



**WFP EVALUATION**



**World Food Programme**

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# **Evaluation of Cambodia 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 was timed to provide evidence and lessons to inform the development of the next CSP for Cambodia.
2. The evaluation covered the Cambodia CSP for 2019–2023 and the transitional interim CSP (T-ICSP) for 2018 and was conducted between May 2022 and April 2023 – the timing took into consideration the revision of the CSP and its budget. Covering WFP’s activities from 2018 to September 2022, the evaluation assessed the quality of the CSP design process, and progress towards the planned strategic changes. Its main users are the WFP country office in Cambodia and internal and external stakeholders, including beneficiaries.
3. The evaluation adopted a theory-based, mixed-methods approach, drawing on monitoring data, a literature review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions – including with beneficiaries – and site observations. A gender-responsive approach was applied throughout the process. Because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the evaluation was conducted through a hybrid approach, with the inception phase being conducted entirely remotely while data collection was through an in-country field mission. Findings, conclusions and draft recommendations were discussed with internal and external stakeholders during two in-country workshops in January 2023.

### CONTEXT

4. Cambodia is a lower-middle-income country with a population of 16.7 million people<sup>1</sup> (see table 1). It is ranked 144th of 189 countries on the Human Development Index<sup>2</sup> and aims to reach upper-middle-income status by 2030. Progress to-date has been driven mainly by agriculture, garment exports, tourism, market liberalization and foreign direct investments, mainly from China. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Cambodia, causing a 3.1 percent contraction in gross domestic product in 2020, the first negative trend since 1980. In addition, school closures affected the education of 3.2 million children.
5. Although Cambodia almost halved its poverty rate from 34 percent in 2009 to 18 percent in 2019,<sup>3</sup> in 2019–2020, 17.8 percent of the population lived below the national poverty line, and the poverty rate in rural areas – where 75 percent of the population lives – is five times higher than in Phnom Penh. Cambodia ranked 69th of 116 countries on the 2021 Global Hunger Index,<sup>4</sup> and while the prevalence of undernourishment has decreased sharply in the last 20 years, 22 percent of children under the age of 5 are stunted and the wasting rate is 10 percent.
6. The people of Cambodia face issues with the availability and affordability of diverse, nutritious foods, contributing to nutrition insecurity<sup>5</sup> while the 2022 price crisis has exacerbated the challenges to food affordability and had large impacts on imported food, fuel and fertilizers.
7. Cambodia is one of the southeast Asian countries most exposed to climate change, experiencing delayed or shortened monsoons and erratic rainfall leading to natural disasters, such as seasonal droughts, floods and typhoons.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank. 2022. [DataBank World Development Indicators](#). (accessed 16 September 2022)

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme. 2020. [Human Development Report 2020. The next frontier: Human development and the anthropocene. Briefing note for countries in the 2020 Human Development Report. Cambodia](#).

<sup>3</sup> Government of Cambodia. Ministry of Planning. 2021. [Poverty in Cambodia. Setting the new poverty line](#). Comparability with previous data may be limited because of the introduction of a new methodology for the calculation of the poverty line.

<sup>4</sup> Global Hunger Index. [Cambodia](#).

<sup>5</sup> Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. 2012. [Cambodia Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\) Version 2.0. Acute Food Insecurity Situation Overview](#).

TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Total population (million) (1)	16.7	2020
	Share of population in rural areas (%) (1)	75	2021
	Share of population under 15 years of age (%) (1)	29	2021
	Share of agriculture in gross domestic product (%) (2)	20.7	2020
	Human Development Index (rank) (3)	144 of 189	2020
	Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of population) (2)	17.8	2019
	Global Hunger Index (score and rank) (4)	17 69 of 116	2021
	Prevalence of moderate and severe stunting (% of children under 5) (5)	22	2022
	Gender Inequality Index (rank) (3)	117 of 162	2020
	Government expenditure on education, total (% of government expenditure) (6)	11.1	2022

Sources: (1) [World Bank. 2020. Population, total – Cambodia](#); (2) Asian Development Bank. 2023. [Poverty Data: Cambodia](#); (3) United Nations Development Programme. [Human Development Data](#); (4) Global Hunger Index. [Cambodia](#); (5) National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Health and ICF. 2022. [Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2021–22 Key Indicators Report](#); (6) Global Partnership for Education. 2022. [GPE 2025 Results Framework for Cambodia](#).

## WFP COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLANS

8. WFP has been present in Cambodia since 1979. The T-ICSP for Cambodia was developed in 2017 to align WFP's assistance with the Government's planning cycle for 2014–2018 and the United Nations development assistance framework for 2016–2018. It was implemented as a short-term bridge between the Cambodia country programme for 2011–2018 and the CSP for 2019–2023, allowing the continuation of activities while the CSP was being developed. The T-ICSP aimed to rationalize the scale and scope of WFP's programme in Cambodia, in line with the organization's gradual transition from the direct implementation of activities.

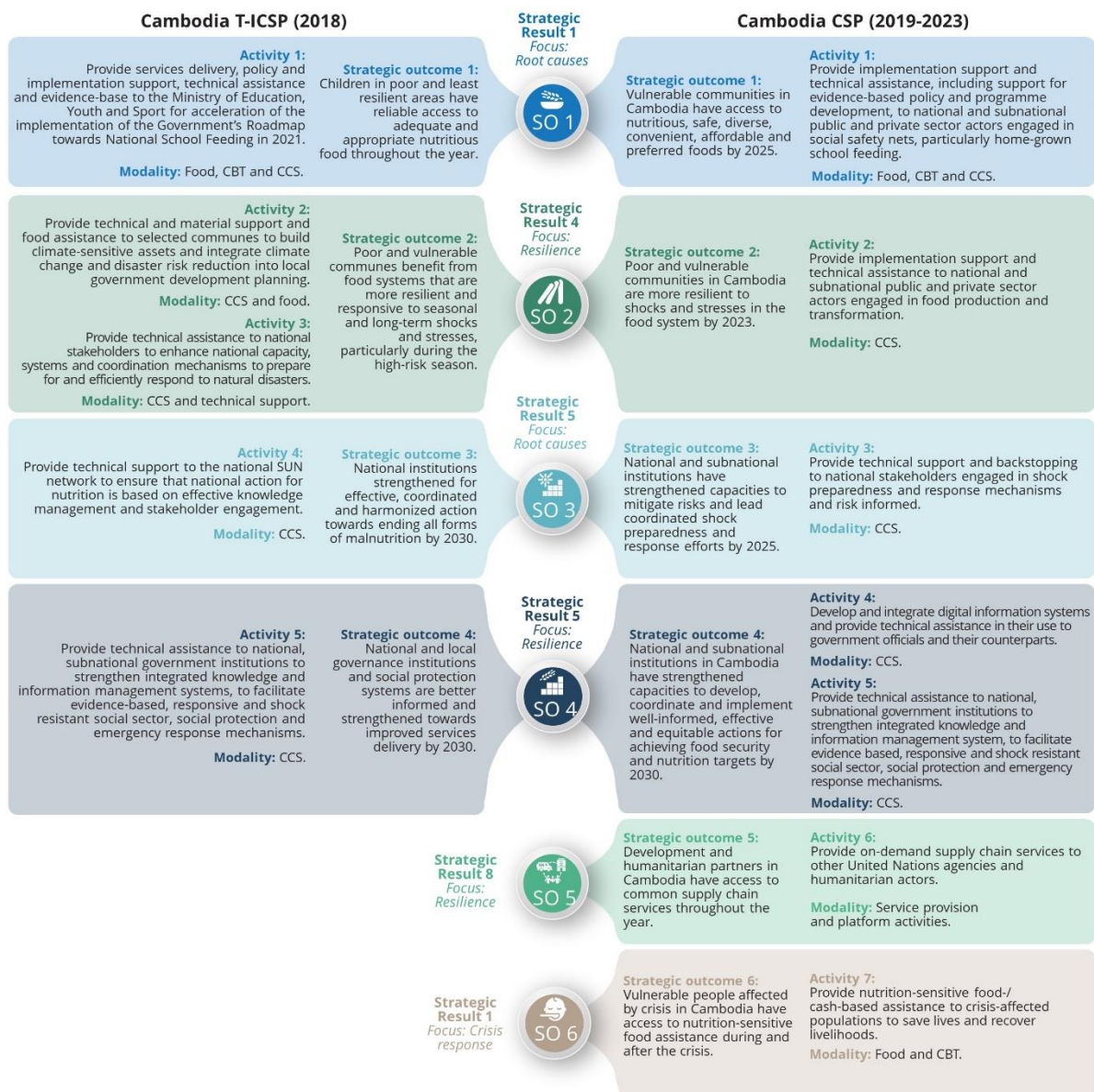
9. The CSP for 2019–2023 was designed to continue WFP's shift in focus from the implementation of activities to the strengthening of national capacities and the building of scalable programme models.<sup>6</sup> That shift involved moving away from “downstream”-focused modalities towards the provision of “upstream” support for national entities and systems.

<sup>6</sup> WFP. 2019. [Cambodia country strategic plan \(2019–2023\)](#).

10. The CSP was designed to contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 17 and WFP strategic results 1, 4, 5 and 8 through work towards five strategic outcomes. A sixth strategic outcome was added in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and heavy flooding experienced in 2020.

11. Figure 1 maps the linkages between the T-ICSP and the CSP; the six CSP strategic outcomes were implemented through seven activities focused on addressing the root causes of hunger, crisis response and resilience building. Activity modalities included cash-based transfers (CBTs), food transfers, capacity strengthening, and service provision and platform delivery.

**Figure 1: Cambodia transitional interim country strategic plan and country strategic plan: overview of strategic outcomes and activities**



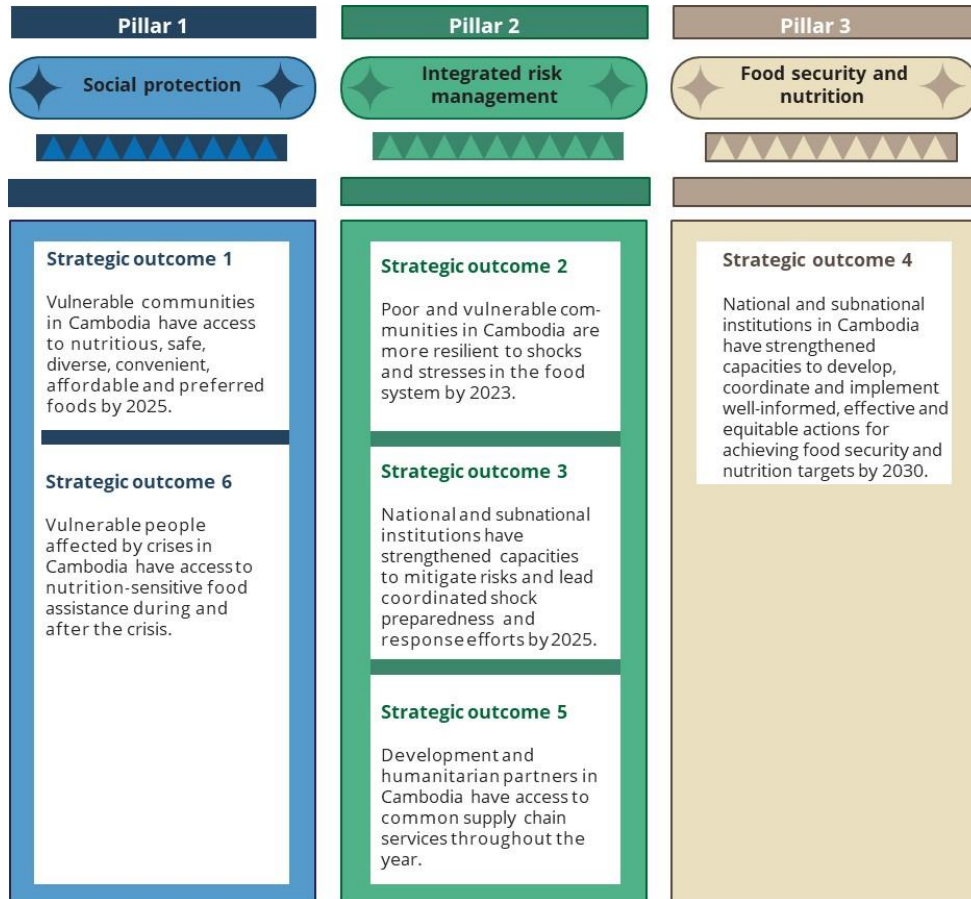
Source: Evaluation team. Inception report Cambodia country strategic plan evaluation (internal document). Cambodia transitional interim country strategic plan (2018), line of sight and logical framework 1.0 (internal documents).

Abbreviation: CCS = country capacity strengthening.



12. *CSP reorientation:* Given the changing context and emerging government priorities in Cambodia in the period from 2019 to 2021, the country office reoriented the CSP by basing it on three pillars (see figure 2) aimed at providing more coherence across the strategic outcomes: social protection, integrated risk management, and food security and nutrition.

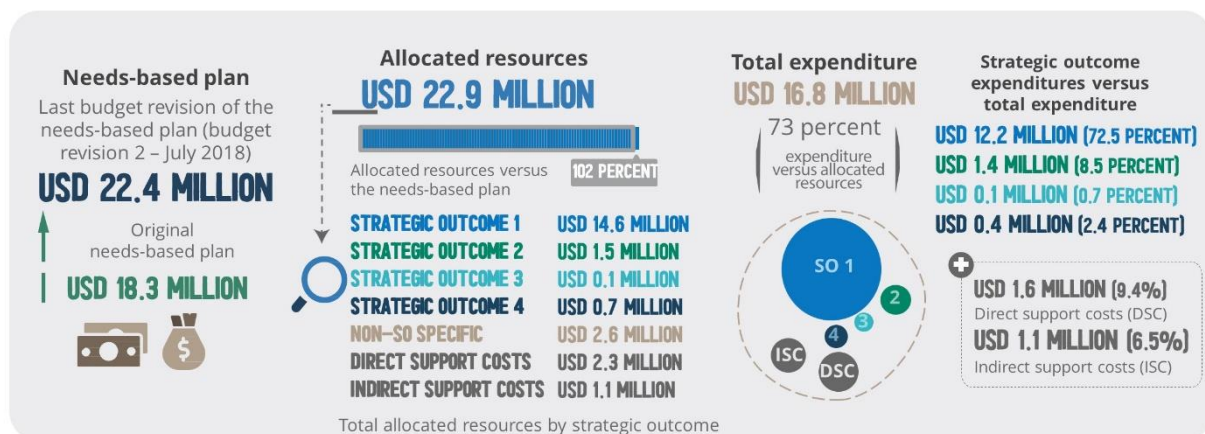
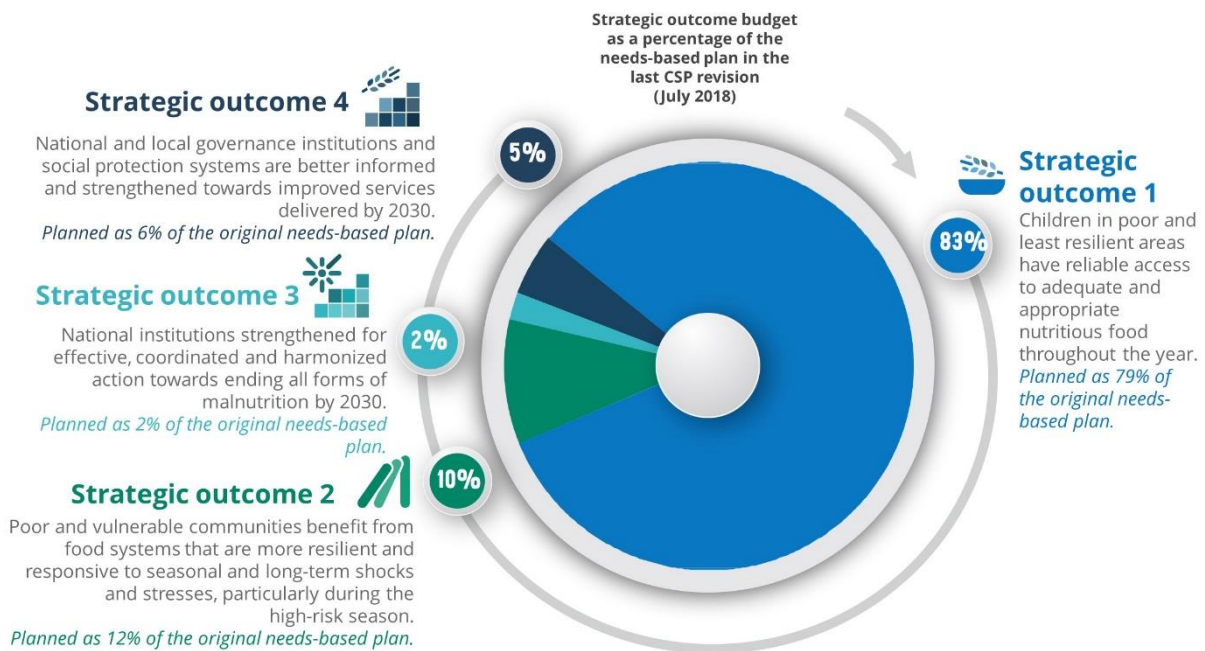
**Figure 2: Country strategic plan structure by pillar**

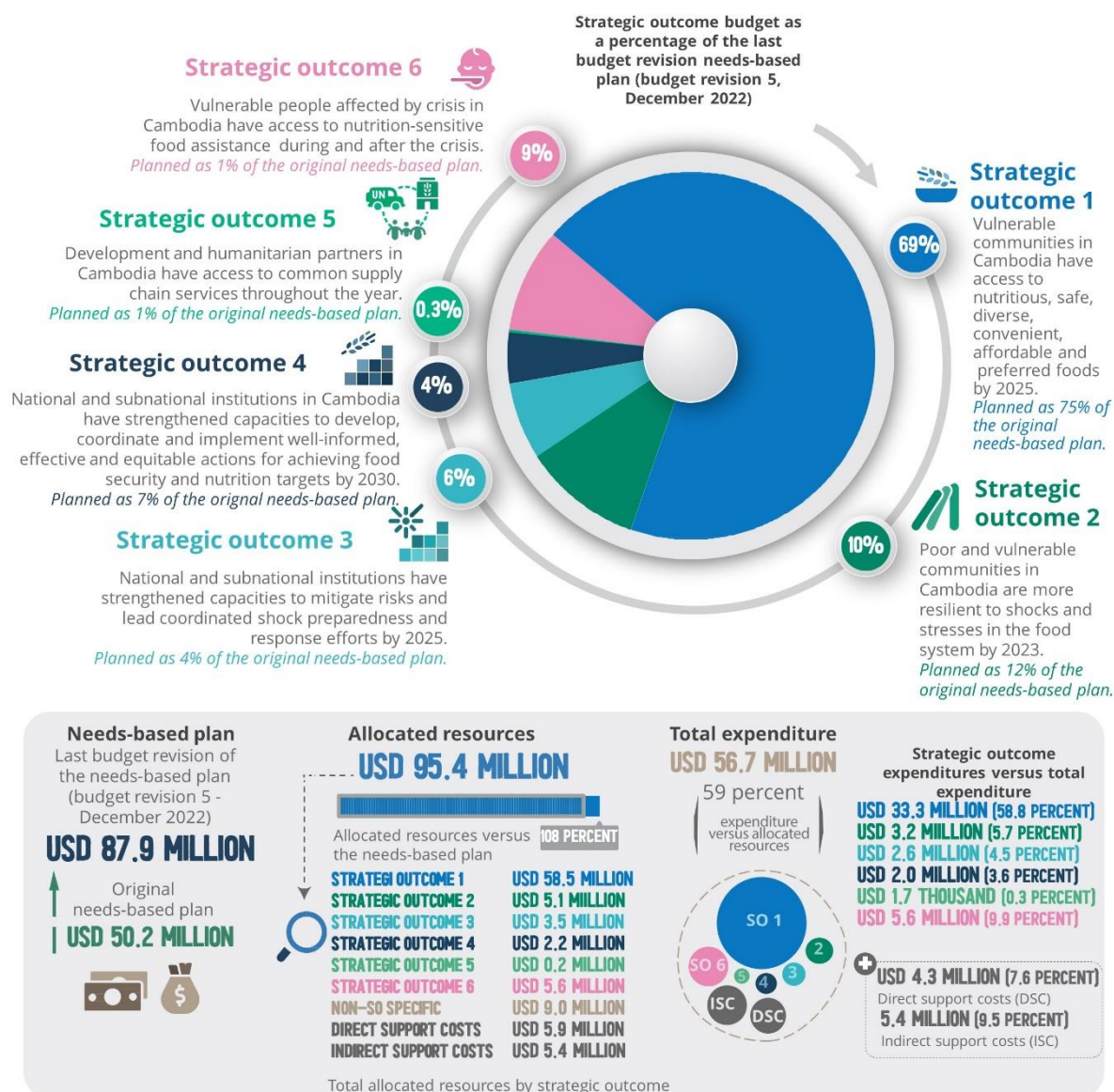


13. *Financial overview:* As shown in Figure 3, the T-ICSP for 2018 had a total budget of USD 18,319,500 and a goal of reaching 544,950 direct beneficiaries with food and CBTs during its 12-month duration. The original CSP budget was USD 50.241 million over four years to reach 424,640 direct beneficiaries with food and CBTs; by December 2022, following five CSP revisions, the budget and number of direct beneficiaries had been increased to USD 87,921,370 and 701,930 beneficiaries.

**Figure 3: Financial overview, 2018–2022**

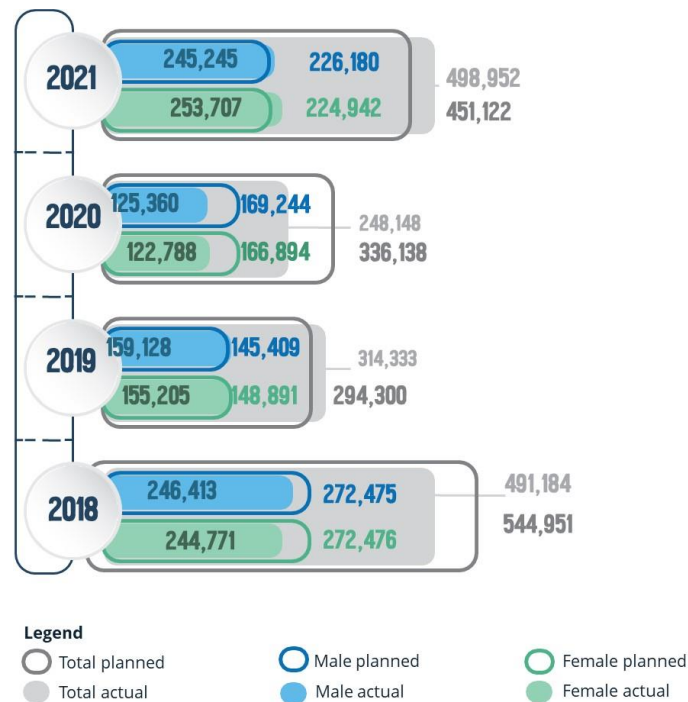
**T-ICSP (January–December 2018)**





14. **Beneficiary data:** Figure 4 shows that in 2018, 90 percent of the planned beneficiaries were reached. The planned numbers of beneficiaries in subsequent years were lower than in 2018 but increased year on year. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures resulted in only 74 percent of planned beneficiaries being reached; no CBTs were distributed. In 2021, with the mobilization of additional resources to support early recovery through CBTs, the coverage improved considerably. There were no substantial differences in the numbers of male and female beneficiaries.

**Figure 4: Actual versus planned beneficiaries by sex, 2018–2021**



Source: Data from WFP's COMET system, accessed on 16 May 2022.

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

### TO WHAT EXTENT ARE WFP'S STRATEGIC POSITION, ROLE AND SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS BASED ON COUNTRY PRIORITIES, PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND WFP'S STRENGTHS?

#### Relevance and alignment

15. The T-ICSP and CSP were highly relevant to, and aligned with, Cambodia's national priorities concerning food security and nutrition, education and disaster risk reduction, and its strategic and programmatic frameworks in those areas. Both plans were consistent with national SDG priorities and targets, particularly those under SDGs 2 and 17.

16. WFP is positioned as a strategic partner for the Government and is a key actor in food security, nutrition, social protection and resilience-building activities. It has demonstrated ability and flexibility in adapting to evolving local circumstances and changing needs over time, for example by adapting to address emergency needs during flooding and the pandemic, including by shifting to take-home rations for school feeding activities. COVID-19 was a driver of reflection and reorientation, leading to a clearer overall CSP narrative.

Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable

17. The CSP design used the evidence available at the time of CSP formulation to emphasize the needs of Cambodia's most vulnerable people, including children in vulnerable areas and those most exposed to climate-related shocks. It was based on WFP's historical and mandate-driven comparative advantage in Cambodia.

18. The school feeding programme has provided continuity to WFP's programme in Cambodia since 1999. It applied geographical targeting to ensure that needs were addressed, but changing circumstances have raised questions regarding whether the most vulnerable areas are being targeted and led WFP and its partners to consider the expansion of the programme. Despite not being planned in the CSP, WFP also provided a valuable and context-specific response to the 2020 floods and the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 through the provision of food and CBTs to crisis-affected populations.

19. With United Nations partners moving away from the direct implementation of activities, there is limited demand for WFP's supply chain services, and the temporary increase of those services during the COVID-19 pandemic is not expected to continue.

20. WFP's technical assistance in nutrition is relevant to the needs in Cambodia, but that relevance is greatest when technical assistance is used as a modality for working across strategic outcomes rather than as a specific activity.

### ***Coherence and alignment with the United Nations cooperation framework***

21. WFP interventions are well-aligned and coherent with United Nations development assistance frameworks in the areas of WFP's comparative advantages in food security and nutrition and shock-responsive social protection. WFP's comparative advantage in addressing climate change, developed through its long experience of work at the community level, has added value in the United Nations system and positioned WFP for a future leadership role in that area.

22. Since 2011, WFP has been leading the Cambodia humanitarian response forum<sup>7</sup> established to enhance coordination among development partners in responding to natural disasters.

## **WHAT ARE THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF WFP'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES IN CAMBODIA?**

### ***Delivery of outputs and contribution to outcomes***

23. Overall, the CSP met most output targets, but progress towards outcome targets was uneven across the strategic outcomes (see table 2). Corporate indicators were inadequately designed to demonstrate country capacity strengthening results, hampering the analysis of effectiveness and requiring additional qualitative assessment.

24. The framing of the CSP around the three pillars of social protection, integrated risk management, and food security and nutrition (see paragraph 12) was used to analyse performance against the CSP strategic outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The forum is co-chaired by WFP and a non-governmental organization – DanChurchAid.

<sup>8</sup> This section examines the contributions of WFP activities and outputs to the expected outcomes of the CSP and, to a lesser extent, the T-ICSP, for which data are available on only strategic outcomes 1 and 2, and not on outcomes 3 and 4.



TABLE 2: PROGRESS TOWARDS COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES, 2019–2023 (percentages)							
	Strategic outcome	2019		2020		2021	
		Output	Outcome	Output	Outcome	Output	Outcome
Social protection	1	88	100	50	47	36	18
				32	53	41	82
		12		18		23	
	6	-	-	67	100	100	80
			33			20	
Integrated risk management	2	33	100	100	100	60	100
		67				40	
	3	40	100	100	100	100	100
		60					
	5	100	100	100	100	100	100
Food security and nutrition	4	43	100	86	100	57	100
		57%		14%		29%	
						14%	

Source: Elaboration from Cambodia annual country reports for 2019, 2020 and 2021. Green = percentage of indicators with achievement rates of 90 percent or above; yellow = percentage of indicators with achievement rates of between 50 and 90 percent; orange = percentage of indicators with achievement rates below 50 percent.

25. Social protection: The long-standing school feeding programme has been implemented successfully, and the addition of a well-conceived emergency response component as part of the CSP provided a strong foundation for WFP as a partner to the Government in social protection:

- Under strategic outcome 1, the school feeding programme is recognized as an important social protection mechanism, promoting educational outcomes. It contributed to higher retention and lower drop-out rates in the assisted schools, but the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the achievement of household food security targets. The planned transition to a fully government-run home-grown school feeding programme is considered a good practice. WFP technical support for central government has been instrumental in creating the conditions for an effective national school feeding programme, but capacity gaps remain at all levels.
- Strategic outcome 6 was added through the third CSP revision as an emergency response intervention aimed at complementing the Government's response to the October 2020 floods and supporting the national COVID-19 response. Despite uneven implementation, with delays to CBT implementation arising from technical aspects of the transfer mechanisms used,<sup>9</sup> outcome targets were broadly achieved owing to effective food transfers in 2020 and efforts to resolve the challenges related to CBTs in 2021. Experience of those challenges provided WFP with lessons that will inform the implementation of future shock-responsive social protection plans.

26. *Integrated risk management*: Despite effective delivery of complementary activities to strengthen resilience at the subnational and national levels, corporate indicators do not fully capture country capacity

<sup>9</sup> The challenges relate to the technical mechanism used for CBT delivery, which was not aligned with the transfer modality used in the IDPoor system led by the Ministry of Planning. This created confusion for beneficiaries: the WFP programme distributed CBTs via mobile phone, which resulted in some recipients needing to change their phone network, while others did not have access to CBTs because they did not have functioning phones or had been provided with invalid codes.

strengthening results. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP's Cambodia country office capitalized on the new national focus on shock-responsive social protection, positioning itself as a leading partner in that area:

- Under strategic outcome 2, WFP supported the development of resilient food systems through a series of subprojects focused on disaster risk management. Those included supporting national agencies in enhancing disaster risk reduction and strengthening local climate change adaptation, and constructing community assets using climate-smart technology, thus reducing weather-related disruption to markets, education and healthcare. Activities also contributed to the integration of climate change, food security and nutrition considerations into commune-level planning processes. However, targets for improving coping capacities were not met, signalling limitations in WFP's contribution to changing the status of some of the most vulnerable people within a short time span.
- Under strategic outcome 3, WFP performed well, strengthening the capacity of national and subnational institutions to mitigate risks and lead coordinated shock preparedness and response efforts. For example, WFP helped to develop national and provincial disaster risk reduction plans and real-time impact monitoring systems. WFP positioned itself as the main government partner in building a shock-responsive social protection framework.
- Under strategic outcome 5, while partners' demand for high-quality supply chain services, particularly warehousing, was consistently fulfilled, a comprehensive analysis of the demand for such services was lacking.

27. *Food security and nutrition:* WFP is considered a key player in food security and nutrition in Cambodia, with unique contributions based on its comparative advantage. WFP delivered results effectively, but the indicators applied do not fully capture the breadth and depth of its role in this area:

- Strategic outcome 4 does not adequately reflect the various activities and contributions that WFP has made in this area, which have been much broader than anticipated in the CSP design. Overall, work under this strategic outcome has been highly effective. WFP has strengthened the capacities of the Government and other food security and nutrition actors in Cambodia, helped to formulate the second national strategy on food security and nutrition for 2019–2023, and successfully promoted food security and nutrition at the highest political levels. It has also contributed significant research and analysis on the issue.

### **Contributions to cross-cutting aims**

28. A full assessment of country capacity strengthening in Cambodia was hampered by the limited availability of evidence for measuring contributions to long-term changes. New comprehensive corporate tools and indicators are being made available and tested, including in Cambodia.

29. Gender and other issues of inclusion, such as disability, have not been sufficiently integrated into programme implementation. The lack of clear and ambitious (transformative) gender indicators in the CSP, a clear gender strategy and dedicated gender staff has been a key constraint. Results of the recent increase in WFP's efforts and investments in gender research and training programmes are yet to be visible. Protection issues were considered at a basic level only at the CSP design stage, and have not been systematically addressed during CSP implementation.

30. Since the start of CSP implementation, accountability to affected population activities have not been conducted within an overall accountability to affected populations framework, but WFP has recently paid increasing attention to this area, regularly consulting beneficiaries and enhancing the feedback mechanism during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Some basic measures are in place to address the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, but the shift to more upstream modalities has meant a lack of clarity on the relevance of those measures in that largely development-focused context. Environmental concerns were mainstreamed into CSP interventions, but there was no overall environmental framing in the CSP.

31. WFP emergency response interventions adhered to humanitarian principles, being in line with the principles of humanity, impartiality and independence. Neutrality is not applicable in Cambodia.

### ***Sustainability prospects***

32. The prospects for the sustainability of school feeding are promising, with a well-considered approach to the transition to government ownership. However, sustainability will require continued engagement and analysis of the changing situation and emerging challenges and opportunities. Risks include a potentially rushed timeline and the need for stakeholders to accept the possible evolution of the current model, but the recently endorsed joint transition strategy addresses those risks and allows a strong level of confidence in the transition process.

33. Elsewhere, sustainable gains were made, such as the launch and operationalization of the second national food security and nutrition strategy for 2019–2023, but there is no evidence on the current or future financial or institutional commitment to these structures and policies nor on the capacity of the Government to implement them.

### ***Humanitarian–development nexus***

34. The CSP refers to the double (humanitarian–development) nexus.<sup>10</sup> It does not include a specific strategy for operationalizing the linkages between humanitarian and development areas of activity, but the three-pillar approach reflects efforts in that direction.

35. In Cambodia, WFP has positioned itself at the double nexus through its work on shock-responsive social protection. Additional potential synergies can be explored, such as the linking of shock-responsive social protection to school feeding and humanitarian-oriented interventions, and the development of stronger linkages between humanitarian and resilience-building activities.

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

### ***Timeliness***

36. In Cambodia, WFP was able to rapidly adapt the school feeding programme to changing circumstances and continued to implement it in a timely manner; however, it experienced some delays in the planned handover to a government-owned home-grown school feeding programme owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. WFP responded rapidly to unforeseen circumstances in 2020, activating an emergency intervention in response to flooding and the pandemic, but technical challenges caused delays in the provision of CBT assistance.

37. Overall, the evaluation found that most of WFP’s country capacity strengthening and policy support activities were implemented within their intended timeframes, with some delays owing mainly to COVID-19-related restrictions regarding travel, meetings and social distancing, and the time required to lay firm groundwork for programme delivery during the first year of CSP implementation.

### ***Appropriateness of coverage and targeting***

38. The geographical targeting of CSP interventions was appropriate, focusing on children in vulnerable areas and those affected by COVID-19. Most beneficiaries were school-age children owing to the focus on school feeding. Changes in the vulnerability landscape have prompted consideration of programme expansion. The recent development, from 2020 onwards, of the on-demand IDPoor platform (see footnote 9) facilitates more effective targeting of the most vulnerable when combined with geographical data on disasters.

