



**WFP EVALUATION**

# **Baseline Activity Study of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia October 2022 to September 2027**

**Decentralized Evaluation – Baseline Report**

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**Prepared by the KonTerra Group**



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Front page picture:

Children at a school in Kampong Thom province enjoying their school breakfast

(Photo: Chandara Gnim, June 2023)

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

1. This report covers the baseline study of the World Food Programme (WFP) McGovern-Dole school feeding project in Cambodia (FFE-442-2022-009-00) for the period from 01 October 2022 to 30 September 2027. This project (hereafter referred to as FY22) is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The baseline study represents the first part of a process that will include midterm and endline evaluations, and has been commissioned by the WFP Country Office (CO) in Cambodia.
2. The objectives of the evaluation are accountability and learning regarding the handover process of WFP school feeding activities to the national Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), with more emphasis on the learning objective. USDA has supported school feeding in Cambodia since 2003 and the FY22 project is the final round. Full handover should be completed by 2028 and the best possible conditions for the sustainability of the NHGSFP should be prepared by the end of the project.
3. The project aims to improve literacy amongst primary school children, through improvements to the quality of teaching, distribution of daily school meals as an incentive to attend school, and interventions in hygiene, health and nutrition practices to reduce absences due to illness. The project operates in 341 schools in 12 districts of Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom and Siem Reap provinces, and these schools will be progressively handed over to the NHGSFP by 2028. The project targets over 100,000 children, 49 percent of them girls. It has a budget of US\$21 million provided by the USDA.
4. The principal stakeholders, and the likely main users, of the evaluation are the WFP CO and Regional Bureau, the various ministries of the Royal Government of Cambodia associated with the project,<sup>1</sup> WFP's cooperating partners,<sup>2</sup> and the donor, USDA.

## Methodology

5. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach to answer four principal questions defined in the baseline Terms of Reference, to enable comparisons at midterm and endline and between schools directly assisted by WFP and those already handed over. The baseline was largely founded on documentary research and secondary data gathered (qualitative as well as a quantitative household and school-level survey) for the endline of the previous McGovern-Dole project (FY19), which was run in parallel with the baseline and was the subject of a separate report. Secondary data collection was completed by a limited number of qualitative key informant interviews (KIIs), conducted remotely, at national level.<sup>3</sup> Gender considerations were mainstreamed in the baseline study through the inclusion of gender references in sub-questions and KIIs, the extraction of gender specific information from literature and the production of gender disaggregated data from the FY19 endline survey.
6. A SABER exercise<sup>4</sup> was conducted in June 2023 and informs the baseline for the project's foundational results, although the final SABER results are not yet available. Other limitations of the study were the late availability of the data from the FY19 endline survey, and the lack of justification of the targets of the Project Monitoring Plan (PMP) that were to be reviewed by this study.

## Context

7. In Cambodia, short-term hunger is a key factor affecting educational results. WFP's school feeding programme started in Cambodia in 1999. In 2014, the MoEYS, in collaboration with WFP, piloted a home-grown school feeding (HGFSF) model. The Government's NHGSFP has been subsequently developed with the expectation that WFP-supported schools will be taken over by the national programme and be managed by the

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1 Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), National Social Protection Council (NSPC), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF).

2 World Education, World Vision and Plan International.

3 In total 32 persons participated in 16 interviews.

4 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/systems-approach-for-better-education-results-saber>

Government after transition. In March 2022, the MoEYS and WFP finalized a Joint School Feeding Transition Strategy (JTS) outlining the handover of further schools and the remaining capacity strengthening to be done.

8. The COVID-19 pandemic had widespread impacts, especially amongst poor households, leading to increased poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Schools were closed for 20 months, during which time school meals were temporarily discontinued, but WFP support continued through take-home rations for the most vulnerable households, the construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure in schools, increased distribution of teaching and learning materials, and support to the development of the school feeding policy framework.

## Evaluation findings

### **Evaluation Question 1: What is the pre-cycle situation for all evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and coherence), and in terms of GEWEs mainstreaming in the project?**

9. **Relevance and coherence.** The project is fully oriented to the objectives of achieving full handover to the Government and creating the best possible conditions for the sustainability of the NHGSFP in all its components. It was designed to support the implementation of the JTS, which identifies a clearer approach for handover than during previous projects. WFP direct implementation will progressively decrease as schools are handed over, and WFP resources will be increasingly dedicated to capacity strengthening and technical assistance to the NHGSF programme.

10. School feeding is well integrated into government priorities within the National Social Protection Policy Framework. The NHGSFP was endorsed in 2019, the development of its policy framework and regulations progressed significantly under the FY19 project, and will continue to develop during the FY22 project. The literacy component is fully integrated into the national Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme, and the sanitation and hygiene component is designed to support the National Policy on School Health.

11. One concern is that local procurement of local food commodities for the meals is a key element of the HGSF model, and schools must be experienced with the processes to be deemed ready for handover. There will be no longer be any local purchase made within the McGovern-Dole project and WFP is expected to mobilize additional resources, different from the case to date, which presents a threat to the handover objectives.

12. **Effectiveness.** The review of intermediate and overall outcomes of the project showed that a few elements deserve particular attention. The implementation of the literacy package by different partners at different times and in different provinces with some variations, and the application of different protocols for the early grade reading assessment affects the comparability of data gathered. Future efforts are required to maintain the same approach as in the 2022 measurement. The FY22 baseline level of 20.4 percent highlights the low levels of early grade literacy and the need to continue to improve this critical outcome.

13. The FY22 baseline showed a higher proportion of hungry students during class and a lower attendance than in 2020. Both trends need to be further investigated so that appropriate measures can be taken. The Diet Diversity Score calculated at baseline is already higher than the project life target, so the target needs to be updated (if the recalculated value remains higher than the LoP target), and the indicator should be clearly defined in the PMP to specify the exact food groups used in the calculation.

14. It would be necessary to clarify if the 24 hours recall includes the meal consumed at school or not, and how the target was defined.<sup>6</sup> Functioning water infrastructure has decreased in the FY22 baseline despite the FY19 project building or rehabilitating a large number of facilities, and this evolution should also be further investigated.

15. WFP's complaints and feedback mechanism is adequate to collect and address comments on WFP direct operations, including for this project. A possible adoption of a similar mechanism by the MoEYS is still under discussion.

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<sup>5</sup> Gender equality and women's empowerment

<sup>6</sup> At baseline, using the data from the FY19 endline survey, the Diet Diversity Score has been calculated based on 10 food groups.

16. **Sustainability.** Institutional ownership and participation in the NHGSF programme have been strong for MoEYS and NSPC, but remain weak for nine other institutions formally associated with the programme. Clarifications on their roles were provided recently, though inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms are not yet in place. This needs to be prioritised under this new project, in order to promote ownership and start strengthening necessary capacities as soon as possible.

17. **Efficiency.** Under this criteria, WFP's emphasis is on supporting a cost-efficient NHGSFP. The CO currently supports the assessment and piloting of different procurement models for the HGSF programme. Regional purchase included in the project is expected to be more cost-efficient than international imports.

18. The CO's management structure for implementing the project is getting more appropriate to the project needs. The FY19 evaluations highlighted the need for a mindset change and for staff to prioritise capacity strengthening and technical assistance to their government counterparts. Internal capacities are considered more appropriate to the FY22 project's objectives than in the past.

**Evaluation Question 2: What are the contextual changes that occurred since the FY19 baseline relevant to the programme and under each evaluation criteria, including GEWE aspects?**

19. The greatest external factor to affect the FY19 project was clearly the COVID-19 pandemic, and the country continues to recover from that, but one key factor is the learning loss for the children affected by 20 months of school closures. However, a repetition of such a situation in the future is unpredictable and cannot realistically be factored into the new project design.

20. The FY19 evaluations highlighted the high-level government support as a key factor of success to date, although there were identified challenges related to limited capacity and understanding of the programme and how to implement it amongst MoEYS and sub-national staff. Baseline key informants confirmed that the Minister of Education has been very supportive throughout the transition process, and that government will remain strong and it is not expected that this will change in the coming years.

21. Ongoing Decentralization and Deconcentration reforms in Cambodia are planned to be rolled out in 2024 and could potentially modify key structures and processes related to the management of the school feeding programme (SFP). WFP needs to assess the potential implication of the reforms on the SFP and factor it into capacity strengthening activities for different audiences.

22. The macroeconomic context was cited during informant interviews as a key factor that could affect the resourcing of the NHGSF plan.

23. The baseline study has not identified contextual changes specific to GEWE.

**Evaluation Question 3: Are the project indicators and targets appropriate in effectively measuring and tracking project results for men, women, girls, boys and vulnerable groups based on the results framework?**

24. The exhaustive review of the FY22 Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) during this baseline allowed the Evaluation Team (ET) to consider that the plan has improved in comparison with FY19, but there are still issues that need to be addressed.

25. The overall set of indicators is found appropriate to measure project outputs and outcomes, and realistic considering the coverage of the project and the achievements of the previous FY19 round. There is some overlapping of indicators, and necessary adjustments to be made. Targets are often not documented and justified, which needs to be improved in order to allow for the analysis of achievements in both the regular monitoring system of the project and for the midterm and endline evaluations. Whenever it is relevant, the PMP disaggregates indicators considering gender, but targets are not disaggregated.

26. National and sub-national capacities for monitoring the NHGSFP were also repeatedly mentioned in the FY19 evaluation series. Difficulties such as lack of connectivity, lack of skills in digitalized system, and excessive workloads, were again cited by interviewees. In April 2022, WFP carried out an assessment of the Monitoring and Evaluation System for the NHGSF programme based on a desk review, and clear recommendations and action points were proposed.

**Evaluation Question 4: To what extent are the midterm and endline evaluation questions relevant in assessing the success of the programme under each criterion and for all categories of participants including men, women, girls, boys and vulnerable groups?**



27. Overall, the evaluation questions capture well the key focus on success and performance of the project, and on the readiness and sustainability of the NHGSF programme. The ET proposes some adjustments that respond to three objectives:

- Simplify the evaluation questions and provide more clarity as the questions are sometimes too extensive and convoluted.
- Reduce overlapping and the number of questions.
- Strengthen the integration of GEWE with explicit references everywhere relevant.

## Conclusions

28. This final McGovern-Dole FY22 aims towards achieving full handover to the Government by 2028 and creating the best possible conditions for the sustainability of the NHGSFP. School handover was initiated in the previous project, but this FY22 project goes further, intending to determine what will happen after the handover.

29. The project is fully oriented towards this objective in all its components and it has been designed to support the implementation of the JTS. School feeding is well integrated into the social protection policy framework. It aligns with, and supports, a wide range of official policies and strategies. There is a strong ownership and political will, particularly from the MoEYS and NSPC, that needs to be extended to other key government institutions.

30. Removing local procurement from the project could potentially affect the readiness of schools for handover and the HGSF model chosen by the Government. It will be essential to address this question in the short term.

31. Overall, the analysis of the baseline situation shows that the project will build on a solid base from past projects, although some elements need to be further investigated and some adjustments need to be made on project targets and indicators. WFP has been adjusting and will continue to progressively improve its own capacities to better support the capacity strengthening objectives of the project.

## Lessons learned

32. The ET has proposed an evaluation model clearly focused on learning from the handover process. The evaluation series will provide a good opportunity to assess the extent to which the handover (of an activity that has been delivered by WFP over decades based on its own standards) to the Government, will result in an evolution of the performance levels. It will also be an opportunity to observe how the Government adapts standards and systems to be more in accordance with its own priorities and resources.

33. Implementing both the FY19 endline and FY22 baseline in parallel was well justified in terms of saving resources, limiting stakeholder fatigue and allowing an analysis of the evolution of 10 years of McGovern-Dole programming in the same schools. However, these two evaluations were done by different teams – albeit via the same company<sup>7</sup> – so they were by definition different exercises with separate reports, but it was ensured that there were multiple phone discussions between the Team Leaders, some of the team members were the same, and there was extensive sharing of information, data and reports between the teams. In future cases several elements could be changed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the exercise. For instance, undertaking the baseline study after the endline of the previous project is completed would allow enough time to access the data, clean, prepare and analyse it, with sufficient interactions between both teams. Alternatively, a more cost-efficient, coherent and appropriate approach would be to integrate both evaluations into a single exercise conducted by the same team.

This baseline study was conducted remotely and primary data collection only included a few key informant interviews at national level. National stakeholders interviewed remotely were mainly at higher levels and not sufficiently aware of the McGovern-Dole projects. For future iterations it will be imperative to speak to sub-national stakeholders, school personnel and communities.

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<sup>7</sup> The CO advised that they considered the approach selected offered more benefits because a new bidding process would allow additional firms the opportunity to submit proposals for the FY22 evaluation series.



# 1. Introduction

1. This report presents the findings and conclusions of the baseline study of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole international Food for Education and Child Nutrition project, implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Cambodia as a key part of its School Feeding Programme (SFP) activities. This project runs from 01 October 2022 to 30 September 2027 under the USDA McGovern-Dole Grant number FFE-442-2022-009-00.<sup>8</sup> The Terms of Reference (ToR) are attached as [Annex 1](#).

## 1.1. Evaluation features

2. The full evaluation process comprises three distinct exercises (baseline, midterm and endline), with each exercise having multiple deliverables, including inception and evaluation reports. The series will take place over a five-year period, and has been commissioned by the WFP Cambodia Country Office (WFP CO). It will be carried out by the KonTerra Group, with the same team of independent experts working on all three exercises. The baseline study was undertaken remotely at the beginning of the project (July 2023), the midterm evaluation is scheduled for 2025, and the final evaluation is scheduled for the end of the project in 2027.

3. **The purpose** of this baseline study is to establish the initial situation at the start of the project, in particular the baseline values for all performance indicators. The midterm and endline evaluations will assess the results achieved based on successive measurement of the same performance indicators. The ToR will remain unchanged for the full series, unless changes to the scope occur which necessitate adjustments to the budget or team composition for the later rounds.

4. **Scope:** The planned series of evaluations will cover all activities and processes of WFP Cambodia's McGovern-Dole-supported school feeding activities under the project FFE-442-2022-009-00, including the formulation, implementation, resourcing, monitoring, evaluation and reporting relevant to answer the evaluation questions, in the three provinces covered by the project: Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom and Siem Reap. The timelines for the baseline and overall evaluation series, as well as country maps showing the project provinces, are available in [Annex 2](#).

5. The specific **objectives** of the evaluation are:

- **Learning** is a critical objective of the evaluation series as it aims to assess the effects of the handover of the school feeding programme (SFP) to the Royal Government of Cambodia, reporting on the project performance and the extent to which the national Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSP) programme is sustainable. This is particularly important considering that this project will be the final USDA support to school feeding in Cambodia. To this end, the evaluation processes will determine the reasons why the handover produces certain results or not, to draw lessons, derive good practices and pointers for learning. Findings will be actively disseminated, and lessons will be incorporated into relevant lesson-sharing systems. The evaluation components will aim to critically and objectively review and take stock of stakeholders' implementation experience and the operating environment for the McGovern-Dole project.
- **Accountability:** The evaluation processes will assess and report on the performance and results of the McGovern-Dole activities during the grant period. For accountability, the evaluations will assess whether targeted beneficiaries have received services as expected, if the project is on track to meet its stated goals and objectives, and in alignment with the results frameworks and other assumptions.

6. The work will provide evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making. The expected users of the evaluation are the WFP Cambodia CO, the Regional Bureau in Bangkok (RBB), key partner ministries within the Royal Government of Cambodia including the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), National Social Protection Council (NSPC), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF). WFP has a particular interest in the evaluation series in order to ensure that the handover process is progressing well and the perspectives of sustainability of the national home-grown school feeding programme (NHGSP) are optimal. Government institutions will also be primary users, as the evaluation series provides an opportunity to identify elements requiring strengthening. Other stakeholders such as the donor and

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<sup>8</sup> Throughout this document this project (2022-2027) is denoted as FY22; the previous project (2019-2022) is denoted as FY19.

cooperating partners also have an interest. WFP's partners in the project are World Education for the literacy component, World Vision and Plan International on school feeding, and on the water/sanitation/hygiene (WASH) and school garden components.

7. USDA has supported school feeding in Cambodia since 2013 through several grants. The McGovern-Dole FY22 project is anticipated to be the final USDA grant and aims at completing the full handover of the SFP to the Government. The emphasis of the project is therefore on capacity strengthening and sustainability through the different components that have been supported by USDA in previous projects, particularly literacy, school feeding, WASH and nutrition (see the project description in section 1.3).

8. This baseline study was conducted in parallel with the endline evaluation of the previous McGovern-Dole FY19 round (2019-2023). To avoid stakeholder fatigue and the duplication of evaluation activities and resources, as well as to allow to analysis of the evolution of 10 years of McGovern-Dole support in the same schools, this baseline study was implemented remotely and uses secondary data to a large extent, particularly the data collected in the FY19 endline evaluation (see section 1.4 for evaluation approach and methodology).

## 1.2. Context

### General overview

9. Cambodia is a constitutional monarchy located in the southern region of the Indochinese peninsula in Southeast Asia, with a landmass of 181,035 km<sup>2</sup> dominated by broad central plains around the Tonle Sap Lake and the Mekong River. The country has an estimated population of over 16.9 million (2023),<sup>9</sup> 49.5 percent male and 50.5 percent female. With an annual growth rate of 1.2 percent, almost a third of the population is below 15 years of age, with only five percent aged over 65 years; the median age is 25 years. Average life expectancy at birth is 70 years (72 for women and 67 for men), and the fertility rate is 2.34 births per woman.<sup>10</sup>

10. Minority ethnic groups constitute six to 10 percent of the population, including the Cham, indigenous highland communities, ethnic Chinese, ethnic Vietnamese, and smaller minority groups such as the Khmer Krom and the Kuy people. The Government formally recognizes only the Cham and Khmer Loeu.<sup>11</sup>

11. The Royal Government of Cambodia has established impressive economic growth over the past 20 years, bringing the country to lower middle-income status in 2016 with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US\$1,785 in 2022.<sup>12</sup> The GDP per capita for 2023 is expected to be US\$1,924.<sup>13</sup> Annual economic growth in the period before the COVID-19 pandemic was consistently above seven percent for over a decade,<sup>14</sup> reaching 7.5 percent in 2018 and 7.1 percent in 2019,<sup>15</sup> making Cambodia one of the fastest growing economies in the world. However, economic growth was severely impacted by the pandemic, falling in 2020 to -3.1 percent, with some recovery in 2022 (3.0 percent)<sup>16</sup> and an expectation from the MEF that growth will increase to 5.5 percent in 2023.<sup>17</sup>

12. In 2021, Cambodia ranked 146<sup>th</sup> in the global Human Development Index (HDI) out of 191 countries reporting and was placed in the medium human development category.<sup>18</sup> In general, Cambodia has one of the world's fastest rates of improved HDI, with increased equity between provinces.<sup>19</sup> While the pandemic caused a decline to 2018 levels, this compares favourably with the global average decline to 2016 levels, indicating the country's effective pandemic response.<sup>20</sup> Indicators for education<sup>21</sup> are also on a positive trend, but health and education indicators both remain lower in comparison with neighbouring countries. The Government's targets on improved nutrition, ending stunting and increasing income (by 20 percent for the poorest) have not yet

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9 <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cambodia-population>

10 All other data in this paragraph from the World Bank, 2022; World Development Indicators DataBank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators> (accessed on 07.06.23).

11 World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous People, <https://minorityrights.org/country/Cambodia/> (accessed on 07.06.23)

12 <https://mef.gov.kh/documents-category/publication/budget-in-brief/> (in Khmer)

13 *ibid.*

14 <https://www.adb.org/countries/cambodia/economy>.

15 [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia\\_VNR\\_PublishingHLPF.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf)

16 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?view=chart&locations=KH>

17 <https://www.adb.org/news/cambodia-economy-accelerate-tourism-recovery-ADB>

18 <https://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KHM>

19 [https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/human\\_development/human-development-report-2019--sustaining-natural-resources-for-.html](https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/human_development/human-development-report-2019--sustaining-natural-resources-for-.html)

20 Doubling down on Cambodia's investments in human development to manage uncertain times | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

21 Education Index calculated using Mean Years of Schooling & Expected Years of Schooling. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/education-index>

been achieved.<sup>22</sup> The country's long-term development vision, the Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase IV (2019–2023),<sup>23</sup> emphasizing strong commitment to education and children's nutrition, is viewed as a priority for sustainable human resource development, economic growth and social development.

13. **Poverty:** Cambodia's fast economic growth has been accompanied by a significant reduction in poverty, cutting poverty levels from 33.8 percent in 2009 to 17.8 percent in 2019,<sup>24</sup> although the COVID-19 pandemic reversed some of the progress made.<sup>25</sup> The national poverty line in Cambodia was adjusted following the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey for 2019/20, based on the cost of basic needs and a common basket approach,<sup>26</sup> and is now Cambodian Riel (KHR) 10,951 or approximately US\$2.70<sup>27</sup> per person per day.<sup>28</sup> The poverty rate in rural areas is up to 22.8 percent in some places, compared with 4.2 percent in Phnom Penh.<sup>29</sup> The distribution of income in Cambodia's economy shows a score of 48.9 on the Gini index for 2019.<sup>30</sup>

14. Three-quarters of the population resides in rural areas where approximately 90 percent of the country's poor live.<sup>31</sup> These households mostly exist on small margins of poverty and are vulnerable to natural hazards, environmental or individual shocks. Previous estimates suggest that a loss in daily income of US\$0.30 per capita would double the poverty rate.<sup>32</sup> There remains a limited social safety net system in the country, but the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) 2016-2025 places a strong emphasis on human capital development, and the collaboration with WFP on school feeding through the MoEYS and its planned nationwide rollout is an integral part of the Government's efforts.<sup>33</sup>

15. **Food security and undernutrition** remain important public health concerns in Cambodia.<sup>34</sup> The national objectives set for the Cambodia-specific Millennium Development Goals were not met<sup>35</sup> and malnutrition rates remain higher than in most countries in the region.<sup>36</sup> The newer Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator for undernourishment (Goal 2) indicates that 6.2 percent of Cambodian households consume less than the minimum dietary energy requirement.<sup>37</sup> Some 39 percent of adult male Cambodians and 45.8 percent of women suffer from severe food insecurity,<sup>38</sup> with undernutrition most prevalent in rural areas. Dietary diversity remains relatively low: rice, meat and fish consumption are high, while fruit, vegetables and consumption of other animal-source protein, like milk or eggs, fall below international guidelines.<sup>39</sup> The Government has developed several policies and programmes to end hunger, including: a) the National Fast Track Roadmap for Improving Nutrition (2014-2020);<sup>40</sup> b) The Second National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN, 2019-2023);<sup>41</sup> c) the National Action Plan for Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia (2016-2025);<sup>42</sup> and d) Cambodia's Roadmap for Food Systems for Sustainable Development 2030. The most recent (2021-22) Demographic Health Survey (DHS) reported that 22 percent of children under the age of five years were stunted, 10 percent were wasted, 16 percent were underweight and four percent were overweight.<sup>43</sup>

22 [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia\\_VNR\\_PublishingHLPF.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf)

23 RS-IV 2019–2023 – Rectangle 1 including 1) Improving the quality of education, science, and technology; 2) Vocational training; 3) Improving public healthcare and nutrition; and 4) Strengthening gender equality and social protection. Available at: <http://cnv.org.kh/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Rectangular-Strategy-Phase-IV-of-the-Royal-Government-of-Cambodia-of-the-Sixth-Legislature-of-the-National-Assembly-2018-2023.pdf>

24 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview>

25 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/publication/cambodia-poverty-assessment-2022-toward-a-more-inclusive-and-resilient-cambodia>

26 *ibid*

27 Exchange rate of KHR 4,000 = US\$1.00

28 As reflected in the cost of a basic food basket, food prices have increased in recent years: in February 2023, the basket cost was the equivalent of US\$26.20 (+1.1 percent compared to the previous month and +6.6 percent compared to the same period in 2022). Source: [https://reliefweb.int/report/cambodia/cambodia-market-seasonal-monitoring-update-february-2023#:~:text=Summary%20of%20Key%20Findings,year%20Donyear%2C%20YoY\)](https://reliefweb.int/report/cambodia/cambodia-market-seasonal-monitoring-update-february-2023#:~:text=Summary%20of%20Key%20Findings,year%20Donyear%2C%20YoY))

29 <https://www.worldeconomics.com/Inequality/Cambodia.aspx>

30 *Ibid*.

31 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview>

32 World Bank Policy Note on Poverty Monitoring and Analysis, October 2013.

33 <http://inndec.com/library/docs/SPPF%20English%20-%20Final%20Ver.pdf>

34 [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000112436/download/?\\_ga=2.113129794.71101732.1589421801-1848541966.1586381573](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000112436/download/?_ga=2.113129794.71101732.1589421801-1848541966.1586381573)

35 Cambodia had an objective of reducing the prevalence of undernourished people to <10%.

36 <https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/topics/sdg-2-zero-hunger/>

37 SDG tracker data: <https://sdg-tracker.org/zero-hunger>

38 <https://data.unwomen.org/country/cambodia>

39 <https://cambodia.un.org/en/198886-wfp-and-government-cambodia-launch-behaviour-change-campaign-improve-nutrition-among>

40 [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia\\_VNR\\_PublishingHLPF.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf)

41 <http://njppp.jp/wp/wp-content/uploads/10-2-Framework-NSFSN-19-23-TWG-for-RACHA-workshop-1.pdf>

42 [http://ocm.gov.kh/ocmwinwin20/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/6-National\\_Action\\_Plan\\_for\\_the\\_Zero.pdf](http://ocm.gov.kh/ocmwinwin20/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/6-National_Action_Plan_for_the_Zero.pdf)

43 <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR377/FR377.pdf>

Among women aged 20-49, seven percent were reported to be thin, while 33 percent were overweight or obese.<sup>44</sup> While rates of undernutrition are declining, an increase is seen in rates of overweight among both children and women.

16. **Gender** inequality persists in Cambodia, which ranked 116 out of the 160 countries in the Gender Inequality Index at 0.475<sup>45</sup> and ranked 98 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2022.<sup>46</sup> Cambodia's relative position in the latter index has been declining in recent years (from 89<sup>th</sup> place of 153 in 2020<sup>47</sup>), indicating its progress towards gender equality falls behind that of many other countries.

17. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Cambodia reported in 2015 that 70 percent of women in employment were engaged at lower levels and on less pay<sup>48</sup> than men, with estimates that on average women were paid 30 percent less for commensurate work.<sup>49</sup> Women are also underrepresented in the public sector where 77 percent of employees and 85 percent of decision-making positions are occupied by men.<sup>50</sup> In 2022, 21 percent of parliamentary seats were held by women.<sup>51</sup> Nationally, 25 percent of women were illiterate compared to 13.5 percent of men (2015).<sup>52</sup>

18. However, Cambodia's Gender Development Index (GDI) results indicate progress in recent years<sup>53</sup> - the 2021 female HDI value is 0.570<sup>54</sup> in contrast with 0.615 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.926, placing it into Group 3 (up from Group 4 (GDI 0.914 in 2017)).<sup>55</sup> Increasingly, more women are creating independent sources of income within the private sector by starting small businesses, particularly in the clothing sector,<sup>56</sup> or through urban migration for work. Although most microenterprises in Cambodia are run by women, they are largely concentrated in the informal sector and female entrepreneurs face additional challenges due to lack of financial knowledge, and double responsibilities related to income-generation and caring for their families. The SDG targets on gender equality in education and literacy (Goal 5) have been achieved at the primary school level and the gender parity index of gross enrolment rate at both lower secondary and upper secondary levels increased from 1.1 in 2015 to 1.2 in 2018.<sup>57</sup>

19. According to the MoEYS,<sup>58</sup> social exclusion particularly affects disabled children and indigenous groups. Cambodia has one of the highest rates of people with disabilities due to large numbers of residual land mines and unexploded ordnance. In 2019, there were nearly 45,000 disabled children at primary school and 7,000 at secondary school, but the majority of children with disabilities were either not enrolled or had dropped out. A key concern regarding indigenous people is their physical well-being as they have a significantly poorer health status than the rest of the population. Indigenous children often live long distances from schools, requiring them to walk in often unsafe areas (especially for girls), and schools often do not provide education in their mother tongue beyond grade 3, all resulting in limited academic performance.

20. **Education:** Cambodia has made positive strides in improving primary education and in reducing gender disparity in schools, particularly in rural areas. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) (2019-2023) and other national strategies indicate a strong commitment to improving educational standards. Official (EMIS<sup>59</sup>) data show that the primary completion rate has nearly doubled over the last two decades, reaching 91 percent in 2021 (95 percent for females, 87 percent for males), while the gross enrolment rate in lower secondary has

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44 ibid

45 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>; Ratio of women to men HDI values. Gender Development Index scores range from 0 to 1 with a score of 1 indicating equality between men and women in reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market.

46 World Economic Forum. Global Gender Gap Report 2022. [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2022.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2022.pdf); a composite index considering equality in health, education, economy and politics

47 [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2020.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf)

48 <https://cambodia.ohchr.org/en/issues/gender-equality-and-human-rights>

49 CSO report on Cambodian gender issues. 2009

50 <https://cambodia.ohchr.org/en/issues/gender-equality-and-human-rights>

51 <https://data.worldbank.org/country/cambodia?view=chart>

52 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html>

53 [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/KHM.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/KHM.pdf); index includes health, education and command over economic resources

54 <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/KHM>

55 Gender Development Index groups: Countries are divided into five groups by absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values. Group 5 comprises countries with the lowest equality in HDI achievements between women and men (absolute deviation from gender parity of more than 10 percent).

56 Commune Database 2013, Ministry of Planning

57 [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia\\_VNR\\_PublishingHLPF.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf)

58 [https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/cambodia\\_understanding\\_social\\_exclusion\\_in\\_the\\_cambodia\\_cantext\\_and\\_planning\\_for\\_inclusive\\_education-2021.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/cambodia_understanding_social_exclusion_in_the_cambodia_cantext_and_planning_for_inclusive_education-2021.pdf)

59 EMIS - the Education Management Information System of the MoEYS

increased from just 19 percent in 2001 to 58 percent in 2021 (62 percent for females, 53 percent for males).<sup>60</sup> Household survey data confirm the improvement trends, as the share of primary-aged children who were out of school (at any level) had been reduced from 27 percent (2000) to just seven percent in the pre-COVID-19 pandemic period (5.9 percent for females, 8.7 percent for males), while the net enrolment rate in lower secondary improved from 11 percent to nearly 47 percent over this same period (50.8 percent for females, 43.9 percent for males).<sup>61</sup> Gender parity index trends consistently show that increases in participation have been most notable for girls, as the combined primary/lower secondary gender parity index increased from 0.86 in 2000 to 1.0023 in 2019,<sup>62</sup> (slightly more girls than boys).

21. Despite the improvement in overall participation and gender equity, and the decline in grade repetition and dropout rates,<sup>63</sup> inequality concerns are still relevant as indicators like primary school completion and secondary enrolment lag significantly behind in rural areas.<sup>64</sup> Pockets of educational exclusion also remain, even at the primary level, for vulnerable populations such as ethnic minorities (non-Khmer speakers), remote and very poor households and children with disabilities.<sup>65</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has likely exacerbated existing inequalities in school participation, as official EMIS data from 2022 show declines in net enrolment rates at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels.<sup>66</sup>

22. Given the progress made in recent decades in getting children into school, with an increasing share reaching secondary education, the central challenge facing the education system is quality. A 2019 regional assessment (Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics, SEA-PLM<sup>67</sup>) found that 24 percent of Cambodian grade 5 students scored in the lowest proficiency level in reading, and only 11 percent reached the minimum “end of primary” proficiency level as defined under the SDG 4.1.1b; in Writing, the share of students in the lowest proficiency level was 50 percent.<sup>68</sup> Girls performed significantly better than boys in all three test subjects in the SEA-PLM assessment, but very large learning gaps were identified by location (rural/urban), socio-economic quintile and language in the home.<sup>69</sup> Results from national assessments not only confirm low levels of achievement and significant gaps between different groups, but also suggest a significant decline as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the grade 6 national learning assessment conducted by MoEYS found that the share of public-school grade 6 students in the lowest proficiency level (‘Below Basic’) increased from 34.2 percent in 2016 to 45.4 percent in 2021, while in mathematics this share increased from 49.2 percent to nearly 75 percent.<sup>70</sup> The share of grade 6 girls in the ‘Below Basic’ category increased from 26.8 percent to 34.2 percent in Khmer and 47.6 percent to 71.2 percent in mathematics between 2016 and 2021, while for grade 6 boys the shares increased from 40.6 to 55.3 percent (Khmer) and 49.0 to 75.1 percent (mathematics).<sup>71</sup>

23. **School Meals.** School feeding is a major component of WFP Cambodia’s Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019–2023 and a key part of the NSPPF 2016-2025, which represents an important policy tool to reduce and prevent poverty, vulnerability and inequity. The NSPPF has been an opportunity to expand Cambodia’s social protection programme, and particularly the home-grown school feeding (HGFSF) programme.<sup>72</sup> School feeding is implemented in ten of Cambodia’s 25 provinces, with WFP’s support in five of them.<sup>73</sup> The SMP started in the country in 1999; in 2014, the MoEYS in collaboration with WFP piloted an HGFSF model and both parties signed a ‘school feeding roadmap’ in May 2015. The Government’s national HGFSF programme has been subsequently developed with the expectation that WFP-supported schools will be added to the national programme. From school year (SY) 2019-2020, WFP started reducing its operational coverage following the transition plan to national ownership in managing and implementing the SFP, and the MoEYS took over the HGFSF model to become the national programme, with an official budget allocation from that school year.

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60 UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data (<http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>).

61 DHS 4 (2000), 7 (2014) and 8 (2021-22).

62 <https://tradingeconomics.com/cambodia/ratio-of-female-to-male-primary-enrollment-percent-wb-data.html>

63 Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023, MoEYS, May 2019

64 Heng, K. et al (2016) Research report. School Dropout in Cambodia: A case study of Phnom Penh and Kampong Speu. Korea International Cooperation Agency, Cambodia Country Office. Royal University of Phnom Penh, Faculty of Education

65 UNESCO/UNICEF (2012) Asia Pacific: End of Decade Notes on Education for All – EFA Goal #5 Gender Equity. Bangkok: UNESCO & UNICEF

66 EMIS 2021-2022 data.

67 <https://www.seaplms.org/index.php?lang=en>

68 UNICEF & SEAMEO. (2020). SEA-PLM 2019 Main Regional Report, Children’s learning in 6 Southeast Asian countries. Bangkok, Thailand: United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) & Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) – SEA-PLM Secretariat.

69 *ibid*

70 UNICEF (2022). Learning loss in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era: Evidence from the 2016-2021 Grade 6 National Learning Assessment in Cambodia. Phnom Penh: UNICEF.

71 *ibid*

72 McGovern-Dole 2019-2023 Midterm evaluation report.

73 Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Oddar Meanchey, Kampong Chhnang and Pursat provinces

24. In March 2022, the MoEYS and WFP finalized a school feeding Joint Transition Strategy that outlines the ongoing handover of schools and remaining capacity strengthening to be done. The transition to a nationally-owned SFP is coherent with the 2019-2023 ESP and the 2016-2025 NSPPF. The Government absorbed WFP's food, cash and take-home ration (THR) beneficiaries into the national scholarship programme until it finalized in 2019.

25. WFP and the Royal Government of Cambodia are in alignment on their commitment to zero hunger and their partnership is implemented through the social protection and education sectors. In Cambodia, short-term hunger is a key factor affecting educational results, such as literacy, attendance, and concentration in schools.<sup>74</sup> The HGSP programme aims to encourage students' enrolment, attendance, and the completion of their primary education, as well as reduce short-term hunger and improve the children's concentration in the classroom. The programme also invests in community and school-based partnerships aimed at providing an incentive for parents so that their children complete their primary schooling.<sup>75</sup> The McGovern-Dole project provides a daily school meal (breakfast) to all morning class pre-primary and primary school children in selected schools within the target areas. The selection criteria for schools are based on poverty, malnutrition and education indicators.

26. **Official international commitments and with development partners:** The Royal Government of Cambodia strives to take over initiatives of development partners that have demonstrated their positive impact, to ensure their continuation to benefit the country. This is in alignment with its commitment to the SDGs (Goal 17, in particular).<sup>76</sup> The Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy (DCPS, 2019-2023)<sup>77</sup> provides a comprehensive framework for promoting development partnerships in Cambodia. Government statistics indicate that official development assistance rose from US\$1.7 billion in 2019 to US\$1.9 billion in 2022 (US\$2.1 billion in 2020; US\$1.77 billion in 2021).<sup>78</sup> Other relevant commitments to the evaluation subject are the School Meals Coalition, Nutrition4Growth, the 2022 Transforming Education Summit and the 2021 Food Systems Summit.

27. Recent Public Investment Programme data highlight a wide range of development partners supporting the public education sector.<sup>79</sup> Among ongoing projects and programmes, the USDA McGovern-Dole school feeding project is the sixth largest disbursement for the 2021-2025 period. Other substantial commitments are provided by the European Union via budget support for all levels, Asian Development Bank (upper secondary education), USAID (teacher development, inclusive education and other areas across all levels) and the World Bank (teachers, school-based management in Early Childhood Education, and at primary and secondary levels).<sup>80</sup>

28. Under the ESP 2014-2018, the MoEYS developed a programme to support the improvement of students' reading and assessment as part of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), in partnership with USAID, WFP, UNICEF, UNESCO and some national and international development actors, including World Education. The new ESP 2019-2023 stresses that the MoEYS must further support students to improve reading and writing in Khmer at the primary education level. As part of its main strategy, the MoEYS will implement training for primary teachers on teaching and learning methodologies for early grade reading and mathematics, and provide mentoring to them.

29. Under a newly-endorsed National Policy on School Health, the MoEYS school health department is collaborating with WFP and the Ministry of Health (MoH) to support food safety and health within the SMP/HGSP programme.<sup>81</sup> Cooperating partners Plan International and World Vision play a role in promoting the creation of an enabling environment for the provision of school meals, which includes the building and rehabilitation of infrastructure and other interventions at both national and sub-national levels.

