



THE SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE NATIONAL COMMITMENTS ON SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME

How Partners plan to support government commitments

INTRODUCTION

Sao Tome and Principe national commitments to the School Meals Coalition were signed in February 2024. The submission of the commitments followed the Country's joining the Coalition in November 2021 and the President's acknowledgment of the importance of the school feeding program in improving the learning, nutrition, and health status of Santomeans children and to the national economy through the transformation of food systems.

In Sao Tome and Principe, partners, both local and international, are committed to continuing their support to the government to achieve the goals set

forth in its national commitments. In this regard, partners committed to aligning their interventions in a coordinated manner to respond to the mission and objectives of the National School Feeding and Health Programme (Programa Nacional de Alimentação e Saúde Escolar - PNASE) and for the successful implementation of the school feeding law.

This paper outlines the support and contributions that WFP and various partners—International Financial Institutions, donors, United Nations agencies, non-government organizations, the private sector, etc.—can offer to assist the government in carrying out its commitments.

May 2024

A. CURRENT STATE OF SCHOOL FEEDING IN THE SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

1. Policy framework

The school feeding program in Sao Tome and Principe is well- integrated into the national policy landscape. It is governed by a School Feeding law revised in 2021 and promulgated in 2023. In addition, the program has a dedicated body within the Ministry of Education, the National School Feeding and Health Programme (PNASE), which is part of the Ministry structure and runs with the state budget. The country has other platforms such as the Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSAN) chaired by the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Agriculture as deputy chair where school feeding matters are discussed and policy guidance provided.

2. Financing framework

The financing of universal school feeding is solely supported by the government since 2016 after the full transition and handover from WFP support to the Government. With the Government relying mainly on external aid, limited generated revenues, and competing priorities, donors and partners intervene from time to time with in-kind food products support. The government has established a budget line under the Ministry of Education that is dedicated to school feeding activities through PNASE, and a bank account has been recently reactivated to ensure that the school feeding budget is well managed and separated from other education activities to increase accountability.

In addition, the new SF has a resource generation provision whereby some imported commodities such as alcohol and Tabac are taxed at 2.5% to be dedicated to school feeding activities and about USD 2 from each bag of cement imported will fund school feeding activities.

3. Institutional framework/coordination commitments

The Sao Tome and Principe has strong institutional framework that allows the country to cover all (universal) the children from preprimary and primary school. In 2012, the Country established the National School Feeding and Health Programme (Programa Nacional de Alimentação e Saúde Escolar - PNASE) and took the full ownership for the management and implementation of the school feeding programme in 2016. At the district level, the in charge of education ensures smooth implementation of the program, and there are regular coordination meetings with all the players in the education and school feeding program. General challenges remain as it is in many other areas with inadequate staff skills, resources, and competencies at various levels, which impact the full implementation of the program. WFP's new country strategic plan aims at strengthening national capacities

to implement a quality program from the policy level to implementation through training of the staff, development of implementation materials such as SF manual, guidelines, and other infrastructure rehabilitation, among others.

4. Program design and coverage

The school feeding program in Sao Tome and Principe is universal, covering ALL the children in preprimary and primary schools (3-14 years). The Government plans to expand the reach in to the lower secondary school (16years) by 2027. The implementation approach includes diverse food modalities and baskets, with a focus on the promotion of locally organic food products. As the programme is embedded in the national budget, cooks are part of the ministry's workforce, making the programme a reliable job opportunity and the government transfers funds to schools for the procurement of fresh food such as vegetables, fruits and fish. Procurement in bulk of non perishable products is organized by PNASE and dispatched to schools.

5. Evidence and data generation

Data and evidence generation is still a challenge in Sao Tome and Principe. With WFP support, a cost benefit analysis was conducted in 2020 and two SABER-SF exercises conducted in 2016 and 2021 respectively. The monitoring of the programme is still weak, collecting limited information and using traditional, analog or paper based data collection tools. In 2022, WFP started to connect schools to a digital platform that will allow PNASE to track food movements and currently contributes to the inclusion and integration of school feeding indicators into the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MECC) Management Information System (MIS) under development.