### ***Cost-efficiency***

39. WFP demonstrated cost-efficiency in its delivery of CSP results, facilitated by the conversion from in-kind food provision to the use of CBTs. Costs per beneficiary were higher for in-kind food distributions than for CBTs owing to the additional requirements associated with the purchase, transportation, storage and distribution of food.

40. Measures for keeping costs in check included ongoing monitoring, including through market-price studies. There were insufficient data to assess the cost-efficiency of capacity strengthening activities.

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<sup>10</sup> Peacebuilding is not of primary relevance in Cambodia.

## **WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT EXPLAIN WFP'S PERFORMANCE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT HAS MADE THE STRATEGIC SHIFT EXPECTED UNDER THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN?**

### ***Adequate, predictable and flexible resources***

41. The country office managed to increase resource mobilization over time, with the initial budget growing by 75 percent, to USD 87 million, by December 2022 (see paragraph 11). Overall, 108 percent of the cumulative needs-based plan was financed by December 2022, but most resources were earmarked at the activity level, thus limiting flexibility. Multi-year funding has helped to increase the predictability of CSP implementation.

### ***Use of data and results-based management***

42. The CSP was informed by various assessments and context analyses, including the mid-term and strategic review of the national strategy for food security and nutrition for 2014–2018.

43. Most relevant indicators were tracked and were aligned with corporate minimum requirements but monitoring and reporting focused mainly on school feeding activities, and a meaningful measurement framework for capacity strengthening was lacking. This hampered the utility of monitoring in informing management decisions under all strategic outcomes. Since 2021, however, the country office has made substantial investments in the evidence architecture, systematically mainstreaming evidence generation and use under all CSP activities.

### ***Partnerships***

44. The flexibility of the country office and its responsiveness to evolving priorities allowed it to maintain and develop effective partnerships. At the design stage, a conscious decision was made to develop strategic partnership agreements with various government entities, which has borne fruit, positively influencing performance and results under all activities. The CSP achieved its intended results with regard to partnerships with other United Nations entities, including the other Rome-based agencies, and partnerships with civil society and the private sector have been cultivated.

### ***Country office structure and staff skills***

45. The country office staffing structure and level of human resources capacity at the time of the CSP design was in accordance with an organizational realignment exercise. While consistent with the planned level of resources, the country office was conservative in setting its staffing level, which hindered effective delivery of CSP results. The “flat” staffing structure contributed to the “siloes” design of the CSP and impeded efforts to address some cross-cutting issues.

46. Between 2021 and 2022, the country office was further reconfigured, increasing in size and strengthening coherence and coordination among key areas. This promises to support the effective implementation of the CSP. However, despite the shift to an “upstream” focus that requires different staff skill sets, the overall programme is still heavily weighted towards school feeding in terms of staffing and operational capacity.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

47. The evaluation concluded that WFP's strategic direction under the CSP was appropriate and well aligned with Cambodia's national development priorities and that it remains so in the light of Cambodia's macroeconomic status and socioeconomic challenges. The CSP was also aligned with WFP's mandate, in particular in continuing the successful school feeding programme and in its work on climate change and resilience building with the Government and other actors.

48. While the CSP design provided a conducive framework with regard to its content, it was less optimal regarding its structure. Its siloes nature has hindered cross-fertilization among all the strategic outcomes, and it lacked an overview of how activities would be linked across the CSP portfolio to maximize efficiencies in the use of staff time during implementation and in WFP's partnerships in Cambodia. The reorientation of the CSP under the three pillars, and the reconfiguration of the country office's staffing structure represent an initial step in addressing those issues.

49. The longstanding and valued school feeding programme has continued to gain momentum and WFP was able to demonstrate adaptive capacity, for example during the emergencies arising from flooding

and the COVID-19 pandemic. The combination of those interventions has also contributed to further solidifying WFP's role as a leading partner in shock-responsive social protection in Cambodia, providing a good opportunity to facilitate strategic linkages in WFP's work at the humanitarian–development nexus.

50. WFP has worked effectively in providing complementary activities to strengthen resilience at the commune and national levels. The shift to more “upstream” support, the time required to establish solid foundations for programme delivery in the first year of the CSP, and external constraints led to a slower than planned implementation of certain capacity strengthening activities. However, WFP has been progressively implementing disaster risk reduction activities with a strong focus on climate change issues and increasing its effectiveness and credibility in that area.

51. WFP's work in the area of food security and nutrition in Cambodia, as articulated under the third pillar of the CSP, has surpassed its original design and placed WFP in a strong strategic position. However, food security and nutrition is an area where there is further opportunity to maximize linkages between standalone nutrition interventions and the mainstreaming of nutrition and its interaction with all other areas.

52. WFP has significantly strengthened partnerships with government counterparts under the CSP and is well-positioned with various other actors to ensure the sustainability of results. WFP cultivated strong relationships with partners at various levels, but while those partnerships have positively influenced performance, they have also evolved organically under the various strategic outcomes rather than as part of a comprehensive partnership strategy. The reframing of the portfolio under the three pillars permits a more holistic approach to partnerships, including with the other Rome-based agencies and the private sector.

53. The evaluation highlights the challenges of shifting WFP's focus so significantly to a more “upstream” approach to supporting government systems across the whole portfolio, particularly when that shift has been based partly on corporate direction rather than entirely on its suitability to the country context. While the shift has been successful in the case of school feeding, where WFP has the benefit of long experience in Cambodia, work under other strategic outcomes that are fully “upstream” has met challenges, and WFP's country capacity strengthening work, while based on capacity needs assessments, has not yet translated into measurable outcome results. The lack of meaningful corporate indicators for measuring sustainable institutional change has also limited the visibility of achievements.

54. The CSP has been weak in integrating cross-cutting issues into the design and implementation of interventions, particularly issues of gender, social inclusion, accountability to affected populations and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Despite some recent improvements, gender equality has not yet been sufficiently integrated at the programme and implementation levels, and staff capacities in that area remain limited. WFP also lacks clear objectives and indicators for ensuring that gender considerations can be well integrated into activities under each strategic outcome. Regarding accountability to affected populations, complaints and feedback mechanisms were not adequately reflected as a priority focus area in CSP design or implementation. The relevance of the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in Cambodia has not been clearly defined.

55. The evaluation concludes that the recent increase in staff capacities, including in skills specific to gender, inclusion and accountability issues, presents an opportunity for WFP to rethink – within the parameters of corporate focus and guidance – its approach to gender, inclusion, the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and accountability to affected populations so as to adopt a more sophisticated integration of those elements into future programming and the next CSP.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

56. The evaluation made five recommendations for shaping the strategic and operational direction of the next CSP for Cambodia. The recommendations are directed mainly to the country office, but also call for contributions from headquarters divisions and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.	Strategic framing of the new country strategic plan: WFP should refine the strategic focus of the next country strategic plan in order to strengthen the integration of inclusive activities, maximize effectiveness across development and humanitarian work, link shock-responsive social protection to climate change adaptation and ground the design of the country strategic plan on WFP's comparative advantages.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters Programme Cycle Management Unit	High	In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
1.1	WFP should consider framing the next country strategic plan in a more holistic way, with more activities clustered under strategic outcomes that have an overarching narrative both within each strategic outcome and among strategic outcomes. While the school feeding programme will remain a large financial and operational component of the overall programme, WFP should ensure that school feeding is positioned within a broader social protection framework, linking country capacity strengthening to the strategy for transitioning to a government-owned home-grown school feeding programme in order support coherence across the portfolio.		Country office senior management			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
1.2	The framing of the next country strategic plan should include a specific, highlighted focus on shock-responsive social protection, linking it to climate change adaptation as part of food security and nutrition resilience and building on WFP's current activities and direction.		Country office senior management			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.3	The new framing should embed gender, inclusion and protection considerations into all strategic outcomes (see recommendation 5).		Country office senior management			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
1.4	Building on the current country office staffing structure, WFP should identify and leverage internal synergies among all strategic outcomes and various activities, noting that a change in structure is a helpful first step in this, but that bringing change to ways of working takes time and does not necessarily happen automatically. The country office should consider what is necessary, including communications and opportunities for cross-team collaboration, and ensure that by the time implementation of the next country strategic plan starts, there are more genuine linkages among the various areas of work, supported by and embedded in the new staffing structure.		Country office senior management			November 2023
2.	Operationalization of the new country strategic plan: Supported by a strong foundation based on evidence generation, WFP should build on the achievements of the current country strategic plan by leveraging the newly identified linkages across the three pillars and should focus on building evidence-based systems and structures to inform country strategic plan implementation and management in a timely manner.	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters	Medium	November 2028 – the end of the new CSP period
2.1	In the next country strategic plan, WFP should build on the successful restructuring of the current country strategic plan under the three pillars, with explicit linkages among pillars, including shock-responsive social protection activities under both the social protection and the integrated risk management pillars, and food security		Country office senior management			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	and nutrition as an overarching concept as well as a stand-alone pillar, as it is the core mandate of WFP.					
2.2	WFP should prioritize the setting up of the necessary systems and processes to ensure that the newly structured research, assessment and monitoring unit is able to provide equal levels of support under all strategic outcomes for informing decision-making in a timely manner and contributing to learning.		Country office senior management and research, assessment and monitoring (RAM) unit			December 2023
2.3	WFP should take the necessary steps to ensure that all the evidence produced from research, assessment and monitoring is fully gender-, inclusion- and protection-sensitive, beyond the simple gender disaggregation of data, and that it provides meaningful analysis of gender, inclusion and protection dimensions.		Deputy country director and country office gender focal point, and programme and RAM units			November 2028 – the end of the new CSP period
3.	Partnerships: WFP should develop an overall partnership strategy focused on the sustainability of results. The strategy should be coherent with the various partnerships that WFP has in Cambodia – with the Government, other United Nations entities, civil society and the private sector – and, in line with recommendations 1 and 2, it should explicitly highlight the opportunities for linkages and alignment across various strategic outcomes and partnerships.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters Partnerships and Advocacy Department	Medium	June 2024
3.1	WFP should build on its current strong relationships with various government entities to identify and maximize the linkages among strategic outcomes within WFP and its relationships with government partners related to various areas of work, in line with increasing internal synergies.		Country office senior management, partnerships officer, head of programme and RAM unit			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.2	WFP should build on its current good partnerships with other United Nations entities, ensuring that linkages and WFP's contributions and areas of leadership are embedded in the new United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework and that WFP's close relationship with the other Rome-based agencies is maximized.		Country office senior management, partnerships officer, head of programme and RAM unit			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024
3.3	WFP should build on its current partnerships with civil society, the private sector and academia, ensuring that – as part of a partnership strategy – those partners are clearly recognized as key to achieving the sustainability of results alongside the Government.		Country office senior management, partnerships officer, head of programme and RAM unit			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024
3.4	WFP should explore the broadening of the donor base, particularly with a view to strengthening support for the Government's capacity to implement and manage priority programmes under the funding to financing agenda.		Country office senior management and partnerships officer			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024
3.5	In the partnership strategy, WFP should include a clear monitoring plan that ensures the visibility of results from various partnership types and informs robust management decision-making with regard to continued and new partnerships.		Country office senior management, partnerships officer and monitoring and evaluation team			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.	WFP support for the Government: WFP should develop an overarching conceptual framework for its support for the Government based on the mapping of existing national capacity needs and strengthened partner coordination, customizing and contextualizing the corporate policy framework <sup>11</sup> and in line with updated corporate guidance <sup>12</sup> and the corporate results framework for 2022–2025. <sup>13</sup>	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters Country Capacity Strengthening Unit	High	November 2023
4.1	The country office should develop an overarching conceptual framework for the provision of support to the Government that is aligned with corporate key documents and applicable to all relevant strategic outcomes in the next country strategic plan. The framework should be used to ensure that all WFP staff have a consistent understanding of WFP's work in support of the Government at the national and subnational levels.		Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme and RAM unit			November 2023
4.2	WFP should build on the capacity needs and mapping exercises conducted for the current country strategic plan, but with more systematic and predictable planned processes in place to ensure that the exercises are fully used as implementation and monitoring guides.		Deputy Country Director and country office RAM and programme units			November 2023

<sup>11</sup> WFP. 2022. "[Country capacity strengthening policy update](#)" (WFP/EB.A/2022/5-A).

<sup>12</sup> WFP. 2023. *WFP corporate framework for country capacity strengthening*.

<sup>13</sup> WFP. 2022. "[Corporate results framework \(2022–2025\)](#)" (WFP/EB.1/2022/4-A/Rev.1).



#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.3	The country office should ensure that there is documented evidence from the piloting of new corporate indicators that the country office has volunteered to take part in with the regional bureau. WFP should ensure that learning from the piloting process includes documentation of the support received and the future support required from the regional bureau, and of the lessons learned from and for all upstream strategic outcomes.		Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme and RAM unit			November 2023
4.4	WFP should use the learning from the current utilization of capacity needs mapping exercises, the learning from the piloting exercise on corporate indicators and the process of developing the new country strategic plan to develop a comprehensive systems-building approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the support provided to the Government by WFP under the various strategic outcomes, including the related theories of change, capacity needs assessments and monitoring and evaluation plans. Monitoring and evaluation plans should be based on monitoring at various output and outcome levels, such as those assessing pre- and post-test knowledge, and more sophisticated measurements (developed with the support of the regional bureau and headquarters) for outcome-level results, within the parameters of corporate frameworks (see recommendation 4).		Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme and RAM unit, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters			November 2023
4.5	The country office should take the necessary steps to ensure that gender, inclusion and protection considerations are embedded in the overarching conceptual framework for the provision of support to the Government.		Deputy Country Director and country office gender focal point and RAM unit			November 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.	Cross-cutting issues: WFP should strengthen and mainstream gender-transformative approaches, inclusion and accountability to affected populations in the design and implementation of the new country strategic plan as much as possible, while remaining aligned with corporate guidance.	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters Gender Equality Office and programme units	High	In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
5.1	<p>The country office should ensure that gender, inclusion and disability considerations are fully incorporated into the design of the next country strategic plan, along with the corporate cross-cutting indicators that cover those considerations, including those that look beyond physical disabilities. The considerations should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ applicable to all strategic outcomes and activities in the country strategic plan; and</li> <li>➤ supported by meaningful output and outcome indicators.</li> </ul> <p>The cross-cutting issues incorporated into the next country strategic plan should be aligned with WFP's corporate direction, including the cross-cutting indicators in the corporate results framework for 2022–2025.</p>		Deputy Country Director and country office gender and inclusion officer and programme units			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
5.2	With support from the regional bureau, the country office should ensure that the most up-to-date accountability to affected populations complaints and feedback mechanisms are in place for strategic outcomes with tier 1 beneficiaries.		Deputy Country Director and country office accountability to affected populations officer, RAM unit and relevant programme units			November 2023

# Introduction

1. In line with the World Food Programme (WFP) policy on country strategic plans (CSPs) and WFP evaluation policy, the Office of Evaluation (OEV) has commissioned an evaluation of the CSP in Cambodia.<sup>14</sup> This evaluation covers both the transitional interim-country strategic plan (T-ICSP) 2018, and the CSP 2019-2023. The purpose of a country strategic plan evaluation (CSPE) is twofold: 1) to provide evidence about WFP performance that can inform country-level strategic decisions, specifically for developing the next CSP; and 2) to provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders. The summary terms of reference (ToR) can be found in Annex 1.

## 1.1. EVALUATION FEATURES

2. This evaluation took place between May 2022 and April 2023 and was aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) principles, norms, and standards. It used the standard WFP key evaluation questions in considering the strategic outcomes (SOs) of the CSP. The evaluation assessed the relevance, quality and results of the CSPs, and the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the structures and systems that supported their implementation. Gender was a cross-cutting theme used to examine contextual factors, data collection and data analysis, as well as the identification of findings and their presentation.

3. The intended stakeholders and users of this evaluation are the WFP Cambodia country office, the WFP regional bureau in Bangkok (RBB), WFP headquarters technical divisions, the WFP Executive Board, the WFP Office of Evaluation, the Royal Government of Cambodia (the Government of Cambodia), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors, United Nations agencies and direct beneficiaries. Its conclusions and recommendations will inform the design of the new CSP (2024-2027), as well as the implementation of the current CSP. A full list of stakeholders is presented in Annex 10.

## 1.2. CONTEXT

### General overview

4. Cambodia is a southeast Asian country situated on the southern part of the Indochinese peninsula with a landmass of 181,035 km. As of 2020, its total population is 16.7 million people,<sup>15</sup> where nearly one third of the population is below 15 years old, and only 5 percent is above 65 years old. The fertility rate is 2.4 children per woman with an adolescent fertility rate of 5 percent. Minority ethnic groups are estimated to cover between 6 and 10 percent of the population. The Government formally recognizes only Cham and Khmer Loeu.<sup>16</sup>

5. Cambodia achieved lower middle-income status in 2015<sup>17</sup> and aims to reach upper middle-income status by 2030. This progress is mainly driven by agriculture, garment exports and tourism, due to the long-term economic reforms, market liberalization and foreign direct investments, mainly from China. It has improved its Human Development Index score from 0.368 in 1990 to 0.594 in 2019, ranking 144<sup>th</sup> out of 189 countries in 2020.<sup>18</sup>

6. As of 2019-2020, 17.8 percent of Cambodia's population lived below the national poverty line, and, in 2021, 9.2 percent of the employed population lived on less than United States Dollar (USD) 1.90 per day purchasing power parity. The poverty rate in rural areas – where 75 percent of the population lives – is five

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<sup>14</sup> Policy on CSP (WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/1/Rev.1) and Evaluation Policy (2016–2021) (WFP/EB.2/2015/4-A/Rev.1).

<sup>15</sup> World Bank, 2022. World Development Indicator (WDI) [DataBank](#), accessed on 16 September 2022.

<sup>16</sup> World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous People, accessed on 18 September 2022.

<sup>17</sup> WB. 2022. WDI DataBank, accessed on 16 September 2022.

<sup>18</sup> UNDP. 2020. The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene. Briefing note for countries on the 2020 HD Report. Cambodia.

times higher than in Phnom Penh. Cambodia almost halved its poverty rate from 34 percent in 2009 to 18 percent in 2019.<sup>19</sup> the Gini index is estimated at 32 percent.<sup>20</sup>

## COVID-19

7. COVID-19 had a significant impact on Cambodia, with 137,937 reported cases and 3,056 deaths<sup>21</sup> as of October 2022. The pandemic caused a 3.1 percent contraction in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020,<sup>22</sup> the first negative trend since 1980. In August 2020, the United Nations provided a framework for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19.<sup>23,24</sup> Economic disruptions led to job losses and decreased working hours, with more than 133,000 new households registered as being particularly vulnerable.<sup>25</sup> School closures affected the education of 3.2 million children<sup>26</sup> with most (70-80 percent) unable to participate in remote learning.<sup>27</sup>

8. In December 2021, the Government of Cambodia launched a framework for recovery from COVID-19<sup>28</sup> with a plan to address the negative economic growth.<sup>29</sup> The poorest households benefited from cash transfers, a mechanism that was later applied by WFP. In 2022, Cambodia relaxed COVID-19 restrictions due to accelerated vaccination progress. However, employment and income had not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels and economic growth for 2022 was projected at 4.5 percent.<sup>30</sup>

## National policies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

9. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, Cambodia has taken notable steps towards mainstreaming the agenda and monitoring progress against the SDGs. Cambodia also adopted the agenda for humanity in September 2015. The Cambodia Vision 2050 is aligned with the SDGs, and de-mining is an additional priority area.<sup>31</sup> A voluntary national review (VNR) of SDG progress was conducted in 2019 reporting against the six global priority goals (education, decent work and growth, reduced inequalities, climate action, peace and institutions and partnerships).<sup>32</sup>

10. The national policy framework for sustainable development is reflected in the Rectangular Strategy-Phase IV (RS-IV).<sup>33</sup> The socioeconomic policy agenda of the Government of Cambodia was operationalized through the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019–2023.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Government of Cambodia. Ministry of Planning (MoP). 2021. Poverty in Cambodia. Setting the new poverty line. Phnom Penh (comparability with previous data may be limited because of the introduction of a new methodology for the calculation of poverty line).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> WHO. Cambodia COVID-19 Dashboard, accessed on 16 September 2022.

<sup>22</sup> WB. 2020. Economic indicators: Cambodia.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations. 2020. United Nations Cambodia Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19.

<sup>24</sup> Government of Cambodia. 2021. Strategic Framework and Program for the Recovery and Promotion of Cambodia's Economic Growth for the New Normal of Living with Covid-19 for 2021-2023.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations. 2020. United Nations Cambodia Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19.

<sup>27</sup> WB notes that during the pandemic a relatively small percentage of students participated in remote learning and that the use of remote learning alternatives was only 19.7 percent in the pessimistic and intermediate scenarios and 30.2 percent in the optimistic scenario. Learning Loss in Cambodia and the Use of EdTech during COVID-19.

<sup>28</sup> Government of Cambodia. 2021. Strategic Framework and Program for the Recovery and Promotion of Cambodia's Economic Growth for the New Normal of Living with Covid-19 for 2021-2023.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> WFP. 2022. Cambodia Market and Seasonal Update. June 2022.

<sup>31</sup> UNDP Cambodia. 2019. VNR 2019: Achieving Cambodia's Vision 2050 via the Sustainable Development Goals. 25 July 2019.

<sup>32</sup> UNDP. 2019. *Cambodia's VNR 2019 on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. WFP and FAO supported CARD and MOP to produce the VNR SDG 2 but there was a lack of data due to the delay in the Cambodia Demographic Health Survey (CDHS) in 2020 due to COVID-19. The CDHS has been completed and preliminary results are now available so the SDG 2 section. The next VNR will be updated accordingly.

<sup>33</sup> Government of Cambodia. 2018. Rectangular Strategy for growth, employment, equity and efficiency: Building the foundation toward realizing the Cambodia Vision 2050. Phase IV of the Government of Cambodia of the Sixth Legislature of the National Assembly. 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Government of Cambodia. 2019. NSDP 2019-2023. For growth in employment, equity and efficiency to reach the status of an upper-middle income country by 2030.

11. The Second National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN) 2019-2023 addresses malnutrition, building on recommendations from the mid-term and strategic review of the NSFSN 2014-2018 and on the policy analysis on accelerating progress towards SDG 2.<sup>35</sup> The mid-term review also informed the National Action Plan for Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia 2016-2025. This plan aims to ensure equitable access to nutritious and affordable foods. The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 and the Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 both include school feeding as a critical strategy component.

12. Policies targeting prevention of violence against women include the Ministry of Women's Affairs National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2019-2023 and the Neary Rattanak Strategic Plan V 2019-2023. Other policies supporting achievement of the SDGs, include the Disaster Management Law, the National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019-2023, the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan 2014-2023, and various decentralization policies.

### Food and nutrition security

13. Cambodia ranked 69<sup>th</sup> of 116 countries on the 2021 Global Hunger Index.<sup>36</sup> The undernourishment rate has decreased sharply in the last 20 years, but 22 percent of children under the age of 5 are stunted.<sup>37</sup> The rate of wasting is 10 percent<sup>38</sup> signalling the need for significant progress to reach zero hunger by 2030. In addition, more than 80 percent of women of reproductive age and children under the age of 5 are estimated to have a sentinel micronutrient deficiency (iron, zinc, vitamin A, folate, vitamin B12, vitamin D).<sup>39</sup> Moreover, 4 percent of children are overweight,<sup>40</sup> doubling from 2014 to 2022. Women of reproductive age exhibit a comparable pattern, with 32.6 percent of those aged 20-49 being overweight or obese in 2022, while in 2014, only 18 percent of those aged 15-24 were overweight or obese.<sup>41</sup> According to the United Nations, after COVID-19, food and livelihoods coping strategies had not returned to baseline levels by December 2021.<sup>42</sup>

14. No recent Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis of chronic food insecurity has been conducted,<sup>43</sup> but an acute food insecurity situation overview for Cambodia was prepared in November 2012.<sup>44</sup> The IPC analysis at that time concluded that the comparatively high stunting and anaemia rates of children under 5 years old (chronic malnutrition) exacerbated the risk of the population falling into acute food insecurity during events such as floods, drought and food price increases.<sup>45</sup> Caloric availability, (i.e., from rice) is not an issue, but there are issues with the availability and affordability of diverse, nutritious foods, contributing to nutrition insecurity.<sup>46</sup> The 2022 price crisis further exacerbated food affordability, with large impacts on imported food, fuel and fertilizers.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Kingdom of Cambodia. 2017. Mid-Term and Strategic Review of the NSFSN 2014-2018.

<sup>36</sup> GHI. 2021. Cambodia.

<sup>37</sup> National Institute of Statistics (NIS), the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) Program, Inner City Fund (ICF) Rockville. Kingdom of Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2021-22. Key Indicators Report. June 2022.

<sup>38</sup> De Onis, M., Borghi, E., Arimond, M., Webb, P., Croft, T., Saha, K., & Flores-Ayala, R. 2019. Prevalence thresholds for wasting, overweight and stunting in children under 5 years. *Public Health Nutrition*, 22(1), 175-179. Recent sex-disaggregated stunting and wasting data are not available.

<sup>39</sup> Gretchen A Stevens, Ty Beal, Mduduzi N N Mbuya, Hanqi Luo, & Lynnette M Neufeld. 2022. Micronutrient deficiencies among preschool-aged children and women of reproductive age worldwide: a pooled analysis of individual-level data from population-representative surveys. *Lancet Global Health* 2022. 10: e1590-99.

<sup>40</sup> NIS, MoH and the DHS Program ICF Rockville. Kingdom of Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2021-22. Key Indicators Report. June 2022.

<sup>41</sup> National Institute of Statistics. 2023. Cambodia, Demographic and Health Survey 2021-22

<https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR377-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm>.

<sup>42</sup> The adoption of negative coping strategies by households to meet food needs is higher in December 2021 than the period before COVID 19. See UNICEF, WFP and Asian Development Bank (ADB) with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). 2022. *COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*. Phase II Report. August 2020-December 2021.

<sup>43</sup> IPC events. Cambodia - IPC Chronic Food Insecurity Analysis.

<sup>44</sup> IPC Version 2.0. Acute Food Security Situation Overview. 08 November 2012.

<sup>45</sup> No recent data are available on chronic or acute food security.

<sup>46</sup> IPC Version 2.0. Acute Food Insecurity Situation Overview. 08 November 2021.

<sup>47</sup> WFP Market & Seasonal Monitoring Update (July 2022).



## Agriculture

15. Agriculture is the backbone of Cambodia's economy; it employs about 32 percent of the labour force and accounts for 20.7 percent of GDP,<sup>48</sup> with crop cultivation as the largest contributor at 54 percent, followed by fisheries (25 percent), livestock (15 percent) and forestry and logging (6 percent).<sup>49</sup> In recent years Cambodia has become self-sufficient in rice and an important exporter. Cambodia has a significantly higher rural population (75 percent) than the rest of South Asia (65 percent).<sup>50</sup> Most rural Cambodians are smallholder farmers dependent on a single harvest of rice.

## Climate change and vulnerability

16. Cambodia is one of the southeast Asia countries most exposed to climate change experiencing delayed or shortened monsoons and erratic rainfall leading to natural disasters, such as seasonal droughts, floods and typhoons. Poor water resource management, access and storage limit the country's capacity to respond and adapt to these events and conditions.

17. Cambodia's economic vulnerability following the pandemic has been further exacerbated by the current global fuel and food crisis. Cambodia is one of the countries most exposed to energy price increases in the Asia Pacific region, owing to its comparatively high net fuel imports relative to GDP, limited domestic access to electricity, and reliance on fossil fuels.

## Education

18. Cambodia's constitution ensures universal free primary and secondary public education, with the Government spending 11.1 percent of total spending on education in 2021.<sup>51</sup> The net school enrolment rate is 93 percent for primary education; the gross enrolment rate is 69 percent for lower secondary education.<sup>52</sup> The number of children in preschool programmes has doubled since 2007,<sup>53</sup> with approximately 327,000 children, of which 165,000 were girls, enrolled in 2020-2021 school year.<sup>54</sup>

19. Nearly 25 percent of children in Grade 3 in primary school are unable to write. The learning assessment results reveal that although all students experienced learning loss after these closures, the impact was not evenly distributed. Boys lost more learning and performed worse in testing: 55 percent of boys were assessed as not meeting basic proficiency in the Khmer language in 2021, compared to 34 percent of girls.<sup>55</sup> Retention declines dramatically in the later years and, by the age of 17, 55 percent of adolescents have dropped out of school.<sup>56</sup> In 2018, the retention rate was 94 percent in pre- and primary schools with WFP assistance. Only 26.6 percent of the population has completed lower secondary school (28.9 percent of men, and 24.5 percent of women).<sup>57</sup>

## Gender and inclusion

20. Cambodia ranks 117<sup>th</sup> out of 162 countries on the 2020 Gender Inequality Index and 96/146 on the global Gender Gap Index for 2022.<sup>58</sup> While women are increasingly part of the labour force, participating at a rate of 75.5 percent compared to 86.7 percent for men,<sup>59</sup> pay is unequal and reduces their capacity to

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<sup>48</sup> ADB. 2020. USD 70 Million ADB Loan to Strengthen Agricultural Value Chain, Food Safety in Cambodia.

<sup>49</sup> FAO. 2020. Cambodia at a glance.

<sup>50</sup> World Bank. 2021. Population figures: Cambodia and South Asia.

<sup>51</sup> Global Partnership for Education (GPE). 2022. GPE 2025 Results Framework for Cambodia.

<sup>52</sup> Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). 2022. Education Congress: The Education, Youth, and Sport Performance in the Academic Year 2020-2021 and Goals for the Academic Year 2021-2022.

<sup>53</sup> World Bank Education Statistics. Country at a Glance – Cambodia, accessed on 20 September 2022.

<sup>54</sup> The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Cambodia. 2022. Education Case Study.

<sup>55</sup> UNICEF Cambodia. 2022. Learning Loss in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era: Evidence from the 2016-2021 Grade Six National Learning Assessment in Cambodia. April 2022.

<sup>56</sup> UNICEF Cambodia. Education, homepage accessed on 20 September 2022.

<sup>57</sup> NIS. 2020. General Population Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2019.

<sup>58</sup> UNDP. 2020. HDR; [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2022.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2022.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> WFP. 2018. T-ICSP.

cope with poverty and food insecurity. Although Cambodia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1992, implementation has been slow.<sup>60</sup>

21. People with disabilities (approximately 5 percent of the population)<sup>61</sup> are among the most vulnerable groups in Cambodia. The Government of Cambodia has adopted laws, regulations and policies to enact the right of people with disabilities, such as the National Disability Strategic Plan 2014-2018, the National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities including Landmine and Explosive Remnants of War Survivors 2009-2011, and the Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of People with Disabilities (2009).

### **Migration, refugees and internally displaced people**

22. The number of refugees or internally displaced people (IDPs) in Cambodia is low due to it being a major country of origin for migrants with over 1,100,000 citizens abroad (particularly in Thailand) in 2020, 54 percent of whom were women.<sup>62</sup> Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, an estimated 265,000 Cambodian migrant workers have returned from Thailand.<sup>63</sup>

### **Social protection**

23. Social protection is increasingly recognized by the Government as a tool that prevents poverty and helps to reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities, improving responsiveness to shocks. The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016–2025<sup>64</sup> includes several forms of social assistance relevant to the work of WFP, such as the government cash assistance programme that was launched as a response to COVID-19. It also includes the home-grown school feeding programme (HGSFP), which is a major component of the WFP CSP 2019-2023. In addition, a health equity fund provides cash transfers for social protection and for emergency response.

### **Human rights**

24. In 2021, Cambodia received a low score of 24/100 on the index of economic freedom, 5/40 for political rights, and 19/60 for political liberties.<sup>65</sup> Cambodia also scored below regional and world averages for economic rights, with an economic freedom score of 57.1 in 2022, ranking it 21<sup>st</sup> among 39 countries in the Asia Pacific region. Between 2017 and 2022, it lost 2.4 points as a result of decreases in labour and trade freedom.<sup>66</sup>

### **International assistance**

25. The current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019-2023<sup>67</sup> is aligned with Cambodia's priorities and needs, as articulated through national development priorities and plans. The current UNDAF outlines the partnership between the United Nations and the Government of Cambodia in support of the national development priorities as articulated in the Rectangular Strategy-Phase IV (RS-IV) and the 2030 Agenda. When the UNDAF expires in 2023, Cambodia will move to a United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) model.

26. Net official development assistance (ODA) to Cambodia has been rising since 2018, reaching USD 1,373.2 million in 2020, representing over 5.7 percent of gross national income.<sup>68</sup> Between 2018 and 2020, Cambodia received a yearly average USD 1 billion gross official development assistance and, during the period 2018-2022, an annual average of USD 17.4 million of humanitarian aid flows. (Figure 1).

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<sup>60</sup>Government of Cambodia. Ministry of Women Affair. Neary Rattanak V. Five years strategic plan for strengthening gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, 2019-2023.

<sup>61</sup> NIS. 2020. General Population Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2019.

<sup>62</sup> The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). International Migrant Stock 2020, accessed on 14 November 2022.

<sup>63</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Group, accessed on 1 November 2022.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cam-53308-001-tar-ld-02.pdf>.

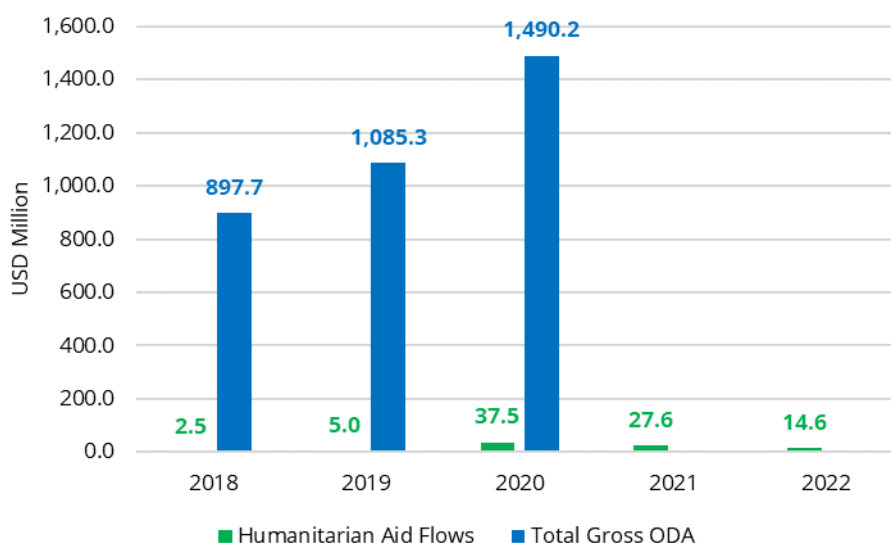
<sup>65</sup> Freedom House Index, accessed on 18 November 2022.