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74 <https://www.worldnomads.com/responsible-travel/footprints/projects/103/school-feeding-program-siem-reap-cambodia>

75 <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2015-wfp-gender-policy-2015-2020-0>

76 <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-17-partnerships-for-the-goals.html>

77 [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia\\_VNR\\_PublishingHLPF.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_PublishingHLPF.pdf)

78 [http://odacambodia.com/Reports/reports\\_by\\_updated.asp?status=0](http://odacambodia.com/Reports/reports_by_updated.asp?status=0)

79 GPE 2025 Cambodia Partnership Compact, March 2023. Phnom Penh: MoEYS.

80 *ibid.*

81 Support to the HGSP is given under the LRP grant. Through the LRP, WFP utilized a USDA grant fund to complete the ongoing transition of its SMP model to a national-led and -owned school feeding programme (the HGSP programme), and to complement activities under the McGovern-Dole programme. The LRP aimed to support the creation of functional supply chain mechanisms and strengthen value chain systems in the localized markets around SMP schools to ensure provision of locally procured commodities that meet the set food quality standards.



30. **National impacts from COVID-19.** According to a July 2021 report,<sup>82</sup> the pandemic had widespread impacts on socio-economic indicators, especially among poorer households, and after a decade of steadily declining poverty rates, the pandemic led to increased poverty and inequality. The Government's scale-up of social assistance to poor and vulnerable households (including THRs under the SMP), launched in June 2020, moderated income losses due to the pandemic for some families. Thanks to this intervention, the poverty rate increase in 2020 was limited to 2.8 percentage points, according to a July 2021 assessment.<sup>83</sup> More than half of respondents experienced loss of income, and 90 percent of those lost at least 50 percent of their income. Food security decreased between August 2020 and February 2021, leading to increased utilization/reliance on negative coping mechanisms such as consuming less-preferred foods, a reduction in portion sizes and the number of daily meals. But the country responded and adapted well to COVID-19: approximately 83 percent of the population received at least two doses of COVID vaccines, and travel restrictions were relaxed in the fourth quarter of 2021. This has contributed to a strong recovery in the main economic sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture,<sup>84</sup> although the emergence of new variants still makes the country vulnerable to potential economic disruptions. The war in Ukraine (from early 2022) also caused fuel and food prices to increase, leading to higher rates of food insecurity and poverty.<sup>85</sup>

31. The pandemic response led to an extended closure of schools in Cambodia, and therefore the temporary discontinuation of the school meals programme, between March 2020 and November 2021,<sup>86</sup> which have inevitably led to learning loss for school children, with potential long-term socio-economic consequences.

32. **Humanitarian situation:** Cambodia is very prone to natural disasters. It was classified the 15<sup>th</sup> highest risk country in the World Risk Report 2021<sup>87</sup> and ranked at the highest level of risk in the world risk index. This is due to its exposure to natural hazards and to the limited adaptive and coping capacity of the population and the national and local structures.<sup>88</sup> The main hazard to regularly affect Cambodia is flooding, the severity of which depends on seasonal rainfall from May to November. While annual flooding in some areas is expected, in 2022 multiple floods occurred affecting approximately 85,000 households in 14 provinces.<sup>89</sup> The National Committee for Disaster Management is the leading government agency for disaster preparedness and response. Humanitarian and development partners are coordinated in the Humanitarian Response Forum (HRF) and since 2014 have developed a joint contingency plan to strengthen their preparedness. WFP is a key member of the Food Security and Nutrition sector within the HRF.

33. **WFP's portfolio and alignment with other United Nations agencies:** The World Food Programme has been present in Cambodia since 1979. Current programming focuses on social protection (through the school feeding programme), food security and nutrition, and integrated risk management. The WFP CSP 2019-2023 has allocated nearly US\$100 million, with strategic results addressing access to food, food systems sustainability, strengthened national and sub-national capacities and the sharing of knowledge and expertise.<sup>90</sup>

34. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019-2023 seeks to support the Government's Rectangular Strategy-Phase IV, which is the overall development plan for the country and the Cambodian SDGs, through five interconnected outcomes: i) expanding social opportunities; ii) expanding economic opportunities; iii) supporting sustainable living; iv) strengthening participation and accountability; and v) managing urbanization.<sup>91</sup> The main focus for WFP in the country is on SDGs 2 and 17.

35. Both the current WFP CSP and UNDAF end in 2023 and the McGovern-Dole FY22 project will mainly be implemented under the new CSP (2024-2028) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework that will replace the UNDAF.

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82 WFP-UNFPA-UN Women-UNAIDS-UNICEF. COVID-19 Socio-economic impact assessment. July 2021

83 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview#1> Last Updated: Mar 29, 2022

84 *ibid.*

85 According to Ministry of Economic and Finance, fuel price increased by 49% in Q4 2021, while the price of pork and fish increased by 2.8 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively. In February 2022, the price of gasoline (regular) was +8% MoM and +33% YoY (Ministry of Commerce, February 2022).

86 The MoEYS mandated reopening of the schools from 01 November 2021 using a hybrid method of instruction (online and face-to-face with limited numbers of students on site). Schools reopened at full capacity nationwide starting the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year on 10 January 2022.

87 World Risk Report 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/worldriskreport-2021-focus-social-protection>

88 Humanitarian Response Forum. Contingency Plan, Focus on Floods, Droughts and Storms. November 2022.

89 Humanitarian Response Forum, Situation Report N° 2 – Floods in Cambodia, 12 October 2022.

90 WFP Cambodia Country Brief, April 2023.

91 United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2019-2023 Cambodia. February 2019.

36. **Alignment to the Sustainable Development Goals:** Cambodia has made substantial progress in recent decades on SDG 2 for ending hunger and achieving food security and improved nutrition. The share of the population that is undernourished (SDG Indicator 2.1.1.) has declined from 23.6 percent in 2001 to 6.2 percent in 2019, although food insecurity (SDG Indicator 2.1.2.) remains a challenge affecting roughly half of the population.<sup>92</sup> Based on the Cambodian Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS) 2021/22<sup>93</sup> data and Cambodia's CSDG targets, the country is on-track for its stunting target (current 22 percent with the 2020 target of 25 percent); but wasting has remained at around 10 percent for more than a decade and is off-track compared to the 2020 CSDG target of six percent). The prevalence of overweight children under five between 2014 and 2021/22 doubled (CDHS data). While current prevalence is still less than the 2020 CSDG target of six percent, the direction of the trend suggests that the 2030 target (below five percent) is unlikely to be met. Data on the remaining SDG 2 goals are less complete, but also show improvement in agricultural labour production efficiency (SDG 2.3.1.), and both government (SDG 2.A.1.) and official aid (SDG 2.A.2.) resource flows to the agricultural sector.<sup>94</sup>

37. Trends are also generally positive for SDG 17 ("Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development"). Government revenue (SDG 17.1.1.) and tax collection (SDG 17.1.2.) have roughly doubled in the last two decades, and the debt service ratio is below two percent (SDG 17.4.1).<sup>95</sup> The total net official development assistance (SDG 17.9.1) increased from US\$480 million in 2000 to just over US\$1 billion in 2019 (in constant 2018 United States dollar terms).<sup>96</sup>

## 2. Subject of the baseline, theory of change and baseline questions

### 2.1. Subject being evaluated

38. The subject of this decentralised activity evaluation is the USDA McGovern-Dole School Feeding Project in Cambodia, Agreement number FFE-442-2022-009-00, which was signed on 14 September 2022 for a period of five years (01 October 2022 to 30 September 2027). This project aims at improving literacy levels for primary school-aged children. To achieve this, it seeks to help improve the quality of teaching, distribute school meals as an incentive for children to attend and stay in school, and intervene in hygiene, health and nutrition practices to reduce absences from school due to illness. The project is a continuation of previous USDA grants for 2013-2016, 2017-2019 and 2019-2023, and targets 341 schools already covered by the previous grant in 12 districts of Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom and Siem Reap provinces (see maps in Annex 2). The project sits within the WFP Cambodia CSP 2019-2023.

39. One of the key evolutions of the project compared to previous USDA grants is the emphasis put on the handover to the Government-led national HGSF programme (NHGSFP), which should be completed by the end of the project period, through country capacity strengthening and technical assistance to manage the national programme and achieve sustainability of all activities supported by the project. The project is implemented by WFP in partnership with the MoEYS, World Education, World Vision and Plan International.

40. The **timing** of the baseline study has been closely synchronized with the endline evaluation of the previous McGovern-Dole grant (FY19) so that this study, and the subsequent midterm and final evaluations, can present findings in a continuum from the FY19 baseline and endline results with a high degree of coherence. This baseline study will present data from 2019, considered as the real baseline situation prior to the previous cycle, thus allowing for the full series of evaluation to track change over a longer period.

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92 SDG tracker data: <https://sdg-tracker.org/zero-hunger>

93 [https://data.opendevlopmentmekong.net/laws\\_record/cambodian-sustainable-development-goals-2016-2030-revised-list-of-targets-and-indicators-by-goals/resource/2545717a-5e4e-4fba-992e-76dacb1a9d57](https://data.opendevlopmentmekong.net/laws_record/cambodian-sustainable-development-goals-2016-2030-revised-list-of-targets-and-indicators-by-goals/resource/2545717a-5e4e-4fba-992e-76dacb1a9d57)

94 SDG tracker data: <https://sdg-tracker.org/zero-hunger>

95 SDG tracker data: <https://sdg-tracker.org/global-partnerships>

96 *ibid*

41. The conclusions and recommendations at midterm and endline of the previous (FY19) have been taken into account for this baseline. The FY19 cycle's midterm evaluation brief presented the main conclusions and lessons learnt (available in [Annex 3](#)), and the design of the McGovern-Dole FY22 project incorporates lessons from this midterm evaluation. During the FY19 project cycle, several key assessments were conducted<sup>97</sup> and this baseline has determined the extent to which the FY22 project integrates findings from these assessments.

42. The long-term goal of the project is that the NHGSFP sustainably contributes towards the development of human capital and the local economy. As defined in the Theory of Change of the project ([Annex 4](#)), to achieve this goal the project is structured around two strategic objectives (SO) and foundational results, for which a results framework was developed. Results frameworks for the overall project, for the two SOs and for the foundational results are provided in [Annexes 5, 6, 7](#) and [8](#). The Theory of Change provides clear pathways from activities to the long-term vision with a link to the national priorities.

43. The overall results framework of the project ([Annex 5](#)) includes an additional SO on local purchase: Improved Effectiveness of Food Assistance through Local and Regional Procurement (LRP). It includes three activities: i) regional procurement of canned fish; ii) support to schools in procuring fresh vegetables and sources of animal protein; and iii) develop the capacity of local farmers to supply the demand for safe, nutritious and affordable food by schools. Only the first of these activities is part of the McGovern-Dole project; the other two activities are supported by complementary funding and will not be assessed in this evaluation series.<sup>98</sup>

44. **Strategic Objective 1 (SO1): Improved literacy of school-age children** (see results framework in [Annex 6](#)). This represents the main objective of the project and will be achieved through: i) the provision of school meals, expected to contribute to increased enrolment, attendance and attentiveness in school, and reduced drop-out; ii) school health promotion, expected to contribute to reduced health related absences; and iii) literacy interventions, expected to contribute to improved quality of literacy. For school meals, the project provides mostly food imported from the United States (fortified rice and vegetable oil), complemented by canned fish purchased regionally.

45. **Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): Increased use of health and dietary practices** (see results framework in [Annex 7](#)). This objective contributes to SO1 and aims to reduce health related absences through: i) the promotion of children's health and dietary practices in line with the National Policy on School Health, ii) the promotion of safe food preparation and storage practices; iii) improved WASH infrastructure; and iv) the provision of preventive health services.

46. The **Foundational Results** aim to ensure that the national SFP runs effectively and sustainably (results framework in [Annex 8](#)). These results contribute to SO1 and SO2 with an emphasis on the sustainability of the NHGSFP and the transfer of WFP-assisted schools to the Government at the end of the McGovern-Dole FY22 project in 2027. These results include four streams: i) increased capacity of government institutions; ii) improved policy and regulatory frameworks; iii) increased development support; and iv) increased engagement of local organizations and community groups.

47. Table 1 indicates the activities, beneficiaries, inputs and expected outputs in each of these three areas, according to the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) (provided in [Annex 9](#) with detailed planned outputs by year and disaggregated by sex). The project targets were reviewed during the baseline study with recommendations for their adjustments (see chapter 1.4.2).

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<sup>97</sup> Examples include a lessons learnt exercise on Take Home Rations conducted in 2020, NHGSF programme capacity assessments from 2021 and 2022, a school assessment from 2020, a gender action research from 2021 and a supplier assessment from 2020.

<sup>98</sup> A separate LRP project (funded by USDA) ran from 2019 to 2023, with another year of no-cost extension to compensate for time lost during the pandemic. This project is to be evaluated in early 2024; baseline and midterm evaluation reports for the LRP are available.

**Table 1: Beneficiaries, outputs and inputs per Strategic Objective (targets to be achieved by 2027)**

Strategic Objective 1: Improved literacy of school-age children				
Main Activities	No. of schools	Beneficiaries	No. of meals	Physical inputs
Provision of school meals	341	109,261 children	26,946,360	3,290 MT rice and vegetable oil + 580 MT canned fish
Literacy interventions	520	1,780 teachers 577 school administrators		556 units of learning materials
Strategic Objective 2: Increased used of health and dietary practices				
Main Activities		Beneficiaries		
Promotion of adequate child, health and nutrition practices		2,786 trainees		
Promotion of adequate hygiene, water and sanitation practices		900 trainees		406 infrastructures
Promotion of safe food preparation and storage practices		1,364 trainees		
Provision of preventive health services				
Foundational Results: The National School Feeding Programme runs effectively and sustainably				
Main Activities		Beneficiaries		
Management and monitoring trainings		180 national level + 204 sub-national level government staff		
Effective SM implementation training		656 community members		
Nine technical assistance initiatives for the design, implementation and monitoring of the HGSP programme				
One technical assistance initiative to strengthen the regulatory framework				
One technical assistance initiative to support budgeting of the national programme				
Support to 15 multi-stakeholder school feeding coordination meetings				

Source: Evaluation ToR and USDA Performance Monitoring Plan.

48. This baseline study has established values for new indicators and evaluation questions, including for two project components introduced under this new FY22 grant: i) strengthened technical assistance for the national institutionalization of the SFP; and ii) expansion of the literacy intervention package from grades 1 and 2 to include grade 3 students.

49. **Gender Considerations.** WFP Cambodia is committed to gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) in line with the corporate principle that these are preconditions for effective and sustainable development and the enjoyment of universal human rights.<sup>99</sup> The CO’s CSP 2019-2023 demonstrates meaningful engagement with GEWE throughout as a precondition, including the commitment “to embed gender and disability analyses, including sex- and age-disaggregated data, in assessments, research, technical assistance and knowledge and information management, as appropriate.”<sup>100</sup>

50. The CO commitment is consistent with WFP’s global gender policy 2022 and aligned with the Government’s Neary Rattanak V: Five Year National Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (2019–2023),<sup>101</sup> which emphasizes the importance of multi-sectoral action to improve gender equity. The Government is also drafting its third National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (NAPVAW III).

51. The McGovern-Dole FY22 project’s key objectives are to reduce hunger and improve literacy and nutrition among primary school-aged pupils, particularly girls.<sup>102</sup> The project acknowledges that the gap to access education and/or health can be linked to gender-related issues depending on the context, and that equal access to health and education must be given to both girls and boys. This is in line with the WFP School Feeding Policy’s gender-related objectives to ensure that girls have equitable access to school and all school feeding related activities.<sup>103</sup> However, as noted in the last round’s baseline and midterm evaluations, the results frameworks lack any gender focus.

99 WFP Gender Policy 2022. [https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document\\_download/WFP-0000135898](https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000135898)

100 WFP Cambodia Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (pp 9-10). <https://www.wfp.org/operations/kh02-cambodia-country-strategic-plan-2019-2023>

101 <https://www.mowa.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Neary-Rattanak-V-final-Eng.pdf>

102 <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/mcgovern-dole-food-education-program>

103 WFP 2013. School Feeding Policy.

52. **Planned outcomes:** The targets established for the main objective of improved literacy of school children are respectively 29.2 percent of students at the end of two grades and 35 percent at the end of three grades who demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text.

53. As part of SO1 it is expected that by the end of the project 85 percent of teachers receiving the Early Grade Learning package reach Level 2 or higher, and 85 percent of teachers and 80 percent of administrators in target schools demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools. The project is expected to positively impact student attentiveness and short-term hunger, with 95 percent of students identified as attentive and 92 percent reported as 'not hungry'. Finally, the attendance rate in supported schools is expected to rise from 90 percent to 95 percent.

54. For SO2, the mean number of days per month children are absent from school because of ill health is planned to decrease from two days to one,<sup>104</sup> and 2,655 people out of 2,786 (95 percent) to be trained in child health and nutrition practices, and safe food preparation and storage practices, should be demonstrating the use of the new knowledge. Project activities are expected to have an impact on dietary diversity, reaching an individual dietary score of 4.5 for assisted school children by the end of the project. Finally, 100 percent of the supported schools should meet the minimum requirements for handover to the Government based on an agreed handover checklist.

55. The outcome targets for the foundational results are established in terms of the improvement of the score of each of the five pillars of SABER<sup>105</sup> by the end of the project: i) design and implementation, ii) institutional capacity and coordination; iii) policy framework; iv) financial capacity; and v) community role. It is noted that in the McGovern-Dole results framework, pillars i and ii are merged into the same result.

56. **The budget** provided by USDA to WFP for the project implementation is shown in Table 2. The resources are entirely provided by USDA, but WFP has committed to mobilize additional resources to support local procurement that is no longer supported by USDA.<sup>106</sup>

**Table 2: Project Budget (in US dollars)**

Budget Line	US dollars sub-total	US dollars
- Activity Cost	11,081,984	
- Commodity Cost	2,347,975	
- International transport (Freight Cost)	888,300	
- Internal transportation, storage and handling	976,571	
- Indirect support costs	1,271,650	
Sub-Total: Operational costs	→	16,566,480
Administrative costs		1,567,791
Evaluation costs		800,000
Local and regional procurement		2,065,728
<b>Budget total</b>		<b>21,000,000<sup>107</sup></b>

Source: Project Agreement between USDA and WFP

57. Main cooperating partners of WFP for the project implementation are World Education, who are in charge of the implementation of the literacy component of the project, and World Vision and Plan International who are in charge of implementing activities related to the other components of the project in the three provinces covered.

58. The project was designed based on lessons learnt from past McGovern-Dole rounds and evaluations, notably the 2022 midterm evaluation of the FY19 round (see the related Evaluation Brief in [Annex 3](#)). To better structure and clarify roles and responsibilities for the handover process, a Joint Transition Strategy (JTS) was prepared by WFP and MoEYS in 2022, as well as a theory of change for the national HGSP programme. The design of the project is fully aligned with the transition strategy and the theory of change.

<sup>104</sup> This indicator is included in the SO1 performance table but actually measures the outcome of SO2.

<sup>105</sup> SABER is a World Bank initiative to produce comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions, with the aim of helping countries systematically strengthen their education systems and the ultimate goal of promoting Learning for All. More at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/systems-approach-for-better-education-results-saber>

<sup>106</sup> In addition, the Korea International Cooperation Agency has provided complementary funds for the same activities as McGovern-Dole from 2020 to 2024.

59. As part of the management response of the FY19 midterm recommendations, WFP planned to conduct - in partnership with MoEYS, MAFF and MoWA - a gender and inclusion analysis to seek to integrate increased gender sensitivity into the school meals processes. According to WFP CO, this assessment is due to be conducted in late 2023 or early 2024.

60. During this baseline study, the overall evaluation design was finalized with the full set of evaluation questions, methodology, and sampling frame for the later midterm and final evaluations (see section 2.4). The baseline has also been used to establish values for all performance indicators and the status of all evaluation questions. The appropriateness of project indicators, targets and evaluation questions were reviewed during the baseline, based on evaluability and relevance (see section 2.3.2. below).

## **2.2. Evaluation questions and evaluation criteria**

61. This baseline study followed a utilization-focused, gender-responsive approach and used five of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria as the basis for determining and reporting the evaluation findings.

62. The baseline study has answered four general questions:

- What is the pre-cycle (FY22-27) situation for all relevant evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and coherence), and in terms of GEWE mainstreaming in the project?
- What are the contextual changes that occurred since the FY19 baseline that are relevant to the project and under each evaluation criteria, including regarding GEWE aspects?
- Are the project indicators and targets appropriate in effectively measuring and tracking project results for men, women, girls, boys and vulnerable groups based on the results framework?
- To what extent are the midterm and endline evaluation questions relevant in assessing the success of the project under each criterion and for all categories of participants including men, women, girls, boys and vulnerable groups?

63. In order to provide a more precise guidance for the baseline study, the ET developed 12 further sub-questions that were integrated into the study matrix (presented in [Annex 10](#)). The matrix indicates how the sub-questions relate to each of the evaluation criteria and have been answered considering the information gathered, the source of information and method to collect and analyse it. Proposed sub-questions were validated by WFP during the inception phase of the study and remained unchanged during the baseline.

# **3. Evaluation approach and methodology for baseline data collection**

## **3.1. Evaluation approach and methodology**

64. This evaluation series was conceived to systematically establish benchmarks against which to measure progress and long-term effects of the project from the start of the previous FY19 cycle through to the end of this new grant in 2027, with a particular focus on the handover of the HGSF programme to the Government. This baseline for the series has established benchmarks in relation to each one of the expected outcomes and performance indicators of this project. Based on these, the evaluation team (ET) has critically reviewed the project targets and the existing PMP and determined whether targets are appropriate and realistic.

65. The FY22 evaluation plan stresses the key task of continued tracking of the two strategic objectives (SO1 and SO2) during the transition period, in which schools will be gradually handed over to the Government. The ET has reviewed the outcome level indicators defined in the PMP and analysed their evolution since 2019 by sourcing their values from the previous cycle's PMP. As planned in the evaluation ToR, the main sources of

information to track outcome results are the quantitative survey carried out for the FY19 endline evaluation,<sup>108</sup> the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) surveys conducted by World Education in 2020 and 2022, and the SABER workshop held in June 2023 that set the baseline for the foundational results. At the time of this report preparation, only preliminary and incomplete SABER results were available. Baseline values for foundational results will therefore have to be updated when final SABER results become available, tentatively in September 2023. In addition, the evaluation team found some comparability issues from EGRA surveys (see paragraphs 74 and 75).

66. **Gender considerations** were mainstreamed in the baseline study through the sub-questions, where gender references have been made explicit to the presentation of the findings, integrating gender specificities. Primary data collection was limited to a few remote key informant interviews (KIIs) for the baseline, but gender-related questions were asked of these interviewees. Considering that primary data collection was collected only through limited KIIs, it was not possible to design a gender balanced sample. Gender specific information relevant to the evaluation questions has been extracted from literature and gender disaggregated data has been produced from the FY19 endline evaluation survey.

### 3.2. Baseline data collection methods and tools

67. The full evaluation series is using a mixed-methods approach, using three main data collection techniques: secondary data review, and the collection of qualitative and quantitative data, to derive evaluation findings. The quantitative component of the evaluation follows a quasi-experimental approach which includes several groups of schools depending on when they were transferred to the Government, so that the impact of the intervention and the effect of the handover on project performance can be measured using comparisons. The approach defined for the quantitative approach of the evaluation series is an output of this baseline study and is presented in section 2.4.2.

68. Contrary to the midterm and final evaluations, quantitative primary data collection was not undertaken specifically for the baseline, which has relied on the data produced by the quantitative survey of the FY19 endline evaluation (collected in June 2023). As established in the evaluation ToR, this approach was taken because the FY19 endline survey was conducted contemporaneously with the baseline study, and the FY19 PMP indicators remain the same in the FY22 project. Using the same data from the FY19 endline survey (collected in the same schools supported since 2019) will allow analysis, at the end of FY22 project, of the evolution over 10 years of McGovern-Dole support to these schools. In addition, WFP wished to avoid stakeholders' fatigue that would result from two similar exercises being conducted at the same time.

69. **Secondary data collection.** A desk review of relevant documents was undertaken, which included the following: i) baseline, midterm and endline evaluation reports of the McGovern-Dole FY19 project; ii) the June 2023 SABER workshop interactions and preliminary findings; iii) project design documents; iv) donor agreements; v) assessment reports; vi) relevant national sector policies and strategies. A full list of documentation consulted to date is given in [Annex 11](#)). Data from the endline survey from the FY19 project was re-analysed by the evaluation team, with further information extracted from the draft endline evaluation report.

70. **Qualitative data collection:** A limited number of remote KIIs were conducted with relevant stakeholders at national level. These interactions were important for new team members (including the team leader) to hear directly from stakeholders and get a better understanding of the context and the project itself. It also contributed to triangulation of information gathered through document review and quantitative data. The list of key informants consulted is provided in [Annex 12](#).

71. **Data collection tools:** The ET members used semi-structured interview guidelines tailored to the expertise and relevance of each respondent to ensure that all areas of interest were covered during an interview. The interview guides (included in [Annex 13](#)) are based on the questions outlined in the Evaluation Matrix.

72. **Data analysis** was based on the comparisons between quantitative data from the FY19 and FY22 baselines, as well as triangulation between data sources and methods, and between team members. Each topic addressed in the study was assessed through different information sources and, to the extent possible, collection methods (the study largely relied on secondary data; the limited primary qualitative data collection was not intended to have a comprehensive coverage of all the topics, with the focus being on the most important elements of the study). Quantitative data from the FY19 endline survey was reanalysed to extract

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<sup>108</sup> The FY19 endline evaluation report is being finalized but will eventually be available online.

data from six schools in Kampong Chhnang province that had already been handed over to the Government (in early 2023). This is justified by the evaluation series model based on the comparison of schools with different status regarding handover. At baseline, only schools not yet handed over were included in the sample (see section 2.4.2). Quantitative data analysis based on the FY19 endline survey was done using R software, and the data was cleaned and recoded for analysis. Results were disaggregated, as relevant and as possible, by gender, province, and other important variables.

73. The majority of the evaluation questions had sufficient evidence to be able to answer using desk review of previous evaluation reports of the project, especially the McGovern-Dole FY19 project endline findings. Areas in need of further qualitative data collection were identified by the ET during inception.

74. There are variations in the literacy outcome measurement between the three project provinces that needs to be taken into consideration for the FY22 analysis. In Kampong Chhnang, project partner World Education applied Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) instruments in 2019 and 2022 in the same 13 McGovern-Dole supported schools from three districts. Grade 2 students were randomly chosen in each year (96 total in 2019, 157 in 2022). However, different EGRA instruments were applied in the FY19 baseline and FY22 baseline (“EGRA 2015” for FY19, “EGRA 2017” for FY22), which means that student literacy results for several key indicators (including the project indicator for reading comprehension) rely on an “adjustment factor” to make FY22 baseline averages comparable with FY19 baseline.<sup>109</sup> In Kampong Thom province World Education conducted the 2022 baseline in 31 McGovern-Dole supported schools using the same EGRA version (“2017 EGRA”) that was used in the 2019 baseline. A total of 359 grade 2 students completed the EGRA at FY22 baseline. The 2019 baseline EGRA test application was conducted by a consortium of support partners (including World Education), but the sample included both McGovern-Dole supported schools and non-project schools (sample size not details not available).<sup>110</sup> In Siem Reap the 2019 baseline was also conducted by a consortium that included World Education using the EGRA 2017 tool in a sample that included both McGovern-Dole target and non-target schools (details on sample size not available).

75. The FY22 baseline EGRA data were collected by a different partner (KAPE) from 48 grade 2 students drawn from just seven schools in two districts.<sup>111</sup> The FY22 baseline data for Siem Reap were collected in February 2022, compared with October-November for Kampong Chhnang and Kampong Thom. Additional details on the EGRA version and makeup of schools (McGovern-Dole supported or not) in Siem Reap are not available at this time. Given these differences the FY19 and FY22 project period baselines are not standardized across the three project provinces. This in turn has implications going forward for establishing project impact and making comparisons across the three provinces during the FY22 project period – as explained in para 78 below. It is important to engage with other partners to discuss a coordinated approach to implementing EGRA data collections during the FY22 project period to better facilitate both between and within provinces (i.e. baseline versus endline) comparisons of the EGRA results.

### 3.3. Limitations

76. The FY19 endline evaluation process (including the survey), was done in parallel to the baseline study, and data was only available at a late stage of the baseline process, which left limited time for the ET to review, clean, reanalyse and triangulate the information. As a consequence, it was not possible to conduct a presentation of preliminary findings to WFP before the presentation of the baseline draft report. In addition, the two parallel evaluation teams had to face the more intense phase of data analysis and report writing at the same time and within tight time constraints, which limited their interactions.

77. The results from the June 2023 SABER workshop were not available by the time this report was finalised. Only preliminary and incomplete results were available, which affect the baseline assessment of foundational results. The baseline assessment will have to be updated by WFP when final results become available, or as part of the midterm evaluation.

78. As noted above, EGRA results present some comparability challenges between provinces. It is not possible to definitively state how differences in the baseline FY22 project period data collections will impact later comparisons, especially given the possibility of focusing on differences rather than levels (i.e. difference in difference). Concerns about baseline comparability, combined with uncertainties about actual test content

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109 World Education (2023). Literacy Endline Report: USDA-McGovern-Dole Food for Education (FFE) Project in Cambodia, 2019-2023. Phnom Penh: World Education

110 World Education (2023). FFE EGRA Endline 2022 in Kampong Thom. Internal project document.

111 World Education (2023). FFE Baseline 2019 and Endline 2022 Comparisons Kampong Chhnang versus Siem Reap/Kampong Thom. Internal project document.



(and sampling), simply mean that additional follow up on this topic is needed, with considerations for how the different EGRA data collections can be coordinated in subsequent moments in order to best support project impact evaluation objectives.

79. The baseline study had to assess whether the project targets were relevant and realistic. However, the PMP does not explain how targets were determined, which makes it difficult to evaluate them. As a consequence, the assessment of the targets is based to a large extent on the achievements of the previous project. In addition, several indicators<sup>112</sup> have not yet been integrated into the PMP and there was no target value defined for them. As a result, the baseline study could not review those targets, but the PMP will be updated after this report is approved.

### **3.4. Quality assurance of the baseline data collection and deliverables**

80. The ET accessed the raw data of the FY19 endline survey and conducted re-analysis to adjust the sample excluding schools already handed over, which allowed checking of the data quality. No significant issues were found. Overall quality assurance of the baseline study was guided by the WFP decentralised evaluation quality assurance system (DEQAS) that defines norms and processes for ensuring quality of all evaluation products. DEQAS standards have been fully applied throughout the baseline process. The team leader was principally responsible for conducting the study and producing high quality products based on factual and verifiable primary data. KonTerra's internal quality expert critically reviewed the draft Inception Report and draft Evaluation Report and provided written comments to the team to improve the drafts, before submission of the final versions to WFP. Draft reports were then reviewed by an independent external reviewer, the WFP CO, RBB, the Evaluation Reference Group (see [Annex 14](#)) and USDA. Final approval is confirmed by the Evaluation Committee (see [Annex 15](#)).

### **3.5. Ethical considerations**

81. This baseline study is in compliance with WFP and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical standards and norms. Key informants were informed that their privacy and the confidentiality of interviews would be safeguarded. Interviews were conducted based on voluntary participation in line with the principles of integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence. Interviewees were informed of the purpose of the interview. The baseline report does not include personally identifiable information or detailed sources of information, or the names of KII respondents. Interviews were conducted ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of respondents and assuring that the evaluation results do not harm participants. All data is solely be used for the purpose of this evaluation, and all interview notes will remain confidential and will not be turned over to public or private agencies, including WFP.

82. No unanticipated effects of the project on human rights or gender have been identified in the baseline study findings.

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<sup>112</sup> Standard Indicator (SI) 8, SI 9, SI 18 and SI 27.

## 4. Baseline findings and discussion

### 4.1. EVALUATION QUESTION (EQ) 1: What is the pre-cycle (FY22-27) situation for all relevant evaluation questions for the evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and coherence)?

#### 4.1.1. How relevant is the project design in contributing towards a sustainable, effective implementation of the NHGSFP vis-à-vis the Government's readiness and capacities to manage the NHGSFP?

83. In March 2022, the MoEYS and WFP released a Joint Transition Strategy (JTS) towards a nationally owned HGSP programme,<sup>113</sup> based on the review of progress achieved until then, and any identified remaining gaps on the five pillars of the SABER approach that define a sustainable national school feeding programme.<sup>114</sup> The JTS includes a capacity strengthening action plan from 2022 to 2025 to support the transition. The McGovern-Dole FY22 project is the last such school feeding intervention in Cambodia and has been designed to fully support the transition strategy, with the objective by 2027 to complete the handover of all WFP assisted schools to the national HGSP programme and to significantly progress towards the sustainability of the programme.

84. The McGovern-Dole FY22 project is based on a theory of change that was developed with the support of WFP for the NHGSFP. According to WFP officers interviewed during the baseline, both the transition strategy and the theory of change provide a much clearer picture and pathway towards a sustainable national programme managed by the Royal Government of Cambodia, and a clear identification of the support and capacity strengthening that WFP will provide during the last round of the project. According to WFP the design of the project is more relevant to the transition process and handover objectives than previous rounds.

85. The **foundational results** and corresponding intermediate outcomes and activities of the FY22 project results framework are fully aligned with the transition strategy and its capacity strengthening action plan. The project design is therefore highly relevant in contributing towards a sustainable, effective implementation of the national HGSP programme vis-à-vis the Government's readiness and capacities to manage the programme.

86. The project's results framework for foundational results is in particular based on the five pillars of the SABER approach, although it includes four intermediate outcomes ([see Annex 8](#)).<sup>115</sup>

87. The project design includes four objectives, out of five, that explicitly refer to ensuring the sustainability of benefits related to the McGovern-Dole result framework:

- Objective 2: "To ensure a sustainable National School Feeding Programme through strengthening the capacities of the Royal Government of Cambodia on programme design and implementation; multisectoral coordination and policy; budget planning and management; and monitoring and oversight".
- Objective 3: "To enable the handover to the National School Feeding Programme by providing school meals in McGovern-Dole target districts while preparing schools to meet the criteria for handover – capacity, infrastructure and equipment".
- Objective 4: "To ensure health and nutrition activities are sustained within the National Policy of School Health through capacity strengthening on WASH, child nutrition, healthy dietary practices and food safety".
- Objective 5: "To ensure the benefits of Khmer literacy instruction are sustained within the National Early Grade Learning Programme through capacity strengthening, training, mentoring and facilitation of school-based management on implementation of the Khmer Early Grade Learning Package.

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113 Joint Transition Strategy Towards a Nationally Owned Home-Grown-School Feeding Programme, Cambodia, Phase 1: 2022-2025, MoEYS and WFP, March 2022.

114 The five pillars of the SABER approach are: 1. Policy Frameworks, 2. Financial Capacity, 3. Institutional Capacity and Coordination, 4. Design and Implementation, 5. Community Roles – Reaching beyond schools.

115 Pillars 1. Policy and regulatory framework and 3. Institutional capacity and coordination of SABER are merged into MGD 1.4.2 Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework.

88. Schools' readiness criteria for their handover to the Government are based on the stakeholders' capacity to manage the programme, as well as available infrastructure and equipment to safely store and prepare food (see details in chapter 4.1.3). The development and application of a HGSF model based on local purchase has been supported by WFP and USDA through the Local and Regional Procurement project from 2019 to 2023, through making cash transfers to schools so that they could purchase fresh produce locally to complement in-kind food supplies.<sup>116</sup>

89. For the FY22 project, McGovern-Dole and LRP projects have been integrated and only regional purchase of canned fish is planned, while local purchase through cash transfers to schools will no longer be supported with USDA funds. WFP has committed to obtain complementary funding to continue supporting local purchase. To date, no additional resources have been secured and the lack of continued support to local purchase is a threat to the handover plan and school readiness. The midterm evaluation of the LRP project conducted in June 2022<sup>117</sup> found that by mid-2022 LRP activities had only been operational for six months, mainly due to the closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the midterm evaluation recognized that the new McGovern-Dole project would be a positive element to continue capacity strengthening on local purchase, in particular in supporting linkages between farmers, suppliers and school stakeholders and strengthened inter-ministerial coordination, it did raise the question of whether cash will still be available to support the HGSF model and build school capacities to receive cash and implement local purchasing.

90. WFP interviewees for the baseline confirmed that it would have been much better to continue supporting local purchase with USDA funds than to procure canned fish regionally, although local purchase does allow for food ration diversification and is more cost-efficient than importation from outside of the region.

91. Interviews with WFP staff also showed that the model for food procurement within the national HGSF programme has not been fully defined. While the priority was clearly on local purchase, the question of rice fortification has not been addressed and seems to be a challenge for a model fully based on local purchase. WFP is currently supporting MoEYS to assess and pilot several procurement models that could allow addressing the issue of rice fortification, such as a model where sub-national millers produce fortified rice and make it available at local level for purchase by schools.

92. **Outcome 1.1.: Improved Quality of Literacy Instruction.** The literacy component of the McGovern-Dole project is in the process of making the transition from a programme-defined intervention that emphasizes quality and effectiveness to a more sustainable version that is harmonized with MoEYS capacity and resources.<sup>118</sup> The literacy component has always been aligned with MoEYS goals and addresses a core challenge facing Cambodia (low early grade learning, see below), and has also been informed from the beginning by both MoEYS and development partner (DP) experiences in this area.<sup>119</sup> The MoEYS, in close coordination with DPs (including World Education), has now developed a single set of Early Grade Reading (EGR) interventions that include materials, teacher training and different teacher support mechanisms (mentors and Literacy Coaches).<sup>120</sup> The project's literacy component partner (World Education) is in the process of modifying some of the core functions, namely the teacher mentor and Literacy Coach selection and recruitment and teacher training operations, in anticipation of full MoEYS ownership. For example, the McGovern-Dole approach of hiring Literacy Coaches by selecting from a pool of applicants is being modified to identify teachers and district/provincial staff who can perform this function locally without the financial burden of hiring additional staff, and the added advantage of having better access to teachers in their districts, clusters and schools.<sup>121</sup>

93. How the FY22 project navigates this transition in the coming years is a critical outcome. The overarching goal is to find ways to deliver EGR interventions with sufficient quality that are sustainable both in terms of capacity and resources.<sup>122</sup> The project is well prepared to take on this challenge through World Education,

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116 The LRP project (Grant number: LRP-442-2019-011-00) was planned to cover 163 schools out of the 599 assisted by the McGovern-Dole FY19 project, and 40,000 schoolchildren out of the total of 151,000.

117 Midterm Activity Evaluation of USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Grant (LRP-442-2019-011-00) for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia, 01 November 2019 to 30 September 2023, Decentralized Evaluation Report, WFP, November 2022.

