



World Food Programme

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

## WFP EVALUATION

# Evaluation of capacity strengthening activities to government and local communities in Sao Tome and Principe

**JULY 2019 – DECEMBER 2022**

## Decentralized Evaluation Report

WFP Sao Tome & Principe Country Office

January 2024

# Key personnel for the evaluation

## WFP Sao Tome & Principe Country Office

Evaluation Manager Levis Kamgan

### PREPARED BY

Blanka Krivankova, Team Leader

Jana Mazancova, Senior Evaluator

Juvenal Bonfim, Evaluator

Marco Gozio, Backstopping

Christophe Dietrich, Quality Assurance

# Acknowledgements

The Evaluation of capacity strengthening activities to government and local communities in Sao Tome and Principe was conducted with support from WFP's Country Office in Sao Tomé e Principe and WFP's Regional Bureau in Dakar. This effort is greatly appreciated.

The evaluation team also appreciates the support and collaboration of the Santomean government partners, donors, beneficiaries, and all the other actors who were involved in both data collection and in the validation of the evaluation results. We are extremely grateful for their extensive inputs.

## Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the evaluation team, and do not necessarily reflect those of the World Food Programme. Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report rests solely with the authors. Publication of this document does not imply endorsement by WFP of the opinions expressed.

The designation employed and the presentation of material in maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.

## Photo credits

Cover photo: WFP/ Milton Machel

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1.1. Evaluation features .....	10
1.2. Context.....	11
1.3. WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024 .....	16
1.4. Evaluation methodology, limitations and ethical considerations .....	23
<b>2. Evaluation findings</b> .....	<b>25</b>
2.1. Relevance.....	25
2.2. Effectiveness .....	28
2.3. Efficiency.....	33
2.4. Coherence .....	40
2.5. Impact .....	44
2.6. Sustainability.....	50
<b>3. Conclusions and recommendations</b> .....	<b>56</b>
3.1. Conclusions .....	56
3.2. Lessons .....	59
3.3. Recommendations .....	60

# List of tables

Table 1 -Overview of STP's country strategic plan .....	17
Table 2. Overview of activities under the activity stream 01 of SO1 .....	18
Table 3. Overview of activities under the activity stream 02 of SO1 .....	19
Table 4. Percentage of SO1 funding for respective activity throughout the implementing years. 22	
Table 5. GAM code per activity .....	22
Table 6. Data collection methods and sample size .....	23
Table 7. Overview of mobilised funds over years of CSP implementation, with emphasis on the COVID-19 response (USD) .....	30
Table 8. Changes in planned activities in SO1 per respective years .....	31
Table 9. Major achievement of interventions, 2019-2022 .....	45
Table 10. Recommendations .....	61

# List of figures

Figure 1. Financing of CSP (SO1 + SO2) .....	21
Figure 2. Financing of SO1 .....	21
Figure 3. Overview of financial indicators for activities A01 .....	22
Figure 4. Overview of financial indicators for activities A02 .....	22
Figure 5. Perception of consistency between CSP's activities and outputs and its higher-level results .....	25
Figure 6. Key informants' perception of GEWE incorporation in the design and implementation of the intervention .....	28
Figure 7. Extent of addressing gender inequality perceived by key informants .....	32
Figure 8. Total Allocated resources and expenditure per strategic outcome to total allocated resources, last revised NBP, and total expenditures, respectively (in percentage) .....	33
Figure 9. Extent of efficiency of implemented intervention .....	34
Figure 10. Extent of efficiency of programme management and decision-making processes .....	35
Figure 11. The extent of the government's contributions that enabled the intervention implementation .....	37
Figure 12. Overview of financial indicators for A01 .....	39
Figure 13. Overview of financial indicators for A02 .....	39
Figure 14. Perception of intervention coherence with national priorities.....	40
Figure 15. Extent of synergies between WFP programme and the work of institutions of key informants.....	41
Figure 16, Overview of HELPO work in Sao Tome, pointing out the synergies (in Portuguese).....	42
Figure 17. Extent to which the interventions have made a real difference in the capacity to design, plan and implement programmes .....	46
Figure 18. Application of Sustainable Agricultural Practices techniques by surveyed farmers* ...	49
Figure 19. Perception of the sustainability extent of the activities-built capacities and systems for the programmes.....	51
Figure 20. Level of satisfaction as perceived by surveyed farmers (N=378) .....	54
Figure 21. Perceived ability to cover food needs of the household (N=378) .....	54

# Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
(I)NGO	(International) Non-governmental Organisation
A	Activity
ACR	Annual Country Report
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
CADR	Rural Development Support Centre
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	International Convention on the Elimination on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CO	Country Office
CoI	Conflict of Interest
CONSAN	National Food and Nutritional Security Council
CPADR	Agricultural Policy Charter for Rural Development
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
CSS	Country Capacity Strengthening
DAC	Development Assistance Commission
DEQAS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
DEQS	Quality Support Service
DRR,	Disaster Risk Reduction
EB	Executive Board
EC	Evaluation Committee
EM	Evaluation Management
ENSSA	National Food Safety Strategy
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ET	Evaluation Team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLA	Field-level Agreements
FS	Food Security
GAM	Gender with Age Marker
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GTA	Gender Thematic Analysis
HGSF	Home Grown School Feeding
HGSM	Home-grown School Meals
HH	Household
HQ	Headquarters
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INPG	Institute for the Promotion of Gender Equality and Gender Equity
IPC	Integrated phase classification
IR	Inception Report
IT	Information Technology

Acronym	Definition
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Rural Development
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoU	Memoranda of Understanding
MPTF	Multi Partner Trust Fund
NDP	National Development Plan
NFR	Note for the record
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEV	Office of Evaluation
PAS	Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition Policies
PET	Polyethylene terephthalate
PNASE	National School Feeding and Health Program
PNIASAN	National Agricultural Investment Programme for Food and Nutritional Security
PNN	National Nutrition Program
PNSAN	National Food and Nutritional Security Programme
PO	Project Office
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
REO	Regional Evaluation Office
RO	Regional office
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SF	School Feeding
SFP	School Feeding Programme
SG	Strategic Goal
SHF	Small Holder Farmer
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SO	Strategic Outcome
SSC	South-South Cooperation
STP	Sao Tome and Principe
TL	Team Leader
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Framework 2017 - 2021
UNEG	United Nations Ethical Guidelines
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USD	United States Dollar
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZHSR	Zero Hunger Strategy Review

# Executive Summary

English.

## Introduction.

**Evaluation Features.** The “Evaluation of capacity strengthening activities for government and local communities in Sao Tome and Principe” was conducted between June and November 2023. It focused on the activities implemented by WFP and its partners within CSP 2019 -2024<sup>1</sup> under Activities 1 (SF) and 2 (SHF), implemented through capacity strengthening intervention under Strategic Outcome 1 (SO1). In relation to Activity 3 (in-kind emergency response to school affected children in time of COVID pandemic), the evaluation focused only on how activity 1 and 2 enabled its implementation, with the idea to inform the implementation of CSP 2024 – 2028.

The evaluation covered the period from July 2019 to December 2022 and applied mixed methods to six evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact and Sustainability. Data were collected in all 6 districts of Sao Tome through desk review, key person interviews, focus group discussions, observation walks and questionnaire survey. Total of 662 individuals (502 female) were consulted. The evaluation respected UNSWAP criteria to integrate GEWE issues and adherence to UNEG guidelines. No major constraints were encountered. Limitations mostly related to the access to some documents and reported data were addressed by triangulation ensuring the findings were valid, impartial, independent and credible.

**Context.** Sao Tome and Principe is a small island nation located in the Gulf of Guinea. The Santomean Government ratified the 2030 Agenda but prioritised 5 (+2) Sustainable Development Goals (1, 8, 9, 13,14,15, 16). Smallholder agriculture is family-based and usually organised around a few crops. Low production levels imply reliance on imported products, with consequences for school feeding. School feeding faces obstacles like the lack of a national school feeding strategy; inadequate consideration of school lunches in national priorities and budgets; limited government capacity to manage school feeding; inadequate funding mechanisms; logistical challenges in food delivery; inability to determine costs and estimate community participation; weak civil society mobilisation to support a national ownership transition, including contributions from community and parent associations; and dependence on a basic food basket made up of imported foods. There is a need to develop a comprehensive home school feeding (HGSM) approach that is gender transformative and has a strong focus on direct procurement of locally produced nutritious food.

**WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024.** The CSP for Sao Tome and Principe 2019 – 2024 was approved by WFP Board in June 2019 with initial length from July 2019 to December 2024 at a total cost of 1,588,903 USD. Initially, the CSP included one Strategic Outcome focusing on strengthening government capacities to implement an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and smallholder-friendly home-grown school meals (HGSM) programme, as well as related food security and nutrition policies and programmes. In 2019, 2021 and 2022 the CSP was revised. The implementation time was reduced until December 2023, to allow new CSP to align with the additional Strategic Outcome 2 of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). Activity 3, focusing on WFP emergency response to affected household, was added, and budget revised to USD 7 805 590.<sup>2</sup> The CSP was designed with a gender transformative social and behavioural change communication approach, and was assigned a GAM code 3. SO1 and SO2 implementation and results are somehow intertwined, making data separation challenging; however, the evaluation focused only on achievements of SO1.

## Evaluation Findings

### EQ1: To what extent does the intervention meet the needs and priorities of the government, stakeholders and affected populations?

The overall goal of WFP support to the government was in line with the WFP Revised Corporate Results Framework (2017-2021) Strategic Goal 2 (Partner to support implementation of the SDGs), Strategic Objective 4 (Support SDG implementation), and Strategic Result 5 (Countries have strengthened capacity to implement SDGs). No specific national requirements were posed on its design. WFP was the government’s partner of

---

<sup>1</sup> Initially the CSP was planned to be from 2019 – 2024 while later on it was reviewed and the period was adjusted for 2019 – 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Subject evaluated are only activities under SO1.



choice in its commitment to consolidate and improve the national school meals and health programme. The CSP design process incorporated and reflected the priorities and needs of government, including the STP Transformation Agenda 2030, the Second National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2017-2020, and the NDP 2017-2021 which sets its major objectives towards the economic growth, poverty reduction, reduction of dependency on imported products and protection of the environment. Involved governments stakeholders recognized these issues as important and were involved in the participatory design of the programme.

WFP decided to ensure that the design and implementation of government activities will be gender transformative and address the particular needs and interests of vulnerable population. It also established Field Level Agreements (FLA) to cooperate with implementing organisations.

WFP decided to ensure that the design and implementation of government activities will be gender transformative and address the particular needs and interests of vulnerable population. It also established Field Level Agreements (FLA) to cooperate with implementing organisations.

### **EQ2: To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and outcomes?**

The CSP contributed to a certain extent to fulfil government priorities, mostly by qualitative interventions by CSS and supporting government autonomy. The intervention timeline overlapped with the NDP 2017-2021 as the first operational plan of the STP 2030 Transformation Agenda and the NDPS 2020-2024. Currently, there is no updated Report on achievement of national priorities.

The COVID-19 period confirmed the role of WFP in country as a well-established stakeholder, providing emergency response and quickly mobilizing resources. In this case, an additional component (SO2) was added to the CSP, focusing on providing relief to vulnerable population.

The sudden emergency opened the potential for mobilization of financial resources and enhanced cooperation and mutual activities with some other donors in the country. During the pandemic, the WFP STP office received support from the regional bureau in Dakar and the Cameroon Country Office. Additional financial resources in total of USD 1,639,425 between 2020 and 2022 were mobilized.

Despite the suspension of some SO1 activities due to lack of funding, the cooperation with government stakeholders worked well. SO2 interventions were implemented.

CSP was designed to target both men and women and include vulnerable groups. Results were delivered to all the groups; for SO1 some gaps in reporting and progress monitoring were recorded. Quantified data, including gender segregated data, were often absent. A specific implementation and communication strategy for GEWE issues was not in place.

### **EQ3: To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated?**

The WFP CO office has a limited HR capacity, but this was offset by well-established, long-term relationships with government stakeholders. Yet, this is susceptible to staff changes, such as political turnover or WFP turnover. Staff shortages were managed by hiring international experts, through FLAs with local NGOs and government cooperation, significantly aiding efficient implementation.

The limited CO staff capacities may be mitigated by adopting an internal management, monitoring and recording system, to improve overall team efficiency and provide some resilience against staff fluctuation.

Limited financial resources influenced implementation efficiency. In 2019 the CO received no donor or government contribution, but was able to mobilise resources to implement all the planned activities, although with slight delays. Within the implementation period, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-related disasters affected funds allocation and reprioritization of activities, which led to the modifications described above. Between 2019 and 2022, the total expenditure of 1,860,193 USD represents 36.3% of the total allocated resources of 5,129,915 USD, as reported within ACRs. Governments' non-monetary contributions, in particular active engagement in the CSP interventions, played a crucial role in implementation and efficiency. CSP design did not include time indicators, milestones, and quantified targets. Yearly workplans were also missing, and only the end-of-year achievements were reported.

The efficiency of the implementation of SO1 was high. Some delays and bottlenecks were reported, mainly due to the revision of CSP and the addition of SO2.

### **EQ4: To what extent is the intervention appropriate/compatible with other interventions in a country, sector or institution?**

WFP's support to the government was fully aligned with national programmes, and its coherence was ensured through the direct participation of government representatives in the implementation process. Civil society organizations were strategic partners, directly engaged in the CSP implementation, and their other work in-country was performed in synergy and communication with WFP. Synergies with UN other programmes were procured, and some joint projects were implemented or started, although some gaps and untapped potential were also observed. Respondents from UN organizations confirmed that they still perceive WFP as more of an emergency response agency.

In 2021, progress in coordination and partnership with other UN organisations was made when WFP, along with other UN agencies under the coordination of the Resident Coordinator, contributed to the UNDAF 2017-2021 annual report and the UN CCA. In the same year, WFP also chaired the UN Communication Group and participated in UN country team meetings. In May 2022, a multi-donor joint project under the SDG Fund in partnership with UNFPA, ILO, UNHABITAT and the Government of STP was launched.

Synergies with FAO were not tackled within SO1 despite being planned within the CSP design. As confirmed by both WFP and FAO respondents, there is space for synergies, and focuses overlap.

#### **EQ5: To what extent has the intervention generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative effects, intended or unintended, at a higher level?**

The School Feeding Law was approved by the National Assembly in August 2022 as a result of long-term WFP interventions. The Law provides secures long-term financial resources from the government for the School Feeding Programme, a crucial step towards the future autonomous financing of the programme.

Within the evaluated period, WFP brought government stakeholders to the following commitments and/or provided evidence for the further development of policies, strategies and budget planning:

- SFP significantly boosted children's food access and motivation for school attendance, perceived as essential by school personnel; fewer children attend on days without the canteen.
- District-level interventions, like school gardens, yielded 876 kg of vegetables and 77 pigs, signalling potential for locally grown and accessible food sources.
- Increased awareness of the importance of locally produced and consumed food was noted.
- Increased awareness on GEWE and GBV was noted.
- Trained farmers enhanced skills, using climate-smart practices, fostering resilience and connecting with schools and markets.
- Government stakeholders received tools for gender-segregated data, enabling the design of gender-sensitive policies; discussions highlighted the need to empower women smallholders, but no specific female leadership activity occurred.

#### **EQ6: To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained in the long-term?**

Through capacity building, the intervention contributed to generate interest and motivation among government stakeholders to continue with the programmes. The strengthened PNASE capacities were the enabling factors to sustainably deliver the School Feeding Programme. Supporting CONSAN's establishment as a respected stakeholder, capable of organizing high-level government meetings, was crucial for laying the foundations of future sustainability.

Strengthening MAFRD capacities provided the tools and skills needed to further the work with smallholder farmers and develop gender-sensitive policies, transferring capacity building to the institutional level, providing resiliency against staff turnover.

Despite recognition of its importance, the School Feeding Programme is not yet sustainable. A crucial element to ensure its sustainability and government autonomisation is to secure financing and strengthen commitment. The capacities of PNASE need to be further strengthened in terms of improving logistics and monitoring tools. To increase the viability and sustainability of the SFP at the school level, the issues of lack of equipment, non-functioning school gardens, and low parental engagement should be tackled. The connection between local producers and schools needs to be enforced, along with strengthening the capacities and resilience of the farmers.

### **Conclusions**

WFP has an irreplaceable position within the donor community in the country, offering impactful and long-term solutions for the country's development for which it is highly regarded by the stakeholders. WFP is

shifting from a traditional operational role to a more transformative actor. In these efforts, a complex and well-focused approach should be maintained, and some of gaps in internal capacities overcome.

**Relevance.** The evaluated capacity strengthening interventions of CSP were highly relevant, meeting the needs and priorities of the government, stakeholders and the affected population. GEWE issues were incorporated. However, a more strategic and diligent process is needed for the upcoming CSP.

**Effectiveness.** Effectiveness was high. The lack of quantitative data and baseline indicators meant only the qualitative performance could be evaluated to provide the endline information. The influence of COVID-19 throughout project implementation effectiveness was rather positive, providing the incentives to seek different approaches for CSP implementation and incentivising additional ad-hoc financing. For the future CSP, a well-defined gender strategy should be designed, including quantifiable indicators to assess the effectiveness and an “emergency” pillow for future potential crises and shocks in the country.

**Efficiency.** Efficiency was adequate to the current WFP CO capacities, pointing to the persisting challenge of small CO offices. Due to their small size and lack of capacity, there is a need to fund new staff, which is hard for small offices. Some management planning and monitoring tools are lacking but could ease work, release capacities, and enable better monitoring.

Cooperation with the government was smooth and worked well due to well-established communications and relations. Despite the initially committed monetary contribution to CSP, the government contribution was non-monetary as the country faced some economic challenges.

**Coherence.** The capacity strengthening interventions of CSP were coherent with national programmes and other donors/activities. Some overlaps were encountered, and more synergies could have been created. There is a space for future improvement in this regard and a need for better coordination within the donor community towards fulfilling national programmes and priorities.

**Impact.** Achievement at institutional capacity building were high. However, intended indirect impacts at the community level still require further efforts. While the project targeted gender inequalities, impact on women's leadership empowerment and independence was rather low.

**Sustainability.** The sustainability of the evaluated interventions of CSP was rather high in terms of built capacities and institutionalisation, with some limitations related to financial sustainability. Further work on enforcing the School Feeding Law is needed to secure the financial resources. PNASE should become autonomous, and the government's commitment to the programme should be strengthened. An efficient data management system for monitoring school feeding should be put in place, in close collaboration with the Government (PNASE) and monitored to enable targeted strategic planning. Gender-responsive activities directly targeting women leaders could also support active participation of beneficiaries and communities.

### Recommendations<sup>3</sup>

Four major recommendations and 17 sub-recommendations were derived from the evaluation results, accompanied by Annex 11 presenting “Detailed Actionable Steps” for the managerial response. All recommendations were developed in consultation with stakeholders. Two recommendations are to be addressed the strategic level, one recommendation at the operational level and one at the level of results-based orientation.

1. Maintain WFP's current strong position within the country and further reposition its role within the upcoming CSP period from operational to transformative development actor;
2. Review, adjust and strengthen CO internal capacities for a more efficient management of CSP implementation;
3. Adopt and use unified monitoring and implementation processes and act on intended strategic implementation of crosscutting issues and GEWE throughout the whole CSP;
4. Ensure that topics related strategy direction, end-to-end activities approach, cooperation with stakeholders and support of good practice while overcoming challenges are actively adopted within the implementation of new CSP and when not directly targeted create intended opportunities and synergies for including and building upon them.

---

<sup>3</sup> Shortened version for the purpose of the executive summary. Full version available in WFP format in the final chapter of evaluation report.

## Português.

### Introdução.

**Características da avaliação.** A "Avaliação das actividades de reforço das capacidades do governo e das comunidades locais em São Tomé e Príncipe" foi realizada entre junho e novembro de 2023. Centrou-se nas actividades implementadas pelo PAM e seus parceiros no âmbito do CSP 2019-2024<sup>4</sup> no âmbito das Actividades 1 (SF) e 2 (SHF), implementadas através da intervenção de reforço das capacidades no âmbito do Resultado Estratégico 1 (SO1). Em relação à Actividade 3 (resposta de emergência em espécie às crianças afectadas pelas escolas em tempo de pandemia de COVID), a avaliação centrou-se apenas na forma como as actividades 1 e 2 permitiram a sua implementação, com a ideia de informar a implementação do CSP 2024 - 2028.

A avaliação abrangeu o período de julho de 2019 a dezembro de 2022 e aplicou métodos mistos a seis critérios de avaliação: Relevância, Eficácia, Eficiência, Coerência, Impacto e Sustentabilidade. Os dados foram recolhidos nos 6 distritos de São Tomé e Príncipe através de uma análise documental, entrevistas a pessoas-chave, discussões em grupos de discussão, passeios de observação e inquéritos por questionário. Foi consultado um total de 662 indivíduos (502 do sexo feminino). A avaliação respeitou os critérios do UNSWAP para integrar as questões GEWE e a adesão às directrizes da UNEG. Não se registaram grandes constrangimentos. As limitações, na sua maioria relacionadas com o acesso a alguns documentos e dados comunicados, foram resolvidas através da triangulação, garantindo que as conclusões eram válidas, imparciais, independentes e credíveis.

**Contexto.** São Tomé e Príncipe é uma pequena nação insular localizada no Golfo da Guiné. O Governo santomense ratificou a Agenda 2030, mas deu prioridade a 5 (+2) Objectivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (1, 8, 9, 13,14,15, 16). A agricultura dos pequenos agricultores é familiar e geralmente organizada em torno de algumas culturas. Os baixos níveis de produção implicam a dependência de produtos importados, com consequências para a alimentação escolar. A alimentação escolar enfrenta obstáculos como a falta de uma estratégia nacional de alimentação escolar; a consideração inadequada dos almoços escolares nas prioridades e orçamentos nacionais; a capacidade limitada do governo para gerir a alimentação escolar; mecanismos de financiamento inadequados; desafios logísticos na entrega de alimentos; incapacidade de determinar os custos e estimar a participação da comunidade; fraca mobilização da sociedade civil para apoiar uma transição nacional de apropriação, incluindo contribuições de associações comunitárias e de pais; e dependência de um cabaz alimentar básico constituído por alimentos importados. É necessário desenvolver uma abordagem abrangente de alimentação escolar ao domicílio (HGSM) que seja transformadora em termos de género e se concentre fortemente na aquisição direta de alimentos nutritivos produzidos localmente.

**Plano Estratégico do PAM para o país 2019 - 2024.** O CSP para São Tomé e Príncipe 2019 - 2024 foi aprovado pelo Conselho do PAM em junho de 2019, com duração inicial de julho de 2019 a dezembro de 2024, com um custo total de 1.588.903 USD. Inicialmente, o CSP incluía um Resultado Estratégico centrado no reforço das capacidades governamentais para implementar um programa de refeições escolares caseiras (HGSM) sustentável do ponto de vista ambiental e social, transformador do género e favorável aos pequenos agricultores, bem como políticas e programas relacionados com a segurança alimentar e a nutrição. Em 2019, 2021 e 2022, o CSP foi revisto. O prazo de execução foi reduzido até dezembro de 2023, para permitir que o novo DEP se alinhe com o Resultado Estratégico 2 adicional do novo Quadro de Cooperação para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável das Nações Unidas (UNSDCF). Foi acrescentada a actividade 3, centrada na resposta de emergência do PAM às famílias afectadas, e o orçamento foi revisto para 7 805 590 USD.<sup>5</sup> O documento de estratégia foi concebido com uma abordagem de comunicação de mudança social e comportamental transformadora do género, tendo-lhe sido atribuído um código GAM 3. A execução e os resultados do SO1 e do SO2 estão de alguma forma interligados, o que torna difícil a separação dos dados; no entanto, a avaliação centrou-se apenas nas realizações do SO1.

### Conclusões da avaliação

**QE1: Em que medida a intervenção responde às necessidades e prioridades do governo, das partes interessadas e das populações afectadas?**

<sup>4</sup> Inicialmente, o PEC foi planeado para o período de 2019 a 2024, mas mais tarde foi revisto e o período foi ajustado para 2019 a 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Os temas avaliados são apenas actividades no âmbito do SO1.

O objetivo geral do apoio do PAM ao governo estava em conformidade com o Quadro de Resultados Corporativos Revisto do PAM (2017-2021), Objetivo Estratégico 2 (Parceiro para apoiar a implementação dos ODS), Objetivo Estratégico 4 (Apoiar a implementação dos ODS) e Resultado Estratégico 5 (Os países reforçaram a capacidade de implementar os ODS). Não foram colocados requisitos nacionais específicos na sua conceção. O PAM foi o parceiro de eleição do Governo no seu compromisso de consolidar e melhorar o programa nacional de alimentação escolar e de saúde. O processo de conceção do CSP incorporou e reflectiu as prioridades e necessidades do governo, incluindo a Agenda de Transformação STP 2030, a Segunda Estratégia Nacional de Redução da Pobreza 2017-2020 e o PND 2017-2021, que define os seus principais objectivos para o crescimento económico, a redução da pobreza, a redução da dependência de produtos importados e a proteção do ambiente. As partes interessadas dos governos envolvidos reconheceram a importância destas questões e foram envolvidas na conceção participativa do programa.

O PAM decidiu garantir que a conceção e a execução das actividades do Governo serão transformadoras em termos de género e darão resposta às necessidades e interesses específicos da população vulnerável. Estabeleceu também acordos a nível local para cooperar com as organizações responsáveis pela execução.

O PAM decidiu garantir que a conceção e a execução das actividades do Governo serão transformadoras em termos de género e darão resposta às necessidades e interesses específicos da população vulnerável. Estabeleceu também acordos a nível local para cooperar com as organizações responsáveis pela execução.

### **QE2: Em que medida a intervenção alcançou, ou se espera que alcance, os seus objectivos e resultados?**

O PEC contribuiu, em certa medida, para o cumprimento das prioridades do governo, principalmente através de intervenções qualitativas do CSS e do apoio à autonomia do governo. O calendário de intervenção sobrepôs-se ao PDN 2017-2021, enquanto primeiro plano operacional da Agenda de Transformação STP 2030, e ao PNDS 2020-2024. Atualmente, não existe um relatório atualizado sobre a realização das prioridades nacionais.

O período COVID-19 confirmou o papel do PAM no país como uma parte interessada bem estabelecida, fornecendo resposta de emergência e mobilizando rapidamente recursos. Neste caso, foi acrescentada uma componente adicional (SO2) ao PEC, centrada na prestação de ajuda de emergência à população vulnerável.

A emergência súbita abriu o potencial de mobilização de recursos financeiros e reforçou a cooperação e as actividades mútuas com alguns outros doadores no país. Durante a pandemia, o escritório do PAM em STP recebeu apoio do gabinete regional em Dakar e do escritório nacional dos Camarões. Foram mobilizados recursos financeiros adicionais num total de USD 1.639.425 entre 2020 e 2022.

