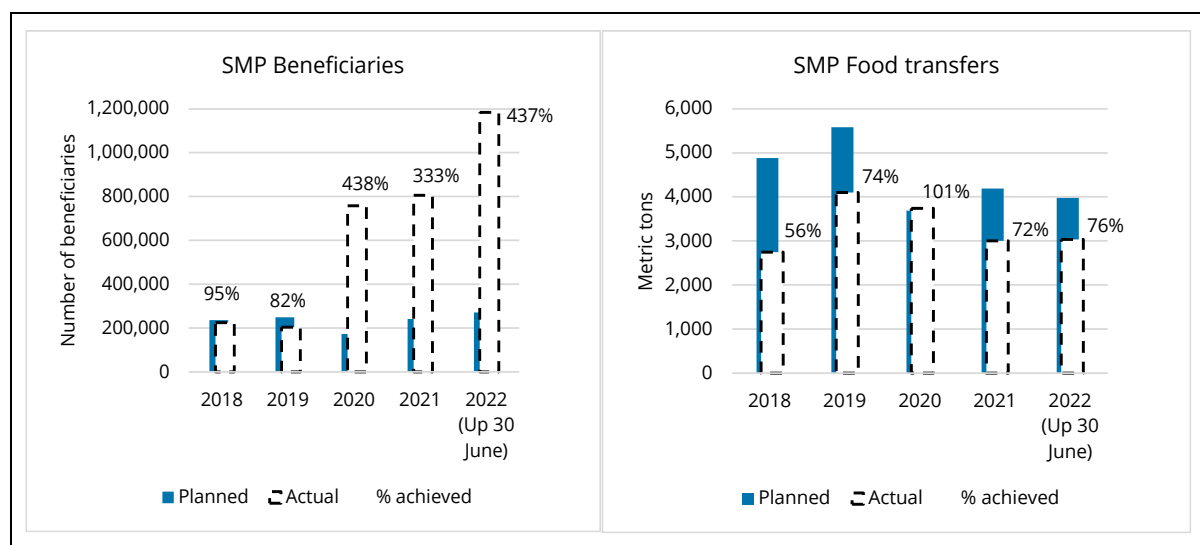
128. WFP provides a mixed food basket to schools in food insecure and remote districts, which is aimed at improving educational outcomes and preventing malnutrition. It also provides material and technical assistance to enhance implementation and facilitate the handover of schools to the national programme.

129. Planned beneficiaries decreased between 2018 and 2021 as some districts were phased out from WFP in-kind food as planned.¹⁷⁰ Annual actual beneficiaries amounted to 95 percent in 2018 and 82 percent of planned in 2019 and largely exceeded targets in the following years (during which actual figures include take-home ration beneficiaries - Figure 26). No significant gender difference is observed. Total quantities of commodities distributed to schools amounted to 56, 74, 101, 72 and 76 percent of planned in 2018-2022. In 2018, USDA food commodities were delayed, and therefore half-rations of locally procured rice and lentils were distributed from January to June to avoid a pipeline break.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ WFP, FY17 – McGovern-Dole International School Feeding and Child Nutrition Program Proposal.

¹⁷¹ WFP, ACR 2018.

Figure 26: Planned and actual CSP Activity 3 and T-ICSP Activity 1 beneficiaries and food transfers, 2018-2022



Source: Planned and actual beneficiaries by activity tag COMET CMR020; WFP, planned and actual transfers food and CBT_COMET CMR014, 2018-2021. Note: 2020-2021 actual beneficiaries refer to THRs beneficiaries and excludes overlaps. Food transfers include on-site and THRs. 2022 figures provided by country office.

130. Two rounds of take-home ration were distributed in lieu of school meals to all schoolchildren in 2020 and 2021 and one round in 2022 during COVID-19-related school closures in line with the WFP SRSP strengthening efforts (see paragraph 66). Different entitlements were provided in different districts^{172, 173} based on available stocks of commodities at the time of school closures rather than a standard ration given to all.¹⁷⁴ The effectiveness of take-home rations to achieve food security was assessed using the food consumption score. However, the evaluation team questions the relevance and usefulness of this assessment in view of: 1) timing of post-distribution monitoring surveys (the first was conducted during the lean season while the second was during a food abundant month) impeding a meaningful comparison;¹⁷⁵ and 2) ration sharing between family members (take-home ration consumed within one to two weeks).

131. Other WFP activities relate to facilitation of learning (*Tole Sikai* and digital teaching learning resources), infrastructure development and deworming (Annex VIII contains tables of outputs). *Tole Sikai*, a community-based learning method introduced in 2020 to help children cover their learning losses during school closures, reached nearly 21,000 children in 2020¹⁷⁶ and 17,587 children in 2021.¹⁷⁷ Post-distribution monitoring surveys report low participation and discontinuation of sessions due to increases in COVID-19 cases and later school reopening. In the schools visited by the evaluation team, parents reported non-participation in virtual sessions due to connection problems or lack of mobile phones. Digital teaching learning resources were provided in 44 municipalities in six districts. Process monitoring reported good utilization of up to 100 percent in some districts. Regarding infrastructure development, annual targets were mostly achieved across the years. Schools visited in Sudurpaschim had adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and kitchen and storage facilities; these were being constructed in Nuwakot.

¹⁷² These were: 6 kg rice, 1.5 kg lentils and 0.5 litres vegetable oil in Achham and Bajhanj, Bajura and Darchula; 7 kg rice and 2 kg lentils in Doti; and 7 kg rice, 2 kg lentils and 0.5 litres vegetable oil in Dailekh and Jajarkot.

¹⁷³ WFP. September 2020. *THR School Meal Programme Remote Onsite Monitoring Brief*.

¹⁷⁴ Explanation provided by country office on 5.08.2022.

¹⁷⁵ WFP. 2020. *THR School Meal Programme – Phase 2 Post Distribution Monitoring Brief*.

¹⁷⁶ WFP Nepal. ACR 2020.

¹⁷⁷ WFP Nepal. ACR 2021.

132. WFP collaborated with the global consortium Partnership for Child Development to develop ten sets of costed menus based on agroecological zone and regional price variations using a variety of locally produced commodities to enhance local production consumption.¹⁷⁸

133. WFP coordinated yearly deworming campaigns¹⁷⁹ as part of the national school health and nutrition strategy (corroborated during school visits): 48, 83, 86 and 80 percent of children were reached from 2018-2021 (see Annex VIII for data by gender).¹⁸⁰ About one-fifth of the McGovern-Dole budget is allocated to capacity strengthening.¹⁸¹ Training/refresher sessions of district- and school-level staff were conducted. These were in: monitoring and evaluation; food preparation; handling and storage; WASH practices; and record-keeping. Interviewees reported having benefited from their participation. The evaluation team's observations confirm adequate practices.

134. Outcome indicators include a mix of educational and nutrition-related indicators. Monitoring results and stakeholder feedback indicate a positive trend in attendance rates (Table 12). However, use of attendance as an indicator can be questioned in the light of COVID-19. For instance, the peak in 2021 (93 percent) was computed over the two months that schools were open and thus the school meals programme was active. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is also observed in enrolment: the increase observed in 2021 is due to more families returning to their villages and more children put in community schools as household incomes could no longer cover private school expenses.¹⁸² Regarding nutrition-related outcomes, WFP monitoring shows positive results: the average number of school days/month on which multi-fortified foods were provided is consistently over the target of 20, though slightly lower than the number of school days as corroborated by WFP process monitoring (for example an average of 5.2 feeding days/week versus 5.5 school days).¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ WFP Nepal, ACR 2020.

¹⁷⁹ Regular deworming contributes to good health and nutrition and educational outcomes. Source: WHO. 2004. Deworming at a Glance. WHO and World Bank Joint Statement.

¹⁸⁰ WFP, Nepal ACRs 2019-2021.

¹⁸¹ WFP. 2021. *Nepal Decentralized Evaluation - McGovern Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program 2018-2021*.

¹⁸² ACR noted that the number for 2021 reflects performance for two months (mid-March-mid-April and December) when on-site feeding was active. During this period, attendance is relatively higher due to the proximity to exams.

¹⁸³ WFP, Process Monitoring Report. 2020 (Table 3).

Table 12: CSP Activity 3 and T-ICSP Activity 1 outcome indicators, 2018-2021

Outcome Indicator	Sex	T-ICSP				CSP							
		Baseline	End T-ICSP Target	2018 Target	2018 Follow-up	Baseline	End-CSP Target	2019 Target	2019 Follow-up	2020 Target	2020 Follow-up	2021 Target	2021 Follow-up
Target Group: students													
Attendance rate	Overall	81	90	90	82	67	≥80	≥70	72	≥75	79	≥75	93
Enrolment rate*	Female	-4.30	1	1	-5.68	-5.68	≥1	≤-3	-4.05	≤-3	-4.9	≤-3	-0.01
	Male	-3.90	1	1	-5.98	-5.98	≥1	≤-3	-4.55	≤-3	-6.1	≤-3	-0.01
	Overall	-4.01	1	1	-5.82	-5.82	≥1	≤-3	-4.28	≤-3	-5.5	≤-3	-0.01
Retention rate	Female	NR				95.9	≥98	≥97	96.0	≥97	95.2	NR	
	Male					96.7	≥98	≥97	94.9	≥97	94.6		
	Overall					96.3	≥98	≥97	95.5	≥97	95.0		
Drop-out rate	Female	3.94	<3	<3	4.10	4.1	≤2	≤3	4.0	≤3	4.8	NR	
	Male	4.30	<3	<3	3.30	3.3	≤2	≤3	5.1	≤3	5.4		
	Overall	4.10	<3	<3	3.70	3.7	≤2	≤3	4.5	≤3	5.0		
Average No. school days/ month on which multi-fortified foods or at least 4 food groups provided	Overall	NR				21	≥20	≥20	21	≥20	22	≥20	20
No. teachers/educators who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools	Overall	NR					>874	>574	1080	NR			
No. individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices	Overall	NR					>1793	>1793	1104				
No. individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices	Overall	NR					>1162	>46	148				
% students who, by end of 2 grades of schooling, show ability to read and understand grade level text	Overall	NR				6.60	≥20	≥10	2				
No. school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools	Overall	NR					>2322	>2184	811				
SABER School Feeding National Capacity (new)	Overall	NR				2.4	≥2.6	NR	≥2.6	2.4	NR		

Source: WFP Nepal 2018-2021 ACRs. Note* The enrolment rate represent the rate of change in enrolment from past year.
SO2/Activity 4 (Rice fortification)

Summary Finding 19. Preparatory work for launching rice fortification is nearly completed, but production and distribution have not started yet. Progress has been slow due to factors such as insufficient coordination, underfunding and COVID-19.

135. In 2018, as part of South-South cooperation, WFP organized visits for government officials to Bangladesh and China and supported the training of two staff from the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC) on laboratory methodologies for fortified rice in Bangladesh. In 2019, WFP provided both technical (establishing a high-level steering and technical committee and development of

standards) and material support (equipment).¹⁸⁴ Progress in implementation has been slow due to limited funding so far, however, there are good prospects for additional funding. The rice fortification standard was approved in 2022 after delays due to COVID-19 and the multiplicity of involved stakeholders (the Ministry of Health and Population, the Ministry of Industry Commerce and Supplies, DFTQC, FMTC and the National Planning Commission), resulting in the deferral of all consequent activities (such as procurement of fortified rice kernels and capacity-building activities). In 2021, the rice fortification equipment was procured and installed at the FMTC rice mill in Rajapur, and a trial run of the machinery was successfully conducted.

136. The country office recruited a food technologist to strengthen both government and local suppliers' capacity and to improve quality control; and seconded a full-time employee to FMTC to provide operational support, guide the development of the operational manual for the implementation of the fair price shop to be established in remote districts for the distribution of fortified rice, and facilitate experience-sharing with other countries in the region.¹⁸⁵

137. While deploring delays in implementation, interviewees (WFP employees and other stakeholders) underlined the relevance and expected nutritional benefits of rice fortification, calling on WFP to continue its support. Online survey respondents had mixed opinions regarding the nutritional benefits of rice fortification (Annex XIII).

SO5/Activity 8 (technical assistance and evidence generation)

Summary Finding 20. WFP has provided valuable support to the Government in the formulation of rules and regulations for the Right to Food and Sovereignty act. Moreover, WFP support to the formulation of policy, legislation and guidance material is contributing to food and nutrition security policy coherence and improved multisectoral dialogue and coordination among national stakeholders and development partners.

138. WFP started its support to enhance the governance and capacity of local-level policy and service delivery in 2018 under SO5. For instance, support was provided to newly elected local governments in the preparation of integrated periodic plans focusing on food security and nutrition, GESI, education and climate change adaptation. To that effect, WFP developed a sample periodic plan procedure and provided process facilitation support to the 12 local governments to pilot this procedure.

139. In spite of underfunding and COVID-19 gathering restrictions, which limited consultative meetings, WFP has successfully supported the Government's efforts (National Planning Commission and sector ministries at national and subnational levels in line with the decentralization process) to develop a regulatory basis for the Right to Food Act, for the drafting of planning documents (for example, the national 15th five-year and periodic provincial plans), and for bylaws on the RtF Act 2018 (for example, national-level bylaws for various ministries and the Karnali Food Bill). WFP also supported the Government in setting up institutional structures to facilitate implementation of the RtF Act.

