



ABRIDGED VERSION

Resilient Food Systems in Western Africa

WFP Contribution to Food Systems Transformation in Western Africa

September 2023



Executive Summary

The transformation of food systems is high on the global agenda due to their potential to accelerate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. WFP is one of the organizations that champions the transformation of food systems to make them more resilient, inclusive, and healthy. In November 2022, WFP developed its global framework for food systems transformation which prioritizes five pathways including (1) protecting food systems and food consumption before, during, and immediately after crises, (2) restoring the natural resource base and supporting climate- resilient local food production, (3) linking production and value chain activities to food consumption, (4) influencing food environments and the consumption of healthy diets, and (5) supporting an enabling environment for resilient food systems.

This document shows how WFP's global framework for food systems transformation is adapted to the context of the Western Africa region. Key issues that face food systems in this region include (1) conflicts that disrupt food supply systems, (2) economic shocks that make nutritious diet unaffordable, and (3) climate shocks that have been reducing production capacity due to desertification, droughts, and floods.

Key pain points affecting the resilience of food systems in Western Africa are (1) dependency on imports due to limited availability and high cost of locally produced food, (2) insufficient hard and soft infrastructures for safe food processing, effective storage, food quality assurance and efficient price discovery mechanisms, (3) inadequate access to agricultural finance and improved technologies, (4) limited food processing capacity and

breakdowns along key food value chains,(5) degradation of ecosystems in the Sahel and coastal countries, and (6) challenging regional food systems governance mechanisms.

There are two distinct types of food systems in this region, including (1) Sahel food systems that depend on a few cereals crops (sorghum and millet) and livestock, and (2) coastal food systems with high food production capacity but facing competitiveness issues and dependent on imports facilitated by the presence of major seaports.

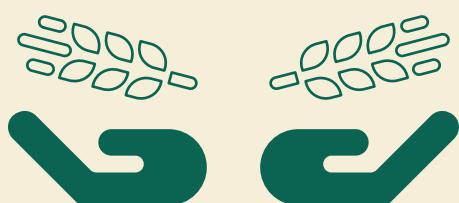
The performance of food systems in this region has been suboptimal as about 10 percent of people in Western Africa depend on humanitarian assistance, more than 57 percent of people cannot afford a nutritious diet, and 1.8 million hectares of land are lost to degradation every year.

Viable entry points that WFP can use to contribute to the transformation of food systems in Western Africa include:

1. Integrated packages of institutional procurement, global commodity management facility, and the Africa Risk Capacity (macro insurance) and other micro-insurance instruments to reduce risks for smallholder producers and connect them to markets.
2. Pairing cash-based transfers with the rehabilitation of degraded land and productivity-enhancing technologies to increase food production, boost livelihoods, and build climate resilience.
3. Building the capacity of food processing companies to efficiently produce and responsibly market safe and nutritious food

at affordable prices. This entails increased operational efficiency and linkages to primary production systems including smallholder farmers and herders as well as improved access to finance and technologies, reducing post-harvest losses, and supporting diversification of food production, transformation, and fortification capacities.

4. Strengthening governments' capacity to reinforce regulatory framework, fortification policies and national and regional quality infrastructure system, develop and implement food quality and safety policy dispensations that incentivize the production



and consumption of safe and nutritious food.

Based on these entry points, WFP's support for the transformation of food systems in Western Africa is based on a three-pronged strategy:

1. **Ecosystem rehabilitation and restoration** with a focus on degraded land using a watershed management approach;
2. **Breadbasket strategy** focusing on protecting surplus-producing areas;
3. **Strengthening institutional and delivery capacity.**

In response to these entry points and this transformation strategy, this document provides WFP country offices in Western Africa with a concise overview of the framework for designing initiatives aiming to contribute to the transformation of food systems in each country and in the region.

