



WFP EVALUATION



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Evaluation of Dominican Republic WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Evaluation Report – Volume I

OEV/2022/002
Office of Evaluation

October 2023

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Executive Summary

Introduction

EVALUATION FEATURES

1. The evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for the Dominican Republic for 2019–2023 covered WFP interventions between 2018 and 2022. Its main users are the WFP country office and national stakeholders, WFP headquarters divisions, the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean and the WFP Executive Board.
2. The evaluation was conducted by an independent external team between June and December 2022, with data collection taking place in November and December 2022. Findings, conclusions and recommendations were discussed with internal and external stakeholders in Santo Domingo in February 2023.
3. The evaluation adopted a theory-based mixed-methods, gender-sensitive approach, drawing on monitoring data, a literature review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

CONTEXT

4. The Dominican Republic is the second-largest country in the Caribbean, with a population of 11.1 million people, 27 percent of whom are between 0 and 14 years of age.¹ The Dominican Republic is now an upper-middle-income country, with extreme poverty having generally declined since the early 2000s. In 2021, 24 percent of the population were not able to meet their basic needs, up slightly from 2019 due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.² The country ranks 80 out of 191 countries on the Human Development Index, with a score of 0.767, above the regional average.
5. Despite progress in reducing wasting and stunting among children under 5, the prevalence of anaemia and obesity is still high. Obesity in children and adolescents age 5–19 has steadily increased since 2000, accounting for 33 percent of the school-age population in 2016.³ The cost of the double burden of malnutrition was 2.6 percent of gross domestic product in 2017.⁴
6. In 2021, an estimated 847,979 migrants were in the Dominican Republic, 48 percent more than in 2020, accounting for 8.3 percent of the total population.⁵ A total of 88.5 percent of migrants are of Haitian origin and many are vulnerable and at risk of social exclusion, although they are part of the labour force, particularly in the agricultural sector.
7. The Dominican Republic is continuously exposed to natural disasters, in particular floods and hurricanes, and is at a high risk of seismic activity due to its geographical location.
8. Gender inequality is an important concern in the Dominican Republic, particularly with regard to gender-based (domestic) violence and early marriage; 36 percent of women age 20 to 24 are married before the age of 18.⁶
9. Certain groups are particularly vulnerable in the country, including Haitian migrants, women, children, older adults, people with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. In 2016, the Government established the *Equipo Consultivo de Protección*,

1 United Nations Population Fund. 2022. [State of World Population 2022. Seeing the Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy.](#)

2 Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development. 2022. [Boletín de estadísticas oficiales de pobreza monetaria en República Dominicana 2021 \(N° 9/Año 7\).](#)








3 United Nations Children's Fund. 2021. [The State of the World's Children 2021: On My Mind – Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health.](#)

4 WFP and others. 2019. [El Costo de la Doble Carga de la Malnutrición. Impacto social y económico en República Dominicana.](#)

5 United Nations Dominican Republic. 2022. [Informe Anual de Resultados 2021.](#)

6 United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). [Women Count country fact sheet for the Dominican Republic.](#)

Género y Edad, a protection, gender and age advisory group aimed at ensuring the protection of people affected and displaced by disasters.⁷

TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Total population (million) (1)	11.1	2022
	Human Development Index (rank and score) (2)	80 of 191 0.767	2021
	Monetary poverty ratio (%) (3)	24	2021
	Stunting, prevalence in children under 5 (%) (4)	6	2020
	Obesity and overweight, prevalence in children age 5–19 (%) (4)	33	2016
	Immigrants (5)	847 979	2021
	Global Gender Gap Index (rank and score) (6)	84 of 146 0.703	2021

Sources: (1) United Nations Population Fund. 2022. *State of World Population 2022. Seeing the Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy*; (2) United Nations Development Programme. 2022. *Human Development Report 2021/2022. Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*; (3) Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development. 2022. *Boletín de estadísticas oficiales de pobreza monetaria en República Dominicana 2021 (N° 9/Año 7)*; (4) United Nations Children's Fund. 2021. *The State of the World's Children 2021: On My Mind – Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health*; (5) United Nations Dominican Republic. 2022. *Informe Anual de Resultados 2021*; (6) World Economic Forum. 2022. *Global Gender Gap Report 2022*.

WFP COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN

10. The CSP for 2019–2023 was preceded by a transitional interim CSP for 2018, which supported the Government's flagship social protection programme, *Supérate*,⁸ and contributed to the formulation of national policies to achieve zero hunger.

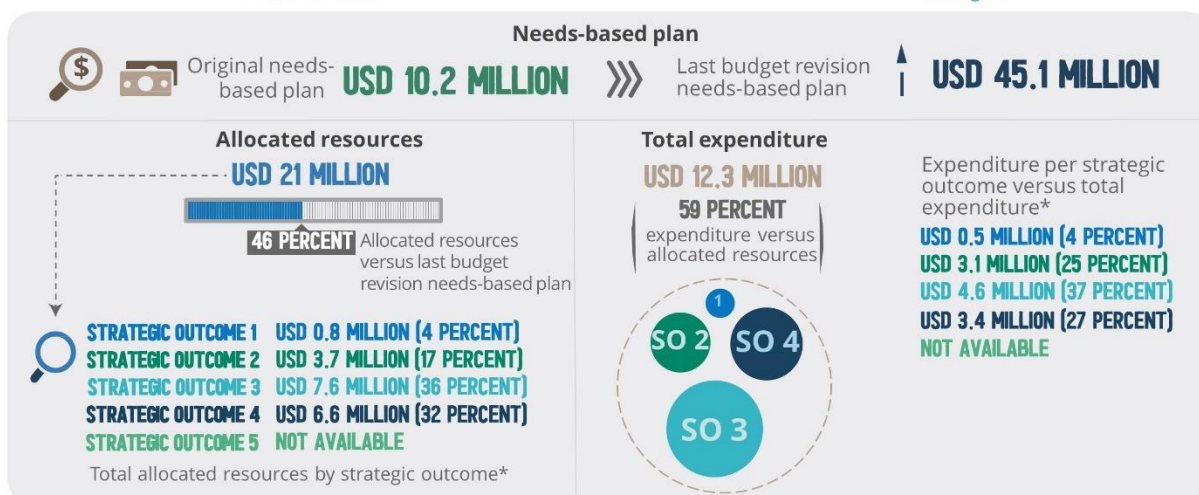
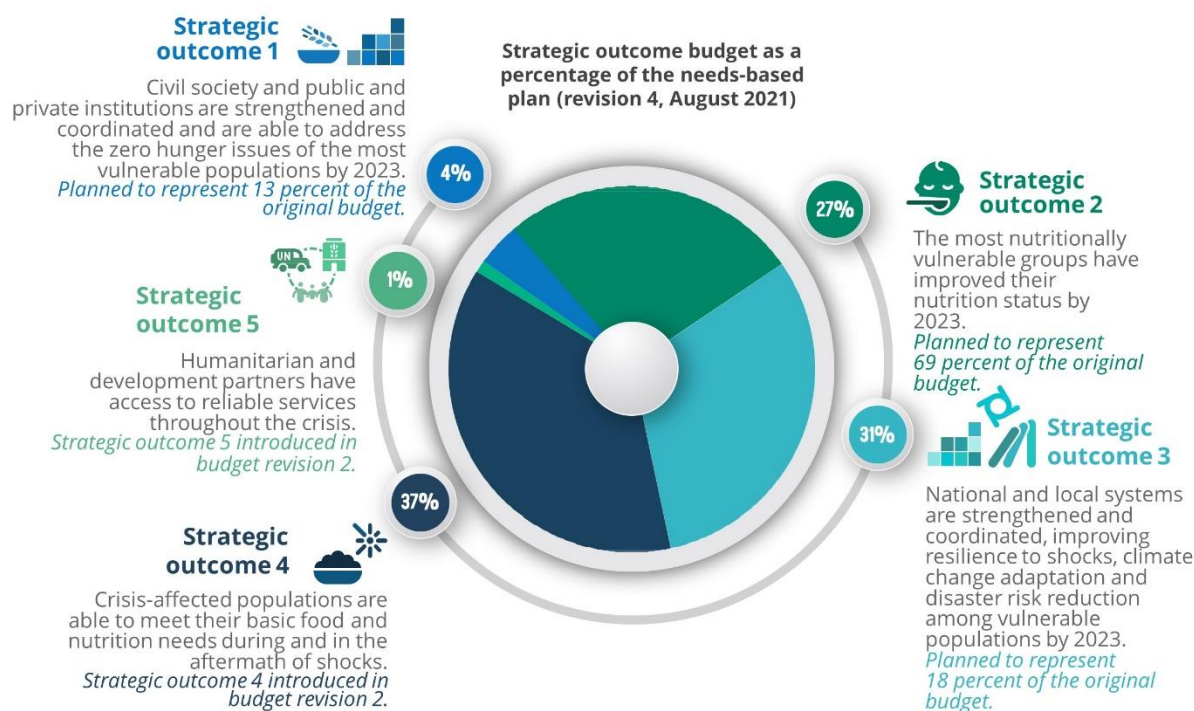
11. The CSP was designed to continue WFP's shift from direct implementation to strengthening national capacity and developing scalable programme models. The original needs-based plan aimed to serve 300,000 beneficiaries at a cost of USD 10,174,911. During the evaluation period, the budget was revised four times, increasing to USD 45,149,802 to reach 510,400 beneficiaries, with two additional strategic outcomes (4 and 5) introduced in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

12. As of December 2022, 46 percent of the budget was funded. The main contributions came from the Government of the Dominican Republic, the European Commission and the Government of the United States of America, and 83 percent of the funding was earmarked at the activity level. Figure 1 illustrates the details of the budget, funding and expenditures.

⁷ Oxford Famine Relief Organization. 2017. *Institutionalizing protection in disaster risk reduction. A case study for the Dominican Republic*.

⁸ National social protection programme formerly known as *Progresando con Solidaridad*, or PROSOLI.

Figure 1: Dominican Republic country strategic plan (2019–2023) strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures

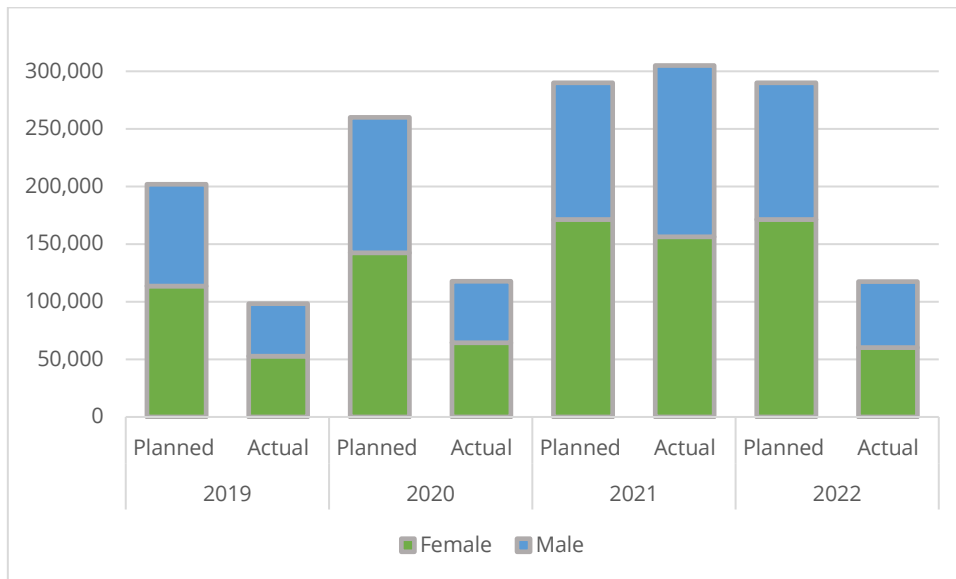


* Percentages of allocated resources and expenditures by strategic outcome do not add up to 100 percent because resources were also allocated and spent for non-strategic outcome purposes.

Sources: Dominican Republic CSP (2019–2023) budget revision 4; WFP Integrated Road Map Analytics, EV_CPB Resources Overview (accessed 14 December 2022).

13. As illustrated in figure 2, WFP reached 105 percent of planned beneficiaries in 2021, while in 2022 it reached 41 percent of the target, representing 117,525 women, men, girls and boys, including 8,259 people with disabilities.

Figure 2: Actual versus planned beneficiaries by sex, 2019–2022



Source: Annual country reports for 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

14. WFP introduced the distribution of cash and vouchers in 2020. Adoption of this modality increased steadily throughout the CSP implementation period, and in 2022, WFP distributed more vouchers than planned. Food distribution, on the contrary, spiked in 2020 and 2021, achieving roughly one third of its planned level. Distributions were mostly made in response to the COVID-19 crisis and to hurricanes; marginal use was made of food distributions in 2019 and 2022.

Evaluation findings

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

Relevance and evidence base of the country strategic plan design

15. The CSP design was relevant to the country context and informed by thorough analyses using multiple sources related to food security and nutrition issues. The design process involved a range of stakeholders from civil society and Government. These analyses were not regularly updated, however, and there was less stakeholder participation in the subsequent budget revisions and the planning of specific interventions at the local level.

16. The CSP had a clear focus on the inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, with particular attention to women, Haitian migrants and children, though many interventions lacked a specific approach for these target groups in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse or accountability to affected populations. Targeted actions for people with disabilities were not part of the CSP design or implementation.

Alignment with national policies and the Sustainable Development Goals

17. The CSP objectives were well aligned with national policies, strategies and plans, particularly as they related to working in key areas of cooperation such as national health and social protection systems and policies, food security and nutrition, and emergency preparedness and response. WFP aligned its nutrition and food security approach with the upper-middle-income status of the Dominican Republic, focusing on feeding practices and multiple dimensions of malnutrition including anaemia, diabetes and hypertension.

18. With respect to emergency assistance for the humanitarian crisis in Haiti and bi-national planning across borders, the CSP was aligned with shared priorities for island-level action by the United Nations and the Government in the area of climate change preparedness, mitigation and resilience.

19. The CSP objectives were well aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2. Strategies related to SDG 17 were well developed with government partners but less so with civil society and the private sector.

External coordination, partnerships and comparative advantage

20. CSP objectives and programmes were aligned with the United Nations development assistance framework (UNDAF) and the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF), although the CSP cycle was not yet harmonized with the UNSDCF cycle.

21. Programmatic alignment within the United Nations did not always translate into optimal operational coordination on the ground. WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations collaborated in providing technical assistance to the Government for preparing road maps for achieving zero hunger and conducted joint projects such as the pro-rural project. However, evidence also shows considerable overlap of activities and competencies among the various United Nations partners, particularly the Rome-based agencies in food security-related actions. For example, the feeding programmes of the national institutes for student welfare and early childhood care are supported by FAO and WFP, respectively, but the first promotes local procurement and the latter, national procurement.

22. WFP demonstrated a clear comparative advantage in logistical support during emergency response and in nutrition-related interventions, where its leadership is exemplary. WFP's expertise in food fortification and micronutrient provision and its technological experience and expertise in data management, risk assessments and surveys and emergency supply chain methods and tools are widely recognized, but most national partners did not consider WFP to be the leading agency on food security, particularly food production in the Dominican Republic. WFP's experience and expertise in adaptive social protection is also widely recognized, although there is scope for further engagement on the topic.

Quality of country strategic plan intervention logic and internal coherence

23. The CSP logic of intervention is coherent in that the first three strategic outcomes are directly related to strengthening national capacity to achieve SDG 2, while strategic outcomes 4 and 5 are designed to support the achievement of the first three strategic outcomes by focusing on transfers during emergencies and on-demand service delivery to partners. While clear intervention logics and theories of change were developed for the first three strategic outcomes, there was no overarching logic to the CSP, and implementation was managed with a siloed approach for each strategic outcome that limited the potential for internal synergies.

Strategic positioning and continued relevance

24. WFP remained relevant throughout CSP implementation. It ensured timely partnership realignment or development in response to context dynamics, including political and institutional changes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

25. WFP is appreciated as a broker for South-South and triangular cooperation with Central and South America. However, the potential for positioning in the Caribbean region for greater cooperation in disaster prevention and response could be more fully exploited, although it was noted that the Dominican Republic is a member of the Central American Integration System but only has observer status in the Caribbean Community.

WHAT ARE THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF WFP'S CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC?⁹

26. Overall, through its capacity strengthening work, WFP made a notable contribution to the work of its United Nations and government partners related to zero hunger and enhanced emergency response capacity, albeit with some challenges in achieving the targets. Key contributions identified by the evaluation are presented below.

⁹ The analysis in this section is not structured by strategic outcome due to the fact that the CSP in the Dominican Republic is relatively small and an analysis for each specific strategic outcome would lead to fragmentation rather than a coherent and overall analysis of WFP's contributions to SDG achievement. Additionally, a separate analysis for each strategic outcome does not do justice to the fact that capacity strengthening is an important intervention strategy in the CSP that enables partners under strategic outcomes 1 and 3 to implement activities under strategic outcomes 2 and 4.

Support for policies, systems and programmes

27. Through services and technical assistance provided under strategic outcomes 1 to 4, including through South-South and triangular cooperation, WFP made important contributions to strengthening the capacity of national and local health institutes to provide country-wide nutritional assistance, though challenges remain for inter-institutional coordination on efforts to improve resilience, support climate change adaptation and reduce disaster risks. Strategic outcome 5 was not funded; therefore, its activities were not implemented.

National capacity for awareness-raising and behaviour change campaigns to address zero hunger and improve nutrition quality (strategic outcomes 1 and 2)

28. With WFP support, health, food security, nutrition and social protection communication messages have been well established and coordinated by national entities. Moreover, WFP's brokering role led to strategic partnerships with the private sector, such as MasterCard Caribbean and Royal DSM, generating additional financial and technical support.

29. The Ministry of Public Health is making progress with the rollout of the *Ruta de la Salud: Cambia tu Estilo de Vida* (the way to health: change your lifestyle) campaign, and WFP has provided valuable technical assistance to address the triple burden of malnutrition. Ministry staff and health units across the country are also trained in appropriate messaging and counselling. Systematic measurement of the impact of the digital behaviour change campaigns has not yet been conducted, however, which will become an increasingly important gap as the programme progresses.

Improved nutrition status of key target groups (strategic outcomes 2 and 4)

30. Through advocacy and technical assistance, WFP contributed to a conducive policy environment and enhanced the technical capacity of national partners to improve the targeting and nutritional value of national feeding programmes. The impact of these interventions is reflected in improvements in household nutrition scores, although to a lesser extent among shock-affected populations (table 2).

TABLE 2: FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE AS A REFLECTION OF WFP'S PERFORMANCE (STRATEGIC OUTCOMES 2 AND 4)						
	Outcome indicator	2019	2021		End of CSP (2023)	
		Baseline	Target	Actual	Target	As of 2021
Strategic outcome 2	Percentage of households with an acceptable food consumption score	86	≥86	97.25	≥90	Achieved
	Percentage of households with a borderline food consumption score	9.8	≤10	0	<6	Achieved
	Percentage of households with a poor food consumption score	4.1	≤4	2.75	<4	Achieved
Strategic outcome 4	Percentage of households with an acceptable food consumption score	86	≥86	86.1	≥90	Not yet achieved
	Percentage of households with a borderline food consumption score	9.8	≤10	10.9	≤6	Not yet achieved
	Percentage of households with a poor food consumption score	4.1	<4	3	≤4	Achieved

Source: 2021 annual country report.

31. The school-feeding institutional architecture is well established and widely recognized by partners and beneficiary groups. The school feeding programmes have adapted to COVID-19 and more recently have recovered their pre-pandemic levels in reaching target groups at the national level. *Supérate*, with its attention to nutritional challenges, has become a reference in social protection, with wide national coverage. The Government has become the primary funder of these programmes, and WFP's role is evolving towards more specific, on-demand technical assistance and service delivery.

Improved resilience of vulnerable communities to emergencies (strategic outcome 3)

32. WFP's training and technical assistance on early warning and forecast-based drought and flood alerts contributed to enhancing the capacity of regional and local partners to assess and manage climate risks in support of vulnerable communities. WFP's forecast-based financing mechanism is situated in specific regions and has been improved and expanded, generating greater coordination of early warning and anticipatory action by the national system for disaster prevention, mitigation and response and the national social protection system. While emergency mitigation and response are generally embedded in programmes, disaster preparedness and prevention and climate change resilience are less developed, and the national system for disaster prevention, mitigation and response still faces coordination challenges.

Vulnerable groups are more capable of recovering from emergencies (strategic outcomes 3 and 4)

33. WFP technical assistance was instrumental in mainstreaming cash-based transfers as a national emergency response mechanism, although more effort is needed to strengthen the humanitarian–development nexus. The introduction of cash-based transfers is still fairly recent, however, and there is still relatively little contextualized knowledge. Shock-responsive social protection is becoming increasingly well-known and appreciated but the approach is still not systematically applied to national emergency responses.

Installed emergency response capacity in the Dominican Republic reaching out to Haiti and beyond (strategic outcome 3)

34. WFP was instrumental in creating operational capacity for a humanitarian corridor between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and establishing a warehouse in Santo Domingo, together with the Red Cross. Continuous donor support is nonetheless required and the potential for this emergency response capacity in the wider Caribbean region is not yet recognized.

Achievement of cross-cutting aims

35. WFP interventions mainstreamed gender equality and women's empowerment and inclusion, though generally only in terms of participation in activities and targeting of beneficiaries. Outcome-level transformational change in gender equality and women's empowerment has not yet been realized or systematically tracked. While direct assistance and emergency response activities reached vulnerable groups, challenges remain in disaster preparedness. Targeting people living with HIV, people with disabilities and young people also remains challenging.

36. WFP showed full commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality throughout CSP implementation. It also paid attention to protection and accountability to affected populations, albeit not systematically due to limited human resource capacity, especially for people living with HIV, people with disabilities and young people. The country office did not systematically track indicators on the environment, protection or accountability to affected populations.

Prospects for sustainability

37. The Government and other key partners show strong ownership of and commitment to WFP's capacity strengthening interventions. They also show good capacity to continue their work on food security, nutrition and social protection and to expand it without continued support from WFP, though demand for specific WFP services remains. There continue to be challenges in ensuring sustainability in work on disaster prevention, mitigation and response, as in the case of the humanitarian corridor, which is well established but still requires continuous donor support to retain stand-by capacity between emergencies.

Humanitarian–development nexus

38. The CSP did not include a strategy for transitioning from humanitarian to development interventions. The humanitarian–development nexus was poorly developed at both the planning and the implementation levels.

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

Timeliness

39. WFP has experienced delays in implementing planned activities and delivering outputs, particularly those related to COVID-19 responses under strategic outcome 4. CSP implementation rates have accelerated since 2021, indicating improved efficiency following the adjustment of the CSP to address the needs created by COVID-19.

40. Despite initial delays, WFP supported the Government in expanding the *Quédate en casa* (stay home) national social protection programme during the COVID-19 pandemic and complemented the coverage of the national response. In 2022, WFP was able to roll out the response to Hurricane Fiona within one month, reprioritizing its target areas and conducting a rapid market assessment to inform the *Supérate* national social protection programme. While the mobilization of additional resources was timely, however, budget utilization was partially slowed down by delayed disbursements and slow recruitment processes.

41. At the time of the evaluation, the availability of monitoring data on supply chain management performance was limited. However, the indicator “% of mt distributed within planned deadlines” shows overall good performance, with significant improvement in 2021 compared to 2020.

Coverage

42. WFP’s coverage prioritized regions with higher vulnerability to disasters and with a higher concentration of Haitian migrants. Together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other United Nations entities, WFP advocated the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the national social protection strategies. While some of WFP’s activities specifically target women and people living with HIV, limited attention was paid to other vulnerable groups, such as young people and people with disabilities.

Cost-efficiency

43. The cost per beneficiary in the Dominican Republic is not systematically lower for cash-based transfers than for food distribution, as cash-based transfers were only introduced in the country in 2020 and further investments are needed to make efficient use of the modality. As shown in table 3, the cost of transporting food purchased internationally by WFP (activity 2) is generally volatile, exposed to changes in the global market, whereas the country office has more control over efficiency when food is purchased on local markets (activity 4).

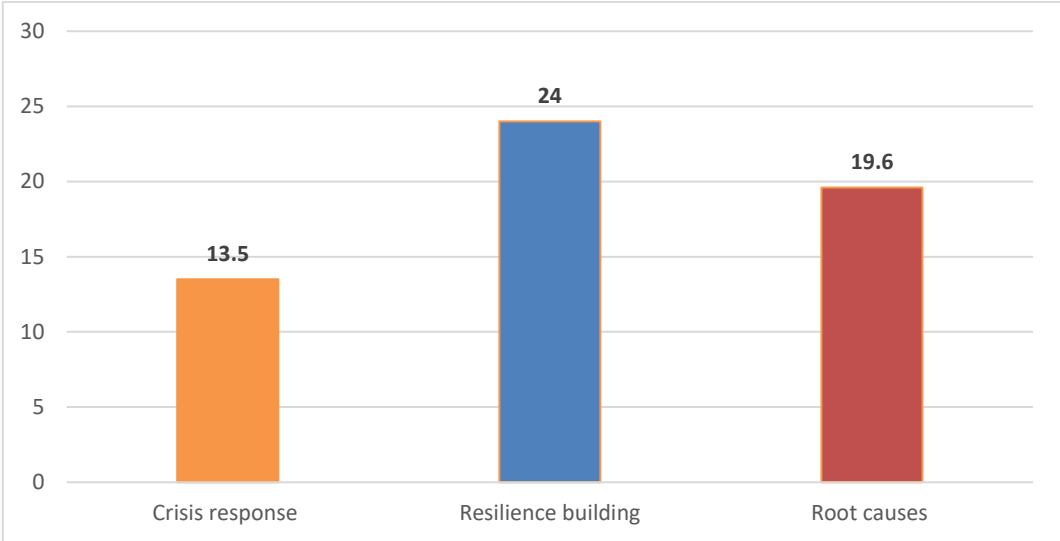
TABLE 3: COSTS FOR EACH MT OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CSP COST					
	Cost item	Year			
		2019	2020	2021	2022
Activity 2	Other food-related costs	9	6	No action taken under this activity in 2021	9
	Transport	10	17		47
	Storage	13	17		5
	Port	0	3		6
	Supply chain management	10	7		0
Activity 4	Other food-related costs	-	14	11	6
	Transport	-	0	4	0
	Storage	-	1	4	2
	Supply chain management	-	0	0	0

Source: Country portfolio budget plan vs actuals report_v2.1 DO02.

44. The short duration of donors’ grants (figure 3) led to several efficiency challenges. In particular, the design phase and targeting exercise for short-term projects can be costly and time-consuming, sometimes

even more resource-intensive than actual project implementation. In addition, short-term projects limit opportunities to strengthen partnerships, especially at the local level, as there is not enough room to adequately nurture the partner relationship.

Figure 3. Average grant duration during country strategic plan implementation (2019–2022) (months)



Source: Country portfolio budget grant balances report v3.0, extracted on 13 December 2022.

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

45. Fundraising efforts generally matched the existing country office implementation capacity. However, funding levels and subsequent adjustments of the implementation plan show considerable gaps compared to the original needs-based budget. Donors’ priorities have influenced the scope and focus of the CSP, with most of the funding being earmarked at the activity level, specifically for disaster risk management activities (strategic outcomes 3 and 4).

Monitoring and reporting

46. The evaluation notes that monitoring and evaluation systems are inadequate for monitoring CSP implementation and progress. Indicators are not consistent over time and data is not analysed and used to inform implementation and adaptation, including on cross-cutting themes such as gender, inclusion, protection and accountability to affected populations. Despite challenges in capturing outcome results, the country office monitors the Emergency Preparedness Capacity Index and other indicators to measure capacity at the institutional and systems levels, but such indicators are not yet used in a consolidated manner because the results are not followed up.

Partnership

47. WFP’s approach to partnering with state institutions is highly appreciated, with the Government particularly valuing the quality of the processes used to deliver the CSP, as well as WFP’s international experience and the access to expertise provided. Civil society organizations, however, have a more varied view on the intensity and quality of cooperation with WFP.

Human resources

48. The WFP country office has limited staff to deliver the ambitious CSP targets and maintain its organizational structure. Due to limited human and financial resources, many employees have more than one functional role and a few positions remain vacant. Several functions, mainly in monitoring and evaluation and cross-cutting workstreams (gender, inclusion, protection/accountability to affected populations) are inadequately staffed or do not exist. While staff competencies are relevant and good, there are still gaps in technical expertise for developing multi-stakeholder partnerships; strengthening linkages

between emergency response and social protection; and strengthening the humanitarian–development nexus.

Other factors affecting performance

49. Key enabling factors include strong WFP networks to engage in South–South and triangular cooperation; political stability and quick post-COVID-19 recovery in the country; and robust capacity to respond quickly to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti.

50. Key inhibiting factors include lack of synergy between the Rome-based agencies; coordination challenges within the national system for disaster prevention, mitigation and response; exclusion of Haitian migrants and refugees; and limited integration of the country within the Caribbean region.

CONCLUSIONS

51. Overall, the evaluation concluded that the CSP was relevant to needs in the Dominican Republic and well tailored to its status as an upper-middle-income country. WFP contributed to a conducive policy and programmatic environment for food and nutrition security, fulfilling a technical assistance and brokering role to facilitate access to knowledge and expertise in order to enhance the coverage and quality of national programmes, and complementing government crisis response.

52. WFP was generally agile in responding to emergencies, particularly due to its high supply chain management and logistics support capacity, though there were delays in project implementation and the delivery of support, particularly under strategic outcomes 3 and 4. This is explained by the fact that the country office is relatively small and has insufficient human and financial resources.

53. WFP’s contribution to strengthening the capacity of its national partners has been significant, with those partners now able to operate autonomously to a large extent. This offers good prospects for sustainability, although specific highly specialized services from WFP will still be needed.

54. Challenges remain in strengthening the humanitarian–development nexus to enhance the resilience of vulnerable groups. WFP does not have a sufficiently developed strategy for transitioning from humanitarian assistance to longer-term development interventions, and there is room for improvement in linking social protection with emergency response. In that connection, it should be noted that WFP activities generally reflect the priorities of humanitarian donors, who tend to strictly earmark their contributions, generally with short-term funding windows.

55. The CSP was aligned with national policies and priorities and WFP is positioned as a trusted partner for government institutions, civil society and the private sector, who recognize its role and competencies in contributing to SDG 2. The CSP was also aligned with United Nations priorities, particularly under the areas of food security, provision of social services and institutional strengthening, although the fact that its programme cycle was not harmonized with the UNDAF and UNSDCF cycles limited opportunities for greater system-wide coherence.

56. The CSP was implemented with a strong focus on five distinct strategic outcomes, some of which had specific theories of change, but the lack of a theory of change at the aggregate level contributed to a siloed approach to implementation, limiting internal synergy.

57. WFP has consistently included gender and other inclusion aspects in targeting its interventions. It has ensured participation by the most vulnerable groups in its activities. However, principles of gender equality and women’s empowerment and accountability to affected populations were neither sufficiently integrated during implementation nor systematically addressed and analysed in monitoring and reporting, which hindered enhanced knowledge and understanding of differential outcomes in those areas.

58. WFP established strong and durable partnerships during the CSP implementation period, mainly with line ministries and public institutions, who expressed a high level of satisfaction with the technical assistance and services it provided. While bilateral partnerships with government institutions are well developed and consolidated, inter-institutional coordination mechanisms and public–private and multi-stakeholder partnerships are less developed.

59. Monitoring and evaluation processes and systems are not well developed and embedded in the organizational structure of the Dominican Republic country office. There was inadequate organizational discipline in systematically collecting and analysing monitoring data over time and across the various strategic outcomes, which limited the generation of inputs for management decisions on continuous

improvement and innovation in CSP planning and implementation. A particular constraint was the limited staff time allocated to the monitoring and evaluation function in the country office.

RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	<p>WFP’s next country strategic plan should more closely reflect the specific political and economic situation of the Dominican Republic as an upper-middle-income country, a Caribbean island State and a country that shares a border with Haiti. WFP should seek stronger alignment with the United Nations planning framework for the Dominican Republic and secure complementarity among the Rome-based agencies. In this alignment, WFP should anticipate a continued trend of declining international support for the Dominican Republic and resources for WFP’s work under strategic outcome 1 (partners’ capacity to achieve zero hunger) and strategic outcome 2 (improved nutrition status of vulnerable groups) and establish a stronger focus on strategic outcome 3 (emergency preparedness, mitigation and response), considering climate change and natural disaster-related challenges at the national, island and Caribbean regional levels.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	June 2024
1.1	In developing a stronger focus on strategic outcome 3, WFP should avoid overlaps and promote closer cooperation on the ground in the implementation of its food security-related actions where its mandate overlaps with those of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.					

