

Crisis response revision of Syria Arab Republic interim country strategic plan (2022–2025) and corresponding budget increase

	Current	Change	Revised
Duration	January 2022– December 2023	Extension from January 2024 to December 2025	January 2022– December 2025
Beneficiaries	9 944 750	1 037 351	10 982 101
<i>(USD)</i>			
Total cost	2 865 679 705	2 008 158 952	4 873 838 657
Transfers	2 583 774 320	1 759 180 065	4 342 954 385
Implementation	67 681 883	75 336 868	143 018 751
Adjusted direct support costs	43 186 212	51 249 988	94 436 201
Subtotal	2 694 642 415	1 885 766 922	4 580 409 337
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	171 037 291	122 392 030	293 429 320

Gender and age marker code*: 4

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

Rationale

1. This budget revision introduces several operational changes to the Syrian Arab Republic interim country strategic plan (ICSP). These include:
 - i) extending the ICSP in time by two years, from January 2024 to December 2025;
 - ii) reducing the number of beneficiaries targeted under activity 1 (general food assistance);
 - iii) increasing cash-based transfer (CBT) transfer values under activity 1;
 - iv) increasing the number of schoolchildren targeted under activity 2 (school feeding);
 - v) adding the CBT modality under a pilot for activity 4 (social safety nets);
 - vi) increasing the number of beneficiaries targeted and adding the capacity strengthening modality under activity 6 (malnutrition treatment); and
 - vii) increasing the overall ICSP budget by USD 2 billion.
2. This budget increase will align the Syrian Arab Republic ICSP with the United Nations strategic framework for the Syrian Arab Republic, which has been extended until 2025.
3. Multiple crises have impacted food insecurity in the Syrian Arab Republic, severely constraining access to adequate food. WFP's 2022 annual food security and livelihood assessment found that 12.1 million people were food insecure and a further 2.9 million at risk of food insecurity. Simultaneously, WFP funding continues to dwindle, necessitating a reduction in the overall number of beneficiaries targeted for emergency food assistance.



Thus, targeting will be refined to prioritize the most severely food insecure and malnourished.

4. Between July 2020 and August 2023, the average cost of the minimum expenditure basket increased by over 800 percent.¹ The depreciation of the Syrian pound coupled with high inflation and increased food prices have necessitated an increase in the CBT transfer values under activity 1 (general food assistance).
5. The 2022 joint assessment mission and nutrition survey found that the prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 increased from 1.7 percent in 2019 to 5 percent in 2022.² The prevalence of acute malnutrition among pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWG) increased from 4.2 percent in 2019 to over 10 percent in 2022.
6. Furthermore, the findings from the 2022 national assessment of the nutritional status of school-aged children³ reported 40 percent of children aged 6–12 did not eat breakfast, and 80 percent did not meet the minimum dietary diversity required to cover their nutritional needs. The assessment of school-aged children further found increased prevalence of malnutrition, indicating a greater need for nutrition-sensitive school feeding, especially considering the worsening food security and economic situation of the average household. Responding to assessment results, this budget increase will increase the number of beneficiaries targeted for nutrition interventions and school feeding. The budget increase will further add the CBT modality to implement a pilot safety net programme under activity 4 (social safety nets), targeting vulnerable out-of-school children and young adults, and PBWG with an enhanced package of services provided together with partners, and paving the blueprint for a future national safety net.

Changes

Strategic orientation

7. This budget increase incurs no changes to the strategic orientation of the ICSP, however makes minor adjustments as follows:
 - i) Adjusts the wording of output 2.1 to place more emphasis on access to schools and equal opportunities, rather than on enrolment and attendance:

[Revised] output 2.1: *"School aged boys and girls receive school meals and/or CBTs to meet their food and nutrition needs and to promote access to education and equal opportunities."*
 - ii) Adjusts the wording of output 3.1 to widen the scope of livelihood activities in both rural and urban areas:

[Revised] output 3.1:⁴ *"Households vulnerable to food insecurity benefit from training, skills-building, digital tools, and access to finance to support livelihood activities, in addition to conditional food or cash-based transfers to meet their food and nutrition needs."*

¹ Comparison of July 2020 and August 2023 market price bulletin, WFP.