Apesar da suspensão de algumas actividades do SO1 devido à falta de financiamento, a cooperação com as partes interessadas do governo funcionou bem. As intervenções do SO2 foram implementadas.

O PEC foi concebido para visar tanto homens como mulheres e incluir grupos vulneráveis. Foram apresentados resultados a todos os grupos; no que respeita ao SO1, foram registadas algumas lacunas na comunicação de informações e no acompanhamento dos progressos. Os dados quantificados, incluindo os dados repartidos por género, eram frequentemente inexistentes. Não foi adoptada uma estratégia específica de execução e de comunicação para as questões GEWE.

### **QE3: Em que medida a intervenção conseguiu uma utilização óptima do orçamento e do tempo atribuídos?**

O gabinete de coordenação do PAM tem uma capacidade limitada em matéria de recursos humanos, mas este facto foi compensado por relações bem estabelecidas e de longa duração com os intervenientes governamentais. No entanto, esta situação é suscetível a mudanças de pessoal, como a rotação política ou a rotação do PAM. A escassez de pessoal foi gerida através da contratação de peritos internacionais, através de acordos de parceria com ONG locais e da cooperação com o Governo, o que contribuiu significativamente para uma execução eficiente.

As capacidades limitadas do pessoal do CO podem ser atenuadas através da adoção de um sistema interno de gestão, acompanhamento e registo, a fim de melhorar a eficiência global da equipa e proporcionar alguma resistência à flutuação do pessoal.

Os recursos financeiros limitados influenciaram a eficiência da execução. Em 2019, a CO não recebeu qualquer contribuição de doadores ou do governo, mas conseguiu mobilizar recursos para executar todas as actividades planeadas, embora com ligeiros atrasos. Durante o período de execução, a pandemia de COVID-

19 e as catástrofes relacionadas com o clima afetaram a afetação de fundos e a redefinição de prioridades das atividades, o que levou às alterações acima descritas. Entre 2019 e 2022, a despesa total de 1 860 193 USD representa 36,3 % do total dos recursos afectados de 5 129 915 USD, tal como indicado nos RAC. As contribuições não monetárias dos governos, em particular o envolvimento ativo nas intervenções do PEC, desempenharam um papel crucial na implementação e eficiência. A conceção do PEC não incluía indicadores temporais, marcos e objectivos quantificados. Também não existiam planos de trabalho anuais e apenas foram comunicados os resultados do final do ano.

A eficiência da implementação do SO1 foi elevada. Foram registados alguns atrasos e estrangulamentos, principalmente devido à revisão do PEC e ao aditamento do SO2.

#### **QE4: Em que medida a intervenção é adequada/compatível com outras intervenções num país, sector ou instituição?**

O apoio do PAM ao Governo foi totalmente alinhado com os programas nacionais e a sua coerência foi assegurada através da participação direta de representantes do Governo no processo de execução. As organizações da sociedade civil foram parceiros estratégicos, diretamente envolvidos na execução do DEP, e os seus outros trabalhos no país foram realizados em sinergia e comunicação com o PAM. Foram obtidas sinergias com outros programas da ONU e foram executados ou iniciados alguns projectos conjuntos, embora também se tenham observado algumas lacunas e potencialidades por explorar. Os inquiridos das organizações da ONU confirmaram que continuam a considerar o PAM mais como uma agência de resposta a emergências.

Em 2021, registaram-se progressos em matéria de coordenação e parceria com outras organizações das Nações Unidas quando o PAM, juntamente com outras agências das Nações Unidas sob a coordenação do Coordenador Residente, contribuiu para o relatório anual do UNDAF 2017-2021 e para o CCA das Nações Unidas. No mesmo ano, o PAM presidiu também ao Grupo de Comunicação da ONU e participou nas reuniões da equipa nacional da ONU. Em maio de 2022, foi lançado um projeto conjunto de vários doadores no âmbito do Fundo ODS, em parceria com o FNUAP, a OIT, o UNHABITAT e o Governo de STP.

As sinergias com a FAO não foram abordadas no âmbito do SO1, apesar de estarem previstas na conceção do PEC. Tal como confirmado pelos inquiridos do PAM e da FAO, há espaço para sinergias e sobreposição de focos.

#### **QE5: Em que medida é que a intervenção gerou ou se espera que venha a gerar efeitos positivos ou negativos significativos, intencionais ou não, a um nível mais elevado?**

A Lei da Alimentação Escolar foi aprovada pela Assembleia Nacional em agosto de 2022, como resultado de intervenções de longo prazo do PAM. A lei assegura recursos financeiros a longo prazo do governo para o Programa de Alimentação Escolar, um passo crucial para o futuro financiamento autónomo do programa.

Durante o período avaliado, o PAM levou as partes interessadas do governo a assumirem os seguintes compromissos e/ou forneceu provas para o desenvolvimento de políticas, estratégias e planeamento orçamental:

- O SFP aumentou significativamente o acesso das crianças à alimentação e a sua motivação para a frequência escolar, considerada essencial pelo pessoal escolar; menos crianças frequentam a escola nos dias em que não há cantina.
- As intervenções a nível distrital, como as hortas escolares, produziram 876 kg de legumes e 77 porcos, assinalando o potencial para fontes de alimentação localmente cultivadas e acessíveis.
- Foi registada uma maior sensibilização para a importância dos alimentos produzidos e consumidos localmente.
- Foi registada uma maior sensibilização para a GEWE e a VBG.
- Os agricultores formados melhoraram as suas competências, utilizando práticas inteligentes em termos climáticos, promovendo a resiliência e estabelecendo ligações com escolas e mercados.
- As partes interessadas do governo receberam ferramentas para dados separados por género, permitindo a conceção de políticas sensíveis ao género; as discussões destacaram a necessidade de capacitar as mulheres pequenas proprietárias, mas não houve nenhuma atividade específica de liderança feminina.

#### **EQ6: Em que medida as actividades e os resultados da intervenção serão sustentados a longo prazo?**

Através da capacitação, a intervenção contribuiu para gerar interesse e motivação entre as partes interessadas do governo para continuar com os programas. As capacidades reforçadas do PNASE foram os

factores que permitiram a execução sustentável do Programa de Alimentação Escolar. O apoio ao estabelecimento do CONSAN como uma parte interessada respeitada, capaz de organizar reuniões governamentais de alto nível, foi crucial para lançar as bases da sustentabilidade futura.

O reforço das capacidades do MAFRD forneceu os instrumentos e as competências necessárias para prosseguir o trabalho com os pequenos agricultores e desenvolver políticas sensíveis ao género, transferindo o reforço das capacidades para o nível institucional, proporcionando resistência à rotação do pessoal.

Apesar do reconhecimento da sua importância, o programa de alimentação escolar ainda não é sustentável. Um elemento crucial para garantir a sua sustentabilidade e autonomização governamental é assegurar o financiamento e reforçar o compromisso. As capacidades do PNASE precisam de ser reforçadas em termos de melhoria da logística e das ferramentas de monitorização. Para aumentar a viabilidade e a sustentabilidade do SFP a nível escolar, devem ser resolvidas as questões da falta de equipamento, das hortas escolares que não funcionam e do fraco envolvimento dos pais. A ligação entre os produtores locais e as escolas deve ser reforçada, juntamente com o reforço das capacidades e da resiliência dos agricultores.

## Conclusões

O PAM ocupa uma posição insubstituível no seio da comunidade de doadores do país, oferecendo soluções com impacto e a longo prazo para o desenvolvimento do país, pelo que é altamente considerado pelas partes interessadas. O PAM está a passar de um papel operacional tradicional para um papel mais transformador. Nestes esforços, deve ser mantida uma abordagem complexa e bem direccionada e devem ser colmatadas algumas lacunas a nível das capacidades internas.

**Relevância.** O PEC avaliado é altamente pertinente, indo ao encontro das necessidades e prioridades do governo, das partes interessadas e da população afetada. As questões GEWE foram integradas. No entanto, é necessário um processo mais estratégico e diligente para o próximo PEC.

**Eficácia.** A eficácia foi elevada. A falta de dados quantitativos e de indicadores de base significou que apenas o desempenho qualitativo pôde ser avaliado para fornecer as informações finais. A influência da COVID-19 em toda a eficácia da execução do projeto foi bastante positiva, proporcionando os incentivos para procurar diferentes abordagens para a execução do PEC e incentivando o financiamento ad hoc adicional. Para o futuro PEC, deve ser concebida uma estratégia de género bem definida, incluindo indicadores quantificáveis para avaliar a eficácia e uma almofada de "emergência" para futuras crises e choques potenciais no país.

**Eficiência.** A eficiência foi adequada às capacidades actuais dos gabinetes de coordenação do PAM, o que aponta para o desafio persistente dos pequenos gabinetes de coordenação. Devido à sua pequena dimensão e à falta de capacidade, é necessário financiar novos efectivos, o que é difícil para os pequenos gabinetes. Faltam alguns instrumentos de planeamento e de acompanhamento da gestão, que poderiam facilitar o trabalho, libertar capacidades e permitir um melhor acompanhamento.

A cooperação com o governo foi harmoniosa e funcionou bem devido a comunicações e relações bem estabelecidas. Apesar da contribuição monetária inicialmente prevista para o CSP, a contribuição do governo foi não monetária, uma vez que o país enfrentava alguns desafios económicos.

**Coerência.** O PEC foi coerente com os programas nacionais e com outros doadores/actividades. Foram detectadas algumas sobreposições e poderiam ter sido criadas mais sinergias. Há espaço para futuras melhorias neste domínio e é necessária uma melhor coordenação no seio da comunidade de doadores para cumprir os programas e prioridades nacionais.

**Impacto.** Os resultados obtidos no domínio do reforço das capacidades institucionais foram elevados. No entanto, os impactos indirectos pretendidos a nível comunitário exigem ainda esforços adicionais. Embora o projeto visasse as desigualdades entre homens e mulheres, o impacto na capacitação e independência das mulheres em matéria de liderança foi bastante reduzido.

**Sustentabilidade.** A sustentabilidade do PEC foi bastante elevada em termos de capacidades criadas e de institucionalização, com algumas limitações relacionadas com a sustentabilidade financeira. É necessário continuar a trabalhar na aplicação da Lei da Alimentação Escolar para garantir os recursos financeiros. O PNASE deve tornar-se autónomo e o compromisso do governo com o programa deve ser reforçado. Deve ser criado um sistema eficiente de gestão de dados para monitorizar a alimentação escolar, em estreita colaboração com o Governo (PNASE) e monitorizado para permitir um planeamento estratégico orientado. As actividades sensíveis ao género que visam diretamente as mulheres líderes poderiam também apoiar a participação ativa dos beneficiários e das comunidades.

## Recomendações<sup>6</sup>

Dos resultados da avaliação resultaram quatro recomendações principais e 17 sub-recomendações, acompanhadas pelo Anexo 11, que apresenta "Medidas de ação pormenorizadas" para a resposta dos gestores. Todas as recomendações foram desenvolvidas em consulta com as partes interessadas. Duas recomendações devem ser abordadas a nível estratégico, uma recomendação a nível operacional e uma a nível da orientação baseada nos resultados.

5. Manter a atual posição forte do PAM no país e reposicionar ainda mais o seu papel no próximo período do documento de estratégia, passando de agente operacional a agente de desenvolvimento transformador;
6. Rever, ajustar e reforçar as capacidades internas do CO para uma gestão mais eficiente da execução do PEC;
7. Adotar e utilizar processos unificados de acompanhamento e execução e agir em conformidade com a execução estratégica prevista das questões transversais e da GEWE em todo o documento de estratégia;
8. Assegurar que os temas relacionados com a orientação da estratégia, a abordagem das actividades de ponta a ponta, a cooperação com as partes interessadas e o apoio às boas práticas, superando simultaneamente os desafios, sejam ativamente adoptados no âmbito da execução do novo PEC e, quando não diretamente visados, criar as oportunidades e sinergias pretendidas para os incluir e desenvolver.

---

<sup>6</sup> Versão abreviada para efeitos do resumo executivo. A versão integral está disponível em formato PAM no capítulo final do relatório de avaliação.



# 1. Introduction

1. The evaluation consortium composed of the ICON Institute and 4G eval was commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) Sao Tome and Principe (STP) Country Office (CO) to conduct the decentralised evaluation “Evaluation of capacity strengthening activities for government and local communities in Sao Tome and Principe”. The evaluation was conducted both remotely and in Sao Tome and Principe between June and December 2023. This draft report presents the results of the evaluation. For further details, see the summarised evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) in Annex 1 and Evaluation Timeline (Annex 2).

## 1.1. Evaluation features

2. **Rationale.** The evaluation was commissioned for the following reasons:

- To support the planning of the second-generation Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for the STP CO, to be submitted to the Executive Board by November 2023;
- To assess WFP capacity strengthening activities, generate useful evidence on key achievements and lessons learned from current programmes, further informing the new CSP;
- To comply with corporate requirements by conducting a Decentralised Evaluation and CSP Evaluation during the penultimate year of the current CSP (2019-2024)
- To inform potential areas of WFP intervention in the new CSP.

3. **Objectives.** The evaluation had the dual objective of assessing the performance of the project (accountability) and learning valuable lessons for its future (learning). As such, it combined both summative and formative elements.

4. **Scope.** The evaluation focused on the activities implemented by WFP and its partners in the six districts of Sao Tome in support of capacity-strengthening activities to government and local communities to provide home-grown school feeding, sustainable and equitable local food value chains, stimulate local agricultural markets and provide emergency response feeding to children affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the reviewed aspects - the gender equality and women empowerment, including human rights approaches, accessibility to income generating opportunities for women, and environmental sustainability of smallholder farming activities was also analysed as in line with UNSWAP Criterion 1b. The island of Principe was not included.

5. In particular, the evaluation focused on the activities 1 School Feeding (SF) and 2 Small Holder Farmers (SHF) implemented through capacity strengthening intervention under Strategic Outcome 1 (SO1). In relation to Activity 3 (in-kind emergency response to school-affected children during the COVID-19 pandemic) under Strategic Outcome (SO2), the evaluation focused only on how the presence and work of WFP in Activity 1 and 2 have enabled its successful implementation, with the idea to inform the design of the new CSP.

6. The period covered by this assignment was from July 2019 to December 2022.

7. **Main stakeholders and intended users.** The evaluation engaged a broad range of WFP internal and external stakeholders (see Annex 3 – List of stakeholders) directly participating in the CSP 2019 – 2022<sup>7</sup> implementation and/or with the relative power to influence the programme.

8. The evaluation findings as such are expected to be useful for the following target audiences:

- Internal (WFP) stakeholders, including WFP HQ, WFP Regional Bureau for West Africa (RBD) WFP Country Office in STP, as well as the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) and WFP Executive Board (EB);
- National governmental partners;
- Implementing partners (Non-governmental organisations - NGOs);
- Beneficiaries, including schools and school staff, smallholder farmers, children and parents;

---

<sup>7</sup> 2019 – 2022 is the evaluated capacity strengthening CSP intervention period; therefore, we use this reference for the evaluation timeframe.

- Donors (e.g. Chellaram Foundation, Government of Brazil);
- UN Agencies (FAO, ILO, UN-HABITAT, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, RCO).

9. **Evaluation team.** The assignment was conducted by two international and one national experts with complementary skills in both evaluation and thematic sectors, including agriculture, food security and nutrition, support to smallholder farmers, community and stakeholder engagement, formal and informal education in rural areas, gender mainstreaming, gender and inclusion in education. The evaluation process was actively supported by the country office throughout the whole implementation.

10. **Timing and duration of fieldwork.** The field mission took place in September 2023 (see Annex 4, Field mission programme and summary of people interviewed) and was concluded by two in country debriefings presenting the preliminary findings. One debriefing was provided to the WFP regional and country office representatives. The second meeting was held for the external stakeholders and was used to collect additional feedback.

## 1.2. Context

11. **General overview.** Sao Tome and Principe is a small island nation located in the Gulf of Guinea, off the western coast of Central Africa. The Republic of Sao Tome and Principe is composed of six districts and the Autonomous Region of Principe. Its population is about 227,380 people (2022).<sup>8</sup> According to the World Bank (2021),<sup>9</sup> about half of its inhabitants are under 18 years old, with a secondary school enrolment rate of 89%.<sup>10</sup> Located on the equator, it has a hot and humid equatorial climate, with an ample variety of microclimates defined mainly by rainfall, temperature and location. The country is rich in biodiversity but prone to climatic shocks and natural disasters.

12. **Political Context.** STP gained independence from Portugal in 1975. Following independence, the country experienced periods of political instability, with several changes in government through coups and democratic transitions. Currently, STP is a democratic republic and has embraced a multi-party, semi-presidential democratic system, with the most recent elections taking place in September 2022. Among the Portuguese-speaking African nations, this young democracy stands out, being second only to Cape Verde in terms of political stability and democratic governance.

13. **Economy.** STP is a lower-middle-income country. While its size and remote location might be deceiving, STP enjoys the advantage of a youthful population, promising potential for the nation's development and prosperity. The economy of STP is predominantly based on agriculture, with cocoa, coffee, and palm oil being the main exports. Despite its potential, the country faces economic challenges, including poverty, high dependency on external aid, and an undiversified production base. Additionally, the country is also susceptible to trade shocks. Economic struggles are underlined by other challenges, including limited infrastructure and inadequate healthcare and education systems. To overcome the current challenges and mitigate the risk of new ones occurring, economic diversification and sustainable development are crucial for the country's growth.

14. In 2022, STP experienced a moderate decline in real GDP growth, dropping from 1.9% in 2021 to an estimated 0.9%. This downturn can be attributed to the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector, a significant pillar of the country's economy. The situation was further exacerbated by the disruption in global trade due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. STP relies heavily on tourism, which accounted for 43.7% of its foreign currency revenue in 2021, making it one of the primary contributors to the nation's economic well-being.<sup>11</sup> The economic slowdown was further exacerbated by the repercussions of elevated food and oil prices in the global market, which had a significant impact on the local market of STP. Since the country imports all of its oil and approximately half of its food, the surge in international prices placed additional strain on the nation's economy, affecting its overall financial stability and making it more vulnerable to economic challenges. This has resulted in skyrocketing inflation.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank (2022): Population, total – Sao Tome and Principe, available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=ST>

<sup>9</sup> World Bank (2021): The World Bank in Sao Tome and Principe, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/saotome/overview>

<sup>10</sup> World Bank (2017): School enrollment, secondary (% gross) - Sao Tome and Principe, available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.ENRR?locations=ST>

<sup>11</sup> African Development Bank (2023): African Economic Outlook 2023, available at: <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/african-economic-outlook-2023>

15. Nevertheless, the outlook for 2023 and 2024 is more optimistic. According to the African Development Bank,<sup>12</sup> STP's real GDP is anticipated to experience modest growth, projected at 1.6% in 2023 and 1.9% in 2024. This slow recovery is attributed to the gradual return to global trade following the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's reaction to international incentives. The government has also implemented prudent measures in public spending, resulting in a decline in the fiscal deficit. Projections indicate that the fiscal deficit is expected to decrease to 5.5% of GDP in 2023 and further to 4.5% in 2024.<sup>13</sup> These measures include austerity measures aimed at containing inflation and fostering fiscal stability. However, the inflation rate increased from 8.14% in 2021 to 18% in January 2022, closing the year with a 25.2% inflation rate.<sup>14</sup> Notably, the efforts of the government and the international community in STP will highly depend on the escalation and the results of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine due to the importation of food and oil.

16. **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** The Santomean Government ratified the 2030 Agenda but prioritised 5 (+2) Sustainable Development Goals. These development goals were chosen given the country's development index, especially economically. According to the United Nations, the SDGs chosen by STP included SDGs 1, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15 and 16. The first strategy elaborated by the country was aiming at zero hunger (SDG 2) which lists a series of constraints and challenges. The National Sustainable Development Plan of STP identifies the main challenges for the country's sustainable and inclusive development, presents the vision for 2030, and aligns itself with international agendas, including Agenda 2030, African Union Agenda 2063 and SAMOA Roadmap.

17. **Agriculture.** The agricultural sector in STP may be small, but it plays a crucial role in the country's economy. The fertile ground and favourable climate create the perfect environment conditions for sustainable and value-added agricultural ventures in STP. Notably, cocoa production stands out as the primary export, contributing to around 54 percent of total exports in 2021.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, STP exports other agriculture products such as palm oil, chocolate, pepper, coconut oil, and coffee. The country has seen promising growth in the chocolate export industry. Furthermore, STP is also venturing into tropical flower production, though at a relatively limited scale. Palm oil is now emerging as the new main export product, with Belgium's investment company, AGRIPALMA, developing vast areas of land in the southern part of Sao Tome for this purpose. Palm oil exports account for more than 30 percent of the country's total exports.<sup>16</sup> While agricultural production has faced challenges in terms of market size and profitability, there remains significant untapped potential in the agricultural products market.

18. Smallholder agriculture in STP is family-based, dominated by polyculture. The family farm is organised around at least one cash crop, normally intended for export (cocoa, pepper, coffee) over an average area of 2 ha in Sao Tome and about 3 ha in Principe, in which food crops are also grown, in particular different species of bananas and taro. Comtrade states that exports from STP recorded a value of USD 19 million in 2021 (USD 12 million in 2020). The five main groups of exported products were Food Products (60.6%) and Agricultural Products (34.3%). The lot of land exploited by each family is allocated by the State. Staple food crops are bananas (different species), roots and tubers (cassava, taro, sweet potato). All are in high demand on the local market and grown in association with other crops. Breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*) can be found in plantations or around houses. Cereal production is limited to a small production of maize often grown in market garden plots or intercropped with cassava. If banana and taro are grown in plantations (cocoa, coffee), cassava and sweet potato are grown on plots of 0.25-0.5 ha in monoculture or in association with maize. Vegetable products (chili, tomato, cabbage-apple, carrot, onion) including beans and fruits (pineapple, citrus fruits, others) intended mainly for the market are grown in a few small plots around the houses or next to the plantations. These different crops and plant species all taken together can occupy an average area of 0.25-0.5 hectares per family. Small farms face several problems impeding their development, including irrigation, lack of technical support or specialised training centers, access to land and production factors.

---

<sup>12</sup> African Development Bank (2023): São Tomé and Príncipe Economic Outlook, available at: <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-southern-africa-sao-tome-and-principe/sao-tome-and-principe-economic-outlook>

<sup>13</sup> African Development Bank (2023): São Tomé and Príncipe Economic Outlook, available at: <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-southern-africa-sao-tome-and-principe/sao-tome-and-principe-economic-outlook>

<sup>14</sup> Trading Economy (2023). Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/sao-tome-and-principe/inflation-cpi>

<sup>15</sup> International Trade Administration (2021): Agricultural Sectors and Agribusiness, available at: <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/sao-tome-and-principe-agricultural-sectors-and-agribusiness>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

19. **Access to food and nutritional habits.** Accessible food represents a key factor in combatting and achieving zero hunger SDG 2 goal. Access to quality food in STP is directly linked to the financial availability of its population, as the country's national production is still low, due to several factors, which leads to consumption of imported products. These imported products are constantly fluctuating in prices due to the country's isolation and other external factors, like for instance the pandemic or skyrocketing inflation. Hence, not all Sao Tomeans have access to and guarantee of adequate food and nutrition, which is a huge challenge to be overcome in this country. The basic diet of the inhabitants consists essentially of bananas, rice, eggs, beans, cassava, vegetables, breadfruit, sweet potatoes, izaquente and yams that can be accompanied by fish or meat (pork, chicken). However, the country has a great capacity to produce tropical fruit but consumption of other fruits is sporadic and its benefit is not recognised by the local population. Considering the data revealed by the Directorate of Social Protection of Sao Tome and Principe, poverty is more present in single-parent families headed by women (73%). This shows that women have less access to food and consequently their children.

20. This brings challenges for the education sector, too. Challenges related to school feeding include the lack of a national school feeding strategy; inadequate consideration of school lunches in national priorities and budgets; limited government capacity to manage school feeding operations effectively and equitably; inadequate funding mechanisms; logistical challenges that make it difficult to deliver food to schools; the inability to accurately determine the cost of a school feeding program and the extent and scope of community participation; weak civil society mobilisation to support a transition to national ownership, including contributions from community and parent associations; and great dependence on a basic food basket made up of imported foods. There is a need to develop a comprehensive home school feeding (HGSM) approach that is gender transformative and has a strong focus on direct procurement of locally produced nutritious food.

21. Currently, **school feeding** is regulated and supported through the PNASE with support from several partners, notably WFP. Until 2011, school canteens were co-financed by WFP. From 2012, this responsibility was gradually transferred to the government of Sao Tome, with assistance from the Brazilian government. During the transition period, Law no.4/2012 (PNASE Law) was prepared and approved. These programs together, and with the support of the National Nutrition Program (PNN), worked on identifying meal menus for schools that are mostly based on local products with greater nutritional value and with greater availability on the market. Despite all the effort, this program guarantees schools just one hot dish a day for the 50,000 pre-school and basic education children in schools across the country with enormous difficulties at all levels, especially the budget, which is not fully included in the general budget of the state.

22. **Main national guidelines on nutrition.** The government has adopted several policies and programmes to meet the challenge of food and nutritional security:

- Regional Strategy for Food and Nutrition Security/Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (ERSAN-CPLP);
- National Poverty Reduction Strategy (ENRP) 2012-2016;
- Drafting of the Agricultural Policy Charter for Rural Development (CPADR);
- National Food and Nutritional Security Programme (PNSAN) 2012-2023;
- National Agricultural Investment Programme for Food and Nutritional Security (PNIASAN) 2016-2020
- National Food Safety Strategy (ENSSA) 2017-2022;
- Social Protection Strategy;
- National Food and Nutritional Security Council (CONSAN) 2016-2020 Law No. 6/2016. The mission of this Council is to ensure the coordination and monitoring of policies, programmes and other sectoral instruments that have an impact on food and nutritional security, as well as the realisation of the right to adequate food in STP, headed by the Prime Minister and co-led by a key ministry of agriculture.

23. **Nutrition situational analysis.** The nutritional situation in Sao Tome and Principe shows that stunting among children under five is 17.2%, with higher rates among boys than girls (20.5% and 13.9% respectively),

while the prevalence of wasting is 4%.<sup>17</sup> Micronutrient deficiency rates are equally alarming, with 96% of pre-school children and 18% of girls and pregnant women suffering from vitamin A deficiency. The anaemia rate among children under 5 is 67.5%, with peaks of up to 72% in Príncipe. The adult population of STP is also faced with malnutrition: 46.1% of women of childbearing age suffer from anaemia and 8.3% of adult men suffer from diabetes, compared with 7.8% of women. At the same time, 16.9% of women and 7.2% of men are obese. These figures show the multiple burden of malnutrition in the country, particularly affecting the poorest households and those headed by women. The underlying causes of malnutrition are poverty, access to and availability of food. On average, 84% of food is purchased, so the issue of access plays a crucial role in food insecurity and malnutrition, even in rural areas. Other unfavourable factors include lack of access to drinking water and sanitation, unsanitary housing in the *rocas*<sup>18</sup>, as well as unsatisfactory hygiene practices and inadequate food preparation. The UNICEF 2015 report showed that only 35% of the population had access to improved sanitation systems. Alcoholism, which also affects women, and social obstacles are also major challenges facing the country.

