



WFP EVALUATION



World Food Programme

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

Centralized evaluation report – Volume I

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Executive summary

Introduction

EVALUATION FEATURES

1. The evaluation of the Malawi country strategic plan (CSP) for the period 2019–2023 was conducted between February and December 2022. It sought to generate evidence and learning to inform the development of the next CSP.
2. The evaluation covered CSP implementation between January 2019 and June 2022. It also considered data from 2018 to examine the development of the CSP, particularly its design, focus and shifts from previous country planning. The evaluation assessed WFP's strategic positioning, its effectiveness in contributing to strategic outcomes, its efficiency and the factors explaining performance.
3. An independent external team conducted the evaluation using mixed methods and drawing on monitoring data, document reviews and field observations. The team conducted over 230 interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries in a variety of settings.
4. The evaluation was designed to include gender equality and human rights dimensions. Ethical standards were applied to safeguard the dignity of the people involved and the confidentiality of the information shared. The preliminary evaluation results were discussed during two workshops with internal and external stakeholders in Lilongwe in November 2022.
5. The evaluation did not encounter major constraints, despite some data inconsistencies and the limited usefulness of the needs-based plan targets due to overoptimistic funding expectations, which made the assessment of target achievement challenging. Intended users include the WFP Malawi country office, the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, technical divisions at headquarters, WFP's Office of Evaluation, WFP beneficiaries, the Government of Malawi, WFP partners and donors.

CONTEXT






6. Malawi is a landlocked country in south-eastern Africa with an estimated population of 19.1 million in 2020 (50.7 percent women and 50.3 percent men); 43 percent of the population are below the age of 15.¹ Most Malawians (84.4 percent) live in rural areas² and more than half the population (51.5 percent) live below the national poverty line.³ Life expectancy at birth is 60 years for men and 68 years for women.⁴ Table 1 provides an overview of selected socioeconomic indicators that reflect the situation in Malawi during the period covered by the evaluation.

¹ World Bank. 2020. [Population, total – Malawi](#). Statistics reflect the situation during the period covered by the evaluation.

² Government of Malawi, National Statistical Office. 2020. [The Fifth Integrated Household Survey \(IHS5\) 2020 Report](#).

³ Government of Malawi, National Statistical Office. 2020. [Malawi in Figures – 2020 Edition](#).

⁴ World Bank. 2020. [Life expectancy at birth, male \(years\) – Malawi](#), and [Life expectancy at birth, female \(years\) – Malawi](#).

TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Human Development Index (rank and score) (1)	174 of 189 0.483	2019
	Gender Inequality Index (rank and score) (1)	142 of 162 0.565	2019
	Weight-for-height (wasting – moderate and severe), (% of children age 0–59 months) (3)	3.7	2020
	Height-for-age (stunting – moderate and severe), (% of children age 0–59 months) (3)	33.7	2020
	Adult literacy rate (% age 15 years and older) (2)	62	2015

Sources: (1) United Nations Development Programme. 2020. *Human Development Report 2020. The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*; (2) World Bank. 2015. *World Development Indicators*; (3) Government of Malawi, National Statistical Office. 2020. *The Fifth Integrated Household Survey (IHS5) 2020 Report*

7. In 2020, the agricultural sector accounted for 22.8 percent of gross domestic product and engaged 84.7 percent of households. According to the 2021 Global Hunger Index, Malawi ranks 81 of 116 countries, falling within the “serious hunger condition” category. A large share of the population experience “very low food security”, with significant disparities between rural and urban areas (67.2 versus 40.7 percent) and women and men (72.2 versus 58.7 percent).⁵

8. Malawi ranked 142 of 162 countries in the 2019 Gender Inequality Index,⁶ reflecting high levels of gender inequality in reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. Sexual and gender-based violence is widespread, with 34 percent of women age 15–49 years experiencing physical violence and 20 percent experiencing sexual violence by the age of 15.⁷

9. Malawi is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The country has faced several extreme weather events in recent years: floods and El Niño-induced droughts in 2015 and 2016, Cyclone Idai in 2019 and Tropical Storm Ana in 2022 (see figure 1).

10. As of September 2022, Malawi hosted 56,486 registered refugees and asylum seekers.⁸ In April 2021, the Government ordered refugees who had settled in other parts of the country to return to the Dzaleka camp, the only refugee camp in the country. Overcrowding and the rapid transmission of communicable diseases, especially during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, have affected life in the camp.⁹

⁵ Government of Malawi, National Statistical Office. 2020. *The Fifth Integrated Household Survey (IHS5) 2020 Report*.

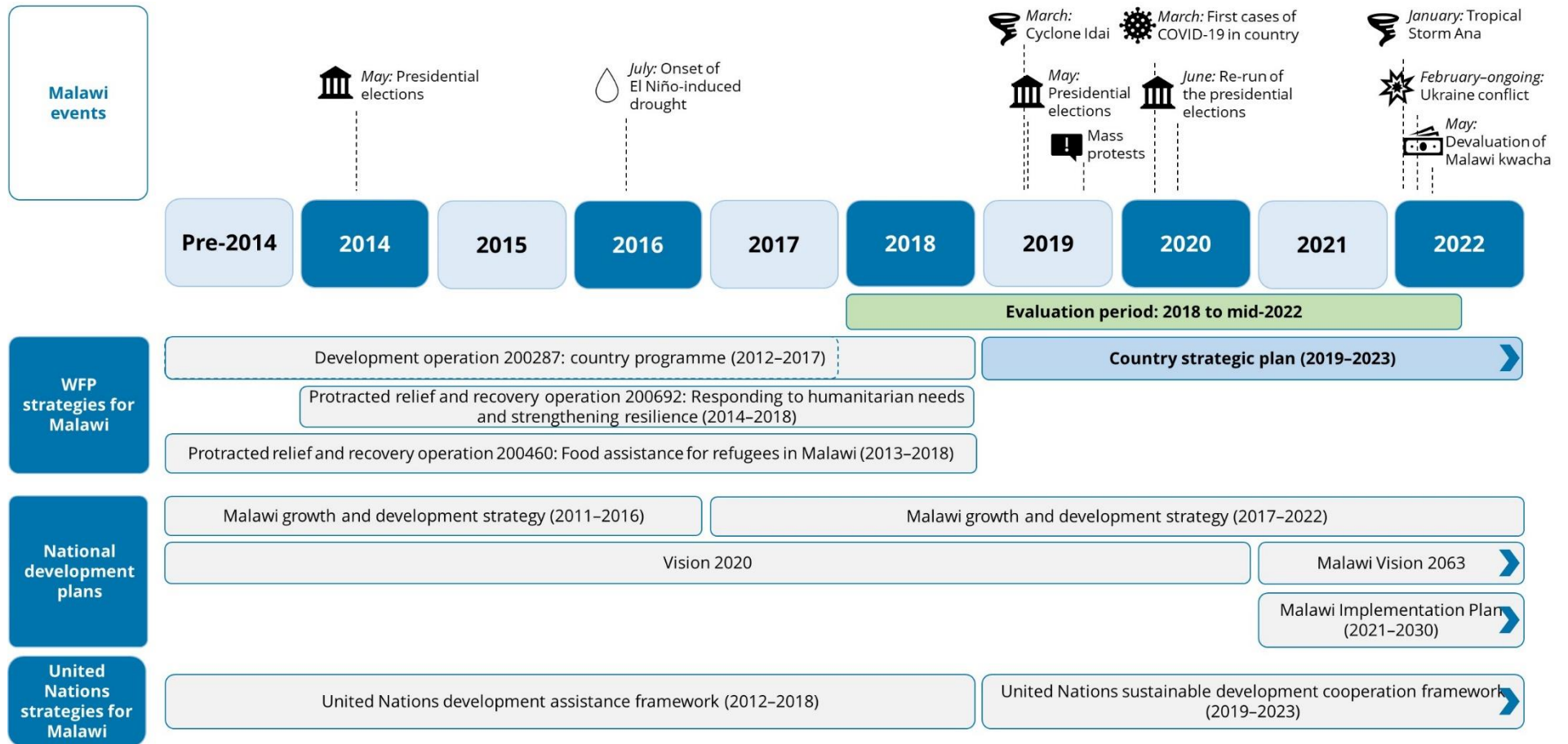
⁶ United Nations Development Programme. 2020. *Human Development Report 2020. The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*

⁷ Government of Malawi, National Statistical Office. 2017. *Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015–16*.

⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Operational Data Portal: Refugee Situations – Malawi*.

⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2021. *Malawi Fact Sheet*.

Figure 1: Country context and WFP operational overview



COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN

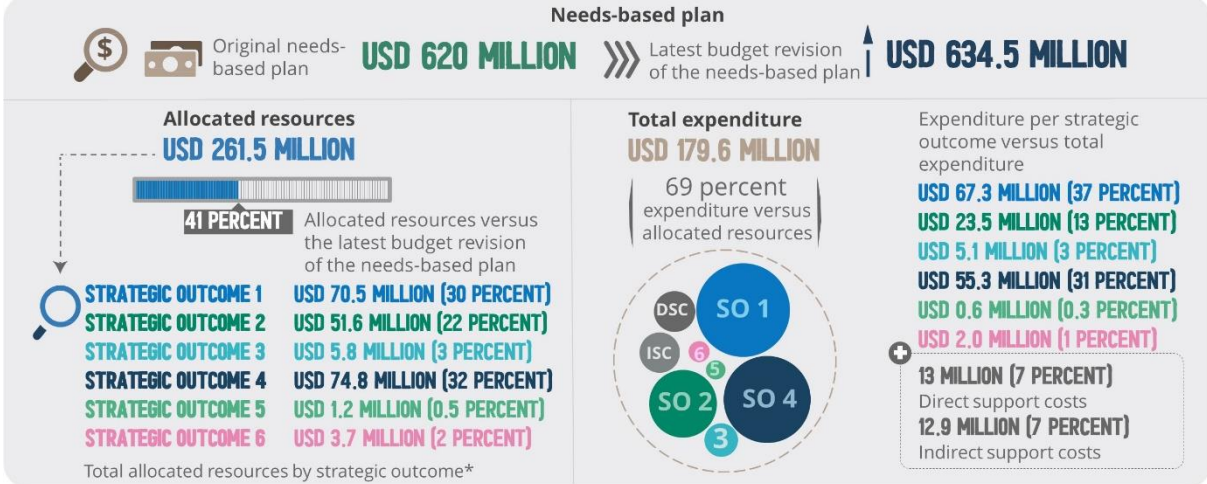
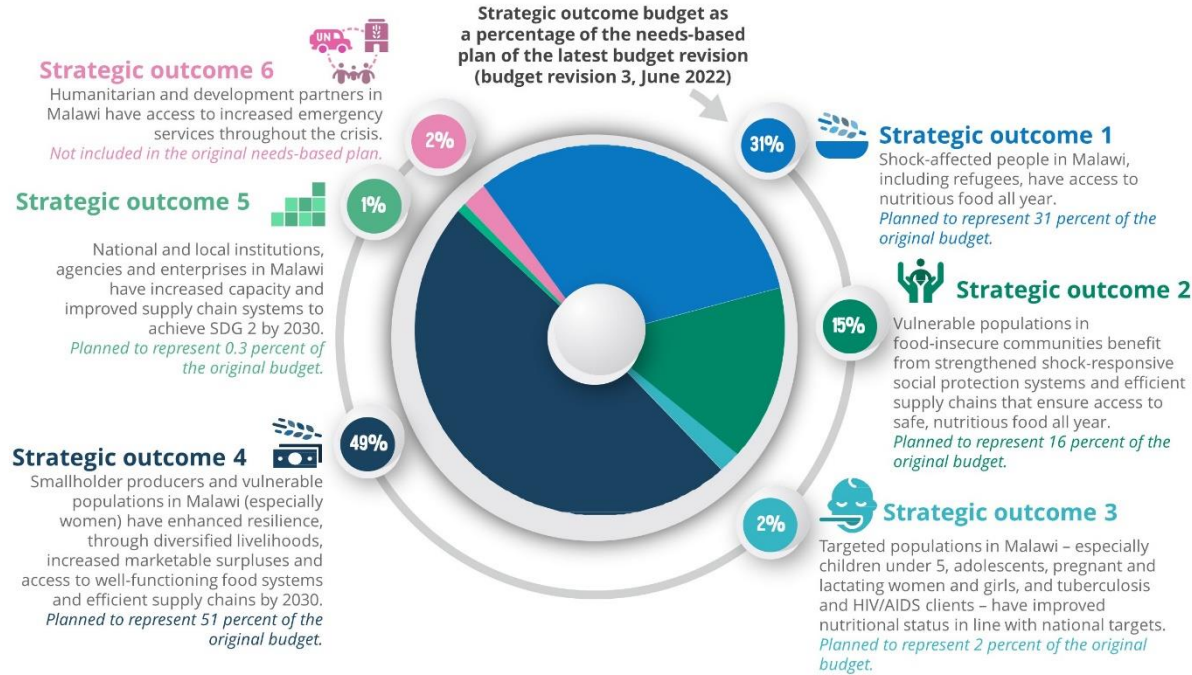
11. In accordance with the objectives of the WFP strategic plan for 2017–2021, the Malawi CSP for 2019–2023 reflected a shift from direct implementation to capacity strengthening. It aimed to mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment, accountability to affected populations and protection considerations in its support of national efforts to tackle hunger, improve nutrition, reduce vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition and strengthen resilience to recurrent shocks. The CSP defined five strategic outcomes and six contributing activities.

12. The original needs-based plan for the CSP set out a budget of USD 620 million to reach 4.85 million beneficiaries over five years. The budget increased to USD 634.5 million over the period May 2019–June 2022 through three budget revisions. The first revision, in May 2019 (USD 1.3 million), introduced strategic outcome 6, aimed at providing emergency services to humanitarian and development partners in response to Cyclone Idai. The second, in April 2021 (USD 8.7 million), expanded that outcome in response to COVID-19 and in preparation for possible future emergencies, while the third, in June 2022 (USD 4.7 million), added an activity related to health systems strengthening under strategic outcome 5. The number of targeted beneficiaries remained the same throughout.

13. Implementation began in January 2019 and as of October 2022, 41.2 percent (USD 261.5 million) of the needs-based plan was funded (see figure 2). Resourcing against the needs-based plan was relatively low, with strategic outcomes 1, 4 and 6 funded at less than 50 percent and strategic outcomes 2 and 3 funded at less than 60 percent.¹⁰ The exception was activity 6 under strategic outcome 5, which sought to provide capacity strengthening and partnership activities alongside logistics and procurement services to institutions involved in food security, nutrition, food safety, disaster risk management and emergency response, which was funded at 80 percent. The United States of America was the largest donor, followed by the Republic of Korea and Germany.

¹⁰ Needs-based plan targets were overestimated, as they were based on very optimistic funding expectations that did not materialize.

Figure 2: Malawi country strategic plan (2019–2023) strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures (2019–2021)



* Percentages of allocated resources by strategic outcome do not add up to 100 percent because resources were also allocated to direct support costs and indirect support costs.

Sources: CSP budget revision 3 (needs-based plan); annual country report 2021 (allocated resources and expenditures by strategic outcome); FACTory, Resource situation report, accessed on 21 October 2022.

Evaluation findings

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN EVIDENCE-BASED AND STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE?

Evidence and targeting

14. The CSP and its interventions were informed by the zero hunger and malnutrition strategic review (2018–2019) and extensive vulnerability and food security analyses; however, the CSP lacked the analyses needed to inform a gender-transformative approach or a more systematic and intentional approach to capacity strengthening. CSP targeting strategies focused on the most vulnerable populations identified for

each strategic outcome. They were based on established criteria agreed with the Government and drew upon corporate approaches such as the three-pronged approach¹¹ for the design of resilience interventions.

Alignment with national priorities

15. The CSP was well aligned with the priorities outlined in national development strategies, national emergency and humanitarian response plans and district-level development plans. For example, in Zomba, strategic outcome 2 was especially significant in the context of the Zomba district development plan priorities for school feeding and social support programmes.

External coherence

16. The CSP was designed to contribute to the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) and was aligned with the priorities of other United Nations entities and development partners. WFP leveraged its role in key national clusters and multi-stakeholder working groups, and its partnerships with other United Nations entities supported coherence across stakeholders.

17. The comparative advantages of WFP in Malawi identified by the evaluation were its field presence; its status as a well-respected and credible interlocutor; its humanitarian response capacity; its evidence generation skills; and its work on shock-sensitive social protection. Joint programmes with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development under the CSP leveraged WFP's expertise in those areas of comparative advantage but partnerships did not always translate into coordinated approaches due to inconsistencies in the objectives, approaches and implementation and monitoring models of the respective entities. Additionally, the evaluation noted opportunities to enhance collaboration in support of smallholder farmers, school gardens and advocacy on sustainable food systems.

Internal coherence

18. While the CSP was not initially based on an explicit theory of change, it reflected WFP's aim for coherence through integrated programming that connected recovery, resilience building and nutrition interventions through the intended strategic shift from direct implementation to technical assistance and capacity strengthening. It also set out linkages across strategic outcomes.

19. An explicit theory of change constructed during the first year of CSP implementation clarified the interconnectedness of the strategic outcomes and identified clear impact pathways. It clearly articulated the strategic shift, such as in the changing role of supply chain and logistics from service delivery to technical assistance; however, WFP's capacity strengthening approach was still not reflected in a clear strategy. The theory of change was used to inform programming choices, such as prioritizing home-grown school feeding in the geographic areas where smallholder agricultural market support and asset creation activities were implemented.

Strategic positioning

20. Significant adjustments to the CSP were required due to unprecedented crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and major flooding from Cyclone Idai in 2019 and Tropical Storm Ana and Cyclone Gombé in 2022. WFP remained relevant over the CSP period and was able to adapt to emerging needs and opportunities, such as by adding an activity aimed at strengthening health supply chain systems to enhance pandemic preparedness in June 2022, in the light of experience gained during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stakeholders highly valued WFP's agility and operational capacity to respond to emergencies, as well as its work on the generation of evidence for use by the humanitarian community to inform emergency programming. Those aspects were considered essential to WFP's comparative advantage and contributed to its strategic positioning in Malawi.

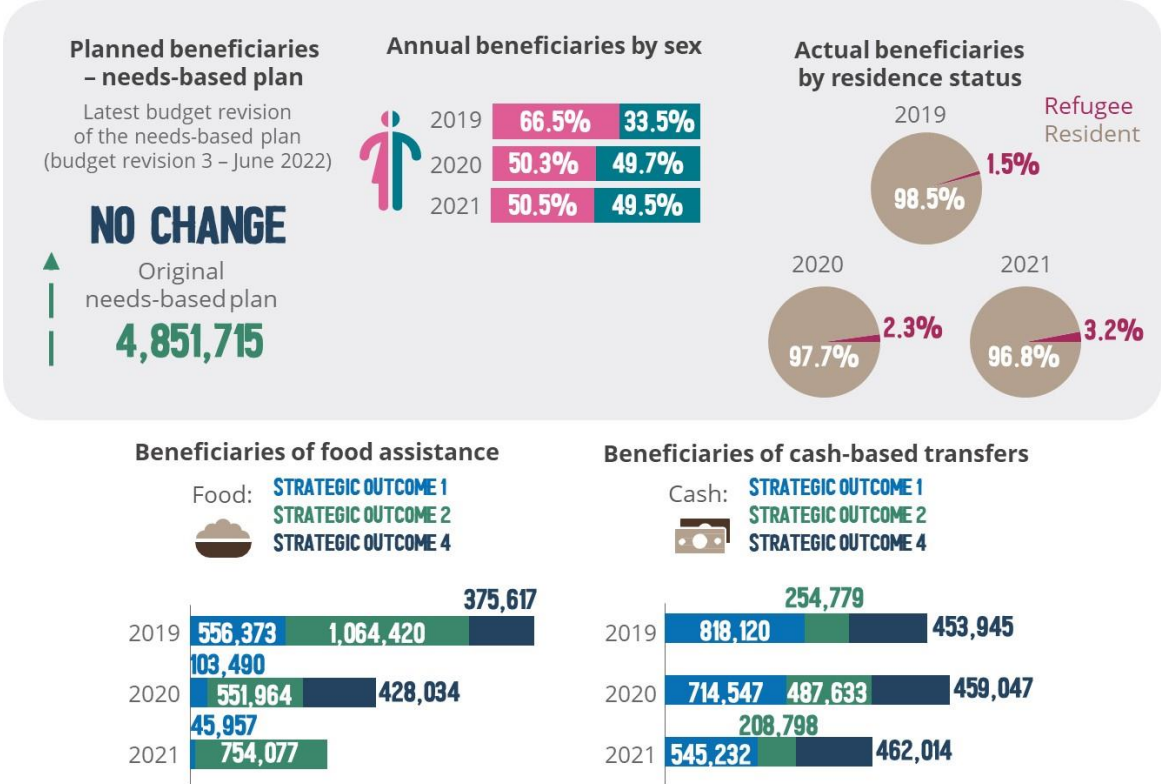
¹¹ The three-pronged approach comprises integrated context analysis, seasonal livelihood programming and community-based participatory planning.

WHAT ARE THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF WFP'S CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES IN MALAWI?

Contribution to strategic outcomes

21. The paragraphs below present an overview of the main achievements under each strategic outcome, while figure 3 provides an overview of the beneficiaries reached.

Figure 3: Malawi beneficiary overview, 2019–2021

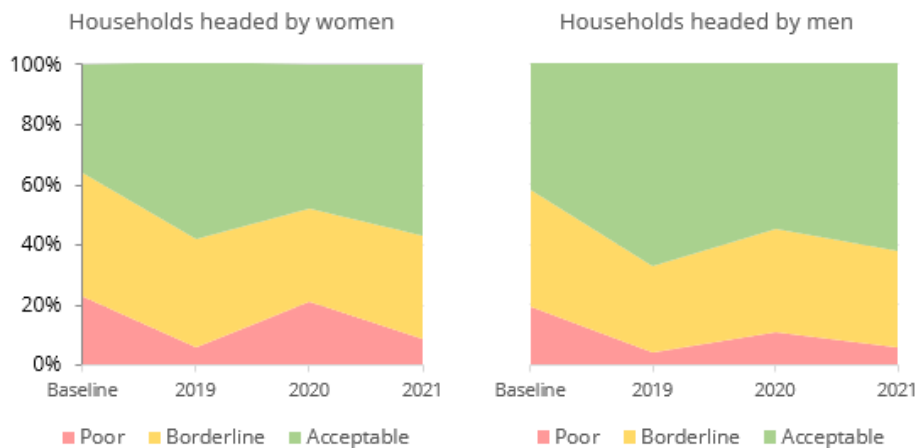


Sources: Annual country reports for 2019, 2020 and 2021; country office tool for managing effectively CM-R020 report, accessed on 5 May 2022.

22. Under strategic outcome 1, WFP provided in-kind assistance and/or cash transfers to the most food-insecure people affected by annual lean seasons, sudden-onset emergencies and COVID-19. Work under strategic outcome 1 also included WFP's assistance to refugees in the Dzaleka refugee camp through direct transfers and livelihood interventions.

23. The evaluation found that WFP had provided timely and effective responses to lean seasons, flooding and COVID-19. Given the relatively well-resourced lean season response during the period 2019–2021, improvements in food consumption, particularly in 2019 and 2021, and reduced reliance on negative coping strategies among beneficiaries were observed (see figure 4); however, the transfers received did not enable beneficiaries to meet their survival minimum expenditures.

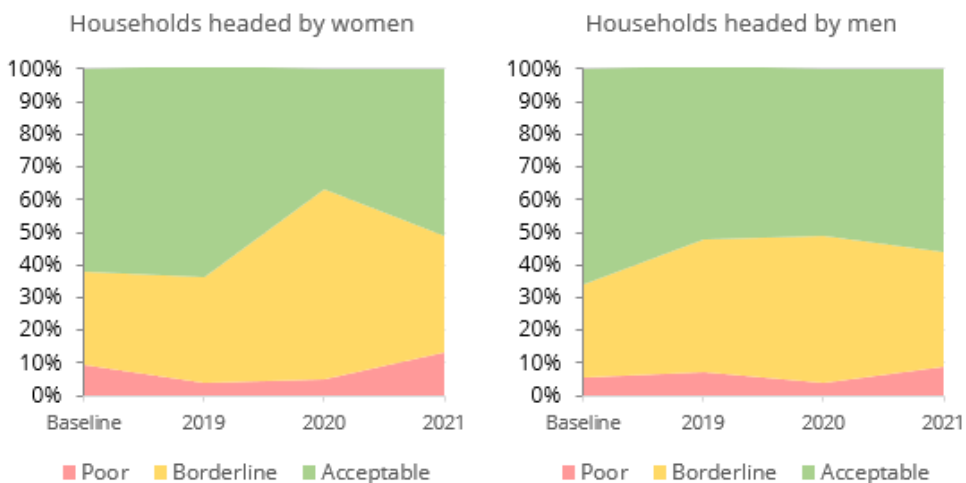
Figure 4: Trend in food consumption score among beneficiaries of WFP lean season assistance, 2018–2021



Source: Annual country reports for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

24. WFP’s refugee assistance was consistently underfunded during the period 2019–2022. Despite adjustments such as retargeting based on vulnerability assessments and a shift to cash assistance, reduced transfers led to a deterioration in food and nutrition security outcomes, such as higher proportions of households with poor and borderline food consumption scores. Households headed by women were disproportionately affected (see figure 5). At the time of the evaluation, a livelihoods project introduced in 2020 to improve refugee self-reliance and foster cohesion between refugee and host communities had not yet led refugee participants to generate sufficient income to fill their consumption gaps.

Figure 5: Trend in the proportion of refugee households with poor, borderline and acceptable food consumption scores, 2018–2021



Source: Annual country reports for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

25. Strategic outcome 2 comprised the provision of school meals and capacity strengthening support to render Malawi’s national social protection system more shock-responsive and hunger- and nutrition-sensitive.

26. In Malawi, WFP is seen as a critical actor supporting shock-responsive elements of the national social protection system due to its expertise in humanitarian assistance and targeting. During CSP implementation, WFP helped strengthen the Government’s technical capabilities for targeting and vulnerability assessments and contributed to the verification of government-identified “hotspots” in need of additional support during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also supported the Government’s social cash transfer programme in piloting the provision of cash top-ups for food-insecure households as part of the response to the 2020–2021 lean season.

27. WFP was one of the key actors supporting the provision of school meals in Malawi, primarily promoting the home-grown school feeding model that provides students with meals based on local foods produced by smallholder farmers and procured directly by the schools. By providing take-home rations during COVID-19 related school closures, WFP complemented Malawi's social protection system and informed the Government's approach to future implementation. Improved enrolment and attendance, decreased dropout rates and improved nutritional awareness were notable gains, especially among those benefiting from the home-grown school feeding model. Home-grown school feeding also contributed to increased resilience by connecting farmer cooperatives to the school food supply system.
28. Under strategic outcome 3, WFP aimed to improve the nutritional status of targeted populations, including children under 5, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls and tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS clients.
29. The CSP shift from malnutrition treatment to malnutrition prevention drove changes in WFP's partnerships and its approach to working with Government (especially district governments); it also led to greater integration of malnutrition interventions with resilience programming. One key element was the use of social and behaviour change communication across WFP programming to improve nutrition practices, including in nutrition-sensitive programming. The resulting behaviour changes contributed to improved health and nutrition outcomes among women and children under 5. Nevertheless, the proportion of children age 6–23 months who consume a minimum acceptable diet remains very low, despite some improvements between 2019 and 2021.
30. Given recent data on chronic food insecurity and, at the time of writing, the expected severity of the 2022–2023 lean season, there is a need to monitor changes in the incidence of moderate acute malnutrition as rising levels may bring about a renewed need for treatment of moderate acute malnutrition.
31. Under strategic outcome 4, WFP aimed to ensure that smallholder producers and vulnerable populations in Malawi (especially women) had enhanced resilience to cyclical shocks through livelihood diversification, increased marketable surpluses and access to well-functioning food systems and efficient supply chains.
32. Despite being under-resourced, integrated resilience programming, where implemented, improved food consumption, expanded the livelihood asset base and increased communities' capacity to manage climate-related shocks. Asset creation activities such as planting backyard vegetable gardens, engaging in soil and water conservation, creating woodlots and planting trees, and developing irrigation and water, sanitation and health-related assets helped mitigate environmental degradation while fostering household access to village savings and loan groups and contributed to an increased ability to pay for food and non-food expenditures. Still, households' economic capacity to meet essential needs remained low. Although WFP connected farmer cooperatives with schools in the home-grown school feeding programme, there is little evidence that it managed to link smallholder farmers with other markets or that it contributed to enhanced coping mechanisms through crop insurance.
33. Strategic outcome 5 was aligned with WFP's corporate approach to increasing investment in upstream capacity strengthening. It focused on three activity areas: vulnerability analysis and evidence generation, supply chain management and food systems development.
34. WFP contributed to strengthening country capacity for vulnerability assessments, shock-responsive social protection and the national universal beneficiary register. Under strategic outcome 5, it also helped to build a national logistics preparedness action plan and improve national food commodity tracking capability. Despite early momentum during the 2021 United Nations food systems summit, however, little progress was made in providing food systems support, partly due to COVID-19 disruptions and the late establishment of a dedicated food systems unit in the country office.
35. Strategic outcome 6 foresaw support through the logistics cluster to improve emergency logistics coordination and supply chain management and the provision of on-demand services to ensure effective emergency assistance.
36. Emergency logistics and supply chain services provided by WFP, such as air transport, early warning systems, health system support and humanitarian staging during the COVID-19 pandemic, were highly regarded by partners and perceived as effective. WFP acted as an essential response enabler for the Government and the humanitarian community during the unprecedented crises in the period 2019–2022 and made strong contributions to the Government's emergency response capacity during that period.

Contribution to cross-cutting aims

37. **Gender equality.** WFP built on its prior experience and the Malawi country office action plan for gender (2017–2020), ensuring that activities were gender-sensitive and including women as **beneficiaries and participants. Gender integration was strongest in resilience and nutrition initiatives, with WFP successfully promoting women’s participation in community committees and household decision-making. Most programming focused on responding to women’s immediate food security and nutrition needs, however, rather than integrating a transformative approach that challenged the underlying causes of gender inequality. Gender mainstreaming was limited by the absence of a dedicated budget, insufficient strategic partnerships on the issue and the lack of context-specific gender analyses to inform interventions.**

38. **Protection and accountability to affected populations.** Beneficiaries were provided with safe access to assistance and services, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse was integrated into agreements with cooperating partners. WFP paid increasing attention to gender-based violence over time, identified protection cases and took action to resolve the issues reported by affected populations. It expanded the complaints, feedback and recourse mechanism in place since 2017 over the course of the CSP to cover all programme activities, although awareness of the tool in the Dzaleka refugee camp remained low despite WFP’s efforts to enhance communication.

39. **Humanitarian principles.** Consistent use of evidence on needs and vulnerabilities for targeting enabled WFP to adhere to humanitarian principles in recurring and sudden-onset emergencies over the period of CSP implementation. Strengthening of the Government’s capacity for vulnerability assessments and use of the universal beneficiary register as an objective way of targeting for horizontal expansion helped to ensure humanity and impartiality. Challenges remain, however, regarding the protracted refugee situation in Malawi, where WFP needs to balance adherence to government policy with discontent among refugee populations, who perceive host-community bias in the livelihood programming supported by WFP.

40. **Environment and climate change.** WFP’s environmental and climate change interventions operationalized through the integrated resilience programme have improved community capacity to manage natural resources and environmental risks, but climate change adaptation has not been mainstreamed across other activities in the CSP.

Sustainability

41. Despite political will to continue supporting CSP activities, the extent to which benefits in areas such as school feeding, emergency preparedness and shock-responsive social protection are likely to be sustained is limited by the Government’s resource constraints and the decline in official development aid inflows.

42. WFP’s involvement of subnational structures and processes in integrated resilience building interventions helps foster the sustainability of community-level benefits stemming from those interventions. Its beneficiary graduation model is still a work in progress, however, as there was significant variation in the extent to which communities understood the rationale behind the model and continued to create and maintain assets after the provision of cash ceased, even though they recognized the lasting positive impact of assets in terms of environmental sustainability.

Linkages between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation

43. CSP activities facilitated strategic links between humanitarian and development actors by following an integrated approach to emergency response, recovery and resilience interventions, such as the linking of the lean season response to shock-sensitive social protection, which is regarded as a good example of the humanitarian–development nexus approach. The evaluation found some missed opportunities for greater collaboration among humanitarian and development actors. They include ensuring clarity on the potential roles of the Rome-based agencies in support of humanitarian-to-development linkages and on programme funding challenges among agencies, as well as on the different approaches to supporting social protection.

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

Timeliness

44. WFP's timeliness in delivering outputs, especially in emergency response activities, was praised by its partners. Delays in some areas, partly due to circumstantial or partner-related factors outside of WFP control, had negative consequences for vulnerable groups such as lean season response beneficiaries and targeted refugees.

Coverage and targeting

45. The concentration of most of WFP's programming in the Central and Southern regions of Malawi, where levels of chronic food insecurity and risk of external shocks are highest, was appropriate, and WFP used targeting approaches to ensure that the available resources were used to reach vulnerable groups. Due to funding gaps, however, WFP had to reduce the depth and breadth of coverage, such as by downsizing transfers or shifting from status-based to vulnerability-based targeting in the Dzaleka refugee camp, which risked excluding some vulnerable populations.

Cost-efficiency

46. WFP improved the cost-efficiency of specific activities and of its operational structure in support of the CSP, such as by selecting less expensive delivery partners for complaints, feedback and recourse mechanisms; introducing electronic tendering; improving supply chain processes; and using common long-term agreements among United Nations entities. The cost-efficiency of WFP's activities was also enhanced by the shift towards cash transfers, which were gradually introduced based on market and other assessments and which allowed, for example, savings in fleet costs.

