

Revision of the Eswatini country strategic plan (2020–2025) and corresponding budget increase – For approval by vote by correspondence

	Current	Change	Revised
Duration	January 2020– December 2025	No change	January 2020– December 2025
Beneficiaries	561 364	(229 512)	331 852
<i>(USD)</i>			
Total cost	49 913 097	26 681 134	76 594 231
Transfers	41 029 674	23 322 517	64 352 191
Implementation	2 515 418	1 041 330	3 556 748
Adjusted direct support costs	3 321 666	688 861	4 010 527
Subtotal	46 866 758	25 052 708	71 919 466
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	3 046 339	1 628 426	4 674 765

Gender and age marker code: 3*

* <http://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/gender-in-programming/gender-and-age-marker/>.

Decision

The Board approves by vote by correspondence the revision of the Eswatini country strategic plan (2020–2025) and the corresponding budget increase of USD 26,681,134 outlined in the present document.

Rationale

1. The WFP country office in Eswatini faces increasing demands for emergency response arising from deteriorating food and nutrition security. Among children under 5, chronic malnutrition rates rose from 24.4 percent in 2020 to 29.4 percent in 2021, 2 percent suffer from wasting and 5.8 percent are underweight. About one third of children of ages 6 months to 2 years do not receive the minimum recommended dietary diversity, and dietary diversity in 78 percent of households was low or moderate according to a 2015 multiple indicator cluster survey. In the Eswatini Vulnerability Assessment Committee report of 2023, acute food insecurity is projected to affect more than 283,000 people (about 25 percent of the population) during the lean season, which lasts from October to March. This challenging situation is a result of multiple factors including the persistent adverse effects of climate change on agriculture and concurrent economic shocks driven by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the impact of the conflict in Ukraine. Compounding the situation, the limited availability of resources is posing fiscal challenges, leaving a significant number of vulnerable people without adequate social protection coverage.

2. To enable it to respond to the growing demand for food assistance, WFP needs to revise the country strategic plan (CSP) and its budget. This revision, the fourth since the start of CSP implementation, will allow the WFP country office to expand beneficiary coverage under strategic outcome 1, introducing vulnerability-based targeting and conditional transfers under activity 1 to replace the community-based targeting and unconditional transfers it has used so far. This change in targeting approach is based on a government request and the insights and recommendations derived from various sources, including the common country analysis, the national development plan, Eswatini's Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris agreement on climate change, Vulnerability Assessment Committee reports and the WFP climate change policy. The revised targeting and transfer modalities, along with the revised budget, will be implemented until the conclusion of the CSP period in December 2025.
3. *Recalculation of overall beneficiary numbers to account for the beneficiaries receiving assistance from one year to the next.* The country office had planned to implement an annual graduation plan that would have allowed it to target new cohorts of beneficiaries in new geographic areas each year, reaching a total of 561,364 beneficiaries over the course of the CSP. Using this approach, WFP reached 156,392 beneficiaries in 2020, 318,492 in 2021, 156,611 in 2022 and so far, 51,079 in 2023. However, owing to the protracted nature of the food insecurity situation, the country office has decided to continue targeting the same beneficiaries for longer periods and not to move its operations into new areas each year. The findings of monitoring exercises support that decision as the areas targeted are those exhibiting the highest levels of vulnerability and acute needs in the country. As a result of this change in approach, the CSP revision reduces the overall number of beneficiaries targeted, from the 561,364 indicated in the previous budget revision to 331,852, who will receive food assistance for the remainder of the CSP period. This recalculation is reflected in this CSP revision to show the number of individuals actually targeted.
4. The budget increase also includes an extension in the duration of the home-grown school feeding programme, an increased number of beneficiaries assisted during the lean season, the incorporation of additional nutritious food items into the food basket, and increases in the value of cash-based transfers (CBTs) in response to higher food prices. Under strategic outcome 3, the home-grown school feeding pilot project will continue until December 2024, at the request of the Government. At the end of the project, all 50 schools covered will be incorporated into the national school feeding programme that the Government is already implementing. The provision of support for neighbourhood care points under strategic outcome 3 will continue until December 2025, and in response to the deteriorating nutrition situation, the food basket for the care points will be revised to include fish and SuperCereal with sugar to address the nutrition needs of the children supported.