24. **Education.** Although STP has made significant progress in improving access to education, the system still grapples with several challenges related to efficiency, quality, and governance. One notable area that demands attention is preschool education. The country's preschool system also remains underdeveloped.<sup>19</sup> A similarly critical situation occurs at primary level education. Another concerning aspect is that approximately 60% of primary education teachers lack the necessary qualifications.<sup>20</sup> This shortage of qualified teachers poses a significant obstacle to delivering high-quality education and ensuring that students receive the best learning experience possible. The literacy rate among adults stood at 92.82 in 2018, this rate reflects the 50 % of young people with secondary education and 42.82 of adults who can read and write and with secondary or higher education.

25. **Gender Profile** reflecting the UNSWAP criterion 3a. Article 15.1 of the Constitution of Sao Tome and Principe establishes the principle of equality between women and men by guaranteeing all citizens the same rights regardless of their social origin, race, sex or religious belief. Article 15.2 stipulates that “women are equal in rights and duties and their participation in political, economic, social and cultural life is guaranteed”. Law No. 2/77 on family law grants equal treatment to women and men. Moreover, STP has demonstrated its commitment to human rights by ratifying key international instruments, including the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2003. In 2007, the country established a National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equity (2012-2017) with the assistance of UNFPA. As a result of this strategy, the National Institute for the Promotion of Gender Equality and Gender Equity (INPG) was created to oversee the implementation of government policies on gender issues. The INPG has identified approximately thirty gender focal points within Ministries and District Offices. These focal points are responsible for integrating the gender dimension into all aspects of governance, prioritising national objectives, and implementing a gender-sensitive budget. According to UN Women, in 2019, “57.7% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) had their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods”.<sup>21</sup>

26. According to Human Development Reports, Gender Inequality Index decreased by 0.002 compared to that in 1992 (GII = 0.627). Gender gaps are significant in indicators related to the share of seats in parliament (-85.5% to the detriment of females), labour force participation rate (age 15 and older) (-39.7%) and population with at least some secondary education (age 15 and older) (-14.1%).<sup>22</sup> As for literacy, both women (91.1%) and men (96.5%) have very high literacy rates and are way above the SSA average (60.9% and 73.8% for women and men, respectively).<sup>23</sup> Despite the STP's population numerical balance in terms of gender, women are at greater risk of poverty than men, with 71.4% of women living below the poverty line against 63% for men.<sup>24</sup> The incidence of poverty is higher among women heads of households (61.6%)

---

<sup>17</sup> Global Nutrition Report (2023) available at: <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/africa/middle-africa/sao-tome-and-principe/>

<sup>18</sup> Local name for the traditional settlements “villages” in STP.

<sup>19</sup> World Bank (2014): QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL PROJECT .

<sup>20</sup> GPE (n.d.): Transforming education in Sao Tome and Principe, available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/sao-tome-and-principe>

<sup>21</sup> UN Women (n.d.): Sao Tome and Principe, available at: <https://data.unwomen.org/country/sao-tome-and-principe>

<sup>22</sup> See <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>

<sup>23</sup> <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/sao-tome-and-principe/>

<sup>24</sup> WFP: Sao Tome and Principe Annual Country Report 2020: available at: [docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000125401/download/](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000125401/download/)

compared to men (55.8%).<sup>25</sup> Simultaneously, almost 60% of the unemployed are women.<sup>26</sup> The labour force participation rate among females is 37.9%, and among males is 69.9% for 2022. Compared with labour force participation in the lower-middle income group, the gap between men and women is lower in STP.<sup>27</sup> Long-term high unemployment rates among the population, together with limited opportunities for local food production and dependency on food import, have resulted in severe gendered food insecurity in which women and young people have been disproportionately affected. The situation has worsened as a result of COVID-19 socio-economic impact.<sup>28</sup>

27. While STP has taken significant steps towards promoting gender equality, enrooted social and cultural norms allow only slow changes, and gender-based discrimination is still a concern to be addressed.<sup>29</sup> There are still notable challenges that need to be addressed. For instance, a concerning 28% of women aged 20–24 years were married or in a union before reaching the age of 18, indicating the persistence of child marriage in the country.<sup>30</sup> Disturbingly, violence against women is also a significant concern. In 2018, 18.1% of women aged 15-49 years reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner within the previous 12 months, indicating the urgent need for greater efforts to combat gender-based violence and support survivors.<sup>31</sup> Further evaluation and monitoring are required to assess their impact and ensure that gender-related policies are effectively integrated into governance and decision-making processes. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, encompassing legislative reforms, social programs, education, and awareness campaigns to foster a more gender-equitable society where women's rights are protected, and their voices are heard.

28. **Protection of the general population.** The STP ratified several international conventions<sup>32</sup> contributing to the protection of the general population, such as CCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified 10 Jan 2017), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (14 May 1991), CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (03 Jun 2003), CERD – International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (10 Jan 2017), CESC – International Convention on the Elimination on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (10 Jan 2017), CMW - International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (10 Jan 2017), CRPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (05 Nov 2015).

29. **COVID-19 and Vaccination Status.** Like all countries, STP was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The country experienced cases of COVID-19, and efforts were made to contain the spread of the virus and manage its impact on public health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, STP's fiscal situation experienced a significant downturn. The country faced challenges as import taxes on products decreased, and exports were hindered, leading to a rise in the fiscal deficit. The pandemic also exposed the vulnerability of the country's internal production, as it was insufficient to meet the population's needs, particularly in terms of food supply, with the country struggling to respond to six months of food requirements. Prior to the pandemic, the government had set ambitious goals through the National Sustainable Development Plan for 2020–2024. This plan aimed to drive sustainable economic growth, generate employment opportunities, alleviate poverty, and safeguard the environment. However, in response to the pandemic's impact, the authorities developed an interim National Strategy for Socioeconomic Resilience and Mitigation of COVID-19. The goal is to build resilience within the country's socioeconomic framework and mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic on vulnerable communities. The pandemic has prompted the government to reassess its development priorities and allocate resources strategically to address immediate challenges while staying committed to its long-term sustainable development objectives. Regarding vaccination, STP received vaccine doses through the COVAX initiative and other bilateral agreements.<sup>33</sup> The vaccination campaign aimed to protect the population and control the spread of the virus. According to official WHO data, a total of 263,275 vaccine doses have

---

<sup>25</sup> WFP: Sao Tome and Principe Annual Country Report 2020: available at: [docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000125401/download/](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000125401/download/)

<sup>26</sup> <https://data.unwomen.org/country/sao-tome-and-principe>

<sup>27</sup> <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/sao-tome-and-principe/>

<sup>28</sup> WFP: Sao Tome and Principe Annual Country Report 2020: available at: [docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000125401/download/](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000125401/download/)

<sup>29</sup> WFP: Sao Tome and Principe Annual Country Report 2021, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/reports/country-regional-divisional-annual-reports-2021/Sao-Tome-and-Principe>

<sup>30</sup> <https://data.unwomen.org/country/sao-tome-and-principe>

<sup>31</sup> <https://data.unwomen.org/country/sao-tome-and-principe>

<sup>32</sup> [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=151&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=151&Lang=EN)

<sup>33</sup> WHO (2021): São Tomé and Príncipe reaches the first global target for the vaccination against COVID-19 by vaccinating more than 10% of its population by end of September 2021, available at: <https://www.afro.who.int/news/sao-tome-and-principe-reaches-first-global-target-vaccination-against-covid-19-vaccinating>

been administered by 4 June 2023. More recent data are not yet available to WHO. 140,256 people received at least one dose of vaccine (64.0%) and 34,624 people (15.8%) received more than one dose of booster vaccine. 111,986 of them are considered fully vaccinated in STP (=51.1%). This places STP more in the lower midfield in terms of immunisation coverage. The vaccination rate is highest in 147 countries.

30. Complementing the Government's efforts, WFP has provided support in line with the national priorities and current needs. Over the years, WFP's operations transitioned from providing direct food assistance to strengthening national institutional capacities. Although the school feeding programme managed by WFP was handed over to the Government in 2015, the latter still faces some operational and financial challenges.

31. **The role of WFP in the country.** WFP successfully concluded the implementation of the transitional-interim country strategic plan. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, through the National School Feeding and Health Programme (PNASE), remained WFP's main partner from 30 June 2019. Partnerships were also strengthened with the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSAN) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development through the Rural Development Support Centre (CADR). WFP repositioned itself in 2020 to ensure prompt alignment with the Government's agenda and strategic response to unexpected challenges and capacity gaps identified by the leading national and regional actors.

32. WFP strengthened its partnership with key government ministries and stakeholders and reinforced collaboration with other development partners, including UN agencies and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). The Country office played a crucial role in coordinating humanitarian air flights to Sao Tome and Principe during the closure of the country's borders.

33. In line with the findings and leveraging on WFP's position as the Government's partner of choice, WFP has strengthened national capacities and infrastructure to autonomously implement the school feeding programme based on local smallholder-friendly home-grown food supply, to enable national dialogue seeking sustainable solutions for addressing food insecurity and dependency on imported food, to revise and implement responsive food security and nutrition-related policies and programmes nationwide, and improve market access for smallholder farmers accenting the role of female farmers in local value chains.

### **1.3. WFP COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 – 2024<sup>34</sup>**

34. Strategic focus of the CSP. The CSP for Sao Tome and Principe 2019 – 2024 was approved by WFP Board in June 2019 with initial length from July 2019 to December 2024 at a total cost of 1,588,903 USD.

35. CSP 2019-2024 was designed to address some of the major food security and nutrition challenges and gaps identified by the national Zero Hunger Strategic Review (ZHSR) and through consultations with the government and other partners regarding the food security, nutrition, school meals and smallholder agriculture.

36. Based on the conclusions and recommendations drawn from evaluations of CSP 2012 – 2016, within which WFP stopped providing the direct support to School Feeding Programme (2015), the need for intense support of government in their pursue for autonomous management of the SFP emerged.

37. In line with the government national strategy "Sao Tome and Principe Transformation Agenda 2030: The country we want to build" where government commits to implement sustainable food security and nutrition programmes and policies autonomously by 2030, WFP agreed to support the government with technical assistance for the government transition process.

38. While school meals remained the entry point for WFP, the CSP was geared towards the capacity strengthening – underlining the strategic shift of WFP away from operational role in the past years towards the transformative one.

39. Initially the CSP included 1 Strategic Outcome aiming for the government capacity strengthening to implement an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and smallholder-friendly home-grown school meals (HGSM) programme and related food security and nutrition policies and programmes nationwide by 2030 with 4 major outputs and 2 main activities as in table below.

---

<sup>34</sup> Initially the CSP was planned to be from 2019 – 2024 while later on it was reviewed and the period was adjusted for 2019 – 2023. In the heading we refer to the initial time frame and mention the adjustment within the text.

**Table 1 -Overview of STP's country strategic plan**

40. SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE CSP (2019-2024)	
SR 5 - Countries strengthened capacities (SDG Target 17.9)	
<b>ROOT CAUSES</b>	
STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1	
The Government of Sao Tome and Principe has strengthened capacity to implement an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and smallholder-friendly home-grown school meals (HGSM) programme and related food security and nutrition policies and programmes nationwide by 2030.	
OUTPUTS:	
<p>1.1 Primary school children (Tier 3) benefit from an improved national HGSM framework [C] to increase their access to nutritious food (SR 1 &amp; SR 2), improve health (SDG 3) and achieve better education results (SDG 4).</p> <p>1.2 The people of STP (Tier 3) benefit from well-coordinated, equitable smallholder agricultural market support and local food value chains [C] that facilitate the HGSM initiative and increase their overall food security (SR 1).</p> <p>1.3 The people of STP (Tier 3) benefit from strengthened national capacities to operate gender-transformative social and behavior change communication programmes on nutritional practices [C] that improve their nutritional status (SR 2).</p> <p>1.4 Food-insecure populations (Tier 3) benefit from strengthened capacity of the CONSAN to coordinate equitable and inclusive food security and nutrition policies and programmes [C] to enhance their food and nutrition security (SR 1 &amp; SR 2).</p>	
<p><b>ACTIVITY 1</b></p> <p>Provide capacity strengthening (including through SSC) to the Government in the design, management and coordination of an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive HGSM programme and related FS&amp;N policies and programmes (activity category: 4; modality: CS).</p>	<p><b>ACTIVITY 2</b></p> <p>Provide capacity strengthening and coordination support to the Government in providing incentives for sustainable and equitable local food value chains and stimulating smallholder agricultural markets (activity category: 7; modality: CS).</p>

41. In 2019, 2021 and 2022 the CSP was revised. The implementation period was reduced until December 2023. Additional Strategic Outcome 2 with Activity 3 providing with emergency response was added during the revision process in 2021 along with the budget adjustment for total amount of USD 7 805 590. For the final – revised Line of sight (see Annex 5).

42. The CSP Theory of Change. WFP designed a Theory of Change (ToC) (see Annex 6) to map out the envisaged approach, identify causal assumptions underpinning change processes, and provide a common understanding for the intended causal links between actions, outputs, intermediary and final outcomes.

43. The evaluation team (ET) reviewed the existing ToC, its logic and interconnections between the particular specific objectives, activities, expected/achieved outcomes and outputs. It was noted that each of the specific outcomes is aiming to fulfilment of one SDGs target (17.9 and 2.1) and that the ToC is effective in identifying the synergies to improve resilience and nutritional outcomes. The design of the results emphasised engagement and capacity building across various stakeholders, enabling the compact development of the sector and achievement of the intervention targets.

44. Along with the findings, recommendations and lessons learned from the current evaluation, the ToC is deemed as a useful tool to pave the way for the upcoming CSP, and to support its refinement and adjustment to keep targeting the selected SDGs and improve the livelihoods in STP.

45. Subject evaluated. The current evaluation however focuses only on the interventions within SO1, namely Activities 1 and 2 implemented during the period from 01 July 2019 to 31 December 2022.



46. In certain aspects implementation and achievement of SO1 and SO2 correlated and/or overlapped therefore presented data could not always be separated, however main focus is only on the achievement of SO1. Overlapping achievements and data are provided only for the aspects which could not be segregated.

47. CSP achievements over the years. The table below provide with the overview of achievements and progress along the years within the evaluated period presented for SO1 per Activity.

**Table 2. Overview of activities under the activity stream 01 of SO1**

Year	Achievements
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained PNASE human resources staff, including school canteen managers from the Ministry of Education and M&amp;E officers.</li> <li>• 88 canteen cooks in all districts of the country trained in a two-month training programme on nutrition, hygiene and food.</li> <li>• Provision of computers and IT equipment to PNASE for the operation of the new logistics software system. The installation of the software was financially supported by WFP.</li> <li>• WFP recruited national legal consultant to revise PNASE law.</li> <li>• WFP facilitated the participation of a high-level delegation (representatives of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and PNASE) at the Global Child Nutrition Forum in Cambodia (December 2019).</li> <li>• WFP provided financial assistance to PNASE to create short promo videos about the SFP and the importance of including local products in school menus.</li> </ul>
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of National School Feeding and Health programme Law was finalised (August 2020)</li> <li>• Awareness raising campaign on the importance of the consumption of nutritious local products in school means was presented during the celebration of African School Feeding Day (March).</li> <li>• WFP provided financial support of 25,000 USD to PNASE to distribute take-home rations and hygiene materials to vulnerable children during the closure of schools.</li> <li>• WFP strengthened the PNASE capacity in monitoring by supporting monitoring activities during distribution processes. (June – September)</li> </ul>
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed FLA with NGOs HELPO (international) and ADAPPA (national) to support the school garden activities.</li> <li>• In partnership with NGOs HELPO and ADAPPA, WFP strengthened PNASE capacities to activate 3 community gardens in Caue and Lemba districts to produce fresh and nutritious products for school menus.</li> <li>• 3 PNASE warehouses and offices located in Cantagalo, Caue and Lemba were retrofitted.</li> <li>• Conducted 3 awareness-raising activities targeting the schoolchildren, parents and communities on the importance of local product consumption at schools, homes and needs for investments to school gardens as a way to diversify school meals source to importance among children, parents and communities.</li> <li>• WFP (in response to school closure due to COVID-19 impact) assisted 5,000 vulnerable children through alternative take-home rations during school closures.</li> </ul>
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School Feeding Law approved by the National Assembly (August 2022)</li> <li>• PNASE capacity strengthened through FLA signed with HELPO on the reactivation of 2 community school gardens in Cantagalo and Agua Grande and the building a pigsty for 70 pigs in Agua Grande.</li> <li>• 876 kg of vegetable was produced within the HELPO cooperation to support 12 schools with fresh vegetables.</li> <li>• WFP supported PNASE in retrofitting 3 school warehouses (conclusions of works from 2021, March 2022).</li> </ul>

Year	Achievements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WFP donated vehicles and assets to PNASE (July).</li> <li>• WFP supported the registration of smallholder farmers into the database managed by??.</li> <li>• Cost-benefit analyses on PNASE was elaborated in partnership with Mastercard, providing evidence-based benefit on HGFP, showing that every 1.00 USD invested in HGFP returns 6.90 USD to local economies if PNASE continues to deliver food to school 100 days a year.</li> <li>• In partnership with PNASE under SDG project, nationwide awareness-raising campaign on the consumption of local products at schools conducted.</li> <li>• WFP supported organisation of African Day of School Feeding's celebration to promote the investment in the local production towards HGSP.</li> <li>• WFP assisted to Brazil and government by connecting SO1 and SO2 to procure local organic products for food assistance operations.</li> </ul>

**Table 3. Overview of activities under the activity stream 02 of SO1**

Year	Achievements
<b>2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WFP funded 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> CONSAN meetings (where also gender was cross-cutting topic of discussions and the needs to encourage and empower women smallholders to deliver healthy and quality products to school canteens), National Institute for Gender Equality and Parity also took part.</li> <li>• Reinforced South-South and triangulation cooperation and high-level dialogue through visits of the inter-ministerial committee of STP to the Center of Excellence against Hunger and Malnutrition in Ivory Coast (March 2019).</li> <li>• FLA signed with CONSAN to rehabilitate and furnish the office to enable regular meetings.</li> <li>• FLA signed with the Ministry of Agriculture on two training sessions for 40 personnel from CADR (men and women) on the supply chain management of equipment and tools which would help smallholder farmers improve their farming activities.</li> <li>• WFP provided assets and equipment to CADR to enable provision of adequate support to female and male farmers, stimulating their access to market.</li> <li>• WFP held courtesy meetings of Prime Minister and representatives of four ministries about WFP strengthening support to the Government through PNASE and advantages of investments in innovative HGSP programme in the country.</li> </ul>

Year	Achievements
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In cooperation with CONSAN and National Nutrition Programme (NNP) the advocacy on food security and nutrition increased due to awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of investing food security and national programmes, along with the campaign the new proposal on School Feeding Law presented to Government (October 2020).</li> <li>Under MPFT project, WFP provided technical and financial support to CADR (40 trained staff) to train 568 (mostly female-headed) vulnerable households on sustainable agricultural techniques.</li> <li>32 gardeners were trained on production techniques in small growing spaces, recycling plastic materials and using biological pest management control leading to reactivation of 32 school gardens in 6 districts (via partnership with NGOs HELPO and ADAPPA).</li> <li>WFP financed establishment of database and information management system to collect and manage data for smallholder farmers to be managed by MAFRD.</li> <li>WFP supported the National Institute of Gender Equality and Parity INGP with sensitisation materials for their GBV campaign (November – December 2020).</li> </ul>
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WFP supported strengthening of the institutional mandate of CONSAN by participation on high-level meetings at the country level and providing them with formulated recommendations on national strategies and development plans on food security and nutrition.</li> <li>CONSAN's website created.</li> <li>WFP successfully advocated in cooperation with MEHE that Minister of MEHE signed the commitment to signature of international declaration on School Meals Coalition Initiative.</li> <li>WFP in co-funding by AfDB supported through financing and participation MAFRD in System Approach for Better Education Result (SABER) validation workshop and the launch of 1 agricultural assessment on the need to collect data on local food production and smallholder capacity needs. Recommendation to introduce permanent data collection mechanism to monitor agriculture production in country.</li> <li>WFP supported MAFRD to conduct 1 territorial diagnosis for the territorial sustainable development plan.</li> <li>WFP donated IT equipment to MAFRD and developed the registry of smallholder farmers to monitor the production and capacity needs.</li> <li>WFP through the 2030 Fund supported MAFRD to collect sex- and age-disaggregated data on local food production and SHF capacity needs to feed into the development of new national gender-sensitive national policies.</li> </ul>
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thanks to the long-term capacity strengthening impacts of WFP and South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) SABER exercise was completed (February 2022).</li> <li>IT equipment delivered to MAFRD.</li> </ul>

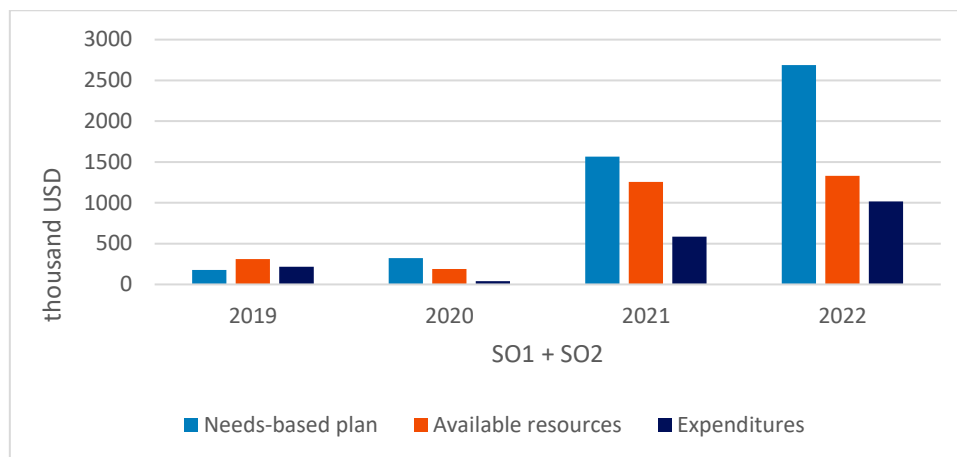
48. Within the CSP implementation WFP put emphasis on building partnerships not only with national stakeholders but also with other institutions within the donor community, with national and international NGOs and private sector. These partnerships fostered the advocacy activities towards the government and/or attracted additional sources of financing for WFP and multi-donor activities with presence of WFP in country.

49. Overview of CSP budget and funding: At approval in June 2019 the total budget for CSP was 1,588,903 USD, when CSP included only SO1. After the revisions in 2019, 2021 and 2022 additional strategic outcome –

SO2 was added and total cumulative budget for CSP was USD 7 805 590 USD, allocating USD 1,241,933 for SO1 and USD 6,563,657 for SO2.

50. Overview of total financing of CSP within the evaluation period is provided in the figure 1. The significant increase in 2021 and 2022 was caused by the emergency response to COVID-19 and the integration of the second strategic outcome 2 with a higher allocated budget stated in the revised CSP.

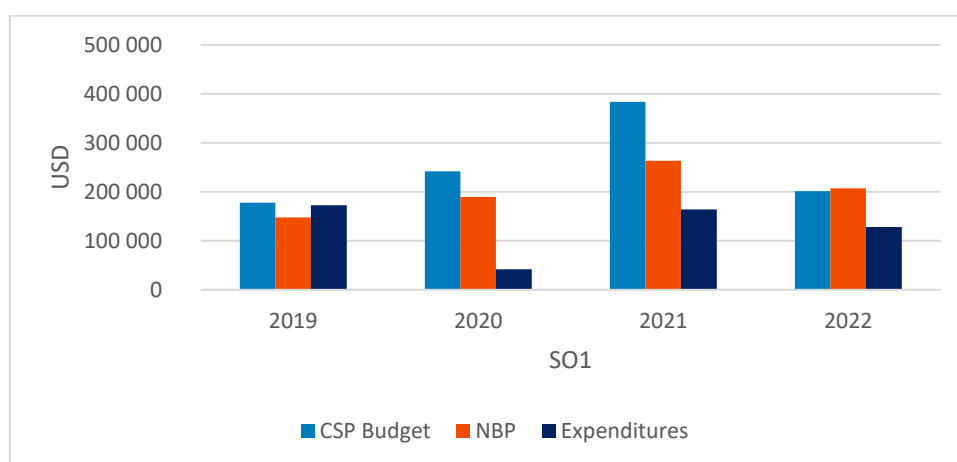
**Figure 1. Financing of CSP (SO1 + SO2)**



Source, ACRs 2019 – 2022, CSP 2019 – 2024, Revision I and III of CSP, 2019, 2022

51. In particular for SO1 the financing was as described in the Figure 2. The total CSP 2019- 2024 allocated budget for SO1 was 1,588,903 USD. Comparing expenditures to the original CSP budget, the expenditures in 2019 reached 96.8 percent of the allocated budget. In 2020, the expenditures represented 17.3 percent of the CSP allocated budget for that respective year. Due to the COVID-19 response, the revision of the CSP budget occurred, and the overall allocation for SO1 decreased to 1,545,967 USD, the implementation period remained unchanged. In following years, the expenditures increased to 42.7 percent in 2021, and 63.8 percent in 2022, respectively. In 2022, the third CSP budget revision occurred and the CSP budget for SO1 decreased to 1,241 933 USD.