² 2022 joint assessment mission and nutrition survey.

³ 2022 national assessment of the nutritional status of children attending primary public schools in the Syrian Arab Republic – Ministry of Health.

⁴ Original output statement: *"Food-insecure male- and female-headed households benefit from conditional food or CBTs that meet their food and nutrition needs in exchange for their participation in livelihood activities"*.



- iii) Amends the activity statement to facilitate a pilot under activity 4 (social safety nets):
[Revised] activity 4: *“Provide technical assistance to strengthen national social safety nets, including piloting cash-based transfers to targeted vulnerable populations.”*
- iv) Adjusts the wording of output 4.1 to reflect the pilot:
[Revised] Output 4.1: *“Households in vulnerable circumstances benefit from improved social safety nets and cash-based transfer pilots, contributing to enhance their food security.”*

Targeting approach and beneficiary analysis

8. While the overall number of beneficiaries targeted for the full duration of the ICSP will increase by over 1 million, under activity 1 (general food assistance), during 2024 and 2025, the number of beneficiaries targeted will be reduced from 8.3 million to 4 million, prioritizing the most food-insecure populations for assistance. As part of the prioritization effort required, WFP has initiated a retargeting exercise, and from July 2023 onward, longer cycles of distribution will be used to phase out assistance to less vulnerable households. A contingency will be retained to enable assistance to be scaled up to a further 500,000 beneficiaries in the event of a sudden-onset emergency.
9. Under activity 2 (school feeding), WFP will target 780,000 children per month over the two-year extension, including 80,000 out-of-school children under 15 years of age. Considering yearly overlaps and incoming students, a total of 493,600 unique additional schoolchildren will be reached over the extended period.
10. Similarly, under activity 3 (livelihoods), WFP plans to reach an additional 400,000 unique beneficiaries for participation in livelihood activities. Targeting remains the same as in the approved ICSP, though the number of beneficiaries reached per year is significantly reduced due to funding constraints (200,000 per year over the two-year extension period – reduced from 750,000 in 2023).
11. Under activity 4 (social safety nets), WFP will pilot conditional CBTs for the following number of beneficiaries annually in 2024 and 2025:
 - i) 37,500 PBWG already registered for community-based management of acute malnutrition under activity 6 (malnutrition treatment), conditional on their attendance at the health clinic, will receive top-ups (for six months at set intervals) to further supplement and safeguard their nutritional status.
 - ii) 25,000 out-of-school children aged 15 years and above that attend non-formal education will transition from activity 2 (school feeding) to receive assistance under the CBT pilot in activity 4 (social safety nets). These out-of-school children are from the most vulnerable families (mainly children with disability, adolescents above 15 years, and female students over 18 years in self-learning programmes), who will receive top-ups conditional upon 80 percent attendance. The activity is designed to provide an incentive to continue with education and reduce child labour. This activity will be implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund to provide an enhanced package of services to improve the life skills of participating adolescents and youth.
12. Under activity 5 (malnutrition prevention), to improve dietary diversity across the first 1,000 days, WFP will expand the scope of assistance, targeting an additional 51,208 PBWG with children up to the age of 2 years (instead of PBWG with children under 6 months) already receiving food rations through WFP, with CBT as a top-up. An additional

69,872 children (6–23 months) will also be reached with supplementary nutrition assistance over the extension period.

13. Under activity 6 (malnutrition treatment), WFP will increase the number of beneficiaries targeted to receive nutrition supplementation services by over 874,000 people (437,000 beneficiaries annually in 2024 and 2025) for the management of acute malnutrition. Early identification of acute malnutrition will be increased through scale-up of the family mid-upper arm circumference approach at the household and community levels.