Food Systems Transformation and WFP Contribution

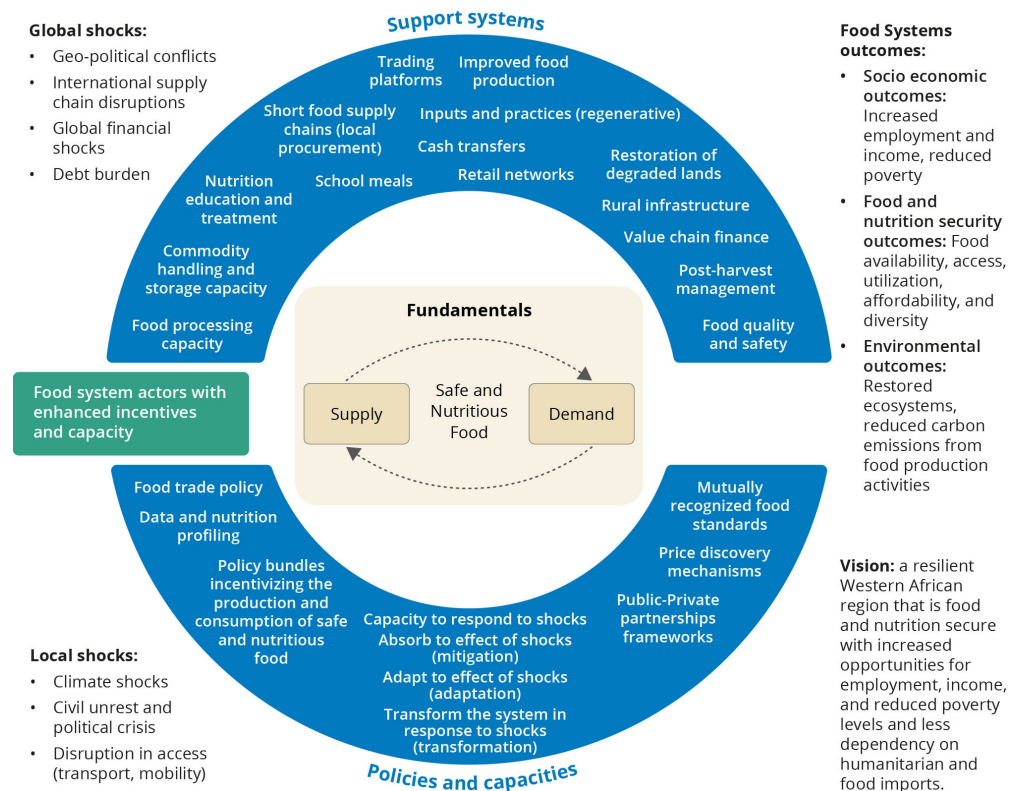
Food systems: refer to the range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution (storage, wholesale, retail, and transportation), consumption and disposal of food products; linkages with parts the broader economic, societal, and natural environments in which food systems operates.

The transformation of food systems refers to fundamental changes in the types of available food products and services, the way food is produced, processed, transported, marketed, consumed, and disposed of.

The framework below shows key areas that WFP and its partners will prioritize in their efforts to strengthen the supply and demand for safe and nutritious food (see Figure 1). Most of these areas are also captured in the existing WFP Smallholder Agricultural Market Support (SAMS) performance areas¹. Contributing to the goal of reducing the dependency on humanitarian assistance and food imports remains the north star that will guide WFP's efforts and its contribution to the transformation of food systems in the Western African region.

¹ docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000141322/download/

Figure 1:
Framework
for WFP
Contribution
to the
Transformation
of Food
Systems in
Western Africa
(adapted from Market Systems Development Framework)



WFP Strategy for the transformation of food systems in Western Africa – Theory of Change

1. Ecosystem rehabilitation and restoration with a focus on degraded land using a watershed management approach. This pillar of the strategy uses cash-based transfers and food assistance to enable communities to develop assets that support and strengthen food production.

