



WFP EVALUATION

Evaluation of Asset Creation and Livelihood Activities in Sierra Leone from January 2020-December 2023

Decentralized Evaluation Report

Final

Sierra Leone Country Office



World Food Programme

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Evaluation features	1
1.2 Context	2
1.3 Subject being evaluated	7
1.4 Evaluation methodology, limitations and ethical considerations	19
2 EVALUATION FINDINGS	24
2.1 EQ1: To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and the priorities of the government, targeted population and stakeholders? (Relevance)	24
2.2 EQ2: To what extent has the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and outcomes? (Effectiveness)	30
2.3 EQ3: To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated (Efficiency)	40
2.4 EQ4: To what extent is the intervention compatible with other interventions in the country, sector or institutions (Coherence)	44
2.5 EQ5: To what extent has the intervention generated significant positive or negative effects, intended or unintended at a high level? (Impact)	46
2.6 EQ6: To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term? (Sustainability)	49
3 CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	52
3.1 Conclusions.....	52
3.2 Lessons	55
3.3 Recommendations.....	56
4 ANNEXES	59
Annex 1. Summary Terms of Reference.....	59
Annex 2. Primary components of ACL interventions	62

Annex 3. Overview of ACL intervention coverage.....	65
ANNEX 4. Strategic Outcome Theory of Change	67
Annex 5. Methodology.....	69
Annex 6. Stakeholder mapping.....	77
Annex 7. Evaluation Matrix	84
Annex 8. Design responsiveness to recommendations.....	96
Annex 9. Data collection Tools	99
Annex 10. Fieldwork Agenda	112
Annex 11. ANNEX 11. Findings Conclusions Recommendations Mapping.....	114
Annex 12. List of People Interviewed	117
Annex 13. Bibliography.....	119
Annex 14. Detailed timeline	121
Acronyms	123

List of figures

Figure 1 Food Security Classification Trend.....	3
Figure 2 Sierra Leone progress towards SDG achievement	6
Figure 3 Map of ACL interventions	9
Figure 4 SO4 resource situation.....	10
Figure 5 Percentage of achievement of ACL participant targets.....	12
Figure 6 Transfers achieved versus planned (% achieved)	12
Figure 7 Smallholder sales outcome achievements (% Achieved)	14
Figure 8 FES outcome measurements.....	15
Figure 9 FCS outcome measurements among ACL participant households	16
Figure 10 Average CSI outcome measurements among ACL participant households	16
Figure 11 Proportion of respondents reporting benefits from an enhanced livelihood asset base among ACL participants.....	17
Figure 12 Participant knowledge of ACL interventions	18
Figure 13 Gender of household members involved in making decisions about the use of food/cash/vouchers.....	19
Figure 14 SO4 Actual expenditure as percentage of implementation plan 2020-2023	41
Figure 15 Household Decision-making over resources among FFA transfer recipients	48

Figure 16 Impact of training on household's ability to manage and maintain assets.....	49
Figure 17 Perception of climate resilience of assets developed	51

List of tables

Table 1 UNSDCF priority areas.....	7
Table 2 GEWE and protection in ACL interventions.....	11
Table 3 SO4 planned versus achieved outputs	13
Table 4 Protection Indicators	18
Table 5 Evaluation Questions.....	19
Table 6 Summary of data collection tools and purpose	21
Table 7 Strategic relevance of ACL interventions addressing factors contributing to food insecurity	25
Table 8 Design considerations for equality, inclusion, and empowerment	26
Table 9 Incorporation of lessons learned	29
Table 10 Inland Valley Swamp Sites (2017-2023).....	31
Table 11 Comparison of ACL beneficiary and national food security outcome measurements	37
Table 12 Stakeholder perceptions on timeliness of WFP support.....	41
Table 13 Summary of evaluability mitigation measures.....	69
Table 14 Revised evaluation questions	70
Table 15 List of project districts with number of targeted communities and ACL interventions	73

Executive Summary

1. This evaluation report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the decentralized activity evaluation of World Food Programme's (WFP's) Asset creation and livelihoods (ACL) activities in Sierra Leone. It was commissioned and managed by WFP's Sierra Leone Country Office (SLCO).

EVALUATION FEATURES

2. The evaluation covered ACL interventions under Strategic Outcome (SO) 4 in Sierra Leone from January 2020 to December 2023. The evaluation is timely for guiding potential revisions of the current implementation of ACL interventions and informing the development of the new Country Strategic Plan (CSP 2026-2030).

3. While the evaluation had the dual objective of accountability and learning, it focused more on learning. It serves as an advocacy tool to highlight WFP's role in the integrated resilience framework and Sustainable Development Goals. Human rights and gender equality were mainstreamed in the evaluation objectives. The main evaluation user is WFP SLCO. The Sierra Leone Government and relevant ministries, Non-Governmental Organisations, WFP regional bureaux, headquarters, and the Office of Evaluation, as well as participants, may also use the results for decision-making.

CONTEXT

4. Sierra Leone, a low-income, food-deficit country with 7 million people, was on track to achieve middle income status by 2030. However, setbacks like the Ebola epidemic and COVID-19 have stalled progress. The country's vulnerability to climate change and dependence on natural resources have exposed the population to repeated shocks. High gender inequality is rooted in cultural and social norms, with discriminatory laws, including statutory and customary ones, reinforcing these inequalities.

5. Poverty remains a significant issue, particularly in rural areas, with food insecurity affecting 80 percent of the population and a stunting prevalence of 31.3 percent.¹ Food insecurity is primarily due to poor agricultural practices, underutilization of agro-chemicals, and labour-intensive methods. Agriculture, centred on subsistence farming, plays a crucial role in Sierra Leone's economy, with rice being a primary crop.

SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

6. The subject of this evaluation was ACL interventions implemented under SO4 of the CSP 2020-2024. The interventions aim to build self-reliance and resilience of vulnerable smallholder farmers (SHF) and communities. The interventions are primarily channelled through Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) with asset development and associated in-kind or cash payments through Food-Assistance-for-Assets (FFA). Nutrition is integrated into the approach. Capacity strengthening is central, with trainings targeting Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) staff and SHFs. Gender and youth empowerment are promoted through sensitization activities. The activities are implemented in seven districts, reaching at least 129 communities between 2020-2023 with an initial budget of 7.3 million USD.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

7. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data sources allowing for systematic triangulation of evidence. Data collection and analysis were participatory and gender responsive. A theory-based approach was applied to validate the theory of change (ToC).

8. The evaluation was guided by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact, and sustainability – no criteria was prioritised. The main challenge was the suitability of available data from WFP combined with partial coverage of data collection within districts targeted for ACL interventions. The ET sought to overcome this by assessing differential outcomes in qualitative data collection and cross-checking with secondary data sources.

¹ WFP. 2023. Food Security Monitoring System Report.

FINDINGS

Relevance

9. **Finding 1:** The design of the ACL interventions is highly relevant to the needs of the population, a large proportion of whom rely on agriculture. The ACL interventions have been designed based on previous evaluation, review and assessment recommendations and help address several identified needs of the population including poor agricultural practice, limited access to nutritious foods, food insecurity and low household income. Geographic targeting and community selection are appropriately based on food security levels and suitability of interventions. The design is generally inclusive and efforts to promote diversity have been successful. Most of FBO members are women, and they are the main users of the created assets. However, cultural norms and practices, and the demanding nature of asset building and rehabilitation are still sometimes a barrier to participation, for women and persons with disabilities. Environment effects should be more fully considered.

Effectiveness

10. **Finding 2:** FFA, both in-kind and cash-based transfers, has been effective in initially incentivizing smallholder farmers' participation in labour-intensive tasks and encouraging financial inclusion through savings and supplementary access to finance. Transfer delays caused by late completion of agreed work outputs by farmers have led to disruptions in work cohesion, fluctuations in FBO membership, and potential dropouts.

11. **Finding 3:** The WFP model of IVS development has been the project's most significant achievement. It stands out for its strong emphasis on community empowerment, which facilitates sustainable asset maintenance and offers the potential for multiple crops per year at sites that can maintain surface water year-round. WFP took steps to adapt IVS agricultural practices to local soil conditions, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of farming practices. These efforts to promote environmental sustainability are commendable.

12. Inability to consistently maintain perennial swamps² has limited the effectiveness of IVS development. Challenges include insufficient maintenance of irrigation infrastructure by FBOs, leading to issues like waterlogging, drying up of IVS sites, and uneven water distribution. WFP has taken steps to enhance the effectiveness of IVS development. However, a more explicit environmental screening and management plan is yet to be implemented to address challenges comprehensively.

13. **Finding 4:** The ACL intervention training initiatives, particularly the Technical Package for Rice Production (TPRP), have been well received, described as comprehensive and effective in enhancing the technical expertise of extension services and smallholder farmers. Participants reported substantial gains in knowledge and skills across various agricultural areas, leading to improvements in farming practices and asset maintenance. Not all targeted groups received training as intended, there are gaps in documenting and reporting training outcomes, and farmers' ability to apply new skills was hampered by delays in input provisions.

14. **Finding 5:** Integration of a nutrition-sensitive approach to ACL interventions has led to diversification of crops, increased numbers of smallholder farmers engaged in green leafy vegetable production and increased yields. The involvement of Mother Support Groups in promoting complementary foods and the cultivation of crops like orange fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) demonstrates tangible progress towards improved nutrition outcomes at the community level and strengthened women's empowerment. Post-harvest loss continued to be a challenge, requiring increased support to improve storage and preservation practices. Other challenges are mainly related to coverage and supply chain, including insufficient funding to increase coverage, and difficulties in sourcing raw materials.

15. **Finding 6:** Anecdotal feedback from FBOs and MAFS suggests that the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) are highly successful in improving savings habits and providing members access to finance. VSLAs have also facilitated an important shift towards a business mindset among SHFs, increasing engagement in income-generating activities and providing tangible contributions to community

² Perennial swamps retain surface water throughout the year, while seasonal swamps hold water for only a portion of the year.

development. At the time of the evaluation the impact of VSLAs on broader financial inclusion is limited by its low coverage. Scaling up this important activity is now being planned by WFP.

16. **Finding 7:** Linkages to WFP markets facilitated through ACL interventions have provided significant economic benefits for FBOs and women's groups through WFP procurement. Many FBOs expressed satisfaction with selling to WFP markets, citing better prices and facilitated bulk sales. Delays in product pick-up and payment persist, with FBOs frustrated because of the lengthy quality control and administrative processes that WFP undertakes, despite improvements. WFP's intention to expand market access for assisted FBOs requires clearer articulation, with several obstacles identified in reaching markets outside of WFP.

17. **Finding 8:** Between 2020 and 2022, rice volume and value obtained from smallholder farmers through WFP-supported aggregation surpassed targets due to increased production, yield improvement, and surplus sales to WFP facilitated by comprehensive agronomic training. Post-harvest losses, while reduced through improved post-harvest management techniques following training, remain a barrier to maximizing results. Further optimization of rice quality knowledge and additional support to ease labour associated with IVS and enhance post-harvest management are crucial to support effectiveness.

18. **Finding 9:** Qualitative and quantitative data suggest that ACL interventions contribute to improved food security, particularly through IVS development leading to increased food production. Extension staff predominantly highlighted increased rice production, and women's groups and smallholder farmers emphasized improvements in nutrition due to increased dietary diversity and general food stability.

19. **Finding 10:** WFP's integrated, flexible and comprehensive approach to building resilience, customized to local conditions and capabilities, has significantly contributed to the success of ACL interventions. This has been complemented by a strong collaboration with MAFS and engagement with CYCs at grassroots level. Direct engagement with farmers enabled the CO to adapt to local needs, contributing to positive results. Using FFA (both in-kind and cash-based) was an important avenue for the extremely poor to engage in resilience-strengthening activities. The main negative factors influencing achievement of results were related to WFP procurement and payment delays, land tenure issues, and climate change risks.

20. **Finding 11:** ACL interventions have been designed with attention to inclusivity, as affirmed by stakeholders' consistent recognition of the participation of women, youth, and to a lesser extent, persons with disabilities. Women particularly benefited from dedicated economic empowerment activities and leadership roles within FBOs and VSLAs, signalling progress in gender equity within ACL interventions. However, the fact that sampling plans are not designed to produce results that represent outcomes when disaggregated by gender, age or disability impedes comprehensive assessments of equitable benefits. Challenges also remain in fully integrating marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities, as WFP Sierra Leone does not systematically collect data on disabilities.

Efficiency

21. **Finding 12:** WFP has made optimal use of the allocated project budget, with all funds being utilized except for a 20% expenditure shortfall in 2022. However, delays in the delivery of inputs have been an ongoing concern, reducing the timeline of support, and sometimes resulting in late cultivation, reduced yields, and reducing the efficiency of investment. WFP has undertaken several actions to address these issues and boost operational efficiency. The focus on improving yields has facilitated the commercialization of assisted farmers, evidenced by MAFS stock assessments reporting 115 metric tons of locally produced rice available for market linkage. Late procurement of rice threatens to undermine the effectiveness (and thus efficiency) of FBO's.

Coherence

22. **Finding 13:** Internal coherence of ACL interventions, particularly alignment with CSP and synergies with school feeding and nutrition, demonstrates positive efforts to reinforce smallholder farmers' role and enhance food security. Collaboration between WFP units in ACL intervention implementation, especially in nutrition-sensitive agriculture training and local food production, exemplifies deliberate efforts to ensure alignment and effectiveness.

23. **Finding 14:** Alignment with national priorities, policies, and strategies showcases a comprehensive approach addressing agriculture, gender/youth empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

24. **Finding 15.** There has been a concerted effort to maximize the impact of ACL interventions through strategic partnerships and alignment with broader development objectives. External coherence is evident through collaborations with civil society and UN programmes through co-leading on sustainable agriculture and food security under the UNDSDF, leveraging comparative advantages and aligning with Government and partner priorities on IVS development.

Impact

25. **Finding 16.** As intended, ACL interventions have generated significant positive impacts in increasing access to nutritious food, income generation, and community socio-economic development. ACL interventions also fostered social cohesion, helped to diversify the school meals, and promoted business-oriented farming approaches, leading to long-term socio-economic development within communities. Despite these positive results, monitoring data was insufficient to show whether nutrition activities had resulted in changes in nutrition outcomes at community level. Data indicates that ACL interventions alone are not adequate to sufficiently address the diverse and interrelated causes of chronic food insecurity and the annual occurrence of seasonal hunger. The evaluation team identified some unintended negative health effects reported for participants in IVS, including exposure to illnesses and injuries.

26. **Finding 17.** ACL interventions have played a significant role in supporting women and youth to become leaders within their communities, fostering gender-transformative work. However, barriers to women's inclusion in decision-making processes persist, highlighting ongoing gender disparities within communities. Further gender mainstreaming efforts could foster greater gender transformation.

Sustainability

27. **Finding 18.** The achievements of the ACL interventions demonstrate positive indications for sustaining the assets created, including IVS, vegetable cultivation, and VSLAs. Stakeholders reported improved capacity in agricultural production and market linkages to WFP's Home-Grown School Feeding activities and willingness to maintain assets due to training and other interventions, signalling a positive outlook for sustainability. However, FBOs expressed a need for regular input and post-harvest infrastructure support. Sustainability challenges include insecure land tenure, and the uncertainty about MAFS' ability to sustain extension services without (WFP's) financial incentives (stipend). Efforts have been made to tackle these challenges, including provision of post-harvest infrastructure.

CONCLUSIONS

28. The design of ACL interventions is sound, demonstrating their relevance in addressing food and nutrition insecurity and grounded in understanding vulnerabilities and capacities in specific contexts. However, there are challenges in consistently translating design into implementation, inclusivity, and environmental considerations.

29. WFPs IVS development model stands out as the project's most significant achievement. The mix of cash/food transfers through FFA, input support and training programmes have proven effective in increasing the availability of labour for agricultural activities and improving farmers' knowledge and skills in rice and vegetable production. Incentivizing smallholder farmers through FFA has encouraged participation, with FBOs advocating to extend cash transfers throughout the entire period of IVS development to maintain cohesion and membership. Disparities in training implementation and insufficient environmental management practices reduce the effectiveness of activities and present barriers to sustaining change.

30. The integration of a nutrition-sensitive approach into ACL interventions has led to increased production of nutritious foods, especially vegetables and OFSP. This has contributed to anecdotal improvements in dietary diversity and nutritional intake among smallholder farmers. Linking OFSP production to HGSF has directly contributed to the improved nutrition of school children. However, challenges persist, including post-harvest losses, and limited resources to increase project scale.

31. Facilitating market connections and increasing coverage of VSLAs are important elements for income diversification and broader food security gains. FBOs and MAFS stakeholders praise VSLAs for facilitating economic growth and stability. Access to WFP markets is appreciated, though delays in payment frustrate FBOs. High post-harvest losses constrain income generation potential.

32. The ACL intervention strategy incorporates multiple approaches, enhancing effectiveness by addressing both immediate and root causes of hunger. WFP's flexible approach has enabled operational

adjustments contributing to positive results. WFP's partnership with MAFS and CYC has been instrumental for strengthening national ownership of the project, supporting farmer training, improving agricultural practice and empowering communities.

33. ACL interventions have made commendable efforts to promote gender, youth and disability inclusion though reliance on labour-intensive activities remains a barrier. Comprehensive assessments of equitable benefits are not possible without systematic data disaggregation, especially by age and disability. Reliance on limited quantitative data is insufficient to assess empowerment outcomes.

34. While efforts to improve efficiency are evident, challenges such as input delays, farmer organization governance issues, and market barriers persist, necessitating continued efforts to enhance planning, transparency, and market linkages for more efficient ACL interventions.

35. There are notable strengths in ACL intervention alignment, collaboration, and focus on key country development priorities. However, gaps in environmental considerations hinder effectiveness and sustainability.

LESSONS

36. **Resilience is strengthened by empowering communities to take charge of their own asset creation and livelihood activities.** The WFP model involving community members in planning and implementing activities does this well. This approach strengthens food security and community resilience by encouraging active participation and creating support networks essential during crises.

37. **Reliance on labour-intensive models of asset development provides a medium to maximize immediate assistance but can limit sustainability prospects and limit the inclusion of women and vulnerable populations.** Integrating mechanization, like agricultural machinery, can address these challenges as was done through donation of agricultural machinery in collaboration with JICA. However, ongoing maintenance is crucial, necessitating a strategy for equipment upkeep to ensure long-term viability.

38. **Partnerships and collaboration with diverse stakeholders are essential for effective asset creation and livelihood activities.** Such collaboration ensures alignment with national priorities and grassroots participation. Leveraging various stakeholders' strengths and resources enhances the success of these initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

39. The main evaluation recommendations are presented in the table below.

#	Recommendation	Link to finding
1	Strengthen the integrated approach to resilience building by enhancing the strategic design of ACL interventions and improving implementation. This should involve clear articulation of inclusion, integration, sustainability, and scalability of ACL interventions.	1, 3, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17
2	Enhance capacity-building efforts with an inclusive strategy for sustainable ACL interventions involving key sectors of nutrition, HGSP, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), environment, and gender.	4, 10, 13, 18
3	Address gaps in coverage and implementation of ACL interventions.	1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 18
4	Build on remedial actions already taken to address late procurement and payment delays.	2, 5, 7, 10, 12
5	Strengthen environmental management in design and implementation of ACL interventions.	1, 3, 14, 18

6	Revise M&E to cover gaps in outcome and broader impact monitoring especially for nutrition, GEWE and resilience measurements.	4, 6, 9, 11
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1 Introduction

1. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the decentralized activity evaluation of the World Food Programme's (WFP) asset creation and livelihoods (ACL) interventions in Sierra Leone. Activities are implemented under Strategic Outcome (SO) 4 of the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2020-2024. The report represents the last part of a process that began in November 2023 with an inception phase (until December 2023) followed by data collection (January 2023), and a data analysis and report writing phase (February 2024). During the inception phase, the evaluation matrix was refined based on feedback from Country Office informants who stressed the need for this evaluation to focus more on the decentralized levels where the interventions are taking place given a planned Country Strategic Plan Evaluation (CSPE) which covers the whole portfolio, to be conducted in January 2023. A focus on the drivers of food insecurity, going beyond the quantitative indicators reported in the Annual Country Reports (ACR) was also requested. The final report is based on several rounds of quality assurance and comments by WFP, the Decentralized Evaluation Quality Support (DEQS) and external stakeholders.

1.1 EVALUATION FEATURES

2. This decentralized activity evaluation was commissioned and is managed by the Sierra Leone Country Office (SLCO). The evaluation scope covers ACL interventions undertaken by WFP Sierra Leone Office under Strategic Outcome (SO) 4 in Sierra Leone from January 2020 to December 2023. The evaluation is timely for guiding potential revisions of the current implementation of ACL interventions and informing the development of the new CSP (2026-2030).

3. The evaluation was intended to address the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning with a greater emphasis on learning. As defined in the evaluation Terms of Reference (See Annex 1: Summary Terms of Reference) the evaluation is specifically commissioned to:

- Assess the performance and extent to which ACL interventions have been successfully implemented and their appropriateness.
- Guide any necessary revision of the current CSP and inform the development of the new CSP (2026-2030).
- Identify opportunities to strengthen the design of the ACL interventions.

4. Per the ToR, the evaluation also may serve as an advocacy tool to raise donor and partner awareness around WFP's contributions towards the new integrated resilience framework and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While there is no dedicated objective to assess contribution to human rights and gender equality, this has been mainstreamed within the objectives. In line with the ToR, the evaluation will identify specific gender issues in the design and implementation of the ACL interventions.³

5. The primary user of the evaluation is WFP Sierra Leone who expect the findings to feed into the next CSP and potentially serve as an advocacy tool for raising awareness to donors and partners around WFP's contributions towards the new integrated resilience framework. Further, the Government of Sierra Leone and relevant Ministries and various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in the implementation of ACL interventions will use the findings for decision-making on improving performance and design. The WFP Regional Bureau for Dakar will use evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, programme support and oversight to the country office as well as to contribute to evidence generation on delivery of ACL interventions in West Africa. WFP Headquarters (HQ) may use the results to revise guidance material on ACL interventions in the future and to enhance organizational learning in general. WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEV) may use the evaluation findings, as appropriate, to feed into evaluation syntheses as well as for annual reporting to the Executive Board on evaluation coverage. Beneficiaries are also potential users of the evaluation in terms of improving implementation of various interventions under the ACL interventions.

6. The evaluation was conducted by the Konterra Group through an evaluation team composed of four team members: a Team Leader, Senior Evaluator, Senior National Evaluator and Junior National Evaluator.

³ ACL interventions specifically target able-bodied adults.

Primary data collection took place in Kenema, Pujehun, Moyamba, Tonkolili and Kambia Districts from 24 January 2023 to 1 February 2024.

1.2 CONTEXT

7. Sierra Leone is a low-income, food-deficit country with a population of 7 million (50.7 percent women and girls).⁴ The population, most of whom reside in rural areas, are heavily dependent on agriculture, employing around 65 percent of the country's labour force.⁵ Following the end of the civil war in 2002, the country demonstrated substantial gains in life expectancy, years of schooling and income per capita (among other factors) as reflected in the rising human development index (HDI) improving by 50 percent. The country had been on track to achieving middle income status by 2030 until the 2014 Ebola virus disease (EVD) epidemic, officially ending in November 2015. The country remains in a 'low' HDI categorization ranked 181 out of 191 in 2020/2021 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ranking, the latest data available.⁶

8. Concurrent domestic and external shocks have exacerbated economic challenges and slowed post-pandemic recovery.⁷ The World Bank projects economic growth, driven mostly by agriculture and mining which have been declining for the past two decades, to grow at 3.8 percent between 2023-2025, below its long-term average.⁸ High youth unemployment, governance issues, weak infrastructure and widespread poverty continue to undermine growth.⁹

9. **National policies:** The national strategy is organized under the 2019-2023 Mid-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP). The plan is organized around eight policy clusters and includes agriculture, the promotion of food security, ending hunger and malnutrition and supporting economic growth as cross-cutting priorities under these clusters. Other relevant policies are discussed in the paragraphs below.

10. **Food security and poverty:** Poverty in Sierra Leone remains high. The 2022 Sierra Leone Poverty Assessment, the most recent data, estimates the incidence of poverty at the national poverty line of Le 3,921,000 per adult equivalent annually to be 58.6 percent. The Multidimensional Poverty Index shows slightly higher overall rates (64.8 percent) reflecting deficiencies in factors outside current consumption, such as ownership of durable goods and education levels of adults.¹⁰ Poverty is concentrated in rural areas with COVID-19 likely stagnating or even reversing poverty reduction trends. The poorest households are those residing in the Northern Province where 77 percent experience poverty; this compares to the Greater Freetown area where only 23 percent experience poverty.¹¹

11. The 2021 National Nutrition Survey showed a stunting prevalence rate of 26.2 percent, down from 31.3 percent in 2017. Boys were more likely to be affected by stunting (29.3 percent) compared to girls (23.4 percent).¹² Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates remain low with a slight improvement when compared to the 2022 August Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) data, decreasing from 5 percent in 2022 to 3.9 percent in the 2023 September FSMS when controlling for seasonality.¹³ According to the 2021 National Nutrition Survey, GAM rates were higher for girls (3 percent) compared to boys (2.3 percent).¹⁴ The national prevalence of acute malnutrition using mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) was 1.8 percent among women of reproductive age (15-49 years). The wasting prevalence was 5.5 percent among pregnant and lactating women.

12. WFP, in partnership with Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), conducts bi-annual Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) surveys: during the lean season (July-September) and post-harvest

⁴ Sierra Leone country strategic plan (2020–2024).

⁵ FAO. Sierra Leone at a glance. Accessed 4 December 2023.

⁶ UNDP. HDI 2020/2021. Accessed 4 December 2023.

⁷ The World Bank. The World Bank in Sierra Leone. Updated 30 March 2023. Accessed 4 December 2023.

⁸ The World Bank. The World Bank in Sierra Leone.

⁹ The World Bank. The World Bank in Sierra Leone.

¹⁰ The World Bank. Sierra Leone Poverty Assessment. 2022.

¹¹ The World Bank. Sierra Leone Poverty Assessment. 2022.

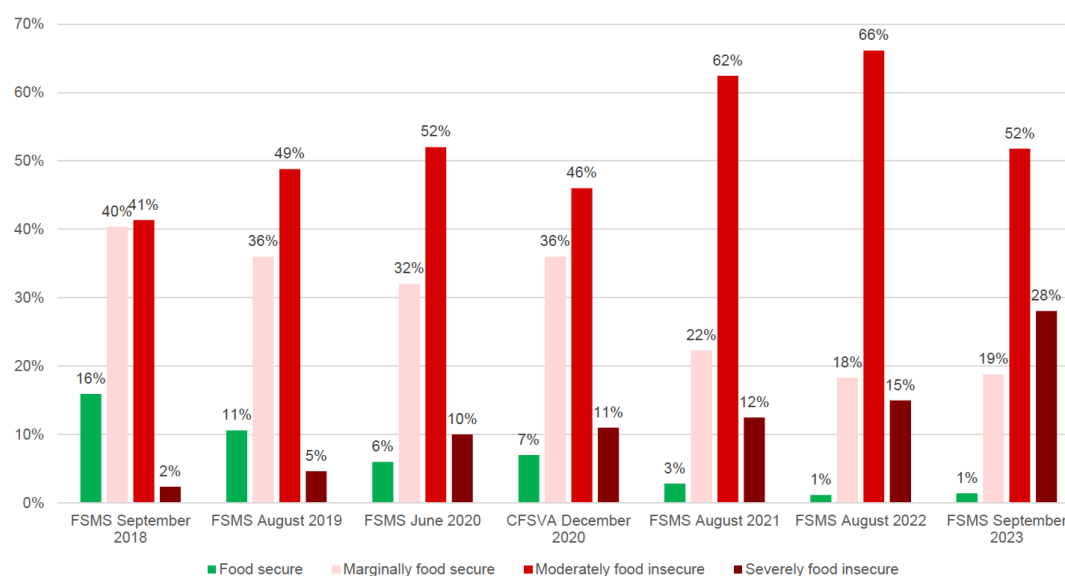
¹² Ministry of Health and Sanitation. Sierra Leone National Nutrition Survey 2021. 2021.

¹³ WFP. FSMS Report. September 2023.

¹⁴ Gender disaggregated results are not available in the 2023 FSMS.

(January-March) to monitor the levels of food insecurity across the country. This data reveals deteriorating national food security between 2018 and 2023 (Figure 1). According to the September 2023 FSMS, 80 percent of Sierra Leone's population is food insecure. Of these, 28 percent are severely food insecure.¹⁵ The 2023 FSMS shows a large increase from the 2020 Comprehensive Food Security Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) which showed 57 percent of the population as being food insecure of which 12 percent were extremely food insecure.¹⁶ According to the FSMS report, deterioration in food security has steepened since 2020 affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and global food crisis since the start of the Russian-Ukraine war. Warnings in the February 2023 FSMS of rising food insecurity during the lean season are reflected the September report where severe food insecurity rose from 20 percent to 28 percent.

Figure 1 Food Security Classification Trend



Source: FSMS and CFSVA 2018-2023

13. There is high variation in moderate and severe food insecurity rates between districts according to survey round. There are also variations according to household demographics. According to the 2020 CFSVA rural households involved in agriculturally based livelihoods are much more likely to be food insecure as are small families (four members or less). The same report notes that households headed by women the same level of food insecurity as those headed by men. Finally, the report notes that disability of the household head also does not make a difference in the overall food security situation, though the prevalence of severe food insecurity is higher among those households headed by someone with physical or mental disabilities.

14. Food insecurity in Sierra Leone stems from a multitude of interconnected factors. At the forefront are poor agricultural practices, characterized by inadequate farming techniques without the use of improved seeds and the underutilization of agro chemicals, compounded by a reliance on labour-intensive methods.¹⁷ These practices result in low agricultural productivity, further exacerbated by significant post-harvest losses due to inefficient processing, preservation, and storage methods.

15. The limited access to nutritious foods exacerbates the situation, driven by high food prices and currency depreciation, which restricts access to nutritionally diverse foods.¹⁸ Traditional staple crops like rice dominate diets, with little dietary variety. Furthermore, underdeveloped infrastructure hinders distribution and access to markets, perpetuating food insecurity.

¹⁵ WFP Sierra Leone Country Office. Food Security Monitoring System Report. September 2023.

¹⁶ WFP. State of Food Security in Sierra Leone 2020. May 2021.

¹⁷ Johnny, Michael, and Bashiru Mansaray, 2019. "Socio-cultural factors of food insecurity in Sierra Leone. Developing Country Studies." Vol.9, No.10 (2019). https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3505044..and 2020 CFSVA.

¹⁸ WFP. FSMS Report. September 2023.

16. The migration of agricultural labourers to urban areas in search of better economic opportunities reduces the available workforce for farming activities, further straining agricultural productivity.¹⁹ External factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the global food crisis triggered by geopolitical events such as the Russia-Ukraine war, and climate change, compound these challenges. Extreme weather events, particularly heavy rainfall, can destroy crops, exacerbating food shortages. Additionally, women, despite their significant contributions to agriculture, often face limited access to land, which impairs their ability to farm effectively and ensure household food security.²⁰ Addressing these interconnected causes comprehensively is essential for effectively combating food insecurity and malnutrition in Sierra Leone.

17. The Government has demonstrated a commitment to addressing food insecurity and meeting SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) targets through inclusion of addressing vulnerabilities and building resilience as one of the eight policy clusters included in the MTNDP.

18. **Agriculture:** An estimated 5.4 million hectares, representing 74 percent of Sierra Leone's surface area, is considered suitable for cultivation. Less than 10 percent of cultivable land is utilized for crops.²¹ Agriculture is mainly subsistence-based with agricultural production heavily concentrated in rice (nearly half of agricultural land is used to grow rice) as well as cassava, oil palm, groundnut and cocoa.²² According to the evaluation ToR, agricultural productivity is undermined by limited access to agricultural inputs and technologies, barriers to market access including a lack of needed road infrastructure and financial services, natural disasters and pest/crop diseases, inadequate land management, a shortage of household labour and gender inequalities. The 2022 World Bank Sierra Leone Poverty Assessment posits that drivers of income differences between poor and non-poor farmers appear mostly related to returns on assets and taking advantage of market access rather than differences in assets or endowments but notes the need for additional research.

19. The agri-food sector employs nearly 80 percent of women in Sierra Leone who face barriers accessing basic resources such as land, training, and services.²³ Recognizing the importance of supporting the integration of gender issues in agriculture, the Government adopted the Gender in Agriculture Policy (GiAP) in 2020. The GiAP aims to increase economic growth through agricultural development and improved gender equality; improve women's access and control over productive resources; increase investment in agri-business; address gender inequality in land tenure security and the right to land; and improve access to gender-responsive technologies.

20. Agricultural policy goals are organized under the National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan 2010-2030. The national policy goal is to ensure increased food security for households and to expand agricultural earnings from domestic and export market opportunities and ensure the operation of the sector on a sustainable basis.²⁴ Feed Salone is the Government's Flagship Programme to post agricultural productivity through inclusive, local food production.²⁵ The 2019-2025 National Agricultural Transformation Plan, which details plans for achieving the agricultural objectives of the MTNDP, includes priorities on i) rice self-sufficiency, ii) livestock development; iii) crop diversification; and iv) sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation with the development of an enabling environment and governance as a cross-cutting priority.²⁶ The government's "Enhancing Private Sector Participation in Agriculture" scheme announced in 2021 (commonly known as the MAFS Policy Shift) seeks to reduce public spending while enhancing the role of the private sector.²⁷ Individual districts will have different means for ensuring these

¹⁹ Johnny, Michael, and Bashiru Mansaray, 2019. "Socio-cultural factors of food insecurity in Sierra Leone. Developing Country Studies." Vol.9, No.10 (2019). https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3505044. 4

²⁰ Abraham Harrison Lincoln Larkoh, Anne Dressel & Katherine Riebe (2021) Inviting women to the table: addressing food insecurity in Sierra Leone, *Development in Practice*, 31:8, 971-976, DOI: [10.1080/09614524.2020.1867066](https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2020.1867066)

²¹ Terms of Reference 2023

²² IFAD. Republic of Sierra Leone Country Strategic Opportunities Programme 2020-2025. 2020.

²³ FAO. Raising rural women's voices in Sierra Leone. 12 October 2023. Accessed 4 December 2023.

²⁴ National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan 2010-2030

²⁵ Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security. Feed Salone Strategy 2023-2028.

²⁶ Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. National Agricultural Transformation Programme 2023. 2019.

²⁷ The World Bank. Sierra Leone Economic Update. October 2023.

goals are achieved based on their specific assets including natural and human resources, infrastructure and institutions.

21. **Education:** Progress towards SDG 4 (Quality Education) is stagnating despite achievement of universal primary enrolment and progress in educational achievements following the Government's Free Quality School Education (FQSE) initiative in 2018.²⁸ Economic and geographic marginalisation, the low value placed on education, negative social norms such as Female Genital Mutilation and early marriage, teenage pregnancy and unsafe learning environments all contribute to low retention and completion rates.²⁹ Adult literacy rates are relatively low at 49 percent with lower literacy among adult women (41 percent) compared to adult men (49 percent).