<sup>66</sup> 2022 index of economic freedom, accessed on 18 November 2022.

<sup>67</sup> United Nations Cambodia. 2020. UNDAF 2019-2023.

<sup>68</sup> Interactive summary charts by aid (ODA) recipients, data accessed on 31/03/2023.

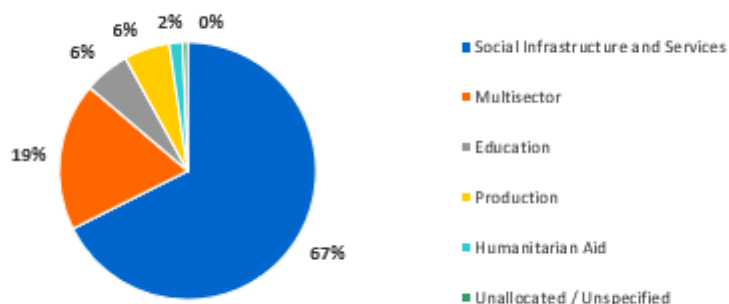
**Figure 1. International development assistance to Cambodia (2018-2022)**



Source: The Organisation for Economic Co-ordination and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (UN OCHA) – financial tracking service (FTS) websites, data extracted on 31/03/2023.

Aid is mainly allocated to social infrastructure and services (67 percent) and multisector activities (19 percent), followed by education and production (both 6 percent). The other sectors are residual, as presented in Figure 2.

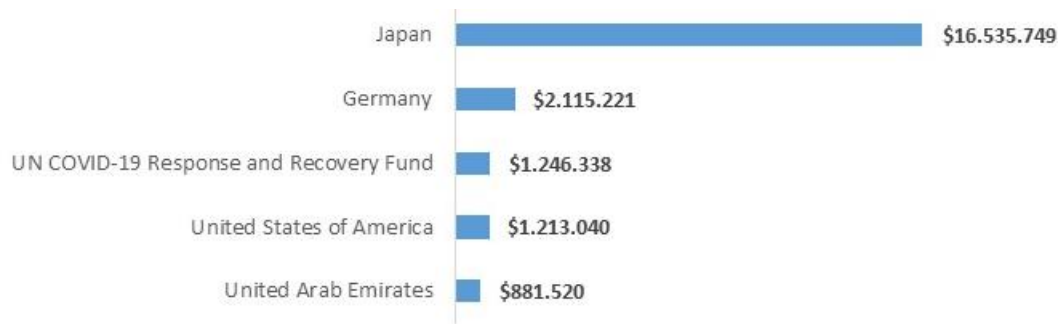
**Figure 2. Cambodia bilateral official development assistance by sector (2020), annual average**



Source: OECD stats, data extracted on 14 November 2022. 2021 data are available but are preliminary and therefore are not included.

27. Between 2018 and 2021 Cambodia received an annual average of USD 17.6 million for humanitarian assistance. The main donors of humanitarian assistance (Figure 3) were Japan, Germany, the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. Humanitarian funding in 2020 focused mainly on health (81.2 percent) and mine action (11.8 percent), with food security accounting for only 0.8 percent.

**Figure 3. Top five donors of humanitarian assistance to Cambodia (2018 - 2021), annual average in USD**



Source: OCHA financial service tracking. Cambodia 2018-2021.

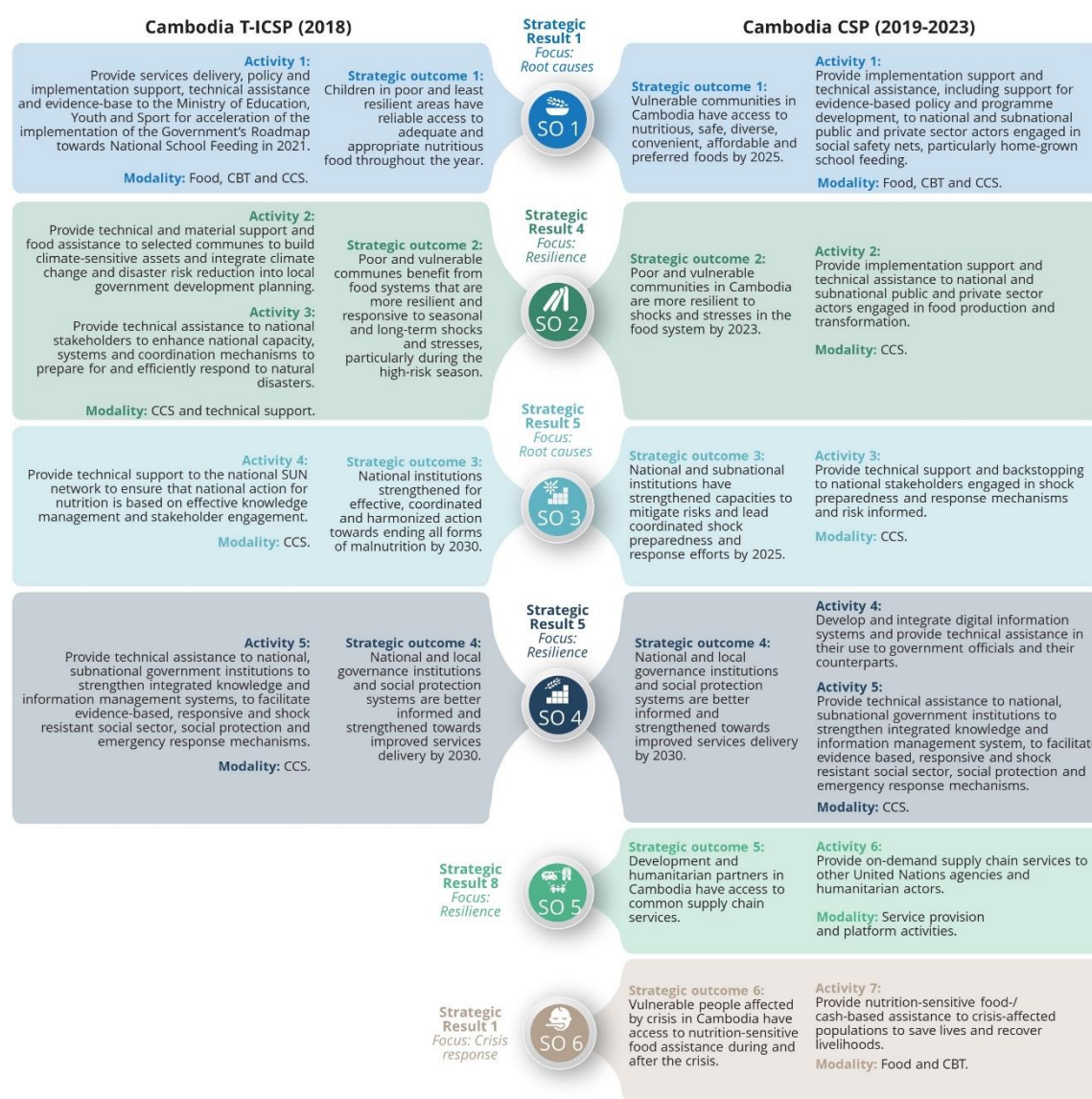
### 1.3. SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED

28. The T-ICSP for Cambodia was developed in 2017. It consisted of components of the country programme (Cambodia Country Programme (2011–2018), whose eight revisions extended activities for 30 months from July 2016 to December 2018, to align WFP assistance with the Government’s planning cycle for 2014–2018 and the UNDAF 2016–2018. It aimed to rationalize the scale and scope of the programme in line with the gradual transition away from direct implementation, while the consultations for the design of the CSP were ongoing. The T-ICSP was designed to contribute to the achievement of the Government’s National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition and the National Strategic Development Plan, both covering the period 2014-2018. During the implementation of the T-ICSP, a full CSP (2019-2023) was developed and approved by the Executive Board (EB) in February 2019. It covered the period from January 2019 to December 2023 and was designed to continue the WFP shift from activity implementation to strengthening national capacities and building scalable programme models.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> WFP. 2019. Cambodia CSP (2019-2023).

## T-ICSP and CSP overview

Figure 4. Cambodia T-ICSP and CSP: overview of strategic outcomes and activities



Source: Evaluation team. Inception Report Cambodia CSPE. Cambodia T-ICSP (2018), line of sight and logframe 1.0.

Abbreviation: CBT = Cash-Based Transfers; CCS = country capacity strengthening.

29. The CSP was designed to contribute to SDGs 2 and 17 and to WFP strategic results 1, 4, 5 and 8 through five strategic outcomes. A sixth strategic outcome was added in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the heavy flooding. As shown in Figure 4 (which also maps the T-ICSP strategic outcomes to the CSP strategic outcomes to show how they interlink<sup>70</sup>), the six strategic outcomes are implemented through seven activities, focusing on root causes, crisis response and resilience building.

30. The design of the CSP was informed by the recommendations of the 2018 Cambodia Country Portfolio Evaluation 2011-2017,<sup>71</sup> which recommended that WFP Cambodia shift from the implementation of food assistance programmes to capacity strengthening; this includes: 1) strengthening support to the

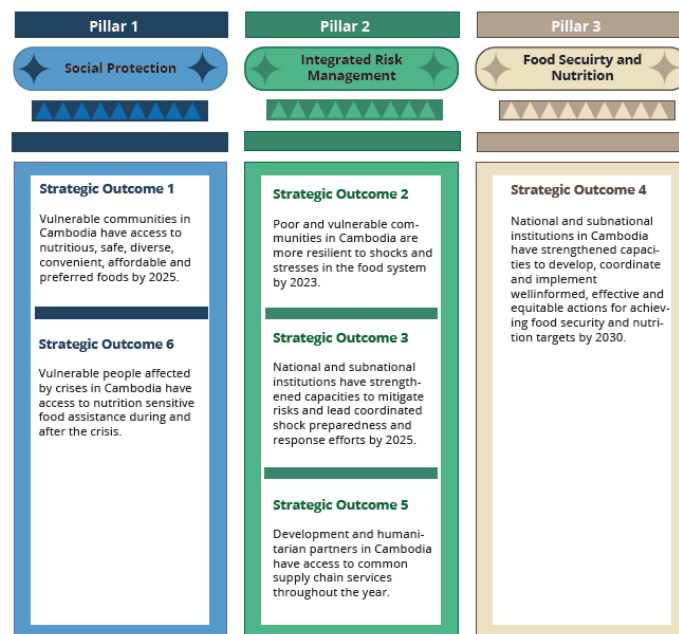
<sup>70</sup> WFP. 2020. ACR; CSP Budget Revision 03.

<sup>71</sup> WFP. 2018. Cambodia: An Evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2011-2017).

decentralization process; 2) rationalizing the country office’s staff capacity; and 3) right-sizing the portfolio to fit the country office’s capacity and resource outlook.

31. In light of the change in context and emerging government priorities in the period 2019-2021, the country office led the development of three theories of change (ToCs), covering all strategic outcomes and focusing on three pillars with the aim of providing more coherence across the strategic outcomes: i) social protection; ii) integrated risk management; and iii) food security and nutrition (FSN)<sup>72</sup> as per Figure 5. Based on the three pillar theories of change presented in the mid-term review of the CSP completed in 2022<sup>73</sup>, the evaluation team reconstructed an overarching theory of change (Annex 4), which was validated with the country office at the inception stage of the evaluation. Key assumptions underpinning WFP work in Cambodia include: resource mobilization; government partnership and its ability to take over school feeding; cooperation with humanitarian and development actors to increase resilience to shocks; and no major ‘Level 3’ type disaster to derail the CSP.

**Figure 5. CSP structure by pillar**



Source: Evaluation team, reconstructed from WFP. CSP Reorientation. 2020 WFP Cambodia COVID-19 response. 2020.

32. The major phases in the evolution of the portfolio over time and key changes in the external context are presented in Figure 6. The COVID-19 pandemic reached Cambodia in 2020, with the economic and social impacts described above; it was closely followed by a series of extreme climate events at the end of 2020, including severe flooding.<sup>74</sup> In response, WFP made a series of adaptations to the CSP, including provision of a cash-based transfer (CBT) to 175,000 affected people to support the social protection efforts of the Government, and the re-purposing of the on-site school feeding programme (SFP) to take-home rations (THR), for 81,658 children<sup>75</sup> following school closures.

<sup>72</sup> WFP respondents at country office level – current and past staff: and see WFP. CSP Reorientation. WFP Cambodia COVID19 response. 2020 and Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP’s Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

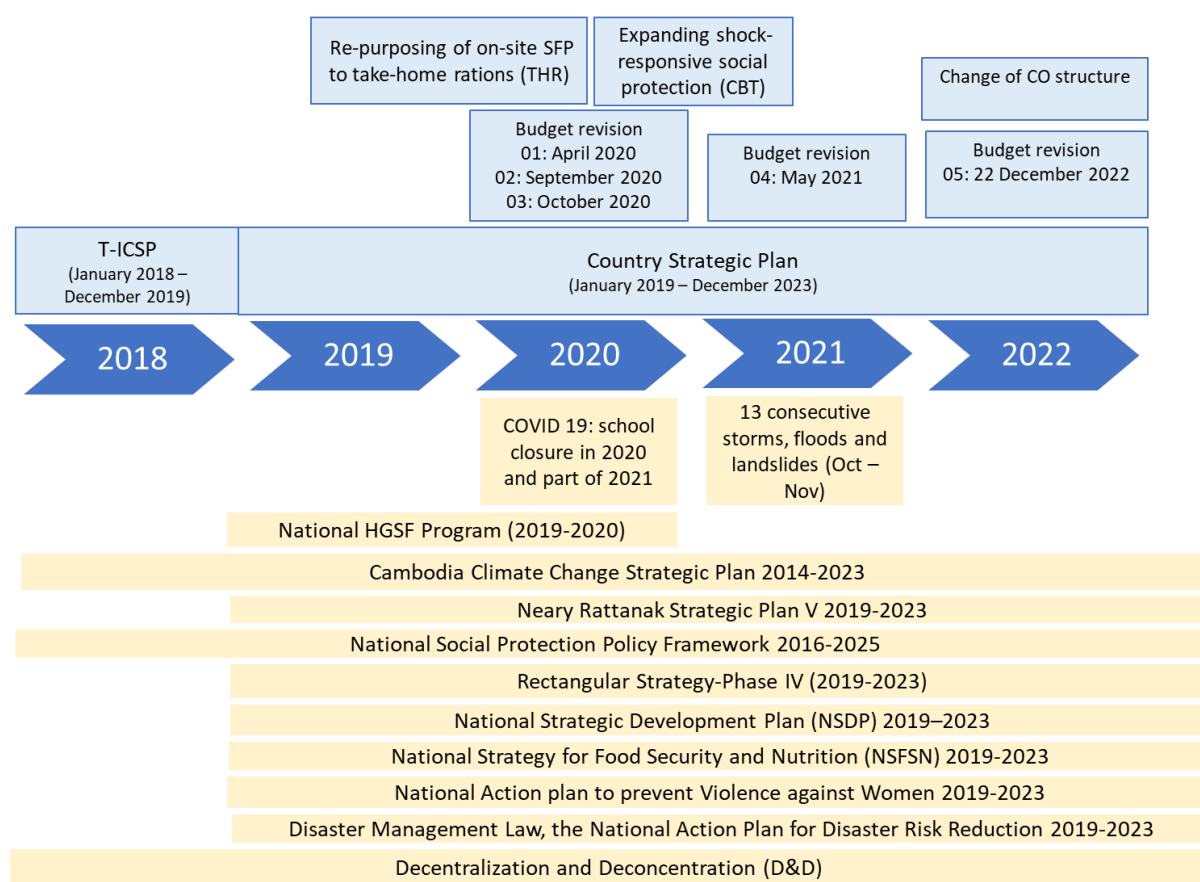
<sup>73</sup> Artival. Research and Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP’s Cambodia CSP 2019-2023.

<sup>74</sup> Cambodia was hit by the Typhoon Molave on October 29, 2020; this affected 20 out of 25 provinces, and 175,872 families. At least 44 persons died. The subsequent flash floods in November 2020 claimed the lives of minimum 43 people and affected more than 792,000 people.

<sup>75</sup> WFP. ACR 2020; WFP. Cambodia CSP (2019-2023).



**Figure 6. Timeline of Cambodia country context and significant WFP interventions**



Source: Evaluation team.

## Budget and levels of funding

### T-ICSP

33. The needs-based plan for the T-ICSP was USD 18,319,500; the total T-ICSP funding amounted to USD 22,961,820, which corresponds to 102 percent of the needs-based plan. The T-ICSP budget underwent one budget revision (BR)<sup>76</sup> in 2018, increasing available resources to USD 22,485,823. The budget revision served to increase the tonnage and cost of food under SO1. Table 1 presents the needs-based plan, the allocated resources and the expenditures of the T-ICSP.

### CSP

34. The original budget/needs-based plan for the CSP was USD 50,241,310. By December 2022, the budget had been revised five times, reaching USD 87,921,370:

- BR01 (April 2020) increased the budget by USD 22,009,670 under strategic outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- BR02 (September 2020) decreased the budget by USD 290,480; the changes were mostly related to amending timelines and re-purposing resources to adapt to the changing context due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- BR03 (October 2020) increased the budget by USD 500,000 to support the Government in its response to multiple crises in 2020, including floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, thus adding a new strategic outcome focused on crisis response (SO6).
- BR04 (May 2021) increased the budget by USD 7,887,450 primarily for SO2, SO3, and SO6 to augment the work of WFP in these areas.

<sup>76</sup> WFP. 2018. BR 2. BR1 was a technical revision demanded by WFP headquarters updating WINGS.

- BR05 (December 2022) added USD 7,573,419, to reflect shifting timelines concerning school feeding under SO1 and cash transfers under SO6 as well as changes in overhead, staffing and supply chain costs.

35. Table 1 presents the needs-based plan, the allocated resources and the expenditures of the CSP. The ratio of resources for SO1 (school feeding) that were allocated based on the needs-based plan was 111 percent at the end of 2022.

**Table 1. Financial overview of T-ICSP and CSP for the period 2018-2022**

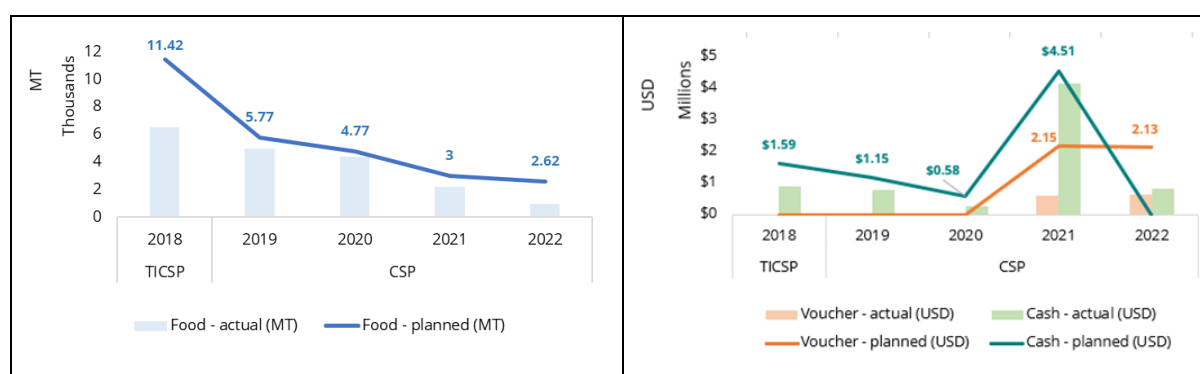
T-ICSP (January - December 2018)							CSP (2019-2023)					
Strategic Outcome (SO)	Needs-based plan (original)	Needs-based plan (BR02)	Allocated resources	Expenditure	% Allocated resources on NBP (BR02)	% expenditure of allocated resources	Needs-based plan (original)	Needs-based plan (original) (BR05)	Allocated resources	Expenditure	% Allocated resources on NBP (BR05)	% expenditure of allocated resources
SO1	12,134,851	15,636,744	14,642,564	12,160,155	94%	83%	30,898,997	52,525,528	58,448,048	33,329,864	111%	57%
SO2	1,870,068	1,847,382	1,543,687	1,421,904	84%	92%	4,843,398	7,782,819	5,101,614	3,252,865	66%	64%
SO3	335,337	336,768	145,053	113,717	43%	78%	1,834,184	4,912,641	3,488,370	2,576,075	71%	74%
SO4	962,659	1,030,941	710,195	405,572	69%	57%	2,947,137	3,370,629	2,204,222	2,038,136	65%	92%
SO5	-	-					476,773	201,540	181,888	175,557	90%	97%
SO6	-	-					-	6,855,542	5,627,930	5,627,930	82%	100%
Not SO specific	-	-	2,574,953				-		9,041,193			
<b>Total operational cost</b>	<b>15,302,915</b>	<b>18,851,835</b>	<b>19,616,451</b>	<b>14,101,347</b>	<b>104%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>41,000,488</b>	<b>75,648,698</b>	<b>84,093,265</b>	<b>47,000,426</b>	<b>111%</b>	<b>56%</b>
Adjusted direct support costs	1,818,113	2,261,614	2,261,614	1,576,475	100%	70%	6,174,451	6,920,096	5,903,845	4,322,866	85%	73%
Indirect support costs	1,198,472	1,372,374	1,083,755	1,083,755	79%	100%	3,066,371	5,352,575	5,379,184	5,379,184	100%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,319,500</b>	<b>22,485,823</b>	<b>22,961,820</b>	<b>16,761,577</b>	<b>102%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>50,241,310</b>	<b>87,921,370</b>	<b>95,376,295</b>	<b>56,702,477</b>	<b>108%</b>	<b>59%</b>

Source: T-ICSP and CSP Documents, Budget Revisions 02 (T-ICSP) and 05 (CSP). For Allocated Resources the source is ACR 2018 (T-ICSP) and ACR1\_Standard Country Report (CSP), extracted from Integrated Road Map (IRM) Analytics on 01.02.2023.

## Food, cash-based transfer, commodity voucher and beneficiary data

36. Figure 7 shows the WFP distribution of food, vouchers and cash. The values of vouchers and cash increased in response to the pandemic. In 2021, just over a quarter of the planned vouchers were distributed, and 92 percent of the planned cash.<sup>77</sup> The quantity of in-kind commodities, both distributed and planned, declined from 2018 to 2022. The decline in the quantity of food was due to: (1) the transition of school feeding to the Government; (2) COVID-19 school closures; and (3) conversion from in-kind to home-grown school feeding (hence the increase in cash and value vouchers in 2020 and 2021).

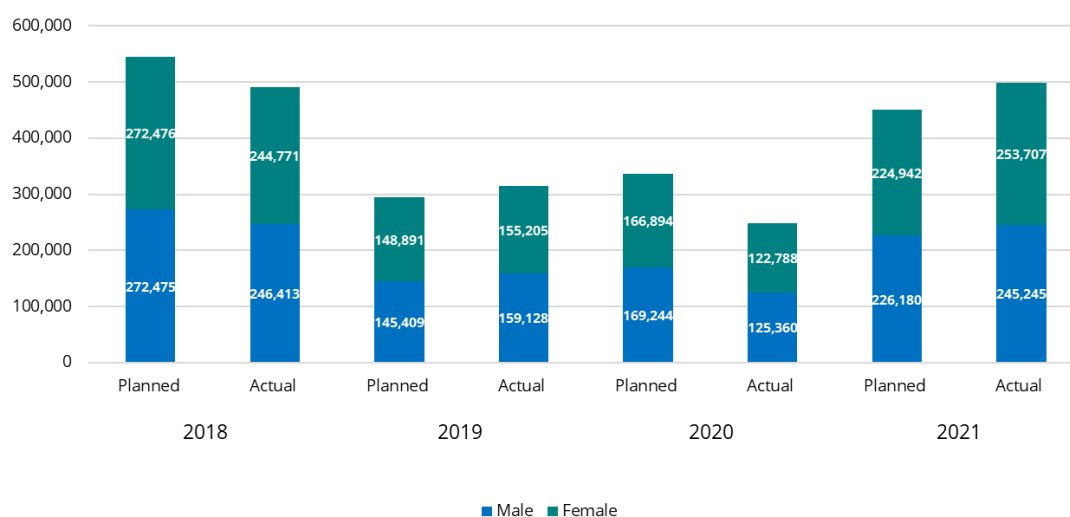
**Figure 7. Total food, cash and vouchers planned and distributed by year (T-ICSP and CSP)**



Source: CM-R014\_Food\_and\_CBT\_v2.0. Data extracted on 09.09.2022.

37. Figure 8 shows that, in 2018, 90 percent of the planned beneficiaries were reached under the T-ICSP. In subsequent years, under the CSP, the number of beneficiaries planned did not reach the levels of 2018, but increased year-on-year from 294,300 in 2019 to 451,121 in 2021. The biggest gap between planned and actual beneficiaries occurred in 2020 when only 74 percent of planned beneficiaries were reached. This shortfall was due to the pandemic outbreak which imposed school closures and was one of the key constraints to the CSP, as discussed under sub-question 3.2. There are no substantial differences in the numbers of male and female beneficiaries.

**Figure 8. Planned and actual beneficiaries by gender (T-ICSP and CSP)**

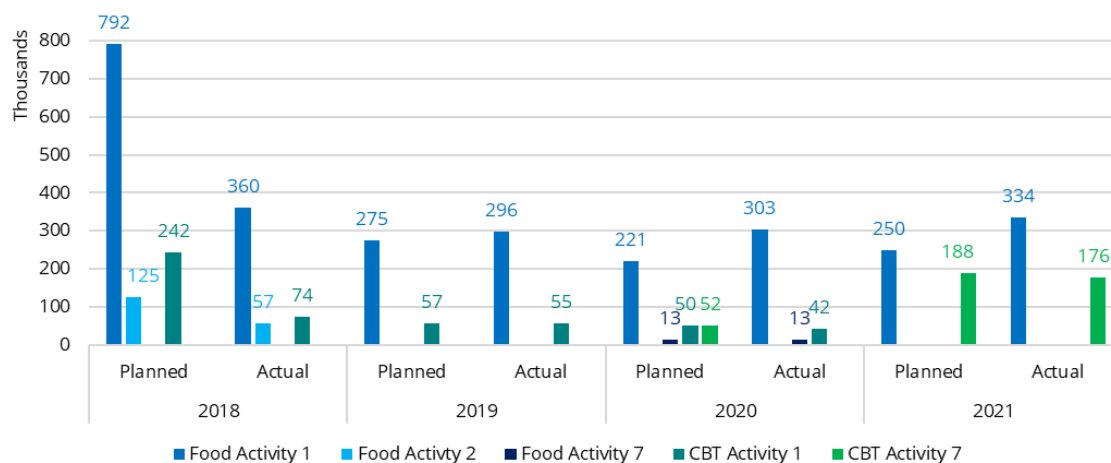


Source: CM-R001b\_-\_Annual\_Country\_Beneficiaries\_(CSP)\_v1.4\_16.05.2022.

<sup>77</sup> With the introduction of CBT to the portfolio, the country office changed the way it reported on HGFS. According to WFP guidelines, this was considered as CBT but cash was used by schools for the purchase of commodities to make the school meals. Hence, in 2021, the cash to schools for HGFS was considered as "voucher". Specifically, following "WFP guidance for the provision of meals through indirect cash transfer", indirect transfers to beneficiaries via transfer agents – such as for HGFS – were to be registered in COMET as commodity vouchers.

38. The number of beneficiaries reached by in-kind assistance under Activity 1 decreased by 18 percent from T-ICSP to CSP implementation (from 2018 to 2019) (see Figure 99). However, the number of actual beneficiaries receiving commodities slightly increased in 2020 (+2 percent) and 2021 (+10 percent). Following decreasing levels of cash-based transfer delivery under Activity 1 from 2018 to 2020 (-44 percent), the number of beneficiaries receiving cash-based transfers increased significantly in 2021 due to the introduction of Activity 7, “Provide nutrition-sensitive food-/cash-based assistance to crisis-affected populations to save lives and recover livelihoods”.

**Figure 9. Actual and planned beneficiaries by transfer modality and activity (T-ICSP and CSP)**



Source: CM-R002b, Annual Beneficiaries by Strategic Outcome, Activity and Modality\_(CSP)\_v1.1\_08.11.2022.

## 1.4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Methodological approach

39. The evaluation was framed around four key evaluation questions and 15 sub-questions (see the evaluation matrix - Annex 5), which were contextualized for Cambodia. The evaluation questions are common to all CSPEs and broadly cover relevance and coherence (EQ1), effectiveness and sustainability (EQ2), efficiency (EQ3) and factors explaining performance (EQ4):

- EQ1: To what extent was the T-ICSP and is the CSP evidence based and strategically focused on the national needs and priorities in Cambodia, as well as on the comparative advantage of WFP?
- EQ2: What is the extent and quality of WFP’s specific contribution to the CSP strategic outcomes in Cambodia?
- EQ3: To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to the CSP outputs and strategic outcomes?
- EQ4: What are the factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected in the T-ICSP and current CSP?

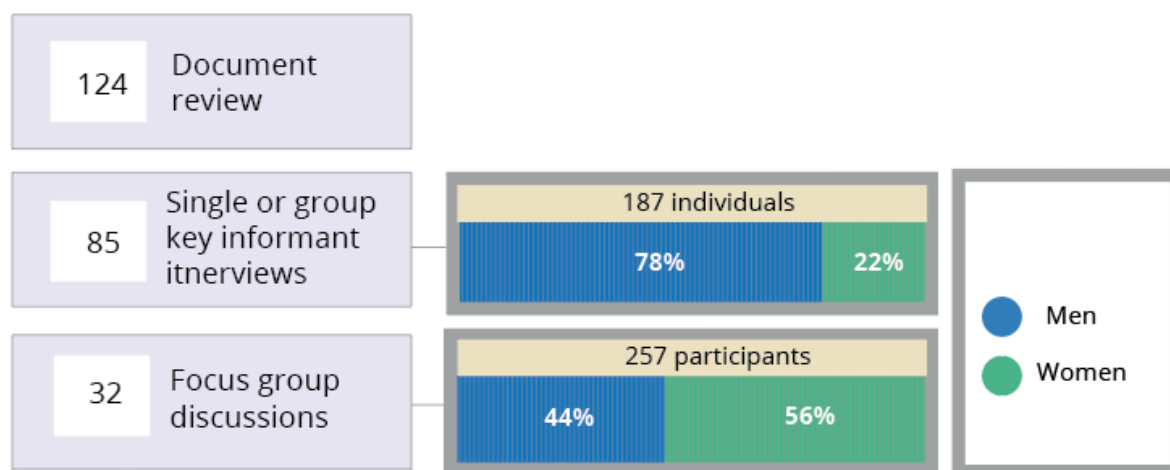
40. The evaluation was conducted as a theory-based evaluation, commencing with the reconstructed and validated theory of change (ToC) (see Annex 4). The evaluation team used a mix of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to gather evidence to test and interrogate the theory of change and develop a contextualized picture of WFP performance and the contribution of the CSP. The cut-off point for quantitative data was the end of data collection (9 September, 2022); financial data were updated to the end of 2022 due to a grant of USD 21 million received by the country office in mid-September.

41. The evaluation was gender and human rights responsive. It mainstreamed protection, accountability to affected populations (AAP), gender and broader inclusion issues (such as disability) in its methodology, as detailed in Annex 3. This included ensuring that samples were geographically representative, and that participants and data collection methods took account of all key groups, particularly women. Data were

collected in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang, Pursat, and Kampong Thom based on the document review and discussions during the inception phase.

42. Data were collected according to Figure 10 (see also Annexes 6 and 7 for field mission agenda and data collection tool). Documents reviewed ranged from internal and public WFP reports to national policies and frameworks and related evaluative studies and reports (see Bibliography in Annex 12).

**Figure 10. Data collection tools**



Source: Elaboration of the evaluation team.

### Analysis and validation process

43. The evidence base for the evaluation is structured according to an evaluation matrix (see Annex 5), disaggregated by each evaluation question and evaluation sub-question, with definition of indicators and data sources. The qualitative and quantitative data collected were collated in a comprehensive evidence database, with data organized according to the evaluation matrix. Evidence for each of the evaluation sub-questions was developed on the basis of data from multiple sources and methods. The evaluation team conducted an exit debriefing with the country office at the end of the data collection; the internal reference group was debriefed on the preliminary findings. Two internal and external stakeholder workshops were organized to refine and contextualize the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations.

### Risks and limitations

44. A summary of the limitations that affected the analytical approach is included here; a more extensive discussion is found in Annex 3 – evaluation methodology. Only validated findings are presented in the report (see Figure 11).



**Figure 11. Summary of the main risks, limitations and mitigating measures**

<b>RISK AND LIMITATION</b>	<b>Availability of key stakeholders</b> within the timeframe of the scheduled field mission	<b>Institutional memory</b> of former WFP staff	<b>COVID-19 restrictions</b> and feasibility to hold meetings and other evaluation activities in country	<b>Logistics and coordination</b> of interviews, in particular with the local authorities
<b>MITIGATION MEASURE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CO focal points for interviews were appointed in Phnom Penh and for provincial level fieldwork, making the scheduling of interview efficient</li> <li>Daily meetings between the evaluation team and the CO focal points to resolve issues arising</li> <li>Interviewees were conducted remotely if stakeholders were not available for in-person interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews were conducted with former staff of Cambodia CO as relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The evaluation team adhered to the COVID-19 preventive measure wearing mask during interviews</li> <li>Interviews were conducted online where interviewees had been exposed to COVID-19.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Cambodia CO provided support in the planning and implementation of the data collection</li> <li>Logistics were covered entirely by the evaluation team with the use of tuk-tuks in Phnom Penh and ET-hired vehicles and translators for the province fieldwork.</li> </ul>
<b>RISK AND LIMITATION</b>	<b>Overlapping of the CSPE</b> across different WFP Strategic Plans, Strategic Objectives and Strategic Results.	<b>Availability of evidence</b> across all SOs	<b>Inconsistency and gaps in reporting outcome and output indicators</b> , including cross cutting and discrepancies between COMET data and ACR data	<b>Adjustments in the evaluation matrix</b>
<b>RISK AND LIMITATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSP performance is mainly based on the Strategic Plan against which the CSP was developed (2017-2021)</li> <li>The ToC highlights both the 2017-2021 Strategic Result (SR) linked to SO and links to the immediate and intermediate outcomes as presented in the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of the secondary evidence has been maximized</li> <li>In light of the imbalance of data and evidence available for SO1 compared to SOs 2-6 for both primary data sources (KIIs and FGDs) and secondary data sources (document review), the evaluation team ensured that all available information and collated data for SOs2-6 is presented in the findings section</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An in-depth quantitative review of the output and outcome results against indicators, including gaps and challenges, has been conducted and is presented both under EQ2.1, complemented by qualitative information and in Annexes 3 and 8.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elements of the cost-effectiveness analysis have been included in the cost – efficiency analysis sub-question as both are linked.</li> <li>Sub-question 4.5, it is not fully covered in the analysis as the evaluation team found no additional factors that affected the CSP performance that have not already been discussed under EQ 1.1 to EQ 4.4.</li> </ul>

Source: Elaboration of the evaluation team.