140. WFP facilitated the organization of several multisectoral meetings and events of the National Nutrition and Food Security Secretariat (NNFSS) at the request of the National Planning Commission. At central and provincial levels, secondees are: supporting and facilitating the development of sector policies and guidelines and provincial RtF Acts; mainstreaming food security and nutrition in the five-year provincial plans; and fostering synergies across ministries, as evidenced through the review of their theories of change and corroborated by stakeholder interviews with WFP and host government institutions.

141. As part of its support to the Government's endeavour to develop its institutional mechanism to scale up nutrition initiatives, WFP, at the request of the National Planning Commission, initiated consultations in 2019 to increase awareness and prepare for establishing the Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network (SBN) in Nepal. WFP recruited a dedicated employee to formulate and coordinate the strategy to move ahead with the SBN. In 2021, the SBN strategy was finalized, spearheaded by WFP. The strategy was officially launched in May 2022.¹⁸⁶

142. In 2021, WFP as the focal agency on behalf of United Nations agencies, provided support to the National Planning Commission in organizing the first national Food Systems Summit Dialogue, examining

¹⁸⁴ WFP. 29019. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Rice Fortification in Nepal.

¹⁸⁵ WFP. 2012.Nepal APP (end review).

¹⁸⁶ Scaling Up Nutrition, Nepal launches national Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network strategy. June 2022.

food systems and identifying paths for transformation to achieve national priorities. WFP helped organize ten dialogue events: three at the national level and seven at the provincial level as part of the United Nations Food Systems Summit and the 2030 Agenda (SDG 2).¹⁸⁷ As an outcome of these dialogues, National Food Systems Pathways were developed along six action tracks.¹⁸⁸ WFP and FAO committed to support all action tracks and IFAD on pathways 1, 3 and 5.¹⁸⁹ As a follow-up to the summit, various activities were planned to take place in late 2022 to review the pathways and proposed actions. These activities were; draft a matrix indicating specific benchmarks under each action track; and identify specific roles of relevant stakeholders to contribute to achieving the intended results.^{190, 191}

143. WFP outcome indicator data show that targets were exceeded (Table 13), as a result of WFP efforts to foster coherence and better coordination among various national entities in the area of food security and nutrition through CCS support to the National Planning Commission and various sector ministries at national and subnational levels; a role that is acknowledged and praised by many stakeholders from different stakeholders' groups.

Table 13: Activity 8 outcome indicator, 2019-2021

Outcome Indicator	Sex	Baseline	End-CSP Target	2019 Target	2019 Follow-up	2020 Target	2020 Follow-up	2021 Target	2021 Follow-up
No. national FSN policies, programmes and system components enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening	Overall	0	≥10	Not applicable		=1	1	≥3	6

Source: WFP Nepal 2019-2021 ACRs.

EQ2.2 Achievement of cross-cutting aims (humanitarian principles, protection, accountability to affected populations, gender, equity and inclusion, environment, climate change, etc.)

Summary Finding 21. WFP field operations were implemented in line with humanitarian principles and applied accountability to affected population standards across its interventions. Community feedback mechanisms were developed and applied, even by other agencies, although the frequency of their use by beneficiaries was not high.

144. WFP ensured that the “do no harm” principle was adhered to in delivering assistance during and in the aftermath of a crisis, and in light of COVID-19. Additionally, WFP followed its corporate strategy for accountability to affected populations in engaging with beneficiaries during assessment, targeting, implementation and monitoring of interventions. Primary interlocutors are local/district/provincial level government authorities, from which WFP obtains established lists of the most vulnerable groups. WFP also consults with affected populations for the identification and selection of beneficiaries. Furthermore, WFP assigns asset creation labour tasks based on assessment of physical abilities and aptitude of selected beneficiaries from the most vulnerable groups.

145. For instance, WFP assigned managing and overseeing construction roles or other tasks to women and persons with disabilities (PWD) in food assistance for assets activities in 2021 as per their physical aptitudes. Feedback from interviewed community members demonstrated that WFP consultations and

¹⁸⁷ WFP, Nepal 2021 ACR.

¹⁸⁸ I.e. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all, shift to sustainable consumption patterns, boost nature-positive food production at scale, advance equitable livelihoods, build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress and right to food Sovereignty Act; GoN and UN Food Systems Summit 2021. *Nepal's National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation*.

¹⁸⁹ GoN and UN Food Systems Summit 2021. *Stakeholders' Commitments for Food Systems Transformation Nepal – Nepal towards equitable, resilient, and sustainable food systems*.

¹⁹⁰ WFP. July 2022. *UN System Summit 2021 - Summary of Progress and Plan of UN Food System Summit Activities in Nepal*.

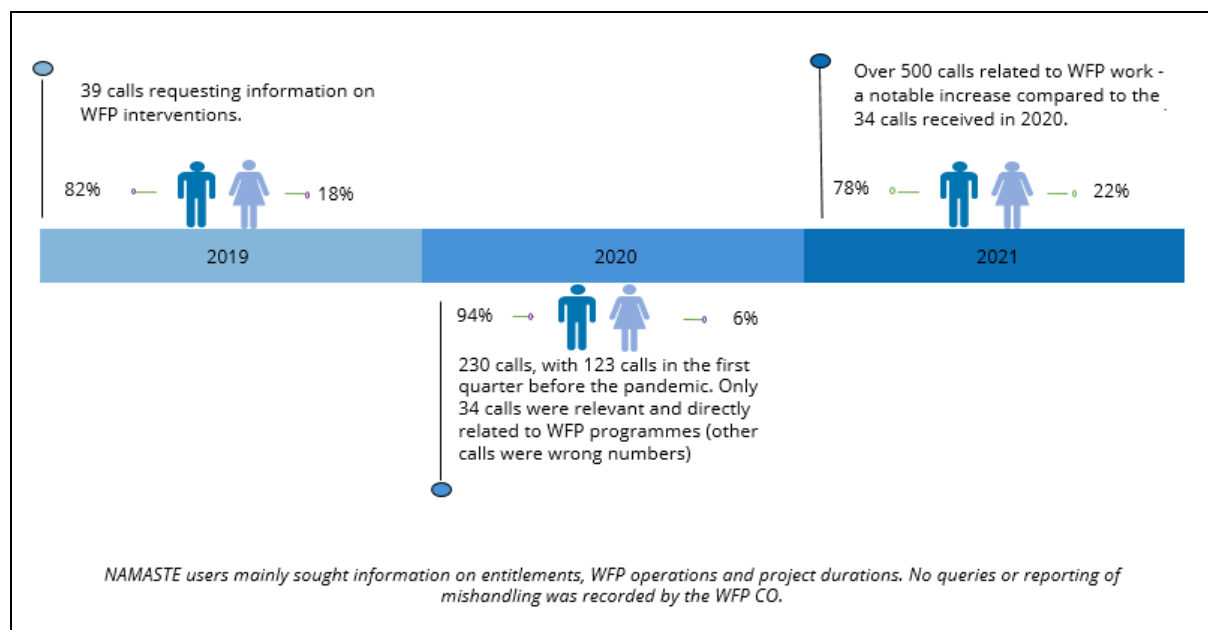
¹⁹¹ WFP. 2022. *Way Forward/Process for Implementing the Pathways and Commitments of Food Systems Dialogues 2021 (Power Point)*.

information sharing had resulted in adequate selection and coverage of the most vulnerable groups, though some stakeholders emphasize the need to conduct more consultations with communities without the presence of authorities, so that deprivation issues, challenges and needs of different castes and groups are fully heard.

146. The Namaste community feedback mechanism serves the objectives of accountability and feedback.¹⁹² It includes a hotline (toll-free telephone number), through which WFP beneficiaries may provide their feedback. During the reference period, community feedback mechanism management guidelines and a standard operating procedure were developed, and a community feedback mechanism coordinator was appointed to strengthen the mechanisms. The tool has been increasingly used since 2019, when it covered two activities, until 2022, at which point it applied to almost all activities (for example, community feedback mechanism in MCHN, the school meals programme, LERP, cash for assets in Jajarkot, CAFS-Karnali and FBAA).

147. Most feedback relates to the need for information on entitlements, WFP operations and project durations (Figure 27), which point to communication/information sharing gaps or lack of awareness. In 2021, WFP increased efforts to improve the visibility of community feedback mechanisms through information, education and communication materials, including radio public service announcements and print materials. However, variable and, in many cases, limited awareness of interviewed and focus group discussion stakeholders corroborate findings of the 2021 mid-term review, which pointed out the need to further increase awareness of the Namaste community feedback mechanism hotline among beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and partners. WFP also provides community feedback mechanism services to UN Women based on a memorandum of understanding for operationalizing this process (during COVID-19 and within joint projects). The WFP SugarCRM¹⁹³ software is planned to be used as a corporate system for community feedback for the joint programme with IFAD and other United Nations agencies, but it is not yet operational.

Figure 27. Namaste mechanism utility, 2019-2021



Source: WFP Nepal 2019-2021 ACRs.

Summary Finding 22. Gender principles and a GEWE perspective have been strongly reflected and mainstreamed across the design, implementation and monitoring cycle. However, a focus on, or coverage of, disability was limited.

¹⁹² WFP, Community Feedback Mechanism Management Guidelines.

¹⁹³ WFP uses SugarCRM software to manage and track recipients' feedback.

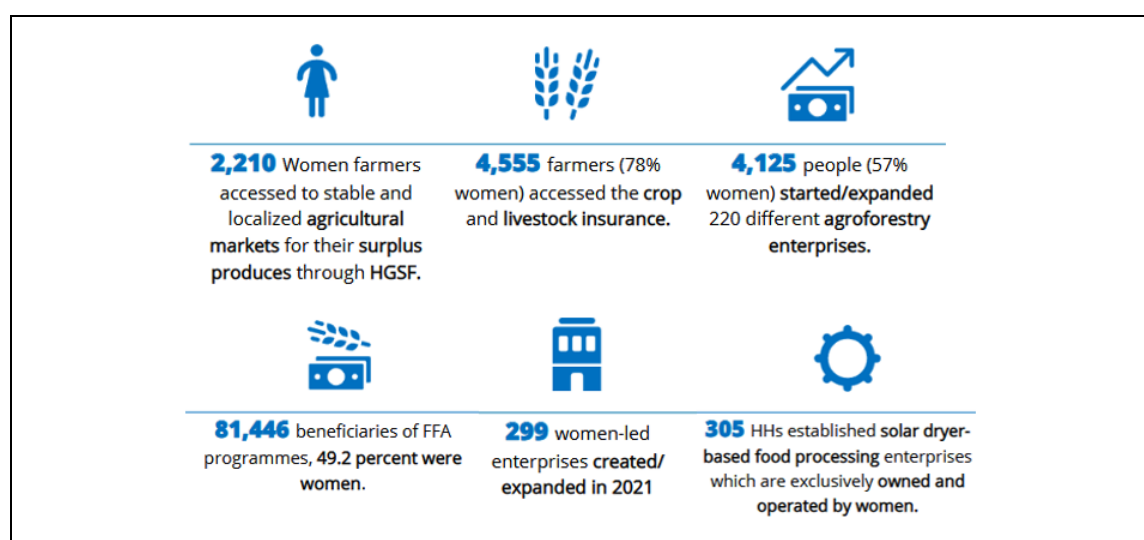
148. As noted in Section 1.3, the country office continuously generated evidence and strengthened the GEWE and gender perspective of its CSP. The country office used the formative research conducted in 2019 to strengthen its institutional capacity for GEDSI by: 1) hiring a GEDSI officer (in 2019); 2) adopting a GEDSI strategy (in 2021); and 3) establishing and maintaining a GEDSI results network for gender, people with disabilities, and inclusion (headed by the Deputy Country Director (DCD) and bringing together strategic outcomes, human resources, communications, monitoring and evaluation, administration and finance departments). The GEDSI strategy and the GEDSI officer role were considered by key informants as facilitating the strengthening of the country office integration of GEDSI elements across WFP programming areas, both in emergency and humanitarian crisis contexts and in development work.¹⁹⁴

149. The evaluation found that WFP engaged in various initiatives to promote GEWE, including its own programmes, such as CAFS Karnali, WIVC, or joint interventions, such as the RWEE joint programme with FAO, IFAD, and UN Women. The evolution of its GEWE commitment was reflected in an increase of the gender and age marker score from GAM 2A for the T-ICSP to GAM 3 for the CSP (Table 3). The CSP strategic outcome gender and age markers either improved or stayed the same except in the case of SO2/Activity 2 (MCHN, rice fortification) which decreased from GAM 4 to GAM 3, though no reason was provided.¹⁹⁵

150. The WFP performance monitoring framework includes gender disaggregated indicators. Indicators relating to cross-cutting issues capture some elements of GEWE, but the indicators do not go deeper to provide input for reflection on how WFP interventions target men and women and in what way. To rectify this, the country office conducted several assessments to establish evidence on the needs, contexts and challenges women and girls encounter in communities (EQ1), which were used to inform the GEDSI strategy and approaches.¹⁹⁶ For instance, a rapid GEDSI analysis for the school meals programme engendered recommendations on the need to sensitize government staff on GEWE. WFP responded by organizing trainings for the Government on how the school meals programme can be more sensitized to GEWE policies and championed a gender-sensitive approach to encourage adolescent girls to remain in school during their menstruation through increased awareness and community-based advocacy on menstrual hygiene and practices, even during school closures due to COVID-19.