6. Advocacy and partnerships

Sao Tome and Principe is keen to increase partnerships with various actors in the school Meals programmes within the Community of Lusophones Countries (CPLP) and across the globe through South South Triangular Cooperation and other avenues. Advocacy for school feeding in Sao Tome and Principe focuses on collaboration between government, international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector. Key partners include international and national NGOs such HELPO and ADAPPA, and the Portuguese Cooperation.

Other key partnerships in the country include partner states such as Brazil and Portugal and UN agencies such as IFAD and FAO.

The National Assembly plays a key role in advocacy through organizations of regular campaigns on the importance of the School Feeding program on education, agriculture, and the economy of the country and promotion of the consumption of locally available products to reduce importation.

B. SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE NATIONAL COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME

- ▶ Finalization of the revision of the School Feeding Manual by integrating other key components of the programme such as the commodity management, governance, among others.
- ▶ Conduct a programme review to inform the impact and lessons learnt after the Government full ownership.
- ▶ Implementation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, the School Feeding Law, to

generate funding for the Programme through designated taxation.

- ▶ Expand school feeding coverage to secondary students by 2030 (up to 16 years old)
- ▶ Promote and serve as an inspirational model to other countries, to learn from STP experiences and welcome other governments to conduct study visits within the framework of South-South cooperation.
- ▶ Reduce the country's dependence on food imports and increase local production and consumption through diversification.

C. HOW PARTNERS PLAN TO SUPPORT THE SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE NATIONAL COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME

Commitments pillars	Commitments	Action to be taken by partners to support the commitments	Timeline
1. Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commitment 1: Expand school feeding coverage to lower secondary students by 2030 (9th class) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Action 1: WFP will assist the Government in mobilizing resources for this expansion. ▶ Action 2: WFP will assist the Government in training new recruits as cooks and establishing school structures for food management. 	December 2026.
2. Financing Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commitment 1: Implementation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, of the School Feeding Law, to generate funding for the Programme through designated taxation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Action 1: WFP will facilitate discussions with the Ministry of Finance and the Assembly on how to implement the new SF law. ▶ Action 2: WFP will support the opening of a bank account dedicated for SF resources and will provide startup funding to the account. 	December 2026
3. Institutional framework/ coordination Commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commitment 1: Reduce the country's dependence on food imports and increase local production and consumption through diversification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Action 1: WFP will support the Government in organizing regular campaigns on the consumption of locally produced food. ▶ Action 2: WFP will support the review of the SF manual where menus focusing on locally produced food will be prioritized. 	2024 – 2030
4. Program design and coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commitment 1: Finalization of the revision of the School Feeding Manual by integrating other key components of the programme such as the commodity management, governance, among others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Action 1: WFP will recruit an international consultant who will support the Government in reviewing and updating the manual. ▶ Action 2: WFP will support the Government in mobilizing resources for the printing and dissemination of the revised <p>IFAD through its local Project called COMPRAN (Commercialization, agricultural productivity and nutrition project) committed to support the printing and the dissemination of the revised manual.</p>	June 2024

Commitments pillars	Commitments	Action to be taken by partners to support the commitments	Timeline
<p>5. Evidence and data generation</p>	<p>► Commitment 1: Conduct a programme review to inform the impact and lessons learnt after the Government full ownership</p>	<p>► Action 1: WFP will help the government in mobilizing resources to cover the costs of the assessment.</p> <p>The WFP Centre of Excellence may support in identifying the consultant who will perform the assessment.</p>	<p>December 2024</p>
<p>6. Advocacy and partnerships</p>	<p>► Commitment 2: Promote and serve as an inspirational model to other countries, to learn from STP experiences and welcome other governments to conduct study visits within the framework of South-South cooperation</p>	<p>► Action 1: WFP will facilitate engagements and planning with other identified countries in the region and beyond.</p> <p>Various partners will be involved including donor governments, WFP CoE, NGOs, and others.</p> <p>► Action 2: WFP will assist the Government in mobilizing required resources for the exchange visits.</p>	<p>2024 – 2030</p>