22. The Government has prioritized school feeding as an important initiative to improve attendance especially for the most vulnerable communities where food insecurity is high.³⁰ The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School Education oversees and coordinates implementation of school feeding in primary and pre-primary schools through the National School Feeding Policy (2021). WFP signed an agreement with the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education for the implementation of the School Meal Programme in Pujehun, Bonthe, Kambia, Karene, and Kenema.³¹ Following the launch of Sierra Leone's National School Feeding Policy in 2021, the school feeding initiative has helped position home-grown school feeding (HGSF) as a priority. WFP's HGSF programme provides school meals for over 200,000 students annually.³²

23. **Gender and equity:** Gender inequality in Sierra Leone is high with the country ranking 162 out of 170 countries included in the 2021/2022 UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII, score of 0.633). Gender inequality and discrimination are rooted in culture and social norms in Sierra Leone.³³ A range of discriminatory laws, including statutory and customary laws, further reinforces inequalities. Over the past decade, the government has made numerous efforts to develop and enact a range of new laws, policies, and strategies at the national level to tackle gender inequality. However, even when national laws are enacted to address gender inequalities, effective enforcement has consistently been a major challenge.³⁴

24. At the national level, several gender justice laws have been enacted by the government including: the Domestic Violence Act 2007, Devolution of Estates Act 2007, Registration of Customary, Marriage and Divorce Act 2009, Child Rights Act 2007 and the Sexual Offences Act 2012 which was amended in 2019.³⁵ Policy Cluster 5 of the MTNDP focuses on empowering women, children, adolescents, and persons with disability by 2023. The government is pursuing special policies that recognize the issue of gender and the role of vulnerable groups in guaranteeing inclusiveness and empowerment.³⁶

25. The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Bill, which was at the bill stage for over two decades, has now become law.³⁷ Provisions and recommendations in the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act require minimum quota of 30 percent for women across sectors, this was reflected in the 2023 elections where women account for 30 percent of representation in all elected positions.³⁸

26. At the international level, the government has signed and ratified various human right conventions and treaties to protect and advance the human rights of women and girls such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Maputo Protocol, which is Africa's Human Rights treaty.³⁹

²⁸ Sustainable Development Report: Sierra Leone. Accessed 19 November 2023.

²⁹ UNICEF Sierra Leone. Education. Accessed 29 November 2023.

³⁰ Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education. 2021. National School Feeding Policy.

³¹ WFP. 2023. Sierra Leone Country Brief 2023

³² Sierra Leone Annual Country Report 2020, 2021, 2022

³³ Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019–2023

³⁴ Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019–2023

³⁵ Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs

³⁶ Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019–2023

³⁷ GEWE Law 2022

³⁸ Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL)

³⁹ Country Report by Sierra Leone 2014.

27. **Climate change:** Sierra Leone is highly susceptible to climate change ranking 166th of 185 countries ranked in the 2021 Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) index, the latest data available. The country's high dependence on natural resources and fragile ecosystems makes it particularly vulnerable to erratic rainfall, rising temperatures, seasonal flooding, droughts, rising sea levels and mudslides. The Government developed the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in 2021 identifying seven central pillars for the development of programmes and actions to reduce the potential impact of climate change.⁴⁰

28. **Disaster management, migration and humanitarian protection:** Approximately 1.4 million Sierra Leoneans, 25 percent of the total population, do not live in the district they were born.⁴¹ There are several reasons why people migrate in Sierra Leone such as environmental degradation, the search for fertile agricultural land, deforestation, climate shocks and natural disasters, including seasonal flash floods, landslides, wildfires, and windstorms.⁴² Increased urbanization, as populations migrate seeking improved economic opportunities, is also prevalent.⁴³ The National Disaster Management Agency was established in 2020 to manage disasters and similar emergencies nationwide including establishing offices at subnational level and establishing a National Disaster Management Fund financing the prevention and management of disasters and other emergencies. There is a national migration policy framework which supports socio-economic development and national security that addresses security related risks such as organized border crime that threatens the peaceful coexistence of different groups residing in Sierra Leone⁴⁴.

29. **Sustainable development goals:** SDGs are referenced in the MTNDP. Progress towards SDGs is moderately improving or on track for a small number of indicators, most indicators are stagnating (Figure 2). Sierra Leone has completed three Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), the latest in 2021. The 2021 VNR report is highly evaluative, it validates the policy impact of strategic state initiatives undertaken in pursuit of Goals 4 and 16. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major challenge in the implementation of the SDGs considering the financial and economic hardship it has caused to the entire global economy with heightened susceptibility for least developed economies like Sierra Leone.⁴⁵ However, the government remains strategic in pursuing the actualization of the remaining goals.

Figure 2 Sierra Leone progress towards SDG achievement



Source: Sustainable Development Report (Accessed November 29, 2023)

30. **Official development assistance (ODA):** Sierra Leone received USD 696.8 million in net ODA representing 16.6 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2021.⁴⁶ In 2023, the country received USD 14.7 million in humanitarian assistance with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations

⁴⁰ FAO. FAOLEX Database: National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2021. Accessed 4 December 2023.

⁴¹ Thematic Report on Migration and Urbanization – 2015 population and Housing Census.

⁴² Sierra Leone Annual Country Report 2022

⁴³ World Bank Group. Sustainable cities: urban areas and climate change in Sierra Leone. 2023.

⁴⁴ Sierra Leone Immigration Department. National Migration Policy for Sierra Leone. 2022.





⁴⁵ Sierra Leone VNR 2021.

⁴⁶ The World Bank Data. Net ODA. Accessed 29 November 2023.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as the largest fund recipients (50.3 percent and 32.7 percent, respectively).⁴⁷ WFP did not receive any humanitarian funding in 2023 compared to 27.6 percent of humanitarian funding in 2022.⁴⁸ WFP Sierra Leone's work with other actors is detailed in section 1.3 (see paragraph 39).

31. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Sierra Leone, covering 2020-2023, serves as a mutual accountability framework between the government and United Nations (UN) System Agencies. It consists of four priority areas and corresponding outcomes that align with government development priorities (Table 1). WFO's ACL interventions in Sierra Leone fall within the scope of the UNSDCF and WFP's own strategic added value. Inclusive economic empowerment is emphasized within the UNSDCF, especially in priority areas one and four.

Table 1 UNSDCF priority areas

	Pillars	Outcomes
	Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security	By 2023, Sierra Leone benefits from more productive, commercialized, and sustainable agriculture, improved food and nutrition security, and increased resilience to climate change and other shocks
	Transformational Governance	By 2023, people in Sierra Leone benefit from more gender and youth responsive institutions that are innovative, accountable, and transparent at all levels and can better advance respect for human rights and the rule of law, equity, peaceful coexistence, and the protection of boys and girls, women and men including those with disabilities.
	Access to basic services	By 2023, the population of Sierra Leone, particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, will benefit from increased and more equitable access to and utilization of quality education, health care, energy and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services, including during emergencies.
	Protection and Empowerment of the Most Vulnerable	By 2023, the most vulnerable, particularly women, youth, adolescents, and children (especially girls), and persons with disabilities, are empowered and benefit from increased social and economic opportunities.

32. **WFP in Sierra Leone:** WFP has been operating in Sierra Leone since 1968, providing assistance during emergencies, aligning with the government objectives and policies in providing school feeding assistance and helping to tackle food insecurity and malnutrition as part of their effort to achieving SDG 2 and 12 creating a world free of hunger by 2030.⁴⁹ Current operations are organized under the CSP for 2020-2025 representing a shift from direct implementation to nationally owned interventions.

1.3 SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED

33. The subject of this evaluation is the ACL interventions implemented under SO4 of the current Country Strategic Plan 2020-2024. SO4 aims to build the self-reliance and resilience of vulnerable smallholder farmers (SHF) and communities through a variety of initiatives, enabling them to better meet their food and nutrition security needs. Activities are primarily channelled through Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) with asset development, mainly development of Inland Valley Swamps (IVS) and associated in-kind or cash payments through Food-Assistance-for-Assets (FFA) for asset development. A nutrition-sensitive approach is integrated throughout, emphasizing the production of vegetables, legumes, roots, and tubers. Capacity strengthening is crucial within ACL interventions, focusing on enhancing the skills of MAFS staff at district and community levels, including field extension workers (FEWs), and Community Youth Contractors (CYC), as well as men, women, and youth smallholder farmers directly.

⁴⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Sierra Leone 2022 Country Summary".

⁴⁸ OCHA Financial Tracking Service, Accessed 5 December 2023.

⁴⁹ Sierra Leone country strategic plan (2020-2024)

34. The resilience approach adopted by the country office is envisioned to encompass a comprehensive package of financial and social inclusion activities, including Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and FBO governance initiatives. Provision of post-harvest technologies and infrastructure and nutrition-sensitive programming, such as the promotion of nutrient-rich crops and Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBC) on critical issues such as gender and nutrition, augment the holistic approach to resilience-building efforts. The primary components of the ACL interventions are further described in (Annex 2: Primary components of ACL interventions).

35. **Analytical work:** The ACL interventions have been formulated based on recommendations of previous evaluations, reviews, and assessments. The 2018 Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) Decentralized Evaluation (DE)⁵⁰ recommended additional food for asset activities to targeted vulnerable communities. The focus shifted towards community-owned project sites rather than individually owned farms. A subsequent 2019 Zero Hunger Strategic Review⁵¹ underscored challenges faced by smallholder farmers, including issues like subpar rice yields due to post-harvest losses, a lack of crop diversification, limited market access, and insufficient value addition. CFSVAs are conducted every five years nationwide and have been pivotal in terms of the country office activities especially the resilience, asset creation and school feeding activities. They provide possible recommendations to guide WFP targeting activities across the country. The findings from the 2020 CFSVA⁵² revealed that food insecurity was compounded by outdated agricultural practices, a scarcity of affordable agricultural inputs leading to low yields, and notably high harvest and post-harvest losses. Difficulties in accessing markets and soaring food prices were identified as significant contributors to food insecurity in Sierra Leone.

36. The bi-annual FSMs⁵³ and Cadre Harmonize (CH)⁵⁴ have been instrumental in providing continuous updates on the food security situation since their initiation in 2018. They have played a key role in guiding the implementation of conditional transfers through price monitoring. The design of these activities was further informed by consultations with the government, donors, and other development partners.

37. ACL interventions are implemented primarily in seven districts: Falaba, Kambia, Kenema, Koinadugu, Moyamba, Pujehun, and Tonkolili (Figure 3). Orange flesh sweet potato (OFSP) pilot activities were conducted in Bonthe and Karene. A total of at least 129 communities have been supported per the records provided to the ET. ACL interventions in Falaba were not included in the scope of the evaluation because they were funded from a different portfolio and implemented jointly with other organizations. The variety of activities differed per district of implementation as indicated by the colour coding below. A more detailed analysis of activity implementation per district is provided in (Annex 3: Overview of ACL intervention coverage).

⁵⁰ WFP, 2018. Final Evaluation of Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200938: 'Rebuilding food and nutrition security and strengthening disaster management capabilities in Sierra Leone' June 2016 to December 2017

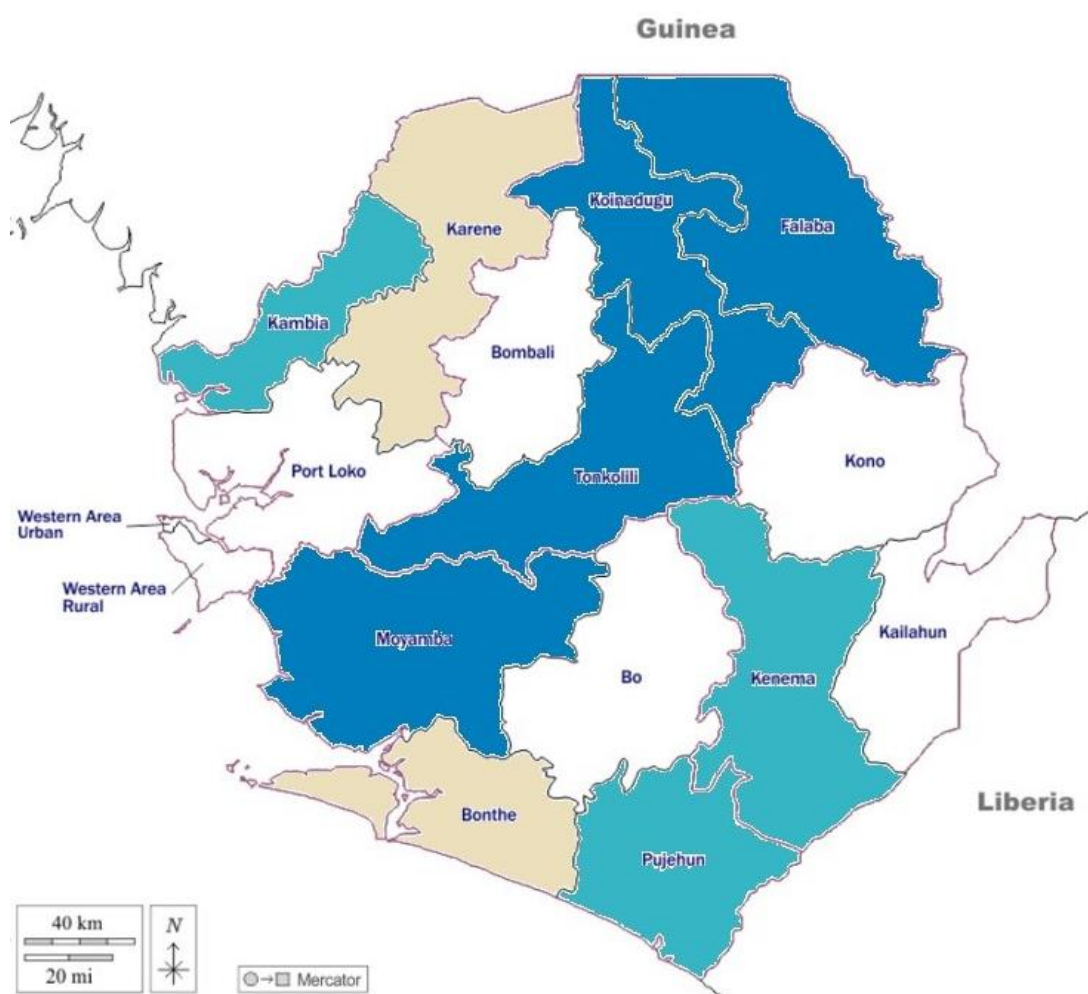
⁵¹ Government of Sierra Leone. 2019. Sierra Leone Zero Hunger Strategic Review

⁵² WFP, 2020. Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, May 2021.

⁵³ The FSMs is conducted every 2 years and is used to complement targeting of activities.

⁵⁴ WFP, 2020. Sierra Leone Food Security Monitoring System Report

Figure 3 Map of ACL interventions



Source: ET compilation based on interviews with WFP ACL team and secondary data review. **Blue**=IVS development; **Light blue**=IVS development and OFSP; **Tan**=OFSP pilot and HGSP.

38. **Theory of change:** During inception, the ET drafted an explicit theory of change (ToC) to enhance the team's understanding of the subject of the evaluation and ensure that underlying assumptions are clearly identified and tested during the evaluation (see Annex 4: Strategic Outcome Theory of Change). The ToC drew from the CSP document and was informed by interviews with WFP country office project staff. Intermediate outcomes were included within the ToC to make explicit how outputs are contributing to the SO4 strategic outcome. A particular addition to the ToC is a set of 'Enablers' across the bottom of the ToC which reflect the factors that are assumed to make the different components of the ToC work together to produce the anticipated SO4 outcome.

39. **Partnerships:** The MAFS is the WFP Sierra Leone's main partner in integrated resilience support, engaging vulnerable smallholder farmers in all districts of implementation through its District Agricultural Offices. Other important partnerships for implementing ACL interventions include the United Nations Agencies (especially the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and multi-national partners (especially the Japan International Corporation Agency-JICA). Activities have been implemented with international organizations including Hellen Keller International. In March 2022, the country office signed a wide-ranging memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI). Through this partnership, SLARI were selected to undertake a soil assessment from the FBOs that the country office supports in order to determine the nutrients the soil needs to tailor the kind of fertiliser to be applied for optimal yield. To improve dietary

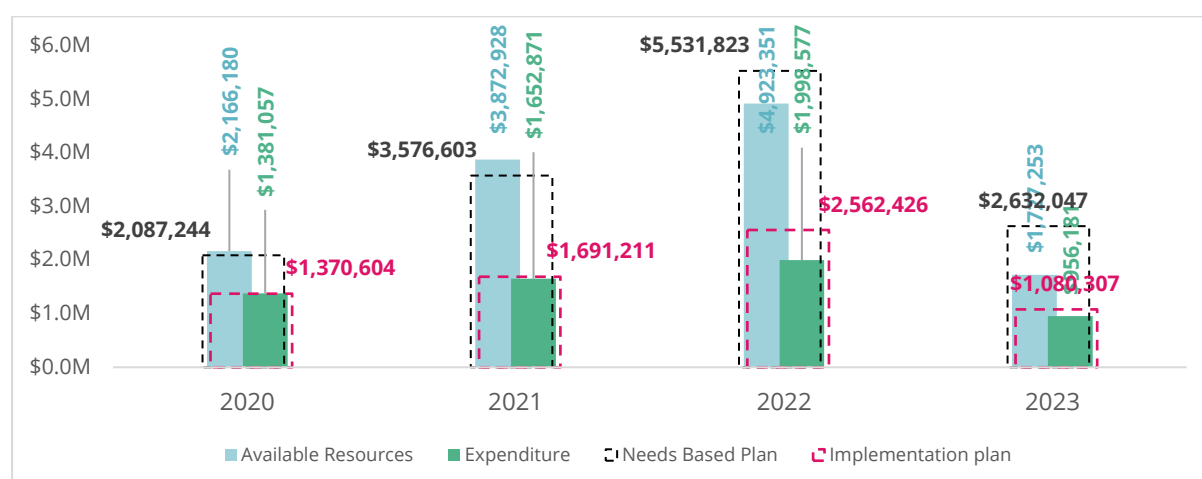
diversity and the consumption of local foods, SLARI also tested the consumer acceptance of four standardized enriched local complementary foods.

40. **Resourcing:** The initial budget of the SO4 was USD \$7,257,915, representing approximately 14 percent of the original CSP budget. The CSP was subject to four budget revisions (BR), with the budget rising to USD 118 million and the extension of the CSP by a year (ending in 2025) to align with the UNSDCF. BRs resulted in a large increase in activity participants, mostly within crisis response, increasing school feeding coverage, and scaling up food assistance for assets support. There was no change in strategic orientation of the CSP nor did these BRs result in any major amendments to the strategic focus of ACL interventions.

41. According to the resource situation, published February 26, 2024, the CSP Needs Based Plan (NBP) is underfunded (69.18 percent funded). Top contributors per the latest resource situation are the Republic of Sierra Leone (13.5 percent), Japan (12.6 percent), flexible funding (10.0 percent) and Germany (8.1 percent).

42. Activities under SO4 have been well resourced, fully funded in 2020 (104 percent funded against NBP) and 2021 (108 percent funded against NBP) and nearly fully funded in 2022 (89 percent, see Figure 4). The SO was 163 percent resourced for 2023 with most contributions corresponding to multi-year funding. The implementation plan has consistently been below the NBP with expenditures at 78 percent of the implementation plan in 2022 and 88.5 percent in 2023.⁵⁵ Top contributors to SO4 have been earmarked funding from Japan, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, and the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC) Fund.

Figure 4 SO4 resource situation



Source: Evaluation ToR and 2023 ACR.

43. **Gender and protection considerations:** The Gender and Age Marker for SO4 has varied between the years. In 2020, 2021 and 2023, the Activity received a four out of four, signifying that gender and age were fully integrated.⁵⁶ However, in 2022, the ACR specifies a Gender and Age Marker of 1, indicating only partial integration of gender and age. According to interviews with WFP country office staff, the reason for this downgrade was somewhat unclear, attributed to a change in the scoring or reporting in 2022, further information was not available.






44. The specific vulnerability of women and youth and constraints to achieving zero hunger are supported through several approaches of WFP's ACL interventions in Sierra Leone. Key elements of these cross-cutting priorities are outlined in Table 2 below and further detailed in section 2.1 (see Table 8). Analysis of gender-specific results is limited by the fact that sample sizes for outcome measurements are not calculated to produce statistically valid results when disaggregated by respondent or head of household gender and the absence of gender disaggregated data for some outcome indicators (see section 1.4). Cross-

⁵⁵ At the time of analysis, only draft financial data was available for 2023 which differs from final ACR data. This is presented in the Efficiency analysis.

⁵⁶ Based on CSP categorization at design. The ET did not conduct a gender and age marker assessment.

cutting indicators were included to assess SO4 contributions to GEWE and compliance with Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and protection commitments, discussed in paragraphs 60-61.

Table 2 GEWE and protection in ACL interventions

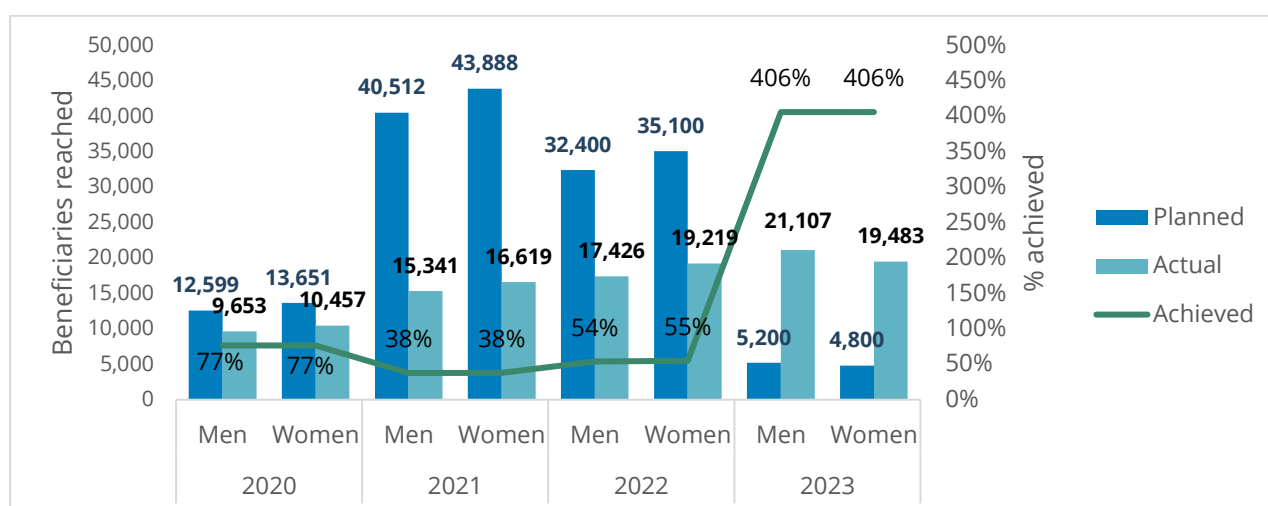
GEWE and protection considerations	
	Promoting representation of women, youth, and people with disabilities within FBOs, including in leadership positions
	Supporting skilled young farmers to become CYCs who can coach and inspire their peers
	Sought to minimize protection risks to participants collecting entitlements by conducting most transactions electronically; providing direct cash in secure locations with security oversight when electronic distribution was not possible
	Catalysing the socio-economic empowerment of women and youth through trainings in improved production methods
	Increased financial inclusion of women through training farmer organizations on VSLAs

Source: ACRs 2020-2022

45. The section below highlights analysis of performance against plan by reviewing ACRs and the data provided in the Annual Country Reports (ACRs) for 2020-2023. ACR data for 2023 was only available in March 2023 after initial submission of the ER. This data has been added to the figures but is discussed in less detail given evaluative limitations in exploring these trends. Summary tables are provided below for participant and transfer achievements (paragraphs 45-46), output (47), outcome (48-57), and cross-cutting indicators (58-62). The efficiency section explores resource use (output achievements) while the effectiveness section includes a detailed analysis of the effects of ACL interventions combining ACR outcome achievements with additional evaluative evidence.

46. **Participants:** There has been significant underachievement in reaching the planned number of participants in 2022. WFP country Office staff explained that new districts were added in 2022 which could explain the most notable underachievement in this year. However, achievements surpassed expectations in 2023 due to additional funding from WFP Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC). This supplementary funding enabled support to be allocated towards the rehabilitation of IVS sites (Figure 5). Achievement rates are the same for both men and women except in 2022 when achievements were slightly higher for women. The country office does not collect age disaggregated data for ACL interventions. The extent to which activities supported youth was explored during data collection as discussed in Relevance and Effectiveness sections.

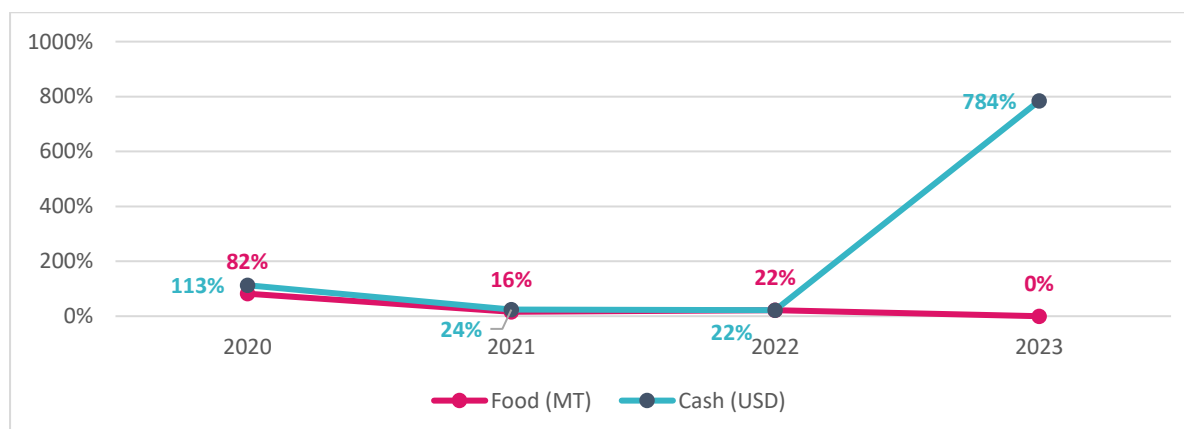
Figure 5 Percentage of achievement of ACL intervention participant targets



Source: ACRs.

47. **Transfers:** The transfer achievement rates seem to correlate somewhat with participant achievements, except for an overachievement of cash transfers in 2020 compared to the underachievement of participants (see Figure 6). However, achievement rates for transfers are lower than those for participants. The primary reason for this variance is the reduced cash disbursements in 2022. Cash was only provided for sites involved in rehabilitating IVS; thus, projections were high for 2022, anticipating program expansion with additional funding that ultimately did not materialize. Regarding food distribution, oil originally allocated for crisis response (SO1) was used to incentivize farmers in compost production.

Figure 6 Transfers achieved versus planned (% achieved)



Source: ACRs 2020-2022

48. **Output achievements:** New indicators were added annually to align with the updated corporate results framework (CRF) as shown in Table 3. Between 2020 and 2021 the country office successfully met all targets for which data was collected. In 2022, all outputs were overachieved except for the number of farmer organizations trained in market access and post-harvest handling skills in 2022 (20 percent of the target reached). SLCO staff explained that the target was no longer valid for farmer trainings as ACL interventions changed from direct engagement (reaching a higher number of people directly) to a cascading training through the farmer-field school approach in training for market access and post-harvest handling. The ET could not verify if the same number of people were eventually trained through the cascade model as this is not tracked in ACR data.

Table 3 SO4 planned versus achieved outputs

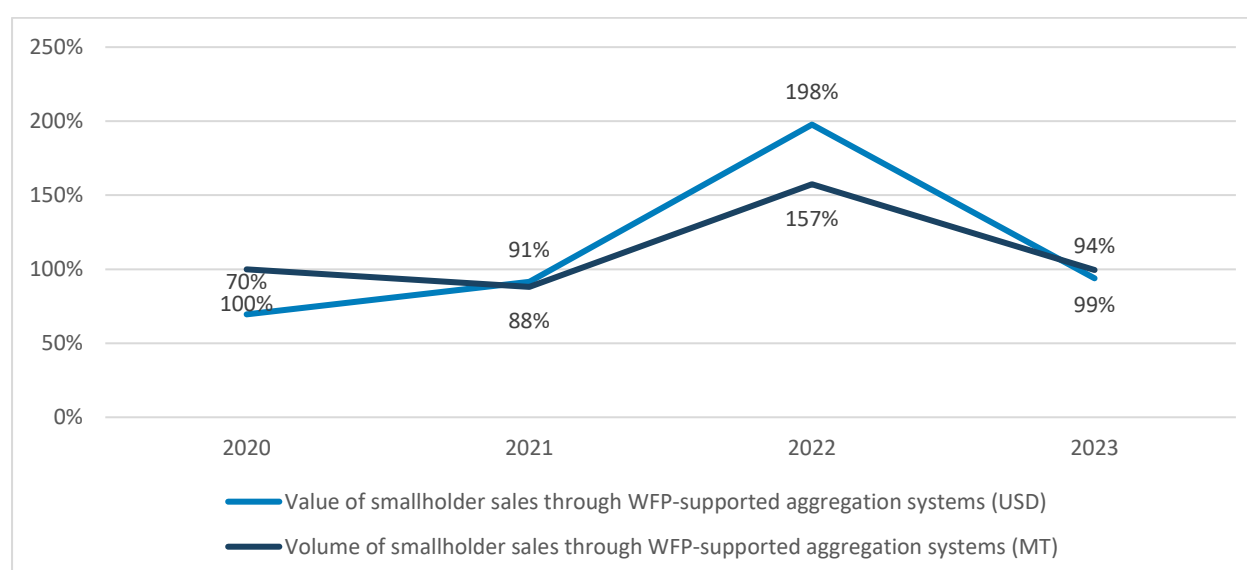
Indicator		2020 % achieved	2021 % achieved	2022 % achieved	2024 % achieved
D.1.158: Community common centres established/rehabilitated (centres)		110 (no target)			
D.1.45: Number of assets built, restored, or maintained by targeted communities			100%	250%	
D.1.56: Number of community post-harvest structures built				310%	
D.1: Number of assets built, restored or maintained by targeted households and communities, by type and unit of measure					101%
D.1: Number of assets built, restored or maintained by targeted households and communities, by type and unit of measure					25%
D.1: Number of assets built, restored or maintained by targeted households and communities, by type and unit of measure					100%
E*.4.2: Number of people reached through interpersonal SBCC approaches ⁵⁷			100%	605%	100%
F.1.22: Number of farmer organizations trained in market access and post-harvest handling skills			100%	20%	
F.1.40: Number of individual farmers trained in good agronomic practices (GAP)				1016%	
F.1.27: Number of farmers that benefit from farmer organizations' sales to home-grown school meals programme and other structured markets				411%	
F.1.59: Average value of cash transferred by WFP assisted schools or communities to smallholder farmers (value per SHF)				212%	
F.2.1: Total membership of supported smallholder farmer aggregation systems	Male				100%
	Female				99%
F.3.1: Number of farmers' organizations supported					100%
F.4.g.1: Number of agricultural equipment provided					1%

Source: ACRs. **Dark Green**: ≥100% of plan; **Green**: 75%-99% of plan; **Yellow**: 74%-50% of target; **orange**: <50% of target; **Grey**: no target

49. **Smallholder farmer sales outcome achievements:** As shown in Figure 7 below, outcome achievements related to the volume and value of sales have increased from 2020 to 2022 before declining after targets were increased in 2023. The value surpassed outcome targets in 2022 in terms of both volume and sales in 2022. Gender-disaggregated data was not available from the ACRs.

⁵⁷ Figures for 2020 and 2021 are all female. Gender is not specified for 2023 ACR figure.

Figure 7 Smallholder sales outcome achievements (% Achieved)



Source: ACRs 2020-2023

50. **Post-harvest losses and nutritious food:** Two new indicators were included in 2023: the average percentage of smallholder post-harvest losses at storage stage and the Percentage of targeted smallholder farmers reporting increased production of nutritious crops. The WFP Sierra Leone surpassed targets for both with survey results showing nine percent losses (below the annual target of less than 10 percent) and above 96 percent of both households headed by men and women reporting increased production (above the target of over 90 percent).

51. The below paragraphs present food security and cross-cutting indicators measurements as reported by the Research, Assessment and Monitoring (RAM) unit based on samples of participants receiving FFA transfers through ACL interventions. There are important limitations to consider in reviewing these figures. First, the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) sampling plans are based on total participants under each activity. As the number of participants varies by year, thus sampling also varies by year. While ACR's sometimes characterize changes as 'increases' or 'decreases' compared to the previous years, the ET notes limitations in trend analysis given variation in sampling procedures and ET uncertainty regarding sample demographics.⁵⁸

52. Assessment of differences according to participant or head of household gender is also limited. As explained by the RAM team, outcome results are reported disaggregated by head of household gender, but sample calculation is done based on random sampling from the entire annual cohort without separate sample sizes designed to be representative of participant results when disaggregated by gender of head of household. In the absence of statistical designs to capture meaningful differences in food security outcomes according to gender of household head. Without consistent patterns in outcomes, the ET considers it impossible to determine whether results are an accurate representation of differences or simply 'noise' in the data.

53. Programme effectiveness in terms of food security and gender-related differences is explored more comprehensively under the Effectiveness (section 2.2) and Impact (section 2.5) criteria.

54. **Food security outcomes:** The country office initially included four indicators to measure food security: the average consumption-based Coping Strategy Index (CSI), the Economic capacity to meet essential Needs (ECMEN), the food consumption score (FCS), and the food expenditure share (FES). Results are based on representative samples of cash/food transfer recipients with PDMs conducted approximately

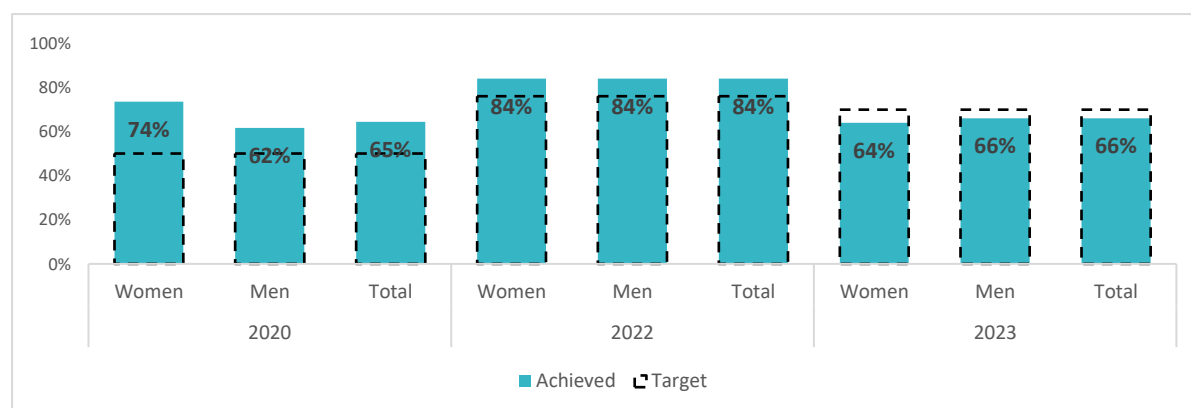
⁵⁸ PDM methodology for 2020-2023 has been provided. The timing of actual data collection was not provided. Given high variation in 'baseline' food security characteristics by district it is unclear whether variations are driven by differences in sampling and/or WFP programming.

two weeks after cash/food transfer. Results are, therefore, more likely indicating the short-term effects of resource transfer rather than the longer-term resilience effects anticipated by the strategy.

55. The ECMEN was a new indicator that was measured for the first time in 2023.⁵⁹ Results show that the vast majority, 91.9 percent of respondents, were below the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) with households headed by men much more likely to be below the MEB (93 percent) compared to households headed by women (85 percent).

56. The FES was not measured in 2021. Outcomes met the targets for 2023. Targets were reduced from less than 50 percent of households spending more than 75 percent of income on food ('severely food insecure' in the coping capacity component) in 2020 to less than 70 percent in 2023.