151. The country office published a gender brief presenting a detailed overview of contextual issues and WFP country interventions with specific analysis of the approach by WFP to gender in 2022, evidencing the gender lens of WFP interventions (Figure 28). Having such a dedicated gender brief is assessed by this evaluation as an example of good practice.

Figure 28: The WFP gender equality and women’s empowerment results at a glance



Source: WFP, Nepal Gender Brief. 2022.

¹⁹⁴ WFP. 2022. *Nepal Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Strategy*.

¹⁹⁵ WFP, Nepal ACR 2020.

¹⁹⁶ WFP, Nepal ACRs 2019-2020.

152. WFP engagement with people with disabilities was limited. The country office developed a Disability Inclusion Initiative Work Plan, an important milestone. However, the initiative does not yet have dedicated funding. As shown in Figure 22, 283 persons with disability engaged in some basic works, though this is just a fraction of the total 16,193 persons receiving employment through food assistance for assets. This is somewhat explained by the hard labour demand, though more opportunities could have been explored. According to the online survey, only 23 percent of overall respondents agreed to a great extent that WFP invests efforts to address the needs of people with disabilities, with NGOs responding more positively than WFP employees, national Government, United Nations agencies, donors and international finance institutions.

153. When it comes to other socially excluded groups, evidence collected through the review of WFP beneficiary records and stakeholder interviews shows that the country office under SO3 activities managed to reach out to beneficiaries from Dalits and Janajati groups, which are two large, marginalized ethnic groups in Nepal. Additionally, SO3 interventions target geographical regions dominated by people from marginalized groups (for example, Madhesi in RWEE, Tharu Janajati in Kailali, Dalits in CAFS) (Table 14).

Table 14. Overview of Activity 1 and Activity 5 outreach to minority groups

Activity	Project name	Gender		Ethnicity					Remarks
		Female	Male	Dalits	Janajati	Brahmin /Chhetri	Madhesi/ Muslim	Others	
Act1	USAID funded (ECRA)	32,794	7,098	7,636	14,152	3,786	14,318		HHs
	LERP (Unconditional)	2,021	1,576	842	503	1,103		1,149	HHs
Act5	CAFS Karnali -	4,371	2,762	1,426	75	5,080	53	499	HHs
	LERP (Conditional)	3,868	5,183	2,605	1,319	2,924		2,203	HHs
	CFA Barekot	464	744	302	24	616		266	HHs
	RWEE	1,609	1,289	294	813	644	1,046	101	Persons
	WIVC	897	749	347	506	754	4	35	Persons
	COVID FSLR	196	65	53	85	121		2	

Source: Data from Nepal country office, shared 19.09.2022.

Summary Finding 23. Attention to environmental protection principles by WFP was adequate. Asset creation and smart agriculture interventions were informed by environmental screenings, which helped ensure environmental protection principles were taken into account. The country office has taken suitable in-office energy saving and monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions to decrease its environmental footprint.

154. WFP Nepal modelled several innovative interventions to address some environmental and climate change issues (for example, climate smart villages; innovative agriculture; and climate resilient infrastructure). In support to the government plan to have 300 climate smart villages by 2030, WFP introduced an integrated model of rural resilience through climate smart villages promoting biodiversity, water use, policies, and skill-building. At the time of this evaluation, a total of eight climate smart villages in seven *palikas* were supported and WFP technical support contributed to development of climate smart guidelines for the Government. Site observation of one climate smart village shows that such interventions were considered as welcome solutions to local environmental degradation issues.

155. WFP investments in irrigation systems assist vulnerable rural households to reclaim previously unused land. The new LISP project funded by the UK started in 2022 and has a focus on strengthening the Government's institutional system to adopt a food assistance for assets model for climate resilient structures in 15 local governments. The project aims to include an additional 172 municipalities through comprehensive technical assistance to the Government in support of its ambitious goals. This proved to be

relevant considering the need to sensitize government institutions on climate change issues (as shown in Table 33 in Annex XIII, only 4 percent of government respondents consider climate change as a challenge). However, findings under Finding 7 show that the country office did not sufficiently integrate climate change as a cross-cutting issue.

156. WFP follows up and reports on the country office's energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions through the annual environmental footprint report (ARCHIBUS). ARCHIBUS data (Table 15) shows a progressive decrease across all monitored elements, some of which were attributed to COVID-19-related work-from-home requirements in 2020. Emissions increased from 2021, reflecting the boost in country office activities (for example, increase of air travel in 2021 due to intensified field work in 2021).

Table 15. Carbon emissions (kg CO²) of WFP Nepal, 2018–2021

Year	Scope 1: Stationary Fuel Combustion				Scope 2: Electricity consumption	Scope 3: Road & Rail	
	LPG gas	Generator	Vehicle fuel consumption	Air-Conditioning		Road travel	Air travel
2018	947	6,140	87,963	18,457	185 ¹⁹⁷	15,376	102,940
2019	340	4,079	74,479	14,815	-	12,787	143,005
2020	184	2,021	39,932	14,815	-	3,372	70,481
2021	12	1,857	67,945	1,619	-	-	170,096
Total	1,483	14,097	270,319	49,706		31,535	486,522
Total carbon emission	853,662						

Source: WFP ARCHIBUS database accessed 27.07.2022.

EQ2.3 Sustainability of CSP achievements, in particular from a financial, social and institutional perspective

Summary Finding 24. The intertwining of CCS combining policy, legislation frameworks and material support with direct assistance is enhancing the sustainability of achievements and their potential scale-up. However, progress is uneven across activities due to a combination of factors: sector-specific constraints; challenges inherent in the federalization/decentralization process and the devolution of responsibilities; and emerging climate-related challenges.

157. WFP endeavoured to reposition its focus from direct assistance towards technical support for strengthening existing institutions and developing new ones. This process aimed to help the Government integrate food and nutrition security elements into policy and governance structures. Within this framework, WFP engaged strongly with the Government at national and subnational levels across the entire process of project design and implementation (from planning and targeting, to coordination and joint implementation). Through intertwining direct implementation with CCS in key reform areas, WFP is strengthening national and subnational capacities (policy, legislative frameworks, institutional structures, and human resource capacities) across activities with various degrees of progress as exemplified below:

- Activity 2/MCHN: To enhance sustainability, WFP adopted a holistic approach in the new MCHN project financed by Japan (due to start in 2022 in five additional districts) combining capacity

¹⁹⁷ Use of diesel generators.

strengthening (policy and monitoring and surveillance system) with material support, SBCC and multisectoral nutrition programming (linkage with the agriculture sector).¹⁹⁸

- Activity 3/the school meals programme: WFP is supporting the transition of the school meals programme to the NSMP¹⁹⁹ to ensure that the systems are fully functional and will remain sustainable. The SABER 2020 assessment acknowledged significant progress in terms of sustainability: government financial commitments (Goal 2) and community participation are both important prerequisites for sustainability. However, the report notes that there is no well-defined mechanism for engagement, accountability and ownership at local government and school levels.²⁰⁰ In 2022, the country office and the regional bureau in Bangkok, together with the Government, conducted an analysis of school meals programme achievements, existing policy documents and SABER findings and identified areas that WFP could further support to ensure the continuity of school feeding in Nepal.²⁰¹ Short- (1-2 years), medium- (3-5 years) and long-term (6-15 years) actions were proposed along SABER goals: i) supporting a conducive policy and fiscal environment at all levels; ii) context-adapted modalities; and iii) strengthening human resource capacities. The review of this document and stakeholder interviews indicate that this document is a strong basis for further WFP support to solidifying a government-owned school meals programme.
- Activity 5/Resilience: WFP secured governance and maintenance mechanisms for rehabilitated assets, which help sustainability in the mid- to long-term. Innovative agriculture practices, and in particular linkages between farmers and local schools (school meals programme), help more sustainable businesses as well. However, more integration of different types of activities (combining different asset creation projects, for example, community centres/storage with innovative agriculture or other types of infrastructure, etc.) would have contributed to more sustainable transformative results.
- Activity 6/emergency preparedness and response: CCS investment resulted in a cumulative and sustainable (in short- to medium-term) increase in institutional emergency preparedness and response capacity, as confirmed by interviewed stakeholders. Integration of WFP-developed courses on emergency preparedness and response into university and institutional training programmes also presents positive sustainability prospects. Since June 2022, WFP has developed a Humanitarian Staging Area Transition Strategy, which has been approved by the Government and will be implemented jointly with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), envisaging that the management of certain humanitarian staging areas would be transferred to the Government by the end of March 2023. At the end of the project, the Ministry of Home Affairs will manage 8 of the 12 humanitarian staging areas, while WFP will continue to manage the most strategic facilities until the Government has the capacity to manage them. Standard operating procedures on management of the humanitarian staging areas have been finalized and will be endorsed by the Ministry of Home Affairs by January 2023.
- Activity 7/NeKSAP: Despite the federal Government's commitments and the confirmed and recognized utility of the system, the evaluation found difficulties in the handover of the comprehensive food security system. These were mainly related to varied implementation capacities and the commitment of subnational government entities, making it difficult for WFP to sustain such a system with dwindling funding. A particular problem is that, while most competences are shifted to the local level, most funds are located at the federal level. Even though the WFP CCS framework also comprises WFP technical support for the Government's financial/budgetary management, this dimension was not significantly prioritized. WFP is scaling up efforts to translate ownership into clear transfer plans. However, this is a slow process demanding continuous WFP CCS support and advocacy, including efforts to support the Government's financial/budgetary management.

158. Despite overall directions for the progressive handover of responsibility from WFP to national authorities for some activities (for example, humanitarian staging areas, the school meals programme,

¹⁹⁸ WFP, The project for MCHN in provinces 1 and 2.

¹⁹⁹ Phase I: Jajarkot and Doti districts; Phase II: Darchula and Bajhang; and Phase III: Achham and Bajura.

²⁰⁰ World Bank. 2020. *Nepal School Feeding SABER Country Report*.

²⁰¹ GoN/WFP. 2022. *Ensuring the Continuity of School Feeding in Nepal*.

NeKSAP), challenges for full handover remain. The most significant challenge relates to the federalization process, which created/revealed multiple fiscal and human resource limitations across different tiers of government (see details under paragraph 9 in Section 1.2 Context and paragraph 212 under EQ4.5 External factors). This is because most competencies within the realm of WFP work have moved to the subnational level, which is affected by limited human and financial resources, unclear responsibilities, and lack of capability to design and implement multisector policies and services, or a lack of funds to fully implement new models. Another challenge relates to frequent turnover of staff across government institutions (see details in paragraph 9 and paragraph 212).

159. Some stakeholders criticized WFP CCS interventions (for example, food security monitoring and managing humanitarian staging areas, or cooperating partners substituting for national staff) as taking over what should be government responsibilities, thus risking creating donor dependence. Government stakeholders in ministries where secondees are placed note that the ministries routinely use secondees to carry out day-to-day activities and tasks that they themselves do not have the capacity to implement. This type of engagement helps relevance but risks undermining the promotion of WFP CCS principles,²⁰² and in particular the building of institutional sustainable capacity and lessening donor dependence.

160. Nepal's inherent environment and climate vulnerability and shocks remain a challenge to the sustainability of achieved results, as exemplified by the worsening values reported on food security indicators (see EQ2.1); and new/recurring needs for short-term food assistance to the detriment of the pursuit of longer-term development objectives.

EQ2.4 Strategic linkages between humanitarian and development cooperation

Summary Finding 25. Despite the T-ICSP and CSP not including explicit plans for how WFP would address the humanitarian-development nexus, the increasing integration of direct emergency assistance and comprehensive multidimensional CCS efforts (development) and the introduction of forecast-based financing reflect WFP efforts to link up short-term humanitarian activities with longer-term development objectives.

161. Comprehensive capacity strengthening support promotes opportunities to break down humanitarian and development silos and contributes to strengthening national and local systems' ability to provide transparent and accessible essential social services to citizens. It also promotes local leadership. WFP organized its CSP interventions across six strategic outcomes and ten activities, integrating direct interventions with a comprehensive CCS package. In such a way, direct assistance (MCHN, the school meals programme, resilience building and emergency preparedness and response) was used as a platform for complementary support to institutional strengthening (for example, trainings to communities, national and subnational government). Furthermore, as part of the humanitarian-development nexus, the forecast-based financing activation has contributed to bridging the gap between preparedness, response and longer-term resilience and development activities.

162. As an illustration, the new MCHN project in provinces 1 and 2 assists provincial and local governments to develop an annual, costed contingency plan and to pre-position essential health and nutrition supplies and commodities to be used for the first phase of an emergency. This is expected to strengthen capacities of the health system to respond to recurrent emergencies that interrupt the delivery of health and nutrition services. Also, farmers were targeted with resilience-building and smart agriculture trainings aimed at assisting the transition to the more integrated resilience package, thereby addressing root causes. The emergency preparedness and response and resilience-building work combined relief efforts with building community assets (for example, food banks) to enhance preparedness for potential new crises, thus developing local strategies and approaches.

²⁰² WFP, Country capacity strengthening. <https://www.wfp.org/country-capacity-strengthening>.

2.3. EQ3: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS WFP USED ITS RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY IN CONTRIBUTING TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUTS AND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES?

EQ3.1 Timely delivery of outputs

Summary Finding 26. Timely assistance was provided to people affected by natural disasters. However, other CSP activities experienced delays in implementation. Some constraints (for example, local production of WSB+) could be better addressed through partnerships with other United Nations agencies.