Cost-effectiveness

47. WFP explored various ways to reduce costs, such as using mobile money as a transfer modality and take-home rations for school feeding or establishing a humanitarian staging area, while maintaining the quality and effectiveness of its programmes. Not all explored options were adopted, however, as some did not achieve the expected results.

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?

Financial resources

48. The CSP was largely dependent on short-term, strictly earmarked allocations of funding. Donor contributions to the CSP were lower than anticipated and decreased sharply between 2020 and 2022, reflecting wider trends in official development aid to Malawi and in the global funding landscape.

49. All strategic outcomes were under-resourced compared to the needs-based plan targets. Positive donor response to emergency appeals was a significant factor in resourcing strategic outcome 1, meaning that lean-season and emergency responses for each year were relatively well-funded for the period 2019–2021, although funding for emergency appeals subsequently declined. Funding shortfalls faced by WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for refugee assistance were compounded by increasing numbers of refugees in the Dzaleka refugee camp.

50. When provided, multi-year funding from donors, such as funding for activities under the United Nations Joint Programme on Girls Education and the Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience programme, supported predictability and allowed the country office to better plan for implementation of interventions over longer periods.

Monitoring and reporting

51. The country office improved the use of monitoring and reporting for management decision-making by enhancing the presentation and timeliness of monitoring findings. WFP's current monitoring and reporting systems track progress towards expected outcomes in food and nutrition security but are not structured to track the results of capacity strengthening interventions.

Partnerships

52. WFP improved its partnership practices with cooperating partners by enhancing communication and requiring cooperating partners to have gender and protection officers, which positively affected CSP implementation. WFP played a strong role in coordination and support for the United Nations country team and initiated more strategic partnerships with government agencies based on formal medium-term frameworks or workplans. WFP's partnerships with private sector entities are still in their early stages, however, and have not yet generated intended effects such as the scaled-up commercial production of certain foods. .

Human resources

53. Three successive organizational realignment exercises over the duration of the CSP focused on “right-sizing” the country office organizational structure, ensuring WFP's continued field presence and striving to obtain cost efficiencies. While the exercises did not have an adverse effect on WFP's ability to implement CSP activities, building staff capacity to implement the strategic shifts envisaged in the CSP has taken time.

Other factors

54. The CSP's integrated approach facilitated its contributions to outcome-level results. Nevertheless, not all districts experienced similar levels of integration of WFP interventions. WFP's role in shock-responsive social protection was bolstered by having a common agenda among key actors in Malawi. Community-level factors, such as a lack of farmer organization capacity and issues with local land tenure arrangements, affected the results of home-grown school feeding and resilience interventions.

55. Factors that limited WFP performance included the lack of a strategic approach to country capacity strengthening, limited visibility of nutrition-sensitive programming and insufficient guidance and capacity for integrated food system development.

CONCLUSIONS

56. **CSP performance.** WFP contributed to positive results under each strategic outcome, despite a challenging funding and operational environment. The degree of progress made towards expected outcomes was uneven across and within strategic outcomes. The organization implemented timely and effective responses to lean seasons, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic and supported social protection through school feeding interventions, but encountered constraints in realizing the full intended benefits of nutrition, resilience building and capacity strengthening interventions.

57. **Integrated approach.** The integrated approach to programming helped to reduce vulnerability in targeted communities by allowing households to benefit from the combined effects of mutually reinforcing interventions. Internal challenges to integration included the structure of the initial line of sight and difficulties in aligning corporate monitoring requirements and financial systems with the theory of change developed by the country office in the first year of the CSP.

58. **Strategic shift.** The intended shift to an enabling role for WFP was impeded by deteriorating food security and WFP's limited ability to define and monitor progress and ensure the sustainability of country capacity strengthening outcomes. Recurrent shocks and growing food insecurity mean that, in the near term, the Government will continue to rely on WFP's capacity for operational delivery, particularly in emergency response.

59. **Humanitarian–development continuum.** WFP's approach to resilience building helped position the organization along the humanitarian–development continuum, but it is still primarily viewed by its partners as a humanitarian emergency responder. Integrated programming has demonstrated the potential to connect crisis response, early recovery and resilience, but achieving results will require long-term investment and collaboration. WFP will also need to clarify its role and position in relation to other humanitarian and development actors and pursue stronger operational alignment.

60. **Cross-cutting objectives.** Protection considerations, efforts to foster environmental and climate adaptation and activities focusing on accountability to affected populations enhanced the overall CSP results. Gender concerns were addressed in terms of women's participation and access to resources, but gender-transformative approaches were not consistently integrated into programming.

61. **Evidence generation and use.** WFP fostered an internal culture of evidence-informed decision-making and provided strong evidence for CSP results. WFP played a leading role in generating

evidence on food and nutrition security in Malawi, including by providing national and international partners with valuable information for targeting.

62. **Resourcing and organizational effectiveness.** Decreasing levels of donor contributions over the period 2020–2022 were antithetical to the growing needs in Malawi. WFP applied appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of the decline, including increased resource mobilization efforts, greater cost-consciousness and improved targeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

63. The evaluation led to four strategic recommendations and one operational recommendation related to the design and implementation of the next CSP for Malawi. The recommendations take into account the inputs and comments received in discussions with the country office, the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa and external partners at two stakeholder workshops held in Lilongwe in November 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.	Build on progress made in developing an integrated programme.	Strategic	Country office (management; programme function including monitoring and evaluation and other units as relevant)		High	
1.1	Revise the theory of change and use it to inform the structure of the next country strategic plan and to explore opportunities to better capture the results of integration, including through indicators that go beyond corporate reporting requirements.					December 2023
1.2	Establish greater integration between programme, supply chain and other functions at the country office internally and through external forums (such as United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework discussions).					December 2025
2.	Expand on the strategy for a phased withdrawal in which WFP plays a stronger role as an “enabler”.	Strategic	Country office (management; programme and partnerships functions)		High	
2.1	Develop a more strategic approach to country capacity strengthening grounded in capacity gap assessments conducted with the Government.					June 2024
2.2	Articulate and communicate a clearer strategy for institutional sustainability, including WFP advocacy with the Government on domestic financing for proven programming approaches.					June 2026 and throughout implementation
2.3	Clearly communicate to beneficiaries WFP’s intentions with regard to the transition of beneficiaries and review the parameters of the transition model so that communities are able to sustain benefits once they transition out of WFP support.					December 2024 and throughout implementation

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.	Refine strategic position and programme directions for the next country strategic plan.	Strategic	Country office (management; programme function)	Regional bureau and headquarters (relevant Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division units)	High	
3.1	Enhance WFP's strategic positioning in relation to the humanitarian–development nexus, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) clarifying WFP's strategy, approach and positioning in resilience building and the link to early recovery (could include building evidence on “cash-plus”, jobs for youth programming and scaling up of livelihood work with refugees); and b) articulating and communicating WFP's strategy for social protection, which emphasizes the sustainability of social safety nets. 					November 2024
3.2	Refine WFP's approach to strengthening sustainable food systems in Malawi based on food systems mapping.					January 2025
3.3	Build on nutrition-sensitive programming that uses a life-cycle approach and is integrated in other programmes as a means of addressing moderate acute malnutrition.					November 2023
3.4	In the refugee response, continue advocacy with the Government on the comprehensive refugee response framework and enhance communications channels with refugee communities/leaders and other stakeholders.					December 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.	Scale up partnerships and collaboration for impact and sustainability.	Strategic	Country office (management: supply chain, programme and partnerships functions)	Regional bureau (partnerships unit) and headquarters (the divisions on the Rome-based agencies and Committee on World Food Security; private partnerships and fundraising; and strategic partnerships)	Medium	
4.1	Strengthen private sector food production and supply chain (transport/distribution/storage) partnerships in support of food systems development and nutrition.					January 2026
4.2	Provide greater strategic emphasis to the relationship with the other Rome-based agencies – in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – as key partners in food systems capacity development.					January 2024
4.3	Prioritize partnerships that support innovation and enhance the sustainability of programming, expanding country office efforts to work with the private sector and international financial institutions.					December 2025
5.	Enhance the approach to addressing the root causes of gender inequality and advancing the economic empowerment of women.	Operational	Country office (programme function)	Regional bureau (Integrated Strategic Programme Design Unit)	High	
5.1	Explore partnerships for more gender-transformative work.					January 2024
5.2	Strengthen gender analysis to inform the next country strategic plan and integrated context analysis.					November 2023

1. Introduction

1. The evaluation of the World Food Programme (WFP) Malawi Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019-2023 was commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation as per the Summary Terms of Reference (TOR) in Annex 1 and was conducted by The Universal Management Group from April 2022 to February 2023.

1.1 EVALUATION FEATURES

Evaluation rationale and objectives

2. CSP Evaluations (CSPEs) are mandatory for all WFP CSPs and encompass the strategy and activities during a specific period. In this case, the period under review was 2018–2022. While implementation of the CSP began in 2019, the September 2022 data collection cut-off point allowed assessment of progress towards 2022 implementation plan figures.

3. The purpose of the CSPE is “to assess progress and results against intended CSP outcomes and objectives, including towards gender equity and other cross-cutting corporate results; and to identify lessons for the design of subsequent country-level support.”¹ The evaluation also examined the extent to which WFP used resources efficiently, factors that affected WFP performance, and the extent to which WFP made the strategic shift envisaged by the CSP. The evaluation provides the country office with evidence on WFP’s performance to inform the design of a new CSP for Malawi, scheduled for approval by the Executive Board (EB) in November 2023.

4. The geographic coverage of the evaluation was national, encompassing all areas where WFP has worked in Malawi.

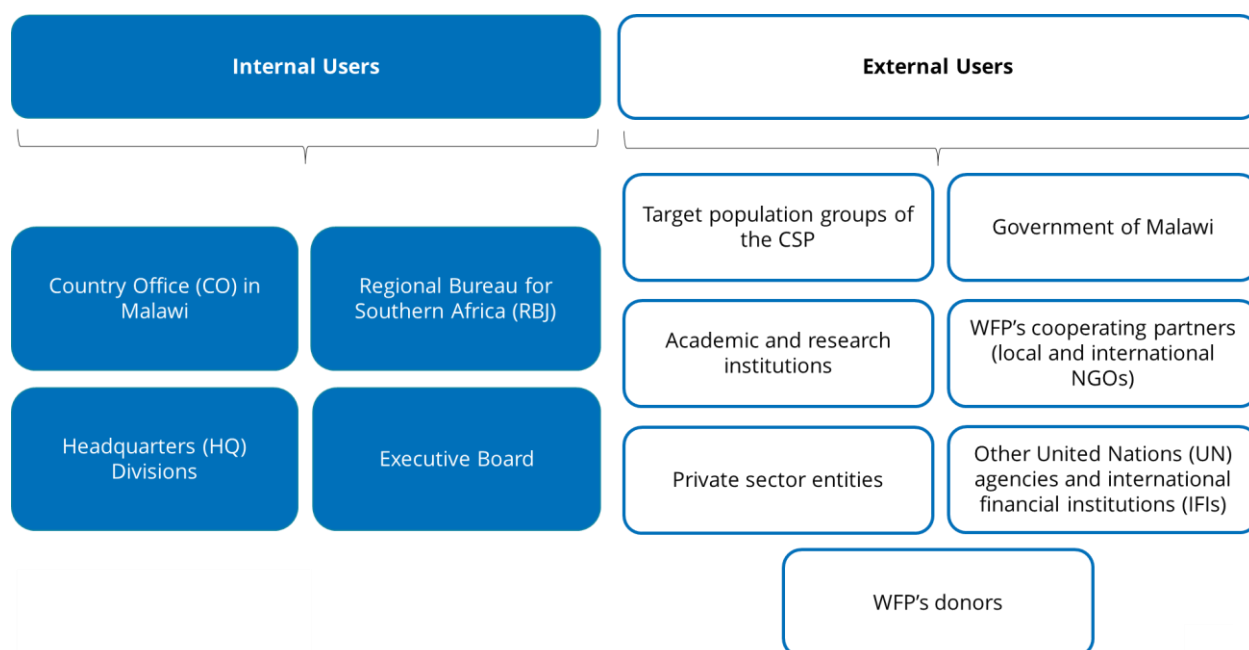
5. In accordance with WFP’s Policy on CSPs, the evaluation’s design incorporated gender and human rights dimensions that ensured the inclusion and visibility of both men and women as well as vulnerable or socially excluded groups, and utilized methodologies that integrated the voices of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations.

6. The primary intended users of the evaluation are outlined in **Figure 1**. The views of these users on WFP’s strategy and performance in Malawi were sought throughout the evaluation, and the evaluation results were discussed and communicated with them through dissemination of the report.

7. Fieldwork was carried out between 12 August and 7 September 2022, and preliminary findings debrief with the country office, members of the internal reference group (IRG), and the Office of Evaluation was conducted on 26 September 2022.

¹ WFP. 2022. *Evaluation of Malawi WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023 – Terms of Reference, 2022*.

Figure 1 Intended users of the evaluation



1.2 CONTEXT

8. This section includes key information on Malawi's context. Additional information on the context is provided in Annex 2.

1.2.1 General overview

9. Malawi is a landlocked country in south-eastern Africa, bordering Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique, with a surface area of 118,484 km².² It is divided into three regions and 28 districts. In 2020, Malawi had a population of 19.1 million³ (about 50.7 percent female and 50.3 percent male)⁴ with 43 percent below the age of 15.⁵ The majority of Malawians (84.4 percent) live in rural areas; 15.6 percent live in urban environments.⁶ More than half of Malawi's population (51.5 percent) live below the national poverty line.⁷ Life expectancy at birth is 61 for men and 68 for women.⁸ According to Malawi's Integrated Household Surveys (IHS), the fertility rate decreased from 5.7 in 2010 to 4.4 in 2015.⁹

10. In 2020, Malawi had a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of USD 636.80 and a Human Development Index (HDI) ranking of 174 out of 189 countries and territories. Malawi's Gini Index decreased from 44.7 in 2016 to 38.5 in 2019, representing a decrease in the level of income inequality in the country.¹⁰

² World Bank. 2018. *Surface area (sq. km) – Malawi*.

³ World Bank. 2020. *Population, total – Malawi*.

⁴ World Bank. 2020. *Population, female (% of total population) – Malawi*.

⁵ World Bank. 2020. *Population ages 0-14 (% of total population) – Malawi*.

⁶ Malawi Government. 2020. *The Fifth Integrated Household Survey (IHS5) 2020 Report*.

⁷ Government of Malawi. 2020. *Malawi in Figures*.

⁸ World Bank. 2020. *Life expectancy at birth, male (years) – Malawi*; World Bank. 2020. *Life expectancy at birth, female (years) – Malawi*.

⁹ Government of Malawi. 2020. *Malawi in Figures*.

¹⁰ World Bank. 2019. *Gini index (World Bank estimate) – Malawi*. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 represents perfect inequality.

Malawi's GDP was growing at an annual average rate of 3.8 percent during the period 2015-2019,¹¹ but decreased from 5.5 percent in 2019 to 0.8 percent in 2020. Since 2020, Malawi's economic situation has been affected by COVID-19, two cyclones, and the recent Ukraine crisis. On 27 May 2022, the Central Bank of Malawi announced a 25 percent devaluation of its national currency (the kwacha) to curb inflation and counter the effects of shrinking foreign exchange reserves.¹²

1.2.2 Food and nutrition security

11. According to the 2021 Global Hunger Index (GHI), Malawi ranks 81 out of 116 countries, falling within the 'serious hunger condition' category.¹³ The 2020 IHS found that 62.9 percent experience 'very low food security' (i.e. the most severe category in the survey). There are significant disparities for this statistic when disaggregated across rural/urban (67.2 versus 40.7 percent) and female/male (72.2 versus 58.7 percent) divides.

Figure 2 Acute Food Insecurity Situation: June to September 2022¹⁴

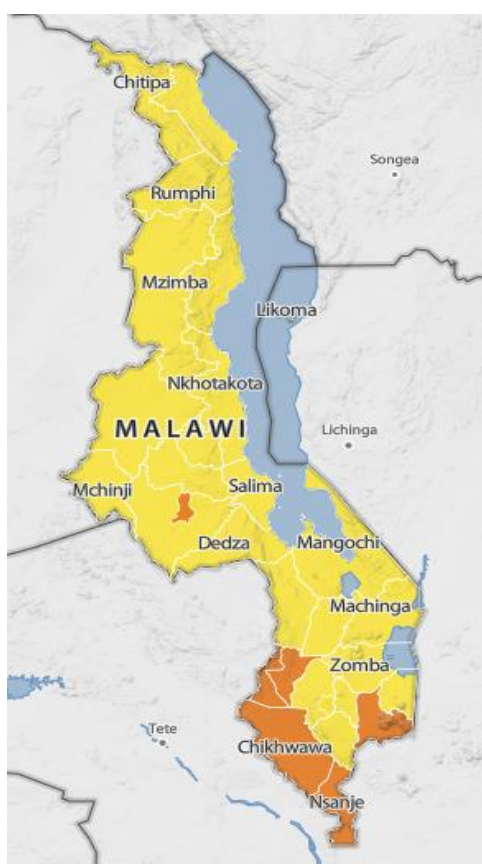
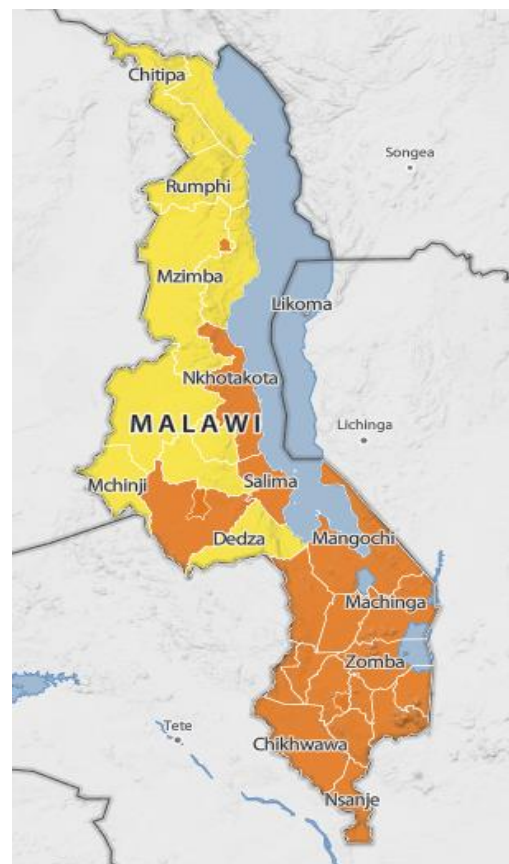


Figure 3 Acute Food Insecurity Situation: projected October 2022 to March 2023¹⁵



Colour coding legend for Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC): Green = 1 - Minimal; Yellow = 2 - Stressed; Orange = 3 - Crisis. IPC Acute Food Insecurity maps also generally include classifications for 4 - Emergency (red) and 5 - Famine (deep red; not present in Malawi).

¹¹ World Bank. 2020. *GDP growth (annual %) - Malawi*.

¹² AfricaNews. 2022. *Malawi: Kwacha gets 25% weaker*.

¹³ Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe. 2021. *Global Hunger Index: Hunger and Food Systems in Conflict Settings*.

¹⁴ Adapted from Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. 2022. *Malawi Acute Food Insecurity Situation June to September 2022 and Projection for October 2022 to March 2023*.

¹⁵ Ibid.

12. Between June and September 2022, an estimated 2.6 million people (13 percent of the population) were facing crisis levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3). This number is expected rise to 3.8 million people (20 percent of the population) between October 2022 and March 2023, mainly due to seasonal factors (i.e. lean season, depletion/shortage of food stocks). Furthermore, 1.9 million people were classified as facing severe chronic food insecurity (CFI), with Chikwawa, Nsanje, and Machinga districts having the highest proportions of the population classified as IPC CFI level 4 (severe). Food insecurity in Malawi is reflected in the high incidence of stunting (33.7 percent in 2020) and wasting (3.7 percent in 2020) among children aged 0-59 months.¹⁶

1.2.3 Agriculture and climate change

13. In 2020, the agricultural sector was the second-largest sector in Malawi, accounting for 22.8 percent of GDP¹⁷ and engaging 84.7 percent of households.¹⁸ Despite its prominence, Malawi has one of the world's lowest agricultural output rates per worker.¹⁹ The sector relies mainly on smallholder farmers who face barriers to accessing land, assets, credit, and banking services.²⁰ Crop diversification is low, as is the scale of irrigation (only 2.3 percent of cultivated land in Malawi was equipped for irrigation in 2011).²¹ This means food security in Malawi is dependent on rainfall, and there is only one rainy season per calendar year. A large proportion of the population, therefore, relies heavily on subsistence rainfed agriculture for income and livelihood.

14. Malawi is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As of July 2021, it ranked 162 out of 182 countries on the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Index, which summarizes a country's vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges alongside its disaster preparedness and resilience.²² Droughts, floods, and soil loss are among the country's top climate-related concerns, all of which constitute threats to food security, nutrition, and agriculture. Malawi has also faced several extreme weather events in recent years. See Annex 2 for information on natural disasters in Malawi and responses led by WFP and the Government of Malawi.

1.2.4 Education

15. For the 2020-2021 school year, the net enrolment rate for primary education was 88 percent (86 percent for boys and 90 percent for girls); the net enrolment rate for secondary education was 14.6 percent (14.6 percent for boys and 14.5 percent for girls).²³ In 2015 — the most recent year for which literacy rates were available — 62 percent of adults aged 15 and above were literate, with significant disparity between male (70 percent) and female (55 percent) literacy rates.²⁴

16. In response to COVID-19, the government closed all schools between March and September 2020, and January and February 2021. Existing research suggests that primary enrolment has decreased since the

¹⁶ Malawi Government. 2020. *The Fifth Integrated Household Survey (IHS5) 2020 Report*. Sex-disaggregated data on the incidence of stunting and wasting among children aged 0-59 months were not available.

¹⁷ Government of Malawi. 2021. *The Malawi 2063 First 10-Year Implementation Plan – 2021-2030*.

¹⁸ Government of Malawi. 2020. *The Fifth Integrated Household Survey 2020 Report*, November 2020.

¹⁹ Mangani, R., Jayne, T., Hazell, P., Muyanga, M. & Chimatiro, S., Burke, W. & Johnson, M. 2020. *Agricultural Transformation in Malawi: Call to Action*.

²⁰ World Bank 2018. *Arable land (hectares per person) – Malawi*.

²¹ Johns Hopkins University and The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. *Food Systems Dashboard – Percentage of cultivated land equipped for irrigation*.

²² University of Notre Dame. 2021. *ND-GAIN Index - Country Rankings*.

²³ Malawi Ministry of Education 2021. *2021 Malawi Education Statistics Report*.

²⁴ World Bank. 2015. *Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above) – Malawi*.

COVID-19 outbreak, and that the pandemic has also increased dropout rates among primary school students.²⁵

1.2.5 Gender, equity, and wider inclusion considerations

17. Malawi ranks 142 out of 162 countries in the latest Gender Inequality Index (GII),²⁶ reflecting high levels of gender inequality in reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Malawi ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1987 and has enacted numerous national policies and frameworks to tackle gender inequality, but challenges persist.

18. Although a constitutional amendment in 2017 raised the age of marriage to 18, Malawi continues to have one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with almost half of adolescent girls married before the age of 18 and almost one-tenth before the age of 15.²⁷ Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is widespread, with 34 percent of women aged 15–49 years experiencing physical violence and 20 percent experiencing sexual violence by the age of 15.²⁸ Significant factors for child marriage and SGBV include cultural and religious traditions, poverty, limited education, lack of employment opportunities, and hunger.²⁹

19. Nationally, 63 percent of women and 81 percent of men aged 15–49 are employed.³⁰ Women living with disabilities face multiplied effects of gender inequality, especially in terms of personal economic prospects and public health challenges.³¹

1.2.6 Refugees and internally displaced people

20. Malawi has adopted the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in solidarity with refugees through international burden- and responsibility-sharing.³² The country's open-door policy provides a safe haven for refugees, most of whom arrive from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi, and Rwanda. In September 2022, Malawi hosted 56,486 registered refugees and asylum seekers.³³ In April 2021, the government ordered refugees who had settled in other parts of the country to return to the Dzaleka refugee camp. Overcrowding and the rapid transmission of communicable diseases, especially in the context of COVID-19, have affected life in the camp.³⁴ Shortly after the government order was made, an application for judicial review of this decision was sought by refugees and asylum seekers. In August 2022, the High Court of Malawi upheld the government's decision and immediately put it into effect, forcing rural-based refugees to return to Dzaleka camp by November 2022.³⁵

²⁵ Government data on enrolment rates, literacy rates, and dropout rates for 2021 were not yet available at the time of writing. According to existing research, however, up to 22 percent of primary school students did not return to school after schools were reopened. Key reasons for this included concerns over the safety of schools, and the increased incidence of pregnancy and child marriage. (Source: Chiwaula, L, et al. 2021. The Impact of COVID-19 on Primary Education in Malawi: Exploring Policy Responses and Practices, *Journal of International Cooperation in Education* (24-2)).

²⁶ UNDP. 2020. *Human Development Report 2020*.

²⁷ UNICEF. 2018. The Child Marriage Factsheet: Towards ending child marriage in Malawi.

²⁸ Government of Malawi National Statistical Office and DHS Program ICF. 2017. *Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16*.

²⁹ UNICEF. 2018. The Child Marriage Factsheet: Towards ending child marriage in Malawi.

³⁰ Malawi National Statistical Office and the DHS program. 2017. *Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16*.

³¹ WFP. 2019. *Malawi Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)*.

³² United Nations. 2018. Global Compact on Refugees.

³³ UNHCR. 2022. Operational Data Portal: Refugee Situations—Malawi.

³⁴ UNHCR. 2021. Malawi Fact Sheet September 2021.

³⁵ Africa News Agency. August 15, 2022. *Time Runs Out For Refugees*.

1.2.7 COVID-19

21. In March 2020, the government declared a State of Disaster regarding the COVID-19 situation, and on 2 April 2020 President Mutharika announced that Malawi had recorded its first three confirmed cases of COVID-19; measures to curb the spread heavily affected Malawi's economy and society.³⁶ COVID-19 has affected all spheres of life, with reported increases in child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and frequency of SGBV, among others.³⁷ The pandemic has contributed to a significant economic slowdown in Malawi; 30 to 40 percent of businesses were estimated to be lost directly or indirectly to COVID-19 in August 2020, with the informal sector disproportionately affected due to its reliance on face-to-face transactions.³⁸ Furthermore, it is estimated that the agricultural sector lost a minimum of USD 59.2 million in real GDP due to the pandemic, leading to jobs and income losses.³⁹

1.2.8 International development assistance and humanitarian protection

22. Malawi has seen an overall increase in international development assistance over the past two decades, coupled with cyclical humanitarian action in response to the country's high vulnerability to weather patterns. During the period 2018-2021, Malawi received on average USD 1,322 million in official development assistance (ODA) annually.⁴⁰ While humanitarian aid flows were lower than ODA inflows, the country received increased amounts of humanitarian aid between 2018 and 2020 – from USD 41.7 million in 2018 to USD 89.1 million in 2020 in response to Tropical Cyclone Idai. However, the amount of humanitarian aid decreased to USD 47.5 million in 2021,⁴¹ and the prospects of increases in external funding are low, as donor attention shifts towards the Ukraine crisis and its global effects. This leaves Malawi with serious development and humanitarian funding gaps, which significantly impact the local population and refugees.

1.2.9 National development policies and the SDGs

23. Malawi's Development Agenda is guided by the Malawi 2063 Vision (MW2063), launched in January 2021, and operationalized by the Malawi Implementation Plan (MIP-10) 2021-2030. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (MGDS III) covered the 2017-2022 period and was phased out in 2021 following the launch of the MW2063. These national policies are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

24. Several other national policies and plans since 2018 are based on the MGDS and the MW2063 and aim to contribute to the achievement of Malawi's development objectives. See Annex 2 for detailed descriptions of these national policies and plans.

25. Malawi undertook two Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in 2020 and 2022. The VNR 2022 indicates that Malawi has made significant progress on SDG 2 – Zero Hunger and on several other SDGs, but little to no progress on SDG 1 – No poverty, SDG 10 – Reduce inequalities, and SDG 15 – Life on land.

1.2.10 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF)

26. Malawi's UNSCDF 2019-2023 (originally the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)) is organized around three pillars and nine outcomes (see Annex 3). WFP is the reporting agency for two outcome indicators related to food and nutrition security within Pillar III (Inclusive and Resilient

³⁶ UNICEF Malawi. 2020. *Reviving hopes dashed by COVID-19 closures*.

³⁷ UN Women. 2020. *Covid-19 Rapid Gender Assessment: Malawi 2020*.

³⁸ Malawi Government. 2021. *Malawi Covid-19 Socio-Economic Recovery Plan: 2021-2023*.

³⁹ ECAM and ILO. 2020. *Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Employment in Malawi*.

⁴⁰ OECD. 2023. *Creditor Reporting System data – Malawi – Official Development Assistance (Total All Sectors), 2012-2021*.

⁴¹ OECD. 2023. *Creditor Reporting System data – Malawi – Official Development Assistance (Humanitarian Aid, Total), 2012-2021*.

Growth).⁴² WFP also contributes to Outcome 4 on increased access to early childhood development, and to Outcome 5 on the provision of quality health, nutrition, and education and protection services, within Pillar II (Population Management and Inclusive Human Development).

27. Other United Nations agencies working with the government on food security, nutrition, and livelihood interventions in Malawi include the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). WFP implements joint programmes with several of these agencies (see **Table 1**). The World Bank provides support for policy development aimed at promoting market access for smallholders, while the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are involved in supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the country. Private sector actors in food and nutrition security are engaged through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network, for which WFP is a convening agency.

Table 1 Joint programmes with other United Nations agencies during the CSP period

Name of programme	Entities involved in implementation	Time period covered	Main activities implemented by WFP
Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER)	WFP, FAO, UNDP, and UNICEF	2019-2023	Four components of the integrated resilience programme: food assistance for assets (FFA), integrated risk management (crop insurance and village savings and loans), participatory integrated climate service for agriculture (PICSA), and smallholder agricultural market support (SAMS). See the textbox in Finding 12 for more details.
Joint Programme for Girls’ Education (JPGE)	WFP, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and UNICEF	First phase: 2014-2017 Second phase: 2018-2020 Third phase: 2021-2024	Provision of school meals through a market-based, home-grown school feeding (HGSF) model.
Social Protection for the SDGs (SP4SDG)	WFP, UNICEF, and International Labour Organization (ILO)	2020-2021	Strengthening Malawi’s social protection system through technical support to the government.
Gender Transformative Approach	WFP, FAO, and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	2021-2022	Some components of the integrated resilience programme, including village savings and loans, PICSA, and SAMS, with an emphasis on addressing gender inequality.

1.3 SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED

CSP design and evolution

28. WFP has been present in Malawi since 1965. Prior to the approval of the Malawi CSP in 2018, WFP’s operations focused on school feeding, resilience building, nutrition, emergency response, and food assistance to refugees, operating mainly through Country Programmes and Protracted Relief Recovery Operations (PRROs). The Malawi CSP aligns with the objectives of the WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021), reflecting a shift from direct implementation to capacity strengthening.

⁴² Outcome 7: Households have increased food and nutrition security, equitable access to WASH [water, sanitation and hygiene] and healthy ecosystems and resilient livelihoods. Indicators 7.1 (Percentage of food-insecure households (disaggregated by women headed and child headed households) and 7.2 (Percentage of children 6-23 months who receive 4 or more food groups (SDG 2.2.1)).

29. The original CSP document articulated the strategy in six contributing activities under five strategic outcomes (SOs). The structure of CSP SOs, focus areas, activities, and modalities of intervention are presented in **Table 2**. See Annex 4 for the CSP’s line of sight and results framework.

Table 2 Strategic Outcomes (SOs) of CSP 2019-2023

Focus Area	SO	Activities	Modality	NBP targets for resources, after budget revision 03 (USD)
Crisis Response	SO1: Shock-affected people in Malawi, including refugees, have access to nutritious food all year (crisis response)	Activity 1: Provide cash and/or food transfers to refugees, malnourished people and the most vulnerable populations affected by seasonal shocks	Food, cash, capacity strengthening	174,243,294
Resilience	SO2: Vulnerable populations in food-insecure communities benefit from strengthened shock-responsive social protection systems and efficient supply chains that ensure access to safe, nutritious food all year (resilience building)	Activity 2: Support national social protection systems to become increasingly shock-responsive and hunger- and nutrition-sensitive	Capacity strengthening	4,517,192
		Activity 3: Provide nutritious meals to schoolchildren in food-insecure areas	Food, cash, capacity strengthening	82,372,804
Resilience	SO3: Targeted populations in Malawi – especially children under five, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women and girls, and TB and HIV/AIDS clients – have improved nutritional status in line with national targets (resilience building)	Activity 4: Provide chronic malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency prevention services to at-risk populations in targeted areas	Food, capacity strengthening	11,046,123
Resilience	SO4: Smallholder producers and vulnerable populations in Malawi (especially women) have enhanced resilience through diversified livelihoods, increased marketable surpluses, and access to well-functioning food systems and efficient supply chains by 2030 (resilience building)	Activity 5: Provide resilience building support, education, and systems strengthening services to smallholder farmers and value chain actors	Food, cash, capacity strengthening	281,142,979
Resilience	SO5: National and local institutions, agencies, and enterprises in Malawi have increased capacity and improved supply chain systems to achieve SDG 2 by 2030 (resilience building)	Activity 6: Provide capacity strengthening, skills transfer, partnership activities, and logistics and procurement services to national and local institutions and private sector enterprises involved in food security, nutrition, food safety, disaster risk management, and emergency response	Capacity strengthening, service delivery	4,558,240
		Activity 9: Support national and sub-national systems strengthening activities to address systemic challenges, reduce the impact of shocks, and improve local resilience of		1,167,011

Focus Area	SO	Activities	Modality	NBP targets for resources, after budget revision 03 (USD)
		the health supply chain systems in Malawi.		
Crisis Response	SO6: Humanitarian and development partners in Malawi have access to increased supply chain emergency services throughout the crisis (crisis response) <i>[added to CSP following Budget Revision 01, May 2019]</i>	Activity 7: Provide services through the Logistics Cluster to national disaster management offices and other relevant partners to improve emergency logistics coordination and supply chain management	Service delivery	6,616,074
		Activity 8: Provide corridor management supply chain services and on-demand services to humanitarian and other relevant partners to ensure effective emergency assistance	Service delivery	3,138,269

30. In its original needs-based plan (NBP), the cost of the CSP was USD 619.8 million and it targeted 4,851,715 beneficiaries. Following budget revisions (BRs) in 2019, 2021, and 2022, the cost increased to USD 634.5 million while the number of tier 1 targeted beneficiaries remained the same since no additional funding was provided for direct transfers of food or cash. Implementation began in January 2019, and as of October 2022, 41.2 percent (USD 261.5 million) of the NBP was funded. The extent to which activities were resourced, when compared to the NBP, is relatively low, with SOs 1, 4, and 6 funded at less than 50 percent, and SOs 2 and 3 funded at less than 60 percent. One exception to this was Activity 6 under SO5, which was funded at 80 percent. See Annex 4 for more information on CSP resourcing.