## Ethical considerations

45. The evaluation was consistent with WFP guidelines and with the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines, including for the use of all data, and maintaining confidentiality for all respondents. Verbal informed consent was obtained from respondents, who were provided with a clear overview of the purpose of this evaluation.

46. The evaluation team remained independent and impartial throughout the process. The evaluation ensured cultural sensitivity; two national evaluators participated alongside international evaluation experts in country-level key informant interviews (KIIs), including with government stakeholders. This ensured that respectful protocols were followed and enabled respondents to express themselves in Khmer if preferred. The evaluation team was supported by Cambodian interpreters in the field.

47. This evaluation report has undergone a thorough quality assurance process within the evaluation team with inputs from internal and external quality advisors and by the Office of Evaluation. The process has followed the Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (CEQAS) and relevant guidance materials, including the Guidance for Process and Contents for CSPEs.

# Evaluation findings

48. The findings section is organized around the evaluation matrix and provides the responses to each of the evaluation sub-questions. For each sub-question, lines of inquiry were tested and are discussed.

## 2.1. EQ.1: TO WHAT EXTENT WERE THE T-ICSP AND THE CSP EVIDENCE-BASED AND STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED ON THE NATIONAL NEEDS AND PRIORITIES IN CAMBODIA, AS WELL AS ON THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF WFP?

49. The reorientation of the CSP to the three pillars of social protection, integrated risk management and food security and nutrition (see paragraph 32 and Figure 5), was driven by the need to provide more coherence across the strategic outcomes.<sup>78</sup> The reorientation, as paragraph 32 explains, has served as the framing lens for the CSP since 2021. The findings below are therefore presented per pillar whenever relevant:

- **Pillar 1. Social protection**
- **Pillar 2. Integrated risk management**
- **Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition**

### Sub-question 1.1: To what extent was the T-ICSP, and is the current CSP, informed by existing evidence on the needs of the Cambodian people, including the most vulnerable, with regard to hunger challenges, food security and nutrition, to ensure relevance at the design stage?

**Finding 1. The evaluation finds that CSP design utilized the evidence available at the time to address the needs of the most vulnerable people of Cambodia.**

50. The T-ICSP<sup>79</sup> was intended and implemented as a short-term bridge between the previous country programme (CP 200202) and the new CSP. This allowed for previous activities to continue while a full evidence-based CSP for 2019-2023 was developed with the Government and other partners.<sup>80</sup> The subsequent CSP changed the emphasis of the work from downstream modalities focused on direct implementation towards more of a focus on upstream country capacity strengthening (CCS) and support<sup>81</sup> to national and subnational entities and systems in the pursuit of SDG 2.

51. The CSP concept note provided justification for the proposed activities and strategic outcomes, building on lessons learned and confirming a shift from direct implementation to capacity strengthening.<sup>82</sup> The CSP design was based on various assessments and context analyses and on the historical and mandate-driven comparative advantage of WFP within Cambodia. The 2018 nutrition appraisal document<sup>83</sup> brought together evidence from CP 200202, the mid-term and the strategic review of the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2014-2018, government strategies and outcomes from the country office staff retreat in 2018 to consider what was necessary for WFP to remain relevant through 2023 and beyond. Country capacity strengthening, together with the continuation of the school feeding programme – particularly the overall transition to the government-owned home-grown school feeding – featured heavily in this assessment.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> WFP respondents at country office level – current and past staff; and see WFP. CSP Reorientation; WFP. 2020. Cambodia COVID-19 response; and Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>79</sup> WFP. Cambodia Transitional Interim CSP (2018).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. and WFP. Cambodia Standard Project Report 2017. 2018. And WFP Cambodia country and regional bureau respondents.

<sup>81</sup> WFP. 2018. Cambodia Standard Project Report 2017.

<sup>82</sup> WFP. 2018. Concept note for Cambodia CSP (2019–2023).

<sup>83</sup> WFP. 2018. WFP Cambodia – Preparation of CSP. Appraisal Nutrition.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

52. Former and current WFP staff members indicated to the evaluation team<sup>85</sup> that the first CSP design prepared in 2017 reflected 'business as usual' programming rather than the anticipated shift to an upstream focus. For this reason, it was not approved and the one-year T-ICSP was instead put in place for 2018.

53. The T-ICSP was not intended to be informed by a full contextual analysis but rather on an understanding that, as a temporary interim plan, it would continue previous activities while the evidence-based CSP was developed.<sup>86</sup>

## Pillar 1. Social protection

### **Finding 2. The school feeding programme in Cambodia was based on identified needs and targets the needs of children in vulnerable areas.**

54. The school feeding programme is a significant component of the CSP and corresponds with the CSP emphasis on social protection. It is aligned with the Government's understanding of school feeding as a social assistance tool. It was designed based on the identified needs of children in vulnerable areas and provided continuity to the programme WFP has been implementing in Cambodia since 1999.

55. By design, the school feeding programme did not target individuals but was provided to all children in selected schools, to avoid stigma and reduce costs. Geographical targeting used between 2004 and 2012 based on poverty, education and food security criteria was revalidated in the preparation of the CSP in 2018, consistent with the Government's plan for the national programme.

56. However, there are other areas that are also vulnerable and, in addition to that, COVID-19 and other external events led to a more recent change in vulnerabilities – for example, areas dependent on tourism experienced increased poverty during the periods of lockdown.<sup>87</sup> Workers in the garment and construction sectors were similarly affected.<sup>88</sup> This led WFP and its partners – including the Government of Cambodia – to consider the expansion of the programme.<sup>89</sup>

57. The Government plans to take responsibility for schools where capacity and infrastructure were developed by WFP before it considers plans for expansion. Any changes in target schools will have cost implications due to the investment already made in the capacity building of schools and districts.<sup>90</sup> Nonetheless, the transition strategy approved by the Government<sup>91</sup> aims to expand the home-grown school feeding programme to new areas, based on existing and changing vulnerabilities in the future.<sup>92</sup>

### **Finding 3. WFP in Cambodia was able to rapidly resume direct assistance to vulnerable populations in response to the emergencies related to the 2020 floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the fact that such assistance had not been provided for in the design of the CSP.**

58. Though constituting a small proportion of the overall budget and programme at USD 500,000 (1 percent of the CSP budget in the initial budget revision (BR03) in October 2020, increasing to 8 percent of the total CSP budget in the latest BR04 in May 2021), Activity 7 of SO6 provided a valuable and context-specific response to the 2020 floods and the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 through provision of food and cash-based transfers to crisis-affected populations.

59. WFP repurposed activities to help address the immediate effects of the pandemic in line with national priorities and changing circumstances, in coordination with United Nations agencies, through

<sup>85</sup> WFP respondents at country office level – current and past staff.

<sup>86</sup> WFP. Cambodia Transitional Interim CSP. 2018; WFP. Cambodia Standard Project Report 2018; WFP Cambodia country office and regional bureau respondents.

<sup>87</sup> WFP, government, and other United Nations agency respondents (WFP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) and UNICEF) to COVID-19.

<sup>88</sup> COVID-19. Socioeconomic assessment. July 2021.

<sup>89</sup> Multiple respondents from WFP and government provincial and district staff and school staff. In addition, see multiple documents including Artival Research & Evaluation 2022. final report; Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023. and Konterra Group. MGD Mid-Term Activity Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant (FFE-442-2019-013-00) 01nov19-30oct23.

<sup>90</sup> WFP respondents.

<sup>91</sup> MoEYS and WFP. 2022. Joint Transition Strategy Towards a Nationally Owned HGSFP.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

programme criticality analysis and planning for the joint COVID-19 Social Economic Response Plan. The assistance was part of a broader humanitarian relief effort led by the Government (coordinated through the National Committee for Disaster Management) in partnership with the Humanitarian Response Forum. The introduction of SO6 demonstrates the capacity of WFP Cambodia to identify and respond to a gap in addressing emergency-specific needs within the CSP.

## Pillar 2. Integrated risk management

**Finding 4. The CSP design corresponds well to the vulnerability of Cambodia to climate change and includes activities designed to address the needs of those most vulnerable to climate-related shocks.**

60. WFP had increasingly implemented activities focused on disaster risk reduction (DRR) under the former country programme. The CSP builds on those activities with a focus on climate change: SO2 provided community-level support for climate shocks while SO3 provided institutional-level support. Activities include the climate risk monitoring system – Platform for Real-time Impact and Situation Monitoring (PRISM), contingency planning and simulation exercises, and capacity strengthening support to institutions, such as the Cambodia’s National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) and its subnational committees.

61. WFP support also aligns with the Government’s focus on social protection (see EQ1.2) and the current UNDAF (see EQ1.3). Under strategic outcomes 2 and 3, WFP strengthened strategic positioning in this area of shock-responsiveness, providing support at the community level and to national and subnational institutions. Under SO3, WFP also supports the Government in developing a shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) framework, which has been particularly relevant to the post-COVID-19 context (see EQ2.1).<sup>93</sup>

**Finding 5. There is limited demand for the supply chain services provided by WFP in a context where more United Nations agencies and development partners are moving away from direct implementation in favour of technical assistance. The temporary increase in demand for warehousing during the COVID-19 pandemic is not expected to continue.**

62. SO5 in the CSP is intended to ensure that WFP can utilize supply chain expertise to address inefficiencies in food and non-food supply chains across the United Nations system, but its indicators only measure warehousing services provided by WFP to other United Nations agencies. CSP documentation provides no evidence of the need for this or broader supply chain services.<sup>94</sup>

63. This strategic outcome is largely operationally focused, with limited strategic intent. According to WFP stakeholders, its rationale for inclusion within the CSP design was largely based on a long history of significant WFP logistics and warehousing investment in Cambodia primarily due to the school feeding programme.<sup>95</sup> Although it is a chargeable activity, there was limited demand for warehousing in a context where more United Nations agencies and development partners were moving towards technical assistance instead of direct implementation. This was also confirmed by the respondents to this evaluation.<sup>96</sup>

64. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily increased demand, but even at its height, demand was limited and this is not expected to continue in future.<sup>97</sup> A 2021 audit highlighted that only 29 percent of the total warehousing space was utilized up to February 2021,<sup>98</sup> suggesting limited demand for these services.

## Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition

**Finding 6. WFP support implemented under SO4, including technical assistance to the Government and coordination through Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) and United Nations Nutrition (UNN), are**

<sup>93</sup>The increased national focus on social protection since COVID-19 was highlighted during the inception phase by WFP and Government respondents. See also: WFP. CSP Reorientation. WFP. 2020. Cambodia COVID-19 response.

<sup>94</sup>WFP. Cambodia CSP (2019-2023).

<sup>95</sup>WFP respondents.

<sup>96</sup>WFP, other United Nations agency, and NGO respondents.

<sup>97</sup>WFP respondents and see WFP. 2020. Cambodia CSP – COVID-19 adjustments & response.

<sup>98</sup>WFP. 2021. Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Cambodia. Office of the Inspector General Internal Audit Report AR/21/12.

**relevant to the needs in Cambodia. However, the evaluation found that its relevance is greatest as a modality of working across strategic outcomes rather than as a specific activity, which is particularly evident for the work conducted by the vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) unit.**

65. Technical assistance (TA) to the Government and coordination through SUN and UN Nutrition (UNN) are relevant to nutritional needs in Cambodia as outlined in government strategies such as the second NSFSN 2019-2023 (see sub-question EQ1.2).

66. Activity 4 relates to the development and integration of digital information management (IM) systems and technical assistance in their use. In practice, the approach is applied across the full portfolio, within activities providing technical assistance to the Government – for example, within social protection, poverty reduction, and climate adaptation engagement. Similarly, support for digitalizing information management systems is relevant not just for SO4, but across all strategic outcomes. Its relevance is greatest as a modality of working rather than as a specific activity for food security and nutrition only. This appears to be a design flaw that was largely sidestepped – in a beneficial and sensible manner – by a more pragmatic approach to implementation.<sup>99</sup>

67. Activity 5 related to the provision of technical assistance, coordination for food security, nutrition, social protection and vulnerability analysis and mapping; it is an overarching, relevant activity for WFP, although, as with Activity 4, no justification was provided at the design phase for placing vulnerability analysis and mapping under this strategic outcome rather than it being a function that applies to all strategic outcomes.<sup>100</sup>

68. The nutrition appraisal conducted in 2018<sup>101</sup> provides a suggestion for WFP strategic orientation based on its comparative advantages within the thematic areas of knowledge management and evidence generation, social behaviour change communication, food fortification, technical assistance and coordination assistance. It is unclear how all these areas became articulated under Activity 4 and Activity 5. For example, these activities incorporate knowledge management, evidence generation and technical assistance but it is less visible how food fortification, coordination assistance and social behaviour change communication are integrated into the activities.

#### **Sub-question 1.2: To what extent was the T-ICSP and is the current CSP aligned to national policies and plans and to the SDGs?**

**Finding 7. WFP support in Cambodia is directly aligned with government priorities, which include an increased focus on social protection following COVID-19. Alignment with SDGs 2 and 17 is explicit within T-ICSP and CSP design and links with the explicit reference to SDGs in government policies and plans.**

69. The CSP shows clear alignment with government frameworks, contributing to SDG 2.1, SDG 2.4, SDG 17.9 and SDG 17.6.<sup>102</sup> These include the current overarching Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase IV (2004-present),<sup>103</sup> which sets out the socioeconomic policy agenda of the Government and is operationalized in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019–2023. The Rectangular Strategy Phase IV places acceleration of reform at its core, around four priority areas: i) human resource development; ii) economic diversification; iii) promotion of private sector development and employment; and iv) inclusive and sustainable development. The upstream approach of WFP links to the areas of human resource development and sustainable development. The alignment of each strategic outcome to government policies is presented in Table 2.

<sup>99</sup> There is no reference in CSP design documents as to why this was developed as a specific activity under SO4 rather than as a modality of working across all SOs.

<sup>100</sup> Initially VAM was located only under SO4 / Activity 5. With the reorientation of the CSP to the three pillars, and the newly created country office structure, VAM is now a cross-cutting activity, as is monitoring and evaluation (M&E) (originally placed under SO1) under a newly created research assessment and monitoring (RAM) unit.

<sup>101</sup> WFP. 2018. WFP Cambodia – Preparation of CSP Appraisal Nutrition.

<sup>102</sup> WFP. Cambodia CSP 2019-2023 Line of Sight. 2019.

<sup>103</sup> Government of Cambodia. 2018. Rectangular Strategy “Phase 4” for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency: Building the Foundation toward Realizing the Cambodia Vision 2050. Cambodia: Sixth Legislature of the National Assembly.

70. Prior to the CSP, the T-ICSP (applicable to 2018) was designed to contribute to the achievement of the Government's National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition and the National Strategic Development Plan, covering the period 2014-2018 and contributing to SDG 2.1, SDG 2.4, and SDG 17.9.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> WFP. Cambodia Transitional Interim CSP Line of Sight. 2017.



Table 2. Alignment between the CSP and the main government plans, policies and strategies (2018-2022)

GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES	PILLAR 1: SOCIAL PROTECTION		PILLAR 2: INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT			PILLAR 3: FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION
	SO 1	SO 6	SO2	SO3	SO5	SO4
2018 Rectangular Strategy Phase IV	X		X	X		
2019 National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023	X		X	X		X
The second National Strategy for food security and nutrition 2019-2023	X	X	X	X		X
Fast Track Road Map for Improving Nutrition 2014-2020	X		X	X		X
National Action Plan for the Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia (NAP/ZHC 2016-2025)	X		X	X		X
National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016.2025	X	X				
Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023	X					
Cambodia's Roadmap for Food Systems for Sustainable Development 2030	X		X	X		X
Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of Cambodia			X			
Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP)			X			
NCDM Strategy Framework				X		

Source: Elaboration of the evaluation team.

## Pillar 1. Social protection

71. SO1 is aligned with multiple national strategies and policies, in particular with different aspects of the Rectangular Strategy Phase VI, the National Development Plan 2019-2023, the Second Food Security and Nutrition Strategy 2019-2023, the Fast-Track Road Map for Improving Nutrition 2014-2020, the National Action Plan for Zero Hunger 2016-2025, the Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023, and Cambodia's Road Map for Food Systems for Sustainable Development 2030. These policy documents are all framed around achieving SDG 2 and within the CSP design, SO1 focused on achieving SDG 2 and school feeding.<sup>105</sup> The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 specifically references school feeding as a strategy.

72. SO6 is aligned with the food security and nutrition in disaster management and climate change component of the Second Food Security and Nutrition Strategy 2019-2023 and the emergency response component of the National Social Protection Framework 2016-2025. It was added based on a joint assessment conducted between WFP and NCDM and other partners and aligned with the Government's emergency response as set out in the National Social Protection Framework, and the food security and nutrition in disaster management as articulated in the Second Food Security and Nutrition Strategy.<sup>106</sup>

## Pillar 2. Integrated risk management

73. SO2 is aligned with the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of Cambodia and the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) as well as the Cambodia SDGs.<sup>107</sup> WFP has also aligned well with the increased focus of the Government on social protection, and especially shock-responsive social protection,<sup>108</sup> although this goes beyond the original CSP design. When the CSP was designed, the social protection space in Cambodia was still nascent; the CSP could not have been expected to align with a space that had yet to be developed by the Government, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, since the emergence of an increased focus on SRSP, WFP has facilitated the development of a shock-responsive social protection policy framework, drawing from what it learned from the cash-based transfer programme to inform future schemes.<sup>109</sup> SO2 is linked to SDG 2.4 in the CSP design.

74. Under SO3, WFP worked with the NCDM at national and provincial levels to strengthen government and development partners' disaster response. Activities, such as developing the PRISM platform, piloted in 2016 and officially launched in 2020, and working with the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) on training on geography, cartography, and geographical information systems (GIS) at subnational levels, are aligned with NCDM plans. SO3 is aligned with the five-year NCDM strategy framework<sup>110</sup> and is linked directly to SDG 17.6 in the CSP design.

75. SO5 provided supply chain services to other humanitarian and development actors and is not explicitly aligned with any government policy.

## Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition

76. Under SO4, WFP is aligned with the second NSFSN 2019-2023, which is the overarching policy guidance aimed at ending malnutrition in Cambodia, developed with WFP support and built on recommendations from the mid-term and strategic review of the NSFSN 2014-2018 and on the policy analysis on accelerating progress towards SDG 2. The mid-term review also informed the National Action Plan for Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia 2016-2025, which aims to ensure equitable access to

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<sup>105</sup> The Government produced an analysis specifically of how the second FSN strategy will accelerate progress towards SDG 2: Kingdom of Cambodia. 2019. Accelerating progress towards SDG 2. Policy effectiveness analysis for the Second National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023.

<sup>106</sup> BR03 October 2020; National Social Protection Framework 2016-2025; Second Food Security and Nutrition Strategy 2019-2023.

<sup>107</sup> WFP and government respondents; Kingdom of Cambodia. 2020. Cambodia's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution.

<sup>108</sup> Other United Nations agency, NGO partner, and government respondents. Also see WFP documents detailing SRSP plans such as WFP. 2021. Exploring thresholds for triggering shock-responsive social protection responses in Cambodia; and WFP. 2020. Cambodia CSP – COVID-19 adjustments & response.

<sup>109</sup> WFP. 2021. Exploring thresholds for triggering shock-responsive social protection responses in Cambodia.

<sup>110</sup> WFP and government respondents and WFP. 2021. Exploring thresholds for triggering shock-responsive social protection responses in Cambodia; and WFP. 2021. An Integrated Risk Programming Framework (IRFP) for Asia Pacific.

adequate nutritious and affordable foods. The National Social Protection Policy Framework (2016-2025) and the Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 include school feeding as a strategy component.

77. In the CSP design, SO4 is linked to SDG 17.9 but in practice it has aligned with government policies that link directly to SDG 2, such as the Second National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition. WFP has supported Cambodia specifically with the localization of this strategy at the provincial level, thus also supporting the Government's decentralization process. Further, in 2021 WFP launched the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network, which aligned with the Government Rectangular Strategy priority area of promotion of private sector development.<sup>111</sup> In 2021 WFP supported national consultations, in line with the United Nations Secretary General's Food System Summit Initiative, to define a national road map.

**Sub-question 1.3: To what extent was the T-ICSP, and is the current CSP, coherent and aligned with the wider United Nations, and including appropriate strategic partnerships based on the comparative advantage of WFP in Cambodia?**

**Finding 8. The Cambodia WFP CSP has been well aligned with UNDAF outcomes under areas of WFP comparative advantage on food security and nutrition and combining social protection and integrated risk management within shock-responsive social protection.**

**Table 3. Cambodia United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes**

Cambodia UNDAF 2019-2023 OUTCOME AREAS	Links to WFP CSP SOs
<b>PEOPLE - Outcome 1</b>	
Expanding Social Opportunities	SO1 and SO6 (social protection pillar) SO2 (integrated risk management pillar)
By 2023, women and men in Cambodia, in particular marginalized and vulnerable populations, have their basic (economic and social) needs addressed equitably as they benefit from and utilize expanded quality social services and social protection in a more resilient, fairer and sustainable society	
<b>PROSPERITY - Outcome 2</b>	
Expanding Economic Opportunities	SO1 (through local and regional food aid procurement under the school feeding programme) SO2
By 2023, women and men in Cambodia, in particular the marginalized and vulnerable, benefit from expanded opportunities for decent work and technological innovations; and participate in a growing, more productive and competitive economy, that is also fairer and environmentally sustainable.	
<b>PLANET - Outcome 3</b>	
Supporting Sustainable Living	SO2 and SO3 (integrated risk management pillar) SO4 (FSN pillar)
By 2023, women and men in Cambodia, in particular the marginalized and vulnerable, live in a safer, healthier, more secure and ecologically balanced environment with improved livelihoods, and are resilient to natural and climate change related trends and shocks.	

Source: Evaluation team.

**Pillar 1. Social protection**

78. WFP work in Cambodia, specifically focusing on school feeding, contributed to Results Group 1 (people) led by UNICEF<sup>112</sup> under the current UNDAF. Active WFP contribution towards this results group is recognized and appreciated within the United Nations country team's (UNCT) collaborative efforts. Respondents considered that WFP brought its comparative advantage to collective United Nations efforts in Cambodia on social protection in general and, since COVID-19, on combining social protection and integrated risk management within shock-responsive social protection.<sup>113</sup>

**Pillar 2. Integrated risk management**

79. The comparative advantage of WFP in climate change in Cambodia, developed through its long experience of work at the community level, aligns with Results Group 3 (planet). Collaboration here has

<sup>111</sup> WFP. 2021.ACR.

<sup>112</sup>United Nations Cambodia. 2019. UNDAF 2019-2023.

<sup>113</sup> Other United Nations agency and NGO partner respondents.

aimed at increasing coherence and synergies through the development and rolling out of a climate change strategy concept note. This aligned with WFP comparative advantage, in the area of climate change in Cambodia, as demonstrated by its work under SO2 and SO3. This effort added value within the United Nations system and helped positioned WFP to adopt a future leadership role in climate change interventions.

80. As part of the UNDAF's identified accelerators to assist in achieving the outcome objectives, WFP chaired the Social Protection Accelerator and supported the National Social Protection Council (NSPC) in developing the shock-responsive social protection framework.<sup>114</sup>

81. In the absence of OCHA presence in Cambodia as a non-emergency country, since 2011 WFP has also been leading the Humanitarian Response Forum in Cambodia (HRF).<sup>115</sup> The HRF was established to facilitate increased coordination across development partners to respond to natural disasters, namely floods and drought.<sup>116</sup>

### **Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition**

82. Under Results Group 3, WFP co-chaired with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) the nutrition accelerator, which focused on joint advocacy and analytics and promoted the comparative advantage of WFP on food security and nutrition. WFP also leveraged global movements, such as the 2021 Food Systems Summit to further promote the agenda of nutrition in Cambodia. WFP has significantly promoted food security and nutrition with the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) and at the highest political levels.<sup>117</sup> Additionally, WFP has implemented activities related to food security and nutrition that were not explicitly articulated within the CSP SO4 (activities 4 and 5), as noted under Finding 6, but that have resonated well across the United Nations system in Cambodia.<sup>118</sup>

83. The 2016-2018 UNDAF had three primary outcomes, aiming at: promoting inclusion of youth, women and vulnerable groups in equitable, sustainable growth (Outcome 1); increased access for these groups to social protection (Outcome 2); and greater transparency and accountability within the Government, with improved democracy and human rights (Outcome 3).<sup>119</sup> Food security and nutrition are covered under the UNDAF outcomes 1 and 2. The T-ICSP was designed to address root causes of food insecurity through SO1 and SO3 and to enhance resilience through SO2 and SO4. These all aligned with UNDAF 2016-2018 outcomes 1 and 2.<sup>120</sup>

84. The new UNSDCF, expected to be developed in the last quarter of 2022, will have a focus on climate change, social development, inclusive economic development and social transformation.<sup>121</sup> WFP is a strong member of UNCT in Cambodia<sup>122</sup> and is expected to work in close alignment with these priorities. All the expected focuses of the new UNSDCF explicitly link to WFP current activities across SO2 and SO3 (climate change), SO1 (human capital) and SO4 (food security and nutrition, linked to both development and digitalization) and potentially provide a framing for those activities under the three pillars. In addition, WFP has a number of ongoing activities related to climate change – particularly under SO2 and SO3, as well as

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<sup>114</sup> WFP, other United Nations agency and NGO respondents.

<sup>115</sup> The forum is co-chaired by WFP and with a NGO (DanChurchAid (DCA).

<sup>116</sup> Evidence and analysis with regard to the effectiveness of the HRF is under EQ2.4.

<sup>117</sup> Other United Nations agency respondents; Kingdom of Cambodia. National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025. 2016; WFP. Cambodia CSP – COVID-19 adjustments & response. 2020; Council for Agriculture and Royal Development in cooperation with the Technical Working Group for Social Protection and Food Security and Nutrition. Statement on Food Security and Nutrition during the COVID-19 Pandemic. 2020; and Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>118</sup> Other United Nations agency respondents and see Kingdom of Cambodia. 2016. National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025; WFP. 2020. Cambodia CSP – COVID-19 adjustments & response; and Council for Agriculture and Royal Development in cooperation with the Technical Working Group for Social Protection and Food Security and Nutrition. 2020. Statement on Food Security and Nutrition during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

<sup>119</sup> United Nations in Cambodia. 2015. UNDAF 2016-2018.

<sup>120</sup> WFP. 2017. Cambodia T-ICSP (2018).

<sup>121</sup> WFP and other United Nations agency respondents. However, there is no documentary evidence to confirm the expected direction of the new UNSDCF.

<sup>122</sup> Other United Nations agencies and NGO partner respondents.

through vulnerability analysis and mapping products under SO4, and research for SRSP, which was based on emergency distribution under SO6.

**Sub-question 1.4: To what extent has WFP's strategic positioning remained relevant throughout the implementation of the T-ICSP and the CSP, considering the changing context, national capacities and needs, in particular in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?**

**Finding 9. Although emergency response was not built into the design of the CSP, the ability and flexibility of WFP to adapt to the evolving local context and needs during CSP implementation confirmed the continued relevance of the chosen strategies and interventions.**

85. As a one-year bridging plan, there were no adaptations under the T-ICSP. During the CSP implementation, adaptations did not occur until after COVID-19. While the 2019 Humanitarian Response Forum (HRF) in Cambodia (under the leadership of WFP) produced situation reports on various disasters, including the 2019 flooding along the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake region, no adaptations were needed for SO1 school feeding or strategic outcomes 2-5 activities.

86. Emergency response was not built in to the CSP design, and there was no budget line for response activities. However, when the floods and COVID-19 occurred in 2020, WFP showed agility and capacity for adaptation in successfully augmenting national response efforts to respond to the emergencies, including through the use of budget revisions.<sup>123</sup>

**Finding 10. There are both good practice examples and some challenges regarding how WFP has adapted to changing needs, most specifically those triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the pandemic did offer an opportunity to have a broader reflection on the whole CSP portfolio. In particular, WFP was able to rapidly resume direct assistance and provided a valuable and context-specific response to the 2020 floods and the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 through the provision of food and cash-based transfers to crisis-affected populations and repurposed the on-site school feeding programme to take-home rations (THR) as a social assistance measure in view of the school closures.**

87. The Cambodia Common Country Analysis in 2021 highlighted the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on Cambodia, and how the pandemic reversed some development gains of the last few years and is expected to have long-lasting impacts on the economy.<sup>124</sup> WFP Cambodia responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in line with the overall United Nations response by recognizing risks and unique opportunities linked to the added value of WFP and its comparative advantage, particularly within social protection.

88. COVID-19 prompted WFP to reflect internally and was a driver for reflection and reorientation for a clearer overall CSP narrative, reconsidering its positioning as part of the increased government focus on social protection. This was also confirmed by the respondents to this evaluation.<sup>125</sup> The strategic outcomes were adapted for the pandemic's impact and the longer-term consequences. The strategies necessary to shift the programme activities have also been rearranged. The pandemic provided a natural opportunity to have a broader reflection on the whole CSP portfolio.<sup>126</sup>

### **Pillar 1. Social protection**

89. SO1 had the most visible adaptation to COVID-19, repurposing the on-site school feeding programme to take-home rations,<sup>127</sup> using the national targeting system of identifying poor households (IDPoor) to identify the most vulnerable households. This allowed the funding for the school feeding programme to be

<sup>123</sup> WFP. BR03, October 2020.

<sup>124</sup> United Nations. 2021. Common Country Analysis.

<sup>125</sup> WFP respondent.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. See also WFP. 2020. WFP's COVID-19 Response in Cambodia; and WFP. 2020. CSP Reorientation.

<sup>127</sup> WFP. 2021. School Feeding amidst a pandemic: preparing for the new normal in Asia and the Pacific; WFP. 2020. Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau Implementation Plan 2021-2025; WFP. 2020. WFP's COVID-19 Response in Cambodia; and WFP. 2020. Cambodia CSP – COVID-19 adjustments & response. Other United Nations agency, NGO partner, and government respondents and focus group discussion (FGD) participants.

utilized for social protection purposes even although the on-site school feeding programme could not continue due to school closures at the time.

90. COVID-19 affected the planned handover of some schools in 2020 and 2021 (see EQ2.1), which impacted the overall transition of the school feeding programme process; government funding and focus were fully occupied by the pandemic response, making it unable to take over additional schools.<sup>128</sup> Both the WFP programme and the national programme (for schools that had already been handed over) did shift to the same modality of take-home rations and this was seen as a positive side of government ownership as it involved continuing with the school feeding programme through take-home rations rather than re-allocating all funds to the COVID-19 response.<sup>129</sup> While the shift to take-home rations was intended as a social assistance measure, there are ongoing attempts by WFP to assess whether take-home rations also contributed to educational outcomes during school closure – such as by keeping the connection between the school and the parents in order to promote distance learning.<sup>130</sup>

91. Regarding the local procurement aspect of school feeding, the 2022 draft local and regional food aid procurement (LRP) evaluation<sup>131</sup> found that repurposing the cash-based transfer component of the LRP grant was relevant to the situation and to the government response to COVID-19. This included using cash transfers to schools to procure local food supplies for take-home rations, which accounted for 50 percent of the LRP budget.<sup>132</sup> This was also confirmed by respondents to this evaluation,<sup>133</sup> who found that these adjustments during COVID-19 were relevant both to the context and the needs of the population and to the Government's response.<sup>134</sup> WFP also expanded technical assistance to the Government during COVID-19, which included adapting the national school feeding programme to take-home rations and developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for safe school meals resumption.<sup>135</sup>

92. Throughout the period of the T-ICSP (2018) and the beginning of the CSP (2019) there was limited flexibility within the strategic outcomes, as they were articulated, for adaptation to small-scale shocks such as localized flooding. Thus, when widespread flooding occurred in October 2020, SO6, which focuses on crisis response, was added to support the Government in its response to multiple crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

93. There was less evidence from respondents and document review regarding the adaptations made to other strategic outcomes in response to COVID-19 and the evidence available is presented below.

## **Pillar 2. Integrated risk management**

94. Under SO2, WFP continued to work with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), and the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDDS) and its subnational departments. As referenced above, during the implementation of the CSP – and significantly driven by COVID-19 – SO2 was amended to reflect an enhanced focus on disaster risk management rather than food production and transformation. This resulted in the construction of safe evacuation centres to enhance community risk reduction as well as community planning and assets for climate change adaptation.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> MoEYS and WFP. 2022. Joint Transition Strategy Towards a Nationally Owned HGSFP.

<sup>129</sup> WFP, Government, NGO, and other United Nations agency respondents and WFP. 2020. CSP Reorientation. WFP Cambodia COVID-19 response.

<sup>130</sup> WFP, Government, NGO, and other United Nations agency respondents. WFP has had two decentralized evaluations on the SFP (one on the McGovern Dole grant and one on the LRP) since COVID-19 and neither highlight any clear evidence of the outcome results of the shift to THR. The regional report on school feeding during the pandemic (WFP. School feeding amidst a pandemic: preparing for the new normal in Asia and the Pacific. 2021) also confirmed the rationale for the shift but did not provide evidence for results of that shift.

<sup>131</sup> WFP. 2022. Mid-Term Activity Evaluation USDA LRP-442-2019-011-00 1 Nov 2019-30 Sep 2023.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Government, NGO, other United Nations agencies, and beneficiaries.

<sup>134</sup> WFP, government, NGO, and other United Nations agency respondents and FGD participants.

<sup>135</sup> WFP respondents.

<sup>136</sup> WFP respondents, FGD participants. See also: WFP. 2020. WFP's COVID-19 Response in Cambodia; WFP. 2020. CSP Reorientation; and WFP. 2020. Cambodia CSP – COVID-19 adjustments & response.