118 KIIs with World Education, USAID and MoEYS.

119 WFP Cambodia, 2023. Endline Activity Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant (FFE-442-2019-013-00) for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia FY 2019-2023 Decentralized Evaluation Report.

120 KIIs with World Education, USAID and MoEYS. Additional details on Komar Rien Komar Cheh (KRKC) in <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/launching-komar-rien-komar-cheh-cambodias-national-early-grade-learning-programme>; and additional details for the Inclusive Primary Education Activity (IPEA) program specifics in: RTI International, 2022. USAID/Cambodia – Inclusive Primary Education Activity (IPEA), Fiscal Year 2023, Quarter 2 Progress Report.

121 KIIs with World Education staff.

122 KIIs with World Education, USAID and MoEYS.

which has extensive experience in this area and is well aware of the imperative of an effective transition towards sustainable interventions. Also, World Education is a partner with other DPs (such as USAID) active in this area and who recognize their technical capacity and relevant experience.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, the lessons learned during FY22 programming will contribute to the larger learning activity that is taking place in the early grade learning space (comprising EGR and mathematics) as the MoEYS and other DPs concurrently implement similar interventions in other districts and provinces. The evidence generated from this coordinated set of early grade learning interventions will inform the MoEYS strategy for expanding these interventions to the entire country in a sustainable and effective manner.

94. **Outcomes 1.2.: Improved attentiveness and 1.3 Improved Attendance.** Based on the results framework for SO 1 (Improved Literacy) the improved attentiveness and attendance indicators are most directly impacted through the SFP delivery of nutritious meals. There is a potential linkage between these outcomes and literacy interventions that create a more stimulating learning environment (more interesting materials, better teaching methods, etc.), but given the emphasis on nutrition the questions of how the project design will lead to effective and sustainable outcomes are more related to the SFP component.

95. **Outcome 2.: Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices.** Strategic Objective 2 is a contribution to SO1, which is the overall objective of the project. It is aligned with the National Policy on School Meals, which includes an objective of promotion of health and nutrition amongst schoolchildren. Table 3 shows that the percentage of parents who consider that school feeding provides benefits in terms of reduction of illness-related absences for their child at school has grown significantly between 2019 and 2023, thus confirming the relevance of this component of the project, according to parents' perceptions.

**Table 3: Benefits of school feeding for the child, as perceived by parents of selected girls and boys**

Parents' perceptions of benefits of the project	FY19 Baseline Girls	FY19 Baseline Boys	FY19 Baseline Total	FY22 Baseline Girls	FY22 Baseline Boys	FY22 Baseline Total
Gets food	80%	82%	81%	95%	91%	93%
Healthier	76%	77%	77%	87%	86%	87%
Learns better	55%	54%	55%	83%	84%	83%
More attentive in class	47%	44%	46%	81%	79%	80%
Has more opportunities	42%	36%	39%	76%	76%	76%
Illness-related absences reduced	22%	17%	20%	63%	64%	64%
No benefit	1.00%	0.50%	0.70%	0%	0%	0%

Source: MGD FY19 baseline and endline surveys

96. The McGovern-Dole FY19 baseline and midterm evaluation reports do not provide additional information on the relevance of Strategic Result 2, while the endline evaluation highlights that latrines, handwashing stations, eating halls and storage facilities are essential for a healthy environment, and that WASH facilities were key to reopen schools after COVID-19 pandemic. A study carried out by Helen Keller International in June 2023<sup>124</sup> showed that a high proportion of school children (87.2 percent) had consumed unhealthy food the day before the survey, and that this food was most likely purchased by children near their schools, thus justifying the emphasis put on this aspect in the new McGovern-Dole project.

97. The FY22 project design focuses on ensuring adequate school feeding infrastructure and equipment (kitchen, storerooms, stoves, kitchen utensils for safe preparation, serving and eating of school meals) are available at school level before handover,<sup>125</sup> which is fully aligned with the handover readiness criteria.

98. Activities under the other intermediate outcomes of SO2<sup>126</sup> focus on building capacities on improved health, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition practices through cascade trainings, technical and mentoring support to schools, production and distribution of WASH information, education and communication materials, construction and rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure, support to the MoEYS to roll out the Health Education Curriculum, enhanced health and safety of school environments and maintenance of school gardens.

123 ibid

124 Results from a Mixed Method Study: Understanding the Eating Practices and Consumption Patterns of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages by Primary School Children in Cambodia, Helen Keller International, June 2023.

125 MGD 2.6: Increased Access to Requisite Food Prep and Storage Tools and Equipment, activity 6.: Construct or Rehabilitate Infrastructure and 6.2: Provide Equipment and Utensils.

126 MGD 2.2: Increased knowledge of Sage Food Prep and Storage Practices, MGD 2.1 Improved Knowledge of Health and Hygiene Practices, MGD 2.3: Increased Knowledge of Nutrition, MGD 2.5 Increased Access to Preventive Health Interventions, MGD 2.4 Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services.

According to the project description annexed to the project agreement, all these activities are designed to contribute to capacity strengthening of the national HGSF project stakeholders at national and local levels.

#### **4.1.2. To what extent is the project aligned to the overall policies, strategies, including gender-related, and normative guidance of institutions with supporting roles for the NHGSFP, such as the MoEYS, NSPC, MAFF and MoH?**

99. Both the FY19 baseline and endline evaluation reports highlight the clear alignment of school feeding with national priorities in Cambodia. School feeding is embedded into the social protection system, as stated in the country's long-term development vision, the Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase IV (2019-2023). As such, it is included into the National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF) 2016-2025.

100. This key policy framework for school feeding remains unchanged since 2019. According to the National Social Protection Council (NSPC), an update of the NSPPF until 2030 is being prepared and it is foreseen that school feeding will remain an important component of the social protection system.

101. The McGovern-Dole project is well aligned with the main objectives of the 2019-2023 Education Strategic Plan (ESP) developed by the MoEYS, which was updated in 2021 with a Mid-Term Review giving projections through 2025.<sup>127</sup> Objective 1 of the ESP for primary schools is to improve primary school participation and completion outcomes, and includes to "Strengthen the school feeding programme to ensure its sustainability" as a specific strategy. There are other references to improving WASH, food safety, school gardens and children's health (ESP, 2019). Objective 2 ("Improve the availability of quality inputs in primary education") is connected to McGovern-Dole literacy programming with specific references to strengthening the quality of in-service training of teachers, implementing EGR and mathematics training for teachers, developing teaching manuals on specific subjects, and providing adequate teaching and learning materials for students and teachers (ESP, 2019). These priorities from the original ESP were maintained in the updated ESP projections that were developed in 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>128</sup>

102. Other key national policies to which the McGovern-Dole project contributes are the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (2019-2023) and the National Policy on School Health. All the activities planned under SO2 are aligned with the MoEYS School Health Department priorities outlined in the policy on school health and its action plan.

103. The development of the school feeding policy framework progressed significantly during the FY19 project, and the national HGSF programme was officially endorsed by the Government in April 2019. WFP has supported the Government to develop the draft National Policy on School Meals (still to be endorsed), and a sub-decree on the HGSF programme implementation was signed in March 2023. The FY22 project is clearly aligned with this policy framework, with the already mentioned exception of the lack of integration of local purchase in the project. As discussed below, the main purpose of the FY22 project is to support the implementation of the JTS towards a nationally-owned school feeding programme.

#### **4.1.3. How relevant are the school readiness criteria in facilitating an effective handover of schools?**

104. The school readiness criteria for handover were defined in the 2022 JTS, and are:<sup>129</sup>

- i. **The capacity of implementers.** This criterion refers to the experience and knowledge of stakeholders (school directors, suppliers, the commune council, cooks, storekeepers, school management committee members) to run the HGSF programme according to the national guidelines. The capacity of implementers is strengthened through trainings, mentoring and coaching, and experience running the programme.
- ii. **The infrastructure.** This criterion refers to the necessary infrastructure required at school level to safely prepare meals for children and ensure that adequate hygiene practices are adopted. It refers to water systems, kitchens (with fuel-efficient stoves), storerooms and hand-washing stations.

<sup>127</sup> MoEYS, 2019. Education Strategic Plan (ESP). Phnom Penh: MoEYS; MoEYS, 2021. Mid-Term Review Report in 2021 of the Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 and Projections to 2025. Phnom Penh: MoEYS.

<sup>128</sup> MoEYS, 2021. Mid-Term Review Report in 2021 of the Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 and Projections to 2025. Phnom Penh: MoEYS.

<sup>129</sup> Extracted from the Joint Transition Strategy towards a Nationally Owned Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, Phase 1: 2022-2025, March 2022.

- iii. **The equipment.** Each school would be equipped with the necessary items for the safe preparation of meals, including cool boxes, scales, and a set of kitchen utensils.

105. The JTS and the criteria were defined to clarify and organize a well-planned handover process, based on lessons from the past where stakeholders were insufficiently prepared for school handover. The FY19 baseline report specifically highlights the need for further capacity strengthening in programme implementation including monitoring and reporting, and the lack of infrastructure including kitchens, energy-efficient stoves, functioning water and sanitation facilities and year-round access to clean water. The handover readiness criteria fully take into account these factors.

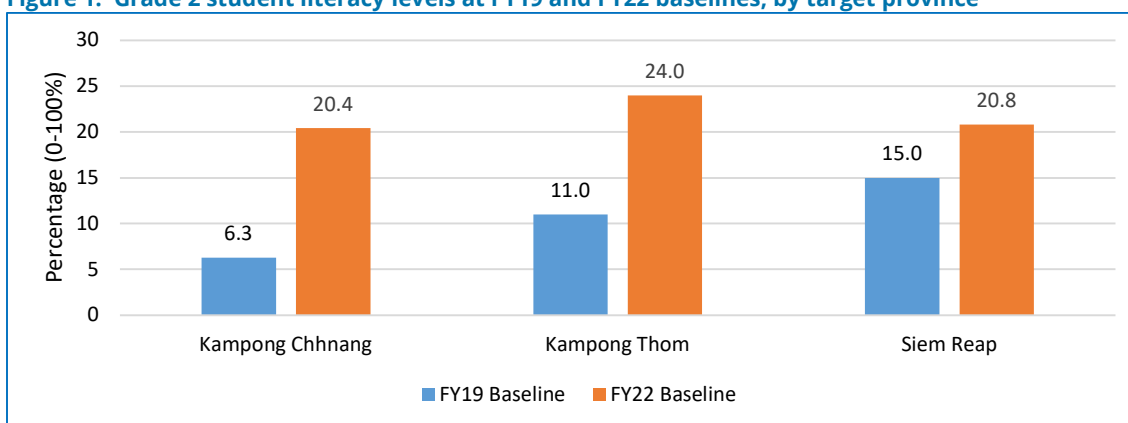
106. The FY19 midterm evaluation, however, highlights that the capacity criteria refer to the experience of sub-national stakeholders in managing the HGSF, expressed in years of experience, which does not necessarily reflect their capacity. The FY22 baseline team did not collect evidence on the extent to which the capacity criteria have been adjusted to reflect actual capacities.

#### 4.1.4. What are the baseline values of the project indicators (since 2019)?

##### *MGD SO1: Improved Literacy of School Age Children.*

107. One of the key outcome indicators for the McGovern-Dole programming is student literacy, which is defined as the percentage of students who can correctly answer at least four out of five reading comprehension questions. Student literacy was measured during the 2019-2023 project phase through EGRA instruments applied at FY19 and FY22 baselines, although these assessments were not standardized across the three project provinces (see Section 1.4). The results for the FY22 baseline are higher than the FY19 baseline in all three provinces, which is inconsistent with national evidence showing learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>130</sup>

**Figure 1: Grade 2 student literacy levels at FY19 and FY22 baselines, by target province**



Source: World Education EGRA report

108. The results in Figure 1 demonstrate that literacy levels among grade 2 students are generally quite low, which in turn highlights the relevance of the McGovern-Dole project and the need for further support in the EGR area. There are additional complicating factors for interpreting the student literacy indicator across the three provinces during the FY22 period. As described in Section 1.4, these include different EGRA test versions used at FY19 and FY22 baselines, test applications carried out by different partners at different times, and in Kampong Thom and Siem Reap some of the reported averages in Figure 1 combine WFP and non-WFP schools. There are also differences in the planned levels of literacy support across the three provinces for the FY22 phase, which is discussed in more detail below. For the FY22 project phase it is imperative that the measurement of the student literacy outcomes - which will be expanded to include grade 3 students - be harmonized across different provinces to facilitate a more accurate interpretation of the results in later stages, and that differences in literacy support activities between the three provinces be taken into account.

109. An additional source of evidence on student literacy is provided by World Education as part of their school monitoring process. Throughout the 2021-22 school year (SY) the McGovern-Dole project Literacy Coaches randomly chose four grade 2 students to complete a basic test of word knowledge (10 words in all)

<sup>130</sup> UNICEF, 2022. Learning Loss in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era: Evidence from the 2016-2021 Grade 6 National Learning Assessment in Cambodia. Phnom Penh: UNICEF.

during each of their school monitoring visits (where they also collected data on the teacher's use of training content and techniques, summarized below). The results show that students tested in January 2022 (the beginning of the SY) were able to correctly read just over four words, compared with an average of roughly seven words at the end of the SY 2021-22 school year (November).<sup>131</sup> This continuous student testing was only completed in McGovern-Dole-supported districts in Kampong Chhnang province, but does provide another potential baseline for the FY22 phase.

110. The evidence of improvement in student literacy levels is consistent with the EGR evidence that is accumulating in Cambodia,<sup>132</sup> as well as evidence linking school feeding generally and better nutrition specifically with better student performance.<sup>133</sup> The literacy package components have been chosen on the basis of extensive research in Cambodia and elsewhere, and World Education in Cambodia has been engaged in these same activities (especially coaching) since before the McGovern-Dole project period.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to note that there is considerable variation in the EGR treatment that schools received during the FY19 project period. The full EGR package (teacher training, local mentoring, Literacy Coaches and materials) was provided by World Education for grades 1 and 2 in three of the four McGovern-Dole target districts in Kampong Chhnang in SYs 2020-21 and 2021-22, and these same three districts are currently (SY 2022-23) receiving the grade 3 teacher training and new materials components. In Kampong Thom, three of the six McGovern-Dole target districts received the World Education teacher training, materials and Literacy Coach support in SY 2020-21, while in the Siem Reap target districts the only component implemented by World Education was the teacher mentoring. In addition to variations in the project's provision of EGR support components, the three provinces have also had different levels of engagement with other DPs working in early grade literacy.<sup>135</sup> For the FY22 period World Education will shift their support to Kampong Thom and Siem Reap provinces, and no longer work in Kampong Chhnang. The overall level of literacy support activities will be somewhat reduced compared with FY19 engagement. Differences between provinces in World Education literacy support may be counterbalanced by support provided through other channels. It should also be noted that all of the development partners working in this area are strengthening existing government support channels (and capacities) as part of the national literacy programme (*Komar Rien Komar Cheh*) to further ensure a standardized implementation model across all schools.

111. Despite the differences in EGR intervention experiences between provinces during the FY19 project phase, the relevance and validity of the student literacy indicator as a key project evaluation outcome remains high. Students in the McGovern-Dole target districts will continue to benefit from the two streams of project intervention (nutrition and literacy support) that potentially affect intermediate outcomes (or mechanisms) that are likely to impact student learning (for example, attendance, attentiveness, access to materials, quality of teaching). The grade 2 student evidence from the FY19 phase is encouraging, and there is good reason to expect that grade 2 and 3 student literacy levels will continue to improve in the project provinces even as literacy project treatment intensity is likely to decline as the project transitions to more sustainable activities provided through existing MoEYS channels.

### **Outcome 1.1: Improved Quality of Literacy Instruction.**

112. MGD 1.1.3.: Improved Literacy Instructional Materials. One area where the McGovern-Dole project support for early grade literacy was especially impactful during the FY19 phase was the provision of teaching and learning materials. The original project goal of 837 total 'units' was reported to have been surpassed exponentially with 71,848 'pieces', although there were variations in the way 'units' were counted, and in fact only about half that number of 'pieces' was provided.<sup>136</sup> The underlying reason for this massive target overshoot was the transition from face-to-face instruction to remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic school closures, which totalled more than 200 days during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, as well as

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131 World Education monitoring report summary, 2023.

132 RTI International, 2022. USAID/Cambodia-All Children Learning, Final Report.

133 Jomaa, L.H., E. McDonnell and C. Probart (2011). School feeding programmes in developing countries: impacts on children's health and educational outcomes. *Nutrition Reviews* 69 (2) : 83-98.

134 KIIs with World Education, USAID and MoEYS.

135 World Education master summary of EGR programming during the McGovern-Dole FY19 phase.

136 An explanation from WFP indicated the initial target in the FY19 project was 827 G1 classes each receiving a Teacher Guide = 2 parts (2 books); Student Supplementary Book = 2 parts (2 books); Pattern Book = 1 set per class (30 titles); Sensory stories = 1 set per class (11 titles). Therefore, the initial target was, in terms of units:  $(2 + 2 + 30 + 11) * 827 \text{ units} = 37,215 \text{ pieces}$ . During the project, lots of additional supplementary books and materials were developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Home Learning Workbooks, Decodable Story Pattern Books to Grade 1 and Grade 2 students and teachers, etc were developed and supplied during the school closure, so indeed more teaching and learning materials for teachers and students were delivered than were originally planned.

poor monitoring and reporting.<sup>137</sup> Partners provided critical support to the MoEYS in producing teaching and learning packages for students to use at home. The FY19 endline also reported that McGovern-Dole-supported schools were much more likely to report receiving learning materials and stationery during SY 2021-22 than comparison schools.

113. For the FY22 project phase the goal for the provision of teaching and learning materials is similar to the original FY19 goal: 556 total 'learning materials'. World Education has been working to supplement teacher and student materials with teacher teaching guides and student materials, including reading books with food and nutrition themes. One important feature of the supplemental reading materials is that these titles are not copyright protected, which means that they can be photocopied and shared in the communities to increase the reach. This work will continue into the next phase, and given the experiences during FY19 it seems that the partners are well placed to reach the new targets.

114. MGD 1.1.4.: Increased skills and knowledge of teachers; and MGD 1.1.5.: Increased skills and knowledge of administrators. The McGovern-Dole literacy intervention includes teacher and administrator training and support activities designed to change teaching behaviour in the classroom to provide more effective literacy instruction in early grades. The challenges of Continuous Professional Development (CPD, or in-service teacher training) are well known, and core project literacy components like face-to-face training, coaching/mentoring and access to materials are well supported in the international CPD literature.<sup>138</sup> For the FY22 phase the target is to train (and certify) the 1,780 teachers (and teaching assistants and other "educators").

115. As part of the MoEYS focus on early grade learning, only accredited (or approved) teacher training programmes are officially recognized as part of the teacher professionalization process. In other words, if teachers want to get credit for training, they must attend trainings that are accredited by the MoEYS through a process where training providers apply for accreditation. This dynamic is increasingly important in Cambodia as more and more EGR (and early grade maths) trainings are being developed and supported in working partnerships between DPs and the MoEYS.<sup>139</sup> The teacher (and administrator) training programmes provided by World Education are approved by the MoEYS, and as these trainings are implemented with increasing levels of MoEYS ownership it is possible that individual districts, provinces and teacher training institutions will use these examples to develop and offer their own (accredited) trainings. The provision of these additional programmes is a potential McGovern-Dole project impact mechanism that will need to be further explored in subsequent interviews and monitoring activities.

116. The FY22 indicators for teacher and administrator training include both raw numbers (Standard Indicator 4) and percentages (Custom Indicator 1) for demonstrated use of the techniques learned. The FY22 phase has set an ambitious goal for use of techniques, with an expectation that 1,513 out of the expected 1,780 trained teachers (or 85 percent) will eventually demonstrate effective usage. The FY22 target is to train 577 administrators and eventually reach an 85 percent rate of effective use. For teachers, demonstrated use is measured by an EGR classroom observation rubric developed by World Education that incorporates a scale from 1-3. Level 1 refers to teachers who demonstrate little or no use of the prescribed teaching techniques, while Level 3 refers to consistent and effective use of EGR materials and techniques. This observation rubric was applied extensively as part of the periodic classroom visits conducted by project-hired and trained Literacy Coaches in Kampong Chhnang province during the SY 2021-22 (see reference to the student reading scores from these same monitoring visits in paragraph 107 above). The results show that virtually all of the teachers began the school year (in January) at Level 1, but by the end of the school year 65 percent of teachers were classified as Level 3, 29 percent were in Level 2, and just six percent still in Level 1.<sup>140</sup> For school administrators, demonstrated use will also be defined on the basis of observation, although it is unclear at this point if an actual observation rubric (or checklist) has been developed.

117. For the FY22 phase the target for Custom Indicator 1 is for 85 percent of observed teachers to reach at least Level 2 (i.e. Level 2 or 3). Based on the Kampong Chhnang data this target is certainly realistic. However, with the anticipated changes in programme delivery in the next phase (the transition to a more sustainable model) there will likely be some differences in this indicator monitoring. For example, instead of relying on Literacy Coaches hired and paid by WFP and World Education, the classroom monitoring data will increasingly

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137 According to the FY19 endline.

138 Popova, A., D.K. Evans, M.E. Breeding and V. Arancibia, 2022. Teacher Professional Development around the World: The Gap Between Evidence and Practice. The World Bank Research Observer 37 (1):107-136. <https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lkab006>

139 KILs with WEI, USAID and MoEYS.

140 World Education Kampong Chhnang monitoring data summary document, July 2023.

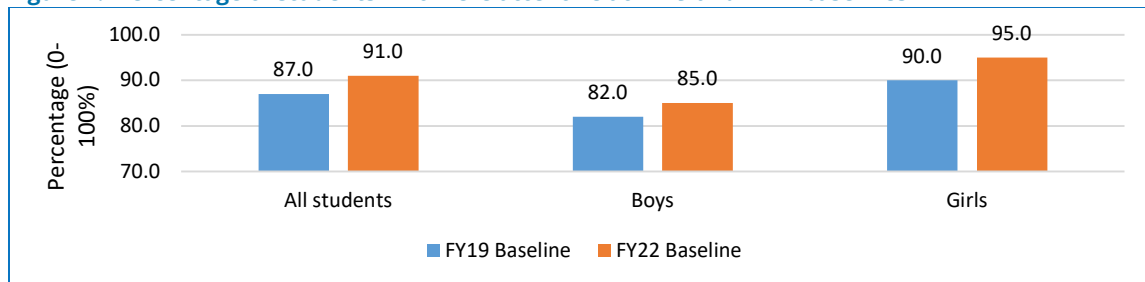


be collected by district and provincial education staff who serve in the role of coaches. This could have implications for both the quality of the coaching provided as well as the quality of the data collected. One concern is that Literacy Coaches (or other staff involved in the project) are, to some degree, evaluating their own work when applying this kind of rubric in classrooms they support. This is why 'externally' generated data - such as the EGRA tests applied by outside enumerators - are important validity checks on project progress.

**Outcome 1.2: Improved Attentiveness.**

118. With better nutrition and more effective literacy teaching it is expected that students are more attentive (or engaged) in class, as measured by teachers' reports. Figure 2 shows that the overall student attentiveness improved from 87 percent in the FY19 baseline to 91 percent at FY22 baseline, which is a significant improvement. Girls realized larger improvements than boys, and they were already much more engaged at the time of the baseline (90 percent versus 82 percent). For the FY22 phase, the target student attentiveness rate is 95 percent, which will require substantial improvement among male students to attain.

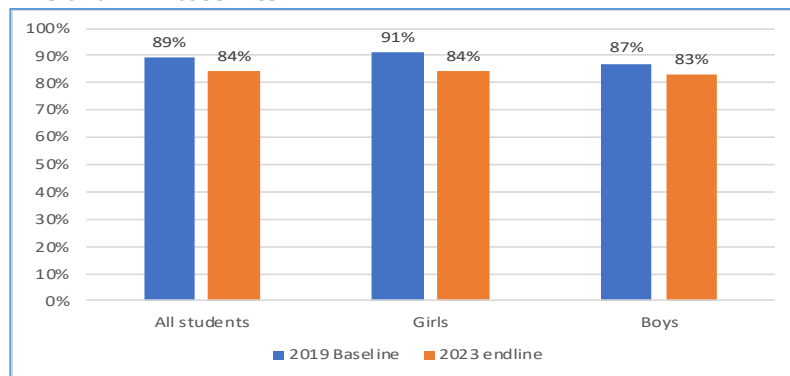
**Figure 2: Percentage of students who were attentive at FY19 and FY22 baselines**



Source: FY19 baseline and endline surveys

119. **MGD 1.2.1 Reduced Short-Term Hunger.** One of the key expected outcomes of the provision of school meals is to alleviate children's hunger at school and to support their attentiveness. Figure 3 shows the percentage of children in assisted schools who did not experience hunger at school, according to teachers. McGovern-Dole schools are actually beginning the FY22 project period with higher levels of reported hunger than the FY19 period, but this may be a result of lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is definitely room for improvement during the FY22 project period, as the life-of-project target is 92 percent of students in target schools reported as "not hungry", which is a significant improvement from the baseline rate of 84 percent (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Percentage of children who do not experience hunger at school, according to teachers, at FY19 and FY22 baselines**



Source: FY19 baseline and endline surveys

**Outcome 1.3.: Improved Attendance**

120. Teachers in McGovern-Dole-supported districts indicated at FY22 baseline that only about 76 percent of their students were in attendance on the day of the data collection. This attendance measure declined from FY19 baseline when teachers reported 80 percent attendance (from survey data). The apparent decline in student attendance rates between the two baselines may be a product of lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, or could also result from differences in the months the data were collected. The FY19 endline team noted that the comparison school communities reporting lower student absence rates at endline had relatively higher levels of socioeconomic indicators or, in other words, the McGovern-Dole targeting of vulnerable communities may complicate comparisons with other schools. It will be important to follow up on this

indicator with both quantitative monitoring and qualitative discussions to understand more about new challenges that students may be facing in the post-COVID period, as well as potential programme impacts on this key outcome.

121. **MGD SO2: Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices.** Output and outcome indicators to measure SO2 target and baseline values as per the project PMP are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: McGovern-Dole SO2 output and outcome indicators as per FY22 project PMP**

Standard/Custom indicators Number	Type	Definition	FY19 Baseline value	FY22 Baseline value	End of project target
SI #19	Outcome	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance <b>(by gender)</b>	0	0	1,782
SI #20	Outcome	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance <b>(by gender)</b>	0	0	873
CI #6	Outcome	Average dietary diversity score (DDS) for enrolled girls and boys of target schools		5.8	4.5
SI #23	Output	No. of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance <b>(by gender)</b>	0	0	2,786
CI #8	Output	No. of individuals trained in hygiene and the minimum guidelines for water and sanitation in schools as a result of USDA assistance <b>(by gender)</b>	0	0	900
SI #22	Output	Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance <b>(by gender)</b>	0	0	1,364
SI #8	Output	Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, improved water sources, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance (WASH related facilities)	0	0	406
CI #11	Outcome	Percentage of target schools that meet the minimum requirements for handover to the government based on agreed handover checklist (by the time of handover)	100%	N/A (new indicator)	100%
CI #5	Outcome	Mean number of days school-children are absent from school because of ill-health per month <b>(by gender and for children with disability)</b>	7,141	1.7	1

Source: McGovern-Dole FY22 PMP

**Outcome 2.1.: Improved Knowledge of Health and Hygiene practices**

122. As for Outcome 2.2, the PMP indicator to measure achievement for this outcome (SI 19) is the number of people trained on hygiene and the minimum guidelines for water and sanitation in schools. The assumption that 65 percent of trainees improve their practices will be tested at endline. As for SI 19, the baseline value for this indicator is 0.

**Outcome 2.2.: Increased Knowledge of Safe Food Preparation and Storage Practices**

123. All baseline output indicator values are zero, as new activities are initiated with new target beneficiaries and deliveries (see the assessment of proposed targets in section 2.3.2.).

124. Outcome Standard Indicator (SI) 20 reflects the increased knowledge of safe food preparation and storage practices and the target was set based on the assumption that 65 percent of the training participants will be able to demonstrate the use of new practices. It is assumed that 80 percent of trainees will have adopted the new knowledge and 80 percent of those with knowledge will be able to demonstrate practices. It is planned that the assumption will be validated with direct observations on a sample of trained staff. The baseline value of these indicators is zero as it is a percentage of new participants to trainings.

125. WFP and the MoEYS will continue to strengthen the capacities of school level stakeholders for the safe storage of food and preparation of school meals during the new project. In addition, the project will support the implementation of MoEYS Directive No<sup>o</sup> 18: *Strengthening the Implementation Rules for Promoting Food Safety*

141 No baseline value is available in the FY19 baseline evaluation report. The 2019 baseline figures reported here correspond to the 2020 target of the FY19 project.

and Wellbeing at Public and Private General Education Facilities working with school-based vendors to reduce children’s consumption of unhealthy snacks and drinks on school grounds.

126. The FY19 endline reported that 1,509 males and 1,189 females attended trainings on food preparation and storage. Paradoxically, WFP CO interviewees mentioned that promoting the participation of males in the school meals’ preparation is a challenge, notably because the incentive provided in WFP assisted schools is very limited. In WFP assisted schools, incentives to cooks are provided by the community, whereas cooks in government-managed schools receive a higher incentive from the local authority budget. This may result in more participation of men to meal preparation after school handover. In any case, the data on male and female training participants suggests that many of the participants do not actually put their new knowledge into practice, at least in school canteens, and that targeting of participants could be improved.

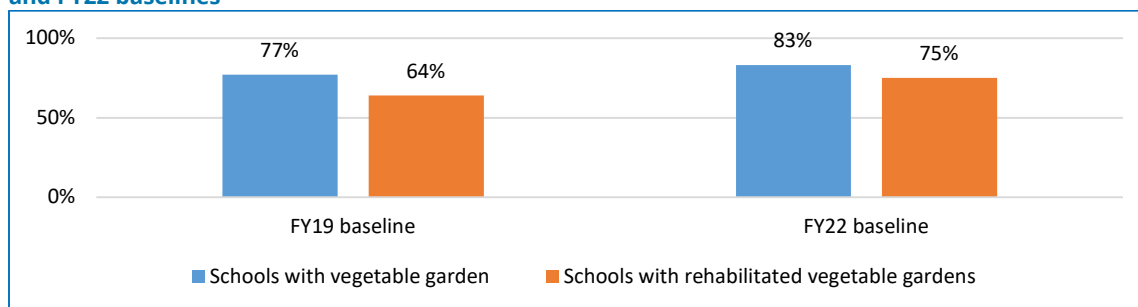
**Outcome 2.3.: Increased Knowledge of Nutrition**

127. The proportion of assisted schools that had received training on nutrition practices was 91 percent at FY19 baseline and 97 percent at FY22 baseline. WFP will be doing dedicated training on the health education curriculum as well as for the school food environment activity (focused on unhealthy snacking in schools); and cooks/other stakeholders will receive training on food safety through the HGSP operations training package during the new FY22 round in order to promote MoEYS ownership and sustainability.

128. One of the key expected outcomes of increased nutrition knowledge, as well as of school meals, is the increase of dietary diversity among assisted children. In the previous phase, Diet Diversity Score (DDS) increased from 5.1 food groups at the FY19 baseline to 5.8 groups in the endline survey.<sup>142</sup> It reflects an already diversified diet and the new project target is lower than the current value for assisted children (4.5), which suggests that the target should be reviewed. Both FY19 and FY 22 baselines measured the minimum diet diversity but data is not comparable, as the food groups used to calculate the indicator have been revised to better reflect children’s consumption of micronutrient-rich foods.

129. School gardens are expected at first to contribute to children’s capacity strengthening on a diversified diet. Figure 4 indicates the proportion of schools with vegetable gardens, and with rehabilitated vegetable gardens, at FY19 and FY22 baselines. The emphasis for the new project is on the maintenance of existing gardens through technical assistance and the provision of agricultural inputs, which can be considered relevant to the nature and objectives of the project.

**Figure 4: Proportion of schools with vegetable gardens and/or rehabilitated vegetable gardens at FY19 and FY22 baselines**



Source: FY19 baseline and endline surveys.

**Outcome 2.5: Increased Access to Preventative Health Interventions**

130. This intermediate outcome refers to the participation of WFP assisted school children in deworming, oral health and immunization campaigns. According to WFP CO, it is a complementary activity led by MoEYS with no direct engagement from WFP and there is no PMP indicator to measure it.

131. MGD 2.4.: Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services: This intermediate outcome is key for the handover process as it directly relates to readiness criteria. Tables 5 and 6 show the average number of drilled wells and water catchments per school, and the school access to year-round clean water at FY19 and FY22 baselines. Despite 79 water facilities having been built or rehabilitated during the FY19 project, access to

<sup>142</sup> DDS at FY22 baseline is calculated based on 10 food groups as asked in the questionnaire: 1. Cereals, grains, roots and tubers; 2. Pulses, legumes, nuts; 3. Dairy products; 4. Meat, fish, eggs; 5. Vegetables; 6. Fruits; 7. Fats; 8. Sugars; 9. Condiments; 10. Prahok.

clean water seems to have decreased between 2019 and 2023. This finding should be assessed in more detail to determine the reason for this evolution and to promote more sustainability of water systems.

**Table 5: Average number of functioning drilled wells/water catchment at FY19 and FY22 baselines**

	FY19 baseline	FY22 baseline
Average number of drilled wells per school	1.7	1.3
Average number of water catchments per school	1.6	1.8
Average percentage of functioning drilled wells	72%	84%
Average percentage of functioning water catchments	80%	96%

Source: 2019 baseline and 2023 endline surveys.

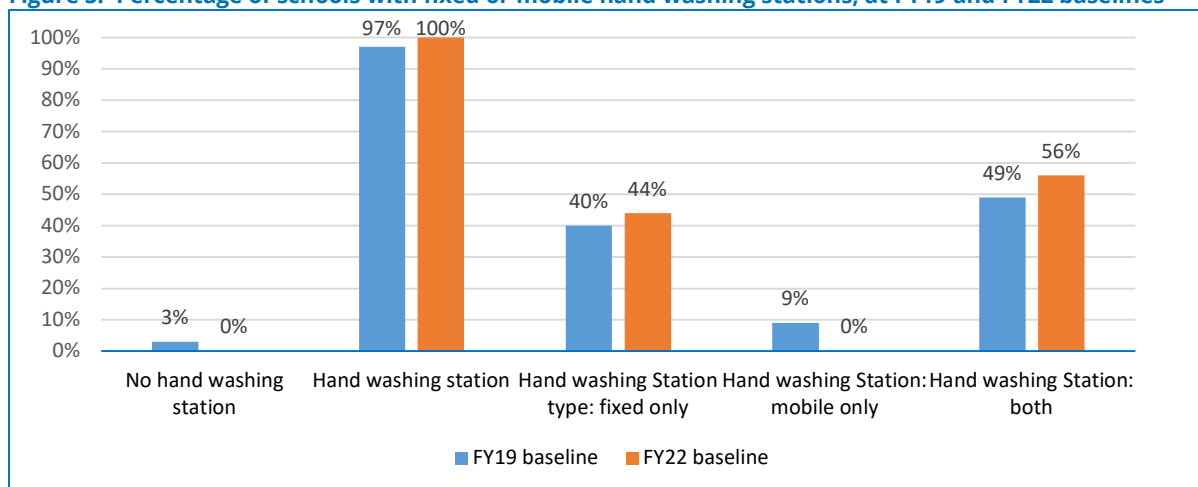
**Table 6: Percentage of schools with year-round access to a clean water source at FY19 and FY22 baselines**

	FY19 baseline	FY22 baseline
Yes (all school year)	81%	72%
No (some months not available)	16%	17%
No (no water)	3%	11%

Source: 2019 baseline and 2023 endline surveys.

132. Figure 5 presents the availability of hand washing stations at FY19 and FY22 baselines. All schools currently have a hand washing station though it would be important to put more emphasis in the new project on sustainability rather than the direct provision of new facilities.<sup>143</sup> According to WFP staff, trainings are planned on hygiene and minimum guidelines for water and sanitation in schools with a focus on operations and maintenance.

**Figure 5: Percentage of schools with fixed or mobile hand washing stations, at FY19 and FY22 baselines**



Source: FY19 baseline and endline surveys.

**Outcome 2.6: Increased Access to Requisite Food Preparation and Storage Tools and Equipment.**

133. Table 7 presents the proportion of schools with food preparation and storage facilities and their condition at FY19 and FY22 baselines. The FY22 project has a clear target for food preparation and storage facilities and equipment that is to meet the readiness criteria for school handover based on the JTS. According to WFP staff, specific targets have been defined by the cooperating partners based on their knowledge of schools. It is not clear to the ET if a clear inventory of existing facilities and equipment is available, and in case one does not exist, it is highly recommended to establish it in order to guide project activities.

<sup>143</sup> Neither the Project Agreement nor the PMP provide a specific target for handwashing stations. An overall figure of 406 is proposed for “educational facilities”.

**Table 7: Proportion of schools at FY19 and FY22 baselines with food preparation and storage tools and equipment and their condition**

Facility	Percentage of assisted schools with facility at FY19 baseline	Percentage of assisted schools with facility at FY22 baseline
Kitchen	100%	Not available
Good condition	47.1%	89.7%
Clean cooking and eating equipment	32.9%	63.2%
Lack utensils	64.3%	27.9%
Leaking roof	38.6%	22.1%
Flooded during rainy season	11.4%	11.8%
Using rocks as stove	7.1%	5.9%
No wall	5.7%	1.5%
Use of energy efficient stove	46%	Not available
Storeroom	66%	86%
Food stored on pallets off the ground	67.4%	80.0%
Clean	73.9%	86.7%
Dry floor	87.0%	93.3%
Can be locked	89.1%	93.3%
Well ventilated	44%	Not available

Source: FY19 Baseline and endline reports

### ***Foundational results***

134. The higher-level outcome for foundational results is the '*National School Feeding Programme runs effectively and sustainably*'. It is disaggregated into four intermediary outcomes, each one with one activity, as presented in Table 8 (and in [Annex 8](#)). As indicated in section 4.1.1, the four intermediary outcomes are aligned with the five pillars of the SABER approach.