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.2	WFP should step up and further diversify its fundraising (including direct fundraising and private sector partnerships) to secure sufficient funding for remaining work under strategic outcomes 1 and 2, while continuing its current fundraising for activities under strategic outcomes 3 and 4 (support for crisis-affected populations). This requires a longer-term pipeline approach and donor diversification to reduce donor earmarking of funds to less than 75 percent, to enable the country office to secure the continuity and coherence of the overall country strategic plan implementation.					
1.3	The next country strategic plan should consider a four-year period in order to align with the other United Nations entities in the country as of the start of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for 2028–2032. This harmonization of planning is required to allow WFP and its United Nations partners to jointly strategize for coming planning periods.	Operational				
2	WFP should strengthen the intervention logic and strategy of its next country strategic plan to enable more synergy in the implementation of activities under different strategic outcomes. This requires the development of a comprehensive theory of change for the entire country strategic plan, for which the reconstructed theory of change drawn up for this evaluation and existing theories of change for strategic outcomes 1, 2 and 3 could serve as references.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters	High	End of 2023 (with the publication of the next CSP)
2.1	A particular area in which more synergy across strategic outcomes is required is in strengthening links between social protection activities (under strategic outcomes 1 and 2) and emergency response (under strategic outcomes 3 and 4). This is also a key area where government partners still have considerable demand for capacity strengthening and technical assistance from WFP, particularly at the policy and systems levels.	Strategic				
2.2	To enhance and facilitate synergy across the various strategic outcomes, the country office could consider reinstalling a programme management function with an overview of all CSP	Operational				

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	operations and the task of identifying opportunities for synergetic projects that can cut across strategic outcomes.					
3	<p>WFP should develop a strategy for transitioning from its capacity strengthening support for government partners to providing demand-based technical assistance to some of these partners.</p> <p>This is needed given the clear recognition that the organizational capacity of WFP’s partners has been strongly enhanced in previous country strategic plan periods. Capacity strengthening could still be considered at the institutional level, when policies and systems present flaws or coordination challenges, such as those identified in the national system for disaster prevention, mitigation and response.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters (country capacity strengthening)	High	By the end of 2024 (before the end of year 1 of the next CSP)
3.1	Based on the acknowledgement of strengthened capacity and access to resources of its government partners, the WFP country office may consider further operationalization of its demand-driven service delivery under strategic outcome 5 of the country strategic plan.	Operational				
4	<p>WFP should develop a specific approach and strategy to strengthen the humanitarian–development nexus in its work.</p> <p>These should be tailored to the context of the Dominican Republic and to specific vulnerabilities arising from emergencies (such as hurricanes and climate-change-related flooding or droughts) and for specific vulnerable groups (such as Haitian migrants and undocumented people). The country office should acknowledge that its experience and organizational capacity is not sufficient to achieve this nexus alone. It will need to develop partnerships with other development-oriented actors in the United Nations system and civil society to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus structurally in all its humanitarian assistance interventions.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters	High	Before 2026
4.1	The country office, with the support of the regional bureau and headquarters, should engage in dialogue and negotiations with key humanitarian donors and possible new donors to acquire longer-term funding for its emergency responses and humanitarian assistance, in order to build in a transition phase for development interventions that foster socioeconomic	Operational				

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	empowerment of beneficiaries. This requires humanitarian support funding horizons that extent beyond a minimum of two years.					
4.2	The country office should identify potential partners within the Government, the United Nations and civil society to jointly prepare approaches and interventions aimed at establishing and strengthening the humanitarian–development nexus, using complementary competencies, experience, expertise and networks.					
5.	WFP in the Dominican Republic should continue to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti by mobilizing humanitarian assistance for Haiti (humanitarian corridor and WFP’s cross-country work in both countries) and in disaster and emergency-related response on both sides of the border. In doing so, the country office could look for opportunities to increase its relevance at the Caribbean-region level, considering the strategic location of the Dominican Republic and the existing national capacity to mobilize for emergency response to other island States in the region. This may require stronger regional positioning of WFP in the Dominican Republic at the Caribbean-region level.	Strategic		Regional bureau, Barbados country office, headquarters	Medium	Before the end of 2027 (by the publication of the next CSP)
5.1	Based on the recognition that WFP’s work on the humanitarian corridor is of strategic importance to both the Dominican Republic and Haiti and possibly to the Caribbean region as a whole, it is recommended that WFP develop its country office in the Dominican Republic into a more pronounced regional hub, which would also facilitate access to alternative funding sources for WFP in the Dominican Republic and the region.					

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.2	WFP should closely align with United Nations efforts in the Dominican Republic and Haiti to strengthen humanitarian and development interventions on both sides of the border and in a cross-border approach, within specific windows to be identified in agreement with the Government. In this connection, WFP could continue its activities related to the Haitian humanitarian-crisis and its natural disaster and emergency-related response activities, for which it has specific knowledge, experience and expertise.					
5.3	The WFP country offices in the Dominican Republic and Barbados and WFP headquarters should engage in a dialogue regarding the extent to which and the specific areas in which WFP in the Dominican Republic could develop a stronger regional profile.	Operational				
6	WFP in the Dominican Republic should increase its focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment, inclusion, and accountability to affected populations/protection in planning, programming and monitoring and evaluation. This will require WFP to consider these aspects at the activity and output levels and to pay more systematic attention to empowerment processes and to achieving differential effects and overall impact for specific target groups. WFP will need to increase its efforts to analyse empowerment and gender and inclusion aspects and ensure they are systematically integrated into its interventions, in order to achieve transformational change in gender equality and women’s empowerment and empowerment of specific vulnerable groups including migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, young people and older people.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	By the end of 2024 (before the end of year 1 of the next CSP)
6.1	Haitian migrants and refugees should be included more explicitly in planning, implementation and monitoring. More knowledge about specific effects and the overall impact of WFP interventions on these target groups is needed to improve the quality of WFP’s own interventions for these groups and provide evidence to support WFP’s policy dialogue and advocacy efforts (and its joint efforts with other United Nations entities) to improve the position of the most vulnerable target groups in Dominican society.					

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
6.2	<p>The place and role of the monitoring and evaluation function and effort in the country office should be strengthened, along with corresponding capacities, and monitoring and evaluation indicators should be improved, particularly at the outcome level. More effort is required to systematize and analyse monitoring and evaluation data for informing future management decisions and improving and introducing innovation into country strategic plan implementation. This will also require more training for all country office staff and more organizational discipline in the population of and use of data in monitoring and evaluation systems. Furthermore, it is recommended that WFP investigate the potential for alignment and synergy with national efforts coordinated by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development in monitoring the effects of national food security and social protection service programmes, to allow more joint data mining in that regard.</p>	Operational				

1. Introduction

1. The independent Evaluation of the WFP Country Strategic Plan (CSPE) for the Dominican Republic (the DR), commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV), covers all WFP activities considered in the transitional interim country strategic plan (T-ICSP- 2018) and the country strategic plan (CSP) 2019-2023. CSPEs were introduced by the WFP Policy on Country Strategic Plans in 2016.

2. This evaluation report consists of three sections; Section 1 includes the context, scope, approach, methodology, process and deliverables; Section 2 presents key findings addressing the evaluation questions; and Section 3 presents main conclusions and recommendations.

1.1. EVALUATION FEATURES

Rationale

3. This evaluation was conducted by an external evaluation team consisting of international and national members. It was managed by Lattanzio KIBS and covered the period 2018-2022. The evaluation is timely and provides the country office (CO) with evidence to inform the design of its next CSP, due for submission to the Executive Board in November 2023.

4. The CSPE addresses the WFP move from project-based planning to country-level strategic planning. Considering an overall timeframe of six years (one year of T-ICSP planning for 2018; and five years of CSP planning for 2019-2023), it considers trends and strategic shifts within this period.

5. The evaluation systematically focuses on CSP activities and processes, with particular attention paid to inclusion aspects, gender equality, equity and accountability to affected populations (AAP).

Objectives

6. The purpose of this CSPE is twofold: 1) to provide evidence and learning on WFP performance to inform country-level strategic decisions, specifically for developing future WFP engagement in the Dominican Republic; and 2) to provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders.¹ Specifically, the evaluation hopes to generate knowledge and understanding of the WFP contribution to CSP strategic outcomes, particularly in the area of capacity strengthening at individual, organizational and enabling environment levels.

Intended users and uses

7. The primary users of this evaluation include country office management and staff, the regional bureau in Panama (RBP), specific divisions at headquarters (HQ), including the Office of Evaluation and the Executive Board. An internal reference group (IRG) was established to guide this evaluation and to ensure that its results can feed into WFP learning and knowledge management processes, these members are therefore also users of this evaluation.

8. External users include government ministries, government institutes and donors (civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector, academia, the target group of beneficiaries, United Nations agencies and other international bilateral and multilateral development partners (IDPs). Other users include representatives, government institutes and organizations participating in South-South (S-S) and triangular exchange activities. The evaluation was particularly focused on the extent to which there was a gender balance across the different beneficiary groups (principally children under 5, pregnant and lactating women, adolescents and elderly people at risk of malnutrition, people living with HIV, smallholder farmers,

1 WFP. 2022. Evaluation of Dominican Republic WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023, ToR, p. 1.

migrants and refugees, and undocumented people, particularly from Haiti), and their participation in guiding the design and implementation of CSP activities and in monitoring its results.

1.2. CONTEXT

Demography

9. The Dominican Republic is the second largest country in the Caribbean² with a population of 11.1 million people (50 percent of whom are women and girls) and 27 percent of whom are between 0-14 years.³ The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) data for 2022⁴ show that life expectancy is 78 years for women and 72 years for men, the fertility rate is 2.2 and the latest available maternal mortality ratio is 95 per 10,000 live births in 2017. The adolescent fertility rate is high, with 64 per 1,000 girls in the age group of 15-19 in 2020 according to World Bank Open Data.⁵ The proportion of Haitian migrant workers and Haitian permanent workers in the Dominican Republic's agricultural sector is historically very high, particularly on sugar plantations. There are 0.75 million Haitians (6.7 percent of the total population and 15 percent of the total labour force) in the Dominican Republic.⁶

Economy and effects of COVID-19

10. The Dominican Republic is now an upper middle-income economy.⁷ Its Human Development Index in 2021 was 0.77, ranking it 88, from 100 in 2010, out of 191 countries.⁸ Tourism, remittances, foreign direct investment, mining revenues, free-trade zones, and telecommunication have all contributed towards making the Dominican Republic the second-fastest growing economy in the Latin America and the Caribbean region (LAC) over the last decade. As of 2019, it was on track to realizing its ambition of achieving high-income status by 2030.⁹

11. Extreme poverty has declined, affecting 24 percent of the population in 2021, slightly increased from 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰ Women have been especially affected by the pandemic-induced increase in poverty: those with income below the poverty line went from 22 percent in 2019 to 24.6

2 UNdata | country profile | The Dominican Republic <http://data.un.org/Search.aspx?q=Dominican+Republic>.

3 According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) data report in 2022.

4 UNFPA. World Population Dashboard, visited on 18.03.2023.

5 World Bank Open Data at <https://data.worldbank.org>.

6 Immigrant Censuses of the Dominican National Statistics Bureau: 2ª Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes (ENI-2017) (in Spanish). Santo Domingo: Oficina Nacional de Estadística. April 2018, National Statistics Office (ONE), 2017.

7 The classification of the countries is as defined by the World Bank.

8 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2022. *Human Development Report 2021/2022. Human Development Report 2021/2022. Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*.

9 World Bank Open Data at <https://data.worldbank.org>.

10 Oficina Nacional de Estadística (ONE). 2019. Encuesta Nacional Continua de Fuerza de Trabajo (ENCFT); World Bank Open Data at <https://data.worldbank.org>; ONE. 2021. Boletín de estadísticas oficiales de pobreza monetaria 2021 <https://mepyd.gob.do/publicaciones/boletin-pobreza-monetaria-a7-no9/>.

percent in 2020. This was slightly less for men (19.8 percent in 2019 and 22 percent in 2020).¹¹ People still experience multidimensional poverty, particularly in rural areas, where it almost doubled.¹²

COVID-19

12. The Dominican Republic has had 655,540 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 4,384 deaths.¹³ As of 2 December 2022, a total of 15,864,270 vaccine doses have been administered.¹⁴

13. Economic activity and jobs have recovered from the effects of the pandemic, with an increase in gross domestic product (GDP) to 12.3 percent in 2021.¹⁵ However, structural challenges related to welfare and social inclusion persist and a recent surge in inflation poses a threat to household incomes, despite the introduction of special support programmes for the poorest.

14. Emerging evidence shows increases in gender-based violence due to stricter social distancing measures. Additionally, in the later stages of the pandemic, job losses and constrained financial sustainability for women were identified as potential drivers of increased abuse within the home and declines in reporting.¹⁶

National policies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

15. The Government is making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through adopting a number of national policies and strategies pertaining to its National Development Strategy (NDS) 2030 that was approved in 2012.

16. To promote food security and nutrition, the Government adopted specific legislative measures. The 2016 Law on Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutrition Security¹⁷ is considered a core legal instrument for achieving zero hunger.

17. For disaster risk management and climate change adaptation, the Government has the Plan Nacional de Gestión Integral del Riesgo de Desastres and the Plan Nacional de Adaptación para el Cambio Climático 2015-2030, implemented through the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response .

18. To address poverty and ensure access to social protection and social safety net programmes, the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Development and the Cabinet of Social Policies are key entities overseeing the National Development Strategy.

19. Gender equality (a National Development Strategy priority) is addressed mainly through the third Plan Nacional de Igualdad y Equidad de Género 2020-2030 (PLANEG III) and the Plan de Reducción de Embarazos en Adolescentes (2019-2023). The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MMUJER) is working at the regional level to implement the Montevideo strategy in order to be on target to achieve the gender-related issues within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) (see section on gender).

Food security and nutrition

20. Despite meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), inequalities remain. There are inadequate quality health services, a lack of diverse diets and a weak agricultural structure, all of which

11 ONE. 2020. Boletín de estadísticas oficiales de pobreza monetaria 2021, available:

<https://mepyd.gob.do/publicaciones/boletin-pobreza-monetaria-a6-no8>.

12 Índice de Pobreza Multidimensional de República Dominicana (2020) available at https://mppn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/IPM-RD-2020_R13082020-p.-.pdf.

13 According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in the DR, from 3 January 2020 to 22 December 2022.

14 World Health Organization (WHO) COVID-19 statistics on <https://covid19.who.int/>.

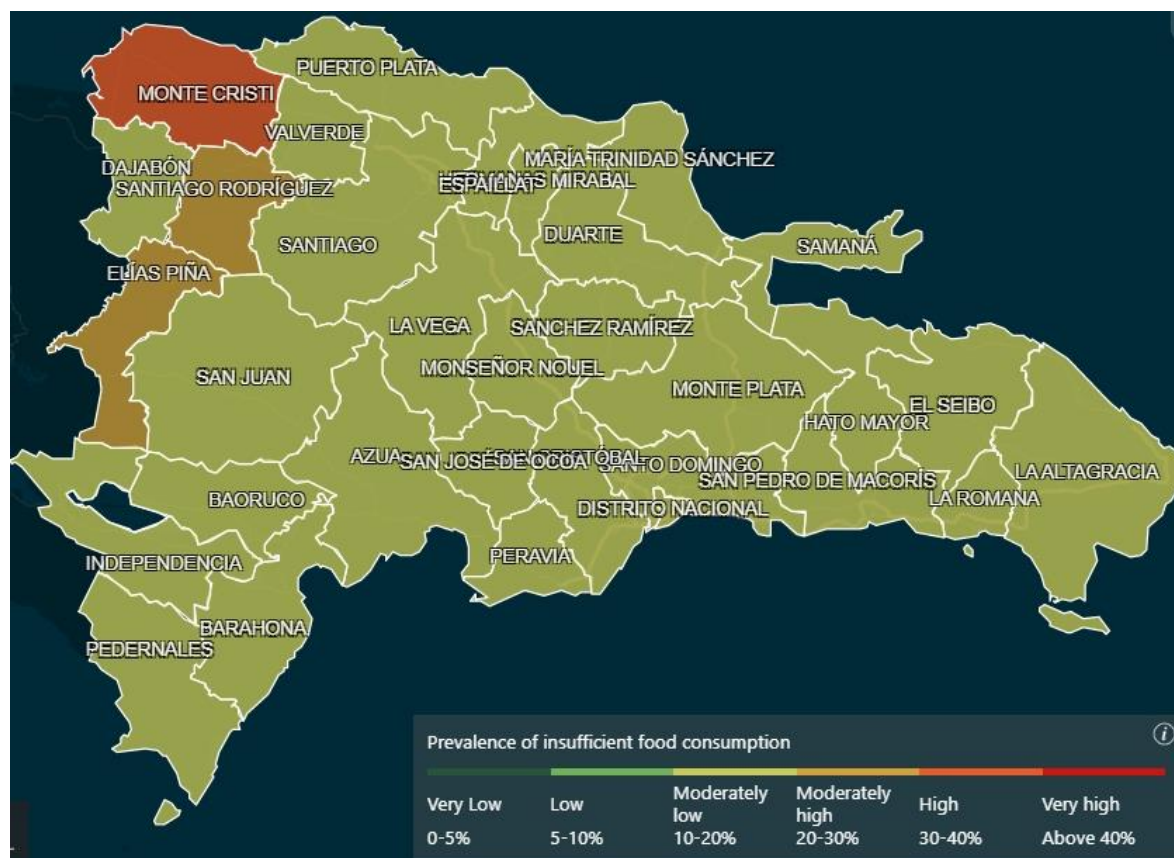
15 World Bank national accounts data, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) National Accounts data files on World Bank/BRD/IDB Website.

16 World Bank (WB). 2022. Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Gender-Based Violence: An Ongoing Challenge for 2022 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2022/03/30/the-incidence-of-gender-based-violence-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>.

17 The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) website <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC159064/>.

underly food insecurity and nutrition problems. Figure 1 shows prevalence of food consumption across provinces, on the WFP hunger map. Only 2 of 31 provinces (Elías Piña and Santiago Rodríguez) and 1 (Monte Cristi) out of 31 have moderate and high food consumption.¹⁸

Figure 1: Hunger map for the Dominican Republic (December 2022)



Source: [HungerMap Live](https://www.hungermaplive.org/), extracted in December 2022.

21. In 2021 the country achieved a score of 8 within the Global Hunger Index, thus it can be described as a country with low levels of hunger¹⁹ (ranking 36th out of 116 countries). It is on track to lowering wasting and stunting among children under 5 to 2.4 percent.²⁰ No progress has been made towards reducing anaemia and obesity. Of children under 5, 8 percent are still anaemic, as are more than 30 percent of pregnant women,²¹ while obesity has doubled in the school-aged population, reaching 33 percent in 2016.²² The double burden cost of malnutrition reached 2.6 percent of the Dominican Republic's GDP in 2017, most of which is related to obesity.²³

Agriculture

22. Agriculture is the fourth-largest sector in the country. In 2020, 9 percent of the economically active population in the Dominican Republic was working in this sector (393,090), of which 5.7 percent were

¹⁸ HungerMap Live, accessed on 22/12/2022.

¹⁹ With a 100-point scale, a value minor or equal to 9.9 highlights a low level of hunger.

²⁰ Global Hunger Index <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/>.

²¹ WFP. 2021. Fill the Nutrient Gap - The Dominican Republic.

²² UNICEF. 2021. State of world's children 2021 <https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2021>.

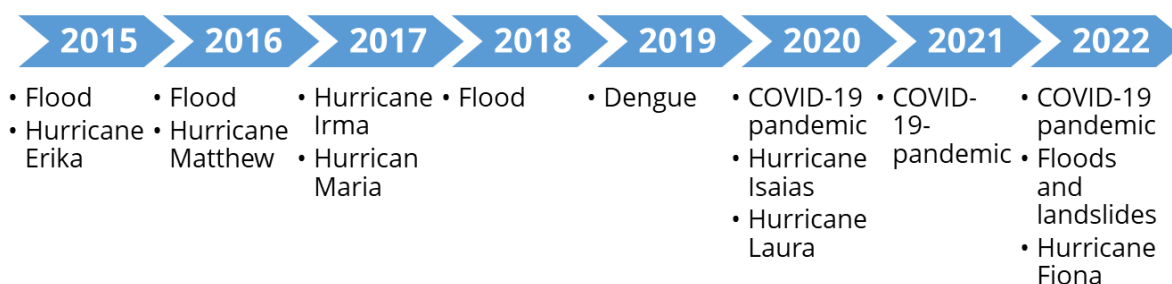
²³ WFP, ECLAC, the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP), and the Vice Presidency. 2019. El Costo de la Doble Carga de la Malnutrición Impacto social y económico en la República Dominicana, available at https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000111141/download/?_ga=2.2141746.385202017.1646645020-218333958.1623157526.

women.²⁴ Agriculture constituted 6 percent of GDP in 2020.²⁵ Around 50 percent of the land is used for agriculture.²⁶ Smallholder farmers make up 81 percent within the sector, of which 83.7 percent are men and 16.3 percent are women.²⁷

Climate change and vulnerability

23. The Dominican Republic is continuously exposed to natural disasters, in particular floods and hurricanes. Due to its geographical location, it is highly at risk of seismic activity. Figure 2 shows the incidence of natural disasters in the country since 2015.

Figure 2. Overview of incidence of natural disasters in the Dominican Republic (2015–2022)



Source: Developed by the evaluation team based on EM-DAT – International disaster database.

Education

24. The second Ten-Year Education Plan 2008-2018 aimed to improve the quality of education. The plan was aligned with other regulatory frameworks such as the Ministry of Education (MINERD) Strategic Plan 2017-2020 and the National Pact for Educational Reform in the Dominican Republic.

25. Recent gender disaggregated data²⁸ indicate that in 2021, the gross enrolment ratio has increased. In 2021 for pre-primary, it was 33.9 percent for girls and 32.8 percent for boys; in primary education, it was 95 percent for girls and 98 percent for boys; and in secondary education, it was 79 percent for girls and 72 percent for boys. The literacy rate in 2016 was 94 percent amongst those aged 15 years and older. In 2021, a UNFPA study showed that six out of ten teenage girls who become pregnant do not complete secondary education, and only 6.2 percent completed university studies.²⁹

Gender equality and equity

26. Gender inequality, particularly early marriage, and gender-based (domestic) violence, is an important concern in the Dominican Republic, with 35 percent of girls being married before the age of 18.³⁰

27. Despite making some progress, the country still has a way to go to achieve gender equality and equity. It ranks 112th out of 162 countries on the Gender Inequality Index,³¹ above the regional average,³²

24 República Dominicana-Agricultura. 2020. Encuesta sobre Población Empleada por Género en el Sector Agropecuario 2002-2020.

25 World Bank. 2021. WB Development Indicators - % GDP agriculture, visited on 22.12.2022.

26 FAO. 2021. FAOSTAT Country Profile, visited on 22.12.2022.

27 ONE. 2015. Precenso Nacional Agropecuario 2015.

28 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2020. Education statistics-The Dominican Republic.

29 Consecuencias socioeconómicas del EMBARAZO ADOLESCENTE en la Implementación de la metodología para estimar el impacto socioeconómico del embarazo y la maternidad adolescentes en países de América Latina y el Caribe – MILENA 1.0. 12 de julio de 2021. República Dominicana at https://dominicanrepublic.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/presentacion_milena_rd_final_12-07-2021.pdf.

30 UN Women – Women Count, available at <https://data.unwomen.org/country/dominican-republic>.

31 UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII) available at UNDP Data Centre on thematic composite indices: Gender Inequality Index.

32 Ibid.

and has endorsed its third National Plan for Gender Equality (Plan Nacional de Igualdad y Equidad de Género 2020-2030 - PLANEG III).

Migration, refugees and internally displaced people

28. In 2021,³³ there were an estimated 847,979 immigrants in the Dominican Republic (compared to 570,000 in 2020), accounting for 8.3 percent of the total population. Of the immigrants, 88.5 percent are of Haitian origin, and many are vulnerable and at risk of social exclusion. More than 60 percent of the immigrants live in urban areas.³⁴ It is important to recognize that many Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic are not refugees or migrant workers, they are part of the labour force, particularly in the agricultural sector.

29. In June 2020, 57,669 Haitians returned from the Dominican Republic to Haiti due to COVID-19 and a loss of income. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has warned that the border between the two countries requires a specific solution and cross-country coordination is required.³⁵ The Dominican Republic has also experienced internal displacements, mainly due to natural disaster. Between 2018 and 2021, 73,632 people have been internally displaced.³⁶

Humanitarian protection

30. Certain groups are particularly vulnerable in the Dominican Republic, and their human rights are at risk of being violated. This includes Haitian migrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent, women, children, senior adults, people with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS or other chronic illnesses and LGBTBI groups. For example, in 2019, 4.6 percent of boys and 3.0 percent of girls were in child labour. Adolescent pregnancy is the highest in the region, with 19 percent of pregnancies being among girls aged 15 to 19.³⁷

31. In 2016, the Government established a national task force on gender, age, and protection in disaster risk reduction (EC-PGE)³⁸ within its National Emergency Commission, aiming at ensuring the protection of people affected and displaced by disasters.³⁹ WFP is an active member of the national task force on migration, led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the EC-PGE.⁴⁰

International development assistance

32. During the period 2018-2020, the Dominican Republic received a yearly average of USD 1,322.4 million in official development assistance (ODA). The proportion of net official development assistance over the gross national income remained stable between 2017 and 2019 at 2 percent. The top five official development assistance funding sources were France, the United States of America, the European Union, Korea and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) (Figure 3).

33 Sistema de las Naciones Unidas en República Dominicana. 2021. Informe de Resultados 2021.

34 ONE. 2018. ENI-2017 Segunda Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes.

35 IOM. June 2020. Diásporas, fronteras e inmigración en tiempos de la COVID-19.

36 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) – Country Profile – The Dominican Republic, visited on 16.08.2022.

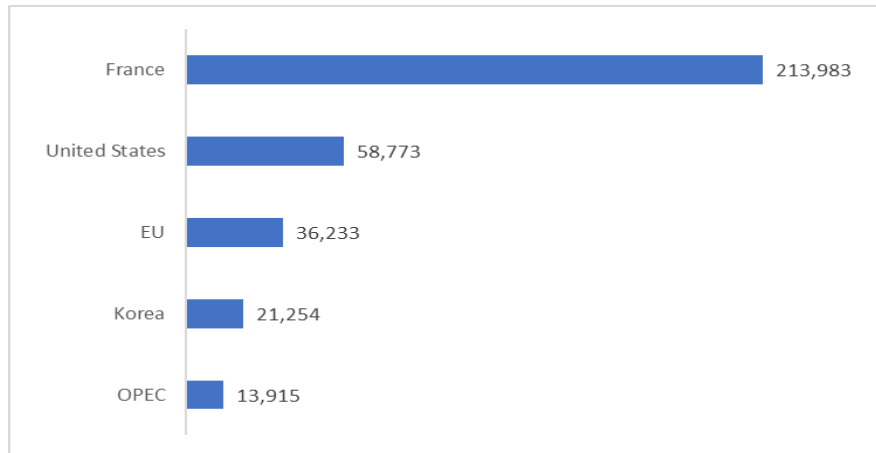
37 Sistema de las Naciones Unidas en República Dominicana. 2021. Informe de Resultados 2021.

38 Equipo Consultivo de Protección, Género y Edad (EC-PGE).

39 OXFAM. 2017. Institutionalizing protection in disaster risk reduction. A case study for The Dominican Republic.

40 WFP. 2021. Annual Country Report 2021 Dominican Republic.

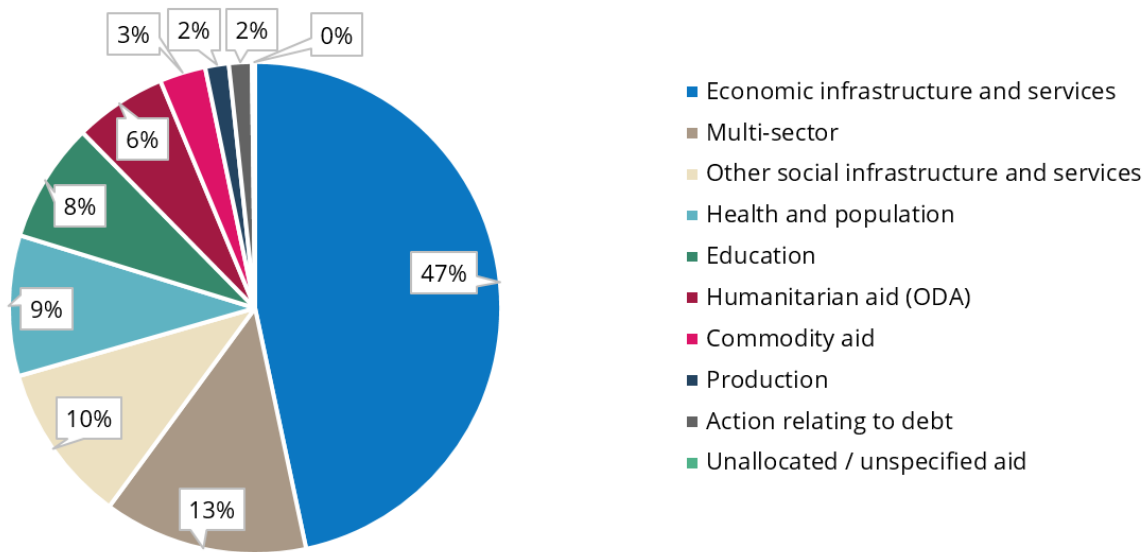
Figure 3: Top five donors of gross official development assistance for the Dominican Republic (average in USD million), 2018-2021



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) website, data extracted on 26.01.2023.

33. Official development assistance funds, between 2018 and 2020, were mostly directed to economic infrastructure and services (47 percent), with 6 percent directed to humanitarian aid (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The Dominican Republic official development assistance by sector, 2018-2021 average



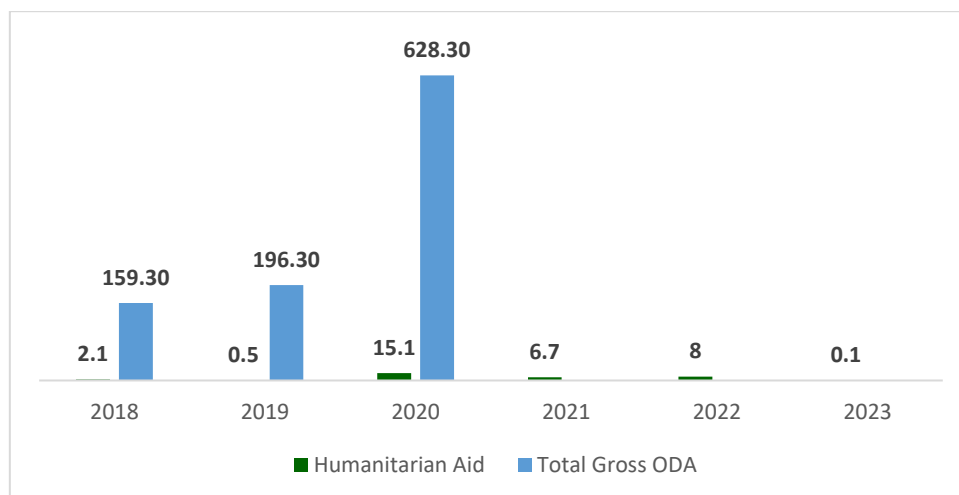
Source: OECD website, data extracted on 26.01.2023.

34. The Dominican Republic received more official development assistance than humanitarian aid, reaching a total of USD 628.3 million in 2020 while humanitarian funding was marginal, reaching almost USD 30.5 million from 2019 to 2023. Since 2019, it received USD 17.8 million humanitarian aid through the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP).⁴¹ Its main humanitarian donors between 2018 and 2023 have

41 UN-OCHA. 2023. Financial Tracking Service website, visited on 02.02.2023.

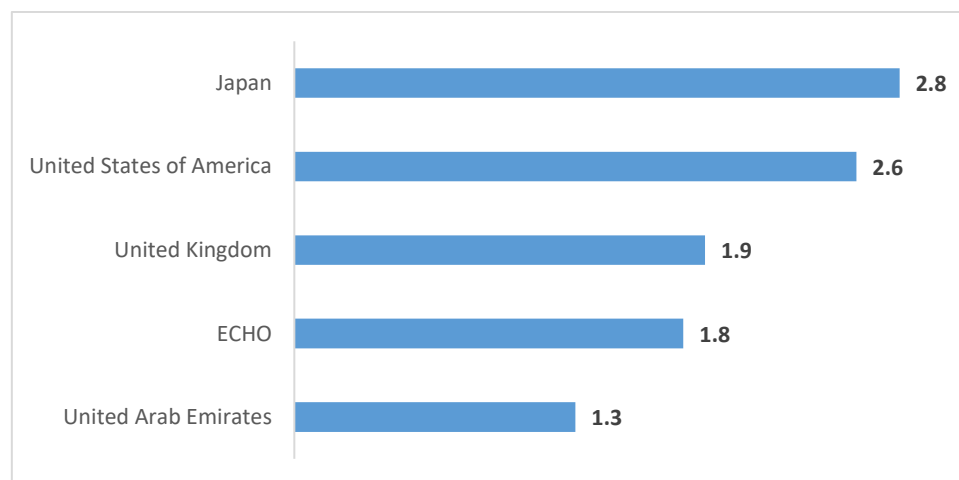
included Japan, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) and the United Arab Emirates (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

Figure 5: International assistance to the Dominican Republic (2018-2023)



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – FTS, data extracted on 26.01.2023. Note (*) No ODA data available for 2022.