95. SO3 originally focused on climate-related disasters, specifically floods and droughts, but was expanded to include the COVID-19 pandemic and its related socioeconomic impacts, with WFP conducting: i) flood simulation exercises for provincial contingency plans to see how newly poor households could be rapidly identified and assisted; and ii) field simulation exercises to see how social distancing could be practiced in safe evacuation shelters during floods.<sup>137</sup>

96. For SO5, several development partners needed increased warehousing in order to respond to COVID-19, procuring more increased tonnage of materials and goods, such as UNICEF procuring more educational and school cleaning materials, Global Fund procuring more mosquito nets and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) working with the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) to procure more fertilizer and nets.<sup>138</sup> This made SO5 more relevant for a short time. However, WFP warehousing capacity was never fully utilized, and the demand is unlikely to change in the long term (see EQ2.1).

### Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition

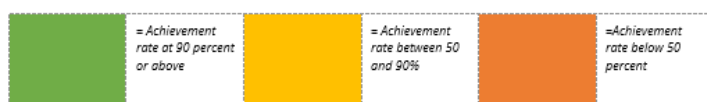
97. For SO 4, Limited evidence exists on how WFP adapted its activities (Activity 4 and Activity 5\_ during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, joint reports and studies published by WFP jointly with other actors, such as the Statement on Food Security and Nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic, shed light on specific issues of concern.<sup>139</sup> For example, the FAO, UNICEF, WFP, and World Health Organization (WHO) joint statement on nutrition in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific highlighted the potential for COVID-19 to worsen the existing malnutrition crisis and aggravate the situation, with 10.5 million children under 5 already suffering from wasting at the beginning of the pandemic, and 78 million experiencing stunting.<sup>140</sup>

## 2.2. EQ.2: WHAT IS THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF WFP'S SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOMES IN CAMBODIA?

### Sub-question 2.1: To what extent did WFP activities and outputs contribute to the expected outcomes of the T-ICSP and current CSP strategic plan, and to the UNSDCF?<sup>141</sup> Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative?

98. This section examines the contribution of WFP activities and outputs to the expected outcomes of the CSP and, to a lesser extent, the T-ICSP as, although it included four strategic outcomes, data are only available for SO1 and SO2. Given the framing concept of the three pillars, social protection, integrated risk management and food security and nutrition (see paragraph 31 and Figure 5), this lens is also applied to analyse performance against the CSP's strategic outcomes.

99. Overall, the T-ICSP and CSP met most output targets, although progress towards outcome targets was uneven with differences in the level of performance across the strategic outcomes (see legend of achievement rate below). Findings are presented below for each pillar and detailed progress against outputs is presented in Annex 8.



<sup>137</sup> WFP respondents and WFP. 2020. COVID-19 Response.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. See also WFP and other United Nations agency respondents; and WFP. 2020. CSP Reorientation.

<sup>139</sup> CARD in cooperation with the Technical Working Group for Social Protection and Food Security and Nutrition. 2020. Statement on Food Security and Nutrition during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

<sup>140</sup> FAO, UNICEF, WFP, WHO. 2020. Joint statement on nutrition in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific.

<sup>141</sup> In 2019, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was renamed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

## Pillar 1. Social protection (SO1 and SO6)

The long-standing school feeding programme has been successfully implemented, and the addition of a well-conceived emergency response to the CSP has provided a strong foundation for WFP as a partner to the Government of Cambodia in social protection.

**Finding 11: The implementation of the school feeding programme was successful. Although the COVID-19 pandemic prevented achievement of the targets for household food security, evidence suggests that the WFP school feeding programme contributed to higher retention rates and lower dropout rates in the assisted schools. The planned transition to a full government-run home-grown school feeding programme is considered a good practice example for United Nations support to governments. WFP technical support provided at the central level has been instrumental in creating the conditions for an effective national programme; nevertheless, certain constraints remain, such as capacity gaps at the school, commune, district and provincial levels.**

100. Under Strategic Outcome 1, WFP aims to ensure that vulnerable communities in Cambodia have access to nutritious, safe, diverse, convenient, affordable and preferred foods. Relevant SO1 outcome-level indicators for the T-ICSP and the CSP on food security and drop-out/retention are included in Annex 8. An analysis of key output indicators during the period 2018-2021 (see Annex 8) shows strong performance.

**Table 4. SO1 selected outcome indicators**

Outcome indicators (selection)	SO1							
	Target				Follow up			
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2018	2019	2020	2021
Drop-out rate	-	≤ 5	≤ 4	≤ 3.5	-	4.27	0.08	1.65
Retention rate	>85	≥95	≥96	≥96.50	94.96	95.73	99.92	98.35
Percentage of households with Acceptable Food Consumption Score	-	=94.80	≥96	≥97	-	95.90	95.90	95.20
Percentage of households with Borderline Food Consumption Score	-	=3.8	≤ 4	≤ 3	-	3.80	4.10	4.00
Percentage of households with Poor Food Consumption Score	-	=0.30	≤0	=0	-	0.30	0.00	0.80
Mean of Dietary Diversity Score (School children Level)	-	=4.48	≥ 4.70	≥ 5	-	4.48	3.80	4.30

Source: Elaboration of the evaluation team from ACRs 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.<sup>142</sup>

101. During the CSP, the Food Consumption Score (FCS) and the Dietary Diversity Score were used to gauge indirect social protection support to households within the school feeding programme. Prior to the pandemic, all school feeding targets were met, but in 2020 and 2021, overall indicators slipped from acceptable FCS to borderline FCS. Over the course of 2021, the percentage of people with poor FCS increased further. Overall, the food security expectations for SO1 were not achieved due to the decline of food security caused by the COVID-19 economic context.

102. The mean Dietary Diversity Score targets followed a similar pattern, met in 2019, but not in 2020 and 2021. However, it is important to note that the 2019 data were collected among the general population in areas receiving on-site school feeding, while the 2020 and 2021 data were collected among the IDPoor receiving take-home rations, who are by definition the poorest households, making the comparison difficult.<sup>143</sup>

103. School feeding was expected to have a positive effect on retention and drop-out rates over the period of the CSP. WFP significantly exceeded the target for retention rate. The targets for dropout rate were also met over the three-year period, but there is a caveat. The estimates for 2020 and 2021 were much lower than the target due to the disrupted data collection from school closures. Nonetheless,

<sup>142</sup> The evaluation team – when possible - has selected the indicators that were measured both in the T-ICSP and in the CSP, and has chosen sets of indicators linked to both education outcomes and to nutrition outcomes at the household level. See Annex 8 for all indicators.

<sup>143</sup> Artival. Research & Evaluation. 2021. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's CSP 2019-2023.

evidence suggests that the WFP school feeding programme contributed to higher retention rates and lower dropout rates in the assisted schools as cited in the Government and WFP Joint Transition Strategy, in the Cambodia Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023<sup>144</sup> and confirmed by focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews.<sup>145</sup> In addition, focus group discussions with parents and school staff across traditional, hybrid, and home-grown school feeding areas also reported that the school feeding programme has had a positive effect on their lives and their children.<sup>146</sup> This includes the social assistance impact on households and the educational impact (more focus and energy for learning) on their children.<sup>147</sup> The programme was able to adapt to challenges, particularly the COVID-19 school closures and the food prices increase in 2022.<sup>148</sup>

104. The local purchase system was praised by schools, parents, suppliers and smallholder farmers for being well-organized and functional. The procurement process is considered to be transparent, with priority given to empowering local communities to engage with the HGSF market as producers and/or suppliers.<sup>149</sup> According to suppliers, the contract with the schools provided a permanent and stable local market and saved both time and money for transportation compared to selling at nearby markets that were unpredictable.<sup>150</sup>

105. Different stakeholders shared varying perspectives on the main purpose of the school feeding programme in Cambodia. WFP considered it as primarily a social assistance programme implemented through schools, while the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) viewed it as an education programme. MoSVY and the newly created National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) saw it as part of a wider social assistance programme that will shortly be incorporated under the new family package.<sup>151</sup> Although these divergent viewpoints do not directly impact the programme's effectiveness, it may become more crucial to clarify the primary purpose of school feeding in Cambodia as the Government moves towards consolidating social assistance programmes under a single overarching framework.<sup>152</sup>

106. By the end of 2020, the national HGSF programme had 205 schools: 103 of which were handed over from WFP and 102 of which were new schools.<sup>153</sup> The roll-out of the home-grown school feeding model was successfully implemented despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, 85 schools have transitioned, bringing the national HGSF programme to 290 schools in total. Figure 12 shows the planned expansion of the national HGSF programme from 2022 to 2028. This model generally procured a diversity of fresh vegetables and animal proteins purchased locally, suggesting that the HGSF has built a strong foundation on which the LRP can continue to build;<sup>154</sup> however, during COVID-19 the dry take-home rations only consisted of rice and canned fish, affecting the local purchases.

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<sup>144</sup> MoEYS and WFP. 2022. Joint Transition Strategy Towards a Nationally Owned HGSFP.

<sup>145</sup> Government and NGO partner respondents and FGDs.

<sup>146</sup> Multiple respondents at provincial and district level, and FGDs.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> WFP. Evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2019-2023) in Cambodia. Evaluation Report. First Draft, 05 October 2022.

<sup>149</sup> WFP. 2022. Mid-Term Activity Evaluation USDA LRP-442-2019-011-00 1 Nov 2019-30 Sep 2023.

<sup>150</sup> FGDs with suppliers.

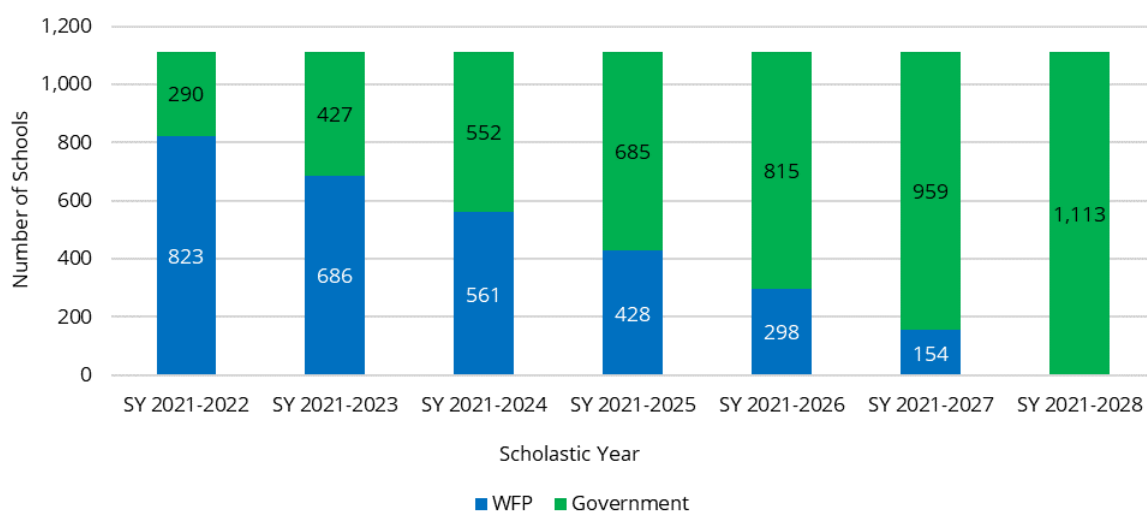
<sup>151</sup> WFP and government respondents.

<sup>152</sup> Multiple WFP, government, and partner respondents, at national and provincial levels.

<sup>153</sup> MoEYS and WFP. Joint Transition Strategy towards a nationally owned HGSFP. 2022 and WFP respondents

<sup>154</sup> WFP. 2022. Mid-Term Activity Evaluation USDA LRP-442-2019-011-00 1 Nov 2019-30 Sep 2023.

**Figure 12. Planned expansion of national home-grown school feeding 2022-2028**



Source: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and WFP. Joint Transition Strategy towards a nationally owned home-grown school feeding programme. 2022.

107. There are mixed reviews of the effectiveness of the transition process.<sup>155</sup> According to some respondents, there has been a mismatch between the ambition of WFP and its donors and the confidence and readiness of the Government, which has further increased since COVID-19.<sup>156</sup> However, the transition of school feeding to government management has been a long process of engaging with government stakeholders, advocating for national funds, designing a suitable school feeding model, and supporting national counterparts to implement the strategy. There is a long-term plan in place for continued support, which was embedded in the Joint Transition Strategy<sup>157</sup> and is also aligned with the Cambodia Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery in the Context of Living with COVID-19, which references school feeding as a key recovery programme.<sup>158</sup>

108. The support provided by WFP has reportedly contributed, among others, to strengthening the policy framework, to prepare annual budget allocations, to develop the institutional capacity within MoEYS and subnational administration, to strengthen the programme design, to enhance programme implementation, and to develop information systems.<sup>159</sup> Although technical support provided by WFP at the central level has been instrumental in creating the conditions for an effective national programme, capacity gaps remain at the school, commune, district, and provincial levels with regards to the skillsets required to implement and monitor school feeding.<sup>160</sup>

109. WFP also supported the engagement of the Government in the global School Meals Coalition, to which it signed up in 2021, along with 60 other governments and multiple public and private entities, recognizing the multisectoral benefits of school feeding to develop human capital.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>155</sup> See EQ 2.3 on sustainability.

<sup>156</sup> While the team did not find evidence from the document review, this was reported consistently by WFP, government and partner NGO respondents.

<sup>157</sup> Paragraph 167 of the MGD MTR states: “Visits to two schools that had been handed over, and interviews with WFP and cooperating partner staff, showed a lack of mentoring and accompaniment after handover. Government staff expressed the desire for joint monitoring visits to observe school readiness and for a range of technical assistance in the management of the programme at the national, provincial, and district levels - beyond the provision of meals at the schools”.

<sup>158</sup> Royal Government of Cambodia. 2020. The Strategic Framework and Programmes for Economic Recovery in the Context of Living with COVID-19 in a New Normal 2021-2023.

<sup>159</sup> WFP respondents.

<sup>160</sup> Multiple subnational respondents.

<sup>161</sup> WFP respondents, and see: WFP. Celebrating the continued transition of school feeding programme in Cambodia. 2022.

110. SO1 has contributed to UNDAF outcomes as relating to United Nations overall support to the Government under UNDAF Outcome 1 (people) and the WFP and MoEYS Transition Strategy is considered a good practice of United Nations support to the Government.<sup>162</sup>

**Finding 12 The WFP cash-based transfer intervention complemented the government response to the October 2020 floods and was aligned with the ongoing government COVID-19 response. Implementation of cash-based transfers was uneven, with delays created by use of transfer mechanisms. Nonetheless, outcome targets were broadly achieved, reflecting a combination of cash-based transfer and effective food transfers in 2020 as well as efforts undertaken in 2021 to resolve cash challenges. These challenges provided WFP with lessons learned regarding cash-based transfer delivery mechanisms that will contribute to implementing future shock-responsive social protection plans.**

111. SO6 stipulated that vulnerable people affected by crisis in Cambodia should have access to nutrition-sensitive food assistance during and after the crisis. This was added as an emergency response, complementing the government response to the October 2020 floods and aligning with the ongoing government COVID-19 response.

112. This strategic outcome included nutrition indicators at the outcome level, with 13 in 2020 and 15 for 2021. Despite challenges during implementation of the cash-based transfers, most of the targets of outcome indicators on Food Consumption Score, Consumption-based Coping Strategy, Dietary Diversity Score, and Economic Capacity were met. (Table 5).

**Table 5. SO6 selected outcome indicators**

Outcome indicators (selection)	SO6					
	Target			Follow up		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Percentage of households with Poor Food Consumption Score	-	≤ 0.5	=0	-	0.5	0
Consumption-based Coping Strategy Index	-	≤ 18	≤ 15	-	8.1	16.4
Dietary Diversity Score	-	-	≥5.34	-	-	5.1
Economic capacity to meet essential needs	-	-	≥3.9	-	-	11.8

Source: ACR 2019, 2020 and 2021. No indicators available for 2018 as SO6 was not in place.

113. While outcome indicator performance was positive, there were mixed results at the output level in relation to the modality delivered under SO6 (food transfers or cash-based transfer) introduced in late 2020. In 2020, the number of beneficiaries of food transfers was slightly below the target at 12,750 rather than 12,800; however, the planned quantity of food was successfully distributed, indicating strong performance. However, in that same year, none of the cash-based transfers were made, as the emergency response was resourced to support immediate food assistance to a limited number of households immediately after the flooding. With additional resources mobilized to support early recovery through cash-based transfer in 2021 the situation improved considerably with both targets for numbers of beneficiaries in receipt of cash-based transfers and the amount of money transferred almost reaching their respective targets.

114. While using the same assistance modality (cash-based transfers), stakeholders cited challenges relating to the technical mechanism of delivery, which was not aligned with the transfer modality for IDPoor transfers, creating confusion for beneficiaries. The WFP programme used cash transfer by phone, which resulted in some recipients needing to change network; some not being able to receive their cash transfer due to not having working phones; and issues with the provision of invalid codes. This caused a high level of frustration, particularly among the beneficiaries, but also for the members of the project committees at the commune level, who spent considerable time on assisting in solving the problems.<sup>163</sup> In a post-distribution

<sup>162</sup> KonTerra Group. Evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2019-2023) in Cambodia. Evaluation Report. First Draft, 05 October 2022. 2022.

<sup>163</sup> Project committees at commune level and CBT beneficiaries in Pursat and Battambang provinces.

lesson learning workshop, WFP acknowledged the challenges of the delivery mechanism. Nonetheless, the mid-term report reported challenges with the cash distribution of registration and data verification, which also affected the achievement of SO6 outputs.<sup>164</sup>

115. It is important to note that an unintended outcome of SO6 was to provide research and learning on cash-based transfers. It positioned WFP as a key national player in supporting shock-responsive social protection (SRSP).<sup>165</sup> The challenges experienced in achieving this strategic outcome provided WFP with practices and lessons learned<sup>166</sup> regarding cash-based transfer delivery mechanisms that will contribute to implementation of future SRSP plans (see below, under Pillar 2).

## **Pillar 2. Integrated risk management (SO2, SO3, SO5)**

WFP has effectively worked at subnational and national levels, providing complementary activities to strengthen resilience, both practically, at the commune level, and institutionally, at the national level. Qualitative evidence collected through this evaluation highlighted the functionality of this approach, with different examples provided in relation to effectiveness. However, corporate indicators are not adequately designed to clearly show capacity strengthening results, hampering a clearly positive quantitative analysis of effectiveness.

One aspect of the Integrated Road Map (IRM) pillar, which was not included in the original design, but which WFP Cambodia has been able to capitalize upon, is the new national focus on shock-responsive social protection. WFP has positioned itself well to be a leading partner in this area.

**Finding 13. Under SO2, the CSP was found to be moderately effective as progress towards output targets was uneven. The collaboration with NCDs on the integration of climate change and food security and nutrition in commune-level planning successfully contributed to enhancing the resilience of communes to extreme weather such as floods.**

116. SO2 sought to ensure that poor and vulnerable communes benefit from food systems that are more resilient and responsive to seasonal and long-term shocks and stresses, particularly during the high-risk season. It was initially designed from a food systems perspective. According to WFP respondents, there was limited understanding within the country office of how to operationalize this strategic outcome as a food system objective and, as a consequence, the strategic outcome became a series of various sub-projects focused more on disaster risk management. This led to a shift away from food systems towards infrastructure resilience, with establishment of safe evacuation centres and other infrastructure construction, such as roads.

117. Table 6 presents the outcome indicator of SO2, which is relevant to the changed focus of this strategic outcome, although no specific indicators have been identified to measure resilience. The indicator related to the number of national food security and nutrition policies, programmes and systems enhanced due to WFP capacity strengthening was achieved in 2020 through one policy, which was a guidance manual on integrating food security and nutrition in commune planning processes; however, the target in 2021 was not fully met with only one of the two expected policies/programmes/systems to be developed, due to ongoing COVID-19 disruption and adaptations to programming.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>165</sup> BR03 and WFP and government respondents.

<sup>166</sup> Government, NGOs, and donor respondents; WFP. Preliminary Findings from the PWD/Gender FGDs. March 2022.

<sup>167</sup> WFP respondents.



**Table 6. SO2 outcome indicator**

SO 2								
Outcome indicators	Target				Follow-up			
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of national food security and nutrition policies, programmes and system components enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening	-	=0	≥1	=2	-	0	1	1

Source: Elaboration from ACRs 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

118. Activities in 2019 were mostly preparatory and consultative in nature, to establish that solid foundations for implementing these activities in 2020, whose targets related to number of government/national partner staff trained or supported and number of training sessions and workshops organized, were fully met. However, in 2021, less than 50 percent of the targets planned for 2021 were achieved, due to COVID-19 national regulations, requiring lockdown protocols and social distancing (see also EQ3.1 for further information).

119. WFP partnered with the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) on enhancing disaster risk reduction and worked with the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS) and subnational authorities to strengthen local climate change adaptation. The construction of six safe evacuation centres, as well as a number of irrigation ponds and dikes based on climate-smart technology, began in 2021. The constructed irrigation schemes, climate-smart roads, and safe evacuation centres have been effective in improving community resilience to extreme weather events, confirmed by provincial government stakeholders and community members.<sup>168</sup> Climate-smart construction is based on the manual developed – and monitored – by NCDDS and it is also aligned with priorities outlined in three-year commune investment plans and five-year development plans, for each of the selected communes.<sup>169</sup> Project committees at both district and commune levels as well as beneficiaries confirmed the high level of ownership and commitment to utilizing and sustaining the constructed units;<sup>170</sup> they also highlighted how the long-lasting climate-smart roads and bridges enabled year-round: i) market access to sell their products; ii) education to send children to schools; and iii) healthcare, including the ability to transport sick people to hospitals, whereas previously these activities were disrupted by seasonal flooding. The permanent irrigation schemes enabled them to cultivate rice in the rainy season, whereas previously the fields would be flooded. Additionally, the safe evacuation centres provided the commune population with a safe place for the evacuated households during flooding incidents and were also used for other community-orientated activities, including as vaccination centres during COVID-19.<sup>171</sup>

120. WFP also worked with NCDDS on the integration of climate change and food security and nutrition in commune-level planning, contributing to the development of a guidance manual on integrating food security and nutrition in commune planning processes, developed in partnership with CARD, NCDDS, MoP, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and GiZ and finalized in 2020.<sup>172</sup>

**Finding 14. Under SO3, the CSP performed well with the initial planned activities within the CSP design (for example, capacity strengthening) and with the shift towards positioning WFP as the main government partner in building a shock-responsive social protection framework. This contributed to the evolving discussion in Cambodia on social protection and climate and disaster risk reduction.**

121. SO3 is targeted to strengthening the capacity of national and subnational institutions to mitigate risks and lead coordinated shock preparedness and response efforts by 2025. WFP activities focused on three areas of work, namely: 1) capacity strengthening to the NCDM for enhanced disaster risk reduction

<sup>168</sup> WFP. ACR.2021.

<sup>169</sup> The commune investment plans are financed, whereas the five-year development plans are not.

<sup>170</sup> Provincial and district government respondents and community member participants in FGDs.

<sup>171</sup> Provincial and district government respondents, and community member participants in FGDs and also see Artival. Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>172</sup> WFP. CSP Reorientation Document. 2020.

and management; 2) support to make social protection more shock responsive; and 3) coordination of humanitarian partners for enhanced emergency preparedness and response.

122. The outcome target for 2020 and 2021 was to achieve enhanced food security and nutrition policies, programmes and systems components, which was successfully met. Similar to SO2, performance under SO3 experienced a slow start in 2019, with initial efforts focused on planning for capacity strengthening activities as reported by WFP and government respondents. In 2019, WFP established a long-term partnership with the National Committee of Disaster Management (NCDM). However, a mid-year change in the leadership and institutional structure of the NCDM required a review and renewal of joint working arrangements. Capacity strengthening activities were eventually implemented after the necessary adjustments were made.<sup>173</sup>

**Table 7. SO3 outcome indicator**<sup>174</sup>

SO 3						
Outcome indicators	Target			Follow-up		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Number of national food security and nutrition policies, programmes and system components enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening	=0	=3	=3	0	3	3

Source: Elaboration from ACRs 2019, 2020 and 2021. No indicators available for 2018.

123. WFP has been leading on SRSP and working with the Government since 2020, in coordination with GiZ, a key partner of the Government on social protection. In the new GiZ seven-year programme in Cambodia, there has been a significant shift towards SRSP. The World Bank has also shown interest in SRSP.<sup>175</sup> This is a promising new opportunity and WFP is positioned as a leading player in this area, as acknowledged widely by respondents to this evaluation.<sup>176</sup> This work links to SO6 where WFP emergency response cash-based transfer activities provided a valuable experience on modalities of cash transfers and contributed to an understanding of how SRSP might work in the future. WFP has also commissioned studies, such as the report on thresholds for triggering SRSP,<sup>177</sup> which provide further insights to further support effective implementation.

124. Under this strategic outcome, WFP chaired the Humanitarian Forum and engaged in activities such as GIS mapping, supporting the Ministry of Interior, together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in mapping migrant movement data and working with RUPP to provide training on geography and cartography (see more information under EQ.1.2 and EQ3.2).<sup>178</sup>

125. WFP has contributed to the evolving discussion on climate and disaster risk reduction-- UNDAF Outcome 3 (planet)-- particularly through activities and support provided under this strategic outcome, as highlighted in the draft UNDAF evaluation report.<sup>179</sup>

<sup>173</sup> WFP and government respondents, and ACR 2019.

<sup>174</sup> WFP provided support to develop: i) the National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction; ii) the national flood contingency plan as well as 25 provincial contingency plans; iii) an improved version of PRISM 2.0; iv) national policy framework on shock-responsive social protection. In addition, WFP supported NDCM to further embed the tool in routine disaster management processes and scaled up PRISM to four additional provinces, achieving nationwide coverage in 25 provinces and the Humanitarian Response Forum, co-chaired by WFP, supported the coordination for multiple crises: lockdowns, floods and migrant return.

<sup>175</sup> WFP respondents. Also see WFP. 2021. Exploring thresholds for triggering shock-responsive social protection responses in Cambodia.

<sup>176</sup> Government, NGO, and other United Nations agency respondents.

<sup>177</sup> WFP. 2021. Exploring thresholds for triggering shock-responsive social protection responses in Cambodia.

<sup>178</sup> Note that NCDM has declined to collect migrant movement / returned data through PRISM. WFP COVID-19 Adjustments and Response Report. 2021.

<sup>179</sup> WFP. 2022. Evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2019-2023) in Cambodia. Evaluation Report. First Draft, 05 October 2022.

**Finding 15. Under SO5, the provision of supply chain services for human development partners was undertaken without the underpinning of a comprehensive analysis of the need by other agencies for warehousing and logistics support.**

126. Under SO5, WFP sought to provide development and humanitarian partners with access to common supply chain services and this is framed as an activity rather than an objective.<sup>180</sup> While data show partners' demand for quality services was consistently fulfilled during the period evaluated, there is limited evidence that SO5 reflected a clear understanding of the needs of development and humanitarian partners, as the activity was built on the residual warehousing capacity of WFP from the large-scale and long-standing traditional, high-tonnage food storage needs.

**Table 8. SO5 outcome indicator**

SO 5						
Outcome indicators	Target			Follow-up		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
User satisfaction rate	=100	=100	100	100	100	=100

Source: Elaboration from ACRs 2019, 2020 and 2021. No indicators available for 2018.

127. The United Nations Service for Project Services (UNOPS) is the longest-standing customer and the Global Fund and UNICEF have also, infrequently, used the service for storage of mosquito nets and other small-scale humanitarian materials for different localized floods and drought responses in Cambodia. The available storage space has never been 100 percent used, even with a temporary increase in usage during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 and 2021).

128. WFP developed a customer satisfaction survey to ensure that feedback was received regarding warehouse management. A tool was developed to measure occupancy rates and effective use of space. Needs were assessed on a regular basis. From the occupancy tool and needs analysis, it was found that adjustments were required including the return of one warehouse to the landlord, maximizing use of space and lowering costs for the country office.<sup>181</sup>

**Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition (SO4)**

Throughout the course of the CSP, WFP has provided visible food security and nutrition support to the Government, and leadership and input to multi-actor collaboration platforms. It is considered a key food security and nutrition player in the country by stakeholders. Measurement of performance against specific indicators for this pillar does not necessarily capture the breadth and width of the WFP role in this area, which has been effective overall, with unique contributions based on the WFP corporate comparative advantage.

**Finding 16. SO4 does not adequately reflect the different activities and contributions that WFP makes in this area, which have been much broader than anticipated in the CSP design. Through SO4, WFP provides technical assistance to the Government and to all food security and nutrition actors in Cambodia, contributing to scaling up nutrition through both the second NSFSN and the SUN Network.**

129. SO4 aimed to strengthen capacity at national and subnational institution levels to develop, coordinate and implement well-informed, effective, and equitable actions for achieving food security and nutrition. It was implemented through two activities, to enhance digital solutions (Activity 4) and to strengthen food security, nutrition and social protection governance and coordination (Activity 5) through

<sup>180</sup> This was due to CSP corporate guidance, which required a service delivery activity had to be under a stand-alone SO.

<sup>181</sup> WFP warehouse usage table - Update Sep-2022.

its technical support to government institutions on national strategies, advocacy efforts, information systems, and analytical tools and products.

130. Table 9 presents the only outcome indicator of SO4, which is measured in terms of enhanced number of food security and national policies, programmes and system components; the target was achieved in 2020 with WFP support to the development of the second NSFSN (2019-2023) and in 2021 with three policies supported, including the support to the Government’s endorsement of the Food Summit Road Map 2021-2030.<sup>182</sup>

**Table 9. SO4 outcome indicator<sup>183</sup>**

SO 4						
Outcome indicators	Target			Follow up		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
<b>Activity 5</b>						
Number of national food security and nutrition policies, programmes and system components enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening	=0	=1	=2	0	1	3

Source: Elaboration from ACRs 2019, 2020 and 2021. No indicators available for 2018.

131. The good performance at output level of SO4 was due to the training (number of individuals and sessions), technical assistance activities, tools and products produced and national coordination mechanisms supported. The indicators used for SO4, (mainly related to capacity strengthening), do not reflect the criticality of WFP work under SO4 as an approach across all CSP areas. Under Activity 4, WFP has been very effective in supporting disaster management with digital platforms, namely through PRISM (see also EQ1.2 and 2.3).

132. WFP has also recently developed the School Feeding Information Management System (SFIMS), which fits under Activity 4 but in practice is an activity that must also sit under SO1. The system, managed under SO1, was launched in January 2022 to all WFP-supported schools, while government-supported schools started using the system a bit late due to a delay in providing training. Currently, the system is being used by schools to manage meal provision, tendering process with suppliers and reporting to WFP.<sup>184</sup> WFP enhanced and incorporated the users’ feedback and experiences collecting during the reflection workshop in September 2022 after data collection for this evaluation had been completed.

133. Activity 5 (the provision of technical assistance, coordination, and organizational assistance to the Government and other food security, nutrition, and social protection actors at the national and subnational levels) is where WFP has been more expansive and effective than can be reflected against the current CSP.

134. In the CSP design, the vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) unit was placed solely under Activity 5, limiting the accessibility of quality vulnerability analysis mapping across the whole programme, and not maximizing synergies and linkages across different activities and strategic outcomes. However, the unit assumed a broader role to ensure that food security and nutrition technical assistance to the Government was supported with robust analysis, conducting a market study and regular food price monitoring under Activity 1,<sup>185</sup> supporting a climate vulnerability and risk analysis,<sup>186</sup> regular seasonal monitoring,<sup>187</sup> a

<sup>182</sup> Artival. Research & Evaluation. 2021. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP’s Cambodia Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>183</sup> WFP supported the endorsement and approval of the i) second National Strategy on Food Security and Nutrition 2019–2023; the Cambodia SUN Business Network Strategy for 2021-2025 and the development of the Cambodia roadmap for sustainable food systems 2030; it also supported the roll out of School feeding information system; and National Institute of Statistics (NIS) through technical and financial assistance on two flagship national surveys.

<sup>184</sup> WFP, NGO, and district and provincial Government respondents.

<sup>185</sup> Angkor Research. Final Report: MCGovern-Dole & LRP Cambodia Market Study.

<sup>186</sup> WFP. Cambodia: Vulnerability and risk analysis. Final Report. September 2021.

<sup>187</sup> WFP. Cambodia - Market and Seasonal Monitoring Update - Oct 2022.

consolidated livelihood exercise for analysing resilience,<sup>188</sup> and minimum expenditure basket analysis under Activity 3.<sup>189</sup>

135. With the vulnerability analysis and mapping work under Activity 5, WFP has provided monthly price monitoring reports and food security and market functionality updates, highlighted by a number of respondents as being particularly effective and useful. WFP has co-led and contributed to various reports on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition in Cambodia, such as a socioeconomic impact assessment conducted by WFP, UNICEF, and ADB, which has now been ongoing for almost two years, with 11 panel surveys completed to date, an economic impact analysis led by the UNDP, and a food systems analysis led by FAO.<sup>190</sup> A 2020 Minimum Expenditure Basket Report by WFP was considered an effective contribution to knowledge and solutions in the country.<sup>191</sup>

136. WFP supported CARD to develop the second NSFSN 2019-2023, which is set to guide Cambodia to end malnutrition in all its forms. It builds on recommendations from the mid-term review and the strategic review of the NSFSN 2014-2018 and on the policy analysis on accelerating progress towards SDG 2.<sup>192</sup>

137. WFP has extended its engagement beyond the initial planned technical assistance. In 2014 (prior to this evaluation) Cambodia joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and the SUN business network was then formally launched in 2021.<sup>193</sup> WFP has been instrumental in supporting this network, with positive feedback on the effectiveness of the network by various SUN network members. Further, WFP was key in supporting the establishment of the SUN business network in Cambodia in 2019, before its formal launch in 2021 – thus aligning with one of the key priority areas of the Government’s Rectangular Strategy, private sector engagement and development. This has also been reported as an effective network producing useful reports.<sup>194</sup>

138. WFP chairs a platform for joint United Nations support to the Government – the UN Nutrition (UNN) Network, which is reportedly effective,<sup>195</sup> although it is not visible within the CSP design under food security and nutrition, and consists of multiple United Nations agencies (WFP, FAO; WHO; UNICEF) and different line ministries, working with CARD as the Government’s coordinating food security and nutrition body. Respondents reported that the UNN is successful and constantly improving. Tools, such as a UNN workplan and an overall strategy, have been considered useful.<sup>196</sup>

139. Nutrition has not been systematically mainstreamed across the different activities and strategic outcomes,<sup>197</sup> largely because mainstreaming was not prominent in the narrative of the CSP design. Nutrition-sensitive elements feature across different strategic outcomes. Nutrition has been comprehensively integrated into the school feeding programme, though is less prominent elsewhere in the CSP. Examples from school feeding include: development of a school-based social behaviour change campaign, which will use schools as a platform to promote better dietary practices among schoolchildren

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<sup>188</sup> Applying participatory climate risk and livelihoods mapping to define users’ demand for climate services. DeRISK SE Asia. Info Series. November 2022.