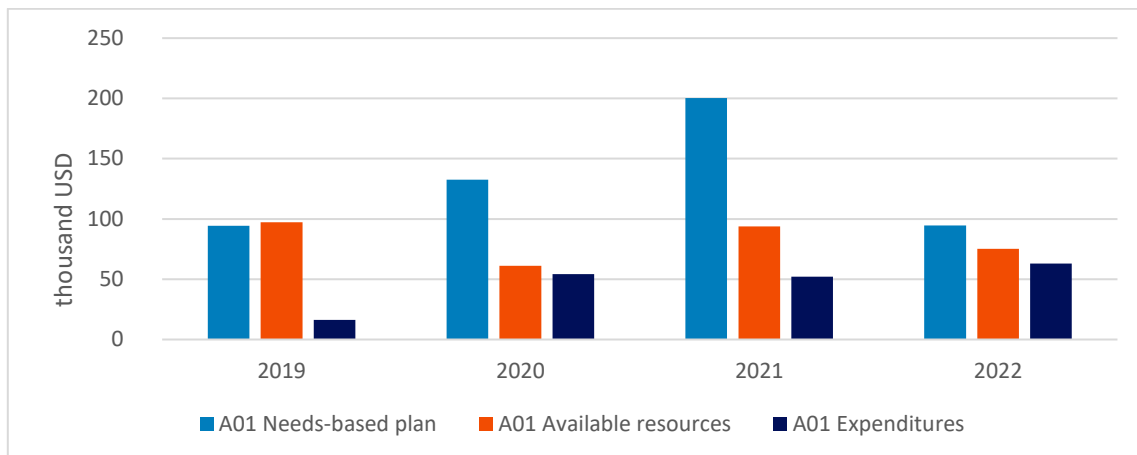
**Figure 2. Financing of SO1**



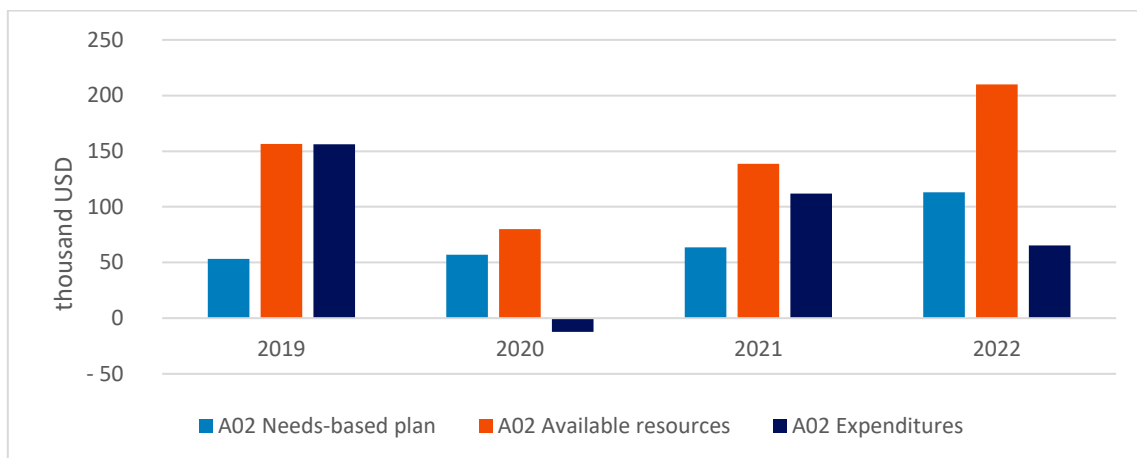
Source, ACRs 2019 - 2022

52. For particular activities under SO1 presented in Figure 2 the financial indicators show the development of the financing within the evaluated period. As shown in table 3 interventions within A01 for the evaluated period were financed from 17% in 2019, 89% in 2020, 56% in 2021 and 84% in 2022. While the interventions under A02 in 2019 were fully funded, in 2020 CSP was revised due to reprioritisation towards emergency response to COVID-19 and resources were reallocated to newly added SO2. In remaining years, the interventions under A02 were funded from 80% in 2021 and 31% in 2022.

**Figure 3. Overview of financial indicators for activities A01**



**Figure 4. Overview of financial indicators for activities A02**



**Table 4. Percentage of SO1 funding for respective activity throughout the implementing years**

Activity/Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>A01</b>	16.6%	88.7%	55.5%	83.7%
<b>A02</b>	99.9%	-15.5%	80.7%	31.2%

53. Gender Equality: The CSP was assigned a GAM (Gender with Age Marker) code 3, stating that at the design stage, it fully integrated gender aspects. The ACRs reported the GAM code for each activity as presented in table below.

**Table 5. GAM code per activity**

Activity	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>A01</b>	GAM 1	GAM 3	GAM 0	GAM 3
<b>A02</b>	GAM 0	GAM 3	GAM 3	GAM 3
<b>A03</b>	N/A	GAM 1	GAM 3	GAM 3

54. GAM 0 code means that the activity does not integrate gender aspects or age<sup>35</sup>, which was reported within the ACR 2019 for A 02 and in 2021 for A01. In 2019 GAM 1 for A01 was recorded which means that gender aspects and age were partially integrated.

55. Overall CSP was designed with emphasis to mainstream gender-transformative social and behavioural change communication approach. The gender-transformative social and behavioural change communication programmes and campaigns were introduced under SO1 to reinforce gender equality and women’s empowerment importance in the agricultural sector, local production and consumption and nutritional practices. In addition, awareness-raising campaign on the inclusion of women in the agricultural production sector, creating decent and sustainable job opportunities, and GBV, sexual and reproductive rights, early marriage and pregnancy amount rural communities were supported. Since 2022 the focus on gender mainstreaming even strengthened with the objectives of SDG project.

56. The intervention of A 02 supported delivery of IT system to MAFRD which should provide with the systematic collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data among rural farmers to inform a gender-sensitive policy framework, programming and strategies. However, no such data were collected and recorded up to date

57. Within the ACRs when regarding the gender components, although they were part of SO1 interventions, with the exception of sub-activity – “provision of training and tools for 568 vulnerable households (HH)” where emphasis on vulnerable women was put and the quantified gender segregated data were collected (from the list of 511 beneficiaries 464 were female) no gender segregated data were reported. The reported activities for SO1 during the evaluated period thus did not provide with gender segregated data and the proportion of men and women participated can be only assumed.

#### 1.4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

58. The evaluation is theory-based and non-experimental. It follows a mixed method approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Its covers six evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact and Sustainability.

59. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Main data collection methods included:

- A desk review of relevant documentation, including programmatic documentation (at national and programme level), monitoring documentation, narrative and financial reports, and reference literature;
- Remote and in-person Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the intervention stakeholders, including WFP, government and implementing partners, donors;
- Gender-separated Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with national stakeholders, including children, smallholder farmers, school staff and parents;
- Questionnaire surveys, deployed both online and in person.

60. A total of 662 individuals, of whom (502 female) were consulted in this evaluation. The table below summarises the evidence body collected during the evaluation, by data collection method.

**Table 6. Data collection methods and sample size**

Data collection method	Reviewed sources and included sample size
Desk review	57 sources analysed
Semi-structured interviews	12 KIIs with representatives of organisations (total 15 informants, 4 females, 11 males) 10 KIIs with farmers (total 10 informants, 5 females, 5 males)

<sup>35</sup> <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000114268/download/>

Data collection method	Reviewed sources and included sample size
Focus Group Discussions	10 FGDs with school personnel and parents (total 94 participants, 60 females, 34 males) 20 FGDs with school children (total 116, 60 girls, 56 boys) 4 FGDs with farmers (total 27 participants, 24 females, 3 males) 1 FGD with stakeholders at the preliminary data presentation (WFP, ADAPPA, HELPO, MAFRD) (total 7 participants, 1 female, 6 male)
Online survey	15 responses were collected from key informants from organisations (total 15 informants, 4 females, 11 males)
Farmers' survey	378 respondents (334 females, 44 males).

61. The evidence collected was triangulated by source and method to formulate findings matching the structure of an evaluation matrix (see Annex 7). In the formulation of conclusions answering the evaluation questions, this report clearly distinguishes between opinions, (expert) analysis, or objectively verifiable evidence.

62. The UNSWAP criteria were respected to integrate GEWE issues along with ensuring the coherence with UNEG guidelines during the whole evaluation process. Gender considerations were integrated along the evaluation design, including specific evaluation questions and measures in data collection (such as disaggregated FGDs).

63. Detailed methodology and data collection methods are provided in Annex 8 and Annex 10, along with the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 7), Theory of Change (Annex 6) and Ethical Considerations (Annex 9). During the implementation of this assignment, the evaluation team has been committed to UN Guidelines on ethical research<sup>36</sup> that were relevant to the evaluation scope. Namely 6 major measures were put in place and ensured – informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, data security and protection, data integrity and analysis, minimising harm, respect for cultural sensitivities, equity and fairness, conflict of interest. Both the proposed methodology and scope of the assignment were presented to and validated by the WFP Country, Regional and HQ office representatives during the inception phase on-line validation meeting in July 2023.

64. The evaluation faced some limitations and challenges related the data availability. Some of the baseline information and quantitative indicators were absent along with some referred documents such as gender baseline analysis 2017. To overcome this, the evaluation team prioritised comprehensive interviews with the CO WFP staff, including field officers, implementing partners, government counterparts and other stakeholders (Annex 3). Some of the quantitative data collected and recorded during the evaluation process therefore provide with the endline information which may be further used for the upcoming CSP 2024 – 2028.

65. Another challenge was that the list of engaged smallholder farmers (SHF) within the evaluated CSP was provided only during the field mission, with the related data presented only later. Yet the evaluation team had already foreseen this possible obstacle within the inception phase and addressed this within the methodology design. The team of local enumerators was mobilised in country prior the arrival of international experts. The initial training took part during the presence of the international evaluation experts in country, along with the pilot data collection and tailormade questionnaires. The majority of data was collected during the field mission of international experts and the remaining data were collected under the supervision of national expert.

66. Another issue related to the list of schools to be visited, which was not complete. The sampling was done in direct cooperation with STP CO reflecting the criteria defined in the inception report such as size of school, level of development, accessibility and geographic location.

67. All limitations were addressed by triangulation to ensure the findings were valid, impartial, independent and credible. The evaluation team feels that was provided with sufficient and adequate information ensuring the good evaluability of subjected CSP.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

## 2. Evaluation findings

### 2.1. RELEVANCE

#### EQ 1: To what extent does the intervention meet the needs and priorities of the government, stakeholders and affected populations?

##### EQ 1.1 To what extent were activities and outputs of WFP support to the government consistent with the overall goal, objectives and intended impact?

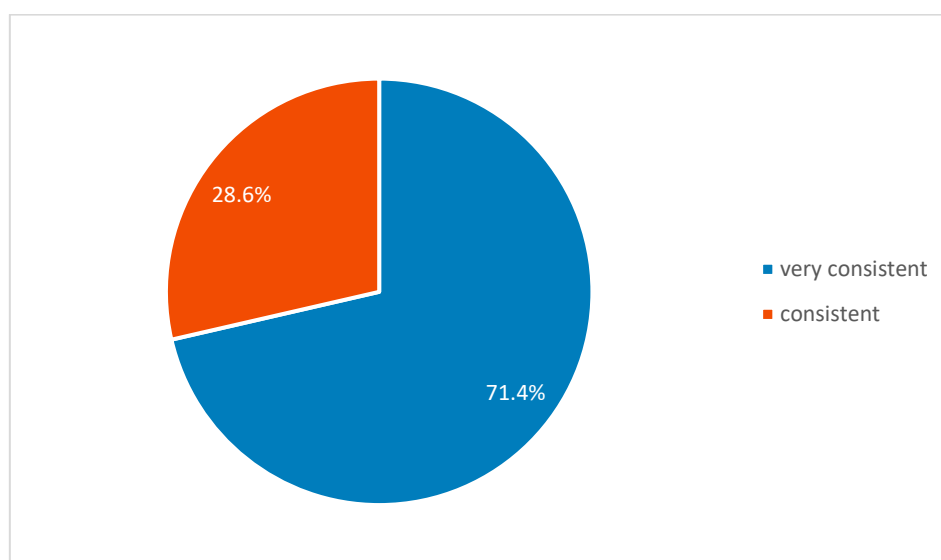
###### Finding 1; CSP was designed in a consistent way.

68. Overall goal of WFP support to the government was in line with the WFP Revised Corporate Framework (2017-2021) Strategic Goal (SG) 2 – Partner to support implementation of the SDGs. Within SG2 the Strategic Objective 4 – Support SDG implementation was chosen aiming to fulfilment of Strategic result 5 – Countries have strengthened capacity to implement SDGs. Outlined activities and outputs of CSP were corresponding the guidance given within the above-mentioned framework and based on the previous good practice, lessons learned and recommendations provided to WFP within the regional operation evaluations 2013- 2016 and in country operational evaluation 2012 - 2016. The structure of the evaluated CSP built around capacity strengthening activities under SO1 corresponded to its thematic focus and supported the strategic shift away from WFPs' operational role in past years to transformative one.

69. Since the capacity strengthening should indirectly contribute to reduced malnutrition rates, to empower women and to make progress towards gender equality, both WFP CO staff and government representatives confirmed that they find the result framework of CSP coherent and in line with what is intended to be done and the role of WFP in country.

70. Within the questionnaire survey, all key respondents from the Government, UN agencies and partners in country indicated that the activities and outputs of WFP to the government are very consistent (71.4%) or consistent (28.6%) with the overall goals, objectives and intended impact.

**Figure 5. Perception of consistency between CSP's activities and outputs and its higher-level results**



71. In their opinion, the intervention targeted the principal challenges of the country, such as poverty and food insecurity of school children, school dropouts if school feeding is not in operation, no systematic involvement of smallholder farmers in local food production and high dependency on imported food items.



### **EQ 1.2 How appropriate and in line with national requirements has the results framework been, including the results chain as laid out in the theory of change?**

**Finding 2: WFP is the governments' partner of choice. Result framework and theory of change are aligned with expected outcomes.**

72. No specific national requirements were imposed on its design, and according to the team's review of various documents, such requirements do not exist. WFP is the government's partner of choice in its commitment to consolidate and improve the national school meals and health programme, as stated in the CSP document and confirmed by various stakeholders from government and WFP staff. As stakeholder from government stated: *"we have a long history of cooperation with WFP and it is important partner for us. Our priorities and their work fit together."*

73. Another respondent from government mentioned: *"School Feeding Programme is important for us, and it shall continue (...). The role of WFP is changing but it is still important partner for us."*

74. Both Result Framework and Theory of Change were designed to address the jointly identified needs and priorities of government, while falling into the scope of WFP focus and corresponding with chosen Strategic Goal (SG) 2 as per WFP Revised Corporate Framework (2017-2021).

75. The key respondents from government, UN organisations and WFP find the result framework appropriate, tangible and aligned with national priorities.

### **EQ 1.3 How have the national, local organisations and other actors of the civil society participated in the project design, implementation and monitoring?**

**Finding 3. CSP was designed in consultation with government stakeholders and incorporating the feedback from local NGOs and other stakeholders.**

76. Within the CSP design process the needs of government stakeholders were incorporated and reflected. A participatory approach was applied in CSP design, since WFP was directly requested by the government to provide with the technical assistance in the endeavour to implement sustainable food security and nutrition programmes and policies autonomously by 2030. This was also confirmed by the respondent from MAFRD: *"The activities and results of WFP's support for the government are established through a very participatory approach, including with the government, based on the real needs presented by the government itself."*

77. As reported by WFP staff and confirmed by representatives of two local NGOs, stakeholders had the time and the chance to attend the meeting where the focus of CSP would be discussed. One of the respondents mentioned that he thinks it was in 2017, confirming the statement in the CSP design that during 2016, 2017 and 2018 WFP carried out the consultations with various stakeholders.

78. The respondents from the government structures (MAFRD, PNASE, CATAP, CONSAN) also highlighted a participatory approach in the design, planning and implementation of interventions in which they were respectively included and/or where relevant to their area of focus. As per their opinion they find the intervention aligned with their respective strategy (MAFRD, PNASE). In their opinion, the CSP targeted the principal challenges of the country, such as poverty and food insecurity of school children, school dropouts when school feeding is not operative, lack of systematic involvement of smallholder farmers in local food production, and high dependency on imported food items.

79. Respondents from WFP personnel and MAFRD consistently repeated that all stakeholders, including those of civil society, are involved in all stages of the project or programme cycle.

**Finding 4: Participation of the local NGOs within the CSP implementation and monitoring was ensured by the usual WFP operational mechanisms, while some relevant national stakeholders with potential significant contribution to the intervention results were not involved.**

80. WFP has established an operational approach to cooperate with the implementing organisations via signature of Field Level Agreement (FLA). As confirmed by WFP staff, *"WFP signs FLA with the CSO where responsibilities and obligations of the parties, delivery deadlines are specified The CSO then regularly, usually annually, report to us."*

81. Within the implementation, two FLA were signed with the international NGO HELPO and the national NGO ADAPPA. Each of these NGOs contributed to the CSP implementation in the areas of their focus – supporting the introduction of school gardens and building farmers capacities. After the revision of CSP and adding up the SO2, both NGOs also participated in A03 implementation.

82. The respondents regard the partnership with ADAPPA as relevant and enabling working at the community level, since ADAPPA has *“a network of field workers and knows communities and their needs very well”* (WFP). On the other hand, the representative of the MAFRD states that *“similarly, the network of extension agents can be used in a more efficient way as agents do not need extra funds to cover their salaries as they are paid by the Government anyway.”* This was also supported by a respondent from FAO.

83. Although in previous CSP, parent associations were actively engaged, their participation was absent, often due to their non-functionality. However, as confirmed during the FGDs at schools and by PNASE, if the parents present their voice in the name of parent association it may be heard more and their ability to communicate back to community is increased.

#### **EQ 1.4 Is the intervention aligned with Government, WFP partners, UN agencies and donor policies priorities?**

**Finding 5: CSP was framed and aligned to Sao Tome and Principe Transformation Agenda 2030: “The country we need to build”, recommendations from Zero Hunger Strategy Review, Agenda 2030 and other donor policies.**

84. Remaining challenges related the governments’ capacity to become autonomous in implementing the sustainable food security and nutrition programmes and policies until 2030 provided a strong rationale for WFP to align their intervention with the government policies and priorities.

85. The CSP was designed to target the priorities of the above-mentioned Agenda which is aligned with the Second National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2017-2020 and corresponds with the NDP 2017-2021 which sets its major objectives towards the economic growth, poverty reduction, reduction of dependency on imported products and protection of the environment.

86. Another document which was considered during the CSP design were the National Food Security and Nutrition Programme for 2012 – 2023 and the National Nutrition Programme, outlining the government priorities related to food security and to reduction of malnutrition rates until 2030. Within the priorities the aim to *“increase basic food production and improve the marketing system by limiting food imports and promoting profitable subsistence economy that increases the incomes of smallholder farmers and consequently reduces the poverty”* is set.

87. In order to promote national multisectoral coordination on food security and nutrition, the alignment with the regional CPLP strategy was ensured.

88. As a UN Organisation, WFP ensure that the CSP was aligned with all three priority areas within the STP United Nations Development Framework 2017 - 2021 (UNDAF), In turn UNDAF is fully aligned to national plans, on the basis of the comparative advantages of various UN organisations working in the country.

89. All respondents confirmed that in their opinion the CSP is aligned to national policies and government priorities. Some of them mentioned that they also perceive the alignment with other UN institution priorities such as UNDP, UNICEF and FAO, although each organisation has its own focus. Interviewees frequently stated that WFP is recognised for food security in STP, including on nutrition and education.

#### **EQ1.5 To what extent have GEWE issues been incorporated in the design and implementation of WFP capacity strengthening and emergency response assistance across the country?**

**Finding 6: GEWE matters were included in the CSP but could be further mainstreamed and operationalised in the specific objectives 1 and 2.**

90. In the Gender Inequality Index 2018, STP ranked 131 out of 160 countries. In this sense, the CSP design, participatory consulted with the government and other stakeholders, reacted on the persistent inequalities in the country by incorporating gender-transformative approach HGSM (A01) alongside food security, nutrition policies, national food values chains stimuli and equitable access to markets for both women and men. The CSP design was assigned with GaM code 03.

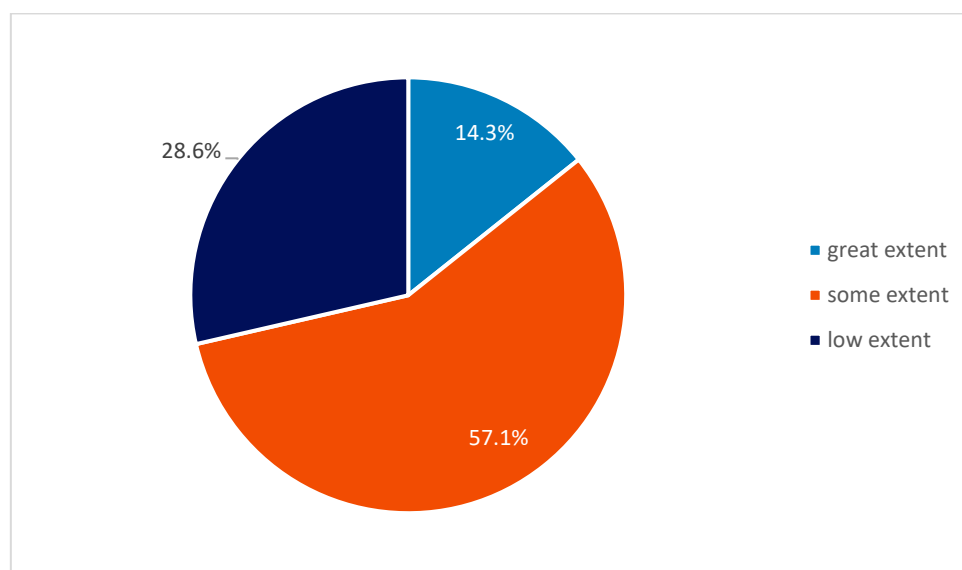
91. Under SO1 some gender-mainstreaming interventions took place. In cooperation with the National Institute for Gender Equality and Parity, multiple awareness raising campaigns focused on GEWE issues were implemented. In CONSAN meetings, the needs to encourage and empower women smallholders to deliver healthy and quality products to school canteens were discussed. MAFRD was equipped with software to collect sex- and age-disaggregated data on local food production and SHF capacity needs, to feed into the development of new national gender-sensitive national policies. However, none of the partners (with the exception of one sub-activity) provided WFP with gender segregated data for their activities.

92. WFP decided to ensure that the design and implementation of government activities would be gender transformative and to address the needs and interests of vulnerable groups. Tackling gender inequalities and monitor progress was recognised as an important and cross-cutting in all activities by WFP and government staff interviewed. However, WFP interviewees admitted that *"within the programme, there was no specific strategy on communication of gender equality"* and that *"once we do some activities we take care of addressing the inequalities and be sensitive.... but it is intuitive rather than based on some established approach"*. No GEWE progress monitoring tool was evident within government activities.

93. Under SO2 – within emergency response to COVID-19 – quantified indicators were reported in the ACRs, demonstrating the equitable distribution of food assistance to schools equally for girls and boys.

94. Overall, more than half of key informants perceived that GEWE issues have been incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention to a certain extent (57.1%). Some of the interviewed stakeholders expressed that the support of GEWE should be enhanced and women-targeting activities incorporated.

**Figure 6. Key informants' perception of GEWE incorporation in the design and implementation of the intervention**



## 2.2. EFFECTIVENESS

### EQ 2: To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and outcomes?

#### EQ 2.1 To what extent has the intervention helped the government to achieve their national priorities and goals?

**Finding 7: CSP interventions contributed to a certain extent to the fulfilment of the government priorities, mostly through qualitative interventions by the Country Capacity Strengthening (CSS) and setting up the long-term mechanisms supporting government autonomy.**

95. The national priorities and goals are framed by the Transformation Agenda 2030 underpinned by the Vision "Sao Tome and Principe 2030: the Country we want to build". The intervention timeline overlapped

with the NDP 2017-2021, as the first operational plan of the STP 2030 Transformation Agenda, and with the NDPS 2020-2024. The NDP 2017-2021 established the institutional implementation and monitoring mechanism, which were not functional in 2022<sup>37</sup> or during the time of evaluation. Currently, there is no updated Report on the national priorities' achievements.

96. Based on the long-term stated government priorities and goals (which were aligned with CSP design), the following contributions to its achievement were identified based on the review of ACRs, partner implementing agencies reports (HELPO, ADAPPA reports) and interviews with stakeholders:

- **Strengthening process of PNASE.** Thanks to the approval of the School Feeding Law, the next important step towards a more autonomous and self-sufficient School Feeding Programme was achieved. This step should help the government on their way to become autonomous and gather required financial resources for the autonomous operation of the SFP.
- **Enhanced technical background, logistical and storage infrastructure and strengthened capacities of PNASE,** resulting in strengthened capacities for implementation of the SFP, in turn contributing to the 2030 goals of achieving food security and decreasing malnutrition. Also, this should contribute to the achievements of high enrolment of children in primary education and gender parity within school attendance in primary schools. As confirmed by both the previous CSP evaluation report and by participants of the FGDs in school, there is a clear link between the provision of meals in schools and children' attendance.
- **Empowering the role of CONSAN,** which became a strong advocacy player positively influencing the development of food security and nutrition related policies. CONSAN also played important role during the presentation of School Feeding Law to government.
- **Strengthened capacities of MAFRD through the provision of data management software,** monitoring tools and evidence-based studies. These are likely to further support the development of new national gender-sensitive policies, aiming to ensure a sustainable national agricultural production, to strengthen self-sufficiency and to provide food security and economic growth.
- **Built capacities of vulnerable farmers,** with a focus on females in sustainable agricultural practices and local food production. This is one of the main assumptions for building the resilient agriculture production, eliminate gender inequalities and ensure the food security of the country, while also decreasing the amount of imported food.
- **Raised awareness on gender inequalities and their deconstruction,** including on GBV, the need for integration of women into the agricultural sector, the need for investment into the local production, and benefits of the local products consumption.

97. Other achievements were recorded in relation to SO2 emergency response activities where direct support was provided. However, these interventions are not subject of the current evaluation.

## **EQ 2.2 Was the programme affected by COVID-19 and how did it address the consequences in the short and long term? Specifically did the programme offer any advantages when responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in STP?**

**Finding 8: The COVID-19 period confirmed the role of WFP in the country as a well-established and recognised emergency response provider, capable of fast mobilisation of resources. In reaction to the situation, CSP was integrated with an additional component – Strategic Outcome 2 – focused on crises response.**

98. With the emergence of COVID-19, WFP proved its role of well-established and recognised stakeholder for providing the emergency response in the country. According to WFP respondents, WFP leveraged its global and long-term experience in emergency response. Thanks to the recognition of WFP as an emergency response agency *"the Government approached WFP to seek support; resources were mobilised in a short time to be able to respond"*.

---

<sup>37</sup> [Governo de Sao Tome e Principe: Agenda de Transformação no Horizonte – 2030](#). Conferência Internacional dos Investidores e Parceiros de desenvolvimento São Tomé e Príncipe, Londres, 14-15 de Outubro de 2015.

99. According to respondent from CATAP, WFP was the first to address the needs of COVID-19. In joint activity with CATAP, they assessed food reserves at the beginning of pandemic.

100. Respondent from MAFRD added that WFP supported the development of national response plan in 2020, which was a crucial document enabling the strategic and organised approach from the government to address the COVID-19 response.

101. A new crisis response strategic outcome (SO2) was integrated into the CSP and remained until the end of its implementation, after other revisions. Through SO2 activities, WFP could also effectively respond to climate-related disasters in 2021 and 2022.