163. Document review and stakeholder interviews with the Government, WFP and development partners, as well as final beneficiaries show that, under SO1, the country office’s anticipatory funding, pre-positioning of commodities and 72-hour assessments allowed timely identification of target groups and delivery of assistance to people affected by natural disasters. WFP support to other humanitarian partners through SO6 helped wider timely response by other actors.

164. Occasional delays in the delivery of commodities to schools or health facilities under SO2 were found to be due to natural events (for example, landslides) and more frequently, under MCHN, due to delays in production of WSB+ and its supply (dependency on other countries for the basic raw materials for WSB+ and vitamin premix ingredients). As noted by the WFP country office team, another reason for delays was related to the lack of a quality control capacity in Nepal (unavailability of accredited food testing laboratory), thus food samples are sent to India for quality and food safety assurance to ensure they comply with WFP standards/requirement, consequently increasing the lead time of delivery. WFP invested sustained efforts to ensure timely delivery of commodities and other inputs across activities through continued improvements of internal procedures (for example, prompt approval of annual procurement plans) and support to activities tailored to Nepal’s challenging topography and needs (for example, establishment of humanitarian staging areas). Constraints on local production and testing of WSB+ have yet to be resolved through, for instance, partnerships with other United Nations agencies such as FAO.

165. Supply chain procedures (for example, invoice processing system, improved real-time commodity tracking and data entering) have enabled the country office to maintain low post-delivery losses and achieve high transport performance (percentage of tonnage uplifted as per the agreed date) throughout the CSP period, overall reaching yearly targets. Table 16 shows a stable trend over 2019-2022 at less than 1 percent in post-delivery losses, and a similarly stable trend as regards transport at around 96-98 percent over the 2019-2022 period.

Table 16: Supply chain key performance indicators, 2019-2022

KPI	2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Target	End-year value	Target	End-year value	Target	End-year value	Target	Mid-year value
% of post-delivery losses	<1%	<1%	<2%	<1%	<2%	<1%	<2%	<1%
% of tonnage uplifted as per agreed date	≥95%	98%	≥95%	96%	≥95%	96%	≥95%	98%

Source: WFP Nepal End Year Review APP 2019-2021, Mid-Year Review APP 2022.

166. WFP was responsive to logistic problems, for example, by providing supply chain management training of government counterparts and cooperating partners as well as by a feasibility study on transport options for an improved school meals programme supply chain.²⁰³ Responsiveness was also noted for more structural constraints relating to in-country WSB+ production and quality assurance capacity issues (which

²⁰³ WFP. 2021. Nepal APP.

could have been more carefully assessed and addressed at the CSP design stage) through technical support to local WSB+ suppliers.²⁰⁴ Factors affecting timeliness are discussed under EQ4.5.

167. The COVID-19 extended restrictions in Nepal affected timeliness of WFP interventions: the majority of field activities were halted in 2020 with some disruptions also in 2021.²⁰⁵ For illustration, resilience-building outputs (SO3) were lower than planned in 2020 due to the pandemic.²⁰⁶ To overcome these challenges, WFP worked closely with the Government to help enable access to communities, which helped resume resilience-building activities in 2021 as found in document review²⁰⁷ and corroborated in interviews with government stakeholders.

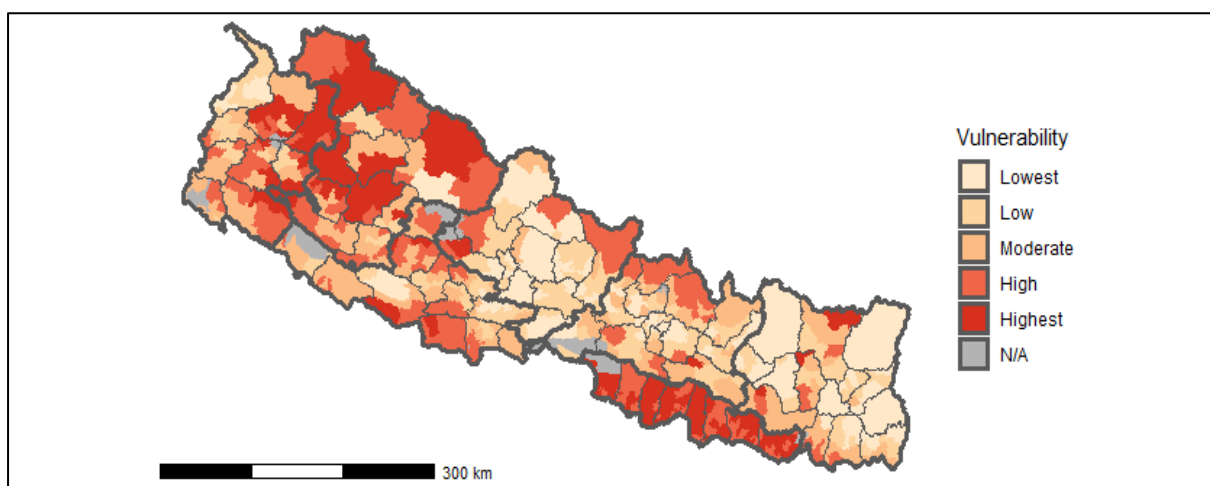
EQ3.2 The depth and breadth of coverage of the most vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition

Summary Finding 27. Geographic (province, district and community levels) targeting is evidence-based and consultative, focusing on areas most in need, though urban food insecurity has not been addressed and improvements in local/community-level consultations are warranted. Household and individual targeting under Activity 1, Activity 2 and Activity 5 are appropriate in reaching the neediest and effective in avoiding overlaps.

168. Targeting of CSP activities is done at provincial (all CSP), district (Activity 1, Activity 2, Activity 3, Activity 5, Activity 6, Activity 7) municipal (Activity 1, Activity 5), household (Activity 1, Activity 5) and individual levels (Activity 2, Activity 5) as discussed in more detail below.

169. The evaluation found evidence of extensive WFP efforts to inform targeting and coverage by its own and other available statistical data and food security monitoring, in close consultation with all relevant tiers of Government (EQ1, EQ2). The country office endeavoured to continuously refine targeting through additional indicators such as the United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index for the expansion of MCHN in provinces 1 and 2, along with coverage and utilization of health services indicators.²⁰⁸ The Economic Vulnerability Index was used to identify and target the most vulnerable municipalities during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 (see example in Figure 29).²⁰⁹ Stakeholders found this index useful not only for targeting but also for their own fundraising.

Figure 29: COVID-19 Economic Vulnerability Index



²⁰⁴ SAPPROS. 2020. *Project Completion Report on MCHN Programme (2019-2020)*.

²⁰⁵ WFP, Nepal, ACR 2020, 2021.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ WFP, Nepal ACR 2021.

²⁰⁸ Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari districts from Province 1, and, Saptari and Siraha districts from Province 2.

²⁰⁹ WFP 2020. Nepal COVID-19 Economic Vulnerability Index.

Source: WFP, WFP's Experience/Reflection on FFA (Cash Modality) under FDCO-Funded COVID-19 LERP (PowerPoint Presentation). September 2021.

170. **Geographic targeting:** Ranking of provinces, districts and municipalities is continuously and appropriately developed to inform WFP selection and prioritization based on food insecurity (through mVAM surveys) and other relevant data (for example, climate vulnerability, gender assessments) and available statistics (such as malnutrition prevalence). Final selection such as for BSFP is driven by funding availability: due to limited funding, WFP, in consultation with government authorities and communities, has to prioritize districts²¹⁰ and even municipalities within the selected districts. Although the selection is consultative, some interviewees reported that exclusion of some municipalities caused dissensions in neighbouring municipalities. This situation calls for improvements in information sharing with all local governments in any one district. As regards MCHN, selection of provinces and districts dates back to 2013-2014 based on chronic food insecurity and high rates of stunting. The school meals programme targeting has prioritized food insecurity, malnutrition and remoteness, which are negative factors impacting enrolment and attendance. However, the evaluation found that the geographic coverage of communities did not sufficiently factor in convergence among various types of resilience-building activities, which diminished the impact of results (mainly emanating from donor and government requirements).²¹¹

171. The CSP has rightly focused on rural areas. Most recent mVAM surveys (for example, June 2022), which disaggregate results by urban/rural residence, confirm higher food insecurity in rural areas. Should funds be available, an assessment could be undertaken to acquire better insights on food and nutrition security challenges in urban areas and ensure that potentially food insecure urban groups would not be excluded from assistance.

172. **Targeting of household and individuals:** Under SO1/unconditional transfers, identification of households and individuals most in need is done using predefined selection criteria such as: fully displaced, landless and land-poor; and having vulnerable family members (households headed by women, persons with a disability or with a chronic disease). The list of beneficiaries meeting these criteria is reviewed/endorsed by district and local authorities to ensure that there are no overlaps, as many humanitarian partners are engaged in the response. The BSFP standard operating procedures developed with WFP support includes explicit targeting guidelines.²¹²

173. For livelihoods and resilience activities under SO1 and SO3, WFP relies on government lists of most vulnerable households. This poses challenges in some instances, mainly due to the lack of a single national social protection registry. To overcome potential gaps in government-generated lists,²¹³ WFP has registered targeted, cash-based transfer beneficiaries in its beneficiary information and transfer management platform, SCOPE.²¹⁴ In doing so, WFP has safeguarded the inclusion of unregistered vulnerable people and has avoided duplications through verification by WFP field office personnel and cooperating partners.

174. According to post-distribution monitoring and interviews by the evaluation team, a very large proportion of BSFP, school meals programme/take-home rations, SO3 beneficiaries were aware of the selection criteria.^{215 216}

²¹⁰ In 2019, BSFP was implemented in four districts (Rautahat, Saptari, Sarlahi and Siraha) of Province 2 and in selected municipalities of five districts (Dhanusha, Mahottari, Saptari, Siraha and Sunsari) of Province 2 in 2020 and 2021.

²¹¹ Based on comparative analysis of WFP data on targeted communities and provided assistance, corroborated by stakeholder interviews with WFP, local community members and beneficiaries, and government institutions.

²¹² Devendra Raj Singh, *Qualitative Study to Document Operational Challenges, Opportunities and Values for Conducting BSFP in the Context of COVID-19*.

²¹³ Per LERP After Action Review, the fact that the Prime Minister Employment Programme's list did not register a substantial number of vulnerable people including returnees presented a challenge.

²¹⁴ WFP, Nepal ACR 2020.

²¹⁵ WFP. 2020. *Take-Home Ration School Meal Programme – Phase 2 Post-Distribution Monitoring Brief*.

²¹⁶ WFP. 2021. *Livelihood and Economic Recovery Project (LERP) BSFP in Province 2 – PDM Report*.

EQ3.3 Cost-efficient delivery of WFP assistance

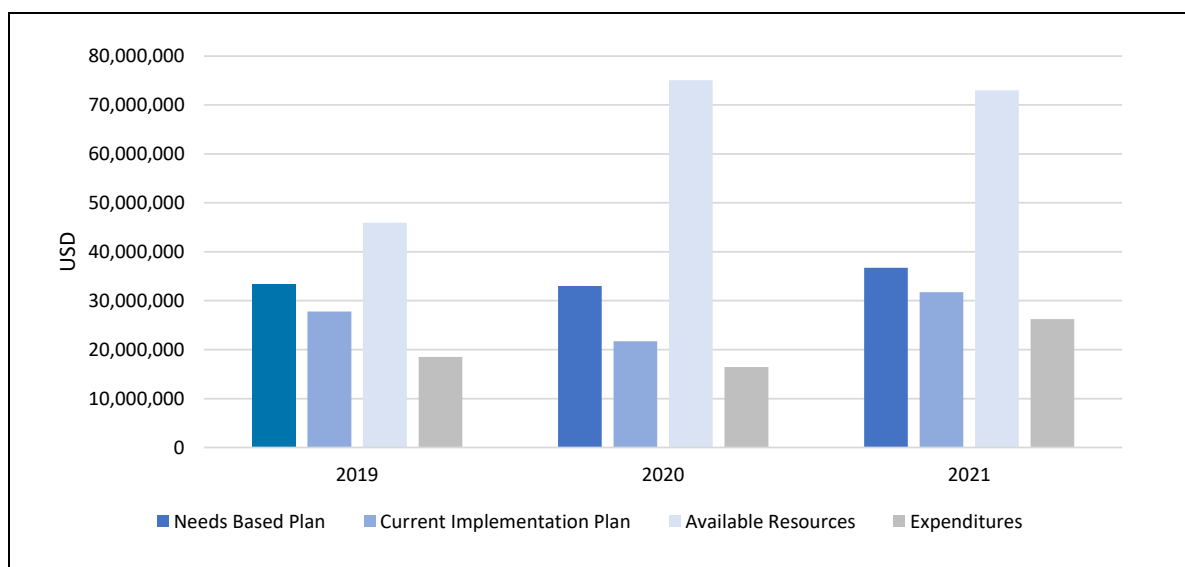
Summary Finding 28. The delivery of WFP assistance reflects a well-justified cost structure. Considerations of cost efficiency have been taken at critical stages of the design and implementation process and achieved an overall reduction of the share of direct support cost in 2021. Cost-efficiency considerations also informed cooperating partner selection. However, short-term field-level agreements (FLAs) with cooperating partners are suboptimal for the longer time frame needed for CCS.