31. Among the CSP's donors, the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) made the largest contributions (USD 63.1 million and approximately USD 66 million, respectively), together funding 21 percent of the NBP. Most of the UK's contributions were channelled through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund, a United Nations pooled financing mechanism. Other donors that contributed significantly to the NBP include the European Commission and Norway. Most multilateral direct contributions to the CSP were earmarked at the activity level throughout the 2018-2021 period, ranging from 84.9 percent (2019) to 95 percent (2021) of annual contributions.

32. Three budget revisions marked significant evolutions in the CSP between 2019 and 2022:

- BR01 in May 2019 represented a budget increase of USD 1.3 million and introduced a new strategic outcome (SO6) focused on crisis response regarding Tropical Cyclone Idai.
- BR02 in April 2021 further developed SO6 and Activities 7 and 8 in response to COVID-19 and in preparation for possible future emergencies, particularly in terms of logistical support for humanitarian action. BR02 represented a budget increase of USD 8.7 million.
- BR03 was approved in June 2022 and added Activity 9 related to health supply chain systems strengthening under SO5, with a budget increase of USD 4.7 million.⁴³

⁴³ Activity 9 is considered in the evaluation although there are fewer data on performance due to early stage of implementation.

33. The total number of beneficiaries reached by the CSP was lower than planned and was on a downward trend between 2019 and 2021. See Annex 4 for details. Overall, available evidence and analytical work from the country office Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) unit supported the evaluability of the CSP. See Annex 5 for a list of the country office's analytical work.

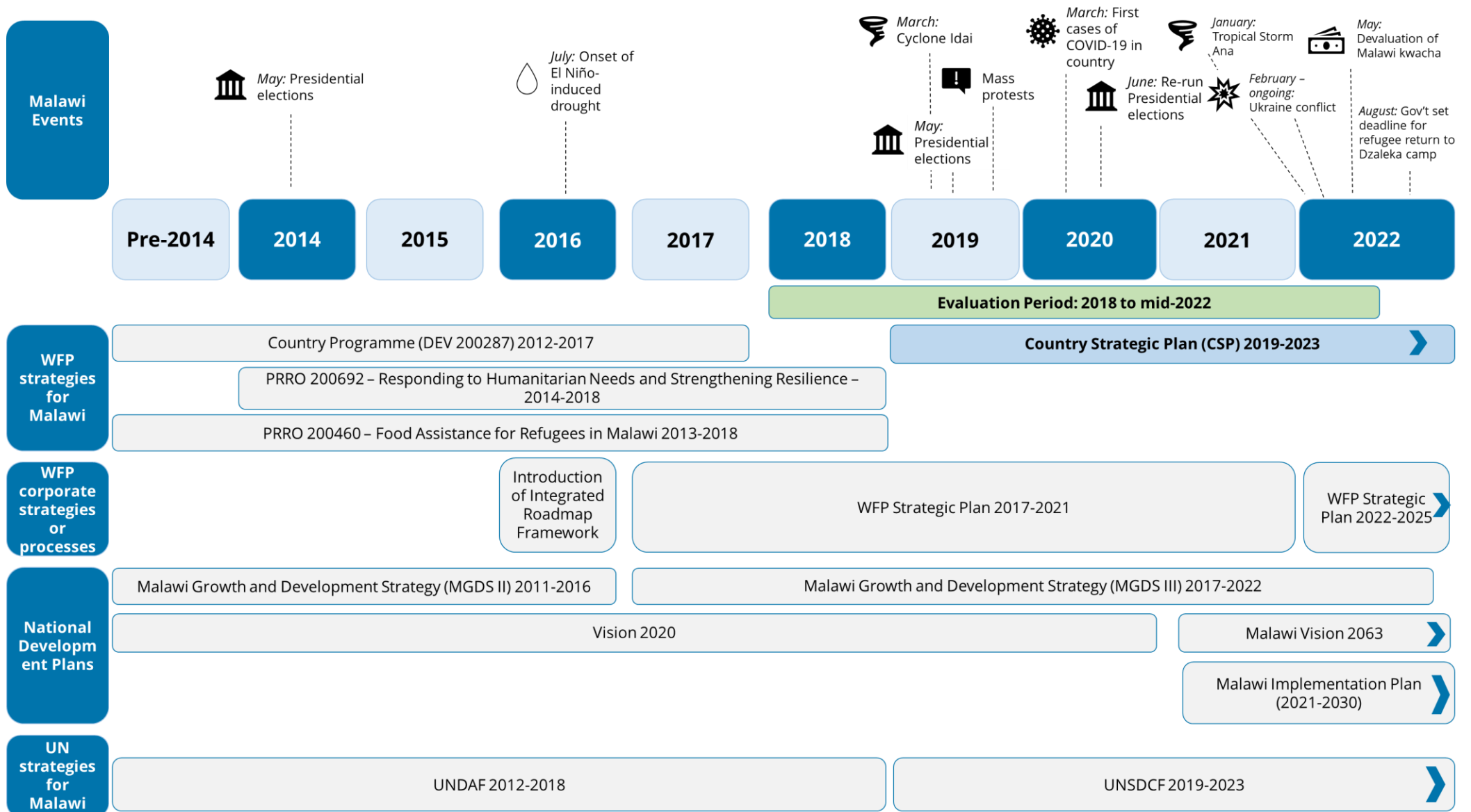
Gender, AAP, and other cross-cutting issues

34. The CSP aimed to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment, accountability to affected populations (AAP), and protection issues in its support of national efforts to tackle hunger, improve nutrition and reduce vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition, and strengthen resilience to recurrent shocks. WFP integrated protection and AAP into the design, implementation, and monitoring of activities by ensuring that all CSP interventions addressed vulnerable people's safety, dignity, and integrity.

35. The CSP articulated WFP's intent to move beyond gender mainstreaming to employ gender transformative approaches to change power relations and achieve gender equality, seen as critical to achieving zero hunger. The CSP had a Gender and Age Marker of 3, indicating that gender was fully integrated.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ For more details on the Gender and Age Marker, see WFP Gender Office (2018), *Gender and Age Marker Guidance*.

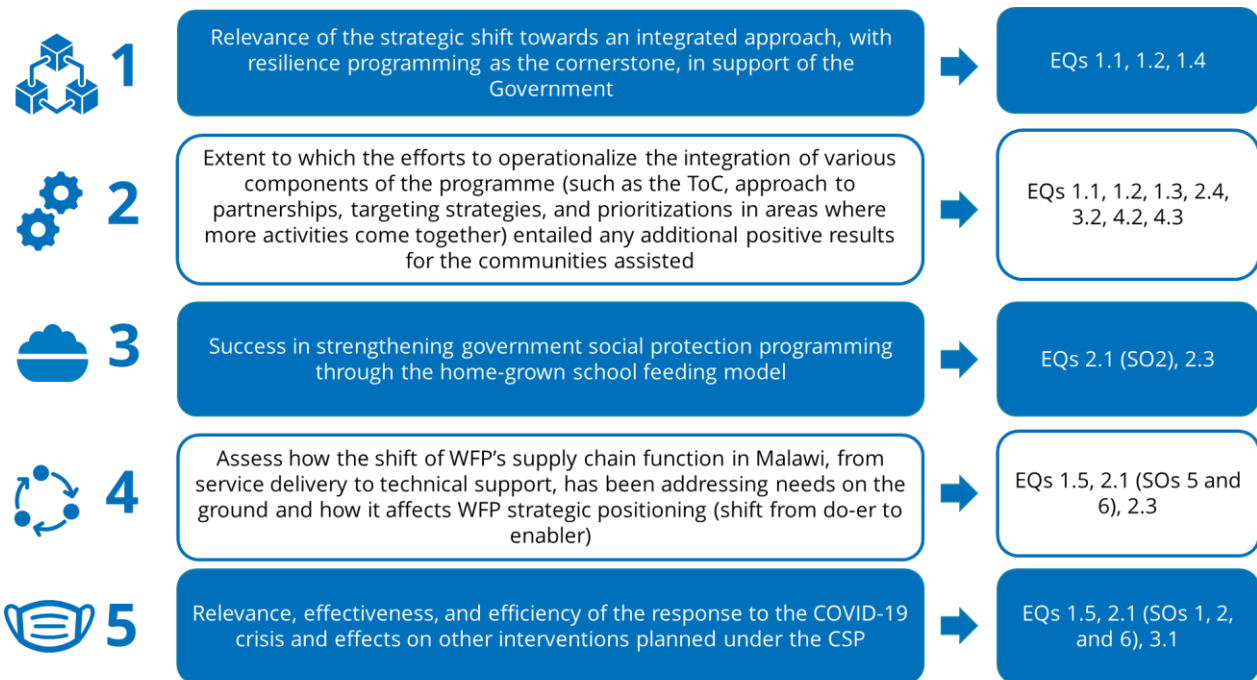
Figure 4 Timeline of events in Malawi



1.4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

36. The unit of analysis for the evaluation was the WFP Malawi CSP (2019-2023), including its strategic outcomes, outputs, activities, inputs, and budget revisions within the evaluation period (2018 to September 2022). The evaluation aimed to provide a holistic assessment of the CSP and was guided by an evaluation matrix (see Annex 7) that builds on the evaluation questions (EQs) and sub-questions in the TOR and that was refined by the evaluation team in light of the themes of interest to the country office (see **Figure 5**) and consultations with the country office and Office of Evaluation.

Figure 5 Themes of interest and the EQs in which they were reflected



37. The core questions that the evaluation sought to answer are common to all CSPEs and broadly cover the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance and coherence (EQ1), effectiveness/sustainability (EQ2), and efficiency (EQ3). EQ4 addresses factors that explain WFP performance.

38. The evaluation took a mixed-methods and theory-based approach. In 2020, the country office developed an integrated Theory of Change (ToC) to articulate the CSP's intent to deliver integrated programming to ensure food security for beneficiaries through different stages of life. The evaluation was guided by the adapted version of this ToC developed by the evaluation team, which included an expanded set of assumptions.⁵⁶ Quantitative data analysed included performance data, expenditures, and fund allocations. Qualitative information was collected through document review, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observation. See Annex 8 for the evaluation's methodology, including its sampling strategy and limitations, Annex 9 for data collection tools, and Annex 10 for the list of stakeholders consulted.

39. Workshops and discussions were held with internal and external stakeholders at country/regional level to validate key findings, conclusions, and recommendations before completing the final evaluation products.

40. See Annex 11 for the field mission calendar and Annex 12 for the timeline of the evaluation.

⁵⁶ Annex 6 includes the ToC as adapted by the evaluation team for the purposes of the evaluation.

2. Evaluation findings

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

2.1.1 To what extent was the CSP informed by evidence on hunger challenges, food security and nutrition issues, gender inequalities, and country capacity gaps in Malawi to ensure its relevance? (EQ 1.1)

Finding 1 The CSP and its interventions were informed by evidence. However, the CSP lacked the analyses necessary to inform a more gender transformative approach and a more systematic approach to capacity strengthening. CSP targeting strategies focused on the most vulnerable.

41. The CSP was informed by the Zero Hunger and Malnutrition Strategic Review (2018-2019), which provided a situational analysis of the state of food and nutrition security in Malawi, the national policies and institutions in place, and the needs for investment in the country. The review did not provide in-depth analysis of gender dimensions, and WFP did not conduct a separate gender analysis to inform CSP design. It should be noted that tools and methodologies for conducting gender analyses to inform gender transformative approaches in CSPs remain under development at the corporate level.

42. CSP interventions across SOs were systematically informed by vulnerability analyses, market analyses, and food security analyses; targeting strategies were based on established criteria and drew upon corporate approaches to intervention design, such as the three-pronged approach (3PA).⁵⁸ The Integrated Context Analysis used information on food security, natural hazards, land degradation, and poverty, but did not contain analysis of differentiated effects of the context on men and women.⁵⁹ Community-based plans included information on gender roles, division of labour, and household decision making, although it is not clear how this information subsequently informed the choice of interventions. The country office planned to carry out more specific gender analyses during the CSP, but this was interrupted by COVID-19.⁶⁰

43. WFP targeting strategies for emergency response, refugee assistance, and resilience programming focused on the most vulnerable populations identified for each relevant Strategic Objective.⁶¹ Standard operating procedures (SOP) for targeting were developed in coordination with the government. Annex 13 outlines the targeting strategies used for interventions across SOs. Where the government's Universal Beneficiary Register (UBR) has been rolled out, WFP used it for targeting beneficiaries for transfers under SO1 and SO4 (see textbox).

Malawi's UBR

The government-managed UBR is the national registry of household data to facilitate beneficiary targeting in social support programmes in Malawi. Introduced in 2017, it gradually expanded to cover 22 out of 28 districts in 2022.

WFP's use of the UBR for targeting cash assistance was part of an intentional effort to align with national systems for beneficiary registry, and to strengthen government technical capacity in managing the national social protection system.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ WFP. 2022. *Memorandum: Determination of the Transfer Values for WFP Malawi Cash Operations*.

⁵⁸ WFP. 2017. *The Three Pronged-Approach (3PA)*. The 3PA includes Integrated Context Analysis, Seasonal Livelihood Programming, and Community-Based Participatory Planning

⁵⁹ The ICA 2021 only identifies a gap in data on GBV.

⁶⁰ The country office integrated gender analysis in its research for Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture activities and as part of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion report for the Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER) project.

⁶¹ For details on the population groups of beneficiaries, and the targeting approach undertaken by WFP for each SO, see Annex 13.

44. Capacity strengthening initiatives were undertaken across SOs, and notably under SO5. Although these responded to government requests, they were not based on organizational capacity assessments or institutional capacity needs mapping.⁶² The absence of such analytical inputs limited the opportunities to plan and collaborate with other partners in a more intentional approach to capacity strengthening that could have addressed the more challenging capacity gaps in Malawi.

2.1.2 To what extent is the CSP aligned to national priorities (under the umbrella of the SDGs)? (EQ 1.2)

Finding 2 The CSP was well aligned with national priorities as outlined in the Government of Malawi’s national development strategies and plans, district-level development plans, and emergency and humanitarian response plans.

45. **National-level alignment:** The CSP was aligned with the MGDS III, which was initially intended to cover the 2017-2022 period, before it was phased out in 2021 and replaced by the MW2063 and its ten-year plan, the MIP-10. **Table 3** outlines the CSP’s alignment with national policies and plans that have been in place since 2018. Interviewed national government stakeholders confirmed that the CSP was aligned with national priorities, and both used and strengthened national systems, notably the UBR (see EQ 1.1).

Table 3 CSP alignment with national development strategies and plans

National Development Policies/Plans	CSP alignment
MW 2063 MIP-10 (2021-2030)	The CSP aligned with the MW2063 and MIP-10’s enabling strategies focused on human capital development (nutrition, household assets) and environmental sustainability (agroforestry, watershed management, climate information), and with Pillar 1: Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization, in particular through CSP intent to expand market access for smallholder farmers.
National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) 2018-2022	SO4 and NAIP 2018-2022 both recognized that agricultural growth requires private investment and aimed to increase marketable surpluses and improve supply chain efficiency.
National Resilience Strategy 2018-2030	SOs 4 (Resilience) and 2 (Social Protection) aligned with the National Resilience Strategy’s aims of promoting: (i) resilient agricultural growth; (ii) risk reduction, flood control, and early warning and response systems; (iii) human capacity, livelihoods, and social protection; (iv) catchment protection and management.
National Multisectoral Nutrition Policy 2018-2022	SO3 (Nutrition) related to the policy’s aims of ensuring optimal nutrition for all Malawians by focusing on children under the age of five, pregnant and lactating women, and other vulnerable groups.
Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) II 2018-2023	SO2 (Social Protection) aligned with the MNSSP II’s goal of providing a framework for strengthening social support and protection for vulnerable populations. Pillar 3 of the MNSSP II aims to develop a shock-sensitive social protection system, which was covered by Activity 2 of the CSP. Support for vulnerability assessments (SO 5) and crisis response (SO1) also aligned with this programme.
National Multi-Hazard Contingency Plan, Emergency and Lean Season response plans	SO 1 (Crisis Response) and SO 6 (Emergency Response) aligned with Malawi’s multi-hazard contingency plan and crisis and emergency response plans, in which WFP is designated as Co-Lead of the Food Security and the Transport and Logistics Clusters. ⁶³

46. **District-level alignment:** In Zomba, SO2 was especially significant regarding the Zomba District Development Plan’s priorities on school feeding and social support programmes (i.e. increasing incomes of vulnerable households

⁶² Such a mapping is proposed as part of the WFP CCS toolkit.

⁶³ Government of Malawi. 2021. *The National Hazard Contingency Plan, 2021-2022*.

through public works and cash transfers).⁶⁴ In Chikwawa, the CSP's focus was reflected in WFP-financed initiatives in the District Development Plan, related to school feeding (SO2, including HGSF), sustainable forest management, and energy saving technologies (SO4).⁶⁵

2.1.3 To what extent is the CSP coherent and aligned with the wider UN and international community and include appropriate partnerships based on the comparative advantage of WFP in Malawi? (EQ 1.3)

Finding 3 The CSP was aligned with the priorities of other United Nations agencies and development partners. Coherence across stakeholders was supported by WFP's role in key national clusters and multi-stakeholder working groups and its partnerships with United Nations entities. These partnerships, however, did not always translate into coordinated implementation approaches.

47. The CSP was designed to contribute to UNSDCF 2019–2023 Pillar III on inclusive and resilient growth and to outcomes under inclusive human development (Pillar II). WFP strategic shifts and its approach to working with government and other partners were also aligned with the Cooperation Framework's transformative principles (see Annex 14).⁶⁶

48. WFP expanded its work with actors in the social protection sector, in particular through a joint position paper on shock-sensitive social protection (SSSP), discussions on a joint workplan with UNICEF, and through a joint programme to strengthen Malawi's social protection system with UNICEF and ILO (See [Table 1.](#))

49. KIIs and existing evaluations suggest that joint programmes under the CSP leveraged WFP expertise in areas of comparative advantage (see textbox), but they were not implemented or monitored in a coordinated fashion.⁶⁷ Even in the Joint Programme on Girls' Education (JPGE), where greater synergies with UNICEF and UNFPA developed over the years, there were reported challenges in making consistent implementation linkages as the agencies worked towards different outcomes.

50. Coherence at a strategic level under the UNSDCF did not always carry through to implementation, leading to questions about 'One UN' by partners and affected populations.⁶⁸ There were often different approaches to disbursing funds to beneficiaries among United Nations agencies working with the same government ministry. In the refugee response, there were reported differences in livelihood programming models (UNHCR, WFP), although implemented by the same cooperating

Comparative advantages of WFP in Malawi

Based on the evaluation team's analysis, the CSP leveraged the following comparative advantages of WFP in Malawi:

Field presence: important for credibility of the United Nations, enables prepositioning of support and facilitates partners' work during emergency response.

Credible interlocutor: with government and international community; a well-respected advocate.

Humanitarian emergency: operational response capabilities, including logistics and supply, speed of response; linkage to global logistics support.

Evidence generation: robust systems and methodologies to support decision making and implementation.

Shock-sensitive social protection: valuable capabilities and cash-based transfer (CBT) experience that augmented the government MNSPP II intervention.

⁶⁴ Zomba District Council. 2017. *Zomba District Development Plan 2017-2022*. The Salima district development plan was not provided to the evaluation team.

⁶⁵ Chikwawa District Council. 2017. *Chikwawa District Development Plan 2017-2022*.

⁶⁶ The UNSDCF describes eight transformative principles, one of which relates to a capacity development approach that is to focus on an enabling environment or sustained delivery of new capacity and skills, ownership of development interventions, and measurable change in institutional capabilities. Government of Malawi and UN in Malawi. 2019. *The UN Development Assistance Framework Malawi 2019-2023*.

⁶⁷ Based on KII in reference to PROSPER and the GTA programme and the evaluation of Joint SDG Fund. 2022. *Final Evaluation of the SDG Fund Joint Programme Social Protection for the Sustainable Development Goals in Malawi: Accelerating Inclusive Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals (2020-2021)*.

⁶⁸ The 2019–2023 UNSDCF commits the UNCT to work as One UN.

partner (see also EQ 2.1 on SO1). KIIs noted different ways of working with care groups and room to share lessons and create more coherence within and across districts.

51. WFP was endorsed as the co-lead for Food Security and Transport and Logistics clusters in the government's emergency response plan.⁶⁹ National Clusters for these and other sectors were established based on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Global Cluster model and drew on WFP expertise in leading and hosting the Global Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Clusters and co-leading, with FAO, the Food Security Cluster. WFP applied its expertise in mobilizing resources for emergency response and used its cluster lead role in support of greater coherence. During the last lean season (2021-2022), for example, WFP advocated for a harmonized approach to transfer values for horizontal and vertical expansion among the government, United Nations agencies and donors involved.

52. FAO and IFAD participated with WFP in multiple joint programmes: FAO in Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER), FAO and IFAD in Gender Transformative Approaches for Food Security and Nutrition (GTA), and FAO and WFP continued collaboration on IPC assessments. Despite efforts made by WFP to coordinate on these programmes, the extent to which these efforts translated into enhanced field-level cooperation was limited. A recent evaluation of the IFAD country programme found little evidence of harmonization and coordination among the three agencies, despite similarities and complementarities in their programming.⁷⁰ Stakeholders and evaluations identified several opportunities to enhance collaboration in support of smallholder farmers, school gardens, and an advocacy agenda on sustainable food systems.

2.1.4 To what extent is CSP design internally coherent and based on a ToC that articulates WFP role and contributions in a realistic manner and based on its comparative advantages as defined in the WFP strategic plan? (EQ 1.4)

Finding 4 The CSP proposed linkages across strategic outcomes. An integrated Theory of Change helped strengthen the internal coherence of the CSP.

53. While initially the CSP was not based on an explicit ToC, it reflected WFP's aim for coherence through integrated programming to connect recovery, resilience building, and nutrition interventions, and a positioning shift towards technical assistance and capacity strengthening (instead of direct implementation). The CSP outlined the SOs but also foresaw linkages among them (e.g. linking productive assets to emergency response).

54. The explicit ToC constructed during the first year of CSP implementation clarified the envisioned interconnectedness of the SOs. Through immediate outcomes, a first level of change,⁷¹ the ToC showed how activities (such as school meals, nutrition, home gardens, community assets, and improved agroforestry practices) would come together to support improved health and nutrition for children and households, for example.

55. The ToC identified three pathways to impact: emergency response, resilience, and stronger government capacity. Compared to the original line of sight, the ToC clarified some of the activities, mechanisms, and expected results for country capacity strengthening. However, the country office capacity strengthening approach was evolving and was not yet reflected in a clear strategy. The ToC also reflected the changing role of supply chain and logistics (away from service delivery to technical assistance).

56. The ToC informed programming choices. For example, the country office prioritized expansion of the HGSP model in the same areas where SAMS and FFA were being implemented to foster linkages across these activities and demonstrate the benefits of integration for targeted communities. EQ 4 explores several key assumptions in the ToC.

⁶⁹ Ministry of Homeland Security. March 2019. *2019 Flood Response Plan and Appeal*.

⁷⁰ IFAD. 2022. *Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation, Republic of Malawi*.

⁷¹ Result level introduced by the country office's Integrated ToC.

2.1.5 To what extent has WFP's strategic positioning remained relevant throughout the implementation of the CSP considering changing context, national capacities and needs – in particular in response to the COVID-19 pandemic? (EQ 1.5)

Finding 5 WFP engagement in Malawi remained relevant over the CSP period and adapted to emerging needs and opportunities. WFP's strategic positioning was positively influenced by its emergency response capabilities and evidence generation.

57. The CSP proposed a critical shift from implementing to enabling through a greater focus on capacity strengthening. Changing conditions in Malawi, due to external shocks, required significant adaptations at a time of unprecedented crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and major flooding due to Tropical Cyclone Idai in 2019 and Tropical Storm Ana and Tropical Cyclone Gombe in 2022. Two CSP budget revisions responded to these emergencies (see section 1.3 for details). Necessary adaptations often brought WFP back into a greater implementation role, as illustrated by its support in the delivery of food and other assistance during major flood responses, and the provision of temporary stores for use as test centres during the pandemic. Stakeholders highly valued WFP's agility and operational capacity to actively respond to emergencies, which were considered essential to WFP's comparative advantage and supported its strategic positioning.⁷²

58. The country office made significant progress towards integrated resilience programming (see section 2.2.1) raising considerable annual and multi-year funding for activities, despite having entered a relatively crowded space in which other actors implemented similar programmes. At both field and central levels, government stakeholders interviewed acknowledged and appreciated the work undertaken. However, some development organizations and donors were found to be less aware of the extent of WFP's resilience work beyond humanitarian interventions, highlighting the need to differentiate and communicate programme approaches and capacity in this area more clearly.

59. WFP's role in evidence generation has been a key factor in its strategic positioning in Malawi. Development partners recognize its role in providing relevant market data (through mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM)), emergency situation updates to United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and donors, and support to the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) and other entities to enhance the evidence base on food insecurity. Malawi was the first country in the region to carry out the IPC chronic food insecurity assessment,⁷³ which was supported by WFP and is now being used by partners to advocate for official development assistance (ODA) /humanitarian assistance funding and to design their next country strategies.

60. WFP adapted to the context by adding Activity 9 related to health supply chain systems strengthening under SO5 in June 2022. This activity includes interventions aimed at providing pandemic preparedness tools to the government and applying supply chain methodologies to support government health supply chains.⁷⁴ This initiative emerged from WFP's experience responding to the 2014 Ebola outbreak in western Africa as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, after which WFP has become more involved in health supply chain capacity strengthening globally. The availability of funding for interventions in several African countries⁷⁵ presented an opportunity for WFP Malawi to engage with the Ministry of Health (see also Finding 14. Support for the health sector, not normally associated with WFP, was regarded by external stakeholders as strategically valuable to filling critical gaps in the Ministry of Health's capacity to manage essential medicines and vaccine storage and to prepare logistically to respond to future health crises. Furthermore, to protect United Nations staff, WFP established the Primary Care Clinic (PCC) in September 2020 and played a role in coordinating the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccinations to United Nations staff and their dependents.

⁷² Based on KIIs.

⁷³ WFP Malawi. 2022. *Chronic Food Insecurity Situation 2022-2026*.

⁷⁴ WFP. 2021. Malawi CSP, revision 03.

⁷⁵ Country projects funded by Takeda Pharma include Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Zambia.

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

2.2.1 To what extent did WFP activities and outputs contribute to the expected outcomes of the CSP and the UNSDCF? Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative? (EQ 2.1)

61. A nuanced view of progress for each SO is provided in the following findings. Further analysis of output achievement and contributions to outcomes is provided in Annex 18.

SO1: Crisis response

62. Through SO1, WFP provided in-kind and/or cash transfers to the most food-insecure populations affected by annual lean seasons, sudden-onset emergencies, and COVID-19. SO1 also included WFP's assistance to refugees in Dzaleka refugee camp through direct transfers and livelihoods interventions. SO1 originally included malnutrition treatment interventions for children of 6-59 months, pregnant and lactating women (PLW), and people receiving HIV and Tuberculosis treatment who suffer from moderate or severe acute malnutrition. WFP shifted away from malnutrition treatment and did not implement planned moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment activities (see Finding 11).

63. The figures below illustrate two distinct trends at the country office (also noted in section 1.3): (i) the shift towards cash transfers; and (ii) the application of horizontal expansion. The annual achievement rates for beneficiaries reached by food transfers decreased substantially in 2020 and 2021, as did the annual achievements rates of amounts of food transferred (see [Figure 7](#)). WFP reached more beneficiaries through cash

Target populations and modalities for direct transfers under SO1

Lean Season Response (LSR): WFP targeted populations that are classified by MVAC as the most food-insecure (IPC acute food insecurity Phase 3, Crisis or worse). Both food and cash were distributed for the 2019-2020 response. WFP distributed cash only for subsequent LSRs. Beneficiaries receive monthly transfers for one to five months, depending on the severity of the shock. This varied across districts within a given LSR.⁷⁶

Flood response: Floods occurred in 2022 and WFP's response targeted the most food-insecure, flood-affected households in two districts, as per an emergency assessment conducted by Malawi's food security cluster. Both food and cash were distributed.⁷⁷

COVID-19 Boma response: WFP provided cash assistance to urban and peri-urban populations classified as the most food-insecure (IPC acute food insecurity Phase 3, Crisis or worse) in Bomas (towns) of seven districts. The households received transfers for three to four months.⁷⁸

Refugee assistance: While WFP provided blanket assistance to all refugees in Dzaleka refugee camp between 2019 and 2021, it shifted to targeted assistance based on refugees' vulnerability in February 2022. WFP completed the shift from provision of food to cash transfers in January 2022. Monthly transfers through automated teller machines (ATMs) were first piloted in August 2020 among 100 self-selected households, before being gradually rolled out to more households in 2021-2022.

⁷⁶ For example, the 2020-2021 LSR covered the following time period for seven districts: December 2020 to March 2021 time period for Nsanje, Machinga, and Zomba; January 2020 to March 2021 for Neno and Balaka; and February 2020 to March 2021 for Dedza and Phalombe. (WFP. 2021. *Lean Season and Boma Response Baseline and Endline Assessment Report*.)

⁷⁷ At the time of writing, there was not yet any documentary evidence for the modality used for direct transfers as part of the 2022 flood response, as the after-action review for the response was still in development. However, KIs and LSR beneficiaries consulted through FGDs noted that both food and cash were distributed by WFP.

⁷⁸ Cash assistance was provided through the Boma response to Nsanje and Machinga during the December 2020 to March 2021 period, and Neno, Balaka, and Mangochi for the January 2020 to March 2021 period. (WFP. 2021. *Lean Season and Boma Response Baseline and Endline Assessment Report*.)

transfers than originally planned in the NBP,⁷⁹ in spite of shrinking financial resources (as shown in [Figure 6](#)). These trends also illustrate the priority given to horizontal expansion (increased breadth of coverage through more beneficiaries with the same or smaller transfer amount) to adapt to decreasing levels of financial resources for the CSP. During the same period, WFP also engaged in vertical expansion of transfers, in which top-ups were provided to food-insecure households.

64. However, it should be noted that data shown in [Figure 6](#) and [Figure 7](#) were for a variety of interventions under SO1, each with different population groups as beneficiaries. They only provide a partial account of the extent to which WFP was able to contribute towards the expected outcome of SO1. This is expanded upon in the following findings, which focus on the three areas covered by SO 1: response to the annual lean season, to sudden-onset emergencies (floods and COVID-19), and to the protracted refugee situation in Dzaleka.

Figure 7 Annual target achievement comparisons beneficiaries and food for SO1

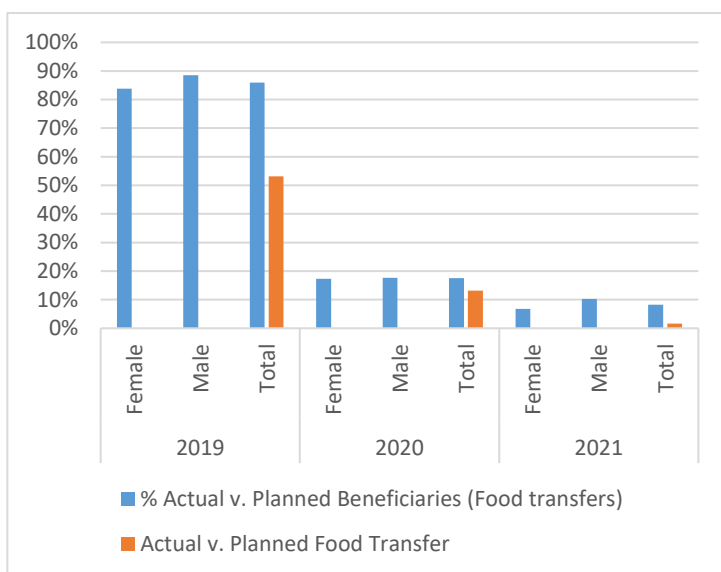
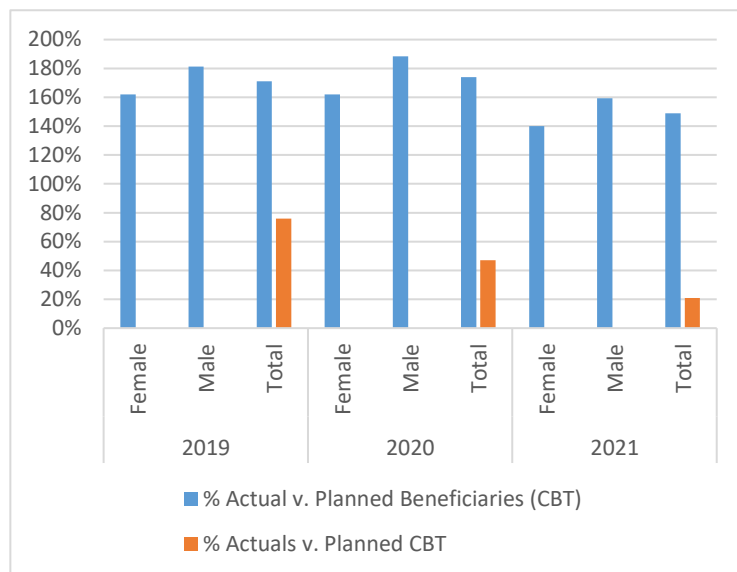


Figure 6 Annual target achievement comparison beneficiaries and cash for SO1



Source: CM-R-007 Annual Distribution (CSP) Malawi 2019-2022; and CM-R020 Adjusted Participants and Beneficiaries Malawi.