**Table 8: Foundational results: expected outcomes and activities**

Intermediary outcomes	Activities
MGD 1.4.1/2.7.1 Increased capacity of government institutions	#1: Strengthen National Home-Grown School Feeding Design and Implementation Capacity
MGD 1.4.2/2.7.2 Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework	#2 Strengthen the National Capacities around Multisectoral Coordination and Policy for Home-Grown School Feeding
MGD 1.4.3/2.7.3 Increased Government Support	#3 Strengthen National Budget Planning and Management Capacity
MGD 1.4./2.7.4 Increased Engagement of Local Organizations and Community Groups	#4 Strengthen National Monitoring and Oversight Capacity

135. Output and outcome indicators to measure foundational results' target and baseline values, as per the project Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), are presented in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Foundational results: output and outcome indicators as per project PMP**

Standard/ Custom indicators Number	Type	Definition	End of project target	FY19 Baseline value	FY22 baseline value
CI #15	Outcome	Number of relevant SABER-SF pillars with improved score by the final SABER workshop in 2026 (by pillar)	2	N/A (new indicator)	0
CI #16	Output	Number of technical assistance initiatives provided by WFP to the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (Specific for MGD 1.4.1/2.7.1, 1.4.2/2.7.2, 1.4.3/2.7.3)	9	N/A (new indicator)	0
CI #17	Output	Number of government staff that received training on National School Feeding Programme operation as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	180	N/A (new indicator)	0
CI #18	Output	Number of multi-stakeholder school feeding Coordination Committee meeting conducted (as a result of USDA assistance) to implement the national programme.	15	N/A (new indicator)	0
CI #19	Output	Number of sub-national level government staff who received training on National School Feeding Programme monitoring (by gender)	204	N/A (new indicator)	0
Standard/ Custom indicators Number	Type	Definition	End of project target	FY19 Baseline value	FY22 baseline value
SI #11	Output	Value of new US Government commitments, and new public and private sector investments leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition (for community contributions and CPs contributions)	US\$ 417,250	0	0
SI #13	Output	Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar school governance structures supported as a result of USDA assistance	656	0	0

Source: MGD FY22 PMP

136. Custom Outcome Indicator 15 is the core indicator to measure progress on foundational results and it relates to the progress achieved on the SABER pillars, measured during the June 2023 and the planned 2026 SABER workshops, representing respectively the baseline and endline values.

137. The final results of the June 2023 SABER workshop are not yet available. As per the pillar scoring, only detailed indicator scores are available, as presented in Table 10. Scores will be aggregated by pillar and within an overall score for the national HGSF programme later. Available SABER results at the time of this baseline study do not include targets to be achieved by 2027 for each pillar. According to WFP CO, the final report (expected by September 2023) should include detailed targets as well as a workplan. The final SABER results with 2027 targets should be added as an addendum to this baseline report when available.

**Table 10: June 2023 SABER workshop scoring results (FY22 foundational results baseline)**

Pillars	Indicators	Latent	Emergent	Established	Advanced
1. Policy and regulatory framework	1.1 Status of development, embeddedness and dissemination of national policy, strategy or law			66.88	
	1.2 Extent to which the content of the national policy, strategy or law is complete				83.33
2. Financial capacity	2.1 Status of budget development, sources, disbursement and use of funds			59.82	
	2.2 Extent of cost coverage and inclusiveness of budget plans		46.09		
3. Institutional capacity and coordination	3.1 Extent to which a national, government-led entity (at central or sub-national level, as relevant) is mandated, recognized and capacitated to provide adequate leadership for school feeding			57.99	
	3.2 Extent to which school-level committees ensure adequate adherence to programme standards and plans			61.88	
	3.3 Extent to which mechanisms are established and functioning at the relevant (central, sub-national and community) levels to ensure the coordination of relevant sectors and actors			55.21	
4. Programme design and implementation	4.1 Extent to which (written or de facto) programme design corresponds to identified needs and established standards			73.30	
	4.2 Extent to which programme implementation (based on a written programme document or de facto activity) corresponds to design and standards			69.44	
	4.3 Extent to which monitoring ensures systematic collection, analysis and use of up-to-date information		42.86		
5. Community roles-reaching beyond schools	5.1 Level of community awareness, engagement and feedback		36.46		
	5.2 Level of involvement and extent of benefits for local private sector actors		29.17		

Source: Draft results of the SABER June 2023 workshop

138. **Regional procurement of canned fish.** As mentioned in chapter 4.1.1, local purchases at school level thanks to cash-based transfers to schools are not included in the FY22 project and only regional purchase is included. Output and outcomes indicators with their targets and baseline values are presented in Table 11.

**Table 11: Regional procurement: output and outcome indicators as per project PMP**

Standard / Custom indicator Number	Type	Definition	FY19 baseline value	FY22 baseline value	End of project target
LRP SI #1	Output	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs ( <b>by gender</b> )	0	0	Not set
LRP SI #5	Output	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance ( <b>by commodity and source country</b> )	0	0	1,682,00
LRP SI #4	Output	Cost of transport, storage and handling of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance ( <b>by commodity and source country</b> )	N/A (new indicator)	0	US\$634,743
LRP SI#6	Output	Quantity of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance ( <b>by commodity and source country</b> )	N/A (new indicator)	0	580 mt

Source: McGovern-Dole FY22 PMP

**4.1.5. To what extent is the project monitoring, evaluation and complaint feedback mechanism designed for the project adequate to improve project relevance throughout the project? To what extent does it allow specifically for feedback from women and vulnerable groups, such as the disabled or ethnic minorities?**

139. The McGovern-Dole FY19 baseline and midterm evaluation reports do not make reference to the feedback and complaint mechanism. According to the endline evaluation report, the feedback and complaint mechanism set up by WFP has been increasingly used by stakeholders, although the report does not provide information on the extent to which it is effective to allow specific feedback from women or vulnerable groups.

140. The FY22 project document states that the community feedback and complaints mechanism will be continued and monitored (activity 5.2), and will be complemented by monitoring visits, mentoring and coaching support, as well as an engagement with local communities to ensure they continue to provide an oversight role and promote the use of the mechanism.

141. Interviews with WFP CO staff during the baseline study showed that the feedback and complaint mechanism is not specific to the SFP but covers all WFP activities. It works well and beneficiary feedback is addressed by each activity focal point if actions have to be taken. The mechanism is being reviewed for its improvement thanks to the engagement of an Accountability to Affected Populations Officer within the CO.

142. The possibility to transfer, or establish, a similar system to MoEYS within the national HGSF programme is still under discussion.

**4.1.6. What is the level of ownership of the programme in schools, communities, and relevant government departments involved in the implementation of the NHGSFP and to what extent does the project design provide for appropriate actions to strengthen ownership and readiness?**

143. The overall WFP support to school feeding in Cambodia through both McGovern-Dole FY19 and FY22 projects aims to enable effective national ownership. The FY19 baseline highlighted that the Royal Government of Cambodia was highly committed to a national school feeding programme in 2019. The report, however, indicated that senior officials stressed the need to transition from a 'donorship' via 'partnership' to 'ownership' mindset. Similarly, the role of WFP also needed to switch from direct implementation to technical assistance, capacity strengthening and mentoring, but this was still considered as a challenge in 2020. Interviews with WFP staff during this FY22 baseline showed that the engagement of their personnel has progressively changed and this new role is better understood, although staff still show direct implementation reflexes.

144. Other challenges found at FY19 baseline were the lack of stakeholders' self-confidence in their own capacity to implement and manage the programme, as well as high staff turnover, especially at school level. Also, the short time frame to make the transition from donorship to ownership, further affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, was found to be a significant challenge.

145. Both FY19 baseline and endline evaluations pointed out that increased decision-making power at sub-national levels contributed to strengthening local participation and ownership. The baseline study mentions budget programming at the commune council level, while the endline evaluation found that the transition to the HGSF model with local purchase has offered an opportunity for more community involvement and ownership. The withdrawal of local purchase in the FY22 project may affect the growing ownership process at community level.

146. According to stakeholder interviews, the MoEYS and NSPC are deeply involved at both strategic piloting and implementation levels, while the participation and ownership of other institutions remain limited. The sub-decree on HGSF Programme Implementation (March 2023) mandates nine national institutions<sup>144</sup> and clearly defines their roles and responsibilities in the programme implementation. Before the sub-decree there was no clearly defined role for each institution involved. In addition, intersectoral coordination mechanisms had yet to be established, further limiting the participation of other institutions beyond the MoEYS and NSPC. The creation of an inter-ministerial committee is considered essential for promoting ownership among all institutions. According to WFP CO, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health have already been involved at activity level, for instance in the preparation of a new cookbook.

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<sup>144</sup> The nine institutions are the MoEYS, NSPC, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Council for Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Economy and Finance.



147. WFP plans several activities within the FY22 project to promote more participation and ownership from all institutions involved in the national programme, such as the participation at the recent SABER workshop, and an exchange visit to Korea in the near future. The ET considers these activities relevant. In addition, WFP interviewees mentioned that there may still be further constraints for effective participation of all the institutions concerned, such as procedures for transferring funds allocated to the HGSP programme. These issues should be assessed in detail, and actions taken to address all potential factors limiting participation.

148. Additional elements that either support or limit ownership, identified at FY19 midterm and endline, were the:

- Availability of complete costing analysis for the HGSP programme implementation, thereby restricting the Government from making realistic budget allocations and reducing dependence on external sources of funding. Within the McGovern-Dole FY22 project, a cost assessment of the national programme is planned.
- Perception of MoEYS officials identified at midterm that they needed more time to take full ownership of the programme and the need to continue WFP's technical assistance after the handover. According to WFP interviewees, technical assistance is planned for two years after handover.
- The additional workload for school stakeholders after handover had not been factored into existing school and government systems at midterm. Interviews with implementing partners and WFP CO staff confirmed that this is an issue that has not yet been addressed.
- Sub-national departments will take over schools at different levels of readiness due to the handover of entire districts.
- The work done during the pandemic on transition to national ownership has been accelerated during the past year. Several policy documents have been drafted and gone through multiple rounds of consultations that engaged a wide range of stakeholders.

149. During the FY19 project phase the literacy component took important steps in the process of establishing ownership of the programme, along two general pathways. Firstly, at the policy level the literacy component is already integrated into a larger systemic effort to harmonize EGR programming among DPs and the MoEYS, and uses the different project experiences to further strengthen EGR policy to facilitate the eventual national scale up of early grade reading and maths interventions. Secondly, at the local implementation level, the literacy component is working closely with teachers, school principals, school clusters, districts and provinces to undertake trainings, distribute materials and support schools through mentors and Literacy Coaches. The cooperating partners (World Education and Bandos Komar) have conducted extensive field visits at all levels of implementation in Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom and (to a lesser degree) Siem Reap provinces to oversee activities, build capacity and collect monitoring data. These are important initial steps in the process of transferring full ownership of activities to local entities.

150. The project design features for the FY22 phase will build on the experiences of the preceding project in order to further strengthen ownership and readiness. As noted in the discussion on sustainability, the literacy component is entering a critical phase where the EGR programme activities will be more completely integrated into existing provincial, district, cluster and school action plans with the goal of maintaining an acceptable level of quality to ensure that teachers are effectively implementing the new teaching approach in the classroom. For example, teacher trainings will increasingly rely on district and provincial staff with less oversight from national teams, and school (and classroom) support functions will be taken over by school, school cluster and district staff instead of World Education staff (or their representatives). World Education counterparts are aware of the inherent challenges in this full handover process, but it is again important to note that this process is not being solely managed by WFP and World Education, but is instead part of a multi-actor implementation of the harmonized EGR methodology (generally referred to as *Komar Rien Komar Cheh* (KRKC)).<sup>145</sup> This learning phase will continue the process of slowly ensuring local responsibility for programme functions, while at the same time building capacity and identifying mechanisms to strengthen local ownership and readiness.

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<sup>145</sup> More details on the Komar Rien Komar Cheh (KRKC) in <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/launching-komar-rien-komar-cheh-cambodias-national-early-grade-learning-programme>; and additional details for the Inclusive Primary Education Activity (IPEA) program specifics in: RTI International, 2022. USAID/Cambodia – Inclusive Primary Education Activity (IPEA), Fiscal Year 2023, Quarter 2 Progress Report.

#### **4.1.7. What roles have the different stakeholders of the NHGSFP played to date in the institutionalization of the programme, and to what extent do they play the correct role considering the national school feeding policy?**

151. The official creation of the national HGSF programme is recent and the process was interrupted during the pandemic period. As mentioned earlier, until very recently there was no clear definition of which institutions should be involved and what role they would play. In this context, MoEYS is the key stakeholder and has been at the centre of the institutionalization of the programme at all level and on all its components. The NSPC plays also an important role in the strategic piloting and monitoring of the programme, as it is embedded into the NSPPF. This role is aligned with the 2023 sub-decree on program implementation and the draft National School Meals Policy. Other government institutions have not yet developed the role that has been defined for them. As mentioned above, the issuing of the sub-decree, the creation of an inter-ministerial committee to coordinate the programme and the expected endorsement of the school meals policy, should represent a starting point for the participation of other institutions.

152. World Education is deeply engaged in the overall policy institutionalization process for EGR through its working relationship with MoEYS and partnerships with other DPs (like USAID). This is work in progress as the McGovern-Dole project - like others working in early grade learning - is continuing the work of institutionalizing the programme and building up ownership while still maintaining acceptable levels of quality. In terms of this being the correct role, the overall strategy employed through World Education is closely coordinated with the larger EGR policy and specific goals related to quality and sustainability. There is no evidence that the literacy component of the McGovern-Dole project is diverging from the larger national policy in a way that threatens institutionalization.

#### **4.1.8. What factors identified at baseline may impact the cost efficiency of the McGovern-Dole 2022-2027 project?**

153. While the FY19 baseline study did not assess the project efficiency, it concluded that the project benefitted from an enabling human, material and institutional environment established during previous rounds of the project. Efficiency was not addressed at all in the midterm evaluation.

154. The FY19 endline was not able to draw final conclusions on the cost-efficiency of the FY19 project due to insufficient available data. The endline report highlights that budgeting and expenditure reporting have been made difficult because of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, floods and the ASEAN Games in May 2023. Those factors are no longer present and are therefore not expected to affect the new project. The evaluation team has not identified other external factors that could affect the efficiency of the project.

155. Interviews with WFP CO staff showed that the emphasis for the FY22 project in the area of cost efficiency is more general, and considers implications for the national HGSF programme rather than the project itself. One of the key elements of the cost-efficiency of the HGSF programme is the procurement model. WFP is currently supporting studies and pilots on the programme's supply models and on the definition of balanced rations, which incorporate the issue of rice fortification. These studies take into account cost analysis so that the most cost-efficient possible model can be adopted for the national HGSF programme.

#### **4.1.9. Is the project management structure suitable to deliver the project effectively?**

156. The FY19 baseline report highlighted that WFP was widely recognized as a strong partner in school feeding programmes, with strong programme management and technical capacity at CO level and with the access to additional technical support from the Regional Bureau in Bangkok (RBB) and the headquarters in Rome.

157. The midterm evaluation confirmed that technical resources provided by the RBB have been of great importance to support the transition process. In addition, while the COVID-19 pandemic restricted field visits for WFP staff, it offered an opportunity to put more emphasis into the transition process.

158. The management of all school feeding activities under one programme unit has allowed for alignment and complementarity of the various contributions to school feeding activities, and for lessons and experience to be drawn and shared from each.

159. As far as the CO structure is concerned, several issues were found in the previous evaluation series and discussed with WFP interviewees:

- Great attention from the CO has continued to be put on direct WFP operations and logistics, leaving the responsibility to strategically and operationally support the transition and handover process on a

few staff members of the CO. The CO institutional memory has been also affected by international and national staff turnover. However, the workload for direct operations will decrease progressively with the handover of schools and more resources will be dedicated to capacity strengthening activities. According to WFP informants, several key staff (including the leader of the school feeding unit) are already fully dedicated to capacity strengthening and technical assistance to the Government.

- Key sectoral expertise among the CO is distributed in the different strategic outcome responsibilities under the CSP, which brings difficulties for internal collaboration and limits the opportunities to optimize capacities.
- At the field level in operations, the staffing and configuration of the sub-national structure did not always reflect the complexity of a shift to a country capacity strengthening approach for handover and transition.
- The level of understanding of the transition process was unequal among WFP staff.

160. The FY19 endline evaluation assessed the extent to which the findings and recommendations of the baseline and midterm evaluations had been addressed. It found that the CO had continued to review its staffing profile and fill gaps. A new position is being created for technical assistance to MoEYS, to be based at the ministry, which is considered a relevant approach to strengthen WFP capacity to accompany the MoEYS on a permanent basis.

161. The CO management also continues to work on changing the mindset of the staff towards their revised capacity strengthening role, but there are still differences in attitude towards these tasks. Nevertheless, many of the WFP CO staff have been working for years on capacity strengthening and have progressively acquired skills and experience in this type of work.

162. On the literacy component, WFP does not have particular expertise, but evidence suggests that the project management structure is suitable for effectively delivering the literacy component of the project. There are three relevant management structure levels: first, the working relationship between WFP and World Education is positive, with WFP satisfied with World Education's engagement and recognizing their capacity in this programme area (which WFP staff are less able to cover).<sup>146</sup> Second, World Education has a good working relationship with the central level MoEYS counterparts and other partners in the general programming area of EGR, which is important for coordinating activities and collectively learning from the different EGR programmes.<sup>147</sup> And third, based on the progress of programme activities to date it does appear that World Education has an effective working relationship with sub-national MoEYS entities, including schools.<sup>148</sup>

#### ***4.1.10. To what extent does the McGovern-Dole 2022-2027 project design provide reinforced complementarities, synergies and linkages with systems of different governing bodies relevant to the NHGSFP and other humanitarian and development initiatives?***

163. The integration of the literacy component with the larger sphere of MoEYS and DP programming in early grade learning has been referenced above, and stands out as a project design feature that reinforces complementarities, synergies and linkages with larger systems.

164. WFP interviewees mentioned that WFP permanently looks for new synergies and collaborations. Several initiatives have been recently initiated, such as collaborations with local non-government organizations on food systems in relation to local purchase, with Helen Keller International, UNICEF and FAO on research on snacking in school grounds, and with FAO and MoEYS to develop revised nutrition guidelines and standards for school meals.

165. Like the FY19 project, the new FY22 project is fully complementary with the contributions of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The two grants are managed by the same team in the WFP CO and include similar activities.

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<sup>146</sup> KII interviews with WFP and World Education.

<sup>147</sup> KII interviews with World Education, MoEYS and USAID.

<sup>148</sup> KII interviews with World Education: note that sub-national entities were not interviewed as part of the literacy component evaluation for this baseline report.

## **4.2. EVALUATION QUESTION 2: What are the contextual changes that occurred since the FY19 baseline relevant to the programme and under each of the evaluation criteria, including GEWE aspects?**

### **4.2.1. What are the contextual factors identified at baseline that may affect (negatively or positively) the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and coherence of the McGovern-Dole FY22 project, and achievements regarding GEWE?**

166. The FY19 baseline, midterm and endline evaluations all identified the COVID-19 pandemic as the external factor that most influenced the implementation and achievements of the previous round. A repetition of a crisis of this scale during the FY22 implementation period is unpredictable, and its effects would be difficult to mitigate with contingency planning in the design of the new project. However, WFP and its partners in Cambodia showed a great capacity to adapt to cope with the situation and reorient their programmes to maintain a high level of relevance, for instance through the shift to take-home rations when schools were closed, and to remain effective.

167. The FY19 evaluation series highlighted the high-level government support as a key factor of success to date, although the three evaluation rounds mentioned the challenges related to limited capacity and understanding of the programme, and how to implement it amongst MoEYS and sub-national staff. The KIIs confirmed that the senior officials have been very supportive throughout the transition process. Government will remain strong and it is not expected that this will change in the next years. The policy framework is being updated, but it is expected that school feeding will remain an important programme within the social protection system.

168. The ongoing Decentralization and Deconcentration reform in Cambodia is planned to be rolled-out in 2024 and could potentially modify key structures and processes related to the SFP management. The FY19 endline evaluation indicates that none of the stakeholders interviewed was able to predict how it would affect the future of the SFP. WFP should carefully assess the potential implication of the reforms on the SFP and factor it into capacity strengthening activities.

169. The macroeconomic context was cited during KIIs as a key factor that could affect the resourcing of the national HGSP plan, and therefore the continuity of activities supported by the McGovern-Dole project and their benefits.

170. Specific to the literacy component of the project, relevant contextual factors are primarily related to the larger context of early grade learning interventions in Cambodia given the goal of harmonizing the McGovern-Dole literacy work with the national programme to better ensure sustainability. In terms of relevance, the contextual situation for the literacy component is more positive compared with the previous phase of the project. Early grade learning has become even more central to the MoEYS sector planning and priorities,<sup>149</sup> and as the rollout of KRKC continues there is more coordination between development partners and the MoEYS to learn as much as possible about effective early grade learning strategies.

171. Contextual features that could potentially impact effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability are mainly related to MoEYS counterparts, who will become increasingly responsible for the implementation of the literacy component. Strengthening capacity at provincial, district, cluster and school levels is imperative for ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in the FY22 project phase and beyond, but this process depends on MoEYS capacity, engagement and internal dynamics that cannot be controlled by external partners. Possible residual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic may continue to affect students and their families, as well as MoEYS counterparts, although the current phase is clearly in a better situation compared with the extreme measures that were in place during the pandemic over two consecutive school years (2020-2022).

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<sup>149</sup> MoEYS, 2023. GPE 2025 Partnership Compact.

### **4.3. EVALUATION QUESTION 3: Are the project indicators and targets appropriate in effectively measuring and tracking project results for men, women, girls, boys and vulnerable groups based on the results framework?**

#### **4.3.1. To what extent does WFP have the systems and capacity at baseline to appropriately monitor and provide sufficient information to measure progress, including on GEWE? What changes should be made, if any?**

172. The FY19 endline evaluation found significant issues in the WFP monitoring system. Clean and valid monitoring data was not readily available for the evaluation and when it was provided, it contained multiple errors and discrepancies. The exhaustive review of the PMP of the new project during this baseline suggests that the monitoring plan has improved but there are still issues that need to be addressed. They are presented with suggestions for improvement in section 2.3.2: *“Are the targets proposed for the project relevant and realistic and is gender sufficiently considered in the targets?”*

173. Overall, a number of PMP indicators are disaggregated by gender but annual and project life targets are not disaggregated.

174. National and sub-national capacities for monitoring the national HGSP programme is an aspect that is repeatedly mentioned in the FY19 evaluation series, highlighting difficulties (especially in the more rural locations) such as lack of internet connectivity, lack of skills in digitalized systems and excessive work.

175. Monitoring readiness is included in the transition strategy. In April 2022, WFP carried out an assessment of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system for the national HGSP programme, and clear recommendations and action points were proposed, though the ET did not assess the extent to which they are being implemented. In addition, an M&E capacity assessment of the NHGSP programme is ongoing and WFP will provide technical assistance to the programme based on the findings of this assessment.

#### **4.3.2. Are the targets proposed for the project relevant and realistic and is gender sufficiently considered in targets?**

176. The PMP integrates 25 USDA standard indicators (SI), four indicators to measure achievements of regional procurement (LRP SI) and 18 custom indicators (CI). The overall set of indicators is found relevant to measure project outputs and outcomes, and realistic considering the coverage of the project and the achievements of the previous McGovern-Dole round. There is some overlapping of indicators, and necessary adjustments to be made, and some practical recommendations are provided to specific indicators below. Targets are often not documented and justified and difficult to assess. A better documentation/justification of targets is necessary in order to allow for the analysis of achievements in both the regular monitoring system of the project and at midterm and endline evaluations.

177. **SI 1: Student literacy.** This is the key overall outcome measure given the Strategic Objective of improving student literacy. Based on the trajectory of student literacy levels in the FY19 phase, the FY22 targets for grades 2 and 3 are realistic, and are essentially a linear continuation of the current improvement trend. Separate targets by gender would be useful given the significant differences in performance to date.

178. **SI 2: Student attendance.** Student attendance is highly relevant given the potential for school feeding programming to directly affect attendance, and the potential impact of attendance on outcomes like literacy. The FY22 endline goal of 95 percent attendance is ambitious given the FY19 endline values, and the evidence from two different attendance measures of a decline in student attendance during that project. It will be important during the FY22 phase to monitor this outcome with different data sources to better understand the underlying causes of student absences and the potential impact of literacy and school feeding programming to address these issues. This is another indicator that should have separate targets by gender given the significant differences in earlier data collected.

179. **SI 3: Number of teaching and learning materials provided.** This is a relevant indicator but it needs to be further specified given the adaptations in materials provision that have taken place in the FY19 phase, specifically the pivot to providing schools and students with remote learning materials. The current goal of 556 materials is hard to interpret since the project was apparently able to provide over 35,000 materials in the FY19 phase (responding to remote teaching demands during the pandemic). The project has supported the production of different teaching and learning materials, such as teacher and student guides that are linked with the new curriculum, and student readers that cover school feeding-related topics (like foods). More details are required for this indicator with specific references to the kinds of materials that will be produced, how they

compare with materials provision from the FY19 phase, and how the indicator should be measured (e.g. units, materials, packages) with clear definitions. This indicator does not have a gender component in terms of numbers, but it is important to review gender-related content and themes in the materials themselves (if applicable).

180. **SI 4, 5, 6 and 7: Teacher and administrator training participation and use of techniques.** The training targets (1,780 teachers, 577 administrators) are realistic based on the previous phase training activities, although the FY22 phase will be more dependent on MoEYS staff for carrying out the trainings, which could impact the total numbers. The 85 percent 'takeup' rate (the percentage of trained participants who demonstrate use of the techniques) is also realistic given the experiences from the FY19 phase. However, several modifications should be considered for the use of the techniques indicator. First, more details are required about the standards which are used to judge this outcome, and how this information is obtained, for both teachers as well as administrators. Second, for teachers it may be possible to replace Standard Indicator 4 with Custom Indicator 1 below, and rely on the classroom monitoring tool that has been developed by World Education for measuring teacher use of KRKC techniques in the classroom. This seems to be a more empirically valid and useful measurement tool, but given the limited evidence on the current measurement of SI 4 (and 6) this topic can be discussed further. Finally, there is not a strong gender component to this indicator since the relevant teachers from programme district schools should participate, and the programme should simply ensure that female and male teachers are adequately represented.

181. **SI 8: Education facilities built/rehabilitated.** 2,230 educational facilities were rehabilitated or built during the previous FY19 phase, representing 197 percent of the target. The target for the new project is 406 'facilities' (school buildings, classrooms, improved water sources, and latrines) built or rehabilitated, and has been set based on the needs identified by cooperating partners at school level. It therefore seems relevant and reasonable considering the achievement of the previous project.

182. **SI 9, 17, 18: Children enrolled and assisted:** these three indicators measure the same population: primary school-age children enrolled in WFP supported schools and who therefore receive daily school meals. Annual targets decrease progressively with the school handover to the Government as the PMP only monitors WFP directly-supported children, and are based on the achievements of the previous rounds, but they can be considered relevant and realistic.

183. **SI 10: Policy processes supported:** It has been removed considering that new custom indicators based on SABER pillars have been introduced to measure progresses on foundational results. This is relevant considering the nature of the project.

184. **SI 11: Community contributions:** relates to the financial contribution of communities to school feeding activities. Some US\$2,775,430 of contributions were reported in the FY19 phase, representing 1,334 percent of the target. The new project target is US\$417,250 for both WFP supported and handed over schools, which seems very conservative considering the achievement of the previous round. **Recommendation: adjust to the level of contributions achieved in the last round.**

185. **SI 12: Public-private partnerships:** as for Standard Indicator #10, it has been removed due to the adoption of the SABER pillars to measure foundational results. This is found relevant.

186. **SI 13: Local committees supported:** Regarding the number of local school feeding committees or school management committees supported by the project through capacity strengthening, the FY19 project supported 522 committees reaching 87 percent of the target. The target for the FY22 project is 656. The PMP does not provide a justification of the target that seems over-estimated considering the achievement of the previous round and the number of supported schools planned (341). **Recommendation: adjust the target to the number of supported schools and/or document the estimation of the target.**

187. **SI 14: Quantity of Take-Home rations delivered:** This indicator is removed from the PMP as take-home rations would only be considered in the event of school closure. Such a circumstance is unpredictable and no target can be defined.

188. **SI 15: Beneficiaries of Take-Home Rations.** The same comments as for Standard Indicator #14.

189. **SI 16: Daily school meals.** 24,783,174 daily school meals were reportedly delivered in the previous round,<sup>150</sup> representing 39 percent of the target. This level of achievement was largely because of the school

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150 Up to March 2023. Note that the FY19 project will continue under a no-cost extension until April 2024, and therefore this number of school meals delivered will increase by the end of the project.

closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The FY22 life-of-project target is 26,946,360 school meals, only including the schools directly assisted by WFP, and annual targets decrease progressively with the handover of schools, which is relevant.

190. **SI 19 and 20: Individuals who apply improved practices.** As described above, these outcome indicators that measure the effect of capacity strengthening activities on child health and nutrition practices, as well as safe food preparation and storage practices, result from the application of 65 percent of trainees putting their new skills to use. It is based on an assumption that will be tested at endline, reflected by a sample of participants who have attended trainings. **Recommendations for better measurement of SI 19 & SI 20: a) revise the PMP target & indicator definition for SI19 to include: i) number of vendors compliant with Directive No 18; and ii) number of school directors monitoring and enforcing compliance with Directive No 18. For SI 19, update baseline value to include an estimate of the percentage of directors/vendors already doing the above (based on the sample from the SBCC KAP baseline, extrapolated to the number of schools and vendors), and c) incorporate questions on vendor/director practices related to Directive 18 into the FY22 midterm and endline evaluation questionnaires. For SI 20, the CO should identify an opportunity to collect baseline data on current use of safe food preparation and storage practices; and update the PMP with the baseline, and incorporate these same questions integrate these same questions into the FY22 midterm and endline evaluation questionnaires.**

191. **SI 22: Individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage.** The previous project round trained 2,698 individuals, representing 220 percent of the target. The new target is 1,364 individuals to be achieved in three years and seems relevant considering the lower number of schools covered in the new project, although the way the new target is set is not documented.

192. **SI 23: Individuals trained in child health and nutrition.** The previous project round trained 2,396 individuals, representing 2,215 percent of the target. The new project target (2,786 individuals) has been well justified by WFP and seems appropriate.

193. **SI 27: schools using an improved water source.** Initially removed from the PMP by WFP, USDA requested to add it back at baseline, though no target has been defined so far. **Recommendation: define a target based on an assessment of the current number of schools using an improved water source and the gap to be realistically filled during the project.**

194. **SI 28: Schools with improved sanitation facilities.** Same as Standard Indicator #27.

195. **SI 30: Beneficiaries of USDA food security programmes.** Accounts for the total participants to the project (children receiving school meals, and participants in capacity strengthening activities). Annual targets decrease as it only includes WFP directly assisted schools.

196. **SI 31: Indirect beneficiaries.** Accounts for family members of those children receiving school meals from WFP. As a result, annual targets decrease progressively as schools are handed over. It is calculated automatically from the number of children assisted. The ET does not have a particular comment on this indicator.

197. **SI 32: Number of schools assisted.** Includes the number of schools assisted by WFP for school feeding and schools assisted by World Education for literacy programming. Targets are aligned to the handover plan, which is relevant.

198. **CI 1: Trained teachers implement early grade learning methodology at Level 2 or higher.** This is a very relevant indicator given the importance of demonstrating effective use of the new teaching methodology in the classroom, and not relying solely on participation measures to monitor training impacts. The 85 percent goal in this outcome is consistent with the results for SI 4, and is also realistic based on the classroom monitoring data collected by World Education during the SY 2021-22 in Kampong Chhnang.<sup>151</sup> **As noted above it may make sense to use this indicator instead of SI 4 for monitoring teachers' use of the methodology, or at least further specify the differences between the indicators and their distinct purposes. There is not a strong gender component in this indicator, so there does not appear to be a need to specify programme targets by gender.**

199. **CI 3: Student attentiveness in class.** This is a relevant indicator given the potential linkages between school feeding and attentiveness, in addition to the possibility that the new teaching methodology will enhance student engagement. The 95 percent target for FY22 is realistic, and perhaps is a little low given the results

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<sup>151</sup> World Education Kampong Chhnang monitoring data summary document, July 2023.

from the FY19 endline (94.8 overall average). It is reasonable to expect some improvement in this indicator as the programme continues to develop.

200. **CI 4: Student reported as “not hungry” during class time.** It is a relevant indicator of school meals considering that hunger at school can affect attentiveness and result in dropout or low attendance. The baseline value from the FY19 endline survey is 84 percent (although the value in the PMP is 89.3 percent) and the FY22 project life target is 92 percent. This seems realistic although the proportion of school children experiencing hunger at school has increased between the FY19 baseline in 2020 and the endline in 2023.

201. **CI 5: Illness related absences at school.** This is a key indicator to measure Strategic Result 2 achievements and contributions to the overall literacy objective of the project. The previous round over-achieved the target of an average of four monthly school days missed by a student due to illness (actual value of 1.7 missed school days). The new project target is one average missed day per month in the last year of project implementation. It may be over-ambitious, but a lot has already been done for improving school facilities and promoting improved practices, resulting in significant achievements.

202. **CI 6: Diet Diversity Score (DDS).** As mentioned above, the project life target is 4.3 while the DDS of assisted children measured at the FY19 endline was 6.3. It is not clear to the ET if the target includes school meals only or also food consumed at home. **Recommendations: align target measurement with the 2023 endline survey methodology (with or without a school meal) and/or revise the target accordingly. Update the PMP indicator definition to specify exactly which food groups should be used in future rounds (as well as possibly revising the target if the baseline value is still higher after the calculation is re-done).**

203. **CI 8: individuals trained in hygiene and the minimum guidelines for water and sanitation.** This new custom indicator is found relevant as it allows monitoring of the application of the standards developed by the School Health Department of MoEYS. There is no reference from the previous round to appreciate the target of 900 individuals trained and, as this target is not documented, the ET cannot make a statement on its realism.

204. **CI 11: Schools that meet the infrastructure and equipment handover criteria.** This new indicator is key, as it is the only one that measures the readiness of schools for handover based on the defined criteria. It will allow identification of the achievements of targets in terms of school handover. **Recommendations: several adjustments could be made to the indicator: 1. Ideally annual targets should be in number (instead of percentage) of schools and aligned with the annual target for school handover; 2. It should be measured in the regular project M&E system instead of on a sample of schools at the midterm and endline evaluations; 3. A similar indicator should be developed for the third readiness criteria on capacity; 4. An additional outcome indicator should monitor the actual number of schools handed over annually, aligned with the target of the handover plan.**

205. **CI 14: SABER school feeding Index.** This new indicator is aligned with the approach proposed to measure achievements on foundational results, based on the SABER approach, and is therefore very relevant to the project. The FY22 project life target is 3 ('Established') but it should be revised when an aggregated index is available from the final report of the June 2023 SABER workshop, which was not available at the time of this baseline study. The final report should also include a target to be achieved by 2027.

206. **CI 15: increase of SABER score by pillars.** As for CI 14, this indicator is very relevant as it is aligned with the approach to measure progress on foundational results. The indicator measures the increase of score for each pillar, and targets only capture any increase achieved during the project. **An alternative, more informative, approach would be to align the target with pillar targets that should be proposed in the final SABER workshop report. Alternatively, pillar targets could be to progress by one status level by the end of the project.**

207. **CI 16, CI 17, CI 18, CI 19** are output Indicators aligned with the activities planned for each intermediate outcome of foundational results.

208. **LRP SI 1: Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programmes.** This indicator is confusing for three reasons. It has the same formulation as SI 30 but it measures only school age beneficiaries, whereas SI 30 accounts for all the participants to the project (school children, participants to trainings and technical assistance). It also overlaps with SI 9, 17 and 18, and it is not relevant to measure a specific output of regional purchase. **Recommendation: consider removing LRP SI 1.**



209. **LRP SI 4 and 5: Procurement costs for regionally purchased commodities.** These two indicators that reflect respectively the procurement costs (transport, storage) and the commodity costs, are aimed to measure the cost effectiveness of food assistance. In the absence of any documentation of the targets, the ET cannot assess the relevance of the indicators and realism of targets.

210. **LRP SI 6: Quantity of canned fish regionally purchased.** No particular comment on this indicator.

**4.4. EVALUATION QUESTION 4: To what extent are the midterm and endline evaluation questions relevant in assessing the success of the programme under each criterion and for all categories of participants including men, women, girls, boys, and vulnerable groups?**

**4.4.1. To what extent are the key elements of success and performance well-captured in the midterm and endline evaluation questions, and is there sufficient consideration given to gender in these questions?**

211. The ET team carefully reviewed the evaluation questions proposed in the ToR for the midterm and endline evaluations. The proposed adjustments are presented in [Annex 16](#).

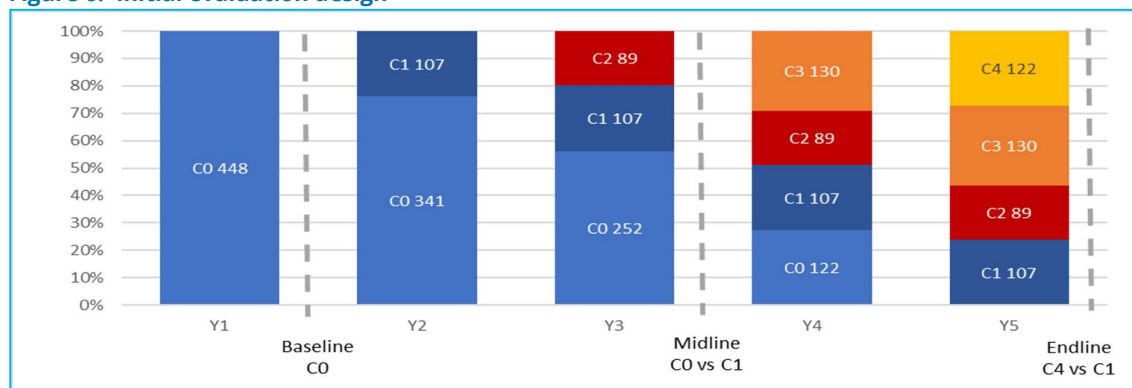
212. Overall, the evaluation questions capture well the key element of success and performance of the project, and the principal questions of readiness and sustainability of the NHGSF programme. Proposed modifications respond to three objectives:

- Simplify the questions and provide more clarity: evaluation questions are sometimes too extensive and lack clarity. Proposed formulations are shorter and more general given that during midterm and endline inception phases, the ET will disaggregate evaluation questions into sub-questions and indicators, which will provide the space for more details.
- Reduce overlap and the number of questions: several overlapping questions have been removed or merged. This reduced the number of questions from 15 to 11 for the midterm evaluation, and from 20 to 14 for the endline. This will help to provide more fluidity to the evaluation report structures based around evaluation questions.
- Strengthen the integration of GEWE, with explicit references wherever relevant. Evaluation questions do not always explicitly consider gender dimensions, which should be reviewed to explicitly mention such considerations.