175. Annual expenditures across the CSP have been significantly lower than annual available resources across strategic outcomes (Figure 30). This is especially apparent for strategic outcomes 2 and 3 (Figure 31), and is explained by the latter having major multi-year funding contributions. SO2 benefited from a USDA MGD contribution of USD 28 million from 2017 for four years, and a second round of MGD contributions of USD 25 million for another four years in 2020. Similarly, SO3 received multi-year funding from the Adaptation Fund and Department for International Development (DFID) contributions for more than four years, albeit most of the SO3 activities were project-based.²¹⁷ The discrepancy in annual available resources and expenditure levels are further explained by COVID-19-related delays in activity implementation. However, when comparing the annual current implementation plan and expenditure levels, results appear better aligned and suggest efficient use of resources.

176. Expenditures vary considerably between strategic outcomes and activities (see Figure 13 and Annex XV). A significant increase in expenditures in 2021 compared to previous years is observed for: a) SO1/Activity 1, consistent with the significant increase in beneficiaries (Table 5) and cash transfers (Figure 19); and for b) SO3/Activity 5, with a renewed boost of food assistance for assets activities from 2021, following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

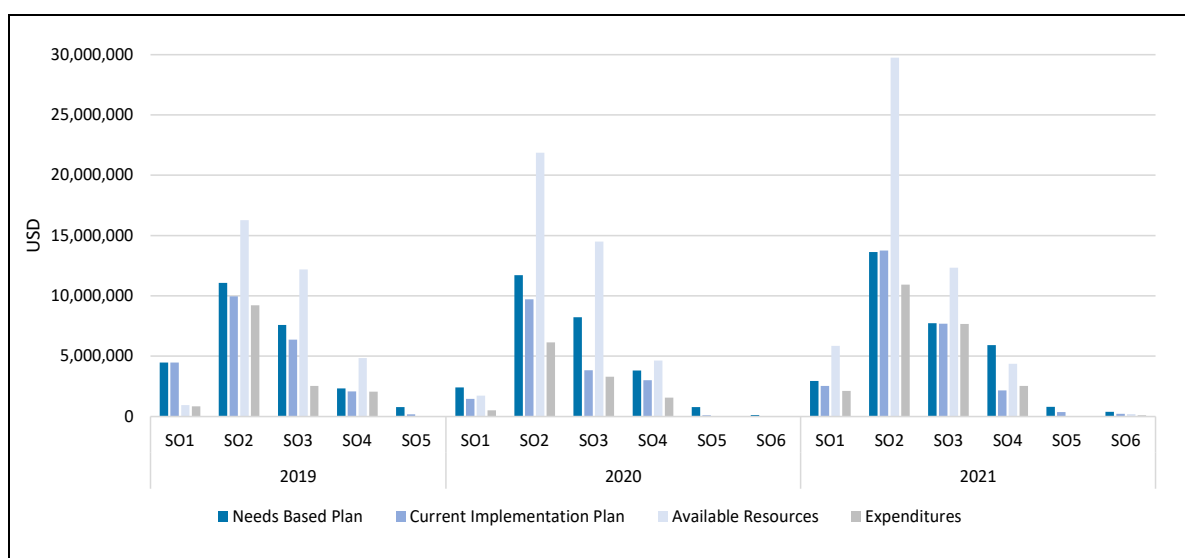
²¹⁷ i.e. CAFS-Karnali, RWEE, LERP and PURNIMA projects, each with their own target groups, indicator sets, timeframes and budgets.

Figure 30: Annual CSP financial overview grand total, 2019-2021



Source: WFP Nepal ACR5 2019-2021 extracted from IRM Analytics 08.04.2022.

Figure 31: Annual CSP financial overview by strategic outcome, 2019-2021



Source: WFP Nepal ACR5 2019-2021 extracted from IRM Analytics 08.04.2022.

177. Regarding trends in transfer costs, actual associated costs as a proportion of total actual *food* transfer costs shows an overall decreasing trend for the activities over the CSP 2019 to mid-2022 period, reflecting a positive evolution (Figure 27 in Annex XV). In the case of *cash-based transfer*, actual associated costs as a portion of total actual transfer costs of cash-based transfers only decreases for Activity 5 over the years; for Activity 1 and Activity 7 the trend is mixed (Figure 28 in Annex XV).

178. Table 17 compares planned costs per beneficiary (calculated as the needs-based plan divided by the planned number of direct beneficiaries) to the actual costs per beneficiary (calculated as the actual expenditures divided by the actual caseload).²¹⁸ This proxy analysis (there were difficulties for the evaluation team to factor in, including different distribution cycles between activities and pipeline breaks) indicates that actual costs were generally lower than planned costs with the exception of Activity 1/cash-based transfer and Activity 7 (due to an increase in the transfer value) in 2021. Actual costs for Activity 3 are

²¹⁸ The analysis considers transfer, implementation and associated costs only and does not include DSC and indirect support costs.

significantly lower than planned in 2020 and 2021 due to long school closures and replacement of on-site meals by one-off, take-home rations to children and their families, and hence a much larger number of actual beneficiaries. The lower actual costs for Activity 2 are consistent with the shorter duration of assistance due to WSB+ pipeline breaks (see Figure 25 and paragraph 121).

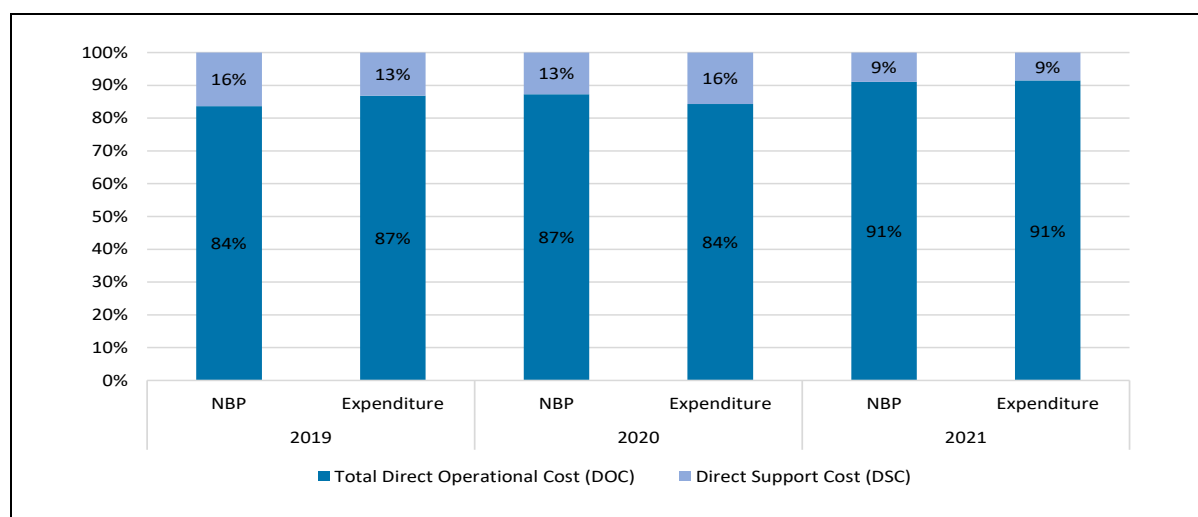
Table 17: Planned versus actual costs per beneficiary (USD), 2019-2021

Activity	2019		2020		2021	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Act1 (Food)	12	8	12	9	13	8
Act1 (CBT)	20	7	19	15	19	37
Act2	41	21	45	32	59	42
Act3	23	18	26	3	18	6
Act5			66	37	70	47
Act7			5	5	24	36

Source: evaluation team calculations based on data from: CPB_Plan vs Actual_for efficiency_IRM Analytics 04.07.22 for cost; and planned and actual beneficiaries by activity tag COMET CMR020 extracted on 05.04.2022 for beneficiaries. Green shading represents lower actual costs than planned, and orange shading higher actual costs than planned. Note that actual costs are highly dependent on the geographical locations (remoteness) of project sites.

179. Figure 32 shows planned versus actual direct support cost (DSC) and total direct operational cost (DOC) as a percent of total direct costs.²¹⁹ DSC remained a stable and small portion of total direct costs over the years, generally aligning with yearly targets, suggesting that management costs remained well contained. The share of DOC, a more variable cost category tied to the level of operational activity, increased significantly in 2021 following project resumption after COVID-19-related slowdowns.

Figure 32: Planned (needs-based plan) versus actual (expenditure) direct support costs and total direct operational costs, as a percent of total direct costs, 2019-2021



Source: WFP Nepal Annual Country Report ACR5 2019-2021 extracted from IRM Analytics 08.04.2022.

180. Transport costs constitute a large expenditure, though this is justified given that WFP works in the most remote and hard-to-reach areas of Nepal. Country office stakeholders cited some overlaps of field missions between different sections or teams. This is being addressed by the country office through the

²¹⁹ DSC: managed at the country level to support activities and programme implementation across more than one SO (e.g. country office management cost); DOC: any cost incurred by WFP in providing inputs that are utilized directly in activities by beneficiaries, the Government of the recipient country or other implementing partners, (e.g. cost of commodities, landside transportation, storage and handling).

monthly travel planning and coordination tool. However, DSC share has been double the regional average in 2019 and 2020 (Table 18). In 2021, the DSC sharply declined and was better aligned with the regional average.

Table 18: Direct expenditures by region and focus area (USD thousand), 2019-2021

	Nepal DSC percentage over total costs excluding ISC	Regional totals for DSC (USD)	Regional totals for all costs excluding ISC (USD)	Regional average percentage of DSC over total costs excluding ISC
2019	13.1	36,801	498,181	7.4
2020	15.9	36,594	586,758	6.2
2021	8.7	47,550	898,930	5.3

Source: WFP Nepal Annual Country Report (ACR5) 2019-2021 extracted from IRM Analytics 08.04.2022. WFP Annual Performance Reports 2019–2021 for regional averages (Annex VIII A for 2019 and Annex IV C for 2020 and 2021).

181. The evaluation found that cooperating partners are appropriately selected, applying the rigorous WFP procurement protocol (the Cooperating Partner Committee, composed of employees from Finance, Programme and Supply Chain undertakes technical and financial assessments of cooperating partners' proposals). The evaluation found the country office utilizes the United Nations partnership roster and ensures that relatively less costly and competent national NGOs, knowledgeable of local conditions, are invited for partnerships.²²⁰ During the expression of interest, the signing of field-level agreements, plan of operation preparation and budget review discussions, employees report that efficiency is always put at the centre. During implementation, cost-efficiency considerations are discussed with cooperating partners, and budget amendments are made as required to ensure efficiency and value for money.²²¹

182. The evaluation found that the majority of cooperating partners are local organizations with grassroots presence in the districts and local governments, hence are highly familiar with local context, geography and population to be served. Stakeholder feedback showed that this results in efficiency gains, positive community-level mobilization and outreach results. Such partnerships also enhance the cost effectiveness of project delivery and provide opportunities to leverage cooperating partners' expertise and experience for effective delivery of WFP assistance.

183. WFP conducts regular performance reviews of cooperating partners, based on which, further partnerships are developed. However, cooperating partners emphasized that the WFP approach is more informative than consultative, expressing the wish for more programmatic partnership (see EQ4.3). More multi-year field-level agreements were also mentioned as avenues to "work with longer-term vision and roadmap in mind", which would enable cooperating partners to retain experienced personnel who are particularly important when it comes to local capacity strengthening (for example, strengthening of grassroots organizations like the farmers' group, which requires a long timeframe). According to WFP regulations, this is possible only when multi-year pre-confirmed funding has been received. Moreover, each yearly field-level agreement requires cooperating partners to prepare full-fledged proposals, which consequently leads WFP to invest time in reviewing and approving proposals.

EQ3.4 Consideration of alternative, more cost-efficient/effective measures

Summary Finding 29. WFP is giving due consideration to cost efficiency/effectiveness in its decisions regarding delivery modalities and office structure realignment.

184. The country office conducts cost-benefit analyses, such as comparing in-kind versus cash modalities for general food distribution (see Annex XV for details).²²² The analysis, which provided an estimate of the

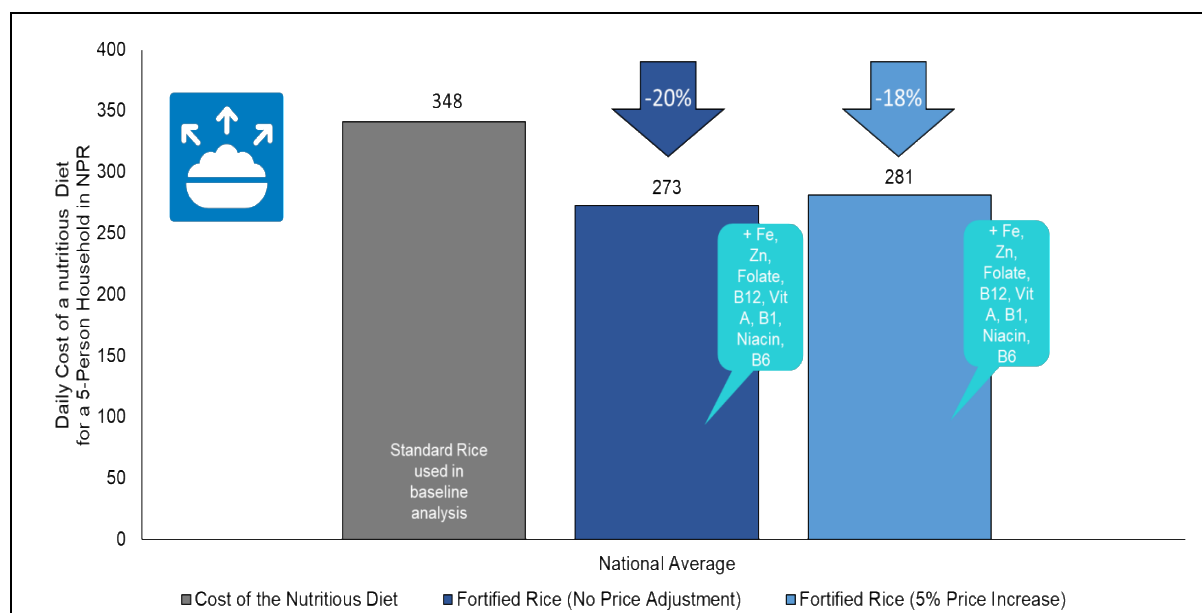
²²⁰ GoN's regulations require INGOs to subcontract national NGOs to implement projects as they are not allowed to implement the project directly. The CO is aware that selecting INGOs leads to double budgeting and inflating of the overhead costs for similar, with direct implications on efficiency.