Figure 6: Top five donors of humanitarian aid for the Dominican Republic, 2018-2022 annual average, USD million



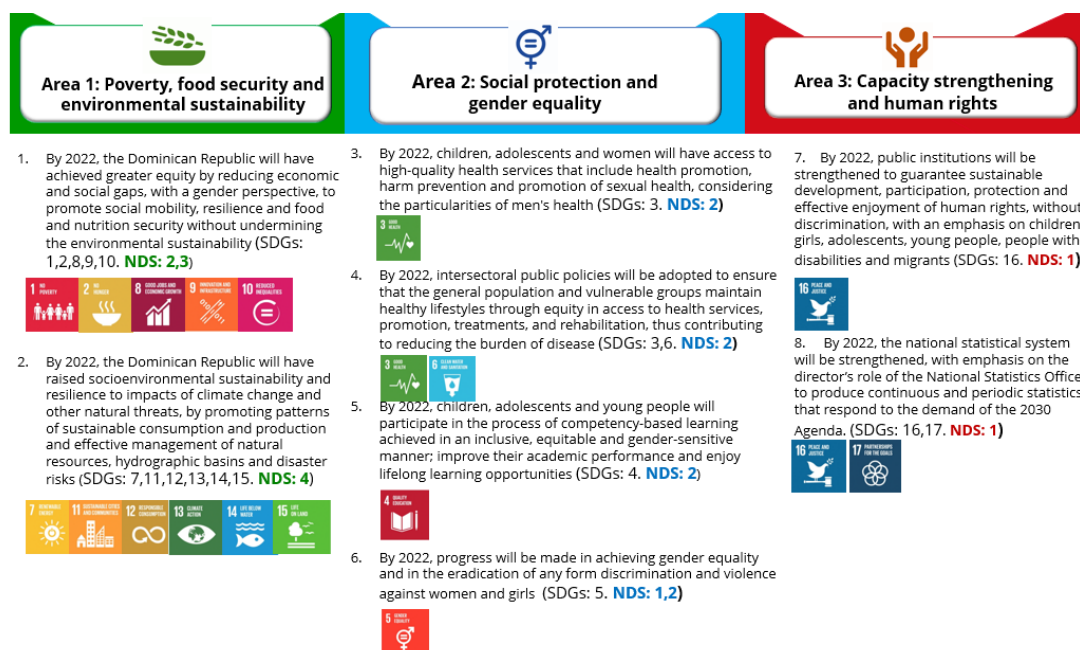
Source: UN OCHA – FTS, data extracted on 26.01.2023.

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

35. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) covers the period 2018-2022 and leverages the expertise, capacity and resources of the United Nations to support the priorities outlined in the Government’s 2030 Agenda. Developed together with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, it focuses on three strategic areas, informed by findings from a common country analysis

(CCA). The UNDAF has eight outcomes that are aligned with both the SDGs and the goals in the National Development Strategy (NDS) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2018-2022 alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and the National Development Strategy



Source: UNDAF The Dominican Republic 2018-2022.

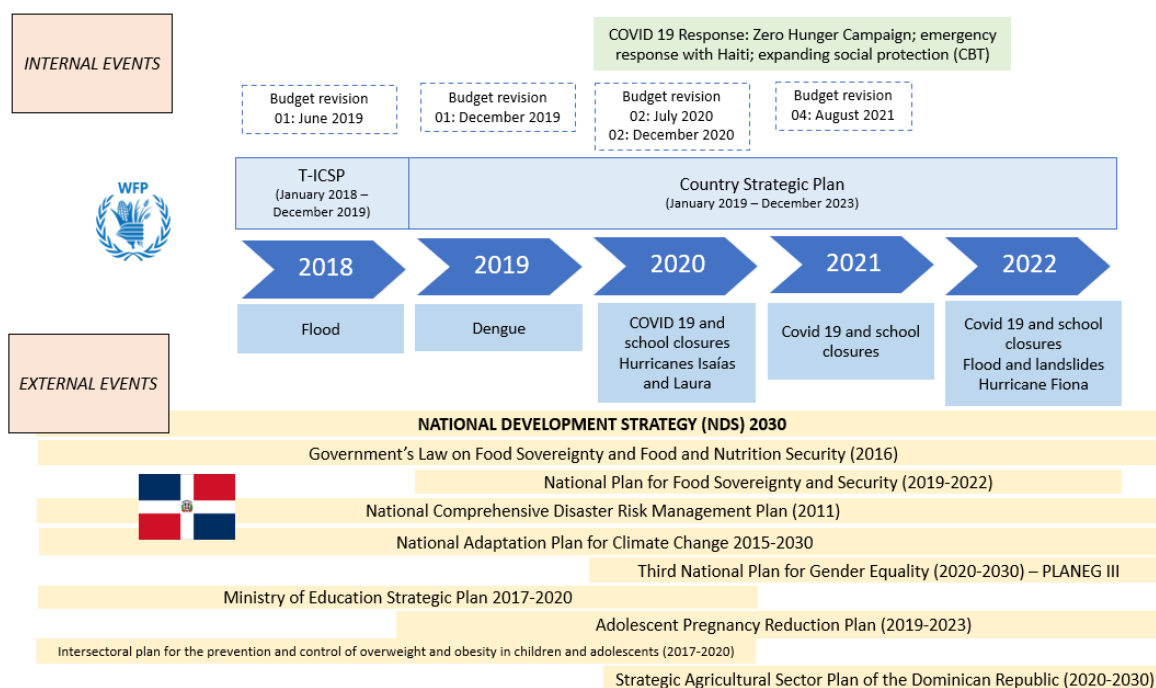
36. In April 2020, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) prepared the United Nations Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP) to COVID-19⁴² for the Dominican Republic, aiming to complement the United Nations assistance to the country in response to the pandemic. Its five axes are: i) health care systems during the crisis; ii) social protection and basic services iii) economic recovery; iv) macroeconomic response and multilateral collaborations; and v) social cohesion and community resilience.

42 United Nations in the Dominican Republic. 2020. República Dominicana, Plan Estratégico de Respuesta a COVID-19.

1.3. EVALUATION OBJECT (SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED)

37. The CSP, (2019-2023) was preceded by the T-ICSP (2018). An overview of strategic outcomes (SOs), as well as of the outputs and activities included in the two strategic plans are described in this section. Figure 8 presents the T-ICSP and the CSP inserted in the national context of the Dominican Republic.

Figure 8: Overview of WFP support to the Dominican Republic throughout the years



Source: Developed by the evaluation team.

T-ICSP and CSP overview

38. In 2018, WFP developed the T-ICSP following its operations (2009 to 2017) to support the nutrition component of the Government's flagship social protection programme *Supérate*.⁴³ The T-ICSP was also designed to contribute to the achievement of the Government's Law on Food Sovereignty and Food and

43 Formerly known as Progresando con Solidaridad or PROSOLI.

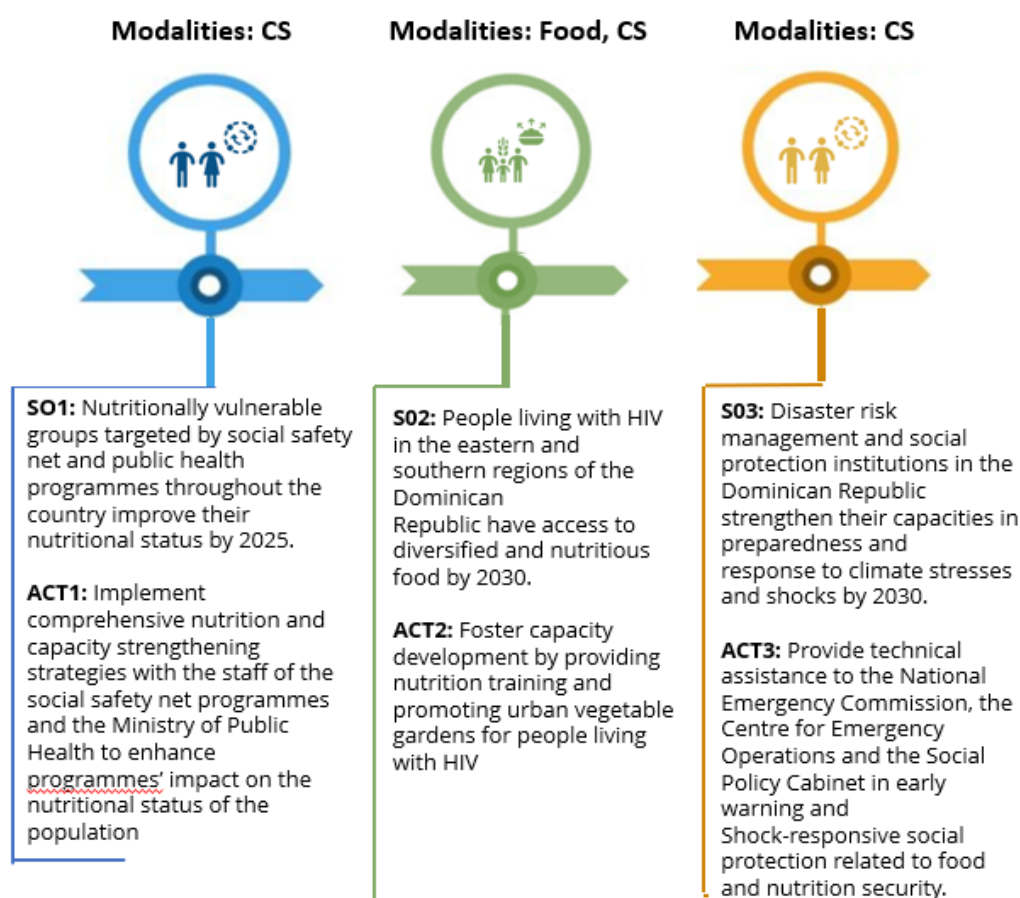
Nutrition Security promulgated in 2016 and considered the core legal instrument for reaching the zero hunger goal.

39. The initial T-ICSP budget was USD 914,632 and this increased to USD 2,731,857 due to a six-month extension from 30 June 2018 to 31 December 2018.⁴⁴ The T-ICSP was almost totally earmarked at the activity level (99.5 percent) with the Government being the first donor (59 percent).

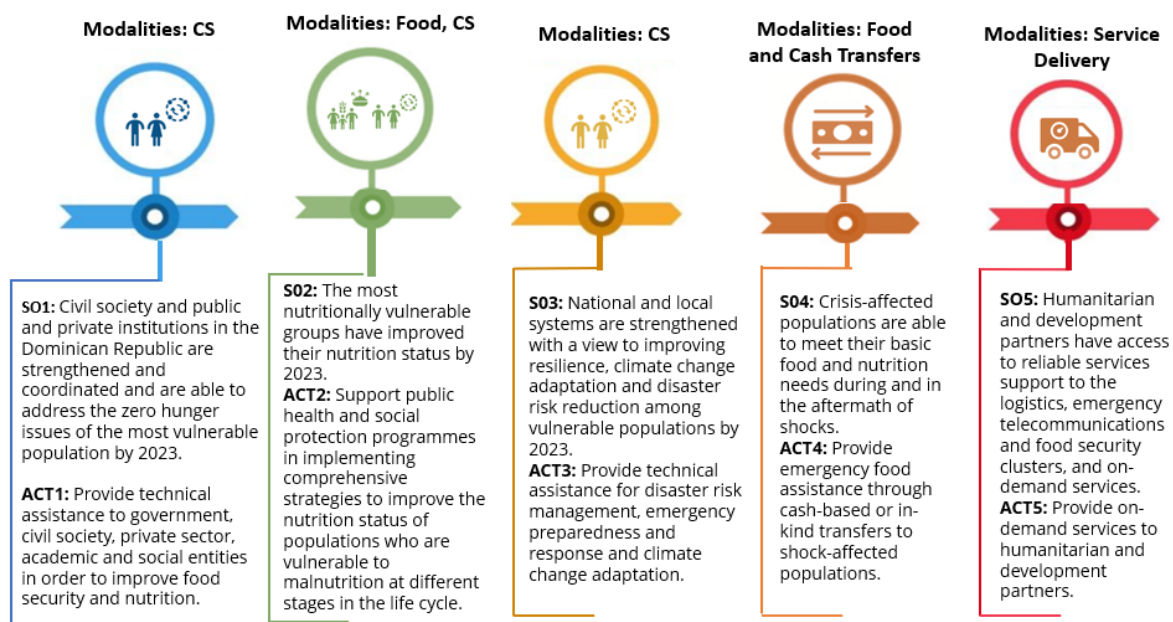
40. The CSP (2019-2023) was developed as the T-ICSP was being implemented and approved by the Executive Board (EB) in February 2019. It was designed to continue the WFP shift from direct implementation to strengthening national capacities and developing scalable programme models.

41. The CSP has five strategic outcomes (SOs) with associated activities, as illustrated in Figure 9 below. Figure 9 also provides an overview of strategic outcomes, activities and modalities of the T-ICSP, alongside the CSP, demonstrating that there was some continuity, especially with respect to SO2 and SO3 activities.

Figure 9. The Dominican Republic T-ICSP (2018) and CSP (2019-2023): overview of strategic outcomes and activities



44 WFP IRM Analytics EV country portfolio budget (CPB) Resource Overview extracted on 14.12.2022.



Source: WFP The Dominican Republic, line of sight of the T-ICSP (2018) and CSP (2019-2023), CSP budget revision #2. CS=Capacity strengthening.

42. The CSP does not have a theory of change (ToC), although there is a line of sight (LoS) that was revised and updated five times to incorporate budget revisions (BRs). Only the BR02 in 2020 introduced a significant change in structure of the CSP, as two additional strategic outcomes (4 and 5) were introduced, mainly as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the inception phase, the evaluation team in two joint workshops with the WFP country office reconstructed an overarching theory of change for the CSP, based on the lines of sight and on three strategic outcome-specific theories of change⁴⁵ that were developed by the country office (see Annex 3).

43. The original CSP budget/needs-based plan (NBP) for January 2019–December 2023 was USD 10,174,911. At the time of the preparation of this evaluation report (January 2023), the budget had been revised four times,⁴⁶ reaching a total of USD 45,149,802. The four budget revisions contributed to the CSP implementation in the following way:

- BR01 (December 2019) increased the budget up to USD 11,606,178 to accommodate additional contributions for SO3, not foreseen during the CSP submission.
- BR02 (July 2020) increased the budget by USD 16,430,187, reaching a total of USD 28,036,365, and added SO4 and SO5 to face the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The changes were related to safeguarding access to food and providing logistic coordination during emergency response.
- BR03 (December 2020) increased the budget with USD 906,494, reaching a total of USD 28,942,858 to accommodate additional contributions for SO3 and revised commodity and supply chain costs for SO4.
- BR04 (August 2021) increased the budget with USD 16,206,944 under strategic outcomes 1, 2 and 3 and covered the revised supply chain costs under SO2.

44. These changes were reflected in the needs-based plan, which increased by 429 percent from its original version. From Table 1, it is clear that 46 percent of the needs-based plan has been allocated (with

45 For the ToCs of SO1,2 and 3, see WFP-CO, 2019, Teorías de Cambio Objetivos Estratégicos 1, 2 y 3.

46 In May 2023 the budget was revised to be aligned with the new Strategic Plan 2022-2025 but did not increase / decrease the NBP..

SO1 and SO3 showing the largest percentages) and 59 percent of the allocated resources has been spent (with SO2 being the strategic outcome with the highest rate).

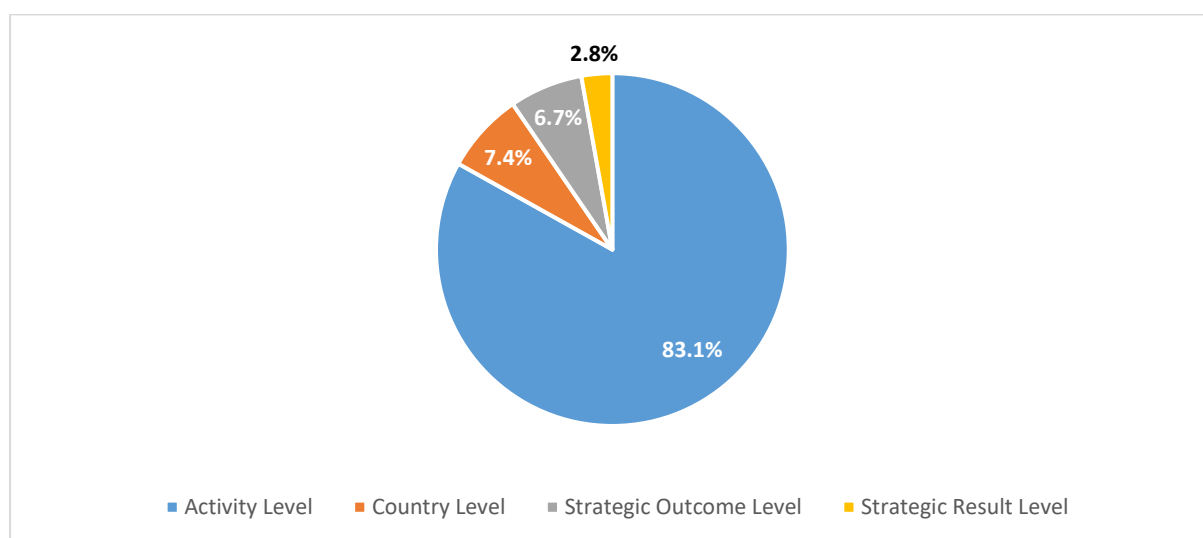
Table 1. Cumulative financial overview of CSP for the period 2019-2023 in USD

SO	NBP (original)	Current NBP	Allocated resources	Expenditure	% allocated resources on NBP (after BR 04)	% expenditure of allocated resources
SO1	1,085,243	1,437,356	838,201	474,899	58%	57%
SO2	5,845,416	10,887,094	3,655,580	3,073,357	34%	84%
SO3	1,600,034	12,525,759	7,560,375	4,593,296	60%	61%
SO4		15,160,564	6,631,287	3,350,474	44%	51%
SO5		500,001	0	0	0%	
Not SO specific	1,644,218	4,639,028	2,282,066	801,015	49%	35%
TOTAL	10,174,911	45,149,802	20,967,509	12,293,040	46%	59%

Source: WFP integrated road map (IRM) analytics, EV_CB Resource Overview CSP, data extracted on 14.12.2022. The table includes direct support costs (DSC) and indirect support costs (ISC).

45. To date, directed multilateral contributions⁴⁷ for the CSP (2019-2023) have been predominantly earmarked at the activity level (83.1 percent), while the remaining 16.9 percent have been earmarked at country, strategic outcome, and strategic result levels. The main donors are the Government, the European Commission and the United States of America.

Figure 10. Directed multilateral contributions by level of earmarking (or pre-allocation)



Source: Distribution contribution and forecast stats Dominican Republic CSP 2019 -2023_extracted on 2022/12/11.

Implementation modalities financial overview

46. WFP introduced the distribution of cash and vouchers in 2020. The adoption of this modality has constantly increased throughout the years of the implementation of the CSP, with satisfactory results. Indeed, in 2022, WFP distributed more vouchers than planned. Food distribution, on the contrary, spiked during 2020 and 2021, achieving roughly one third of its planned level – mostly to face the COVID-19 crisis as well as hurricanes – but remained marginal in 2019 and in 2022. WFP nutrition support to priority target

⁴⁷ Directed multilateral contributions are funds, which a donor requests WFP to direct to a specific Country/ies SO/s, or activity/ies.

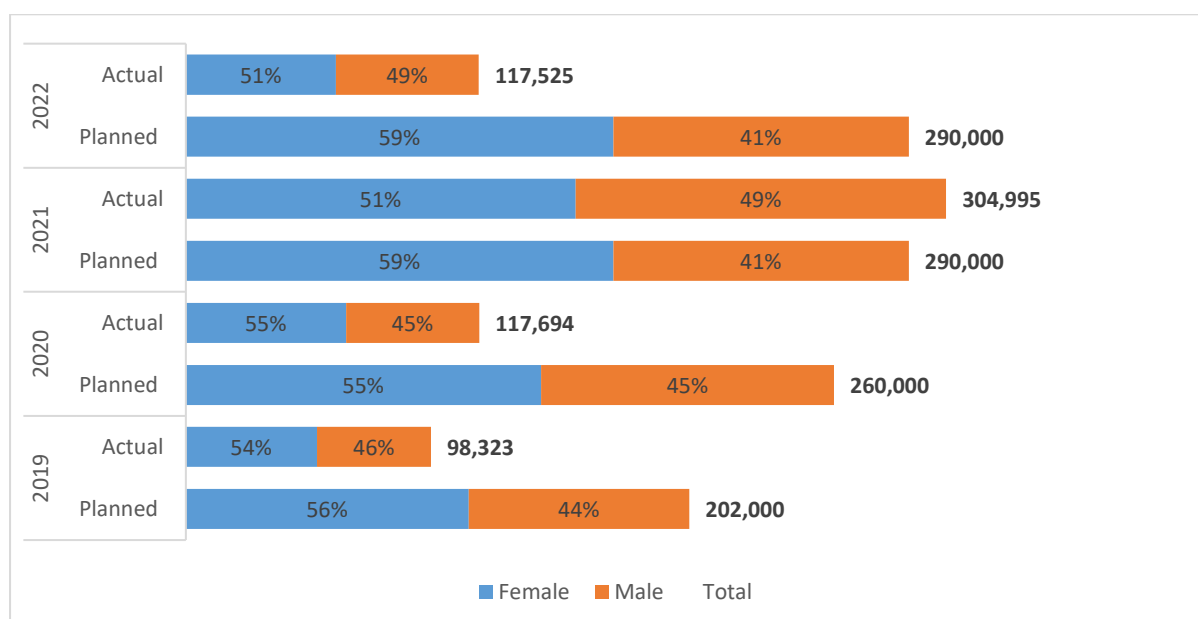
groups under SO2 is a regular ongoing action throughout all years. However, the food distribution under SO4 is activated in times of emergencies. Planned volumes of food distribution are higher in these instances, although the same challenges exist in achieving the distribution of the amounts of food that were originally planned. Cash and vouchers are generally an easier and more efficient response to be applied in emergency responses.

Beneficiaries

47. Figure 11 shows the total number of beneficiaries in the Dominican Republic. The number of actual beneficiaries achieved its highest level in 2021, when it exceeded the planned number of beneficiaries (with a ratio of 105.2 percent). The data from 2022 show that the CSP is running behind, with 40.5 percent of planned beneficiaries supported at the end of the planning period.

48. Composition of male and female beneficiaries during the implementation period of the CSP has been roughly balanced. Planned values are usually higher for females, but differences are smaller when comparing actual beneficiaries. In 2021 in particular, the actual number of male beneficiaries reached was at 125.5 percent against the number planned, while this ratio for female beneficiaries was only 91.2 percent in the same year. In 2019, 2020 and 2022 the number of males actually reached was around 50 percent compared to the number planned, but the number of females actually reached was systematically and significantly lower than 50 percent of the planned number (see Figure 11 below). These figures are clear indications that during implementation of actions under the CSP, the number of women and girls reached is lagging behind the number of men and boys reached.

Figure 11: Summary of planned and actual beneficiaries by gender (2019-2022)



Gender	2019	2020	2021	2022
	Planned vs Actual beneficiaries			
Female	46,4%	45,1%	91,2%	35.1%
Male	51,6%	45,4%	125,5%	48.4%
Total beneficiaries	48,7%	45,3%	105,2%	40.5%

Source: COMET report CM-R001b.

1.4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Methodological approach

49. The evaluation was framed by the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, coverage, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency, four key evaluation questions and 18 sub-questions (see the evaluation matrix - Annex 4).

- EQ1: To what extent is the CSP evidence-based and strategically focused to address the needs of the most vulnerable?
- EQ2: What is the extent and quality of WFP's specific contribution to country strategic plan strategic outcomes in the Dominican Republic?
- EQ3: To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to country strategic plan outputs and strategic outcomes?
- EQ4: What are the factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the country strategic plan?

50. The evaluation used a theory-based approach, with mixed methods to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to assess WFP performance and contribution made through implementation of the CSP.

51. It embedded gender and human rights and other broader inclusion issues (such as disability and migrants from Haiti) in its methodology, as detailed in Annex 5. This included ensuring that samples were geographically representative of the actions of WFP in the Dominican Republic, and that key groups participated in data collection. As the evaluation matrix was designed to include evaluative and assessment perspectives of women and other vulnerable groups, the voices of women and other vulnerable groups have been heard (women represent 61 percent of key informant interviews (KIIs), and 34 percent of the beneficiaries listened in the focus group discussions (FDGs)). In addition, data collection was carried out using a gender lens; where available, disaggregated data by gender have been analysed. Finally, the evaluation report includes gender- and inclusion-sensitive analysis, findings, and conclusions. For further details, please refer to Annex 5 and Annex 6.

52. Data were collected in Santo Domingo, Monte Cristi, Dajabón and Mao, based on inception phase document review and discussions. Data were collected through 115 key informant and fieldwork interviews (Annex 9) and 6 focus groups discussions (Annex 9, see also Annexe 8 for field mission agenda. Documents

reviewed ranged from internal and public WFP reports to national policies and frameworks and related evaluation studies and reports (see Bibliography in Annex 14).

Analysis and validation process

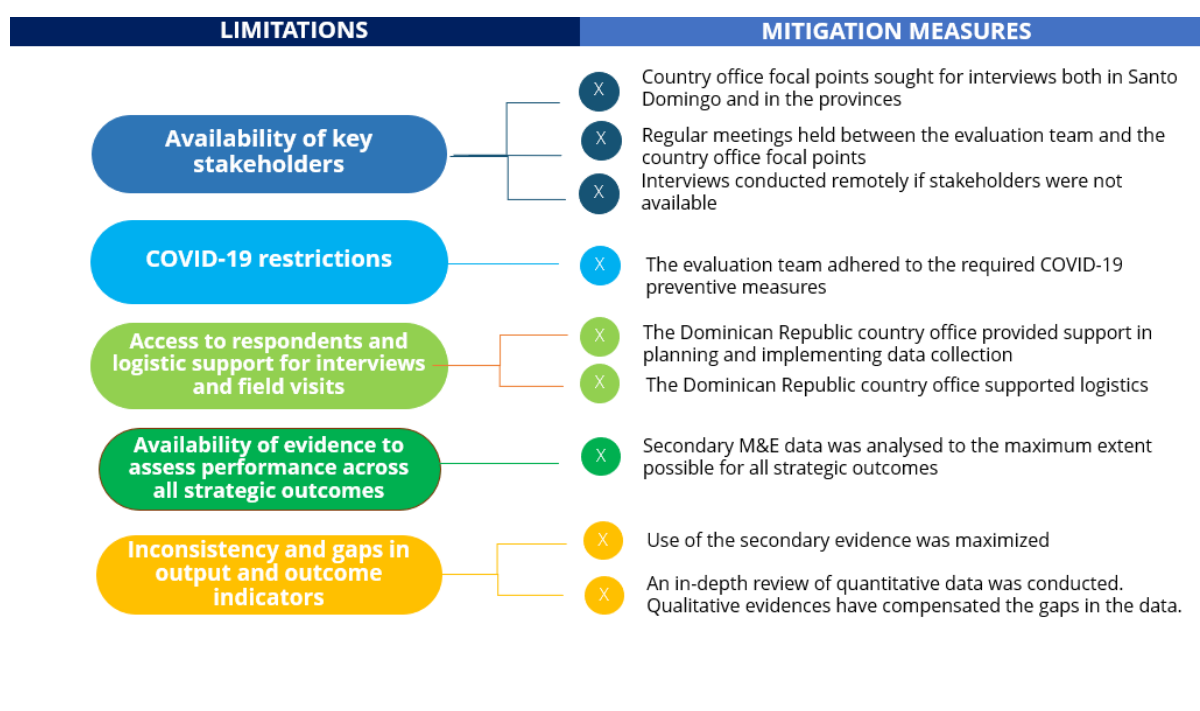
53. Findings from various data sources were triangulated. Secondary data analysis, related to indicators, was limited due to data gaps and inconsistencies. However, quantitative evidence has been used to support findings from qualitative data sources.

54. The qualitative and quantitative data were collated in a comprehensive evidence database, organized according to the evaluation matrix.

Risks and limitations

55. A summary of the limitations experienced is given in Figure 12. More extensive detail is provided in Annex 5.

Figure 12. Summary of the limitations and mitigating measures



Source: Compiled by the evaluation team.

Ethical considerations and quality assurance

56. The evaluation complied with the United Nation Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards and good practice, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC). The deliverables were quality assured according to guidelines from the Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (CEQAS), by an external and independent quality assurance advisor.

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 existing evidence on the hunger challenges, and the food security and nutrition issues prevailing in the Dominican Republic to ensure its relevance at design stage?*

Finding 1. At the design stage the CSP and related interventions, including emergency responses, were informed by thorough and comprehensive context and risk analyses using multiple evidence sources related to hunger challenges, food security and nutrition issues. However, these analyses were not regularly updated to inform subsequent reviews of the CSP.

57. WFP undertook a systematic and comprehensive context analysis to inform the preparation and formulation of the ICSP and the current CSP, as evidenced by an analysis of the documents⁵⁷ used to inform the CSP. In addition, a variety of WFP assessment tools and data sources were also used (Annex 14).

58. The more comprehensive Integral Context Analysis and Food Security Market analysis has not been updated since 2017 to inform and update the CSP at a strategic level. However, some of the more specific data sources used for context analysis were regularly updated, (monthly, quarterly and annually). These data were sourced from WFP internal tools, the Dominican Republic's National Statistics Office (ONE) on economic, production and consumption and household data, the national Unified System for Beneficiaries (SIUBEN) integrated poverty index, the Ministry of Agriculture on agricultural production and the National Meteorological Institute on rainfall.

59. At the corporate level, WFP has developed instruments for context and risk assessment in situations of shock and emergencies and these have also been used in preparing the WFP emergency responses in the Dominican Republic, where cyclone- and excessive rainfall-related emergencies are frequent, such as Cyclone Fiona in 2022.

60. Risk analyses and instruments have been updated and improved throughout the CSP period and used to inform project design, though not always with participation of local actors, who have specific knowledge and needs, as evidenced in the fieldwork interviews (see Annex 9).

61. Risk management has gradually become more strategic and holistic,⁵⁸ by, for example, linking the National Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response System (NS-PMR) with the social protection system. Risk assessment is also increasingly done in United Nations consortiums and inter-agency assessments and in the United Nations (United Nations Emergency Team - ÚNETE) in situations of emergencies.

62. At the design and planning phase of specific project interventions, WFP contracts external expertise to identify and prioritize beneficiaries' needs. To ensure independence, this is not done with local partners, although they are consulted. However, this practice limits the possibilities to include specific knowledge and expertise available on the local context and networks in order to ensure that the interventions are optimally targeted to respond to the gender-disaggregated needs of the correct target groups.⁵⁹

57 WFP. no date. Construyendo el Plan Estratégico del PMA 2018-2023 en RD. See Annex 14 for a complete bibliography.

58 As shown by ACRs for the period 2018-2022 and in interviews with government partners and international partners.

59 WFP. no date. Costruyendo el Plan Estratégico del PMA 2018-2023 en RD. This was observed during field visits conducted for fieldwork interviews.

Finding 2. Partners and stakeholders were included in the CSP design and planning process, particularly at the national and government levels. However, stakeholder participation was reduced in subsequent budget revisions, and similarly, in the design and planning of specific interventions at the local (subnational) level.

63. WFP undertook an inclusive and comprehensive consultation process with national partners in 2017 that informed the T-ICSP and CSP.⁶⁰ In a series of stakeholder workshops (two) and individual consultations, 78 representatives of the national government, civil society (including women's organizations), private sector, academia, churches, embassies and international development partners⁶¹ participated in this process. All key WFP partners from within the Government were consulted.