**4.4.2. Midterm and endline quantitative approach**

213. The **evaluation design** follows the evolution of key programme outcomes in 448 schools through the five-year cycle (Year 1 through Year 5), with assessment exercises conducted after Year (Y) 1 (baseline), after Y3 (midterm) and after Y5 (endline). As shown in Figure 6 below, in Y1 (i.e. the most recent school year, SY22-23), all the schools included in the evaluation series are under WFP management (C0). At the end of Y1, 107 schools assisted previously will be transferred to the Government (C1). A further 89 schools will be transferred at the end of Y3 (C2), 130 schools will be transferred at the end of Y4 (C3), and the remaining 122 schools will be transferred at the end of Y5 (C4).

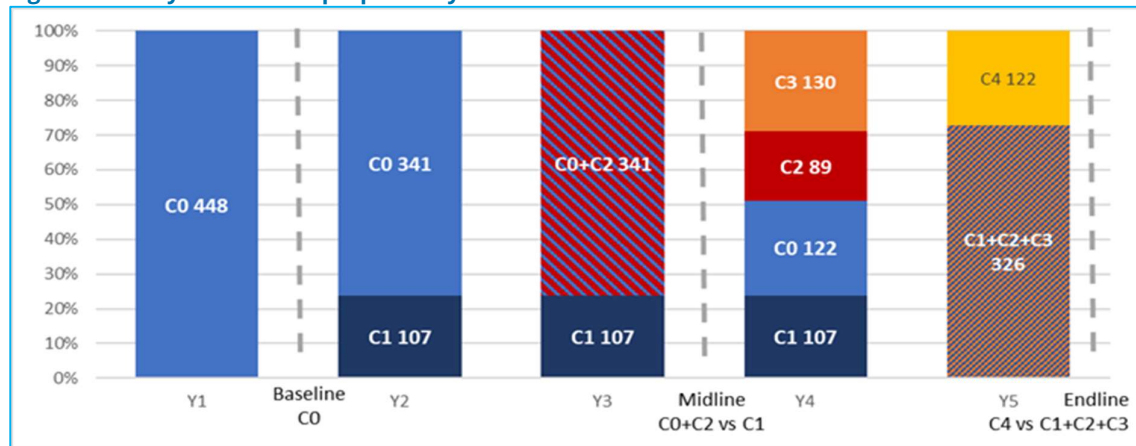
**Figure 6: Initial evaluation design**



Source: Developed by the ET based on the WFP CO Terms of Reference

214. **Analysis model.** In order to address the learning objective of the evaluation and particularly to assess the effect of the handover process on project performance, the analysis model summarised in Figure 7 is proposed and has been agreed with the WFP CO. The four school cohorts are put into two groups presenting similarities considering the time elapsed since their handover to the Government. The benefit of this approach will be to simplify the analysis between only two groups in the midterm and endline evaluations ('schools not yet handed over or handed over a year ago' versus 'schools handed over two years ago or more'). These two groups have been defined based on discussions with WFP CO and RBB on which groups would be more homogenous. The other alternative was 'schools not handed over' and 'schools handed over' but this last group would have grouped together more heterogenous situations with schools very recently handed over and schools handed over more than three years ago. The proposed approach will increase the confidence level of the survey, thanks to larger samples for each comparison group.

**Figure 7: Analysis Model as proposed by the evaluation team**



Source: Developed by the evaluation team

215. **School and household sample.** The sample of schools of this baseline study is drawn from the FY19 endline evaluation. Kampong Chhnang schools are analysed separately, as all sampled schools in that province were handed over to the Government at the end of the SY21-22.

216. All Kampong Chhnang schools in the evaluation design belong to C2, as they are planned to be transitioned at the end of Year 3. At midline and endline, they will always be on one side of the quasi-experimental design only (in the group "C0+C2" at midterm and on the group "C1+C2+C3" at endline), meaning that the two groups of schools in the analysis model will not be balanced by province. To overcome this constraint, the ET proposes to analyze schools in Kampong Chhnang separately, looking at their evolution through time specifically. In this province, qualitative data collection in the midterm evaluation will be key to reconstruct the evolution of the performance since the beginning of the project.

217. As per the ToR, the evaluation series will look for continuity with the FY19 project in order to analyze the long-term effects over two cycles. For comparability purposes, the series will retain the previous approach with household surveys administered to the caregivers of targeted students, and school surveys conducted with directors and teachers.

218. The quantitative survey design for the students' household survey will continue to follow a two-step cluster sample where schools will be the primary sampling units. This is a standard sampling method for household surveys as it maximizes data collection efficiency. The overall sampling approach is outlined in Table 12 with an estimated sampling error defined at school level. The quantitative survey design for teachers will follow the same logic. For each primary sampling unit or school, the household survey will target six students and the teacher survey will target three teachers.

**Table 12: Sampling approach at school level**

Phase	“Schools not yet handed over or handed over a year ago”	“Schools handed over two years ago or more”	All groups (schools)	Sample size by group (schools)	Total sample size (schools)	Sampling error by group at school level	Total sampling error at school level
Baseline	C0: 448		448	C0: 64	64	+/- 11%	+/- 11%
Midline	C0+C2:341	C1: 107	448	C0+C2: 85 C1: 55	140	+/- 9%	+/- 7%
Endline	C4: 122	C1+C2+C3: 326	448	C4: 58 C1+C2+C3: 82	140	+/- 9%	+/- 7%

Source: prepared by the evaluation team

219. **Sampling error at household level.** While it maximizes data collection efficiency, cluster sampling has a price in terms of sampling error, due to intra-cluster correlation, which inflates sample variance, increasing the margin of error. The ET has taken this design effect into account when estimating the student level sampling error presented in Table 13 below. In order to estimate it, the ET used the baseline sample data for WFP supported schools, the prevalence of students that had a 10-group-DDS of value 5 or above, and the R software. Table 13 below includes some key parameters for the estimations.

**Table 13: Household sample design parameters**

Parameter	Value	Parameter	Value
Intra-cluster correlation (ICC)	0.133	Design Effect (DEFF)	1.665
Prevalence of outcome variable (perc. of students with a 10-group-DDS of value 5 or above)	81.7%	Variance of outcome variable (perc. of students with a 10-group-DDS of value 5 or above)	15.0%
Cluster size	6	Cluster size by gender	3 girls and 3 boys
Power	80%	Confidence level	95%
Average number of students of ages 6 to 11 per school	175	Average number of girl students of ages 6 to 11 per school	87

Source: Prepared by the evaluation team

220. The proposed sample design for midterm targets 140 sample schools (55 and 85 by group) and six children per school, for a total of 840 students (420 girls and 420 boys). This will imply a sampling error of +/- 5.4 and 4.3 percent respectively by group of schools, and a minimum detectable effect of 9.9 percent for the outcome variable.

221. The endline sample design is very similar. It targets 140 sample schools (58 and 82 by group) and six children per school, for a total of 840 students (420 girls and 420 boys). This will imply a sampling error of +/- 5.2 and 4.4 percent respectively by group of schools, and a minimum detectable effect of 9.8 percent for the outcome variable. These figures are presented in Tables 14 and 15 below. At both midterm and endline, independent samples will be drawn for each group of the analysis model, stratified by province. More considerations on survey methods related to stratification and weighting are summarized in [Annex 17](#).

**Table 14: Sampling error by group at student level**

Phase	Group	Cohort	Estimated number of students	School Sample Size	Student Sample Size	Sampling error (+/-)	Minimum detectable effect among groups
Midline	Schools handed over two years ago or more	C1	18,725	55	330	5.4%	9.9%
Midline	Schools not yet handed over or handed over a year ago	C0+C2	59,675	85	510	4.3%	9.9%
Endline	Schools not yet handed over or handed over a year ago	C4	21,350	58	348	5.2%	9.8%
Endline	Schools handed over two years ago or more	C1+C2+C3	57,050	82	492	4.4%	9.8%

Source: Prepared by the evaluation team

**Table 15: Sampling error by group and gender at student level**

Phase	Group	Cohort	Estimated number of girls students	School Sample Size	Girl Student Sample Size	Sampling error (+/-)	Minimum detectable effect among groups
Midline	Schools handed over two years ago or more	C1	27,392	55	165	7.6%	12.2%
Midline	Schools not yet handed over or handed over a year ago	C0+C2	87,296	85	255	6.1%	12.2%
Endline	Schools not yet handed over or handed over a year ago	C4	31,232	58	174	7.4%	12.1%
Endline	Schools handed over two years ago or more	C1+C2+C3	83,456	82	246	6.2%	12.1%

Source: Prepared by the evaluation team

222. **Minimum detectable effects.** In summary, the household sample design is geared to detecting a 9.9 percent effect on the percentage of students who yield a Diet Diversity Score of 5 or more, as a consequence of the programme handover to the Government.

223. The ET has also estimated the minimum effect that would be detected for the outcome indicators “Percentage of attentive students” and “Percentage of students reported as not hungry”, issued from the teachers’ survey (targeting three teachers per school). These effects are 3.18 and 9.72 percentage points respectively (see Table 16)

**Table 16: Minimum detectable effects**

Outcome Indicator	Survey	Cluster size	Intra-Cluster Correlation	Design Effect	Baseline value	Variance	Minimum detectable effect (at midline and endline)
Percent of students who yield a DDS score of value 5 or more	Household	6	0.133	1.665	81.7%	15.0%	9.9%
Percent of students in target schools identified as attentive by their teachers (0-100 scale)	Teacher	3	0.320	1.640	90.3	78.7	3.18
Percent of students in target schools reported as 'not hungry' during class (0-100 scale)	Teacher	3	0.312	1.625	82.4	742.0	9.72

Source: Developed by the evaluation team

# 5. Conclusions and Lessons

## 5.1. Conclusions

224. The McGovern-Dole FY22 project is the fourth USDA supported school feeding project in Cambodia since 2013 and has the heavy responsibility of being the final one, aiming to achieve full handover to the Government and to create the best possible conditions for the sustainability of the national HGSF programme. School handover was initiated in the FY19 project, but the FY22 project goes further, intending to answer the question of what comes next, after the handover.

225. The FY22 project is fully oriented to this handover and sustainability objective in all its components: school meals, literacy, health, nutrition and WASH. It has been designed to support the implementation of the joint WFP and Government Joint Transition Strategy, which provides a much clearer picture and pathways towards a sustainable national programme than in previous projects. While there is still direct implementation of assistance by WFP, it will progressively decrease as schools are handed over, and WFP resources will be increasingly dedicated to capacity strengthening and technical assistance towards the national HGSF programme. The project objectives and activities are found relevant to this context and to the objectives set in the JTS (EQ1).

226. School feeding is well integrated into Government priorities within the National Social Protection Policy Framework and it is expected that this level of integration will continue until midterm at least. The national HGSF programme was officially endorsed in 2019, the development of its policy framework and regulations have progressed significantly under the FY19 project and will continue to progress under the FY22 project. The literacy component is fully integrated into the National Early Grade Reading Programme and the WASH component is designed to support the National Policy on School Health (EQ1).

227. The key issue regarding the relevance of the project is the resource situation to continue supporting local purchase. Local purchase is a key element of the HGSF model and school experience with it is one of the three readiness criteria for handover. USDA no longer supports local purchase and WFP is expected to mobilize additional resources, which has not been the case to date. It represents a considerable threat to the handover objectives. In case insufficient funds are mobilized, the criteria of local purchase experience would be hardly met (EQ1).

228. This evaluation has set the baseline values and situation for the outcomes and intermediate outcomes of the project. It has also reviewed the targets of the new project and indicators. A few elements that deserve particular attention have been found (EQ3):

- Overall, the PMP provides gender disaggregation where relevant. It could be further strengthened in a few areas as listed below. Life of project and annual targets are not disaggregated.
- Several factors affect the comparability between 2020 and 2022 EGRA data and between provinces. Efforts should be made to keep the same approach (the 2022 measurement) for future measurements.
- Student literacy and student attendance indicators should have separate targets by gender.
- The FY19 project did not show a positive effect on alleviating hunger at school; on the contrary, numbers of hungry children have increased. The reasons for this need to be further investigated so that appropriate adjustments to school meals can be done, if relevant.
- Similarly, the FY19 project did not have a positive effect on attendance. Potential external factors affecting attendance should be investigated.
- More males than females participate in trainings on safe food preparation and storage, but men do not participate in the preparation of meals. This suggests that trainings do not target the right participants.
- The DDS calculated at baseline is higher than the project life target. It would be necessary to clarify if the 24-hour recall includes the meal consumed at school or not, and how it was calculated at baseline.
- Functioning WASH infrastructure has decreased despite the previous project which built or rehabilitated a number of facilities. This finding suggests that more emphasis should be put on

sustainability of existing facilities. The effect of climate change on access to year-round clean water should also be investigated.

- Final results from the SABER workshop were not available by the time of this study. Baseline values and targets should be updated in accordance with final results when they become available (expected in September 2023).

229. WFP maintains a complaint and feedback mechanism which is adequate to collect and address feedback on WFP direct operations, although the baseline could not determine if the mechanism allows for specific feedback from women and/or vulnerable groups. The possible adoption of a similar mechanism by the MoEYS is still under discussion (EQ1).

230. Institutional ownership and participation in the national HGSP programme have been strong for MoEYS and NSPC, but remain weak for other key institutions formally designated to contribute to the programme. Clarifications on their roles have only been provided recently and inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms are not yet in place. This is really needed for the new project in order to promote ownership and start strengthening capacities accordingly as soon as possible (EQ1).

231. WFP's emphasis on cost-efficiency focuses on the broader national HGSP programme, of which the McGovern-Dole project is a part. However, one of the most important considerations for the project is regional purchase, expected to be more cost-efficient than international imports, and WFP is supporting the assessment and piloting of different procurement models, focusing on cost-efficiency, for the HGSP programme (EQ1).

232. WFP's project management structure is getting more appropriate to the project needs. The FY19 evaluation series mentioned several times about the need for a mindset change, as well as resource allocation between direct operations and the support to the national HGSP programme, through capacity strengthening and technical assistance. While this process is still ongoing, internal capacities now seem more appropriate for the project needs (EQ 3).

233. The COVID-19 pandemic was the most important external factor to have influenced the previous project implementation and achievements; a repetition is not predictable and cannot be factored into the FY22 design. Other factors that could support or affect the implementation and results of the FY22 project identified at baseline are the high level of political will that is a great supporting factor, the implications for the HGSP programme of the Decentralization and Deconcentration process that are yet to be assessed, the evolution of the macro-economic context, and the higher integration of the literacy component in MoEYS priorities (EQ 2).

234. Midterm and endline evaluation questions included in the baseline ToRs have been reviewed in detail in order to increase their clarity, reduce overlap and strengthen the explicit integration of GEWE dimensions into the questions (EQ4).

## 5.2. Lessons

235. The initial design of the evaluation model presented in the ToR provided less opportunity for learning on the handover process than the model proposed by the evaluation team. The evaluation series provides a good opportunity to assess the extent to which the handover to the Government will result in an evolution of the performance of the activity - one that has been delivered by WFP over several decades based on its own standards. It will also be an opportunity to observe how the Government adapts standards and systems initially designed by WFP to address its own priorities and resources. The proposed design should allow assessment of these elements and potentially draw lessons that go beyond the Cambodia experience.

236. Implementing the FY19 endline and the FY22 baseline of the new project simultaneously is well justified by a wish to save resources, allow analysis of the evolution in schools after almost 10 years of McGovern-Dole support, and to limit stakeholder fatigue. However, several elements could be improved to further strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of a similar parallel exercise in the future. Conducting both evaluations at the same time and with the same data led to time constraints and affected the baseline process. If one set of quantitative data is to be collected for both evaluations, undertaking the new baseline after the old endline would allow sufficient time to access, clean, prepare and re-analyse the data, with sufficient interactions between both teams. Even better, and a more cost-efficient, coherent and appropriate method would be to integrate both into a single exercise conducted by the same team. Lessons learnt from the previous project would be much better factored into the new project, particularly – as in this case – because the new project is a continuation of the previous one.

237. Obtaining literacy data and information requires speaking with partners who are most directly involved in that work (World Education in this instance), but also development partners like USAID. MoEYS counterparts - at least senior staff - are generally aware of the McGovern-Dole literacy components but they tend to respond in general terms to questions about this component, which are not always specific to McGovern-Dole but rather to the broader MoEYS work on improving literacy (in coordination with several other partners).

238. The remote baseline study interviews did not include sub-national MoEYS staff or school personnel (principals, teachers, etc.). For future iterations it will be imperative to speak with these stakeholders to understand more about programme implementation and sustainability dynamics.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Summary Terms of Reference

Note: References to annexes in the ToR have been removed as they appear as part of the main document.

### 1. Background

#### 1.1. Introduction

1. These Terms of Reference (TOR) are to guide an evaluation process comprising three distinct evaluation exercises (baseline, midterm, and endline), with each exercise having multiple deliverables, including inception and evaluation reports. The evaluations, which will take place over a five-year period, are commissioned by the WFP Cambodia Country Office (WFP CO) for the activity evaluations of Home Grown School Feeding Program (HGSFP) activities in Cambodia supported by United States Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole (USDA-McGovern-Dole) International Food for Education and Child Nutrition for fiscal years (FY) 2022-2027 under the grant (USDA McGovern Dole Grants FFE-442-2022-009-00). The TOR covers three deliverables: a baseline, a mid-term and an endline evaluation for USDA-McGovern-Dole. All deliverables will preferably be undertaken in a single assignment/contract. The specific deliverables (timeframes mentioned are subject to change) are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation exercise for McGovern-Dole

Evaluation exercises for USDA-McGovern-Dole project	Date
Baseline Study	March – December 2023
Mid-term evaluation	March – December 2025
End line Evaluation	March – December 2027

2. This TOR was prepared by the WFP CO based upon an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders. It outlines the evaluation requirements for USDA-McGovern-Dole (US\$21 million budget) grant supporting implementation of a Home-Grown School Feeding program (HGSF-hybrid) for the period 2022-2027 and associated interventions in 341 schools in Siem Reap, Kampong Thom and Kampong Chhnang provinces. The TOR aims to 1) provide key learning themes, program scope, and other key information to guide the evaluation team on the conducting the evaluations; and 2) to involve stakeholders early on, keeping them informed of progress, and providing opportunities for inputs to secure their support and commitment.

3. The evaluation process within WFP will be managed by an evaluation manager who will be the main focal point for day-to-day contact during the evaluation period. An external independent firm (evaluation team) will be contracted to carry out the actual evaluation and will appoint their own evaluation team leader and managers, based on the proposal approved by WFP.

4. This evaluation will provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of the results of the learning to feed into the government led and managed National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) while also making it possible to quantify the impacts of the program.

5. To commemorate the milestone of the end of 25 years of McGovern-Dole programme, the evaluation team will plan to conduct extensive dissemination events with NHGSFP stakeholders and suggest additional evidence products to be produced.



## 1.2. Context

6. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has established impressive economic growth over the past 20 years, bringing the country to lower middle-income status in 2016, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US\$1,561 in 2018, up from US\$1,043 in 2013. The high economic growth rate has been sustained above seven percent for over a decade, most recently at 7.5 percent in 2018 and 7.1 percent in 2019, making Cambodia one of the fastest growing economies in the world. However, this economic growth rate was seriously impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, although the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) projects that it should reach 2.4 percent in 2022.

7. Despite economic growth and current development in urban areas, rural development lags behind. Nearly three-quarters of the population resides in rural areas where approximately 90 percent of the country's poor live. These households mostly live on a small margin of poverty and are vulnerable to natural hazards, environmental or individual shocks. Estimates suggest that a loss in daily income of US\$0.30 per capita would double the poverty rate. There remains a very limited social safety net system in the country.

8. Food security and undernutrition remain important public health concerns in Cambodia. The national objectives set for the Cambodia-specific Millennium Development Goals were not met and malnutrition rates remain higher than most countries in the region. The SDG indicator for undernourishment (Goal 2) indicates that 14 percent of households continue to consume less than the minimum dietary energy requirement. In addition, dietary quality remains sub-optimal, with 11.6 percent of households estimated to have inadequate dietary diversity.

9. Gender inequality persists in Cambodia, ranked 116 out of the 160 countries in the Gender Inequality Index (GII = 0.474) and ranked 93 out of 149 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) 2018. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Cambodia reported (2015) that 70 percent of women in employment were engaged at lower levels and on less pay than men, with estimates that on average, women are paid 30 percent less for commensurate work. Women are also underrepresented in the public sector where 77 percent of employees and 85 percent of decision-making positions are occupied by men. Nationally, 25 percent of women are illiterate compared to 13.5 percent of men (2015). In contrast, in 2019, women owned 61 percent of businesses in the country, significantly higher than in many ASEAN countries.

10. The RGC is committed to improving educational standards while aiming to embed programs supported by development partners, such as the SFP and scholarship programs, within its national strategies. The national decentralization and deconcentration reforms place greater responsibility on subnational authorities to take ownership of planning and delivery of basic services, including education. In education, Cambodia has made good strides in improving primary education programs and reducing gender disparity<sup>152</sup> in education in rural areas. The net primary school enrolment figure increased from 81 percent in 2001 to 98 percent in school year 2018-19. Although there is still a need to expand enrolment in primary schools and pre-schools in some locations, sustained efforts to globally expand access to school are less relevant than they once were. The main challenge now for primary school education is completion. Even though both repetition and dropout rates have steadily declined in the last five years,<sup>153</sup> they remain a key concern. School dropout is most problematic at the end of the primary school cycle as students are more likely to leave school rather than repeat a year. School dropout is also more likely to happen in rural areas.<sup>154</sup>

11. In education, Cambodia has made positive strides in improving primary education and in reducing gender disparity in schools, particularly in rural areas. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) (2019-2023) and other national strategies indicate a strong commitment to improving educational standards. Over the last two decades, the net primary school enrolment has risen from 81 percent (2001) to 98 percent (2019). The school completion rate is the bigger challenge for primary education today, and more so in rural areas. Poverty as well as (in urban areas) family mobility, lack of access to religious schools, low academic

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<sup>152</sup> Gender considerations, and principles of inclusion, participation and non-discrimination will be included in the design, questioning, data collection and reporting in line with UNEG Guidance on Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation.

<sup>153</sup> Final Draft Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023, MoEYS, May 2019.

<sup>154</sup> Heng, K. et al (2016) Research report. School Dropout in Cambodia: A case study of Phnom Penh and Kampong Speu. Korea International Cooperation Agency, Cambodia Country Office. Royal University of Phnom Penh, Faculty of Education

achievement, and (in rural areas) community values and low parental education are among the main reason for drop out.

12. School feeding is a major component of the WFP Cambodia's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019-2023 and is implemented in five of Cambodia's 25 provinces. The school meals programme (SMP) started in Cambodia in 1999. In 2014, the MoEYS in collaboration with WFP piloted a 'Home Grown School Feeding' (HGSF) model and both parties signed a 'school feeding roadmap' in May 2015.

13. From school year (SY) 2019-2020, WFP started reducing its operational coverage following the transition plan to national ownership in managing and implementing the School Feeding Programme (SFP), and MoEYS took over the HGSF model to become the national programme with an official budget allocation from school year (SY) 2019-2020. In 2020, Cambodia launched the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) and today the Government plans, funds, and manages school meals in 290 schools, or 26 percent of the country's schools with school feeding programmes.

14. Signed in early 2022, the MoEYS, with WFP's technical assistance, developed the Joint School Feeding Transition Strategy (JTS) 2022-2028 that outlines the remaining handover of schools and remaining capacity building to be done. Handover is projected to be completed by 2028. It commits the Government to gradually take-over the remaining 823 schools from WFP by 2028, including all schools currently supported by USDA by 2026, while capacity is strengthened where gaps remain at institutional and school level to ensure the robustness of the programme, which is key for continued national investment and sustainability.

15. WFP implements the programme and complementary activities under grant support of USDA McGovern-Dole FFE Programme in partnership with key ministries of the Royal Government of Cambodia and NGOs. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) is the key partner, although the decentralization and deconcentration reforms have placed greater responsibility on subnational authorities for planning and delivery of basic services, including education, so WFP also works closely with the Provincial and District Offices of Education, Youth and Sport (PoEYS/DoEYS). Other ministries involved under the JTS include the National Social Protection Council (NSPC), the MEF, the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), the Ministry of Planning (MoP), and the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD).

16. Other partners in this programme include NGOs Plan International (PLAN), World Vision International (WVI) and World Education, who play a role in promoting the creation of an enabling environment for the provision of school meals, including the building and rehabilitation of infrastructure and other interventions at both national and sub-national levels supporting the provision of school meals.

## 2. Reasons for the evaluation

### 2.1. Rationale

17. The WFP CO is commissioning baseline, mid-term and endline evaluation for the 2022-2027 USDA-McGovern-Dole grants in support of WFP's School Feeding Program (SFP) activities in Cambodia, to be evaluated from the period 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2027, to critically and objectively assess performance of the programs and associated interventions for the purposes of accountability and learning and to fulfil a requirement of the USDA. The primary user of this evaluation is WFP CO, USDA, RGC and Implementing Partners.

18. The USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program is the continuation of the USDA grants 2019-2023, 2017-2019 and 2013-2016. While the target area and the implementation design have expanded and evolved throughout the awards, the current 2022-2027 McGovern-Dole program targets the same schools with continued activities from the 2019-2023 grant; with a stronger focus on institutionalization and transition of the program to full government ownership.

19. Therefore, the three evaluations will build on the 2019-2023 evaluation results, rather than be conducted in isolation, to capture change over the course of the two programs. The evaluation design will need to reflect this continuation, especially in the baseline study. The aim is to enable the evaluation to produce more insightful understanding on the project's progress and results as it tracks a longer timeframe of change.

## 2.2. Objectives

20. The evaluation will serve the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning. The evaluation will collect evidence that demonstrates the extent to which WFP, together with partners, is attaining the project objectives and outcomes. The evaluation will be utilised to inform the design and implementation of the NHGSFP and further the evidence-base for USDA's learning agenda.

- **Accountability** – The evaluation processes will assess and report on the performance and results of the USDA McGovern-Dole activities during the funding period. For accountability, the evaluations assess whether targeted beneficiaries have received services as expected, if the programs are on track to meeting their stated goals and objectives aligned with the results frameworks and assumptions.
- **Learning** – The evaluation processes will determine the reasons why certain results occurred or not to draw lessons, derive good practices and pointers for learning. They will provide evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making. Findings will be actively disseminated, and lessons will be incorporated into relevant lesson sharing systems. For learning, the evaluation components will aim at critically and objectively reviewing and taking stock of participant's implementation experience and the implementation environment for McGovern-Dole.

## 2.3 Stakeholders Analysis

21. As a utilization-focused evaluation, the results of this evaluation will inform and benefit all relevant government ministries that implement and contribute towards the National School Feeding programme. This includes Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), National Social Protection Council (NSPC), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) and Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), among others. Particularly, WFP will work with MoEYS and NSPC as the bodies implementing and overseeing the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, to utilize the evidence collected from the mid-term evaluation to adaptively manage the national programme and use the endline evaluation results to improve the programme design to enhance sustainability and effectiveness.

22. WFP will ensure timely communication with USDA and key stakeholders throughout the evaluation. All evaluation questions included in the evaluation design are aligned with key stakeholders' evidence needs identified through bilateral consultation, including factors that contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability. Utilization of evaluation results will be effectively facilitated using existing communication platforms, such as the Programme Coordination Committee meetings, to disseminate evaluation findings and lesson learned to facilitate actions on identified mid-course corrections on policy, funding, design and implementation at the national level. At the subnational level, WFP and MoEYS will also be accountable to the beneficiaries by conducting consultation meetings with the Local School Feeding Committees to share the evaluation results and receive feedback on the mid-course corrections.

23. Internally within WFP, the evaluation results will be used by the Cambodia Country Office, Regional Bureau, and WFP Washington Office, as well as key headquarters Divisions (School Based Programmes Division, the Performance Management and Monitoring Division, and the Office of Evaluation among others) for learning purposes.

24. Accountability to affected populations is tied to WFP's commitments to include beneficiaries as key stakeholders in WFP's work. WFP is committed to ensuring gender equality, equity, and inclusion in the evaluation process, with participation and consultation in the evaluation of women, men, boys, and girls from different groups (including persons with disabilities, the elderly, and persons with other diversities such as ethnic and linguistic).

**Table 1: Preliminary stakeholder analysis<sup>155</sup>**

Stakeholders	Interest and involvement in the evaluation
<b>Internal (WFP) stakeholders</b>	
<b>WFP Cambodia Country Office (CO)</b>	The WFP Cambodia country office has a direct stake in decision-making, notably related to program implementation and design, partnerships, adjustments required for the Country Strategic Plan and advocacy efforts with Government and other national stakeholders.
<b>Regional Bureau (RB) Bangkok</b>	Responsible for both oversight of COs and technical guidance and support, the RB management has an interest in an independent/impartial account of the operational performance as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, program support, and oversight, as well as sharing successes and lessons learnt across the region. The Regional Evaluation Officer supports CO/RB management to ensure quality, credible and useful decentralized evaluations.
<b>WFP HQ technical units</b>	WFP HQ technical units (including School Feeding, nutrition, SAMS/P4P <sup>156</sup> ) are responsible for issuing and overseeing the rollout of normative guidance on corporate program themes, activities and modalities, as well as of overarching corporate policies and strategies. They also have an interest in the lessons and may use evaluations for wider organizational learning and accountability, as many may have relevance beyond the geographical area of focus. Relevant HQ units should be consulted from the planning phase to ensure that key policy, strategic and programmatic considerations are understood from the onset of the evaluation.
<b>Office of Evaluation (OEV)</b>	OEV has a stake in ensuring that decentralized evaluations deliver quality, credible and useful evaluations respecting provisions for impartiality as well as roles and accountabilities of various decentralised evaluation stakeholders as identified in the evaluation policy. The office may use the evaluation findings, as appropriate, to feed into evaluation syntheses as well as for annual reporting to the Executive Board.
<b>WFP Executive Board (EB)</b>	The WFP governing body has an interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP programs. This evaluation will not be presented to the Board, but its findings may feed into thematic and/or regional syntheses and corporate learning processes.
<b>External stakeholders</b>	
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	The ultimate recipients of direct and indirect food assistance, school children and their parents, have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective. As such, the level of participation in the evaluation of women, men, boys and girls from different groups will be determined and their perspectives will be sought.
<b>Government (MoEYS, MEF, MAFF, MoH and others)</b>	The Government has a direct interest in knowing whether WFP activities in the country are aligned with its priorities, harmonised with the action of other partners and meet the expected results. Issues related to capacity development, handover and sustainability will be of particular interest. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) might use evaluation

<sup>155</sup> The evaluation team will be expected to further investigate and refine the stakeholder analysis.

<sup>156</sup> Smallholder Agricultural Market Support (SAMS) is a demand side market access support to smallholder farmers. Purchase for Progress (P4P) links WFP's demand for staple food commodities with technical expertise.

	findings for decision making related to program implementation and/or design, country strategy and partnerships, as well as to inform the planning of transition from externally supported to nationally owned school feeding program. Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) and Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSAVY) might also use these findings for their learning and implementation of programs in the future.
<b>UN Country team</b>	The UNCT's harmonized action should contribute to the realisation of the government developmental objectives. It has therefore an interest in ensuring that WFP programs are effective in contributing to the UN concerted efforts. Various agencies are also direct partners of WFP at policy and activity level.
<b>Partners: WV, Plan, World Education, and FAO</b>	NGOs are WFP's partners for the implementation of some activities while having their own interventions. The results of the evaluation might affect future implementation modalities, strategic orientations and partnerships.
<b>Donors: USDA</b>	WFP operations are voluntarily funded by a number of donors. They have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if WFP's work has been effective and contributed to their own strategies and programs. USDA will use evaluation findings to inform project strategy, results frameworks, and critical assumptions.
<b>Other education, nutrition and social protection partners in Cambodia (USAID, UNICEF, NGOs, etc)</b>	Results from this evaluation will be used to inform the direction of government and WFP work on school meals moving forward. As part of the baseline, a reference groups comprising key stakeholders in country was formed to provide inputs and contribute to the related evaluation processes.

### 3. Subject of the evaluation

#### 3.1. Subject of the Evaluation

25. The USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program is implemented by WFP in partnership with World Education, Plan International, World Vision and relevant Government ministries. The USDA 2022-2027 McGovern-Dole (US\$21 million) program supports the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) in 341 schools in Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom and Siem Reap provinces (12 districts) while preparing the schools for handover to the national programme. The project will benefit approximately 92,618 schoolchildren (45,382 girls)<sup>157</sup>. Other programme target groups include school staff and government officials relevant to the NHGSFP at the national and sub-national level.

**Estimated number of school children in target schools<sup>158</sup>**

Province	Number of targeted schools (SY 2023-24)	Total number of school children	Number of girls
Kampong Chhnang (4 districts)	43	11,871	5,817
Kampong Thom (6 districts)	96	19,646	9,626
Siem Reap (8 districts)	202	61,101	29,939
Total	341	92,618	45,382

<sup>157</sup> The estimated number of school children is based on the number of students enrolled for school year 2021-2022. Student enrolled for school year 2022-2023 is not available as of March 2023.

<sup>158</sup> As above

26. A key element of the USDA 2022-2027 McGovern-Dole program is that it is a continuation of the previous McGovern-Dole award (2019-2023) in the same target schools with a similar set of activities. The Program will continue contributing towards the three strategic objectives; (1) improved literacy of school-aged children (2) increased use of health and dietary practices; and (3) improved effectiveness of food assistance in all target schools to identify the factors that influenced the project outcomes either positively or negatively post school handover.

27. The first strategic objective will be achieved through; the results of the school feeding, school health promotion in line with national priorities, and literacy interventions implemented directly by WFP and NGO partners in schools until handover.

28. The second strategic objective will be achieved through the increased efficiency and effectiveness of the government owned National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, as a result of WFP's technical assistance on enhancing programme design, financing, monitoring, accountability, and governance of the NHGSFP.

29. The third objective will be achieved through strengthening local food systems and economies by providing technical assistance and capacity strengthening to schools, suppliers and farmers for the production and supply of fresh products for the meals.

30. The Program also has a component of USDA Local/Regional Procurement (LRP). While 2019-2023 LRP grant supported cash to schools, this was not possible anymore under the FY22 grant. Under the current award, WFP will procure canned fish regionally, which will be complemented by purchases of fresh food commodities from local farmers and suppliers. Through complementary funds in the same target areas, WFP will strengthen local food systems and economies by providing technical assistance and capacity strengthening provided to schools, suppliers and farmers for the production and supply of fresh products for the meals. Schools may procure all commodities locally (full HGSF modality) or as a combination of local and regional procurement (Hybrid modality).

31. Combined, these activities aim to contribute towards the long-term impact of enhanced human capital for pre-primary and primary schoolchildren in Cambodia and strengthened local economies. The project results-framework can be seen in Annex X. **Error! Reference source not found.**

32. The project's Theory of Change assumes that if daily nutritious school meals, typically consisting of rice, vegetable oil, animal protein, iodized salt, and vegetables, are provided as a warm breakfast, schoolchildren will be incentive to attend schools from the start of the class, reduce short-term hunger and to support attentiveness in class. As upper-primary students rotate between morning and afternoon sessions, students attending the afternoon session will not receive breakfast. Around 70 percent of all primary and pre-primary students are present in the morning shift and can eat breakfast through the school meals programme on each school day<sup>159</sup>.

33. the 2022-2027 USDA McGovern-Dole also require undertaking a baseline study, a mid-term and final evaluation.–The baseline study, mid-term evaluation and the final evaluation will be conducted in 2023, 2025 and 2027 respectively with indicative dates for each evaluation activities highlighted in Annex X.

### 3.2. Scope of the Evaluation

34. Commissioned by the WFP Cambodia Country Office, the 2022-2027 USDA McGovern-Dole also require undertaking a baseline study (2023), a mid-term (2025) and final evaluation (2027)<sup>160</sup>. The planned evaluations will cover all activities and process of the WFP Cambodia School Feeding USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program FFE-442-2022/009-00, including the formulation, implementation, resourcing, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting relevant to answer the evaluation questions.

35. The timing of the baseline study will be synchronized with the endline of the McGovern-Dole 2019-2023 award so that the baseline study, and the subsequent midterm and final evaluations, can present findings in continuum to the 2019 baseline and 2023 endline results with coherence.

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<sup>159</sup> Based on the calculation of WFP Cambodia's primary data on number of students enrolled in target schools

<sup>160</sup> The three evaluations will cover five years of implementation of McGovern-Dole 2022-2027. The indicative dates for each evaluation activities highlighted in **Error! Reference source not found.**

36. The McGovern-Dole 2022-2027 baseline will not collect primary quantitative data for indicators that remain the same with the previous award and measure change from the same groups. These indicators mainly include education, health, nutrition outcomes of school-going children in the targeted schools, such as the attentiveness, attendance, and literacy rate, etc. The baseline study will present the 2019 baseline and the updated values for these indicators gathered through the 2023 endline, which will constitute as the baseline values for the new award.

37. The benefit of measuring project-related change starting from the 2019 values is the following:

- 1) Data collected in 2023 will show the raised value as a result of the effects of the implementation from the previous award. The 2019 values are closer to the 'true baseline' or the pre-intervention state of the outcomes
- 2) Evaluation fatigue of stakeholders can be reduced as the baseline can be established primarily through desk review. The baseline will be established through desk review and primary data collection from the 2017 endline. Conducting primary quantitative data collection through the baseline study would cause beneficiaries to be surveyed twice in rapid succession; once for the endline of the 2019-2023 award (June 2023) and again for the 2022-2027 award baseline (July 2023). This approach would expend additional resources without the benefit of new insights (i.e., values are unlikely to have changed in a matter of months)
- 3) Comparing the 2019 baseline values allows the evaluation to track change with a longer timeframe, which will enable more insightful evidence on the progress and sustainability of the results.