Figure 8 FES outcome measurements

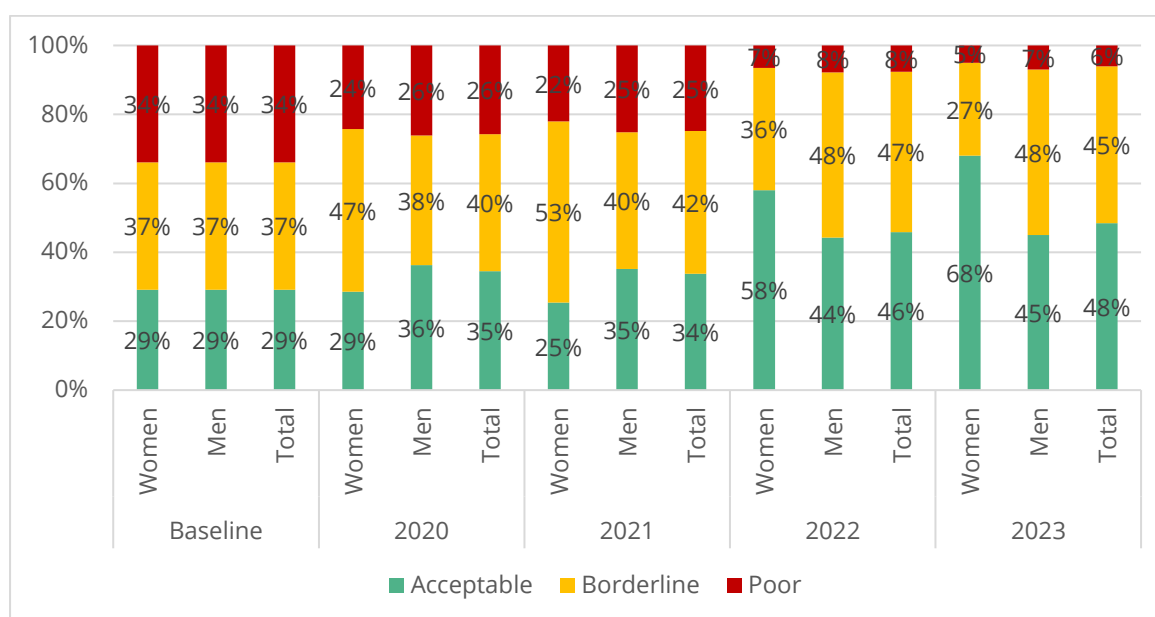


Source: 2020 and 2022 ACRs. PDM database shared for 2023 values, the indicator is not reported in the 2023 ACR. FES not measured in 2021.

57. Results appear positive in terms of FCS with a decreasing proportion of ACL intervention participants reporting poor or borderline FCS between 2020 and 2023. Outcomes in 2021 were more mixed with a small decrease in the proportion of participants with poor food consumption but also a decrease in the proportion with acceptable FCS. The aforementioned limitations in evaluating annual trends with ACR indicators are again noted (see paragraph 50).

⁵⁹ The 2022 ACR specifies that the indicator was not analysed as a minimum expenditure basket (MEB) had not been established.

Figure 9 FCS outcome measurements among ACL intervention participant households

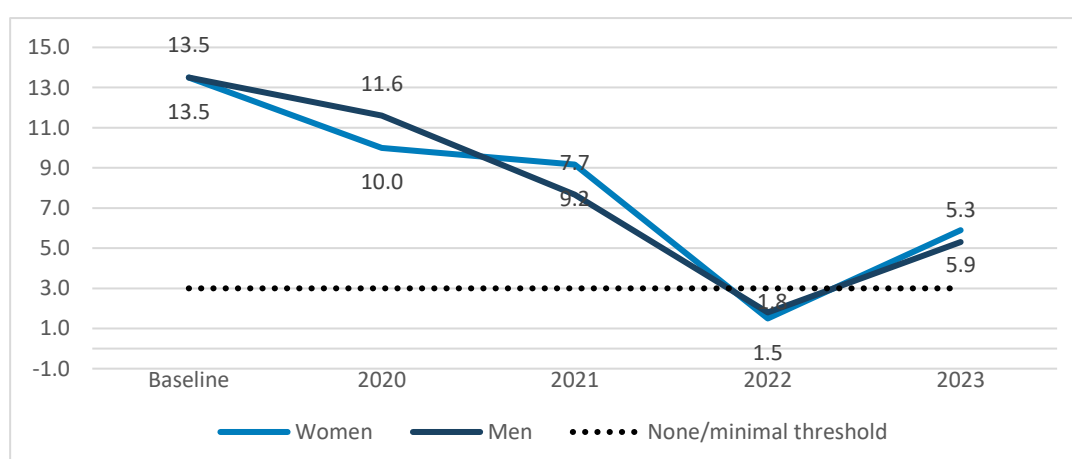


Source: ACRs 2020-2023.

58. The FCS-Nutrition scores were added for the first time in the 2023 ACR. Results show that sampled participants were above targets in consuming Hem Iron rich foods, protein rich foods daily and above targets in 'sometimes' consuming Hem Iron rich foods.

59. Coping strategy index measures have similarly improved between baseline and 2022 and are below the national FSMS results (see Table 11). Results in 2023 are much worse (Figure 10). Results surpassed targets since 2021 and surpassed the end-CSP target of below five in 2022. As stated above, without demographic data from the PDM, it is difficult for the ET to interpret these trends. However, the increasing rates of severe food insecurity nationally between 2022 and 2023, as noted in the FSMS highlights broader contextual pressures (see Figure 1).

Figure 10 Average CSI outcome measurements among ACL intervention participant households

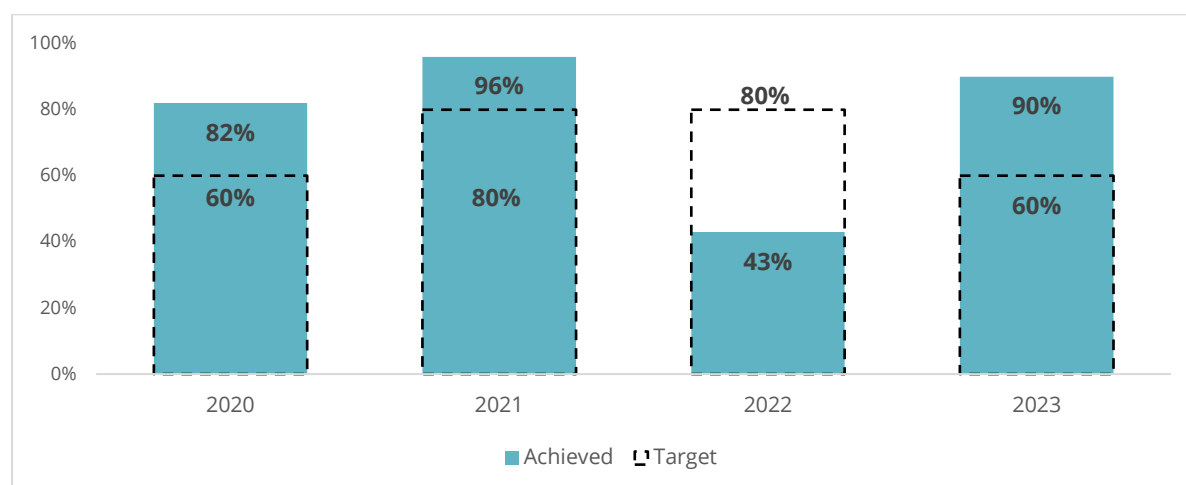


Source: ACRs 2020-2022, 2023 data from PDMs

60. Besides food security measures, the country office measures the "Proportion of the population in targeted communities reporting benefits from an enhanced livelihood asset base". Achievements were above targets for all years except 2022 where only 43 percent of participants reported benefitting from an improved asset base, out of the target of 80 percent (Figure 11). According to WFP stakeholders interviewed, this was due to a change in methodology in 2022 where households not directly included in asset development were included in indicator calculation under the false assumption that non-participants in asset creation activity

would benefit from community-level assets. After discussion with the Regional Bureau, the methodology was revised to include only participants in 2023, with positive results, above targets, reported. Gender disaggregated data was not available for this outcome indicator except for 2023 where results were very similar comparing men and women reporting improved asset base (90.1 and 90.9 percent, respectively).

Figure 11 Proportion of respondents reporting benefits from an enhanced livelihood asset base among ACL intervention participants



Source: ACRs 2020-2023.

61. **Cross-cutting results:** SO4 includes indicators to measure cross-cutting indicators on GEWE, protection, AAP, and the environment.

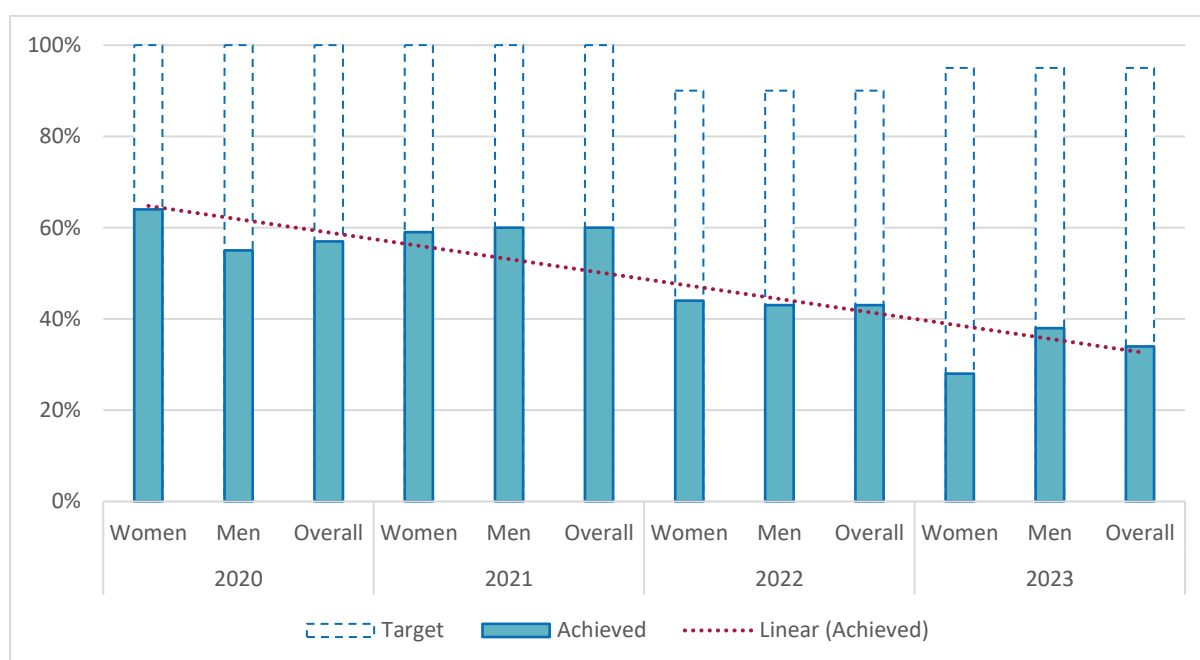
62. In ACRs, the indicator “proportion of activities for which environmental risks have been screened and as required, mitigation actions identified” was included between 2020 and 2022 to assess integration of environmental considerations. However, this indicator was never reported in ACRs. According to the WFP RAM team interviewed, the country office required technical guidance which they did not have. According to the 2023 ACR, no risk assessments of ACL interventions were conducted in 2023 due to capacity gaps and the seasonality of activities. The indicator was dropped from 2023 ACR.

63. The country office includes two indicators, disaggregated by respondent gender, to assess commitments to AAP. According to ACRs, all activities have documented, analysed, and integrated participant feedback since 2020 meeting the universal target.⁶⁰ In the 2023 ACR, a different indicator was reported “country office has a functioning community feedback mechanism”, the result was “no” for 2023. Results are markedly less positive concerning targets to inform people about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, length of assistance) with achievements, expressed as a proportion of participants surveyed, declining between 2020 and 2023 (Figure 12). WFP stakeholders noted that a lack of multi-year funding creates uncertainties within the country office. However, this cannot fully explain results as most of 2023 funding was multi-year. Results according to respondent gender have differed by year with women respondents much more likely to report awareness among the 2020 cohort surveyed (64 percent of women respondents compared to 55 percent of men respondents) but much less likely to report being informed among the 2023 cohort surveyed (28 percent of women respondents compared to 38 percent of men respondents). Differences were more minimal in 2021 and 2022; given the absence of representative samples by respondent gender, these patterns cannot be interpreted.⁶¹

⁶⁰ This indicator was not reported for the 2023 ACR.

⁶¹ These indicators are derived from the same PDM sample as the food security outcome indicators. Sample sizes are not designed to be representative when disaggregated by gender.

Figure 12 Participant knowledge of ACL interventions



Source: ACRs 2020-2023

64. Protection indicators are generally reached for 2020 to 2022 (see Table 4). Values in 2023 were lower than any other year; the RAM team explained this is due to a change in the CRF indicator methodology for 2023 reporting that requires positive responses to a panel of questions to achieve positive indicator results. In 2020, achievements were below targets concerning whether programmes are dignified.

Table 4 Protection Indicators

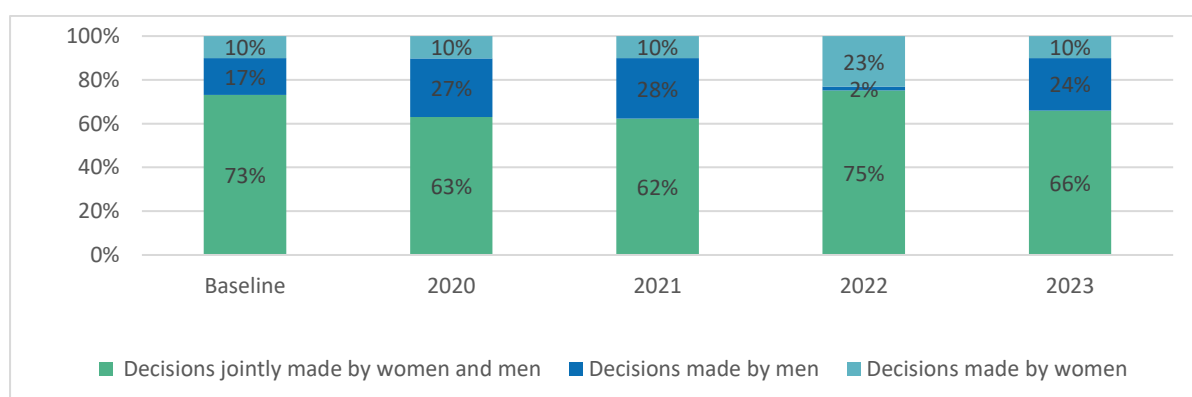
Indicator	Gender	Baseline	2020		2021		2022		2023	
			Target	Follow-up	Target	Follow-up	Target	Follow-up	Target	Follow-up
Proportion of targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes (new) - -	Women	92%	--	--	≥90	92%	≥90	99%	≥90	83%
	Men	90%	--	--	≥90	90%	≥90	98%	≥90	79%
	Overall	90%	--	--	≥90	90%	≥90	99%	≥90	81%
Proportion of targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges (new) - -	Women	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	≥95%	95%
	Men	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	≥95%	92%
	Overall	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	≥95%	93%
Proportion of targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified	Women	88%	90%	75%	≥95	100%	≥95	99%	≥95	96%
	Men	85%	90%	79%	≥95	100%	≥95	98%	≥95	96%
	Overall	86%	90%	78%	≥95	100%	≥95	99%	≥95	95%

(new)

Source: 2019-2022 ACRs. 2023 data from May 2023 PDM, these indicators are not reported in the 2023 ACR. **Dark Green**: ≥100% of target; **Green**: 75%-99% of target; **Yellow**: 74%-50% of target; **orange**: <50% of target; **grey**: no target

65. Finally, SO4 includes two indicators on GEWE. ACR results differ by year with targets met in 2022 of at least 75 percent of households making decisions about WFP assistance jointly (see Figure 13). ACR data is not reported disaggregated by respondent gender. The 2023 PDM data shows that women were much less likely to report that decisions were made together (28 percent) compared to men (73 percent).

Figure 13 Gender of household members involved in making decisions about the use of food/cash/vouchers



Source: ACRs 2020-2023

66. ACL interventions also seek to increase the decision-making power of women as measured through the “Proportion of food assistance decision-making entity – committees, boards, teams, etc. – members who are women”. This indicator remained constant at 30 percent below the target, which was revised downward from at least 60 percent in 2021 to at least 50 percent in 2022.⁶²

1.4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

67. The evaluation covers the design, implementation, management, monitoring, and evaluation related activities concerning ACL interventions implemented by WFP in Sierra Leone from January 2020 through December 2023.

68. The evaluation sought to answer the evaluation questions (EQs) presented in Table 5, defined in the evaluation ToR and refined during the inception phase. During inception, the evaluation team completed an evaluability assessment highlighting potential issues and mitigation measures put in place (see Annex 5). Refinement of the EQs did not affect the scope. The EQs are organised according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact, and sustainability – no criteria were prioritised. EQs include specific sub-questions to assess gender and cross-cutting issues.

Table 5 Evaluation Questions

Relevance: To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and the priorities of the government, targeted population, and stakeholders? (Relevance)

1.1: Was WFP’s selection criteria consistent with the needs of the key affected groups (women, men, youth) based on geographic vulnerabilities/ needs/food insecurity as well as activity design and objectives?

⁶² The indicator was not measured in 2020 or 2023.

1.2: To what extent have the design, planning and implementation of the activities been participatory, inclusive (including youth), gender-sensitive, and considerate of protection risks?
1.3: To what extent have lessons learned based on previous WFP asset creation and livelihood activities informed the current asset creation and livelihoods activity adjustments/redesign and positively contributed to improvements in the approach since 2020?
1.4: To what extent were environmental concerns and the effects of climate change taken into account in the design and implementation of the intervention?
Effectiveness: To what extent has the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and outcomes?
2.1: Are intervention outcomes aligned with planned targets after 3 years?
2.2: What have been the major factors (including COVID-19), positively or negatively influencing the achievements of outputs and outcomes of the activities?
2.3: Were results delivered equitably to specific groups including men, women, youth, and people living with disabilities or other marginalized groups?
Efficiency: To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated
3.1: To what extent were activities implemented in terms of timeliness and cost-effectiveness?
3.2: What are the best practices for FBO set-ups and organization?
3.3: What is the efficiency of linking farmers to WFP procurement systems (rice and vegetables for school feeding) and local markets?
Coherence: To what extent is the intervention compatible with other interventions in the country, sector or institutions
4.1: Was the activity adequately aligned with WFP Sierra Leone CSP overall especially in terms of linking with School Feeding and Nutrition programmes?
4.2: To what extent is the intervention aligned with national and sector-wide priorities, policies, and strategies? (external coherence)
4.3: What have been the synergies between the ACL interventions and interventions from Civil society, UN wider programmes, etc. especially in regard to using the results of the CBPP? (external coherence)
Impact: To what extent has the intervention generated significant positive or negative effects, intended or unintended at a high level?
5.1: What were the intended and unintended effects and consequences of the intervention on project communities and others where available?
5.2: Have the WFP ACL interventions empowered or developed and supported women's and youth's leadership and independence of targeted populations?
Sustainability: To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term?
6.1: To what extent are the benefits of the activities likely to continue after WFP support has ceased?
6.2: To what extent are key structures that were established by the project or existed prior able to sustain project activities without WFP and other humanitarian support?
6.3: How sustainable are the environmental impact of the programme?

69. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data sources allowing for systematic triangulation of evidence through different data sources and collection methods. Data collection and analysis have been participatory and gender responsive (see paragraph 71). A theory-based approach⁶³ was applied using primary and secondary data to validate the ToC with empirical evidence of implementation in relation to its context and outcomes and to assess the extent to which critical assumptions were upheld, thus drawing conclusions regarding the effectiveness of ACL interventions as well as identifying areas that need further strengthening.

⁶³ Theory-based evaluation is an approach to evaluation (i.e., a conceptual analytical model) and not a specific method or technique. It is a way of structuring and undertaking analysis in an evaluation. A theory of change explains how an intervention is expected to produce its results. No specific framework will be utilized.

70. The evaluation questions form the evaluation's overarching analytical framework. They have been disaggregated into indicators in the evaluation matrix (Annex 7: Evaluation Matrix). This matrix has formed the basis for the data collection and analysis and traces a path from question to answer, providing sources of information and data collection methods. All tools and methodologies are based on this evaluation matrix.

71. **Gender, equity, and inclusion considerations:** A gender-sensitive approach was mainstreamed throughout all evaluation processes and activities. Evaluation questions include explicit reference to GEWE, and inclusion is reflected in the evaluation matrix and data collection tools. The ET carried out gender and age-differentiated analysis where data was available. Systematic disaggregation of results by age was not possible given the absence of age-disaggregated data available. Sampling sought to reflect the views of men, women and youth including people living with disabilities where possible based on available information with people living with disabilities included in some FGD discussions. The team considered the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) evaluation technical guidance for integrating GEWE-related data and alignment with human rights issues and adhere to the Humanitarian Principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, and independence throughout.

72. **Data collection methods:** The evaluation team used three different and complementary data collection methods to answer the evaluation questions: desk review, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). These methods cover the diversity of stakeholders involved in ACL interventions. The ET systematically explored unanticipated effects through all data collection methods. A summary of tools and their purpose is provided in Table 6 below. Data collection tools are available in Annex 9. A notable change from the planned data collection presented in the inception report was the inclusion of Moyamba District to replace Bonthe. This replacement was made in consultation with WFP as no IVS assets had been constructed in Bonthe.

Table 6 Summary of data collection tools and purpose

Tool	Stakeholders	Geographic scope	Purpose	Sample size
Desk review	All	n/a	ToC, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact, Sustainability	n/a
Key Informant Interviews /Group interviews	WFP staff, MAFS, SLARI, Partners, Donors	National/central levels	Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact, Sustainability	6
	WFP field officers	Kenema, Pujehun		15
	MAFS District Officers and CYSS	Kambia, Moyamba, Tonkolili,		7
Focus Group Discussions	FBO participants, Women's economic groups, community leaders	Kambia, Kenema, Moyamba, Pujehum, Tonkolili,	Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability	12 FGDs
Direct observation	Project sites		Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability	10 sites

73. **Sampling:** There were no quantitative data collection activities budgeted for this evaluation per the evaluation ToR. Qualitative sample sizes are designed within available evaluation resources and designed to capture the diversity of stakeholders and different types of activities/contexts being evaluated. Districts selected for data collection were based on activity lists provided by WFP, aiming to ensure coverage and reduce bias to draw meaningful conclusions. Sampling was based on a detailed stakeholder mapping conducted during the inception phase to capture input from key stakeholder groups while respecting the need to focus on district level data collection given the ongoing CSPE process (see Annex 6: Stakeholder mapping). The ET ensured that participant sampling approach included men, women and youth including persons with disabilities in data collection (smallholder farmers, women's economic groups, CYCs, community

leaders, MAFS District Officers). Some stakeholders, such as the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), are not involved in data collection but will provide input to the evaluation through membership in the ERG.

74. **Data analysis:** The evaluation team worked together to manually analyse data from the different data sources into an excel, organizing evidence sources according to evaluation questions and criteria. Organizing data in this way allowed for comprehensive analysis, triangulating findings between different data sources and data collection methods.

75. **Triangulation** was a vital tool for validating and analysing findings to ensure quality and avoid bias. Triangulation was done as follows: a) source triangulation – comparing information from different sources; b) method triangulation – comparing information collected by different methods; c) using the evaluation matrix – data from different sources assisted in identifying key findings, conclusions, and results; and d) investigator triangulation – involving more than one evaluator to assess the same issues. Qualitative and quantitative data has been triangulated in the analysis of each topic and combined in the presentation of evidence and findings in this evaluation report.

76. **Quality assurance and ethical issues:** WFP decentralized evaluations must conform to WFP and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical standards and norms. The contractors undertaking the evaluations are responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.

77. Data collection was conducted in accordance with these ethical standards. Participants were informed on the objectives of the evaluation and their role in the process and on their voluntary participation. They were also assured on the confidentiality of the information they have provided.

78. The evaluation fully adheres to the WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance and the Development Assistance Commission). Quality assurance of the evaluation products occurred at two levels. The team leader held primary responsibility for producing high-quality evaluation products based on factual and verifiable primary data. KonTerra's internal quality assurance expert reviewed the draft evaluation report, providing written feedback to improve the draft before submission of the final version to WFP. Then the evaluation report has been reviewed externally under the DEQAS system and the Evaluation Reference Group. The evaluation report has been finally approved by the Evaluation Committee. Further details on ethical safeguards can be found in Annex 5.

79. **Limitations:** The main challenge faced by the evaluation team was in the suitability of monitoring and evaluation data available from the country office to systematically assess outcomes. As described in chapter 1.3, the monitoring and evaluation system, and especially the outcome indicators of the results framework are not informative of the achievements of training activities or long-term outcomes for food security. Due to the timing of data collection (linked to transfers) and the sampling procedures which are based on different population sampling frames due to annual variations in programme coverage, food security measures track the short-term effects of transfers, rather than the long-term changes in food security. This limitation goes beyond WFP Sierra Leone and is an issue of the suitability of WFP's corporate reporting and monitoring systems more broadly.⁶⁴ Other expected outcomes, such as changes in knowledge and improvements in post-harvest losses, are not systematically tracked, though ad hoc studies by WFP add essential information.

80. Furthermore, the combination of limited availability of disaggregated data, combined with the fact that PDM sampling is not designed to be representative by district or gender of participant, did leave some ambiguity in assessing differential outcomes according to location and/or participant demographics. The ET sought to overcome this by assessing geographic, gender and age-related differences in qualitative data collection and cross-checking with secondary data sources.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Evaluation of "WFP's Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition" (OEV/2021/07)

81. The utilisation of data beyond corporate reporting, especially data from the Japan Bilateral Project (JBP) endline evaluation⁶⁵ was particularly useful in strengthening analysis for indicators that are not systematically tracked. The evaluation also sought to qualitatively assess achievements to further strengthen analysis; however, limitations in quantitative assessment are acknowledged.

⁶⁵ The project covered ACL interventions (IVS development, capacity strengthening, cash transfers) in Kenema, Pujehun and Tonkolili districts

2 Evaluation findings

82. The following sub-sections detail evaluation findings according to evaluation criteria. Sub-headings indicate sub-questions as detailed in the evaluation matrix (see Annex 7: Evaluation Matrix)

2.1 EQ1: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE INTERVENTION RELEVANT TO THE NEEDS AND THE PRIORITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT, TARGETED POPULATION AND STAKEHOLDERS? (RELEVANCE)

Finding 1. The design of the ACL interventions is highly relevant to the needs of the population, a large proportion of whom rely on agriculture. The ACL interventions have been designed based on previous evaluation, review and assessment recommendations and help address several identified needs of the population including poor agricultural practice, limited access to nutritious foods, food insecurity and low household income. Geographic targeting and community selection are appropriately based on food security levels and suitability of interventions. The design is generally inclusive and efforts to promote diversity have been successful. Most of FBO members are women, and they are the main users of the created assets. However, cultural norms and practices, and the demanding nature of asset building and rehabilitation are still sometimes a barrier to participation, for women and persons with disabilities. Environment effects should be more fully considered.

Was WFP's selection criteria consistent with the needs of key affected groups based on geographic vulnerabilities/needs/food insecurity as well as activity design and objectives?

83. **Geographic selection criteria:** According to ACL team feedback, targeting of ACL interventions is based on selection of Chiefdoms with the highest levels of food insecurity based on the CFSVA data.⁶⁶ Data at chiefdom level was available in graphic form only in the 2020 CFSVA and was not fully legible at chiefdom level. Thus, it is not possible to comprehensively assess whether this selection criterion was followed.⁶⁷

84. **Community selection:** WFP prepared detailed guidance for community selection for IVS and VSLA implementation. This guidance helps ensure that activities are relevant to community capacities and needs. For example, the IVS selection checklist includes assessments of both suitability of IVS for rehabilitation as well as farmer interest.⁶⁸ As part of the initial stages of IVS development, WFP and MAFS district officials engage with community leaders, youth, and women to select suitable sites and identify land ownership arrangements. They conduct meetings with landowners, chiefs, and FBOs to establish 5-10-year lease agreements, which are then signed by landowners and FBOs and witnessed by representatives from WFP and MAFS. Compensation varies among FBOs, typically offered in the form of in-kind (such as rice) or cash payments. This phase is critical, particularly in Sierra Leone, where farmland is predominantly owned by families,⁶⁹ with occasional community ownership. Selection for OFSP sites was specified in the Field Level Agreements signed with MAFS.

85. **Participant selection:** According to the checklist for IVS development implementation, WFP and MAFS form a five-person committee including one community leader, two youths and two women to identify and select persons to form the FBO, including leadership, as well as the CYCs. In FGDs, FBO participants described being invited by WFP to understand the future IVS implementation where "anyone who is interested" could be involved within selected communities. The field level agreement (FLA) specifies that selection for OFSP should rely on existing and ideally formally registered women's farming group among

⁶⁶ ACL selection strategies in Falaba, not included in the evaluation scope, were different.

⁶⁷ A legible format of data was not available to the ET at the time of submission.

⁶⁸ Greater than three hectares, accessible (<15 minutes walking from community), perennial (water can support two crops) and should be clustered with other sites for ease of implementation/monitoring.

⁶⁹ The family members are also part of the FBOs.

other criteria.⁷⁰ This does not align with how OFSP groups described selection in FGDs. In all three communities where FGDs were held with OFSP groups, the participants described WFP requesting women not engaged in other ACL interventions to register for OFSP participation. While the processes described during primary data collection do not exactly match the described processes, it does generally confirm inclusivity in participant selection. However, there was some feedback from FGD participants that there were gaps in inclusivity (see Table 9 below).

86. **Conceptually, ACL interventions address many of the primary causes of food insecurity in Sierra Leone** (see Table 7). Successful integration with the HGSP programme and mainstreaming of nutrition has been particularly important for ensuring the more holistic approach. However, there are gaps between strategic design and implementation, as the specific mix of activities implemented within an ACL intervention area depends on a variety of factors, including donor interests and funding levels which are insufficient for holistic coverage. The absence of some activities listed in the IVS development checklist in some communities, especially threshing machines and access to rice mills, highlights gaps in activity implementation, even if the design is relevant to address needs more holistically (see Annex 2: Primary components of ACL interventions for more details).

Table 7 Strategic relevance of ACL interventions addressing factors contributing to food insecurity

Factor contributing to food insecurity	ACL intervention strategic inclusion
Poor agricultural practices	Capacity strengthening is an essential element within ACL interventions, addressing constraints at individual, community, and institutional levels. Farmers have been supplied with key inputs which were praised, though secondary data ⁷¹ and qualitative data with FBOs frequently highlighted the insufficiency of fertilizers provided.
Reliance on labour-intensive methods	IVS development is extremely labour-intensive; community members and WFP's own assessments highlighted that the work is not attractive to all community members, leading to dwindling FBO participation and inefficiencies in IVS development. Some FBOs are provided with inputs to reduce labour needs; substantial gaps remain according to activity mapping (Annex 2: Primary components of ACL interventions) and qualitative data.
Limited access to nutritious foods	The promotion of OFSP and other vegetable cultivation, combined with SBCC to promote behaviour change, attempt to address this issue. As highlighted in interviews with WFP Nutrition team, coverage remains a core challenge in maximizing these benefits.

⁷⁰ Other criteria in the FLA include being located in a community with or close to a WFP assisted primary school, having owned/leased farmland with appropriate soil for OFSP cultivation, have a democratic/elected governance structure, run income-generating activities with capacity to pre-finance activities, have an existing bank account, not an active political group and not holding public office, and not directly associated with a school or its governance/school feeding structure.

⁷¹ WFP, 2022. Strengthening capacities and resilience of vulnerable and food insecure smallholder farmers through nutrition and market sensitive approaches and practices in targeted communities in Sierra Leone - JBP201122 (2017-2022). Japan Bilateral Project (JBP) Endline Report, November 2022.

Underdeveloped infrastructure	Infrastructure is addressed in some communities through the provision of post-harvest asset support, such as drying floors. FBOs repeatedly highlighted the need for further support. According to WFP staff feedback, communities are encouraged to build their own stores while WFP will provide the roof. This strategy is intentional to encourage community ownerships. Larger infrastructure constraints, such as the high cost of transportation to market, are not addressed either directly or through partnerships.
High food prices/food availability	WFP seeks to address both supply-side constraints (through improved production capacities) as well as increasing financial access to food for farmers through income generation, both through direct purchase for the HGSF programme and broader promotion of market access. Qualitative data suggests substantial barriers to markets remain; while IVS cultivation has improved food supply, farmers in some districts explained that food was still not available year-round.
Climate change	Targeting IVS for development is based on assumed environmental benefits. Gaps exist in incorporation of environmental considerations (see paragraph 89 for more details).

Source: compiled by ET. **Green**: Core component of ACL intervention strategy; **Light green**: included in ACL intervention strategy with some gaps; **Orange**: included in ACL intervention strategy with notable gaps; **Grey**: Information gaps.

To what extent have the design, planning and implementation of the activities been participatory, inclusive, gender-sensitive and considerate of protection risks?

87. **At the community level, WFP is inclusive in terms of participant selection and planning implementation. However, there is little evidence of community-level stakeholders being engaged in more strategic elements of activity design.** The overall approach incorporates community feedback based on its evolution in line with evaluation recommendations and other sources of lessons learned which themselves have incorporated participant feedback. Activity design is informed by WFP's experience implementing ACL interventions, including use of the three-pronged approach (3PA) in development of activities under the Japan Bilateral Trust Fund Project and the PBF-funded ACL interventions.

88. **ACL interventions incorporate several design considerations to promote equality, inclusion and women's empowerment outlined in Table 8 below.** Inclusion of people with disabilities is primarily hindered by the physically demanding labour required in IVS rehabilitation. However, IVS FBO participants universally reported that vulnerable households benefited equally from ACL interventions by virtue of representation of these target groups within FBOs (often by proxy), with income and production benefits reported to be shared equally. Achievement of equitable benefits is further explored in section 2.2.

Table 8 Design considerations for equality, inclusion, and empowerment

	Design implications
Rural equality	All beneficiaries reported benefits shared equally among participating households.

	<p>FBO selection should enable representation of every household.</p> <p>Partnerships and support for MAFS encourages rural inclusion</p>
Disability inclusion	<p>Qualitative feedback notes disability inclusion in selection strategy, encouraging people with disabilities to participate/take leadership in FBOs or are represented by proxy when they cannot participate directly.</p> <p>No specific inclusion criteria for people with disabilities are included in the IVS development checklist.</p> <p>WFP does not systematically collect data on disability</p>
Age equality	<p>Promotion of 'youth' as leaders to coach and inspire their peers, though approximately 15 per cent were above the national definition of 'youth' as between the ages of 15-35⁷²</p> <p>Youth economic empowerment supported through stipends and capacity building for CYCs</p>
Women's empowerment	<p>Successes:</p> <p>Promoting women's leadership within FBOs through governance training and sensitisation within participating communities in 2023 with ongoing coaching and mentoring reported by WFP stakeholders</p> <p>Targeted activities for women's economic empowerment in some locations, particularly income from vegetable cultivation and OFSP</p> <p>Integration of men into nutrition-support activities</p> <p>Identified gaps:</p> <p>No gender analysis was conducted to inform ACL intervention design</p> <p>All output level data is reportedly disaggregated by gender. Outcome data is disaggregated by gender of head of household which is not directly related to gender of the participant.</p> <p>Women continue to face gender-specific barriers to participation, including the lack of childcare for women to be able to work in IVS activities</p>

Source: compiled by ET. **Green**: Core component of ACL intervention strategy; **Light green**: included in ACL intervention strategy with some gaps; **Orange**: included in ACL intervention strategy with substantial gaps; **Grey**: Information gaps.

89. **WFP incorporated do no harm approaches through community engagement and the availability of a complaints and feedback mechanism.** Adherence to do no harm approaches can be measured, in part, by the achievement of protection indicators assessing commitments to AAP. The universal documentation, analysis, and integration of participant feedback since 2020 as indicated in protection indicator achievements in ACRs is a positive reflection of the incorporation of do no harm approaches. These positive findings are triangulated with feedback from FGDs with FBOs, where participants universally described outreach efforts from WFP to explain project activities; there were no issues in terms of MAFS or WFP staff behaviour reported in qualitative data.⁷³ WFP stakeholders identified the availability of a toll-free

⁷² The Republic of Sierra Leone, "Sierra Leone National Youth Policy: President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's Website." The UN definition of youth is between the ages of 15-24.