Transfer modalities

14. In response to food price increases, under activity 1 (general food assistance) the transfer values will be increased to USD 84 for beneficiaries identified as severely food insecure and to USD 65 for targeted beneficiaries identified as moderately food insecure. CBT assistance provided as part of the hybrid ration for beneficiaries identified as severely or moderately food insecure in specific areas will comprise a top-up of USD 50 or USD 28 respectively and will be provided in addition to the in-kind food basket.
15. Under activity 2 (school feeding) the transfer provided to out-of-school children enrolled in the Curriculum B (a second chance learning scheme) will be carried out through e-voucher (restricted to food items) valued at USD 30 per month and conditional upon 80 percent school attendance. This transfer value is aligned with unskilled labour wages.
16. Under activity 3 (livelihoods), the provision of in-kind food will be phased out and CBT scaled-up. Based on the minimum expenditure basket agreed with cash working group, the CBT transfer value will be set at USD 84 per household per month.
17. Under activity 4 (social safety nets):
 - i) For PBWG receiving treatment for acute malnutrition, the CBT transfer value is USD 60 provided monthly for six months (four months while enrolled in the treatment programme and two months post-treatment). The value is set based on nutrition cluster analysis and covers the nutritional needs required to prevent acute malnutrition.
 - ii) For out-of-school children the CBT transfer value is set at USD 30 per month. The transfer value has been designed to cover the food portion of the minimum expenditure basket, and is conditional on attendance, restricted to food items and aligned with unskilled labour wages.

Risk management

18. Funding shortfalls have necessitated the targeting of a reduced number of beneficiaries under the ICSP. WFP is coordinating with government counterparts and cooperating partners to jointly communicate with the affected population on the reduced funding availability and the subsequent necessity to reduce beneficiaries. The capacity of the community feedback helpline has been increased to respond to the anticipated increased volume of calls and a strategy has been developed to communicate with beneficiaries and stakeholders to convey the changes in targeting and reduced assistance being provided. WFP has further opened an appeal window to document any appeals against the changes in assistance.

Country office capacity

19. Although increased staffing levels were necessary in 2023 to accommodate both the surge support for the earthquake response and the ongoing prioritization/retargeting of



beneficiaries, a gradual decrease in staffing levels is foreseen during the extension period. The staffing structure will be aligned with operational and strategic changes and will be implemented under a strategy that leverages local capacities.

Beneficiary analysis⁵

TABLE 1: DIRECT BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY							
Strategic outcome	Activity	Period	Women (18+ years)	Men (18+ years)	Girls (0-18 years)	Boys (0-18 years)	Total
1	1	Current	1 803 258	1 732 542	2 332 300	2 431 900	8 300 000
		Increase/ (decrease)	-	-	-	-	-
		Revised	1 803 258	1 732 542	2 332 300	2 431 900	8 300 000
	2	Current	-	-	482 650	502 350	985 000
		Increase/ (decrease)	-	-	237 044	256 556	493 600
		Revised	-	-	719 694	758 906	1 478 600
2	3	Current	271 575	260 925	366 250	351 250	1 250 000
		Increase/ (decrease)	136 178	117 492	74 332	71 998	400 000
		Revised	407 753	378 417	440 582	423 248	1 650 000
	4	Current	-	-	-	-	-
		Increase/ (decrease)	64 650	-	34 100	26 250	125 000
		Revised total	64 650	-	34 100	26 250	125 000
3	5	Current	380 000	-	274 235	244 265	898 500
		Increase/ (decrease)	51 208	-	36 955	32 917	121 080
		Revised	431 208	-	311 190	277 182	1 019 580
	6	Current	47 500	-	28 500	24 000	100 000
		Increase/ (decrease)	500 534	-	221 096	152 552	874 182
		Revised	548 034	-	249 596	176 552	974 182
Total (without overlap)		Current	2 098 583	1 993 467	2 981 327	2 871 373	9 944 750
		Increase/ (decrease)	385 840	116 978	284 101	250 433	1 037 351
		Revised	2 484 423	2 110 445	3 265 428	3 121 806	10 982 101

⁵ Please note that table 1 reflects the number of beneficiaries planned for the duration of the ICSP (2022–2025).