102. Through SO2 Activity 3, WFP immediately reacted in the short term to the closure of all 209 schools and on the consequent suspension of the SFP in the period from March to September 2020, by providing food assistance via on-site distribution to 19,287 children from 127 schools. Other interventions continued until the end of CSP.<sup>38</sup>

103. As reported by various stakeholders both from WFP and other UN organisations, the sudden situation also pointed out the need to allocate contingency budget to the design of upcoming CSP, in order to be ready for similar situations.

**Finding 9: The sudden emergency opened the potential for mobilisation of financial resources and enhanced cooperation and mutual activities with some other donors in the country.**

104. During the pandemic, the WFP STP office received support from the regional bureau and the Cameroon Country Office. Additional financial resources in total of USD 1,639,425 between 2020 2022 were mobilised as presented in the table below.

**Table 7. Overview of mobilised funds over years of CSP implementation, with emphasis on the COVID-19 response (USD)**

Source	Activity/SO	2020	2021	2022
Multi Partner Trust Fund	A02	71 039		
Global Partnership for Education	A03	55 056		
Chelleram Foundation	A03		700 000	
WFP HQ Funds	A03			328 330
Government of Brazil	SO1, SO2			100 000
Strategic Resource Allocation Committee	SO1			150 000
SDG project	SO2			235 000
<b>TOTAL funds per year</b>		<b>126 095</b>	<b>700 000</b>	<b>813 330</b>
<b>TOTAL mobilized</b>		<b>1 639 425</b>		

105. As reported by WFP staff and confirmed within the ACRs and financial reports, the mobilised resources were also used for the activities under SO1. Respondents from other donor organisations in country mentioned that WFP was exceptionally successful in fast resource mobilisation (including from non-traditional sources). In turn, this opened new opportunities for financial resource mobilisation for WFP.

**Finding 10; The COVID-19 period imposed some financial constraints which affected the implementation of SO1 activities.**

106. The implementation of planned activities in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022 was affected, and some activities were postponed or not implemented until the end of the evaluated intervention, as reported within ACRs.

<sup>38</sup> Full information on the SO2 is available in ACRs 2020, 2021 and 2022. SO2 performance is not the subject of this evaluation.

107. Within interviews, informants also pointed out that the redirection of resources and priorities of the government and donors, the consequent lack of funding, and restrictions in mobility (lockdown) delayed the implementation of the planned activities.

108. As a key partner and donor for WFP operations, the government also suffered from a financial and economic downturn due to COVID-19 pandemic, with funds significantly decreasing in 2020.<sup>39</sup>

109. An overview of postponed and performed SO1 activities for 2020-2022 is provided in the table below.

**Table 8. Changes in planned activities in SO1 per respective years**

	Activity postponed		Activity Performed		Notes
	2020	2021	2021	2022	
Awareness and sensitisation campaigns on the importance of adding nutritious local products to school menus	x		x	x	
Improvement of PNASE and Ministry of Education information management system	x		x		
Assessment of the nutritional status of school children aged 6 to 14 years	x				Not reported as realised
Revision of national laws and policies	x			x	New School Feeding Law Approved in 2022
Training for national partners		x		x	CSS Training for PNASE on reactivating school gardens
Support of PNASE's strategic plan formulation		x			Not reported as achieved
Revision of MoA policies		x			Not reported as realised

**Finding 11: COVID-19 proved that WFP has well-established communication channels with government stakeholders, and created the space for cooperation with other donors such as UNICEF on the Back-to School Programme.**

110. Despite the fact that some SO1 activities were suspended due to lack of funding, the cooperation with government stakeholders was working well and SO2-related interventions were implemented.

111. As reported by various respondents from government institutions, the cooperation between WFP and their institutions was unaffected. Some mentioned that this was due to long-term established cooperation, while others mentioned the well-working communication channels.

112. As per respondent from MAFRD *“The COVID-19 had only partial influence. There was a clear contingency plan, the meetings went on-line and the cooperation between MAFRD and WFP was not influenced significantly, in my opinion”*. In the words of a WFP respondent *“the COVID-19 crises taught us to think differently and look for solutions we did not think of before. It boosted our partnerships with other donors and opened opportunities for financing from unconventional sources (...). It has also showed us what works and what does not.”*

113. The WFP intervention continued after the reopening of schools with the support of PNASE in form of delivering food purchased locally for the joint campaign with UNICEF, called Back to School. Additionally, support to the national mapping exercise of local food production to ensure food security was provided.

**EQ 2.3 Were results delivered to specific groups including girls, boys, men, women and people living with disabilities or other marginalised groups?**

<sup>39</sup> WFP: Sao Tome and Principe Annual Country Report 2020.

**Finding 12: CSP was designed to target both men and women and included vulnerable groups. Results were delivered to all groups. However, for SO1 some gaps in reporting and progress monitoring were recorded and quantitative data, including gender segregated data, were often absent.**

114. Within SO1, CSP indirectly targeted children in schools, smallholder farmers, government staff and wider communities.

115. The ACRs reporting often lacks figures about trained staff, participants in the events, children benefitting from the activities and other quantifiable data. When revising the reports and activity evidence from implementing partners, sometimes the quantities are reported (e.g.: training of 40 CADR personnel on the supply chain management of equipment and tools for smallholder farmers in 2019), but gender segregated data in most cases are not provided.

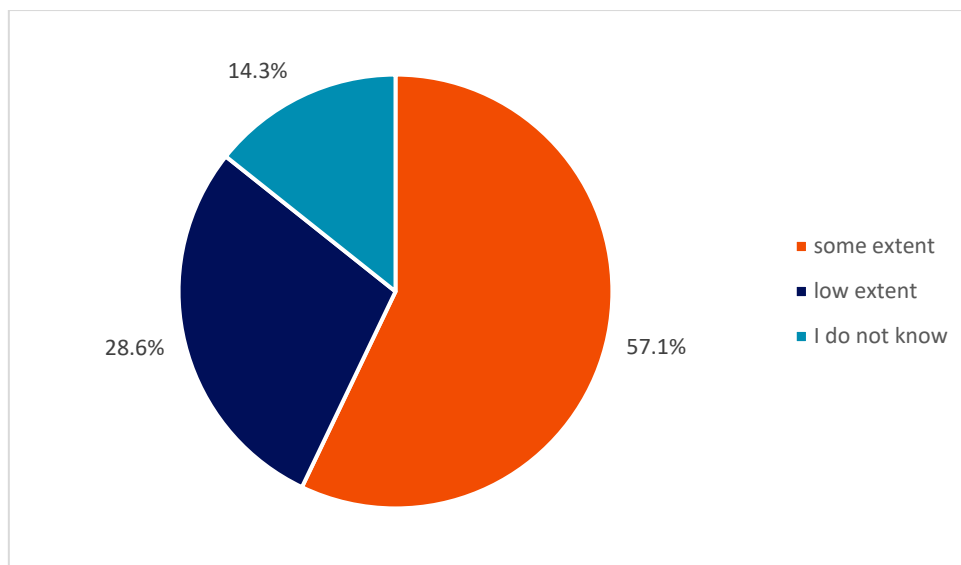
116. The WFP CO staff confirmed that currently there is no unified database or folder to store all collected data. *“The knowledge where the documents are and what were the results usually lies with the particular person”.*

117. Per FLAs, implementing partners shall report their achievements and progress of activities to WFP. However, the quantities and gender segregated data are often absent and not handed over to WFP.

**Finding 13: Lack of specific implementation and communication strategy for GEWE issues resulted in weak progress towards gender equality as unanticipated effect of the intervention.**

118. More than half of key informants from government, WFP staff and implementing partners perceived that the intervention addressed gender inequality to a certain point (57.1%); while 28.6% perceived that the gender inequality was not addressed at all (Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Extent of addressing gender inequality perceived by key informants**



119. Respondents from other UN organisations mentioned that they are not familiar enough with all the activities of WFP to assess this aspect. However, they confirmed that joint projects put a stronger emphasis on gender transformative approaches; such in the SDG project. As stated by the MAFRD respondent: *“The beneficiaries of the interventions were subject to the gender quota criterion, whereby for each intervention, care was taken to ensure the participation of women in terms of benefits.”* At the same time, it was acknowledged that MAFRD also does not have access to gender segregated data (e.g. for the smallholder farmers), and only thanks to the WFP intervention a software for data monitoring was delivered.

120. Despite the recognition of the significance of gender transformative approaches in the programme implementation by WFP, implementing partners and government, and gender transformative narrative used in the CSP, the unanticipated effect of the intervention was recognised. The lack of a specifically targeted communication strategy to work toward GEWE resulted in poor understanding of implementers as to what steps to take and consequently to very weak progress toward gender equality through the interventions.

## 2.3. EFFICIENCY

### EQ 3: To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated?

#### EQ 3.1 Were the interventions implemented in the most efficient manner?

**Finding 14: Limited financial resources and limited HR capacity of WFP CO influenced the efficiency of CSP implementation. However, considering the WFP CO, the efficiency of interventions and the level of achievements within the project are remarkable.**

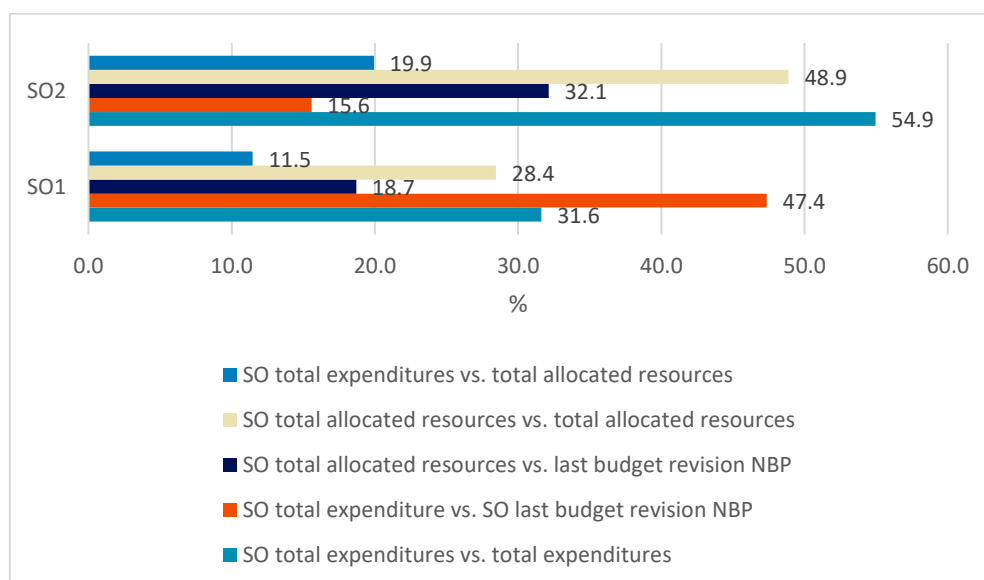
121. In the ACRs, financial constraints were recognised as the main strategic and programming risk to implementing the planned activities on their entire scale. As a result of the limited financial resources, some activities throughout the CSP implementation were delayed, postponed or have not been undertaken.

122. In 2019, WFP received no donor contributions or the government's committed contribution, as reported in ACR and the CO financial overview. Yet the CO was able to mobilise resources to implement all planned activities.

123. Within the period of the CSP implementation, as reported in ACRs and confirmed in the CO financial overview, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-related disasters affected fund allocation and reprioritisation of activities, which led to the CSP revisions, introduction of SO2 and scaling up the budget. In 2022, macro-economic factors such as the armed conflict in Ukraine and increased energy and food prices have brought additional challenges to the government as well as to secure funding for the CSP implementation from other sources.

124. In the CSP evaluated period (2019-2022), the total expenditure of 1,860,193 USD represents 36.3% of total allocated resources, 5,129,915 USD, as reported within ACRs. The detailed breakdown of expenditure and allocated resources per strategic outcome covering the CSP period is shown in the figure below. The SO1 expenditures represent 31.6% of the total CSP expenditure and 11.5% of the total allocated resources. The SO1 allocated resources represent 28.4% of the total allocated resources. If compared to the last revised NBP, SO1's expenditure share was 47.4%, while SO1's allocated resources represented 18.7%.

**Figure 8. Total Allocated resources and expenditure per strategic outcome to total allocated resources, last revised NBP, and total expenditures, respectively (in percentage)**



\*For the calculation of total allocated resources covering the whole CSP period, allocated resources for 2022 were not available; instead, available resources for 2022 were used.

125. Throughout the CSP implementation, WFP mobilised external resources, particularly for implementing emergency response. The overview of mobilised resources and related activity over the years of

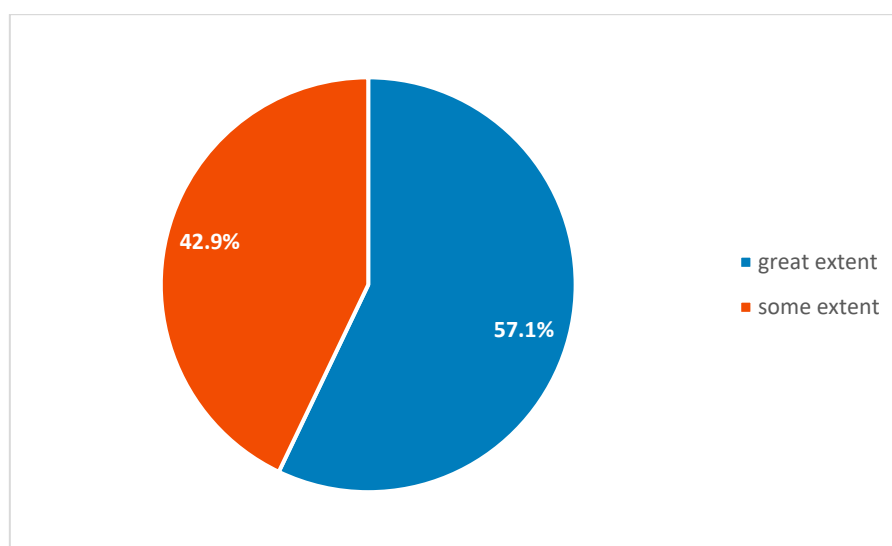


implementation are shown in Table 6. In total, 1,639,425 USD was mobilised from 2020 to 2022, of which 80% was intended for emergency response (COVID-19, floods).

126. The Direct Support Costs, which can be used to support the country office with additional staff and needed equipment<sup>40</sup>, are mostly underfunded and can influence the implementation of planned activities. The challenges with the number of staff and the small size of the WFO CO were emerging throughout the evaluation process in the form of observed bottlenecks within the implementation, the need for fast reactions in the COVID-19 period, etc. These were raised by the WFP respondents during the personal interviews and were emerging throughout the evaluation process.

127. However, respondents from government, implementing organisations, WFP CO and donor organisations perceived that the intervention was implemented in the most efficient manner. More than half of respondents (57.1%) said the efficiency was great, while 42.9% of respondents stated that to some extent (Figure 10). During in-person interviews, the respondents clarified they are aware of limited HR capacities and financial resources. In addition, the informant from WFP CO stated that *"the limited resources were allocated where they were most needed"*.

**Figure 9. Extent of efficiency of implemented intervention**



128. The informant from the government mentioned that he considers the intervention efficient because there was always a vision of sustainability, and the resources were allocated properly to the supporting activities, such as technical training and assistance. *"We know they have limited resources, and COVID-19 made it difficult for all of us, so I think that with what is available, this is really good."*

129. According to a UN other donors' informant, the efficiency might be compromised because the WFP STP office has limited mandates in terms of not having signature rights to partner agreements and a bank account. Concern that *"in such case, the support of the UNDP office is needed, however it prolongs the process"* was shared.

130. As verified with UNDP as the organisation enabling the directing of funds to WFP within the country and UN RCO, the financial set up of WFP – where the funds are delivered via another UN agency is commonly applied practice within the UN management system. It is also aligned with the upcoming trend and strategy of UN organisations under the UN Cooperation Framework 2018.

131. The WFP CO office has limited HR capacity. The WFP CO is rather small, with a range of six to eight staff members during the evaluated period, as reported by WFP CO staff. The organigram provided was updated in 2023; therefore, the evaluation team had to rely on the "institutional memory" of the WFP staff. Out of those, the country representative and deputy country representative play a rather strategic role. There is one communication officer, one driver, and one financial and administrative person, which leaves the operational

<sup>40</sup> [https://executiveboard.wfp.org/ar/document\\_download/WFP-0000030777](https://executiveboard.wfp.org/ar/document_download/WFP-0000030777)

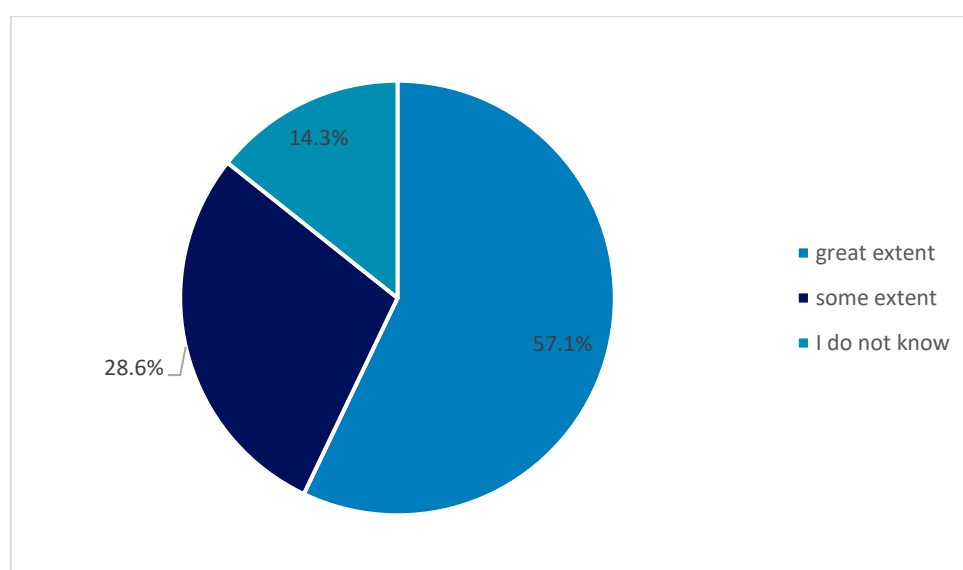
staff ranging from one to three field officers (and one of those plays the role of monitoring expert). Considering the scope of CSP design, it was rather demanding on the current staff numbers

132. As reported within the ACRs and confirmed by WFP staff, the shortage in staff was addressed by contracting international external ad-hoc experts, implementing the CSP based on the FLAs with local NGOs, and in cooperation with the government, which significantly supported the CSP implementation.

133. The efficient implementation currently stems from the well-established relations and working communications with the government stakeholders over the years of WFP's presence in the country. However, this status is vulnerable and dependent on the current staff. For example, if there is political turnover or WFP staff turnover, the relations may be disrupted.

134. Key informants from government, UN organisations, WFP CO and implementing partners found programme management and decision-making processes to be efficient to a certain extent (57.1%) or very efficient (28.6%).

**Figure 10. Extent of efficiency of programme management and decision-making processes**



135. During the interviews, the informants from government partner organisations highlighted the efficiency in decision-making and coordination of the activities while recognising the limited staff capacity of the WFP STP office. As a respondent from the government mentioned, *"We often consult our documents with them (WFP<sup>41</sup>), prepare the plans together (...) if we need to meet for coordination, there is always a fast reaction, and we always find agreement (...) there is always support and it helps."*

**Finding 15: Limited WFP on-site monitoring capacity and weak reporting by partners on quantifiable gender disaggregated data and GEWE result in inefficiencies in monitoring programme results.**

136. During the evaluation process, the team experienced difficulties in tracking the reports from the partners and some intervention deliverables, which indicated some challenges within the internal management system. The monitoring system, including the archiving of reports, deliverables and other documents and a database of supported beneficiaries, does not seem to operate efficiently.

137. Access to information for responsive planning was challenged, considering, for example, the change of WFP personnel. This is an important aspect when it comes to the limited on-site monitoring capacity of the WFP STP office and the high reliance on the partner's reporting.

138. Reporting responsibilities are given to the implementing partners within the signed LFAs, where the requirements on the frequency of reporting and the type of data to provide are stated. WFP ACRs are built on the collected data from all interventions throughout the year, including those based on the interventions

<sup>41</sup> It was clear from the context. Other agencies were also mentioned.

of implementation partners. However, when reviewing the partner reports, the information provided often did not include quantified achievements, gender segregated data or recorded evidence related to addressing the GEWE issues. The lack of such information poses the need for the gathering of these data by the CO monitoring officer.

**Finding 16: Enhanced visibility of WFP in country activities and joint projects with other UN donors could attract additional sources of funding.**

139. A field survey with farmers pointed out that 44.4% of respondents stated that they were not involved in any of WFP's support<sup>42</sup>.

140. WFP supported several campaigns on the importance of the consumption of local products. However, leaflets, posters or other printed materials were not visible at the schools the ET visited. In contrast, some material from other donors was visible, even outdated (2012) leaflets.

141. Similarly, the ET could not find printed materials related to the campaigns on GBV and gender inequality, not only in the visited schools but also in public spaces (local markets, shops).

142. However, during the FGDs with school personnel and parents of children from schools, it was reported that they were aware of the campaign. Some of them were able to describe what it was about, and they said correctly which year it was.

143. Based on the ET experience with private sector fundraising activities, it is proved by common practice that these companies consider visibility important. The WFP could build a strong fundraising narrative for unconventional donors – including the private sector but not limited to it - in case they could present the story from the community level.

144. In ACR 2020, it was reported that insufficient funding remained one of the major risks for CSP implementation. Hence, strategic measures were set to reinforce the partnership with government donors, UN agencies and IFIs to secure funding for the CSP implementation and increase the visibility of the WFP's performance in STP.

145. In 2020, a Partnership Action Plan was developed to mitigate identified risks. In 2021, WFP invested in strategic partnerships with non-traditional donors.

146. As per ACRs and confirmed with the WFP CO and other donor organisations, several joint initiatives have been implemented with other UN agencies and international and national NGOs. These initiatives were implemented mostly under SO2 and led to the optimisation of available financial resources. As reported by the WFP CO respondent and confirmed by other UN donors, this approach showed the way to tackle additional financial resources and should be one of the possibilities for the future. Proving this point, in May 2022, an SDG joint-donor project led by WFP falling under SO1 was launched when the resources from the UN SDG Fund were received.

147. Such cooperation is also in line with the UN Cooperation Framework 2018 and the drive for multi-donor joint projects.

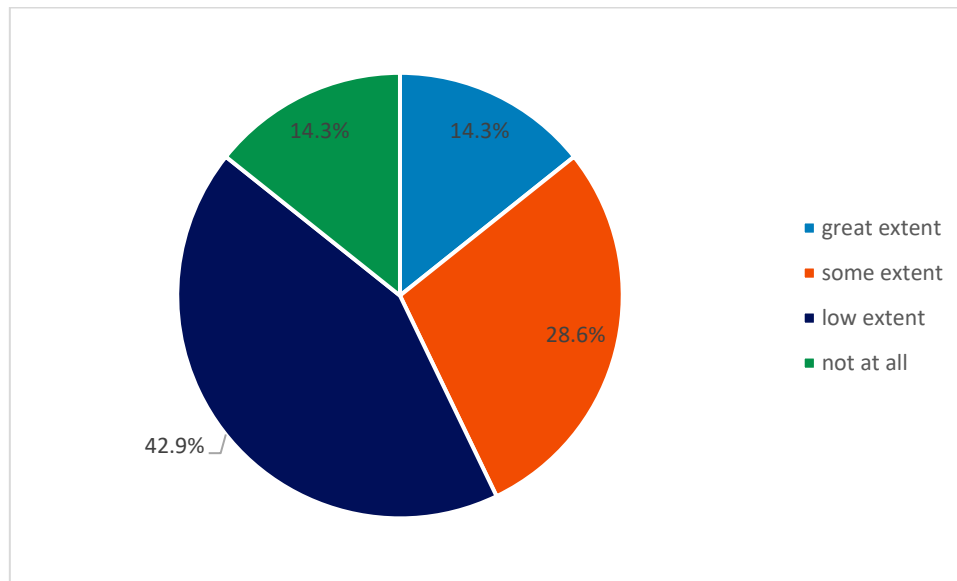
**EQ 3.2 To what extent did the monetary and non-monetary contributions from the government enable the intervention to be implemented in an efficient manner?**

148. The key informants' questionnaire survey results showed a great variety in responses on the extent of the monetary and non-monetary contributions from the government and their influence on the CSP implementation in an efficient manner. More than half of the informants perceived that the government contributions enabled the intervention implementation to a small extent (42.3%) or not at all (14.3%). During the in-person interviews, it was clarified that the respondents meant mostly the influence of a lack of monetary contributions.

---

<sup>42</sup> All interviewed farmers within the survey were directly engaged in SO1 WFP intervention.

**Figure 11. The extent of the government's contributions that enabled the intervention implementation**



**Finding 17: Government monetary contributions for SO1 interventions were not received due to the country's financial crises and other shocks, such as the COVID-19 crisis and subsequent emerging challenges. However, WFP managed to keep delivering the SO1 interventions, although with slight delays or some postponements.**

149. The government was a key partner and major stakeholder in the CSP implementation. Within the CSP design process, the government committed to allocate one million USD for the CSP implementation – contributing 200,000 USD annually as stated in the CSP document and ACR 2019. However, already in 2019, the commitment was postponed due to the country's financial crises.

150. WFP did not receive the anticipated funds from the government in 2019 as reported in ACRs and CO financial overview or in the following years due to other shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and macroeconomic factors related to the armed conflict in Ukraine and energy crises which affected the government's ability to fulfil the commitment as planned.

151. However, the monetary contribution was released for the emergency response action under SO2.

152. The lack of funding from the government directly caused constraints to the CSP implementation. However, in 2019, as reported in ACRs and as per the financial overview, despite the underfunding of A01, both interventions under A01 and A02 were implemented. For years 2020 and 2021, some delays of SO1 interventions or postponing of sub-activities was observed due to lack of financing, but also due to the need to provide an emergency response in reaction to COVID-19 (SO2) and the limited HR resources of WFP CO.

153. As mentioned by a respondent from WFP. *"We do have limited staff capacities. The emergency response was a priority at the time, and we simply could not continue with all activities."* On the other hand, as repetitively stated by some other stakeholders, both from the government and other UN agencies, *"It was a period when we all were impacted by the pandemic and had other priorities, operational/implementation challenges due to limited travel/lockdown."*

**Finding 18: Governments' non-monetary contributions – in particular – active engagement in the CSP interventions played a crucial role in the CSP implementation and its efficiency.**

154. The government's non-monetary contribution was the active participation and cooperation of relevant government stakeholders (MAFRD, PNAASE, CONSAN) in the CSP implementation, as they were the main CSP stakeholders as designed within the CSP. Their role, in line with the national strategies, lay in strengthening capacities to become self-reliant and in securing long-term funding for the SFP and other CSP related

activities. Targeted institutions and departments actively participated in CSP activities, which was a main assumption and key factor for CSP implementation. Since the CSP is aligned with the goals and expected achievements of the national strategy, the influence of turnover within the political roles was minor, or none, as reported repetitively by the representants of PNASE, MAFRD, CONSAN and CATAP and confirmed by WFP. Also, no evidence of such influence was recorded within the ACRs.