64. The consultation process undertaken to inform the CSP was aligned with the Government's own process to prepare a road map for the realization of the SDG 2 to achieve "zero hunger" in the Dominican Republic. The consultation process was reported to be well prepared and structured.⁶² WFP corporate requirements (strategic objectives and intervention strategies) also informed the CSP structure.⁶³ This means WFP adopted both a top-down and bottom-up approach to design the CSP.

65. WFP aligned well with national-level policy and strategic priorities and the Government's SDG 2 road map to zero hunger.⁶⁴ WFP did this by building on its longstanding relationships with key national partners, such as the ministries of the Presidency and Vice-Presidency, Economy and Planning and Public Health (including their subordinated institutes) with which it had collaborated in previous CSPs.

66. Stakeholder consultations did not take place for the budget revision BR02, (July 2020). The CSP underwent a major revision and two new strategic objectives (SO4 and SO5) were added to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to incorporate direct assistance actions in the programme with the extra funding that became available for these COVID-19 responses.

67. Rationale for the BR02 budget revision indicated that "WFP's crisis response is part of the United Nations' response in support to the Government Commission for COVID-19, which coordinates the national response".⁶⁵ This statement suggests that there has been a general alignment with other United Nations agencies and the Government in applying the changes identified during the CSP planning process.

68. The evaluation did not find evidence of beneficiary consultation, from 2018-2019, to initially inform the CSP design process. From the documents reviewed,⁶⁶ it is, however, more apparent that WFP paid more attention to this from 2020 onwards, via accountability to affected population mechanisms, especially for social protection and risk management programmes. Actions focusing on strengthening accountability to affected populations are included in the WFP annual performance plans (APPs) and annual country reports (ACRs) (2020 and 2021). These actions, are mostly limited to informing target groups about WFP and the objectives of the activities, rather than consulting about their preferences or making them directly participate in the design and planning of specific interventions.⁶⁷ This could be observed in the case study field visits in northwest Dominican Republic and was also regularly commented on by implementing partners in the key informant interviews.

69. However, since 2020, there has been an improvement and beneficiaries have been generally better informed about the assistance they were about to receive and about the selection processes, through regular community meetings with WFP, local partners and government counterparts. In these meetings, beneficiary groups were also better informed through communication materials adapted to the COVID-19 context and, in 2021, the WFP country office has further emphasized proper consultation with target groups during project identification and preparation to achieve a better match of its assistance with the gender-

60 WFP. no date. Construyendo el Plan Estrategico del PMA 2018-2023 en RD.

61 From the national government (42), civil society (8), private sector (4), academia and experts (6), churches (5) and embassies and international development partners (13).

62 Stakeholders interviewed confirmed this.

63 As reported by key informants in this evaluation.

64 Stakeholders and partners in the Dominican Republic confirmed this during interviews.

65 WFP CO DR. 2020. Crisis response revision of Dominican Republic Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023) and corresponding budget increase (signed 2-7-2020). P. 2.

66 ACRs 2018 and 2019.

67 ACR 2018 and ACR 2019.

disaggregated needs of these groups. The consultation aimed at improving project design and transfer mechanisms, particularly the cash-based transfers (CBT). Subsequent cash-based transfer actions were deemed more appropriate as they took into consideration the beneficiary's priority needs and concerns, as indicated by partners and beneficiaries in cash-based transfer interventions interviewed in this evaluation.⁶⁸

Finding 3. The CSP and its specific interventions have a clear focus on inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, though many interventions miss a specific gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) or accountability to affected population (AAP) approach to produce specific, differential and desirable effects on these target groups.

70. The projects and plans of the CSP systematically embed inclusion and participation of the most vulnerable groups, as well as including these groups during implementation of activities, monitoring and reporting. These groups include women, people living with HIV (PLHIV), the elderly, disabled people, young children, Haitian migrants and undocumented people.⁶⁹

71. While disability is part of the WFP approach to inclusion and WFP reaches out to disabled people within broader beneficiary groups, targeted actions to respond to the specific needs of disabled persons or to facilitate their active participation in activities could not be identified and were not observed during the case study field visits.

72. WFP actions in the Dominican Republic have a specific focus on inclusion of Haitians and undocumented people. The country office applies the WFP corporate approach to protection, which includes "discriminated and marginalized groups".⁷⁰ This is relevant as these groups are generally not targeted by government interventions.⁷¹ Haitians constitute an important proportion of the total population, and are among the most vulnerable groups in the country. While they can benefit from medical assistance and basic education, where no identity documents are required, they cannot receive other educational support or access to social protection services, as these are only open to Dominican Republic citizens. Within the United Nations, the attention to and inclusion of Haitian migrants is a high priority and WFP collaborates with other United Nations agencies such as UNHCR to advocate for their rights. This is not easy considering the historical sensitivity attached to Haitian migrants and refugees. There is no broad support from the public for inclusion of Haitian migrants into their society. Needs of these groups are served by WFP, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), following their mandates and in consultation with Dominican Republic public institutions but not in direct collaboration.⁷²

73. There are also other vulnerable groups in the country, particularly adolescent youth (suffering from challenges such as delinquency, unintended pregnancy, child labour), who are generally not sufficiently covered in government programmes with actions to empower them through education, economic advancement or social protection, although there are some exceptions, such as a special youth programme run by Supérate. The CSP is not different from this and it also has a limited focus on youth, their needs and corresponding interventions.⁷³

2.1.2 To what extent is the CSP aligned to national policies and plans and to the SDGs?

Finding 4. CSP objectives are well aligned with national policies, strategies and plans of the Government of the Dominican Republic, as well as with those of specific partners working in the key areas of cooperation between WFP and the Government. In particular this includes those working within the national health system and on social protection policies, food security and nutrition, and emergency preparedness and response. On emergency assistance to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti and on planning for both nations across the borders, the WFP CSP is

68 ACR 2020 and ACR 2021.

69 As identified from analysis documents (plans and reports) and reported during stakeholders KIIs.

70 WFP Strategy for Protection and Accountability to Affected People (2019-2021).

71 As reported by key informants from WFP, UN and GoDR.

72 As confirmed by in KIIs with GoDR and UN partners.

73 As evidenced during field visits and from interviews with cooperating partners and local government.

aligned with shared priorities for island-level actions of the United Nations and the Government in the area of climate change preparedness, mitigation and resilience responses.

74. WFP closely aligned itself with the Government as it prepared its road map⁷⁴ (2018) towards achieving SDG 2 zero hunger by 2030. WFP coordinated with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to provide technical assistance during this process. These consultations were useful and informed the WFP T-ICSP and the CSP planning processes.

75. The close working relationship between WFP and the Government helped to secure CSP alignment with government policies and strategies related to SDG 2, as well as, at the institutional level, covering key intervention areas within CSP strategic outcomes (SOs), as illustrated in Table 2.

74 GoDR, Vicepresidencia, 2018. Hambre cero al año 2030 en la República Dominicana. Revisión estratégica y hoja de ruta para el logro del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 2 – Hambre Cero.

Table 2. Alignment of CSP strategic outcomes and focus areas with national policies and systems, policy-level and coordinating partners and implementing partners

CSP SOs	Focus areas	National policies	Alignment	National system	Policy and coordination partners	Implementation Partners
SO1 & 2	Zero hunger campaign activities, nutrition counselling, food fortification	2016 Law on Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutrition Security; Plan Nacional para la Soberanía y Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional 2019-2022.	Eradication of hunger and conditions of malnutrition with a transforming approach and capacity strengthening in public policies of food and nutrition security.	National System for Food and Nutritional Sovereignty and Security	Ministry of the Vice-Presidency, CONASSAN	SETESSAN, Red SSAN
SO2	Provision of micronutrients	Plan intersectorial para la prevención y control del sobrepeso y la obesidad en la niñez y la adolescencia: República Dominicana 2017-2020; Plan Estratégico nacional de Nutrición 2013-2016.	Addressing childhood obesity, reinforce programmes of fortification of foods with micronutrients.	National Health System	Ministry of Public Health	UNAPs, SAI
SO2, SO4	School feeding Food assistance to young children	Plan Decenal de Educación 2008-2018; MINERD Strategic Plan 2017-2020; Plan intersectorial para la prevención y control del sobrepeso y la obesidad en la niñez y la adolescencia: República Dominicana 2017-2020.	Strengthening of school programmes to increase promotion of healthy food consumption, halt the rise of childhood obesity.	National education and early childhood centres	Ministry of Education	INAIPI, INABIE
SO2 and SO4	COVID-19 responses Food assistance CBT to vulnerable groups	National Development Strategy (NDS) 2030; Plan Estratégico Sectorial para la Inclusión Social y Económica (PEISE) 2018-2024.	Poverty, equal rights and ensuring access to social protection and safety nets programmes.	Social Protection Network	Ministry of the Presidency, Social Policy Coordination Office	Supérate (Prosoli), ADESS, SIUBEN, Comedores Económicos, CONAVI, HSIDA
SO3 and SO4	Emergency preparedness and responses	Plan Nacional de Gestión Integral del Riesgo de Desastres; Plan Nacional de adaptación para el cambio climático 2015-2030.	Development of risk management mechanisms, strengthen institutional capacity in emergency preparedness, prevention and response.	National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response	Ministry of the Presidency, CNE	COE, Civil Defence, Cruz Roja
Gender equality (cross-cutting)	Gender equality, equity, women empowerment and wider inclusion	Plan Nacional de Igualdad y Equidad de Género 2020-2030 (PLANEG III) and Plan de Reducción de Embarazos en Adolescentes 2019-2023.	Women economic empowerment, equal social organization of care, equal access to services and goods, addressing gender-based violence.	National System for Gender Equality (Comisión Mixta para la Transversalización con Enfoque de Género	Ministry of the Presidency, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MMUJER)	Civil society

Source: Developed by the evaluation team, based on inventory of national partners involved in the CSP (2019-2022).

76. WFP work was strongly aligned with institutions responsible for implementing specific programmes and projects.⁷⁵ There were bilateral partnerships established for this purpose. WFP was also involved in policy dialogue and technical assistance at the level of specific ministries and commissions responsible for policy development and coordination. There were however no long-term agreements or memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for this cooperation.

77. The Government's National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response shows some coordination challenges across the different partners that comprise it. While the respective partners, such as the National Emergency Commission (CNE), the Emergency Operations Centre (COE), the Civil Defence (Defensa Civil) and the Dominican Red Cross (CRD) are individually strong and effective, key informants within the system and among civil society organizations and United Nations agencies confirm that coordination across these organizations is difficult. This is also recognized in the WFP annual report of 2021, which states: "The reform of the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response and social protection systems posed challenges on the engagement with the Government in 2021. It slowed down efforts to achieve inter-institutional coordination in emergency management."⁷⁶ As a consequence, WFP has reoriented its approach to cooperate more with specific partners on the ground to work on emergency preparedness, mitigation and responses at local and regional levels, instead of at the national level.

78. At the level of United Nations agencies in the Dominican Republic, WFP, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)⁷⁷ have been actively coordinating to provide technical assistance to the Government for preparing its road map for food systems (2021).⁷⁸ For WFP, under SO1 and SO2 in the CSP, this road map provides a framework for aligning with government policies and strategies to achieve food security at the national level and under SO3 with resilience building and climate change adaptation. Coordination of United Nations actions have also occurred around its COVID-19 response plan⁷⁹ and in emergency actions in its ÚNETE group, since the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently around Hurricane Fiona responses in the autumn of 2022.

79. The Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) has been calling for coordination of actions within United Nations agencies at the level of both nations to address the humanitarian and institutional crisis in Haiti, which is also affecting the Dominican Republic with a high flow of migrants and refugees. In spite of the coordination of actions across both nations, responding to this crisis is challenging.

80. The United Nations and the Government, during consultations on the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in 2022, agreed on two areas for joint planning and actions at the island level. These areas are trade and climate change, which have become shared priorities for the Government and the United Nations at the island level. The Government, during these consultations did not agree with a comprehensive joint planning approach for both countries, in the form of a shared chapter in the upcoming UNSDCF documents for Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as proposed by the United Nations.

Finding 5. WFP CSP objectives are well aligned with the SDGs, particularly with SDG 2 for achieving zero hunger. However, objectives and strategies related to SDG 17 on partnerships, have been well developed with government partners, but only to a lesser extent with civil society and the private sector.

75 KIIs with key stakeholders in the public institutions.

76 ACR 2021. P. 18.

77 Rome-Based organizations (RBOs).

78 GoDR, Min. de Agricultura, 2021. Hoja de Ruta Nacional hacia un Sistema alimentario sostenible, resiliente y Equitativo.

79 UN in DR. 2020. República Dominicana Plan Estratégico de respuesta a COVID-19.

81. The close alignment of WFP with SDG 2 is embedded in its core organizational mandate and CSP SO1 and SO2. At the national policy level, the alignment is further strengthened, through links with the Government's road map to achieving zero hunger (2018) and the National Food Security Policy (2021).

82. WFP has further aligned its nutrition and food security approach and support to the specific situation in the Dominican Republic, as an upper middle-income country. It has focused on challenges related to different dimensions of malnutrition, including the consequences of bad feeding practices, such as anaemia, diabetes and hypertension.

83. The CSP also aligns with SDG 17, partnerships for development. Two of the CSP strategic objectives (SO1 and SO5) are focused on partnerships. Under SO1, related to the zero hunger (SDG 2) campaign, alliances were built: with the Government, mostly in technical assistance and joint implementation arrangements; with civil society organizations, mostly as implementing partners in projects (such as Plan International, World Vision and Centro de Estudios y Solidaridad con América Latina (CESAL)); and with private sector partners, as providers of technical assistance and material and technical support (such as Dutch State Mines (DSM) and Mastercard Caribbean). And under SO3, WFP partnered with the World Bank in supporting the Government to develop a shock-responsive social protection strategy (SRSP).

84. Other SDGs that are relevant for WFP in the Dominican Republic include SDG 3 on health, SDG 5 on gender, SDG 10 on inequalities and SDG 13 on climate action. However, reference to these is limited in CSP and other reporting documents.

2.1.3 To what extent is the CSP coherent and aligned with the wider United Nations actions in the Dominican Republic and includes appropriate strategic partnerships based on the WFP's comparative advantage in the country?

Finding 6. CSP objectives and programmes are well aligned with the UNDAF/UNSCDF, particularly under the areas of food security, provision of social services and institutional strengthening, as aspects of the three key strategic areas of the UNDAF 2018-2022. There is considerable overlap of activity areas and competencies among different United Nations partners, particularly the Rome-based agencies (RBAs), particularly in the area of food security-related actions. The WFP programme cycle is not harmonized with the United Nations planning cycle, as it follows United Nations planning by year.

85. The CSP is well aligned with the objectives and programmatic strategies of the UNDAF/UNSCDF. In the most recent UNDAF for the Dominican Republic⁸⁰ for 2018-2022, the three key strategic areas of cooperation were: a) poverty alleviation, food security and environmental sustainability; b) provision of social services and gender equality; and c) institutional strengthening and human rights. The WFP CSP is integrally addressing the first two areas in its food security and nutrition actions and in providing social services to priority population groups. Two strategic outcomes in the CSP address strengthening of partnerships as an important aspect of institutional strengthening.

86. Within the United Nations, WFP is currently coordinating the ÚNETE group, which has become increasingly active as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this group, several United Nations partners work more closely together in coordinating COVID-19 and other emergency responses, such as Hurricane Fiona. This development shows increased efforts of United Nations agencies in working on rapid inter-agency assessments and joint actions to respond to emergencies.

87. Coordination and cooperation among the Rome-based agencies (WFP, FAO and IFAD) are reported to be one of the most difficult areas for achieving complementarity and avoiding overlaps. FAO and WFP have often operated in very similar environments, working with the same partners for food security-related matters. They have collaborated to provide technical assistance to the Government for preparing road maps for achieving zero hunger and food security. A notable example of this is the 'Pro-rural Project' jointly implemented with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPyD) by FAO and WFP and funded by IFAD. Despite these efforts, coordination between WFP and FAO shows room for improvement. United Nations agencies, including WFP and FAO, and in-country partners regularly call for a clearer division

80 Ministerio de Economía, Planificación y Desarrollo y Sistema de las Naciones Unidas. 2018.

of roles and responsibilities between the two United Nations agencies and more efforts for joint implementation.

88. The WFP country strategic plans do not follow the same timeframe as the five-year planning cycle of the UNDAF/UNSCDF, which is followed by WFP one year later. United Nations partners indicate harmonization of the timeframe of WFP planning with UNDAF/UNSCDF would be desirable.⁸¹

Finding 7. WFP has demonstrated clear comparative advantage, as a strategic partner in the Dominican Republic, particularly with respect to its capacity to provide quick logistical support during emergency responses and in its nutrition-related interventions, where WFP leadership is exemplary. The comparative advantage of WFP is less obvious in relation to food security and the humanitarian-development nexus.

89. The key competencies of WFP and its comparative advantage are clearly recognized and acknowledged by United Nations agencies, the Government and civil society.⁸² These competencies include quick and efficient logistical support during emergency preparedness and response, technological experience and expertise in data management, risk assessments and surveys, use of modern technology, and emergency supply chain methods and tools. In nutrition-related issues, the accumulated experience of WFP in food fortification and production, and in the provision and distribution of micronutrients is widely recognized. Most national partners consider FAO as the most relevant and competent United Nations agency for food security, particularly food production.

90. WFP experience and expertise in adaptive social protection is also widely recognized, though this experience is not yet sufficiently and strongly applied during emergency preparedness, mitigation and response. This is particularly due to the fact that adaptive social protection, needed to build resilience against shocks, is not well developed as an approach within the NS-PMR. Social protection policies and instruments, developed by the Government, are not yet well linked with and integrated within emergency responses. This is an area where national partners indicate that the continued technical assistance of WFP is still needed.

2.1.4 To what extent is the CSP design internally coherent and based on a clear theory of change articulating WFP's role and contributions in a realistic manner and based on its comparative advantages, as defined in the WFP strategic plan?

Finding 8. The WFP country office has developed clear intervention logics and theories of change for the first three strategic outcomes of the CSP. However, there is no explicit theory of change for the CSP as a whole, which has contributed to a "silo" style of management and implementation of the CSP under specific and separate strategic outcomes, thus limiting synergies across strategic outcomes.

91. The theory of change reconstruction process conducted in this evaluation (see Annex 3) showed a number of weaknesses in the CSP design that have limited synergies across the strategic outcomes and limits the coherence of the CSP as a whole, as noted below:

- The strategic outcomes in the CSP are developed as stand-alone pillars in the overall CSP, not allowing for easy linkages and synergies across other strategic outcomes. The strategic outcomes guided the distribution of roles and responsibilities within the country office, with different persons leading different strategic outcomes. While at the start of the CSP, there was also an overall programme manager for the entire CSP, this function was not continued after the programme manager moved to another position. Recruitment of a replacement for this position is still ongoing. This further encouraged the siloed approach and affected internal coherence.
- The strategic outcomes are linked to corporate-level strategic outcomes and, at the same time, they include references to specific SDG targets (capacity strengthening (17.9), end malnutrition (2.2), everyone has access to food (2.1), enhance global partnerships (17.16)) as well as WFP

81 Reported by several UN partner during KIIs.

82 As reported during interviews.

focus areas (root causes, resilience, crisis response). As such, they are combining many different elements at the design stage. Incorporating national context and priorities into WFP corporate-level requirements enables a closer link to corporate-level planning, monitoring and evaluation requirements, but also inhibits the same alignment with specific country context and priorities.

- Strategic outcomes 4 and 5 were added later to the CSP. SO4 particularly focused on operationalizing SO2 and SO3 into transfer mechanisms to prioritize target groups and SO5 is focused on demand-driven service delivery to partners. As such these two strategic outcomes support the achievement of other strategic outcomes.
- Linking social protection with emergency responses is an important WFP area of expertise, but it is operationalized under multiple strategic outcomes. The links between actions under SO1 and SO2 on the one hand and SO3 on the other, are weakly developed and this limits the capacity to further develop a strong approach on shock resistant protection.

92. An important element of the intervention strategy is capacity strengthening of national partner organizations. This strategy is not yet well captured in an intervention logic and theory of change and as a result there is no clear vision on the desired outcomes, impact and transition strategies for capacity development interventions.

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

Finding 9. WFP has remained relevant throughout the CSP implementation period. It has ensured timely (re)alignment and development of (new) partnerships in the context of political and institutional change in the Dominican Republic, including COVID-19.

93. WFP has adapted well to the changing context and developments in the Dominican Republic, a country experiencing rapid economic development and now as a higher middle-income country with well-established institutions.

94. These characteristics were taken into account at the CSP design stage and have informed subsequent changes. Key actions developed during the CSP implementation period, in coordination and cooperation with a number of key national partners, include the following:

- **Zero hunger campaign:** The activities under this campaign, developed under SO1, included a focus on quality of nutrition and the double and triple burdens of malnutrition, such as obesity, hypertension and anaemia. According to the Global Nutrition Report, obesity has increased to alarmingly high rates.⁸³ WFP and its partners' awareness-raising and nutrition counselling activities have increasingly addressed these new health challenges.
- **Emergency response capacity:** WFP has addressed the worsening crisis in Haiti on both sides of the border; specifically in the Dominican Republic by establishing emergency response capacity on the Dominican Republic side of the border (logistic corridor) with support of international development partners (ECHO and the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)), the Government and civil society organizations, particularly the Dominican Red Cross.
- **Support to NS-PMR:** WFP field experience and broad knowledge of humanitarian issues during emergency response is widely recognized and this has made WFP a relevant and reliable strategic partner to the Government in supporting the development of the NS-PMR and in providing technical assistance to the system, especially in planning, prepositioning and providing a rapid response.
- **WFP leads the SRSP task force:** International development partners and WFP donors for CSP prioritized SO3 activities. These donors recognize the strategic role of WFP in emergency

⁸³ The Global Nutrition Report (globalnutritionreport.org) provides the following estimates: "The country has shown no progress towards achieving the target for obesity, with an estimated 38.1% of adult (aged 18 years and over) women and 25.0% of adult men living with obesity. The Dominican Republic's obesity prevalence is higher than the regional average of 30.7% for women and 22.8% for men. At the same time, diabetes is estimated to affect 13.6% of adult women and 10.0% of adult men."

preparedness and shock-responsive social protection (SRP). During the CSP period, SO3, with the subsequent budget revisions, became increasingly important. WFP is currently leading the SRSP task force as a platform for establishing potential synergies across risk management, emergency response and social protection actors. Recent changes include the newly established social subsidies to emergency-affected populations linked with the Government's national social protection programme (Supérate). This is done by providing cash-based transfers to the most vulnerable households affected by shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent Hurricane Fiona. These newly developed subsidy mechanisms are attributed to the work undertaken by the SRSP task force in which WFP takes a leading role.

- **New funding opportunities:** As a response to diminishing funding from traditional donors, WFP is increasingly exploring new funding opportunities to continue its operations in the country (See EQ4 for further details).

95. COVID-19 significantly influenced WFP programming in the country. In order to respond, WFP made major changes in the CSP, complemented by revised budget, BR02, in July 2020. There was a United Nations-wide concerted effort to respond to COVID-19 and WFP worked in coordination with other United Nations agencies.⁸⁴ It contributed to the COVID-19 analysis by providing estimates of the food-insecurity situation, (7.4 percent of the population was experiencing severe food insecurity).⁸⁵

96. Long-term donors of WFP have provided significant additional funding to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to address the needs of the most affected populations. This has led to an increase of actions in 2021 and 2022, particularly under SO4. WFP and its national partners have adapted their modes of operation to respond to COVID-19, for example, responding to the Government's lockdown measures. In some cases, programmes continued to deliver food, such as by take-home rations to the houses of students and their families by the Instituto Nacional De Bienestar Estudiantil (INABIE), though the Instituto Nacional de Atención Integral a la Primera Infancia (INAIP) food provision in the early childhood centres had to be temporarily interrupted. Other additional COVID-19 response projects were designed and planned in 2021, some of which were delayed significantly, such as the COVID-19 cash-based transfer interventions in the region of Dajabón and Monte Cristi, which were implemented only in the Summer of 2022.

97. More recently, with the rising food and energy prices worldwide, new food security-related challenges are emerging in the Dominican Republic. The Government has responded by including a special subsidy programme for the most vulnerable, based on the same cash-based transfer mechanisms and instruments that were developed in previous years by the SRSP task force and WFP experience.

Finding 10. South-South and triangular exchange activities are appreciated by national partners, however regional alignment and cooperation in the Caribbean region, for emergency responses in the region and to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti, have been weak.

98. During the CSP, regional cooperation and exchange activities were mainly done with Spanish Latin American countries and partners. This is well appreciated and considered highly relevant by national partners. Examples of these include: exchanges with Peru on best practices in emergency response, supply chain and social programmes in 2019 and 2020; and the organization of COVID-19-related joint webinars with Peru, Mexico and Colombia (with support from the WFP COVID-19 South-South Opportunity Fund) on how to address food insecurity and malnutrition using enhanced social protection.

99. Since the Dominican Republic is oriented more towards the Spanish-speaking countries in the region,⁸⁶ international exchange and cooperation activities have not focused on similar challenges faced by Dominican Republic and other Caribbean islands (which are French- and English-speaking) to address risks from disasters (cyclones) and effects of climate change. This is also shown by the fact that the Dominican Republic is a member of the Central American Economic Integration System (SICA), whilst it only has an observatory status in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

100. An assumption identified in the theory of change that international exchange is functionally useful for national partners is only partially met. A few actions under SO3 were listed in the annual country

84 UNSGD, Nov 2020. República Dominicana. Plan Estratégico de respuesta a COVID-19.

85 Ibid. p. 7

86 According to key informants interviewed.

reports although follow-up actions and the explicit use and utility of these initiatives were not explicitly reported. In 2019, a workshop was conducted with participation from Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti to have a subregional response plan based on the development of deployment protocols among these countries. While key informants regularly refer to South-South exchange with Latin American countries, they do not refer to exchange at the level of the Caribbean and at island level.

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

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

101. This section provides an analysis of the achievement of outputs and outcomes as compared to planning under the strategic outcomes of the CSP, complemented by a contribution analysis.

102. The analysis in this section is not structured according to strategic outcomes due to the fact that the CSP in the Dominican Republic is relatively small and an analysis for each specific strategic outcome would lead to fragmentation instead of a coherent and overall analysis of WFP interventions. Additionally, a separate analysis for each strategic outcome doesn't do justice to the fact that capacity strengthening is an important intervention strategy in the CSP that enables partners under SO1 and SO3 to implement actions under SO2 and SO4 of the CSP. Instead, the analysis in this section is divided in four subsections:

- Two subsections focus on output achievement and on outcome achievement under the specific output and outcome indicators for each strategic outcome.
- A third subsection focuses on higher-level outcomes as specified in the WFP theory of change (ToC) for the specific strategic outcomes and the reconstruction of the theory of change for the entire CSP (See Annex 3). For these outcomes, a contribution analysis is conducted to analyse the specific contributions of WFP to outcome achievements. Considering the key intervention strategy of WFP in the Dominican Republic is focusing on capacity development of national partners, many longer-term and higher-level outcomes cannot be captured easily with the WFP outcome indicators specified for the CSP. Thus this additional higher-level outcome analysis and subsequent contribution analysis is deemed necessary to do justice to this strategic approach of WFP in the Dominican Republic and to capture outcome-level changes that otherwise cannot be captured, focusing on WFP outcome reporting on the CSP for the Dominican Republic.
- A fourth and final section focuses on the quality of the outcome delivery process.

Analysis of output achievement

Finding 11: The CSP in the Dominican Republic has had a strong focus on strengthening partners' capacities to provide social protection, health and nutrition and emergency-related services, particularly under SO1, SO2 and SO3. WFP has been able to deliver a considerable number of planned outputs under the first two strategic outcomes, though considerably less under SO3 and SO4. No outputs were delivered under SO5 by the time of this evaluation.

103. The CSP has followed up on the T-ICSP approach to provide capacity strengthening services to its national partners and also to provide direct assistance, in partnership with government partners, to target

groups to fight the root causes of malnutrition and to improve resilience. The first three strategic outcomes in the CSP have featured in the T-ICSP phase.

104. In the T-ICSP,⁸⁷ two of the three strategic outcomes in 2018 (SO2 and SO3) were related to capacity strengthening of key national policy and implementing government partners in developing and implementing social protection, health and emergency response policies, programmes and services.

105. Under the CSP, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP added two additional strategic outcomes (SO4 and SO5) in 2020. Activities and outputs under SO4, were mainly directed to the provision of crisis responses to shock affected populations, including COVID-19 responses. SO5, focused on direct service delivery and has not been operationalized into concrete activities and outputs before this evaluation was conducted in the second quarter of 2022.

106. Under SO2, WFP provided direct support with technical assistance (TA) to specific target groups such as public health and social protection programmes. Under SO4, WFP also provided direct support through emergency food assistance, such as cash-based or in-kind transfers to emergency affected populations, for example after COVID-19 and after Hurricane Fiona.

107. The monitoring data for beneficiaries and for output indicators in this section are only analysed for the CSP implementation period. More specific details on monitoring data for both the T-ICSP and CSP are provided in Annex 10. Table 3 provides an overview of the beneficiaries reached during CSP period.

Table 3. Planned versus actual beneficiaries reached during CSP period (2019-2022)

Year	SO	Activity	Transfer modality	Planned	Actual	%
2019	SO2	Act. 2 - CSI	Food	202,000	98,323	49%
			CBT			
2020	SO2	Act. 2 - CSI	Food	202,000	106,963	53%
			CBT			
	SO4	Act 4 - URT	Food	20,000	7,972	40%
			CBT	40,000	2,760	7%
2021	SO2	Act. 2 - CSI	Food	230,000	151,736	66%
			CBT			
	SO4	Act 4 - URT	Food	20,000	9,000	45%
			CBT	40,000	143,679	359%
2022 (until Sep)	SO2 and SO4	Act 2 -CSI Act 4 -URT	Food	248,000	10,800	4%
			CBT	40,000	136,949	342%

Source: CM-R002b Annual Beneficiaries by Strategic Outcome, Activity and Modality (CSP) v1.1 14.12.2022 plus MODA extraction for the period January -November 2022. Data for 2022 is only available up to November.

108. During the CSP period, WFP has provided (Table 3) direct food and cash assistance to beneficiaries through the transfer modality of unconditional resource transfers (URT), under SO4, and through institutional capacity strengthening (ICS) to partners, under SO2. During the T-ICSP a third modality was used, namely the school meals programme (SMP), but in the CSP, this modality was changed into institutional capacity strengthening (of INAIPI).

109. WFP, in the provision of food assistance to INAIPI, did not monitor the number of beneficiaries reached by this partner as this is done by INAIPI on its overall operations, without specific reporting on beneficiaries to specific contributing partners. INAIPI's reach, through its early childhood centres, covers

87 WFP, I-CSP for DR 2018. Logical Framework.

almost 200,000 children in the whole country⁸⁸ and key informants interviewed in this evaluation have confirm the competencies and high capacity of this partner in providing food assistance in its centres.

110. The information in Table 3 shows three important trends:

- The number of beneficiaries planned and reached with WFP food and cash assistance has consistently increased over the past years. Three times as many beneficiaries were reached in 2021 compared to previous years. This increase (in 2020, 2021) is due to higher coverage during COVID-19⁸⁹ and this trend is likely to remain in 2022 due to additional emergency responses after Hurricane Fiona and in the WFP COVID-19 responses, providing cash support to the poorest sectors of the population in the northwest of the country, targeting Haitian migrants with the current inflation and food prices.
- Cash-based transfers were introduced as a new transfer modality in the Dominican Republic in 2020 and since then have rapidly increased. A further increase in 2022 is likely to occur, though data for this year only include data until November 2022.⁹⁰ Almost all transfers in 2022 were cash-based transfers, while only 2 percent were food transfers. This trend shows that WFP in the Dominican Republic considers cash-based transfer as an important transfer modality to reach vulnerable populations, which is in line with government partners, which, particularly in the Supérate programme, use cash-based transfer on a large scale to support the poorest segments of the population.
- Food and cash-based transfers, during the 2019-2020 period, have been lower than planned, with 50 percent implementation rate. This trend was reversed in 2021, when beneficiaries reached were slightly higher than planned, indicating that the COVID-19 response in this year accelerated. Implementation rates are likely to be near 100 percent for 2022 (although full data are not yet available).

111. Table 4 provides an overview of the value of transfers, food, vouchers and cash (combined in cash-based transfer values) during the CSP period.