²²¹ Information from WFP Nepal CO, 17.08.2022.

²²² WFP Nepal. 2019. CBT and GFD cost efficiency analysis.

cost of a food basket consisting of ten food items (conceived based on local availability and dietary diversity considerations) applying local market prices analysis, showed that cash-based transfer is more cost-efficient: while the transfer value cost is alike for both options the associated transfer cost is evidently higher for the in-kind modality (60 percent as compared with 49 percent for cash-based transfer). Cost-effectiveness of rice fortification was examined by modelling potential benefits if households were to purchase and consume fortified rice instead of unfortified rice. Results for this model, shown in Figure 33, illustrate that even if the price of fortified rice were 5 percent more than that of unfortified rice, it could reduce the cost of nutritious diets by almost one-fifth.²²³

Figure 33: Reduction in the cost of the nutritious diet after consumption of fortified rice, under two pricing scenarios



Source: WFP/NPC, Fill the Nutrient Gap. 2021.

185. Another example of conscious efforts on the part of WFP to reduce costs is that WFP approached local vendors to directly procure construction materials needed for asset rehabilitation through a competitive procedure, which helped boost cost effectiveness (in terms of lowering transportation costs, quality of material and avoidance of associated pecuniary risks).

186. As regards cash transfers, two options have been considered: cash in-hand (direct cash as part of emergency “anticipatory action”); and transfers through bank accounts. The latter has been favoured (lower cost to WFP in terms of bank fees: 5-10 US cents per transaction compared with 70-80 cents for direct cash for brokers’ fees)²²⁴ when applicable, based on cost-saving considerations as well as benefits in terms of financial inclusion of beneficiaries. A market assessment and feasibility study for cash-based transfer operations are planned in 2022 jointly by Supply Chain, Programme and EPI units.

187. To improve cost effectiveness, the office structure was reviewed, with the support of the regional bureau in Bangkok, to align it with the CSP human resource needs. Some posts were abolished, and others re-advertised or newly created (for example, activity managers’ posts). One sub-office was closed (Ghorka) as it was no longer required in view of CSP geographic coverage.

188. Adopting flexible monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including remote monitoring for post-distribution monitoring and use of local enumerators, is another cost-saving measure adopted by the country office, while acknowledging some limitations, such as: frequent connection problems; bias by only

²²³ WFP. 2021. Cost of the Diet analysis quoted in: WFP/NPC, *Fill the Nutrient Gap*.

²²⁴ Data from Nepal CO shared on 16.06.2022.

including those with phones (majority of whom are men and boys); and limited opportunities for verification through observation.^{225, 226}

2.4. EQ4: What are the factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the country strategic plan?

EQ4.1 Ability to mobilize adequate, timely, predictable and flexible resources to finance the CSP

Summary Finding 30. Owing to sustained efforts by WFP, a high proportion of the total CSP budget has been mobilized. However, resources were heavily earmarked at the activity level, limiting in particular resilience building and food security monitoring activities. The country office's resource mobilization strategy (RMS) rightly calls for intensifying WFP efforts to diversify its donor base with emphasis on flexible multi-year funding.

189. The WFP Country Office Resource Mobilization Strategy (2018) adopted a multipronged approach to resource mobilization, focusing on government, donors, pooled funds, international finance institutions, the private sector and internal funding sources.²²⁷ The resource mobilization strategy identified risks (for example, slow economic growth, global socioeconomic and political trends) and mitigation measures (for example, diversification of donor base and flexible, multi-year funding to ensure the country office's agile response to emerging needs and funding challenges).

190. The resource mobilization strategy also called for more visibility, which could be tackled through the development of a partnership and communications strategy.²²⁸ Such a document is considered important in light of rather limited buy-in to the dual mandate of WFP among interviewed external stakeholders, some of whom perceived WFP as an emergency relief/operational agency rather than as a development partner (particularly in its shift from direct assistance to CCS). The WFP dual mandate is notably visible in the CSP structure under two dedicated strategic outcomes: SO1 a dormant crisis response; and SO5 dedicated to policy support. While WFP was able to mobilize resources for the former, SO5 suffered from underfunding (no funds in 2019; and funds outside the country portfolio budget from the WFP SDG 2030 approved in 2020). The competitive environment (in terms of funding) is another challenge to be addressed by the resource mobilization strategy. In that regard, interviewed stakeholders noted that donors' priorities, whether thematic or geographic, shifted in view of Nepal's graduation to lower middle-income country status, competition between United Nations agencies and NGOs, and other emerging priorities elsewhere.

191. WFP resource mobilization efforts resulted in additional funding from current and new donors (for example, Japan, the Emerging Donors Matching Fund (EDMF), France and Ireland are all new donors as compared to the T-ICSP). The additional funding included: funding in 2020 under the CPRP to procure WSB+ for BSFP; additional resources in 2021 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) being a new donor under Activities 3 and 6; funding from the FCDO for COVID-19 and monsoon emergency response under activities 1, 2 and 7; funding from Japan for Activity 3 infrastructure and farm-to-market support in Nuwakot in 2020 and Activity 2 expanding MCHN coverage in 2021;²²⁹ and funding from CERF for collective anticipatory action intervention.²³⁰ In addition, WFP engaged with international finance institutions such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and IFAD, resulting in the approval of a Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) grant.²³¹

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ WFP. *Nepal Monitoring, Review, Evaluation and Knowledge Management Strategy (2019-2023)*.

²²⁷ WFP. 2020. *Nepal Resource Mobilization Strategy Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)*.

²²⁸ WFP, 2018. *Communication Strategy (2021-2023) Nepal (A PPT)*.

²²⁹ WFP, 2021. *The Project for Mother and Child Health and Nutrition Programme (MCHN) in Provinces 1 and 2 in Nepal*; and WFP. 2020. *Critical Infrastructure and Farm-to-Market Support for Increased Sustainability and Improved Implementation of the National School Meals Programme in Nuwakot District*.

²³⁰ WFP, Nepal ACR 2021.

²³¹ Ibid.

192. Flexibility of funding remained low. T-ICSP-earmarked contributions amounted to USD 18.43 million of the USD 27.93 million in allocated contributions (65.9 percent). T-ICSP earmarking occurred almost entirely at the activity level (Table 19). By July 2022, through direct contributions from donors, multilateral fund allocations and advance financing from the WFP corporate Immediate Response Account (IRA) Fund, WFP Nepal mobilized 68.9 percent of the needs-based plan. However, the earmarking of contributions continued to limit the implementation of resilience-building activities, particularly food security monitoring. As of 4 July 2022, CSP earmarked contributions amounted to USD 97.53 million of USD 113.87 million allocated contributions (85.6 percent).

Table 19: Nepal T-ICSP and CSP budget earmarking level (USD)

Level	T-ICSP		CSP	
	Earmarked contributions	% of total earmarked contributions	Earmarked contributions	% of total earmarked contributions
Activity	17,476,266	95%	97,527,931	100%
Strategic outcome	954,253	5%	-	-
Grand Total	18,430,519	100%	97,527,931	100%

Source: WFP Nepal Annual_Resource_Situation_Report, shared by country office 16.05.2022 (T-ICSP data); WFP Nepal CPB_Resource Situation Overview_FACTORY on 04.07.2022 (CSP data with earmarking identified by country office).

193. The majority of funding was earmarked to root causes (63 percent), followed by resilience building (25 percent) and crisis response (11 percent). In terms of activity, Activity 3 (school meals programme) received the most funding while Activity 4 (rice fortification) received the least.

EQ4.2 Utility of the performance monitoring and reporting systems to track and demonstrate progress towards expected outputs and outcomes and to inform management decisions

Summary Finding 31. Monitoring and evaluation are extensive but resource-intensive due to the remoteness of some targeted communities and other geographical and access issues. The country office devised mechanisms to enhance cost-efficient data collection.

194. The Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation and Knowledge Management Strategy and the WFP comprehensive logframe present the framework for performance monitoring activities, along with ad hoc requests and reporting demands from donors. The CSP includes a high volume of 40 outcome indicators, including: WFP corporate indicators and donor-related indicators (for example, there are 17 project-specific indicators for the CAFS Karnali project alone of which 30 are for education); process indicators; cross-cutting monitoring indicators (around 20 indicators); and other WFP indicators. WFP also added a Washington Group set of disability-related questions to its monitoring and evaluation tools and generated evidence through dedicated study (for example, indigenous persons with disabilities and their access to food security and nutrition). Overall, the volume of indicators is far too many to be credibly monitored and stretches the M&E Unit's capacity and ability to comprehensively plan work processes.

195. Data collection is costly due to the remoteness of some locations where WFP works. Monitoring was particularly difficult during COVID-19 restrictions when the office could only track 10-15 percent of all indicators. In order to mitigate these and enhance cost efficiency, monitoring and evaluation is increasingly conducted via hybrid approaches, distinguishing between the data that can be collected remotely and those that need to be collected in-person. Much of the monitoring and evaluation work is outsourced to external consultancy companies and to a roster of enumerators who are locally based. This presents some cost efficiencies, but also affects the timeliness of data collection. Performance monitoring data is used to inform decision making, as reflected in adjustments informed by monitoring data made over the CSP implementation (for example, changes in WSB+ distribution schedule to enhance the linkage with MCHN services based on post-distribution monitoring findings – see paragraph 124).

196. WFP tested a remote SMS-based monitoring tool in schools of Bidur municipality of Nuwakot to address the constraints of the current lengthy and costly paper-based system, which limits the effectiveness of budget decentralization (from the national Government to municipalities and schools), ultimately causing delays in payments to farmers supplying schools. This remote system has a minimum running cost (SMS cost only) and connectivity was found to be good even in the most remote schools. The next stage of the pilot is scaling up the model to generate automated reports on all schools (to be aggregated in different formats of reports), and ultimately integrating this system into the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's (MoEST) Education Management Information System. This remote monitoring tool has the potential to act as a turning point for the Government in monitoring the results of their NSMP across the country.

197. The evaluation found some overlaps and unclear roles between the M&E Unit, the EPI Unit and the Strategic Planning and Knowledge Management Unit, each of which has responsibility for concrete data collection, handling, report drafting and dissemination tasks. The M&E Unit collects data, the Strategic Planning and Knowledge Management Unit is in charge of reporting, while the External Relations Unit communicates with donors on reports. Such process results in some fragmentation. In efforts to streamline these processes, the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Steering Committee was established in 2021 to provide oversight and guidance to monitoring and evaluation activities, which has potential to clear the overlaps.

198. Over the reference period, 12 evaluations of variable quality, were commissioned by the country office (including baseline, mid-line, final, and impact evaluations for various projects such as school meals programme²³² and climate change adaptation²³³).

EQ4.3 Partnerships and collaborations with other actors

Summary Finding 32: WFP flexibly and responsively collaborates with government authorities at national and subnational levels. WFP is increasingly engaging in joint projects with United Nations agencies and fostering consultation with development and humanitarian actors particularly at the field level, however more strategic partnerships are only now gaining traction, mainly due to strong CCS work with the Government addressing root causes. Collaboration with NGO and CSO cooperating partners has been successful but insufficiently consultative. Partnerships with the private sector and academia are slowly emerging.

199. A partnership strategy and action plan was developed for the CSP in 2018. At the time of the evaluation field mission, this action plan was being updated. Interviews and documentary analysis show that WFP invests in building partnerships, with stronger engagement with the Government but less intensive approaches when it comes to development partners, CSOs and the private sector. Close collaborative efforts between WFP and government authorities at all levels have been evidenced. As noted in previous sections, the open and consultative approaches by WFP promote partnerships with national and subnational government, which in turn improve the targeting and implementation of assistance (for example, selection of final beneficiaries, community outreach and asset creation, school meals programme; technical assistance for assets, etc).