⁷³ Feedback from the community-level complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) is reported at the CSP level rather than being activity-based to allow a deeper understanding of the issues and how these had been addressed.

hotline to redress complaints from the community; no beneficiaries described providing feedback to WFP though this was not specifically asked in primary data collection.

90. **The positive findings above are somewhat diminished by community concerns about farmer exposure to risks through participation in ACL interventions.** Injuries and illnesses during IVS cultivation were frequently mentioned in FGDs. Additionally, some community stakeholders reported that, because there is no storage facility, households are exposed to theft as they are required to dry/store crops in their homes. This feedback highlights potential gaps in programme design as these unanticipated, negative effects are reported. The declining proportion of participants reporting knowledge of ACL interventions (Figure 12) and overall worse protection outcome indicator values for 2023 (Table 4) may indicate areas for improvement in outreach design, though WFP RAM stakeholders interviewed highlighted the challenges in attaining positive results with the reformulation of CRF protection indicators; questions were perceived as overly complex for targeted populations with low literacy.

To what extent were environmental concerns and the effects of climate change considered in the design and implementation of the intervention?

91. **IVS cultivation is based on anticipated environmental benefits, but there is no clear environmental/climate change screening policy to operationalize consideration of environmental concerns and climate change effects effectively.** The promotion of IVS development is premised on environmental benefits as a climate-smart method of agricultural production that is expected to reduce deforestation and aligns with MAFS emphasis of IVS cultivation for rice production through various policies and legislations.⁷⁴ Despite this, there is no clear environmental/climate change screening plan included in ACL intervention design. Selection of OFSP for cultivation is not based on the same purported environmental benefits.

92. **Environmental considerations are included within various activities, with noted gaps.** During community selection, WFP and the MAFS are expected to engage with community leaders, youth and women including explanation of climate-sensitivity of action and the need to conserve the environment (no burning, no deforestation of the catchment area).⁷⁵ Other key environmental considerations in the design of ACL interventions include training on community-level compost production to reduce reliance on inorganic fertilizers and planting crops/perennial trees around IVS water catchment areas to prevent drying of swamps. Importantly, these considerations do not seem uniform in IVS development, as a KII with FEW in Tonkolili recommended planting crop trees in water catchment areas to prevent water from drying in the future. The widespread use of inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, and inadequate container management pose threats to the environment.

To what extent have lessons learned based on previous WFP ACL interventions informed the current ACL intervention adjustment/redesign and positively contributed to improvements in the approach since 2020?

93. **Per key informant interviews with WFP ACL programme teams, the “strategy” for ACL interventions is evolving, with flexible and agile approaches based on context.** Broadly speaking, these changes have responded to recommendations from previous analytical work, notably the 2018 PRRO decentralized evaluation⁷⁶ which recommended a shift in resources and focus from short-term FFA programmes under the PRRO to longer-term, sustainable resilience interventions under SO4 of the current CSP. Main adaptations and gaps are highlighted in Table 9 below. Additional details are provided in Annex 8: Design responsiveness to recommendations.

⁷⁴ The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Sierra Leone Land Degradation Neutrality National Report. 2018,

⁷⁵ WFP, MAFS. Checklist for Food Assistance for Asset assisted Inland Valley Swamp Development Implementation, Community-level. N.d.

⁷⁶ WFP. 2018. Final evaluation of Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200938: ‘Rebuilding food and nutrition security and strengthening disaster management capabilities in Sierra Leone’.

Table 9 Incorporation of lessons learned

Recommendation area	Progress
Increasing integration of complementary resources such as tools, seeds, financial support and technical advice	The ACL intervention strategy has increasingly incorporated these complementary resources. However, the frequent call for additional inputs by some smallholder farmers (especially fertilizers) underscores the necessity for tailored support based on the FBO capacities.
Mainstreaming nutrition considerations within ACL interventions	The visibility of efforts to mainstream nutrition considerations within ACL interventions was mixed in field data collection. Integration of nutrition-smart agricultural practices were very visible with every FBO describing benefitting from vegetable cultivation, and many described increased access to nutritious foods through these initiatives. Moreover, deliberate efforts were made to establish linkages between Mother Support Groups (MSGs) and FBOs. However, despite training FBOs to cultivate nutrition-sensitive crops such as OFSP, full realization of this aspect was still in its nascent stages during data collection, particularly evident in Moyamba. There was scant evidence of nutrition education/training and capacity strengthening among FBOs and OFSP Women's groups. Only one focus group discussion mentioned "behaviour change" related to nutrition in a broader sense, albeit not specifically linked to WFP outreach activities.
Reduce potential for conflict through community consultation and review of land use agreements	WFP has maintained its use of community-based approach to self-targeting for participation in ACL interventions, a good practice noted in the PRRO. Consistent identification of community involvement in site selection for IVS development responds to PRRO recommendations to review land ownership practices, though there is no specification in the checklist for IVS development that the land should be community-owned, as recommended in the PRRO evaluation. Most consulted stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the ownership arrangements, noting no significant incidents that could have disrupted IVS production activities. This outcome is partly credited to the proactive efforts of WFP in raising awareness regarding land rights, regulatory frameworks, land acquisition processes, and conflict prevention, as evidenced in Moyamba and Pujehun Districts. ⁷⁷ Nonetheless, challenges were identified in primary data collection. Based on feedback from two separate FGDs with FBOs in Kenema, site selection was still determined by chiefs and landowners without the inclusion of the broader community. A complication also emerged in Moyamba District when a mining company encroached upon the IVS. Landowners, primarily individual families in Ngiehun village, offered the site to the company, breaching the lease agreement and contrary to the wishes of most FBO members, underscoring continuing complexities in land use agreements. Feedback from the community-level CFM is reported at the CSP level rather than being activity-based to allow a deeper understanding of the issues and how these had been addressed.

Green: Progress made; **Light green:** progress with some gaps; **Orange:** progress with substantial gaps; **Grey:** Information gaps.

⁷⁷ Peace Building Fund, 2022. Endline Evaluation-Report Prepared for The Project: Mitigating Localised Resource-Based Conflicts and Increasing Community Resilience in Pujehun and Moyamba Districts of Sierra Leone, September 2022

2.2 EQ2: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE INTERVENTION ACHIEVED OR IS EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES? (EFFECTIVENESS)

Are intervention outcomes aligned with planned targets after 3 years?

94. The findings on this sub-question on effectiveness methodically detail ACL intervention achievements. The narrative encompasses accomplishments at activity and outcome levels.⁷⁸ While discussed separately, the ACL interventions are interconnected and target the same FBO members, except for specific OFSP sites catering to women benefiting from the women's economic empowerment project.

Finding 2. FFA, both in-kind and cash-based transfers, has been effective in initially incentivizing smallholder farmers' participation in labour-intensive tasks and encouraging financial inclusion through savings and supplementary access to finance. Transfer delays caused by late completion of agreed work outputs by farmers have led to disruptions in work cohesion, fluctuations in FBO membership, and potential dropouts.

95. **Feedback from smallholder farmers consulted confirms that transfers through FFA have been crucial in maintaining consistent FBO participation.** Additionally, FBOs have highlighted the benefits of cash transfers. Some members utilize the cash for household needs, while others use it to open bank accounts, encouraging savings and providing supplementary access to finance.

96. **Transfer delays have led to disruptions to FFA activities.** As per the IVS development checklist,⁷⁹ the first cash payment is expected in March after brushing, clearing, and de-stumping of the virgin land. Subsequently, a second payment is scheduled for April following the construction of essential infrastructure like the head bund, spillway, main drain, and peripheral canals. Both payments are contingent upon joint verification by WFP and MAFS to ensure the quality of work. However, delays in cash-based transfers by WFP to participating farmers have been a recurring challenge, as noted in a previous evaluation⁸⁰ and stakeholder consultations. These delays caused by late completion of agreed works by farmers disrupt work cohesion, affect group dynamics, and hinder the efficiency of FBOs in completing their tasks. Field extension officers observed dropouts in FBO membership, particularly after the second distribution of cash transfers. A joint assessment⁸¹ by WFP and MAFS also identified a lack of transfers as one reason for fluctuating FBO membership, in addition to members seeking paid jobs elsewhere or reliance on subsistence and commercial farming. The fluctuating FBO membership indicates that cash transfers alone may not sufficiently incentivize consistent participation in IVS cultivation.

Finding 3. The WFP model of IVS development has been the project's most significant achievement. It stands out for its strong emphasis on community empowerment, which facilitates sustainable asset maintenance and offers the potential for multiple crops per year at sites that can maintain surface water year-round. WFP took steps to adapt IVS agricultural practices to local soil conditions, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of farming practices. These efforts to promote environmental sustainability are commendable.

Inability to consistently maintain perennial swamps⁸² has limited the effectiveness of IVS development. Challenges include insufficient maintenance of irrigation infrastructure by FBOs, leading to issues like waterlogging, drying up of IVS sites, and uneven water distribution. WFP has taken steps to enhance the effectiveness of IVS development. However, a more explicit

⁷⁸ Output achievements are discussed in section 1.3.

⁷⁹ Checklist for Food Assistance for Asset assisted Inland Valley Swamp Development Implementation, Community-level WFP used the Three-Pronged Approach (3PA) to resilience building, particularly Community-Based Participatory Planning (CBPP) for Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) activities.

⁸⁰ Peace Building Fund, 2022. Endline Evaluation-Report Prepared for The Project: Mitigating Localised Resource-Based Conflicts and Increasing Community Resilience in Pujehun and Moyamba Districts of Sierra Leone, September 2022

⁸¹ WFP and MAFS, undated. Assessment of Agricultural Business Centers and WFP supported Farmer Based Organization Result and Report.

⁸² Perennial swamps retain surface water throughout the year, while seasonal swamps hold water for only a portion of the year.

environmental screening and management plan is yet to be implemented to address challenges comprehensively.

The development of the IVS was hailed by district MAFS staff and FBO participants as the project's most significant achievement. According to insights shared by the FEW and CYCs, a crucial, challenging aspect of swamp development is land preparation that involves manual labour. This challenge is reflected in the noticeable underrepresentation of women in these activities. Women participants in FBOs expressed consensus regarding the predominance of men's participation in IVS development activities due to their labour-intensive nature (

97. Table 10).

Table 10 Inland Valley Swamp Sites (2017-2023)

District	IVS size (Ha)	IVS development/ rehabilitation	Number of FBOs	Number of participants			
				Men	Women	Total	% Women
Kenema	1142	2020, rehab 21/23	16	672	415	1039	40%
Tonkolili	125.7	2017, rehab 22/23	13	472	254	726	35%
Kambia	86.27	2017, rehab 2023	10	284	153	437	35%
Koinadugu	54	2020, rehab 21/23	7	263	142	405	35%
Moyamba	300	2017, rehab 2023	31	145	808	2259	36%
Pujehun	426	2022, rehab 2023	49	1800	955	2755	35%

Source: Data supplied by WFP

98. **WFP took steps to adapt IVS agricultural practices to local soil conditions, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of farming practices.** This initiative was a result of conducted soil sampling across seven ACL intervention-targeted districts.⁸³ conducted under a wide-ranging memorandum of understanding with SLARI signed in March 2022. The findings indicated highly acidic soil conditions, with pH levels below the optimal range for growth in nearly all swamps, posing a challenge to fertilizer effectiveness. In response to these findings, WFP followed through with the recommendations to use straight fertilizers instead of compound fertilizers, which is commendable. However, this adjustment contributed to delays, particularly in late 2023, as straight fertilizers needed to be imported, and only compound fertilizer was readily available in the country.

99. **Inability to consistently maintain perennial swamps⁸⁴ has limited the effectiveness of IVS development.** An assessment on the quality of the rehabilitation of previously developed IVS sites with support from MAFS/WFP, revealed that (51 percent) of assessed sites dry up around March to April annually, the remaining 49 percent retain water throughout the year.⁸⁵ This evaluation highlights the continuing challenges in IVS water retention especially during the dry season. This issue needs further investigation but could be due to various factors such as insufficient water management practices, environmental changes, or inadequate infrastructure. Inadequate infrastructure was reflected in the same report, where over half (52 percent) of sites assessed did not have well-established and maintained head bunds. The sites with adequately maintained structures are likely to have better water retention capabilities, reducing the risk of

⁸³ Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), 2023. Draft report soil fertility assessment across WFP farm sites in seven districts in Sierra Leone. Submitted by Christen Charley Shaka, Rokupr Agricultural Research Centre (RARC), Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), April 2023

⁸⁴ Perennial swamps retain surface water throughout the year, while seasonal swamps hold water for only a portion of the year.

⁸⁵ MoA and WFP, 2023. Assessment of Agricultural Business Centers and WFP supported Farmer Based Organization Result and Report. Ministry of Agriculture: Fatmata Margai and Aminata WurieWorld Food Programme: Alimamy Sesay, Peter Abdulai, Abubakarr P. Kamara, Sheku Sesay, Joseph Bangura and Mohamed Kargbo.

drying up and providing consistent water supply for agricultural activities. In contrast, those sites with inadequate maintenance may face challenges in controlling water flow, leading to issues such as erosion, uneven distribution of water, and potential loss of soil fertility.

100. The importance of maintaining surface water year-round for food security outcomes was noted in field data collection, with those sites able to maintain water year-round providing the potential for multiple cropping per year (two to three). In contrast, other FBO participants mentioned that IVS sites were not viable during some parts of the year, reducing access to food. In one instance recalled by FEWs, excessive flooding occurred in a Moyamba District IVS in July/August 2023 due to heavy rains, resulting in decreased rice production. Informants explained that excessive flooding in IVS sites was also related to poor site selection.

101. **WFP has made commendable efforts to promote environmental sustainability; a more comprehensive and explicit environmental screening and management plan is needed.** One of the core principles guiding WFP's IVS development is the imperative to conserve the environment, emphasizing the avoidance of burning and deforestation in catchment areas. WFP has directly contributed to reforestation efforts. In 2021, WFP supported farmers in planting 3,900 tree seedlings to reforest degraded catchment areas, ensuring the long-term viability of assisted IVS for agricultural production.⁸⁶ Building on this effort, in 2022, WFP and MAFS collaborated to train farmers in tree planting techniques, supplying them with 21,000 economic tree seedlings to restore degraded areas. The impact of these initiatives is being monitored by WFP's Asset Impact Monitoring from Space (AIMS) unit in Rome, which will track their effect on water availability over time.⁸⁷ As discussed, challenges with excessive flooding, drying up of some IVS as well as inadequate maintenance of irrigation structures remain.

Finding 4. The ACL intervention training initiatives, particularly the Technical Package for Rice Production (TPRP), have been well received, described as comprehensive and effective in enhancing the technical expertise of extension services and smallholder farmers. Participants reported substantial gains in knowledge and skills across various agricultural areas, leading to improvements in farming practices and asset maintenance. Not all targeted groups received training as intended, there are gaps in documenting and reporting training outcomes, and farmers' ability to apply new skills was hampered by delays in input provisions.

102. **Internally, there is a notable underreporting of capacity strengthening results, including training outcomes, at both individual and FBO levels beyond some project-level assessments.** This makes it difficult to assess the transfer of skills or knowledge. Although data on the number of trained farmers is available (see Table 3), data on outcomes of training activities is not tracked systematically, nor is there evidence of pre- and post-training follow-up to assess change. This evidence gap is not unique to the WFP Sierra Leone. An Evaluation Synthesis of CCS conducted in 2021 reconfirmed the observation of the 2017 CCS policy evaluation which found that monitoring and evaluation of CCS remains "weak and inconsistent, limiting WFP's ability to showcase and learn from its work".⁸⁸ No specific barriers to measurement were mentioned in interviews with stakeholders.

103. **While it is not feasible to comprehensively assess results, primary and secondary data affirm the effectiveness of trainings in changing farmer practices.** Training sessions were described as comprehensive, covering a diverse range of topics aimed at augmenting rice agricultural productivity. MAFS extension workers and CYCs highlighted the knowledge and skills gained in various areas, including IVS development, water management, nursery establishment, vegetable production, pond maintenance, weeding techniques, application of fertilizer for increased production, post-harvest management, pest management, quality control, and production of nutritious foods, particularly vegetables, amongst others.

104. Feedback from FBOs indicates significant improvements in knowledge and skills related to good farming practices following trainings. They expressed satisfaction with the training on water management, proper utilization of fertilizers, and enhanced post-harvest management techniques, enabling them to dry and store rice effectively. Moreover, training on FBO governance, gender sensitivity, and financial

⁸⁶ ACR 2021

⁸⁷ ACR 2022. Results from AIMS were not published at the time of ER drafting.

⁸⁸ "Evaluation Synthesis of evidence and lessons on country capacity strengthening from decentralized evaluations" (OEI/2020/005)

management within VSLAs was commended for its contribution to enhancing transparency, accountability, and gender equality within FBOs.

105. Secondary data from the JBP endline evaluation⁸⁹ supports qualitative findings with most of the sampled farmers reporting applying the TPRP, the use of tarpaulins, and threshing at both household and FBO site level. However, the report also identified gaps in applied practices, with sampled farmers less likely to report milling, performing quality checks of food stock, or applying warehouse management. Additionally, according to this survey, the application of good practices slightly decreases at the household level compared to the FBO level, likely due to most project activities being conducted at the FBO level.

106. OFSP women's groups were trained in their communities by MAFS utilizing the farmer field school (FFS) methodology, which involved hands-on demonstrations covering the entire production cycle. MAFS Block Extension Supervisors (BES) and Frontline Extension Workers (FEWs), responsible for this farmer training, underwent a trainer-of-trainers program facilitated by a master trainer from SLARI during a one-day session. However, during consultations with SLARI, informants were unaware of any MoU with WFP or the conducted training, highlighting potential gaps in internal coordination within the organization and coverage of training. Furthermore, it was noted that not all women's groups had received training in OFSP, as emphasized by a group in Kambia.

107. **The ability of farmers to apply good practices promoted in trainings has been hampered by delays in input provisions.** For instance, delays in the supply of fertilizers have been reported annually. In Pujehun, informants noted delays in the supply of fertilizers for the 2022/23 season due to import delays. In the previous year, fertilizers arrived in August/September instead of the expected April/May timeline, resulting in suboptimal yields attributed to the high-water levels during that period. Additionally, farmers expressed dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of liquid fertilizers provided in 2022 and have since shifted to using dry fertilizers, particularly NPK 15-15, for improved results.

Finding 5. Integration of a nutrition-sensitive approach to ACL interventions has led to diversification of crops, increased numbers of smallholder farmers engaged in green leafy vegetable production and increased yields. The involvement of Mother Support Groups in promoting complementary foods and the cultivation of crops like orange fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) demonstrates tangible progress towards improved nutrition outcomes at the community level and strengthened women's empowerment. Post-harvest loss continued to be challenge, requiring increased support to improve storage and preservation practices. Other challenges are mainly related to coverage and supply chain, including insufficient funding to increase coverage, and difficulties in sourcing raw materials.

108. The nutrition-sensitive agriculture initiative under SO4 is being implemented in collaboration with the WFP nutrition unit, employing an integrated approach. The activities encompass capacity strengthening and the cultivation of nutrition-sensitive crops and vegetables, OFSP and connecting mother support groups (MSG) producing locally made enriched complementary foods to FBOs producing these nutritious foods.

109. **Primary and secondary data confirm the effectiveness of integrating a nutrition-sensitive approach to ACL interventions, resulting in increased production of nutritious food.** According to the JBP endline results, the involvement of smallholder farmers in market gardening has increased significantly, rising from 8 percent at baseline to 26 percent. Results in Tonkolili showcase the transformative results, with vegetable cultivation rising from only 2 percent of households at baseline to approximately one-third of households participating at the time of the endline survey. Production of nutritious food was confirmed in primary data collection with the ET observing leafy green vegetable nurseries in most districts. The JBP endline evaluation also highlights rising vegetable yields, from 174 kg/ha to 616 kg/ha between baseline and endline assessments. This suggests that support, including trainings and input provision, has been effective in improving farmer productivity.

110. Increased involvement of smallholder farmers in market gardening indicates a positive shift towards diversified and nutritious food production. This not only enhances the dietary diversity and nutritional intake of farming communities but also opens new income-generating opportunities for them. However, post-

⁸⁹ WFP, 2022. Strengthening capacities and resilience of vulnerable and food insecure smallholder farmers through nutrition and market sensitive approaches and practices in targeted communities in Sierra Leone - JBP201122 (2017-2022). Japan Bilateral Project Endline Report November 2022.

harvest losses continue, underscoring the need for improved storage and preservation practices. There was limited data available concerning whether activities resulted in increased consumption of nutrient-rich food at the household level.

111. **The OFSP cultivation pilot has produced notable results, both for MSGs to produce complementary foods and to support diversification objectives within the Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) strategy.** According to the HGSF OFSP Pilot report,⁹⁰ integration of OFSP into the HGSF programme has generated approximately 8,600USD in income for 750 women smallholder farmers and contributed to the dietary diversity and addressing micronutrient deficiencies for over 17,000 beneficiaries over five weeks in Term 1 of the 2023-2024 academic year. Despite achievements, the same assessment identified several challenges related to OFSP cultivation, including the encroachment of small ruminants into OFSP fields, particularly impacting farms located within communities. Pest attacks, such as those from millipedes affecting tubers, were also noted. Additionally, challenges arose from underweight vines and the mixing of different varieties in one bag, an observation also noted by the Evaluation Team. MAFS district staff reiterated that delays in vine delivery resulted in reduced quality during transit, leading to poor germination.

112. **Primary data collection did not reveal substantial findings on the effectiveness of SBCC to promote consumption of nutrient-rich foods.** Notably, given the breadth of ACL interventions to explore, assessing the effectiveness of SBCC was less prioritised over other components of the ACL interventions. The JBP endline evaluation does highlight some achievements in SBCC, reporting an increase in coverage of nutrition messaging, with an increase in sampled farmers reporting knowledge of foods to be eaten for healthy growth (though a notable proportion of respondents did not identify consumption of fruits and vegetables as important). However, the assessment also revealed gaps in coverage, particularly in Kenema and Pujehun.

113. **Most respondents emphasized the significant empowerment and economic opportunities brought about by nutrition-sensitive agriculture in targeted communities.** A group visited in Kenema had harvested high quality OFSP and were very excited about being part of the project. Through the facilitation of community structures like MSGs, individuals have experienced both economic and social empowerment.

114. **Despite these achievements, several challenges persist primarily related to coverage and supply chain challenges.** Limited resources have impeded WFP 's efforts to reach all targeted communities, with some MSGs unable to conduct outreach sessions in other areas. Additionally, not all communities have both MSGs and FBOs, and some communities have neither. This leaves some communities without interventions or with limited integration of nutrition and ACL intervention interventions. Additionally, supply chain challenges such as sourcing raw materials for production sites and competition from external buyers offering higher prices have hindered the scaling up of production of nutrition-sensitive crops.

Finding 6. Anecdotal feedback from FBOs and MAFS suggests that the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) are highly successful in improving savings habits and providing members access to finance. VSLAs have also facilitated an important shift towards a business mindset among SHFs, increasing engagement in income-generating activities and providing tangible contributions to community development. At the time of the evaluation, the impact of VSLAs on broader financial inclusion was limited by its low coverage. Scaling up this important activity is now being planned by WFP.

115. **Based on FBO and MAFS feedback, VSLAs serve as a crucial mechanism for financial inclusion and empowerment, facilitating economic growth and stability within communities.** District MAFS staff described VSLAs as ground-breaking, providing positive multiplier effect encouraging farmers to save and increasing their access to finance, leading to benefits that extend to other communities. Additionally, FEWs and CYCs noted that VSLAs had significantly improved the lives of smallholder farmers by providing a structured financial management system. They observed that many farmers previously lacked a business mindset, but with VSLAs, they are now engaging in farming for business and making tangible contributions to community development.

⁹⁰ WFP. 2023. Home-Grown School Feeding: Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato Pilot.

116. All FBOs emphasized the pivotal role of VSLAs in providing access to finance, especially in rural areas where formal banking infrastructure may be lacking. This accessibility offers a viable and affordable alternative for community members who previously depended on microfinance institutions with exorbitant interest rates. This affordability encourages members to engage in income-generating activities, thereby enhancing their financial prospects. Utilisation of VSLA funds to purchase productive assets was reported in FGDs where some FBO members had used the money from VSLAs to buy livestock. Additionally, FBOs consistently emphasized that VSLAs promote improved savings habits among participants through comprehensive training on financial management.

117. **Currently, VSLA effectiveness is hampered by low coverage.** However, WFP has plans to expand VSLA activities to establish an additional 95 VSLAs across the seven districts targeted under its ACL interventions. These VSLAs are expected to play a crucial role in enhancing financial inclusion, fostering a culture of self-reliance, and strengthening cohesion among FBO members.

118. **Currently, WFP Sierra Leone does not track any indicators in ACR reporting associated with VSLA performance nor have any monitoring results been generated.** VSLAs are relatively new within the suite of ACL interventions, with the piloting of VSLAs beginning in 2021.⁹¹

Finding 7. Linkages to WFP markets facilitated through ACL interventions have provided significant economic benefits for FBOs and women's groups through WFP procurement. Many FBOs expressed satisfaction with selling to WFP markets, citing better prices and facilitated bulk sales. Delays in product pick-up and payment persist, with FBOs frustrated because of the lengthy quality control and administrative processes that WFP undertakes, despite improvements. WFP's intention to expand market access for assisted FBOs requires clearer articulation, with several obstacles identified in reaching markets outside of WFP.

119. **Farmers have benefited from selling rice, vegetables and OFSP through FBOs and women's groups to the HGSF program.** Based on ACR data, WFP has transferred nearly USD 180,000 between 2020 and 2023 through WFP-supported aggregation systems (see Figure 7). At a smaller scale, the OFSP pilot has generated approximately USD 8,600 for 750 women.⁹²

120. **Despite payment delays, FBOs expressed favourable sentiments regarding selling to WFP markets, citing better rice prices, facilitated bulk sales through aggregation sites, proper weighing of rice, and provision of packaging materials.** FBOs largely attributed payment delays to late pick-ups of commodities. From the SLCO staff perspective, these delays are due to necessary processes like quality control, which are standard procedures. These delays, coupled with perceived lengthy administrative processes, are a source of frustration for FBOs. This creates a tension between FBOs' need for timely payments and WFP's commitment to thorough quality assurance. Work done by WFP to address these issues in 2022 and 2023, have resulted in improvements to these processes.

121. **Accessing markets beyond WFP remains challenging, though some farmers are clearly benefiting.** The JBP endline evaluation⁹³ showed that only 47 percent sold through FBOs while 66 percent reported to have sold their harvest directly to the market. Reliance on WFP markets were more dominant in the WFP/MAFS joint assessment, where 67 percent of supported FBOs exclusively sold to WFP. In qualitative data, only FBOs in Moyamba and some FBOs/women's groups in Tonkolili and Pujehun reported selling to markets beyond WFP. Producers noted challenges stemming from competition with non-participating FBOs. Additionally, women farmers in Kenema highlighted difficulties selling their production to the market in cities because of the distance and the lack of appropriate transportation. The lack of adequate transportation exacerbates the difficulties posed by insufficient storage facilities and processing techniques.

Finding 8. Between 2020 and 2022, rice volume and value obtained from smallholder farmers through WFP-supported aggregation surpassed targets due to increased production, yield

⁹¹ ACR, 2021, ACR 2022

⁹² WFP, 2023. Home-Grown School Feeding: Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato Pilot. Diversifying school meals in Sierra Leone, October 2023.

⁹³ WFP, 2022. Strengthening capacities and resilience of vulnerable and food insecure smallholder farmers through nutrition and market sensitive approaches and practices in targeted communities in Sierra Leone - JBP201122 (2017-2022). Japan Bilateral Project Endline Report November 2022.

improvement, and surplus sales to WFP facilitated by comprehensive agronomic training. Post-harvest losses, while reduced through improved post-harvest management techniques following training, remain a barrier to maximizing results. Further optimization of rice quality knowledge and additional support to ease labour associated with IVS and enhance post-harvest management are crucial to support effectiveness.

122. **Primary and secondary data confirm that rice production and yields have increased due to asset creation activities.** Increased yields supported the overachievement of targets for the volume of smallholder sales through WFP-supported aggregation systems in 2022 (see Figure 7). In qualitative data collection, all stakeholders noted benefits to production and yields as a primary result of ACL interventions. This finding is consistent with the JBP endline evaluation results, which showed an overall increase of rice production by over 60 percent per household in 2022 compared to the baseline. Similar results were observed in the 2023 IVS Rice Yield Report, where the average rice yield was at 2.7 metric tons per hectare, with an average production of 7.98 metric tons.

123. **Production and yield increases have varied between districts.** This variation is highlighted in the 2023 IVS Rice Yield Report. Tonkolili district recorded the highest production, albeit with a moderate yield.⁹⁴ Conversely, Kambia (not covered by the JBP endline) witnessed decreased production, while Kenema district exhibited low yields, potentially due in part to soil acidity, which reduces nutrient availability and overall plant growth and yields. In the JBP endline evaluation, increases were widespread across all districts, with Kenema notably experiencing the highest quantity of rice production per household, up by over 120 percent.

124. **The provision of farm inputs, such as seeds, fertilizers, and tools, proved to be particularly beneficial in increasing yields.** In primary data collection, stakeholders, including smallholder farmers, unanimously agree that capacity building with material support contributed to increased rice production, enhanced yields, and decreased post-harvest losses. MAFS district staff and FBOs emphasized the need for continued technical support to ensure continued implementation of activities.

125. **Post-harvest losses, while improved, continue to reduce effectiveness of ACL interventions.** The JBP endline evaluation shows a notable reduction of 71 percent compared to the baseline in the three analysed districts (Kenema, Pujehun, and Moyamba) with variation by district. Pujehun exhibited the highest post-harvest loss rate at 17 percent, contrasting with 8 percent in Kenema and Tonkolili. Nonetheless, Pujehun also demonstrated the most significant improvement, with losses dropping from 90 percent to 17 percent. JBP endline evaluation quantitative data was corroborated by FGD findings whereby smallholder farmers reported improved storage and handling after training, no longer storing rice on the ground in farms for several days after harvest, resulting in substantial losses.

126. Despite these advancements, the same JBP endline evaluation revealed that many farmers do not feel confident in implementing other post-harvest management techniques, such as warehouse management, stock quality control, and milling, with only 45 percent expressing proficiency. Limited storage facilities, inadequate drying floors, and delayed pickup of rice and OFSP by WFP were cited as the main obstacles to reducing post-harvest losses in primary data collection. Addressing these challenges is essential to further reduce post-harvest losses and improve overall agricultural efficiency.

Finding 9. Qualitative and quantitative data suggest that ACL interventions contribute to improved food security, particularly through IVS development leading to increased food production. Extension staff predominantly highlighted increased rice production, and women's groups and smallholder farmers emphasized improvements in nutrition due to increased dietary diversity and general food stability.

127. **Most of the reported food security indicators show an improving food security situation for project beneficiaries.** The new ECMEN indicators, introduced in 2023 highlights continuing economic barriers to meeting food security needs. As discussed in section 1.3, the indicators used are insufficient to assess long-term food security, instead representing the short-term effects of food/cash transfers.

128. **ACL intervention contributions to food security are also demonstrated through better food security outcomes of ACL participants when compared to national measurements as reported in the annual FSMS.** ACL intervention participants were more likely to have an acceptable FCS and lower reduced

⁹⁴ Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, 2024. IVS Rice Yield Report 2023 Cropping Season

CSI (rCSI) score, on average, compared to national estimates (Table 11). Data was not available to compare FES with national estimates. This comparison highlights the buffering effect of ACL interventions within the context of deteriorating food security over the past ten years.

Table 11 Comparison of ACL intervention beneficiary and national food security outcome measurements

	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	ACR	FSMS ⁹⁵	ACR	FSMS ⁹⁶	ACR	FSMS ⁹⁷	ACR	FSMS ⁹⁸
FES	65%	--	No data	--	84%	4% ⁹⁹	66%	5%
FCS (% acceptable)	35%	34%	34%	21%	46%	29%	49%	29%
rCSI	11.2	12.7	7.9	13.78	1.7	9.9	5.4	8.3

Source: ACRs. **Dark Green**: better than national average; **orange**: worse than national average; **grey**: no comparison data

129. Qualitative data confirms ACL intervention contribution to improved food security with all categories of community-level stakeholders included in qualitative data collection stating improvements in food security and nutrition security. Extension staff predominantly highlighted increased rice production as evidence of food security, whereas women's groups and smallholder farmers emphasized improvements in nutrition security in terms of dietary diversity and general food stability. The IVS development emerged as the primary driver of the enhanced food security situation across all districts.

What have been the major factors (including COVID-19), positively or negatively influencing the achievements of outputs and outcomes of the activities?

Finding 10. WFP's integrated, flexible and comprehensive approach to building resilience, customized to local conditions and capabilities, has significantly contributed to the success of ACL interventions. This has been complemented by a strong collaboration with MAFS and engagement with CYCs at grassroots level. Direct engagement with farmers enabled the CO to adapt to local needs, contributing to positive results. Using FFA (both in-kind and cash-based) was an important avenue for the extremely poor to engage in resilience-strengthening activities. The main negative factors influencing achievement of results were related to WFP procurement and payment delays, land tenure issues, and climate change risks.

130. **ACL intervention strategic design, in line with WFP's Resilience Policy, enhances effectiveness through multi-sector and multi-layered activity implementation, seeking to address both the immediate and root causes of hunger.** WFP staff consistently characterize the strategy as "integrated," incorporating nutrition-sensitive and gender-responsive activities. Activities appropriately operate at multiple levels (individual, household, community, and government), adopting a systems-based approach, engaging multiple sectors and stakeholders, and tailoring actions to the specific context. This framework has guided WFP in the effective layering, integration, and sequencing of cross-sectoral actions with national government strategies and partner-supported programs. Although the WFP's resilience building strategy is not formally documented, it encompasses several foundational elements that provide guidance on designing and implementing activities within Area-Based Livelihoods Coordination initiatives.

131. **Direct engagement with farmers and strengthening their capacities facilitates the sustainable development and maintenance of the IVS ecosystem.** The model utilized in the development

⁹⁵ January 2020 FSMS

⁹⁶ August 2021 FSMS

⁹⁷ January 2022 FSMS

⁹⁸ February 2023 FSMS

⁹⁹ August 2022 FSMS

of IVS stands out for its strong emphasis on community empowerment. This compares favourably to other implementers that make use of service providers. The planning process, necessitating detailed assessments of the capacities and vulnerabilities of women, men, girls, boys, people with disabilities, and minority groups within target communities, facilitated through CFVSA ensures activity relevance to community needs. Moreover, WFP's utilization of the three-pronged approach (3PA) to inform programming decisions, particularly seasonal livelihood programming, empowers communities to collaboratively determine targeting and intervention selection through Community-Based Participatory Planning (CBPP).

132. **WFP's flexible and agile approach to resilience building, responding to local contextual needs and capacities, is essential in the realization of benefits for smallholder farmers.** Described by WFP staff as flexible and agile, the ACL intervention strategy remains adaptable, capable of adjusting or shifting strategies in response to new information or contextual changes. This flexibility is key to positive results on the ground. Emphasizing experimentation and shared learning, the strategy involves piloting multiple activities with beneficiaries, acknowledging the potential for gaps as a learning opportunity. These activities are not rigidly layered but are guided by contextual livelihood challenges, ensuring relevance and effectiveness within each community, a characteristic appreciated by MAFS staff at district levels.

133. WFP has exemplified this flexibility in its utilisation of peacebuilding as an entry point for resilience-building efforts, as evidenced in Pujehun and Moyamba under the Peace Building Fund project, which concluded in 2021. Interventions were directed towards mitigating local conflicts involving communities, government entities, and the private sector, particularly disputes over agricultural land and mining activities. To provide livelihood opportunities to community members affected by these conflicts, WFP initiated IVS development projects. Positive outcomes recorded in Pujehun and Moyamba highlight the significance of peaceful relations in promoting social cohesion and supporting asset development initiatives. Subsequently, WFP extended peacebuilding activities to the Falaba district, targeting conflict-affected communities consisting of cattle herders and crop farmers. By focusing on ten bordering communities within the Falaba district and earmarking approximately 50 hectares of inland valley swamps, WFP aimed to address underlying conflict drivers and promote sustainable peace.