Transfers

TABLE 2: FOOD RATION (g/person/day) AND CASH-BASED TRANSFER VALUE (USD/person/day) BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY																					
	Strategic outcome 2												Strategic outcome 2		Strategic outcome 3						
	Activity 1									Activity 2			Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5		Activity 6				
Beneficiary type	Vulnerable Syrians in camps		Severely food-insecure Syrians			Moderately food-insecure Syrians			Newly displaced vulnerable Syrians		Primary school children	Out-of-school children	Primary school children – fresh meals	Vulnerable Syrians	PBWG and targeted out-of-school children	Children age 6–23 months	PBWG	Children age 6–59 months	PBWG		
Modality*	Food	CBTs	Food	Hybrid	CBTs	Food	Hybrid	CBTs	Food	CBTs	Food	CBTs	CBTs	CBTs	CBTs	Food	CBTs	Food	Food		
Cereals	300		233	66		166	66														
Pulses	120		100			73															
Fortified vegetable oil	49		42	42		36	42														
Iodized salt	7		7			7															
Sugar	40		33	33		33	33														
Fortified date bars											80										
Yeast	3.33																				
Ready-to-eat rations									458												
LNS-MQ																7 178.4					
LNS-LQ																		1 359.9	3 431.8		
Total kcal/day	2 100	2 100	1 700	737	1 700	1 300	737	1 300	2 075	2 100	330					267		500	500		
% kcal from protein	10.8		10.8	2.4		10.3	2.4		17.1												
Cash-based transfers (USD/person/day)		0.68		0.33	0.56		0.19	0.43		0.68				1	0.7	0.76		PBWG: 2.00 Out-of-school children: 1.00	1.20		
Number of feeding days per year	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	5	5	176		360	176	88		PBWG: 180 Out-of-school children: 300	360	360	90	120

* The following commodities distributed in the in-kind food basket are fortified: wheat flour, oil and salt.

Abbreviations: LNS-LQ = lipid-based nutrient supplement - large quantity; LNS-MQ = lipid-based nutrient supplements-medium quantity.



	Current budget		Increase		Revised budget	
	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Cereals	595 851	305 830 952	209 017	124 507 789	804 868	430 338 741
Pulses	281 435	192 079 351	86 700	75 133 795	368 135	267 213 145
Oil and fats	165 689	272 920 069	56 702	89 306 431	222 391	362 226 500
Mixed and blended foods	32 204	67 372 237	40 452	92 088 401	72 657	159 460 639
Other	730 730	431 447 449	382 937	284 280 356	1 113 668	715 727 805
Total (food)	1 805 910	1 269 650 058	775 809	665 316 773	2 581 719	1 934 966 831
Cash-based transfers	-	674 583 360		783 696 256		1 458 279 616
Total (food and cash-based transfer value)	1 805 910	1 944 233 418	775 809	1 449 013 029	2 581 719	3 393 246 447

Cost breakdown

20. The primary increase under the present budget increase is under strategic outcome 1 to accommodate the extension in time, though this represents a significant reduction per year compared to the original approved ICSP for the Syrian Arab Republic.

	WFP strategic outcome 1	WFP strategic outcome 3	WFP strategic outcome 2	WFP strategic outcome 5	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	Strategic outcome 4	
Focus area	Crisis response	Resilience building	Resilience building	Crisis response	
Transfers	1 438 441 419	103 114 141	188 505 428	29 119 077	1 759 180 065
Implementation	64 961 496	3 661 336	6 666 641	47 395	75 336 868
Adjusted direct support costs					51 249 988
Subtotal					1 885 766 922
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)					122 392 030
Total					2 008 158 952

TABLE 5: OVERALL ICSP COST BREAKDOWN, AFTER REVISION (USD)					
	WFP strategic outcome 1	WFP strategic outcome 3	WFP strategic outcome 2	WFP strategic outcome 5	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	Strategic outcome 4	
Focus area	Crisis response	Resilience building	Resilience building	Crisis response	
Transfers	3 420 822 421	378 891 332	426 588 660	116 651 973	4 342 954 385
Implementation	120 252 346	8 795 927	13 269 593	700 885	143 018 751
Adjusted direct support costs	75 249 166	7 468 294	9 460 355	2 258 385	94 436 201
Subtotal	3 616 323 932	395 155 553	449 318 608	119 611 243	4 580 409 337
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	235 061 056	25 685 111	29 205 710	3 477 444	293 429 320
Total	3 851 384 988	420 840 664	478 524 318	123 088 688	4 873 838 657