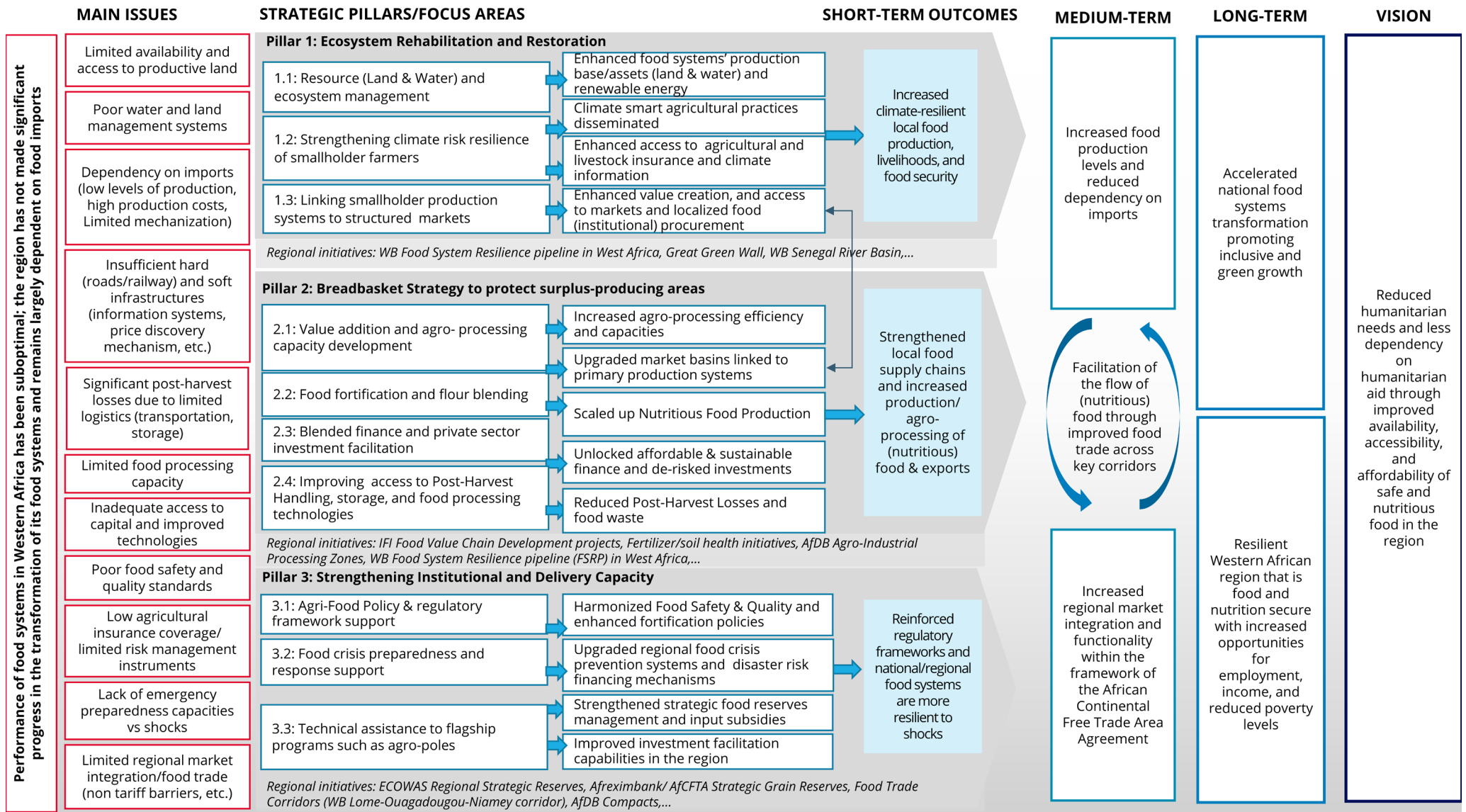
2. Breadbasket strategy focusing on protecting surplus-producing areas through good food production practices, post-harvest management, value optimization, and improved linkages with institutional and retail markets. WFP leverages its LRFPP to support countries to reduce food imports and strengthen local food supply chains.

3. Strengthening institutional and delivery capacity which focuses on

building the capacity of governments to develop and implement food crisis response plans and support the production and incentivize the consumption of safe and nutritious foods. WFP also strengthens the capacity of private sector companies to process and market nutritious foods.