134. **WFP's strong partnership with MAFS has contributed to significant outcomes.** Formalized through memorandums of understanding at the central level and implementation agreements at the district level, this collaboration has facilitated the effective implementation of ACL interventions. MAFS personnel at all levels, including BESs and FEWs, expressed appreciation for WFP's support. Discussions with MAFS staff revealed significant improvements in knowledge and skills related to ACL interventions.

135. The BES and FEWs assigned to each block play a crucial role in monitoring and implementation of ACL interventions. WFP ensures their effectiveness by providing monthly mobility support stipends and offering extensive training opportunities. Prior to the rollout of any Farmer Field School activities, WFP collaborates with technical specialists from institutions such as the Agricultural Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture headquarters, JICA, FAO, and Helen Keller International to conduct Training of Trainers sessions for block extension staff. This approach incentivizes MAFS staff and enhances the efficacy of ACL intervention implementations.

136. **Gaps in MAFS capacity, especially related to irrigation structures and environmental protection, pose challenges to ACL intervention effectiveness as do specific cases of limited commitment.** While the MAFS is well-equipped to provide technical support for various aspects of ACL interventions, such as the siting and design of irrigation structures and extension services, there are clear capacity gaps in adhering to international standards for irrigation structures as highlighted by some informants and secondary data. Additionally, there is a recognized necessity to prioritize environmental protection and management within catchment management practices. There have also been some gaps in activity monitoring in specific cases, notably in Kambia district. This was largely attributed to limited commitment, something that will require further review.

137. **Engagement with CYCs at grassroots level helps compensate for gaps in MAFS capacity.** At the grassroots level, WFP collaborates with a cohort of young agriculturalists (CYCs), identified as promising influencers within their communities. These individuals undergo comprehensive training and receive monitoring and mobility support similar to Ministry extension workers. This approach addresses the challenge of a low ratio of extension workers to population faced by the Ministry, providing a network to support agricultural development initiatives. Despite occasional challenges, this partnership structure offers

a manageable framework for the Ministry to engage with communities effectively. However, there is no clear sustainability strategy to incorporate CYC payments within MAFS operations; continuation of support is likely dependent on continued WFP payments.

138. **FFA has proven to be an important incentive and provides an avenue for the extremely poor to engage in resilience-strengthening activities; the impact on long-term resilience is unclear.** Interviews with WFP partners support the use of FFA to stimulate IVS development, viewing it as a valuable entry point for enhancing community resilience capacities. Opinions diverge regarding its suitability for rehabilitation purposes, with concerns raised about the potential for dependency rather than fostering long-term resilience. In the absence of conclusive evidence regarding the latter, it becomes imperative to critically examine FFA's role in long term resilience building.

139. **Delays from WFP procurement quality requirements reduce ACL intervention effectiveness, contributing to post-harvest losses, reduced productivity and disincentivising FBO participation.** WFP's procurement quality requirements resulted in delayed collection of rice and OFSP from farmers leading to concerns among farmers about reduced volumes due to post-harvest losses. Additionally, farmers expressed frustration over delayed delivery of inputs, such as fertilizers and vines for OFSP, which disrupted production activities and contributed to decreased yields. These delays were confirmed in secondary data. On the other hand, WFP is constrained by internal procurement procedures, involving lengthy verification and quality checks processes. Moreover, procurement of specific fertilizer varieties, sometimes requiring importation, further exacerbates delays. Procurement teams also reported issues with late delivery of procurement plans from districts. However, delays are still experienced in some instances regardless of the timely submission of district procurement plans.

140. **Customary land rights governing areas for IVS development can raise risks for IVS development.** Lease agreements signed for the use of IVS sites serve as additional instruments to protect the rights of FBOs. Nevertheless, instances have been reported where these rights have been violated, such as when a family sold their land to a mining company in Moyamba, resulting in the dissolution of the FBO and adversely affecting IVS development (see Table 9).

141. **The impact of climate change continues to undermine the effectiveness of ACL interventions.** Despite WFP aligning ACL interventions to the cropping calendar, the delay of rains often delays in implementation of activities. Additionally, seasonal flooding resulting from inadequate drainage in undeveloped swamps impacts soil fertility and also contributes to low yields. The districts most susceptible to these disasters include Bo, Bonthe, Kailahun, Kambia, Kenema, Pujehun, Western Area Rural, and Western Area Urban, due to their vulnerability to seasonal flooding and the effects of climate change.¹⁰⁰ Rice, which contributes significantly to the agricultural gross domestic product (GDP), is particularly sensitive to increased humidity, intensified rainfall, and pests thriving in warmer temperatures.

Were results delivered equitably to specific groups including men, women, youth and people living with disabilities or other marginalized groups?

Finding 11. ACL interventions have been designed with attention to inclusivity, as affirmed by stakeholders' consistent recognition of the participation of women, youth, and to a lesser extent, persons with disabilities. Women particularly benefited from dedicated economic empowerment activities and leadership roles within FBOs and VSLAs, signalling progress in gender equity within ACL interventions. However, the fact that sampling plans are not designed to produce results that represent outcomes when disaggregated by gender, age or disability impedes comprehensive assessments of equitable benefits. Challenges also remain in fully integrating marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities, as WFP Sierra Leone does not systematically collect data on disabilities.

142. **Disaggregated data on disability is not systematically available, limiting comprehensive assessments of equitable benefits.** However, attention in design, and consistent stakeholder affirmation of the participation of women, youth, and (to a lesser degree) persons with disabilities, indicates that ACL interventions benefit participants equitably.

¹⁰⁰ Government of Sierra Leone, 2021. National adaptation Plan.

143. Quantitative assessment of differences in outcomes according to participant or head of household gender from ACR data is not possible as sample sizes are not designed to produce results that accurately represent outcomes when disaggregated by gender. However, the fact that FGD respondents consistently affirmed that households benefitted equally from IVS activities (and thus benefits from food or cash transfers) suggests that there should be no systematic differences in food security outcomes according to gender of head of household. Results are not disaggregated by gender of participating farmers to understand gender-specific outcomes.

WFP is taking steps to mitigate the fact that women have historically benefitted less from IVS development, including incorporation of activities specifically targeting women. The demanding physical requirements for IVS labour have limited women's participation in FFA activities (see

144. Table 10). As noted in one FGD, women with young babies may benefit less from ACL interventions as they need someone to care for their babies if they are to be able to work. The inclusion of women's economic groups has specifically targeted women not benefitting from IVS activities providing important income-generating opportunities. According to interviews with the ACL team, there have been improvements in gender equity of IVS activities since 2022 with sensitization and engagement to achieve equitable participation of men and women.

145. **Gaps in training of women's groups are reported.** Disparities exist in training implementation, with not all targeted groups receiving training as intended, particularly women's groups implementing OFSP in Kambia who faced limited extension support.

146. **Women have benefitted from both gender-targeted and gender-sensitive activities within ACL interventions.** Objectives to advance women's empowerment has been reflected in ACL intervention implementation through the promotion of women in leadership roles within FBOs and VSLAs. In qualitative data, trainings on FBO governance, gender sensitivity and financial management were noted for their effectiveness in increasing the number of women in leadership roles. However, the consistent underachievement of GEWE cross-cutting indicator on the "proportion of food assistance decision-making entity members who are women" suggests continuing barriers to increasing women's representation. Increasing efforts to integrate MSGs into FBOs supported by ACL interventions may increase achievements in the future.

147. **While a comprehensive analysis of youth inclusion is not possible, ACL intervention achievements in including youth are clear from stakeholder consultations and the mainstreaming of youth involvement in activity design.** Support for CYCs was an important component of ACL interventions promoting youth engagement in agriculture. Additionally, efforts were made to increase youth representation in leadership roles within FBOs and VSLAs. According to the checklist for asset and IVS development, youth were also included in the five-member Community Identification Committees (CICs) established in each vulnerable community targeted for asset rehabilitation/IVS development. The lack of age-disaggregated data for SO4 participants prevents quantitative assessments of youth's benefitting; age-disaggregated data on CYCs confirms that the majority were within the more expansive definition of 'youth' as between the ages of 15-35.

148. **There are limitations in the evaluation team's ability to assess disability inclusion.** IVS activities involve hard manual labour and are only available for 'able-bodied people'. However, according to FGDs, ACL interventions are successful in disability inclusion through representation by proxy, meaning households with people with disabilities are prioritised for inclusion. WFP does not systematically collect data on disabilities for a more comprehensive understanding.

2.3 EQ3: TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE INTERVENTION ACHIEVE AN OPTIMAL USE OF THE BUDGET AND TIME ALLOCATED (EFFICIENCY)

Finding 12. WFP has made optimal use of the allocated project budget, with all funds being utilized except for a 20% expenditure shortfall in 2022. However, delays in the delivery of inputs have been an ongoing concern, reducing timeline of support, and sometimes resulting in late cultivation, reduced yields, and reducing the efficiency of investment. WFP has undertaken several actions to address these issues and boost operational efficiency. The focus on improving yields has facilitated the commercialization of assisted farmers, evidenced by MAFS stock assessments reporting 115

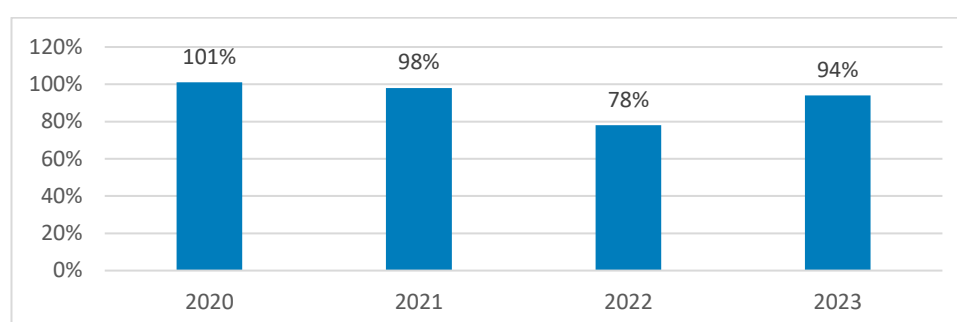
metric tons of locally produced rice available for market linkage. Late procurement of rice threatens to undermine the effectiveness (and thus efficiency) of FBO's.

To what extent were activities implemented in terms of timeliness and cost-effectiveness?

149. This section of the report considers the extent to which outputs were delivered in a timely manner. As quantitative data on timeliness of inputs against plans could not be obtained from WFP, the analysis is limited to information that was triangulated between documentation review, interviews and FGDs.

150. Expenditure against Implementation Plan have been high except for 2022 (Figure 14). The majority of the funding received is multiyear allocations. According to feedback from WFP staff, procurement delays and the high cost of equipment impacted spending in 2023. The ET was not able to receive feedback from WFP on reasons for the shortfalls in other years, especially in 2022.

Figure 14 SO4 Actual expenditure as percentage of implementation plan 2020-2023



Source: 2020-2023 ACRs.

151. **There have been consistent delays in the timely delivery of SO4 inputs, a concern highlighted in past evaluations and assessments.** This issue was further underscored during discussions with various stakeholders. Interviews with FBO and extension staff emphasized timeliness as a significant issue affecting multiple activities, as outlined in Table 12 summarizing the types of delays reported by stakeholders during district-level data collection. WFP and MAFS stakeholders in Freetown corroborated these findings, noting delays, especially in input support. Delays in input provision such as seeds and fertilizers and payments to farmers and other stakeholders has led to disappointment among smallholder farmers and extension staff. Some MAFS field staff noted that delays in procurement have negatively affected yields. Late payments for rice sold to WFP resulted in some participants losing confidence in the project, potentially fostering distrust among farmers.

Table 12 Stakeholder perceptions on timeliness of WFP support

Delays reported for:	Kenema	Moyamba	Pujehun	Tonkolili	Kambia
Seed cash for VSLA	X				X
Input supply (seeds, potato vines, fertilizer)	X	X	X	X	X
Compost preparation					X
Payment/pick-up for crops				X	X
Stipends			X		

Source: FGDs and KIIs conducted for the evaluation

152. **Although WFP endeavours to align with the agricultural calendar, there are delays in crop cultivation reducing the efficiency of investment.** A recent assessment of FBOs revealed widespread

instances of late rice cultivation. FBOs seem to adhere strictly to their own farming calendars, contributing to potential inefficiencies in production. Some areas also experience climate change-induced delays, such as late rains, impacting implementation. WFP staff at district level highlighted their efforts to catch up with the cropping calendar.

153. **There appears to be differing understandings within the WFP regarding the reasons for delays.** WFP staff recognize the time-consuming nature of the local procurement process, including payment procedures. WFP staff also perceives that requesting units and vendors often fail to submit their payment requests on time, citing issues such as lack of identity cards for verification, loss of SIM cards and lengthy quality checks, among others. Sometimes, the requesting unit submits procurement plans late, thereby delaying subsequent processes as requisition numbers and offer validity has time constraints. Late delivery of inputs can also be attributed to market shortages and the need for adequate farmer communication about procurement processes. Moreover, fluctuations in the local currency's value result in cost changes. While these processes are explained during onboarding, there seems to be insufficient understanding among stakeholders. Finally, some other staff express a lack of clarity regarding the causes of these delays, underscoring the need to enhance awareness and improve planning.

154. **The available data are inadequate for a comprehensive analysis of the extent to which WFP has minimized the cost of delivering SO4 inputs, and performance reporting by WFP does not systematically measure the cost-efficiency of their actions.** Some informants noted that WFP's expenditure on land preparation is relatively limited, suggesting that increased mechanization could enhance efficiency and allow for more timely completion of tasks, thus saving costs and time. Extension staff and FBO members reiterated concerns about the intensive nature of manual land preparation, with instances where FBO members fell ill due to the demanding work.

155. **There are instances where WFP has found ways to enhance efficiency.** These include:

- **Revised payment strategy for MAFS staff:** WFP funds to support MAFS extension staff to do monitoring of the project are now directly transferred to personal bank accounts. This avoids the potential diversion of funds through observed loopholes in the previous process when funds were routed through the district.
- **More data-driven estimates of fertilizer:** WFP has utilized GPS technology conducted by FEW to determine fertilizer quantities. Subsequent soil analysis tests by SLARI are expected to lead to support better fertilizer selection and more accurate quantities of fertilizer required.
- **Investing only in the highest-performing FBOs:** WFP/MAFS verification team evaluates performance and identifies the best FBOs to supply machinery making more efficient use of finite resources.
- **Benefits from MAFS technical expertise and field presence.** MAFS complements WFP's capacity by providing improved, short-duration seeds and fertilizer to FBOs on a loan basis. Examples include MAFS district officials' contributions towards pesticides to combat fall armyworms in Moyamba district.
- **Provision of power tillers to high-performing groups enhances efficiency and production:** Supply of processing machinery reduces post-harvest losses and lessens the labour burden on women who traditionally handle manual tasks.
- **Initiatives such as post-harvest management prioritize cost-conscious approaches to securing and preserving yields before collection.** Working with FBOs aims to enhance both efficiency (through strengthened governance) and effectiveness (via improved financial management).

What are the best practices for FBO set-ups and organization?

156. The strategy of ACL interventions relies on FBO organization to manage and organize work in IVS sites. WFP has noted variable performance of IVS sites and links this, in part, to the effectiveness of leadership structures within supported FBOs. The evaluation thus sought to identify best practices of FBOs that encourage smallholder farmer commitment to IVS cultivation and improved agronomic practices.

157. WFP and the MAFS conducted a joint assessment of FBOs and Agricultural Business Centres (ABCs) including assessment of the effectiveness of each FBO/ABC management in terms of transparency, accountability, and initiative.¹⁰¹ Positively, a large majority of FBOs executives were perceived as honest (93 percent) and keep proper farm records (72 percent). The evaluation team is limited in understanding how these characteristics impact overall performance, as the report does not seek to compare performance between 'better' and 'worse' FBOs.

158. **FBO accountability mechanisms were highlighted by FBOs as an important component to encourage the commitment of participating farmers while WFP staff emphasized strong leadership and the need for more men participating.** In FGDs, FBOs described detailed processes to encourage work, including enforcing labour commitments with associated fees if farmers are absent or late. Some FBOs also mentioned that work was divided into sub-groups as a good practice to enhance effectiveness/efficiency. In interviews with WFP district staff, staff highlighted the importance of strong leadership from the chief to encourage cooperation, ownership, and ease mobilization. The same KII reported that FBOs with more men were doing better because they could manage the workload compared to FBOs with high numbers of women. One FGD also emphasized the need for more men in FBOs.

159. Finally, MAFS stakeholders in Freetown highlighted a disconnect between the FBO chairperson, CYC and FEWs with the FBO chairperson not cooperative towards CYC work in the field. Given WFP's reliance on CYC's as essential outreach persons to increase capacity, their acceptance by FBOs is essential. No FBO members reported problems with the CYC suggesting that this is not a widespread problem.

160. **Importantly, findings from primary and secondary data do not suggest that FBO leadership is the most important factor driving relative success.** Rather, emphasis on poor performance is mainly attributed to issues in the sufficiency of inputs (cash/food for labour and farm inputs), with preference of some members to search for paid jobs as a more attractive use of their time. The joint assessment of FBOs reported that farmers do not see IVS cultivation as a rewarding investment especially when (many complained) it lacks payment, food support, medical support, rain gear and adequate hand and mechanized tools. These issues were reiterated in FGDs with FBOs who frequently cited the lack of tools and rain gear as barriers to cultivation, rather than FBO organization and leadership.

What is the efficiency of linking farmers to WFP procurement systems (rice and vegetables for school feeding) and local markets?

161. **The focus on improving yields has facilitated the commercialization of assisted farmers, as evidenced by MAFS stock assessments reporting 115 metric tons of locally produced rice available for market linkage.** Furthermore, WFP purchased 50 metric tons of locally produced rice from 36 assisted FBOs in Pujehun and Kenema districts, amounting to USD 34,752 in income for smallholder farmers. These activities were expected to especially benefit women and youth, though the absence of age and gender-disaggregated data prevents ET confirmation of benefits. The quantity and quality of locally procured rice were validated through independent laboratory analysis conducted by a private company.

162. **Linkages to local markets have been limited.** As discussed in the Effectiveness section, primary and secondary data point to continued barriers to local markets (see paragraph 123). Producers noted challenges including competition from non-participating FBOs, requirements to pay for stand fees, and lack of affordable transportation to move goods to market.

163. In contrast, farmers have appreciated the access and complementary support received when selling through WFP procurement systems. In the WFP/MAFS joint assessment, preference for selling to WFP was based on assurances of receiving payment in a lump sum, which can then be utilized for more productive purposes. In qualitative data, FBOs favoured selling to WFP markets, citing better rice prices, facilitated bulk sales through aggregation sites, proper weighing of rice, and provision of packaging materials.

164. **Delays in payments for rice threaten to undermine the effectiveness (and thus efficiency) of FBOs.** This was reported by the WFP/MAFS joint assessment where delays in payment for rice sold to WFP have led to dissatisfaction and suspicions regarding FBO leadership. As the majority of surveyed FBOs are

¹⁰¹ MoA and WFP, 2023. Assessment of Agricultural Business Centers and WFP supported Farmer Based Organization Result and Report. Ministry of Agriculture: Fatmata Margai and Aminata WurieWorld Food Programme: Alimamy Sesay, Peter Abdulai, Abubakarr P. Kamara, Sheku Sesay, Joseph Bangura and Mohamed Kargbo.

not keeping farm records, there is a clear issue of transparency that may undermine programme efficiency if farmers lose trust in the ACL interventions.

2.4 EQ4: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE INTERVENTION COMPATIBLE WITH OTHER INTERVENTIONS IN THE COUNTRY, SECTOR OR INSTITUTIONS (COHERENCE)

Was the activity adequately aligned with WFP Sierra Leone CSP overall especially in terms of linking with School Feeding and Nutrition programmes?

Finding 13. Internal coherence of ACL interventions, particularly alignment with CSP and synergies with school feeding and nutrition, demonstrates positive efforts to reinforce smallholder farmers' role and enhance food security. Collaboration between WFP units in ACL intervention implementation, especially in nutrition-sensitive agriculture training and local food production, exemplifies deliberate efforts to ensure alignment and effectiveness.

165. The alignment of ACL intervention strategy with the CSP,¹⁰² particularly in synergies with school feeding and nutrition, is evident and evolving. The CSP prioritized support to smallholder farmers to address food production challenges, emphasizing boosting rice production to sustainably feed school children. Under the nutrition-focused SO3, households of children in the school feeding program benefitted from complementary gender-responsive, nutrition-sensitive, and resilience-building activities. This integrated approach aimed to reinforce smallholder farmers' role across the value chain, including through direct purchase of locally produced food commodities and linking schools with FBOs supported by the FFA programme.

166. Interviews with WFP staff confirmed deliberate efforts to ensure internal coherence and alignment, facilitated by proactive communication and identification of opportunities between SOs. Since 2020, the nutrition unit has collaborated with ACL intervention implementation through nutrition-sensitive agriculture training, emphasizing the cultivation of diverse foods and balanced diets. Practical examples included linkages between MSGs and FBOs in producing local complementary foods in various districts. An assessment in August 2022 showed that all FBOs in Moyamba and Pujehun and some in Kambia had incorporated MSGs in their membership.¹⁰³

167. The shift in the School Feeding modality from central to an HGSP modality with local procurement further strengthened synergies with ACL intervention implementation under SO4.¹⁰⁴ While challenges such as predictable demand for OFSP remain, interventions were undertaken to train women smallholder farmers for OFSP cultivation and to procure and deliver the produce to schools.¹⁰⁵ This strategic alignment and collaboration between ACL interventions and school feeding programs demonstrate a concerted effort to enhance food security and nutrition outcomes within the CSP framework.

Alignment with national and sector-wide priorities, policies and strategies

Finding 14. Alignment with national priorities, policies, and strategies showcases a comprehensive approach addressing agriculture, gender/youth empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

168. Alignment with Government priorities is clearly formulated in the CSP, with WFP supporting specific government programs and priorities, particularly in agriculture transformation, exemplified by the alignment to Government's Feeds Salone initiative promoting the cultivation of OFSP.

169. **Agriculture:** The focus of ACL interventions is well aligned with both goal areas and cross-cutting priorities of the Mid-Term National Development Plan, the organisational framework for the national strategy. The focus on improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers is aligned with the inclusion of agriculture, promotion of food security, ending hunger and malnutrition and supporting economic growth as cross-cutting priorities in the MTNDP as well as being aligned with the National Sustainable Agriculture

¹⁰² WFP, 2019. Sierra Leone Country Strategic Plan (2020–2024)

¹⁰³ WFP, 2022. ACR.

¹⁰⁴ WFP, 2023. Home-Grown School Feeding: Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato Pilot- Diversifying school meals in Sierra Leone

¹⁰⁵ WFP SLCO, 2023. OFSP Pilot- Case Study

Development Plan 2010-2030's goal to increase food security and expand agricultural earnings. The promotion of rice cultivation through TPRP is aligned with the 2019-2025 National Agricultural Transformation Plan prioritisation of rice self-sufficiency while the inclusion of OFSP/vegetable cultivation responds to crop diversification priorities under the same Plan. Work capacitating Ministry of Agriculture District Officers is aligned with the inclusion of the development of an enabling environment and governance as a cross-cutting priority in the National Agricultural Transformation Plan. Finally, activities directly contribute to all four strategic goals of the Feed Salone programme released in October 2023.

170. However, the limited strategic engagement with the private sector is one noticeable divergence between the WFP's ACL intervention strategy and national agricultural priorities. Increased engagement with the private sector is emphasized in current agricultural policy, especially through the "Enhancing Private Sector Participation in Agriculture" scheme announced in 2021 (commonly known as the MAFS Policy Shift) seeks to reduce public spending while enhancing the role of the private sector.

171. **Gender/youth:** the promotion of women's participation and economic empowerment, including in leadership positions within FBOs and as CYCs and with dedicated women's economic empowerment activities, aligns with the government's promotion of GEWE, specifically through the GiAP commitments to improve women's access and control over productive resources and Policy Cluster 5 of the MTNDP focusing on empowering women, children, adolescents, and persons with disability by 2023. The provision of productive assets was mentioned in one interview with a CYC in Moyamba as specifically saving time/effort in milling, a task described as being done traditionally by women.

172. **Environment:** Work with MAFS to improve irrigation practices and cultivation of IVS is aligned with priority actions in the agriculture and food security sector of the National Adaptation Plan. Collaboration with SLARI for soil testing is coherent with research and knowledge management programmatic objectives under the National Adaptation Plan. While IVS activities are promoted in the CSP design as more environmentally supportive, it is important to address the absence of environmental screenings, which is a WFP requirement to mainstream environment.

173. ACL interventions strategic integration with other activities and strategic objectives under the CSP further aligns it with national priorities. Specifically:

- **School feeding:** Explicitly linking farmers supported with ACL interventions to the HGSP programme in some districts supports Sierra Leone's National School Feeding Policy.
- **Nutrition:** mainstreaming nutrition in ACL interventions through the provision of nutrition-sensitive trainings and support of OFSP/vegetable cultivation responds to addressing malnutrition as a cross-cutting priority of the MTNDP.

What have been the synergies between the ACL interventions and interventions from Civil society, UN wider programmes, etc. especially in regard to using the results of the CBPP? (external coherence)

Finding 15. There has been a concerted effort to maximize the impact of ACL interventions through strategic partnerships and alignment with broader development objectives. External coherence is evident through collaborations with civil society and UN programmes through co-leading on sustainable agriculture and food security under the UNDSDF, leveraging comparative advantages and aligning with Government and partner priorities on IVS development.

174. The synergies between ACL interventions and interventions from civil society and UN wider programs are evident through a focus on collaboration and partnerships, leveraging implicit areas of comparative advantage recognized by partners. External alignment is pursued through alignment with Government, UN, and partner priorities, as demonstrated by participation in the UNCT. WFP is co-leading the first outcome area of the 2020-2023 UNSDCF (sustainable agriculture and food security) with FAO and IFAD. Partners confirm the WFP's proactive engagement in needs assessment, collaboration with ministries, and participation in working groups on food security and agriculture.

175. Efforts to enhance synergies and complement activities, especially in IVS development and CBPP, involve discussions with partners such as IFAD, although concrete agreements have not yet been reached. Collaborative initiatives include capacity-building with Helen Keller International to develop small-scale

industries for baby food production and the OFSP platform, aimed at scaling up OFSP production with Irish Aid support. Furthermore, districts supported by JICA express willingness to create synergies in the rollout of technical rice packages, indicating a commitment to enhancing collaboration at the local level with MAFS and community structures. These efforts underscore a concerted approach to maximize the impact of ACL interventions through strategic partnerships and alignment with broader development objectives.

2.5 EQ5: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE INTERVENTION GENERATED SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECTS, INTENDED OR UNINTENDED AT A HIGH LEVEL? (IMPACT)

What were the intended and unintended effects and consequences of the intervention on project communities and others where available?

Finding 16. As intended, ACL interventions have generated significant positive impacts in increasing access to nutritious food, income generation, and community socio-economic development. ACL interventions also fostered social cohesion, helped to diversify the school meals, and promoted business-oriented farming approaches, leading to long-term socio-economic development within communities. Despite these positive results, monitoring data was insufficient to show whether nutrition activities had resulted in changes in nutrition outcomes at community level. Data indicates that ACL interventions alone are not adequate to sufficiently address the diverse and interrelated causes of chronic food insecurity and the annual occurrence of seasonal hunger. The evaluation team identified some unintended negative health effects reported for participants in IVS, including exposure to illnesses and injuries.

176. **FBOs and women's groups emphasized the benefits of improved access to a nutrient-rich diet, particularly for children's health.** Thanks to the training provided by WFP on OFSP and other vegetable cultivation, FBOs emphasized that everyone now had access to a healthy diet. They highlighted how this training has led to an increase in vegetable consumption among households, thereby contributing to overall improved nutrition. Additionally, communities had diversified their food sources, moving away from sole reliance on rice to include cassava and sweet potatoes. Women's groups similarly expressed that they can now enjoy a more balanced diet as they cultivate vegetables alongside other crops like rice, cassava, and sweet potatoes. They also noted the positive effects of this shift towards a more diverse and nutrient-rich diet, particularly on children's health. Furthermore, the linkage of some FBOs to MSGs processing factories has potentially granted direct access to markets, thereby encouraging broader increases in the supply of nutritious food. Finally, production of nutritious foods has directly benefitted school children through diversification of the school meals provided through the HGSP programme. ACL intervention-supported FBOs contributed OFSPs to school meals reaching over 17,000 beneficiaries in 73 schools across 5 districts.¹⁰⁶ While vegetable purchases for the HGSP are done by schools directly, and thus it is not known whether these FBOs were supported through ACL interventions, the overlap of HGSP programmes and ACL intervention support suggests that children have also benefitted from increased vegetable production through ACL intervention support.

177. Currently, there is no outcome monitoring of nutrition activities to monitor broader changes in nutrition outcomes at community level. The 2023 ACR did include the FCS-Nutrition score for the first time with results indicating that the sampled cohort has a higher consumption of Hem Iron-rich foods, protein and Vitamin A-rich foods compared to the 'baseline' value provided.

178. **Evidence indicates that, while WFP-supported ACL interventions have received high ratings from participants for enhancing food security, they are not adequate on their own to sufficiently address the diverse and interrelated causes of chronic food insecurity and the annual occurrence of seasonal hunger.** As highlighted in the context section (see paragraphs 14-16), food insecurity stems from a multitude of interconnected factors. While the ACL intervention strategy envisages a comprehensive approach to tackling food insecurity considering these various factors, including the widespread over-reliance of most of the population on rice as well as socio-economic, cultural, gender, environmental, and climatic factors, implementation has proved insufficient to fully overcome these factors.

¹⁰⁶ WFP. 2023. Home-Grown School Feeding: Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato Pilot.

179. **Increased income from participating in ACL interventions has helped smooth consumption patterns and contributed to higher-level impacts.** Community members involved in qualitative data collection highlighted that households utilized their funds to purchase rice when their own food stocks depleted, ensuring a consistent food supply, and reducing reliance on costly alternatives during lean periods. Income also contributed to higher-level impacts, including investment in children's education and financial inclusion through opening bank accounts. Additionally, women who participated in FFA highlighted their ability to leverage resources to hire labour for upland agriculture activities. This not only facilitated essential tasks but also generated income, contributing to their financial resilience.

180. **Participation in VSLAs has further bolstered income improvement efforts.** By joining VSLAs, households gained access to finance through savings and loans, empowering them to save money, access credit as needed, and invest in income-generating activities. Collectively, these strategies underscore a comprehensive approach to income generation and financial management, leading to improved household income and economic stability.

181. **Community socio-economic development was noted on multiple fronts, most notably through improved social cohesion.** Nearly all FBOs participating in FGDs highlighted improved social cohesion within communities, attributed to the collective efforts of ACL interventions. As conceptualized in the triple-nexus approach, support to peace fosters a supportive and cohesive environment for humanitarian and development assistance to be most effective. Other, less frequently mentioned results, include:

- The CYCs talked about a shift they had observed both at household and community levels, towards "farming for business," indicating a long-term positive impact on the local economy. This business-oriented approach to farming can lead to increased income generation, job creation, and overall economic development in the community.
- The assistance provided by FBOs in negotiating access to land for cultivation, along with the empowerment of women in decision-making, signifies a long-term shift towards increased land security and gender equity within the community. This can lead to more sustainable farming practices and improved livelihoods for all members.
- Initiatives such as purchase of a motorbike for transportation, and the creation of employment opportunities for CYCs contribute to improved community services.
- The allocation of part of the profit from rice sales towards developing a community centre in Pujehun demonstrates a long-term investment in communal infrastructure. Although still under construction, this initiative suggests a commitment to enhancing community development and support to agriculture development.

182. **The evaluation team identified negative unintended effects, exposing participants to direct risk.** Nearly all FBO participants mentioned that farmers became sick or obtained injuries while cultivating IVSs. While CFM reports are not collected at activity level to understand the prevalence of this issue, the fact that the JBP endline evaluation recommended planning for medical support highlights that this is a longstanding problem. One negative outcome of the increased yields is that farmers are exposed to risk when storing yields in their homes, with some FGDs mentioning that homes have been broken into. The OFSP pilot report also reports theft of OFSP. Finally, gaps in environmental safeguards have also unintentionally exposed farmers to risk, especially in inadequate fertilizer container management. Water management has not been maximized with insufficient maintenance of irrigation infrastructure leading to issues like flooding, drying up of IVS sites, and uneven water distribution.

Have the WFP ACL interventions empowered or developed and supported women's and youth's leadership and independence of targeted populations?

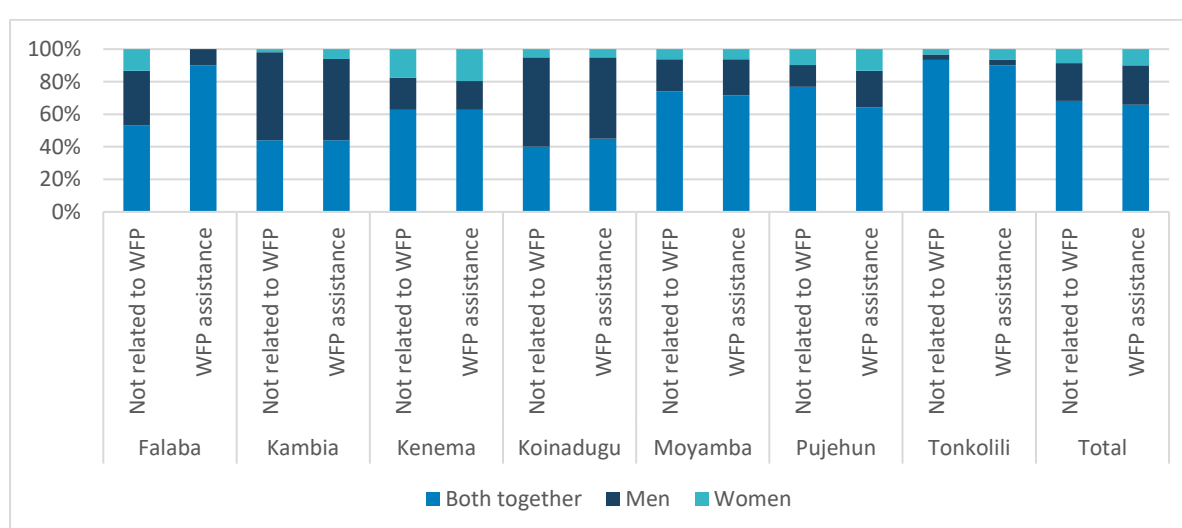
Finding 17. ACL interventions have played a significant role in supporting women and youth to become leaders within their communities, fostering gender-transformative work. However, barriers to women's inclusion in decision-making processes persist, highlighting ongoing gender disparities within communities. Further gender mainstreaming efforts could foster greater gender transformation.

183. **Observations and consultations with FBOs, women's groups, and extension staff have demonstrated the significant role ACL interventions have played in developing and supporting women's and youth's leadership within communities; relevant monitoring data is not available for more comprehensive analysis.** This progress can be attributed to robust governance training packages and targeted interventions, such as the OFSP programme. The evaluation team noted that women have assumed leadership positions as chairpersons of FBOs and VSLAs and that women demonstrated their ability to actively contribute and express their views in mixed gender groups during qualitative data collection. While gender-disaggregated data is available for FBOs, it does not specify positions of members to confirm widespread changes in leadership. Furthermore, though women were confident in expressing their views in FGDs, this may differ from their actualized control over FBO governance decisions. WFP's CRF data highlights continuing barriers to women's inclusion at community level with women's participation in FBOs below targets for all years measured (see paragraph 63).