Changes

Strategic orientation

5. Under the revision, the overall strategic orientation of the CSP remains unchanged and no new strategic outcome will be added.

Strategic outcomes

6. To address escalating food and nutrition insecurity in Eswatini, WFP has incorporated a conditional transfer modality for activities under strategic outcome 1. Beneficiaries will be categorized according to their vulnerability levels. Those in the most vulnerable groups will receive assistance in the form of unconditional resource transfers, while those in other vulnerable groups will benefit from conditional assistance under the food assistance for assets programme, which will entail participation in community-initiated asset building initiatives, with WFP providing food assistance. The food assistance for assets projects will be implemented through livelihoods programming aimed at enhancing resilience as part of early recovery initiatives. Meanwhile, non-food items such as tools, equipment and construction materials will be supplied by concurrent government programmes and local development funds. These efforts will be linked to capacity strengthening work under activities 2 and 3 and strategic outcomes 2 and 3. The community asset building initiatives aim to reduce the support that vulnerable individuals need by improving the livelihoods of the poor. The changes under strategic outcome 1 are reflected in the refinement of activity 1 in the CSP line of sight: "Provide food and/or CBTs to food-insecure people affected by shocks, including children, identified using vulnerability-based targeting".
7. Under strategic outcome 3, efforts will focus on enhancing the Government's capacity to expand existing social protection programmes during times of crisis. Vulnerable population groups, including people living with HIV, people with disabilities, older people and the caregivers of children and adolescents, will have access to knowledge and support for adopting practices that will improve nutrition outcomes.
8. The country office will continue to implement the home-grown school feeding pilot project in order to support schoolchildren until December 2024. Through the neighbourhood care points, children under 8 will receive SuperCereal with sugar and fish until December 2025 to address their nutrition needs.
9. Under all three strategic outcomes, the country office will prioritize the most food-insecure areas and target beneficiaries based on their vulnerability; beneficiaries will include children, women, people with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS. The targeting approach is shaped by the gender action plan developed by the country office. To ensure that WFP reaches the most vulnerable people and communities across all strategic outcomes, a two-phase approach to targeting will be employed. The first phase involves geographic targeting based on annual national vulnerability assessments, which will be used to classify locations according to their vulnerability. The second phase is participatory community-based targeting in which the targeting process is actively led by the targeted people themselves, demonstrating WFP's strong commitment to gender mainstreaming and accountability to affected populations. A community feedback mechanism will ensure that the right assistance reaches the intended beneficiaries and that any barriers that impede beneficiaries' access to support are addressed effectively.

Rations and transfer modalities

10. Under strategic outcome 1, transfer modalities will comprise in-kind food assistance, CBTs and commodity vouchers, and transfers will be either conditional or unconditional. During the lean season, households affected by shocks and identified in vulnerability assessments will receive assistance in the form of food and/or CBTs that will enable them to fulfil their daily dietary requirements. The budget revision proposes an increase in the daily cash transfer value from USD 0.35 to USD 0.5 to accommodate the increase in food prices. The introduction of food assistance for assets projects in communities will foster early recovery from shocks, complementing the social protection framework.

Partnerships

11. The country office has strengthened its partnerships in order to better implement programmes and meet the additional requirements of the CSP revision. New sources of funding for work on community resilience building will be pursued, particularly climate adaptation funds such as the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility. Efforts to retain current donors and secure Eswatini's limited funding sources have been stepped up. Strengthened relationships with affected individuals and local and international partners will facilitate more collaborative activities that cover more people in need while using fewer resources. To support the implementation of the changes introduced under this revision, the country office will partner with existing implementing partners, community-based organizations, civil society organizations, the Government and the private sector. An in-kind donation of fish from Japan has already been secured.

Country office capacity

12. WFP will use mainly existing staff to address the additional programme requirements. This will require a strategic staffing review and a revision of the organizational structure of the country office aimed at optimizing its human resources.