Table 4. Total value of food distribution and cash-based transfer (planned and actual per year in USD 2019-2022)

		Planned	Actual	%
2019	Food (mt)	662	51	8%
	CBT (USD)			
2020	Food (mt)	1,314	448	34%
	CBT (USD)	2,016,000	138,398	7%
2021	Food (mt)	2,486	772	31%
	CBT (USD)	3,024,000	660,512	22%
2022	Food (mt)	1,575	35	2%
	CBT (USD) (until Nov 2022)	3,024,000	2,821,675	93%

Source: Annual country reports and MODA extraction for the period January-November 2022. Data for 2022 is only available up to November.

112. Table 4 shows key trends and developments related to value of transfers to beneficiaries:

- cash-based transfers were introduced in 2020 and its rapid increase as a transfer modality clearly indicates its popularity;⁹¹ and
- in 2021, the number of beneficiaries reached was higher than planned, while the total value of cash-based transfer and food transfers in the same year was only 21.8 and 31 percent of the planned values (see EQ 3). In 2022, cash-based transfers rapidly increased, with a 93 percent implementation rate.

88 The number of children reached by INAIPI at national level was 195,583 in December 2022 (See: 2022. <https://inaipi.gob.do/index.php/documentos/estadistica>).

89 Key Informants from WFP and key partners.

90 Also confirmed by respondents met during field case study visits.

91 Also reported during KIIs

113. Table 5 and Table 6 show outputs reported under the two implementation modalities of direct assistance (SO2 and SO4 in Table 5) and capacity strengthening (SO1 and SO3 in Table 6) in the CSP.⁹²

Table 5. Output indicator reporting on WFP direct assistance to beneficiaries, CSP 2019-2021⁹³

Output indicators	ACR 2019				ACR 2020				ACR 2021			
	Target		Actual		Target		Actual		Target		Actual	
	Total	% Female	Total	% Female	Total	% Female	Total	% Female	Total	% Female	Total	% Female
SO2: Beneficiaries food transfers ⁹⁴	202,000	56%	98,323	54%	202,000	56%	106,963	55%	230,000	62%	151,736	52%
SO2: Beneficiaries capacity strengthening									98,000	74%	74,612	54%
SO2: Beneficiaries receiving direct SBCC	50,300		41,050									
SO2: Beneficiaries of SBCC through media	150		10						3,650,000		3,050,000	
SO3: Beneficiaries forecast-based actions									10,500		941	
SO4: Beneficiaries CBT					40,000	50%	2,760	50%	40,000	50%	143,679	52%
SO4: Beneficiaries food transfers					20,000	50%	7,972	50%	20,000	50%	9,000	50%
SO4: Beneficiaries capacity strengthening									7,500	50%	2,379	53%

Source: extracted from ACRs 2019, 2020 and 2021. Legend: data in orange show under-achievement, green is over-achievement, and blue is on-target .

92 In addition to the monitoring of food and cash transfers as reported in MODA, the WFP CO in its ACRs reports on a number of output indicators, some of which are partially overlapping with MODA reporting. The analysis on output implementation provided in this section is separated for two key CSP implementation modalities: direct assistance to beneficiaries and capacity strengthening. Both modalities require their own specific analysis as these implementation modalities are very different.

93 Output level data for 2022 is not included into the analysis given in Table 5 and Table 6, as these data were not yet available at the time of this evaluation.

94 The titles of output indicators are summarized from the official long titles as used in formal WFP reports to improve readability of this table. For more details and the full tables the reader is referred to Annex 10.

114. Table 5 shows key trends and developments in relation to WFP performance at the output level:
- WFP has not performed as expected across all outputs against planned targets, specifically in food, cash transfer and capacity development actions. More beneficiaries received cash-based transfer under SO4 in 2021, three times higher than planned. Fluctuations in performance were attributed to operational challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Planned targets for reaching women were achieved or exceeded under SO4 but not for SO2. Nutrition support under SO2 was provided for pregnant and lactating women, particularly in 2021. However, slightly more than 50 percent of target women were reached. More men than originally targeted received support under SO2.
 - No attention was given in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to certain vulnerable target groups, including disabled persons, Haitian migrants and undocumented persons. The extent to which Haitian migrants have been included in interventions cannot be verified in the WFP monitoring system, as the WFP corporate system does not disaggregate by specific vulnerable group.
 - Delivery of social and behavioural change communication (SBCC) has changed drastically over the CSP implementation period. While in 2019 SBCC was mostly done in direct interaction with target groups, in 2021 SBCC delivery shifted entirely to reaching out to target groups through social media. With this change, the number of beneficiaries increased to over 3 million persons, which is more than 10 times the CSP target. However, the intensity of interaction with beneficiaries through social media and mass media is much lower than would be the case with face-to-face food counselling services provided to target groups.
 - The forecast-based anticipatory actions under SO3 show a particularly low implementation rate with less than 10 percent of the originally planned beneficiaries being reached by end of 2021.

115. The second key implementation modality in the CSP is institutional capacity strengthening and here the activities and outputs are very different in kind to those related to beneficiaries, as is shown in Table 6 below. Table 6 provides a summary of key indicators at the aggregate level,⁹⁵ to enhance legibility of the table (for further details, see Annex10).

Table 6. Output indicators for capacity strengthening of partners, CSP 2019-2021

Output indicators	ACR 2019			ACR 2020			ACR 2021			
	Actual			Actual			Actual			
	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO5
# National institutions benefiting from embedded or seconded expertise of WFP	15	2	41	4	202	67	12	26	94	
# Staff-members receiving TA/training	1,108	414	682	183	7,286	289	489	1,230	84	
# TA activities provided		50	3				16		4	
# Training sessions/workshop organized	17	0	39	5	34	10		67	0	
# Tools or products developed	3	4	17	5	5	21	17	3	8	
# Organizations using storage facilities										1

Source: Extracted from WFP ACRs 2019, 2020, 2021. Legend: data in orange show underachievement, green is over-achievement, and blue is on-target.

95 The following indicators are aggregated: a) Number of national institutions benefiting from embedded or seconded expertise as a result of WFP capacity strengthening support combines all (new) climate adaptation and risk management activities and all emergency preparedness activities; b) Number of technical assistance activities provided combines all emergency preparedness activities and all climate adaptation and risk management activities. c) Number of training sessions/workshop organized combines all emergency preparedness activities. e) Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training combines all climate adaptation and risk management activities and all emergency preparedness activities. f) Number of tools or products developed combines all climate adaptation and risk management activities and all emergency preparedness activities.

The following indicators were not included in the table, as these didn't show systematic values: Number of mobile storage tents/units made available; Total storage space made available (m2); Number of Anticipatory Action SOPs developed or reviewed through WFP's support; Percentage of tools developed or reviewed to strengthen national capacities for Forecast-based Anticipatory Action.

116. Some key findings emerging from Table 6 are:

- WFP has developed capacity of a large number of partners, particularly under SO2 and during 2020. In particular these included health institutes at the national, regional and local levels that provided nutritional assistance to beneficiaries in the entire country.
- Targeting of partners under SO3 in emergency response-related actions has steadily increased over the CSP period. During the first year this was done at the central level within the ministries of Health, Presidency (emergency response) and Vice-Presidency (social protection) and government institutes residing within these ministries. In health and nutrition (SO1 and SO2) and emergency-related capacity strengthening actions (SO3), there is a clear trend of increased reach to regional and local partners over time.⁹⁶
- There has been considerable capacity building of staff within these partners, though with considerable variance. The reach was higher in health partners, reaching over 200 staff members in a single organization.
- Under SO4, WFP has been mostly providing direct assistance or service delivery in emergency-related food and cash transfers. There is only one government institute (INAIPI) with which WFP has worked where food storage capacity was supported under SO4. INAIPI itself provided food transfers to child centres through its own structure. The reach achieved through direct assistance to the beneficiaries by INAIPI is not included in WFP monitoring data.

Analysis of outcome achievement

Finding 12: The contribution of WFP to broader UNDAF and UNSCDF outcomes is notable and recognized by United Nations partners and the Government. This contribution is focused on SDG 2-related targets and on strengthening emergency response capacities in the country. WFP, through its capacity strengthening activities, has made a notable contribution to outcomes achieved by these partners among their target groups, though with some inter-institutional coordination challenges among its partners under SO3.

117. WFP performance on key CSP outcome indicators is presented in Table 7.

⁹⁶ This was confirmed during the KIIs.

Table 7. WFP performance on key CSP outcome indicators (2019-2021)

Outcome indicator	2019	2023	ACR 2019		ACR 2020		ACR 2021		End of 2021
	Baseline	Final target	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Final target
SO1/Act 1: # food security & nutrition policies, programmes & system components enhanced through WFP	0	≥ 2		0	=1	1	≥1	1	Not yet achieved
SO1/Act 1: USD mobilized for national food security & nutrition systems through WFP	3,255,595	≥ 45,149,802		3,255,595		2,651,874	≥ 8,000,000	8,589,129	Not yet achieved
SO1/Act 1: % targeted sectors & government entities implementing recommendations from zero hunger strategic reviews	10	≥73		0	≥65	58	≥65	58	Not yet achieved
SO2/Act 2: % eligible population participating in programme (All)	35	>70			> 70	53 (F 55/ M 52)	> 50	42 (F 42.8/ M 40.9)	Not yet achieved
SO2/Act 2: # eligible population participating in programme - prevention micronutrient deficiency	360		≤ 50000 (50% F)						Not yet achieved
SO2/Act 2: % households with Acceptable Food Consumption Score	86	≥ 90				86	≥ 86	97.25 (F 96.77/ M100)	Achieved
SO2/Act 2: % households with Borderline Food Consumption Score	9.8	<6				11	≤ 10	0	Achieved
SO2/Act 2: % households with Poor Food Consumption Score	4.1	<4				3	≤ 4	2.75 (F 3.23/M 0)	Achieved
SO2/Act 2: % target population participating in adequate distributions	100		≤100						Not yet achieved
SO2/Act 2: % children 6-23 months receiving minimum acceptable diet	10	>70	< 100 (50% F)				> 20	23.2	Not yet achieved
SO3/Act 3: Emergency Preparedness Capacity Index	2.33	> 3.2	2.33		> 3	2.33	>3	1.83	Not yet achieved
SO4/Act 4: % households with Acceptable Food Consumption Score	86	≥90					≥86	86,1 (F 85/ M 90)	Not yet achieved
SO4/Act 4: % households with Borderline Food Consumption Score	9.8	≤6					≤10	10,9 (F 13/ M 5)	Not yet achieved
SO4/Act 4: % households with Poor Food Consumption Score	4.1	≤4					<4	3 (F 3 / M 5)	Achieved

Source: Elaboration of the evaluation team from WFP country office ACRs 2019, 2020, 2021. Legend: data in orange show underachievement, green is overachievement, and blue is on-target.

118. The key achievements at outcome level, as reflected in Table 7, are summarized below:

- In 2020, WFP underperformed on a considerable number of planned outcome indicators, though this performance sharply improved in 2021, overachieving on many indicators. However, in this year not all targets were met: the use of technical recommendations by partner organizations, under SO1; and the percentage of the eligible population participating in SO2 programme activities. In the same year the Emergency Preparedness Capacity Index (EPCI) decreased from its original baseline level. Newly introduced SO4 food and cash-based transfer interventions also showed underachievement on indicators.
- Most indicator targets are not on track to be fully achieved, with a few exceptions: food-transfer interventions under SO2; and the food consumption score under food and cash transfers to emergency affected populations under SO4.
- Under SO5 no outcome targets and indicators were specified in planning and no outcomes have been reported.
- At the end of 2021, with two more years to go in CSP implementation, as shown in the final column of the Table 7, outcome achievements under SO2 and SO4 are not yet on target, though in the remaining implementation period the achievement rate can still increase substantially. Under SO1 and SO3 none of the outcome indicators are on track and may present challenges to reach full achievement towards the end of the CSP.

Analysis of higher-level outcomes of the CSP and analysis of WFP contributions to these outcomes

119. For the identification of specific outcomes for further contribution analysis, the evaluators refer to the CSP plan, annual country reports and theory of change in Annex 3 and the specific theories of change developed by the country office for SO1, SO2 and SO3.⁹⁷

120. Table 8 provides an overview of achievements against planned longer-term outcomes and WFP contribution as recognized by national partners in key informant interviews and witnessed during the fieldwork interviews and cross-checked against available outcome data in the annual country reports and other relevant documents.

⁹⁷ The ToCs for SO1, SO2 and SO3 were developed in 2019 and were separate for each SO, resulting in differently structured documents that did not refer to each other. Each ToC indicated a number of more specific outcomes that were further processed by the evaluators into the ToC that is presented in Annex 3. The outcome-level changes were taken as a basis for the development of Table 8 below.

Table 8. Analysis of WFP contribution to achievement of planned outcomes up to November 2022

Key longer-term outcomes in the CSP ⁹⁸	Achievements	WFP contribution to outcomes as recognized by national partners	Evaluators' assessment of WFP's contribution to key outcomes
<p>SO1 and SO2: Government is generally on track in achieving SDG 2 zero hunger goals and targets (through technical assistance (TA) to strengthen support policies, systems and programmes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government's SDG reporting is evidencing progress in achieving SDG 2 and most specific SDG 2 targets, although new nutritional challenges have emerged that require new responses. These new challenges are included by WFP and its key partners in zero hunger campaigning under SO1 and nutrition services under SO2 Inputs of the Government provided at the United Nations Food Systems Summit in 2021, and clear government commitments to SDG 2 achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The long-term support of WFP in nutrition related to TA and service provision is well appreciated by the Government, particularly by Ministry of Public Health (MSP) and SETESSAN. These partners recognize the high-quality TA provided and the mobilization of international expertise through South-South exchange and triangular cooperation The communication and campaign work of WFP on zero hunger is considered important by all partners Key government partners confirm that WFP support has strengthened the Government's reach within United Nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contribution of WFP to strengthening the capacities of its national partners is widely confirmed through KIIs and in policy and programme documents of government partners Government's SDG 2 reporting is systematic and of good quality and it evidences growing challenges related to the triple burden of malnutrition
<p>SO1: Campaign and awareness raising alliances at national level to address zero hunger challenges have clear visibility (particularly in zero hunger campaign actions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health, food security, nutrition and social protection communication messages are well established and coordinated by MSP, SETESSAN, the Ministry of the Vice-Presidency and the Cabinet for Social Policies National partners, including WFP, organize campaigns and raise funds (including from civil and private sector) to support SDG 2 policies and programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The national campaigns have included WFP messages and communication strategies on zero hunger, nutrition and food security New partnerships are established with the private sector by WFP and partners and these have generated additional financial and technical support in specific actions (such as Mastercard Caribbean and DSM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New positioning and communication strategies on zero hunger and addressing the triple burden of malnutrition are included in the WFP approach and planning. WFP country office is exploring new fundraising strategies to allow continuation of its SDG 2-related work in the Dominican Republic, now that traditional

98 All key outcomes in this outcome contribution analysis are organised under the first three SOs of the CSP. Some actions under SO4 have contributed to outcomes under SO2 and SO3, mainly by providing direct assistance to vulnerable groups, while at the same working with national partners under SO2 and SO3. As such SO4 can be considered to a large extent an operational strategy to support the first three outcomes. Under SO5, which is also a more supportive strategy, no activities have yet occurred and therefore no contributions of WFP can be established thus far under SO5.

			donors are decreasing their support
<p>SO1 and SO2: Behavioural changes among Dominican Republic population in nutrition are notable, though with increased welfare-related challenges in obesity, hypertension and diabetes (through campaigning (SO1) and through provision of nutrition, training and counselling (SO2))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The triple burden of malnutrition is included in campaign and counselling approaches of WFP and its partners, although new (welfare-related) diseases of obesity, diabetes and hypertension are increasing, indicating quality challenges in nutrition MSP is advancing the “Health Route, change your style of living” campaign to support these behavioural changes in the Dominican Republic Behavioural change messages and training are included in most activities and programmes and staff members of MSP and health units across the country are trained in this area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National partner organizations and their staff members have obtained knowledge and expertise through direct TA of WFP and by WFP support to establish a nutrition counselling curriculum to train national staff Partners state that WFP training and counselling support in more recent years has moved to (social) media campaigns and digital means. This has changed more recent campaigns, including those of the Government, to online and (social) media. Effects of digital campaigns on behaviour change have a clearly bigger reach, although possibly at the costs of less effectiveness in achieving behavioural change Partners confirm that incidences of obesity, hypertension and diabetes have now superseded incidences of malnutrition in the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP has provided significant and valuable support to campaign activities and behavioural change communication to national partners, as can be witnessed in campaign materials In this area, specific needs for this type of assistance by WFP are declining with growing competencies among national partners Systematic measurement of the effects of digital campaigns on behavioural change is not yet available, though measurement becomes increasingly relevant if these means are increasingly used
<p>SO2 and SO4: Improved nutrition status of key target groups thanks to improved food safety policies (e.g. food labelling and rice fortification) and thanks to improved targeting and nutritional value of feeding programmes of the Government (INAIFI, INABIE,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government has formulated comprehensive policies and programmes to improve the quality of nutrition Nutrition-sensitive social protection is included in the nutritional component of Supérate While in rice fortification a regulatory framework was established, there is still not a policy on rice fortification, limiting the rolling out of rice fortification, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSP, SETESSAN and related partners at national, regional and local levels recognize and appreciate WFP TA to the development of new policies and programmes, through evidence creation, piloting of new approaches and technologies The TA provided in nutrition-sensitive social protection provided by WFP is clearly recognized and appreciated by Supérate The school feeding programme partners indicate that WFP TA has strengthened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MSP, SETESSAN and school feeding organizations (INABIE, INAIFI) are strongly established and widely recognized by partners and beneficiary groups The school feeding programmes have adapted to COVID-19 and more recently have recovered their pre-COVID-19 levels in reaching out to target groups at the national level Supérate has become a national reference in social protection with

<p>Cantinas Populares) (through TA and services to partners, in some occasions also through direct WFP support under SO4)</p>	<p>ensuring a level playing field for all rice producers in the country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government's feeding programmes, such as INABIE, INAIPI and Cantinas Populares are well established and reach target groups in the entire country • The effects of WFP support are verified by improvements in household nutrition scores, particularly under SO2 actions though to a lesser extent under SO4 among shock-affected populations 	<p>their capacities and has also improved the quality of nutrition. National Health Service surveys confirm the effects of these programmes among their specific target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In rice fortification, the private sector is not sufficiently on board as a partner in this strategy and key informants indicate that there is not yet sufficient mutual trust to effectively cooperate • Fortified foods are included in the WFP supply of food support, leading to improved nutrition status of target groups • Some partners identify lack of complementarity and coordination between WFP and FAO in providing support to the same partners 	<p>a large national reach, including its attention to nutritional challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has become the primary donor of these programmes, and the WFP role is changing towards specific TA and service delivery • There is a possible conflict in approaches of WFP and FAO with respect to buying of food in the school feeding programme. While local buying is promoted by FAO (INABIE), central buying is promoted by WFP (INAIPI)
<p>SO3: Resilience of vulnerable communities against emergencies has improved through application of early warning systems at regional and local levels (through capacity development and targeted TA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response (NS-PMR) shows coordination challenges, while specific organizations in NS-PMR are strong • The WFP forecast-based financing mechanism is situated in specific regions and has been improved and expanded, generating greater coordination in early warning and anticipated actions between the NS-PMR and the social protection system • Training of trainers (ToT) on early warning systems (EWS) with community volunteers has improved community resilience at the local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hi-tech TA support of WFP is considered an important contribution to what national and local partners don't have • Local prevention, mitigation and response (PMR) committees feel empowered with WFP training and TA on risk management • At the national level, government partners such as ONAMET and Civil Defence experience improvements in their assessment capacity of climate risks, resilience to floods and droughts (through training on early warning and forecast-based drought and flood alerts) • Partners and stakeholders at the local level confirm that WFP reach to regional and local support in the NS-PMR has increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to coordination challenges in the NS-PMR, WFP support has focused on specific partners and on regional and local interventions • Emergency response systems and policies still require significant strengthening in coming years, particularly in establishing capacity to categorize disasters and disaster responses at the national level • While emergency mitigation and responses are generally embedded in programmes, disaster preparedness and prevention and resilience to climate change are less developed

<p>SO3 and SO4: Vulnerable groups are more capable of recovering from emergencies (thanks to emergency responses that include AAP and protection), though with challenges in establishing the humanitarian-development nexus (through TA, capacity development and direct WFP support under SO4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFP has developed actions with specific organizations and actions at the local level with regional and local actors, which have provided good access to vulnerable target groups at the local level • SRSP approaches in emergencies are gradually becoming stronger, as can be seen in COVID-19 and Hurricane Fiona responses • CBT responses are becoming increasingly important in emergency responses, including in COVID-19 responses, which is strengthening protection and AAP in emergency responses • Emergency responses are usually short-term by nature and generally not followed up with developmental interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific partners at national, regional and local levels have benefited from TA and food and cash-based support provided by WFP and with TA of WFP in emergency and risk analysis and in CBT technology and their capacities to respond to local emergencies have been strengthened • The WFP SRSP approach and support is valued though not yet systematically embraced and applied in national emergency responses • The use of CBT in emergency responses is now embraced by partners and is valued as a means to strengthen protection and empowerment of target groups • National partners confirm that partnerships in establishing the humanitarian-development nexus have not been strongly established in WFP emergency response actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of CBT as a tool to strengthen AAP, empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups in emergency responses by WFP is still fairly recent and not much contextualized knowledge has been built • SRSP as an approach is becoming increasingly known and appreciated, though is still not widely disseminated • WFP and its national partners have not yet developed a strong approach to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus in emergency responses
<p>SO3: Installed emergency response capacity in the Dominican Republic reaching out to Haiti and beyond (Through TA and potentially also through demand-driven service delivery under SO5 in the future)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022 important investments were made in the establishment of the warehouse with the Red Cross in Santo Domingo and in establishing the operational capacities for the logistic corridor within WFP in Dominican Republic and coordination across WFP in Dominican Republic and Haiti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFP has been a crucial actor in taking steps towards developing this emergency response capacity and this capacity is recognized at the partner level with: the Red Cross in the Dominican Republic; as the partner in the warehouse in Santo Domingo; among government partners; and among humanitarian assistance partners, BHA and ECHO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistic corridor capacity is established, though it requires continuous donor support for standby capacity in times when there are no emergencies • While capacity to respond to emergencies in the Dominican Republic and Haiti is clearly established, the potential for this emergency response capacity in the wider Caribbean region is not yet strongly recognized

Source: ACRs (2019-2021), WFP indicator tables provided to the evaluation in December 2022, KIs and evaluators' assessment.

Analysis of quality of WFP processes to deliver outcomes under the CSP

Finding 13: The national partners of WFP, particularly the national Government, highly value and appreciate the quality of processes adopted to deliver outcomes. The international experience and access to expertise provided by WFP to Dominican Republic partners has supported design and implementation of national programmes. WFP expertise in providing quick emergency response and supply chain management are key competencies appreciated by national partners. Civil society organizations partnering with WFP have a more varied view on the intensity and quality of cooperation with WFP.

121. There is generally a high level of satisfaction with the Technical assistance (TA), capacity strengthening and logistical services provided by WFP.⁹⁹ WFP is considered a reliable and experienced partner that has global and regional expertise, which is helpful for the design and development of appropriate policies and programmes. Access to international expertise also includes exchange with peers in Latin American countries. This exchange is highly valued and has directly informed policy and programme development among the partners working under the Cabinet for Social Policies, such as Supérate.

122. Government partners have demonstrated good absorption capacity of the technical assistance provided by WFP, thanks to existing expertise, capacity and resources in-house. This is an important guarantee for achieving longer term changes related to improved nutrition status of vulnerable populations, emergency preparedness and response capacity of national partners. This is an important assumption in the theory of change that is clearly met at the national partner level.

123. Capacity strengthening is also done at decentralized levels with local and regional government institutes and health units in the health system. However, this is less intensive than that at the national level, and capacity strengthening and awareness raising tools are often in the form of written or digital communication materials and social media usage.¹⁰⁰

124. Civil society organizations' perception and appreciation of WFP technical assistance and other services varies. Some were highly satisfied, while others have received very little support and their role is confined to implementing subcontracted activities.¹⁰¹ While this still provides 'on the job' learning opportunities, it is not considered a partnership.

125. Delivering against outcomes that target change at systems and institutional levels is more challenging. This requires other forms of interaction and coordination with multiple stakeholders and partners. Within the national health system (nutrition), food security (nutrition, food fortification) and in the social policies (social protection) the different partners in the system indicate that coordination is functional and the government institutes work well together at national and decentralized levels. WFP supports this cooperation through working with different partners in specific projects, although partners indicate that a longer term and more integral framework of cooperation at the systems level could strengthen these coordination mechanisms. This would require, for example, memorandums of understanding and framework agreements with a longer-term vision on desired outcomes at the systems level with key coordinating government institutes, such as the Social Policies Cabinet, the MSP, CONASSAN/SETESSAN, the CNE, and the ministries of the Presidency and Vice-Presidency with ultimate responsibility for coordination

99 KIIs with GoDR partners.

100 As observed in the fieldwork interviews and KIIs.

101 Reported in KIIs, with civil society partners.

at the institutional level. Some United Nations agencies work with such comprehensive memorandums of understanding or framework arrangements, but not WFP.¹⁰²

126. Within the United Nations, coordination of the different United Nations agencies in-country, is considered important. There are mechanisms for coordination around the development of United Nations planning in UNDAF and UNSDCF and in the joint response to COVID-19.¹⁰³ In March 2022, the Government received a joint SDG fund from the United Nations of USD 725,000 for two years to strengthen the national care and protection system, through a “care communities” pilot.¹⁰⁴ Coordination is also successful in the ÚNETE working group, which, under WFP leadership, coordinates emergency responses among United Nations agencies.

127. While there is coordination and exchange among the United Nations agencies and some United Nations partners work in consortiums, this is not a widespread practice. WFP, in the past has implemented programmes in partnership with FAO but this is not done anymore. However, both work with the same partners, such as SETESSAN and INABIE. Harmonization and coordination of bilateral United Nations support is done by the national partners, arranging support from the United Kingdom and other partners in a comprehensive planning process. However, on some occasions, achieving complementarity and avoiding overlap requires closer cooperation on the ground by different partners. This is particularly relevant when the areas of cooperation and support provided are closely related. An example is INABIE, where both WFP and FAO provide support to the same partner. FAO is coordinating the school feeding programme, while WFP provides technical assistance on nutrition aspects. Closer coordination between WFP and FAO could strengthen synergies.

128. Government partners highly value WFP supply chain management capacity for providing nutrients and food. The capacities of WFP in this area ensure quality, fair pricing and rapid delivery. This is the reason for large government food assistance programmes, such as INAIPI, INABIE, Comedores Populares and MSP sourcing their food and micronutrients from WFP. Supply chain monitoring indicators of WFP confirm this positive image, with limited losses and quick delivery compared to other WFP countries.¹⁰⁵

2.2.2 To what extent did WFP contribute to achievement of cross-cutting aims (humanitarian principles, protection, accountability to affected populations, gender, equity and inclusion, environment, climate change and disaster preparedness)?

Finding 14. WFP interventions have included GEWE and inclusion, though most often limited to participation in activities and targeting of beneficiaries. The indicators on GEWE, protection, accountability to affected population and the environment are not systematically measured. Outcome-level transformational changes on GEWE, protection and accountability to affected population have not sufficiently materialized and, while direct assistance and emergency response activities have reached vulnerable groups, challenges remain in disaster preparedness.

102 Reported by some partners.

103 UNDAF (2018-2022), UNSDCF (2023-2027, in development), joint UN strategic COVID-19 response plan.

104 UNSDG. The Dominican Republic receives funds to establish a National Care System to help reduce poverty and meet the SDGs, 18 March 2022, available at: <https://unsdg.un.org/latest/announcements/dominican-republic-receives-funds-establish-national-care-system-help-reduce>.

105 See: COs overview on K3 Indicators for Supply Chain Performance Q1-2019).

129. Table 9 shows WFP performance related to gender, protection, accountability to affected populations and the environment, throughout the CSP.

Table 9. WFP performance on cross-cutting issues during the CSP (2020-2021)¹⁰⁶

Cross cutting indicators	2019		2020		2021	
	Target	Follow up	Target	Follow up	Target	Follow up
PROGRESS TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY						
Act 2						
Type of transfer received by participants in WFP activities	-	100	=100	100	=100	100
Type of transfer received by participants in WFP activities (FEMALE)	-	53	=55	58	=55	56
Type of transfer received by participants in WFP activities (MALE)	-	47	=45	42	=45	44
Act 4						
Type of transfer received by participants in WFP activities	-	-	=100	100	=100	100
Type of transfer received by participants in WFP activities (FEMALE)	-	-	=50	72	=55	63
Type of transfer received by participants in WFP activities (MALE)	-	-	=50	28	=45	37
PROTECTION						
Act 2						
% targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes	-	-	>95	82.5	≥95	100
% targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes (FEMALE)	-	-	>95	80	≥95	100
% targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes (MALE)	-	-	>95	85	≥95	100
% targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges	-	-	=100	95	=100	100
% targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges (FEMALE)	-	-	=100	95	=100	100
% targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges (MALE)	-	-	=100	95	=100	100
% targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified	-	-	>90	87.50	>90	100
% targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified (FEMALE)	-	-	>90	85	>90	100
% targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified (MALE)	-	-	>90	90	>90	100
Act 4						
% targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes	-	-	>95	92.5	>95	97
% targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes (FEMALE)	-	-	>95	90	>95	98

¹⁰⁶ The table only contains indicators that were used in WFP country office's reporting, which up to the time of this evaluation included data for only 2020 and 2021, as no indicators were measured during the T-ICSP and the first year of CSP implementation and at the time of this evaluation no data were yet available for 2022. Furthermore, only a few indicators that were used to measure performance on cross-cutting indicators actually refer to outcome-level changes and none of the indicators refer to differential effects of interventions on different target groups.

% targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes (MALE)	-	-	>95	95	>95	93
% targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges	-	-	=100	100	=100	99
% targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges (FEMALE)	-	-	=100	100	=100	100
% targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges (MALE)	-	-	=100	100	=100	99
% targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified	-	-	>90	97.50	>90	98
% targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified (FEMALE)	-	-	>90	100	>90	98
% targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified (MALE)	-	-	>90	95	>90	98
ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS						
Act 2						
% assisted people informed about the programme	-	-	>70	63	>70	94
% assisted people informed about the programme (FEMALE)	-	-	>70	65	>70	97
% assisted people informed about the programme (MALE)	-	-	>70	60	>70	81
% project activities for which beneficiary feedback is documented, analysed and integrated into programme improvements	-	-	=100	30	>50	50
Act 4						
% project activities for which beneficiary feedback is documented, analysed and integrated into programme improvements	-	-	=100	30	-	-
% assisted people informed about the programme	-	-	>90	95	>80	56
% assisted people informed about the programme (FEMALE)	-	-	>90	100	>80	56
% assisted people informed about the programme (MALE)	-	-	>90	90	>80	55
ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS						
Act 2						
% of field-level agreements (FLAs)/MoUs/CCs for CSP activities screened for environmental and social risk	-	-	-	-	≥80	0

Source: WFP ACRs 2019, 2020 and 2021. No data on cross-cutting indicators provided in ACR 2019 and no data available for 2022. Legend: green 100 percent of the target or above, yellow is between 50 percent and 99 percent and orange is below 50 percent of the target.

130. Output-level targets for gender equality, under activities SO2 and SO4, have been fully achieved against the planned targets, although Activity 4 shows a distortion of transfer received by participants in favour of women, a trend that seems to be diminishing from 2020 to 2021. In the annual country report (2021),¹⁰⁷ the Gender with Age Marker (GAM)¹⁰⁸ for SO1 and SO2 was 3 and for SO3 and SO4 it was 1.¹⁰⁹ Gender awareness and specific aspects¹¹⁰ for the first two strategic outcomes were integrated into campaigns and into communication and training activities and there was increased effort to increase the percentage of men participating in training activities. The lower GAM scores for SO3 and SO4, as presented in the annual country report 2021, were due to the fact that gender aspects, although considered in planning during the implementation phase, were only partially integrated. This is also confirmed by the gender analysis, conducted as part of this evaluation (see Annex 6), which shows that GEWE is not strongly integrated into programme planning and preparation and into implementation of activities. Gender is most often considered as a participation requirement and is addressed in training activities, but gender mainstreaming and targeting of women in specific activities with mixed target groups is not common in interventions on the ground, although targeting women and children in specific age groups is done in nutrition interventions under SO2. The GEWE analysis in Annex 6 also shows that differential effects and the impact of interventions and approaches on men and women, as well as changes in decision making power at the family level, are not analysed in activity reporting. This is also supported by the evidence from fieldwork interviews based on field visits to specific locations in the northwest of the Dominican Republic.