184. **Gender transformative work has reportedly contributed to changing some gender norms.** In KIIs with WFP staff, staff highlighted the positive results for gender empowerment, including changing gender norms through integrating men into nutrition-sensitive activities. However, these same stakeholders note the need for further gender mainstreaming.

185. **There were limitations in ET ability to determine decision-making dynamics at the household level due to the community-based nature of ACL interventions.** Data from the May 2023 PDM indicates that decision-making over household resources is predominantly a collaborative effort for both decisions over WFP assistance (66 percent) and resources not related to WFP assistance (68 percent, Figure 15). While the ET could not identify secondary data sources to compare these results to national averages to make any clear contribution claim to WFP, qualitative data collection highlighting the improved status of women at community level because of ACL interventions (discussed above) could be assumed to contribute to changes in household level dynamics. However, it's noteworthy that men continue to make decisions solely over both WFP assistance (24 percent) and resources not related to WFP assistance (23 percent). This illustrates a continuation of the traditional gender dynamic where men often hold primary decision-making authority within the household. Conversely, women were less likely to make decisions independently (10 percent over WFP assistance, 9 percent over other resources). Joint decision-making also varies by district. However, sample size is not calculated to provide representative results when disaggregated by district. Thus, the ET cannot draw conclusions on whether there are true differences in gender norms according to district. Finally, there is an interesting variation within Falaba whereby joint decisions are much more common related to WFP assistance (90 percent) compared to resources not related to assistance (53 percent). In all other districts, the levels of joint decision-making are very similar.

Figure 15 Household Decision-making over resources among FFA transfer recipients



Source: May 2023 PDM

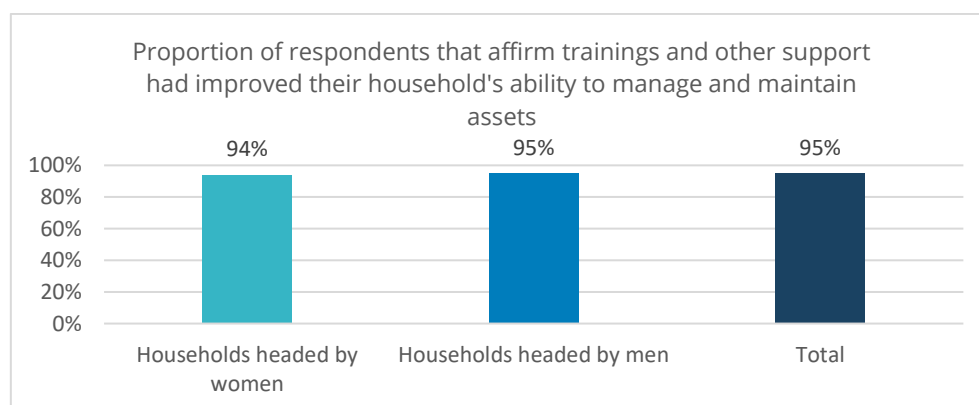
2.6 EQ6: TO WHAT EXTENT WILL THE ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE INTERVENTION BE SUSTAINED LONG-TERM? (SUSTAINABILITY)

Finding 18. The achievements of the ACL interventions demonstrate positive indications for sustaining the assets that have creating through IVS, vegetable cultivation, and VSLAs. Stakeholders reported improved capacity in agricultural production and market linkages to WFP's Home-Grown School Feeding activities and willingness to maintain assets due to training and other interventions, signalling a positive outlook for sustainability. However, FBOs expressed a need for regular input and post-harvest infrastructure support. Sustainability challenges include insecure land tenure, and the uncertainty about MAFS' ability to sustain extension services without (WFP's) financial incentives (stipend), Efforts have been made to tackle these challenges, including provision of post-harvest infrastructure.

To what extent are the benefits of the activities likely to continue after WFP support has ceased?

186. The qualitative and quantitative findings indicate that the trainings have had some impact in enhancing smallholder farmer capacity to sustain assets, though there are gaps in data availability. In qualitative data collection, most FBOs consulted were positive about the sustainability of the IVS structures. The main reason provided was because of skills and knowledge gained through capacity strengthening through various trainings. This capacity strengthening including market linkages to WFP's Home-Grown School Feeding market was considered crucial for the long-term viability of IVSs. FBOs and women's groups were similarly positive about their willingness to maintain vegetable cultivation. The importance of training in sustaining assets is similarly reflected in the 2023 PDM assessment where most respondents (95 percent) reported that trainings and other support had improved their household's ability to manage and maintain assets (see Figure 16). However, beyond this self-reporting, there is not no systematic follow-up to assess the sustainability of changes.

Figure 16 Impact of training on household's ability to manage and maintain assets



Source: 2023 PDM

187. Despite positive indications about farmer commitment to maintaining IVS and vegetable cultivation, FBOs emphasized the need for ongoing input support. Concerns also exist regarding the quality of irrigation structures, particularly due to limited expertise in this area (see paragraphs 97-98).

188. Efforts have been made to address infrastructure and equipment provision, with the development of by-laws to govern machinery use and guide future asset transfers under the JICA support. Some FBOs have taken independent steps by constructing storage facilities, indicating initiative but also potential gaps in support. Extension staff and FBOs described infrastructure and equipment provision, such as power tillers and milling machines, as critical incentives for farmers to sustain IVS cultivation. However, FBOs frequently requested replacements or funds for ongoing maintenance for the sustained functionality of this equipment, particularly in terms of postharvest management.

189. **At an organizational level, there are uncertainties regarding MAFS' ability to continue extension services without financial support, indicating a potential risk to sustainability.** Concerns about insufficient coverage further compound these challenges.

190. **Climate change and climate-related events continue to erode food security nationally and directly affect the sustainability of asset development.** Climate projections for Sierra Leone indicate rising temperatures, more extreme weather events, including intensified precipitation, and rising sea levels. Alongside structural vulnerabilities, these climate change risks pose significant threats to food security and the livelihoods of majority of the population.¹⁰⁷ Many communities, especially poor people in rural areas, rely on streams and swamps, which can dry up during severe droughts. Finally, annual flooding of IVSs due to rains necessitates rehabilitation efforts which FBOs are currently unable to undertake without additional support. This underscores the need for comprehensive monitoring, mechanisms to finance repairs, and addressing infrastructure challenges to ensure the long-term sustainability of asset creation activities within the community.

To what extent are key structures that were established by the ACL interventions or existed prior able to sustain project activities without WFP and other humanitarian support?

191. **Insecure land tenure poses threats to the sustainability of assets developed through ACL interventions.** Although not commonly highlighted by stakeholders, this is an area that requires increased awareness to ensure the long-term sustainability of IVS initiatives. ACL interventions are typically implemented in rural areas where land is held under customary tenure, belonging to indigenous land-owning families. Traditional leaders act as trustees of such family property with variations in customary land practices among different ethnicities. Despite the existence of a legal framework affirming that customary land in the provinces cannot be bought or sold, it lacks safeguard mechanisms, protective oversight, and redress complaint mechanisms for dealing with violations.¹⁰⁸ Despite these apparent weaknesses, the customary land tenure system remains operational and functional.

192. **There is no clear sustainability strategy to incorporate CYC payments within MAFS operations, continuation of support is likely dependent on continued WFP payments.** As indicated by the MAFS directorate, there are not sufficient Field Extension Workers to meet demand, CYCs have essentially become a smaller extension arm in the field. MAFS stakeholders expressed interest in increasing their staff, with priority consideration given to existing CYCs, although the timing of any potential recruitment remains uncertain.

193. CYCs have highlighted the importance of stipends in driving activity completion and monitoring. While incentives can yield short-term results, the long-term sustainability of initiatives may hinge more on intrinsic motivation and community ownership. Concerns arise over the inability of FBOs to assume ownership of CYC payments post-project, underscoring the importance of ownership and ongoing maintenance for sustainability beyond project cycles.

194. **FBOs exhibit varying performance levels, impacting their potential for sustainability.** A major challenge highlighted by FBOs and extension staff is the considerable input costs, notably fertilizer, coupled with the labour-intensive nature of IVS activities. Many suggest that increased mechanization could mitigate these challenges and enhance sustainability. Importantly, the sustainability of any input supply must also be considered.

How sustainable are the environmental impact of the programme?

195. **There are limitations in the ET's ability to assess the environmental benefits that have occurred as a result of ACL interventions due to data availability.** The ET has not identified any available data to confirm a reduction in deforestation or water use as a result of IVS cultivation. The impact of WFP's provision of seedlings to reforest degraded water catchment areas in 2022 is to be monitored by AIMS unit

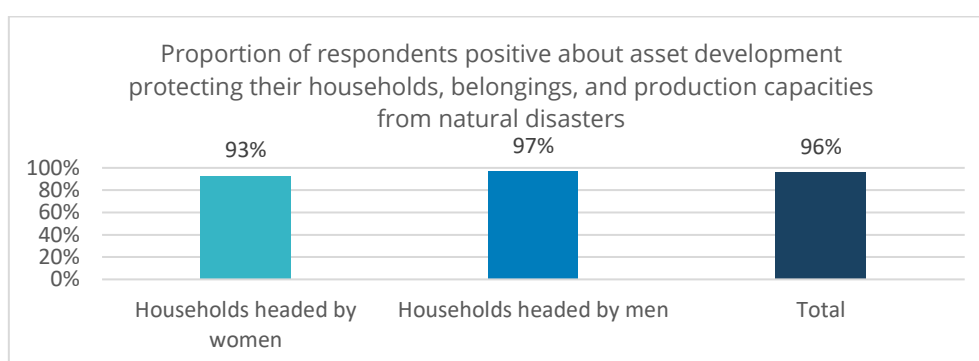
¹⁰⁷ World Bank, 2020. International Development Association International Finance Corporation Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency Country Partnership Framework for Republic of Sierra Leone for The Period FY21-FY26 APRIL 19, 2020

¹⁰⁸ Report No: AUS0000874 . Sierra Leone Land ASA Policy Note. June 2019

in Rome, which will show its effect on water availability over time.¹⁰⁹ While the development of compost production was frequently identified, its effectiveness in reducing reliance on inorganic fertilizers cannot be verified.

196. Results from the 2023 PDM do provide a positive indication of the success of asset development in protecting their households, belongings, and production capacities from natural disasters with most sampled participants reporting positive results (96 percent). Results show a slight difference according to the gender of the head of household of the FFA participant, with FFA participants belonging to households headed by men slightly more likely to report assets protecting from natural disasters compared to sampled participants in households headed by women. Given the sampling limitations already discussed, further analysis would be needed to understand any underlying factors influencing the perception differences between participants according to the gender of head of household.

Figure 17 Perception of climate resilience of assets developed



Source: 2023 PDM

¹⁰⁹ ACR, 2022. WFP provided farmers with 21,000 tree seedlings in 2022 (2022 ACR) 3,900 tree seedlings in 2021 (2021 ACR). Provision of tree seedlings was not reported in 2019 or 2020.

3 Conclusions, Lessons and Recommendations

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

197. The evaluation findings lead to the following main areas of conclusion.

Conclusion 1: The design of ACL interventions is sound, demonstrating their relevance in addressing food and nutrition insecurity and grounded in understanding vulnerabilities and capacities in specific contexts. However, there are challenges in consistently translating design into implementation, inclusivity, and environmental considerations.

198. The targeting of ACL interventions based on CFSVA and FSMS data demonstrates a relevant approach in addressing food insecurity, particularly in districts with high food insecurity rates like Kenema, Falaba, Moyamba, and Karene.

199. The detailed guidance for community selection and engagement in IVS and VSLA implementation ensures activities are tailored to community capacities and needs, enhancing their relevance and effectiveness. While there are efforts to incorporate community feedback and evolve ACL interventions accordingly, gaps remain in implementation consistency and coverage due to varied donor interests and funding levels. The inability to implement the holistic approach as designed, misses opportunities to address community needs effectively.

200. Environmental considerations, while acknowledged, lack uniformity in implementation across IVS development. Inadequate management practices pose threats to the environment, underscoring the need for stricter adherence to environmental safeguards and more consistent implementation of climate-smart agricultural practices.

Conclusion 2: WFP's IVS development model stands out as the project's most significant achievement. The mix of cash/food transfers through FFA, input support and training programmes have proven effective in increasing the availability of labour for agricultural activities and improving farmers' knowledge and skills in rice and vegetable production. Incentivizing smallholder farmers through FFA has encouraged participation, with FBOs advocating to extend cash transfers throughout the entire period of IVS development to maintain cohesion and membership. Disparities in training implementation and insufficient environmental management practices reduce the effectiveness of activities and present barriers to sustaining change.

201. WFP's model for IVS development demonstrates a strong emphasis on community empowerment, offering the potential for sustainable asset maintenance and increased agricultural productivity. Insecure land tenure and inadequate irrigation infrastructure maintenance pose immediate barriers to production gains in IVS'.

202. Incentivizing smallholder farmers through FFA has proven effective in encouraging participation in labour-intensive tasks and promoting financial inclusion. FBOs advocate for the extension of cash transfers throughout the entire period of IVS development, emphasizing the importance of covering all phases rather than solely prioritizing labour-intensive aspects to maintain work cohesion and avoid FBO membership drop-outs.

203. Trainings at individual, community, and institutional levels, particularly the TPRP, have been well-received and are an important element to sustain IVS development. Self-reported evidence from the JBP endline evaluation highlights the effectiveness of the TPRP in enhancing agricultural knowledge and skills among smallholder farmers while qualitative data conducted for the evaluation highlights gains in extension services and among FBOs. However, disparities exist in training implementation, with not all targeted groups receiving training as intended, particularly women's groups. Furthermore, gaps in documentation and reporting of training outcomes hinder the thorough assessment of knowledge transfer.

204. While IVS development is prioritized based on purported environmental benefits with environmental considerations incorporated into activity implementation, implementation has inadequate environmental

screening and management plan to address these challenges comprehensively. Key environmental considerations in the design of ACL interventions include community sensitisation on expected climate-sensitivity of action and the need to conserve the environment, training on community-level compost production to reduce reliance on inorganic fertilizers and planting crops/perennial trees around IVS water catchment areas to prevent drying of swamps. Despite these efforts, threats to the environment generated by the ACL interventions are visible including the widespread use of inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, and inadequate container management. Water management has not been maximized with insufficient maintenance of irrigation infrastructure leading to issues like flooding, drying up of IVS sites, and uneven water distribution.

Conclusion 3: The integration of a nutrition-sensitive approach into ACL interventions has led to increased production of nutritious foods, especially vegetables and OFSP. This has contributed to anecdotal improvements in dietary diversity and nutritional intake among smallholder farmers. Linking OFSP production to HGSF has directly contributed to the improved nutrition of school children. However, challenges persist, including post-harvest losses, and limited resources to increase project scale.

The integration of nutrition-sensitive approaches within ACL interventions has generated a notable increase in the production of nutrient-rich foods such as vegetables and OFSP within supported communities as reported in primary and secondary data. Community members in qualitative data collection described how increased production has diversified diets while qualitative data and monitoring data affirm the income-generating benefits of the production of nutritious food, particularly benefiting women's groups involved in cultivating and selling complementary foods. At a higher level, the production of vegetables and OFSP positively impacts wider community health outcomes through diversifying school meals supplied through the HGSF programme.

205. Despite these achievements, challenges such as limited resources, adherence to WFP procurement standards, and coverage gaps persist, hindering the scaling up of nutrition-sensitive agriculture interventions. Further analysis of FCS data could provide additional evidence of changes in nutrition at the household level, though limitations in comparing annual trends should be considered.

Conclusion 4. Facilitating market connections and increasing coverage of VSLAs are important elements for income diversification and broader food security gains. FBOs and MAFS stakeholders praise VSLAs for facilitating economic growth and stability. Access to WFP markets is appreciated, though delays in payment frustrate FBOs. High post-harvest losses constrain income generation potential.

206. FBO and MAFS stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation were extremely positive about the potential contributions of VSLAs to higher-level impacts, with MAFS staff describing VSLAs as 'ground-breaking'. Community members described substantial positive impacts of VSLAs on financial inclusion and empowerment, fostering a culture of saving and business mindset among smallholder farmers, thereby contributing to economic growth and community development. Currently, WFP does not track any indicators in ACR reporting associated with VSLA performance nor have any monitoring results been generated to understand effectiveness and impact more systematically. More comprehensive monitoring could provide evidence to support expansion efforts, as VSLA coverage is currently low.

207. Improved agricultural practices have increased farm yields, most notably in rice production. Increased food availability has contributed directly to household food and nutrition security, as well as providing farmers with new income sources as they can sell extra harvest. Linkages to the HGSF have been particularly important in enabling market access. However, farmer access to private markets remains constrained by high transportation and processing costs. Farmers continue to lose valuable crops due to inadequate post-harvest management.

Conclusion 5. The ACL intervention strategy incorporates multiple approaches, enhancing effectiveness by addressing both immediate and root causes of hunger. WFP's flexible approach has enabled operational adjustments contributing to positive results. WFP's partnership with MAFS and CYC has been instrumental for strengthening national ownership of the project, supporting farmer training, improving agricultural practice and empowering communities.

208. The design of ACL interventions is aligned with WFP's Resilience Policy, incorporating multi-sectoral and multi-layered approaches. This alignment enhances effectiveness by addressing both immediate and root causes of hunger. WFP's flexible and agile approach to resilience building, coupled with an emphasis on experimentation and shared learning, enables adjustments to strategies in response to contextual changes, contributing to positive results on the ground.

209. The emphasis on in-depth and multi-level training has transformed agricultural practices, leading to improved yields, and decreased post-harvest losses. Providing extensive training opportunities and support to block extension staff and CYC enhances the efficacy of ACL intervention implementations. The WFP model utilized in the development of IVS also stands out for its strong emphasis on community empowerment.

210. Collaboration with governmental entities such as the MAFS enhances the effective implementation of ACL interventions, contributing to significant outcomes and improvements in knowledge and skills at all levels. However, gaps in MAFS capacity, especially related to irrigation structures and environmental protection, pose challenges to ACL intervention effectiveness. There are cases of limited commitment among MAFS staff which have further detracted from results. While engagement with CYCs at grassroots level has helped compensate for gaps in MAFS capacity, the sustainability of this model is uncertain as there is no clear sustainability strategy to incorporate CYC payments within MAFS operations.

211. FBO members in primary and secondary data highlighted that the reliance on labour-intensive methods leads to dwindling FBO participation and inefficiencies in IVS development. Additionally, some community and WFP stakeholders felt that FBOs with more men did better than those with more women because they could handle the heavy workload.

212. Delays in procurement, risks associated with customary land rights, and the impact of climate change pose additional challenges to ACL intervention effectiveness and impact. Current monitoring and mitigation strategies are insufficient.

Conclusion 6. ACL interventions have made commendable efforts to promote gender, youth and disability inclusion though reliance on labour-intensive activities remains a barrier. Comprehensive assessments of equitable benefits are not possible without systematic data disaggregation, especially by age and disability. Reliance on limited quantitative data is insufficient to assess empowerment outcomes.

213. Efforts to promote gender, youth, and disability inclusion within ACL interventions have been made through targeted activities, promotion of representation in leadership roles, and sensitization efforts. However, reliance on labour-intensive development of IVS has limited the inclusivity of activities for women and persons with disabilities. Observations and consultations with FBOs, women's groups, and extension staff have demonstrated the significant role ACL interventions have played in developing and supporting women's and youth's leadership within communities with gender transformative work reportedly contributing to changing some norms related to nutrition. Inclusion of youth and persons with disabilities was visible through qualitative data collection, though the lack of disaggregated data prevents a more comprehensive understanding.

Conclusion 7. While efforts to improve efficiency are evident, challenges such as input delays, farmer organization governance issues, and market barriers persist, necessitating continued efforts to enhance planning, transparency, and market linkages for more efficient ACL interventions.

214. There are efforts to align ACL interventions with the agricultural calendar, indicating recognition of the importance of timing for efficient implementation. However, delays in crop cultivation continue to diminish efficient production.

215. Conducting joint assessments and evaluations, such as the WFP/MAFS assessment of FBOs and Agricultural Business Centres, demonstrates a commitment to monitoring and improving program effectiveness.

216. Initiatives aimed at improving yields and facilitating commercialization, such as purchasing locally produced rice from assisted FBOs, also suggest a focus on enhancing efficiency in agricultural production and marketing. Efforts to enhance FBO leadership and accountability through training and capacity-building activities indicate a recognition of the importance of organizational effectiveness for program efficiency.

Engagement with local markets through procurement systems and aggregation sites suggests an effort to streamline market linkages and optimize revenue generation for smallholder farmers.

217. Consistent delays in input delivery, attributed to procurement bureaucracy and late payments from WFP, are the main barriers to efficiency and lead to farmer disappointment. Delays in payments for rice threaten to undermine FBO trust and efficiency, highlighting the importance of transparency and timely payments for program effectiveness.

Conclusion 8. There are notable strengths in ACL intervention alignment, collaboration, and focus on key country development priorities. However, gaps in environmental considerations hinder effectiveness and sustainability.

218. ACL interventions closely align with national development priorities outlined in CSP and other government strategies, particularly in agriculture transformation, nutrition, gender empowerment, and environmental sustainability. Internally, there is effective integration of ACL interventions with existing school feeding and nutrition programs, showcasing a coordinated approach to addressing food security and nutrition challenges, especially among vulnerable populations like school children.

219. ACL interventions actively engage with government ministries and UN agencies, participating in joint initiatives and co-leading outcome areas within broader development frameworks, such as the UNSDCF. Gaps in addressing certain environmental policy objectives, particularly in conducting environmental screenings for IVS activities, are also evident.

3.2 LESSONS

220. **Lesson 1: Resilience is strengthened by empowering communities to take charge of their own asset creation and livelihood activities.** The WFP model for ACL interventions prioritizes community involvement in planning and implementing activities, fostering ownership, social cohesion, and enhancing the sustainability of IVS agricultural interventions. By placing community members at the heart of decision-making, WFP emphasizes participation, empowerment, and capacity strengthening. This collective approach strengthens food security and enhances the resilience of food systems. Community engagement plays a pivotal role in building resilience by nurturing a sense of belonging among community members. Community members highlighted that, when individuals feel connected to their community, they are more likely to actively participate in resilience-building initiatives. Additionally, community engagement facilitates the formation of social networks, which serve as crucial support systems during times of crisis, providing access to information, resources, and assistance.

221. **Lesson 2: Reliance on labour-intensive models of asset development provides a medium to maximize immediate assistance but can limit sustainability prospects and limit the inclusion of women and vulnerable populations.** Integrating mechanization into asset development processes can mitigate these challenges, particularly for labour-intensive tasks. For instance, in the context of IVS development, through collaboration with JICA, WFP facilitated the donation of agricultural machinery, such as power tillers, rice mills, and threshers, to high-performing FBOs. This initiative significantly enhanced efficiency and productivity while reducing the burden on labour, particularly on women who typically undertake manual tasks. However, ongoing maintenance is essential for sustained functionality. FBOs frequently requested replacements or funds for maintenance to ensure the long-term viability of equipment, highlighting the need to develop an appropriate transition strategy if such support is provided.

222. **Lesson 3: Partnerships and collaboration with diverse stakeholders are essential for effective asset creation and livelihood activities.** Collaboration with governmental entities plays a pivotal role in the effective implementation of resilience-building initiatives. This collaboration ensures alignment with national development priorities and policies, while engaging with community leaders fosters ownership and participation at the grassroots level.

223. By leveraging the strengths and resources of various stakeholders, partnerships and collaboration maximize the effectiveness and long-term success of asset creation and livelihood activities. Limited engagement with the private sector represents a notable gap in ACL intervention strategies which may detract from access to available resources, expertise, and innovative solutions for sustainable development.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are based on evaluative findings, considering the existing programme strategy within the Sierra Leone country office and WFP more widely. The evaluation reference group has been involved in formulating recommendations through the review process to ensure the relevance and feasibility of action as well as ownership. Specific recommendations to improve the GEWE, inclusion and equity-related elements of the evaluand are integrated within recommendations 1, 2 and 6. Recommendations are accompanied by more detailed sub-recommendations to guide implementation

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping Short/medium/long-term	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority	By when
1	<p>Recommendation 1: Strengthen the integrated approach to resilience building by enhancing the strategic design of ACL interventions and improving implementation. This should involve clear articulation of inclusion, integration, sustainability, and scalability of ACL interventions.</p> <p>1.1: Assess and strengthen partnership to increase coverage of ACL interventions and address funding constraints. Following WFP's Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition. ACL intervention strategy should be based on multi-sector and multi-stakeholder partnerships to utilize the comparative advantages of each stakeholder.</p> <p>1.2: Develop a comprehensive resilience building ToC that addresses the interconnected nature of food security, nutrition, environmental management, climate risk management and adaptation and resilience and aligned with national and district priorities.</p> <p>1.3: Foster greater integration and synergy among different components of ACL interventions across the CSP such as agricultural development, nutrition, disaster risk reduction, school feeding, and market access initiatives.</p> <p>1.4: Consolidate and document standardized protocols and guidelines for implementing ACL interventions to ensure consistency and quality across different districts and communities.</p>	Short	WFP programme, management with support from the Regional Bureau in Dakar (RBD)	All other WFP units	High	April 2025

	<p>1.5: Develop and implement clear inclusion criteria and guidelines to ensure the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, including marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>1.6 Develop long-term sustainability and scale up plans for ACL interventions, including strategies for infrastructure maintenance, capacity building plan across all ACL interventions, graduation/exit plans.</p>					
2	<p>Recommendation 2: Enhance capacity-building efforts with an inclusive strategy for sustainable ACL interventions involving key sectors of nutrition, HGSF, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), environment, and gender.</p> <p>2.1 Conduct a needs assessment of beneficiaries to identify specific capacity-building requirements across ACL focus areas. Internal capacity building should consider WFP and potential partner's comparative advantages.</p> <p>2.2. Create an integrated strategy that combines capacity-building initiatives from different focus areas.</p> <p>2.3. Continuously review and strengthen training programs that build on existing modules and focus on areas such as disaster preparedness, gender mainstreaming, and other relevant topics to provide participants with expanded and up to date skills and knowledge.</p> <p>2.4 Strengthen collaboration and coordination among different SOs to jointly plan, implement, maximizing synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts.</p>	Medium	WFP	All other WFP units	High	April 2025
3	<p>Recommendation 3: Address gaps in coverage and implementation of ACL interventions</p> <p>3.1: Strengthen the linkage between research, training and implementation of OFSP at district levels</p> <p>3.2: Strengthen supply and maintenance of post-harvest management infrastructure.</p>	Medium	WFP	All other WFP units	High	April 2025
4	<p>Recommendation 4: Build on remedial actions already taken to address late procurement and payment delays.</p> <p>4.1 Conduct a participatory review/analysis of supply chain- procurement to identify the main challenges.</p>	Short	HQ, WFP Procurement, Supply Chain, Programme	All other WFP units	High	January 2025

	<p>4.2 Review the procurement guidelines for smallholder farmers and adopt a flexible approach that accommodates smallholder farmers and WFP quality assurance and internal guidelines.</p> <p>4.3 Strengthen capacity of smallholder farmers to meet the adapted guidelines</p>					
5	<p>Recommendation 5. Strengthen environmental management in design and implementation of ACL interventions</p> <p>5.1: Develop a comprehensive environmental plan and clear operational guidelines for extension workers and farmers to minimize risks associated with IVS cultivation.</p> <p>5.2: To address these needs effectively, involve the Forestry division under MAFS more extensively, particularly given their mandate for climate resilience building.</p> <p>5.3: Strengthen capacity of MAFS staff in implementation of environmental management plans</p>	Medium	WFP ACL team, FAO	All other WFP units	High	May 2025
6	<p>Recommendation 6: Revise M&E to cover gaps in outcome and broader impact monitoring especially for nutrition, GEWE and resilience measurements</p> <p>6.1: WFP has made progress on developing evidence on resilience with anticipated rollout of six-step approach and two new resilience-specific indicators in 2024. Progress should be followed to determine if intermediary steps should be taken by WFP.</p> <p>6.2: As the WFP expands coverage of VSLAs, implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress and impact of VSLA initiatives, identifying areas for improvement and refining strategies accordingly.</p> <p>6.3: Adjust the M&E strategy to track longitudinal change in the food security of ACL intervention beneficiaries with more intentional consideration of sample demographics to ensure comparability of cohorts and including measurements not tied to resource transfer.</p> <p>6.4: Improve disaggregation of activity monitoring data, especially by age and disability</p> <p>6.5: Consider sampling procedures to meaningfully track differences between men and women participants.</p>	Medium	WFP RAM team	All other WFP units	High	April 2025

4 Annexes

ANNEX 1. SUMMARY TERMS OF REFERENCE

Decentralized Evaluation of WFP Asset Creation and Livelihood Activities in Sierra Leone from Jan 2020 to Dec. 2023

Summary Terms of Reference – July 2023

The mid-term decentralized evaluation of the Asset creation and Livelihood (ACL) activities implemented under the WFP Sierra Leone Country Office Country Strategic Plan (CSP 2020-2024). This evaluation is commissioned by WFP Sierra Leone Country Office (SLCO) and will cover the period from January 2020 to December 2023.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

SLCO implements ACL interventions under strategic outcome 4 of the CSP (2020-2024) portfolio: smallholder farmers and communities in targeted areas have resilient livelihoods that better meet their food security and nutrition needs by 2030. This outcome aims to build self-reliance and resilience of vulnerable smallholder farmers and communities, thereby enabling them to better meet their food and nutrition security needs.

This decentralized evaluation will assess WFP contributions to CSP strategic outcome 4, establishing plausible causal relations between the outputs of WFP activities, the implementation process, the operational environment, and changes observed at the outcome level, including any unintended consequences.

It will also focus on adherence to humanitarian principles, gender equality, protection, and accountability to affected populations.

The evaluation will adopt standard UNEG and OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, namely: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability and Coherence.

OBJECTIVES AND STAKEHOLDERS OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation serves the dual objectives of accountability and learning and has been commissioned for the following reasons: 1) to assess the performance and extent to which ACL interventions have been successfully implemented and their appropriateness. 2) to guide any necessary revision of the current CSP and inform the development of the new CSP

(2025-2029). 3) To identify opportunities to strengthen the design of the ACL interventions.

The evaluation will potentially serve as an advocacy tool for raising awareness of donors and partners around WFP's contributions towards the new integrated resilience framework and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a range of WFP's internal and external stakeholders, such as the Government of Sierra Leone (Ministry of Agriculture, Youth Affairs, Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute), donors (JICA, EU, Irish Aid), NGOs and the private sector (Socfin, Vimetco, Sierra Rutile, Natural Habitat).

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation will address the following key questions:

QUESTION 1: To what extent is the intervention relevant the needs and priorities of the government, targeted population and stakeholders?

The evaluation will assess if and how the design, planning and implementation of the activities have been participatory, inclusive, gender-sensitive, considerate of protection risks and have been taking into account environmental concerns. It will look at targeting criteria to assess their consistency with the needs of targeted groups based on their vulnerabilities and at how communities perceive and compare the added value of capacity-building activities compared to food assistance, including possible reasons for this.

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

The evaluation will assess if the intervention is leading to/likely to lead to meeting intervention objectives (in line with planned targets) and what have been the major factors influencing the achievements of outputs and outcomes. It will also look at whether the results had been delivered to specific groups including men, women, people living with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

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

This question will assess the degree to which the activities had been implemented efficiently (specifically in regard to the timeliness of the implementation, adequacy of output and cost effectiveness). It will assess how efficient had WFP been in linking farmers to its own procurement systems and local markets and the impact this may have had on farmer revenues and gains, as well as what are the most efficient Farmer Based Organizations (FBO) set-ups and the efficiency of the Community Youth Contractor (CYC) model in building the capacity of smallholder farmers.

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

The extent to which WFP's work is coherent and aligned with national and sector-wide priorities (e.g. agricultural policy) is evaluated by this question, as well as what have been the synergies between WFP and other interventions. It will also look at the internal alignment of ACL interventions with the CSP in terms of linking with School Feeding and Nutrition programmes.

QUESTION 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?

This question will evaluate if and how communities are reporting positive and negative effects of the intervention, and what were the intended or unintended effects. It will also look at the extent to which WFP ACL interventions empowered or supported female leadership and independence of targeted populations.

QUESTION 6: To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term?

The evaluation will assess the benefits of the activities are likely to continue after WFP support ceases by identifying the key success factors in programme design, selection and set up, the actual building of capacities and systems for the programme to continue, including any gaps that need to be covered. It will also evaluate the extent to which the key structures (FBO, agricultural extension network, CYC, mother support groups) established by the intervention are likely to continue beyond WFP/external support and are

able to afford maintenance and replacement of the technologies/services/outputs introduced by the intervention.

SCOPE, METHODOLOGY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation will adopt a mixed methods approach using a mix of methods and a variety of primary and secondary sources, including desk review, key informant interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions. Systematic triangulation across different sources and methods will be carried out to validate findings and avoid bias in the evaluative judgement. The evaluation approach and data collection methodology and tools will be developed by the evaluation team during the inception phase.

The evaluation conforms to WFP and 2020 UNEG ethical guidelines. This includes but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EVALUATION TEAM: The evaluation will be conducted by a team of independent consultants with a mix of relevant expertise related to the Sierra Leone context and in particular an appropriate balance of technical expertise and practical knowledge on, among others, livelihoods, integrated resilience programming, nutrition and gender-sensitive programming, transfer modality, capacity strengthening.

EVALUATION CHAIR: the evaluation will be chaired by the SLCO Director Yvonne Forsen, who nominates the evaluation manager, approves all evaluation deliverables, ensure the independence and impartiality of the

evaluation at all stages, participates in discussions with the evaluation team, oversee the dissemination and follow up process, including the management response.

EVALUATION MANAGER: The evaluation will be managed by Allison Dumbuya, a member of the SLCO RAM team. He will be the main interlocutor between the evaluation

team, represented by the team leader, and WFP counterparts, to ensure a smooth implementation process and compliance with quality standards for process and content. Support will be provided by

the Regional Evaluation Unit throughout the evaluation process.

EXTERNAL REFERENCE GROUP composed of a cross- section of WFP and external stakeholders from relevant business areas. It is an advisory group providing advice and feedback at key moments of the evaluation process. It is guided by the principles of transparency, ownership and use and accuracy.

WFP SLCO members: Evaluation Chair, Evaluation Manager, Head of Programme, Head of M&E, Head of Supply Chain, Head of ACL, Heads of Field Offices.
WFP RBD members: Regional Evaluation Unit, Regional Monitoring Advisors, Regional Gender Advisor, Senior RAM advisor, Senior Resilience Officer.
Government, NGOs, donors, partner: Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs Madam, NGO WHH, JICA, FAO, IFAD, UNCDF, UNDP

COMMUNICATION

Evaluation findings will be actively disseminated, and the final

evaluation report will be publicly available on WFP's website.

Timing and key milestones

Inception Phase: September-November 2023

Data collection: November-December 2023

Debriefing: December 2023

Reporting Phase: January – March 2024

Findings will be actively disseminated, and the final evaluation report will be publicly available on WFP's website.

Full Terms of Reference are available at <https://www.wfp.org/publications/sierra-leone-asset-creation-and-livelihood-evaluation> For more information, please contact the Western Africa Regional Evaluation Unit at rbd.evaluation.list@wfp.org

ANNEX 2. PRIMARY COMPONENTS OF ACL INTERVENTIONS

Asset building

Asset building involves supporting targeted farmer groups (approximately 138 FBOs)¹¹⁰ in developing productive assets, primarily inland valley swamps for year-round cultivation of nutritious vegetables and rice. The cultivation of OFSP has been the entry point for ACL interventions in Bonthe and Karene where ACL interventions are not supporting IVS development.