38. The **baseline study (April-September 2023)** is the first product of the evaluation plan and will serve several critical purposes:

- 1) Establishing baseline values for new indicators and evaluation questions. There are two project components that are unique to the Program vis-à-vis the previous award, where primary baseline data will be collected. The first is the strengthened technical assistance for the national institutionalization of the school feeding programme. The relevant four outcomes for the Foundational Results will be gathered during the Year 1 Systems Approach to Better Education Results-School Feeding (SABER-SF) workshop<sup>161</sup>. The second is the expansion of the literacy intervention package from grades 1 and 2 to include grade 3 students. Grade 3 literacy outcomes will be collected separately by WFP's NGO partner, World Education. A detailed description of literacy outcome data collection method can be found in 4.2. Evaluation Approach and Methodology. A detailed list of indicators can be found on Annex X.
- 2) The baseline study will present the changes made by the project from 2019 to present, in view of the current context, supplemented by primary qualitative data, and framed in the evaluation questions of the McGovern-Dole 2022-2027 award. The baseline report will be a document that systematically presents the progress made from 2019 onwards so that the upcoming evaluations from this project will be able to present results in continuum with coherence.
- 3) The baselines established will be used to review the Program targets for 2028 and the relevance of evaluation questions.

39. At baseline inception stage, the overall evaluation design will be finalized with the full set of evaluation questions, methodology, sampling frame for mid-term and final evaluations. The baseline study will also be used to establish baseline values for all performance indicators and revisit project targets.

40. The **midterm evaluation (April-September 2025)** will be conducted at the end of FY25<sup>162</sup> to assess the progress towards project objectives and targets and inform course correction for the remainder of the project, as necessary. Specifically, the mid-term evaluation will: (1) review the project's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, sustainability, and coherence, (2) collect follow-up data for performance

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<sup>161</sup> Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) School Feeding framework (SABER-SF) is a useful approach to assessing the school feeding policy situation and systems in any country to identify the gaps and plan appropriate capacity development plans and/or road maps with the government and other stakeholders. It helps countries strengthen their national school feeding programs and/or transition to national school feeding programs with solid policies and systems when applicable, and assess progress of implementing each indicator

<sup>162</sup> End of project year 3 (April-Sept 2025), after two full years of activity implementation (there are no activities in project year 1).

indicators (both new and continued indicators from the FY19 award) for strategic objectives and outcomes, (3) assess whether the project is on track to meeting the results and targets, (4) review the results frameworks and theory of change, and (5) identify any necessary mid-course corrections and learning.

41. The midterm evaluation data will be gathered using multiple sources, such as primary quantitative, qualitative and participatory data, including results from Systems Approach to Better Education Results-School Feeding (SABER-SF) annual reviews<sup>163</sup>, to explore the evaluation questions outlined in Section 4. The methodology and sampling approach will be carefully designed to ensure comparability with the McGovern-Dole 2022-2027 baseline results, which is outlined in detail in Section 4. Methodology for the Evaluation. The findings from the midterm evaluation will provide preliminary learning on the key factors that contribute positively and/or negatively to facilitate a successful national ownership of the programme, which will be used for adaptive management of the project.

42. The objective of the **final evaluation (April-September 2027)** is to provide an evidence-based, independent assessment of performance of the project to evaluate its success, ensure accountability, and generate lessons learned. Specifically, it will: (1) review the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and coherence of the project, (2) collect performance indicator data for strategic objectives and higher-level results, (3) assess if the project has succeeded in achieving McGovern-Dole's two strategic objectives, (4) investigate the project's overall impact, (5) identify the likelihood for the benefits of the NHGSFP to sustain beyond the project timeline and expand in geographic coverage. It will analyse the factors that contributed to the success or challenges in the transition to national ownership and in strengthening the effectiveness and sustainability of the NHGSFP. The final evaluation will contribute to the learning of Royal Government of Cambodia, WFP and partners and further the evidence-base of USDA's learning agenda. The detailed utilization plan by all relevant stakeholders is presented in Section 2.3.

43. Gender equity and women empowerment (GEWE) considerations: HGSFP's gender entry-points are threefold: 1) By mainstreaming gender-sensitive approaches to tackle stereo-typical, negative gender norms in target area, especially around cooking and domestic work 2) By ensuring equal opportunities to men and women in the participation of the local HGSFP value-chain (Outcome 2) 3) By encouraging equal gender representation in leadership positions of relevant groups, such as school committees, procurement committees and agriculture cooperatives.

## 4. Evaluation approach, methodology and ethical considerations

### 4.1. Evaluation Questions and Criteria

44. **Evaluation Criteria:** The evaluations will apply the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria of impact, effectiveness, sustainability, relevance, efficiency and coherence<sup>164</sup>. The selected criteria are well aligned with criteria agreed for the McGovern-Dole funded program and set in the approved evaluation plan. The evaluation should analyse how gender, equity and wider inclusion objectives and GEWE mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design, and whether the evaluation subject has been guided by WFP and system-wide objectives on GEWE. The gender, equity and wider inclusion dimensions should be integrated into all evaluation criteria as appropriate. The criteria in the approved evaluation plan are the OECD-DAC criteria listed above.

45. **Evaluation Questions:** While the evaluation questions need to be developed in detail by the evaluation team during the inception stage, the key evaluation questions that addresses the evidence needs for the main end-users for this evaluation results are outlined in the included in Annex X. Key stakeholders' evidence needs identified through bilateral consultation, including factors that contribute to the effectiveness, sustainability, and cost efficiency of HGSFP.

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<sup>163</sup> SABER-SF workshops and annual reviews inform the progress in the NHGSFP institutionalization as anticipated under the project's Foundational Results, which also mirrors the five pillars of Joint Transition Strategy (FY22 McGovern-Dole Proposal; WFP Cambodia)

<sup>164</sup> For more detail see: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm> and <http://www.alnap.org/what-we-do/evaluation/eha>



46. Key stakeholders and users are outlined in detail in Section 2.3. Collectively, the questions aim at highlighting the existing circumstances, performance of the Program during the period and key lessons learnt, which could inform future strategic and operational decisions of the NHGSFP and WFP's technical assistance to the NHGSFP.

47. Furthermore, the initial evaluation questions are designed to further the knowledge base within the school meals literature through the application of USDA's McGovern-Dole Learning Agenda to learn on the effective design of capacity strengthening. As the proposed project design focuses on the transition to a nationally owned school feeding programme and on ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the NHGSFP, the evaluation will mainly contribute towards the following three Learning Agenda questions regarding the governance and institutionalization of the school feeding programme:

- a. What are the key institutions and governance structures required to effectively deliver, implement, and sustain school meal interventions? What relationship structures among these institutions yield the most successful and effective school meal programmes?
- b. What are the most successful policies affecting the success of school meal programmes? What are the necessary conditions for these policies to be implemented and to be effective?
- c. What types of incentives (and in which contexts) are the most effective at securing local or national government investment into school meal programmes? What are the barriers and challenges in securing investment?

#### **4.2. Evaluation Approach and Methodology**

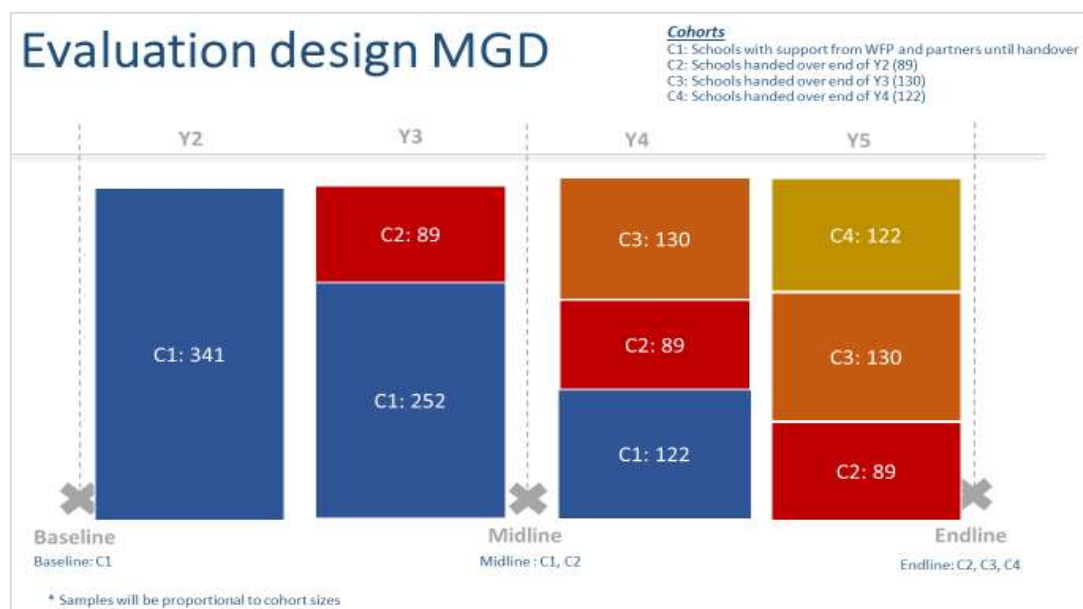
48. The methodology for the evaluations will be designed in accordance with the WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) as well as USDA's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Based on the requirements described in the TORs, further analysis done at inception phase and consultations with key stakeholders, the Evaluation Team will formulate an appropriate evaluation design, sampling strategy, and methodological approach for each stage of evaluation process. The Inception reports will be produced, and the detailed methodology defined in the inception reports should be guided by the following principles:

- 1) Employ the relevant evaluation criteria above.
- 2) Demonstrate impartiality and lack of biases by relying on a cross-section of information sources (stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries, etc.). The selection of field visit sites will also need to demonstrate impartiality.
- 3) Using mixed methods, ensure that women, girls, men and boys from different stakeholder groups participate and that their different voices are heard and used. Quantitative and qualitative data from different methods and sources will be triangulated to enhance the validity, reliability and credibility of the findings. The method to get qualitative data will include focus group discussions and key informant interviews while the method to get quantitative data will include reviewing and collecting quantitative data from the monitoring data from on-going program implementation and a cross-sectional survey of a sub-sample of school feeding schools visited in the previous baseline survey. The methods to get qualitative data such as focus group discussions and key informant interviews, will be used where relevant to highlight lessons learned and case studies representative of the interventions.
- 4) Apply an evaluation matrix geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions considering the data availability challenges, the budget and timing constraints.
- 5) Partnership with local research firms is encouraged. This includes the use of local enumerators for any survey work, ensuring that cultural and political sensitivities are addressed and that the enumeration teams have the local language expertise to elicit the needed information from beneficiaries and others; and
- 6) To the extent possible, the evaluation will be conducted by a gender-balanced, geographically and culturally diverse team with appropriate skills to assess gender dimensions of the subject as specified in the scope, approach and methodology sections of the Terms of Reference (ToR).

49. The activity evaluation design will follow a mixed-methods approach, which will maximize the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods and complement the results to gain a holistic, in-depth understanding on the evaluation questions. Quantitative methods will be utilized to collect data on the performance indicators for McGovern-Dole Strategic Objectives. The evaluation will take advantage of the

project design, which hands over different cohorts of schools to government ownership at different points in time and adopt a stratified-sampling approach. The four different cohorts are seen in the **Error! Reference source not found.** Cohort 1 (C1) are schools that are still supported by WFP and partners with direct implementations (activities 5-10) prior to hand over. Cohort 2 (C2) are the 89 schools to be handed over at the end of year 2, cohort 3 (C3) 130 schools to be handed over at the end of year 3, and cohort 4 (C4) the 122 schools to be handed over at the end of year 5<sup>165</sup>.

**Figure 4. Phased-in Sampling Approach for quantitative data collection under MGD**



50. A representative sample, statistically powered for comparison with 2019 baseline<sup>166</sup>, will be selected per strata for comparison, which will result in a rich analysis of factors that may have positively and negatively influenced the outcome results based on school hand-over timing. Variables, such as socio-demographic factors, quality of implementation and other external factors, will be comprehensively and systematically reviewed using multiple data sources to explain the variation in results between cohorts. The analysis will further be enhanced by disaggregation of all relevant indicators by gender to evaluate whether the project addresses the needs of boys, girls, men, women and other vulnerable groups.

51. The sample size will be determined based on the degree of change that is expected amongst the performance indicators, levels of statistical significance desired and acceptable levels of statistical error. The sample size calculations will be the responsibility of the Evaluation Team in consultation with the WFP CO.

52. Specific to the literacy indicators, the Program's cooperating partner, World Education will be responsible of collecting the quantitative data. The full list of indicators, which World Education is in charge of can be found in Annex X. The Strategic Objective 1 indicator on students' ability to demonstrate reading, "Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text (grade 2 by gender)" will be evaluated using the globally recognised Early Grade Reading Assessment tool contextualized to the new Komar Rien Komar Cheh early grade reading package. As the use of the instrument requires specific training and training package, World Education, together with MoEYS, will manage the data collection through specially trained external assessors. Data collection cycle will differ from the rest of the monitoring and evaluation cycle, which is detailed in Annex X,

<sup>165</sup> The school handover criteria agreed in the Joint-Transition Strategy are: 1) adequate capacity to implement the HGSF programme, (2) adequate infrastructure to safely prepare meals for children, and (3) schools have adequate kitchen equipment and utensils to ensure hygiene practices are adopted (FY22 McGovern-Dole Proposal; WFP Cambodia)

<sup>166</sup> The sampling universe (N=304) will be identical to the evaluations conducted in FY19-23. In case the handover of schools does not follow planned timeline, each stratum will be oversampled by 10% to ensure representativeness. In case there are wide variation in the actual number of schools handed over, the sampling strategy will adjust adaptively.

53. A wealth of qualitative data will be collected using focus group discussions and key informant interviews from a multitude of stakeholders; students, teachers, parents, cooks, storekeepers, village leaders and a range of government stakeholders at the district, provincial and national level. Qualitative data will be crucial to answer numerous important evaluation questions and to explore the reasons behind the numbers, such as the factors that affected the performance of the results. Primary qualitative data will also be critical informing the changes to the context occurred since FY19 baseline.

54. Specific data collection methods are expected to include: a desk review, quantitative survey, semi-structured interviews and focus groups (to ensure that a cross-section of stakeholders is able to participate so that a diversity of views is gathered) and observation during field visits. The survey modules utilized will include household and child questionnaires as well as school questionnaire (with teachers and school directors).

55. Data on the **Foundational Results** will be largely informed by the two participatory Systems Approach to Better Education Results-School Feeding (SABER-SF) workshops, which will produce comparative data and knowledge across five pillars (Policy Frameworks, Financial Capacity, Institutional Capacity and Coordination, Design and Implementation, Community Roles) in support of governments implementing national school feeding programmes. The first SABER-SF workshop will be conducted in year 1 of the project ahead of implementation to provide baseline information on government capacity to run the NHGSFP. Every year, a review of the progress of SABER pillars will be conducted while a follow-up SABER-SF workshop will be conducted in year 4 of project implementation.

56. The rich information drawn from the SABER exercises is expected to be extensively triangulated with monitoring data, quantitative, qualitative primary data for an in-depth evaluation of the Foundational Results. Furthermore, to strengthen the independence and impartiality of SABER results, which in essence is a self-assessed, participatory exercise, the evaluation team is expected to participate in the SABER-SF workshops and annual reviews to gain a robust understanding on the strengths and weaknesses of the workshop results and minimise biases in the final analysis.

57. The main strengths of this evaluation design is threefold; 1) the evaluation results can be measured against the FY19 baseline and see the ten-year change in the target areas; 2) the stratified sampling design is tailored towards identifying the factors that positively or negative influence the sustainability of the home-grown school feeding programme under national ownership; 3) measure the strengths and gaps of national stakeholders capacity to implement the NHGSFP according to the five pillars of capacities agreed under the Joint-Transition Strategy, which mirrors the SABER-SF pillars as well as this project's Foundational Results Framework. The main limitation of the evaluation is that it will not be able to measure attribution of project activities towards impact as there is no comparison with the counterfactual. An impact evaluation design was not possible due to a lack of valid comparison group.

58. The methodology should be sensitive in terms of GEWE, equity and inclusion, indicating how the perspectives and voices of diverse groups (men and women, boys, girls, the elderly, people living with disabilities and other marginalized groups) will be sought and considered. The methodology should ensure that primary data collected is disaggregated by sex and age; an explanation should be provided if this is not possible.

59. The following potential risks to the methodology have been identified. The start and end of the school year is subject to change since the disruptions due to COVID-19 pandemic; hence, the timeline should remain flexible and concreted during inception period. Some indicators, such as extent of school children being hungry at school or attentiveness in class, are heavily dependent on the time of data collection, therefore, the data collection method should be carefully curated to these risks. Language and culture are also barriers for the evaluation; hence, the evaluation team should be aware of and take pre-emptive action before going down to the field.

60. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect gender and equity analysis. The findings should include a discussion on intended and unintended effects of the intervention on gender equality and equity dimensions. The report should provide lessons/ challenges/recommendations for conducting gender and equity-responsive evaluations in the future.

### 4.3. Evaluability assessment

61. Evaluability is the extent to which an activity or a program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. A preliminary evaluability assessment will be done by the Country Office at the initial stage of

project cycle, which will be deepened by the evaluation team in each inception package relating to deliverables.

62. The evaluation team shall critically assess data availability and take evaluability limitations into consideration in its choice of evaluation methods. In doing so, the team will also critically review the evaluability of the gender aspects of the programs, identify related challenges and mitigation measures and determine whether additional indicators are required to include gender empowerment and gender equality dimensions.

63. The evaluations will take a program theory approach based on the results framework. It will draw on the existing body of documented data as far as possible and complement and triangulate this with information to be collected in the field.

64. Concerning the quality of data and information, the Evaluation Team should assess data reliability as part of the inception phase expanding on the information provided in section 4.3 to inform the data collection. In addition, the Evaluation team should systematically check accuracy, consistency and validity of collected data and information and acknowledge any limitations/caveats in drawing conclusions using the data.

#### **4.4. Ethical Considerations**

65. WFP's decentralised evaluations must conform to WFP and UNEG ethical standards and norms. The contractors undertaking the evaluations are responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle (preparation and design, data collection, data analysis, reporting and dissemination). This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.

66. Contractors are responsible for managing any potential ethical risks and issues and must put in place in consultation with the Evaluation Manager, processes and systems to identify, report and resolve any ethical issues that might arise during the implementation of the evaluation. Ethical approvals and reviews by relevant national and institutional review boards must be sought where required.

67. The team and evaluation manager will not have been involved in the design, implementation or monitoring of the WFP HGSFP nor have any other potential or perceived conflicts of interest. All members of the evaluation team will abide by the [2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#), including the Pledge of Ethical Conduct as well as the WFP technical note on gender. The evaluation team and individuals who participate directly in the evaluation at the time of issuance of the purchase order are expected to sign a confidentiality agreement and a commitment to ethical conduct. These templates will be provided by the country office when signing the contract.

#### **4.5. Quality Assurance**

68. The WFP evaluation quality assurance system sets out processes with steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products based on a set of [Quality Assurance Checklists](#). The quality assurance will be systematically applied during this evaluation and relevant documents will be provided to the evaluation team. This includes checklists for feedback on quality for each of the evaluation products. The relevant checklist will be applied at each stage, to ensure the quality of the evaluation process and outputs.

69. The WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) is based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community and aims to ensure that the evaluation process and products conform to best practice. This quality assurance process does not interfere with the views or independence of the evaluation team but ensures that the report provides credible evidence and analysis in a clear and convincing way and draws its conclusions on that basis.

70. The WFP evaluation manager will be responsible for ensuring that the evaluation progresses as per the [DEQAS Process Guide](#) and for conducting a rigorous quality control of the evaluation products ahead of their finalization.

71. To enhance the quality and credibility of decentralized evaluations, an outsourced quality support (QS) service directly managed by the WFP Office of Evaluation reviews the draft ToR, the draft inception and the

evaluation reports, and provides a systematic assessment of their quality from an evaluation perspective, along with recommendations.

72. The evaluation manager will share the assessment and recommendations from the quality support service with the team leader, who will address the recommendations when finalizing the inception and evaluation reports. To ensure transparency and credibility of the process in line with the [UNEG norms and standards](#),<sup>[1]</sup> a rationale should be provided for comments that the team does not take into account when finalizing the report.

73. The evaluation team will be required to ensure the quality of data (reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the data collection, synthesis, analysis and reporting phases.

74. The evaluation team should be assured of the accessibility of all relevant documentation within the provisions of the directive on disclosure of information. This is available in the [WFP Directive CP2010/001](#) on information disclosure.

75. WFP expects that all deliverables from the evaluation team are subject to a thorough quality assurance review by the evaluation firm in line with the WFP evaluation quality assurance system prior to submission of the deliverables to WFP.

76. All final evaluation reports will be subject to a post hoc quality assessment (PHQA) by an independent entity through a process that is managed by the Office of Evaluation. The overall PHQA results will be published on the WFP website alongside the evaluation report.

## 5. Organization of the evaluation

### 5.1. Phases and Deliverables

77. The main phase for each evaluation is as follows:

	<b>McGovern-Dole 2022-2027</b>		
	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Mid-line Evaluation</b>	<b>Endline evaluation</b>
1. Preparation	Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference
2. Inception	Inception Report	Inception Report	Inception Report
3. Collect data	Debriefing with PowerPoint	Debriefing with PowerPoint	Debriefing with PowerPoint
4. Analyse data and Report <sup>167</sup>	Evaluation Report	Evaluation Report	Evaluation Report
5. Validate, Disseminate and follow-up			Combined Management Response, Dissemination product <sup>168</sup> , (only at endline) presentation at

[1] UNEG Norm #7 states "that transparency is an essential element that establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability"

<sup>167</sup> In addition to the standard list of Annexes to the Evaluation Reports, during the Inception phase WFP CO and Evaluation Team will elaborate the type of practicable deliverables to be used for further program adjustments and decision making, as well as for effective communication with key stakeholders. These may include – Aide Memoire, Technical Summary of lessons learnt and recommendations based on feedback from Key stakeholders (aimed at SF practitioners), thematic briefs on topics identified jointly with the WFP CO (such as gender, nutrition, transition and handover, etc).

<sup>168</sup> WFP CO will explore with stakeholders most effective ways to disseminate the evaluation results for accountability, effective learning and advocacy with critical stakeholders of the program to increase the utility function of the evaluations. The final dissemination product may include case studies, briefs, synthesis, PowerPoint presentation, etc.

			the external dissemination workshop
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78. **Timeline:** The timeline for the evaluations for the Program is from October 2022 to September 2027, covering planning/preparation, inception, data collection, data processing and data analysis and report, and dissemination. The key list of deliverables and timelines for those is outlined in Annex X. The list of deliverables and timelines will be further reviewed and adjusted as required when the methodology and Inception report are finalized and agreed between the parties.

**5.2. Evaluation Team Composition**

79. The evaluation team will be comprised of a team leader and other national and international team members, as necessary, to ensure a complementary mix of technical expertise in the evaluation’s focus areas (i.e., education, nutrition and food security, gender, etc.). The team comprised of 3-4 members will have experience in evaluation, research, and survey design in addition to individual technical expertise in the thematic areas, such as education/school feeding programme, Institutional capacity development (including experience with the SABER method) and gender. A dedicated Quality Assurance person as part of the team composition is preferred.

80. The team leader must have a track-record of strong leadership experience in complex evaluations and have expertise in one of the key competencies listed above. The team leader is expected to be the communication point-person, thus, have in-depth technical expertise in designing the methodology, sampling and data collection tools. Her/his primary responsibilities will be: i) defining the evaluation approach and methodology; ii) guiding and managing the team; iii) leading the evaluation mission and representing the evaluation team; iv) drafting and revising, as required, the inception report, the end of field work (i.e., exit) debriefing presentation and evaluation report in line with DEQAS.

81. The team members will bring together a complementary combination of the technical expertise required and have a track record of written work on similar assignments. Team members will: i) contribute to the methodology in their area of expertise based on a document review; ii) conduct field work; iii) participate in team meetings and meetings with stakeholders; iv) contribute to the drafting and revision of the evaluation products in their technical area(s). All team members are expected to demonstrate the ability to be culturally sensitive and respectful in the communication and attitude throughout the evaluations towards WFP’s internal and external stakeholders.

82. To the extent possible, the evaluation will be conducted by a gender-balanced, geographically and culturally diverse team with appropriate skills to assess gender dimensions of the subject as specified in the scope, approach and methodology sections of the TOR. At least two team members should have experience in conducting evaluation exercises for WFP-implemented programs funded by McGovern-Dole.

83. The evaluation team will conduct the evaluation under the direction of its team leader and in close communication with the WFP evaluation manager. The team will be hired following agreement with WFP on its composition

**5.3. Roles and Responsibilities**

**84. The WFP CO Management**

- Assign an evaluation manager for the evaluation for the McGovern-Dole 2022-2027 program evaluations
- Compose the internal evaluation committee and the evaluation reference group (see below)

- Approve the final ToR, inception and evaluation reports
- Approve the evaluation team selection
- Ensure the independence and impartiality of the evaluation at all stages, including establishment of an evaluation committee and a reference group
- Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and the evaluation subject, its performance and results with the evaluation manager and the evaluation team
- Organize and participate in two separate debriefings per evaluation, one internal and one with external stakeholders
- Oversee dissemination and follow-up processes, including the preparation of a management response to the evaluation recommendations.

85. The **evaluation manager** manages the evaluation process through all phases including: drafting this ToR; identifying the evaluation team; preparing and managing the budget; setting up the evaluation committee and evaluation reference group; ensuring quality assurance mechanisms are operational and effectively used; consolidating and sharing comments on draft inception and evaluation reports with the evaluation team; ensuring that the team has access to all documentation and information necessary to the evaluation; facilitating the introduction of the ET to local stakeholders in support of field work preparation; arrange meetings with WFP internal stakeholders; organise security briefings for the evaluation team and supporting with additional logistics as necessary; and conducting the first level quality assurance of the evaluation products. The evaluation manager will be the main interlocutor between the team, represented by the team leader and WFP counterparts to ensure a smooth implementation process.

86. An internal **evaluation committee** is formed to help ensure the independence and impartiality of the evaluation. The role and responsibility of committee members will be detailed in Annex X. An internal evaluation committee chaired by the Country Director will approve Terms of Reference, budget, evaluation team, inception and evaluation reports, which helps to maintain distance from influence by program implementers.

87. **An evaluation reference group (ERG)** has been formed, as appropriate, with representation from WFP country office, Regional Bureau, WFP Headquarters divisions, USDA, Government partners, UN agencies and NGO partners. Please refer to Annex X where list of members is available. The ERG members will review and comment on the draft evaluation products and act as key informants in order to further safeguard against bias and influence.

88. **The regional bureau** will take responsibility to:

- Advise the evaluation manager and provide support to the evaluation process where appropriate
- Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and on the evaluation subject as required
- Provide comments on the draft ToR, inception and evaluation reports
- Support the preparation of a management response to the evaluation and track the implementation of the recommendations.
- While the regional evaluation officer will perform most of the above responsibilities, other regional bureau-relevant technical staff may participate in the evaluation reference group and/or comment on evaluation products as appropriate.

89. **Other Stakeholders** (National Government including relevant ministries, implementing partners / NGOs, partner UN agencies) will perform the roles and responsibilities of evaluation reference group since they are members of the group.

90. **The Office of Evaluation (OEV)**. OEV is responsible for overseeing WFP decentralized evaluation function, defining evaluation norms and standards, managing the outsourced quality support service, publishing as well submitting the final evaluation report to the PHQA. OEV also ensures a help desk function and advises the Regional Evaluation Officer, the Evaluation Manager and Evaluation teams when required. Internal and external stakeholders and/or the

evaluators are encouraged to reach out to the regional evaluation officer and the Office of Evaluation helpdesk ([wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org)) in case of potential impartiality breaches or non-adherence to UNEG ethical guidelines.

91. The Evaluation Team will be expected to deliver the three evaluations as outlined by the ToR and agreed during inception. The Evaluation Team is expected to hire a local point-person that will be able to schedule and set up all necessary meetings needed for data collection and arrange all necessary logistics independently.

#### **5.4. Security Considerations**

92. **Security clearance** Security is not necessarily a significant concern in Cambodia, beyond some incidence of theft and other opportunistic crimes. Security clearance where required is to be obtained from the Cambodia CO, through UNDSS. As an independent supplier of evaluation services to WFP, the evaluation company is responsible for ensuring the security of all persons contracted, including adequate arrangements for evacuation for medical or situational reasons. The consultants contracted by the evaluation company do not fall under the UN Department of Safety & Security (UNDSS) system for UN personnel. The evaluation team must observe applicable United Nations Department of Safety and Security rules and regulations including taking security training (BSAFE) available at <https://training.dss.un.org/thematicarea/category?id=6>

However, to avoid any security incidents, the Evaluation Manager is requested to ensure:

- The WFP CO registers the team members with the Security Officer on arrival in country and arranges a security briefing for them to gain an understanding of the security situation on the ground.
- The team members observe applicable UN security rules and regulations –e.g., curfews etc

#### **5.5. Communication**

93. To ensure a smooth and efficient process and enhance the learning from this evaluation, the evaluation team should place emphasis on transparent and open communication with key stakeholders. These will be achieved by ensuring a clear agreement on the communication channels, timeline and frequency of communication with and between key stakeholders

92. Should translators be required for fieldwork, the evaluation firm will make arrangements and include the cost in the budget proposal.

93. Based on the stakeholder analysis, the communication and knowledge management plan (in Annex X) identifies the users of the evaluation to involve in the process and to whom the report should be disseminated. The communication and knowledge management plan indicates how findings including gender, equity and wider inclusion issues will be disseminated and how stakeholders interested in, or affected by, gender, equity and wider inclusion issues will be engaged.

94. As part of the international standards for evaluation, WFP requires that all evaluations are made publicly available. It is important that evaluation reports are accessible to a wide audience, thereby contributing to the credibility of WFP – through transparent reporting – and the use of evaluation. Following the approval of the final evaluation report, a dissemination workshop will be arranged with the donor, government stakeholders and other members of the ERG with the purpose of learning. Response to the evaluation recommendation will be co-developed during the dissemination workshop.

#### **5.6. Budget**

95. Funding Source: The baseline study, mid-term evaluation and endline evaluation will be funded by the WFP Cambodia Country Office using the M&E budget allocation in the McGovern-Dole 2022-2027 grant.



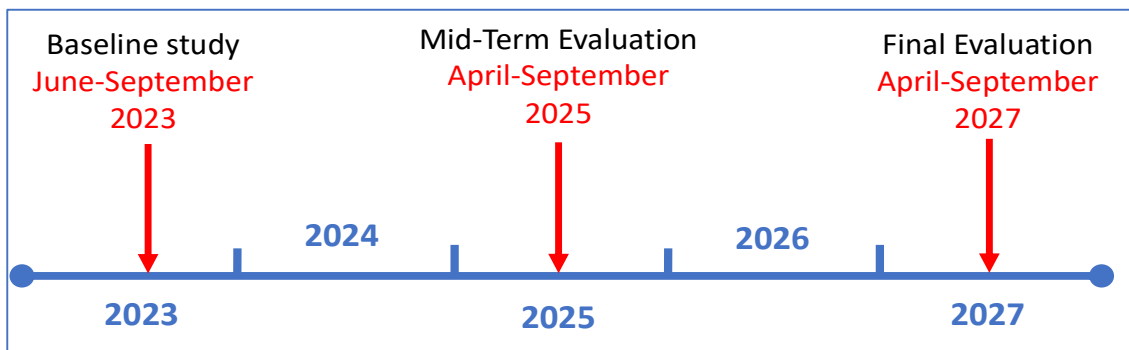
96. The service provider will outline their budget in a financial proposal to WFP as part of their response to the Request for Proposals (RfP) (Annex X indicates the anticipated number of days which help evaluation team to estimate the budget). For the purpose of this evaluation, the service provider will:

- Include budget for international and domestic travel and for all relevant in-country data collection (both qualitative and quantitative)
- Hire and supervise any and all technical and administrative assistance required (including in-country).
- The final budget and handling will be determined by the option of contracting that will be used and the rates that will apply at the time of contracting.
- Follow the agreed rates for decentralized evaluations as provided for in the Long-Term Agreement (LTA) with WFP

97. Please send any queries to Sunwoo Julie Byun, M&E officer: [sunwoo.byun@wfp.org](mailto:sunwoo.byun@wfp.org)

## Annex 2: Timeline and Country Maps

The overall timeline of the series of evaluation is shown here:



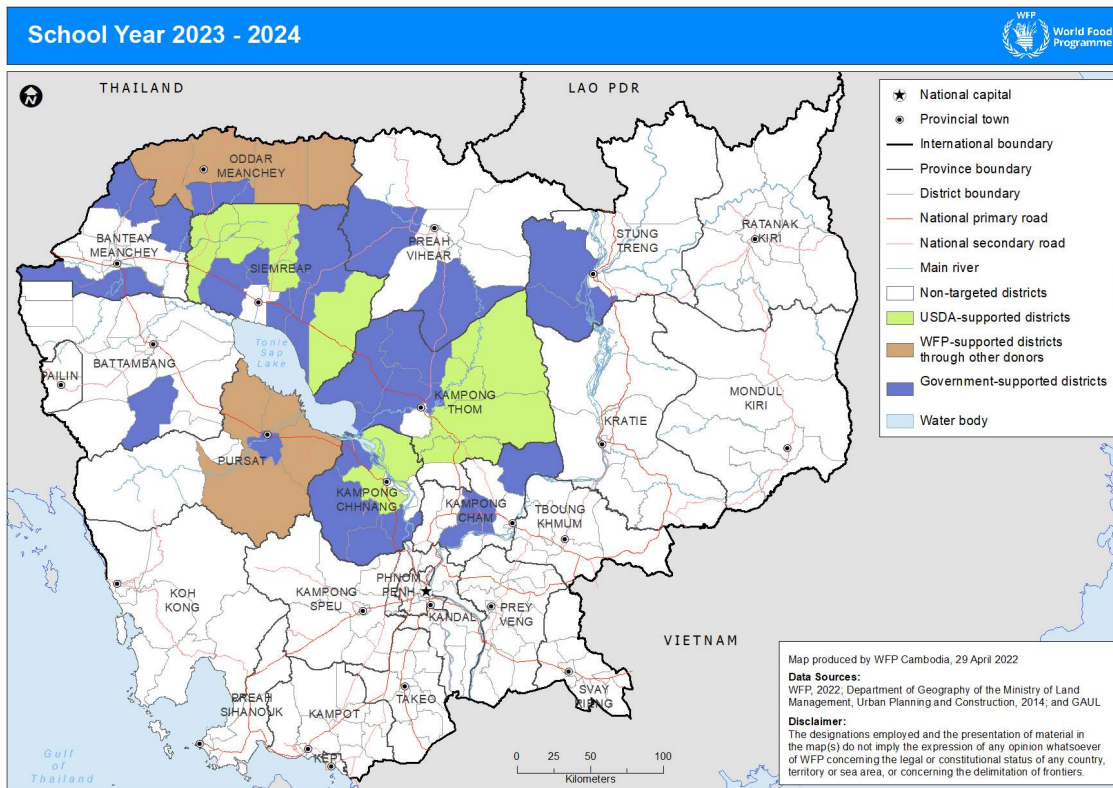
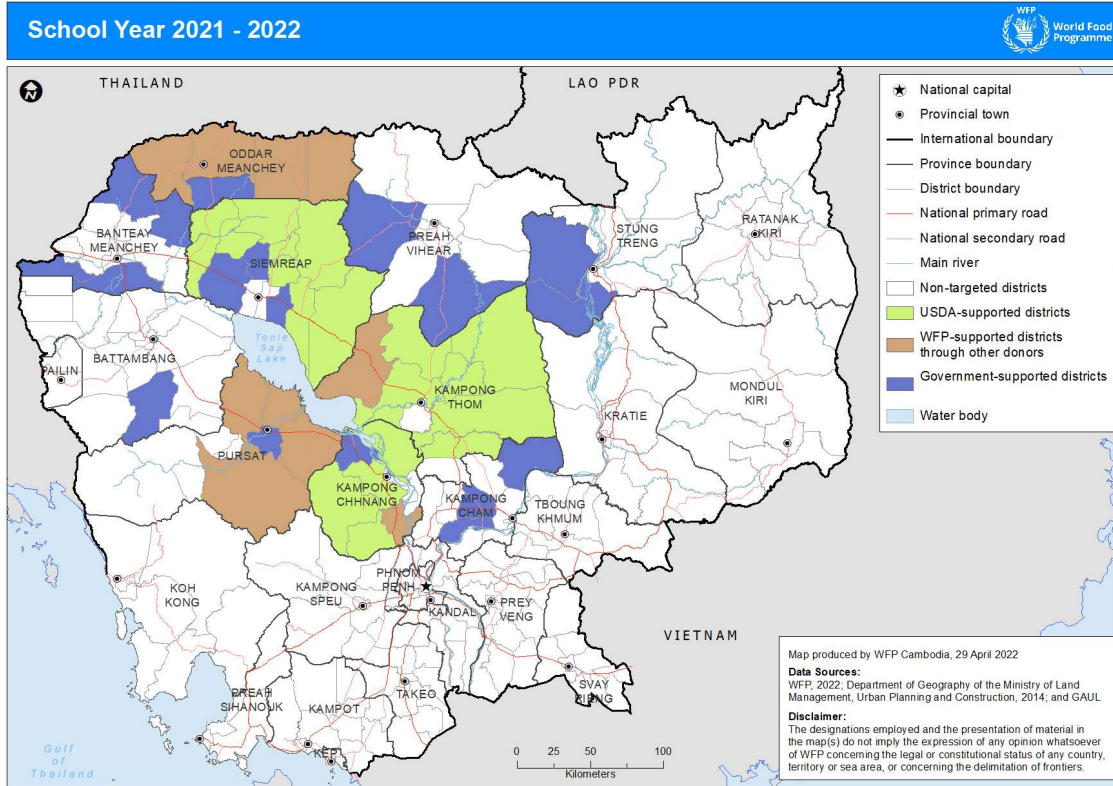
The detailed timeline for the baseline is shown in here:

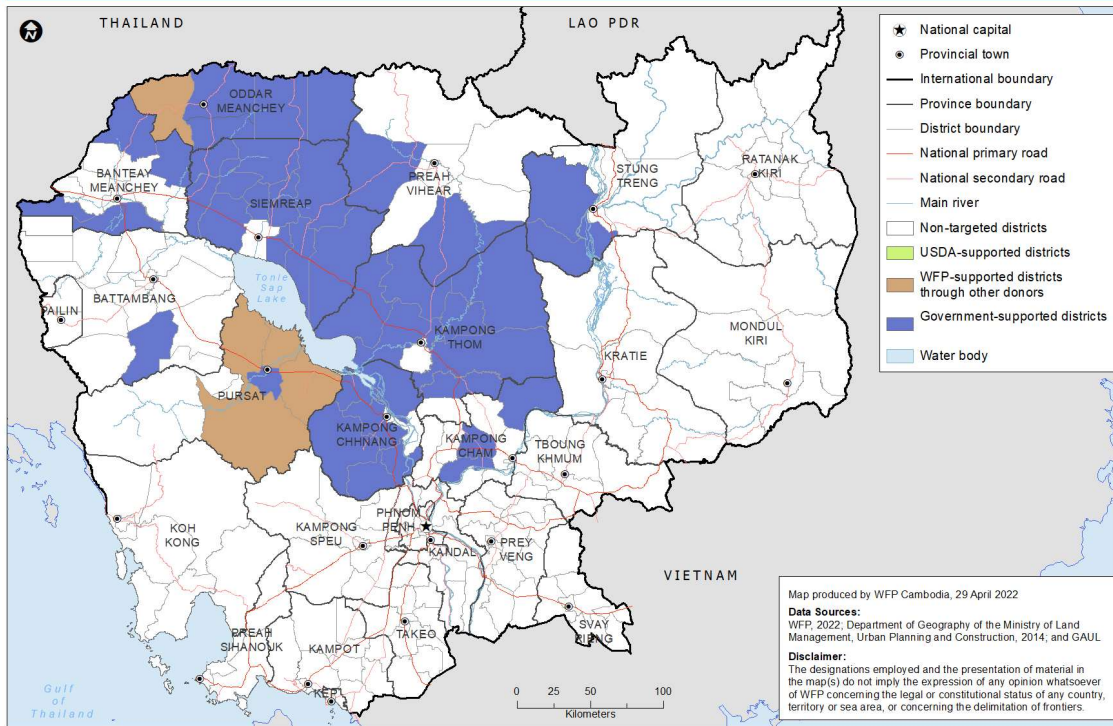
Indicative timeline	Phases	Led by
<b>BASELINE STUDY</b>		
<b>INCEPTION PHASE FOR OVERALL EVALUATION</b>		
May 2023	Provision of the data/electronic library to the Evaluation Team; team orientation	EM
29 May – 09 June	Draft and submission of inception report	ET
09 –26 June	Review by DEQs, ERG, EC	EM
By 05 July	Revision and submission of final inception report	ET
<b>DATA COLLECTION<sup>169</sup></b>		
26 & 27 June 2023	SABER-SF initial workshop	ET
05 -21 July	Desk Review <sup>170</sup> and qualitative data <sup>171</sup> collection	ET
21 July	Debrief with WFP on preliminary findings	ET
<b>ANALYSIS AND REPORT WRITING</b>		
31 July	Prepare and submit baseline study report (draft zero)	ET
01 – 18 August	Review by DEQs, ERG, EC	EM
25 August	Revision and submission of second draft	ET
01 September	Review and approval by EC	EC
08 September	Submission to USDA for review	EM
06 October	Comments received from USDA	USDA
13 October	Finalization and submission of final Evaluation Report to USDA	ET

<sup>169</sup> The data collection stage for the baseline study may be conducted remotely, depending on the final agreed design at inception

<sup>170</sup> The quantitative results from the McGovern-Dole 2019-2023 endline only became available by the second week of July

Cambodia country maps showing project locations by school year





## Annex 3: McGovern-Dole 2019-2023 midterm evaluation brief

# Midterm Activity Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant (FFE-442-2019-013-00) for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia

### Introduction and Background

This document summarizes the findings from the midterm evaluation of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) McGovern-Dole School Feeding Programme<sup>172</sup> for World Food Programme (WFP) School Feeding activities in Cambodia, covering the period 01 November 2019 to 30 October 2023. The current McGovern-Dole programme is a continuation of two earlier phases (2013-2016 and 2017-2019) and is being implemented in three central provinces of Cambodia

This evaluation is the second of a series of three linked pieces of work<sup>173</sup> considering the USDA support to the WFP programme in the country. The series has been commissioned by the WFP Cambodia Country Office, with updated Terms of Reference to take account of the effects of the pandemic on implementation. The evaluation focused on three evaluation criteria: relevance (especially of pandemic mitigation adaptations), effectiveness, and sustainability (with a focus on steps yet to be taken to ensure a smooth handover and transition by the end of the cycle). Information was collected in mid-2022 through interviews and group meetings, visits to provincial departments and schools (425 persons were interviewed (58 percent women), but no quantitative data was collected in this round.