131. WFP has performed better on protection (see indicators in Table 9), especially in 2021, where it achieved all targets, and particularly in relation to ensuring the dignity of beneficiaries in the programmes, also confirmed during meeting with target groups. However, the protection indicators mostly refer to input-related aspects of coverage and participation. The last protection indicator in Table 9 refers to how these target groups have experienced their participation in activities. WFP and its partners are making increased efforts to ensure that target groups are treated with dignity in their interventions. In designing actions and identifying beneficiaries, a thorough approach to reach out to the most vulnerable can be observed in the fieldwork interviews, although there is a difference of 5 percentage points in terms of unhindered access to WFP programmes between women and men. Despite efforts made, protection-related¹¹¹ targets at the outcome level are not yet fully achieved. Protection indicators are not systematically reported, although it is a requirement for WFP. However, protection reporting is provided to ECHO,¹¹² for whom this is also a requirement.

132. The accountability to affected population indicators in Table 9 mostly show partial achievement, with women being more informed about the programmes than men. While affected populations are informed about the interventions, their views are only considered to a limited extent in further design and implementation of these interventions.¹¹³

133. WFP is responding to these challenges by working more closely with community networks (volunteers) to empower local actors in early warning mechanisms and in emergency prevention actions. A clear example of this community empowerment approach is the pilot of an early warning system in Puerto Plata.¹¹⁴ In its more recent cash-based transfer interventions, WFP is also paying more attention to

107 ACR 2021.

108 ACR 2021.

109 At the design and monitoring stages, a WFP programme is assigned a code on a 0 to 4 scale where: 0 is 'does not integrate gender or age'; 1 is 'Partially integrates gender and age'; 2 is 'Fully integrates age'; 3 is 'Fully integrates gender' and 4 is 'Fully integrates gender and age'. 'The minimum requirement, at the design stage, is for T-I/CSPs to fully integrate gender (GAM code 3), thereby supporting implementation of the corporate commitments articulated in the Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and Gender Policy (2015-2020). There is no minimum requirement for the monitoring stage, as the code should reflect the actual integration of gender into programme implementation'. WFP Gender Office – Gender with age Marker – Monitoring.

110 ACR 2021.

111 Based on KIIs at the level of WFP CO and implementation partners.

112 DG ECHO Protection mainstreaming key outcome indicator and monitoring tool – Technical guidance. To measure ECHO's protection indicator, specific guidance is given with eight mandatory questions to make to beneficiaries through a survey questionnaire.

113 KIIS with WFP CO staff, partners and beneficiaries, and fieldwork interviews in Annex 9.

114 ACR 2020.

accountability to affected populations and to protection aspects, through training and empowerment of recipients and their representatives and ensuring protection measures in distributions.

134. There have been improvements, since 2020, regarding activities with people living with HIV.¹¹⁵ Confidentiality protocols were established together with the health system and other partners, based on the WFP Guide to Personal Data Protection and Privacy, with a view to protecting their rights and promoting their social integration without stigmatization. Collaboration with NGOs and the establishment of community gardens have helped with such integration.

135. Monitoring data on environmental aspects were only available for 2021, though these are considered during implementation, as seen in the vegetable garden activities for those living with HIV and the early warning system in Puerto Plata.

136. No evidence is available to suggest that WFP has produced knowledge and insights to improve integration of cross-cutting aspects in the planning, design or implementation of new interventions.¹¹⁶ Thus, the focus on cross-cutting dimensions to ensure that target groups are included and that gender balance (where relevant) is achieved, has remained limited.

137. WFP has an explicit inclusion approach to ensure that Haitian migrants are included in its interventions and it has also developed targeted interventions for this target group, such as could be witnessed during the case study visits to the northwest. This is important, as this group is highly vulnerable, heavily discriminated against and excluded at all levels within Dominican Republic society. Haitian migrants only have limited access to basic health and education but don't have access to social protection services (see EQ 1.1) and their inclusion is considered to be important.¹¹⁷

Finding 15. WFP has shown full commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality throughout the CSP implementation. WFP also paid attention to protection and accountability to affected populations; however, this was not done systematically due to its limited (human resource) capacity, especially for targeting groups experiencing protection-related issues such as people living with HIV, the disabled and youth.

138. There is clear evidence through the interviews that WFP has ensured respect for humanitarian principles, addressing those who suffer, wherever they are, and impartiality by having paid attention, without discrimination, to the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups such as undocumented migrant populations, and people living with HIV, the disabled and youth. The attention provided by WFP to undocumented migrants is based on the fact that they are excluded from social protection services from the Government, and only have access to basic health and education services in the Dominican Republic. From a protection perspective, WFP has ensured respect for the identity of this group and enabled conditions that allow it access to benefits and resources, as WFP did when it included Haitian migrants and refugees in its support actions. In its proactive work on the Dominican Republic-Haiti logistic corridor, WFP has shown neutrality in promoting the strengthening of humanitarian support and in working with Haitian migrants and refugees in the Dominican Republic, without taking sides with specific stakeholder groups on either side of the border. WFP has also remained independent of any political or non-humanitarian objectives by not leaving behind the Haitian migrants' group, which is not covered by many government support programmes.

139. WFP in the Dominican Republic does not pay sufficient attention to protection and accountability to affected populations, due to the current lack of dedicated staff to provide systematic support in these areas (see EQ 4.4 for a further discussion about staffing). A protection and accountability-centred approach is therefore not fully integrated in WFP Dominican Republic CSP interventions.

140. For instance, in the WFP protection and accountability scorecard for 2020 it was recommended that "strong institutional commitment, practical directives and guidance grounded in a solid normative framework are required for the sustainable application of protection throughout WFP".¹¹⁸ Such follow-up

115 Observed through interviews and fieldwork interviews.

116 Neither in the analysis of available documentation nor during the fieldwork, did the evaluators find evidence of the active use of M&E data and other sources of information.

117 As reported in KIIs with WFP, UN agencies and CSOs.

118 WFP. 2020. Protection and accountability. Scorecard October 2019–October 2020.

was not evident. The country office has no protection focal point, which inhibits more regular work on protection due to limited capacity. As it has been acknowledged internally, WFP protection strategies and guidelines are not strictly followed and there is limited knowledge of protection and accountability to affected population issues.

141. Youth are an important vulnerable target group in the country, and one that faces growing protection risks, such as pregnancy in girls, child labour and crime. WFP is considered by national partners and cooperating partners as a potentially relevant actor to include youth and to address their protection needs in cash-based transfer or social protection programmes. Similarly, people living with disabilities are a vulnerable group that is often not systematically targeted by specific interventions. Although these groups are included during selection of beneficiaries, their needs are not duly served.

Finding 16. WFP has contributed significantly less to environmental sustainability and climate change resilience (with no clear achieved effects) than to disaster preparedness in its emergency related work under SO3.

142. Despite promotion by WFP of the implementation of the national road map, where environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation have been included for achieving SDG 2, WFP in the Dominican Republic does not have a leadership role in addressing environmental sustainability and climate change resilience-related development challenges. Many United Nations partners, including FAO and IFAD, work in this area and sustainability and climate change has increasingly become a cross-cutting theme across all United Nations agencies' work. Cross-cutting indicators on environment have not been measured in the CSP.¹¹⁹ WFP has shown concern in ensuring no harm to the environment in its interventions through environmental and social safeguards, but there is limited evidence on how this is put into practice. The annual country report 2021 refers only to a specific recycling initiative for the in-kind food rations distributed under SO4 and transformed in eco-friendly bags.

143. On the other hand, WFP has built specific expertise in the area of disaster preparedness and mitigation, through which it addresses climate change community resilience. National partners widely recognize WFP for environmental forecasting and risk assessments for disaster preparedness and responses. In this area WFP has provided technical assistance to national partners, such as the National Meteorological Institute (ONAMET). WFP developed weather and foliage coverage assessment methods and tools in this area that have been applied in several emergency preparedness-related actions. These efforts are recognized and appreciated by national partners.

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?

Finding 17. Government and other key partners show strong ownership of and commitment to WFP capacity development interventions. They also report having good capacity to continue and expand their work in the future on food security, nutrition and social protection. There are, however, clear challenges in emergency preparedness, mitigation and response-related work.

144. The Government ministries (MSP, Ministry of the Presidency and Vice-Presidency) and institutes (Supérate (previously Progresando con Solidaridad (PROSOLI), INAIPI, INABIE, SIUBEN, Administradora de Subsidios Sociales (ADESS) etc.) are long-standing partners of WFP and have gradually developed strong partnerships (see also EQ1.2). The ministries and coordinating entities (Social Policies Cabinet, CONASSAN, CNE), working in WFP areas of operation, (food security, nutrition, food, social protection and emergency preparedness and response) are now capable of formulating policies and developing programmes to reach large populations, such as those created by Supérate, and INAIPI and INABIE, as well as funding these partners. In addition, continuous support from the Government and other international partners, such as

119 Acknowledged in ACR 2021.

FAO, enables these partners to implement their programmes over time (see also EQ4 for more details on donors).

145. The national government partners, thanks to their strong structures and staffing and access to resources from their own Government do not require continuous capacity strengthening support from international partners such as WFP, although specific technical assistance or a reliable supply of services and goods is still needed. Particularly under SO1 and SO2 in the CSP, the national partners show significant organizational and institutional capacities, as confirmed by key informant interviews and by consistent government policies and programmes. Under SO3 (emergency preparedness, mitigation and response), WFP works with key partners such as the Civil Defence, COE and the Dominican Red Cross, although challenges still remain, particularly at the coordination and systems levels and also in linking emergency preparedness and response with social protection programmes and measures. In these areas a need for continued WFP support has been reported in WFP annual country reports.¹²⁰

146. According to national stakeholders in key informant interviews, the new Government was ready to tackle some of the key challenges posed by the COVID-19 quickly after its formation, in spite of difficulties posed by the pandemic, such as the impossibility of physically meeting as a government team. In 2022, the Government was quick to respond to the global food and inflation crisis with a new cash-based subsidy programme for the poorer segments of society, managed by Supérate.

147. Government partners that received technical assistance from WFP, as well as external partners confirm the results from WFP capacity development interventions at the organizational level in the form of stronger mandates, more effective structures and increased capacity for access to revenue and funding. However, capacity challenges still remain at the institutional level, particularly in the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response and more systematic linking of social protection with emergency responses, integrating and embedding cross-cutting dimensions in policies, programmes and institutions. Partners interviewed reported that more needs to be done by WFP at the systems and policy levels and by strengthening capacity at the institutional level.

148. Two other remaining challenges that require further WFP capacity strengthening support and direct assistance are¹²¹ the Haitian migrants, and refugees and undocumented people who are not included in social protection or in many other services and support programmes from the Government. There is a need to address the humanitarian crisis in Haiti and to ensure that support can be mobilized and provided. This also relates to the vulnerability against disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes and climate change that are felt on both sides of the border. These challenges indicate a clear need for continued WFP support in Dominican Republic and at international level.

2.2.4 To what extent did the CSP facilitate more strategic linkages between humanitarian action, development cooperation and, where appropriate, contributions to peace?

Finding 18. The CSP does not include a strategy for transitioning from humanitarian to development interventions. At both the planning and the implementation levels of specific humanitarian interventions, the humanitarian-development nexus is poorly developed.¹²²

149. Neither the CSP nor the annual country reports (2019-2021) contain reference to the humanitarian-development nexus. SO3 refers to the purpose of “ensuring sustainable food security and local development”, although there are no specific actions. During the CSP implementation there have been valuable joint collaborations with development agencies, for example FAO/IFAD. However, these were not established with a vision to develop and strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus. Key informants from the Government and civil society regularly indicate that humanitarian and development agencies need

120 During KIs with national partners.

121 As identified by multiple stakeholders.

122 The responses to EQs 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 of the evaluation matrix are combined under this finding.

to collaborate more and combine their areas of expertise to deal with shocks and emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and hurricanes and flooding.

150. Opportunities for collaboration with development-oriented civil society organizations existed throughout the CSP implementation period, such as with Plan International, World Vision and CESAL, with whom WFP has worked. However, the focus has been on implementing specific tasks and not on establishing linkages with development-oriented interventions of these civil society organizations working in the same locations and regions where humanitarian interventions were being implemented. Some of the consequences of not developing the humanitarian and development nexus approach were seen during field visits whereby groups receiving COVID-19-related cash-based transfers during a period of three months found themselves without any support after this. Many people indicated that they were in the same dire situation as before and had experienced merely a temporary period of relief.

151. WFP has limited in-house socioeconomic development expertise (see EQ4.4), and there have been no initiatives, implemented either by WFP or in collaboration with other agencies, for developing the humanitarian-development nexus. The short time frameworks for humanitarian interventions and short-term funding from humanitarian donors, according to WFP and partners, often inhibits the establishment of links between humanitarian and development initiatives within the project duration or the establishment of links with other partners in providing follow-up actions to the same target groups.

152. The limited cooperation between partners and the limited opportunities for funding that enable development of the humanitarian-development nexus pose serious constraints to achieving more structural and sustainable improvements for the target groups. This was identified as an assumption in the theory of change of the CSP and, since this assumption is not met, possibilities to achieve lasting improvement – especially in the economic situation of target groups in emergency related interventions - are limited.

153. There are examples where WFP is using developmental approaches, such as the vegetable garden project with people living with HIV. However, its focus has been on health and nutrition rather than on providing economic and livelihood opportunities. The scale of the micro-gardens project is too small to provide a feasible opportunity for the people involved. Possibilities to increase scale or link this project with a more economic development approach have not yet been explored.

154. WFP and its local partners' work on developing and setting up early warning systems has focused on emergency prevention and mitigation and not on economic recovery and development. Stakeholder groups in early warning mechanisms¹²³ voiced concerns that the strict application of rain and flooding forecasts affecting large regions leads to economic inactivity and affects large groups of producers, while the actual risks were much more confined to specific regions.

155. From 2017 onwards, high-level policy dialogue between WFP and the Government, on strengthening capacities and using the social protection national system in response to humanitarian emergencies, have resulted in establishing stronger linkages between emergency response and social protection. WFP has supported the development of a comprehensive social protection and emergency response strategy in the Dominican Republic, a road map to promote social protection in emergencies, and a multi-agency agreement across WFP, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA for a more shock-responsive social protection system.¹²⁴ WFP organized a senior-level meeting in 2018 to discuss the findings of the 2017 study conducted by Oxford Policy Management and WFP on shock-responsive social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean. At this event, stakeholders agreed to develop a comprehensive strategy for social protection and disaster risk management. With this study, WFP has supported the Gabinete de Políticas Sociales and the Centre for Emergency Operations to define a common strategy for emergency response,

123 By relevant stakeholders.

124 WFP 2019. Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean: Summary of key findings and policy recommendations.

and revise shock-responsive social protection standard operating procedures in case of emergencies. These actions are still ongoing.

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

2.3.1 To what extent were outputs delivered within the intended timeframe?

Finding 19. WFP has experienced delays in implementing planned activities, and delivering outputs particularly those related to COVID-19 responses under SO4. Implementation rates of the CSP since 2021 are accelerating, indicating improvements in efficiency after having adapted the CSP to the needs created by COVID 19.

Analysis of expenditures and budget depletion rates in CSP implementation

156. Budget and expenditure rates for the CSP period (2019–November 2022) are presented in Table 10 below. Table 10 presents expenditure rates compared with the original needs-based plan and revised (after BR04) needs-based plan and allocated resources and expenditures. The last column the table indicates a relatively slow expenditure rate up to November 2022, with 59 percent of the allocated resources spent by December 2022, after almost four of the five years duration of the CSP.

Table 10: Cumulative financial overview of CSP for the period 2019-2022 in USD (up to November 2022)

SO	Original NBP (USD)	NBP after BR04 (USD)	Allocated resources (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	% Allocated resources on NBP (after BR 04)	% Expenditure of allocated resources
SO1	1,085,243	1,437,356	838,201	474,899	58%	57%
SO2	5,845,416	10,887,094	3,655,580	3,073,357	34%	84%
SO3	1,600,034	12,525,759	7,560,375	4,593,296	60%	61%
SO4		15,160,564	6,631,287	3,350,474	44%	51%
SO5		500,001	0	0	0%	
Not SO specific		4,639,028	2,282,066	801,015	49%	35%
TOTAL	8,530,693	45,149,802	20,967,509	12,293,040	46%	59%

Source: WFP IRM Analytics EV_CB Resource Overview CSP, data extracted on 14 12 2022. The values include DSC and ISC costs.

157. The expenditure rate is highest under SO2 (84 percent), which is in line with the four-year implementation period of the five-year CSP. At the same time, it should be noted that the final funding allocation for SO2 was much lower than the original and revised needs-based plans, indicating that the intensity of work under this strategic outcome has decreased significantly. These revisions were done based on planning revisions by the country office, responding to a decrease in available budget for this strategic outcome.

158. The expenditure rate under SO3, is 61 percent, which is considered low after almost four out of five years implementation. Under this strategic outcome, the revised needs-based plan and final budget allocation were significantly higher than its original needs-based plan, reflecting increased availability of resources for this strategic outcome. This increase in budget has caused challenges in preparing and implementing actions under SO3 in a timely way.

159. The expenditure rate for SO1 is also low with 57 percent after almost four years of implementation. Under SO1 the budget allocation has also been lower than originally planned in the needs-based plan, indicating a decreased level of effort dedicated to this strategic outcome. Considering these

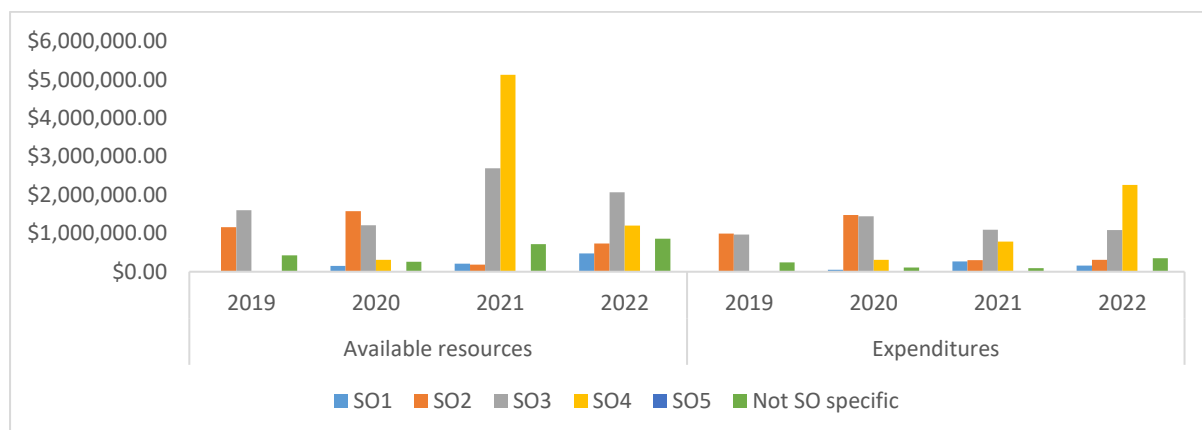
revisions, the expenditure rate under SO2 is actually considerably lower than under the needs-based plans for SO1 and SO3.

160. The expenditure rate for SO4, at 51 percent, may seem low, though still show considerable expenditures as this strategic outcome was only introduced in 2020. Considering the shorter implementation period, it is likely that expenditures under SO4 will be considerably higher than the estimated 64 percent at the end of the CSP. This assessment is further underscored by key informant interviews and field visits in which the evaluators could observe a sharp increase of activities under SO4 in 2022.

161. No expenditures were reported under SO5. In addition, the country office is considering a new budget revision that may lead to changes in expenditure rates under SO4 and SO5 due to the fact that a project implementation contract with INAIPI that was allocated under SO4, has possibly been transferred to a service delivery contract under SO5 from January 2023.¹²⁵ This change will not lead to a change in overall expenditure rates in the final year of CSP implementation.

162. Available resources and expenditures over time have evolved differently under the different strategic outcomes, as is shown in Figure 13 below. SO1 only shows available and growing resources from 2020 and beyond, reflecting that in 2019 no activities were implemented under this strategic outcome. SO2 shows significantly higher allocated resources for the first two years of the CSP, while implementation (expenditures) has been generally in line with resource allocation. Allocations and expenditures under SO3 show variance over time, with a decline in 2021 and an increase again in 2022. Expenditures under SO3 have been consistently lower than allocations with the exception of 2020. And finally, SO4 shows a large increase in allocations in 2021, after two years of no and small allocations. In 2022, the allocation for SO3 decreased significantly again. Under SO3, it can also be seen that expenditures have followed showing delay, with gradually growing expenditures until the end of 2022.

Figure 13. Available resources and expenditure rates for the CSP by strategic outcomes (2019-2022)



Source: WFP IRM Analytics EV_CB Resource Overview CSP, data extracted on 14.12.2022. Data for 2022 are up to November 2022.

163. The key findings that can be further derived from the Table 10 and Figure 13 related to budget and expenditures are listed below:

- The expenditure development rates over time show a clear challenge to achieve full depletion of allocated resources. This is particularly the case for SO3 and SO4¹²⁶. There are also challenges under SO1.
- Considering the delay factor of responding to increases in budget allocations that have occurred under SO3 and SO4, the rapid increase of expenditures under SO4 in 2022, shows good potential for full or close-to-full depletion rates, although it is less likely that the same can be achieved under SO3.

125 According to KIIs with CO officers.

126 With data up to November 2022, extracted from WFP IRM Analytics EV_CB Resource Overview CSP.

- The key reasons reported and mentioned in key informant interviews are delays in budget disbursements and slow recruitment processes for project implementation. The increase in expenditures in 2022 indicates that some of the logistical and administrative problems are now resolved.
- Considering the fact that expenditure rates are increasing in the final year, except for SO1, it is to be expected that by the end of the current CSP period final expenditure rates per allocated resources are likely to reach above 80 percent.
- Table 10 furthermore shows that there is a large discrepancy between the original and the current needs-based plan, and also between both needs-based plans and allocated resources. This raises the question of the extent to which needs-based plans are useful for informing annual programme planning over time, as changes in budgets, that come with subsequent budget revisions, are considerable during the CSP implementation stage.

164. While funding availability has been generally timely, the resource utilization analysis above has shown that budget utilization usually comes with considerable delay, because of the time needed for project design and preparation and also for recruitment of staff. This could be particularly observed with the delays in responding to the sudden additional availability of COVID-19-related funding for the CSP. There is an inherent challenge, particularly in emergency situations, that there is always a time gap between the availability of funding and the actual implementation. While partners and WFP informants state that WFP is well capable of responding to specific emergencies, the COVID-19 challenges and changes in funding were so massive that more time was needed to absorb the funding in a normal implementation pattern.

Analysis of timeliness of COVID-19 and emergency-related responses

165. WFP and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) as a whole were quick in preparing their COVID-19 response plan, (published on 12 November 2020¹²⁷), which was ready less than six months after the pandemic hit the country. There were some challenges experienced by WFP to rapidly dedicate additional budget to COVID-19 response activities, with some only starting in 2022, such as the COVID-19 cash-based transfers realized in the northwest of the Dominican Republic only in the summer of 2022, as witnessed during the field visits of the evaluation team to this region. These delays are also related to timelines of funding provision for COVID-19 responses.

166. The Government's social protection national programme, "*quédate en casa*" (stay at home), set up to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, benefited from WFP technical assistance at the design and implementation stages and expanded to serve additional beneficiaries. The COVID-19 subsidies programme, implemented by Supérate, expanded rapidly from 800,000 to 1.5 million households and from USD 15 to USD 85 per household in monthly cash-based transfers.

167. WFP is reported¹²⁸ to have quickly revised its basic emergency survey tool (FIBE), developed earlier in 2019, in order to implement it in collaboration with the social registry system (SIIUBEN), to target emergency affected populations for cash-based transfer emergency responses.

168. In other emergencies, such as Hurricane Fiona, WFP was able to mobilize the required support and respond quickly within one month.¹²⁹ WFP was able to reprioritize its target areas and conduct a rapid market assessment so that it could issue emergency credit transfer cards for affected populations via Supérate. Response to Hurricane Fiona enabled WFP to implement the emergency protocol in real time.¹³⁰

127 UNCT. 2020. Plan estratégico de respuesta a COVID-19.

128 As indicated by key informants.

129 As reported by its partners.

130 Standard Operations for Emergency Response (OPS) that was being developed by the SRSP working group.

Also, the flooding in the northwest of the Dominican Republic in 2022 demonstrated joint WFP-government rapid responses in the region.¹³¹

Analysis of efficiency of supply chain management

169. At the corporate level, WFP monitors supply chain performance of its country offices in a systematic way, as is shown in Table 11. However, these monitoring data on supply chain management performance were only available for the first three quarters of 2019 and the data for Q1 of this year are presented in Table 11 below. These are the only available monitoring data that allow a comparative analysis across countries in the region and a comparison with global data.¹³²

Table 11. Comparison of basic supply chain management performance (Q1 2019)

Country	Tonnage uplifted per agreed date (STO) – Transporter performance	Transport documents are accurate and issued on time	Data reliability indicators	% transactions captured in real-time in LESS	# Days to process account payable (ITS data)	Lead time for delivery to CP	% post-delivery losses	% pre-delivery losses	% Expiring commodities (mt)
GLOBAL	75%	88%	83%	59%	22 days	5 days	0,17%	0,27%	3,41%
RBP	90%	97%	48%	64%	17 days	2 days	0,05%	22,47%	5,62%
Dominican Republic	n/a	n/a	n/a	71%	25 days	1 days	n/a	n/a	0,00%
Cuba	n/a	n/a	n/a	71%	52 days	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Haiti	86%	99%	56%	n/a	20 days	2 days	0,12%	0,10%	6,37%
Honduras	98%	96%	56%	n/a	n/a	2 days	0,00%	n/a	4,52%
Nicaragua	100%	67%	5%	31%	n/a	n/a	0,01%	n/a	n/a
Guatemala	n/a	n/a	n/a	78%	19 days	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Colombia	64%	50%	0%	23%	29 days	2 days	n/a	n/a	0,00%

Source: WFP, K3 indicators - SC performance management (country office overview Q1 of 2019). Orange is no data or low performance compared to other country offices and green shows better performance.

170. The available supply chain performance data in the first year of the CSP show that WFP in the Dominican Republic is not providing data on a number of indicators, although - where it does - the country office shows overall good performance. The indicator lead-time delivery to cooperating partner, defined as “the average difference in days between dispatch document dates from WFP or third-party warehouses to cooperating partner (CP) and handover document dates in the CP storage location for each cooperating partner”, performs particularly well, indicating the quick communication between WFP and its partner for service delivery. Also, the Dominican Republic does not exhibit commodities expiring within 60 days from the delivery to cooperating partners. However, it takes 25 days to process accounts related to payments, putting the Dominican Republic above the average, which is indicating efficiency challenges in this area.

171. Additional data were analysed on supply chain performance, such as the indicator on “land transportation instruction (LTI)”. This indicator: “Transport documents are accurate and issued on time” – is quite critical for the time needed to secure delivery of food to partners and beneficiaries. Specifically, 54 percent of the LTI are delayed and this increases to 62 percent if only released LTI are considered. This indicator shows that there have been delays in transportation documentation in the Dominican Republic.

131 As reported by cooperating partners, such as CESAL and World Vision, during the field visits to this region by the evaluation team.

132 For ease of comparison across years, when data on later years will become available, the first quarter of 2019 was used for this comparative analysis. The data on Q2 and Q3 in the same year don't show much variance with the data on Q1.

On this indicator, no longitudinal and comparative data are available, not allowing for a comparative analysis of land transportation instructions over time and across countries.

Table 12. Timeliness of land transportation instruction, CSP (average compliance percentage 2019-2021)

State of LTI	Delay	On time	Total
Released	62%	38%	100%
Unreleased	14%	86%	100%
Total	54%	46%	100%

Source: DOTS, Land Transportation Instruction Dominican Republic, data extracted on 11.07.2022.

172. Table 13 below shows that some delays in timely delivery of food have occurred in 2020¹³³ as reported in the annual performance plan. The indicator shows the percentage of metric tons (mt) of food distributed on time: out of a target of 95 percent, 75 percent was actually delivered on time in 2020. In 2021, a significant improvement in performance on this indicator is shown with 100 percent of food distribution delivered on time. The same indicator is not yet available for 2022. The Dominican Republic's performance on food distribution in 2020 was lower than the global average in 2020, where almost 83 percent of the tonnage was uplifted by the agreed date, but it was more efficient in 2021 compared to the same global value (which remained stable at 83 percent).¹³⁴

Table 13. Percentage of food distributed on time during CSP (2020-2022)

Key indicator	Target 2020	Actual 2020	Target 2021	Actual 2021	Target 2022	Actual 2022
% of mt distributed within planned deadlines - Dominican Republic	95%	75%	95%	100%	≥95%	n/a

Source: WFP annual performance plan 2020.

173. Supply chain management performance data furthermore show that WFP in the Dominican Republic has been able to efficiently distribute food while containing losses. The target indicator was achieved for the three years considered in this analysis.¹³⁵

2.3.2 To what extent does the depth and breadth of coverage ensure that the most vulnerable to food insecurity benefit from the programme?

Finding 20. WFP ensured inclusion of the most vulnerable populations at two levels: through direct implementation of activities, and indirectly, through providing support to government entities in their targeting policies and strategies to reach beneficiaries. WFP responses included a clear focus on Haitian migrants as a priority vulnerable group excluded by national policies and programmes. While women are generally reached by both WFP and government programmes, attention to other vulnerable groups, such as youth and disabled people, has remained limited. Geographical targeting was done by WFP in its direct support provision to beneficiaries, prioritizing regions with a higher incidence of Haitian migrants and migrant workers and population groups with higher vulnerability to disasters (the northwest and the east of the Dominican Republic).

174. The principle of inclusion of most vulnerable populations is embedded in WFP policies and strategies and is applied during implementation of all activities. Yet, the WFP monitoring and evaluation systems do not include specific data on migrant populations and therefore no data on inclusion of Haitian people is provided in planning and reporting documents of the country office in the Dominican Republic. As

133 Data for other years included in the CSP are not available.

134 See Annual Performance Plan 2020 and 2021 - Annex III A - Detail Analysis of Key Performance Indicators.

135 Data for 2019 are not available for the Dominican Republic. In addition, it is not possible to compare this value with the same indicator at the global level as only the indicator "post-delivery losses" is presented in Annex III A of the APP.

a result, the extent of participation of Haitians in WFP activities cannot be verified, although interviews with implementing partners and beneficiaries suggest that they are regularly targeted in interventions.

175. There is no specific attention given to the needs and characteristics of disabled persons in the design and planning of interventions, though these target groups are included in WFP interventions.¹³⁶ In addition, the WFP small garden project (for health and nutrition) in the northwest (Mao) focuses on people living with HIV. Some interventions are not as accessible for some target groups. For example, popular canteens and supermarkets in cash-based transfer activities were sometimes remote, and therefore not easy to access, particularly by disabled persons.¹³⁷

176. WFP prioritizes marginalized groups that are not covered by or have marginal access to the social protection and health and nutrition programmes, as well as households placed in higher levels of poverty in the Quality of Life Index (ICV).¹³⁸ WFP has worked with UNHCR to train partners on safe and transparent identification, selection and recruitment of target groups, without discrimination.¹³⁹ UNHCR, WFP and other United Nations agencies, have also shown efforts to advocate for the inclusion of marginalized groups, including the Haitian migrants, although this remains a politically sensitive issue.¹⁴⁰

177. The process of identifying specific beneficiaries is complex, especially Haitian migrants who are usually on the move and difficult to follow up with interventions over a longer period. WFP in its cash-based transfer interventions in the northwest of the Dominican Republic, visited during the field interviews has worked with independent experts to ensure a proper and unbiased process for beneficiary selection.

178. The extent to which targeting at the community level resulted in WFP assistance actually reaching the most vulnerable people, Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic, has been difficult to establish, because WFP monitoring systems do not recognize these specific target groups.¹⁴¹ In the design and preparation of projects, WFP has considered regional characteristics to identify key intervention areas, such as the cross-border region, where Haitian refugees and migrants represent large sectors of communities and in the northwest and east of the country, where large groups of Haitian migrant workers reside in Bateyes. Further, specific climate change-related interventions were planned in the north and northwest, such as forecast-based financing interventions. These regions are known to be vulnerable to natural disasters, such as regular flooding.