Finding 6 Through LSRs, WFP contributed to improved food consumption and reduced negative coping strategies of assisted beneficiaries. However, LSR beneficiaries still do not meet survival minimum expenditures.

65. As seen in [Table 4](#), while 2020 saw a deterioration in food consumption scores⁸⁰ for LSR beneficiaries, this improved in 2021. A similar trend was seen in the frequency and severity of food consumption-based coping strategies among LSR beneficiary households (see [Figure 8](#)), which decreased overall during the 2019-2021 period,

⁷⁹ Overall, comparing outputs delivered (amounts transferred and numbers of beneficiaries reached) through SOs 1, 2, and 4 to NBP targets provides an indicative, but not conclusive, account of WFP's performance in Malawi. The NBP overestimated the available resources for the CSP, when compared to the reduction in levels of ODA inflows into Malawi in recent years. Yet, it was also challenging for the ET to compare numbers of beneficiaries to targets set in implementation plans. This is because implementation plan targets are adjusted at multiple points in a given year, to respond to changes in the availability of resources and do not provide a suitable basis for interpreting delivery of outputs as planned.

⁸⁰ Food consumption scores measure the quantity and quality of people's diets and are used to classify households into three groups: poor food consumption: households are not consuming staples or vegetables every day, and never or seldom consume protein-rich foods; borderline food consumption: households that consume vegetables and staples every day, and oil and pulses a few times per week; and acceptable food consumption: households consume staples and vegetables every day, frequently with oils and pulses, and occasionally with protein-rich foods. (Source: WFP. 2021. *Lean Season and Boma Response Baseline and Endline Assessment Report*.)

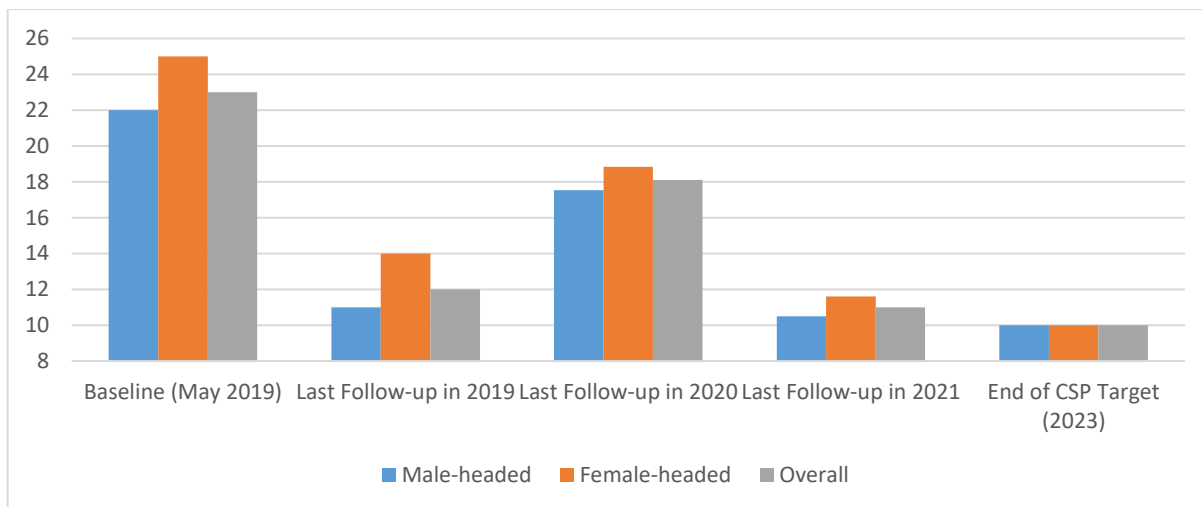
despite an increase in 2020.⁸¹ While the food consumption scores for female-headed households improved in 2021 from baseline, disparities between households headed by men and households headed by women still exist.

Table 4 Food Consumption Scores (FCS) for Lean Season Affected Populations

Outcome Indicator		Baseline (January 2019)	Last Follow-up in 2019	Last Follow-up in 2020	Last Follow-up in 2021	End-of-CSP Target (2023)	Overall trend
Percentage of households (HH) with Acceptable Food Consumption Score	HH headed by men	42%	67%	55%	62%	70%	Deterioration between 2019 and 2020, before an improvement in 2021
	HH headed by women	36%	59%	48%	57%	70%	
	Overall	40%	64%	52%	60%	70%	
Percentage of households (HH) with Borderline Food Consumption Score	HH headed by men	39%	29%	34%	32%	25%	
	HH headed by women	41%	36%	31%	34%	25%	
	Overall	40%	31%	33%	33%	25%	
Percentage of households (HH) with Poor Food Consumption Score	HH headed by men	19%	4%	11%	6%	5%	Deterioration between 2019 and 2020, before improvement in 2021
	HH headed by women	23%	6%	21%	9%	5%	
	Overall	20%	5%	16%	7%	5%	Disparity between households headed by men and households headed by women persist and saw an uptick in 2020

⁸¹ The reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) compares the level of stress faced by households due to food shortages by measuring the frequency and severity of food consumption-based coping strategies households are engaged in, such as restricting consumption by adults for children to eat, reducing numbers of meals, borrowing food, or relying on less preferred or expensive food. (Source: WFP. 2021. *Technical Guidance for WFP's Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI)*, November 2021.)

Figure 8 Consumption-based Coping Strategy Index (Percentage of households with reduced CSI)



Source for **Table 4** and **Figure 8** above: CM-L008b CRF Outcome Indicator Values Malawi

66. Over most of the CSP period, the shift to cash transfers enabled increased dietary diversity among beneficiary households that purchased food items that would not have been provided through in-kind assistance.⁸² The 2020-2021 Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) noted that beneficiaries felt cash transfers were appropriate given market dynamics, especially in relation to increased quantity of food available at markets and prevailing food prices.⁸³

67. Nevertheless, households with LSR beneficiaries were still not meeting their survival minimum expenditure baskets (SMEBs).⁸⁴ This may be due to increased food prices and continued low economic capacity among households. FGDs with lean season affected populations in Zomba and Chikwawa provided anecdotal evidence of a shift in preferences away from cash. Although there are no quantitative data on how many LSR beneficiaries feel this way, changes in preferences may reflect price increases (see EQ 4.5) and limited household capacity to meet needs. As noted in the PDM 2020-2021, only 13 percent of households had total monthly expenditures above the SMEB.

Finding 7 WFP delivered critical support for the government of Malawi’s COVID-19 response, which enabled the provision of relief for households and small businesses affected by the pandemic. WFP’s flood response in 2022 saved lives.

68. In 2020-2021, WFP’s cash assistance in response to the economic effects of COVID-19 in seven Bomas (district towns) reached 11,855 households (53,348 people) in districts faced with high rates of chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, as well as where commercial activities such as tourism, cross-border trade and remittances were affected by the pandemic.⁸⁵ These beneficiaries reported improvements in food consumption and dietary diversity

⁸² WFP. 2021. Malawi ACR

⁸³ Among beneficiaries surveyed by the PDM exercise in 2020-2021, 36 percent reported that market prices had increased, 26 percent that they had decreased, and 27 percent that they had remained the same.

⁸⁴ The SMEB is the bare minimum amount a given household requires to survive and cover lifesaving needs. It is calculated and updated by WFP’s Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM) unit on a monthly basis. It differs slightly from the minimum expenditure basket (MEB), which measures a household’s capacity to meet all essential needs, including food, which are required to live a dignified life.

⁸⁵ The transfer value of the cash assistance was USD 31 or 23,000 MWK per month, covering the December 2020 to March 2021 period. WFP’s COVID-19 Boma response did not have a set target of number of beneficiaries to be reached. (Source: WFP. 2020/2021 Lean Season Response (LSR) & COVID-19 Responses: Final Progress Update – December 2020-March 2021; government of Malawi).

as well as reduced use of negative coping strategies, signalling an overall improvement in their access to safe and nutritious food.⁸⁶

69. WFP also supported the COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI), led by the government and supported by a variety of development partners,⁸⁷ which covered different districts from WFP's Boma COVID-19 response. WFP assisted with logistics management and vulnerability mapping. The joint response reached 200,000 households (close to one million people), including those most affected by food insecurity in urban areas and households in Bomas most affected by the negative economic impact of the pandemic.⁸⁸ Cooperating partners (CP) and government partners interviewed noted that the CUCI response provided important economic relief for households with small businesses at a time when the livelihoods of beneficiaries were most affected by the pandemic.⁸⁹

Feedback from communities on WFP's emergency flood response

"The money helped, it saved our lives, some of us lost everything, no food, no shelter. It helped us to survive. Much as it was not enough because of high food prices, we appreciated it. The challenge is low coverage. Most of the affected [people in our village] were not targeted and not included. The floods affected a very big area, but only a few households were assisted." – woman FGD participant from flood-affected community.

"The transfer was not adequate and reached only few people, but we appreciate the support because it saved our lives. We were able to eat something that was also nutritious. And within the community, [in accordance with] the social cultural practice, we would share the food. Those who received it, even if [it was] not enough, we would share the food with relatives and friends. It benefited more [people] in the end, although it was not enough for much impact." – women and men FGD participants from flood-affected community.

70. Feedback collected through FGDs with communities in Chikwawa⁹⁰ that were affected by the floods brought on during Tropical Storm Ana and Tropical Cyclone Gombe indicated that WFP's delivery of emergency assistance saved lives through the provision of cash transfers and in-kind food distribution but that the coverage of the transfers was small overall (see textbox above and EQ 3.3 for discussion of coverage). WFP's support reached a total of 45,011 households out of 100,718 flood-affected households in Chikwawa and Nsanje (44.7 percent).⁹¹ Beneficiary perceptions that flood response transfer values were insufficient compared to needs, as mentioned in the textbox, could not be corroborated.

⁸⁶ WFP. 2021. *Lean Season and Boma Response Baseline and Endline Assessment Report*, December 2020–April 2021. Of note, the evaluation team did not consult any beneficiaries of WFP's COVID-19 Boma response.

⁸⁷ The World Bank, the European Union, Germany (through KFW), Ireland, ILO, and UNICEF.

⁸⁸ WFP. 2021. Malawi ACR

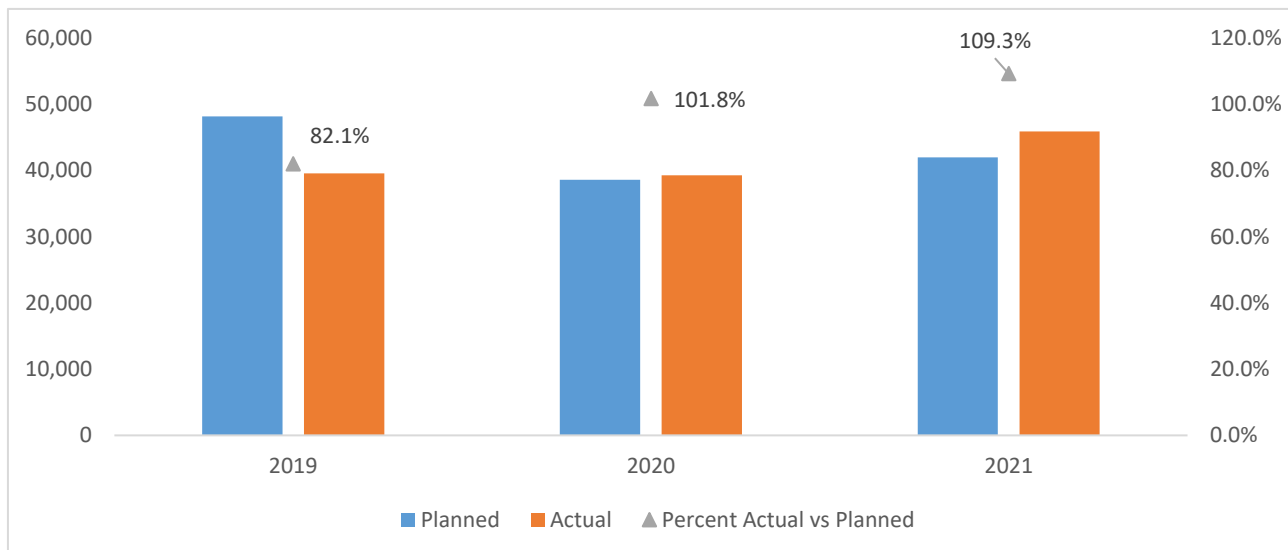
⁸⁹ Also mentioned in World Bank. 2021. *Malawi CUCI: Process Evaluation Report* and WFP. 2020/2021. *Lean Season Response (LSR) & COVID-19 Responses: Final Progress Update – December 2020-March 2021*, p. 9.

⁹⁰ The evaluation did not conduct FGDs in other districts that were covered by WFP's flood response in 2022.

⁹¹ Numbers of households reached by flood response from WFP. 2022. *Memorandum: Determination of the Transfer Values for WFP Malawi Cash Operations*; Numbers of flood-affected households from Government of Malawi. 2022. Food security cluster assessment report.

Finding 8 In a context of increasing refugee populations and critical underfunding of the response, food and nutrition security outcomes deteriorated for refugees. Nonetheless, WFP met or nearly met annual targets for numbers of beneficiaries and introduced livelihoods initiatives. Reduced ration size, COVID-19, and challenges among beneficiaries in accessing cash transfers affected outcomes.

Figure 9 Annual target achievement comparisons for refugee beneficiaries



Source: CM-R001b Annual Country Beneficiaries (CSP) Malawi. Data for number of refugee beneficiaries reached in 2019 was provided by CO.

71. As shown in **Figure 9**, WFP was relatively close to meeting its target in 2019 and exceeded its annual beneficiary target for refugees receiving transfers in 2020 and 2021. The number of refugees reached increased from 39,571 in 2019 and 39,292 in 2020 to 45,909 in 2021.

72. WFP introduced several changes in its approach, including: (i) targeted assistance based on a February 2022 vulnerability assessment; (ii) a shift from provision of food to cash transfers, beginning in late 2019 and completed by January 2022; (iii) the roll-out of transfers through ATMs, beginning with a pilot covering 100 self-selected households in August 2020;⁹² and (iv) the introduction of livelihoods supports in 2020.⁹³

73. In response to decreased funding, WFP reduced the transfer values for refugees in May 2019, delivering transfers at 50 percent of prevailing market prices for a minimum food basket,⁹⁴ before raising this to 75 percent in July 2020. WFP continued to provide cash transfers at 75 percent of market prices for the minimum food basket throughout 2021 and 2022.

74. Since 2019, there has been an overall deterioration of food and nutrition security outcomes among refugees sampled by PDMs. As seen in **Figure 10** and **Figure 11**, despite an improvement between 2019 and 2020, the

⁹² The pilot for ATM transfers lasted for only a few months in 2020, and was followed by a gradual roll-out of ATM transfers to more households in 2021-2022. According to country office staff, the gradual nature of the roll-out was brought about by several factors, including time required for production of ATM cards, which were produced overseas, the slowdown in delivery of the ATM cards due to COVID-19, the lack of funding available to finance the production of the cards, just following the end of the pilot, and time required to conduct training to build awareness on ATM card handling and safety, as well as trust to use ATM cards, among beneficiaries.

⁹³ WFP. 2022. *Support to Refugees Factsheet*, January 2022.

⁹⁴ The transfer value for refugee assistance is adjusted monthly, and is determined based on market prices of a food basket consisting of 13.5 kg of cereals, 1.5 kg of pulses, and 0.75 litres of vegetable oil.

quantity and quality of food consumed by refugees declined between 2020 and 2021, and the proportion of households engaged in consumption-based coping strategies increased.

Figure 10 Food Consumption Scores (FCS) for refugees

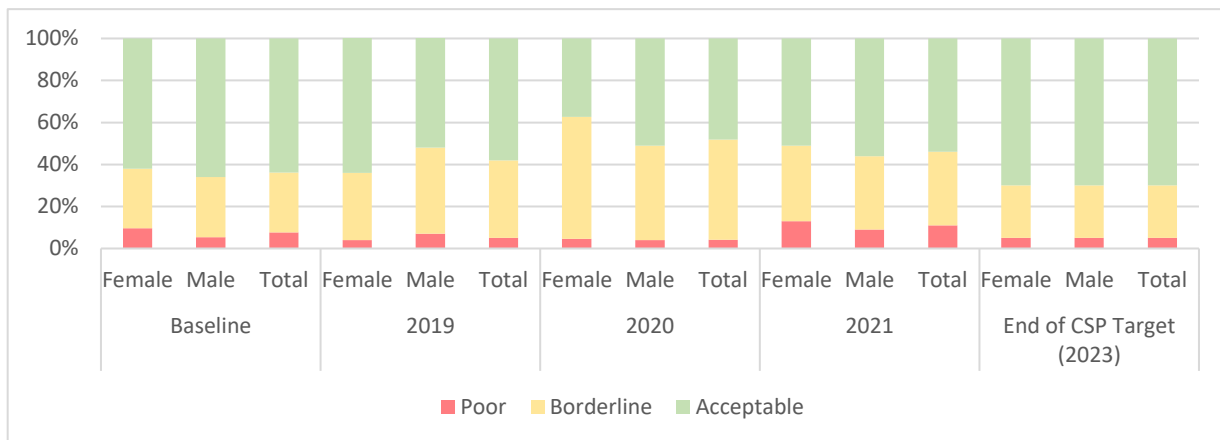
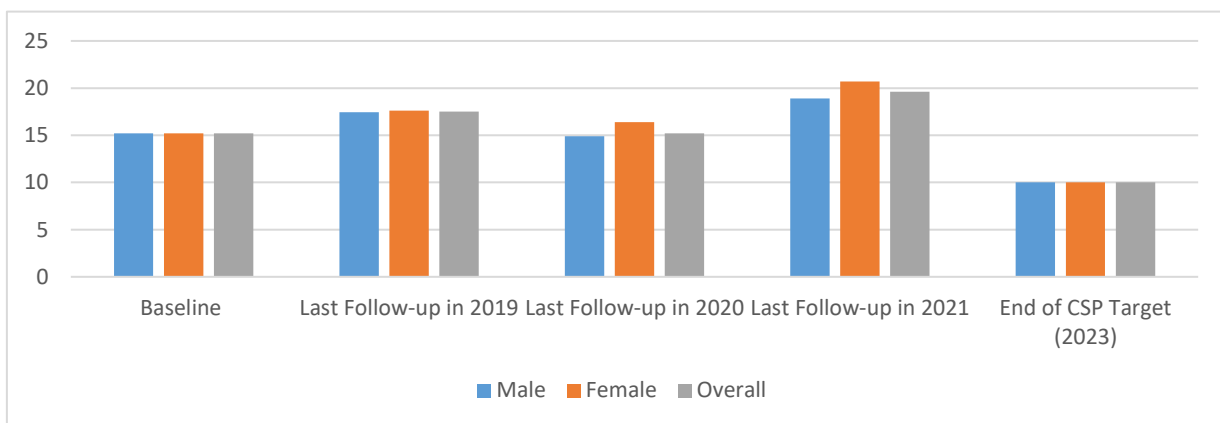


Figure 11 Consumption-based strategies (percentage of households with reduced CSI) - refugees



Source for both figures above: CM-L008b CRF Outcome Indicator Values Malawi

75. PDM reports noted a decline in other indicators for refugee households in areas such as dietary diversity. The proportion of households engaged in 'emergency' and 'crisis' livelihoods coping strategies increased between 2020 and 2021 (emergency strategies from 5 percent to 19 percent, and crisis strategies from 16 percent to 19 percent). FGD participants from refugee communities commented that community members often resort to illegal activities, reduce education-related expenses, or withdraw children from school to make ends meet.

76. The decline in food and nutrition security among refugees may be due to:

- **Ration size, timing, and cost of living:** Participants in all refugee FGDs reported that the value of the cash transfers was insufficient compared to food needs and rising food prices in 2022.⁹⁵ The cash transfer value was perceived by many FGD participants as covering only up to one day's worth of essential food items.⁹⁶ FGD participants also reported significant delays between cash transfers that compounded the situation (see EQ 3.1). They also reported that top-ups (in the form of corn soya blend worth USD 2) aimed at households with children under the age of two were not consistently provided during the 2019-2021 period.⁹⁷
- **COVID-19:** The pandemic reduced mobility and economic opportunities in Dzaleka refugee camp and the PDM report for 2020-2021 posited that this contributed to declines in food consumption scores.⁹⁸
- **Challenges in accessing cash transfer:** KIIs and FGDs with refugees highlighted challenges faced by refugees who could not collect WFP transfers from either the distribution point (in the case of cash) or from ATMs, despite being on the beneficiary list. KIIs speculated that this problem stems from issues in coordinating beneficiary lists between UNHCR and WFP, and difficulties in keeping track of numbers of refugees in the camp. Country office staff also noted that in some cases household members withdraw cash from ATMs without informing other household members. See Finding 16, EQ 2.2, for discussion of AAP in Dzaleka refugee camp.

77. The livelihoods project (see textbox) has not yet enabled income generation among refugee participants to fill their consumption gaps. When asked about their experiences with the project, several refugee FGD participants noted a lack of private land to continue livelihoods activities, in particular crop production (maize and soya bean) and rearing of livestock. WFP did not provide food or cash rations for participants who attended training, which led to perceptions of differential treatment of participants across WFP and UNHCR projects.¹⁰¹

78. Similarly, there is insufficient evidence that the livelihoods project made plausible contributions to

Livelihoods project in Dzaleka refugee camp

WFP began implementing a livelihoods project in 2020 to improve refugee self-reliance and foster cohesion between refugee and host communities. The project targeted 200 beneficiaries for training in one of four livelihoods options: soya bean, mushroom, soap, and mask production. Chicken and pig rearing and tailoring were added in December 2021.⁹⁹ The project also aimed to enhance beneficiaries' access to self-employment by providing training in market linkages, business management, and village savings and loans (VSL). 40 percent of the beneficiaries were from the host community in the area surrounding Dzaleka refugee camp.¹⁰⁰

WFP uses a similar project design, in terms of activities and targeting, and the same cooperating partner as a concurrent UNHCR livelihoods project. Both projects support access to VSL and coaching from CP volunteers for those beneficiaries who complete the training, and WFP and UNHCR share the site used for crop production and livestock-rearing. According to KIIs, the differences between the WFP and UNHCR projects were WFP's addition of soap-making and UNHCR's provision of food rations for training participants.

⁹⁵ From September 2021 to August 2022, significant increases in average prices were seen in Dzaleka for maize (from 123 to 300 MWK per kg), beans (from 967 to 1,383 MWK per kg), and vegetable oil (from 1,758 to 3,883 MWK per kg). The cash value recommended by WFP for a 100 percent ration increased from 4,794 MWK per person in September 2021 to 9,038 MWK per person in August 2022.

⁹⁶ Values of transfers are determined based on prevailing market prices for a basket of commodities (mentioned in the footnote above), for an amount that is intended to last for one month. The perception that the cash transfer value only covered up to one day's worth of food items, though mentioned in all refugee FGDs conducted, was not corroborated by any other documents reviewed, nor KIIs.

⁹⁷ WFP's memorandum on cash-based transfers also notes that the provision is subject to resource availability (see WFP. 2022. *Memorandum: Determination of the Transfer Values for WFP Malawi Cash Operations*). This may account for differences in the actual monthly value of the cash transfer mentioned by FGD participants.

⁹⁸ WFP. 2021. *Refugee Programme 2021: Post-Distribution Monitoring Report (PDM)*.

⁹⁹ Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD). 2021. *WFP Integrated Resilience Programme (MLW CSP 2019-2023)*, Monthly Report, December 2021.

¹⁰⁰ Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD). 2020. *Project proposal for potential WFP cooperating partners*.

¹⁰¹ Beneficiaries' expectations of the provision of consumption support from the WFP project was reported by the CP as an ongoing challenge. (Source: Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD). 2021. *WFP Integrated Resilience Programme (MLW CSP 2019-2023)*, Monthly Report, December 2021.)

improvements in refugees' food and nutrition security. PDM reports from 2020 and 2021 noted that refugee participants scored better in terms of food consumption and reduced consumption-based coping strategies. However, the extent to which these changes were linked to the livelihoods project was not clear in the report or other sources of data.

SO2: Social protection systems

79. SO2 consists of two activities: Activity 2 provides capacity strengthening support to Malawi's national social protection system to become more shock-responsive and hunger- and nutrition-sensitive; and Activity 3 focuses on the provision of school meals.

Finding 9 WFP helped strengthen Malawi's shock-responsive social protection system through its capacity strengthening support to national institutions and systems.

80. Among government and United Nations agency representatives interviewed, WFP is seen as a critical actor in supporting Pillar 3 (shock-responsive) of the MNSSP II due to its expertise in humanitarian assistance and targeting. In 2019-2022, WFP focused on strengthening technical capabilities of government agencies involved in targeting of beneficiaries and vulnerability assessments. Details on results of the latter are provided in SO5. Through the Social Protection for the SDGs (SP4SDG) programme, which was jointly implemented with UNICEF and ILO, WFP contributed to strengthened government capacity through the provision of operational guidance and backstopping, and operational systems preparedness.¹⁰³

81. In supporting the government-led CUCI that was implemented in urban areas to provide relief for households during COVID-19, WFP and ILO contributed to the verification of government-identified 'hotspots' (i.e. settlements with low-income levels). WFP conducted a minimum expenditure basket survey in four cities that were included in the CUCI in July 2020 to estimate food security requirements and establish the value of the transfers. Most households surveyed agreed that hotspots were accurately identified.¹⁰⁴

82. As part of the 2020-2021 LSR, WFP bolstered the government's Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) to pilot the provision of cash top-ups for food-insecure households. This involved vertical expansion of cash transfers for SCTP beneficiaries and the use of national systems to register food-insecure households. The cash top-ups reached 73,000 beneficiaries.

83. Following the after-action review of the 2020-2021 LSR, WFP, UNICEF, and the government published SOPs and guidelines to implement a 'cash plus' approach that was piloted during the 2021-2022 LSR (see textbox). Many

'Cash plus' interventions for LSRs

'Cash plus' interventions deliver cash transfers as well as one or more additional activities aimed at improving livelihoods, nutrition, or agricultural production to targeted beneficiaries of LSRs. Activities could include asset creation (such as homestead gardens, tree planting), provision of post-harvest management training and tools, or training on climate-smart techniques, among others.

These interventions address consumption gaps and needs for complementary support that are not addressed by transfers alone. In Malawi, labour constrained households receive unconditional transfers and support, while those with labour capacity receive conditional transfers and support. A key aspect of the 'cash plus' approach is the application of 'soft conditionalities'. This entails 'softer' approaches to households that do not meet set conditions (e.g. completion of asset or school attendance) through case management rather than exclusion from support. As such, the approach aims to address barriers to meeting the conditions.¹⁰²

¹⁰² No author. n.d. *Concept Note: Meeting and Reducing Future Food Needs: Introducing Cash Plus Interventions to Better Address Household Needs over the Lean Season.*

¹⁰³ An existing evaluation found that the programme was successful in increasing social protection coverage in Malawi, and in providing the government with "the potential basis for a shock-sensitive social protection model to be replicated at scale." (Source: WFP. 2022. *Final Evaluation of the SDG Fund Joint Program SP4SDG in Malawi.*)

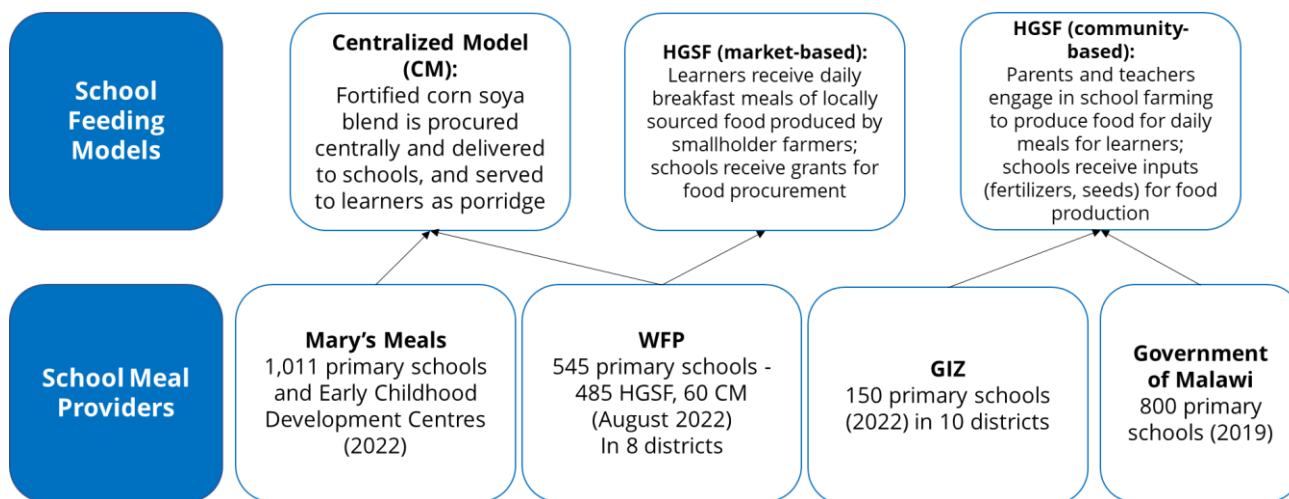
¹⁰⁴ World Bank. 2021. *Malawi CUCI: Process Evaluation Report.*

stakeholders recognized the guidelines as a milestone in national strategic guidance for ‘cash plus’ activities and for raising the profile of the shock-responsive social protection agenda in Malawi.

Finding 10 WFP’s provision of school meals, in particular through the HGSF model, helped improve nutrition and awareness of nutrition practices among learners. The HGSF also benefited communities by providing a ready market linkage for farmer organizations and by creating assets in schools.

84. WFP was one of the key actors supporting school meals in Malawi, primarily promoting the HGSF model. **Figure 12** provides an overview of the models and actors that supported school meals during the CSP.

Figure 12 School feeding in Malawi¹⁰⁵



Sources: Mary's Meals. 2022. *Where we work – Malawi*; WFP. n.d. *School feeding in Malawi: Investing in children's education and health – A framework for WFP support for a sustainable National School Meals Programme*; GIZ. 2019. *Malawi: Afikepo Nutrition Programme – Nutrition and Access to Primary Education (NAPE)*.

85. As shown in **Figure 13** and **Figure 14**, the numbers of beneficiaries reached through cash transfer¹⁰⁶ and the amounts of cash transferred exceeded annual planned targets in 2020, while the number of beneficiaries reached by food transfer and amounts of food transferred were substantially below annual planned targets due to the government-mandated COVID-19 school closures from March to September 2020 and January and February 2021.¹⁰⁷ WFP's provision of school meals shifted to take-home rations (THRs), through both cash and food, as opposed to on-site feeding. The modality of the THRs differed in each district. The choice of cash, food, or a mix of cash and food was made by WFP based on market assessments of prices and local availability of food.¹⁰⁸ The THRs comprised two one-off transfers covering the periods June-August 2020, and October-December 2020, in the form of cash, corn soya blend (CSB), or a mix of both.¹⁰⁹

86. WFP's provision of THRs during this time contributed to Malawi's social protection system by providing needed support to households in the face of the pandemic. THRs were a horizontal expansion of WFP's school feeding to respond to increased needs. The rations were also distributed to households in catchment areas of schools that were not supported by WFP's school feeding prior to COVID-19. WFP's THRs for COVID-19 contributed to at least 9

¹⁰⁵ Available documents did not provide information on the numbers of districts covered by school meals provision under Mary's Meals and the Government of Malawi.

¹⁰⁶ Cash transfers under WFP's school meals provision were provided through: (i) HGSF, in which funds are channelled through district councils (district-level government) to schools to procure food; and (ii) THRs, which were provided in the context of school closures in response to COVID-19.

¹⁰⁷ WFP. 2021. *School Feeding in Malawi: A Policy Report*, September 2021.

¹⁰⁸ WFP. 2021. *School Meals Take Home Ration Programme – PDM report Round 2*, February 2021. Documents did not further specify the criteria used to select the modality of the transfer for schools in a given district.