IF ecosystems are rehabilitated and restored, AND surplus-producing areas are protected through sustainable practices and upgraded market systems for food crops and livestock products, AND institutional and delivery capacity is strengthened (government and private sector), THEN food systems will be transformed and function in a way that reduces the reliance on humanitarian assistance and food imports in Western Africa (see figure 2)

Figure 2: Theory of change



WFP Capabilities and Value Proposition for Western Africa

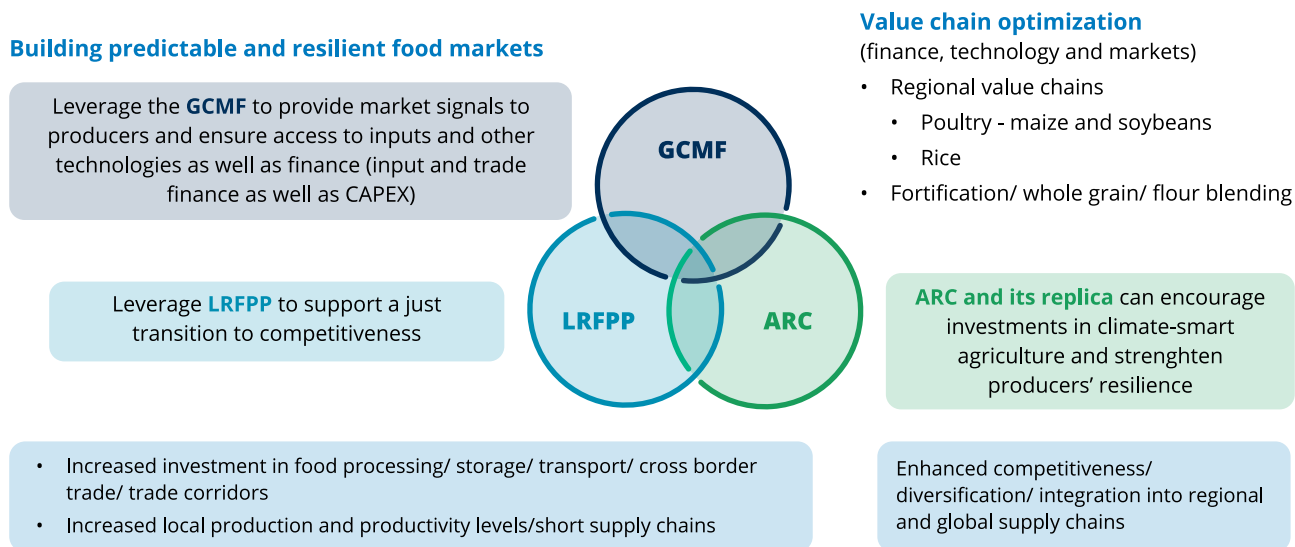
WFP is uniquely positioned to effectively contribute to the transformation of food systems in Western Africa. To fulfil its mission of ensuring that people affected by natural and human-made disasters have access to affordable and safe nutritious food, and become resilient to shocks and stressors, WFP developed capabilities that span the full spectrum of food value chains and food system support functions. These capabilities constitute leverage points that the Western Africa region can lean on as it seeks to transform its food systems.

A **creative combination** of investments can enable WFP to positively impact food systems and subsystems. A sample of investment areas can be combined to maximize WFP impact on food systems.

WFP has revised its **Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy (LRFPP)** to ensure that

smallholder farmers and other food system actors adopt sustainable, regenerative, and inclusive practices that can be incentivized to reach the scale required to transform food systems while becoming competitive vis-à-vis food imports. WFP has also put in place the **Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF)** that makes working capital available for food procurement and which enables WFP and other humanitarian agencies to access food stocks whenever needs arise. Lastly, WFP in partnership with African governments and other development partners put in place the **Africa Risk Capacity (ARC)** which serves as a sovereign agricultural insurance scheme. A combination of these capabilities and leverage points holds the power to effectively transform the way food is produced, marketed, and consumed (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Key WFP leverage points for the transformation of food systems



The complete **“2023 - Resilient Food Systems in Western Africa - WFP Contribution to Food Systems Transformation in Western Africa”** strategy document can be consulted online.