2.3.3 To what extent were WFP activities cost-efficient in delivery of its assistance?

Finding 21. Based on analysis of quantitative performance data, WFP appears to be more cost-efficient in cash-based transfer interventions compared to food transfers. Experience of WFP with cash-based transfers, however, is still limited as this distribution modality was only recently introduced.

179. An analysis of basic quantitative data was done for food and cash transfers by WFP during the CSP implementation period. The data provided in this analysis are only available at the aggregate level and thus do not allow a more specific cost efficiency analysis for specific interventions and it is also not possible to consider differences in efficiency in size and volume of transfers per beneficiary and the overall size of beneficiary groups. There has been significant variance in these size and volume aspects of specific food and cash-based transfer interventions of WFP that would have made such comparative analyses very useful in order to generate more learning and insights for further development and improvements of these interventions. This is particularly relevant for cash-based transfer interventions, as these interventions have only been applied since 2020 and WFP in the Dominican Republic has still limited experience in applying cash-based transfers.

180. For the CSP, as is shown in Table 14, costs related to food transfers are generally higher for Activity 2 than for Activity 4. The cost percentages across the different years are very volatile and it is not possible to identify a clear trend of development of these costs. The WFP country office in the Dominican Republic

136 As observed during the field visits and in meetings with beneficiaries.

137 Observed by the evaluators during field visits and also confirmed in interviews.

138 The ICV was developed by SIUBEN with the support of the World bank and is used in the Supérate programme.

139 ACR 2020, ACR 2021.

140 UNHCR. UNHCR calls on States to refrain from forced returns of Haitians, 03 November 2022, available at:

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2022/11/6363acd64/unhcr-calls-states-refrain-forced-returns-haitians.html>.

141 Based on the limited secondary data made available to the evaluation team.

indicated that the substantial increase in transportation costs (+37 percentage points) in 2022 for Activity 2 is likely due to inflation, and the increase in international shipping costs due to the war in Ukraine. As food under Activity 2 is sourced internationally, while food under Activity 4 is sourced locally, the transport component is much more substantial for Activity 2 than it is for Activity 4. Also, port costs of international shipping for Activity 2 increased to 6 percent. Costs have been higher for storage during and immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic, maybe because of higher costs related with speed and urgency of actions required. The effects of storage costs on each mt of food distributed reduced again in 2022.¹⁴²

181. This analysis shows that international food purchases by WFP are generally dependent on developments on the global market and also exposed to dramatic changes that the country office cannot control, while costs and efficiency are easier to manage when food is purchased on local markets.

Table 14. Cost percentage of each metric ton of food distributed (CSP)

	FOOD	Years			
		2019	2020	2021	2022
Activity 2	Other food-related costs	9%	6%	No actions implemented under this activity in 2021	9%
	Transport	10%	17%		47%
	Storage	13%	17%		5%
	Port	0%	3%		6%
	Supply chain management costs	10%	7%		0%
Activity 4	Other food-related costs	-	14%	11%	6%
	Transport	-	0%	4%	0%
	Storage	-	1%	4%	2%
	Supply chain management costs	-	0%	0%	0%

Source: Country portfolio budget (CPB) Plan vs Actuals report v2.1 DO02.

182. Table 14 shows several 0 percent figures (see the ones related to costs of supply chain management under Activity 4 and, for some specific years, also costs of port (2019), supply chain management (2022) for Activity 2 and transportation cost (2022) for Activity 4). For 2021 there was no food delivery under Activity 2, hence for this year no values are presented for Activity 2. The 0 percent figures in the table, according to the WFP country office, are mainly due to the fact that some of the actions under Activity 2 and Activity 4 have been small and particular to specific partners and donors. In these situations, supply change management costs and transportation have been absorbed under other specific budget items and in reporting to specific donors and not included in the country portfolio budget (CPB) plan versus actual reporting.

183. The fact that supply chain management and transportation costs in some occasions have been reported under different systems, present some challenges to analysing Table 14. While at first sight, the table seems to suggest that food delivery activities have been very efficient with very low costs, the complete picture of these costs is not included in this table and it is impossible to derive a conclusion on cost effectiveness of food distribution by WFP in the period under review.

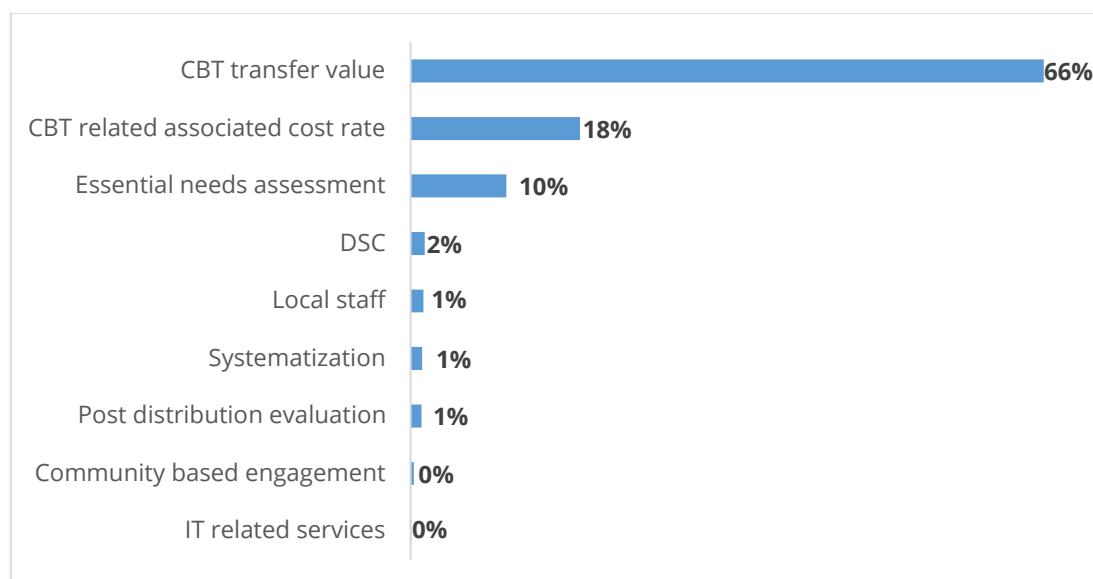
184. The costs of cash-based transfer interventions, as reported in the WFP “CPB Plan vs Actuals Reporting”, show even more challenges in analysing cost effectiveness of cash-based transfer interventions, as many cost percentages are reported at 0 percent.

185. The evaluation team has requested specific cash-based transfer costs reporting under specific contracts to obtain more insights in these cost percentages. An example of cost reporting on cash-based transfer was obtained from a financial report of a cash-based transfer intervention supported by ECHO in

¹⁴² Key informants among the CO and WFP partners confirmed that use of storage was high in 2021, due to COVID-19 responses at national level and for mobilization of support to Haiti to respond the earthquake in 2021.

2022 (see Figure 14 below). While this intervention may serve as an example, it should be recognized that it is not representative of overall WFP efficiency in cash-based transfer delivery in the period 2020-2022.

Figure 14. Costs associated with cash-based transfer distribution in ECHO-funded actions under Activity 4 (2022)



Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team based on CBT financial reporting to ECHO in 2022, provided by the country office to the evaluation team.

186. The figure above shows an overall 34 percent cost rate of delivery of cash-based transfers to target groups in the ECHO-supported intervention. This specific percentage is high, when compared with the costs of food transfer under both Activity 2 and Activity 4 of the CSP. This may be related to the fact that cash-based transfer delivery is still a relatively new activity for WFP in the Dominican Republic.

187. Based on the limited available data, it is not possible to come to an assessment of whether or not cash-based transfers are more efficient than food transfers. On the contrary, the data presented above points towards the finding that the costs percentages of both modalities are not very different. While cash-based transfer-related costs are lower than the internationally purchased food items under activities, they seem to be significantly higher than costs related to locally purchased food under Activity 4. This, in combination with the fact that cash-based transfers are a new transfer modality in WFP operations in the Dominican Republic, where initial set-up and learning costs may still be high, make it premature to come to a more definitive assessment of both modalities.

188. To complement the analysis in the sections above, cost of food and cash-based transfer per beneficiary has also been analysed, as it is a common way of measuring cost efficiency in humanitarian assistance provision. This is shown in Table 15 below. This table presents operational costs of delivery of food and cash-based transfer per beneficiary (these are all the operational costs associated with food and cash transfers, excluding the value of food and cash itself) as well as the total number of beneficiaries.

Table 15. Operational costs of delivery of food and cash-based transfer (2019-2022)

Beneficiaries and costs	SOs	2019		2020		2021	
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
# Beneficiaries	Act 2 (Food)	202,000	98,323	202,000	106,963	230,000	151,736
Total operational costs		190,381	110,465	190,380	283,433	334,178	161,666
Operational cost per beneficiary		0.94	1.12	0.94	2.65	1.45	1.07
# Beneficiaries	Act 4 (Food)			20,000	7,972	20,000	9,000
Total operational costs				469,744	9,730	308,453	12,559
Operational cost per beneficiary				23.49	1.22	15.42	1.40
# Beneficiaries	Act 4 (CBT)			40,000	2,760	40,000	143,679
Total operational costs				103,421	4,163	109,827	N/A
Operational cost per beneficiary				2.59	1.51	2.75	N/A

Source: CM_R002_b_Annual Beneficiaries by Strategic Outcome, Activity and Modality (CSP), v.1.1 and CPB_Plan vs Actuals Report_v2.1 DO02.

189. For food distribution, the planned cost per beneficiary is much lower under SO2 than under SO4. The lower planned costs per beneficiary under Activity 2 as compared with Activity 4 can be mainly explained by the fact that the number of planned beneficiaries under Activity 2 is much higher than under Activity 4, for all years. While it is straightforward that costs per beneficiary of food delivery is higher when the number of beneficiaries is lower, it remains a question as to why planned costs for food delivery under Activity 4 in the years 2020 and 2021 were so high. As no explanation could be provided in key informant interviews, it is assumed that this may be related to challenges in proper registration of these data in the monitoring system.

190. The differences in actual costs of food delivery per beneficiary are much lower and more comparable between activities 2 and 4. This is mainly related to the facts that the number of beneficiaries actually reached under all activities was lower than planned and that the actual delivery differences in costs were much less pronounced.

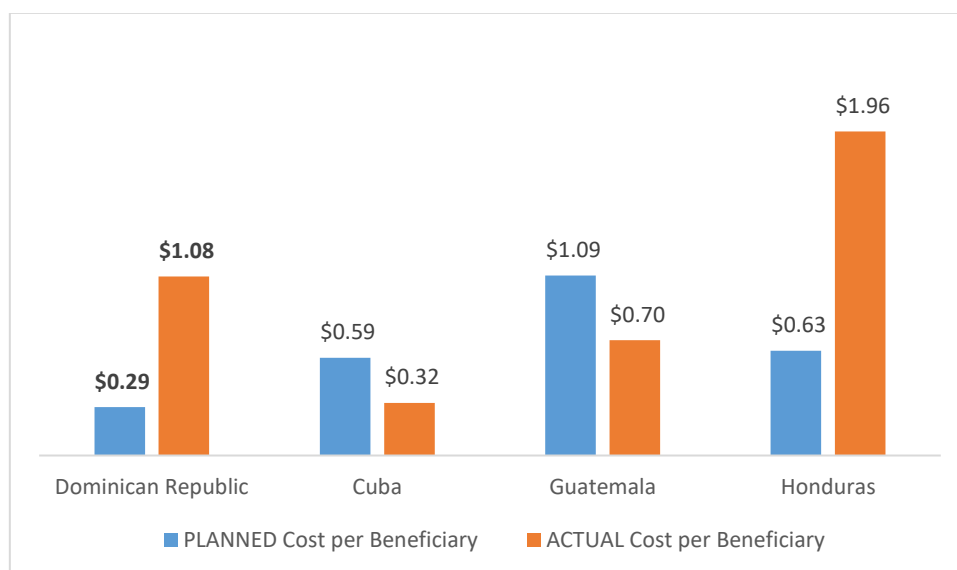
191. An additional factor that can explain how under SO4 costs per beneficiary are higher, is that emergency responses under SO4 require more preparation, experience logistical challenges and use different delivery mechanisms due the emergency context where they are implemented.

192. For cash-based transfers, WFP was able to keep the actual cost per beneficiary below the planned cost, although no data are yet available for 2021. The reporting data on cash-based transfers do not show a clearly lower cost than those under food transfers, when this would have been expected. This is related to the fact that cash-based transfer, as a transfer modality, was only introduced in the Dominican Republic in 2020 and therefore the country office still had to go through initial investments and a learning curve to make efficient use of this modality. This analysis was confirmed in key informant interviews. As no data are available on 2021 and 2022, it is not yet possible to assess if efficiency gains can be obtained over time.

193. Planned and actual cost per beneficiary vary significantly across countries. The Dominican Republic has the highest actual cost per beneficiary among similar countries in the region. For example, Figure 15 shows that the cost of transferring food is higher in the Dominican Republic compared to Cuba, which has

similar logistic issues and costs as a Caribbean island state. The Dominican Republic, just as Honduras, faces difficulties in complying with its planned costs per beneficiary with higher costs than anticipated.

Figure 15 Planned versus actual cost per beneficiary for food distribution – comparison across countries (2021)



Source: Elaboration of the evaluation team from CBP Resource Overview EV_03.11.2022 and ACR 2021 Dominican Republic; ACR 2021 Cuba; ACR 2021 Guatemala; ACR 2021 Honduras.

194. It is not possible to conduct the same comparative analysis for cash-based transfers, as many costs percentages for cash-based transfers are equal to zero, which is likely due to missing data in the WFP system recording financial data (WFP Information Network and Global System - WINGS).

Finding 22. Although there are limited data, WFP supply chain management is generally efficient in delivering food items.

195. In terms of supply chain, WFP country office was able to efficiently distribute food while containing losses. The target indicator was achieved for the three years considered.

Table 16. Food losses in WFP food delivery

Key indicator	Target 2020	Actual 2020	Target 2021	Actual 2021	Target 2022	Actual 2022
% of food loss during delivery	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<2%	0%*

Source: WFP, Plan Anual de Rendimiento 2020. * Actual values for 2022 refer to mid-year.

196. In 2020 the quantity of food loss was related only to “super cereals” under Activity 2, and it sits at 47 mt, for a total value of USD 25,140.¹⁴³

197. Key partners of WFP in food and cash-based transfer at the government level (INAPI, Supérate, MSP), in key informant interviews during this evaluation did not report delays in WFP support activities and services and had no complaints about quality of delivery and losses during storage and transport. These partners also indicate that WFP is competitive in its supply, in terms of price, quality and timeliness, compared with other private sector suppliers. Many partners, such as the Civil Defence, COE, Dominican Red Cross and WFP Haiti, recognize the experience and efficiency of WFP in the Dominican Republic in

143 WFP. Annual Performance Plan 2020.

supply chain management and the provision of logistical services. Partners often refer to WFP global experience and knowledge in this area that ensures it is generally cost-effective.

198. It is important to mention that WFP capacity in the Dominican Republic has been used in the provision of humanitarian assistance to Haiti, and a cost-sharing mechanism was applied to ensure that costs of these operations were properly attributed to different entities. The costs for developing and maintaining operational capacity for the logistic corridor have been absorbed under SO3 – hence excluded from the analysis above that only consider SO2 and SO4 for food and cash-based transfer distribution. A proper calculation and budgeting for the costs related to maintaining this capacity is needed.

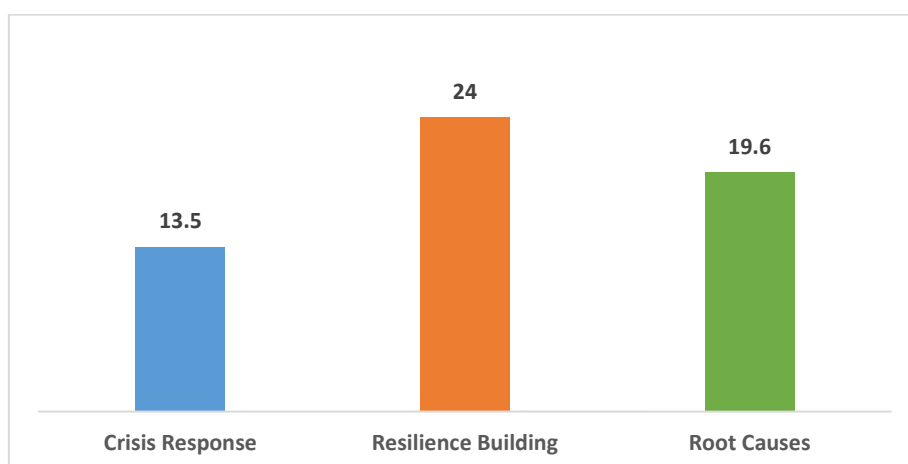
199. Although the data in this section do not allow a comparative analysis over time and across countries, the indicators above and the key informant interviews show that WFP in the Dominican Republic is generally efficient and timely in delivery of food items and there is no evidence of significant delays.

200. The limitations in WFP monitoring and evaluation reporting systems and compliance in populating these information systems by the country office are further discussed in Section 2.4.2

Finding 23. Short-term contracting and funding cycles, especially for humanitarian assistance projects, posed significant constraints on the effectiveness and efficiency of these interventions during CSP implementation.

201. WFP donor contracts are usually short term, as illustrated in Figure 16.¹⁴⁴ The average duration of the 156 contracts considered is 19.6 months, and this is even shorter for short-term crisis-response contracts. In the case of Dominican Republic, this is only 13.5 months, while for resilience building contracts it is 24 months.

Figure 16. Average donor-contract duration during CSP implementation (2019-2022) (months)



Source: CPB Grant Balances Report v3.0, extracted on 13.12.2022.

202. The short-term duration of contracts leads to a number of efficiency challenges. The process of project identification and design, as well as the selection of beneficiaries is relatively costly, particularly when the project duration is short. Some project interventions, as observed during the case study field visits, have had only a few hundred beneficiaries for cash-based transfer support lasting only three months while the cost of design, identification of beneficiaries and delivery has been high.¹⁴⁵

203. Challenges related with effectiveness are even more pronounced. The short-term duration does not allow for the preparation and identification of possible follow-up support actions for beneficiaries. Therefore, the risk that beneficiaries return to the same situation as before once a specific support

¹⁴⁴ The average grant duration is calculated as grant TDD minus first allocation date. When Grant TDD was not associated to a definite end (i.e. 31.12.9999) the last day of the CSP has been considered (31.12.2023). This analysis has two limitations. The first is related to sampling, grants with empty TDD and first allocation date are excluded. In addition, the date of last transaction is not available. Rather, only the date of first transaction is available.

¹⁴⁵ As reported by key informants during these visits and KIIs at the WFP CO.

intervention ends is considerable, as evidenced by field interviews in Dajabón. Also, the time to work with beneficiaries to develop awareness and knowledge on specific subjects and to work on empowerment is limited, while behavioural change interventions require longer periods of time.

204. Another aspect to consider is the fact that the short-term duration of projects limits the opportunities to build and strengthen partnerships. The role of partners remains limited to specific interventions during the short duration of a project. This limitation can be seen particularly in partnerships at the local level, while partnerships with national partners are usually built around multiple projects or projects of a longer duration.

205. The short-term duration of projects is not conducive to establishing a humanitarian-development nexus, as this requires a longer-term approach for empowerment and socioeconomic support. It requires time to establish linkages and cooperation with partners that have the right expertise and capabilities to provide the right follow-up services.

2.3.4 To what extent were alternative, more cost-effective measures considered for CSP implementation?

Finding 24. Assessment of cost effectiveness in this section has been limited, due to incomplete data. Clear examples of measures taken to improve cost effectiveness and efficiency resulting from analysis of monitoring data on previous interventions are not available. However, one significant innovation was introduced: the start of cash-based transfer as a new transfer modality in 2020.

206. Availability of data on specific transfer mechanisms and design and implementation frameworks is limited and mainly available at the aggregate level. This hinders an in-depth analysis of transfer modalities and the comparison of different intervention designs. Hence, the capacity of the country office to introduce new transfer modalities and project interventions based on systematization and comparison of projects and transfer modalities has been limited.

207. Some innovations were introduced in CSP programming and implementation, the most important being cash-based transfers in 2020. This innovation and change are considered very important by country office and national partners and its expected effects are likely to reduce costs of transfer modalities, and at the same time these are empowering target groups in decision making on the use of cash received. The introduction of cash-based transfer in the Dominican Republic is late compared to other countries where WFP operates and is therefore more related to lessons learned by WFP and partners in other contexts and countries than to specific lessons learned in the Dominican Republic.

208. Another innovation that has been introduced during this CSP is the gradual shift in approach in SO1- and SO2-related actions from malnutrition to addressing the triple burden of malnutrition with increased attention to quality of nutrition and the growing incidence of obesity, diabetes and hypertension. This shift in approach was accompanied with innovations in campaigning and fundraising addressing new and non-traditional income sources for WFP activities from within the private sector and the general public.

Finding 25. New insights, developments and technologies to improve cost effectiveness of operations have been considered in (re)designing and (re)planning the CSP over time and particularly new technology and innovation technologies have been increasingly incorporated into WFP interventions in the Dominican Republic.

209. WFP in the Dominican Republic has been keen to invest in digital platforms and new information, communication and technology (ICT) developments, such as drones and new software to facilitate risk analysis, planning and programme design. Also, important technological advancement was observed with the introduction of SCOPE as a system to facilitate the cash-based transfer interventions in the Dominican Republic.

210. The introduction of new digital and ICT technologies has improved cost effectiveness in WFP operations, as costs of using these technologies are low and at the same time the potential reach of these technologies can be high. And an even more important effect of these technological innovations is that external partners in the Dominican Republic recognize and appreciate WFP experience and expertise in applying new technologies in the cash-based transfer programme, in forecast-based financing and in realization of environmental risk assessment with the application of drones. These innovations also

demonstrate that WFP remains current and relevant for its partners in the Dominican Republic as a provider of specific technical assistance in technology-related matters.

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 CSP?

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

Finding 26. WFP funding efforts and results in fundraising during implementation of CSP, including the various revisions, show limited alignment with its original needs-based planning. The actual implementation of the CSP is done at a significantly lower level than was originally planned.

211. Table 17 shows variance between funding allocated in the annual implementation plan (AIP) and available resources (AR) against needs-based planning (NBP) for each year of the CSP.¹⁴⁶

Table 17. Implementation plan, available resources compared with CSP needs-based plan (2019-2022)

	Year	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	Not SO specific	Total
AIP/NBP	2019	60%	72%	64%		84%	70%
AR/NBP		0%	81%	167%		127%	107%
AR/AIP		0%	112%	260%		151%	152%
AIP/NBP	2020	118%	121%	118%	8%	64%	60%
AR/NBP		62%	106%	91%	9%	35%	48%
AR/AIP		53%	87%	77%	118%	54%	79%
AIP/NBP	2021	67%	79%	85%	83%	88%	82%
AR/NBP		66%	7%	80%	93%	63%	69%
AR/AIP		98%	9%	94%	112%	72%	84%
AIP/NBP	2022	155%	34%	119%	114%	83%	94%
AR/NBP		145%	27%	60%	28%	61%	43%
AR/AIP		94%	81%	50%	24%	74%	46%

Source: EV CB Resource Overview as per 13-12-2022. Legend: darker green and orange show variance of more than 50 percent with planning and available resource. Medium green and orange show variance of 25-50 percent and lighter green and orange show variance of less than 25 percent.

212. Table 17 shows that annual implementation plans (AIP) for the entire CSP period have been significantly lower than the needs-based plan (NBP) for the same year. This is also true for most strategic outcomes under all needs-based plans for most years, except 2020 when the implementation plans for SO1, SO2 and SO3 were increased. Further, in 2022 the implementation plans for SO1, SO3 and SO4 were increased in relation to the needs-based plan. As the overall implementation plans for both years were less than the needs-based plan, these shifts primarily refer to internal shifts of budgets across strategic outcomes. Firstly, this puts into question the degree of realism that is applied in preparing the needs-based plan as, in the actual implementation plan, the level of ambition is brought back with 30 and 40 percent in the first two years of the CSP and in subsequent years with another 18 and 6 percent respectively. Furthermore, implementation planning resources have shifted from SO1 and SO2 to SO3 and from 2021 onwards also to SO4. These shifts, according to the budget revision narratives, were due primarily to the availability of donor funding, which has shifted more to SO3 and after COVID-19 also to SO4. This means

¹⁴⁶ The table does not include data for SO5, as for this SO only from 2020 onwards there was an NBP though no IP was developed and no AR were allocated and thus no expenditures were realized.

that implementation planning is a first step of the WFP country office to align the earlier identified needs with available funds.

213. Available resources have also been consistently lower than the budgets in the implementation plans, indicating a second step of the WFP country office in aligning needs and planning with confirmed available resources. There has been one exception in 2019, when available resources for SO3 were higher than the implementation plan and this availability of additional funds was so high that it even caused an overall increase of the available resources for the entire CSP.

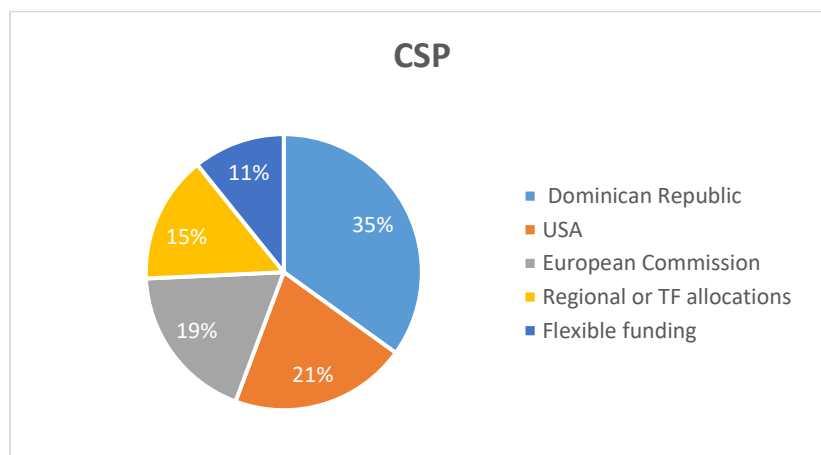
214. The often-considerable gaps between the needs-based plan, annual implementation plans and available resources show that the original needs-based plan has been too optimistic as compared to the funding that would ultimately be available. And at the same time, available funding also influences the course of the CSP, as will be discussed under the following finding (Finding 27).

215. The resource utilization, as was analysed under EQ3.1 has generally been lower than the available budget, although with the remaining implementation time is likely to still increase. This is an indication that funding levels have been generally adequate to match WFP country office's existing implementation capacity.

Finding 27. The scope and focus of the CSP have been influenced by donor priorities, with funding being earmarked specifically for SO3 and SO4. This may affect future decisions for continuing actions under SO1 and SO2.

216. Figure 17 provides detail of funding received by WFP from various donors during the CSP implementation period (2019-2022). The needs-based plan funded until December 2022 is USD 21,059,092, almost 47 percent of the total needs-based plan. The Government is the first donor, with more than USD 6.1 million, followed by the United States of America and the European Commission (USD 3.6 and 3.3 million, respectively). The top five is completed by regional or trust fund (TF) allocations (USD 2.6 million) and flexible funding (USD 1.9 million).

Figure 17. Total donor contribution to CSP in CSP period 2019-2022 (in USD)



Source: CPB_RS4_Cumulative Resource situation DO02.

217. As illustrated in Section 1.3, most of the earmarked funding by donors is done at the activity level, accounting for over 83 percent of the total funds. This reduces the ability of WFP to be flexible in how it is able to use the available resources.

218. Earmarking funds for activities under SO3 and SO4 are likely to continue as reflected in the pipeline of funding opportunities for WFP in the Dominican Republic. This pipeline shows clear challenges for the

immediate to longer term future of WFP operations in the Dominican Republic, as funding opportunities are rapidly declining.

219. The amount of high opportunity funding sources for 2022 and 2023 is rather limited and is in line with the trend of focusing on disaster-related activities under SO3. For example, funding from Germany will likely be a short-term opportunity, as key informant interviews confirmed that it will withdraw as a donor from the Dominican Republic, though at the global level Germany is still committed to funding disaster response-related activities with other centrally available resources. In addition, there will be a significant amount of possible funds from BHA for disaster response and the logistic corridor in the Dominican Republic, while government funding sources - Supérate and INAIPI - are key partners to help sustain future SO1 and SO2-related activities.

220. The funding opportunities from the Government, (already the most important WFP donor), are highly demand-driven and related to social protection actions and school feeding in early childhood centres. The Government is able to acquire specific services from WFP, while responsibility for implementation rests with the respective Government institutes.¹⁴⁷ This is reflected in the latest CSP budget revision (BR05) in which the contract with INAIPI has shifted from SO4 to SO5.

221. The trend of increasing earmarking at the activity level by donors has coincided with an overall decrease of available funding for the Dominican Republic and an increase of demand-driven service delivery of WFP to Government institutes. As this service delivery is on-demand, it also means that WFP is not free to allocate these resources to priority strategic outcomes. SO5 has been added to the CSP to provide an on-demand service and in the remaining CSP period will absorb funding. As a response to these trends, WFP is making new efforts in communication and fundraising campaigns and actions to generate more flexible funding. These fundraising initiatives are particularly related to the continuation of activities under SO1 and SO2. Additionally, WFP has developed partnerships with the private sector such as DSM (in food fortification) and with Mastercard Caribbean, as well as from the general public in the Dominican Republic for both SO1 and SO2 activities, however, funding received to date has been limited. This private sector fundraising is done to compensate for declining donor support over past years particularly for SO1 and SO2-related activities. WFP, at the time of this evaluation, had commissioned research to further analyse partnership and fundraising possibilities for WFP in the Dominican Republic.

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

Finding 28. The monitoring and evaluation system and its related data and indicators are inadequate to monitor CSP implementation and progress. They have been unable to generate reliable and useful information to inform management decisions.

222. There is generally incomplete data across the CSP years and more specifically at the outcome level. Data availability varies across strategic outcomes, (see EQs 2.1 and 2.2). Absence of data has prevented comparison and analysis over time and across different strategic outcomes. A review of documents (annual performance plans, and narrative reports) shows that these are not based on systematic analysis of monitoring data. As disaggregated data are not available, this prevents detailed analysis to determine performance within specific interventions.

223. Monitoring and evaluation data are reported¹⁴⁸ to be of limited use for informing implementation and adaptations, rather its purpose is to aggregate findings and report at the corporate level. There is also limited staff, apart from a single monitoring and evaluation officer, to produce the required data, which is a

147 According to KIIs both at the GoDR and WFP CO level.

148 KIIs with some WFP staff and discussed during the two debriefing and validation workshops at the end of the field research phase.

time-consuming process. As a consequence of this, generating and submitting the required monitoring and evaluation data at the country office level is limited.

224. Monitoring and evaluation data are not frequently analysed, including data on cross-cutting indicators of GEWE, inclusion, protection and accountability to affected populations. This means very little information is produced on differential effects of interventions on men, women and other target groups. WFP gender and cross-cutting indicators do not measure impact or transformational change and are mostly output oriented. Furthermore, cross-cutting indicators are processed and presented at the aggregate strategic outcome and programme levels, and hence are of limited use for course-correcting and adapting interventions.

225. In addition to monitoring and evaluation data, several assessment tools also generate valuable data, such as vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), household nutrition vulnerability, rainfall assessment, environmental risk assessment, etc. These are particularly used at the project design stage and to identify and prioritize target groups for specific interventions. However, these tools are subsequently not used to monitor changes over time across specific target groups or to inform future decisions (see also EQ 3.4). Some of these assessment instruments and tools are also valuable for WFP partners in the Government and among civil society organizations to help in their planning and programming processes.

226. WFP uses the EPCI indicator for monitoring but there are no indicators to measure capacity strengthening at organizational and institutional levels. WFP uses organizational capacity assessment and risk analysis forms to make decisions on engaging in a partnership with specific civil society organizations.¹⁴⁹ Methods and tools to measure capacities at the institutional and systems levels, such as the national capacity, shock-readiness and EPCI indexes are developed but not yet used in a consolidated manner (results are not followed up). The EPCI was, however, developed in a participatory way with the Government, which indicated interest in the tool and perceives it as a useful tool to identify and discuss specific aspects to improve national capacities in emergency preparedness. Indicators to measure the quality of coordination and partnership do not yet exist or are not systematically used.

227. Cross-cutting indicators at output and outcome levels are insufficient to measure progress in results achievement of the CSP, specifically:

- data are not available to determine the extent to which Haitian migrants have been included or are participating and which WFP actions reached them although their participation is consistently confirmed by WFP staff, partners and beneficiaries¹⁵⁰ (see also EQ 3.2); and
- accountability to affected population is also not consistently measured, although there is a specific indicator that refers to feedback from target groups. It is not clear how this indicator is actually measured or how beneficiary satisfaction is measured and complaints are analysed. At the outcome level, indicators are missing and mainly refer to changes in the nutritional status of target groups, but do not measure changes in behaviour, capacity or the extent of empowerment at the individual and organizational levels.