In Cambodia, short-term hunger is a key factor affecting educational results, such as literacy, attendance, and concentration in schools.<sup>174</sup> The USDA McGovern-Dole programme is a major component of the WFP school feeding activities in Cambodia set up to address these issues through the provision of quality education; promotion of good nutrition practices. It is also designed to support the school feeding programme's transition to national funding, management, and overall ownership.<sup>175</sup>

The USDA McGovern-Dole programme aims to encourage students' enrolment, attendance, and completion of their primary education, as well as reduce short-term hunger and improve the children's concentration in the classroom. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cambodian schools were closed for almost two years, which severely curtailed the planned activities, though different ways of delivering food assistance and trainings were developed. Schools fully reopened in January 2022.

### Was it relevant?

The McGovern-Dole SFP provides an avenue for the WFP school meals programme to work with and support the change from a traditional food delivery approach to the 'home-grown school feeding' approach adopted by the Government. This is done through a combination of direct engagement at school and district level, as well as through building official capacity to enable strong national leadership. This is outlined in a new Joint Transition Strategy agreed between the parties.

The programme appropriately prioritizes schools in areas with high poverty and low education outcomes. During the school closures, the repurposing of the activities to support the distribution of take-home rations was relevant to the Government's emergency response approach to support the most vulnerable populations.

The overall school feeding programme – of which the McGovern-Dole component is a major part - is well aligned with Government priorities, with trainings and capacity building activities conducted jointly. Technical assistance support at school level has contributed to increased clarity of benefits, roles, responsibilities, and management of the programme.

The programme design assumes that the school feeding programme equally impacts girls and boys, though a more proactive focus on gender considerations would be beneficial.

### Was it effective?

There are good policies and structures in place, but continued rollout of the national school feeding programme still depends on the support of high-level advocates. There is more clarity and structure related to

<sup>172</sup> USDA McGovern-Dole programme FFE-442-2019-013-00

<sup>173</sup> The evaluation consists of a baseline (2020), midterm (originally planned for 2021) and endline assessment (2023).

<sup>174</sup> WFP/USDA LRP Proposal FY2019.

<sup>175</sup> WFP/USDA McGovern-Dole Proposal

the programme at different levels compared to the baseline, and school feeding committees at school, commune, district, and provincial levels have been established. Staffing issues and turnover have had a more negative impact.

A significant percentage (65 percent) of the pre-set targets have been met (or are on track to be met). Over-achievements were most common regarding trainings and production of improved teaching materials. The number of meals provided is only at 15 percent of end of cycle target, due to the school closures. Although the take-home rations were not foreseen in the programme design, 72 percent of the revised target numbers were reached, and WFP monitoring found that over 95 percent of the recipient households reported acceptable levels of food consumption after distributions.

### **Can it be sustained?**

The overall school feeding programme is planned to be handed over to the Government over the coming six years, and continued as a key component of the national social protection policy. It is very likely that the work will be satisfactorily continued by the authorities, not least as school feeding enjoys high-level support within the Ministry of Education.

The development of a Joint Transition Strategy between the Government and WFP will serve to guide this process, despite some known challenges such as the need for enhanced technical assistance at different levels. It clarifies roles and responsibilities of national stakeholders to enable ongoing implementation. The programme has made progress towards handover, but the timeframe of the current cycle is too short to sufficiently prepare the Government to continue the programme – since the evaluation, USDA has confirmed a new programme phase to succeed the current one.

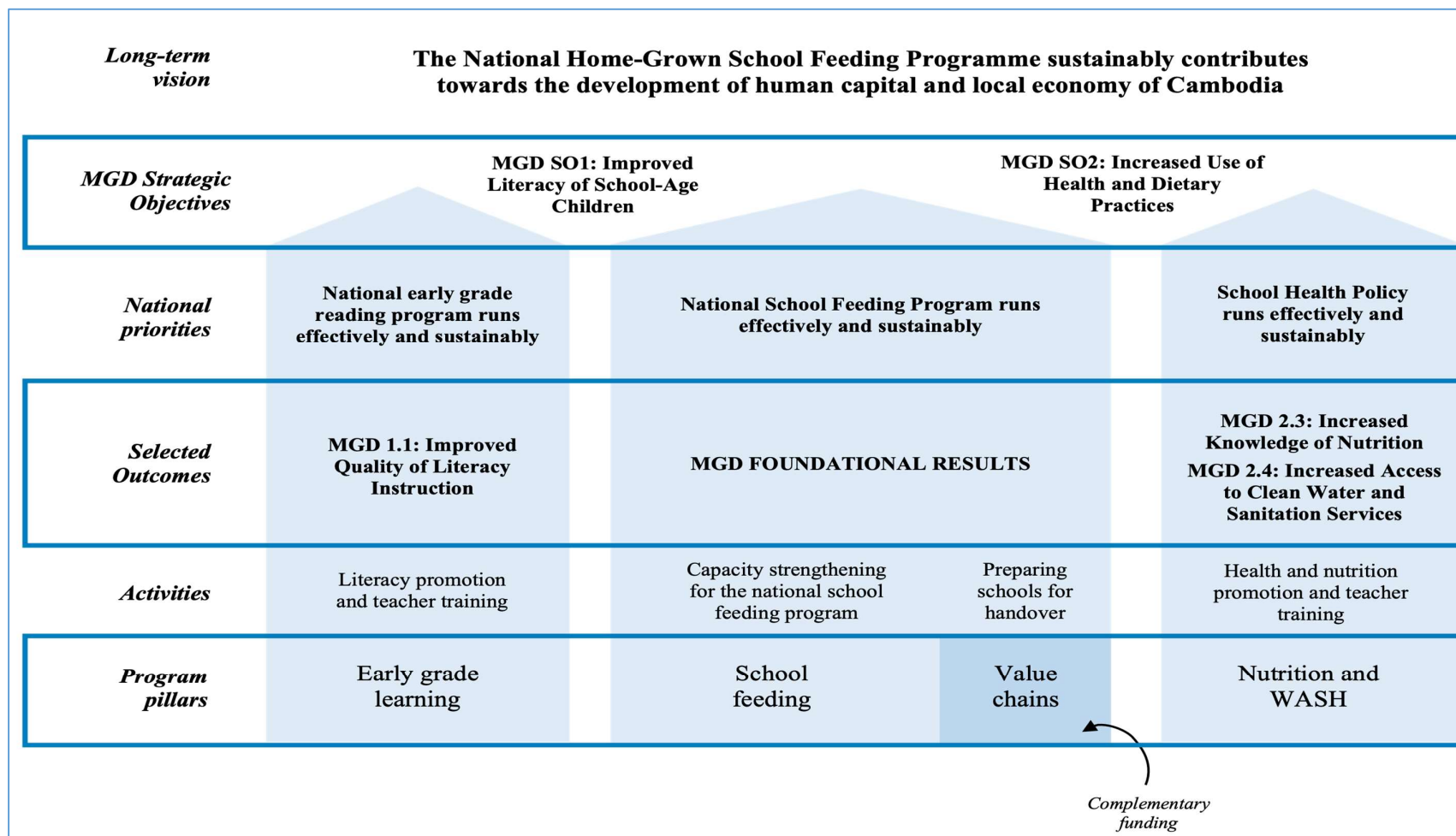
The current McGovern-Dole programme cycle has prioritized the more concrete components of handover of schools, but there needs to be further emphasis on supporting the school systems and other institutions in other areas – policy development, monitoring and reporting, programme management, and resourcing. Communities are supportive of the programme, but the success of the work is still highly dependent on the cooperating partners and volunteers at community and school levels. A stronger degree of institutional support is still needed, which will require further technical assistance from WFP as schools transition to government management.

### **Lessons Learned**

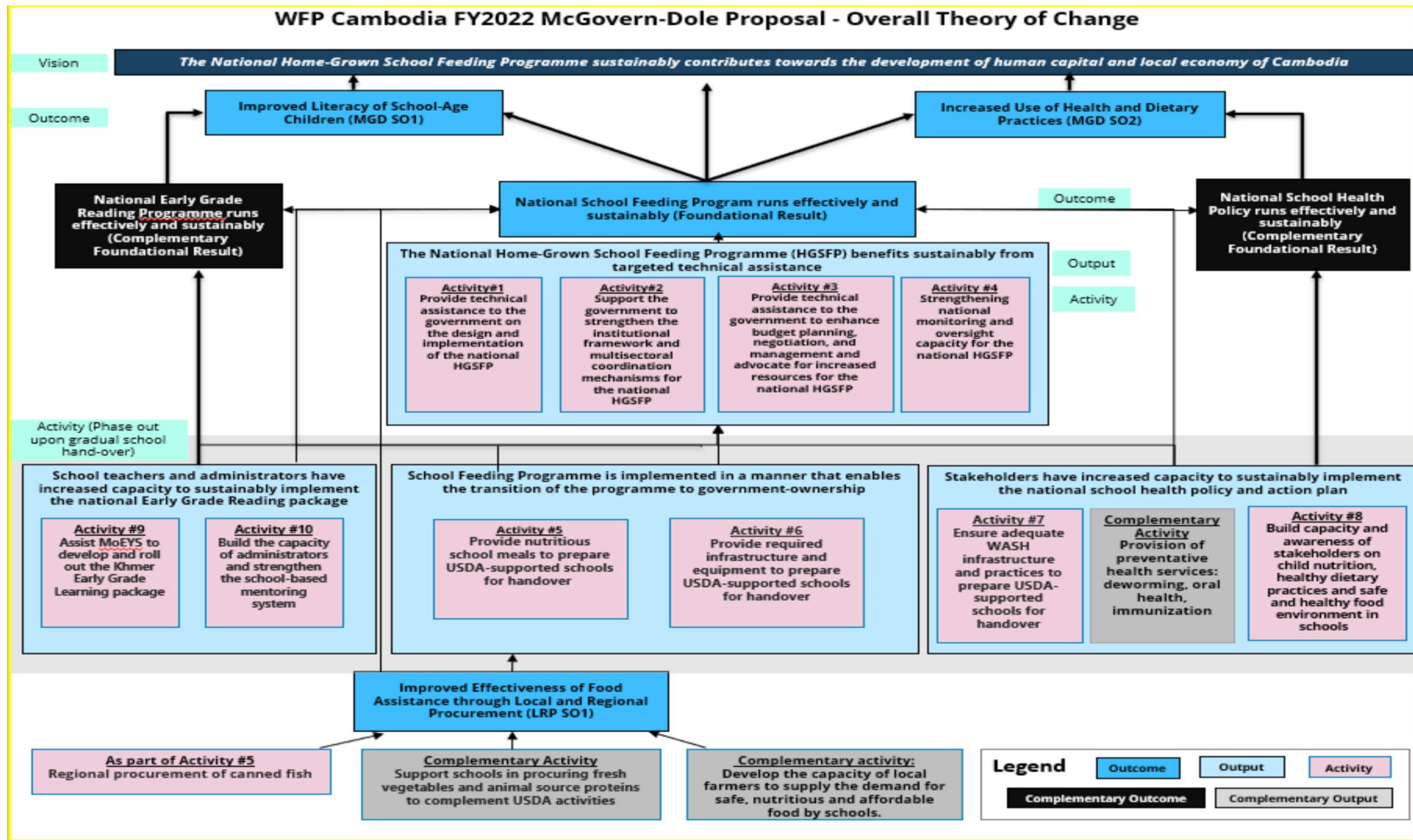
Applicable lessons learned fall into three categories: handover, project management, and monitoring and evaluation.

- WFP should integrate increased staffing for national staff with expertise in Government procedures.
- Government management systems need to be developed prior to school handover.
- The Government requires a complete costing analysis for supporting school meals that integrates all ancillary management costs.
- Continuous socialization: there is a need for a standardized training and orientation approach to incoming personnel at different levels of Government, from schools and suppliers up to the Ministry level, given frequent staff turnover.
- Management training for school principals will directly contribute to better results.
- Better availability and understanding of monitoring and reporting systems, particularly in remote settings, is required.
- Repurposing school meals to take-home rations was shown to be feasible and improved the food security of the most vulnerable households.
- Gender indicators: more proactively ensuring women's participation and empowerment in the programming would be beneficial.

## Annex 4: Project Theory of Change

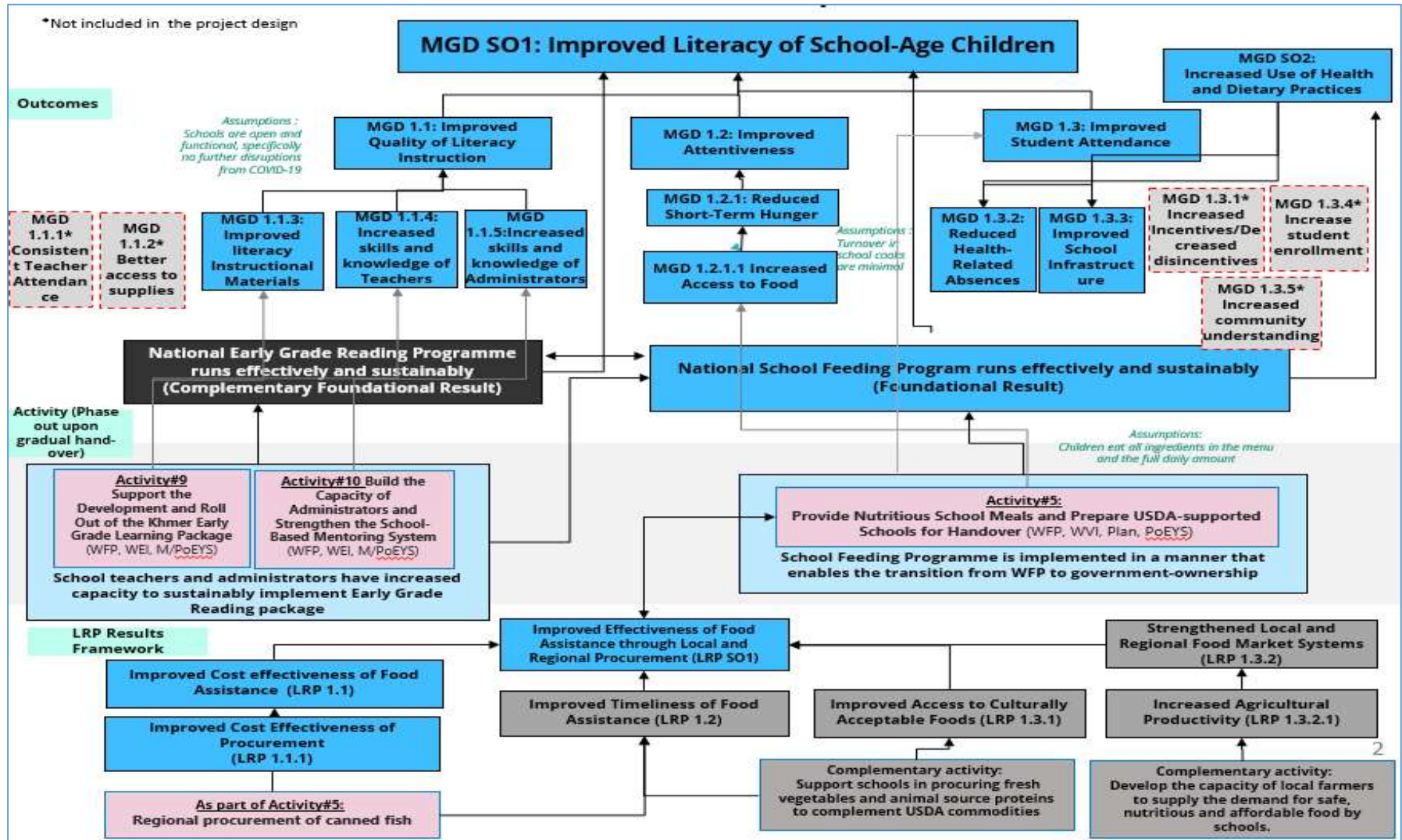


## Annex 5: Overall Results Framework

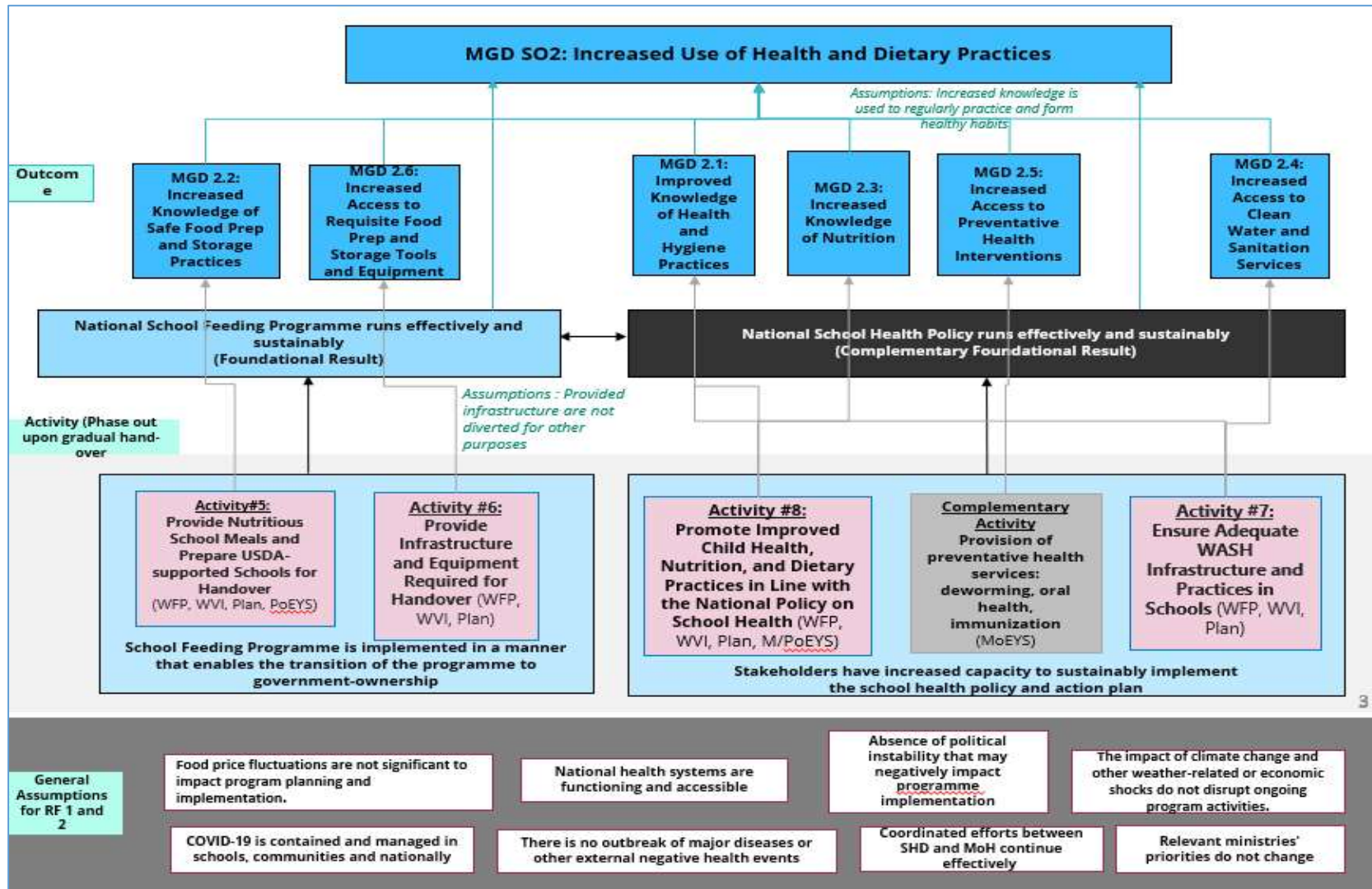




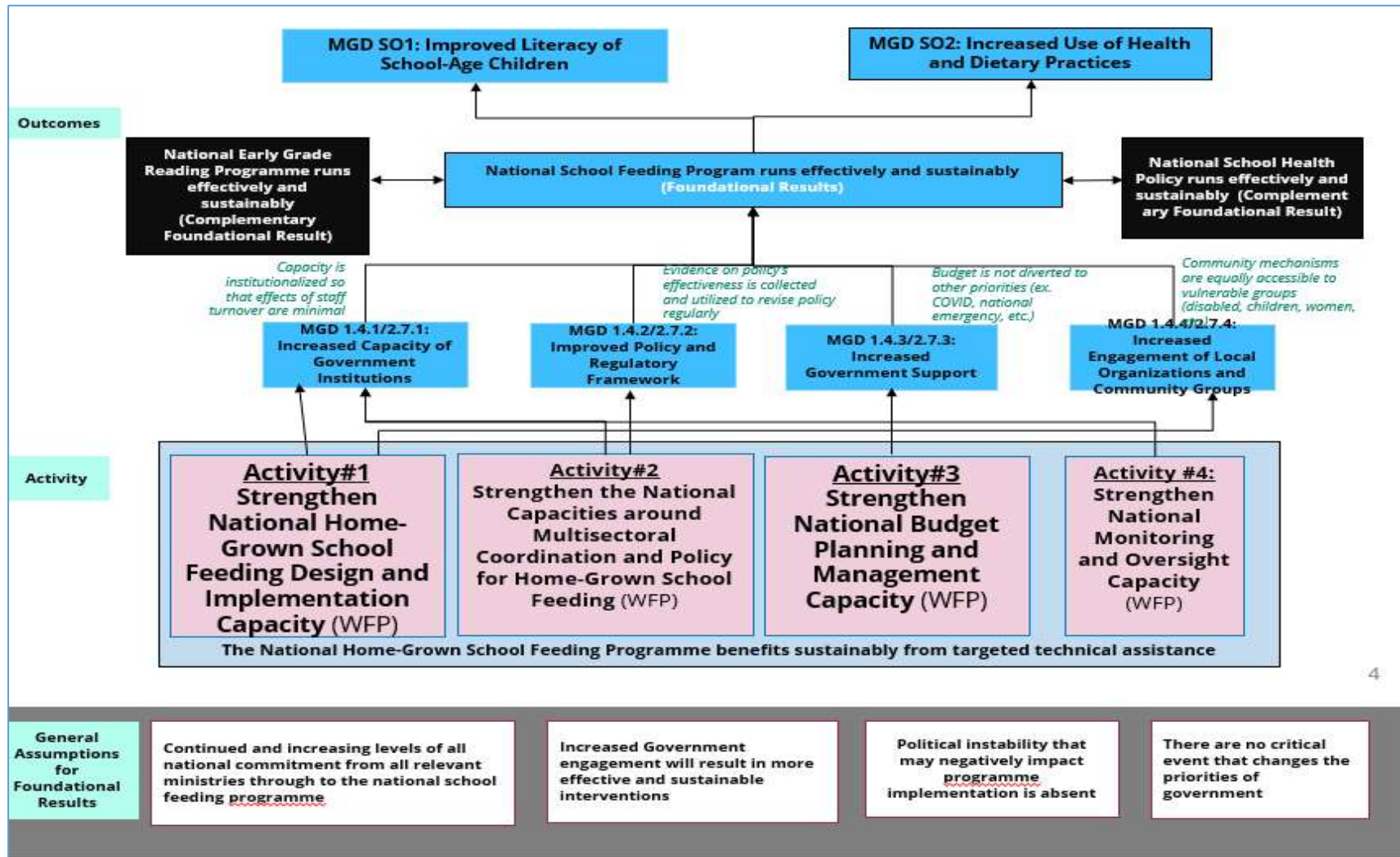
## Annex 6: Results Framework 1



## Annex 7: Results Framework 2



## Annex 8: Foundational Results



## Annex 9: Performance Monitoring Plan

### Strategic Objective 1

Logical Framework and Performance Indicator Table											
USDA McGovern-Dole: World Food Programme Cambodia FY 2022 - SO1							Planned Targets				
Impact/ Outcome/ Output/ Activity	Indicator	Standard/ Custom	Type	Baseline	Life of Project	10/22 to 09/23	10/23 to 09/24	10/24 to 09/25	10/25 to 09/26	10/26 to 09/27	
Long-term Outcome	MGD SO 1: Improved Literacy of School-Age Children	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text (grade 2 by gender)	Standard Indicator #1	Outcome	Grade 2: 14.2%	29.2%	14.2%	14.2%	14.2%	29.2%	29.2%
		Percent of students who, by the end of three grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text (grade 3 by gender)			Grade 3: 20%	35.0%	20%	20%	20%	35%	35%
	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs (By Sex; Age; and type of individual)	Standard Indicator #30	Output	0	111,618	0	94,975	72,383	29,830	0	
		Standard Indicator #30	Output	0	2,354	0	1,535	913	653	-	
		Standard Indicator #30	Output	0	204	0	144	168	180	204	
		Standard Indicator #32	Output	0	510	0	510	467	122	0	
	Outcome	MGD 1.1: Improved Quality of Literacy Instruction	Percentage of observed teachers, receiving the early grade learning intervention, who reach Level 2 or higher	Custom Indicator #1	Outcome	0	85%	0	80	85	85
Activity	Activity #9: Assist MoEYS to develop and roll-out the Khmer Early Grade Learning package	Number of teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance	Standard Indicator #3	Output	0	556	0	556	0	0	0

Outcome	MGD 1.1.4: Increased Skills and Knowledge of Teachers	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	Standard Indicator # 4	Outcome	0	1,513	0	1,424	1,513	1,513	1,513
Activity	Activity #9: Assist MoEYS to develop and roll-out the Khmer Early Grade Learning package	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	Standard Indicator #5	Output	0	1,780	0	1,780	1,780	0	0
Outcome	MGD 1.1.5: Increased Skills and Knowledge of Administrators	Number of school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	Standard Indicator #6	Outcome	0	462	0	289	462	462	462*
Activity	Activity 10: Build the capacity of administrators and strengthen the school-based mentoring system	Number of school administrators and officials trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	Standard Indicator #7	Output	0	577	0	577	577	0	0
Outcome	MGD 1.2: Improved Attentiveness	Percent of students in target schools identified as attentive by their teachers	Custom Indicator #3	Outcome	94.8%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Outcome	MGD 1.2.1: Reduced Short-Term Hunger	Percent of students in target schools reported as 'not hungry' during class time according to a hunger scale	Custom Indicator #4	Outcome	89.3%	92%	89%	89%	91%	91%	92%
Outcome	MGD 1.2.1.1/1.3.1.1: Increased Access to Food (School Feeding)	Number of school-age children receiving daily school meals (breakfast) as a result of USDA assistance (by gender, new/continuing students)	Standard Indicator #17	Output	0	109,261	0	92,618	70,026	29,830	0
		Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA funded interventions	Standard Indicator #31	Output	0	139,059	0	117,877	89,124	37,965	0
Activity	Activity #5: Provide nutritious school meals and prepare USDA-supported schools for handover	Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	Standard Indicator #16	Output	0	26,946,360	0	12,966,520	9,803,640	4,176,200	0
Outcome	MGD 1.3: Improved Student Attendance	Average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools (by gender)	Standard Indicator #2	Outcome	90%	95%	1	1	1	1	1
Outcome	MGD 1.3.2: Reduced Health-Related Absences	Mean number of days school-children are absent from school because of ill-health per month	Custom Indicator #5	Outcome	2.0	1.0	2	2	2	2	1

## Strategic Objective 2

Logical Framework and Performance Indicator Table											
USDA McGovern-Dole: World Food Programme Cambodia FY 2022 - SO2							Planned Target				
Impact/ Outcome/ Output/ Activity	Indicator	Standard/ Custom	Type	Baseline	Life of Project	Y 1 10/22 to 09/23	Y 2 10/23 to 09/24	Y 3 10/24 to 09/25	Y 4 10/25 to 09/26	Y 5 10/26 to 09/27	
Long-term Outcome	MGD SO2: Increased Use of Health and Dietary Practices	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	Standard Indicator #19	Outcome	0	1,782	0	910	1,346	1,782	1,782
		Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	Standard Indicator #20	Outcome	0	873	0	873	645	312	873
		Average dietary diversity score (DDS) for enrolled girls and boys of target schools	Custom Indicator #6	Outcome	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.5
Activity	Activity 8: Promote improved child health, nutrition, and dietary practices in line with National Policy on School Health	Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	Standard Indicator #23	Output	0	2,786	-	1,422	682	682	-
	Activity #7: Ensure adequate WASH infrastructure and practices in schools	Number of individuals trained in hygiene and the minimum guidelines for water and sanitation in schools as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	Custom indicator #8	Output	0	900	-	900	840	-	-
Activity	Activity #5: Provide nutritious school meals to prepare USDA-supported schools for handover	Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance (by gender)	Standard Indicator #22	Output	0	1,364	-	1,364	1,008	488	-
Activity	Activity #7: Ensure adequate WASH infrastructure and practices in schools	Number of educational facilities (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, improved water sources, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	Standard Indicator #8	Output	0	406	-	228	130	48	-
Outcome	MGD 2.6: Increased Access to Requisite Food Prep and Storage Tools and Equipment	Percentage of target schools that meet the minimum requirements for handover to the government based on agreed handover checklist (by the time of handover)	Custom indicator #11	Outcome	0%	100%	-	-	100%	100%	100%

## Foundational results

	Logical Framework and Performance Indicator Table										
	USDA McGovern-Dole: World Food Programme Cambodia FY 2022 - Foundational Results						Planned Targets				
	Impact/ Outcome/ Output/ Activity	Indicator	Standard/ Custom	Type	Base line	Life of Project	Year 1 10/22 to 09/23	Year 2 10/23 to 09/24	Year 3 10/24 to 09/25	Year 4 10/25 to 09/26	Year 5 10/26 to 09/27
Long-term Outcome	National School Feeding Programme runs effectively and sustainably	SABER–School Feeding (SABER-SF) Index	Custom indicator #14	Outcome	0	3	1	1	1	3	3
Outcome	MGD 1.4.1/2.7.1: Increased Capacity of Government Institutions	Number of relevant SABER-SF pillars with improved score by the final SABER workshop in 2026 (Design and Implementation, Institutional Capacity pillars)	Custom indicator #15	Outcome	0	2	0	0	0	2	2
Activity	Activity 1: Provide technical assistance to the government on the design and implementation of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme	Number of technical assistance initiatives provided by WFP to the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (include Design, implementation and M&E TA) (by technical assistance type)	Custom indicator #16	output	0	9	1	2	2	2	2
		Number of government staff that received training on National School Feeding Programme operation as a result of USDA assistance	Custom indicator #17	output	0	180		144	40	16	0
Activity	Activity #2: Support the government to strengthen the institutional framework and multisectoral coordination mechanisms for school feeding	Number of multi-stakeholder school feeding Coordination Committee meeting conducted (as a result of USDA assistance) to implement the national programme.	Custom indicator #18	output	0	15	3	3	3	3	3
Activity	Activity #4: Strengthen national monitoring and oversight capacity for school feeding	Number of sub-national level government staff who received training on National School Feeding Programme monitoring	Custom indicator #19	output	0	204	0	144	168	180	204
Outcome	MGD 1.4.2/2.7.2: Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework	Number of relevant SABER-SF pillars with improved score by the final SABER workshop in 2026 (policy framework pillar)	Custom indicator #15	Outcome		1	0	0	0	1	1
Activity	Activity #2: Support the government to strengthen the institutional framework and multisectoral coordination mechanisms for school feeding	Number of technical assistance activities provided by WFP to the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (for policy)	Custom indicator #16	output		1				1	

## Annex 10: Baseline study Matrix

Evaluation Question 1: What is the pre-cycle (FY22-27) situation for all relevant evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and coherence), and in terms of GEWE mainstreaming in the project?					
Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Evidence availability and Reliability
1.1: How relevant is the project design in contributing towards a sustainable, effective implementation of the NHGSFP vis-à-vis the government's readiness and capacities to manage the NHGSFP (relevance)	Appropriateness of project objectives and activities with the assessment of the Government's readiness and capacities	Participation at SABER workshop Literature review Key informant interviews	SABER workshop, June 2023 MGD FY19 endline evaluation WFP country office Relevant ministries (MoEYS, MEF) UNICEF	Comparison between the assessments' results and the project design Triangulation of evidence	SABER is a self-assessment and results may include bias. Results will be triangulated with other sources of information
1.2: To what extent is the project aligned to the overall policies, strategies, including gender-related, and normative guidance of institutions with supporting role for the NHGSFP, such MoEYS, NSPC, MAFF and MoH? (relevance)	Level of alignment the project objectives and activities with key national policies and strategies of relevant sectors	Literature review Key informant interviews	Education, health and nutrition policies MGD 2019-2023 baseline and endline evaluations Relevant ministries (MoEYS, MEF)	Comparison between the project design and key policies' priorities Triangulation of evidence	OK to the extent that the endline evaluation provides sufficient information
1.3: How relevant are the school readiness criteria in facilitating an effective handover of schools? (relevance)	Perceptions of key stakeholders on the relevance of the school readiness criteria	Key informant interviews	WFP country office MoEYS	Triangulation of evidence	OK to the extent that the endline evaluation provides sufficient information
1.4: What are the baseline values of the project indicators (since 2019) effectiveness)?	All project indicators baseline value	Literature review	MGD FY19 baseline, midline and endline evaluations World Education EGRA test 2023 SABER results	Presentation of data from 2019 to 2023	OK to the extent that the endline evaluation provides sufficient information



**Evaluation Question 1 (continued): What is the pre-cycle (FY22-27) situation for all relevant evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and coherence), and in terms of GEWE mainstreaming in the project?**

<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>	<b>Sources of data/information</b>	<b>Data analysis methods/ triangulation</b>	<b>Evidence availability and Reliability</b>
1.5: To what extent is the project monitoring, evaluation and complaint feedback mechanism designed for the project adequate to improve project relevance throughout the project? To what extent does it allow specifically for feedback from women and vulnerable groups such as the disabled or ethnic minorities? (effectiveness)	Adequacy of the mechanism used in the MGD FY19 project Changes introduced in the FY22 project	Literature review Key informant interviews	WFP country office Cooperating partners MGD FY19 endline evaluation	Triangulation of evidence	OK to the extent that the endline evaluation provides sufficient information
1.6: What is the level of ownership of the programme in schools, communities, and relevant government departments involved in the implementation of the NHGSFP and to what extent the project design provides for appropriate actions to strengthen ownership and readiness? (sustainability)	Level of ownership and readiness Appropriateness of project design to strengthen ownership and readiness	Literature review Key informant interviews	MGD FY19 endline evaluation WFP country office Relevant ministries (MoEYS, MEF) Cooperating partners	Triangulation of evidence	OK to the extent that the endline evaluation provides sufficient information
1.7: What roles have the different stakeholders of the NHGSFP played to date in the institutionalization of the programme, and to what extent do they play the correct role considering the national school feeding policy? (sustainability)	Role played by each key actor Alignment with the school feeding regulatory framework	Literature review Key informants' interviews	MGD FY19 endline evaluation School feeding regulatory framework WFP country office Relevant ministries (MoEYS, MEF) Cooperating partners	Comparison between effective role played and regulatory framework Triangulation of evidence	OK to the extent that the endline evaluation provides sufficient information
1.8: What factors identified at baseline may impact the cost efficiency of the MGD 2022-2027 project? (efficiency)	Lessons learnt on cost-efficiency from MGD FY19 endline Appropriateness of new implementation arrangements	Literature review Key informants' interviews	MGD 2019-2023 endline evaluation WFP country office Relevant ministries (MoEYS, MEF) Cooperating partners	Triangulation of evidence	OK to the extent that the endline evaluation provides sufficient information

Evaluation Question 1 (continued): What is the pre-cycle (FY22-27) situation for all relevant evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and coherence), and in terms of GEWE mainstreaming in the project?					
Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Evidence availability and Reliability
1.9: Is the project management structure suitable to deliver the project effectively (efficiency)	Lessons learnt from MGD FY19	Literature review Key informants' interviews	MGD 2019-2023 endline evaluation WFP country office Relevant ministries (MoEYS, MEF) Cooperating partners	Triangulation of evidence	OK to the extent that the endline evaluation provides sufficient information
1.10: To what extent does the MGD 2022-2027 project design provide reinforced complementarities, synergies and linkages with systems of different governing bodies relevant to the NHGSFP and other humanitarian and development initiatives? (coherence)	Lessons learnt on complementarities, synergies and linkages from MGD FY19 endline  Likely evolution considering project design and evolution of the relevant governing bodies and humanitarian and development initiatives.	Literature review Key informants' interviews	MGD FY19 endline evaluation WFP country office Relevant ministries (MoEYS, MEF) United Nations development agencies (UNICEF, World Bank) Non-governmental organizations (Plan International, World Education, World Vision)	Triangulation of evidence	OK to the extent that the endline evaluation provides sufficient information

Evaluation Question 2: What are the contextual changes that occurred since the FY19 baseline relevant to the programme and under each evaluation criteria, including regarding GEWE aspects?					
Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Evidence availability and Reliability
2.1: What are the contextual factors identified at baseline that may affect negatively or positively the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and coherence of the MGD FY22 project, and achievements regarding GEWE?	Lessons learnt on factors that have affected the previous project drawn from MGD FY19 endline  Likelihood of these factors to affect the MGD FY22 project	Literature review Key informant interviews	WFP country office Relevant ministries (MoEYS, MEF) Cooperating partners MGD FY19 endline evaluation	Triangulation of evidence	OK

<b>Evaluation Question 3: Are the project indicators and targets appropriate in effectively measuring and tracking project results for men, women, girls, boys and vulnerable groups based on the results framework?</b>					
<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>	<b>Sources of data/information</b>	<b>Data analysis methods/ triangulation</b>	<b>Evidence availability and Reliability</b>
3.1: To what extent does WFP have the systems and capacity at baseline to appropriately monitor and provide sufficient information to measure progress, including on GEWE? What changes should be made, if any?	Appropriateness of PMP indicators to sufficiently and comprehensively inform on project progress regarding the results framework	Literature review Key informant interviews	WFP country office MGD FY19 baseline and endline evaluations World Education EGRA assessment reports	Triangulation of evidence	OK
3.2: Are the targets proposed for the project relevant and realistic and is gender sufficiently considered in targets?	Appropriateness considering the effectiveness of MGD FY19 and the key evolution of the objectives of MGD FY22	Literature review Key informant interviews	WFP country office MGD FY19 baseline and endline evaluations World Education EGRA assessment reports	Triangulation of evidence	OK
<b>Evaluation Question 4: To what extent are the midterm and endline evaluation questions relevant in assessing the success of the programme under each criteria and for all categories of participants including men, women, girls, boys and vulnerable groups?</b>					
<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>	<b>Sources of data/information</b>	<b>Data analysis methods/ triangulation</b>	<b>Evidence availability and Reliability</b>
4.1: To what extent are the key elements of success and performance well-captured in the midterm and final evaluation questions, and is there sufficient consideration given on gender in these questions?	Extent to which the key design and contextual elements identified in previous questions are captured in the evaluation questions Perception of project stakeholders on the appropriateness of the evaluation questions	Literature review Key informant interviews	WFP country office MGD FY19 baseline and endline evaluations Relevant ministries (MoEYS, MEF) Cooperating partners	Triangulation of evidence	OK

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## Annex 12: Key Informants' overview

A total of 32 key informants from the following organizations were interviewed as part of this baseline study.