WFP and MAFS have supported FBOs in developing and rehabilitating IVS sites since 2017. Support was provided in Falaba, Koinadugu, Pujehun, Tonkolili, Kambia, and Moyamba. IVS development involves the clearing of trees, shrubs, and subsequent removal of stumps from the swamp. Subsequent processes, primarily overseen by the district MAFS irrigation department, entail engineering design work and the construction of irrigation infrastructure. Key structures include the head bund, essential for water retention, diversion, and regulation. Additional works encompass the construction of spillways, main drainage canals, bunds, and peripheral bands, all pivotal in managing excess flooding. Proper and sustainable swamp development necessitates the effective protection of the catchment area/watershed through the provision or maintenance of sufficient vegetation cover. This ensures the continued efficiency of water control structures allowing multiple cropping per year.

In Karene and Bonthe, WFP used the HGSP programme as the entry point for support rather than IVSs. Women's groups tasked with cultivating OFSP were assigned the responsibility of identifying and clearing two acres of suitable land near their community. Following site establishment, each group received a comprehensive set of agricultural tools for cultivation alongside training through the farmer field school approach. To facilitate economic empowerment and enable women to engage male labourers for site clearing (a task traditionally undertaken by men), each group was provided with seed money totalling SLE3,727.¹¹¹ OFSP vines including Chipka, Kaphulira (both 3-month varieties), and Mathuthu (5-month variety) were procured from Farmer-Based Organizations (FBOs) specializing in multiplication, previously trained and capacitated by Helen Keller International (HKI). The vines were transported in perforated bags by WFP. Planting took place in July 2023, aligning with the seasonal calendar for upland cultivation and synchronized with the reopening of schools in September. WFP provided additional vines to some groups that did not receive enough initially. A total of 16,344 kg of OFSP vines and 1,265 tools were distributed to 25 women FBOs for the cultivation of OFSP.

Participants in IVS development and rehabilitation receive conditional **transfers through Food Assistance for Assets (FFA)** to incentivize their involvement, particularly during labour-intensive tasks like land preparation and the construction of irrigation structures. FFA is provided through two modalities: in-kind, consisting of dry ration food (rice, oil, salt, and split peas) and cash-based transfers (CBT),¹¹² which are disbursed through banks, community visits or mobile money.

Per the CSP, WFP is using community-based participatory planning (CBPP) to ensure that transfers respect the local preferences of men and women with prioritization of youth, people living with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Alongside/following transfers to incentivize asset building, FBOs also receive capacity building and inputs to improve agronomic practices, among other topics.

Farmer Field Schools capacity building

Training activities for MAFS, CYCs and farmers are an important component of the ACL intervention strategy. There are a number of different training packages implemented through ACL interventions encompassing improved agronomic practices, post-harvest management and nutrition sensitive agricultural practices. Training at the community level is conducted through farmer field schools whereby community youth contractors (CYCs) are trained via MAFS extension workers and WFP to cascade training to FBOs at the community level. MAFS extension workers are responsible for overseeing the establishment of farmer field schools.

¹¹⁰ KII with WFP Project manager

¹¹¹ WFP, 2023. Home-Grown School Feeding: Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato Pilot- Diversifying school meals in Sierra Leone

¹¹² Cash-based transfers were approximately USD 2.90 per day, for sixty days.

One of the main training packages is the Technical Package for Rice Production (TPRP)¹¹³ conducted in partnership with JICA to train MAFS extension workers and CYCs. Developed jointly by JICA and MAFS, TPRP incorporates advanced farming practices and technologies aimed at improving overall productivity. As part of the initiative, several FFS were established where MAFS and CYC trainees trained farmers on TPRP through practical sessions and demonstration plots. Under the support of JICA, WFP facilitated the donation of agricultural machinery, including power tillers, rice mills, and rice threshers, to high-performing FBOs. Furthermore, specific training on the operation and maintenance of these machinery was provided to the beneficiaries.

Market linkages

SO4 links smallholder farmers to the homegrown school feeding (HGSF) market and private sector markets in Sierra Leone through direct purchase of produce for the HGSF as well as provision of post-harvest management equipment (milling machines, community stalls, drying floors, branding) and training on contracting, as well as quality management and certification with the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau. Product aggregation is done by WFP with MAFS, aggregating produce from several FBOs for bulk purchases. Local procurement of rice and OFSP adheres to WFP quality control and procurement guidelines outlined in the procurement plan. Following a waiver for SHF, price negotiation ensues, along with quality control measures (such as SSB and Baltic Control), including sending samples for rice testing.

Nutrition-sensitive agriculture support, training and Social Behaviour Change Communication

The nutrition-sensitive agriculture initiative under SO4 is being implemented in collaboration with the WFP nutrition unit, employing an integrated approach. The activities encompass capacity strengthening and the cultivation of nutrition-sensitive crops and vegetables, including Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) and connecting mother support groups (MSGs) producing locally made enriched complementary foods to FBOs producing these nutritious foods. According to insights from WFP SLCO staff, the integrated strategy involves engaging with FBOs and proactively identifying and promoting the cultivation of nutritionally dense crops by smallholder farmers. Examples of such crops include black-eyed peas, maize, OFSP, among others.

Activities focus on educating farmers and farmer-based organizations about the importance of cultivating diverse foods for a balanced diet as well as vegetable seed provision and the training and implementation of compost production to reduce reliance on inorganic fertilizers. Emphasis is placed on the value of vegetables and awareness that agriculture should contribute not only to income but also to overall health. SBCC programming is developed by nutrition colleagues from WFP, providing practical demonstrations on food preparation and conservation through Mother Support Groups.

Trainings incorporate nutrition-sensitive practices. In 2021,¹¹⁴ WFP, MAFS, and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation jointly trained 311 lead farmers, with 50 percent being women, in nutrition-sensitive agriculture. The training, conducted at the onset of the dry season in alignment with the seasonal calendar for vegetable cultivation in inland valley swamps, covered various skills such as land preparation, nursery establishment, transplanting, storage, food preparation, and preservation. An adult learning approach was predominantly utilized, incorporating practical demonstrations, while theoretical sessions employed pictorial presentations to enhance understanding and engagement.

In 2022, WFP, MAFS and Helen Keller International jointly trained 88 extension workers and CYCs on improved agronomic practices to enhance the production of nutritious vegetables, legumes, and tubers.¹¹⁵ Helen Keller International conducted sessions on OFSP, a rich source of vitamin A, which was nationally promoted in 2022 to address micronutrient deficiencies. To disseminate best practices to farmers, MoA and CYC trainees are meant to conduct training sessions for assisted farmers through farmer field schools. Additionally, WFP

¹¹³ Ministry of Agriculture, The Republic of Sierra Leone. 2022. Sustainable Rice Production Project in the Republic of Sierra Leone Project Completion Report, ANNEX 4 Manual on the Participatory Inland Valley Swamp Development JULY 2022, JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

¹¹⁴ ACR, 2021

¹¹⁵ ACR, 2022

provided quality seeds for okra, pepper, cucumber, cowpea, krain-krain (a leafy vegetable), maize, groundnut, and soybean to empower farmers to grow nutrient-dense crops.

Mother Support Groups (MSGs) play a central role in the WFP SLCO nutrition interventions. At inception, it was established that MSGs were not initially part of the SO4 activities. However, since 2022, the WFP SLCO emphasis has been on integrating these groups into farmer-based organizations, particularly in districts such as Pujehun, Moyamba, and Kambia. Training sessions extend to both farmer-based organizations and mother support groups, along with monthly open cooking demonstration sessions promoting local food commodities. Despite successfully engaging communities in all seven districts in nutrition-sensitive agriculture in 2021, cooking demonstrations are currently limited to three districts; the evaluation will seek to understand this limited coverage. The mother support groups are not only recipients of information but actively contribute to social behaviour change through focus group discussions. The strategy involves encouraging men's participation in these groups to address traditional barriers to men's involvement in childcare and maternal education.

Village Savings and Loans Associations:

In 2021,¹¹⁶ with the aim of extending financial services to rural women in underserved communities, WFP piloted VSLAs in 15 communities across Kenema, Pujehun, and Tonkolili districts. Each VSLA comprises 30 members, with women constituting 70 percent of the membership. These associations operate revolving funds, enabling members to access loans based on their needs, with approval from the group, and repaid through ethical repayment schemes. Additionally, each VSLA manages a social fund, accessible to members in case of emergencies. WFP provided comprehensive support to each group, including training in VSLA management, start-up kits consisting of savings boxes and ledgers, and seed funding amounting to USD 214. This seed funding was disbursed after each group successfully completed four savings meetings, during which each member made contributions.

Research by Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI)

In March 2022, WFP signed a wide-ranging memorandum of understanding with SLARI. Through this partnership, SLARI conducted soil sampling across seven ACL intervention targeted districts.¹¹⁷ Laboratory analysis revealed significant variations in soil fertility levels both within and among swamp sites. Some swamps showed adequate nutrient levels, while others exhibited deficiencies requiring additional inputs. The findings indicated highly acidic soil conditions, with pH levels below the optimal range for growth in nearly all swamps, posing a challenge to fertilizer effectiveness. SLARI also tested the consumer acceptance of four standardized enriched local complementary foods to improve dietary diversity and the consumption of local foods.

¹¹⁶ ACR, 2021, ACR 2022

¹¹⁷ Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), 2023. Draft report soil fertility assessment across WFP farm sites in seven districts in Sierra Leone. Submitted by Christen Charley Shaka, Rokupr Agricultural Research Centre (RARC), Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), April 2023

ANNEX 3. OVERVIEW OF ACL INTERVENTION COVERAGE

The table below is compiled based on primary and secondary data reviewed by the ET. Confirmation of data was requested to the ACL team but not received by time of ER submission.

District	VSLA (all Chiefdoms of IVS) ¹¹⁸	Veg cultivation ¹¹⁹	Post- harvest mgmt. infrastructure ¹²⁰	WFP purchase through HGSF ¹²¹	IVS development							OFSP (all 2023)		Program me
					Tools	Ag. Inputs	Training	CBT	dev/ rehab	Beneficiaries (W/M)	Chiefdom	beneficiaries	Chiefdom	
Bonthe	N	N	N	OFSP	N	N	N	N	n/a	0	N	150W	Sogbeni	Not confirmed
Falaba	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	2022, rehab 2023	501 (249/252))	Mongo, Sulima	0	n/a	UNPBSO 21-23, BMZ
Kambia	Y	Y	Y	Rice, OFSP	Y	N	Y	Y	2020, rehab 21/23	437 (153/284)	Bramaia, Dixon, Gbileh, Magbema, Mambolo	150W	Gbileh	Jl Org. Grant; Irish aid, BMZ, JICA
Karene	N	N	N	OFSP	N	N	N	N	n/a	0	n/a	150W	Safroko	Not confirmed
Kenema	started	N	Y	Rice, OFSP	Y	Y	Y	Y	2017, rehab 2022/23	1039 (415/672)	Malegohun, Miawa	150W	Malegohun	Jl Org. Grant JBP, BMZ, JICA

¹¹⁸ Same Chiefdoms as IVS

¹¹⁹ Same Chiefdoms as IVS

¹²⁰ Same Chiefdoms as IVS

¹²¹ Same Chiefdoms as IVS/OFSP

Koinadugu	started	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	2017, rehab 2023	405 (142/263)	Nieni	0	n/a	Jl Org. Grant, BMZ
Moyamba	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	2020, rehab 21/23	2259 (808/1451)	Lower Banta, Upper Banta	0	n/a	UNPBSO 20-21 Jl Org. Grant; Irish Aid, BMZ
Pujehun	started	Y	Y	Rice, OFSP	Y	Y	Y	Y	2017, rehab 2023	2755 (955/1800)	Makpele, Malen, Peoje, Soro Gbema, Sowa	150W	Makpele, Peje	UNPBSO 20-21 Jl Org. Grant JBP; Irish Aid, BMZ, JICA
Tonkolili	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	2022, rehab 2023	726 (254/472)	Kunike Barina,	0	n/a	Jl Org. Grant, JBP, BMZ

ANNEX 4. STRATEGIC OUTCOME THEORY OF CHANGE

The overall statement of the ToC, is the following:

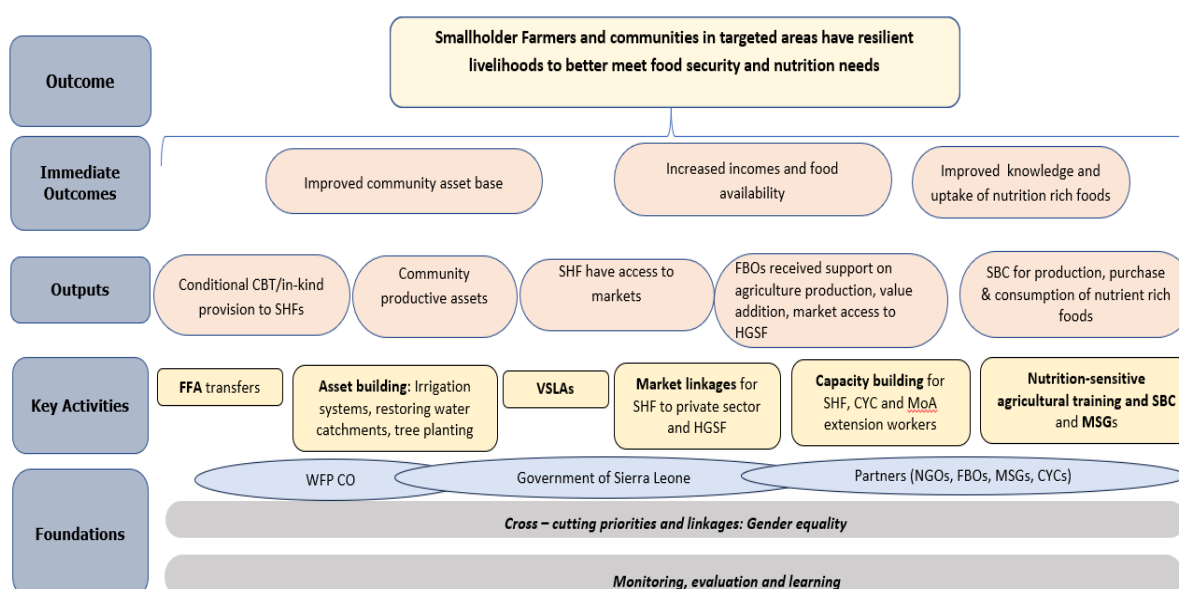
IF WFP works with the Government of Sierra Leone and implementing partners (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Sierra Leone Research Institute, UNCT, international partners, NGOs) to implement the Asset Livelihood Creation Activities **AND** is informed by a robust CSP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system and the integration of cross-cutting issues **AND** all stakeholders have sufficient technical skills, funding, political will and commitment and conducive enabling environment, **THEN:**

- i) Smallholder farmers will be provided with conditional cash transfers (cash/in-kind).
- ii) Community productive assets will be developed.
- iii) Farmer Based Organization will receive support/training in nutrition sensitive farming techniques, post-harvest management, value addition, market access to HGFS.
- iv) Smallholder farmers will receive gender sensitive SBCC and information that promote production, purchase, and consumption of nutrient rich food.

THEN Targeted communities will have an improved productive asset base **AND** smallholder farmers will have increased incomes and production of food **AND** improved knowledge and uptake of nutrition-rich foods.

THEN Smallholder farmers and communities in targeted areas will have resilient livelihoods to better meet food and nutrition needs.

ACL intervention ToC developed by the evaluation team



Source: Developed by the ET

The ToC has allowed the evaluation team to identify a set of nine key **underlying assumptions**. These assumptions will be comprehensively tested during the evaluation exercise and reported upon in the evaluation report.

Key assumptions of ACL intervention ToC

Level/Assumptions	
From activities to outputs	
1.	Government, smallholder farmers and communities are committed to resilience building and SBCC approaches to enhance food security and nutrition in Sierra Leone.
2.	Donor support is timely, predictable, flexible, and sufficiently long term to favour funding for resilience building activities
3.	Farmer Based Organizations are willing to participate in activities

4.	Suitable experts within WFP and partners are able to provide training and support implementation of all activities including SBCC and gender
5.	No disaster or political instability in the region that limits project implementation
From outputs to outcomes	
6.	Government, smallholder farmers and communities are committed to resilience building and SBCC approaches to enhance food security and nutrition in Sierra Leone.
7.	Donor support is timely, predictable, flexible, and sufficiently long term to favour funding for resilience building activities
8.	Suitable experts within WFP and partners to provide training and support implementation of all activities including SBCC and gender
9.	No disaster or political instability in the region that limits project implementation

SO4 is implemented through four interrelated outputs:

- Smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, and community members receive conditional food or cash-based transfers to enhance their livelihoods (output 4.1)
- Community members, particularly women and youth, equitably benefit from productive assets that improve their livelihoods and resilience to natural shocks and climate change, including support for women and youth in gaining access to land and productive resources (output 4.2)
- Smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, equitably benefit from WFP support in farming techniques, post-harvest value addition and market promotion for HGSP in order to increase their productivity and incomes (output 4.3)
- Smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, receive gender-transformative social and behaviour change communications and information that promote the production, purchase and consumption of nutrient-rich food (output 4.4)

ANNEX 5. METHODOLOGY

Evaluability assessment

The evaluation team conducted an evaluability assessment during the evaluation's inception phase, based on an analysis of the operational plan of the ACL interventions and livelihood indicators. Through the evaluability assessment, the ET identified several prospects and challenges. This section presents a summary of the key issues identified by the various elements of the evaluability assessment. The ET has used the evaluability assessment process to ensure that the scope and rationale of the evaluation is clear and that all data needs are appropriately addressed.

SO4 comprises 28 indicators which include 10 outcome indicators, 7 cross cutting indicators and 11 output Indicators. The evaluation will focus on these indicators, in that available data will be collected and analysed to reflect all the indicators as much as possible.

Several national assessments, making available good data, have informed the ACL interventions. These include the CFSVAs, Zero Hunger Strategic Review, FSMS and the peace building initiatives. These assessments provided baseline data for most of the indicators. Review of other documentation such ACRs and post distribution monitoring assessment reports revealed data on the progress of the indicators. The ET will utilize findings from previous evaluations covering all areas of the ACL intervention as important sources that strengthen the evaluability of the activity.

The ET has identified a few issues. Firstly, there are gaps in reporting on outcome indicators in the ACRs. These gaps will be investigated and appropriate analysis on the indicators will be provided upon availability of reliable data. There are also a number of issues specifically impacting the extent to which GEWE and wider inclusion issues can be evaluated. Specifically, some indicators are not disaggregated by gender.¹²² Furthermore, there is some lack of clarity in the ACRs as to how gender disaggregated data is reported, specifically whether gender specifies the head of household or the respondent. Consistency and clarity in this element is essential to interpreting the gendered impact of WFP's assistance.

With respect to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria and based on the elements of this evaluation's evaluability assessment our assessment of the evaluability against OECD-DAC criteria is as follows:

Table 13 Summary of evaluability mitigation measures

Evaluation criteria	Related evaluability issues for this evaluation	Evaluation approach to mitigation
Relevance	No particular evaluability challenges noted against this evaluation criterion.	Not needed
Effectiveness	Data are available on effectiveness for broad reconstructed ToC results areas but have limitations in terms of fully capturing outcomes. To some extent they lack follow-up values for outputs and outcomes in particularly in some years (2020 and 2021). Furthermore, there is lack of gender disaggregation for some indicators.	The evaluation will cover gaps that emerged from secondary data analysis by seeking explanations from other secondary sources (evaluations, ACRs, etc.) and through primary data collection.
Efficiency	Cost dimensions of efficiency will be difficult to assess as unit cost data and budget breakdowns per activity not readily available from WFP. Operational efficiency, cost effectiveness, and timeliness are more feasible.	The evaluation will cover gaps using primary data collected using key informant interviews with WFP staff

¹²² Output indicators: F.1.27: Number of farmers that benefit from farmer organizations ' sales to home-grown school meals programme and other structured markets, F.1.40: Number of individual farmers trained in good agronomic practices (GAP), Outcome indicators: Value and volume of smallholder sales through WFP-supported aggregation systems: Value (USD and MT), Proportion of the population in targeted communities reporting benefits from an enhanced livelihood asset base.

Coherence	No particular evaluability challenges noted against this evaluation criterion.	Not needed.
Impact	It may not be possible to attribute impact entirely from WFP supported activities.	The evaluation will probe using questions that help capture WFP contributions to impact.
Sustainability	Prospective sustainability should be feasible to assess for the main areas of activity under SO4, and in particular for those that have been handed over/completed, or where there is a substantial implementation history.	The evaluation will examine sustainability with a focus on the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time are in place.
Cross cutting issues	Some indicators are not disaggregated by gender. Furthermore, there is some lack of clarity in the ACRs as to how gender disaggregated data is reported, specifically whether gender specifies the head of household or the respondent.	The evaluation will cover gaps using primary data collected using key informant interviews with WFP staff. The ET will work with the WFP to clarify methodological questions.

Source: Evaluation Team based on Evaluability Assessment

Stakeholder analysis and consultations with WFP ACL intervention staff at inception suggests all relevant stakeholders will be available for interview as and when necessary. The evaluation team does not expect to encounter any challenges in terms of access to the different regions and field sites other than that the security situation will need to be constantly monitored to inform feasibility of fieldwork and site visits.

Methodological approach

A theory-based approach will be applied to validate the ToC with empirical evidence of implementation in relation to its context and outcomes and to assess the extent to which critical assumptions were upheld, thus drawing conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the programme as well as identifying areas that need further strengthening. The evaluation questions form the evaluation's overarching analytical framework.

The ET will collect data through a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data sources. Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data sources will help formulate a holistic and complete picture of ACL interventions. These methods and data collection tools (presented below) are aligned with the evaluation questions and sub-questions in the Evaluation matrix.

The evaluation will assess the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact, and sustainability – no particular criteria has been prioritized. Under impact, the evaluation will explore long term effects of ACL intervention that have been, or are likely to be, realized for community and household agriculture and nutrition behaviour.

The evaluation questions (EQs) in the ToR have been reviewed and modified during the inception phase to clarify wording and reduce duplications. The revised EQs are presented in Table 14 below. provides a comparison between the initial and modified questions, with justifications for proposed changes.

Table 14 Revised evaluation questions

Evaluation Question/sub-question		Evaluation criteria
EQ1: To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and the priorities of the government, targeted population, and stakeholders?		Relevance
1.1	Was WFP's selection criteria consistent with the needs of the key affected groups (women, men, and youth) based on geographic vulnerabilities/needs/food insecurity (?) as well as activity design and objectives?	

1.2	To what extent have the design, planning and implementation of the activities been participatory, inclusive (especially youth), gender-sensitive, and considerate of protection risks?	
1.3	To what extent have lessons learned based on previous WFP asset creation and livelihood activities informed the current asset creation and livelihoods activity adjustments/redesign and positively contributed to improvements in the approach since 2020?	
1.4	To what extent were environmental concerns and the effects of climate change taken into account in the design and implementation of the intervention?	
EQ2: To what extent has the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and outcomes		Effectiveness
2.1	Are intervention outcomes aligned with planned targets after 3 years?	
2.2	What have been the major factors (including COVID-19), positively or negatively influencing the achievements of outputs and outcomes of the activities?	
2.3	Were results delivered equitably to specific groups including men, women, youth, and people living with disabilities or other marginalized groups?	
EQ3: To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated		Efficiency
3.1	Were activities efficiently implemented in terms of timeliness, inputs and cost-effectiveness?	
3.2	What are the best practices for FBO set-ups and organization?	
3.3	What is the efficiency of linking farmers to WFP procurement systems (rice and vegetables for school feeding) and local markets?	
EQ4: To what extent is the intervention compatible with other interventions in the country, sector, or institutions		Coherence
4.1	Was the activity adequately aligned with WFP Sierra Leone CSP overall especially in terms of linking with School Feeding and Nutrition programmes?	
4.2	To what extent is the intervention aligned with national and sector-wide priorities, policies and strategies? (external coherence)	
4.3	What have been the synergies between the ACL interventions and interventions from Civil society, UN wider programmes, etc. especially in regard to using the results of the CBPP? (external coherence)	
EQ5: To what extent has the intervention generated significant positive or negative effects, intended or unintended at a high level?		Impact
5.1	What were the intended and unintended effects and consequences of the intervention on project communities and others?	
5.2	Has the WFP asset creation and livelihood interventions empowered or developed and supported women's and youth's leadership and independence of targeted populations?	

EQ6: To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term? Sustainability		Sustainability
6.1	To what extent are the benefits of the activities likely to continue after WFP support has ceased?	
6.2	To what extent are key structures (FBOs, agricultural extensionist network, the CYCs, the mother support groups, local leaders and other local structures) that were established by the project or existed active to the sustainability of project activities beyond WFP and other humanitarian support?	
6.3	How sustainable are the environmental impact of the programme?	

The EQs have been further disaggregated into indicators in the evaluation matrix.

Quantitative data: The ET will collect quantitative data on all components of ACL interventions implemented between 2020 and 2023. The ET will mostly collect and use secondary quantitative data from monitoring reports and/or databases on the programme indicators through desk review and during field mission. The evaluation will be highly reliant on monitoring data. Completeness, consistency, quality, and reliability of the data collected will be assessed and verified with programme staff as much as possible. As discussed above, the ET has already identified some gaps to be addressed during data collection.

Qualitative data: Qualitative data will be collected through conducting KIIs, FGDs and direct observations of project sites. Qualitative data will be used to complement and supplement the quantitative data. This method will provide evidence and explanation on '*how and why*' questions as well as '*what*' questions concerning the evaluation criteria. The qualitative data will be useful to triangulate and validate findings from the secondary quantitative data. The ET will ensure that qualitative data collected is objective and systematic by utilizing semi-structured tools to gather findings according to evaluation criteria and subsequently organizing findings into an evidence matrix to compare findings across data sources.

Gender, equity and inclusion: a gender-sensitive approach will be mainstreamed throughout all evaluation processes and activities. Evaluation questions include explicit reference to GEWE, and inclusion is reflected in the evaluation matrix and data collection tools. The ET will aim to carry out gender and age-differentiated analysis and where data is available, disaggregation by youth will be performed. Sampling will seek to reflect the views of men, women and youth including people living with disabilities where possible based on available information. The team will consider the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) evaluation technical guidance for integrating GEWE-related data and will also consider alignment with human rights issues and adhere to the Humanitarian Principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, and independence throughout.

Data collection methods

The ET shall use four data collection methods to answer the evaluation questions and collect the relevant data for the evaluation. These methods will cover the diversity of stakeholders involved in ACL interventions. The ET will systematically explore unanticipated effects through all data collection methods. A summary of tools and purpose is provided in Annex 9: Data collection Tools below.

Desk review: Document review has started during the inception phase and will continue during the data collection and analysis and the report writing phase. The desk review (and the initial meetings with the programme team) forms the entry point of the evaluation. It gives the ET the opportunity to understand the programme design and implementation. The list of documents reviewed so far is provided in Annex 14: Bibliography . The reliability of available data/information is, at this stage, assumed to be accurate. This will be verified and tested/triangulated further during the data collection phase by the ET to ensure rigor in the evaluation process.

Key Informant Interviews: The ET will conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews with individuals or groups that will include a broad range of stakeholders from WFP staff, donors, Government and NGOs. These interviews will focus on the WFP Sierra Leone management and staff including ACL intervention staff at national and sub-national/field offices; WFP donor partners; Government counterparts at the national,

district levels (including Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, UNCT, NGOs and donors. Interview guides will be adapted to each class of stakeholders. The range of stakeholders is intended to promote the participation of different groups and seeks to avoid bias through triangulation. These KIIs will be used to contribute to the analysis of all dimensions of the evaluation criteria.

Focus Group Discussions: FGDs will be a priority means of generating deeper understanding of the reality of WFP interventions on the ground and to enhance the learning element of the evaluation. Each FGD shall comprise 8-10 members of the respective stakeholders. The strength of the FGDs is that participants can co-construct their responses by disagreeing and agreeing with each other. This can provide understanding of how a group thinks about an issue as well as giving insight into the potential range of opinions and ideas. Focus group discussions with participants – while contributing to the analysis of all the dimensions of the evaluation criteria – will focus on gaining insights into programme relevance (choice of programming), effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

FGD will be used to collect primary data from:

- WFP district staff,
- MAFS district level extension staff.
- FGDs with men and women smallholder farmers/FBOs. In each district of the five districts sampled, two FGDs will be conducted in two separate communities. Communities will be identified upon receipt of the list of project communities from WFP SLCO. Where possible separate women FBOs will be organized and facilitated by a female evaluation team member.
- FGDs with CYCs consisting of men and women youths.
- Community leaders in each district will be consulted to provide their perspectives on the relevance of the ACL interventions and their effectiveness in addressing the needs of the communities.
- Mother Support Groups where available

Direct Observations: Direct observations of project sites will be randomly conducted to triangulate/validate information from KIIs and FGDs as well as capture additional information. In addition, selected Agriculture Business Units (ABUs) will be observed, and key informants will be interviewed for their perception of market linkage with the smallholder farmers.

The respective data collection tools for the different groups of stakeholders are provided in Annex 9: Data collection Tools.

Sampling for selection of field visits and key informants: Samples for qualitative methods will be selected purposively – that is, to make sure that the sample composition considers the diversity of all the different types of activities/contexts being evaluated. The ET will select samples of key informants of the different stakeholders and project sites widely across the regions and districts with an aim to ensure coverage and reduce bias to draw meaningful conclusions. The different groups and types of stakeholders involved in the ACL interventions implementation in 2020-2023 that will be sampled for the evaluation are listed in the stakeholder analysis/mapping above (Annex 6: Stakeholder mapping). The ET will ensure that the selection reflects the diversity of targeted stakeholders. The participant sampling approach will ensure inclusion of men, women and youth including persons with disabilities in data collection (smallholder farmers, mothers support groups, CYCs and community leaders).

Table 15 lists the project districts with the number of targeted communities and ACL interventions that serve as sampling frame for district selection for the field visits.

Table 15 List of project districts with number of targeted communities and ACL interventions

No.	Region	District	#Targeted communities	Main Activities
1	Northern	Falaba	10	Asset creation, cash transfers, capacity building, market linkage
2		Koinadugu	7	Asset creation, FFA, capacity building, nutrition sensitive agriculture/vegetables, market linkage

3		Tonkolili	13	Asset creation, FFA, capacity building, market linkages
4	North-Western	Kambia	10	Asset creation, FFA, capacity building, nutrition sensitive agriculture/vegetables, market linkage
5		Karene	5	Asset creation, FFA, Nutrition/vegetable, capacity building, market linkages, Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP)
6	Southern	Bonthe	5	nutrition sensitive agriculture/Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) cultivation and market linkage.
7		Moyamba	31	Asset creation, FFA, capacity building, market linkages
8		Pujehun	49	Asset creation, FFA, Nutrition/vegetable, capacity building, market linkages
9	Eastern	Kenema	20	Asset creation, cash transfers capacity building, nutrition sensitive agriculture/vegetables, market linkage, nutrition/vegetable.

Based on the proposal, considering time and resources available for the evaluation, the field visits will be conducted in five out of nine project districts. The **five** districts considered for field visits are: **Tonkolili** in Northern region; **Kambia** in North-Western region; **Bonthe** and **Pujehun** in Southern region; and **Kenema** in Eastern region. Communities will be selected based on diversity of activities, accessibility balancing time to reach sites and time available for data collection. In addition, KIIs will be carried out with WFP staff at the sub-offices in Kenema, and Makeni on their perceptions of the ACL interventions.

KIIs will be conducted with representatives of WFP field staff and implementing partners (NGOs and government officials); and Observations will be conducted in two sites within each selected district.

Gender, equity, and wider inclusion issues: Interviews will match ET and interviewee gender whenever possible to create a comfortable environment for expressing interviewee views and concerns. Considerations will be made regarding the timing and location of FGDs to accommodate different gender groups' obligations and ensure that consultations are conducted at convenient times and appropriate locations to the extent possible. During data analysis, the ET will ensure that the perceptions and priorities of women, men and youth are represented in the findings. The evaluation report will include gender and age disaggregated data and analysis (in particular youth considerations) wherever appropriate and feasible. Gender analysis will include a perception analysis on topics including leadership positions of women and the extent to which women make decisions within FBOs and on cash received through FFA.

Data analysis

Data collected will be assessed for accuracy, consistency, reliability, and validity; and subsequently analysed and synthesized. This will be a systematic process of organizing and classifying the information collected, tabulating quantitative data, summarizing it and generating findings against the evaluation questions and criteria. Findings will be disaggregated by gender and geographical location as much as possible. Based on the findings, conclusions and recommendations reflecting the evaluation questions will then be drawn.

For secondary quantitative data, statistical analysis will be applied, as appropriate. In case of qualitative data, which is typically in narrative form, an analytical matrix might be useful to summarize data from multiple sources and facilitate triangulation and synthesis.

The ET will systematically employ triangulation as a key tool for validating and analysing findings as follows:

- **Source Triangulation:** Comparing information from different sources. The WFP sources such as ACRs will be triangulated with other Government, UN and NGO assessments generated at national and district levels. This has been encouraged by the SLCO.
- **Method Triangulation:** Comparing information collected by different methods, e.g., KIIs, FGDs, document research. Data collected will be guided by the evaluation matrix, the data collection tools have been organized by evaluation questions which provides a systematic way of triangulation from different data collection methods and allowing to identify convergence of evidence.

- **Using the evaluation matrix:** Data from different sources can assist in identifying key findings, conclusions, and results.
- **Investigator triangulation:** Involving multiple evaluators to assess the same issues. An evaluation team analysis meeting will be held to systematically discuss findings and assess convergence of evidence.

All ET members are expected to take detailed notes of all interviews and FGDs (of participants who consent). The Senior Evaluator will check incoming interview notes to ascertain quality of data on an ongoing basis and provide timely feedback to each ET member that can be incorporated into the subsequent notes. All of data collection is conducted in a process of free and un-coerced consent with absolute confidentiality and anonymity ensured for participants, and the right to withdraw at any time, which also extends unconditionally to Konterra's work with youth.

A draft evaluation report will be prepared and shared with WFP for feedback and comments from internal and external stakeholders. A validation workshop will be organized after the comments have been received to validate and finalize findings and recommendations before preparing the final evaluation report, evaluation brief and infographics for dissemination.

Ethical considerations

Evaluations must conform to the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines. Accordingly, the KonTerra Group is responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.

Interviews will be conducted in accordance with UNEG's 2020 Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation,¹²³ notably to ensure that informants understand that their participation is voluntary and that data collection from individuals will proceed in line with the principles of integrity, accountability, respect, and beneficence. Participants will be informed of the purpose of the evaluation and how the information and perspectives they provide will be used. WFP staff will not take direct part in interviews or FGDs beyond introductions, unless they are direct participants. All data collected will solely be used for the purpose of this evaluation, and all field notes will remain confidential and will not be turned over to public or private agencies, including WFP. Any data later provided to WFP, or third parties, will be anonymized.

Evaluation questions explicitly pertain to gender issues and underrepresented groups and aim to meaningfully incorporate rights holders' feedback and contribution to evaluation questions. Through the careful consideration and design of evaluation tools that are value-neutral and gender, culture and age-appropriate, the ET will minimize risk of harm to participants. Likewise, the ET will ensure the access and safety of invited participants through practical considerations for data collection such as choosing accessible locations and times of day for data collection, including accounting for access issues relevant to marginalized populations. Before conducting data collection, the ET will liaise with the CO to determine relevant policies to guide response in case they become aware of abuse and how to make the appropriate referrals as required.

There is no conflict of interest for any team member supporting this evaluation. No other specific ethical considerations have been determined during the inception phase. Risks will be continually monitored by the ET to anticipate potential harm (physical, social and/or psychological/emotional) and develop an appropriate course of action as needed.

Quality assurance

WFP has developed a Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) and the Development Assistance Commission (DAC)). It sets out process maps with in-built steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products. It also includes checklists for feedback on quality for each of the evaluation products. DEQAS will be systematically applied

¹²³ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

during this evaluation and relevant documents (checklists and technical notes) have been provided to the ET to guide the evaluation process and products.