¹⁰⁹ Just under 600,000 learners were targeted by each round of THRs covering approximately 450 schools in seven districts: Salima, Dedza, Mangochi, Zomba, Phalombe, Chikwawa, and Nsanje. (Sources: WFP, PDMs THRs. 2020 and 2021).

percent of the minimum expenditure baskets of beneficiary households, and ration sizes were larger than regular school feeding sizes to account for intra-household sharing.¹¹⁰ WFP also contributed to the development of the Ministry of Education’s SOPs and an operational plan for THR during COVID-19, including guidance on distribution and orientation materials for government partners involved in implementation.¹¹¹

Figure 13 Annual target achievement comparisons beneficiaries and food for SO2, Activity 3 (SMP)

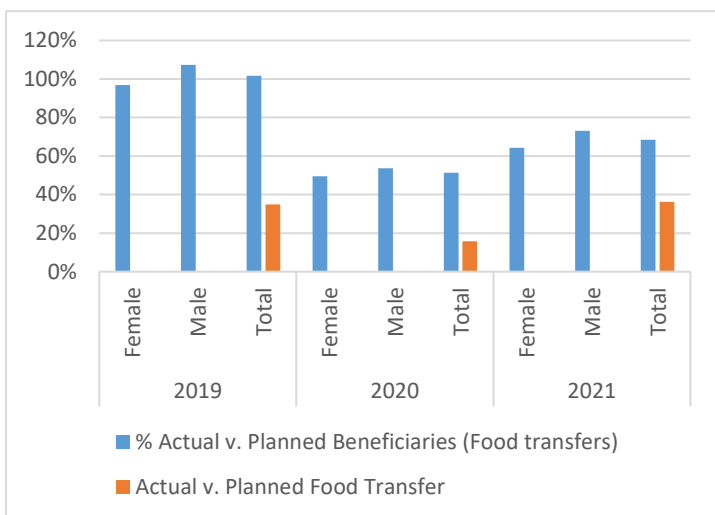
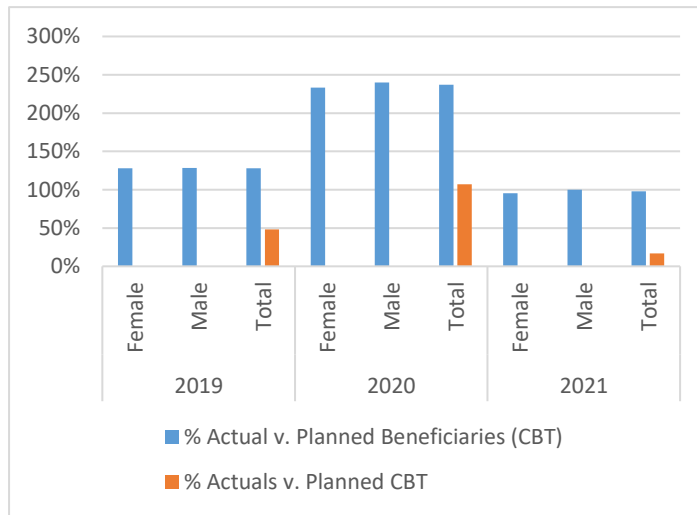


Figure 14 Annual target achievement comparisons beneficiaries and cash for SO2, Activity 3 (SMP)



Source: CM-R-007 Annual Distribution (CSP) Malawi 2019-2022; and CM-R020 Adjusted Participants and Beneficiaries Malawi.

87. The Ministry of Education reopened schools in February 2021 and resumed on-site school feeding in October 2021. Once on-site feeding resumed, WFP transitioned 72 primary schools from the centralized model to the HGSP programme, which represented a change for over 106,000 children.¹¹² As of August 2022, 485 schools (89 percent of schools supported by WFP in Malawi) had adopted the HGSP model,¹¹³ exceeding the 2023 target of 410 schools under the country office’s school feeding strategy.¹¹⁴

88. Available documents indicate that the HGSP model contributed to increased enrolment, increased school attendance, and reduced dropout and absenteeism among school-aged children. This is in line with findings on the HGSP model in a JPGE study that covered 2014-2019.¹¹⁵ The final progress report for the JPGE second phase noted that attendance rates increased among both boys and girls in schools covered by the programme during 2018-2020, from 79.8 percent at baseline to 87.4 percent in 2020. This increase was higher for girls, from 79.7 percent at baseline to 88.5 percent in 2020.¹¹⁶ At the time of writing, CSP monitoring data for SO2 indicators for enrolment, attendance, and dropout rates for 2022 were not yet available. Men and women who participated in FGDs also

¹¹⁰ Country office staff indicated that the ration size for the THR for COVID-19 was 53 percent larger than regular school feeding ration sizes, with the COVID-19 THR set at 4 kg of CSB plus and MWK 5,000, compared to the regular school feeding ration size of 3.4 kg CSB plus and MWK 3,200.

¹¹¹ Ministry of Education Science and Technology. 2020. *Standard Operating Guidelines for School Feeding Program during COVID-19 School Closure*, April 2020; WFP. 2020. *WFP Malawi School Feeding COVID-19 Response – Presentation for Partner Orientation*, November 2020.

¹¹² WFP. 2021. Malawi ACR

¹¹³ WFP. 2022. *Malawi – Country Brief*, August 2022.

¹¹⁴ WFP. 2021. *Malawi, A lifecycle approach to school feeding in Malawi*.

¹¹⁵ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2020). *JPGE: Best Practices and Lessons Learned 2019-2020*, May 2020.

¹¹⁶ UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP. *JPGE II – Final Programme Narrative Report (2018-2021)*. Available progress reporting for the JPGE did not include data on enrolment rates, nor data on attendance rates after 2020.

reported that providing breakfast to children improved their children's performance in school.¹¹⁷ See textbox for details on WFP's provision of school meals in Malawi.

WFP's School Feeding Programme in Malawi

WFP provided meals to schools in seven districts in 2019-2021 and to an additional district in 2021-2022 through two models: centralized school feeding and a market-based HGSF model (see Figure 12 School feeding in Malawi for a description of school feeding models). This was fewer districts than initially planned (13 districts) due to the end of McGovern Dole funding in 2019 (see EQ 4.1; see also EQ 3.2 and Annex 13 for more information on targeting). As of August 2022, WFP provided school meals for 27.8 percent of primary schools in the eight districts (545 out of 1,769 schools).¹¹⁸ WFP selected schools in areas where it had livelihoods interventions and watershed and irrigation schemes to facilitate transition to the HGSF model.¹¹⁹ The market-based HGSF model was implemented through:

- JPGE, which began in 2014, and involves WFP, UNFPA, and UNICEF. It is currently in its third phase, covering 2021-2024. Across phases, the programme aimed to ensure: (i) adolescent girls remain in and complete primary school, leading to transition to secondary education; (ii) out-of-school adolescent girls acquire basic life skills; (iii) district- and national-level government structures effectively design, implement, and monitor girls' education programmes in Malawi. JPGE II (2018-2020) reached 169 primary schools in three districts (Dedza, Mangochi, and Salima).
- The Tsogolo La Thanzi (TSOLATA) programme, which is funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by WFP, began in September 2020. It initially provided THRs during September 2020 and August 2021 before providing school meals through the centralized model and HGSF model following the resumption of on-site school feeding. In addition to providing diversified school meals through the HGSF model, it builds on the EU-funded Afikepo programme to enhance community members' knowledge on nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices. The programme covers 200 primary schools in four districts (Chikwawa, Phalombe, Nsanje, and Zomba).¹²⁰

89. The following positive effects of WFP's provision of school meals during the CSP period, especially through HGSF, were reported by FGD participants:

- Reduced burden on women to prepare breakfast for their children, not only in terms of saving food, but also saving time, which was then used to engage in other essential agricultural activities.
- Improved dietary diversity for learners because HGSF meals cover four of the six essential food groups.¹²¹ The addition of groundnuts and vegetables to porridge and variation in the base ingredient of the porridge represent an improvement from the provision of CSB porridge under the centralized model.
- Increased knowledge among children of good nutrition practices and transfer of such knowledge to parents, which informs food preparation at home.
- Provided a ready market for farmer organizations to supply produce, noting the additional benefit of being able to sell to schools in bulk.

¹¹⁷ Participants in FGDs perceive a link between school meals and their child's ability to pay attention in class and receive better grades on school assignments. However, this perception could not be corroborated by available documents. The evidence for linking WFP's school feeding in Malawi to better performance among children is not conclusive. An existing evaluation of the first phase of the JPGE found that pass rates among children in JPGE-covered schools had only minimally improved over time, with changes in pass rates due largely to factors outside of the JPGE's control. See WFP. 2019. *Evaluation of the JPGE, July 2014–October 2017, Evaluation Report*, p. 29.

¹¹⁸ Calculation made based on data available from Ministry of Education. 2021. *2021 Malawi Education Statistics Report – EMIS*.

¹¹⁹ The evaluation team did not have data for numbers of schools covered by WFP school feeding by district.

¹²⁰ Government of Malawi, WFP, and EU. 2020. *TSOLATA – Healthy Future: Achieving Sustainable School Meals Programme in Malawi Year 1 report*.

¹²¹ The Government of Malawi's national nutrition guidelines include six essential food groups: vegetables, fruits, legumes and nuts, animal foods, fats, and staples. (Source: Ministry of Health. 2007. *National Nutrition Guidelines for Malawi*, October 2007.)

- School vegetable gardens and fruit tree orchards provided an additional food source for school meals. Other assets, such as woodlots, walking pathways, and school gardens, were noted as improving the well-being of children.

90. FGD participants identified two challenges related to WFP’s provision of school meals. Stock-outs were reported as a challenge in schools under the centralized model. There were also instances of stock-outs of food to prepare meals in HGSF schools, though this was limited in frequency (see EQ3.1). Another challenge commonly cited by FGD participants and KIIs was that children from other catchment areas would travel to their village to attend schools covered by WFP’s school meals, which limited the ability to plan and prepare enough food.

SO3: Nutrition

Finding 11 WFP’s nutrition-sensitive programming, focused on social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) messaging, improved awareness of nutrition and WASH practices, especially when delivered through care groups. The resulting behaviour changes contributed to improved health and nutrition outcomes among women and children under five. However, the proportion of children of 6-23 months of age who receive a minimum acceptable diet remains very low, despite improvements between 2019 and 2021.

91. The CSP shift away from malnutrition treatment towards malnutrition prevention entailed changes in WFP partnerships, its approach to working with government (especially district governments), and integration with resilience programming. One key element was the use of SBCC across WFP programming to improve nutrition practices. SBCC messages were communicated through national and community radio, live theatre, mobile vans, public address systems, cooking demonstrations, and door-to-door nutrition counselling. Care groups were one of the key community structures through which SBCC messages were disseminated.

92. As seen in [Figure 15](#) and [Figure 16](#), the numbers of people reached through SBCC messaging were close to or exceeded annual output targets during the period 2019-2021, with the exception of numbers of people reached via traditional media (i.e. songs and theatres) in 2019.

WFP’s shift to malnutrition prevention in Malawi

In 2019/2020, WFP shifted from treating MAM and providing blanket supplementary feeding to the prevention of malnutrition. The change was based on the significant decline in undernutrition in Malawi in 2019 and 2020, the low rates of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) in 2019 and 2020, and the continued prevalence of stunting, which could be addressed through the multisectoral, nutrition-sensitive programming approach taken under SO3.¹²² According to KIIs with several national- and district-level government representatives, the shift has resulted in a gap, in that support for MAM treatment and supplementary feeding activities have not been taken over by either the government or other partners, while the population requiring such assistance is still high in absolute terms. This is an issue that requires monitoring.

¹²² WFP. n.d. *WFP Malawi Nutrition Strategy*.

Figure 15 Number of people reached through interpersonal SBCC approaches

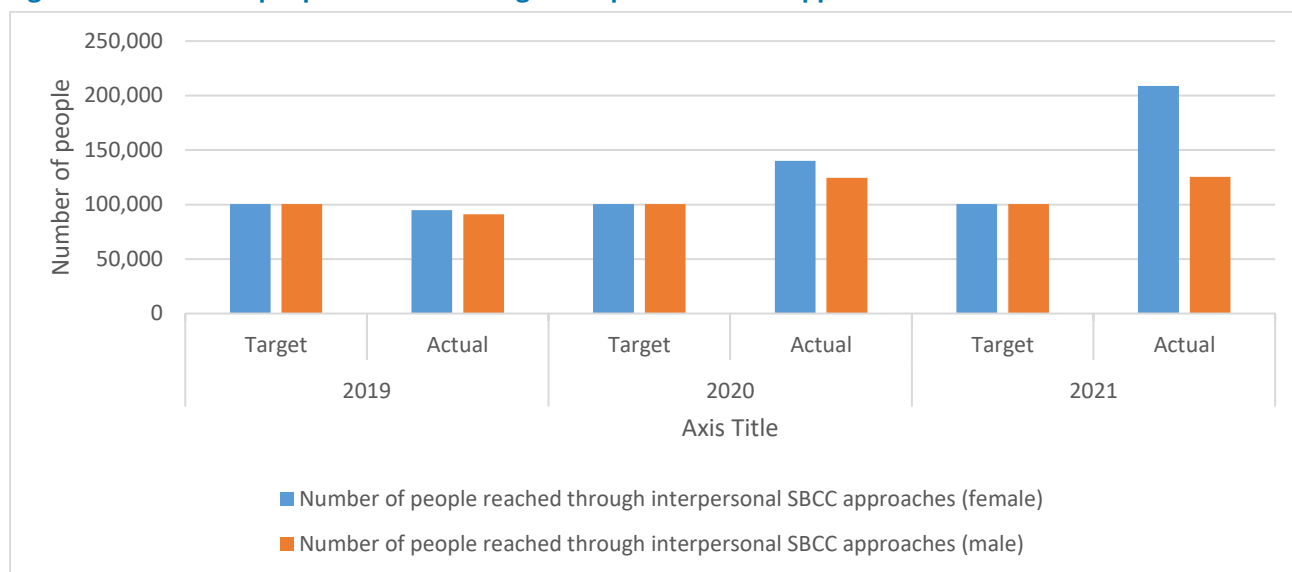
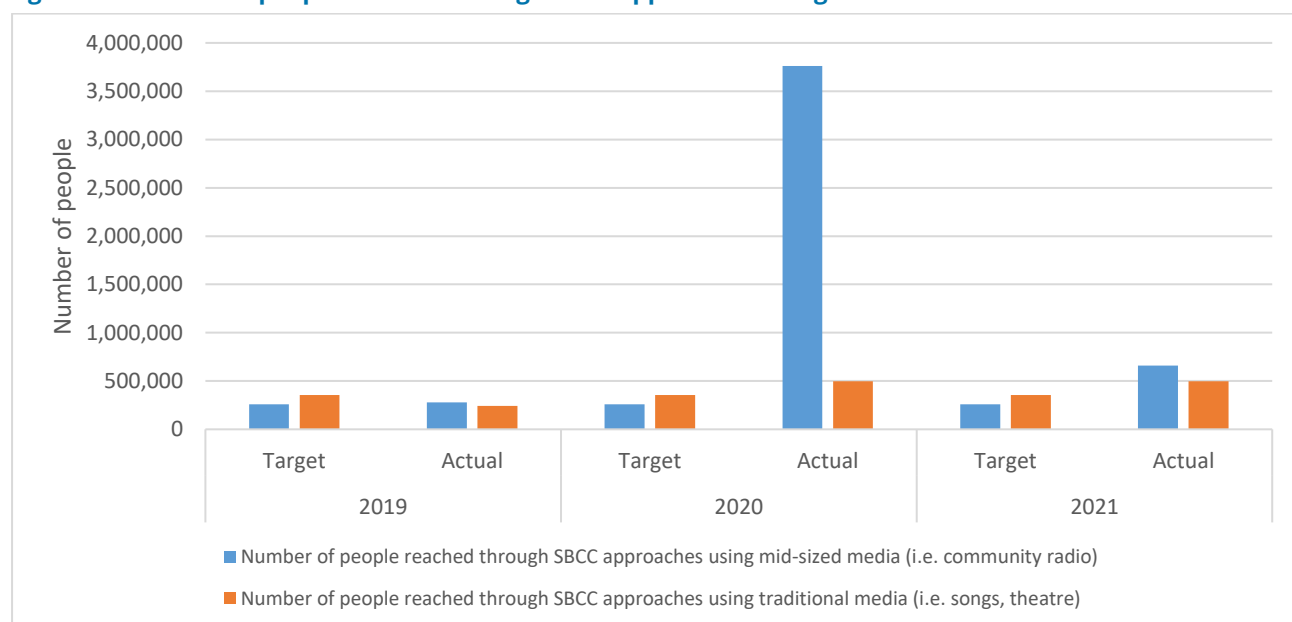


Figure 16 Number of people reached through SBCC approaches using mid-sized and traditional media



Sources for Figure 15 and Figure 16: CM-R-008 Output Indicators Malawi, 2019; CM-R-008 Output Indicators Malawi, 2020; CM-R-008 Output Indicators Malawi, 2021.

93. Since the beginning of the CSP, care group membership and frequency of care group visits across the targeted districts improved from baselines measures in 2017. Most respondents to PDM surveys identified themselves as care group members, and a large majority of households surveyed indicated that they received regular visits from care group volunteers with messages on WASH, nutrition, infant feeding, and maternal health.¹²³ PDMs also indicated that a large majority of households across all districts surveyed received SBCC messages (77 percent in 2020, 74 percent in 2021). Interpersonal means of dissemination of SBCC messages, such as group nutrition counselling sessions, sensitization meetings, and individual nutrition counselling sessions, were the most reported

¹²³ In 2021, 83 percent of PDM respondents indicated that they are care group members, which is an increase from 17 percent at baseline, in 2017. The percentage of households visited at least twice a month by care group volunteers also increased from 64 percent at baseline in 2017, to 73 percent in 2021.

mechanisms reported by survey respondents.¹²⁴ FGD participants noted being sensitized through door-to-door visits, community cooking demonstrations, and counselling on feeding at clinics. Where WFP FFA interventions were also implemented, care group volunteers encouraged household members to maintain or create household gardens (often with support from local agricultural extension workers), and imparted good practices in cultivation of nutritious food crops.

94. At the outcome level, CSP monitoring data show increases in the proportion of children of 6-23 months of age who receive a minimum acceptable diet (15.1 percent at baseline to 22 percent in 2021) and in the minimum dietary diversity score among women (26 at baseline to 32.2 in 2021). Participants in community FGDs noted the adoption of good feeding practices among lactating women and increased frequency of antenatal visits to the clinic among pregnant women as a result of sensitization via care group volunteers. Nevertheless, 22 percent of children receiving a minimum acceptable diet is very low and far less than the end-of-CSP target of 70 percent. Overall, this signals the need for significant improvements in the nutritional status of children of 6-23 months of age.

95. Several communities noted the importance of WASH-related messaging received from care group volunteers and through WASH-related assets,¹²⁵ often citing decreased incidence of diarrhoea in their households. The 2021 PDM also reported a significant decrease in the incidence of diarrhoea episodes among households surveyed since the introduction of the CSP, with 21 percent of households reporting at least one member having a diarrhoea episode in the last two weeks in 2021, compared to 47 percent at baseline (2017).

96. Several FGD participants highlighted the role of care group volunteers in early case monitoring of severe and moderate acute malnutrition levels among children by conducting Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tests as part of their door-to-door visits, noting that this reduced the incidence of malnutrition and death caused by malnutrition.

97. Care group contributions to nutrition outcomes were documented in a WFP desk review in 2021, which reported that measures of indicators such as maternal and child dietary diversity and consumption patterns based on the six food groups were higher among households in areas with active care groups.¹²⁷ WFP selected five districts to provide care group support under SO3; see Annex 13 for a discussion on targeting.

98. Contributions from other elements of WFP's approach to malnutrition intervention were less clear. In relation to WFP's support to capacity strengthening of district-level nutrition coordination mechanisms, for example, district-level government and WFP stakeholders interviewed noted WFP's financial support for conducting meetings (paying for refreshments and transportation costs) but did not signal any significant policy-level or institutional capacity strengthening.

The care group model in Malawi

A care group is a group of volunteers selected by beneficiary households to deliver training, awareness-raising, and monitoring as part of health and nutrition interventions. Each group typically comprises 8-12 volunteers from different households that are supervised by a promoter and government extension workers. Each care group member disseminates health information to approximately 12-15 households in their community and provides training to households on a single nutrition-related issue every 2-4 weeks. Promoters typically train up to 300 care group volunteers.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ WFP. 2021. *Nutrition: Stunting Prevention Project – Outcome Monitoring Survey Report*.

¹²⁵ One focus group noted a minimum 'package' of WASH assets that is commonly promoted, including: a toilet, a handwashing facility which has soap or ash, a garbage pit, a dish rack, and a line for drying clothes.

¹²⁶ Pieterse et al. 2020. *Systematic Reviews: Exploring how and why Care Groups work to improve infant feeding practices in low and middle-income countries: a realist review protocol*.

¹²⁷ WFP. 2021. *Evaluation of the Care Group Model in Malawi*, October 2021.

SO4: Integrated resilience

Finding 12 WFP's integrated resilience programming contributed to enhanced resilience and increased livelihood diversity for communities. Asset creation helped mitigate environmental degradation and natural shocks, and VSL contributed to improved economic capacity in communities. There was less evidence of WFP contributions to enhanced market linkages or smallholders and enhanced coping through crop insurance.

Integrated Resilience Programme Components

1. **FFA:** WFP provides support for community and household assets creation and maintenance through a graduation pathway for beneficiaries that have attained sufficient levels of food security. FFA aimed to shift WFP from provision of technical support and direct transfers (food and cash) for meeting food consumption needs towards provision of technical support only. The modality of the transfers changed from food to cash in 2020, with 33.3 percent of households included in FFA receiving cash transfers in 2021 (34,750 out of a total of 104,212 households).¹²⁸
2. **Integrated Risk Management (crop insurance and VSL):** Through WFP's crop insurance scheme, farmers pay a premium and create assets aimed at reducing their vulnerability during the off-season. Insurance pay-outs are triggered in the event of climate shocks (floods and dry spells) and low-yield harvests to allow farmers to purchase food or invest in alternative livelihoods. WFP VSL support included a micro-credit scheme and technical support for governance of VSL associations that can increase smallholders' ability to purchase agricultural inputs, cover health or education-related expenditures, and invest in income-generating activities.
3. **The PICSA approach** aimed at providing smallholder farmers with location-specific climate information for farmers to make informed decisions on livelihood activities that may be affected by climate variability or extreme weather. Climate information was disseminated through community radio, SMS messages, and agricultural extension.
4. **SAMS** aimed to promote better access to markets, as well as increased agricultural diversification, enhanced knowledge of business management practices, and reduced post-harvest losses, among smallholder farmers.

The programme was implemented through two joint programmes, as well as WFP-only programming, all of which fall under SO4, Activity 5. The two joint programmes were: (i) Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER), funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), and whose implementation was led by the government, WFP, FAO, UNDP, and UNICEF; (ii) the Adaptation Fund, which is implemented jointly by WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture.

99. WFP's integrated resilience programme aimed to build resilience of smallholder farmers to cyclical shocks and transition food and nutrition insecure communities from subsistence to surplus-producing livelihoods (see textbox below).

100. Data on annual target achievement rates for beneficiaries reached and amounts of food and cash transferred reflect the country office's shift towards cash transfer, which was gradually introduced based on market and other assessments and resulted in no food transfers by 2021. Lower annual target achievement rates for numbers of beneficiaries of cash transfers, and amounts of cash transferred, reflect the application of the graduation model throughout 2019-2021, in which fewer FFA beneficiaries received cash transfers over time, and only technical support was provided.

¹²⁸ WFP. 2022. *Memorandum: Determination of the Transfer Values for WFP Malawi Cash Operations*.

101. WFP data on food consumption indicate that SO4 beneficiaries are consuming increased quantities and quality of food since the CSP's introduction. **Figure 19**, which displays trends in food consumption scores, indicates significant improvements from baseline in terms of increased percentages of households with acceptable scores. Food consumption scores improved to a greater extent among women than men (27 percentage point increase in proportion of women with acceptable scores between baseline and 2021, compared to 22 percentage points for men). CSP outcome monitoring data between 2020 and 2021 also indicate increases in proportions of households consuming iron-rich foods weekly (from 64 percent to 84 percent); protein-rich foods daily (from 21 percent to 37 percent); and vitamin A-rich foods daily (37 percent to 42 percent).

Figure 16 Annual target achievement comparisons beneficiaries and food for SO4

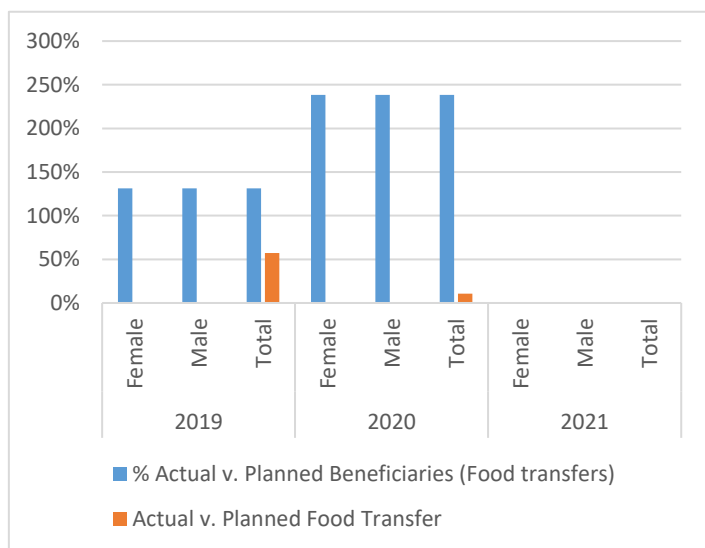
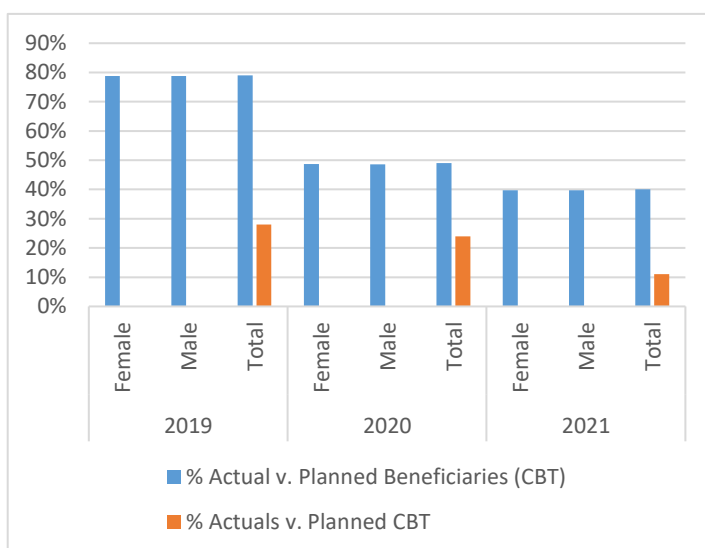
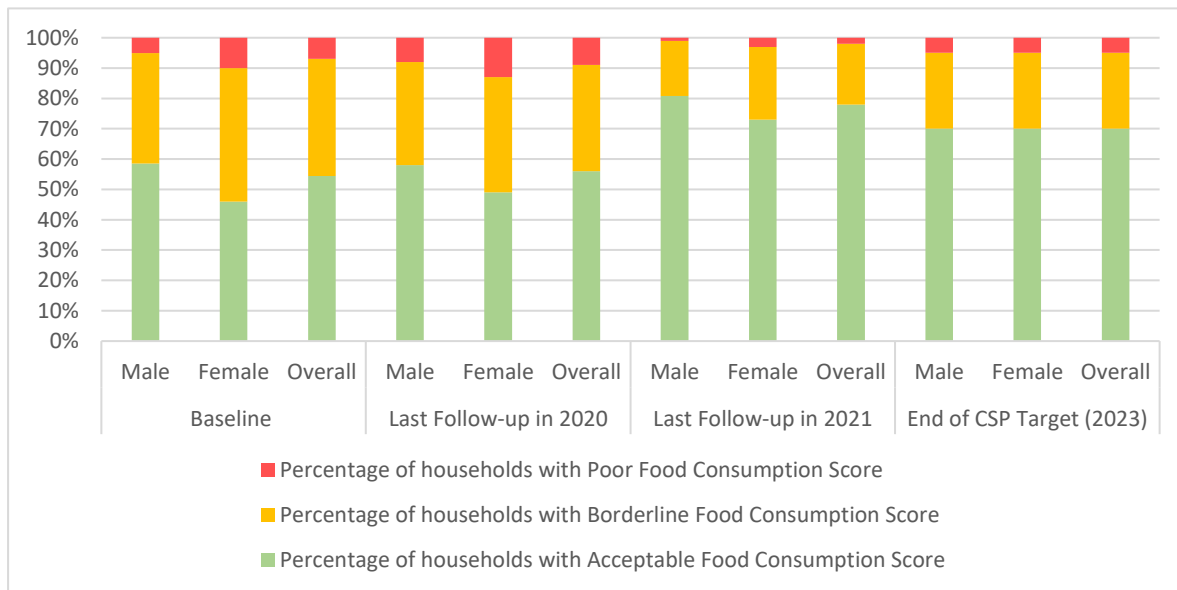


Figure 15 Annual target achievement comparisons beneficiaries and cash for SO4



Source: CM-R-007 Annual Distribution (CSP) Malawi 2019-2022; and CM-R020 Adjusted Participants and Beneficiaries Malawi.

Figure 19 Food Consumption Scores (FCS) for smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations under SO4¹²⁹



Source: CM-L008b CRF Outcome Indicator Values Malawi.

102. PDM reports and FGD participants indicated that households benefiting from WFP interventions had expanded their livelihood asset base since 2019, which contributed to improved food availability. A large and increasing proportion of beneficiaries reported the benefits of these assets on their livelihoods and in their capacity to manage climate shocks and risks. In PDM surveys of beneficiary households, a significant majority of targeted communities reported benefits from an enhanced livelihood base (increasing from 26 percent at baseline in 2019 to 93 percent in 2021), particularly in enhanced protection from natural disasters, improved natural environment, increased ability to manage and maintain assets, increased agricultural production, and decreased day-to-day hardship.¹³⁰ FGD participants from targeted communities noted benefits to their livelihoods, food consumption, and nutrition through the creation and maintenance of the following (for a discussion of environmental benefits, see EQ 2.2):

- **Backyard vegetable gardens** provided food for household consumption and improved food diversity. Some participants noted they could sell surplus vegetables grown in their gardens as an additional income source.
- **Assets related to soil and water conservation** prevented or mitigated soil erosion and improved crop production. Examples included revegetation and soil fertility related assets, such as vetiver nurseries¹³¹ and planting of trees to improve water-holding capacity of land and enhance soil health.¹³²
- **Woodlots and tree planting around homesteads** had many positive effects. Planting fruit trees around homesteads provided an additional source of food. In addition to the erosion benefits mentioned, above, community members reported that improvements in tree cover also improved health as there is less dust and contamination of food during preparation and consumption.

¹²⁹ There were no CSP monitoring data for follow-up values for outcome indicators for SO4 in 2019. This was because implementation of resilience interventions under the CSP were delayed due to the need to focus on flood emergency response (WFP. 2019; ACR Malawi. 2019.)

¹³⁰ WFP. 2021. *Integrated Resilience Programme 2019-2021: Outcome Monitoring Survey Report.*

¹³¹ Vetiver is a plant that has a large, dense, strong root system that grows up to six metres deep. Vetiver is grown in the form of hedgerow planting, usually on top of a slope, to prevent erosion due to flooding and poor drainage. Vetiver also improves soil fertility and productivity (source: Gesesse et al. 2013. *Journal of Science and Sustainable Development 1(1): Effect of vetiver grass hedges in maintaining soil fertility and productivity.*)

¹³² Also mentioned as an intended benefit under the Adaptation Fund; see Adaptation Fund. 2019. *Project/Programme Proposal to the Adaptation Fund.*

- **WASH-related assets**, such as improved toilets with handwashing facilities and dishracks, contributed to household nutrition and health.
- **Production of organic manure and construction of fuel-efficient stoves:** Several communities were trained in the production of organic manure that mitigated the rise in fertilizer prices. Innovations such as fuel-efficient stoves reduced the time spent collecting firewood by communities by 60 percent.¹³³ A few FGD participants reported that they continued making stoves to sell as an additional source of income.
- **Irrigation schemes** such as treadle pumps boosted agricultural productivity and allowed community members to forgo labour-intensive methods of sourcing water for crops and trees. However, not all communities visited by the evaluation team had such support from WFP, and FGD participants in Zomba and Chikwawa commonly noted the need either to introduce small-scale irrigation technology or expand current irrigation schemes.¹³⁴

103. Increased access to VSL over time increased households' ability to pay for food and non-food expenditures. Based on PDM reports, the proportion of households that had access to loans increased from 44 percent in 2019 to 89 percent in 2021, while the number of households that took loans for the purpose of purchasing food decreased from 72 percent to 61 percent during the same period. Increased proportions of households obtained loans for small businesses and education-related expenditures.¹³⁵ WFP support bolstered existing village savings or helped establish new groups by advising on effective governance mechanisms (e.g. savings group constitutions, minimum contributions, rules for meetings). Several FGD participants noted their collected savings increased their ability to purchase food, pay for school fees, buy agricultural inputs or livestock, and improve or repair their dwelling.

104. Nevertheless, communities continue to face challenges related to their economic capacity to meet essential needs. While monthly expenditures among households surveyed by PDMs increased between 2019 and 2020, they remain lower than the minimum expenditure baskets calculated for each year by WFP's VAM unit.¹³⁶

105. In relation to SAMS, the most significant WFP contribution was to connect farmer cooperatives with HGSP schools. In FGDs, members of farmer cooperatives highlighted the WFP's technical support on good practices in business operations and governance as well as the training on the HGSP model's requirements for supplying food.¹³⁷ However, there is little evidence that WFP contributed to linking smallholder farmers with other markets apart from schools.¹³⁸ Country office staff note that WFP is currently placing an increased emphasis on implementing SAMS through contract farming agreements with private sector entities, which are still being finalized. SAMS continues to be challenged by: (i) relatively few established private companies in Malawi that could link with smallholders; (ii) the lack of a clear framework or SOP for WFP COs to engage with private companies or government grain reserves to promote smallholder access to markets; and (iii) the lack of indicators in the corporate results framework to measure changes in income as a result of SAMS activities.

¹³³ WFP. 2021. Malawi ACR

¹³⁴ This is also mentioned by community members consulted by an existing evaluation of WFP's FFA in Malawi (see WFP. 2021. *Evaluation of the FFA in the Context of Malawi 2015-2019*, p.35).

¹³⁵ WFP. 2021. *Integrated Resilience Programme 2019-2021: Outcome Monitoring Survey Report*.

¹³⁶ Of note, though, there was an increase in the proportion of households whose monthly expenditure is equal to or above the minimum expenditure basket, from 19 percent in 2020 to 29 percent in 2021.

¹³⁷ FGDs did not provide specific details on the content of this training; the ACR 2021 notes that WFP focused on delivering training, through Plan International, on quality and quantity requirements for supplying food to the HGSP programme, in Chikwawa, Mangochi, Nsanje, Phalombe, and Zomba.