Supply chains

13. This budget revision introduces new supply chain strategies that complement the existing strategic outcomes 2 and 3. The supply chain unit in the country office will establish strategic partnerships with key government ministries and parastatal entities, working with them to strategically position food storage facilities and assist smallholder farmers in moving to commercial operations. The supply chain unit will lead market assessments with a view to linking smallholder farmers to local markets, building on existing support mechanisms for smallholder farmers under the current strategic outcome 2 and further strengthening the related value chains. The unit will also work with national institutions, traders and retailers to improve the value chain for the items in the food basket.
14. In collaboration with the Government, the country office aims to establish value chains for maize and beans that support smallholder farmers' market access. This will involve partnering with local organizations to strengthen farmers' position in corporate procurement processes, helping them to shift from subsistence to commercial farming and enhancing their competitiveness in supplying grain. To ensure food safety, WFP will strengthen national institutions and laboratories so that they meet accreditation standards for mycotoxin measurement. Assistance in the formulation of policies for enforcing food safety and quality regulations will be extended to the Government and the national regulatory body.

Monitoring and evaluation

15. WFP will continue to monitor projects on a monthly or quarterly basis and will use community feedback mechanisms to monitor and address complaints. WFP will establish a CSP monitoring strategy that takes into account the adjustments made in this CSP and budget revision. The country office will embark on an evaluation of the current CSP in 2024.

Accountability to affected populations, protection risks and restrictions related to gender and disability

16. According to a gender analysis conducted by WFP in 2022, the majority of people in Eswatini reside in rural areas and rely on agriculture, ranging from subsistence farming to commercial activities. Applying insights from that analysis, the country office will use its climate-proof and resilient livelihood projects to enhance its support for the 20 women's groups (with 280 members) and five young people's groups (with 70 members) that exist in the communities most affected by poverty in the regions of Lubombo and Shiselweni. The country office will prioritize people with disabilities by ensuring the availability of disaggregated data and including people with disabilities in all interventions. During the remaining CSP period, WFP will update its gender analysis and conduct a protection analysis to inform programming. WFP will reinforce mechanisms in place for the prevention and reporting of possible incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse, including community feedback mechanisms.
17. The country office will make sure that the potential negative impacts of new activities on the environment and the general population are mitigated. The office will screen all CSP activities regarding their environmental sustainability and social safeguards.

Risk management

18. WFP will conduct a comprehensive risk assessment for the new activities introduced under this revision and will update the country office risk register accordingly. Risk mitigation strategies such as food safety and quality measures have been integrated into the new supply chain activities and partnership initiatives.

Beneficiary analysis

TABLE 1: DIRECT BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME, ACTIVITY AND MODALITY								
Strategic outcome	Activity	Modality	Period	Women (18+ years)	Men (18+ years)	Girls (0-18 years)	Boys (0-18 years)	Total
1	1	CBTs	Current	137 269	123 417	95 021	95 765	451 472
			Increase/ (decrease)	(73 691)	(66 256)	(51 013)	(51 412)	(242 372)
			Revised	63 578	57 161	44 008	44 353	209 100
		Food	Current	9 273	8 337	6 420	6 470	30 500
			Increase/ (decrease)	0	0	0	0	0
			Revised	9 273	8 337	6 420	6 470	30 500
		Commodity vouchers	Current	0	0	0	0	0
			Increase/ (decrease)	3 911	3 515	2 706	2 728	12 860
			Revised	3 911	3 515	2 706	2 728	12 860

TABLE 1: DIRECT BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME, ACTIVITY AND MODALITY

Strategic outcome	Activity	Modality	Period	Women (18+ years)	Men (18+ years)	Girls (0-18 years)	Boys (0-18 years)	Total
3	3	Food	Current	0	0	40 141	39 251	79 392
			Increase/ (decrease)	0	0	0	0	0
			Revised	0	0	40 141	39 251	79 392
Total (without overlap)*			Current	146 542	131 754	141 582	141 486	561 364
			Increase/ (decrease)	(69 780)	(62 741)	(48 307)	(48 684)	(229 512)
			Revised	76 762	69 013	93 275	92 802	331 852

* Originally, WFP intended to reach 156,392 beneficiaries in 2020, 318,492 in 2021, 156,611 in 2022 and 51,079 in 2023, giving a total of 561,364 people. However, owing to the protracted nature of the situation, WFP decided to continue targeting the same beneficiaries and not to move its operations into new areas each year.