<sup>189</sup> WFP, Minimum Expenditure Baskets (MEB). An evidence-based approach to design and planning for humanitarian and social assistance interventions. Update: 23 December 2022.

<sup>190</sup> WFP. 2020. Cambodia CSP – COVID-19 adjustments & response.

<sup>191</sup> NGO and other United Nations agency respondents, and WFP. 2020. Technical Report. Estimating Minimum Expenditure Baskets and Expenditure Gaps in Cambodia.

<sup>192</sup> Kingdom of Cambodia. 2019. Accelerating progress towards SDG 2. Policy effectiveness analysis for the Second National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023.

<sup>193</sup> SUN Business Network website, Cambodia.

<sup>194</sup> NGO and other United Nations agency respondents and United Nations. Evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2019-2023) in Cambodia. First Draft Evaluation Report, 05 October 2022.

<sup>195</sup> Other United Nations agency respondents and see, for example, UN Nutrition. 2021. Joint Statement of United Nations Nutrition (UNN) Cambodia. Rising Food Prices Pose Risks for Food Security and Nutrition in Cambodia.

<sup>196</sup> Other United Nations agency and partner respondents.

<sup>197</sup> WFP, other United Nations agency, and NGO respondents. Also see Global UN Nutrition article on success of Cambodia UNN: Flying high in Cambodia: Tips for embedding nutrition into food systems transformation, July 23, 2021. For an example of a UN Nutrition product, see UNN Cambodia. Rising Food Prices Pose risks for Food Security and Nutrition in Cambodia. July 2022.

and their family members;<sup>198</sup> partnering with FAO on the "school food nutrition guidelines and standards for safeguarding children and adolescents' right to food" project, which aims to develop a methodology for developing nutrition guidelines and standards for school food and which will be piloted in Cambodia with WFP support;<sup>199</sup> undertaking research, in partnership with Helen Keller International, FAO & UNICEF, to understand Cambodian primary schoolchildren's consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages, and the drivers of their dietary choices, including how the school food environment influences children's diets; conducting "school nutrition days" to raise awareness about nutrition; and partnering with World Education International to develop non-fiction reading books on nutrition and healthy eating.

140. Overall, this strategic outcome has been highly effective, beyond the more modest articulation of activities 4 and 5 and is well-referenced as a clear contribution to UNDAF outcomes within the draft UNDAF evaluation report. This references the contribution of WFP to scaling up nutrition through the second NSFSN 2019-2023 and the SUN Network, which is coordinated by WFP.<sup>200</sup>

### **Sub-question 2.2: To what extent did WFP contribute to the achievement of cross-cutting aims (capacity strengthening, gender, protection, environment, social inclusion, accountability to affected populations and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and humanitarian principles)?**

#### **Capacity strengthening**

**Finding 17. A full assessment of country capacity strengthening (CCS) in Cambodia has been hampered by not placing the corporate indicators within a clear, coherent framework available in 2018 when the CSP was designed: further, there remains a question among different stakeholder groups as to whether Cambodia was or is ready for a significant shift to upstream support across all areas.**

141. Under SO1, WFP Cambodia has accomplished specific capacity strengthening results regarding the transition of the school feeding programme under SO1, which is discussed in EQ2.3. Within this subsection, the evidence focuses on the country capacity strengthening related to other strategic outcomes.

142. The introduction of new upstream strategic outcomes in 2019, - SO2, SO3, and SO4 – brought about a shift in the activities of the CSP. As result, 2019 was focused on planning and preparation to establish the foundation for meeting targets in 2020 and 2021.<sup>201</sup> The 2019 annual country report confirmed during the first year of the CSP implementation, that WFP worked to create a “robust foundation for capacity strengthening, while scaling back the direct programme implementation portfolio”.<sup>202</sup>

143. More fundamentally, the CSP was designed without a strong understanding of what country capacity strengthening entails and with limited consideration of the factors, including human and financial resources, that affect capacity within different levels of government in Cambodia.<sup>203</sup> This limitation is well understood by WFP Cambodia staff, who report that the challenge was a lack of strong corporate guidance on country capacity strengthening at the time the CSP was being designed.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> United Nations Cambodia. 2022. WFP and Government of Cambodia to launch Behaviour Change Campaign to improve Nutrition among Schoolchildren. 13 September 2022.

<sup>199</sup> FAO. 2022. Cambodia joins FAO and WFP to improve children's diets through school food. 12 July 2022.

<sup>200</sup> KonTerra Group. 2022. Evaluation of the UNDAF (2019-2023) in Cambodia. Evaluation Report. First Draft, 05 October 2022.

<sup>201</sup> WFP respondents and ACR 2019.

<sup>202</sup> WFP. ACR 2019.

<sup>203</sup> WFP, other United Nations agencies, and government respondents all questioned whether Cambodia was ready for a dramatic shift away from direct implementation towards upstream support. The MTR - Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023. – highlights limited government leadership and ownership of WFP areas of intervention as a hindering factor.

<sup>204</sup> WFP country office respondents – current and past staff.



144. Although the 2019 annual country report reported that WFP Cambodia had developed a holistic, multi-stakeholder approach to systems-strengthening for country capacity strengthening,<sup>205</sup> this evaluation found limited evidence of WFP support for capacity strengthening across policymaking, institutional effectiveness and accountability, strategic planning and financing, programme design, delivery, and monitoring and evaluation.<sup>206</sup> Instead, capacity strengthening in Cambodia has focused mostly on training workshops across different aspects of food security and nutrition, the use of risk management tools such as PRISM, and aspects of school feeding for government counterparts.

145. The CSP used the corporate indicators available at the time, which were considered by staff as inadequate for measuring meaningful results.<sup>207</sup> Results of training are measured only by pre- and post-workshop questionnaires, which are inadequate tools for measuring longer-term, institutional changes.<sup>208</sup> The 2021 WFP synthesis of evidence and lessons on country capacity strengthening highlighted this systemic issue and also reconfirmed the observation of the 2017 evaluation of the corporate policy that monitoring and evaluation of country capacity strengthening remains weak and inconsistent, limiting the ability of WFP to showcase and learn from its work.<sup>209</sup> On a positive note, more comprehensive tools are being made available, including country capacity strengthening smart piloting and updated capacity needs mapping methodologies as well as country capacity strengthening strategies for CSPs as a whole. The updated corporate results framework introduced new indicators for country capacity strengthening and the country office has volunteered to be one of five countries to test and pilot them in late 2022.<sup>210</sup>

146. Country capacity strengthening activities implemented during the CSP had varying levels of success,<sup>211</sup> with 2020 results affected by training delays due to COVID-19 restrictions, particularly the availability of government stakeholders, and a limit to the number of people who could meet in person (see Table 10).<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> ACR 2019.

<sup>206</sup> WFP respondents were unable to provide examples of support based on an overall mapping of needs.

<sup>207</sup> WFP respondents.

<sup>208</sup> The Cambodia country office is one of five country offices undertaking new CCS indicator pilot testing in late 2022. There was no information available for this evaluation on the outcome of that testing.

<sup>209</sup> WFP. 2021. Synthesis of evidence and lessons on country capacity strengthening from decentralized evaluations.

<sup>210</sup> WFP respondents. There was no information available for this evaluation on the outcome of that testing as this happened after the data collection.

<sup>211</sup> Output indicators for SO1, SO2, SO3 and SO4.

<sup>212</sup> WFP and government respondents and ACR 2021.

**Table 10. Country capacity strengthening output indicators**

Output indicators	Target			Follow-up		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
<b>SO 1</b>						
Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training (individual)	5,000	720	4,862	5,292	623	2,288
Number of training sessions/workshop organized (sessions)	153	34	325	157	22	363
<b>SO 2</b>						
Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training (individual)	109	109	400	0	175	183
Number of training sessions/workshop organized (sessions)	5	4	16	0	4	6
<b>SO 3</b>						
Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training (individual)	499	500	520	0	711	1,160
Number of training sessions/workshop organized (sessions)	9	13	20	0	12	29
<b>SO 4</b>						
<b>Activity 4</b>						
Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training (individual)	3,737	2,000	50	2,614	1,503	158
Number of training sessions/workshop organized (sessions)	7	6	16	5	10	7
<b>Activity 5</b>						
Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training (individual)	95	55	97	96	157	220
Number of training sessions/workshop organized (sessions)	2	3	4	1	5	13

Source: Elaboration from ACRs 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. No indicators available for 2018.

## Gender

**Finding 18. Gender and other issues of inclusion such as disability have not been sufficiently integrated at programme implementation level. The lack of clear and ambitious (transformative) gender indicators in the CSP, combined with a lack of a clear gender strategy and dedicated gender staff, have been key constraints. Results of the recent increase in the WFP effort and investments in gender research and training programmes are yet to be visible.**

147. Although the cross-cutting issues were reflected in the strategic and corporate documents, those have not been sufficiently integrated at programme and implementation levels.

148. All seven cross-cutting indicators for gender equality in the CSP relate to SO1 and SO6, which have direct implementation activities with Tier 1 beneficiaries<sup>213</sup>. There are no gender indicators for any upstream work, and targets for SO1 and SO6 are modest. While CSP targets for women's involvement in programme-level committee leadership roles have been exceeded (15 percent in 2018; 25 percent in 2019; 27 percent in 2020; and 28 percent in 2021), these represented only marginal improvements on the baseline level of women constituting 22.4 percent of decision making committees for the CSP (see Table 11).

<sup>213</sup> Tier 1 direct beneficiaries are identifiable and recorded individuals who receive direct transfers from WFP or from a cooperating partner, to improve their food security and nutrition status.

**Table 11. Gender cross-cutting indicators**

Cross cutting indicators	2018*		2019		2020		2021	
	Target	Follow up	Target	Follow up	Target	Follow up	Target	Follow up
<b>PROGRESS TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY</b>								
<b>SO 1</b>								
Proportion of food assistance decision-making entity – committees, boards, teams, etc. – members who are WOMEN	>15	22.40	>25	26.28	>27	31.88	>28	33
Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men <u>together make</u> decisions over the use of cash, voucher or food - Decisions made by WOMEN	=85.00	70.00	70	68.99	≤70	66.9	≤70	71.01
Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men <u>together make</u> decisions over the use of cash, voucher or food - Decisions made by MEN	=5	10.00	10	11.11	≤10	4.21	≤10	2.89
Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men together make decisions over the use of cash, voucher or food - Decisions make JOINTLY	=10.00	20.00	=20	20.9	≥20	28.89	≥20	26.1
<b>SO 6</b>								
Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men together make decisions over the use of cash, voucher or food - Decisions made by WOMEN	-	-	-	-	-	-	≤ 80	85,9
Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men together make decisions over the use of cash, voucher or food - Decisions made by MEN	-	-	-	-	-	-	≤ 5	0,9
Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men together make decisions over the use of cash, voucher or food - Decisions make JOINTLY	-	-	-	-	-	-	≥ 15	13,2

Source: Elaboration from ACRs 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. \*For the year 2018, only values regarding "Education programme coverage area" have been considered.

149. The modest targets and incremental improvements during the T-ICSP and CSP were recognized in the WFP Cambodia mid-term review in 2021 which stated that “[d]espite great efforts made to consider and mainstream gender ... gender issues are still not fully mainstreamed into the CSP”.<sup>214</sup> Key constraints identified include the lack of expertise within WFP Cambodia staff and the lack of gender training for newcomers beyond the corporate training package. Additionally, the review found the gender-oriented indicators to be too narrow, mainly focusing on the work with direct beneficiaries.

150. The mid-term review recommended specific gender training for staff and adding new markers (indicators) to identify and broaden the level of integration of gender issues at all levels.<sup>215</sup> The gender training was completed<sup>216</sup> and household decision making index indicators were added and collected during the outcome monitoring exercise.<sup>217</sup> Since the mid-term review, WFP has invested more in gender

<sup>214</sup> Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> WFP. Action plan in Response to the Recommendation from the Mid-Term Review of the WFP Cambodia CSP 2019-2023 in 2022. Updated Q4 2022.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

research, including action research focusing on women's role in the home-grown school feeding programme combined with training to promote women's empowerment.<sup>218</sup> A qualitative study of the use of cash transfers was also conducted to understand the needs of women and persons living with disability.<sup>219</sup> In addition, in 2022 an in-county workshop with country office staff was completed as part of the WFP Transforming Social Norms for Gender Equality training initiative, resulting in a better staff understanding of the links between patriarchal masculinities and food security and nutrition. The workshop also provided important insights into potential entry points for work on discriminatory social norms in relation to different areas of WFP programming and strategies.<sup>220</sup>

151. At the policy level, WFP participated in the National Gender Working Group, contributed to the input for the CEDAW, and conducted an analysis of the nutritional situation of adolescent girls. In preparation for the CSP 2019-2023, WFP explored potential pathways for contributing to gender transformation and social inclusion in achieving zero hunger in Cambodia.<sup>221</sup>

152. The WFP staff are aware of the difficulties in Cambodia but the lack of clear and ambitious (transformative) gender indicators in the CSP have limited measurement of visible progress on this issue. This is compounded by a lack of both a gender strategy and dedicated gender staff.<sup>222</sup> Some respondents, such as school feeding programme and implementing partner staff, reported that gender was not a concern for the school feeding programme because the programme targets schools rather than individuals. Other staff have reported that gender is not relevant to technical assistance work. Some respondents reported that WFP follows the Gender with Age Marker (GAM) for gender, but without knowing what this is<sup>223</sup> and without being able to articulate how it is used, or by whom within the office.

153. Cambodia country office has made notable progress, achieving an approximately 50/50 split between men and women staff<sup>224</sup> and has taken some initial steps to integrate gender into its programmes, such as ensuring women are represented on school feeding committees, but there is no evidence of WFP recognizing the barriers preventing women from meaningfully engaging in these committees – such as being able to speak and be listened to by the men on the committees. While WFP has produced some useful reports on gender, such as the 2018 gendered nature of intra-household decision making in Cambodia,<sup>225</sup> there is no evidence of how this learning has been incorporated into WFP interventions. In addition, WFP worked with the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 2021/2022 to review how to increase the inclusion of gender in the school feeding programme and other related activities.<sup>226</sup>

## Protection

**Finding 19. Protection issues have been considered within design at a basic level only, being unhindered access of Tier 1 beneficiaries to accessing assistance without safety challenges, and have not been systematically addressed during the CSP implementation.**

154. The CSP has four cross-cutting protection outcome indicators, which are only applicable to SO1 and SO6 and newly added in 2020. All respective targets were achieved in relation to: the unhindered access of beneficiaries (SO6); accessing assistance without safety challenges (SO1 and SO6); and reporting that WFP programmes are dignified (SO6).

<sup>218</sup> WFP. 2021. Report: Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSE) – Gender Action Research in Cambodia.

<sup>219</sup> WFP. 2022. Preliminary Findings from the PWD/Gender FGDs.

<sup>220</sup> White Ribbon. 2022. Transforming Social Norms for Gender Inequality Dec 2022.

<sup>221</sup> WFP. ACR 2018.

<sup>222</sup> There is only a gender focal point within the office rather than a dedicated gender expert.

<sup>223</sup> WFP and partner NGO respondents. GAM is a gender and age marker, a corporate tool that codes – on a 0 to 4 scale – the extent to which gender and age are integrated into the design and monitoring of a WFP country strategic plan.

<sup>224</sup> In the ACR 2021, WFP reported that gender parity within the country office increased from 38 percent to 41 percent. WFP respondents report that in 2022, it has increased further to 50 percent.

<sup>225</sup> WFP. The gendered nature of intra-household decision making in Cambodia. 2018.

<sup>226</sup> Government respondents.

155. The SO1 indicator “Proportion of targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges” was achieved. Respondents were found to feel safe accessing assistance.<sup>227</sup> However, issues were identified regarding the inability of women to access distribution points for take-home rations due to the distance and safety concerns when returning home in the dark.<sup>228</sup> Evidence of how WFP has addressed these issues was not available at the time of evaluation data collection.

## Environment

**Finding 20. Environment was mainstreamed into the CSP at the intervention level, but there was no overall environmental framing in the CSP.**

156. Environment was mainstreamed into the CSP at the intervention level, with consideration of sustainable technologies integrated into SO1 and SO2.<sup>229</sup> The design for the safe evacuation centres was screened for environmental risk before construction commenced.<sup>230</sup> WFP also worked with NGO partners to build and rehabilitate energy- and water-efficient school infrastructure in selected WFP-supported schools. In addition, many WFP-supported schools have gardens with vegetables to supplement the school meals and as a practical tool for children to learn about nutrition, natural resources management and the environment.<sup>231</sup>

157. The mid-term review did, however, find limitations with regard to environmental mainstreaming into all strategic outcomes and in-house environmental expertise and recommended environmental training for staff.<sup>232</sup> There was no further evidence from stakeholders or documentation with regard to integration of environmental concerns since the mid-term review, which was completed only four months before the CSPE data collection.

158. In 2020, an environmental sustainability indicator was added to SO1, SO2 and SO4, looking at the proportion of field-level agreements, memorandums of understanding and construction contracts for CSP activities screened for environmental and social risks. The target was met in 2021 only under Activity 2, in which WFP and partners conducted environmental risks screening for all asset-creation projects and these were used by the environmental management authorities to assess the risk level and the adequacy of mitigation measures.<sup>233</sup>

## Social inclusion

**Finding 21. There is limited reference within the CSP design to how disability and social inclusion should be systematically considered and monitored across the CSP portfolio, and limited evidence of results in this area.**

159. The country office has taken some steps to consider physical disabilities in infrastructure work, such as wheelchair access for schools where there is school feeding,<sup>234</sup> and consulted with people with disabilities through focus group discussions to assess both their needs and on how disability and gender have affected access to cash-based transfers<sup>235</sup> with support from the Regional Disability Inclusion Advisor.<sup>236</sup> However, the CSP had basic indicators, with limited corporate guidance on how disability and inclusion should factor more comprehensively across all strategic outcomes. The country office has also

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<sup>227</sup> WFP monitoring reports.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> For example: 150 energy-saving stoves, 1,500 water-efficient hand-washing stations, 20 water reservoirs and 41 wells in the school feeding programme (SO1), and through the environmentally friendly construction of six safe evacuations centres (SO2). WFP and subnational government respondents and ACR 2021.

<sup>230</sup> WFP respondents and ACR 2020.

<sup>231</sup> Cambodia. ACR 2018; CSP 2019-2023.

<sup>232</sup> Artival. Research and Education. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia CSP 2019-2023.

<sup>233</sup> WFP. ACR 2021.

<sup>234</sup> WFP respondents.

<sup>235</sup> WFP. 2022. Preliminary findings from the PWD/gender FGDs.

<sup>236</sup> WFP respondents.

made increasing effort to make sure that relevant analyses are disaggregated for different vulnerable sub-groups and has started to explore issues of intersectionality.<sup>237</sup>

160. WFP Cambodia has requested a donor-funded junior professional officer (JPO) to strengthen this aspect of programming and provided a foundation for a more solid integration of inclusion into the next CSP. The country office has also established an inclusion committee that will bring attention to these issues and strengthen the WFP response in the short term.<sup>238</sup>

#### **Accountability to affected populations (AAP) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**

**Finding 22. WFP has regularly consulted beneficiaries in relation to the programme design and implementation and enhanced the beneficiary feedback mechanism during the COVID-19 pandemic. Accountability to affected populations has been limited in design since the start of the CSP but WFP has recently been increasing attention to this area. United Nations agencies, including WFP, that have shifted to more upstream modalities, are still struggling to understand the relevance of PSEA in the absence of large-scale direct humanitarian action in the Cambodian development context.**

161. WFP has regularly consulted beneficiaries in relation to the programme design and implementation. This is confirmed by beneficiaries themselves in focus group discussions and<sup>239</sup> progress against accountability to affected population cross-cutting indicators, both reported respectively under SO1 and SO6. Table 12 shows positive results and incremental improvements from 2019 onwards regarding proportion of assisted people informed about the programme. However, in relation to Tier 1 beneficiaries under SO1 and SO6, there have been disparate activities that fall under feedback mechanisms, and these have not been conducted under an overall accountability to affected population framework in the first years of the CSP implementation. However, as referenced below, in mid-2022 a new, unified community feedback mechanism (CFM) system was introduced. In addition, there is a government community feedback mechanism for the national school feeding, but the set up for community feedback mechanism channels need to be reconsidered to align with preferences and contexts. Information-sharing about community feedback mechanism channels is needed to raise awareness on their availability.

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> FGD participants.



**Table 12. Accountability to affected population cross-cutting indicators**

Cross cutting indicator	2018*		2019		2020		2021	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS</b>								
<b>SO 1</b>								
Proportion of assisted people informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, length of assistance)	=90.00	89.00	=90	85.75	=90	97.87	=95	97.3
Proportion of project activities for which beneficiary feedback is documented, analyzed and integrated into programme improvements	-	-	=100	100	=100	100	=100	100
<b>SO 6</b>								
Proportion of assisted people informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, length of assistance)		-	-	-	≥90	100	≥90	86.2
Proportion of project activities for which beneficiary feedback is documented, analyzed and integrated into programme improvements		-	-	-			=100	100

Source: Elaboration from ACRs 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. \*For the year 2018, only values regarding "Education programme coverage area" have been considered.

162. The beneficiary feedback mechanism, established in 2014, has been an important tool, although focus group discussion participants had limited knowledge about the system and expressed a lack of confidence in using it, which makes use of a voice-recording device.<sup>240</sup>

163. In response to COVID-19 restrictions, WFP enhanced its beneficiary feedback mechanism, now named a community feedback mechanism. The school feeding programme used an interactive voice record system to collect feedback and a phone hotline was established in relation to cash-based transfers (Activity 7). An online system was recently rolled out.<sup>241</sup> Local school feeding committees played a critical role in engaging communities in planning the take-home rations and ensuring clear communication with beneficiaries ahead of distributions. In addition, in 2022 WFP Cambodia conducted a comprehensive community consultation with affected populations, including marginalized and diverse groups. Key recommendations emerging from the consultation include the need to: i) provide safe spaces, raise awareness of the community consultation for the community feedback and response mechanism (CFRM), WFP operations and key principles; ii) ensure inclusiveness of information, education and communication material; iii) increase accountability to affected populations through participation in both design and implementation, verify vulnerability targeting criteria, conduct additional assessment to inform the WFP country office accountability to affected population strategy.<sup>242</sup> An accountability to affected population officer was recruited in the fourth quarter of 2022 and in mid-2022, the country office also established one unified community feedback mechanism for activities under SO1 and SO6 with the phone hotline extended to SO1; however, this had not been functioning long enough for evidence to be available for analysis to be made for this evaluation.

<sup>240</sup> WFP respondents and FGD participants. FGDs were conducted with beneficiaries of both SO1 and SO6 activities; there was no difference in response between the two groups.

<sup>241</sup> WFP respondents.

<sup>242</sup> WFP. 2022. Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP): Community Consultation for Inclusive Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM).

164. For PSEA, WFP in Cambodia has some basic measures in place, such as a section on PSEA in NGO partnership agreements and staff capacity training.<sup>243</sup> A joint PSEA assessment with UNCT found that many agencies, particularly those that have shifted to more upstream modalities, are still struggling to understand the relevance of PSEA in a largely development-focused context, which lacks large-scale direct humanitarian action and these agencies are exploring how best to apply PSEA principles in the Cambodian context.<sup>244</sup> Engagement with national structures and systems in relation to these issues remains to be defined.

165. In 2021, UNCT created a PSEA Task Team in Cambodia; WFP has been an increasingly active member of this team.<sup>245</sup> UNICEF is the PSEA Task Force coordinator agency.<sup>246</sup> However, given that WFP leads on the Human Response Forum and the PSEA agenda is specifically grounded in the humanitarian sphere, the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office and other partners in Cambodia expect that WFP will be a leading partner.<sup>247</sup>

### Humanitarian principles

**Finding 23: WFP field emergency response interventions adhered to humanitarian principles and were in line with principles of humanity, impartiality and independence. Neutrality is not an applicable principle in the context of Cambodia.**

166. The CSP was designed from a development perspective with no specific humanitarian lens. In 2020 an emergency response strategic outcome, SO6, was added. The design of this strategic outcome<sup>248</sup> does not explicitly reference the humanitarian principles,<sup>249</sup> but its overall focus implicitly includes the humanitarian principle of humanity in respect to WFP's intention to address needs in Cambodia as far as feasible. WFP Cambodia has also sought to adhere to the principle of impartiality by utilizing the Government's geographical and other vulnerability-based targeting systems. For example, the IDPoor system, considered by the United Nations in Cambodia to be a non-discriminatory system, was used by WFP for targeting those most vulnerable during the floods for SO6 emergency response assistance.<sup>250</sup> The Government has been continually supported by the United Nations as a whole to ensure impartiality within the system, for example, by expanding registration criteria to include people living with HIV and people with disabilities.<sup>251</sup> In terms of independence, although a close partner to the Government, WFP remains autonomous from the political, military and other objectives of the Government, reflected also in its functioning as part of the United Nations system in the country. Neutrality is not an applicable principle to the context of Cambodia currently.

### Sub-question 2.3: To what extent are the achievements of the T-ICSP and current CSP likely to be sustainable, in particular from a financial, social, institutional and environmental perspective?

**Finding 24. There is a general confidence among stakeholders on the sustainability of the school feeding programme; the transition to a government-owned home-grown school feeding is a long-term process and requires continued engagement and analysis of the changing context and arising challenges and opportunities.**

<sup>243</sup> WFP respondents. And see and Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>244</sup> WFP and UN Resident Coordinator Office respondents. This risk assessment was discussed in key informant interviews but the report itself was not shared with the evaluation team.

<sup>245</sup> Other United Nations agency respondents.

<sup>246</sup> United Nations. 2021. PSEA Task Team Action Plan Updated 2021.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid. and other United Nations agency respondents.

<sup>248</sup> WFP. BR03.

<sup>249</sup> WFP definitions of humanitarian principles. WFP. 2018. Evaluation of WFP Policies on Humanitarian Principles in Humanitarian Contexts. Evaluation Report. OEV/2016.014.

<sup>250</sup> WFP, NGO partner, and other United Nations agency respondents. See also WFP Cambodia. Urban Vulnerability in Phnom Penh. May 2019.

<sup>251</sup> WFP. 2022. Evaluation of the UNDAF (2019-2023) in Cambodia. Evaluation Report. First Draft, 05 October 2022.

167. The school feeding programme remained stable during CSP implementation, accounting for 75 percent of the original CSP and 69 percent in the latest budget revision of December 2022.<sup>252</sup> The school feeding programme has a well-considered transition approach to move from traditional and hybrid models<sup>253</sup> to a government-owned, government-funded, and government-run home-grown school feeding programme. However, WFP and donors were keen on a faster pace of handover than the Government of Cambodia desired.<sup>254</sup> The transfer of the programme slowed down during the pandemic, but did not stop. The continued investment despite the constrained resources reflected the commitment of the Government to take over this programme. In 2022, the transition strategy realigned expectations between WFP and the Government for the transition and gradual handover of schools. In 2022 the handover took place as planned (see above under EQ2.1).<sup>255</sup>

168. While all stakeholders remain confident in the Government's commitment to maintaining a national school feeding programme in Cambodia, there are a number of risks, including: that a rushed timeline might impact longer-term sustainability of the programme; and the capacity of all stakeholders to recognize that a genuinely nationally owned school feeding programme may evolve into something different from the current programme.

169. These risks are offset by the long support WFP plans to provide, which has been the basis of the multi-year engagement with MoEYS for transition and has included the development of a monitoring and evaluation system for the national home-grown school feeding programme (NHGSFP) due to be launched in 2023.<sup>256</sup>

170. The recently endorsed Joint Transition Strategy, signed between WFP and MoEYS, and developed jointly between WFP, MoEYS, the NSPC, and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, towards a nationally owned HGSP programme addresses these potential risks and confirms the financial commitment towards sustainability of the handover and the targets outlined within the strategy.<sup>257</sup> It outlines the initial phase of systematic handover of school feeding implementation and management to the MoEYS, and how the MoEYS will expand the NHGSFP from 290 schools in 2022, aiming for a target of 685 schools by 2025 and full handover of 1,113 schools by 2028. There is also reference to a further expansion of the national programme towards 2030, which confirms a social and institutionalized commitment to school feeding in the country.<sup>258</sup>

171. This joint strategy is a key achievement by WFP in the longer-term objective of transition and, coupled with the securing of a new McGovern-Dole (MGD) grant starting from 2023 and supporting a longer transition timeline, it allows for a strong level of confidence in the transition process. However, there is still scepticism at school, commune, district and provincial levels regarding whether the Government has the skills and capacities required to manage this programme; there is strong demand for WFP to continue to provide support to districts post-handover.<sup>259</sup>

**Finding 25. The assessment of sustainability of intentions under strategic outcomes 2-4 is limited by the lack of an outcome-level results measuring framework in place. However, there are some levels of sustainability as part of WFP support to the Government, such as the launch and the operationalization of the National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy 2019–2023, but there is no**

<sup>252</sup> See more evidence and analysis in EQ4.1.

<sup>253</sup> According to the traditional model, meals were prepared using commodities that were centrally sourced and delivered to the schools by WFP; in addition, meals were prepared with ingredients that were procured in the local communities through the HGSP approach; the hybrid approach is a combination of both modalities.

<sup>254</sup> WFP, government, NGO, and other United Nations agency respondents. As previously referenced; this was reported consistently by multiple respondents, but it is not documented in any transition documents.

<sup>255</sup> WFP, government, NGO, and other United Nations agency respondents and see MoEYS and WFP. 2022. Joint Transition Strategy Towards a Nationally Owned HGSP.

<sup>256</sup> WFP RBB respondents and MoEYS and WFP. Joint Transition Strategy Towards a Nationally Owned HGSP. 2022.

<sup>257</sup> MoEYS and WFP. 2022. Joint Transition Strategy Towards a Nationally Owned HGSP.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Multiple subnational respondents.

**evidence on the current or future government financial or institutional commitment to implement them.**

172. Under SO3, the evaluation found sustainable longer-term benefits to the Government at both national and subnational levels: these include i) WFP partnership with RUPP to provide training to the Government; ii) the integration of disaster risk management modules within university curricula; iii) the development of PRISM for improved government disaster management, which was found to be well-integrated into government systems; and iv) WFP support to the Government on the social responsive social protection framework. This was confirmed by the respondents to this evaluation, who considered that WFP achieved sustainable results.<sup>260</sup>

173. Under SO2, activities, such as the construction of safe evacuation centres, were conducted in a sustainable manner at the local level, ensuring knowledge transfer, which included the development of standard operating procedures for local government use.<sup>261</sup>

174. Conditions are not yet in place to measure the WFP contribution to technical assistance and capacity strengthening as there is no outcome-level results measuring framework in place, hence the assessment of sustainability is limited. However, the evaluation found some level of sustainability as part of WFP support to the development of guidance on integrating food and security into local development plans to support the design and framing of the SRSP policy; and the launch and operationalization of the second NSFSN 2019–2023.

175. The draft UNDAF evaluation credits WFP and other agencies for the support provided to the Government in developing the second NSFSN and drafting the Cambodia Road Map for Food Systems for Sustainable Development 2030.<sup>262</sup> The establishment of the SUN business network is considered a sustainable system, bringing private sector resources into development goals.<sup>263</sup> However, there is no evidence on the current or future financial or institutional commitment or on the capacity of the Government to implement these structures and policies.

**Sub-question 2.4: To what extent did the T-ICSP and current CSP facilitate more strategic linkages between humanitarian, development cooperation and, where appropriate, contributions to peace?**

**Finding 26. When synergies were explicitly identified and leveraged, the CSP provided a good foundation for linkages between humanitarian, development and peace spheres but the CSP lacked an explicit strategy for this nexus.**

176. While the CSP did not specifically include reference to the triple nexus of humanitarian, development, and peace, it does refer to the double nexus (humanitarian and development) with regard to helping to “protect local food systems and strengthen the relief-development nexus.”<sup>264</sup> Beyond this, however, for the humanitarian-development aspects of the nexus, WFP did not develop a specific strategy to operationalize the linkages between them (though the later three-pillar approach reflects effort in this direction). More broadly, the nexus is not referenced in the 2019–2023 UNDAF.<sup>265</sup> While WFP has taken steps at the corporate level to deepen the approach and pointed out ways for the practical operationalization of peace in the CSPs, WFP contribution to the peace concept itself and the approach to pursue it is still under construction.<sup>266</sup> In light of this and the country context at the time of the design of the CSP, it is therefore reasonable that the Cambodia CSP design did not articulate the triple nexus as such, nor the peace component.

<sup>260</sup> WFP, government, NGO, and other United Nations agency respondents.

<sup>261</sup> WFP, government and NGO partner respondents; FGD participants; and ACR 2020 and ACR 2021.

<sup>262</sup> United Nations 2022. Evaluation of the UNDAF (2019–2023) in Cambodia. Evaluation Report. First draft, 05 October 2022.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> WFP. Cambodia CSP (2019–2023) WFP/EB.1/2019/8-A/2. 2019.

<sup>265</sup> United Nations. UNDAF 2019–2023.

<sup>266</sup> For example, the “WFP CSP Policy” refers to the humanitarian-development nexus, but the peace component is not yet sufficiently articulated.

177. Operationally, and reflecting the changing context and increasing government interest in this area after the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP in Cambodia positions itself within the 'double nexus' space<sup>267</sup> through its work on shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) under SO3. This includes linking emergency preparedness and response to capacity strengthening for disaster response management (see additional details under EQ2.1).<sup>268</sup>

178. SRSP has strong potential to be the foundational 'bridge' to the double nexus. SRSP fits currently under Pillar 2, integrated risk management (SO3), but there are potential synergies that could be explored with Pillar 1, on social protection, linking to both school feeding as a form of social assistance (SO1) and also more humanitarian-oriented interventions (SO6). There is an opportunity within the next CSP to develop stronger linkages between humanitarian and resilience-building related activities.

## 2.3 EQ.3: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS WFP USED ITS RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY IN CONTRIBUTING TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUTS AND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES?