¹³⁸ The PDM report for HGSP implemented under the TSOLATA project indicated that the preferred point of sale for smallholders supported by WFP across targeted districts was the school. Among maize, rice, and bean producers surveyed by the PDM, the largest proportion of respondents indicated that the school was their preferred point of sale (between 35 percent and more than 50 percent of respondents), followed by a significant proportion indicating individual vendors as their preferred point of sale (between 25 and 36 percent of respondents). Only 5 to 15 percent of respondents indicated farmers' associations or local markets as their preferred points of sale, with the exception of bean producers, among whom 27 percent indicated local markets as their preferred point of sale. (WFP. 2022. *Annual Outcome Survey Report of the School Feeding Programme TSOLATA in Malawi with Financial Support from the European Union*, April 2022.)

106. The extent to which beneficiaries perceived crop insurance benefits appeared to be low. While insurance pay-outs were made, and communities consulted received these pay-outs, delays in receiving payments or receiving less-than-expected amounts were limitations commonly cited during FGDs. The SO4 2021 PDM reported a decline in positive perceptions about the insurance programme, and the proportion of farmers willing to take part in crop insurance decreased from 86 percent (2020) to 73 percent (2021).¹³⁹

SO5: Capacity strengthening including improved supply chain systems

Finding 13 WFP contributed to enhanced national capacity for vulnerability assessments and improvements in national food commodity tracking capabilities. An integrated food systems approach was at a nascent stage.

107. SO5 aligned with WFP's corporate approach to increase investment in upstream capacity strengthening and focused on three activity areas: vulnerability analysis and evidence generation, supply chain management, and food systems development.

108. WFP support to the MVAC improved the knowledge and skills of government entities and other stakeholders in designing and conducting food security and livelihood-based vulnerability assessments, and in data analysis for the IPC process.¹⁴⁰ A key milestone was that MVAC completed the first IPC Chronic Food Insecurity Report in 2022. Training helped to ensure that district-level MVAC members understood the IPC process and could respond to queries concerning geographic targeting. By the end of 2021, ten districts with the highest prevalence of acute food insecurity in the country had officers to support IPC analysis at the local level.¹⁴¹ Key informants noted that the government has been in a stronger position to collaborate with stakeholders on vulnerability assessments.

109. WFP strengthened the capacity of the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) to conduct joint baseline and endline surveys, which provided evidence to mobilize donor funding and other resources for LSR plans. The country office was instrumental in initiating response programme after-action reviews to promote learning.

110. Budget Revision 03 adjusted the SO5 budget to respond to a request from the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) and the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) to address gaps in the national food supply chain, including silo and warehouse assessments, training, and technology to improve food systems.¹⁴² Based on a food value chain analysis, WFP adapted its partnership with ADMARC and NFRA to help address critical operational gaps identified, but progress was slow; delays were compounded by the suspension of ADMARC in August 2022.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, WFP supported the development of a national logistics preparedness action plan¹⁴⁴ and a new commodity tracking system (CTS), enabling the government to better manage food consignment movements.¹⁴⁵

111. The CSP recognized an opportunity to use WFP's supply chain capacities to support national food agencies at all levels of the value chain by introducing a food systems approach.¹⁴⁶ The country office supply chain team contributed to broader (corporate) preparations for the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit. There was limited progress in the implementation of the intended food systems capacity strengthening (CCS) activities due to COVID-19 (see EQ

¹³⁹ WFP. 2021. *Integrated Resilience Programme 2019-2021: Outcome Monitoring Survey Report*.

¹⁴⁰ WFP. 2020. Malawi ACR: Funding was provided by USAID/BHA. All planned activities for 2020 were achieved with input from personnel seconded to MVAC (financed by the Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme). A total of 221 MVAC members at central and district levels (15 districts) benefited from the programme, which also engaged 81 enumerators who were trained in data collection skills for the urban assessment and market survey.

¹⁴¹ WFP. 2021. Malawi ACR.

¹⁴² WFP Malawi Supply Chain Strategy 2020 to 2021 – targeted CCS support for DoDMA, the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MOTPW), Ministry of Education, Science & Technology (MOEST), Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) and the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA).

¹⁴³ During the evaluation team field mission (August 2022), ADMARC's operations were formally suspended.

¹⁴⁴ Government of Malawi, December 2020, National Logistics Preparedness Action Plan.

¹⁴⁵ A WFP staff member was seconded to DoDMA to provide technical support for commodity tracking.

¹⁴⁶ The term 'food system' refers to the constellation of activities involved in producing, processing, transporting, and consuming food.

4.4 below), although a dedicated food systems unit was subsequently established within the country office supply chain team.

112. In 2021, WFP Malawi began a new project¹⁴⁷ under BR 03 and in response to COVID-19 to support health supply chain systems strengthening. The project was planned in consultation with other United Nations agencies (including WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA) and key health sector stakeholders to align activities and avoid duplication of effort.¹⁴⁸ There is not yet information to assess its effects (see also Finding 5).

SO6: Emergency services

Finding 14 WFP's logistics services during the unprecedented emergencies between 2019 and 2022 were effective and highly regarded.

113. As noted in Section 1.3, Budget Revision 01 introduced SO6 in response to the March 2019 Tropical Cyclone Idai emergency. Activity 7 was added to "Provide services through the Logistics Cluster to National Disaster Management Offices and other relevant partners to improve emergency logistics coordination and supply chain management," and Activity 8 to "Provide on-demand services to humanitarian and other relevant partners to ensure effective emergency assistance."

114. Budget Revision 02 provided critical logistics support to the government's COVID-19 response.¹⁴⁹ This enabled further assistance under SO6 for DoDMA, which was also leading the 2020/2021 LSR. Supply chain management support was also provided to the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MOTPW). WFP's assistance included coordination, information management, and access to common logistics services.

115. Other services provided during the CSP included air transport for the humanitarian community from South Africa (when Malawi's airspace was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic); use of early warning systems; establishment of a humanitarian staging area (HSA) in Bangula, Nsanje District to preposition emergency supplies and transport equipment;¹⁵⁰ deployment of over 50 mobile storage units used as health screening sites, field hospitals,¹⁵¹ or vaccine centres;¹⁵² and logistical support to over 40 organizations.

116. WFP's cooperating partners regard the HSA¹⁵³ as an important emergency preparedness initiative¹⁵⁴ that helped DoDMA and other agencies, including UNICEF and the Malawi Red Cross Society, stockpile relief items. Aligned with one pillar of the country office's supply chain strategy, the facility has also been used to conduct simulation exercises with district officers and other stakeholders on how to respond to disasters. However, the evaluation team was not able to determine that intervention's effectiveness. Key informants highly valued WFP's operational capabilities and noted that these would be required for the foreseeable future.

117. WFP has supported the national Logistics Cluster by acting as co-chair with DoDMA. While key informants indicated that this mechanism has worked very well, no full-time government staff have been dedicated to its

¹⁴⁷ Building on WFP's role in the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing on WFP headquarters' relationship with Takeda Pharmaceuticals, and WFP headquarters' emerging experience in temperature sensitive logistics (TSL).

¹⁴⁸ Based on KIIs.

¹⁴⁹ The country office is unable to programme new contributions due to minimal Outstanding Balance Commitment (OBC) under MW01.08.061.

¹⁵⁰ Small boats stored at the HSA were used during floods in 2022 to access areas on the east bank of the lower Shire River.

¹⁵¹ WFP supply chain provided timely and highly regarded support – providing mobile storage units – to MSF France to set up a large field hospital attached to the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre to screen and treat cases of COVID-19.

¹⁵² WFP. 2021. ACR. The set-up of some test centres/screening sites at border crossing points was reportedly delayed, so they were not active until 2022. During the pandemic response, WFP also supported the sourcing and import of medical items with support from the UN Humanitarian Response Depot network (UNHRD), which is hosted by WFP headquarters.

¹⁵³ Mobilizing resources for the Bangula HSA set-up was difficult. It was only during the 2021/2022 lean season that its benefits could be demonstrated. The government has since negotiated with WFP for the establishment of a second logistics hub in Blantyre.

¹⁵⁴ The Regional Bureau has also supported a programme of south-to-south exchange visits to support learning between disaster management authorities, such as with the government of Madagascar.

operation. It is not clear how it would function as an emergency preparedness capability for the government in the longer term. At present, the national Logistics Cluster relies on support from the emergency preparedness and response (EPR) section of the WFP supply chain department.¹⁵⁵

118. The country office provided complementary services for the humanitarian and development community. During the COVID-19 response, WFP set up a United Nations staff health clinic run on a cost recovery basis under the One UN Business Operations Strategy (BOS).¹⁵⁶ Bilateral service provision also included transport, procurement,¹⁵⁷ and storage of non-food items for other United Nations agencies. While key informants confirmed that such services are useful and effective, longer-term service provision objectives have not been determined and cost efficiencies have not been measured.

2.2.2 To what extent did WFP respect the humanitarian principles and contribute to achievement of cross-cutting aims (protection, accountability to affected populations, gender, equity and inclusion, environment, climate change and other issues as relevant)? (EQ 2.2)

Gender equality and the empowerment of women (EQ 2.2.1)

Finding 15 WFP successfully promoted women’s participation in community committees and household decision making. Most programming, however, did not integrate a transformative approach that challenges the underlying causes of gender inequality.

Examples of WFP activities that supported a gender transformative approach

The JPGE provided a good example of how different agencies’ expertise combined to support more gender transformative programming. Over an eight-year period, the programme became more holistic, addressing cultural practices and considering perspectives of both boys and girls. Lower dropout rates for girls achieved by the JPGE likely helped strengthen the position of girls in their adult life. Gender-sensitive treatment of pupils by teachers in schools, and support provided to girls who dropped out of school, likely contributed to closing gaps between boys and girls.¹⁵⁸

The Joint Programme on Gender Transformative Approaches for Food Security and Nutrition began in 2021 and focuses on enhancing the economic autonomy of women and youth through improved financial inclusion. The RBA will work with government, VSL associations and financial service providers to make services more inclusive and accessible. The programme will also work with community groups and households to address discriminatory social norms and expectations based on gender and to promote rural women and youth leadership.¹⁵⁹

119. CSP design and implementation were not informed by gender analysis (see Finding 1). Nonetheless, WFP built on its prior experience and the Malawi Country Office Action Plan for Gender (2017-2020) to mainstream gender in its work, ensuring that activities were gender-sensitive and including women as beneficiaries and participants.¹⁶⁰ Gender mainstreaming in the CSP was facilitated by the hiring of a gender and protection officer in the M&E team, which led to better monitoring feedback on issues such as the needs of persons with disabilities, SGBV, and gendered effects of communications and programming. Gender integration has been strongest in resilience and nutrition initiatives. At the same time, gender mainstreaming was limited by a lack of dedicated budget for gender-related work in each CSP activity, the absence of strategic partnerships to support gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the lack of context-specific gender analyses to inform

¹⁵⁵ Based on KIIs.

¹⁵⁶ The BOS focuses on joint business operations with the purpose of eliminating duplication, leveraging the common bargaining power of the United Nations, and maximizing economies of scale.

¹⁵⁷ WFP chairs a United Nations procurement working group for combined procurement services, such as security, cleaning, vehicle rental, etc. UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, and UNHCR are part of BOS/One UN approach.

¹⁵⁸ Although these findings are from the evaluation of the first phase of the programme (conducted in 2019), WFP monitoring reports show that the positive trend continues. WFP. 2019. *Evaluation of the Joint Programme for Girls Education (JPGE) with financial support from the Norwegian Government 2014–2017*, March 2019.

¹⁵⁹ Drawn from JP GTA Malawi Workplan 2021.

¹⁶⁰ WFP CSP Malawi. 2019. An update of the Gender Action Plan was under way in 2022, in preparation for the new CSP.

interventions under each SO (see EQ 1.1 and EQ 4.5). The Rome-Based Agencies (RBA) joint programme on Gender Transformative Approaches was supposed to address some of these limitations (example in textbox), but COVID-19, the lack of IFAD presence, and the extent of FAO coordination resulted in less progress than anticipated.

120. CSP implementation contributed to increased women’s leadership and food security through:

- *More equal representation of women and men:* country office reporting (Table 5) indicates that activities almost met the target of equal representation of men and women in community committees (such as school feeding committees). FGD participants in all districts signalled that women participated in committees (including farmer organizations), although they were sometimes reluctant to take on leadership roles. The evaluation team was unable to verify whether women on committees participated meaningfully and had influence over decisions.
- *Voice in household decision making:* country office reporting, WFP baseline/endline studies,¹⁶¹ and previous programme evaluations demonstrated that in the majority of households, decisions on the use of the entitlement, ration, or THR were made by women or jointly.¹⁶² FGD participants also suggested a positive evolution in decisions about use of the entitlement.
- *Reducing unpaid workload, saving time, reducing risk:*¹⁶³ Certain community and household assets helped to reduce unpaid workloads and risks for women and girls, although the women were not always involved in deciding what assets to prioritize. FGD participants noted that fuel-efficient stoves saved time in collecting fuel. In 2021, the country office reported in the annual country report (ACR) that the construction of shallow wells near residences reduced the burden and risk for women in fetching water.
- *Micro-credit options:* VSL provided women with affordable credit and the possibility to save and start income-generating activities, such as beekeeping.¹⁶⁴

Table 5 CSP monitoring data for cross-cutting indicators related to gender equality and women’s empowerment

Gender equality: Improved gender equality and women’s empowerment among WFP-assisted population	Baseline	2019	2020	2021	CSP Target	
Proportion of food assistance decision making entity – committees, boards, teams, etc. – members who are women	47	n.d	48	49	53	
Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of food/cash/vouchers	Decisions made by women	41	45	37	39	34
	Made by men	27	23	22	22	28 ¹⁶⁵
	Jointly made	31	32	41	39	38

Source: CM-L008b CRF Cross-Cutting Indicator Values Malawi.

¹⁶¹ WFP. 2021. Lean Season and Boma Baseline and Endline Assessment Report 2020-2021.

¹⁶² WFP promotes joint decision making in the household.

¹⁶³ The evaluation of FFA in 2021, however, identified negative unintended consequences arising from the programme in terms of a reported increased work burden of women due to working on the assets.

¹⁶⁴ The PROSPER Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis Report (2020) confirms that VSL are more important for women than for men, possibly because VSL levels of financing are not attractive to men.

¹⁶⁵ The country office encourages joint decision making. Given the higher baseline figure for decisions made by women, the country office target for decision making by men was set to be a little higher.

121. The country office tracked the Corporate Results Framework indicators (Table 5) on women's participation in community committees and household decision making. However, these indicators provide only a partial picture of progress towards gender equality. The indicator on committees does not identify women in leadership positions, distinguish between different types of committees (some have more power than others), or capture the quality/extent of women's participation and influence. The indicator on household decision making raises other questions, especially considering CSP targets that suggest an intentional reduction over time in women-led decision making in favour of more joint decision making. In the future, WFP target setting for joint decision making requires a more nuanced gender analysis of household dynamics, as proposed in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis carried out for the PROSPER programme in 2020.¹⁶⁶

122. Despite positive results on women's representation in committees and joint decision making, feedback from FGDs and other evaluations suggest that men still control most resources (household assets, land, income generated by women) and that social and cultural norms run deep and continue to encourage inequality.¹⁶⁷ Households headed by women had lower food consumption scores and reduced coping strategy index scores, according to evaluations and annual country reporting. At the same time, the WFP FFA Malawi evaluation noted the unintended effect of FFA activities increasing the burden on women, who still have to perform their domestic chores at home after working in afforestation, soil and water conservation, and other community asset creation initiatives.

123. These data points indicate limited progress in effecting more transformational change in gender roles and/or the social norms underlying these roles. This is unsurprising given that the programmes were largely focused on responding to women's immediate food security and nutrition needs. There were positive examples, however, of WFP-supported efforts that aimed to facilitate women's participation and leadership in community decision making spaces. Positive examples are highlighted in the following textbox.

Protection and AAP (EQ 2.2.2)

Finding 16 WFP put in place a complaints, feedback and response mechanism (CFRM) that was generally accessible, transparent, and safe. WFP identified protection cases and took action to resolve the issues reported by affected populations.

124. Aligned with WFP's AAP policy,¹⁶⁸ WFP has used a CFRM since 2017 to identify and resolve protection cases using multiple channels, including location-based helpdesks and suggestion boxes managed by partners (or WFP), theatre for development,¹⁶⁹ and a toll-free helpline. During the CSP, WFP expanded the CFRM to cover all programme activities¹⁷⁰ and adapted to COVID-19 by prioritizing the call centre as a communications channel in 2020/2021.

125. Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), an NGO with experience in social accountability, initially supported the CFRM. In 2021, WFP contracted Telekom Networks Malawi (TNM) to run the call centre (a cost-savings measure) and transferred other aspects of the CFRM to WFP staff and CPs. Most feedback provided to the evaluation team suggests that the system continues to function well, although it now relies more on WFP staff and has required adjustments in CP capacity.¹⁷¹ Some key informants regarded the change in approach to AAP as a milestone for greater integration and collaboration between the WFP programme and ICT teams and in configuring the system to provide more effective CFRM decision making.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ The WFP CRF indicator compendium also indicates that the indicator targets should be informed by context-specific gender analysis. WFP, 2017-2021 Programme Indicator Compendium Revised Corporate Results Framework (2019).

¹⁶⁷ WFP. 2021. *Evaluation of Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) in the Context of Malawi 2015-2019*; and PROSPER. 2020. *Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis Report*.

¹⁶⁸ WFP. 2020. Protection and accountability policy.

¹⁶⁹ This was used to illustrate potential situations of abuse of power, such as forced sharing of food or cash transfers.

¹⁷⁰ Before 2019, it did not include school meals and nutrition interventions.

¹⁷¹ CP reported hiring a gender and protection officer to support this function.

¹⁷² Based on KIIs, the CFRM operates through the Sugar CRM platform developed by WFP headquarters, enabling CPs and staff to receive email alerts when the call centre has received a case.

126. The WFP CFRM works through community structures (such as gender committees, grievance, and redress committees) and with government entities to resolve critical cases. Depending upon the nature of cases, either DoDMA, District Police or social welfare and local leaders may be involved.

127. Participants in FGDs in rural areas confirmed that both men and women know about the existence of such mechanisms. However, WFP monitoring reports for the LSR and COVID-19 response¹⁷³ and the FFA evaluation reported limited use and understanding of the types of issues that could be raised through these mechanisms. During COVID-19, exclusive reliance on call centres was likely affected by gender dynamics in affected populations given that men represent the greatest proportion of phone-owners in Malawi, and thus were the greater proportion of callers to file complaints via the hotline.

128. Data reported in ACRs suggest that there has been a decline in more serious complaints about extortion/forced sharing and that, in general, there are very few complaints about sensitive issues such as sexual exploitation. As noted above, this may be due to lack of awareness about the range of issues that can be raised through these mechanisms, and the disparity in phone ownership in Malawi between men and women, mentioned above.¹⁷⁴

129. Among the cases registered during YONECO's contract period (which ended in July 2021), the top two concerns related to extortion/harassment and food diversion/fraud and corruption, primarily as part of the LSR (**Table 6**).¹⁷⁵

Table 6 Frequently reported concerns among beneficiaries: August 2020 to July 2021

Type of concern	Number of cases	Percentage
Extortion/Harassment	810	28%
Food Diversion/Fraud & Corruption	440	15%
Technical Issues	379	13%
Cash or Food Inquiries	289	10%
General Inquiry	270	9%
Targeting	227	8%

Source: YONECO, End of Contract Technical Report, Integrated CFRM for WFP Programmes (2021).

130. In response to the high volume of extortion/harassment cases in which perpetrators (especially village chiefs) reportedly forced WFP beneficiaries, particularly during the LSR, to give them part or all the cash or food they had received, the WFP programme team developed and socialized a code of conduct in late 2021 that was signed by village chiefs, local government officials, and CPs explaining that WFP would temporarily halt distributions if issues of misconduct arose. This is a new approach for WFP, and its effectiveness and ethical soundness will have to be carefully monitored given that the actions of a few may result in depriving the affected population of access to benefits.

131. A key test of the CFRM and the code of conduct will be the 2022/2023 LSR, which is expected to cover more beneficiaries than in the past. However, in a protection survey of 200 households (conducted during the 2020/2021 LSR among beneficiaries who reported issues of extortion by community leaders), 57 percent of respondents felt there were changes in the community after reporting issues via the hotline, and 71 percent reported improved conduct by community leaders.¹⁷⁶ Another important result of the CFRM is that WFP recovered over USD 25,000 from community leaders and returned it to beneficiaries.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ WFP. 2021. *Lean Season and Boma Response Baseline and Endline Assessment Report*.

¹⁷⁴ WFP. 2021. *Evaluation of FFA in the Context of Malawi 2015-2019*.

¹⁷⁵ YONECO, End of Contract Technical Report: Integrated Community Feedback and Response Mechanisms for WFP Programmes, August 2021.

¹⁷⁶ WFP. 2021. ACR

¹⁷⁷ WFP. 2021. ACR and KII.

132. The country office integrated protection into activities primarily by ensuring safe access to assistance and services, without barriers. WFP has emphasized Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in its agreements with CPs and through training. WFP paid increasing attention to GBV by including relevant questions in PDM monitoring, providing more information to beneficiaries about what can be reported through the CFRM, and participation in an inter-agency gender and protection working group that will map community feedback mechanisms across the UNCT and develop joint referral pathways on GBV through the Spotlight Initiative.¹⁷⁸

133. Ensuring AAP in the Dzaleka refugee camp was complex during implementation of the CSP. Key informants highlighted numerous refugee complaints about targeting of assistance (exclusion errors) or problems receiving cash transfers. FGD participants and key informants observed that many refugees did not know about the toll-free hotline and how to provide feedback, despite WFP efforts to publicize its existence.

134. Protection issues in the camp are a growing concern, particularly as camp conditions worsen and there is a reported increase in violence and GBV in particular.¹⁷⁹ This situation makes CFRM, communications channels, and coordination among different actors even more important. In 2021, WFP included Swahili in the choice of languages available in the ATMs used for cash transfers and ensured there is a Swahili-speaking operator for the CFRM hotline as part of efforts to enhance beneficiary communication.

Humanitarian principles (EQ 2.2.3)

Finding 17 Consistent use of evidence on needs and vulnerabilities for targeting enabled WFP to adhere to humanitarian principles in recurring and sudden-onset emergencies.

135. Adherence to the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and operational independence as well as the ability to access those in need of assistance are central to WFP's operations. Corporately and nationally, WFP has strengthened its approach to cash-based transfers as a means of providing humanitarian assistance.

136. In Malawi, WFP aims to target beneficiaries based on need but also reinforce government systems and other capacities. WFP and other stakeholders widely accept and use vulnerability assessments developed by MVAC to determine who/where to provide support. WFP then applies further levels of analysis of vulnerabilities before identifying beneficiaries. Use of the UBR as an objective way of targeting for horizontal expansion has helped to ensure that support is not based on political inclinations. The perception of greater objectivity was manifest in FGDs in Chikwawa, where the UBR was rolled out. There are more challenges when community-based approaches to targeting are applied in the districts without UBR. However, as noted in Finding 16, in these cases the CFRM system has been used to redress (return funds) and prevent (code of conduct) any violation of these humanitarian principles.

137. Affected populations consulted are largely aware of their rights and entitlements (understanding the programme and its proposed trajectory), but also note that sometimes the timing of assistance or the protection received is inadequate and does not fully meet their needs.

138. The protracted refugee situation in Malawi, in which the government has not rolled out the Comprehensive Refugee Response framework, puts WFP in a challenging situation. It must abide by government policy directives, is called on to advocate with the government, and bears the fallout of discontent among refugee populations who perceive host community bias in the livelihood programming supported by WFP (see Annex 18 with analysis on unintended effects of the CSP).

¹⁷⁸ Spotlight Initiative is a global programme of the United Nations funded by the European Union.

¹⁷⁹ FGD, KII, and news articles.

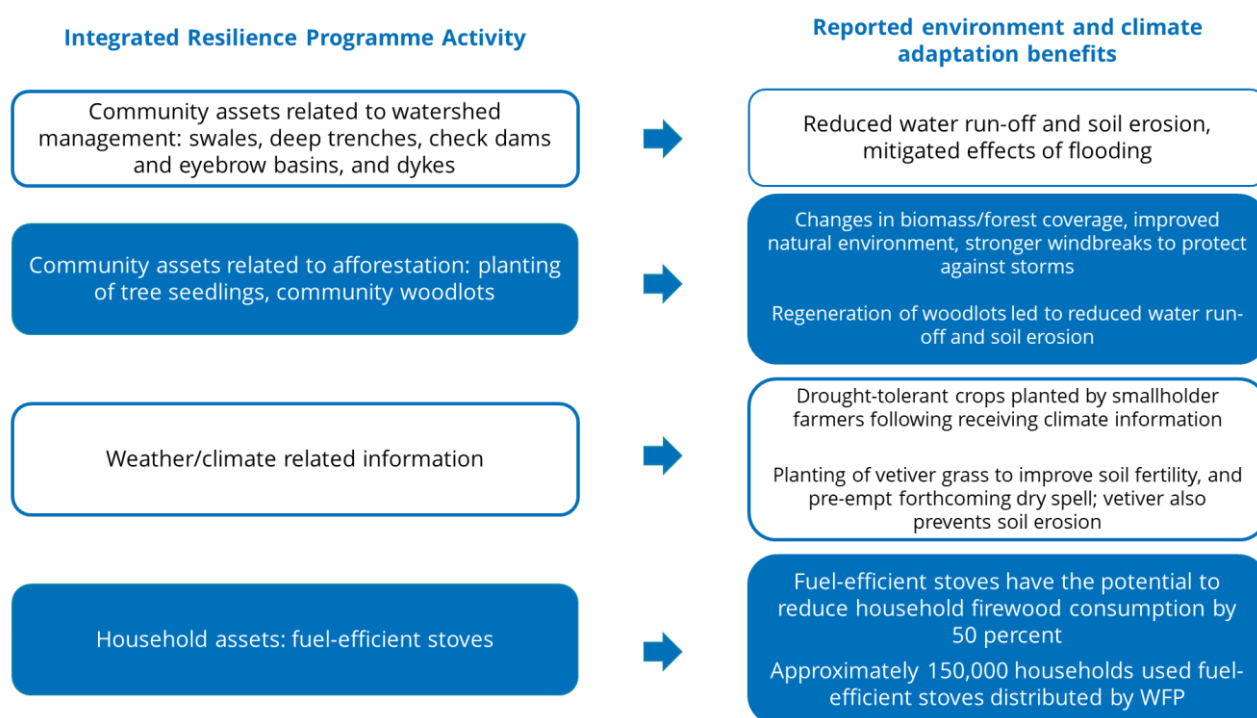
Environment and climate change (EQ 2.2.4)

Finding 18 Within the integrated resilience programme, WFP’s environmental and climate change interventions have improved community capacity in managing natural resources and environmental risks. However, climate change adaptation was not mainstreamed across other interventions in the CSP.

139. WFP included environment and climate change considerations in its integrated resilience programme, which focused on watershed management and livelihoods diversification (see textbox in Finding 12). Investments in watershed management systems, climate services, rural financial institutions, market access support, and post-harvest loss management were aimed at enabling communities to better sustain themselves against shocks. CSP outcome monitoring data for SO4 indicated that 90 percent of communities targeted under the programme self-reported increased capacity to manage climate shocks and risks in 2021, a substantial increase from 50 percent at baseline. The PDM report for SO4 also indicated improvements in climate capacity scores among a large proportion of communities across districts covered by the programme.¹⁸⁰ Several activities from the integrated resilience programme were cited by documents reviewed and communities consulted through FGDs as having produced environment and climate adaptation benefits. See [Figure 20](#).

140. Although the focus on environment and climate change was strategically planned and monitored as part of the integrated resilience programme, other areas of the CSP did not mainstream environment and climate adaptation systematically. Another challenge is that not all communities continue to create and maintain assets once cash transfers end, as per the assumptions of the graduation model (see also Finding 20).

Figure 20 Reported environment and climate adaptation benefits from the Integrated Resilience Programme



¹⁸⁰ WFP. 2021. *Integrated Resilience Programme 2019-2021 – Outcome Monitoring Survey Report, October 2021*. Climate capacity scores measure a community’s ability to manage climate shocks and risks. Through SO4 PDMs, the score is collected through survey questions covering communities’ access to climate information; engagement in climate-resilient livelihoods practices; creation of climate-resilience assets; access to micro-insurance; and access to contingency funding mechanisms.

2.2.3 To what extent are the achievements of the CSP likely to be sustainable, in particular from a financial, social, institutional and environmental perspective? (EQ 2.3)

Finding 19 Despite high levels of government political will to continue supporting the CSP's activities, the extent to which benefits in areas such as school feeding, emergency preparedness, and shock-responsive social protection are likely to be sustained is hampered by the government's lack of financial resources.

141. Government political will and ownership of school feeding was evident in the national school feeding policies, strategies, and guidelines that were initiated prior to the CSP. The government's own HGSF model, utilizing a community garden approach (see Finding 10), was developed with WFP support. In 2021, WFP and the Ministry of Education signed a strategic cooperation framework to strengthen inter-sectoral coordination for the delivery of a future school health and nutrition programme and to develop a roadmap for school feeding expansion.¹⁸¹ Plans for a pilot of a HGSF hybrid model, drawing upon WFP and government models, were in development in 2022, with identified funding from Norway and Iceland.

142. Yet, the government's lack of financial resources across several thematic areas limits financial sustainability and potential for handover. KIIs mentioned this as a general challenge in Malawi, exacerbated by the decline in ODA inflows since 2020, and noted four areas in particular:

- **School feeding:** Provision of school meals in Malawi remains largely dependent on external funding. While the Ministry of Education has budget for school feeding, only 0.03 percent of its total budget was allocated for this purpose in 2020, which amounted to USD 120,000.¹⁸² Key informants noted potential to leverage budgetary resources from other ministries (such as the Ministry of Agriculture), which would require advocacy. WFP is currently working with Harvard University to develop a Value for Money Study that will quantify the benefits of its HGSF model in Malawi, which could be used for future advocacy efforts.
- **Emergency preparedness:** While WFP's activities to strengthen capacity of DoDMA had positive effects, stakeholders interviewed raised doubts about the extent to which the government would continue to invest in staff capacity.
- **Shock-responsive social protection:** WFP's focus on strengthening government capacity to apply vertical and horizontal expansion within LSRs, and the ongoing roll-out of the 'cash plus' initiative, provided a positive shift away from long-term dependence on LSR transfers. However, international development partners instead of the government continue to fund a significant proportion of these. Limited donor funding also restricted WFP's ability to respond to government requests to support updating the UBR database.
- **Nutrition:** District development plans also lack nutrition-related programming budget lines. The absence of nutrition-focused government workers whose primary responsibility is to facilitate community malnutrition prevention has implications for the care group model's sustainability. The model currently involves government extension workers from district-level health, education, or agriculture departments whose primary mandate is not nutrition.¹⁸³ WFP has provided financial support to cover expenses¹⁸⁴ of District Nutrition Coordinating Committee meetings, but interviewees questioned whether these meetings will continue without funding.

¹⁸¹ The evaluation team was not able to confirm if the strategy and roadmap have been finalized, as of writing.

¹⁸² WFP. 2021. *School Feeding in Malawi: A Policy Report*, September 2021.

¹⁸³ This is also mentioned in WFP. 2021. *Evaluation of the Care Group Model in Malawi*.

¹⁸⁴ According to KIIs with district-level stakeholders, such expenses included refreshments, rental of meeting locations (if needed), and transportation costs. While these do not seem significant, stakeholders noted that they provide incentives to attend the meetings and cannot be paid for without external funding.

Finding 20 WFP’s approach to interventions for integrated resilience, involving sub-national structures and processes, is a significant enabler for the sustainability of community-level benefits stemming from these interventions. Its beneficiary graduation model, however, is still a work in progress.

143. Community-based participatory planning (CBPP) created buy-in and community commitment to FFA activities under the integrated resilience programme (see Annex 13 for details). KIIs and an evaluation of WFP’s FFA activities in Malawi also noted that CBPP processes contributed to community understanding of the benefits of FFA activities in building their resilience to shocks.¹⁸⁵

144. As noted in EQ 2.1 under SO4, the integrated resilience programme adopted a graduation model aimed at improving beneficiary self-reliance by transitioning from cash incentives towards technical support. The extent to which communities understood the rationale for this model and continued to create and maintain assets after the provision of cash was stopped varied. In Zomba and Chikwawa, some FGD participants questioned the rationale for no longer receiving the cash transfer. However, many participants also noted the ongoing environmental sustainability benefits of assets focused on soil and water conservation. Community participants also reported adding more tree plantation areas following the initial planting at the beginning of FFA by passing down seeds and maintaining seed banks. The FFA evaluation found similar evidence about community scale-up of tree plantations during the 2015-2019 period.¹⁸⁶

145. Factors in the community environment that enabled or limited integrated resilience intervention sustainability included the recurrence of shocks, land tenure arrangements, existence of VSL and others outlined in EQ 4.5. WFP considered land tenure arrangements and existing VSL in its project design. For example, the Adaptation Fund consulted smallholder farmers to understand VSL associations’ capacity and the challenges they face as well as the effects of prolonged dry spells and pests on harvests and assets created under previous FFA support.¹⁸⁷ The ongoing design of the hybrid model for HGSF identified the limited availability of land and lack of land management governance structures as challenges for the model to address.¹⁸⁸

2.2.4 To what extent did the CSP facilitate more strategic linkages between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation? (EQ 2.4)

Finding 21 WFP strengthened the link between humanitarian and development activities through an integrated approach to emergency response, recovery, and resilience interventions. There were missed opportunities for greater collaboration among humanitarian and development actors.