155. During the survey and in-person interviews where the informants were providing feedback on their perception of the government's contribution to the efficient CSP implementation, the non-monetary contributions were emphasised. Namely the provision of human resources, transportation and logistical support during the capacity building activities and distribution of agricultural-inputs to SHFs.

156. As emphasised by multiple WFP CO staff, this contribution was critical for a successful intervention.

### **EQ 3.3 Were the activities efficiently implemented (specifically timeliness of implementation, adequacy of inputs and cost-effectiveness?)**

**Finding 19: CSP design did not include the time indicators, milestones, or quantified targets. Workplans per year were also missing, and only the end-of-year achievements were reported.**

157. The CSP does not provide a timeline for its activities, and no quantified indicators to be achieved were set. The indicators for CSP arise from the WFP Revised Corporate Results Framework (2017 – 2021). The Framework sets the type of indicators to follow and collect. However, no quantifications were present in the CSP design or ACRs.

158. The annual planning, including the workplan for the year, was not presented to ET. ACRs report the set of interventions and achievements for the respective year. The delays of some activities were reported within the ACRs.

159. The respondent from WFP clarified that during the year, this is dependent on the actual resources the office receives, and the work is organised based on those resources. *"Then the priorities are set, we know what to do and usually our implementation partners do the activities"*. Although requested by ET, no workplan from the evaluated period was available. The respondent from WFP clarified that the work responsibility is usually assigned, and organisation meetings are taking place.

160. During COVID-19, reprioritisation had to take place, and a fast reaction was needed. *"This was one of the typical examples where we had to react and suspend some other activities"*.

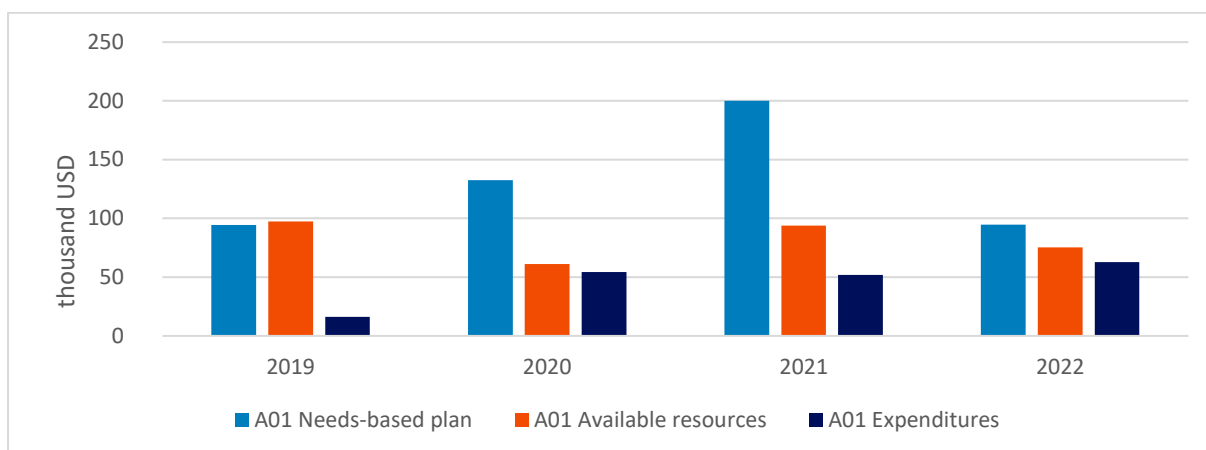
161. The issue of the HR capacities was repetitively reported. Yet some supporting institutionalised tools were not presented to the ET. It was proved that the documents related to the CSP are stored and available. However, the knowledge and overview still stayed mostly with the individuals. The same is true for some official planning tools, which could be revised backwards for the time of the evaluation period.

**Finding 20: The efficiency of implementation of SO1 based on the comparison of the expenditures and reported results was found to be high despite some delays and bottlenecks being reported, considering that a revision of CSP and the addition of SO2 had a direct influence on the timeliness and capacity for SO1 implementation.**

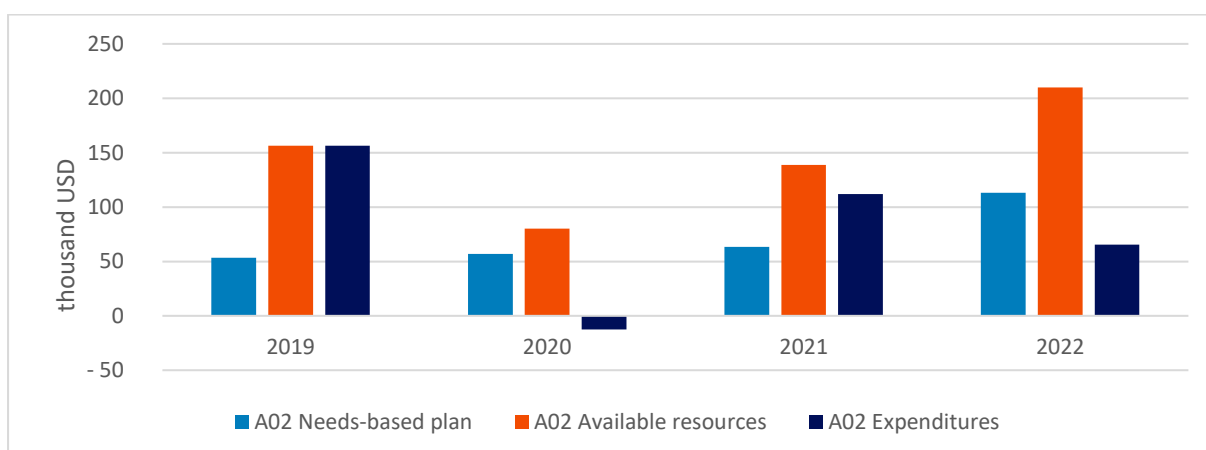
162. No initial - start of the year – targets were presented to the team. Therefore, a comparison of end-year results against the financial resources was undertaken.

163. The following table shows the financial indicators for A01 and A02 within the evaluated period.

**Figure 12. Overview of financial indicators for A01**



**Figure 13. Overview of financial indicators for A02**



164. It should be noted that when considering the efficiency of implementation towards financial resources, the same WFP staff was also engaged in the implementation of SO2, which was added to the CSP from 2020 onwards based on the sudden need to reprioritise due to COVID-19.

165. Reported results for the years<sup>43</sup> in ACRs, confirmed with stakeholders by a review of the WFP's financial figures and in the field, showed that the SO1 interventions were implemented efficiently. Some bottlenecks were faced due to limited capacities. These bottlenecks were usually connected with the sudden situation, e.g. Success in raising the funds from SDG funds. However, the capacities to start the project and organise the multi-donor project were needed, and as was suggested by the respondent from another UN organisation, maybe the ratio between the actual capacities, funding, and the scope of intervention might be revised so the bottlenecks are not reached so often. However, as mentioned by another UN organisation respondent, *"This is the vicious circle. There is limited funding, you have limited resources (...), so you try to raise finances, but then when you succeed, you have more limited capacities to implement."* This challenge was also confirmed by WFP respondents.

166. The overall implementation was timely, with slight delays within particular projects that were directly managed by WFP CO staff. The work of implementing partners was in line with the given timeline in the contracts and corresponded to the expected outcomes.

<sup>43</sup> Listed in chapter 1.3 Subject Evaluated and within chapter 2.2 Effectiveness

## 2.4. COHERENCE

### EQ 4: To what extent is the intervention appropriate/compatible with other interventions in a country, sector or institution?

#### EQ 4.1 To what extent is WFP's support to the government on school feeding, promotion of local products and smallholder farmers' activities coherent and aligned with national programmes?

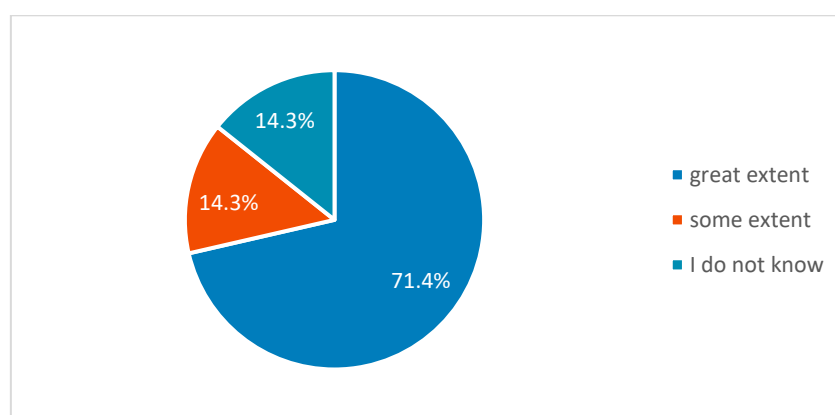
**Finding 21: WFP support to the government on the above-mentioned topics is fully aligned with national programmes, and its coherence is ensured through the direct participation of government representatives within the design and implementation process.**

167. The intervention is aligned with the strategic Transformation Agenda 2030, Sao Tome and Principe 2030 Vision: "The Country we want to build" and other national strategic documents, such as the Second National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2017-2020, NDP 2017-2021 and NDP 2020-2024, which sets its major objectives towards the economic growth, poverty reduction, reduction of dependency on imported products and protection of the environment.

168. Another programme to which the WFP intervention is directly linked is the National Food Security and Nutrition Programme for 2012 – 2023 and, the National Nutrition Programme outlining the governmental priorities related to the increase in food security and the reduction of malnutrition rates until 2030.

169. The majority (71.4%) of key informants perceived a high coherence of the intervention with the national priorities.

**Figure 14. Perception of intervention coherence with national priorities**



170. The interviewees confirmed that there is a systematic participatory approach in place to assure that the intervention aligns with the government's priorities and/or emergency needs and that the government's stakeholders take an active role in the design phase.

171. In addition, as confirmed by both government representatives and WFP CO staff, WFP develops with government partners annual and multi-annual plans as a response to their goals and programme, which are signed by both parties. This approach ensures continuous alignment even during the implementation phase.

172. As mentioned by the representative of MAFRD, "WFP work is coherent and highly aligned with national priorities and policies. WFP is responsive to governments demands and provides consultations and capacity building on the needed topics".

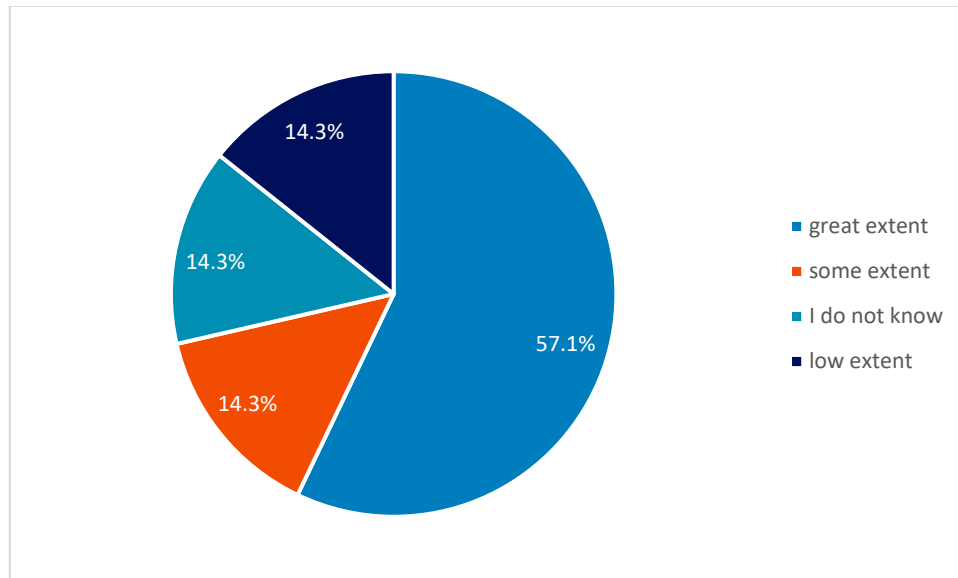
173. The alignment is also explicitly presented within the respective CSP, where the particular national policies and country needs are listed.

#### EQ 4.2 What have been the synergies between WFP-supported programmes and interventions from civil society, UN wider programmes, etc?

174. More than half of the informants perceive the synergies between the WFP programme and the work of institutions they are representing as great (57.1%); one in seven to a certain extent (14.3%), and one in seven

low (14,3%). None of the interviewees reported a complete absence of synergy. However, some gaps and overlaps were identified.

**Figure 15. Extent of synergies between WFP programme and the work of institutions of key informants**



175. Within the interviews and based on desk reviews, synergies with UN agencies, NGOs and other donors were identified. Several joint projects have been implemented, such as MFTP with FAO, ILO and UNHABITAT, which supported the implementation of A02. The SDG Fund project launched in May 2022 is another example of active cooperation with four UN agencies that identified synergies and worked together towards achieving the project goals.

**Finding 22: Civil society organisations are strategic partners to WFP, directly engaged in the CSP implementation, and their other work in-country is performed in synergy and communication with WFP.**

176. As per WFP common practice, reported by WFP CO staff and confirmed by other UN agencies staff, WFP has a mechanism of project implementation where WFP directly contracts the NGOs to fulfil the sub-activities of CSP. In this case, the international NGO HELPO and national NGO ADAPPA were contracted by WFP to support the implementation of some sub-activities. For HELPO mostly A01, while ADAPPA mostly in A02.

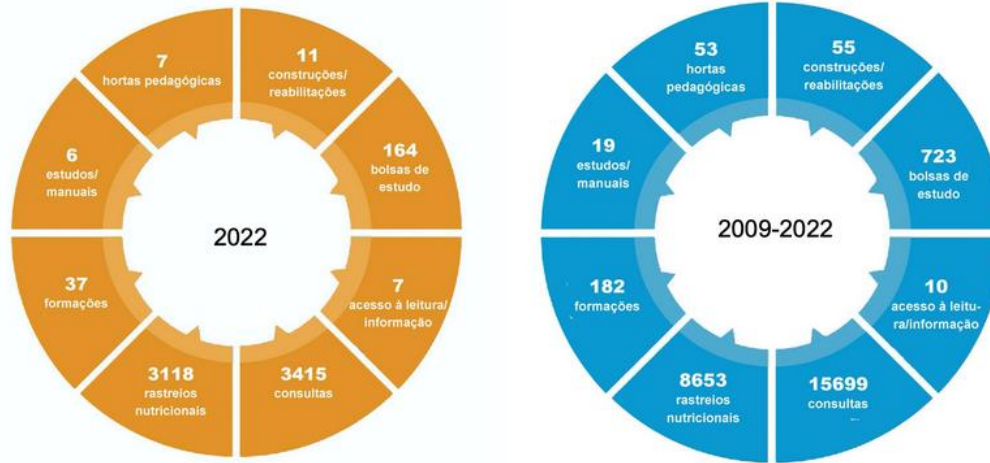
177. As reported by WFP CO staff and confirmed by representatives from the above-named NGOs, their selection was based on the long-term established relationship and relevancy of the work focus of the named NGOS in country.

178. International NGO HELPO has been working in Sao Tome on school feeding interventions and support of local production since 2009 and has strong recognition by local communities. This was confirmed via the HELPO website and stated by the interviewed representative of this NGO.



Figure 16, Overview of HELPO work in Sao Tome, pointing out the synergies (in Portuguese)

### São Tomé e Príncipe - resumo da intervenção, por atividade



179. WFP developed synergies with HELPO on the interventions related to school feeding and smallholder farmer support to produce local products. One of the projects implemented with HELPO in direct cooperation with PNASE, which is also a direct beneficiary of WFP interventions “MeNutRic Mais<sup>44</sup> (Melhoria do Estado Nutricional das Crianças de São Tomé e Príncipe) (2022-2030)”, is focused on nutrition and awareness about nutritious and healthy food and rehabilitation of community school gardens in the districts of Lobata and Cantagalo. On the HELPO website, WFP is mentioned as one of the funding sources along with the Camões, I.P. and Associação Helpo. Although these activities were not stated in ACRs, it was confirmed by the representative of HELPO, PNASE and WFP staff that mutual cooperation on the activities is taking place. At the same time, they all confirmed they do not see any overlaps in their work, as they actively work together, and in case of opportunity, they communicate.

180. Another NGO with whom WFP is directly cooperating and at the same time has built on the synergies is the national NGO ADAPPA. This NGO has worked with smallholder farmers in STP for over two decades. During the interviews with the ADAPPA representatives, it was stated that “WFP is an important and strategic partner for us. We have cooperated for many years with them, FAO and IFAD. It is our expertise and also a source of funding for our activities with farmers.” A representative from MAFRD stated that “ADAPPA is an important partner for us, and we are glad they deliver work to farmers at the community level. We know they work with WFP and FAO, and we see them as a strategic partner.”

181. The particular synergies were Identified within ADAPPA’s projects such as WACA (2020), focusing on awareness-raising, training, forest seedling production and planting; PRIASA II (2016-2020), focusing on Food and nutrition security; school gardens; demonstration plots for the transition to organic; capacity building; PAS (Políticas Agroalimentares Sustentáveis} (2019-2021), funded by EU Camões, I.P., covering topics linked to assurance of the Human Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition; the Rights of Rural Women; Important World Agricultural Heritage Systems (SIPAM) and adequate Nutrition via a School Feeding Programme; PRIASA II project – Infrastructure Rehabilitation for Food Security Support Project funded by the African Development Bank. All the projects named above are in line with the WFP strategic focus. ADDAPPA cooperated with WFP on the agricultural assessment to identify potential areas of collaboration for smallholder farmers' support and on activities under SO2.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.helpo.pt/pt/menutric-mais-melhoria-do-estado-nutricional-das-criancas-de-sao-tome-e-principe>

182. In the interview, the ADAPPA representative emphasised ADAPPA's strong orientation on organic farming, family farming and empowerment of rural women, which is also in line with the country's strategic plans and WFP's long-term focus.

**Finding 23: Synergies with other UN programmes were procured, and some of the joint projects were implemented or started, while some gaps and unused potential for more synergies with some of the UN institutions occurred.**

183. As reported by all stakeholders from interviewed UN organisations in country – the donor coordination meetings are in place where UN organisations meet with other donors in country and coordinate their intervention. The interviewed stakeholders agreed that although some synergies are here, the space for cooperation is so far underused, although recently (2021 and 2022), some new joint projects/initiatives emerged.

184. One of the representatives of a UN agency in STP said, *"We always meet, are motivated to cooperate and do work together. But then we go back to our office and go back to work as usual"*. Another representative of a different UN agency mentioned, *"I believe it is also about capacities to work together. We know that WFP is a rather small office here, and we understand they have limited staff. They are very capable, but then there is a concern whether with the new projects they may have capacities to fully implement it"*.

185. Previous cooperation<sup>45</sup> among WFP and various UN institutions was reported by the WFP and UN organisations' respondents and verified within the UN websites' previous projects and ACRs. As stated by various respondents from UN organisations – WFP is still perceived by them as more of an emergency response agency.

186. Within the implemented CSP, the majority of synergies with UN donors were undertaken within SO2. In 2020 the Multi-Partner Trust Fund represented a great opportunity to cooperate with other agencies (ILO, UN HABITAT, FAO). Similarly, in 2020, under GPE, WFP signed an agreement with UNICEF to provide food assistance for children in school.

187. In 2021, some progress in coordination and partnership with other UN organisations was made when WFP, along with other UN agencies under the coordination of the Resident Coordinator, contributed to the UNDAF 2017-2021 annual report and to UN CCA. The same year, it also chaired the UN Communication Group and participated in UN country team meetings.

188. In May 2022, a multi-donor joint project under the SDG Fund in partnership with UNFPA, ILO and the government of STP was launched.

189. Synergies with FAO, as one of the most sector-related UN organisations, were not tackled within the SO1 despite being planned within the CSP design. As confirmed by both WFP and FAO respondents – there is a space for many synergies, and the focus of the work is overlapping. As one of the respondents mentioned, *"I am aware that WFP works with the farmers and School Feeding Programme, but I am not sure what their role is and what the role of FAO is"*. Similarly, a respondent from MAFRD confirmed they cooperate with both FAO and WFP but not on any joint interventions so far. No specific reason for that was mentioned, yet it was acknowledged that cooperation between MAFRD, FAO, and WFP could have more potential for consistent development of the agriculture sector in STP and ensure food security.

190. As confirmed by respondents from FAO, there are some overlaps, and in some cases, both organisations work on the same activities – e.g. support of local consumption and sustainable agriculture practices. Both WFP and FAO respondents confirmed there is unused potential and that joint cooperation might also attract financial resources from other sources, such as the Green Climate Fund.

191. In 2021, additional donor synergies under SO1 were in cooperation with AfDB on the implementation of agriculture assessment and support of the World Bank with expert feedback during the country-level stakeholder consultation for Systematic Diagnosis of STP, which should serve the WB for development of their six-year Partnership Framework in the country.

---

<sup>45</sup> Prior to the period of evaluated capacity strengthening CSP interventions.

## 2.5. IMPACT

### EQ 5: To what extent has the intervention generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative effects, intended or unintended, at a higher level?

#### EQ 5.1 Are national ministries adjusting policies, regulations, budgets or programmes as a result of the capacity strengthening?

#### **Finding 24: The School Feeding Law was approved by the National Assembly in August 2022 as a result of long-term WFP interventions.**

192. WFP consistently supported CONSAN in empowering its role, providing expert recommendations and supporting the advocacy towards the government and providing space for high level dialogues on the topic of food security and nutrition (ACRs 2019-2022).

193. In 2019, WFP held courtesy meetings with the Prime Minister and representatives of four ministries about WFP strengthening support to the Government through PNASE and the advantages of investments in the innovative HGSF programme in the country.

194. After multiple consultations and high-level meetings from 2019 to 2022, the School Feeding Law was approved in August 2022. The School Feeding Law provides the mechanism for ensuring the long-term financial resources from the government for the School Feeding Programme. As derived from the law itself and confirmed by respondents, this is a crucial step towards the autonomous financing of the programme in the future.

#### **Finding 25: Advocacy and evidence-based interventions equipped the government with needed tools to prepare gender sensitive national policies and brought them to some commitments.**

195. As reported in ACRs 2019 – 2022, WFP supported multiple interventions enabling the government representatives to attend high level meetings within South-South cooperation, leveraged CONSAN to be perceived as a respected stakeholder with valid recommendations and delivered tools to measure and monitor performance so the evidence could be collected from various interventions and be used for planning. As reported by government stakeholders, *“evidence needs to be in place in order to enable government to pursue with strategic decisions”*.

196. Within the evaluated period, WFP brought the government stakeholders to the following commitments and/or provided evidence for the further development of policies, strategies and budget planning:

- The Minister of MEHE signed the commitment to the international declaration on the School Meals Coalition Initiative.
- The System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) to analyse the logistics and infrastructure for the government's optimal implementation of PNASE was finalised.
- Software to collect, record and monitor sex- and age-disaggregated data on local food production and SHF capacity needs to feed into the development of new national gender-sensitive policies was delivered.
- One agricultural assessment on the need to collect data on local food production and smallholder capacity needs was conducted.
- One territorial diagnosis was conducted for the territorial sustainable development plan.
- A registry of smallholder farmers to monitor the production and capacity needs was developed.
- Thanks to the capacity strengthening, introducing the IT tools and building the capacities, delivering the evidence-based assessment studies, MAFRD has increased its capacities and tools for the development of new national gender-sensitive policies aiming to ensure sustainable agricultural production in country to strengthen the self-sufficiency of STP and providing food security and economic growth.

197. According to the respondents of in-person interviews, the advocacy material, such as cost-benefit analysis and SABER-SF exercise, supported the legal change. Further impact can be seen in incorporating *“capacity building components into all the projects they (WFP) develop”*, as stated by a respondent from government.

**EQ 5.2 What real difference has the activity made on the capacity to design, plan and implement programmes? How did the WFP support to government capacity building change beneficiaries' lives and livelihoods?**

**Finding 26: WFP strengthened the technical background and increased the capacities of the stakeholders so they can monitor and implement their programmes. Also, their position was strengthened, which is likely to help them in further work and advocacy for the programmes.**

198. The project executed multiple activities, which strengthened the capacities of the government stakeholders to implement the programmes, mainly by addressing PNASE, MAFRD and CONSAN.

199. In the table below, we summarise the major achievements of the interventions which enhanced the capacities of the above-mentioned stakeholders and enabled them to undertake their activities in a more efficient manner and/or ensure a longer reach of their activities and/or made their voice be heard more. In the third column, we mention which change this intervention supported and contributed to.