Transfers

TABLE 2: FOOD RATION (g/person/day) AND CASH-BASED TRANSFER VALUE (USD/person/day) BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY

	Strategic outcome 1			Strategic outcome 3	
	Activity 1			Activity 3	
Beneficiary type	Residents	Residents	Residents	Schoolchildren (home-grown school feeding)	Neighbourhood care point (orphaned and vulnerable children)
Modality	Food	CBTs	Commodity vouchers	Food	Food
Cereals	333.33			150	150
Pulses	83.33			40	40
Oil	30.00			7.50	7.50
Fish					30
Salt					
Sugar					
SuperCereal ¹				75	75
SuperCereal Plus					
Micronutrient powder					
Total kcal/day	1 766			1 040*	1 008*
% kcal from protein	10.5			13.3	13.4

¹ Please note that if WFP encounters difficulties in sourcing SuperCereal with sugar in the market, as was the case in 2023, WFP will use a mixture of Corn-Soya-Blend and sugar as a suitable alternative.

	Strategic outcome 1			Strategic outcome 3	
	Activity 1			Activity 3	
Beneficiary type	Residents	Residents	Residents	Schoolchildren (home-grown school feeding)	Neighbourhood care point (orphaned and vulnerable children)
Modality	Food	CBTs	Commodity vouchers	Food	Food
Cash-based transfers (USD/person/day)		0.5	0.52		
Number of feeding days per year	180	180	180	264	264

* In a five-day week, the children in neighbourhood care points consume beans on three days, and fish on the other two days. This means that by the end of the month, they will have consumed roughly the same number of calories as children under the school feeding programme.

Food type/ cash-based transfer	Current budget		Increase		Revised budget	
	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Cereals	13 393	4 824 789	9 192	4 013 227	22 586	8 838 016
Pulses	3 495	4 103 442	2 428	3 890 873	5 923	7 994 315
Oil and fats	854	797 051	515	962 743	1 369	1 759 794
Mixed and blended foods	0	0	1 198	958 320	1 198	958 320
Other	0	0	479	2 166 762	479	2 166 762
Total (food)	17 742	9 725 282	13 813	11 991 925	31 555	21 717 206
Cash-based transfers		20 649 659		6 375 676		27 025 336
Total (food and cash-based transfer value)	17 742	30 374 941	13 813	18 367 601	31 555	48 742 542

Cost breakdown

19. This fourth CSP revision will increase the CSP budget by USD 26.7 million. Activity 1 under strategic outcome 1 will be expanded and extended into 2025, while the implementation of home-grown school feeding under activity 3 and strategic outcome 3 will be extended until the end of 2024. The revision also introduces additional commodities into the food basket under activity 3.

TABLE 4: COST BREAKDOWN OF THE REVISION ONLY (USD)				
	SDG target 2.1/ WFP strategic outcome 1	SDG target 2.3/ WFP strategic outcome 3	SDG target 17.9/ WFP strategic outcome 4	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	
Focus area	Crisis response	Resilience building	Resilience building	
Transfers	8 103 702	116 389	15 102 426	23 322 517
Implementation	364 401	174 349	502 579	1 041 330
Adjusted direct support costs				688 861
Subtotal				25 052 708
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)				1 628 426
Total				26 681 134

TABLE 5: OVERALL COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN COST BREAKDOWN, AFTER REVISION (USD)				
	SDG target 2.1/ WFP strategic outcome 1	SDG target 2.3/ WFP strategic outcome 3	SDG target 17.9/ WFP strategic outcome 4	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	
Focus area	Crisis response	Resilience building	Resilience building	
Transfers	34 809 688	3 129 553	26 412 949	64 352 191
Implementati on	1 518 298	813 634	1 224 816	3 556 748
Adjusted direct support costs	2 028 450	238 852	1 743 225	4 010 527
Subtotal	38 356 436	4 182 039	29 380 990	71 919 466
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	2 493 168	271 833	1 909 764	4 674 765
Total	40 849 605	4 453 872	31 290 755	76 594 231