146. CSP programme interventions facilitated strategic linkages between humanitarian and development actors through integrated programming, WFP’s role in coordination, and its support for SSSP – which donors regard as a good example of the Humanitarian to Development Nexus. Under SO2 (Activity 2) LSR were linked to SSSP interventions. During the 2021 lean season, cash top-ups were provided to the Government’s Social Cash Transfer Program (SCTP) beneficiaries, and WFP worked with the government to use the same national systems to reach non-SCTP food-insecure households.¹⁸⁹

147. The evaluation team noted missed opportunities for greater collaboration among humanitarian and development actors. As noted in Finding 3, despite efforts made by WFP to enhance collaboration among the agencies, the potential roles of RBA in support of humanitarian to development linkages remain unclear. Programme funding challenges among humanitarian and development actors have been another limiting factor. While there were many synergies between partner agencies related to SSSP in the Social Protection for the SDGs (SP4SDG) programme, several differences emerged, and some experimentation was necessary to test approaches for government leadership versus humanitarian sector coordination and operation. Disagreements were apparent

¹⁸⁵ WFP. 2021. *Evaluation of the FFA in the Context of Malawi 2015-2019*, June 2021.

¹⁸⁶ WFP. 2021. *Evaluation of the FFA in the Context of Malawi 2015-2019*, June 2021.

¹⁸⁷ Adaptation Fund. 2019. *Project/Programme Proposal to the Adaptation Fund*.

¹⁸⁸ No author. 2022. *Concept – Proposed HGSF Hybrid model*.

¹⁸⁹ WFP. 2021. ACR

among UNCT members on the extent to which, or at what point, the government should be supported to lead emergency responses, as this reflected respective United Nations agency funding models.¹⁹⁰

148. Further UNCT misalignment emerged because agencies engage with different government counterparts – WFP working primarily with DoDMA and UNICEF primarily with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare. There was also a lack of clarity around coordination mechanisms for SSSP and how the broader MNSSP II could replace humanitarian agency support.¹⁹¹ For example, nationally led SSSP interventions in 2021 could, according to key informants, have been better prepared and avoided financing gaps that were discovered late in the process and that hampered a full-fledged response.

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

2.3.1 To what extent were outputs delivered within the intended timeframe? (EQ 3.1)

Finding 22 WFP demonstrated timeliness in delivering outputs, especially in emergency response. Delays in some activity areas, partly outside of WFP control, had consequences for vulnerable groups such as LSR beneficiaries and targeted refugees.

149. All key informants commended WFP for its timely support to emergency assistance. The role WFP played to underpin the government's COVID-19 response and its responses to flooding caused by Tropical Cyclone Idai (2019), Tropical Storm Ana and Tropical Cyclone Gombe (2022) was crucial to the relief effort.

150. LSRs were delivered in a timely manner overall, despite some challenges. Chikwawa and Zomba LSR beneficiaries consulted did not raise any timeliness issues. The after-action review for the LSR in 2020-2021 noted the timely joint response of actors in the food security cluster, with 9 out of 12 districts beginning distributions 'on time', and highlighted WFP's role in the timely release of the MVAC IPC report, which led to on-time donor resource commitments.¹⁹³ However, key informants reported ongoing issues in WFP cash transfers for SSSP interventions during LSRs, including delays of up to two months after the onset of the lean season. For LSRs and sudden-onset emergencies, the cash in transit approach¹⁹⁴ encountered delays when funds were not transferred to the designated account in time (sometimes due to funding shortfalls).¹⁹⁵

Timeliness of WFP's emergency response

Consulted community members in flood-affected areas mostly reported that WFP's emergency response to flooding in 2022 was delivered quickly. Community members from Chikwawa noted that the rapid availability of small boats (from the Bangula HSA) was essential to the search and rescue effort. As part of the Boma response to COVID-19, WFP and its cooperating partners delivered emergency supplies on time and provided timely assistance to support vulnerability assessment for the government-led CUCI cash transfers.¹⁹²

151. The expansion of the HGSP model meant that fewer schools faced challenges in timely provision of meals. FGD participants in the catchment areas of HGSP schools noted a reduction in stock-outs since making the transition from the centralized model. Although limited in frequency, stock-outs in HGSP schools were often due to lack of

¹⁹⁰ Based on KIIs.

¹⁹¹ Based on KIIs.

¹⁹² World Bank. 2021. Malawi CUCI Process Evaluation Report.

¹⁹³ Government of Malawi et al. 2021. 2020/2021 Lean Season Food Insecurity Response: After Action Review. 'On-time' distributions were defined as distributions that "commenced in time to meet the recommended food gap (i.e. if distributions were slated to begin in December, then 'on time' means they started in December)."

¹⁹⁴ This entails the physical transfer of banknotes from the bank to distribution sites.

¹⁹⁵ Inter-bank contracts/arrangements for cash in transit also caused delays.

food items that had to be purchased at markets in neighbouring villages or districts. Delays in government fund disbursement for the procurement of food items also caused stock-outs.¹⁹⁶

152. WFP's delivery of each round of THRs for schoolchildren, both maize and cash, in response to the closure of schools during COVID-19, was only marginally delayed despite challenges posed by the pandemic. Surveys conducted through PDM for the THRs indicated only 7 percent of beneficiary respondents in 2020 and 19 percent in 2021 reported the late arrival of distribution teams.¹⁹⁷ The greatest challenge faced by beneficiaries at distribution sites was that their names were missing from distribution lists (56 percent of respondents in 2020 and 41 percent in 2021 indicated this as a challenge).

153. Integrated resilience programme insurance pay-outs and cash transfers to refugees were delayed, partly due to factors beyond WFP control. FGD participants who received insurance pay-outs reported payment delays of up to four months in the event of crop failure. The Integrated Risk Management Programme desk review found that delays were linked to the involvement of several intermediaries along the decision making chain, a lack of digitization of assessments, and/or communication issues among actors along the chain.¹⁹⁸

154. Refugee participants in FGDs reported delays of up to three or four months between cash transfers (as opposed to receiving them every month), and noted cash was not transferred on a set date every month. KIIs with external stakeholders confirmed delays and attributed them in part to the process of coordinating beneficiary lists between WFP (for food distribution) and UNHCR (for non-food items) and the MyBucks¹⁹⁹ banking requirements. WFP records of dates of distribution of transfers in 2022 indicate that delays in transfers were seen especially between January and September. However, delays did not reach the three to four months reported by participants in FGDs.²⁰⁰

2.3.2 To what extent does the depth and breadth of coverage ensure that the most vulnerable to food insecurity benefit from WFP activities? (EQ 3.2)

Finding 23 The geographic focus of the CSP was appropriate and WFP ensured that available resources were used to reach the targeted vulnerable groups through its activities. However, due to funding gaps, the depth and breadth of coverage of WFP activities was reduced and risked excluding vulnerable populations.

155. The concentration of most of WFP's programming in the Central and Southern regions of Malawi, where levels of chronic food insecurity and risk of external shocks are highest, was appropriate. As noted in EQ2.1, WFP generally met or exceeded beneficiary targets across activity area. Its targeting approach for activities in most SOs ensured that the most vulnerable were prioritized.²⁰¹ This was done in the context of funding shortfalls that forced WFP to reduce the depth of its coverage, i.e. the size of transfers or types of support. The country office addressed the abrupt reductions in resources in the PROSPER programme by eliminating monetary compensation but continuing technical support for FFA participants as proposed in the graduation model.

¹⁹⁶ A small number of FGDs in HGSE districts pointed this out. The evaluation of phase 1 of the JPGE reported delays in government procurement of food items. Delays in fund disbursement was also mentioned in a best practice and lessons learned note for phase three of the JPGE. However, neither source provided specific numbers of schools affected, or duration of delays. (see WFP. 2019. *Evaluation of the JPGE (2014-2017)*; and Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2020. *Best Practices and Lessons Learned 2019-2020: JPGE*.)

¹⁹⁷ PDMs for THRs did not provide any reasons for this increase in beneficiaries reporting lateness of delivery.

¹⁹⁸ WFP. 2021. *Desk Study of Integrated Risk Management and Climate Services Programme (IRMP) in Malawi (2017-2020)*.

¹⁹⁹ WFP contracted MyBucks, a Malawian bank, when it shifted to e-payments as a transfer modality for refugee assistance.

²⁰⁰ The transfers for February and March 2022 were each delayed by up to a month and a half due to issues related to use of the Global Distribution Tool which required corrections (the February transfer was delayed to a distribution period of 14 March to 21 April; the March transfer was delayed for the distribution period of 28 April to 25 May).

²⁰¹ See Annex 13 for details on targeting approaches, and their resultant coverage for SOs 1 to 4.

Figure 19 Malawi CSP activity map

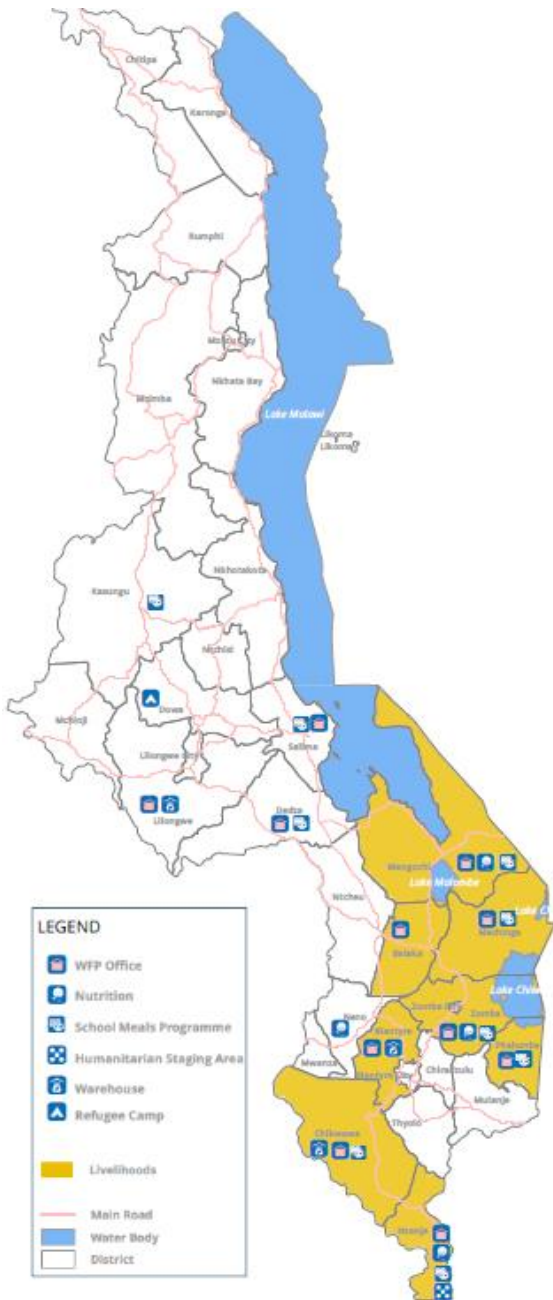
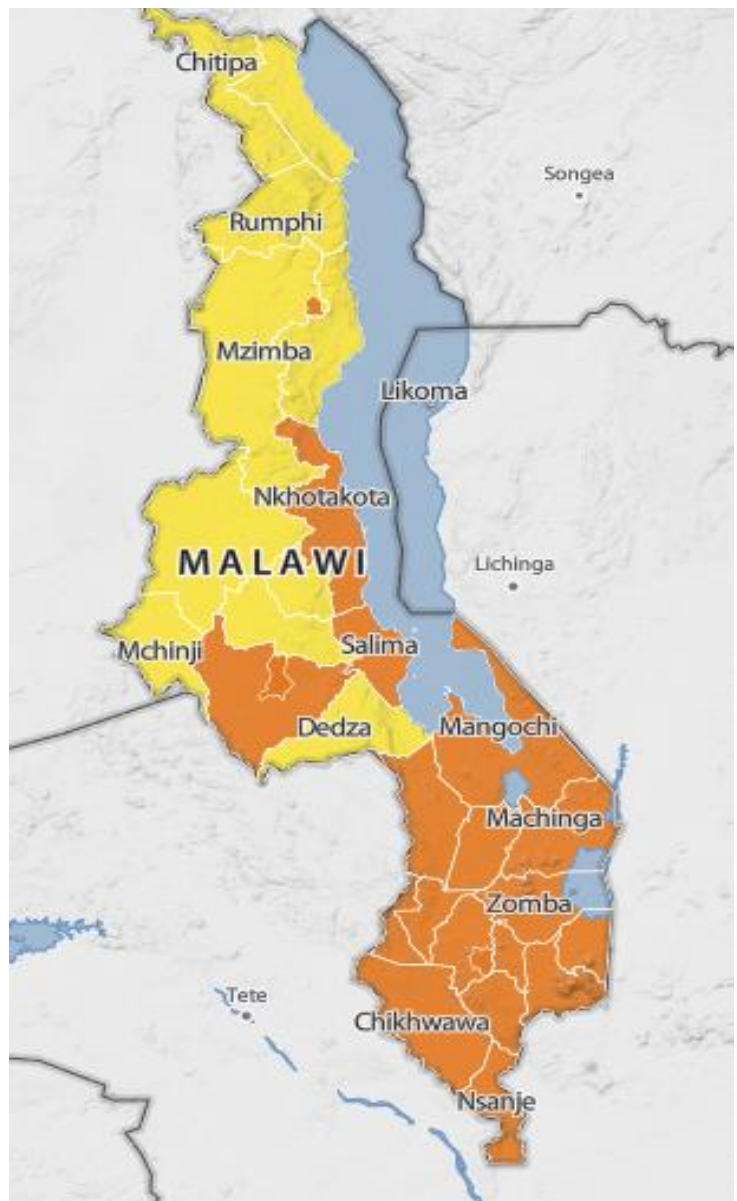


Figure 20 Acute Food Insecurity Situation: projected October 2022–March 2023



156. Sources: Figure 21 was provided to the evaluation team by the country office; Figure 22: adapted from Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. 2022. *Malawi Acute Food Insecurity Situation June–September 2022 and October 2022–March 2023*. For the colour coding legend for Figure 22, see section 1.2.2.

157. The CSP’s integrated approach covered only a limited number of districts and traditional authorities in these regions. This was due largely to SO4’s prioritization of eight districts during the CSP period, which was fewer than the 11 districts identified in the Integrated Context Analysis (ICA) that was conducted in 2014 as part of the 3PA.²⁰² WFP

²⁰² WFP. 2014. *Integrated Context Analysis*, Malawi.

reduced districts due to available funding and to minimize overlap with interventions of other actors.²⁰³ A subsequent ICA in 2021 validated the selection of districts and TAs under SO4.

158. The numbers of individuals targeted by WFP interventions for SOs 1 and 4 were seen as less than adequate by some communities consulted in FGDs. Communities where LSRs were implemented indicated that on average four to five individuals in a village received the cash transfers, and that while these individuals were considered among the 'most vulnerable', they represented a small fraction of the area's vulnerable population. It was not clear if these vulnerable populations could access other safety nets. When asked how they coped without LSR transfers or SO 4 interventions, FGD participants in Zomba and Chikwawa said that casual labour and farming in neighbouring villages were common. In Chikwawa, WFP covered 60 percent of vulnerable households identified through the LSR assessment and targeting process. For details on targeting approaches and their resultant coverage, see Annex 13.

159. WFP programming under SO 4 did not directly target the most vulnerable because providing labour was a condition for FFA activities to ensure that assets met quality standards. However, all FGD participants confirmed that older persons and persons with disabilities benefited from FFA activities and drew on other family members to provide the necessary labour. Furthermore, WFP support for the MNSSP and improvements in the government's SCTP indirectly helped to expand the reach of SSSP such that the most vulnerable households that did not have labour capacity, including households with persons with disabilities, households headed by women, and older persons, would receive support in the case of external shocks.

160. Scaling down numbers of beneficiaries through vulnerability-based targeting, in light of limited funding, was challenging to implement in the Dzaleka refugee camp and raised concerns about unintentionally excluding vulnerable households. WFP engaged with partners to rectify exclusion errors by sharing monthly data for household verification and the planned development of an SOP with the Ministry of Homeland Security for tracking unaccompanied minors and new arrivals. While these activities have been planned, they had not been completed as of writing. See also Finding 16 for challenges faced in ensuring AAP in the refugee camp.

2.3.3 To what extent were WFP's activities cost-efficient in delivery of its assistance? (EQ 3.3)

Finding 24 The country office has improved the cost efficiency of specific activities and operational structure support for the CSP. The cost efficiency of WFP's activities was also enhanced by the shift towards cash transfers.

161. In response to available resources and a decline in funding, WFP adjusted its delivery model. Cost efficiency was further enhanced by the use of CBTs. Available data on the value of food transfers and CBT as percentages of their respective costs indicate that, overall, actual costs were as planned, and cash transfers were more cost-efficient than food.²⁰⁴ See Table 21 in Annex 15 for further details.

162. WFP modified specific activities and its organizational set-up and staffing to increase efficiency. The country office reduced fleet costs in response to decreased in-kind assistance. Based on a cost-efficiency analysis of options for maintaining the fleet, 5 trucks, out of the country office's fleet of 20 Isuzu trucks, were kept for country office operations with the lease (ownership) for the remaining 15 trucks transferred to WFP Global Fleet.²⁰⁵

163. Other measures that reduced costs included the selection of a less expensive delivery partner for CFRM services. The shift from YONECO to TNM for the CFRM was noted by key informants as a cost-saving measure that has not compromised the CFRM's quality.

²⁰³ The evaluation team did not have data on the geographic coverage of programming of other actors across districts. The intention to minimize overlap reported in: WFP. n.d. *WFP Livelihoods Programme in Malawi*.

²⁰⁴ The average proportion of the value of the transfer compared to their total cost between 2019 and September 2022 was 61 percent for food and 87 percent for CBT.

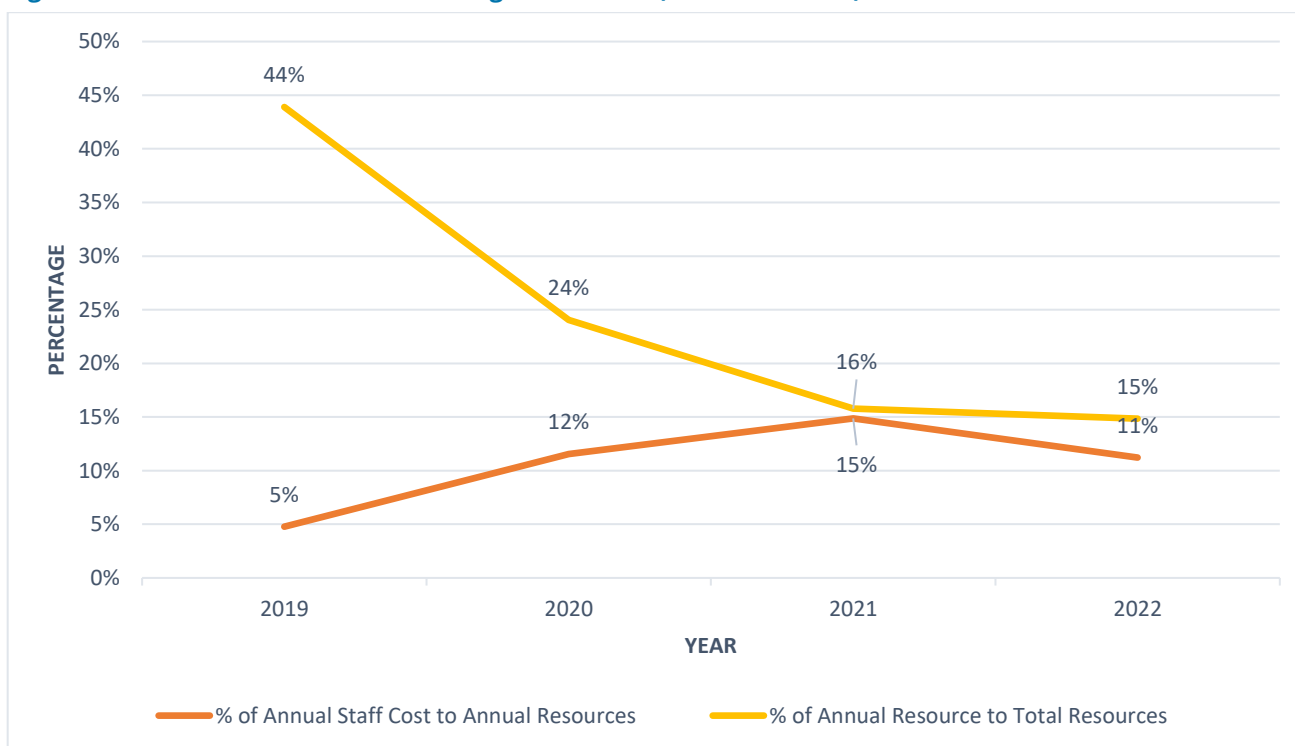
²⁰⁵ WFP Malawi. 2021. *CO Fleet Strategy*.

164. Further measures to enhance the country office’s efficiency include the introduction of electronic tendering, improved supply chain processes, and cost efficiencies, which was noted under EQ 2.1. Efficiencies were also realized using common Long-term Agreements (LTAs) among United Nations agencies that were managed by WFP under the BOS. The primary care clinic, formerly only for WFP, is now a One United Nations clinic that operates on a cost recovery basis. The cost efficiency of bilateral service provision, including transport and procurement and storage of non-food items, had not been measured.

165. The country office adopted broader measures to align its operation structures with the CSP and available resources. This began as early as 2018 with a review of contract types, field presence, and overall staffing, leading to a reduction in positions. Two further organizational realignments were undertaken in 2020-2021 and in 2022; the latter included the closure of the Blantyre sub-office, which reduced fixed costs.²⁰⁶ See EQ 4.4 for details on organizational realignments.

166. In response to donors shifting resources to other emergencies, the country office carefully scrutinized the relationship between funding levels and staffing costs (see **Figure 23**). Despite reducing the staff complement to the minimum required, annual staff costs as a proportion of resources mobilized increased between 2019 and 2021 due to decreases in available annual resources over time. Another contributing factor was the shift away from providing direct transfers as part of FFA interventions towards providing technical support without transfers. This type of analysis is used to foster cost-conscious decision making among SO and activity managers. See EQ 4.4 for a discussion of the implications for the country office’s capacity to deliver planned interventions.

Figure 23 Annual staff costs vs resourcing level trends (November 2022)²⁰⁷



Source: WFP Malawi, Annual Resource Situation Report, November 2022; and WFP Malawi, Resource Management Committee Staff Cost Analysis.

²⁰⁶ Mentioned by KIIs. The evaluation team could not find data or documents to corroborate this.

²⁰⁷ The term ‘total resources’ refers to all funds received and available between 2019 and 2023, as of 16 November 2022. The term ‘annual resources’ refers to funds received and available for the given year.

2.3.4 To what extent were alternative, more cost-effective measures considered? (EQ 3.4)

Finding 25 WFP considered cost-effective measures to deliver CSP activities, although it did not adopt them all.

167. WFP explored options to reduce costs while maintaining the quality and effectiveness of its programmes through mobile money as a transfer modality, THR for school feeding, and the establishment of a humanitarian staging area.

168. WFP experience globally suggests that mobile money cash transfers can be a cost-effective transfer method and, when based on a mobile banking platform, can also support digital financial inclusion.²⁰⁸ To assess the viability of using mobile money and e-payment services instead of Cash in Transit (CIT), the country office tested Standard Bank's platform Unayo through a pilot project in Mangochi and in select areas in Chikwawa during the 2021/2022 LSR.²⁰⁹ Lessons from the experience were shared with the inter-agency Cash Working Group and illustrate factors that limit adoption of this method, including network connectivity, handset availability, use dynamics, gender differences in access,²¹⁰ literacy, and logistical matters such as distance to Unayo agent locations.

169. During the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP partnered with the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) to transform the school feeding programme into THR. This was also done for the 2020/2021 LSR. The change in transfer modality reduced costs for WFP, minimized COVID-19 risks, and supported household food security. However, it did not have the desired effects on school attendance, which is why WFP advocated that the government reinstate school feeding soon after schools reopened. Also related to school feeding, and as noted in section 2.2.3, WFP is working with Harvard University on a Value for Money study of its HGSP model. At the time of data collection for this evaluation, the Value for Money study was not yet completed.

170. In emergency response, the HSA in Bangula enabled the rapid dispatch of relief supplies during floods in 2022, improving the cost effectiveness of support.

2.4 EQ4: WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT EXPLAIN WFP PERFORMANCE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT HAS MADE THE STRATEGIC SHIFT EXPECTED BY THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN?

2.4.1 To what extent has WFP been able to mobilize adequate, timely, predictable, and flexible resources to finance the CSP? (EQ 4.1)

Finding 26 The CSP was largely dependent on short-term, strictly earmarked allocations of funding. Donor contributions to WFP Malawi decreased sharply between 2020 and 2022, due to several factors that reflected trends in ODA to Malawi and in the global funding landscape.

171. WFP's resource mobilization challenges reflect the global funding landscape and trends in ODA to Malawi. The country office has largely been able to adapt to funding shortfalls through programmatic adjustments.

172. All SOs were relatively under-resourced compared to NBP targets; most were resourced at less than 50 percent of the required resource levels outlined in the NBP at a time when approximately 77 percent of the CSP had been implemented. This was due in part to the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 and subsequent effects on the resource

²⁰⁸ WFP. 2022. *Cash and In-Kind Transfers in Humanitarian Settings: A Review of Evidence and Knowledge Gaps*; WFP. n.d. *Digital Financial Inclusion through Cash Transfers: Her Money, Her Account*.

²⁰⁹ KIs noted that (as of September 2022) WFP was the only United Nations organization to have tested the Unayo mobile money platform.

²¹⁰ Men are reported to have more cell phones than women and then they can access the women's vouchers.

mobilization landscape. However, there are limitations in using NBP targets for the evaluation to ascertain the extent to which the CSP was adequately resourced.²¹¹

Table 7 Needs-based plans and allocations by activity as of 20 October 2022

Malawi CSP (2019-2023) cumulative financial overview					
Focus area	Strategic outcome	Activity	NBP, after BR03	Allocated resources	Resourcing level (%)
Crisis response	SO 1	Act. 01	174,243,294	75,238,342	43.2%
	Sub-total SO 1		174,243,294	75,238,342	43.2%
Resilience Building	SO 2	Act. 02	4,517,192	1,462,834	32.4%
		Act. 03	82,372,804	34,757,816	42.2%
	Sub-total SO 2		86,889,996	36,220,650	41.7%
	SO 3	Act. 04	11,046,123	5,895,325	53.4%
	Sub-total SO 3		11,046,123	5,895,325	53.4%
	SO 4	Act. 05	281,142,979	75,729,291	26.9%
	Sub-total SO 4		281,142,979	75,729,291	26.9%
	SO 5	Act. 06	4,558,240	3,305,799	72.5%
Act. 09		1,167,011	160,259	13.7%	
Sub-total SO 5		5,725,251	3,466,058	60.5%	
Crisis response	SO 6	Act. 07	6,616,074	3,736,903	56.5%
		Act. 08	3,138,269	563,715	18.0%
	Sub-total SO 6		9,754,343	4,300,618	44.1%
	Non SO Specific		0	1,924,780	
	Total Direct Operational Cost		568,801,986	202,775,064	35.6%
	Direct Support Cost (DCS)		27,161,590	17,925,621	66.0%
	Total Direct costs		595,963,576	220,700,685	37.0%
	Indirect Support Cost (ISC)		38,523,579	12,999,440	33.7%
	Grand Total		634,487,155	233,700,125	36.8%

Source: IRM Analytics, custom Office of Evaluation report, CPB Resources overview 2022-10-20.

173. Several factors influenced resource mobilization for different components of the CSP:

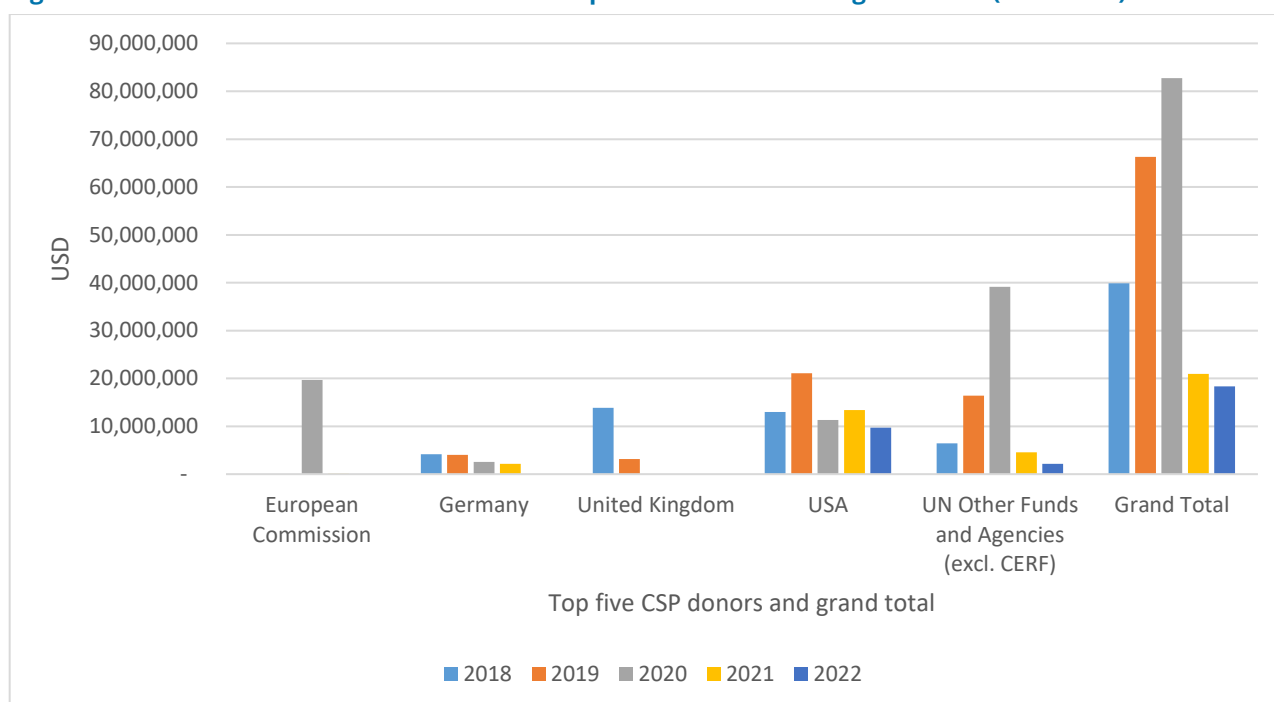
- **Donor response to emergency appeals was a significant factor in resourcing for SO1.** ACRs for the 2019-2021 period reported that lean season and emergency responses for each year were relatively well funded. Neither other documents reviewed nor KILs provided reasons for why these responses were well funded from 2019 to 2021. As of 2021, donor response to emergency appeals declined, as reflected, for example, in decreasing levels of funding for the COVID-19 emergency response over the course of 2021, which was insufficient compared to the response's funding requirements. Similarly, the flood response for 2022 mobilized only USD 2.7 million out of USD 7.4 million required (36 percent).²¹²

²¹¹ The evaluation team used NBP instead of implementation plans because of the difficulties in discussing progress on 'rolling' implementation plans that have changing annual targets. The use of NBP as reference points has other limitations. Of note, NBP targets for resourcing levels of the CSP presented in Table 7 represent cumulative figures for the entire CSP period. Funding is allocated on an ongoing basis, and data on allocated resources are from October 2022. Full funding of the CSP before the end of its implementation cannot be expected. The ET has not yet analyzed resourcing levels per year compared to annual NBP targets during the 2019-2022 period. Furthermore, NBP targets were unrealistic as they were based on WFP Malawi's 2018 annual budget, which was particularly large given the emergency response to the floods that occurred in early 2018, and which in turn served as the basis for estimating the overall NBP for the 2019-2023 period. See Annex 8 for more details on limitations of the evaluation.

²¹² The overall flash appeal for the flood response in 2022 received USD 14.6 million out of USD 29.5 million required (49.5 percent). (Source: OCHA Service. *Malawi Flash Appeal 2022*.)

- **WFP and UNHCR both faced funding shortfalls for refugee assistance.**²¹³ This was compounded by increasing numbers of refugees in Dzaleka refugee camp, with an average of 300 new arrivals per month in 2021,²¹⁴ and the imminent return of refugees to the camp due to government policy shift. Funding for refugee assistance has not increased to match growth in numbers of beneficiaries.
- **Shifting donor priorities** (see [Figure 24](#)) are illustrated by the reduced funding for the PROSPER programme from the UK, for whom domestic financial needs were a higher priority. KIs report that decreases in ODA funding inflows to Malawi since 2019 affected all development and humanitarian actors, including the government. The outbreak of COVID-19, followed by the conflict in Ukraine, shifted donor priorities elsewhere.
- **Increases in food and input prices**, which were compounded by the conflict in Ukraine, had a negative effect on the extent to which WFP transfer amounts were sufficient for beneficiaries to meet their minimum expenditure needs. These factors also affected country office efforts to continually reduce costs.

Figure 24 Donor contributions to WFP Malawi: top five CSP donors and grand total (2018-2022)



Source: FACTory, “Distribution Contribution Forecast Statistics” as of 16.10.2022. ‘Top five donors’ refers to the five donors that contributed the largest amounts of funding across the 2019-2022 period. Country office staff noted that approximately 90 per cent of the figure for allocated contributions by ‘UN other funds and agencies’ consists of funding from the UK via the Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

174. WFP’s school meals programming received adequate resources throughout the CSP period. This was due in part to government buy-in to school feeding, in particular the HGSF model, which is seen by donors to promise sustainability of benefits, and also to the well-documented results that school meals have had on education and nutrition outcomes among children. The withdrawal of McGovern Dole funding for school feeding in mid-2019 prompted WFP to focus on geographic areas where resilience programming under SO4 was active, to link HGSF schools to smallholder farmers that benefit from WFP’s resilience programming. Since the resumption of on-site school feeding in 2021, WFP has mobilized resources from several new donors for its HGSF model, including the EU, Norway, and Iceland.