### Sub-question 3.1: To what extent were outputs delivered within the intended timeframe of the CSP – 2019-2023?

**Finding 27. WFP was able to rapidly adapt the school feeding programme to the changing context and continued to implement it in a timely manner but experienced some delays in planned handover to the government-owned HGSF programme for reasons that were outside WFP control.**

#### Pillar 1. Social protection

179. WFP delivered its school feeding assistance in a timely way. On-site school meals were provided as per planned timeline (see EQ.2.1)<sup>269</sup> also after the repurposing of on-site school feeding programme to take-home rations.<sup>270</sup> WFP made efforts to ensure timely reporting through the switch to a new digital School Feeding Information System (SFIS – Version 1), which is expected to be progressively integrated into the MoEYS reporting system.<sup>271</sup>

180. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the handover to the government-owned HGSF programme, resulting in an extended timeline compared to plan. However, the 2022-2025 Transition Strategy Phase 1 has extended the deadline to complete the overall transition by 2028.<sup>272</sup>

**Finding 28. WFP responded rapidly to unforeseen circumstances in 2020, but experienced technical challenges causing delays in the provision of cash-based transfer assistance.**

181. While WFP reacted rapidly to the unforeseen circumstances, activating a crisis response outcome in October 2020 in response to the flooding and the COVID-19 pandemic, it experienced delays in setting up

<sup>267</sup> WFP, government, and other United Nations agency respondents. See also ACR 2021 and Artival Research and Evaluation. 2021. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia CSP 2019-2023. Final Report and WFP. 2021. Exploring thresholds for triggering shock-responsive social protection responses in Cambodia.

<sup>268</sup> WFP, government, donor, and other United Nations agency respondents, See also ACR 2020, ACR 2021, and WFP. 2021. Exploring thresholds for triggering shock-responsive social protection responses in Cambodia.

<sup>269</sup> Indicator reports confirm the achievement of targets for distribution of food. WFP, government, and NGO partner respondents confirm timeliness of on-site school feeding prior to COVID-19. The MGD Midterm Evaluation - WFP. 2022. MGD Mid-Term Activity Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant (FFE-442-2019-013-00) 01 Nov 2019-30 Oct 2023 – confirms the timeliness of onsite school meals.

<sup>270</sup> District and provincial level respondents, FGD participants, and see also: The MGD Midterm Evaluation - WFP. 2022. MGD Midterm Activity Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant (FFE-442-2019-013-00) 01 Nov 2019-30 Oct 2023. and WFP. Post-Distribution Monitoring Reports 2020 and 2021.

<sup>271</sup> District- and provincial-level respondents. The SFIS aims to assist its users (MoEYS, WFP and partners) to track supplies, generate reports, and make adjustments as needed, ensuring more visibility over efficiency and timeliness. Currently provincial- and district-level stakeholders report that schools and local government have limited capacity to use SFIS, including challenges with installing the software required. The system has not been in place long enough for this evaluation to make any assessment of its contribution to better timeliness.

<sup>272</sup> Joint transition strategy towards a nationally owned HGSFP Cambodia Phase 1: 2022-2025 17 March 2022.

the cash-based transfer systems. Technical issues arose from the method of digital payment used by the agent, as this used services from mobile companies that were different to those usually used by recipients of assistance.<sup>273</sup> WFP conducted a number of lesson learning exercises on cash-based transfer with the aim of improving performance.<sup>274</sup> It was able to resolve key issues, such as those related to digital literacy levels and mobile phone ownership of recipients.

**Finding 29. COVID-19 restrictions led to delays in the construction of evacuation centres and the delivery of training associated with them, as well as other capacity strengthening and policy support activities.**

## **Pillar 2. Integrated risk management**

182. Most activities under SO3 and SO5 were implemented within the intended timeframe, with some delays mainly related to COVID-19 restrictions on travel and meetings, and social distancing requirements (see Section 2.2).<sup>275</sup>

183. For SO2, the construction of evacuation centres was delayed, taking two years to complete rather than one.<sup>276</sup> This was partly due to the extended preparatory phase in 2019 and the COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, which impeded the ability of construction work and impacted on the delivery of associated trainings, which were finally completed in 2020.<sup>277</sup>

## **Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition**

184. Under SO4, activities were implemented in a timely manner in 2018 and 2019, and the previous version of PRISM enabled the National Committee for Disaster Management to leverage data for decision making to respond to shocks and disasters and respond rapidly to the needs of most vulnerable groups, supporting timely and effective coordination during the 2018 July-August floods.<sup>278</sup>

185. COVID-19 had a direct impact on the timing of capacity strengthening and policy support<sup>279</sup> activities due to government restrictions on gatherings in 2020 and 2021. However, some activities incurred delays due to revised government timing. For example, preparation of the Joint Food Security Report with the National Institute of Statistics was postponed to 2022 due to delays in the analysis of the national survey data.<sup>280</sup>

### **Sub-question 3.2. To what extent does the depth and breadth of coverage ensure that the most vulnerable to food insecurity benefit from the programme?**

**Finding 30. The CSP mainly targeted children in vulnerable areas and those affected by COVID-19. The IDPoor system for selection of beneficiaries under SO1 and SO6, however, raises questions on whether the most vulnerable are being targeted. The recent development from 2020 onwards of an on-demand IDPoor platform by the Government, enabled a more effective targeting of the most vulnerable under SO6.**

<sup>273</sup> See FGDs with beneficiaries in Ko Koh Village and in Srae Sdok Commune, Kandieng District and Operational research on the WFP Cash Assistance Programme in Cambodia. Oxford Policy Management. February 2022.

<sup>274</sup> WFP, government, NGOs, and donor respondents and WFP. 2022. Preliminary findings from the PWD/Gender FGDs.

<sup>275</sup> 2020 ACR.

<sup>276</sup> No activities were foreseen in 2019 under SO2. WFP however received earmarked funds, which enabled the construction of e.g. evacuation centres. The CSP budget was approved only in December 2019 and therefore the construction work started in 2020 (WFP. 2019. ACR). See also WFP, district and provincial level government and NGO respondents and FGD participants; Artival Research & Evaluation; 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>277</sup> WFP and government respondents. See also Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023. and ACR 2020 and 2021.

<sup>278</sup> ACR 2018 and 2019.

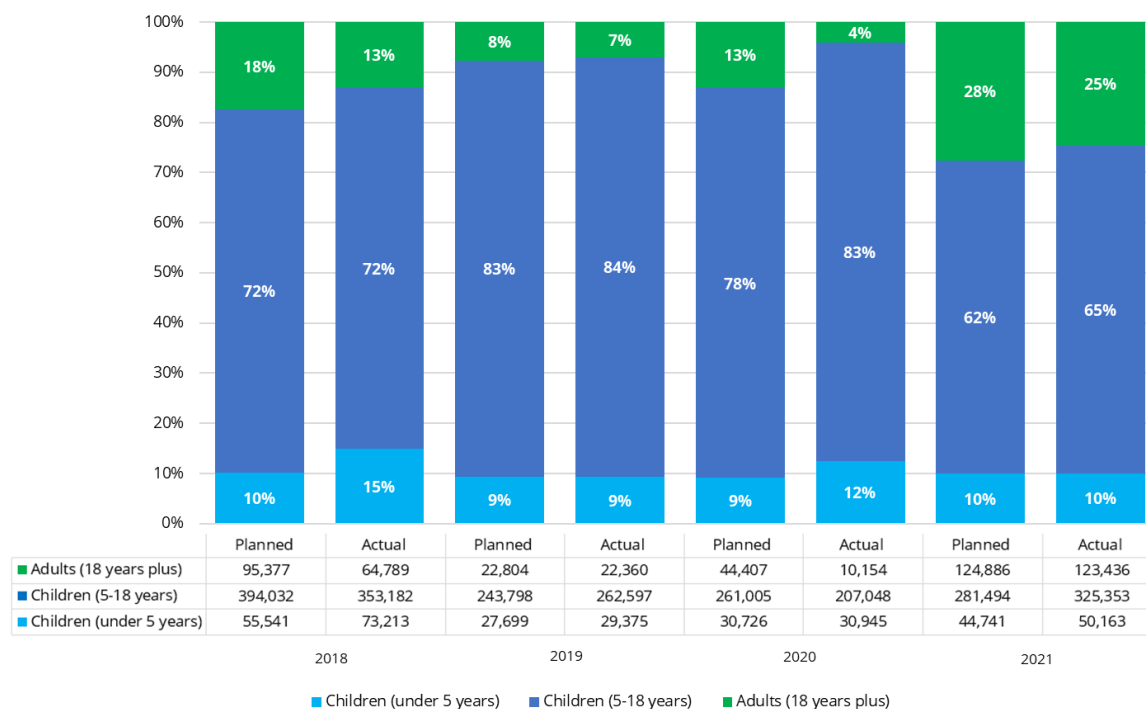
<sup>279</sup> Mid-Term Activity Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant (FFE-442-2019-013-00) for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia, Final Report - November 2022.

<sup>280</sup> WFP respondents and ACR 2021.



186. Figure 13 shows that most beneficiaries were school-age children, due to the focus on school feeding. The number of planned and actual beneficiaries under SO1 and SO6 continuously increased during the CSP, only dropping in 2020 due to COVID-19-related school closures and subsequently increasing thereafter. As detailed in Figure 13, the largest group of beneficiaries is composed of children from 5 to 18 years.

**Figure 13. Planned and actual beneficiaries by age group (T-ICSP and CSP)**



Source: CM-R001b-Annual country beneficiaries\_v1.4, data extracted on 09.09.2022.

187. Targeting is based not on individual/household needs, but on the status of schools, which are selected at the district level, using data from the Ministry of Planning data on IDPoor. Selection criteria used by the ministry include: net admission rate; dropout rate; completion rate; poverty rates; levels of stunting, wasting; and average weight.

188. Geographical targeting was found to be appropriate, with school feeding programmes implemented mostly in the poorer, rural districts according to the indicators in paragraph 187 (Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and, Oddar Meanchey).

189. IDPoor data was updated for each province only once every three years. During COVID-19, the vulnerability landscape changed, with newly poor, and newly near-poor areas. This shone a spotlight on concerns development partners had expressed for a while with regard to issues of exclusion. However, under SO6, WFP conducted operational research into the cash-based transfer programme (which used IDPoor targeting) and found no statistically relevant inclusion or exclusion errors.<sup>281</sup>

190. The Ministry of Planning has invested in updating its IDPoor system, which provides an opportunity to reassess the selection process and criteria. In 2020 the Government launched a new on-demand IDPoor platform, rather than relying on infrequent registration rounds, allowing for people to register at any time.<sup>282</sup> Current efforts supported by WFP are ongoing to identify not only the current poor but also the

<sup>281</sup> WFP. 2022. Operational Research on the WFP Cash Transfer Programme in Cambodia.

<sup>282</sup> Royal Government of Cambodia. Department of Identification of Poor Households. IDPoor History. <https://idpoor.gov.kh/en/about/>.

near-poor, in order to have a more comprehensive database that can be used for more effective targeting,<sup>283</sup> overlaying with geographical disaster data such those available in PRISM.

191. WFP has produced data to enhance evidence-based programming and improve targeting. This work has been conducted under vulnerability analysis and mapping activities, originally formulated as a specific activity (5) under SO3. However, in fact vulnerability analysis and mapping work supports the entire portfolio in Cambodia, and includes aspects such as: food price monitoring; market assessment updates; and other resources, such as a 2021 Macro IT (MAITA) Desk Review on Preparedness Action,<sup>284</sup> with an accompanying Macro IT Assessment Tool. The GIS unit established in 2020 supported mapping and other disaster-related activities in 2021.

192. WFP has also supported national entities with their capacity strengthening for data gathering and analysis. For example, it helped the National Institute of Statistics produce the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2019 report and incorporate food security and nutrition into the national survey database.

### Sub-question 3.3: To what extent were WFP activities cost-efficient in delivery of assistance?

**Finding 31. WFP demonstrated cost efficiency in its CSP delivery, supported by the conversion from in-kind provision to cash-based transfers. There are limited available data to assess the cost efficiency of the delivery of capacity strengthening activities.**

193. As summarized in Table 13, the allocated resources over the duration of the CSP exceeded the needs-based plan<sup>285</sup> (111 percent), while expenditures reached 56 percent of allocated resources. The gap between these two percentages and the low expenditure level recorded one year prior to the end of the CSPs mostly due to the new funding (mid-September 2022) from the United States of America under SO1.

**Table 13. Need-based plan, allocated resources and expenditures (over CSP lifetime)**

	Need based plan USD (BR05)	Allocated resources USD	Expenditure USD	% allocated resources on NBP (BR05)	% expenditure of allocated resources
Total operational cost	75,648,698	84,093,265	47,000,426	111%	56%

Source: Cambodia BR05 and ACR1-A\_Standard Country Report (CSP 2019-2023), data as of 31/12/2022.

### Pillar 1. Social protection

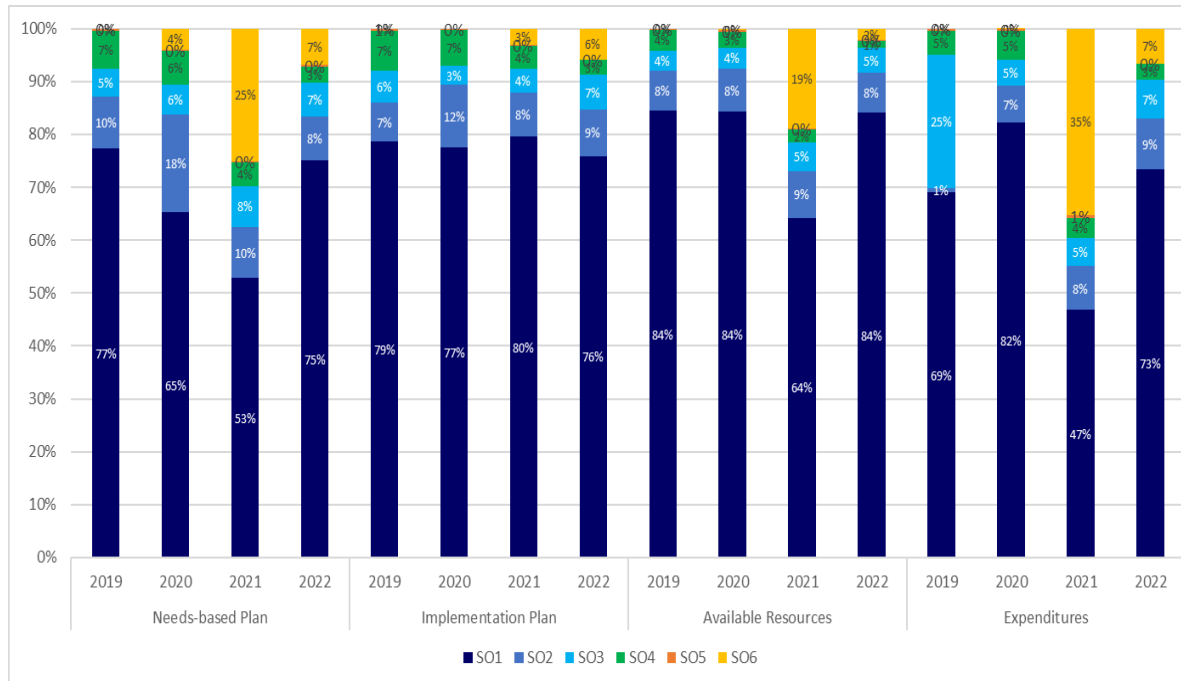
194. The school feeding programme represents a substantial proportion of the CSP; the total needs-based plan allocated to the school feeding programme was 77 percent in 2019, slightly decreased to 75 percent in 2022. Even higher percentages are reported for the implementation plan; the available resources; and the expenditures, as displayed in Figure 14.

<sup>283</sup> Government respondents.

<sup>284</sup> WFP. 2021. Macro IT MAITA desk review.

<sup>285</sup> Compared to WFP global funding operational requirements at 65 percent in 2021, corresponding to USD 9.6 billion received in contributions, compared to operational needs of USD 14.8 billion. Source: APR 2021. At the regional level, the ratio between allocated resources and the needs-based plan of all RBB countries stands at 49 percent in 2022. Source: Financial Resource Dashboard 2022.

**Figure 14. Overview of the needs-based plan, implementation plan, available resources and expenditures per strategic outcome (CSP)**



Source: ACRs 2019, 2020, 2021.

195. The school feeding programme in Cambodia has been the subject of six decentralized evaluation exercises since 2018. While there is no specific evaluation on the efficiency of other strategic outcomes,<sup>286</sup> for SO1 WFP has undertaken a cost analysis for the Government. However, this study was limited to the cost of the food and meal preparation at the school level, without including costs for management, monitoring, reporting and supervision of the programme.<sup>287</sup> The 2021 WFP country office audit further highlights that the lack of an oversight framework for the use of funds within the HGSP programme has an impact on the capacity to monitor efficiency.<sup>288</sup>

196. As per paragraph 134, WFP has conducted many market-price studies. These include quarterly food price updates and monthly food security and market functionality updates, as well as one-off reports, such as the Estimating Minimum Expenditure Baskets and Expenditure Gaps (2020).<sup>289</sup> This allowed WFP to monitor cost efficiency of the programme to a certain extent. For SO6, WFP produced a macro financial assessment, which provides an overall recommendation for ensuring an efficient cash-based transfer with minimized risk.<sup>290</sup>

197. In this regard, Table 14 and Table 15 compare the cost components for both cash-based transfer and food between 2019 and 2022. With respect to cash-based transfer distribution under SO1, management costs increased significantly in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 and the subsequent need to shift to take-home rations (see EQ1.4 and EQ2.1), but started to decrease in 2022.<sup>291</sup> Cash-based transfer management costs under SO6 followed a similar trend. SO6 appeared to be more cost-efficient than SO1, with a lower

<sup>286</sup> This includes baseline studies and evaluations across the MGD grant and the LRP.

<sup>287</sup> WFP. 2022. Mid-Term Activity Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant (FFE-442-2019-013-00) for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia. 01 November 2019 to 30 October 2023. Decentralized Evaluation Report. Final Report - November 2022.

<sup>288</sup> WFP. 2021. Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Cambodia. Office of the Inspector General Internal Audit Report AR/21/12.

<sup>289</sup> WFP. 2020. Technical Report. Estimating Minimum Expenditure Baskets and Expenditure Gaps in Cambodia.

<sup>290</sup> WFP. 2019. Macro Financial Assessment, Cambodia.

<sup>291</sup> WFP and NGO partner respondents. See also monthly WFP market updates and quarterly WFP food price updates.

overall ratio between cash-based transfer costs and cash-based transfer value<sup>292</sup> (7 percent versus 12 percent). It is worth noting that that, only for 2022, the trend is reversed.

**Table 14. Cash-based transfer cost components (CSP)**

CBT Cost Category		2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
SO1	CBT - value (USD)	766,915	272,513	583,021	2,312,515	3,934,964
	CBT - delivery cost (USD)	1,407	369	346	0	2,122
	CBT - management cost (USD)	78,228	104,039	106,328	69,493	358,088
	CBT - cooperating partner cost (USD)	40,178	20,131	32,294	38,548	131,151
	<b>CBT costs/CBT value (%)</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>12%</b>
SO6	CBT - value (USD)			4,141,926	730,582	4,872,508
	CBT - delivery cost (USD)			35,797	9,699	45,496
	CBT - management cost (USD)			123,282	75,464	198,746
	CBT - cooperating partner cost (USD)			97,647	4,208	101,855
	<b>CBT costs/CBT value (%)</b>			<b>6%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>7%</b>

Source: CBP\_Plan\_vs\_Actual Report, data as of 31 Dec 2022 (extracted on 26.01.2023).

198. Analysing food distribution under SO1, some cost components (for example, 'other food-related costs'<sup>293</sup>) increased in 2020 due to the pandemic, without decreasing significantly in 2021 and 2022. Transport costs doubled in 2022 and represents the highest cost per ton distributed. For SO6, costs related to food storage were reported higher in 2020 than 2021. SO6 appeared once again to be more cost-efficient than SO1, with a lower ratio between food costs and food value (21 percent versus 45 percent).

**Table 15. Food cost components (CSP)**

Food Cost Category		2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
SO1	Food - value (USD)	1,361,778	4,443,473	756,219	2,087,075	8,648,545
	Food - other food related costs (USD)	26,177	119,985	26,477	25,445	198,084
	Food - transport (USD)	308,213	581,832	359,728	696,556	1,946,329
	Food - storage (USD)	180,032	131,704	119,464	134,476	565,676
	Food - port (USD)	8,075	18,678	1,269	1,397	29,419
	Food - supply chain management costs (USD)	407,643	309,144	189,470	146,102	1,052,359
	Food - cooperating partner costs (USD)	27,523	25,434	13,187	18,379	84,523
	<b>Food costs/Food value (%)</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>45%</b>
SO6	Food - value (USD)		0	64,927		64,927
	Food - other food related costs (USD)		0	1,212		1,212
	Food - transport (USD)		7,685			7,685
	Food - storage (USD)		2,990	1,898		4,888
	Food - port (USD)		0			0
	Food - cooperating partner costs (USD)		0			0
	<b>Food costs/Food value (%)</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>5%</b>		<b>21%</b>

Source: CBP\_Plan\_vs\_Actual Report, data as of 31 Dec 2022 (extracted on 26.01.2023).

<sup>292</sup> CBT delivery cost includes both CBT management and CBT cooperating partner costs, whereas CBT value indicate the actual value of the CBT provided.

<sup>293</sup> This includes for example cost of insuring commodities in all supply chain (SC) stages and cost of inspecting the quality, weight, and packaging of commodities (quality & quantity).

199. Overall, and in line with widely documented findings in the international literature,<sup>294</sup> costs related to food distribution are higher than cash-based transfer due to their associated requirements (purchase, transportation, storage and distribution). This holds true under SO1 (12 versus 45 percent) and SO6 (7 percent versus 21 percent) (see Table 15). This is further confirmed by the cost per beneficiary analysis (see Table 16), where costs under SO6 are lower than SO1 for both food and cash-based transfer. The school feeding programme incorporates a number of technical assistance costs related to the transition to HGSF.<sup>295</sup>

**Table 16. Costs per beneficiary (CSP)**

SOs	Beneficiaries and costs (US\$)	2019		2020		2021		2022	
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
SO 1 (Food)	Beneficiaries	274,900	296,472	221,401	303,295	249,565	333,954	-	-
	Intervention cost	1,219,357	957,664	1,268,082	1,186,777	1,093,622	709,595	1,138,861	1,022,355
	Cost per beneficiary	4,4	3,2	5,7	3,9	4,4	2,1		
SO1 (CBT)	Beneficiaries	56,900	55,439	50,337	41,513	-	-	-	-
	Intervention cost	183,535	119,813	197,061	124,539	413,434	138,968	375,125	108,041
	Cost per beneficiary	3,2	2,2	3,9	3	-	-		
SO 6 (Food)	Beneficiaries	-	-	12,800	12,750	-	-	-	-
	Intervention cost			13,968	10,674	-	3,110	-	-
	Cost per beneficiary			1,1	0,8	-	-		
SO6 (CBT)	Beneficiaries	0	0	51,600	0	188,025	175,818	-	-
	Intervention cost			34,366	0	502,906	256,726	96,716	89,371
	Cost per beneficiary			0,7		2,7	1,5		

Note: Number of beneficiaries by activity includes overlaps. Actual intervention cost includes the following cost components for food: FTC-other food-related costs, FTC-transport, FTC-storage, FTC-port and FTC-cooperating partner. Actual intervention cost includes the following cost components for CBT: CBT-delivery cost, CBT-management cost; CBT cooperating partner cost.

Source: CBP\_Plan\_vs\_Actual Report, data as of 31 Dec 2022 (data extracted on 26.01.2023). Note that final consolidated beneficiaries for 2022 were not available when evaluation was carried out.

## Pillar 2. Integrated risk management & Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition

200. There are limited available data to assess the cost efficiency of the delivery of capacity strengthening activities. This is confirmed by the 2021 audit, which reports that the country office monitoring being focused on school feeding programme has hindered the efficient monitoring of other activities under SO2, SO3 and SO4.<sup>296</sup>

201. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cambodia country office discussed the use of the baseline cost of the diet and/or essential needs analysis and Shock Impact Simulation Model (SISMOD) tool to

<sup>294</sup> See Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (2015) Humanitarian cash transfers: cost, value for money and economic impact background note for the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, London, ODI.

<sup>295</sup> WFP and NGO partner respondents.

<sup>296</sup> WFP. 2021. Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Cambodia. Office of the Inspector General Internal Audit Report AR/21/12.

understand how the model could be used to measure the impact of COVID-19 on access to essential needs. However, there are no data for upstream activities under SO2, SO3 or SO4 with regard to any consideration of more cost-effective alternatives.<sup>297</sup>

## 2.4. EQ.4: 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?

**Sub-question 4.1: To what extent has WFP been able to mobilize adequate, timely, predictable and flexible resources to finance the current CSP?**

**Finding 33. WFP Cambodia has been successful at resource mobilization, with the CSP being funded at 111 percent. However, the high level of predictability is coupled with limited flexibility of funding.**

202. During the period 2019-2022, available resources have been consistently higher than the needs-based plan (Figure 15). Cumulatively, for the CSP duration of January 2019 to December 2023 as per BR05, 111 percent of the needs-based plan has been funded, at USD 84.1 million of the USD 75.7 million required across the period. SO1, which represents 70 percent of the budget, saw a slight drop in the resources and expenditures in 2020, which was in line with the needs-based plan. However, in 2021, expenditures continued to drop, even though both the needs-based plan and the available resources had increased, but the trend was reversed in 2022, mostly due to the new McGovern-Dole agreement available from the last quarter of 2022 that pushed SO1 expenditures.

203. The emergency response activity under SO6 secured nearly USD 5.5 million of available resources in 2021, as donors increased their contributions to address both the October 2020 floods and the COVID-19 crisis.

**Figure 15. Overview of needs-based plan, available resources, implementation plan and expenditures per strategic outcome (CSP)**



Source: ACRs 2019, 2020 and 2021. For 2022, the source is ACR5\_Annual Country Report as of 31.12.2023.

204. As shown in Figure 16, multilateral directed contributions<sup>298</sup> for the CSP have been earmarked predominantly at the activity level (75.5 percent), followed by the country level (17.9 percent) and the

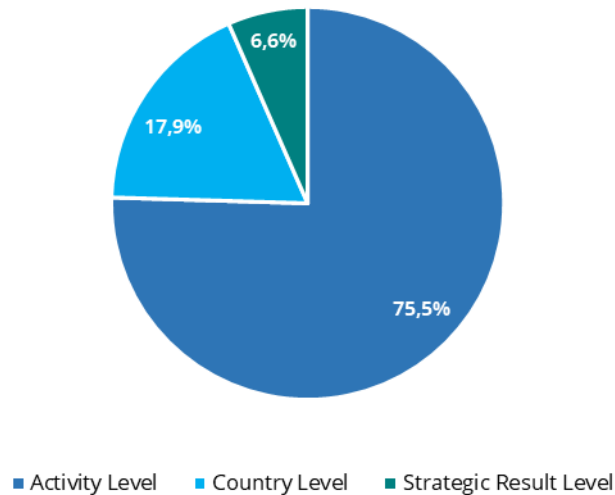
<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Multilateral directed contributions are funds, which a donor requests WFP to direct to a specific country/ies SO/s, or activity/ies.



strategic outcome level (6.6 percent). Earmarking prevents shifting funds across activities, and donors might also apply restrictions on moving funds. As per analysis of WFP funding at the corporate level, in 2018, 84 percent of directed contributions were earmarked at the activity level and this share fell to 71 percent in 2019.<sup>299</sup> While the CSP model intended to reduce earmarking, in the early deployment of the model by WFP it was noted that earmarking increased in countries, as activities were made more visible to donors.<sup>300</sup>

**Figure 16. Multilateral contributions by level of earmarking (or pre-allocation)**



Source: Distribution and Contribution Forecast. Data extracted on 27.01.2023.

205. Multi-year funding has increased predictability for CSP implementation. This was also confirmed by respondents of this evaluation.<sup>301</sup> In terms of duration, most long-term support falls within SO2, which addresses resilience, followed by SO1 and SO4, both of which are connected to the root causes (see Table 17). The shortest duration of grant is associated with the crisis response focus area (SO6), followed by SO3, which focuses on shock preparedness and response, and SO5, supply chain management and warehousing.

<sup>299</sup> WFP. 2020. Strategic Evaluation of Funding WFP's Work. Evaluation Report Volume I. Rome: WFP Office of Evaluation.

<sup>300</sup> WFP. 2018. Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans. Evaluation Report.

<sup>301</sup> ACR 2021 and WFP staff.

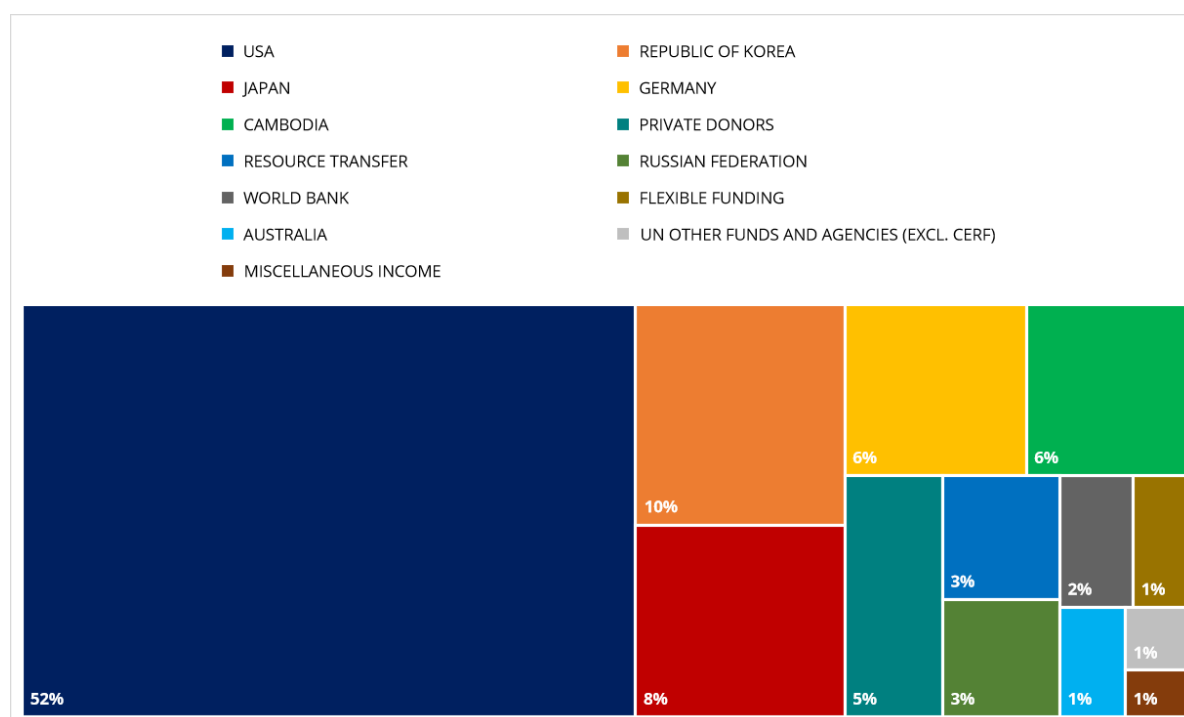
**Table 17. Average duration of grants**

Strategic outcome (SO)	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6
Average duration grant (months)	30.8	47.6	16.4	24.1	20.9	11.3

Source: Elaboration of the evaluation team from CPS Grant Balance Report\_v03. The predictability has been calculated including multi-year grants and assigning to the terminal disbursement date (TDD) undefined data the end of CSP data (31/12/2023). Data extracted on 07/03/2023.

206. The main donors for CSP are the United States of America, covering 52 percent of the total contributions, mainly earmarked at the activity level, followed by the Republic of Korea (10 percent), Japan (8 percent), Germany (6 percent), the Government of Cambodia (6 percent) and private donors (5 percent)– see Figure 17.

**Figure 17. Cambodia funding sources by donor (CSP)<sup>302</sup>**



Source: Cambodia Resource Situation, data as of 31/12/2022.

**Sub-question 4.2: To what extent were the monitoring and reporting systems useful to track and demonstrate progress towards expected outcomes and to inform management decisions?**

**Finding 34. While most of the indicators have been tracked and were aligned with corporate minimum requirements, monitoring and reporting mainly focused on school feeding and lacked a meaningful measurement framework for capacity strengthening, hampering the utility of monitoring and evaluation for informing management decisions across all strategic outcomes.**

207. The country office’s monitoring, review and evaluation plan of the CSP, aimed to monitor all activities across strategic outcomes. While most of the output and outcome indicators have been tracked, the CSP necessarily utilized corporate indicators to measure the effectiveness and sustainability of country capacity strengthening activities, which were inadequate for meaningful monitoring. This was also confirmed by the

<sup>302</sup> “Other” includes: Australia, 2 percent; miscellaneous income, 1 percent; UN other funds and agencies, 1 percent; and emerging donors matching fund (EDMF), 1 percent.

2021 audit report<sup>303</sup> and in the mid-term review,<sup>304</sup> which found that with regard to outcome indicators for SO2, SO3 and SO4, the measurement framework for capacity strengthening has no indicators to measure the actual improvement in knowledge, or changes in attitudes and behaviours as a result of training activities.

208. Monitoring of SO1 is significantly different from the other strategic outcomes, with 33 output indicators and 18 outcome indicators, while other strategic outcomes have between 3 and 6 output indicators. SO2 to SO5 have 1 outcome indicator each and SO6 has 7 outcome indicators (see Annex 8).<sup>305</sup> In addition, only SO1 and SO6 provided regular monitoring reports, with SO1 delivering quarterly progress monitoring reports and SO6 producing monthly process monitoring reports and four outcome monitoring dashboards. Although there is extensive monitoring data for SO1, the scope for programmatic decision making is limited to the parameters of the grants, specifically the McGovern-Dole grant and the LRP, which fund the overall programme and align now with the Joint Transition Strategy agreed with the Government.

209. Other strategic outcomes have largely relied on annual capacity strengthening reports and focus group discussions as a means to track progress,<sup>306</sup> but there is no evidence available as to how these annual reports informed management decisions.

210. In the country office structure, the M&E unit was originally under SO1 but a new cross-cutting reporting, assessment and monitoring (RAM) unit merging both vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation functions was created in 2021 to systematically mainstream generation and use of evidence across all CSP activities and provide a broader platform for generating evidence across the CSP as a whole. Since then, substantial investments in evidence architecture, such as developing a country office research agenda and theories of change, have been made. The rationale for changing it was based on the fact that the initial CSP structure with monitoring and evaluation under SO1 did not allow for meaningful use of monitoring data for SO2-SO5 to inform management decisions.<sup>307</sup> The unit now comprises eight staff: three national vulnerability analysis and mapping staff members, two national monitoring and evaluation staff members, one international monitoring and evaluation staff member and a Head of Unit. With regard to T-ICSP outcome and output indicators that were tracked under SO1 and SO2, there is no evidence as to the extent to which monitoring informed management decisions prior to the CSP being introduced.