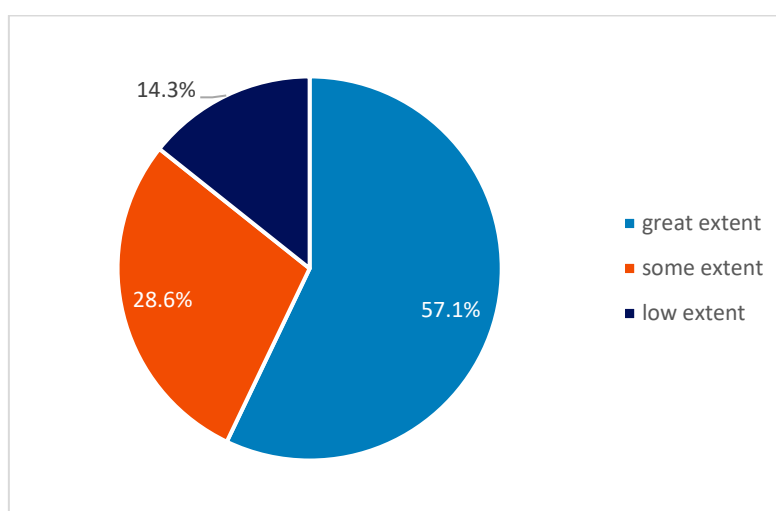
**Table 9. Major achievement of interventions, 2019-2022**

Government beneficiary	Achievements within 2019-2022	Impact
PNASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of School Feeding Law</li> <li>• Delivering a cost-benefit analysis proving that the investment into SFP is economically beneficial for the state</li> <li>• Trained PNASE staff on administrative matters, monitoring of SFP, expert training on nutrition</li> <li>• Provision of computers and IT equipment</li> <li>• Introduction of IT monitoring system for enhanced organisation of logistics and overview of delivered meals</li> <li>• Provision of vehicles, retrofitting 3 warehouses and office premises</li> <li>• Participation in high-level international meeting -Global Child Nutrition Forum in Cambodia</li> <li>• More than 6 awareness raising campaigns addressing the importance of including local products in school menus, the consumption of nutritious local products, and the need for investment in local production, including the development of an awareness raising video.</li> <li>• Reactivation of school gardens</li> <li>• Establishment of pigsty.</li> </ul>	<p>The role of PNASE was strengthened thanks to the opportunity to participate in high level international meetings and approval of School Feeding law. This was an important step towards the autonomous position of PNASE within MEHE and assurance of long-term financial income for SFP.</p> <p>Also, thanks to strengthening the office background, enabling improved logistics of the food distribution to schools and storage of food, providing the tools for monitoring its programmes and building the capacities of PNASE in both administering, monitoring and implementing the work, including the capacity building of canteen cooks PNASE could better implement the SFP.</p> <p>By introducing the school gardens and constructing the pigsty from which food to schools can be directly distributed, an additional amount of food could be delivered to children, and the self-subsistence of some schools was strengthened.</p>
MAFRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforced South-South and triangulation cooperation and high-level dialogue</li> </ul>	<p>Thanks to capacity strengthening, introducing IT tools, and building the capacities, delivering the evidence-based assessment studies, MAFRD has increased</p>

Government beneficiary	Achievements within 2019-2022	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained staff (CADR) to further train the smallholder farmers and help them improve their farming activities</li> <li>• Establishment of a database and information management system to collect and manage data for smallholder farmers</li> <li>• Delivered one agricultural assessment on the need to collect data on local food production and smallholder capacity needs</li> <li>• One territorial diagnosis for the territorial sustainable development plan.</li> </ul>	<p>its capacities and tools for the development of new national gender-sensitive policies aiming at ensuring the sustainable agricultural production in country to strengthen self-sufficiency of STP and providing food security and economic growth.</p> <p>Also, it strengthened and built the capacities of CADR trainers and MAFRD staff to deliver particular in field programmes in line with the national agricultural strategies.</p>
CONSAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforced background of CONSAN premises, enabling them to hold important meetings and play an active role</li> <li>• Delivery of IT equipment</li> <li>• Supporting with the expert advice to build the formulations and recommendations for government in the areas of food security and nutrition.</li> </ul>	<p>Thanks to strengthening the position of CONSAN due to improved technical and capacity background, CONSAN could play an important role in advocacy for food security and nutrition, emphasising the importance of investing in food security and national programmes towards the government and presenting the campaign for the new proposal on the School Feeding Law to the government (October 2020) which was later approved.</p>

200. Confirming the above, more than three-quarters of informants perceived that the interventions have made a real difference in the capacity to design, plan and implement programmes. 28.6% of them indicated it was a great contribution, while another 57.1% marked it as up to a certain point.

**Figure 17. Extent to which the interventions have made a real difference in the capacity to design, plan and implement programmes**



201. The respondent from WFP stated that:

*“As part of the projects implemented with WFP support, partnership agreements are signed between WFP and the partners. In order to implement these agreements, various supporting documents/tools must be drawn up and submitted to the WFP to monitor and supervise the activities, such as work plans, schedules, and technical and financial reports (both mid-term and final). These constant exercises within the framework of each agreement, associated with each project and/or intervention with the WFP, certainly open up a range of knowledge regarding the design, planning and execution of programmes and projects.”*

### **EQ5b: How did the WFP support government capacity building to change beneficiaries' lives and livelihoods?**

#### **Finding 27: The feeding program in schools directly impacts the access of children to food and often motivates them to be present in school.**

202. From the perspective of school personnel, as reported within the FGDs at schools, the School Feeding Programme is an essential motivation for children to attend school and their parents to let the children attend school. Some school directors mentioned that if *“children do not see smoke [at a school], they will not come”*, referring to the fact that if the school canteen is not in operation, fewer children appear at the school that day.

203. Resulting from FGDs, teachers perceived the difference directly during the learning process. If children are provided with meals, they are more active, show more energy, and pay attention in classes. If there is no meal, children are passive, only sitting and looking *“very sad”*. This situation is also very demotivating for teachers themselves to perform well.

204. Children participating in the FGDs, regardless of their gender, said similar statements about not being active if there is no meal and being happy if the meal is provided. However, as per their statements, school feeding is not the main motivation for them to be at school. Learning new things, reading, writing, mathematics and playing with other children were often mentioned as the main motivation and best things about the school.

205. Children of both genders further showed appreciation for the fact that school meals are similar to what they eat at home. They named some traditional meals (e.g. *matabala, folhas de mekeke, cachupa, calulu, kizaka com peixe*). In some FGDs, children participants stated that meals at school and home are equally as good, while in other FGDs, children participants preferred home meals as these are tastier but said that school meals are still good.

206. Regarding the portion size of meals, in the FGDs children of both genders showed general happiness. Some said that portions at home are larger than at school (Lembá district). In one school in the Cantagalo district, children reported that they could add a portion if they were hungry. On the other hand, in the Caué and Me-Zochi districts, some children (of both genders) at both visited schools said that the meal portions are small, and they would welcome larger portions. In some schools, children mentioned having meals only two to three times per week.

207. During the FGDs, it was reported that last school year, mostly 2-3 meals per week are prepared *“since there are no more resources”*, as mentioned by some directors and confirmed by PNASE workers, or it is *“the only way to make the food nutritious”* as mentioned by canteen cooks. The reported frequency matches with the findings of 2022 in the NFR report -an estimation of 90 school days per school year (out of the intended 180).

208. Parents, asked in FGDs, appreciated the School Feeding Programme. In particular, mothers (who are household heads) expressed the importance of meal provision to their children. Similar statements came from female farmers in the FGDs and personal interviews if they were mothers of children attending schools up to 6th grade. *“You know, it makes a difference when I do not have to feed one child who eats at school... I still have another five [children] to feed...”* (mother and female farmer).

209. At the time of evaluation, the school kitchens were not in operation yet, and the canteen workers and PNASE workers mentioned that they did not know when the food would arrive.

#### **Finding 28: Interventions focused on school gardens and other means to support access to food at the district level enabled production of 876 kg of vegetables and the production of meat from 77 pigs**

**within a pigsty. Indicating the way forward and a potential source of locally grown and accessible food supporting the school feeding.**

210. The CSP design proved to be a good potential source of locally grown food and a way to support school feeding. As concluded and recommended within the NFR report, the local production, including the school gardens, may have the potential to provide locally produced food that is easily accessible to schools. This finding also arose from the work of HELPO on the same topic.

211. As per ACR 2022 and confirmed directly by representatives of HELPO and their recordings, 876 kg of vegetables was produced from the HELPO cooperation in school gardens in Cantagalo and Agua Grande. As confirmed by the directors of the school – *“this is already a sufficient amount for us and the schools in the neighbourhood”*. In Agua Grande, the directors mentioned that *“thanks to the pigsty, children will have access to animal protein, which is good for them.”*

212. If the school has a garden, children reported that they are involved in some activities related to crop cultivation, such as seeding, weeding, and watering. Children of both genders liked school garden activities and regretted the fact that some gardens were not in operation.

213. School personnel, particularly teachers, mentioned that if the school has a garden, they do some garden activities with children, even though these are not part of the education curricula. They find these activities important as *“children see that we can produce local food”* (school director).

**Finding 29: Perception of the importance of locally produced and consumed food has started to be noted.**

214. Participants of FGDs organised at schools<sup>46</sup> showed awareness about the importance of locally produced food. They were able to mention what the benefits are and whether it is beneficial. The most emphasised aspects of what was important were that the food is healthier and more nutritious. This perception is linked to the fact that, as reported by MAFRD, there are projects supporting organic farming that do not use fertilisers and other chemicals. Various participants of FGDs repetitively stated that *“it is good, and it comes directly from our land”*. During the discussion, the participants often used the discourse showing the ownership over the local food using expressions like *“our products”*, *“coming from our land”*, and *“our tradition”*

215. Some of the participants stressed the understanding of the economic aspects. *“Such vegetable/fruit is cheaper”*. It is in line with the findings of the team in the local market at the time of the field mission. However, as reported by MAFRD, farmers, NGO representatives and WFP staff, the prices of both local production and imported food fluctuate over the year. The participants of the FGDs at schools mentioned that recently, prices of local products have been continuously increasing, and it is not clear to them how this is possible.

**Finding 30: Awareness raising related to gender issues and GBV has started to be noticed.**

216. As reported during the FGDs with school personnel and parents, some participants noticed the GBV campaign and were able to articulate its main messages. Some female participants stated that the campaign is only theoretical and pointed out that the practical aspects are missing. As one respondent mentioned, *“It is good to know about it, but there is nothing I can do”*.

217. During the FGDs and KIIs with farmers, it was confirmed that they had heard about the campaign, and they confirmed by describing the picture and a message. When interviewed about gender issues and supporting the role of women in agriculture, one of the respondents said, *“We think it is good to speak about it, and it is good to empower women.”* Another woman added: *“We think that women shall lead more and have a stronger voice. But you know, then the man comes home, and it is the same again.”*

218. In the FGDs, it was mentioned repetitively that there is the perception of a connection between drinking and violence. It is common knowledge in country that there is problem of excessive drinking of alcohol among the rural population, mainly males. This was also a very visible trend ET could see during the field visits, where males were drinking palm wine on the roads from early morning.

219. The respondent from PNASE confirmed that GBV is a visible problem and shared the perception they see there is increasing notice of the issue within schools and in communities and an increased level of

---

<sup>46</sup> 10 FGDs; always 2 in each district with the participation of director, teacher(s), school canteen worker(s) and gardener

discussions related to gender inequalities. The teachers and school personnel within FGDs, mentioned that violence is observed in children as well. Some teachers suggested “*raising awareness among us (teachers) about the issue, so we know what to do about it*”.

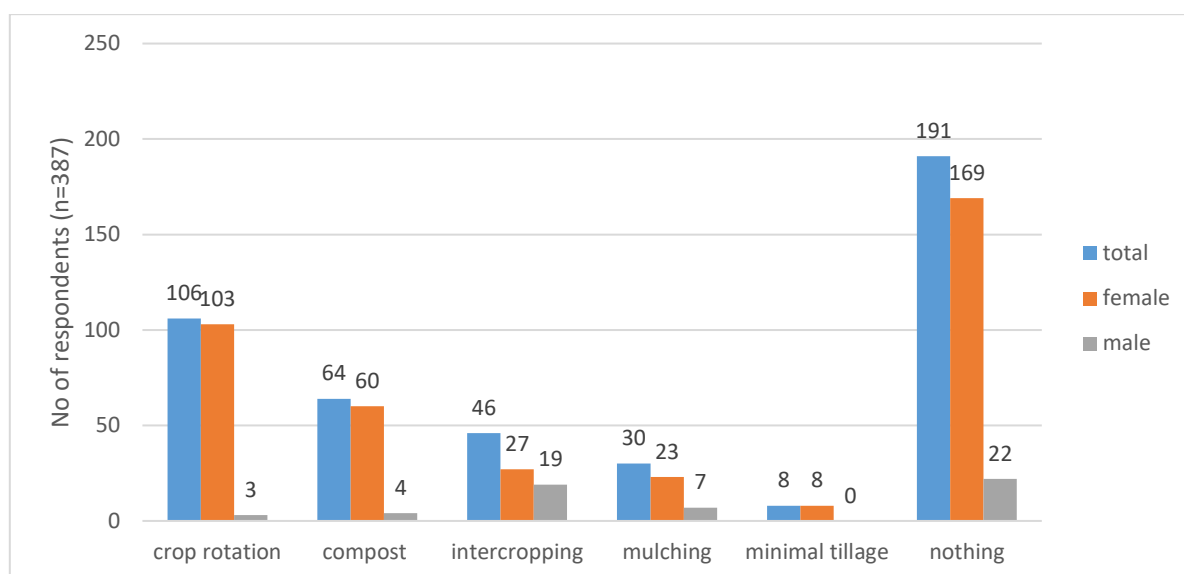
**Finding 31: Some of the trained farmers from vulnerable households increased their skills and capacities to produce local products through climate-smart practices, making their production more resilient to climate change and opening opportunities to connect them w with schools in the area and the local market.**

220. Under SO1, based on ACR 2020, training on innovative and sustainable agricultural techniques and climate change adaptation and delivery to tools for 568 vulnerable households was provided<sup>47</sup>. During the field mission, the ET received a list of 511 beneficiaries, of which 464 were female.

221. Within the conducted questionnaire survey<sup>48</sup>, almost half of the respondents (44.4%<sup>49</sup>) stated that they had not been involved in any activity funded by WFP or implemented by CADR. However, later during the personal interviews, with additional questions the ET found that some farmers confirmed participation in training with the same content and timing, but the link to WFP or CADR was not kept due to the WFP low visibility.

222. Based on the information from the ACR 2020 and as confirmed by the implementing partner, the training was focused on innovative and sustainable agricultural practices (SAP) and climate change adaptation. Some female farmers reported that they also received other training, e.g. on organic farming. Half of the respondents answered that they do not use any SAP techniques in their fields even after the training. It was repetitively reported that they do not know why they should use it, “*the training was too short, and I am not sure how should I do it*”. “*I would like to try, but I am not sure how to start with it*”. Nevertheless, some farmers reported some SAP techniques without knowing they belong to SAP. Similar finding was observed by the ET during guided walks with farmers noticing that intercropping and mulching with coconut copra and composts were applied. From the results (Figure 18), it is evident that farmers often apply more SAP techniques, mainly crop rotation and composting. Some interviewed female farmers expressed that they think that SAP techniques are good and can help to cultivate good products.

**Figure 18. Application of Sustainable Agricultural Practices techniques by surveyed farmers\***



\*multiple choice question allowing more answers to be selected

<sup>47</sup> ET received a list of 511 vulnerable households only from which 464 were women.

<sup>48</sup> ET reached out to total of 387 farmers of which 334 were women and 44 men.

<sup>49</sup> From this group disaggregated by sex - 58 were male farmers and 110 female farmers



### **EQ 5.3 Has the WFP support to government and subsequent activities empowered or developed and supported female leadership and the independence of affected populations?**

**Finding 32: Government stakeholders were equipped with tools for recording gender segregated data enabling them to design new national gender-sensitive national policies. High level discussions where the need to empower women smallholders were mentioned. However, no specific female leadership activities took place.**

223. Throughout the CSP implementation, capacities of government were built to bring up the important topic to encourage and empower women smallholders to deliver local healthy and quality products to school canteens.

224. In 2019, two high-level discussions with the participation of the National Institute for Gender Equality and Parity took place. Respondents from the government engaged in CSP implementation mentioned the importance of women's involvement and reported their knowledge of campaigns on GE promotion and GBV. Yet the transformative approach directly focused on empowering women's leadership was not mentioned.

225. In 2021, MAFRD was equipped with IT software to collect sex- and age-disaggregated data on local food production and SHF capacity needs to feed into the development of new national gender-sensitive national policies. However, at the time of evaluation, no overview of collected data existed so far, neither any updated country report providing the collected data nor the newly developed policy where this aspect could be reviewed.

226. CSP interventions targeted both men and women, addressed the vulnerable households where mostly female-headed households were supported, and GEWE issues were considered. However, no specific training on women's leadership was organised, no specific gender-transformative measures were taken and no gender sensitive baseline study was available.

## **2.6. SUSTAINABILITY**

### **EQ 6: To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained in the long-term?**

**EQ 6.1 How have the activities, built capacities and systems for the programmes to continue? Are there needs or gaps to be covered so that the government can pursue the programme without WFP support?**

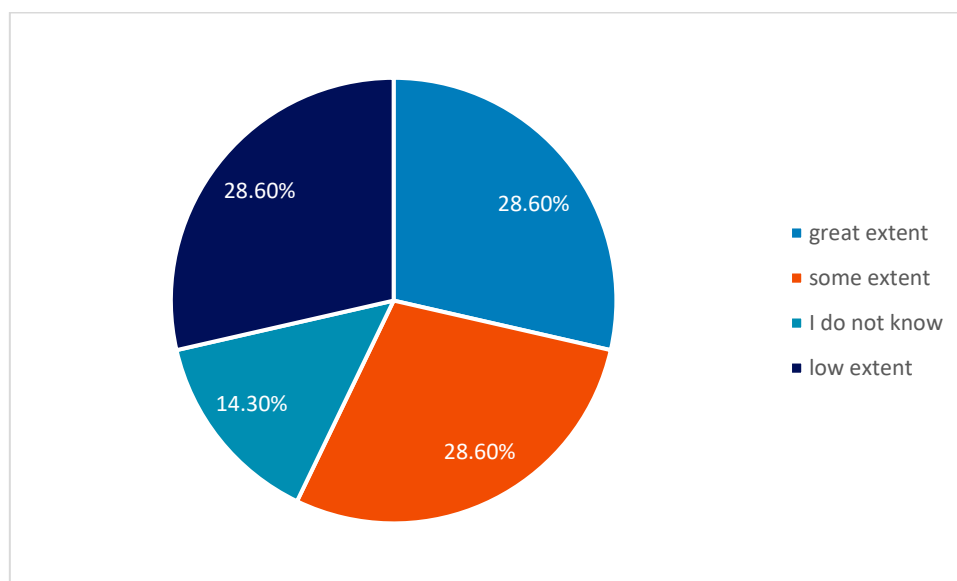
**Finding 33: Interest and the motivation of government stakeholders to continue with the programmes are in place since the built capacities support them in fulfilling the national government priorities; however, the perception of sustainability is compromised by persistent challenges with PNASE autonomy and related autonomous financing for SFP.**

227. After years of WFP's consistent work with CONSAN, PNASE, and other stakeholders, as reported in ACRs and directly with the engaged partners, the School Feeding Law was approved in August 2022. The law provides the mechanism for how the government may release funding for PNASE activities on the School Feeding Programme.

228. CSP design was built around the government's priorities, which is according to the government respondents crucial for the intervention results' resilience against possible fluctuations in the government structures as *"people change, but the national programmes and priorities stay"*.

229. Within the survey, almost 60 % of respondents from government, implementing partners, WFP and other donor organisations indicated lacking knowledge or low extent of sustainability of the activities-built capacities and systems for the programmes (Figure 19). They mainly refer to the dependent position of PNASE in terms of decision-making and financing of SFP and highlight the need of more long-term efforts creation.

**Figure 19. Perception of the sustainability extent of the activities-built capacities and systems for the programmes**



**Finding 34: Strengthened capacities of PNASE, CONSAN and MAFRD have created enabling environment for sustainable delivery of the School Feeding Programme, high-level advocacy, development work with smallholder farmers and gender sensitive policies. However, some gaps to be addressed remain.**

230. PNASE is the government organisation responsible for the organisation of the SFP and delivery of meals to schools. Enhanced technical background and infrastructure supports the delivery of the programme and eliminates some of the challenges while contributing to its sustainability. The intervention support addressed the PNASE's needs in terms of retrofitting of warehouses and decreasing so food losses, and delivery of vehicles for food distribution and reaching so remote areas which previously lacked food distribution. Assets equipment delivered are in the ownership of PNASE and are fully functional and actively used.

231. Nevertheless, PNASE capacities need to be further strengthened in terms of improving the logistics and monitoring tools to tackle the remaining obstacles. As stated by PNASE, confirmed in schools and verified by the ET, PNASE conducts school visits to monitor food items in storage, consult menus and participate in searching for solutions when some food items are not available. One consultant takes care of around 5-6 schools in the districts. In some districts, it is more challenging as the schools are in remote areas. PNASE consultants need support to cover the transportation costs as, so far, they cover it from their own salaries. As repetitively mentioned by PNASE district consultants, they perceive it as unfair and reduces their motivation to visit harder-to-reach schools which then stay without proper supervision and monitoring. Despite the monitoring tool in place, the data have been collected only on paper, no digital database has been created so far, which limits the use of results for planning.

232. A map of school locations was not found by ET and was reported as non-existent by the respondents. However, it was acknowledged this could enable better planning of food logistics and was recommended within the NFR report.

233. Programme interventions towards CONSAN resulted in its position of a respected stakeholder with the capacity to hold and organise high-level meetings with the government and participative strategic discussions on food security and nutrition of the country. CONSAN's established counselling role will likely continue in the future.

234. The provision of tools and up-skilling of MAFRD enabled the gathering of evidence-based findings and gender-segregated data to provide a background for the development of gender sensitive policies in line with the national priorities and needs while at the same time put in place a mechanism to transfer the gain in capacities to the institutional level, meaning making it resilient against the turnover of staff. Provision of

studies and assessments with evidence-built capacities for long term sustainable planning beyond the scope of CSP.

235. The respondents from MAFRD recognised the support of their capacities in working with smallholder producers to increase local food production. *"Many of the WFP's interventions include institutional capacity-building programmes, especially in the sectors responsible for providing technical assistance and rural extension services, both in terms of materials and training. These reinforcements help create the conditions for these organisations to continue providing the necessary support to producers during and after the projects."*

236. Awareness-raising activities related to the importance of the consumption of local products created opportunities for active engagement of local producers and further work with communities.

**Finding 35: The School Feeding Programme is not yet sustainable despite the importance of the programme being recognised. A crucial element to ensure sustainability and autonomous implementation of the programme by the government is to secure financing, mobilise resources, and strengthen commitment.**

237. Results of the interviews showed that all respondents agreed on the importance of school feeding. One government representative made a direct statement that *"school feeding is the future of our children"*, and another added that *"the meal keeps the children in the school"*, emphasising the positive influence of school feeding towards school attendance.

238. According to the respondents from the organisations, the enabling environment has been created in terms of legal and policy aspects. The informants highlighted the new School Feeding Law No 1/2023, which has been approved and is waiting for its enforcement. The Law enables PNASE's financial autonomy from the Ministry of Education, which the informants see as promising for a more effective performance.

239. Based on the results from the interviews, most of the informants highlighted a need for PNASE's autonomy, mainly in terms of financial and administrative autonomy, such as a clear budget allocation, access to their bank account, *"make the process of acquiring food products for school meals operational"*. Informants perceive that PNASE has no mandate, for example, resulting in not being able to purchase basic food commodities, such as rice or beans.

240. The respondent from PNASE described the evolution of the WFP's role and progress in increased governmental responsibility in the programme, along with the remaining challenge mostly related to funding. *"If WFP leaves the country, PNASE is not viable and cannot fulfil its aim. The government makes an effort, but there are so many challenges in delivering food to schools. There has been progress. WFP does not cover food costs anymore, but WFP's operational support, including contribution to cover fuel and support in transportation, is still essential to run the programme."*

241. Based on PNASE's role, meals should be made every day of the school year for 180 days. For all schools the ET visited, it is perceived as a challenge, and schools need help in achieving the expected target. All respondents from visited schools confirmed that the funds allocated from PNASE are insufficient to purchase local products such as fish, vegetables, and leaves. Most schools cover 30% to 60% of school feeding, both in terms of meal provision as well as following the PNASE menu.

242. The NFR Back to Office report (2022) concluded that *one of the main challenges to PNASE is securing the funds to feed every child every day*. In 2022, it was observed that PNASE covered only 90 days. This irregularity of coverage affects children's nutritional status as well as the reliability of governmental payments.

**Finding 36: To increase the viability and sustainability of the School Feeding Programme on the level of schools, issues of lack of equipment, non-functioning school gardens, and low engagement of parents should be tackled.**

243. As reported within FGDs at schools and confirmed by observation in the field and with the respondent from PNASE, the conditions of school kitchens are rather poor. Cookers are traditional or improved (so called ecological). All visited schools use fuelwood, which poses an additional financial burden on its operation. Cooks in some schools complain of smoky environments when they are cooking, causing them respiratory difficulties and eye irritation. Therefore, some cooks abandoned the ecological cooker and cooked outside on an open fire. Problems with smoky environments worsen on rainy days. In one of the visited schools, it was reported that *"it is so bad that we stop cooking on such days"*.

244. As stated within the FGDs and observed by the ET, meal serving at some schools also faces challenges as canteens and tableware are lacking. Meals are served in classrooms, which disrupts the educational process and is more demanding in terms of labour (cooks must bring meals to classrooms and then clean school tables) and time (it takes much longer than when meals are served in dining rooms).

245. As per PNASE records, more than half of visited schools have their school gardens with the aim of providing fresh local produce to school canteens. It was confirmed from the practice of HELPO, from school directors and ACRs, that school gardens provide a source of food that, to a certain extent, can cover the food needs of schools or even become a source of additional income. One of the directors stated that *"production we have can, in season, cover all our needs, and we can even sell the excess amounts to the community around or send it to other schools in the surroundings."*

246. At the end of September 2023, in ten schools visited, there were signs of school gardens, but only two were in operation. The rest of the gardens were not functional for various reasons, such as lack of access to water, lack of precipitation (delay of rainy season), lack of gardeners, and gardens being destroyed by domestic animals from the community or due to the stealing of the harvest when in operation.

247. As stated during the FGDs and confirmed with HELPO, the biggest perceived challenge of the school gardens in operation is the need for a fence preventing the open access to the garden, which is frequently used by other people who steal the produce. Some produce is also consumed by free-ranging domestic animals. This is demotivating for the school personnel to manage school gardens.

248. During FGDs at schools and confirmed by HELPO, it was mentioned that there were recent difficulties with the position of gardener as the person who used to work for them could not continue due to the new regulations on civil servants working for the MEHE. The civil servants must demonstrate a minimum level of education at the ninth grade, which is often not the case for gardeners. It was stated repetitively during the FGDs that people in the communities close to the schools are willing to take the job but do not comply with the new requirement on the requested educational level. As per the opinion of three directors who lost skilled personnel, they think that educational level is unimportant compared to their skills as a gardener.

249. To address the robberies from the school gardens, it was repetitively expressed during FGDs and confirmed from HELPOs' experience with similar projects and confirmed from PNASE that they believe that if the community could be more engaged and had a better understanding that the garden is for the benefit of their children, such cases could be eliminated.

250. Based on the results of FGDs at schools, parents are only active in some schools. The associations of parents are not in operation in most of the visited schools. Parents are not actively involved in the educational process, including school feeding. Only two schools have an active association of parents. In these cases, parents also contributed to production (banana, vegetable, leaves) and/or fuelwood. As mentioned by some parents during interviews, *"They [parents-farmers] feel if they are alone, nobody listens, and they feel shy to step up and engage"*. As reported by PNASE and some of the school directors, when parents' associations were active in more schools, there was more influence on the community, *"and this could make a community better understand that if they steal from our garden, they steal from their children"*.