2.4.3 How did partnerships and collaboration with other actors influence performance and results?

Finding 29. WFP has developed strong and long-term bilateral partnerships with government institutes and, under SO1, it has established broader multi-stakeholder partnerships around zero hunger campaigning and awareness-raising initiatives. More recently, partnerships were also established with private sector organizations. Partnerships with civil society organizations have been long-existing, though in some occasions have been somewhat limited to operational cooperation. While coordination within the United Nations in the Dominican Republic has been good, operational cooperation at the project implementation level is more limited. Possibilities for

149 Partnership assessment of individual NGO partners were provided to the evaluation team. These partnership forms were only used for NGO partners and not for GoDR partners and only at the start of project contracts.

150 As reported during KIIs by staff, partners and beneficiaries in the focus group meetings during the case study visits.

establishing partnerships to enhance the humanitarian-development nexus have been explored by WFP, but have not yet led to cooperation in implementation on the ground.

228. WFP has maintained good and long-term relations with bilateral partners particularly with the Government, although collaboration at systems- and policy-level on the longer term, according to key informant interviews, shows room for improvement.¹⁵¹ Some government representatives indicate that, while WFP has specific project-level contracts with its implementing partners, it does not have long-term framework agreements or memorandums of understanding at the policy level, for example with the CNE, CONASSAN and Social Policies Cabinet. And they indicate that other United Nations agencies sometimes do work with memorandums of understanding with government partners on a longer-term cooperation time frame. Memorandums of understanding at this level would also enhance synergy of specific projects with specific partners in a broader cooperation framework.

229. Particularly, under SO1 in awareness raising and campaign activities, WFP has established broader partnerships with multiple actors organized around SDG 2 campaign activities. The WFP zero hunger campaign and communication activities in the Dominican Republic were conducted through strong and diverse partnerships with the Government, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector, such as the private sector initiative of *Sanar una Nación* (heal a nation). More recently, campaigning and awareness is shifting towards fundraising for specific behavioural change and feeding and nutrition-related actions implemented by the Government and WFP. These partnerships are well appreciated by the partners, and WFP leadership in SDG 2-related issues is clearly recognized as a key driver for these campaigning and awareness-raising capacities.

230. WFP regularly partners with civil society organizations for implementing projects or for providing specific services within projects. With some partners, WFP shares implementation responsibilities, while other partners indicate that their relation with WFP is more of the subcontracting type with limited shared responsibility and limited opportunities for capacity strengthening of the civil society organization partners.

231. Developing partnerships with the private sector is a relatively new area for WFP, though it is rapidly increasing in importance. Partnerships with private sector are set up for fundraising, such as with MasterCard Caribbean, and for knowledge sharing, such as in rice fortification where the company DSM is involved in communication and training and also in sourcing of micronutrients for fortification. The partnership with DSM goes beyond the Dominican Republic as WFP worked together with DSM in several Latin American countries. In the Dominican Republic, the partnership includes business aspects such as the provision of nutrients for food fortification, though DSM also provide funding and expertise for educational activities. Cooperation with the rice fortification private sector companies in the Dominican Republic is somewhat challenging, due to lack of a clear rice fortification policy by the Government that guarantees a level playing field for all companies. WFP provides technical assistance to SETESSAN in developing regulations and policies for food fortification, although in rice fortification the policy for fortification has been delayed, leading to some discontent among companies.

232. While United Nations agencies in the Dominican Republic closely coordinate their actions with the UNDAF and the upcoming UNSDCF and in ÚNETE around emergency responses (COVID-19 and Hurricane Fiona), this does not always translate into joint implementation of projects on the ground. WFP and FAO regularly meet and coordinate while working with the same government partners, although their project-specific cooperation remains mostly bilateral. Government partners as well as United Nations agency respondents reported that usually coordination is sufficient. However, in some instances key respondents indicated that there is inadequate collaboration between WFP and FAO in matters, specifically in food security and in food provision interventions, with a risk of overlap or different approaches being adopted. An example of this is FAO support to INABIE in school feeding, with a strong approach to sourcing food locally, while WFP provides technical assistance using centralized systems to sourcing foods/ingredients. These approaches may be complementary but require a closer coordination among INABIE, FAO and WFP.¹⁵²

233. WFP does not have a partnership approach and strategy to link its humanitarian assistance with socioeconomic development support of other partners, at United Nations, the Government or civil society

151 Partners comment during KIs.

152 According to key informants interviewed.

levels. As a result, the humanitarian-development nexus is not yet strongly developed in WFP actions under SO3 and SO4.

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

Finding 30. Staffing in the country office is limited for delivering against the ambitious CSP results and targets. Several functions, mainly in monitoring and evaluation and cross-cutting issues, are inadequately staffed or do not exist. While staff competencies are relevant and good, there are still some gaps in technical expertise that hinder improvement in WFP effectiveness, in strengthening linkages between emergency responses and social protection under SO3 and in strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus under SO4.

234. The WFP country office has limited staff to deliver against ambitious CSP targets and to maintain its complex organizational structure in the country. Due to the limited size of staffing and available resources, many staff have more than one position and a number of positions remain vacant. These factors have led the staff to combine working on activities under strategic outcomes and on cross-cutting areas such as monitoring and evaluation and gender. Protection and accountability to affected populations as cross-cutting areas are not assigned as focal points among staff members.¹⁵³

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235. Key areas where additional staff capacity is needed are:

- Cash-based transfers: this transfer modality is rapidly increasing in importance. More staffing capacity is required to help analyse and further adapt cash-based transfer approaches to specific situations, including post emergency actions and shock resilient protection interventions.
- Monitoring and evaluation: additional capacity in monitoring and evaluation is needed to generate the required monitoring data for proper CSP implementation and follow up, and to systematize and analyse monitoring data to identify implementation challenges and possibilities for improvements and innovations.
- Gender, inclusion and accountability to affected population/protection: in order to streamline these cross-cutting priorities into programmes and projects to achieve the planned results dedicated staff members as focal points are required.

236. Some areas in which new skills and expertise are needed to deal with changing CSP priorities and approaches include:

- Competencies to develop multistakeholder partnerships and to strengthen approaches for institutional and systems-level capacity development. Additionally, there is a capacity gap to develop institutional linkages for social protection and emergency responses, and forward-looking shock-resilient social protection approaches that require interaction between the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response and the Social Policies Cabinet.
- Competencies to establish and strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus in WFP is needed to improve follow-up of WFP humanitarian assistance interventions. This also requires expertise in developing complementary partnerships with other development-oriented partners to provide such follow-up.
- Competencies to deal with climate change and resilience against natural disasters, which affect the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean region as a whole, are becoming more relevant, with increased vulnerability of the entire region to natural disasters.

¹⁵³ As reported by CO staff during interviews. These findings are based on qualitative data collected through interviews as staffing data throughout the CSE implementation period was not available.

2.4.5 What are other factors, not yet covered under the questions above, that can explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the CSP?

237. Key enabling factors that have influenced WFP performance in achieving its CSP strategic goals are: a) strong WFP networks to engage in South-South and triangular cooperation; b) political stability in the country and strong government policies and institutions; c) quick recovery and economic growth in the Dominican Republic after COVID-19; and d) the existence of a response capacity in the Dominican Republic to quickly mobilize support to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti. These factors are explored in more detail below:

- a) **Strong WFP networks to engage in South-South and triangular cooperation:** one of the key strengths of WFP has been its global network and operation capacities. This has enabled it to pool knowledge and resources and gain access to international expertise, characteristics highly appreciated by the national partners. They reported benefiting from specific knowledge on social protection, nutrition and other key areas through South-South and triangular cooperation.
- b) **Political stability and strong government policies and institutions:** the Dominican Republic is politically stable, with strong democratic institutions, that are well-equipped to address social and economic challenges, to achieve SDG 2 goals and targets. The country is on target to meet these,¹⁵⁴ although it faces specific challenges, including: obesity; the nitrogen management index not being sufficient¹⁵⁵ and not showing sufficient progress; and improved undernourishment from 2003 to 2017, but a worsened situation since then.
- c) The Dominican Republic is now an upper middle-income country fully meeting its SDG 1 targets and well on its way to achieving SDG 2 targets: the Dominican Republic has demonstrated quick recovery and economic growth post COVID-19 and this has enabled the Government to invest in social protection, health and nutrition systems and food and cash-based support. In these areas, the Government is the long-term reliable partner of WFP and currently its most important provider of funding for its country operations. The Government's financial capacity allows continuation of social protection and school feeding (in early childhood centres) programmes and provides longer term stability.
- d) **Existence of a response capacity in the Dominican Republic to quickly mobilize support to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti:** the WFP country office in Dominican Republic has a proven capacity to quickly mobilize itself and respond to multiple crises in Haiti. The substantial and growing needs of Haiti, due to its humanitarian crisis, require that response capacity in the Dominican Republic should be maintained and strengthened. This need is also recognized within the Government, United Nations partners and international donors and therefore conditions for WFP to remain with its capacity as a humanitarian response actor requires the continued presence of WFP in both countries. The logistic corridor initiative of the WFP is an important action that will remain relevant in the future, with humanitarian donors willing to continue to provide funding for this initiative.

238. Key inhibiting factors that have influenced WFP performance are: a) a lack of coherence, complementarity and synergies across Rome-based, United Nations agencies; b) coordination challenges within the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response; c) global inflation and the food crisis; d) discrimination against, and exclusion of, Haitian migrants and refugees within the Dominican Republic; and e) limited integration of the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean region. These factors are explored in more detail below:

- a) **Limited complementarity and synergies across Rome-based, United Nations agencies:** at the United Nations level, there are challenges to achieving complementarity and synergy across the Rome-based agencies, particularly between WFP and FAO. These are particularly related to the work done by both agencies on food security issues and on feeding programmes. As described under EQ4.3, there have been attempts to improve coordination but implementation is mostly through bilateral arrangements. These challenges have been acknowledged at the United Nations and government

154 Sustainable Development Report. 2022. Dominican Republic, available at:

<https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/dominican-republic/indicators>.

155 On Nitrogen Management Index, only two countries (Ireland and Paraguay) are meeting the SDG2 targets.

levels as well as globally, as reported in a recent evaluation, commissioned by FAO, IFAD and WFP.¹⁵⁶ The evaluation recommended that the Rome-based agencies “further embrace the new joint programming mechanisms at the country level and ensure constructive, collaborative Rome-based agency engagement with these mechanisms”.¹⁵⁷ Currently there are few examples of active cooperation, mainly in providing technical assistance to local partners, but coordination and cooperation between WFP and FAO remains low.

- b) **Coordination challenges in the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response:** these influencing factors are beyond WFP control and its direct influence, however they affect its actions under SO3. The coordination challenges at the systems level have directed WFP and other partners to focus on bilateral cooperation with specific government institutes and other organizations at regional and local levels. However, several key informants have expressed concern that a national policy framework for disaster response is missing and the coordination challenges in the system pose a serious threat to achieving effective responses to major (category 5) disasters.
- c) **Global inflation and food crisis:** this external factor was included as one of the key assumptions in the theory of change developed for this evaluation. The assumption was that rising food and energy prices would not inhibit the continuation of nutrition support and emergency responses. However, support in these areas is strongly influenced by food and energy prices. While the global trends are a matter of concern, the Government has demonstrated its capacity to deal with the effects of this crisis by prioritizing financial support to poorer segments of society. Although it is not clear how this crisis will further develop, it will need to be monitored to inform the next CSP.
- d) **Discrimination against, and exclusion of, Haitian migrants and refugees within Dominican Republic society:** this has been a historical feature and a key factor influencing WFP performance. While the Haitian migrant labour force has for decades contributed to the economic development of the Dominican Republic, acceptance of them has been low. This also influences the extent to which the Government can manoeuvre. There is no widespread and open support for these groups despite advocacy from United Nations agencies such as UNHCR. These vulnerable populations remain excluded from government social protection programmes and hence depend on support from United Nations and civil society organizations. As the humanitarian crisis in Haiti is worsening this challenge is likely to continue and will require continued dialogue across WFP, the United Nations and the Government to understand how and to what extent these groups can be better integrated into society and social economic development.
- e) **Limited integration of the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean region:** the Government has shown a more consistent preference for the Spanish-speaking side of the Americas than for its immediate neighbours in the Caribbean region. While this approach may be beneficial for the Government, it is an inhibiting factor for WFP as it affects its ability to address challenges related to emergency preparedness, mitigation and responses that require an international response at the island level and also in the Caribbean region. The Dominican Republic, as the strongest and largest economy of the Caribbean region, can be a strong hub for mobilizing support to address climate change and disaster-related responses at the regional level, including its direct neighbour Haiti. This regional positioning, for climate change and emergency responses, is becoming more important for WFP and its programming.

156 See: FAO, IFAD, WFP. 2021. Joint Evaluation of Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies.
157 *ibid.* p. 82.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1 (on relevance EQ1)

The WFP T-ISCP and CSP (2018-2023) are well aligned with the Government's SDG 2-related national policies and priorities, and with the United Nations priorities for the Dominican Republic. The role of WFP and its competencies to contribute to SDG 2 are widely appreciated and recognized by the Government, civil society and private sector partners. The WFP CSP planning period has not followed the UNDAF timeframe, which is limiting the programmatic alignment of WFP with the UNDAF and the upcoming UNSDCF.

239. WFP planning has been influenced by changing donor preferences that responded increasingly to the Dominican Republic's specific vulnerability to disasters and the its contributions to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Haiti. Developmental donor support to the Dominican Republic, as an upper middle-income country, is decreasing and less funding is being made available to traditional feeding- and nutrition-related actions. This has led to decreased budgets for SO1 and SO2 and increased budgets for SO3 and SO4, in particular to support WFP emergency preparedness, mitigation and responses, including the WFP COVID-19 response.

240. Challenges for WFP to remain relevant as a humanitarian development partner of the Dominican Republic include its ability to ensure complementarity and synergies with other United Nations agencies, particularly FAO. WFP and FAO show considerable operational overlap, particularly in the area of food security, though with limited coordination in implementation of actions on the ground.

241. Country-level strategic outcomes and intervention strategies are, to a considerable extent, guided by WFP corporate level requirements for planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, and as a result do not always responding sufficiently to specific country contexts and needs.

242. Climate change and related regional-level vulnerability to disasters, such as cyclones, flooding and droughts, which were integrated in WFP planning under SO3, are trends likely to continue and will considerably affect future planning periods of WFP in the Dominican Republic and at the regional level.

Conclusion 2 (on relevance EQ1)

WFP interventions historically have combined direct assistance to beneficiaries with capacity strengthening of key partners, to enhance their reach to vulnerable population groups in order to address root causes, build resilience and provide responses to humanitarian crises. The actions in the CSP have been operationalized with a strong focus on five specific and separate strategic outcomes, some of which had their own theories of change, though with no theory of change at the aggregate level of the CSP. This has limited the coherence and internal synergy of the CSP as a whole.

243. The CSP did not have an overall theory of change to provide coherence and this, in combination with the WFP strategic outcome-focused approach in operationalizing planning of the CSP, has contributed to compartmentalization of the CSP. Key challenges are the fact that strategic outcomes are operationalized as stand-alone pillars, with specific persons responsible to lead the activities and also the fact that, in spite of coordination and exchange across pillars, in particular projects and interventions the key actions are mostly confined to the specific strategic outcomes. Functions to strengthen work across strategic outcomes and to link actions between different strategic outcome in the country office are not strong and the post of Head of Programme has not been filled since the previous Head of Programme left the country office in February 2021.

244. WFP capacity development interventions have focused on national partners to support their capacities in reaching target groups and beneficiaries. This important indirect reach to beneficiaries,

through national partners, is done with a clear contribution by WFP, although this is not fully captured in WFP reporting. This means that the overall reach and relevance of WFP for vulnerable populations in the Dominican Republic has remained under-highlighted.

Conclusion 3 (on effectiveness EQ2)

WFP has performed well in implementing the CSP and its work has been effective, as widely recognized by national partners, particularly in the areas of: technical assistance in nutrition; social protection; quick and efficient emergency responses; policy and programme development; South-South and triangular exchange; promotion and support in technological innovation (such as software, digitization, application of drones, cash-based transfer tools, etc.); and its high operational and supply chain management capacity. The contribution of WFP to the capacities of national partners has been significant, to the extent that these partners require less capacity strengthening, though still need specific, highly specialized services from WFP.

245. While WFP capacity strengthening efforts have been highly appreciated, some gaps remain, including the need to strengthen linkages between social protection and emergency responses. There is also a need for a stronger focus on institutional-level capacity development to strengthen coherence and synergy of the Government's provision of health, nutrition and social protection services and effective emergency responses.

246. The results obtained through the provision of technical assistance and capacity strengthening to the Government show strong planning and implementation capacities of partners and this is gradually creating a shift in partners' demands for specific types of technical assistance and demand-driven services. However, WFP and its partners have not yet discussed transition strategies to reduce reliance on WFP in the longer term.

247. While the capacity strengthening needs of specific partners are declining, there is still a need for capacity strengthening focusing at the institutional and systems levels, in particular to enhance coordination mechanisms and partnerships across multiple partners. This is a particular need in the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response.

248. The COVID-19 responses by WFP in 2020 and 2021 were focused on direct assistance to vulnerable groups, while maintaining capacity strengthening as a key implementation modality. The fact that the Government showed strong capacities in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently the inflation crisis, further confirms the effectiveness of WFP in this area, while needs for direct assistance in the Dominican Republic are once again on the decline.

Conclusion 4 (on effectiveness EQ2)

WFP has consistently included gender and other inclusion aspects in targeting its interventions. Through this, it has ensured participation of the most vulnerable groups in its activities. However, GEWE and accountability to affected population principles have not been sufficiently integrated during implementation. Gender, inclusion and accountability to affected population have not been systematically addressed and analysed in monitoring and reporting processes, this hindered an enhanced knowledge and understanding of differential GEWE, inclusion and accountability effects at the outcome level.

249. While women and other vulnerable groups are included in WFP actions, it is difficult to ascertain the effect of these actions at the outcome level, in terms of improved situation and empowerment of these groups, because the indicators on GEWE are focusing instead on the output level.

250. In humanitarian assistance, the duration of interventions is often short and actions are quick, which is limiting possibilities to take into account proper feedback mechanisms to target groups, subsequently limiting accountability to affected populations in these interventions. While target groups are

informed about interventions, there is often no time to take their feedback properly into account during these interventions.

251. The significant support provided to Haitian migrants is not well reported and documented using monitoring indicators, which makes it difficult to assess WFP reach among this most vulnerable group, although this is considered to be substantial.

Conclusion 5 (on effectiveness EQ2)

WFP has yet to make progress in the area of the humanitarian–development nexus, to combine humanitarian assistance with socioeconomic development and to link social protection with emergency responses. WFP interventions are generally short-term and aligned to humanitarian donors’ priorities (and with usually short-term funding windows). WFP has not sufficiently developed a strategy whereby humanitarian interventions easily transition into development and continued support is ensured for beneficiaries, particularly the most vulnerable.

252. The short duration of donor support, often less than 12 months, for humanitarian (emergency) interventions is an important limitation to WFP in developing its work along the humanitarian-development nexus. Most of the humanitarian interventions of WFP have not yet transitioned into development work to provide ongoing support to target groups, as these require a longer-term change of strategy.

253. WFP in the Dominican Republic has no strong expertise or experience on the humanitarian-development nexus and this has limited its ability to develop this area of work. Not having this expertise requires WFP to involve other partners to complement and continue its emergency/humanitarian work in order to further empower beneficiaries so that they can secure livelihoods and strengthen their economic standing. At community and regional levels, there are government entities and civil society organizations that provide this type of support, though WFP has not yet built strong linkages with these partners.

Conclusion 6 (on effectiveness EQ2 and on other factors EQ4)

During the CSP period, WFP has established strong and durable partnerships with the Government, mainly at the level of specific ministries and public institutes. Government partners generally express high satisfaction with the technical assistance and services provided by WFP. While bilateral partnerships with government institutes are well-developed and consolidated, inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, public-private and multiple-stakeholder partnerships are less developed.

254. WFP has mainly developed bilateral partnerships with specific government ministries and institutes for providing technical assistance and implementation support. It also works with coordinating entities, although not through formal partnerships or with a longer-term vision for policy and systems development and strengthening of inter-organizational coordination.

255. Multistakeholder partnerships and public-private partnerships are becoming increasingly important for addressing development challenges and WFP and its government partners have gradually accumulated experience in this area, particularly in campaigning and awareness raising around SDG 2.

256. WFP has multiple partnerships with civil society organizations, some long term, such as with the Dominican Red Cross. Other civil society organizations are subcontracted for specific activities. Exploring structural and longer-term partnerships with relevant civil society organizations in the Dominican Republic is needed to link specific WFP support interventions with civil society organizations to target groups and to embed actions at the community level. The potential of these partners for bringing context-relevant development expertise and to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus is underutilized by WFP country office.

Conclusion 7 (on efficiency EQ3 and other factors EQ4)

WFP is generally agile in responding to emergencies, particularly due to its high capacity in supply chain management and logistics support, although with the sharp increase of available resources in BR02, delays have occurred in project implementation and delivery of support, particularly under SO3 and SO4. This is due to the fact that the WFP country office in the Dominican Republic is relatively small and lacks human capacity as well as budgetary resources.

257. Partners widely acknowledge the capacity of WFP to provide relevant and timely humanitarian support to respond to disasters and emergencies. Its supply chain management and logistic operations are key contributors towards this.

258. WFP country office has a small team, while the CSP is complex and ambitious. This requires many staff to take on more than one role, creating higher workloads. Cross-cutting priorities are under-resourced with limited staff.

259. While generally efficient, particularly during planning and budget changes, the country office has faced difficulties and delays during implementation, including contracting and starting activities. This has contributed to low budget utilization in earlier years, though accelerating in more recent years of CSP implementation.

260. Planning and target setting by WFP in the Dominican Republic in its needs-based plan are optimistic and have required significant revisions during implementation of the CSP, which is putting into question the value of needs-based plan exercises.

Conclusion 8 (on efficiency EQ 3 and other factors EQ 4)

The CSP has undergone significant changes over time, particularly in 2020 with the addition of two additional strategic outcomes, mainly as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Budget reallocations have shown the significant dependence of WFP on external donor funds, which are to a large extent earmarked, thus giving external donors considerable leverage over the course of WFP in implementing the CSP in favour of SO3 and SO4 and at the cost of SO1 and SO2.

261. CSP budget revisions have been to a considerable extent driven by the availability of donor funding rather than by an analysis of national context and needs. This shows considerable donor influence on actions under the different CSP strategic outcomes. Funding available for SO1 and SO2 has decreased significantly during the CSP, while availability of funding for SO3 and SO4 has increased, because donor interest remained in responding to emergencies in the Dominican Republic and also in relation to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti.

262. The Government has been the key partner of WFP and its primary donor. Government partners, particularly those under SO1 and SO2, have built their capacities to design, plan and implement interventions on a large scale. Even with these capacities, they have a continuous need for specific technical assistance and logistical services from WFP. These needs are increasingly becoming demand-driven and giving the Government considerable leverage over WFP service delivery.

263. Under SO3, vulnerability to disasters and climate change is increasingly recognized as a priority by the Government and is supported by the continued donor interest to provide resources for these priorities. These shifts in government and donor interests are relevant for future WFP planning, not only at a national level, but also considering the vulnerability of Haiti and the entire region of the Caribbean to natural disasters. This may present opportunities for a more regional positioning of WFP in the Dominican Republic.

Conclusion 9 (on other factors influencing performance EQ 2)

The monitoring and evaluation process and systems are not well developed and embedded in the organizational structure of the WFP country office in the Dominican Republic. Organizational discipline in providing systematic data over time and across the different strategic outcomes has been limited, leading to limited possibilities for use of monitoring and evaluation data in a comparative perspective as witnessed in this evaluation. A particular constraint has been the limited staff time allocated to the monitoring and evaluation function in the country office. As a

result, there are limitations in generating management information to inform decisions on continuous improvement and innovation in CSP planning and implementation.

264. Use of monitoring data for planning and improvement of the CSP has remained limited because most monitoring data are only collected at the output level. It is of limited use for determining changes, particularly in the areas of organizational capacity strengthening of key partners and longer-term behavioural changes, improvement of situations and empowerment of WFP key target groups.

265. While capacity strengthening is an important intervention strategy in the CSP, the indicators to measure changes and results in capacity development are insufficient and also not sufficiently systematically applied over time. As a result, there is limited knowledge of dynamics and results of capacity development, which subsequently also limits the development of transition strategies under this approach.

266. Organizational discipline in generating and storing monitoring data in the WFP monitoring and evaluation systems has been low, leading to poor quality and incomplete data. This has hampered the realization of a proper analysis of monitoring data on effectiveness and efficiency of CSP implementation. In trying to conduct a comparative analysis of monitoring data across countries and at the regional level, it can be observed that the country office in the Dominican Republic is not alone in these deficiencies, as monitoring reports of country offices in the region also show similar flaws in monitoring data.

3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	<p>WFP’s next country strategic plan should more closely reflect the specific political and economic situation of the Dominican Republic as an upper-middle-income country, a Caribbean island State and a country that shares a border with Haiti. WFP should seek stronger alignment with the United Nations planning framework for the Dominican Republic and secure complementarity among the Rome-based agencies. In this alignment, WFP should anticipate a continued trend of declining international support for the Dominican Republic and resources for WFP’s work under strategic outcome 1 (partners’ capacity to achieve zero hunger) and strategic outcome 2 (improved nutrition status of vulnerable groups) and establish a stronger focus on strategic outcome 3 (emergency preparedness, mitigation and response), considering climate change and natural disaster-related challenges at the national, island and Caribbean regional levels.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	June 2024
1.1	<p>In developing a stronger focus on strategic outcome 3, WFP should avoid overlaps and promote closer cooperation on the ground in the implementation of its food security-related actions where its mandate overlaps with those of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.</p>					

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.2	WFP should step up and further diversify its fundraising (including direct fundraising and private sector partnerships) to secure sufficient funding for remaining work under strategic outcomes 1 and 2, while continuing its current fundraising for activities under strategic outcomes 3 and 4 (support for crisis-affected populations). This requires a longer-term pipeline approach and donor diversification to reduce donor earmarking of funds to less than 75 percent, to enable the country office to secure the continuity and coherence of the overall country strategic plan implementation.					
1.3	The next country strategic plan should consider a four-year period in order to align with the other United Nations entities in the country as of the start of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for 2028–2032. This harmonization of planning is required to allow WFP and its United Nations partners to jointly strategize for coming planning periods.	Operational				
2	WFP should strengthen the intervention logic and strategy of its next country strategic plan to enable more synergy in the implementation of activities under different strategic outcomes. This requires the development of a comprehensive theory of change for the entire country strategic plan, for which the reconstructed theory of change drawn up for this evaluation and existing theories of change for strategic outcomes 1, 2 and 3 could serve as references.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters	High	End of 2023 (with the publication of the next CSP)
2.1	A particular area in which more synergy across strategic outcomes is required is in strengthening links between social protection activities (under strategic outcomes 1 and 2) and emergency response (under strategic outcomes 3 and 4). This is also a key area where government partners still have considerable demand for capacity strengthening and technical assistance from WFP, particularly at the policy and systems levels.	Strategic				
2.2	To enhance and facilitate synergy across the various strategic outcomes, the country office could consider reinstalling a programme management function with an overview of all CSP	Operational				

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	operations and the task of identifying opportunities for synergetic projects that can cut across strategic outcomes.					
3	<p>WFP should develop a strategy for transitioning from its capacity strengthening support for government partners to providing demand-based technical assistance to some of these partners.</p> <p>This is needed given the clear recognition that the organizational capacity of WFP’s partners has been strongly enhanced in previous country strategic plan periods. Capacity strengthening could still be considered at the institutional level, when policies and systems present flaws or coordination challenges, such as those identified in the national system for disaster prevention, mitigation and response.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters (country capacity strengthening)	High	By the end of 2024 (before the end of year 1 of the next CSP)
3.1	Based on the acknowledgement of strengthened capacity and access to resources of its government partners, the WFP country office may consider further operationalization of its demand-driven service delivery under strategic outcome 5 of the country strategic plan.	Operational				
4	<p>WFP should develop a specific approach and strategy to strengthen the humanitarian–development nexus in its work.</p> <p>These should be tailored to the context of the Dominican Republic and to specific vulnerabilities arising from emergencies (such as hurricanes and climate-change-related flooding or droughts) and for specific vulnerable groups (such as Haitian migrants and undocumented people). The country office should acknowledge that its experience and organizational capacity is not sufficient to achieve this nexus alone. It will need to develop partnerships with other development-oriented actors in the United Nations system and civil society to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus structurally in all its humanitarian assistance interventions.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau and headquarters	High	Before 2026
4.1	The country office, with the support of the regional bureau and headquarters, should engage in dialogue and negotiations with key humanitarian donors and possible new donors to acquire longer-term funding for its emergency responses and humanitarian assistance, in order to build in a transition phase for development interventions that foster socioeconomic	Operational				

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	empowerment of beneficiaries. This requires humanitarian support funding horizons that extent beyond a minimum of two years.					
4.2	The country office should identify potential partners within the Government, the United Nations and civil society to jointly prepare approaches and interventions aimed at establishing and strengthening the humanitarian–development nexus, using complementary competencies, experience, expertise and networks.					
5.	WFP in the Dominican Republic should continue to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti by mobilizing humanitarian assistance for Haiti (humanitarian corridor and WFP’s cross-country work in both countries) and in disaster and emergency-related response on both sides of the border. In doing so, the country office could look for opportunities to increase its relevance at the Caribbean-region level, considering the strategic location of the Dominican Republic and the existing national capacity to mobilize for emergency response to other island States in the region. This may require stronger regional positioning of WFP in the Dominican Republic at the Caribbean-region level.	Strategic		Regional bureau, Barbados country office, headquarters	Medium	Before the end of 2027 (by the publication of the next CSP)
5.1	Based on the recognition that WFP’s work on the humanitarian corridor is of strategic importance to both the Dominican Republic and Haiti and possibly to the Caribbean region as a whole, it is recommended that WFP develop its country office in the Dominican Republic into a more pronounced regional hub, which would also facilitate access to alternative funding sources for WFP in the Dominican Republic and the region.					

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.2	WFP should closely align with United Nations efforts in the Dominican Republic and Haiti to strengthen humanitarian and development interventions on both sides of the border and in a cross-border approach, within specific windows to be identified in agreement with the Government. In this connection, WFP could continue its activities related to the Haitian humanitarian-crisis and its natural disaster and emergency-related response activities, for which it has specific knowledge, experience and expertise.					
5.3	The WFP country offices in the Dominican Republic and Barbados and WFP headquarters should engage in a dialogue regarding the extent to which and the specific areas in which WFP in the Dominican Republic could develop a stronger regional profile.	Operational				
6	WFP in the Dominican Republic should increase its focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment, inclusion, and accountability to affected populations/protection in planning, programming and monitoring and evaluation. This will require WFP to consider these aspects at the activity and output levels and to pay more systematic attention to empowerment processes and to achieving differential effects and overall impact for specific target groups. WFP will need to increase its efforts to analyse empowerment and gender and inclusion aspects and ensure they are systematically integrated into its interventions, in order to achieve transformational change in gender equality and women’s empowerment and empowerment of specific vulnerable groups including migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, young people and older people.	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau	High	By the end of 2024 (before the end of year 1 of the next CSP)
6.1	Haitian migrants and refugees should be included more explicitly in planning, implementation and monitoring. More knowledge about specific effects and the overall impact of WFP interventions on these target groups is needed to improve the quality of WFP’s own interventions for these groups and provide evidence to support WFP’s policy dialogue and advocacy efforts (and its joint efforts with other United Nations entities) to improve the position of the most vulnerable target groups in Dominican society.					

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
6.2	<p>The place and role of the monitoring and evaluation function and effort in the country office should be strengthened, along with corresponding capacities, and monitoring and evaluation indicators should be improved, particularly at the outcome level. More effort is required to systematize and analyse monitoring and evaluation data for informing future management decisions and improving and introducing innovation into country strategic plan implementation. This will also require more training for all country office staff and more organizational discipline in the population of and use of data in monitoring and evaluation systems. Furthermore, it is recommended that WFP investigate the potential for alignment and synergy with national efforts coordinated by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development in monitoring the effects of national food security and social protection service programmes, to allow more joint data mining in that regard.</p>	Operational				

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