²¹³ Though the figures are not reflected in Table 7, lack of adequate funding for refugee assistance throughout the CSP period was mentioned in the ACRs for 2019-2021. The lack of adequate funding was also faced by UNHCR, which had USD 5.2 million in available resources, out of USD 22.6 million (23 percent) of its financial requirements for 2022 as of October 2022 (Source: UNHCR. 2022. *Funding Update – 6 October 2022.*)

²¹⁴ UNHCR, Malawi, <https://www.unhcr.org/malawi.html>

175. In relation to predictability of funding, WFP benefited from four envelopes of multi-year funding for the CSP, to fund activities under the JPGE (from Norway), PROSPER (from the UK), and from the EU and Belgium, for a total of USD 66.6 million for the 2019-2023 period.²¹⁵ Country office stakeholders interviewed noted that these envelopes of

Figure 23 Directed contributions by level of earmarking per year (2018-2023)

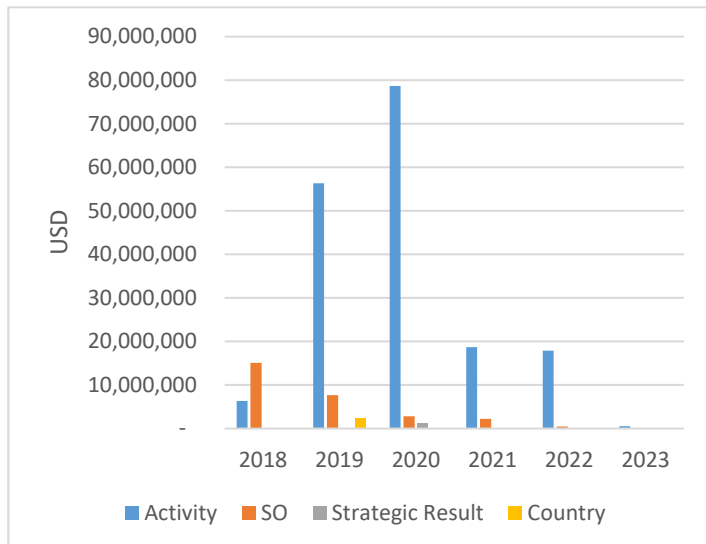
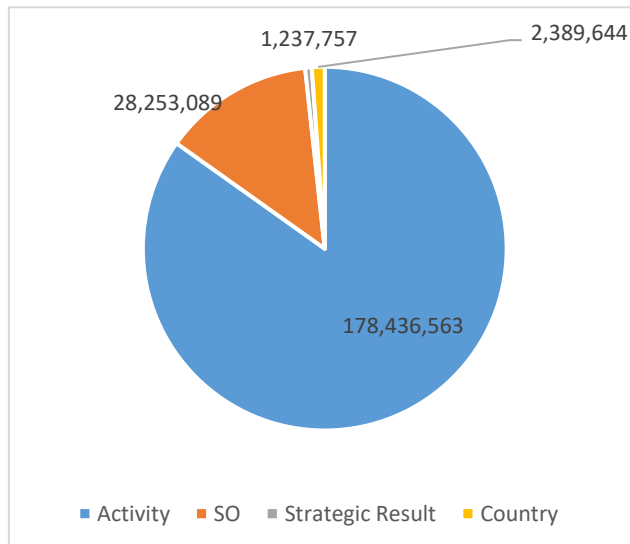


Figure 24 Directed contributions by level of earmarking, total (2018-2023)



multi-year funding allowed the country office to better plan for implementation of interventions over a longer period. Beyond these envelopes, however, all of CSP funding continues to depend on annual allocations of donor funding and responses to appeals for LSRs and emergency responses launched on a needs basis.

176. Source: FACTory, “Distribution Contribution Forecast Statistics” as of 16.10.2022.²¹⁶

177. The country office did not see an increase in donor funding at CSP or SO level as expected with the global introduction of CSPs. As seen in **Figure 25** and **Figure 26**, the majority of multilateral direct contributions to the CSP were earmarked at the activity level throughout the period 2018-2021, ranging from 84.9 percent (2019) to 95 percent (2021) of annual contributions leading to limited flexibility for the country office in the use of funds across activities and hence limited ability to bridge gaps in funding. Country office staff interviewed indicated that this poses challenges, especially for the implementation of the integrated resilience programme, with some donors earmarking at the sub-activity level (e.g. for specific districts or specific interventions, such as insurance). This limited WFP flexibility in implementing the integrated resilience programme based on what was most suitable for a given geographic area.

178. WFP engaged regularly with donor agencies throughout the CSP period. It maintained open lines of communication through reporting and cultivated working relations across organizations through follow-ups and correspondence during and outside of reporting periods. Donor representatives interviewed noted WFP’s strength in communicating achievements of its work through circulation of knowledge pieces, and the benefits of having information on progress in areas that they fund. There was no evidence, however, that donor contributions increased as a result.

179. WFP is still regarded primarily as an operational humanitarian actor, valued for emergency response capabilities. WFP’s work in resilience and capacity strengthening is less well known among some donors. The exceptions to this are the USA and the UK’s FCDO, as both countries have significantly funded WFP’s resilience building activities during the CSP period. Country office staff note that the publication of the evaluation report on

²¹⁵ WFP. 2022. *Malawi, Annual Resource Situation Report* – 16 November 2022.

²¹⁶ Data from 2018 reflect contributions that were made that year towards CSP in advance of the CSP implementation in 2019. Data from 2022 and 2023 represent multilateral directed contributions made towards the CSP as of 16 October 2022.

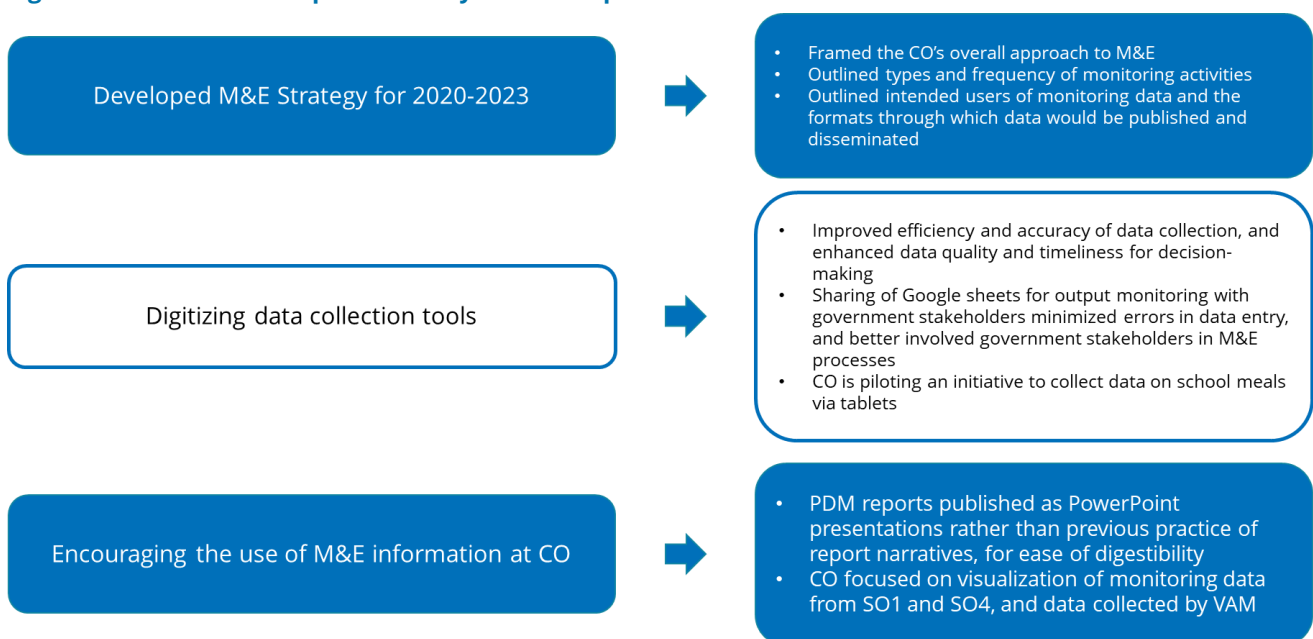
the integrated resilience programme, as well as the dissemination of its summary report and related learning events, were aimed at increasing WFP communications on its resilience building work.

2.4.2 To what extent were the monitoring and reporting systems useful to track and demonstrate progress towards expected outcomes and to inform management decisions? (EQ 4.2)

Finding 27 The country office improved the use of monitoring and reporting processes for management decision making. WFP’s monitoring and reporting systems track progress towards expected outcomes in food and nutrition security. However, they are not structured to track results from capacity strengthening interventions.

180. During the CSP period, the country office undertook several initiatives to improve M&E²¹⁷ systems and processes, and/or to link these processes with decision making (see **Figure 27**):

Figure 27 Initiatives to improve M&E systems and processes



181. Country office staff indicated that M&E information has improved and is used in programme decision making. Examples of use include the country office’s introduction of more SAMS interventions in communities where the integrated resilience approach is being implemented, which was informed by PDMs conducted during the 2019-2021 period. The country office advocated to government to resume on-site school feeding based on PDM that found THR were not improving school attendance rates as intended.²¹⁸

182. The country office’s monitoring and reporting systems tracked progress towards intended outcomes for SOs 1 to 4 through data on activity implementation, outputs, and progress towards outcomes. However, there were no CSP monitoring data for output and outcome indicators for SO5, no outcome indicators for SO6, and no indication of monitoring activities planned for these SOs in the country office’s M&E strategy.

183. The CSP’s results framework includes outcome-level indicators that are appropriate for measuring progress towards results in food and nutrition security and livelihoods. These indicators, which are tracked by PDMs, followed WFP corporate guidance on measuring outcome-level results deriving from interventions related to direct transfers,

²¹⁷ In this finding, M&E refers primarily to monitoring and reporting.

²¹⁸ This was mentioned through KIIs with country office staff. This was not corroborated by government staff interviewed, nor was this mentioned in documents reviewed.

livelihoods and asset creation, and school feeding, and provide specific, consistently applied and reliable measures of changes in food consumption, coping strategies, and dietary diversity.

184. The country office made efforts to support integrated SO monitoring, by adding questions to PDMs in 2020 and 2021 so they were less focused on one single SO, and in coordinating monitoring trips as feasible (e.g. during SO2 monitoring missions to schools, field monitoring staff check on nearby resilience programming for SO4).

185. CSP indicators were less appropriate for measuring the performance of its interventions aimed at government capacity strengthening. Several outcome indicators related to CCS measured numbers of outputs delivered, as opposed to changes in the individual or organizational domain or in the enabling environment, which are the three areas of capacity change in WFP country capacity strengthening policy.²¹⁹ WFP's work in food systems also lacked indicators to measure outcome-level results.

2.4.3 How did partnerships and collaborations with other actors influence performance and results? (EQ 4.3)

Finding 28 WFP improved its partnership practices with CPs, which positively affected CSP implementation. WFP played a strong role in coordination and support for the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and initiated more strategic partnerships with government agencies. However, WFP's partnerships with private sector entities have not yet generated intended effects. WFP had limited resourcing and partnerships to deliver its intended gender transformative interventions.

186. WFP worked with a wide variety of actors, including national and sub-national government, local and international NGOs, the private sector, and academic institutions, to implement the CSP.

187. WFP's approach to partnering with NGO CPs was enhanced through:

- good communications, especially through regular coordination meetings to share information and learn from others who are implementing activities under the CSP;
- WFP's technical expertise and proactive field monitoring, which helped in project implementation; and
- requirements added to Field Level Agreements (FLAs) for CPs to have gender and protection officers, which had positive effects on CP's capacity for gender work.

188. While partners still have concerns about timeliness of contracting, WFP has improved turnaround times to finalize FLAs and disburse funds. WFP also introduced longer-term FLAs (i.e. more than 12 months) so that CPs could provide technical support to beneficiaries over longer periods, especially in communities where beneficiaries graduated and no longer receive direct transfers.²²⁰ Nevertheless, some CPs interviewed still had FLAs for one year or less and noted the difficulties this poses in their ability to retain and recruit qualified staff.

189. WFP has strategic partnerships with some relevant government agencies, based on formal medium-term frameworks or workplans. WFP signed a cooperation framework on school feeding with the Ministry of Education in 2021 and activities related to developing a national strategy and roadmap for the expansion of HGSF are ongoing. Because it is relatively recent, there are not yet any results reported from this cooperation framework. WFP expanded its engagement with the Ministry of Agriculture through the Adaptation Fund project, which began in 2021 and aims to strengthen government capacity through joint implementation of resilience interventions. Although it is still too early to have reported contributions to government capacity, KIIs highlighted that the project is on the right

²¹⁹ For example, SO2 outcome indicators include the Emergency Preparedness Index, and whether or not a handover strategy was developed and implemented during the CSP period. For SO3, outcome indicators measured numbers of capacity initiatives facilitated by WFP, number of tools or products developed to enhance food systems, and numbers of policy engagement strategies developed. Capacity change domains are presented in WFP. 2022. *Country capacity strengthening policy update*, June 2022, WFP/EB.A/2022/5-A.

²²⁰ The evaluation team did not review all active FLAs during the CSP period. However, the country office's shift to multi-year FLA was referenced in KIIs and is noted in WFP. 2021. *IRMP Desk Study*.

track. Annual agreements with DoDMA have outlined core activities and expected contributions. As noted in Finding 14, WFP has played a significant role in strengthening the capacity of DoDMA.

190. WFP has not clarified the nature of the partnerships with other relevant government agencies, such as the National Planning Commission and Department of Economics and Planning. Interviewed KIs noted that WFP worked with these agencies on an ad hoc and short-term basis. This limited opportunities for longer-term, strategic collaboration, and for WFP contributions to the capacity of these agencies. At the district level, while government actors have regular communications with WFP on issues related to programme implementation, district-level government stakeholders cited the need for more joint monitoring of activities, which would enhance their strategic engagement with WFP.²²¹

191. As noted in EQ 1 (Finding 3) and EQ 2 (Finding 21), WFP worked with members of the UNCT in joint programmes and joint technical support to government through its coordinating role, especially in emergency response and service provision (e.g. warehouse and logistics services). Strategic partnerships (such as with UNICEF in shock-responsive social protection) are especially critical for the humanitarian-development continuum and have required additional effort by WFP and UNICEF to understand and harmonize approaches. There is room to strengthen strategic partnerships with other United Nations entities, such as FAO, in collaborating on food systems and resilience building activities, and UN Women, in taking a gender transformative approach, for example. A more strategic partnership with the World Bank did not emerge during the CSP, despite complementary work in resilience and social protection.

192. Partnerships with private sector entities are still in early stages. WFP is the convener of the SUN Business Network (SBN), which provides public education on nutrition and business opportunities for the private sector in nutritious food production, and supports improvements in the nutrition regulatory environment in Malawi.²²² While the network provides a platform for its members to reach these goals, there is not yet any evidence that significant progress has been made in scaling up commercial production of CSB. SBN membership increased from 22 in 2019 to over 170 members in 2021,²²³ and interviewed stakeholders noted that WFP has provided important technical guidance to members on quality of food production.

193. WFP also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Malawi University of Science and Technology to develop and test adaptations of the 3PA in urban and refugee contexts, beginning in 2019. KIs indicated that there had not yet been any results from the activities (i.e. piloting of urban ICA, and testing of guidance to conduct an urban Seasonal Livelihood Programming).

194. The CSP had the ambitious intent to deliver gender transformative interventions. The country office bolstered its staff capacity with the appointment of a specialized gender and protection officer but did not have a clear strategy for allocating resources for gender across its activities. Partnerships with women's organizations or with UN Women did not emerge during the CSP.

2.4.4 To what extent did the country office have appropriate human resources capacity to deliver on the CSP? (EQ 4.4)

Finding 29 The organizational realignments undertaken by the country office did not have adverse effects on its ability to deliver CSP interventions. Building staff capacity to address strategic shifts of the CSP has taken time.

195. The country office undertook three organizational realignment exercises. The early organizational realignments led to a decrease in number of staff (from 225 in 2019 to 178 in 2021). The most recent realignment in 2022 entailed a small decrease in number of staff (to 173 people), the closure of the Blantyre sub-office, and the transfer of staff stationed there to the country office in Lilongwe.

²²¹ While WFP's partnerships with district-level governments have been formalized through MoUs, the MoUs do not outline a framework or workplan for joint activities, or the shared objectives between agencies in the medium or long term.

²²² SUN Business Network. 2019. *Sun business Network Malawi Strategic Plan 2019-2023*.

²²³ WFP. 2021. ACR

196. In addition to supporting cost efficiencies (see Finding 24), organizational realignment exercises focused on 'right-sizing' the country office's organizational structure and ensuring WFP's continued field presence. Measures have included:

- **Streamlining field office presence:** WFP merged heads of field office positions with field-level head of programme positions, with emphasis on posting staff of adequate seniority and experience to district-level operations. Several government staff (district-level and national) noted WFP's field offices as a strength throughout the 2019-2022 period, providing an open line of communication, ensuring its presence in district coordination meetings, and as a source of technical advice.
- **Shift towards fixed-term contract modalities:** For national staff in the country office, there has been a significant increase in numbers of general service contracts (from 18 in 2019 to 71 in 2022), and a concurrent decrease in service contracts (from 138 in 2019 to 44 in 2022). Another key shift was the provision of fixed-term contracts for all field-level staff.
- **Aligning organizational structure with CSP implementation needs:** Organizational realignments allocated programme assistant positions under each SO to allow programme officers to focus on their strategic role; hired a senior officer to focus on strengthening food systems and a health supply chain team, with the introduction of Activity 9 through BR03. The country office created a staff position at the HSA in Bangula and reduced the numbers of storekeepers and truck drivers, in line with the shift away from in-kind distribution. The appointment of a gender and protection officer in 2019, and the integration of the position with the M&E unit in 2020 facilitated the implementation of the CSP's gender mainstreaming approach (see Finding 15).
- **Emphasis on staff wellness:** The country office added a wellness unit in 2020 that is tasked with management of the PCC and staff well-being. A health promotion campaign began in October 2021 to provide support in areas such as nutrition, mental health, ergonomics, and physical activities for country office staff and their dependents. This support and activities have been well received by country office staff interviewed. Since the establishment of the PCC, nine United Nations agencies have signed MoUs with WFP to have PCC primary care and wellness services extended to their agencies.

197. It has taken time to build staff capacity to address strategic shifts of the CSP. The country office established a food systems unit, which is a positive step forward in advancing technical work in this area. The supply chain team also began the shift towards providing retail support services that would help to underpin cross-cutting CBT and market-based project initiatives such as training of local traders on essential food storage practices, or the use of digital cash transfer tools such as point of sale devices. However, the supply chain team has been delayed in developing the level of technical understanding and capability required. Apart from SSSP interventions and cash transfers to refugees, other emergency responses during the CSP did not require a significant cash or market-based approach requiring supply chain engagement.

2.4.5 What are the other factors that can explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the CSP? (EQ 4.5)

Finding 30 The CSP's integrated approach enabled contributions to outcome-level results. Nevertheless, not all districts experienced similar levels of integration of WFP interventions. WFP's role in shock-responsive social protection was bolstered by a common agenda among key actors in Malawi. Community-level factors influenced WFP's ability to make contributions through its HGSF and resilience interventions.

198. Factors that enabled WFP's performance during the CSP period include:

- **Integration of interventions across SOs:** In practice, integration entailed the 'layering' of activities in a particular geographic area, and in general, communities where more CSP interventions were implemented had more benefits in terms of increased food and nutrition security outcomes. Not all districts, however, experienced the same level of integration of activities, e.g. in Salima, where WFP's interventions were limited mainly to SO2, FGD participants noted the lack of livelihoods support.
- **A common agenda for shock-responsive social protection** was an enabling factor for strengthening government capacity to manage and respond to climate shocks, especially through its increasing role in

LSRs. The government-led CUCI in response to COVID-19 exemplified shared objectives and willingness to collaborate among government and international actors, including WFP.

- **Community-level factors** influenced the extent to which WFP was able to make contributions through HGSF and resilience interventions. In areas with stronger farmer organizations, HGSF schools faced fewer stock-outs when providing meals. Support for irrigation schemes, either through WFP or other actors, bolstered the sustainability of outcomes stemming from creation of assets aimed at enhancing crop production, and soil and water conservation. More stringent land tenure arrangements limited the possibility for some communities to continue managing the assets created. Finally, recurrent shocks negatively affected asset maintenance.²²⁴

Finding 31 Factors that limited WFP performance included a lack of strategic approach for CCS, lack of visibility of nutrition-sensitive programming, and insufficient guidance and capacity for integrated food systems development.

199. In addition to the overarching challenge of reduced ODA funding to Malawi, and increases in food and input prices over time (see EQ 4.1), several other factors limited WFP's performance during the CSP. These included:

- **Lack of strategic approach for CCS:** WFP's approach to capacity strengthening in Malawi has been largely ad hoc and opportunistic, rather than guided by a strategic approach with specific objectives and planned CCS initiatives for the CSP period. The country office did not appoint CCS specialists within its staff, and as noted under EQ 4.3, CCS outputs and outcomes lacked performance indicators.
- **Positioning of nutrition-sensitive programming:** While malnutrition prevention interventions are included in WFP programming in other SOs, apart from SO3, especially through SBCC interventions in school feeding and resilience programming (via PROSPER), the lack of a specific, cross-cutting budget line for nutrition-sensitive programming within these programmes, and in the CSP's financial planning, overall, hampers visibility of results and had likely implications on resource mobilization.
- **Insufficient guidance and capacity for food systems development:** Limited progress on food systems was partially attributed, by KIs, to the more immediate priorities of response to climate shocks and the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to the lack of clear corporate guidance and indicators to measure outcome-level results for food systems approaches. Work during 2022 helped strengthen country office understanding on how to align supply chain and programme activities (such as to support school feeding) to contribute to improved food systems in Malawi. WFP's expertise in areas such as storage, transport, food quality and safety, and post-harvest loss management provides additional opportunities for synergy.

²²⁴ The evaluation of WFP's FFA also noted this. For example, floods can wash away assets before they reach maturity; or woodlots that have been planted and matured can be badly affected by a dry spell. Strong winds, earthquakes, and fall armyworm are other recurring shocks which negatively affect assets.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: WFP contributed to positive results in each SO despite challenging funding and operational contexts.

- World Food Programme (WFP) contributed to positive results in each strategic outcome (SO), although progress made towards expected outcomes was uneven across and within SOs.
- *Crisis response:* WFP provided timely and effective responses to lean seasons, flood, and COVID-19. Lean Season Responses (LSRs) during the 2019-2021 period were relatively well resourced, and there were improvements in food consumption and reduced negative coping strategies among beneficiaries. However, transfers received did not enable beneficiaries to afford survival minimum expenditure baskets. WFP's refugee assistance was consistently underfunded during the 2019-2022 period, which affected output quality while food and nutrition security outcomes deteriorated. Nevertheless, WFP was an essential response enabler for the government and humanitarian community and made strong contributions to emergency response capacity through logistics services provision for development and humanitarian actors.
- *School feeding:* WFP's provision of take-home rations (THRs) during COVID-19 school closures contributed to Malawi's social protection system, and informed the government's approach to implementing THRs in the future. Improved enrolment and attendance and decreased dropout rates were notable gains among covered schools, especially those benefiting from the home-grown school feeding (HGSF) model. HGSF also contributed to increased resilience by connecting farmer cooperatives to supply food to schools.
- *Nutrition:* Nutrition-sensitive programming showed positive effects on health and nutrition outcomes among women and children under five. However, the proportion of children of 6 to 23 months of age that consume a minimum acceptable diet remains very low despite improvements during the 2019-2021 period. There is a need to monitor changes in the incidence of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), which is critical given Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessment findings on chronic food insecurity and the expected severity of the 2022-2023 lean season, which may bring about a renewed need for MAM treatment and supplementary feeding.
- *Resilience:* Despite having been under-resourced, the integrated resilience programming improved food consumption, expanded the livelihood asset base, and increased communities' capacities to manage climate shocks. WFP's support in increasing access to village savings and loans (VSL) among households contributed to increases in their ability to pay for food and non-food expenditures. Nevertheless, households' economic capacity to meet essential needs remained low. There was less evidence to indicate that WFP contributed to linking smallholder farmers to markets apart from schools or contributed to enhanced coping through crop insurance.
- *Capacity strengthening:* WFP contributed to strengthening country capacities for vulnerability assessments (through the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC)), shock-responsive social protection, and the national Universal Beneficiary Register (UBR) system. Despite early momentum during the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, there was less progress in providing food systems support, partly due to COVID-19 disruptions and the late establishment of a dedicated food systems unit/team.

Conclusion 2: The integrated approach to programming showed promise in reducing vulnerability in targeted communities. Integration faced internal challenges stemming from the structure of the initial line of sight, corporate monitoring requirements, and financial systems.

- The country office created linkages between activities, with the Theory of Change (ToC) envisioning a more coherent programme for reducing vulnerability. This allowed targeted households to benefit from the combined effects of mutually reinforcing interventions.
- The Country Strategic Plan (CSP) architecture/original line of sight did not fully reflect the different WFP roles to be played in the humanitarian-development continuum. To some extent, this was remedied through budget revisions, which allowed WFP to play a more operational role. However, the country office's

structural legacy limited the integration of technical functions, such as ICT and supply chain, with programme. This delayed the strategic use of, for example, digital technologies. Although supply chain was reflected within the ToC, when it pivoted towards Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) provision, the intended programmatic integration was not achieved. The line of sight did not facilitate integrated work on sustainable food systems.

- Corporate monitoring requirements and financial systems did not easily align with the ToC, so the country office was not able to track progress on integration – for example, how activities contributed to government capacity to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 and SDG 17 – or gather evidence for progress along impact pathways, or the validity of assumptions.

Conclusion 3: The country office’s envisaged shift to an enabling role was hindered by a deteriorating food security situation and a limited ability to define and monitor progress and ensure sustainability of CCS outcomes.

- The country office was recognized for providing multi-year and multi-level (national and district) support to strengthening national capacity to conduct and use data from food insecurity assessments. However, CCS results were not well defined, and ambitions were unrealistic. WFP lacked staff and systems for planning and monitoring progress.
- An increasingly challenging context undermined WFP’s aim to reduce direct implementation. Shocks and growing food insecurity mean that the government will continue to rely on WFP’s capacity for operational delivery, particularly in emergency response, in the near term.
- CCS has not addressed challenges to institutional sustainability. Despite the Government of Malawi’s political will to support the CSP’s activities, in areas such as school feeding, emergency preparedness, and shock-responsive social protection, the handover has been limited by fiscal constraints and a dependence on donor funding. There is room for greater WFP advocacy on domestic budget allocations to school feeding and the MVAC IPC assessments, for example.

Conclusion 4: Its approach to resilience building helped position WFP along the humanitarian–development continuum, but it is still viewed primarily as a humanitarian emergency responder.

- Although WFP has enhanced its programmatic toolkit through resilience building, donors and other partners continue to see its strength in emergency response. While WFP has shown that integrated programming has the potential to connect crisis response, early recovery, and resilience, achieving results requires long-term investment and collaboration.
- WFP will need to clarify its role and positioning in relation to other humanitarian and development actors and build on its programmatic activity and role as coordinator and its positioning along the humanitarian-development continuum. WFP’s approach to the humanitarian-development continuum warrants stronger operational alignment among United Nations Country Team (UNCT) members and more strategic collaboration with the Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs).

Conclusion 5: Gender considerations, environmental, and AAP activities enhanced overall CSP results. However, gender transformative approaches were not consistently integrated into programming.

- WFP made efforts to bring environmental and climate adaptation benefits to communities through its integrated resilience work, and to the Government of Malawi through leveraging external resources, such as the Adaptation Fund, and helping to expand services such as the participatory integrated climate service for agriculture (PICSA) and crop insurance.
- Protection and accountability to affected populations (AAP) considerations were integrated in the CSP through the complaints, feedback and response mechanism (CFRM), which enabled WFP and its partners to address reported abuses. WFP used evidence-based targeting to support adherence to the humanitarian principles.
- Gender considerations were addressed in terms of women’s participation and access to resources through WFP’s emphasis on women’s involvement in VSL and its efforts to reduce barriers to women’s financial inclusion through a joint programme with the RBAs.
- However, the CSP did not incorporate strong gender analysis and the roll-out of additional analyses was interrupted by COVID-19 and funding limitations. These analyses will be critical for understanding barriers

to women's participation in programme activities, including the gender and social norms that influence household dynamics and decision making and labour patterns. Although WFP is a member of inter-agency gender working groups, it did not pursue more strategic partnerships with UN Women or women's rights organizations.

Conclusion 6: WFP fostered an internal culture of evidence-informed decision making and played a leading role on food and nutrition security evidence generation in Malawi.

- WFP-supported analytical studies, LSR after-action reviews, and satellite imagery provided national and international partners with valuable evidence to inform targeting approaches. The country office also tested new transfer modalities – such as mobile e-payments and e-voucher schemes – and shared the lessons from this experience with the Inter-Agency Cash Working Group.
- A culture of evidence-based programming is evident in improvements to monitoring tools and reports and in the use of decentralized evaluations and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) information in programme decision making. The country office had a clear strategy for using research, assessment, and monitoring that provided strong evidence about CSP results. The country office made less progress in documenting and measuring results of country capacity and food systems strengthening.

200. Conclusion 7: Decreasing levels of donor contributions between 2020 and 2022 were antithetical to growing needs in Malawi. WFP applied appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of this decline, including increased resource mobilization efforts, cost-consciousness, and improved targeting.

- Donor contributions to WFP Malawi decreased sharply between 2020 and 2022, reflecting decreasing overall official development assistance (ODA) to Malawi, as well as changes in the global funding landscape in the context of COVID-19 and the Ukraine conflict. The effects of diminished funding, alongside increasing needs in Malawi, included: reduced food and nutrition security among refugees, which posed a reputational risk for WFP; and a constrained response to the 2022 flood, which was funded at only 36 percent.
- To increase cost effectiveness, WFP prioritized regions of Malawi with the highest levels of chronic food insecurity and risk of external shocks, consolidating efforts in areas where it could provide a larger package of activities and test an integrated approach. The depth and breadth of activities had to be reduced due to funding gaps, which risked excluding some targeted vulnerable populations and will remain a challenge.
- WFP made consistent efforts to increase cost efficiency, including organizational realignments, which led to staff reductions. By mid-2022, there was little more that could be cut without losing core capacity to implement.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

201. The purpose of the CSP Evaluations (CSPE) is “to assess progress and results against intended CSP outcomes and objectives, including towards gender equity and other cross-cutting corporate results; and to identify lessons for the design of subsequent country-level support.” The evaluation also examined the extent to which WFP uses resources efficiently, factors that affect WFP performance, and the extent to which WFP has made the strategic shift envisaged by the CSP.

202. The evaluation led to four strategic recommendations and one operational recommendation related to the design and implementation of the next Malawi CSP, which is scheduled for approval by the Executive Board (EB) in November 2023. These recommendations were informed by learning workshops with the country office and external stakeholders.

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.	Build on progress made in developing an integrated programme.	Strategic	Country office (management; programme function including monitoring and evaluation and other units as relevant)		High	
1.1	Revise the theory of change and use it to inform the structure of the next country strategic plan and to explore opportunities to better capture the results of integration, including through indicators that go beyond corporate reporting requirements.					December 2023
1.2	Establish greater integration between programme, supply chain and other functions at the country office internally and through external forums (such as United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework discussions).					December 2025
2.	Expand on the strategy for a phased withdrawal in which WFP plays a stronger role as an “enabler”.	Strategic	Country office (management; programme and partnerships functions)		High	
2.1	Develop a more strategic approach to country capacity strengthening grounded in capacity gap assessments conducted with the Government.					June 2024
2.2	Articulate and communicate a clearer strategy for institutional sustainability, including WFP advocacy with the Government on domestic financing for proven programming approaches.					June 2026 and throughout implementation
2.3	Clearly communicate to beneficiaries WFP’s intentions with regard to the transition of beneficiaries and review the parameters of the transition model so that communities are able to sustain benefits once they transition out of WFP support.					December 2024 and throughout implementation
3.	Refine strategic position and programme directions for the next country strategic plan.	Strategic			High	

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.1	Enhance WFP's strategic positioning in relation to the humanitarian–development nexus, by: a) clarifying WFP's strategy, approach and positioning in resilience building and the link to early recovery (could include building evidence on “cash-plus”, jobs for youth programming and scaling up of livelihood work with refugees); and b) articulating and communicating WFP's strategy for social protection, which emphasizes the sustainability of social safety nets.		Country office (management; programme function)	Regional bureau and headquarters (relevant Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division units)		November 2024
3.2	Refine WFP's approach to strengthening sustainable food systems in Malawi based on food systems mapping.					January 2025
3.3	Build on nutrition-sensitive programming that uses a life-cycle approach and is integrated in other programmes as a means of addressing moderate acute malnutrition.					November 2023
3.4	In the refugee response, continue advocacy with the Government on the comprehensive refugee response framework and enhance communications channels with refugee communities/leaders and other stakeholders.					December 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.	Scale up partnerships and collaboration for impact and sustainability.	Strategic	Country office (management: supply chain, programme and partnerships functions)	Regional bureau (partnerships unit) and headquarters (the divisions on the Rome-based agencies and Committee on World Food Security; private partnerships and fundraising; and strategic partnerships)	Medium	
4.1	Strengthen private sector food production and supply chain (transport/distribution/storage) partnerships in support of food systems development and nutrition.					January 2026
4.2	Provide greater strategic emphasis to the relationship with the other Rome-based agencies – in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – as key partners in food systems capacity development.					January 2024
4.3	Prioritize partnerships that support innovation and enhance the sustainability of programming, expanding country office efforts to work with the private sector and international financial institutions.					December 2025
5.	Enhance the approach to addressing the root causes of gender inequality and advancing the economic empowerment of women.	Operational	Country office (programme function)	Regional bureau (Integrated Strategic Programme Design Unit)	High	
5.1	Explore partnerships for more gender-transformative work.					January 2024
5.2	Strengthen gender analysis to inform the next country strategic plan and integrated context analysis.					November 2023

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