**Finding 37: The connection between local producers and schools needs to be enforced, along with strengthening the capacities and resilience of the farmers.**

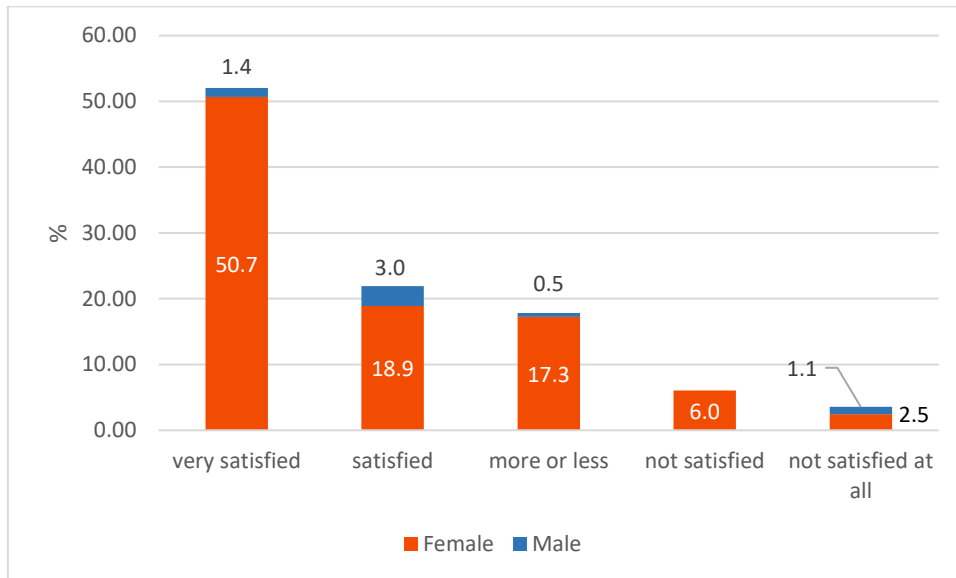
251. NFR Back to Office report (2022) concluded that the second main challenge is connecting schools with local food producers through HGFS. As reported, the challenge lies in the weak link between the high demand for food products for the school canteens and the local producers, particularly smallholder farmers and local fishermen. So far, 95% of the total food distributed is imported, with just one big importer supplying the five products (rice, beans, pasta, olive oil and salt).

252. Participants from only one FGDs of ten visited schools reported that the school has regular cooperation with local smallholder farmers. Farmers supply vegetables and leaves. Other schools reported that, in some cases, they used to cooperate with local farmers. Currently, the collaboration is paused as schools have a limited budget to buy the produce regularly. Some schools have no cooperation with local farmers as there are none in the area.

253. Farmers who were included in activities under SO1 and participated in the survey perceived their production as satisfying (70%) (Figure 20). This enables the possibility of access to food from local production.

However, within the FGDs, participants of both genders described possible challenges related to sustaining their agricultural production in future, such as lack of financial means, climate-change impact (late start of rainy season), lack of available water for watering, lack of seeding and planting material, low productivity and stealing of the produce.

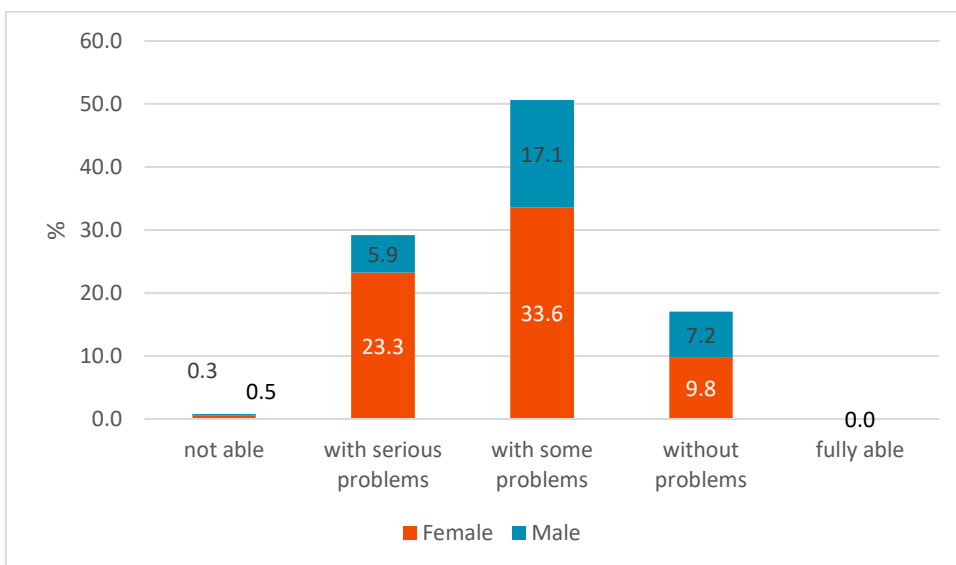
**Figure 20. Level of satisfaction as perceived by surveyed farmers (N=378)**



254. During FGDs with farmers, females repetitively stated that during COVID-19 they were challenged with high prices of food and agricultural inputs, restrictions on mobilities, their higher care burden due to sick family members and children not attending schools, and extra expenditure for hygienic kits. *“But now, the situation is better, even though the food prices are high”.*

255. The majority of the respondents reported that their households have either serious (29.2%) or some (50.6%) problems covering the food needs of their members. None of the surveyed farmers mentioned that their household is fully able to cover the food needs of their members. The figure 21 shows the results in percentage and disaggregated by sex.

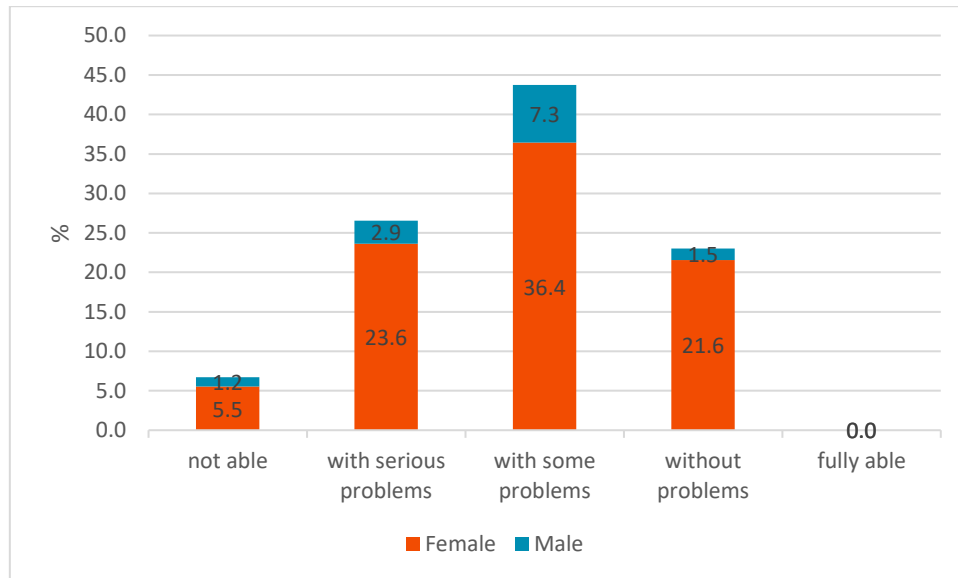
**Figure 21. Perceived ability to cover food needs of the household (N=378)**



256. Results of survey with farmers (Figure 22) indicated that more than half of them see that will encounter some (43.7%) or serious problems (21.6%) if continuing their agriculture production without further support

of external organisations (WFP/CADR/ADAPPA/HELPO<sup>50</sup>), when some farmers will not be able at all (6.7%). The respondents reported that without support, they would mostly lack seeding and planting material, agricultural tools (hoes, machetes) and financial resources. Almost one-fourth of farmers (23.0%) reported to be able to manage agricultural production without problem and any external support.

**Figure 22. Perceived ability to continue agricultural production without external support (N=378)**



<sup>50</sup> Farmers indicated the stakeholders with whom they cooperate on the current interventions. However, other organizations such as FAO may support to cover the identified needs.

# 3. Conclusions and recommendations

## 3.1. CONCLUSIONS

257. Work and presence of the WFP Country Office in STP are highly relevant and highly regarded by the stakeholders in the country. WFP has an important place within the donor community, STP's government, and the country's development.

258. The continuous shift of priorities within the CSP 2019–2024 focuses on strengthening the government's capacities to become independent regarding providing the School Feeding Programme. Support of local production, value chains, and access to markets and smallholder farmers are key elements to ensure the long-term sustainability and self-reliance of the country by addressing these issues. Persistent, longer-term cooperation with the government is needed to ensure that the newly developed policies are applied and that sufficient resources are allocated to the SFP within the upcoming CSP. Similarly, persistent efforts are needed to support PNAE in becoming more independent and working continuously with smallholder farmers. However, when stepping into new thematic areas or working on overlapping themes, such as work with smallholder farmers, more synergies with other donors and local stakeholders should be actively procured and realised. This approach could mobilise other financial resources and result in long-term contributions to fulfil national and global strategies and fortify donor cooperation within the country. WFP is moving from a traditional operational to a more transformative actor within the country. However, a complex and well-focused approach should be maintained in these efforts, and some challenging gaps in internal capacities should be overcome. At the same time, it is a great opportunity to use this position to attract new financial resources for its upcoming CSP. However, the visibility of WFP's work at the community level should be fortified to strengthen the whole narrative for new financing sources.

259. Overall, when addressing some identified gaps and building up on the current good practices and lessons learned, WFP has an irreplaceable position within the donor community in the country and is an important actor in offering impactful and long-term sustainable solutions for the country's development.

260. **Relevance.** The evaluated capacity strengthening interventions of CSP were found highly relevant, meeting the needs and priorities of the government, stakeholders and affected population.

261. CSP interventions were aligned with government priorities, the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and national development strategies, directly targeting SDGs (2 and 17). It was built on lessons learned from the previous CSP and designed in the participative process with all relevant stakeholders.

262. During implementation, government agencies were actively engaged, some national and international organisations played the role of local implementation partners, while some other donor agencies participated in joint activities. CSP monitoring was mostly undertaken by the local WFP staff with the support of implementing partners pointing out some gaps and space for improvement within the participative progress monitoring.

263. On the level of particular projects within the CSP implementation, while some synergies with other donors were established, there is a need for more emphasis on planned and anticipated synergies, and a space for improvement is already evident for the upcoming CSP design.

264. GEWE rhetoric was extensively included in the programme design. However, a comprehensive gender analysis of baseline was not undertaken, pointing to the need for a more strategic and diligent approach. There was no evidence of active engagement of the National Institute for Gender Equality and Parity within the programme's GEWE component.

265. **Effectiveness.** Effectiveness was found to be high: objectives and goals can be considered achieved if assessed through the available qualitative indicators and data.

266. Despite the absence of quantitative indicators at baseline and endline, qualitative evidence indicated that the CSP contributed to achieving national priorities. For example, by supporting the development and

approval of the new School Feeding Law, empowering the role of CONSAN and PNASE, and building their capacities as stakeholders with influencing power on the achievement of government goals and priorities.

267. The influence of the COVID-19 period on project implementation effectiveness was rather positive, providing the incentives to seek alternative approaches for CSP implementation. The pandemic period proved the WFP's well-established relations with the stakeholders and the readiness of the WFP to mobilise resources for emergency support. The need to prepare future "emergency" pillow and emergency readiness mechanisms (contingency plans) for future crises and shocks in the country was identified.

268. Despite there was no gender transformative strategy in place, the general approach to target all with a "no discrimination approach" was maintained. Within the SFP, PNASE/ WFP targeted children present at schools – however, it meant only those whose parents let them attend the school. For farmer-related activities, a strong emphasis on supporting women producers was kept. Yet, as there were no initial baseline quantified indicators, the comparison with initial estimates is not available. For the future CSP, a well-defined gender strategy should be designed, including quantifiable indicators so its performance and effectiveness can be assessed.

269. **Efficiency.** Efficiency was adequate to the current WFP CO capacities. Regarding CSP management and organisation, implementation efficiency corresponded to and often exceeded the current WFP CO capacities. The interventions were executed successfully, often stemming from previous long-lasting work and the presence of WFP in the country, taking advantage of the well-established relations and cooperative mechanisms with government stakeholders and WFP CSP implementors. These factors sometimes eased the WFP staff capacities but pose a risk in the form of staff turnover at both WFP and government institutions.

270. The WFP CO faced multiple shortages in staff capacities, which were covered by hiring ad hoc external experts or led to slight delays within projects as noted by partners. Some observed bottlenecks, such as staff overloads, emerged when additional funding sources were identified and jointly funded projects were launched. At the same time, it seemed that more could be achieved if more resources were available. Such a state is not sustainable in the long term, calling for an alignment between expected achievements and CO capacities in the upcoming CSP. On the other hand, there is space for improvement in terms of setting up an internal data management system and unified progress monitoring protocols which could ease the work and release some capacities.

271. The government contributions to the interventions were non-monetary as the government representatives were one of the major targeted stakeholders. Their role laid in strengthening capacities to become self-reliant and securing long-term funding for the SFP and other CSP-related activities in line with the national strategies. Targeted institutions and departments actively participated in CSP activities, which was a main assumption and key factor for CSP implementation. Since the CSP was aligned with the goals and expected achievements of the national strategy, the influence of a certain turnover within the political roles was minor or none. A space for improvement was observed in progress monitoring, as a unified approach to collected information and reporting could ease the tracking process for WFP and the government.

272. **Coherence.** The evaluated capacity strengthening interventions of CSP were coherent with the national programmes and other donors/activities, although some overlaps were encountered, and more synergies could have been created. There is a space for future improvement in this regard and a need for better coordination within the donor community in favour of the fulfilment of national programmes, policies and priorities.

273. Capacity strengthening activities related to SFP were designed to support PNASE and other government institutions. The CSP design included the narrative of ambition and focus on developing synergies with other donors in the country. While some joint projects were implemented, overlaps were also recorded when, for example, both FAO and WFP were working with smallholder farmers, but activities needed to be coordinated. The current CSP contributes to SDG 2 and 17, the focus of other UN organisations and donors in the country.

274. During the CSP implementation period, donor coordination meetings were in place and accessible, yet they have to fully harness their potential. Despite the donors' will for joint coordination of synergic activities, the limited capacities of WFP CO restricted the preparation and actual coordination of more joint programmes. The most significant potential for cooperation among UN institutions is with FAO and IFAD due to their close sectoral focus. UNICEF may be another potential partner in the SFP and schools related activities. Locally active NGOs were strong implementing partners easing on the WFP capacities in the field and are likely to be involved in future CSP implementations.



275. **Impact.** The programme significantly contributed to enhance capacities beyond its original scope for the capacity building of government stakeholders. However, intended indirect impacts on the community level still require further efforts.

276. Impact on ministries and government stakeholders emerged clearly through policy adjustments. Due to extensive advocacy and supportive efforts, the New School Feeding Law No. 1/2023 was jointly developed and approved<sup>51</sup>, which is one of the most significant achievements of the evaluated CSP. The law commits a budget to the SFP, but its application in practice has been still limited so far.

277. WFP's support to government capacities proved to be impactful in changing beneficiaries' lives and livelihoods, although there is space for improvement, and some gaps should be covered in the future. Thanks to the South-to-South cooperation, strengthening capacities in advocating for SFP and delivered equipment of CONSAN, strengthening capacities and infrastructure of PNASE and introduction of IT systems, stakeholders received essential support to improve the implementation of their programmes. However, some gaps and challenges remain. PNASE is not autonomous and has no financial resources, which directly impacts SFP implementation. Thus, sufficient and established financial commitment from the government is needed to ensure regular food deliveries, cover remote schools, and mitigate other technical and logistical issues.

278. Access of schools to home gardens is lacking or can be improved. Further work and coordination with the community-level farmers should be strengthened with agricultural services (e.g., government extension centres) and FAO. Awareness-raising activities proved to have an impact, and their continuation is desirable to accompany CSP interventions: such activities ensure an increased acceptance of the programme by communities and create the will to actively engage within the implementation (e.g. to reestablish parents association, promoting participation of farmers to local supply to schools, etc.).

279. The impact on women's leadership empowerment and independence was rather low, with no evidence of gender-responsive activities observed. Since 2020, more gender-focused activities have occurred, and gender-segregated data were gathered and reported throughout the CSP implementation. Nonetheless, there is space for improvement to empower women leadership within communities, especially among women farmers and among mothers of schoolchildren within parents' associations.

280. **Sustainability.** The sustainability of the evaluated intervention was found to be rather high in terms of built capacities and institutionalisation, with some limitations related to financial sustainability.

281. Since the CSP was aligned with the government priorities, stakeholders have their own interests and motivation to continue with the activities. Yet, the built capacities within the CSP supported the progress in achievements and provided the stakeholders with incentives and enhanced background supporting the drive for achieving given strategies.

282. To some extent, the capacities built at the government level have been institutionalised: CONSAN is recognised and proved to have a strong voice while simultaneously providing space for constructive dialogues among governmental bodies, the private sector and CSOs. With a rehabilitated meeting room and adequate IT equipment, CONSAN was able to conduct regular meetings and strategic discussions on food security and nutrition of the country. The capacities of PNASE have been strengthened in terms of human resources, technical assets and processes. In particular, introducing a digitalised school feeding monitoring system has resulted in increased capacities for implementing the SFP. The new School Feeding Law framed the financial and technical sustainability of PNASE, a crucial step for its autonomisation process that shall ensure that more financing will be available. Thanks to CADR's strengthened human resource capacities, MAFRD empowered its operational programmes and collaboration with partners in rural development activities. In particular, the awareness raising activities related to the importance of consumption of local products created opportunities for active engagement of local producers and further work with communities.

283. In the future, some needs and gaps need to be covered to support the government in pursuing the programme without WFP support. Further work enforcing the School Feeding Law is required to secure the financial resources that the Law allocates to the SFP. At the same time, PNASE should become autonomous and receive its own allocated budget. Along with that, the need to support the commitment of the

---

<sup>51</sup> The New School Feeding Law was only approved in January 2023. However, this was the culmination of intense and long-lasting efforts conducted within the evaluated period.

government to prioritise the School Feeding Programme and to prepare a long-term strategic plan on how to decrease reliance on external funds continues.

284. An efficient data management system for monitoring school feeding should be put in place and monitored to enable targeted strategic planning.

285. The absence of intended strategic approach for establishing the school gardens and/or community gardens was found to be limiting factor for the long-term sustainability that could have been mitigated if an exit strategy would be designed during the strategic planning with a view to also ensure with local producers' engagement in food supply to schools while empowering female producers.

286. Gender-responsive activities directly targeting women leaders were lacking while it was confirmed that such activities could also support increased interest on the side of beneficiaries to actively participate and support at the community level (on the side of indirectly targeted beneficiaries).

## **3.2. LESSONS**

287. Presented lessons are composed solely from the additional findings which did not lead to concrete conclusions and have potential for wider application in the future. Due to importance of GEWE within similar interventions, lessons which were not emphasized within the conclusions are listed below. Additional particular GEWE measures and actions stemming out of validated recommendations are presented in Annex 11 in the form of actionable steps.

### **Agricultural production and establishment of local market**

288. Farmers have recognized and acknowledged the impact of climate change on their production and the need to adapt and introduce climate smart agricultural practices. The trainings provided within CSP motivated some of the farmers to put the new knowledge in practice, while some farmers were already introducing some of the practices without knowing they are sustainable and supporting the resilience against climate change. The long-term strategical approach of including such practices on the country level may increase its climate resilience, decrease the occurrence of natural disasters and take advantage of the momentum when local market shall be created and its products may be based on the responsibly produced products.

289. The evaluation confirmed the space and readiness for introduction of organic production by both farmers themselves and consumers. In this regard the impact of awareness raising campaigns proved it to be a possibly suitable approach when the campaigns may inform consumers and raise their demand for such a production, while at the same time increased demand of these products may positively motivate farmers and potentially bring long-term revenues.

290. Farmers expressed their understanding of the importance of local production and consumption and that are interested in active engagement within the local value chain, where schools can also play a key consumer role if their financial resources are available. The expressed motivation, understanding and link across the value chain – from farmer directly to schools – may be a great opportunity to build upon in order to reach the complex and long-term sustainable situation. This approach may benefit both farmers and consumers including the children in schools.

291. Diversification of local production should be promoted to increase climate-change resilience and ensure a stable food supply to schools/SFP and local markets, while assuring food security of smallholder producers.

292. Established local value chains could be more resistant to food price fluctuation if the strategy of reduction of dependency on imported food were promoted and supported also by government measures. Monitoring of production in each of the respective districts should be conducted to provide evidence for suitable selection of crops and the appropriate sustainable practices. This approach may also contribute to evidence-based strategic planning and provide with incentives for production and by that also for local markets (e.g. P4P).

293. Farmers lack basic evidence systems about their inputs and production, which prevents them from elaborating basic business plans and entering the local markets. Such a systems might be more effectively introduced and applied within the cooperatives which may also support the easier access on local markets.

294. Farmers expressed certain satisfaction with their production and interest in direct and regular supply to school/SFP while at the same time emphasized their vulnerabilities and challenges they face such as: lacking agricultural inputs and financial resources. These weaknesses could be relatively easily tackled within collective actions by establishing farmers' groups and agricultural cooperatives of both types - production and marketing. Collective cooperative actions can also contribute to GEWE and women's leadership with further outreach to the overall community empowerment related the democratic principles. Building up on the grassroots experience of implementing partners and government structures (extension services) can facilitate the process of collective actions establishment and its functionality.

#### **GEWE**

295. Lacking strategy for communication and monitoring of GEWE resulted in the weak progress of gender equality CSP interventions. This was an unanticipated effect of the intervention. Such effect may be easily mitigated by the introduction and diligent implementation of GEWE strategy and provide with complex all-inclusive interventions on community level.

296. Designing GEWE quantitative and qualitative SMART indicators contributes to monitoring progress in GEWE, while providing evidence for appropriate planning and gender-responsive policy.

297. GEWE's responsive strategic design, implementation tools and experienced staff can significantly contribute to achieve the desired targets.

298. Strategic and long-term GBV campaigns can contribute to desired societal changes. Low visibility and short-term stand-alone actions, however, limit their impact and outreach; on the contrary, visible long-term interventions may also potentially attract some donors.

### **3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

299. The following table presents the main recommendations and related sub-recommendations for strategic, operational and result driven actions to be put in place by STP CO managerial staff as a response on the evaluation findings, conclusions and lessons learned. The Detailed Actionable Steps for Recommendations are presented in Annex 11 xx.

300. The presented recommendations were consulted with stakeholders to ensure that all recommendations are useful, realistic and feasible and are taking into consideration the contextual and organizational constraints.

301. Alignment of validated recommendations with the findings and conclusions of the evaluation process is presented in Annex 13.

**Table 10. Recommendations**

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when
<b>1</b>	<b>Maintain the current strong position of WFP within the country and further reposition its role within the upcoming CSP period from operational to transformative development actor</b>	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
1.1	Maintain the role as the main stakeholder for delivering emergency support in case of natural and/or other disasters/emergencies.	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office		<i>Medium</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
1.2	Focus and work on creating synergies and active development of joint projects with other relevant donors and stakeholders in country, to enhance the impact of the new CSP, avoid overlaps and jointly achieve long-term national objectives and contribute to fulfilment of global strategies.	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office	Regional Office, UN RCO in STP, other UN institution in STP	<i>High</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
1.3	Build upon the previous work with some of the stakeholders and/or coordination mechanisms in place	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office	UN RCO, CONSAN, government stakeholders	<i>Medium</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
1.4	Take advantage of WFP unique role and achievements in country in order to mobilise financial resources from both conventional and unconventional sources of financing for both conventional emergency response and long-term transformative activities.	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
<b>2</b>	<b>Review, adjust and strengthen country office internal capacities with perspective/in relation to more efficient implementation of CSP implementation management</b>	<i>Operational</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	April 2024
2.1	Check and revise the alignment of the expected outcomes and achievements of new CSP to the number of staff, their skills and qualifications; and address the discovered needs and emerged bottlenecks	<i>Operational</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	April 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when
2.2	Strengthen resilience against data loss and fluctuation of staff by review, adjustment and introduction of unified internal data management system. Every 3 months check that the most updated documents/information are recorded in the system, if not ensure it is inserted/recorded.	<i>Operational</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	July 2024
2.3	Develop and/or review the tools for internal management system to make it more efficient and interconnected. Review developed reporting protocols for implementing partners and align/adjust them to the WFP CSP reporting needs. Consider whether some supportive data management software or digital data collection tool may facilitate processes.	<i>Operational</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	July 2024
2.4	Ensure that lists of beneficiaries addressed under particular emergencies are recorded and continuously added to the data management system, so the data can be compared over the time and their capacity to adapt can be assessed.	<i>Operational</i>	Country Office		<i>Medium</i>	July 2025
2.5	Review and compare monitoring indicators of new CSP against protocols in place, align if needed. Ensure that the in-house staff capacities for monitoring and, system of record keeping, tracking and reporting are corresponding with the needs and requirements for monitoring data collection.	<i>Operational</i>	Country Office		<i>Medium</i>	April 2024
<b>3</b>	<b>Ensure and periodically check the use and adoption of unified monitoring and implementation processes and intended strategic implementation of crosscutting issues and GEWE throughout whole CSP</b>	<i>Result driven</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
3.1	Review initially designed milestones for achievements of the new CSP built upon both quantitative and qualitative indicators, adjust based on the findings from the current evaluation, collected endline data and newly developed baseiine and vulnerability analysis. Adjust accordingly and periodically revisit.	<i>Result driven</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	April 2024; on annual basis throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when
3.2	Collect and record the endline data of previous CSP or baseline data for new CSP to ease the measurement of change and progress monitoring of current CSP.	<i>Result driven</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	January 2024
3.3	Develop the baseline vulnerability analysis, with clear strategy on gender transformative actions and particular activities/interventions.	<i>Result driven</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	May 2024
3.4	Develop innovative approaches on how to strengthen WFP's visibility during their work in field.	<i>Result driven</i>	Country Office		<i>Medium</i>	April 2024
<b>4</b>	<b>Ensure that following topics and approaches are actively adopted within the implementation of new CSP and when not directly targeted create intended opportunities and synergies for including and building upon them.</b>	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
4.1	Keep the new CSP strategy direction focused and complex. When thinking of overlapping and additional topics – rather look for synergies with other donors and aim for cooperative joint funded and joint implemented projects than stepping into the new thematic areas.	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office	Regional Office, UN RCO in STP, other UN institution in STP	<i>High</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
4.2	Overall, ensure the end-to-end activities addressing the stakeholders from all levels in order to reach the highest effectiveness and impact of the CSP.	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
4.3	Continue the cooperation with government and smallholder farmers to support their access on market and supply to schools. Emphasise the synergies with FAO, IFAD and take advantage of the agriculture extension workers to make these activities sustainable in long term and with potential to long-term impact.	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office	FAO STP, IFAD STP	<i>High</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028
4.4.	Support the government, PNASE and other relevant stakeholders with decisive/influence power to eliminate the systematic obstacles standing in the introduction and following up of good practices.	<i>Strategic</i>	Country Office		<i>High</i>	Throughout whole upcoming CSP implementation period 2024 - 2028

**WFP Sao Tome & Principe Country Office**  
**<https://www.wfp.org/countries/sao-tome-and-principe>**

**World Food Programme**

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70

00148 Rome, Italy

T +39 06 65131 **wfp.org**