	Organization	Number of interviewees
1	World Food Programme, Country Office	8 officers interviewed
2	WFP Regional Bureau in Bangkok	1 officer interviewed
3	World Education	2 officers interviewed
4	World Vision Country Office	2 officers interviewed
5	PLAN International	4 officers interviewed
6	USAID	2 officers interviewed
7	UNICEF	2 officers interviewed
8	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS)	7 officers interviewed
9	Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)	4 officers interviewed
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32 key informants interviewed</b>

## Annex 13: Semi-structured Interview Guides

### WFP Country Office

<b>OPENING AND ROLE</b>
First of all, what is your relationship to, or the way you are connected to, this McGovern-Dole SFP? What is your role? How long have you been involved?
<b>RELEVANCE</b>
1. In your opinion, and considering the progress achieved in the HGSP programme to date, how relevant is the new McGovern-Dole project in contributing towards a sustainable and effective national HGSP programme vis a vis the government readiness and capacities to manage the NHGSP programme?
2. To what extent the new McGovern-Dole project has evolved to adapt to the context evolution since 2019, including policy and institutional changes?
3. What are the criteria used to assess the readiness of schools for their hand-over to the government? Have those criteria been applied to date? How relevant are those criteria?
4. Please describe the monitoring and complaint feedback mechanism of the project. Has this mechanism been fully implemented? If not, why? Is it adequate to improve project relevance?
5. What are the objectives and approach of the project to progress towards GEWE objectives?
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>
1. In your opinion, what key lessons for the effectiveness of the implementation of MGD FY22 project can be drawn from the previous cycle?
2. Considering these lessons, to what extent the targets of the new McGovern-Dole project for outputs and outcomes relevant and realistic
3. What are the key internal and external factors that will likely influence the performance of the project?
4. What lessons can be drawn on the performance of the previous cycle regarding GEWE, which are relevant to the new project?
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>
1. What factors will likely impact the cost efficiency of the McGovern-Dole FY19 project?
2. What change have been introduced in the new project to improve the efficiency?
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>
1. What is the level of ownership and readiness in schools, communities, and relevant government departments involved in the implementation of the NHGSP and to what extent the project design provides for appropriate actions to strengthen ownership and readiness?
2. What roles have the different stakeholders of the NHGSP played to date in the institutionalization of the programme, and to what extent do they play the correct role considering the national school feeding policy?
3. What are the key contextual factors that could support or affect the hand-over and sustainability of the HGSP programme?
4. What are the perspectives of sustainability of the progresses achieved on GEWE?
<b>COHERENCE</b>
1. To what extent has the SFP sought complementarities, collaborations with other programs? Can you give some examples?
<b>Appropriateness of indicators and targets</b>
2. To what extent can the indicators of McGovern-Dole FY22 project be appropriately monitored and provide sufficient information to measure progress? If not, why and what changes should be proposed?
3. What is your perception of the targets of the new project? Do you think they will be achieved? If not, why?
4. To what extent gender disaggregation has been possible and if not, why and how it could be improved in the new project?
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED</b>
1. In your opinion, what would you suggest for corrections to improve the SMP for the next cycle? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability and transition factors and gaps</li> <li>Key bottlenecks for transition and handover</li> <li>GEWE objectives</li> <li>Other</li> </ol>

## Government

<b>OPENING AND ROLE</b>
First of all, what is your relationship to, or the way you are connected to, this McGovern-Dole SFP? What is your role? How long have you been involved?
<b>RELEVANCE</b>
1. What have been the main changes in the policy framework since 2019, regarding school feeding, primary education, health and nutrition and gender?
2. What have been the main institutional changes since 2019, regarding school feeding, primary education, health and nutrition and gender?
3. To what extent the new McGovern-Dole project has evolved to adapt to the context evolution since 2019, including policy and institutional changes? How the project could be better aligned to the government priorities, including on gender?
4. Do you know what are the criteria to determine the readiness of schools for their hand-over to the government? If yes, are those criteria relevant?
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>
1. Based on lessons learnt from the previous project, what are the key internal and external factors that will likely affect the performance of the project, including on GEWE?
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>
1. What is the level of ownership and readiness in schools, communities, and relevant government departments involved in the implementation of the NHGSFP and to what extent the project design provides for appropriate actions to strengthen ownership and readiness?
2. What roles have the different stakeholders of the NHGSFP played to date in the institutionalization of the programme, and to what extent do they play the correct role considering the national school feeding policy?
3. What are the key contextual factors that could support or affect the hand-over and sustainability of the HGSP programme?
4. What are the perspectives of sustainability of the progresses achieved on GEWE?
<b>COHERENCE</b>
1. To what extent has the SFP sought complementarities, collaborations with other programs? Can you give some examples?
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED</b>
1. In your opinion, what would you suggest for corrections to improve the SMP for the next cycle? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sustainability and transition factors and gaps</li> <li>b. Key bottlenecks for transition and handover</li> <li>c. GEWE objectives</li> <li>d. Other</li> </ul>

## Cooperating partners

<b>OPENING AND ROLE</b>
First of all, what is your relationship to, or the way you are connected to, this McGovern-Dole SFP? What is your role? How long have you been involved?
<b>RELEVANCE</b>
1. To what extent is the project monitoring and complaint feedback mechanism designed for the project adequate to improve project relevance throughout the project?
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>
1. In your opinion, what key lessons can be drawn on the effectiveness of project implementation from the previous cycle?
2. Considering these lessons, to what extent the targets of the new McGovern-Dole project for outputs and outcomes relevant and realistic
3. What are the key internal and external factors that will likely influence the performance of the project?
4. What lessons can be drawn on the performance of the previous cycle regarding GEWE, which are relevant to the new project?
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>
1. What factors will likely impact the cost efficiency of the McGovern-Dole FY22 project?
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>
1. What is the level of ownership and readiness in schools, communities, and relevant government departments involved in the implementation of the NHGSFP and to what extent the project design provides for appropriate actions to strengthen ownership and readiness?
2. What roles have the different stakeholders of the NHGSFP played to date in the institutionalization of the programme, and to what extent do they play the correct role considering the national school feeding policy?
3. What are the key contextual factors that could support or affect the hand-over and sustainability of the HGSP programme?
4. What are the perspectives of sustainability of the progresses achieved on GEWE?
<b>COHERENCE</b>
1. To what extent has the SFP sought complementarities, collaborations with other programmes? Can you give some examples?
<b>Appropriateness of indicators and targets</b>
1. To what extent the indicators of McGovern-Dole 2023-2027 can be appropriately monitored and provide sufficient information to measure progress? If not, why and what changes should be proposed?
2. What is your perception of the targets of the new project? Do you think they will be achieved? If not, why?
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED</b>
1. In your opinion, what would you suggest for corrections to improve the SFP for the next cycle? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sustainability and transition factors and gaps</li> <li>b. Key bottlenecks for transition and handover</li> <li>c. GEWE objectives</li> <li>d. Other</li> </ol>



## United Nations Agencies

<b>OPENING AND ROLE</b>
First of all, what is your relationship to, or the way you are connected to, this McGovern-Dole SFP? What is your role? How long have you been involved?
<b>RELEVANCE</b>
1. What have been the main changes in the policy framework since 2019, regarding school feeding, primary education, health and nutrition and gender?
2. What have been the main institutional changes since 2019, regarding school feeding, primary education, health and nutrition, and gender?
3. To what extent the new McGovern-Dole project has evolved to adapt to the context evolution since 2019, including policy and institutional changes? How the project could be better aligned to the government priorities?
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>
1. What is the level of ownership and readiness in schools, communities, and relevant government departments involved in the implementation of the NHGSFP and to what extent the project design provides for appropriate actions to strengthen ownership and readiness?
2. What roles have the different stakeholders of the NHGSFP played to date in the institutionalization of the programme, and to what extent do they play the correct role considering the national school feeding policy?
3. What are the key contextual factors that could support or affect the hand-over and sustainability of the HGSP programme?
4. What are the perspectives of sustainability of the progresses achieved on GEWE?
<b>COHERENCE</b>
1. What is your agency's involvement in school feeding, primary education, health and nutrition? Are there any complementarities/synergies of this work with WFP and/or the HGSP programme?
2. How complementarities/synergies could be further developed?
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED</b>
1. In your opinion, what would you suggest for corrections to improve the SFP for the next cycle? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sustainability and transition factors and gaps</li> <li>b. Key bottlenecks for transition and handover</li> <li>c. GEWE objectives</li> <li>d. Other</li> </ol>

## Annex 14: Evaluation Reference Group

**Purpose and role:** The evaluation reference group (ERG) is an advisory group providing advice and feedback to the evaluation manager and the evaluation team at key moments during the evaluation process. It is established during the preparatory stage of the evaluation and is mandatory for all decentralized evaluations.

The overall purpose of the evaluation reference group is to contribute to the credibility, utility and impartiality of the evaluation. For this purpose, its composition and role are guided by the following principles:

- **Transparency:** Keeping relevant stakeholders engaged and informed during key steps ensures transparency throughout the evaluation process
- **Ownership and Use:** Stakeholders' participation enhances ownership of the evaluation process and products, which in turn may impact on its use
- **Accuracy:** Feedback from stakeholders at key steps of the preparatory, data collection and reporting phases contributes to accuracy of the facts and figures reported in the evaluation and of its analysis.

Members are expected to review and comment on draft evaluation deliverables and share relevant insights at key consultation points of the evaluation process.

The main roles of the evaluation reference group are as follows:

- Review and comment on the draft ToR
- Suggest key references and data sources in their area of expertise
- Participate in face-to-face or virtual briefings to the evaluation team during the inception phase and/or evaluation phase
- Review and comment on the draft inception report
- Participate in field debriefings (optional)
- Review and comment on the draft evaluation report and related annexes, with a particular focus on: a) factual errors and/or omissions that could invalidate the findings or change the conclusions; b) issues of political sensitivity that need to be refined in the way they are addressed or in the language used; c) recommendations
- Participate in learning workshops to validate findings and discuss recommendations
- Provide guidance on suggested communications products to disseminate learning from the evaluation.

## Membership of the ERG (May 2023)

Country Office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fumitsugu Tosu, Head of Programme (SO Lead): Chair, at <a href="mailto:fumitsugu.tosu@wfp.org">fumitsugu.tosu@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Bunthang Chhe, Programme Policy Officer (M&amp;E); as technical officer; at <a href="mailto:thang.bun@wfp.org">thang.bun@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Benjamin Scholz, Head of RAM; at <a href="mailto:Benjamin.scholz@wfp.org">Benjamin.scholz@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Noah Makokha, M&amp;E officer; as Evaluation Manager; at <a href="mailto:noah.makokha@wfp.org">noah.makokha@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Yohan Chambaud, Programme Officer (education); at <a href="mailto:yohan.chambuad@wfp.org">yohan.chambuad@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Sokunvatanak Sek, Programme Support Assistant; at <a href="mailto:sokunvatanak.sek@wfp.org">sokunvatanak.sek@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Nisith Um, head of Field Operations at <a href="mailto:nisith.um@wfp.org">nisith.um@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Yav Long, Programme Policy Officer (VAM); at <a href="mailto:yav.long@wfp.org">yav.long@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Jyoti Felix, Programme Policy Officer (Nutrition); at <a href="mailto:jyoti.felix@wfp.org">jyoti.felix@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Sanramith Sam, Accountability and Inclusion officer; at <a href="mailto:Sanramith.sam@wfp.org">Sanramith.sam@wfp.org</a></li> </ul>
Regional Bureau (RBB)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mari Honjo; Regional Evaluation Officer at <a href="mailto:mari.honjo@wfp.org">mari.honjo@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Sophia Dunn; Regional School Feeding Programme Policy Consultant; at <a href="mailto:sophie.dunn@wfp.org">sophie.dunn@wfp.org</a></li> <li>• Stuart Coupe; Regional Evaluation Officer at <a href="mailto:stuart.coupe@wfp.org">stuart.coupe@wfp.org</a></li> </ul>
Headquarters (HQ)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anna Hamilton, Evaluation Officer - School based Programme, <a href="mailto:anna.hamilton@wfp.org">anna.hamilton@wfp.org</a></li> </ul>
Royal Government of Cambodia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E. San Vathana, Under Secretary of State, MoEYS; at <a href="mailto:san.vathana@MoEYS.gov.kh">san.vathana@MoEYS.gov.kh</a></li> <li>• H.E. Put Samith, Director General, MoEYS; at <a href="mailto:put.samith@MoEYS.gov.kh">put.samith@MoEYS.gov.kh</a></li> <li>• H.E. Chan Sophea, Director, MoEYS; at <a href="mailto:chansopheaped@gmail.com">chansopheaped@gmail.com</a></li> <li>• Mr. Ven Thol, Deputy Director, MoEYS; at <a href="mailto:venthol16@gmail.com">venthol16@gmail.com</a></li> </ul>
Cooperating Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Vision: Ravuth at <a href="mailto:Lyna_nga@wvi.org">Lyna_nga@wvi.org</a></li> <li>• Plan International: Hang Hybunna at <a href="mailto:Hybunna.Hang@plan-international.org">Hybunna.Hang@plan-international.org</a></li> <li>• World Education: Chanmony Ung at <a href="mailto:chanmony_ung@kh.worlded.org">chanmony_ung@kh.worlded.org</a></li> </ul>
Donor – USDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ellie Morefield (<a href="mailto:eleanor.morefield@usda.gov">eleanor.morefield@usda.gov</a>)</li> <li>• Bobbi Kraham (<a href="mailto:Bobbi.Kraham@usda.gov">Bobbi.Kraham@usda.gov</a>).</li> </ul>

## Annex 15: Evaluation Committee

**Purpose and role:** The purpose of the evaluation committee (EC) is to ensure a credible, transparent, impartial and quality evaluation in accordance with WFP evaluation policy. It will achieve this by supporting the evaluation manager in making decisions, reviewing draft deliverables (ToR, inception report and evaluation report) and submitting them for approval by the Country Director/Deputy Country Director (CD/DCD) who will be the chair of the committee.

According to the Country Office Memorandum (WFP/CAM/21), "Evaluation Committee for Decentralised Evaluations", the following are the members of the Evaluation Committee for the McGovern-Dole 2022-2027 Project.

### **USDA McGovern-Dole project:**

<b>WFP Cambodia Country Office</b>	
1.	Claire Conan, Country Director: Chair, at <a href="mailto:claire.conan@wfp.org">claire.conan@wfp.org</a>
2.	Noah Makokha, M&E officer; as Evaluation Manager; at <a href="mailto:noah.makokha@wfp.org">noah.makokha@wfp.org</a>
3.	Benjamin Scholz, Head of RAM; <a href="mailto:benjamin.scholz@wfp.org">benjamin.scholz@wfp.org</a>
4.	Bunthang Chhe, Programme Policy Officer (M&E); as technical officer; at <a href="mailto:thang.bun@wfp.org">thang.bun@wfp.org</a>
5.	Kannitha Kong, Programme Policy Officer (education); at <a href="mailto:kannitha.kong@wfp.org">kannitha.kong@wfp.org</a>
6.	Annalisa Noak, Programme Policy Officer (nutrition and foods systems); at <a href="mailto:Annalisa.noak@wfp.org">Annalisa.noak@wfp.org</a>
7.	Nisith Um, head of Field Operations at <a href="mailto:nisith.um@wfp.org">nisith.um@wfp.org</a>
8.	Sokheng Leng, Procurement officer; <a href="mailto:sokheng.leng@wfp.org">sokheng.leng@wfp.org</a>

<b>WFP Regional Bureau and Headquarters</b>	
9.	Mari Honjo; Regional Evaluation Officer; at <a href="mailto:mari.honjo@wfp.org">mari.honjo@wfp.org</a>

## Annex 16: Proposed modifications to midterm and endline evaluation questions

Midterm ToR Questions	Midterm proposed adjustments	Endline ToR questions	Endline proposed adjustments
<b>Relevance</b>			
1. How relevant is the project design in contributing towards a sustainable, effective implementation of the NHGSFP vis à vis the government readiness and capacities to manage the NHGSFP?	1. To what extent the project design has remained relevant in contributing towards a sustainable, effective implementation of the NHGSFP vis à vis the government readiness and capacities to manage the NHGSFP? <b>Already covered at baseline. Focus on changes since baseline.</b>	1. How is relevant is the project design in contributing towards a sustainable, effective implementation of the NHGSFP vis à vis the government readiness and capacities to manage the NHGSFP?	1. To what extent the project design has remained relevant in contributing towards a sustainable, effective implementation of the NHGSFP vis à vis the government readiness and capacities to manage the NHGSFP? <b>Already covered at baseline. Focus on changes since baseline and midterm</b>
2. To what extent was the project aligned to the overall policies, strategies and normative guidance of institutions with supporting role for the NHGSFP, such as MAFF and MoH?	2. What have been the main policy changes relevant to the project since baseline and to what extent the project has remained aligned with key policies and strategies, including on gender? <b>Already covered at baseline. Focus on changes since baseline.</b>	2. To what extent was the project aligned to the overall policies, strategies and normative guidance of institutions with supporting role for the NHGSFP, such as MAFF and MoH?	2. What have been the main policy changes relevant to the project since baseline and midterm evaluation and to what extent the project has remained aligned with key policies and strategies, including on gender? <b>Already covered at baseline. Focus on changes since baseline and midterm.</b>
3. How relevant were the school readiness criteria in facilitating an effective handover of schools?	3. How relevant were the school readiness criteria in facilitating an effective handover of schools? <b>No change</b>	3. How relevant were the school readiness criteria in facilitating an effective handover of schools?	3. How relevant were the school readiness criteria in facilitating an effective handover of schools? <b>No change</b>
4. To what extent has data from project monitoring and complaint feedback mechanism been utilized to improve project relevance throughout the project?	<b>Removed: as it is conceived to date, the complaint and feedback mechanism only applies to WFP direct assistance and is not relevant to the transition process</b>	4. How relevant is the project's complaint feedback mechanism in sustainably ensuring that the needs of the target beneficiaries (girls, boys, men, women in target areas) are met?	<b>Removed and replaced by a question on WFP effectiveness to promote the inclusion of a gender approach in the NHGSF programme.</b>

Midterm ToR Questions	Midterm proposed adjustments	Endline ToR questions	Endline proposed adjustments
<b>Effectiveness</b>			
<p>1. To what extent did the project in target schools, including both the schools receiving WFP and NGO partners' direct implementation (cohort 1) and 85 schools that were handed over in year 2 (cohort 2), enhance the literacy and school health/nutrition outcomes (MGD SO 1 and 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How did the results differ between cohort 1 and 2 and why?</li> <li>- What were the differences in results for various beneficiary groups and by type of activity? How did gender GEWE outcomes vary by stakeholder group?</li> </ul>	<p>1. What are the performances of the project in both WFP managed and already handed over schools in enhancing the literacy and health/nutrition outcomes (MG SO1 and 2)? Are there any differences between the schools assisted by WFP and already handed over and among girls, boys, men, women and vulnerable groups, and why?</p> <p><b>Modified for more clarity.</b></p>	<p>1. To what extent did the project in target schools, which were all progressively transitioned into the NHGSFP over the project timeframe, enhance the literacy and school health/nutrition outcomes (MGD Strategic Objectives 1 and 2)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How did the results differ across all four cohorts and why? How did the schools' readiness level according to the handover criteria as defined by WFP (experience in running HGSF, infrastructure, equipment) influence results, if at all? What were other variables (socio-demographic, quality of implementation, external factors, etc.) that influenced the results either positively or negatively?</li> <li>- What were the difference in results for various beneficiary groups and by type of activity? How did GEWE outcomes vary by stakeholder group?</li> </ul>	<p>1. What are the performances of the project in handed over schools in enhancing the literacy and health/nutrition outcomes (MG SO1 and 2)? Are there any differences between the schools handed over at different moments and among girls, boys, men, women and vulnerable groups, and why?</p> <p><b>Modified for more clarity.</b></p>
<p>2. To what extent did the transition to the NHGSFP, including the activities to enhance the five SABER pillars through WFP technical assistance implemented under the project's Foundational Results, contribute to the government's capacity to run the national programme effectively and sustainably? In view of the SABER assessment findings, what preliminary results were achieved in each of the five dimensions? What factors influenced the results positively or negatively?</p>	<p>2. What are the performances of the project in supporting the transition strategy? Have schools been handed over as planned and if not, why? What are the results achieved on the five pillars of SABER? To what extent GEWE is mainstreamed in the NHGSF programme?</p> <p><b>Modified for more clarity.</b></p>	<p>2. To what extent did the transition to the NHGSFP, including the activities to enhance the five SABER pillars through WFP technical assistance implemented under the project's Foundational Results, contribute to the government's capacity to run the national programme effectively and sustainably? Review the effectiveness of all five pillars of SABER, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity for design and implementation of NHGSFP: To what extent do stakeholders at national, subnational level have the capacities to manage, supervise and monitor the NHGSFP after handover?</li> <li>- Inter-ministerial coordination: To what extent is there cooperation between necessary government ministries and public programmes to successfully run and sustain the NHGSFP?</li> <li>- Policy and budget: Are there a national-level policy and budget to effectively run the NHGSFP? Why or why not?</li> <li>- Community engagement: To what extent has NHGSFP been successful in engaging national stakeholders and local communities (PTAs, farmers groups, etc) towards school feeding activities? Has the role of the communities and local stakeholders been institutionalized?</li> </ul>	<p>2. What are the performances of the project in supporting the transition strategy? Have schools been handed over as planned and if not, why? What are the results achieved on the five pillars of SABER? To what extent GEWE is mainstreamed in the NHGSF programme?</p> <p><b>Modified for more clarity.</b></p>

Midterm ToR Questions	Midterm proposed adjustments	Endline ToR questions	Endline proposed adjustments
<b>Effectiveness (continued)</b>			
3. To what extent has progress been made on the overall handover process against the project plan and Transition Strategy agreed with and endorsed by the Government? Were the capacity needs, gaps and priorities at the national and sub-national levels clearly identified and addressed by the project's Capacity Strengthening activities?	<b>Removed as already covered by question 2</b>		
4. What are the mid-course corrections to improve project effectiveness in terms of i) activities that provide support directly to schools, ii) handover process, iii) technical assistance to the NHGSFP?	<b>Removed: the identification of necessary corrections to improve the project effectiveness is included in the evaluation's objectives and applied to all evaluation criteria. Replaced by a question on the factors that have supported or affected the effectiveness.</b> 3. What implementing and context factors have supported or affected the implementation and achievements of the project for the 2 SOs and foundational results, including the achievements on GEWE?		3. What implementing and context factors have supported or affected the implementation and achievements of the project for the 2 SOs and foundational results, including the achievements on GEWE??

Midterm ToR Questions	Midterm proposed adjustments	Endline ToR questions	Endline proposed adjustments
<b>Efficiency</b>			
1. Were the activities undertaken as part of Local Regional Procurement cost-efficient compared to international procurement of commodities?	1. Were the activities undertaken as part of Local Regional Procurement cost-efficient compared to international procurement of commodities? <b>No change</b>	1. Were the activities undertaken as part of Local Regional Procurement cost-efficient compared to international procurement of commodities?	1. Were the activities undertaken as part of Local Regional Procurement cost-efficient compared to international procurement of commodities? <b>No change</b>
2. What factors impacted the cost efficiency of the project implementation? What measures can improve the efficiency for the remaining implementation period?	2. What factors impacted the cost efficiency of the project implementation? <b>Removed the second question as the identifications of measures/corrections is included in the objectives of the evaluation.</b>	2. What factors impacted the cost efficiency of the project implementation? What are the lessons learned that can be applied to improve the efficiency of NHGSFP in the future?	2. What factors impacted the cost efficiency of the project implementation? To what extent the NHGSFP is based on a cost-efficient procurement model? <b>Reformulated the second question for more clarity.</b>

Midterm ToR Questions	Midterm proposed adjustments	Endline ToR questions	Endline proposed adjustments
<b>Coherence</b>			
1. To what extent has the project sought complementarities with the priorities and systems of different governing bodies relevant to the NHGSFP? What are the factors that influenced positively and negatively the synergies and interlinkages?	<b>Removed: The issue of participation of government institutions in the MHGSFP is addressed under effectiveness question 2.</b>	1. How coherent were the interventions carried out by the different ministries that contributed towards a successful NHGSFP? What are the factors that influenced positively and negatively the synergies and interlinkages?	<b>Removed: The issue of participation of government institutions in the MHGSFP is addressed under effectiveness question 2.</b>
2. To what extent has the project sought complementarities with other donor-funded initiatives, as well as initiatives of humanitarian and development partners operational in the country?	1. To what extent has the project sought complementarities with other donor-funded initiatives, as well as initiatives of humanitarian and development partners operational in the country? <b>No change</b>	2. To what extent has the project sought complementarities with other donor-funded initiatives, as well as initiatives of humanitarian and development partners operational in the country?	1. To what extent has the project sought complementarities with other donor-funded initiatives, as well as initiatives of humanitarian and development partners operational in the country? <b>No change</b>

Midterm ToR Questions	Midterm proposed adjustments	Endline ToR questions	Endline proposed adjustments
<b>Impact</b>			
NA	<b>No change</b>	1. To what extent has the project achieved the intended and unintended impacts, both positive and negative? What effect has the project made on beneficiaries, schools, communities, and government partners in target areas? What were the particular features of the program and context that made a difference?	1. What is the expected or already observed impact, intended and unintended, positive and negative of MGD projects and the NHGSF programme on beneficiaries, schools, communities, institutions, in particular on the development of human capital, on the local economy and on GEWE? <b>Integrated the three questions on impact in one as it would be difficult to isolate the impact of the project from the impact of the NHGSF programme. Added impact in GEWE,</b>
		2. What is the potential future impact of a sustained National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) to the development of human capital and the local economy of Cambodia based on evidence so far? Which particular features of this project should be incorporated/strengthened in the NHGSFP to ensure sustainability?	<b>Integrated to question 1</b>
		3. To what extent has the project had an effect on the local economy and the development of human capital in Cambodia?	<b>Integrated to question 1</b>



Midterm ToR Questions	Midterm proposed adjustments	Endline ToR questions	Endline proposed adjustments
<b>Sustainability</b>			
1. What were the key factors that contributed to or hindered a successful ownership and readiness in schools, communities, and relevant government departments involved in the implementation of the NHGSFP (MoEYS, MoH, MAFF, etc.)?	1. What is the level of ownership and participation of all relevant stakeholders (government, communities, schools, farmer, etc.) vis à vis the NHGSF programme? <b>Rather than starting with the factors that have influenced the ownership, it is proposed to first assess the level of ownership.</b>	1. Based on available evidence, to what extent were the benefits (literacy, school health, nutrition and others) of the NHGSFP likely to continue beyond the scope of the project timeline? Which particular features of this project should be incorporated/strengthened in the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) to ensure sustainability?	1. What are the perspectives of continuity after the full hand over to the government of the activities and processes supported by the project, and their respective benefit, including on GEWE? <b>Simplified the question for more clarity</b>
2. What roles did the different stakeholders of the NHGSFP (students, teachers, school staff, communities, relevant ministries at national and subnational level) play in the institutionalization of NHGSFP?	2. What other factors may affect the sustainability of the NHGSF programme and the achievements of the project? <b>Broader question on the factors that may affect the sustainability instead of two questions (1 and 3)</b>	2. What are the prospects of the national school feeding programme expanding to nationwide coverage?	2. What achievements have been made on the 5 pillars of SABER? What are the remaining capacity gaps for each pillar and to what extent they can affect the sustainability of the NHGSF programme? <b>Added this question as there was no question on the progress on SABER pillars despite them defining a sustainable school feeding programme</b>
3. What factors influenced the results positively or negatively? (USDA Learning Agenda questions will be explored as below): - What were the key institutions and governance structures required to effectively deliver, implement, and sustain school meal interventions? What relationship structures among these institutions yielded the most successful and effective school meal programmes? - What were the most successful policies affecting the success of school meal programmes? What were the necessary conditions for these policies to be implemented and to be effective? - What types of incentives were the most effective at securing local or national government investment into school meal programmes? What were the barriers and challenges in securing investment?	No change	3. What were the key factors that contributed to or hindered a successful readiness and ownership in schools, communities, and relevant government departments involved in the implementation of the NHGSFP (MoEYS, MoH, MAFF, etc.)?	3. What are the prospects of the national school feeding programme expanding to nationwide coverage? <b>No change</b>

Midterm ToR Questions	Midterm proposed adjustments	Endline ToR questions	Endline proposed adjustments
<b>Sustainability (continued)</b>			
As above	No change	4. What roles did students, teachers, school staff and the communities play in institutionalization of NHGSFP?	4. What is the level of ownership and participation of all relevant stakeholders (government, communities, schools, farmer, etc.) vis à vis the NHGSF programme? What other factors can affect the sustainability of the NHGSF programme?
		5. For the NHGSFP to run sustainably, is there a continued need for WFP's technical assistance to the Government beyond the project timeline? In which areas is the support needed?	<b>Removed: this is an implied recommendation. Recommendations will come naturally from the findings on sustainability of the NHGSF programme</b>
		6. To what extent does the home-grown school feeding model contribute towards the sustainability of the NHGSFP?	<b>Removed: this question lacks clarity</b>
		7. What factors influenced the results positively or negatively? (USDA Learning Agenda questions will be explored as below): - What were the key institutions and governance structures required to effectively deliver, implement, and sustain school meal interventions? What relationship structures among these institutions yielded the most successful and effective school meal programmes? - What were the most successful policies affecting the success of school meal programmes? What were the necessary conditions for these policies to be implemented and to be effective? What types of incentives were the most effective at securing local or national government investment into school meal programmes? What were the barriers and challenges in securing investment?	7. What factors influenced the results positively or negatively? (USDA Learning Agenda questions will be explored as below): - What were the key institutions and governance structures required to effectively deliver, implement, and sustain school meal interventions? What relationship structures among these institutions yielded the most successful and effective school meal programmes? - What were the most successful policies affecting the success of school meal programmes? What were the necessary conditions for these policies to be implemented and to be effective? What types of incentives were the most effective at securing local or national government investment into school meal programmes? What were the barriers and challenges in securing investment? <b>No change</b>

## Annex 17: Methodological considerations for the FY22 cycle survey analyses

In order to maximize the simplicity and comparability with the evaluation results from the previous cycle, the survey analysis conducted for this baseline did not use cluster weights (i.e. schools were not weighted depending on their size). Nevertheless, the analysis did take into account the fact that the sample design is a 2-step cluster design and not just a simple random household sample. Other methodological considerations are summarized in the below table.

### Methodological considerations for FY22 cycle survey analyses

ISSUE	UNDERTAKEN MEASURES	CONSEQUENCES
Sample design is a 2-step cluster sample design and not a simple random sample	We use the R Survey Package (and srvyr wrapper) to produce survey estimates	This might lead to slightly different results between the 2019-2023 endline and the 2023-2028 baseline.
School sizes vary from one another	School sizes will not be used as weighting for the probability to select schools	Small schools will be as likely to be drawn in midline and endline samples as big schools will. This ensures smaller and more isolated schools are just as likely to be drawn in the sample as any other school
School sizes vary from one another	School sizes are not used as weighting for calculation of survey estimates	This may affect the accuracy of certain survey estimates, but they will be comparable with estimates from the previous cycle, as the same methodology is applied in this sense
Province sizes vary from one another	This is already considered at baseline and in the previous cycle, because sampling is proportional to province size. This will also be taken into account in the new cycle. A sample that is stratified by province and proportional to province size will be applied drawn separately for each group of the analysis model (namely, "handed over more than 2 years ago" vs "not handed over or handed over a year ago")	Each group sample will be balanced by province, following the same methodology as in the previous cycle.

## Annex 18: Acronyms

ACR	Annual country report
CARD	Council for Agricultural and Rural Development
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CO	Country Office
CCS	Country capacity strengthening
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DCPS	Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy
DEQAS	Decentralized evaluation quality assurance system
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DOE	District office of education
EC	Evaluation Committee
EGL	Early grade literacy
EGR(A)	Early grade reading (assessment)
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EoC	End of cycle
ER	Evaluation report
ERG	Evaluation reference group
ESP	Education strategic plan
ET	Evaluation team
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service
FFE	Food for education
FY	Fiscal year
FGD	Focus group discussion
GDI	Gender development index
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GII	Gender inequality index
HDI	Human Development Index
HGSF	Home-grown school feeding
HQ	Headquarters
IR	Inception Report
JTS	Joint Transition Strategy
kg	kilogramme
KCG	Kampong Chhnang province
KHR	Cambodian riel (currency)
KII	Key informant interviews
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KRKC	<i>Komar Rien Komar Cheh</i> ("Students Learn, Students Know")
KTM	Kampong Thom province
LoP	Life of project
LRP	Local and Regional Procurement
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goals
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoH	Ministry of Health

MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoM	month-on-month
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoSAVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
mt	metric tonne
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHGSFP	National home-grown school feeding programme
NSFSN	The National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition
NSPC	National Social Protection Council
NSPPF	National Social Protection Policy Framework
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OEV	Office of Evaluation (WFP)
PDM	post-distribution monitoring
POE	Provincial Office of Education
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
QA	Quality assurance
RBB	Regional Bureau Bangkok (WFP)
RF	Results framework
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SABER-SF	Systems Approach for Better Education Results - School Feeding
SDG(s)	Sustainable development goal(s)
SF(P)	School feeding (programme)
SFIS	School Feeding Information System
SFTF	School feeding task force
SMP	School meals programme
SO	Strategic objective
SRP	Siem Reap province
SY	School year
THR	Take home ration
ToC	Theory of change
ToR	Terms of reference
UNDP	The United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	The United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
US\$	United States Dollar (currency)
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
YoY	year-on-year

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