200. There are mixed assessments of the WFP approach to partnerships with United Nations agencies and other development partners. WFP participates in UNCT working groups and in other instances. However, some United Nations agency and development partner representatives participating in interviews and in the survey characterize WFP engagement as limited to information sharing, and not very collaborative (Annex XIII). Others utilizing WFP services praised the responsiveness and efficiency of service provision. The most valued contribution from WFP is considered to be the field offices and their district coordinators, who are viewed as excellent sources of information and helpful in organizing community activities for other United Nations agencies or development partners, especially in remote and hard-to-reach areas. WFP is increasingly engaging in United Nations joint projects, for example the RWEE programme 2015-2026, in which WFP collaborates with FAO, UN Women and IFAD, and the 'Women in Value Chain' initiative. The role of WFP in climate change is also perceived as strong, resulting in WFP undertaking a coordination role for

²³² WFP/SAMBODHI/NARMA. 2019. Decentralized Evaluation USDA McGovern Dole Food for Education Program in Nepal.

²³³ A final evaluation is currently ongoing.

the “Environmental Sustainability, Climate and Disaster Resilience” theme in the new UNSDCF (2022-2026). WFP also partners with IFAD on other joint projects and provides office services to this agency as well.

201. As per document review and as corroborated by stakeholder interviews with CSOs, WFP engagement with cooperating partners (NGOs and civil society), particularly those at a local level, has been successful (see paragraphs 181 to 182) though not sufficiently consultative (see paragraph 182). Data collected through document review and stakeholder interviews also show that WFP is well engaged with the private sector, such as in nutrition (for example rice fortification and HGFS) and is promoting more involvement by assisting the Government in the establishment of the SUN Business Network.²³⁴ WFP engagement with academia (integration of emergency preparedness and response course) is slowly increasing, showing the potential of such linkages when it comes to CCS.

EQ4.4 The country office’s human resources capacity to deliver on the CSP

Summary Finding 33. The organizational structure of WFP, with human resources distributed across the country office and field offices, is conducive to effective delivery of results. Across most strategic outcomes, efforts were invested to reflect an increasing CCS focus in job profiles, though some weaknesses persist. The country office’s tendency to hire employees under consultancy contracts instead of fixed-term contracts (due to funding limitations) creates a rather unstable human resource situation. The country office invests continued efforts to enhance gender parity, despite the difficulty to source and hire more women.

202. The overall organizational structure and distribution of positions in the country office has been stable with little fluctuation of personnel outside of project-based hires (for example, under SO3 and BSFP programme under the Nutrition Unit). This helps continuity and promotes efficient and effective delivery of results. According to 2022 data, the country office engaged a total of 169 employees (full coverage across various types of contracts), with 24 recruitments underway (of which 19 were new and in most cases project-based).²³⁵

203. The country office is organized through the main country office (Kathmandu) and two field offices (Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces), each with its full-fledged and functional organizational structure. As noted in EQ2, WFP field presence is a strong added value. A total of 20 employees were seconded across government ministries and related offices, providing technical assistance services and performing civil servant tasks that the Government cannot cover through its own resources. Most employees are hired to contribute to WFP work under SO3, while most secondees and outposted employees belong under the EPI unit structure. Due to funding issues, WFP has insufficient financial resources to hire fixed-term international staff, so most international employees (who also fill sector management positions) are hired on consultancy contracts (for example, Head of Strategic Planning and Knowledge Management, Head of School Meals Programme, Head of Nutrition etc.), which in interviews with WFP country office was raised as a factor of potential instability or workflow disruption.

204. Regarding gender parity, in June 2022, 33 percent of national staff were women; with total representation by women of 37 percent when international personnel are also counted.²³⁶ The country office recognized the challenge of ensuring gender parity in the office and took proactive steps, including an internship programme aiming to attract (and potentially later to hire) young women professionals active in IT (to support digital/electronic systems; for example, for data collection and processing in food security monitoring). This resulted in a few new hires. However, according to the stakeholder interviews with WFP and development partners, national staff gender parity is difficult to achieve because the recruitment process does not attract a large number of professional women candidates. A reason consistently identified by stakeholders is that, due to traditional roles, fewer women than men in Nepal qualify for professional work in the thematic fields covered by WFP.

205. The country office invests in learning and development of its personnel, with a dedicated learning committee established to assist the creation of professional development opportunities, which is considered helpful by employees. Realignment of the country office organizational structure and

²³⁴ WFP, Nepal 2021 ACR

²³⁵ WFP. 2022. NPCO master employees list; and WFP country office interview in June 2022.

²³⁶ WFP. 2022. NPCO master employees list.

recruitment of specialized personnel have enhanced the country office's technical and oversight capacity (for example, dedicated personnel for gender, inclusion and protection, programme associate for accountability and communication; knowledge management function integrated into the Monitoring Review and Evaluation Department (MRE)). CCS expertise has been on the increase (through enhancing in-house sector CCS expertise and secondments), though there are outstanding gaps in in-house capacity to lead on and operationalize CCS plans as emphasized by interviewed WFP stakeholders. In particular, secondments from WFP are considered as useful from both a CCS perspective and for linkages with beneficiary institutions but are considered by WFP as not fully utilized. This is mainly because secondees' work tends to be more focused on government tasks, rather than CCS for its own sake.

EQ4.5 Other factors affecting WFP performance and the extent to which WFP has made the strategic shift expected by the CSP

Summary Finding 34. CSP focus and performance have benefited from WFP evidence generation, CCS mainstreaming and country office management decisions as well as government commitment. Nevertheless, progress was affected by both internal factors and government commitment, as well as federalization, the Government's limited resources and the COVID-19 pandemic.

206. Some activity-specific factors mentioned in previous sections are summarized in Annex XVI, which also highlights commonalities (the same factor supporting various activities) as well as factors that have been both enabling and impeding (for example, coordination facilitating emergency response but constraining progress in the adoption of the regulatory framework for rice fortification). Analysis of theory of change assumptions (Annex IV) shows that most of the assumptions at input-output levels have transpired in practice, which helped facilitate output delivery. Key assumptions relative to outputs to outcomes and outcomes-impact show a more varied picture, with only one (of ten) met and two mostly met. The remaining ones were partially or not met.

Internal factors

207. The CSP's strategic shift was facilitated by: 1) timely evidence generation (for example, Fill the Nutrient Gap, periodic food security and market assessments, the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerability), which enabled WFP to make informed strategic and operational decisions (for example, targeting, choice of most adapted delivery modality, etc.); and 2) mainstreaming of capacity strengthening into the various activities to improve the knowledge and skills of its partners (both government and cooperating partners), thereby contributing to sustainability. The Fill the Nutrient Gap, in particular its cost of the diet analysis, was acknowledged by many stakeholders as timely and useful and an excellent example of the added value of WFP in identifying bottlenecks and challenges. The analysis explored opportunities in formulating evidence-based food security and nutrition interventions and policies to address the problem of food insecurity and malnutrition in Nepal, not only for WFP but for other stakeholders as well.

208. As stated in the WFP communication strategy, there is a need for WFP to increase advocacy and engagement with donors and partners such that WFP is recognized as a key development actor (in particular for its CCS role) and hence able to raise funds for some activities (for example, Activity 4).

209. Performance, in terms of delivery of outputs and progress towards outcomes, is enabled by various internal factors. Good relations and strong partnerships with government counterparts at different levels (in particular with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) and the National Planning Commission at the federal level) boosted the delivery of results as acknowledged by the great majority of interviewees. Able and committed cooperating partners have been selected through rigorous country office selection procedures that took into account competence and cost considerations (see paragraphs 180 and 181).

210. Continuous improvement in supply chain procedures such as improved real-time commodity tracking and data entering (see paragraph 165) have also enabled the country office to maintain low post-delivery losses and achieve high transport performance.

External factors

211. Government commitment and budgetary allocations (for example, purchase of locally produced commodities, internal transport, storage and handling costs) have been key drivers in supporting

programme delivery. However, timely delivery of outputs has been constrained by prolonged approval, procurement and supply delivery procedures often involving three tiers of government and many stakeholders causing delays in emergency response and implementation of other activities. For instance, delays in the adoption of legislative and regulatory documents have slowed down rice fortification; and pipeline breaks have affected MCHN due to lengthy procurement procedures as well as shortcomings in the production and quality control capacity of the private sector.

212. The Government's absorption capacity in light of the federalization process and fiscal limitations have been constraints creating difficulties in translating declarative commitment into concrete handover and/or scale-up activities. Staff turnover across institutions and challenges with vertical and horizontal coordination across the Government caused delays in the review and endorsement of various policy and regulatory documents facilitated by WFP and other partners (for example, rice fortification). Additionally, donor dependence and expectation that WFP would plug the gaps in their own capacities and continue to lead on tested models was highlighted as a challenge. As an illustration, the school meals programme was affected by limited technical capacity and financial resources of local government and limitations in communities' financial and management capacities. This constrained the timely transport of commodities from extended delivery points to schools and the preparation of meals due to: a shortage in firewood; absence of/meagre payment of cooks (meals often prepared by school helpers); and a lack of kitchens and insufficient utensils.

213. Other unforeseeable external factors, such as natural events (for example, landslides) have caused disruptions in the delivery of commodities to schools and health centres. The COVID-19 crisis significantly affected progress in food security and nutrition policy formulation and evidence generation, in many cases causing reprioritization of government policies.²³⁷ Suspension or slow-down of activities occurred across strategic outcomes due to COVID-19-related restrictions. For instance: evidence generation and monitoring shifted to remote data collection, or outsourcing these tasks to a company; construction activities were suspended (Activity 5); and all capacity strengthening activities and consultations needed for review and approval of key policy and regulatory documents had to be conducted virtually (Activity 4, Activity 8). Further worsening of the socioeconomic context in Nepal following COVID-19 and the further economic downturn were also noted as factors hindering transformative potential of delivered results.

²³⁷ WFP, Nepal APP 2020.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

214. This section presents a set of conclusions derived from the analysis of links in the chain of results and related assumptions in line with evaluation's theory-based approach. The conclusions are followed by six recommendations and sub-recommendations in Section 3.2.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

C1. WFP alignment with national priorities, its adaptability and quick response to crises (including COVID-19) helped address the needs of the most affected populations, while respecting humanitarian and protection principles. Targeting of communities and beneficiary groups is informed by evidence generated by WFP and other data sources as well as by consultations with the Government. However, consultations and information sharing with communities could be improved. Environmental aspects have been integrated, but the focus on disability remained limited.

215. WFP has been able to rapidly adapt and respond to the emerging **needs of the most affected populations**, rightly focusing on remote rural areas and extending to urban settings as and when evidenced, while respecting humanitarian and protection principles. Continuous interaction with national authorities, food security monitoring and forecast-based financing assessments informed immediate and effective responses to crises and **alignment with national priorities** and emerging needs. The integration by WFP of direct assistance and CCS was appropriate and also contributed to the country's development priorities, while the provision of logistics, common services and operational support to government and humanitarian partners responded to needs emerging from natural disasters and COVID-19. The incorporation of a dormant crisis response strategic outcome proved useful, as it helped WFP to respond swiftly to needs emerging from natural disasters and the impact of COVID-19 in the most affected districts. Shifting approaches (for example, take-home rations in lieu of the on-site school meals programme) and the introduction of new models (for example, food banks, anticipatory action interventions) helped to reach the most-affected populations in a timely manner, while simultaneously ensuring that the interventions did no harm. Unconditional (food or cash-based) transfers and asset creation contributed to mitigating the negative socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in targeted communities, even if only in the short term.

216. Informing the targeting of the most vulnerable communities by comprehensive situation analyses and consultations with local authorities was appropriate, although inconsistent consultation practices with local communities (particularly members of marginalized groups) hindered somewhat the fulfilment of WFP participatory approaches. Additionally, the disability focus in the CSP was underdeveloped. Environmental considerations were taken into account and mainstreamed both internally (within the office) and externally in the design and implementation of assistance.

C2. WFP has integrated GEWE appropriately, leading to positive practices and results across different programme components.

217. **Gender.** GEWE was mainstreamed in CSP design and implementation. Notable GEWE considerations included WFP efforts to empower women as crucial actors in food security (WiVC). Across **resilience-building activities, women's needs and their inclusion were facilitated as well.** WFP efforts to generate evidence on GEWE aspects and deeper integration of GEDSI across strategic outcomes to inform the country office's GEDSI strategy were commendable. Gender-disaggregated evidence was used to inform programmes, while the country office undertook proactive efforts to identify and include women experts into its team, despite cultural and labour market challenges.

C3. The shift by WFP towards a more development/CCS-focused role while maintaining its fundamental humanitarian role has aligned strongly with Nepal's priority needs set in the RtF Act; 2030 Agenda; Food System Summit commitments; and Nepal's vision of graduating to lower middle-income country status by 2026.

218. The CSP results contribute to SDGs 2 and 17, as well as to other SDGs (1, 3, 4, 5 and 13). WFP played a key facilitation role in Nepal's Food Systems Summit Dialogue as part of the United Nations Food Systems

Summit and the 2030 Agenda (SDG 2), providing direction for sustainable food systems in Nepal and accelerating collective action. WFP is strategically positioned with the Government to contribute to these advancements of the food and nutrition security agenda through **evidence generation, CCS** and also direct support (crisis response, MCHN, the school meals programme and resilience-building activities). Additionally, WFP contributions to social protection show how shock-responsiveness, sustainability, efficiency and local economic impact of national social protection systems can be improved. Resilience-building efforts included modeling of innovative and climate-smart agriculture and livelihood interventions, bringing WFP into a strategic position to contribute to climate change interventions, which translated into the leadership by WFP of the climate change cluster in the new UNSDCF. While the successful positioning of WFP in this domain helped to secure continuous funding, the project-based nature of this funding affected WFP potential for more holistic approaches and impact at scale.