#### **Sub-question 4.3: To what extent did the T-ICSP and current CSP lead to partnerships and collaborations with other actors that positively influenced performance and results?**

**Finding 35. The flexibility of WFP Cambodia, and its responsiveness to evolving priorities allowed the country office to maintain and develop effective partnerships that positively influenced performance and results for all upstream country capacity strengthening and for the school feeding programme, particularly the transition to HGSE.**

211. During the design of the CSP, there was a conscious decision to develop strategic partnership agreements with different government entities. Partners, such as CARD, were consulted during the preparation of the CSP; government partnerships were designed or tailored for specific activities with the

<sup>303</sup> WFP. 2021. Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Cambodia. Office of the Inspector General Internal Audit Report AR/21/12.

<sup>304</sup> Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>305</sup> SO1 and SO6 Tier 1 direct beneficiaries are identifiable and recorded individuals who receive direct transfers from WFP or from a cooperating partner, to improve their food security and nutrition status. Institutional capacity strengthening does not have Tier 1 beneficiaries. SO3, SO4 and SO5 Tier 2 beneficiaries are those individuals who have access to assets, knowledge and capacity, commodities or services transferred or delivered in their communities or catchment areas as a result of, but not directly through, WFP support. SO2 Tier 3 beneficiaries consist of a wider targeted population impacted who indirectly benefit from the effects of WFP technical assistance and support to government policies, and national systems and programmes. Source: Guidance Note on Estimating and Counting Beneficiaries (2019 and 2021).

<sup>306</sup> As reflected in the WFP Cambodia, CSP Monitoring, Review and Evaluation Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>307</sup> WFP respondents. Also see Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

aim to shift WFP from activity implementation to strengthening national capacities and building scalable programme models. WFP did conduct capacity needs in 2021 assessments, which the country office based on the corporate capacity needs mapping framework of the time based on five strategic pathways (policy and regulatory framework; institutional mandate and coordination; sustainable finance; programme design and delivery; and role of communities). However, it did not conduct an in-depth assessment at the design stage of the benefits of these potential partnerships, nor define the optimal coordination modalities across different ministries and at both national and subnational levels.

212. In the course of CSP implementation, WFP established strong relationships with government entities at the national level, including CARD and the Ministry of Planning (SO4), NCDM (SO3), and NCDDS (SO2) and particularly with MoEYS, with whom it has a direct and continuous relationship through the school feeding programme (SO1), along with less defined and unstructured linkages under SO5-SO6 (see Table 18).

**Table 18. Mapping of main relationships between strategic outcomes and primary line ministries / government bodies**

SO	Line ministries / government bodies								
	CARD	MoH	MoP	MAFF	MoEYS	MoSVY	NCDDS	NCDM	NSAF
SO1					X				
SO2						X	X		
SO3								X	~
SO4	X	~	X	~					
SO5									
SO6								X	

Source: Evaluation Team, 'X' represents well-established relationships with formalized partnerships between that strategic outcome and the line ministry or government body. '~' represents newer, less established, more informal partnerships that have the potential to become stronger.

213. With regard to partnerships with United Nations agencies, the CSP achieved its intended results,<sup>308</sup> in particular continuing active engagement in the SUN network<sup>309</sup> and ensuring close collaboration with other United Nations agencies, especially the Rome-based agencies.<sup>310</sup> WFP enjoyed a strong partnership with FAO,<sup>311</sup> such as through the joint chairing of the UNDAF nutrition accelerator, and reportedly ensured smooth cooperation with other United Nations agencies, such as UNICEF when supporting cross-ministerial government initiatives, like the new Family Package.<sup>312</sup> There is no substantive direct relationship with the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), which has one staff member in Cambodia, and which acts only as a grant-making body in the country.<sup>313</sup>

214. WFP has cultivated partnerships across civil society and the private sector including international and national NGOs and other organizations such as Agri House,<sup>314</sup> which started collaboration with WFP in May 2022 under an innovation grant-funding programme on work for healthy snacks for schoolchildren. WFP partners with NGOs both bilaterally, and through leadership of coordination mechanisms such as the Humanitarian Response Forum (see EQ1.4). In general, the evaluation found strong, productive and respectful partnerships between WFP and civil society and WFP and the private sector, with WFP being

<sup>308</sup> WFP, other United Nations agency, government, and NGO partner respondents.

<sup>309</sup> Other United Nations agency and NGO partner respondents and see WFP. 2022. Evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2019-2023) in Cambodia. Evaluation Report. First Draft, 05 October 2022.

<sup>310</sup> WFP. 2019. Cambodia CSP (2019-2023).

<sup>311</sup> WFP and other United Nations agency respondents. See all ACR 2019, ACR 2020 and ACR 2021.

<sup>312</sup> Government and other United Nations agency respondents.

<sup>313</sup> WFP respondents.

<sup>314</sup> Agri House website.

lauded for its convening power and influence, although there was still a sense of contractor relationships rather than equal input into development of programmes.<sup>315</sup>

### **Pillar 1. Social protection**

215. Under SO1, WFP worked closely with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport,<sup>316</sup> whose collaboration resulted in the Joint Transition Strategy for School Feeding.<sup>317</sup> Under SO6, WFP built on the existing relationship with NCDM under SO3, and strengthened this relationship further through a new partnership with GiZ, which provided cash transfers for vulnerable households and has allowed WFP and GiZ to jointly support the new SRSP framework developed by the Government.<sup>318</sup>

216. The MoSVY created “the blue-green book for social protection” in 2016 and developed a social protection framework that was intended to bring ministries together. It provides a coherent framework for different schemes such as IDPoor and school feeding. Initially, the “blue” book was developed under a council headed by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF) – which holds the budgets and hence can grant the necessary resources for its implementation – with which WFP does not yet have a strong relationship. Social protection was then split into two pillars; social security and social assistance, which consists of a number of existing schemes, including IDPoor, managed by the Ministry of Planning, and the scholarship and school feeding programmes, under MoEYS. These two have been brought together under a National Social Assistance Fund (see below linkages with Pillar 2).<sup>319</sup>

### **Pillar 2. Integrated risk management**

217. WFP developed strong partnerships with NCCDS (SO2) and NCDM (SO3). WFP has strengthened its collaboration with NCCDS through engaging local government bodies in climate change adaptation activities and supporting the promotion of decentralized reforms.<sup>320</sup> WFP worked closely with NCDM and strengthened the collaboration in 2021 with regard to developing an SRSP framework, in conjunction with GiZ – as referenced above under SO6.<sup>321</sup> WFP has also worked closely with RUPP under SO3 (see EQ 1.2, 2.1 and 2.3). As part of a reframing and refocusing on social protection as a whole, and SRSP in particular, the Government established a new National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF), which coordinates across different line ministries. The evaluation team did not find evidence of partnerships with government entities under SO5.

### **Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition**

218. Under SO4, WFP worked closely with, and supported, CARD, fostering a new long-term strategic partnership which was signed in 2020.<sup>322</sup> This has been crucial with regard to strengthening country capacity on food security and nutrition, as described under EQ 2.1, Pillar 3.<sup>323</sup>

219. There is limited evidence on the relationship between WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). There is no formal agreement between WFP and MAFF at the national level.<sup>324</sup> However, subnational government stakeholders reported solid collaboration between WFP and various

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<sup>315</sup> Civil society and private sector respondents. A stakeholder workshop conducted by WFP after the data collection for this evaluation found similar findings.

<sup>316</sup> WFP and government respondents.

<sup>317</sup> MoEYS and WFP. 2022. Joint Transition Strategy towards a nationally owned home-grown school feeding programme.

<sup>318</sup> WFP, Government, and donor respondents. See also ACR 2021 and WFP. 2022. MGD Mid-Term Activity Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant (FFE-442-2019-013-00) 01 Nov 2019-30 Oct 2023.

<sup>319</sup> Government respondents. See also Kingdom of Cambodia, Expanding and financing Social Protection in Cambodia and experiences of the United Nations Joint Programme.

<sup>320</sup> WFP and government respondent and ACR 2021.

<sup>321</sup> WFP and government respondents and ACR 2021.

<sup>322</sup> Artival. Research and Education. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia CSP 2019-2023.

<sup>323</sup> WFP respondents and ACR 2019, ACR 2020, ACR 2021.

<sup>324</sup> WFP and government respondents and see WFP. 2022. Mid-Term Activity Evaluation USDA LRP-442-2019-011-00 1 Nov 2019-30 Sep 2023.

subnational-level agricultural, fisheries and farming offices, which contributed to achievement of objectives under SO4.<sup>325</sup>

#### **Sub-question 4.4: To what extent did the country office have appropriate human resources capacity to deliver on the T-ICSP and current CSP?**

**Finding 36. The country office staffing structure and level of human resources capacity at the time of the CSP design was not sufficient for the delivery of the CSP. A new structure, with additional resources, has been put in place from mid-2022 onwards to support the effective implementation of the CSP.**

220. At the time of the CSP design, there was an organizational realignment that took place under headquarters and regional bureau in Bangkok leadership and it recommended the structure in place for the first years of the CSP. The CSP was initially conservative in its staffing level consistent with the planned level of resources, which subsequently increased significantly, requiring, according to respondents, a different and expanded structure.<sup>326</sup> The reorienting of the strategic outcomes into three pillars was considered widely useful by WFP staff in Cambodia, providing a more coherent understanding of the programme,<sup>327</sup> with the previous staffing structure having hindered the most effective delivery of the CSP.<sup>328</sup>

221. Prior to 2022, there was a flat structure with two strategic outcome managers, each responsible for different strategic outcomes, reporting directly to the Country Director. This contributed to the siloed design of the CSP by strategic outcomes<sup>329</sup> and led to a number of cross-cutting issues (such as gender and disability) being only partially addressed. In 2022, the Deputy Country Director and Head of Programme positions were introduced and the country office has shifted to a more standardized structure.

222. The high turnover in WFP Cambodia of international staff is in part due to short-term consultancy contracts, with just under 50 percent of staff on these contract types (see Figure 18)<sup>330</sup> For international fixed-term staff, turnover is a necessary factor of the WFP corporate rotation policy, but in a country like Cambodia, where many other development partners have long-term international staff, the WFP turnover is more visible and can hamper the development of longer-term relationships with development partners and Government.<sup>331</sup> Nonetheless, the national and international staff with a fixed term contract represent more than 50 percent of the total staff during each year of CSP implementation (see Figure 18). Despite the turnover of short-term consultancy and international staff, therefore, WFP can overall count on field presence and national staff to enhance stable relations, and to ensure institutional memory.

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<sup>325</sup> Subnational government respondents.

<sup>326</sup> WFP respondents.

<sup>327</sup> Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

<sup>328</sup> WFP respondents and see Artival Research & Evaluation. 2022. Final Report. Mid-Term Review of WFP's Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023. 2021 and WFP. 2021. Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Cambodia. Office of the Inspector General Internal Audit Report AR/21/12. for an analysis of the challenges of the original CSP country office staffing structure.

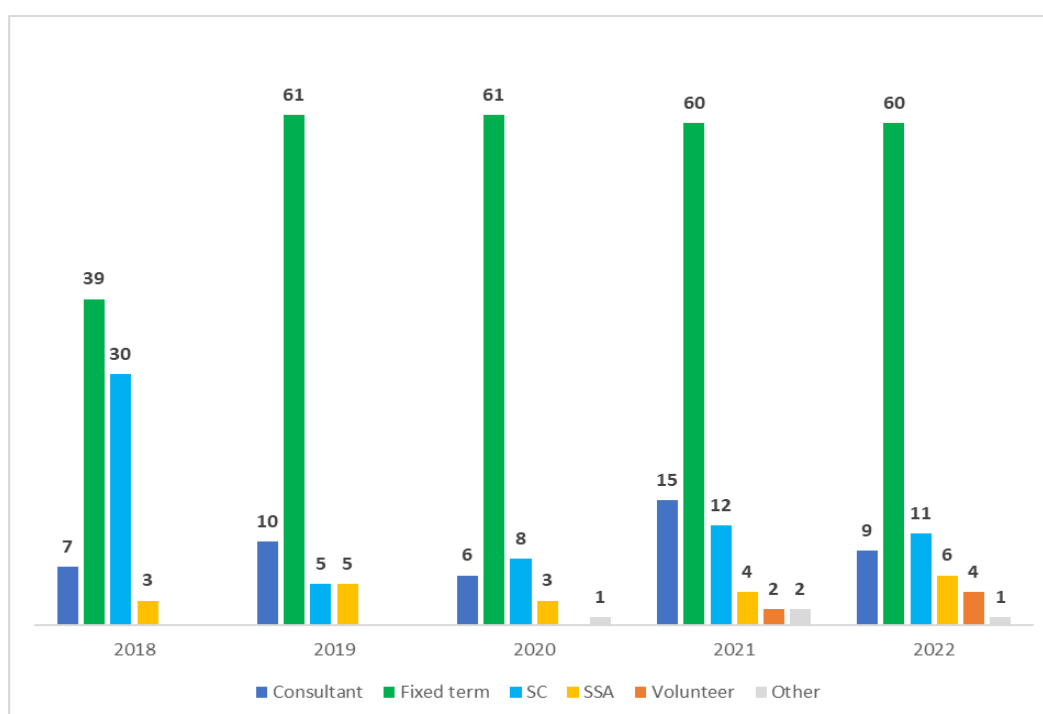
<sup>329</sup> Fragmentation of WFP portfolios, coupled with siloed ways of working, have been one of the most significant negative unintended outcomes of the CSP policy, in a trend that was contrary to the expected programme integration. The line of sight and the breakdown of WFP work into activities under focus areas (with separate managers) enhanced the fragmentation. Source: WFP.2023, Evaluation of WFP's Policy on Country Strategic Plans.

<sup>330</sup> WFP respondents.

<sup>331</sup> NGO and other United Nations agency respondents.



Figure 18. WFP Cambodia country office staff by type of contract and strategic outcome (2018-2022)



SO1	5	5	5	10	9
SO2	1	2	3	2	4
SO3	2	3	2	2	2
SO4	8	7	6	10	6
SO5	3	1	1	1	1
SO6	0	0	0	2	1
Cross-Cutting	60	63	62	68	68
Total	79	81	79	95	91

Source: Elaboration of the evaluation team from the country office staffing list. Data provided on 26 January 2023.

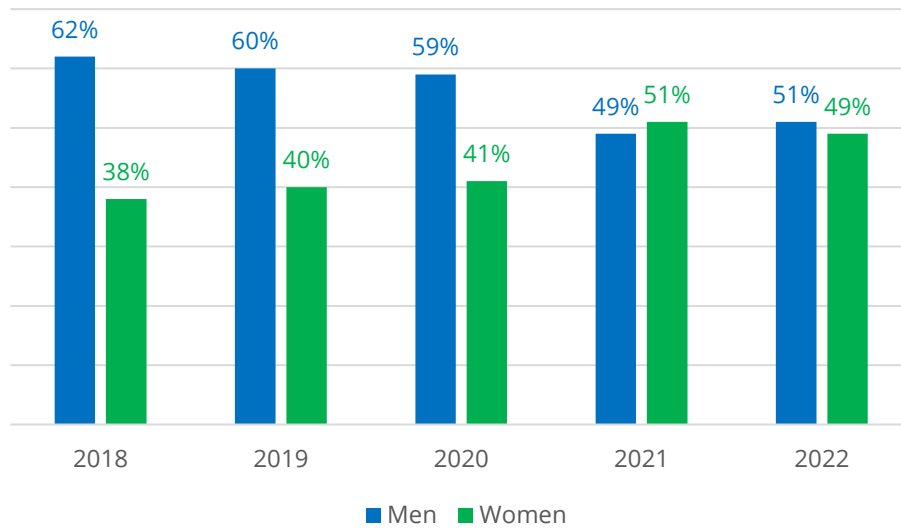
223. The shift to an upstream focus requires different staff skill sets but the programme is still heavily weighted towards the school feeding programme in terms of staffing and operational capacity. It also lacks a coherent country capacity strengthening framework, making it difficult to assess the specific skill sets required for the implementation of related activities.<sup>332</sup> Indeed, when it comes to capacity strengthening, previous evaluations conducted for SO1 highlighted that there are gaps in staffing, especially to address the transition from the school feeding programme to HGSP and to handle the post-transition period.<sup>333</sup> The Cambodia country office has been conducting a needs assessment of staff capacity for country capacity strengthening skills.

224. The country office has made significant steps towards gender parity in staffing, with women staff increasing by 11 percentage points from the implementation of the T-ICSP until the end of 2022 (see Figure 19).

<sup>332</sup> WFP respondents. Also see WFP. 2021. Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Cambodia. Office of the Inspector General Internal Audit Report AR/21/12.

<sup>333</sup> WFP. 2022. Mid-Term Activity Evaluation of USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Grant (LRP-442-2019- 011-00) for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia, Decentralized Evaluation Report. November 2022.

Figure 19. Evolution of the staff by gender (2018-2022)



Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team from the country office staffing list. Data provided on 26 January 2023.

# Conclusions and recommendations

## Conclusions

**Conclusion 1. The design of this CSP provided a conducive framework with regard to *content*, but less so with regard to *structure*. Its siloed nature has hampered cross fertilization across all strategic outcomes.**

225. The content of the CSP made clear the support that WFP could provide to Cambodia relevant to the context and relevant to the mandate of WFP and its expertise, in particular: a continuation of the successful and effective school feeding programme; climate change and resilience building with regard to community structures and institutional policies; and food security and nutrition support across government and other actors.

226. While activities have been successfully implemented, the siloed nature of the structure of the CSP hampered cross fertilization across all strategic outcomes. Initial theories of change developed for each strategic outcome were useful in determining how each activity would lead to each objective, but the original design lacked an overview of how activities would be linked across the portfolio to maximize efficiencies across staff time, implementation of the CSP and WFP partnerships in Cambodia. In addition, vulnerability analysis and mapping was originally placed under one strategic outcome, rather than as a cross-cutting function for the whole CSP.

227. The country office has recognized this and had taken steps to adequately reframe the strategic outcomes into three pillars and restructure the country office. Through practice rather than through design, the CSP has started to develop opportunities for WFP leadership, particularly in the areas of SRSP and climate change, with strong linkages between the two. These are emergent components of WFP practice in Cambodia. These aspects necessarily should be – and could be – more strategically and explicitly linked to food security and nutrition in the future in ways which the current CSP did not articulate in design.

**Conclusion 2. Performance of the individual components of the CSP has been mostly effective.**

228. Overall, the T-ICSP and CSP met most output targets, although progress towards outcome targets was uneven. The performance of the CSP is presented below against each pillar.

### Pillar 1. Social protection

229. The longstanding and valued school feeding programme has continued to gain momentum over the evaluation period, and WFP was able to demonstrate adaptive capacity through the shift to take-home rations during COVID-19. The clear social protection purpose of the school feeding programme has been strengthened with the reframing of it into a social protection pillar, and, together with the newly added emergency crisis response intervention, has further solidified a coherence of thinking within WFP as to the role of WFP in social protection within Cambodia.

230. The strategic focus of the school feeding programme has evolved over time. The culmination of the overall transition approach into a clear Joint Implementation Strategy, owned by the Government, has further clarified the objectives of school feeding beyond the WFP programme and as a national commitment. This has been coherent with the launch of a national HGSF programme by the Government, which is itself the culmination of work by WFP in preceding years and shows a clear progression that should increase sustainability.

## Pillar 2. Integrated risk management

231. WFP has worked effectively at the subnational and national levels to provide complementary activities to strengthen resilience at the commune level, and at the national level. The original CSP design focused WFP support on: i) community resilience to shocks and stresses in the food systems; and ii) assisting the government and humanitarian agencies to effectively anticipate, prepare for and respond to natural hazards and other shocks. Both represented a significant shift away from the previous direct implementation-oriented programme and therefore were slow to implement in the first year of the CSP. However, WFP has been progressively implementing disaster risk reduction activities with a strong focus on climate change issues and has been increasing its effectiveness and credibility in this area.

232. A particularly exciting opportunity is the new focus on SRSP within Cambodia. WFP has already positioned itself within this agenda, with strong potential to build upon the credibility already gained so that it can situate itself as one of the main partners for the Government in this area. Overall, the CSP itself has not explicitly facilitated more strategic linkages within the humanitarian and development nexus but SRSP provides a good opportunity to do this.

## Pillar 3. Food security and nutrition

233. Throughout the course of the CSP, WFP has provided visible food security and nutrition support to the Government, as well as leadership and input to multi-actor collaboration platforms and is considered a key food security and nutrition player in the country by stakeholders. WFP support to the Government in the field of food security and nutrition was articulated in a relatively understated manner within the CSP but its work in Cambodia has spanned more than is immediately visible in the articulation in the design. This has included support to coordination mechanisms across food security and nutrition actors in Cambodia, not just government partners, and more comprehensive contributions to food security and nutrition through vulnerability analysis and mapping and technical assistance.

234. The vulnerability analysis and mapping work of WFP is extremely well received by different actors in Cambodia and considered to be a clear added-value of WFP across different stakeholder groups.

235. This is an area where the performance of WFP in Cambodia has surpassed the design of the CSP and placed WFP in a strong strategic position. However, it is also an area where there is further opportunity to maximize linkages between the stand-alone nutrition strategic outcome and nutrition interaction/mainstreaming across all other strategic outcomes the CSP.

### **Conclusion 3. WFP has significantly strengthened partnerships with government counterparts through this CSP and is well positioned among different actors for ensuring sustainability of results.**

236. The CSP provided clear alignment between the CSP and government priorities and the UNDAF. To contribute to these national frameworks, WFP has cultivated strong relationships with partners at all levels in Cambodia and these partnerships have positively influenced performance and results across all three pillars. The partnerships have evolved organically with different relationships under different strategic outcomes, rather than under a comprehensive partnership strategy. The reframing of the portfolio under the three pillars permits a more holistic approach to partnerships, including with the Rome-based agencies and the private sector.

237. Strategic partnerships with government bodies were an objective embedded within the design of the CSP; this objective has been further built upon through the course of implementing the CSP, with WFP recognizing and capitalizing upon new opportunities linked to changing government priorities – such as the new focus on SRSP. However, the siloed nature of the design of the CSP has also led to a siloed nature of relationships with government bodies. The increasing coordination within the Government across different departments – for example, with the establishment of the National Social Assistance Fund, and the work of NSPC to have a holistic approach to social protection – is conducive to WFP increasing the coherence of support across different line ministries in order to maximize linkages and work towards increasing sustainability of results, including through the “funding to financing” agenda.

238. WFP has also strengthened partnerships with other United Nations agencies through engagement with and leadership of UNDAF results areas and coordination networks. There has been increasing collaboration and synergies regarding the provision of capacity strengthening support to the Government over the course of the CSP/UNDAF period. Partnerships with civil society and more recently with the private sector have also been key to the achievement of results across the CSP.

**Conclusion 4. The evaluation has highlighted the challenges of shifting so significantly to a more upstream approach, supporting the government systems across the whole portfolio, particularly when that shift occurred based partially on corporate direction rather than entirely on country context suitability.**

239. CSPs are required to describe what success looks like and how progress will be measured and tracked<sup>334</sup> and this has not been sufficiently achieved within this CSP to date. The upstream element of the school feeding programme – supporting the Government in a transition to government-owned HGSP has been the strategy for a long period and is based on country context suitability, with economic growth and greater government capacities (including financial capacity) and willingness for greater ownership. The success of this is evident, particularly by the Joint Transition Strategy, which is now in place.

240. For the other work of WFP, strategic outcomes that are entirely upstream have struggled with understanding how to provide support to Government beyond training activities. WFP country capacity strengthening work, while based on capacity needs assessments, has not yet translated into measurable outcome results. The lack of meaningful corporate indicators to measure sustainable institutional change has limited the visibility of achievements and the ability to measure contribution to results at outcome level, rather than immediate-term outputs (such as change in knowledge of participants of training). During the time of CSP development WFP globally had limited internal capacity to support country offices in developing the processes necessary for measuring meaningful support to the Government, although the corporate framework existing at the time did outline fundamental principles. Now, more comprehensive tools are being made available and the updated corporate results framework introduced new country capacity strengthening indicator which are being piloted and tested by the Cambodia country office.

**Conclusion 5. In both design and implementation, the CSP has been weak in integrating cross-cutting issues, particularly gender, social inclusion, accountability to affected populations and PSEA.**

241. Although the cross-cutting issues were reflected in the strategic and corporate documents, those have not been sufficiently integrated at programme and implementation levels. With the introduction of the current strategic plan this has further improved.

242. WFP Cambodia has used the indicators for cross-cutting issues that were available and supported corporately at the time of CSP design. The CSP has basic indicators for direct implementation, however, it does not consider gender in all capacity strengthening or upstream activities. Genuine gender mainstreaming and an understanding of gender-responsive versus gender-transformative interventions is a complex process and WFP does not have clear objectives and indicators under each strategic outcome to ensure that these issues can be well integrated into activities. At the same time the limited knowledge of gender issues among programme staff meant that integration of gender into programmatic activities could not always be done in a systematic manner.

243. To correct these concerns, WFP in Cambodia has intensified work on gender in the recent period, with efforts to build staff capacity and experience through research and training programmes. An emphasis on transformative approaches within the new CSP design will be key.

244. For accountability to affected populations, complaints and feedback mechanisms were not adequately reflected in CSP design or in implementation as a priority focus area – this also reflects a lack of strong corporate guidance in this area at the time of CSP design. For PSEA, WFP has not yet taken a

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<sup>334</sup> WFP. Executive Board Recurring Issues – Q1 2022. Ongoing issues and key considerations for CSPs raised in recent WFP Executive Board sessions. 2022.

leadership role within Cambodia and, despite a new UNCT focus on PSEA, the development context provides a challenge – for WFP and UNCT as a whole – as to how to implement PSEA measures in a non-humanitarian setting. WFP will need to engage with the national governance and legal system in relation to these issues.

245. Without these cross-cutting, people-focused issues being fully embedded within the design of the programme, it is unsurprising that the practice within WFP has lacked meaningful integration of these issues across all strategic outcomes.

246. With increased staff capacity from 2022 onwards, including skillsets specific to gender, inclusion and accountability, there is an opportunity for WFP to rethink, within the parameters of corporate focus and guidance, the priority of these areas and have a much more sophisticated integration of gender, inclusion, and accountability in future programming and the next CSP.

## **Recommendations**

247. The evaluation makes two strategic and three operational recommendations to address key issues for Cambodia in the next CSP. The table below presents the evaluation recommendations.



#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.	Strategic framing of the new country strategic plan: WFP should refine the strategic focus of the next country strategic plan in order to strengthen the integration of inclusive activities, maximize effectiveness across development and humanitarian work, link shock-responsive social protection to climate change adaptation and ground the design of the country strategic plan on WFP's comparative advantages.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters Programme Cycle Management Unit	High	In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
1.1	WFP should consider framing the next country strategic plan in a more holistic way, with more activities clustered under strategic outcomes that have an overarching narrative both within each strategic outcome and among strategic outcomes. While the school feeding programme will remain a large financial and operational component of the overall programme, WFP should ensure that school feeding is positioned within a broader social protection framework, linking country capacity strengthening to the strategy for transitioning to a government-owned home-grown school feeding programme in order support coherence across the portfolio.		Country office senior management			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
1.2	The framing of the next country strategic plan should include a specific, highlighted focus on shock-responsive social protection, linking it to climate change adaptation as part of food security and nutrition resilience and building on WFP's current activities and direction.		Country office senior management			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.3	The new framing should embed gender, inclusion and protection considerations into all strategic outcomes (see recommendation 5).		Country office senior management			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
1.4	Building on the current country office staffing structure, WFP should identify and leverage internal synergies among all strategic outcomes and various activities, noting that a change in structure is a helpful first step in this, but that bringing change to ways of working takes time and does not necessarily happen automatically. The country office should consider what is necessary, including communications and opportunities for cross-team collaboration, and ensure that by the time implementation of the next country strategic plan starts, there are more genuine linkages among the various areas of work, supported by and embedded in the new staffing structure.		Country office senior management			November 2023
2.	Operationalization of the new country strategic plan: Supported by a strong foundation based on evidence generation, WFP should build on the achievements of the current country strategic plan by leveraging the newly identified linkages across the three pillars and should focus on building evidence-based systems and structures to inform country strategic plan implementation and management in a timely manner.	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters	Medium	November 2028 – the end of the new CSP period
2.1	In the next country strategic plan, WFP should build on the successful restructuring of the current country strategic plan under the three pillars, with explicit linkages among pillars, including shock-responsive social protection activities under both the social protection and the integrated risk management pillars, and food security		Country office senior management			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	and nutrition as an overarching concept as well as a stand-alone pillar, as it is the core mandate of WFP.					
2.2	WFP should prioritize the setting up of the necessary systems and processes to ensure that the newly structured research, assessment and monitoring unit is able to provide equal levels of support under all strategic outcomes for informing decision-making in a timely manner and contributing to learning.		Country office senior management and research, assessment and monitoring (RAM) unit			December 2023
2.3	WFP should take the necessary steps to ensure that all the evidence produced from research, assessment and monitoring is fully gender-, inclusion- and protection-sensitive, beyond the simple gender disaggregation of data, and that it provides meaningful analysis of gender, inclusion and protection dimensions.		Deputy country director and country office gender focal point, and programme and RAM units			November 2028 – the end of the new CSP period
3.	Partnerships: WFP should develop an overall partnership strategy focused on the sustainability of results. The strategy should be coherent with the various partnerships that WFP has in Cambodia – with the Government, other United Nations entities, civil society and the private sector – and, in line with recommendations 1 and 2, it should explicitly highlight the opportunities for linkages and alignment across various strategic outcomes and partnerships.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters Partnerships and Advocacy Department	Medium	June 2024
3.1	WFP should build on its current strong relationships with various government entities to identify and maximize the linkages among strategic outcomes within WFP and its relationships with government partners related to various areas of work, in line with increasing internal synergies.		Country office senior management, partnerships officer, head of programme and RAM unit			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.2	WFP should build on its current good partnerships with other United Nations entities, ensuring that linkages and WFP's contributions and areas of leadership are embedded in the new United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework and that WFP's close relationship with the other Rome-based agencies is maximized.		Country office senior management, partnerships officer, head of programme and RAM unit			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024
3.3	WFP should build on its current partnerships with civil society, the private sector and academia, ensuring that – as part of a partnership strategy – those partners are clearly recognized as key to achieving the sustainability of results alongside the Government.		Country office senior management, partnerships officer, head of programme and RAM unit			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024
3.4	WFP should explore the broadening of the donor base, particularly with a view to strengthening support for the Government's capacity to implement and manage priority programmes under the funding to financing agenda.		Country office senior management and partnerships officer			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024
3.5	In the partnership strategy, WFP should include a clear monitoring plan that ensures the visibility of results from various partnership types and informs robust management decision-making with regard to continued and new partnerships.		Country office senior management, partnerships officer and monitoring and evaluation team			In the overall partnership strategy – by June 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.	WFP support for the Government: WFP should develop an overarching conceptual framework for its support for the Government based on the mapping of existing national capacity needs and strengthened partner coordination, customizing and contextualizing the corporate policy framework <sup>335</sup> and in line with updated corporate guidance <sup>336</sup> and the corporate results framework for 2022–2025. <sup>337</sup>	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters Country Capacity Strengthening Unit	High	November 2023
4.1	The country office should develop an overarching conceptual framework for the provision of support to the Government that is aligned with corporate key documents and applicable to all relevant strategic outcomes in the next country strategic plan. The framework should be used to ensure that all WFP staff have a consistent understanding of WFP's work in support of the Government at the national and subnational levels.		Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme and RAM unit			November 2023
4.2	WFP should build on the capacity needs and mapping exercises conducted for the current country strategic plan, but with more systematic and predictable planned processes in place to ensure that the exercises are fully used as implementation and monitoring guides.		Deputy Country Director and country office RAM and programme units			November 2023

<sup>335</sup> WFP. 2022. "[Country capacity strengthening policy update](#)" (WFP/EB.A/2022/5-A).

<sup>336</sup> WFP. 2023. *WFP corporate framework for country capacity strengthening*.

<sup>337</sup> WFP. 2022. "[Corporate results framework \(2022–2025\)](#)" (WFP/EB.1/2022/4-A/Rev.1).

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.3	The country office should ensure that there is documented evidence from the piloting of new corporate indicators that the country office has volunteered to take part in with the regional bureau. WFP should ensure that learning from the piloting process includes documentation of the support received and the future support required from the regional bureau, and of the lessons learned from and for all upstream strategic outcomes.		Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme and RAM unit			November 2023
4.4	WFP should use the learning from the current utilization of capacity needs mapping exercises, the learning from the piloting exercise on corporate indicators and the process of developing the new country strategic plan to develop a comprehensive systems-building approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the support provided to the Government by WFP under the various strategic outcomes, including the related theories of change, capacity needs assessments and monitoring and evaluation plans. Monitoring and evaluation plans should be based on monitoring at various output and outcome levels, such as those assessing pre- and post-test knowledge, and more sophisticated measurements (developed with the support of the regional bureau and headquarters) for outcome-level results, within the parameters of corporate frameworks (see recommendation 4).		Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme and RAM unit, with support from the regional bureau and headquarters			November 2023
4.5	The country office should take the necessary steps to ensure that gender, inclusion and protection considerations are embedded in the overarching conceptual framework for the provision of support to the Government.		Deputy Country Director and country office gender focal point and RAM unit			November 2023



#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.	Cross-cutting issues: WFP should strengthen and mainstream gender-transformative approaches, inclusion and accountability to affected populations in the design and implementation of the new country strategic plan as much as possible, while remaining aligned with corporate guidance.	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters Gender Equality Office and programme units	High	In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
5.1	<p>The country office should ensure that gender, inclusion and disability considerations are fully incorporated into the design of the next country strategic plan, along with the corporate cross-cutting indicators that cover those considerations, including those that look beyond physical disabilities. The considerations should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ applicable to all strategic outcomes and activities in the country strategic plan; and</li> <li>➤ supported by meaningful output and outcome indicators.</li> </ul> <p>The cross-cutting issues incorporated into the next country strategic plan should be aligned with WFP's corporate direction, including the cross-cutting indicators in the corporate results framework for 2022–2025.</p>		Deputy Country Director and country office gender and inclusion officer and programme units			In the design of the new CSP – November 2023
5.2	With support from the regional bureau, the country office should ensure that the most up-to-date accountability to affected populations complaints and feedback mechanisms are in place for strategic outcomes with tier 1 beneficiaries.		Deputy Country Director and country office accountability to affected populations officer, RAM unit and relevant programme units			November 2023

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