C4. The CSP did not have a theory of change that clearly articulated a strategic and integrated vision of how various lines of WFP action come together. Beyond this, the fact that interventions were not designed within a fully integrated vision have not served to facilitate the understanding and visibility of the WFP role beyond its well-known emergency mandate amongst development partners.

219. The formal shift towards the CSP approach did not automatically boost stronger cross-sectoral operational linkages or convergence, which would have maximized the programme's transformative potential. Despite the effort to group activities under crisis response, building resilience and root causes, the silos across and within each of the categories persist. Some examples of efforts to break silos were visible through interactions between programmatic areas such as crisis response (SO1), the school meals programme (SO2/Activity 3) and resilience (SO3, including WiVC), although WiVC has been so far at small scale and not commensurate to the needs of the most vulnerable and their priorities (such as food systems, women empowerment and sustainability).

220. CCS interventions also lack a systematic approach to assessment and prioritization of institutional capacity needs and gaps, which would have provided a rationale for the selection of CCS approaches and helped understand CCS contributions in interaction with other WFP interventions across thematic areas. The subsequent lack of baselines makes it difficult to adequately measure CCS achievements. Additionally, a lack of more methodical planning and reporting of results and related missed opportunities to mainstream CCS have been unfavourable for the **strategic portraying of the WFP mandate in the 'changing lives' sphere.**

C5. The effectiveness and sustainability of WFP output- and outcome-level results ensuing from delivery of direct support are mixed.

221. WFP maintained its 'deliverer' role throughout the CSP implementation, by providing basic shock-responsive social and nutrition services during and in the aftermath of crises. **Direct engagement** in crisis response and resilience building has been mostly **effective** in providing for (at least in the short-term) income generation and basic gender- and shock-responsive social and nutrition services, as well as enhanced local infrastructure and climate-smart agricultural practices. In this way, WFP enhanced its response to basic human needs for the most vulnerable population groups in most remote regions, thereby contributing to enhanced local livelihoods and well-being during and in the aftermath of crises. Medium- to long-term **sustainability** of rehabilitated assets is strong, but results would have been more solid had a smaller number of communities benefited from more convergent interventions (for example, in-community convergence across rehabilitation, innovative practices modelling, capacity building, etc.).

222. Resilience-building interventions also provided an opportunity to promote alternative labour market opportunities through food assistance for assets. These job opportunities, which responded to immediate needs, were short-term and one-off, limiting their wider social protection and poverty reduction potential. However, they served as a model to be replicated by the Government in larger infrastructure projects. For some beneficiaries, particularly women, opening up bank accounts proved to be a source of empowerment, a positive and unexpected result.

223. Activities addressing root causes that combine direct support (MCHN and the school meals programme) with technical assistance (rice fortification and support to policy and evidence generation) show overall good performance in terms of outputs and outcomes. WFP support to nutrition in Nepal has rightly prioritized prevention of malnutrition (wasting, stunting and micronutrients deficiencies), combining activities to increase immediate access to nutrient-rich food by the most vulnerable through a life-cycle

approach (crisis response, MCHN and the school meals programme) and by the general population through rice fortification. However, activities aiming to increase local availability and diversity of micronutrient-rich foods (for example, WiVC) have been limited in scope. Rice fortification, which is supported by WFP in partnership with the Government and the private sector, though well-grounded in evidence (landscape analysis and Fill the Nutrient Gap) and national policies (MSNP II), has been severely underfunded.

224. The programme assumptions generally only partially transpired, which influenced the performance of the CSP and the sustainability of its results. The main assumptions relative to allocation of necessary and stable governmental financial and human resources to implement new legislation, mechanisms, knowledge and capacities, and also the commitment to translate acquired knowledge and capacity into accessible and sustainable services that meet the needs of vulnerable populations, did not transpire in full, which hindered the transformative potential of achieved results. The COVID-19 pandemic and worsening socioeconomic prospects of the most vulnerable groups also hindered results.

C6. WFP CCS interventions contributed to enhanced capacities of national institutions and to the formulation of relevant policies, legislation and regulatory documents, as well as to the delivery of basic services. The challenge is to ensure that investments across these thematic areas transform into more sustainable outcome-level results.

225. Particularly at the local level, but also at the national level, institutional reforms and capacity have improved, thanks to WFP **CCS interventions**, though to varying degrees at different governance levels and across different institutions. Especially in the area of food security, there was progress on policy reform and, in particular, via support to the development of a package of bylaws operationalizing the RtF Act law provisions. This reform milestone presents strong transformative and sustainability potential.

226. CCS, together with support to direct implementation to leverage improved nutritional outcomes, has yielded mostly positive results (though uneven due to capacity and material constraints). The uneven results are being addressed in the recent expansion of MCHN, which includes a more comprehensive capacity strengthening component. A WFP review of current interventions and the organization's support to the formulation of MSNP III provide an opportunity to translate lessons learned from the current MCHN approaches into policy and vice versa.

227. The Government's objective of scaling up the NSMP to all districts (including the districts phased out from the school meals programme) is facing multiple challenges arising from: the decentralization process (for example, roles and responsibilities of local government still requiring streamlining); the cash modality (for example, processes needed for its operationalization); and from infrastructure limitations in schools. There has been significant progress in the school health and nutrition policy and instruments, capacities and infrastructure (albeit to a lesser extent as needs are substantial) thanks to WFP support. However, there are still gaps in terms of: a conducive policy and fiscal environment; institutional and individual capacities; context-adapted modalities; and infrastructure. To address these constraints, WFP could have established further strategic partnerships with development partners, in particular United Nations agencies and NGOs.

228. Investment in evidence generation through food security monitoring, early warning (for example, the 72-hour assessments) and forecast-based financing are all inputs that have leveraged further enhancement of evidence-based emergency preparedness and response policies. Combined with long-term, comprehensive institutional development (investment in the school meals programme, MCHN, humanitarian staging areas, the capacity strengthening of first responders, and other forms of institutional support), WFP evidence generation has contributed to enhancing the system as a whole. However, the prospects of a full handover and scale up are bleak due to capacity and financial constraints, particularly at the subnational level.

229. Significant amounts of policy advice, CCS and secondments to national institutions helped boost sustainability prospects. However, despite institutional and policy contributions, these efforts have not been sufficient to promote more implementation of the Government's ambitious plans and handover of tested models, mainly due to fiscal challenges and basic capacity issues. These include lack of basic skills and understanding of new institutions under the federalization process and a need for more staff and greater management capacity at decentralized levels.

C7. CSP activities have been implemented efficiently and adaptations were informed by a comprehensive, albeit resource-intensive monitoring and evaluation system. Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness

considerations were also taken into account, but not systematically. Some efficiency challenges related to internal silos, the “project approach” in some sectors and the underutilization of secondees.

230. WFP **efficiency** is driven by a comprehensive office structure and a network of field coordinators and secondees, though the latter remain insufficiently utilized. However, the massive scope and breadth of WFP interventions, many of which are funded through multiple projects/donors, leaves little time or energy to overcome internal silos or explore synergies and holistic approaches more proactively. To overcome some of these challenges, the WFP country office underwent realignment of its human resource structure and responsibilities, addressing leadership and management needs of various thematic areas and specific activities. However, this process is yet to foster internal consultations and joint actions.

231. WFP efficiency has been exemplified through its agility to mobilize and reach the field in a short time and to adapt to emerging needs and contextual challenges in light of natural disasters and COVID-19. Its efforts to inform programme efficiency by cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness considerations in planning and implementation of activities across strategic outcomes yielded results, though such considerations are still not sufficiently institutionalized.

232. WFP monitoring practices helped inform decisions to adapt the CSP over the implementation period. However, the monitoring system is complex and requires an enormous volume of often overlapping data to be collected and analysed in order to respond to WFP corporate and donor requirements. Demanding monitoring and evaluation requirements lead to spreading human resources thinly, though the resulting data sets are helpful and used to inform decision making and prioritization.

C8. Resource mobilization has been successful, even though high levels of earmarking persisted throughout CSP implementation.

233. Overall, the CSP funding has been mostly adequate, though uneven across activities with project orientation, which limited stable multi-year funding. The country office’s sustained **resource mobilization** efforts yielded positive results (additional from existing and new donors). However flexibility of funding, which is crucial for operational continuity (that is, the ability to manage funding gaps in some activities), remained low (high earmarking at activity level). Country office resource-mobilization efforts are facing various challenges linked to Nepal’s graduation to lower middle-income country status but also to shifting donors’ interests and priorities (for example, the COVID-19 pandemic and global political and economic challenges). Continued advocacy for predictable (unearmarked) multi-year funding is needed, guided by the country office communication strategy.

C9. Although WFP engaged in joint activities with other United Nations agencies, more strategic partnerships (including at the activity level) with all stakeholders, including other development partners, private sector and academia are yet to materialize.

234. WFP **partnership** strategy is comprehensive, yet not fully operationalized through balanced partnership approaches towards various actors. Close cooperation with the Government has proven to yield stronger relevance and results. While some joint projects with United Nations agencies have been realized, the CSP did not benefit (as foreseen in its design) from other strategic and/or activity-level partnerships bringing complementarity of expertise and resources. The perception by some stakeholders of the limited communication by WFP with other United Nations agencies has not helped to promote such partnerships.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

235. All recommendations are underpinned by the need to have reliable multi-year funding that enables a more solid focus on resilience and CCS. The recommendations focus on seeking a stronger, more realistic focus, with efforts to develop strategic partnerships. Recommendations are directed mainly to the WFP country office, but with contributions by WFP headquarters and the regional bureau in Bangkok.

Table 20: Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	The next CSP design should be based on a set of interconnected and coherent strategic outcomes that foster links between food systems and social protection in order to improve the food and nutrition security and resilience of the most disadvantaged population groups and promote opportunities and benefits for women in food systems.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of third quarter 2023
1.1	Analyse WFP's current portfolio from the perspectives of food systems, social protection, gender equality and disability and social inclusion, and CCS and elaborate a theory of change that prioritizes intervention pathways that are internally complementary and includes explicit synergy pathways across areas.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	April 2023
1.2	Develop a partnership action plan that lays out how new and existing synergies are deepened, prioritized and promoted with other United Nations entities, the Government and other national and development partners in food systems and in response to multidimensional poverty, climate change and social protection.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of third quarter 2023
2	Design an evidence-based CCS strategy that addresses policy and regulatory frameworks and the institutional capacities to plan and deliver sustainable programmes aligned with national strategies and priorities.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of fourth quarter 2023
2.1	Building on existing assessments, conduct comprehensive capacity needs assessments of key partner national institutions.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of third quarter 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
2.2	Based on the assessments, elaborate a set of needs-based, targeted CCS interventions		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of fourth quarter 2023
3	Support the Government in designing nutrition-specific and nutrition and gender-sensitive programmes aiming at the prevention of stunting and micronutrient deficiencies, drawing on lessons learned from existing interventions.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024
3.1	Support the review of existing nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programmes in order to help the Government develop an evidence-based, nutrition-sensitive social protection programme.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024
3.2	Increase or continue advocacy and partnerships to promote the national food fortification agenda and foster interventions that increase the production and availability of micronutrient-rich local foods.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024
4	Continue the hand-over of WFP-supported schools to the national school feeding programme while developing a strategy for supporting the national programme in terms of policy, context-adapted transfer modalities and the management capacity of all engaged actors.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024
4.1	Develop a five-year road map specifying the respective responsibilities of WFP and its development partners and the implementation timeline for the short-and medium-term interventions agreed to by the Government and WFP.		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of fourth quarter 2023
4.2	Expand advocacy efforts to generate support for the national school feeding programme from relevant		Country office	Regional bureau	High	End of second quarter 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	government sectors, private sector representatives, development partners and donors.					
5	<p>Deepen WFP's climate change and resilience building support for targeted climate-vulnerable locations and population groups by integrating CCS for national and subnational-level government, advocacy and direct support for the most vulnerable people and communities.</p> <p>WFP should review its approach to CCS with a view to providing better support to local governments for deeper resilience interventions while working with national and provincial governments and donor partners to explore avenues for resilience building initiatives at scale.</p>	Operational	Country office	Country office, donors	Medium	End of fourth quarter 2023
5.1	Support local governments' efforts to analyse, plan, design and implement integrated, inclusive and comprehensive resilience interventions that address a commensurate range of risks and vulnerabilities and promote the empowerment of women and other vulnerable population groups at the municipality level.		Country office	Country office, donors, Government	Medium	End of third quarter 2023
5.2	Based on lessons learned, WFP should work closely with national institutions to adapt and scale up integrated packages of climate change adaptation and resilience building interventions targeting climate-vulnerable locations and population groups, incorporating a watershed or natural boundary approach where appropriate.		Country office	Country office, donors, Government	Medium	End of fourth quarter 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
6	Support the enhancement of the Government's analytical capacities for optimal evidence-based policy formulation and operational response.	Operational	Country office	Country office, donors	Medium	End of first quarter 2024
6.1	Identify and systematize lessons generated from the implementation of food security monitoring activities and other innovative evidence-building methods tested during CSP implementation.		Country office	Country office, donors	Medium	End of fourth quarter 2023
6.2	Based on the lessons learned and best practices identified, determine WFP's framework of support for enhancing the Government's analytical capacities for evidence-based policy formulation and operational response.		Country office	Country office, donors	Medium	End of first quarter 2024

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