Quality assurance (QA) for the evaluation products will occur at two levels. The team leader will hold primary responsibility for producing high-quality evaluation products based on factual and verifiable primary data. KonTerra's internal QA expert will review the draft Inception Report and Evaluation Report, providing written feedback to improve the drafts before submission of the final version to WFP. KonTerra is familiar with WFP data systems and DEQAS requirements. All team members will maintain full impartiality and independence, declaring no direct interest in WFP's activities in Sierra Leone. The ET will select intervention sites and informants for data collection with support from WFP to identify appropriate informants.

The evaluation report will be reviewed first externally under the DEQAS system and secondly by the Evaluation Reference Group. WFP has developed a communication and knowledge management plan to ensure a structured and impactful flow of information to targeted stakeholders to feed into deliverable development.

ANNEX 6. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Who are the Stakeholders	What is their Role in the intervention	What is their interest in the evaluation?	How should they be involved in the evaluation	At which stage should they be involved	Importance of involving them in the evaluation
WFP Internal Stakeholders					
WFP field offices in Makeni and Kenema sub office	Responsible for day-to-day programme implementation and liaise with stakeholders at district level.	The field offices have an interest in learning from experience to ensuring the successful implementation of the pilot project. <i>Likely use: The field offices may use evaluation findings for implementation of ACL interventions at the district level.</i>	Primary stakeholder: Key informants and users of the evaluation findings and recommendations which will feed into the design and implementation of the next CSP. They will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft inception report (IR), and ER. Participates in the end of data collection debriefing meeting.	The WFP field Office will be involved at all levels of the evaluation, especially, at inception, data collection and reporting stage.	High
WFP Country Office in Sierra Leone	The country office is responsible for the planning and implementation of WFP interventions at country level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Director- Management Head of Program- overall strategic guidance ACL interventions team coordinates activities such as FFA, CBT, Markets, Smallholder farmers) responsible for planning and implementation Nutrition unit- for nutrition sensitive agriculture 	The country office has an interest in learning from experience to inform decision-making, accountability to project beneficiaries, partners, funders, and government, and ensuring the successful implementation of activities. <i>Likely use: The country office may use evaluation findings for implementation of ACL interventions and inform</i>	Primary stakeholders. Key informants and users of the evaluation findings and recommendations which will feed into the design and implementation of the next CSP. They will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft IR, and ER. Participates in the end of data collection debriefing meeting.	The WFP country Office will be involved at all levels of the evaluation, especially, at inception, data collection and reporting stage.	High

Who are the Stakeholders	What is their Role in the intervention	What is their interest in the evaluation?	How should they be involved in the evaluation	At which stage should they be involved	Importance of involving them in the evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance unit- to understand the cost efficiency of the ACL interventions. 	<i>the activities in the next CSP</i>			
Regional Bureau in Dakar	<p>RBD management is responsible for both oversight of CO and technical guidance and support.</p> <p>Resilience unit staff is responsible for technical guidance and support.</p>	<p>The RBD management has an interest in an independent account of the operational performance as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to apply lessons to other COs</p>	<p>Primary stakeholder: They will be involved in providing oversight and guidance throughout the implementation of the evaluation and to ensure the implementation of quality, credible and useful decentralized evaluations.</p> <p>The Resilience Unit is a member of the ERG</p>	<p>The RBD will be engaged at inception and during meetings and reporting sessions.</p> <p>No direct participation in the data collection anticipated.</p>	High
WFP HQ divisions	<p>Responsible for issuing and overseeing the rollout of programmes/interventions.</p> <p>(i) The Food Systems and Smallholder Support Unit responsible for producing normative guidance and provides technical support to WFP Country Offices and Regional Bureaux embracing food systems approaches and implementing Smallholder Agricultural Market Support (SAMS) programmes, including Post-Harvest Loss (PHL) reduction initiatives.</p> <p>(ii) The livelihoods, Asset Creation and Resilience unit (PRORL) is responsible for developing corporate policy and technical</p>	<p>They have an interest in learning how well the guidelines are applied and how they are working [or not] in different country contexts.</p> <p>Likely use: To adopt lessons for wider organizational learning and accountability.</p>	<p>Primary stakeholder: HQ has been consulted in the planning phase of the evaluation.</p>	<p>Relevant units will be consulted from time to time through the WFP country office to provide guidance. Otherwise, they will largely be kept informed.</p> <p>No direct participation in the data collection anticipated.</p>	Medium

Who are the Stakeholders	What is their Role in the intervention	What is their interest in the evaluation?	How should they be involved in the evaluation	At which stage should they be involved	Importance of involving them in the evaluation
	guidance on integrated resilience, asset creation, and livelihoods. The Unit supports Regional Bureaux, Country Offices and partners in applying the guidance and enhancing capacities to scale-up effective FFA programmes, to ensure high quality programme design and evidence-based programme responses.				
WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV)	The Office of Evaluation is responsible for ensuring that decentralized evaluations deliver quality, credible and useful evaluations respecting provisions for impartiality. The office also ensures accountabilities of various decentralized evaluation stakeholders as identified in the evaluation policy.	The office is interested in the effective conduct of the evaluation and adherence to WFP standards and quality. <i>Likely use:</i> The office may use the evaluation findings as appropriate, to feed into centralized evaluations, evaluation syntheses or other learning products.	Primary stakeholder: To provide WFP Evaluation standards and ensure quality.	The evaluation office will be consulted from time to time through the WFP country office to provide guidance. Otherwise, they will largely be kept informed. No direct participation in the data collection anticipated.	Low
WFP Executive Board (EB)	The Executive Board provides final oversight of WFP programmes and guidance to programmes.	This WFP governing body has an interest in the effectiveness of WFP programmes. <i>Likely use:</i> The findings may be used to feed into thematic and/or regional syntheses and corporate learning processes.	Primary stakeholder: To provide overall oversight and approval of all WFP programmes.	The Executive board will be kept informed through the Country Office No direct participation in the data collection anticipated.	Low

Who are the Stakeholders	What is their Role in the intervention	What is their interest in the evaluation?	How should they be involved in the evaluation	At which stage should they be involved	Importance of involving them in the evaluation
WFP External Stakeholders					
Government: (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (extension and agricultural engineering divisions, Sierra Leone Agriculture Research Institute (SLARI)	<p>The MAFS is responsible for design and overall implementation of WFP asset creation activities and livelihood activities.</p> <p>At central level the MAFS is responsible for policy and strategic guidance on ACL interventions through an existing MoU.</p> <p>At district-level (District Agriculture Offices) through implementation agreements, MAFS have provided seeds, fertilizers, and extension services to increase agriculture yields.</p> <p>The MAFS has benefited directly from WFP training support and donation of goods relating to smallholder farmers and agricultural markets.</p> <p>The MAFS and WFP are involved in the training and support to Community Youth Contractors.</p> <p>SLARI is responsible for research activities including the recently completed soil</p>	<p>MAFS has a strong interest in knowing whether WFP activities in the country are aligned with national priorities, harmonized with the action of other partners, and meet the expected results. Issues related to capacity development, handover and sustainability will be of particular interest.</p> <p>SLARI is interested in understanding how research/evidence generation contributes to effective implementation of the smallholder farmers activities.</p> <p>Likely use: The MAFS at central and district levels may use the findings to inform future project implementation and decision making, and to enhance delivery and partnerships on the ACL interventions.</p>	Primary stakeholders: key informants - on government policy, views on alignment of WFP with Government priorities, as well as achievements, challenges, and inputs by WFP and partners. Lesson learning from the evaluation.	Government (MAFS at central and district levels, SLARI) will be involved at data collection (as key informants), reviewing evaluation reports, and providing feedback on the evaluation reports.	High

Who are the Stakeholders	What is their Role in the intervention	What is their interest in the evaluation?	How should they be involved in the evaluation	At which stage should they be involved	Importance of involving them in the evaluation
	assessments amongst smallholder farmers.				
Donors (Government of Japan, EU, Irish Aid, SRAC)	Key donors for ACL interventions. Government of Japan and the Peace Building Fund have been the largest contributors to ACL. Implementation of ACL has received some important contributions under the SRAC mechanism	<p>They have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if WFP work has been effective and contributed to their own strategies and programmes</p> <p>Likely use: Findings and recommendations may inform future strategic decisions or funding commitments to the WFP.</p>	Primary/Secondary stakeholder: Relevant portfolio managers of selected donors to be interviewed depending on the organizational structure of each donor.	They will be involved during data collection as key informants.	High
United Nations country team (UNCT, FAO, IFAD)	They ensure that WFP programmes are effective in contributing to the United Nations concerted efforts in the country.	<p>FAO and IFAD are part of the Evaluation Reference Group and will be interested in lessons generated to inform UNCT wide programming.</p> <p>Likely use: To inform resilience building programming within the UNCT</p>	Secondary stakeholders: They will be involved as key informants to provide documents, reports/ data. As members of the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), they will comment on draft IR and draft ER.	At all stages of the evaluation through the Country Office.	High

Who are the Stakeholders	What is their Role in the intervention	What is their interest in the evaluation?	How should they be involved in the evaluation	At which stage should they be involved	Importance of involving them in the evaluation
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/international enterprises: Helen Keller International.	NGOs are WFP's partners for the implementation of some activities while at the same time having their own interventions.	<p>The results of the evaluation might affect future implementation modalities, strategic orientation, and partnerships.</p> <p>Likely use: They will be involved in using evaluation findings for programme implementation</p>	Primary stakeholders: They will be involved as key informants to provide documents, reports/ data.	At data collection stages and may comment on draft ER.	High
Participants- farmer Based Organizations, smallholder farmers (women and men)	Participants are the ultimate recipients of ACL interventions,	<p>Farmers are interested to know if the project is working or not and if they are meeting project requirements.</p> <p>Likely use: <i>Farmers may use the information from the evaluation to enhance production systems, assets, market access to HGSP and others.</i></p>	Primary stakeholders: FBOs and will provide information on their governance structures, production, post-harvest losses, value addition activities, technologies, gender etc. They will share knowledge on improving the intervention based on their observations and engagements with WFP.	They will be involved during data collection through focus group discussions.	High
Participants- Community Youth Contractors (CYC)	CYC bridge the gap between MAFS extension workers and communities. They support Farmer Based Organizations	<p>Programme participants have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective.</p> <p>Likely use: <i>CYC may use the information from the evaluation to enhance their support to FBOs</i></p>	Primary stakeholders: They will be involved as informants through FGDs.	They will be involved during data collection through focus group discussions.	High

Who are the Stakeholders	What is their Role in the intervention	What is their interest in the evaluation?	How should they be involved in the evaluation	At which stage should they be involved	Importance of involving them in the evaluation
Participants- Mother Support Groups (MSGs)	Six MSGs in Moyamba and Pujehun received support from WFP to establish small poultry enterprises	<p>Programme participants have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective.</p> <p><i>Likely use MSGs may use the information from the evaluation to enhance their support to nutrition sensitive agriculture activities</i></p>	Primary stakeholders: They will be involved as informants through FGDs.	They will be involved during data collection through focus group discussions.	High

ANNEX 7. EVALUATION MATRIX

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
EQ 1	To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and the priorities of the government, targeted population and stakeholders? (Relevance)					
	Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Availability and Reliability of Evidence
1.1	Was WFP's selection criteria consistent with the needs of the key affected groups (women, men, youth) based on geographic vulnerabilities/ needs/food insecurity as well as activity design and objectives?	<p>Proportion of districts, and participants (women and men) with greatest vulnerability/food insecurity targeted by the intervention.</p> <p>Stakeholder and participant perceptions on the appropriateness of intervention targeting and coverage.</p> <p>Community perceptions on added value of capacity building activities compared to food assistance</p> <p>Alignment of needs to the activities designed</p>	<p>Document and data review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Observations</p>	<p>CSP and BRs</p> <p>ACRs 2019-2022, COMET, SCOPE, CFSVA (2015,2020) reports, Country sectoral assessments, Japan Bilateral Trust Fund Project baseline and progress reports</p> <p>2023 Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) report</p> <p>KIIs:</p> <p>Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders.</p> <p>FGDs:</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Quantitative data analysis</p> <p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	<p>Relevant, reliable documents are available.</p> <p>Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.</p>

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
				FBOs, CYCs, Community leaders Site visits to a selection of WFP project locations		
1.2	To what extent have the design, planning and implementation of the activities been participatory, inclusive (including youth), gender-sensitive, and considerate of protection risks?	Evidence of community/participant consultations to define targeting and coverage. List of barriers to participatory, inclusive, gender-sensitive design/planning/implementation Extent to which design/planning/implementation: considered the communities' preferences, promoted rural/ gender and age equality promoted women's empowerment Incorporated do no harm approaches, Enabled safe and dignified access to assistance	Document and data review Semi-structured interviews Focus Groups	ACRs 2019-2022 Japan Bilateral Trust Fund Project baseline and progress reports KIIs: Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders. FGDs: FBOs, CYCs, Community leaders	Content analysis Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.	Relevant, reliable documents are available. Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
1.3	To what extent have lessons learned based on previous WFP asset creation and livelihood activities informed the current asset creation and livelihoods activity adjustments/redesign and positively contributed to improvements in the approach since 2020?	Extent to which previous learnings have been reflected in the design of the intervention	Document and data review Semi-structured interviews	2019 ZHSR, 2020 CFSVA, FSMSSs, Cadre Harmonize (CH) KIs: WFP CO staff	Content analysis	Relevant, reliable documents are available. Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.
1.4	To what extent were environmental concerns and the effects of climate change taken into account in the design and implementation of the intervention?	Proportion of activities for which environmental risks have been screened. Proportion of activities in which mitigation measures to offset environmental risks identified	Document and data review Semi-structured interviews	Documents: ACRs, environmental impact assessments/mitigation plans KIs: Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders.	Content analysis Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.	Relevant, reliable documents are available. Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.
EQ 2	To what extent has the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and outcomes? (Effectiveness)					
	Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Availability and Reliability of Evidence

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
2.1	Are intervention outcomes aligned with planned targets after 3 years?	<p>Level of achievement of planned outputs, disaggregated by gender and vulnerable group where possible</p> <p>Evidence of progress towards end-of CSP outcome level targets</p> <p>Analysis of the rationale behind any difference between planned and effectively achieved outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>Perspectives of participants on achievement of results</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Observations</p>	<p>CSP and BRs</p> <p>ACRs 2019-2023; Performance data at Strategic Outcome level</p> <p>Japan Bilateral Trust Fund Project baseline and progress reports</p> <p>KIIs:</p> <p>Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders.</p> <p>FGDs:</p> <p>FBOs, CYCs, Community leaders</p> <p>Site visits for FBO, implementation partner, decentralized government, and beneficiary perspectives</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Quantitative data analysis</p> <p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	<p>Availability and reliability of existing monitoring data credible and reliable</p> <p>Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.</p>
2.2	What have been the major factors (including COVID-19), positively or negatively influencing the achievements of outputs	Extent to which identified internal factors positively/negatively affected achievements	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>CSP and BRs</p> <p>ACRs 2019-2023; Performance data at Strategic Outcome level</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Quantitative data analysis</p>	<p>Availability and reliability of existing monitoring data</p>

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
	and outcomes of the activities?	Extent to which identified external factors positively/negatively affected achievements	Focus groups	<p>Japan Bilateral Trust Fund Project baseline and progress reports</p> <p>KIIs:</p> <p>Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders.</p>	<p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	<p>credible and reliable</p> <p>Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.</p>
2.3	Were results delivered equitably to specific groups including men, women, youth and people living with disabilities or other marginalized groups?	<p>Evidence that targets on gender or other identified vulnerable groups (e.g. youth) were achieved.</p> <p>Perception of stakeholders on achievements, against gender and other cross-cutting aims and targets.</p>		<p>Documents:</p> <p>CSP and BRs</p> <p>ACRs 2019-2023; Performance data on cross-cutting issues, Japan Bilateral Trust Fund Project baseline and progress reports</p> <p>KIIs:</p> <p>Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders.</p> <p>FGDs:</p> <p>FGDs:</p> <p>FBOs, CYCs, Community leaders</p> <p>,</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Quantitative data analysis</p> <p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	<p>Availability and reliability of existing monitoring data credible and reliable</p> <p>Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.</p>

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
				WFP complaints records on SO4		
EQ 3	To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated (Efficiency)					
	Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Availability and Reliability of Evidence
3.1	To what extent were activities implemented in terms of timeliness and cost-effectiveness?	<p>Evidence of disbursements in line with activity planning (time/content)</p> <p>Cost category analysis by modality (e.g., cash versus food) at outcome levels</p> <p>Annual expenditure per Metric Ton (MT) of food delivered/value of cash transferred.</p> <p>Evidence of measures to manage costs and maximize benefits (e.g., complementarities with partners, use of digital platforms, market and price analysis, etc.).</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Data analysis</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>CSP and BRs</p> <p>ACRs 2019-2022, PDMs</p> <p>Funding and financial execution by SO4 and activity</p> <p>Planning and evaluation documentation: Internal procurement, KPIs</p> <p>KIIs: Government officials, CO staff, partners,</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Quantitative data analysis</p> <p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	<p>Relevant, reliable documents are available, despite an apparent challenge of disaggregating cost data at activity level</p> <p>Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.</p>

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
		<p>Evidence of cost sharing between donor/government/UN and private resources.</p> <p>Perception of stakeholders on WFP cost-efficiency and WFP's support to ensuring good use of public resources.</p>				
3.2	What are the best practices for FBO set-ups and organization?	Best practice examples of FBO set-up and organisation that could be adopted in current or future projects	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p>	<p>Farmer Survey reports</p> <p>KIIs: Government officials, CO staff, partners,</p> <p>FGDs: Selected FBOs</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.
3.3	What is the efficiency of linking farmers to WFP procurement systems (rice and vegetables for school feeding) and local markets?	<p>Perceptions of farmers on the successes and challenges of access to WFP procurement markets</p> <p>Changes in farmer revenues and gains</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p>	<p>Farmer Survey reports</p> <p>KIIs: Government officials, CO staff, partners,</p> <p>FGDs: Selected FBOs</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.
EQ 4	To what extent is the intervention compatible with other interventions in the country, sector or institutions (Coherence)					

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
	Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Availability and Reliability of Evidence
4.1	Was the activity adequately aligned with WFP Sierra Leone CSP overall especially in terms of linking with School Feeding and Nutrition programmes?	Evidence of synergies and complementarities between CSP strategic outcomes and SO4 ACL interventions	Semi-structured interviews Review of CSP strategic outcomes	CSP, ACRs 2019-2023; KIIs: CO staff	Content analysis	Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.
4.2	To what extent is the intervention aligned with national and sector-wide priorities, policies and strategies? (external coherence)	Evidence of matching between strategic outcome 4 and activities and national priorities and objectives, as outlined in government policies, plans and strategies.	Semi-structured interviews Review of policy and strategic documents	KIIs: Government officials, CO staff, partners, Policy and Strategic Plan documents: Food and Nutrition; Social Protection; Agriculture Transformation; School Feeding; Environment and Climate Change; Gender; Persons living with disabilities, youth	Content analysis (documents, interview notes, evidence matrices) Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.	Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
4.3	What have been the synergies between the ACL interventions and interventions from Civil society, UN wider programmes, etc. especially in regard to using the results of the CBPP? (external coherence)	<p>Evidence of synergies and complementarities between UN, NGOs and other partners.</p> <p>Evidence of implementation of coordinated actions with partners and their effects.</p> <p>Stakeholder perceptions on the quality of partnerships and collaboration under the SO4.</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Review of documents</p>	<p>KIIs:</p> <p>UN, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders.</p> <p>CSP and BRs</p> <p>ACRs 2019-2022, PDMs</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.
EQ 5	To what extent has the intervention generated significant positive or negative effects, intended or unintended at a high level? Impact					
	Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Availability and Reliability of Evidence
5.1	What were the intended and unintended effects and consequences of the intervention on project communities and others where available?	<p>Evidence of long-term effects of ACL intervention that have been, or are likely to be, realized for community and household agriculture and nutrition behaviour.</p> <p>Project community perception of long-term effects</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Review of documents</p>	<p>KIIs:</p> <p>UN, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders.</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>CSP and BRs</p> <p>ACRs 2019-2022, PDMs</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.
5.2	Have the WFP ACL interventions empowered or developed and supported women's and	Evidence of women and youth leaders and demonstrated independence	Document and data review	ACRs 2019-2022	Content analysis	Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
	youth's leadership and independence of targeted populations?	Perception of participants on the extent of women's empowerment as a result of the intervention(s)	Semi-structured interviews Focus Groups	Japan Bilateral Trust Fund Project baseline and progress reports KIIs: Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders. FGDs: FBOs, CYCs, Community leaders	Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.	available for interview / discussions.
EQ 6	To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term? (Sustainability)					
	Sub questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Availability and Reliability of Evidence
6.1	To what extent are the benefits of the activities likely to continue after WFP support has ceased?	Evidence of changes and gaps in government/national capacities and systems Perception of ownership within communities and individual farmers of WFP activities	Document review FGD with beneficiaries Site visits / observations	Evaluations and reports: PDMS, capacity needs assessments Site-visits, particularly to assess livelihood activities, as FFA, FBOs KIIs:	Content analysis Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.	Relevant, reliable documents are available. Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
		Key success /enabling factors to ensure community/household commitment		Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders. FGDs: FBOs, CYCs, Community leaders		interview / discussions.
6.2	To what extent are key structures ¹²⁴ that were established by the project or existed prior able to sustain project activities without WFP and other humanitarian support?	<p>Extent to which the project promoted or advanced local leadership of activities</p> <p>Extent to which affected groups and/or relevant local authorities/institutions are able to afford the maintenance or replacement of the technologies/services/outputs introduced by the project</p> <p>Measures identified by stakeholders (affected groups/relevant local authorities/institutions) to ensure maintenance/replacement of technologies/services/outputs introduced by the project</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>FGD with beneficiaries</p> <p>Site visits / observations</p>	<p>Evaluations and reports: PDMs, capacity needs assessments</p> <p>Site-visits, particularly to assess livelihood activities, as FFA, FBOs</p> <p>KIIs: Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders.</p> <p>FGDs: FBOs, CYCs, Community leaders</p>	<p>Content analysis</p> <p>Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.</p>	<p>Relevant, reliable documents are available.</p> <p>Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.</p>

¹²⁴ FBOs, agricultural extensionist network, the CYCs, the mother support groups, local leaders and other local structures

#	Evaluation Question (criteria)					
6.3	How sustainable are the environmental impact of the programme?	Type of environmental benefits that have occurred as a result of ACL interventions ¹²⁵ Perceptions on the environmental sustainability of the intervention	Document review Site visits / observations	Site-visits, particularly to assess livelihood activities, as FFA, FBOs KIIs: Government officials, CO, NGO partners and other external stakeholders.	Content analysis Triangulation across data collection methods and sources.	Appropriate, reliable key informants are expected to be available for interview / discussions.

¹²⁵ For example: Soil and water conservation activities strengthen ecosystems; Asset creation enhance water access (micro-irrigation schemes, IVS etc.), Trainings and skills enhancement that help diversifying livelihood opportunities and develop alternative income sources (post-harvest losses, food storage etc).
<https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp289786.pdf>

ANNEX 8. DESIGN RESPONSIVENESS TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Status
PRRO evaluation	
<p>R2. The Country Office should immediately review the assistance approach to treatment of moderate acute malnutrition through the targeted supplementary feeding programme and prioritise the programme's focus towards the prevention of stunting.</p>	<p>There has been a greater mainstreaming of nutrition activities within the ACL intervention portfolio with SBCC and nutrition-sensitive agricultural training integrated into capacity training initiatives.</p>
<p>R5. The Country Office should improve the quality of programming and beneficiary targeting of food-by-prescription services, and forge livelihood linkages for graduated clients living with the human immune-deficiency virus.</p> <p>Linkages to livelihood activities and vocational training would strengthen programme effectiveness and would provide a pathway for graduating clients to achieve sustainable food security and avoid creating dependency on food-by-prescription.</p>	<p>The nutrition activities shifted from direct provision of treatment to a community-based preventative approach. While food-by-prescription services through WFP have been discontinued, WFP has linked MSGs, a cornerstone of the nutrition strategy for malnutrition prevention, to ACL interventions. The nutrition team noted issues in coverage of activities, whereby there is not always overlap between FBOs supported by ACL interventions and MSGs supported by nutrition activities. The exact extent of successful integration is not documented by WFP. Based on data from the nutrition and nutrition teams, coverage of nutrition activities remains a challenge.</p>
<p>R7. The Country Office should consider undertaking a broad-based nutrition-sensitive gender analysis, to align the upcoming Country Strategic Plan with updated WFP Policies, and to contribute towards strengthened programming, the infant and young child feeding behaviour change communications strategy and other components of the Country Strategic Plan.</p> <p>This will assist the Country Office in ensuring that gender dimensions, including gender equality and the empowerment of women, are constructively integrated into all ongoing and future programming and are understood by WFP staff and the partners' employees, through additional training.</p>	<p>Based on interviews with WFP Nutrition team, there was no specific gender analysis conducted to inform nutrition activity design. However, the nutrition team was able to cite adaptations to integrate men in MSGs to improve effectiveness of MSG messaging, highlighting gender sensitive programming within the CO portfolio.</p>
<p>R8: The Country Office should not actively plan for annual short-term safety nets distributions, as implemented to date, but use available resources for additional food activities for assets activities producing livelihood enhancements to targeted vulnerable communities.</p>	<p>The current CSP model of asset rehabilitation as the entry point for ACL interventions seeks to realign resources for more sustainable improvements in food security.</p>
<p>R10: The Country Office should continue to implement its food assistance for assets activities but consider working on community-owned project sites rather than individually owned smallholdings. Additional partners</p>	<p>Community involvement in selecting participants, FBO leadership and CYCs is specified in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for IVS community selection. Selection of land, per SOPs, is done with community leaders to identify land</p>

<p>should be incorporated into the planning to ideally provide complementary resources.</p> <p>□ This approach would convey a better sense of support to the whole community rather than benefits for a few land-owning individuals. The positive experiences of work groups would continue, but with the overall benefits ideally aiding a larger number of community members over a longer period.</p> <p>□ Plans must include the provision of required resources such as tools, seed, extra financial support and technical advice as required.</p>	<p>ownership arrangement, meeting with landowners to sign 10-year lease agreement. Specification that ownership agreements should be witnessed by other partners (MOA, District Council and Paramount Chief) shows adaptation to incorporate additional partners, the MOA is assigned to provide complementary resources for IVS development, though not additional resources to farmers directly.</p> <p>Community involvement in identifying activity sites was frequently reported by interviewed FBOs. However, data collection indicates some continuing issues with control of site selection by chiefs/landowners a reported issue in two FGDs in Kenema. For women's economic empowerment activities, communal land seems to be more common, though the sample of qualitative data is too small to draw strong conclusions.</p>
<p>Japan Bilateral Project Endline Report</p>	
<p>Encourage MAFS to organize refresher training for community youth contractors (CYCs), and to continue identifying and training CYCs on good agronomics techniques and post-harvest management, to ensure continuous availability of qualified human resources to support, encourage and advice farmers.</p>	<p>Unclear. Requested information from the ACL team.</p>
<p>□ Continue the support of smallholder farmers with access to market by linking the beneficiary farmers with the private sector, other potential buyers, and eventual WFP local food purchase system.</p>	<p>Purchases for HGSF have expanded and ACL interventions have increasingly provided/rehabilitated post-harvest management equipment and facilities. Coverage and effectiveness of post-harvest management equipment and knowledge transfer was consistently identified as a weaker point of implementation among both WFP and FBO stakeholders. The WFP Programme staff described efforts to link farmers to traditional/periodic markets (Lumas) and training conducted on contracting and aggregating. FBOs included in FGDs mentioned accessing private sector markets but did not tie this directly to support from ACL interventions.</p>
<p>□ Extend the support on access to credit through the Village Saving and Loan Association to the remaining communities that have not yet benefited from it.</p>	<p>According to WFP programme staff, coverage of VSLA is reportedly complete in all districts except Pujehun, Kenema and Koinadugu. However, in both FGDs with FBOs in Kambia and Moyamba, respondents reported that they had been promised seed cash that was not yet distributed.</p>
<p>□ Ensure good understanding and broad communication of land tenure agreement with communities before starting the land rehabilitation for cultivation by FBO to avoid doing any harm while ensuring the sustainability of the project.</p>	<p>WFP facilitated lease agreements for the IVS activities for community or family-owned land. Land tenure agreements were known by FBOs in FGDs. There were some limitations in ET ability to assess conflicts related to land ownership due to sensitivity</p>

	of discussing these issues. In one FGD in Kenema participants mentioned that the land use agreement was not upheld with feedback suggesting the price paid for land use was unfairly benefitting landowners.
□ Facilitate the supply of modernized agricultural machines to FBOs to ease labour work, increase productivity and the sizes of plot cultivated.	Inputs have increasingly been integrated into ACL interventions, but coverage is below needs according to FBO and MAFS feedback.
□ Support access to threshing and milling machines to reduce transportation costs when moving to another location for milling and impact of poor road conditions.	
□ Support FBO with storage facilities and set up of dry floor to reduce post-harvest losses.	
□ Plan refresher rounds of SBCC on nutrition messages, particularly on consumption of vegetable.	According to interviews with WFP nutrition team, SBCC refresher trainings are included in plans for 2024.
Ensure timely distribution of farm inputs like seedlings, tools fertilizers etc. to avoid late start of the cropping activities	Delays in OFSP vine distribution and vegetable seedlings frequently reported. According to interviews with the procurement teams, late deliveries happen for a variety of reasons including vendors not submitting the non-availability of some products, shortage of input supply and long WFP procurement processes.
For future implementation of such kind of project, avoid delaying the payments when purchasing crop harvest from FBO, as this may lead to a loss of confidence of some farmers.	Delays in payments frequently reported. According to interviews with the WFP SLCO procurement team, late payments primarily relate to quality control procedures which are lengthy.
□ For future implementation, plan medical and other facilities to Food for Work /Cash for Work participants as this require physical labour.	Illness and injury due to work in IVS were frequently reported by FBOs. No medical facilities provided by WFP were specified.
Endline Evaluation: Report Prepared for The Project: Mitigating Localised Resource-Based Conflicts and Increasing Community Resilience in Pujehun and Moyamba Districts of Sierra Leone	
All recommendations are aimed to enhance peacebuilding objectives, which were not assessed.	

Dark green: No major gaps identified; **Light green:** Progress with some gaps identified; **Orange:** Significant gaps identified; **Red:** No progress.

ANNEX 9. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

WFP SL Country Office (CO)

EQ1 – To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and priorities of the government, targeted population and stakeholders? - RELEVANCE

1. From your perspective did the Asset Creation and Livelihood (ACL) Interventions¹²⁶ respond to the most relevant needs of target groups (women, men, youth)? Did WFP reach the people most in need? Please explain your view.
2. How aligned are ACL interventions activities with the national priorities? Are there any areas where the alignment is poor or where you think WFP should be contributing?
3. What do you see as the most important objectives of the ACL interventions? How do activities seek to achieve these objectives? Probe for objectives related to rural/gender and age equality, women's empowerment?
4. To what extent has WFPs work under the ACL interventions integrated gender? To what extent has WFP achieved its gender objectives? From your perspective, has the work been gender transformative? Is there a need to make further progress? How would you do this?
5. In what ways have the ACL interventions considered the needs of persons with disability in the planning and delivery of specific activities? Please provide examples. Is there a need to make further progress? How would you do this? To what extent and in what ways has WFP sought to address environmental and climate change challenges in its design and implementation of ACL interventions? Is there a need to make further progress? How would you do this?

EQ2 – To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and outcomes - EFFECTIVENESS

6. In your perspective, what has been the major achievements of the ACL interventions? Please explain in detail and reasons behind such achievements (probe on internal and external factors such as COVID, climate change etc)
7. What are the components of ACL interventions that have been most/least successful? What is driving these results? (Probe on CYC model and MSGs especially)
8. In your perspective, to what extent were the results delivered to specific groups including men, women, youth and people living with disabilities or other marginalized groups?
9. SO5 includes a cross-cutting environmental indicator "proportion of activities for which environmental risks have been screened and as required, mitigation actions identified" which was reported as 0 for 2021/2022. What are the barriers to achieving this indicator?

EQ3 – To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated? - EFFICIENCY

10. Have you delivered the expected ACL interventions on time and with enough resources (including financial, human, equipment etc)? (If not, the ET needs to collect proper evidence, especially if it does not match the saying of certain reports.) What were the reasons for delays and limited resources (to check as appropriate)?
11. There are some targets that have not been met, could you provide information on the following:
 - a. ACL interventions are reaching fewer people than planned (half of targets in 2022) with much lower food and cash transfer volumes: why? Do you expect to reach targets in the coming years?

¹²⁶ Probe based on the ACL components - Asset building, Market linkages, FFA, Nutrition-sensitive agriculture, VSLAs, capacity building etc

- b. Output achievements have been far higher than targets in 2022, except for the number of farmer organizations trained. What led to overachievements?¹²⁷
12. Do you feel that WFP's interventions have been cost-efficient¹²⁸? Please comment on the following:
- a. What are the most efficient FBO set-ups to achieve objectives? Explain the reasons
 - b. How efficient was WFP in linking farmers to its own procurement systems (rice procurement), its other projects (e.g., vegetables for school feeding) and local markets? How did this impact farmers revenues and gains?
 - c. How efficient is the Community Youth Contractor model to build the capacities of smallholder farmers?
13. Could those same results have been reached using more effective approaches? Has any specific analysis been done in ACL interventions to inform understanding of cost effectiveness?
14. Were there any contributions (financial and/or in-kind) from government that improved the cost efficiency of ACL interventions? Please explain.
15. In what ways has WFP sought to learn from participant feedback? How well have they worked? Can you provide specific examples of how feedback from beneficiaries has been used in design and adjustment of activities?

EQ4 – To what extent is the intervention appropriate/compatible with other interventions in a country, sector or institutions? - COHERENCE

16. In your perspective how well are ACL interventions aligned to other activities of the CSP? Where are the gaps? Please give examples
17. What are the complementarities/synergies, if any, with other interventions implemented by the Government of Sierra Leone, UN, NGOs, and other actors?
18. What value do the ACL interventions add (especially in regard to using the results of the CBPP) in the context of other interventions supported by the Government and other actors?

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? - IMPACT

19. What long-term changes/effects have been, or are likely to be realized at household and community levels as a result of ACL interventions?
20. Have the ACL interventions contributed to changes in gender equality/equity? Give examples. (Probe for women economic empowerment, enhanced their leadership roles)

EQ6 – To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term? - SUSTAINABILITY

21. How have the ACL interventions-built capacities of Government to continue without WFP assistance?
22. To what extent are key structures (FBOs, agricultural extensionist network, the CYCs, the mother support groups, local leaders and other local structures) that were established or supported likely to be sustained without WFP assistance?
23. To what extent have ACL interventions led to behavioural changes at an individual level? Specifically, what is the sense of ownership?
24. To what extent did the project promote or advance local and national ownership?

¹²⁷ Number of assets built/restored/maintained, community post-harvest structures built, number of people reached through interpersonal SBCC approaches, individual farmers trained in GAP, farmers benefitting from sales to HGSP and other markets all +200% achievement

¹²⁸ Cost-effectiveness analysis is a method of comparing the costs and benefits of an intervention, but not necessarily indicated by monetary value. WFP Technical Note Evaluation Methodology. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/704ec01f137d43378a445c7e52dcf324/download/>

GENERAL

25. What are the main changes you would like to see in ACL interventions for the next CSP? (This open question may lead to other issues the ET may have overlooked. It may be the occasion to dig a little further).
26. Is there any data or documentation that you could share with us that would provide useful insights?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW
WFP Field Staff in Makeni and Kenema Sub-offices

EQ1 – To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and priorities of the government, targeted population and stakeholders? - RELEVANCE

1. Regarding the activities you are involved in, do you reckon that WFP is reaching the people most in need?
2. As a WFP staff, have you received any training on gender equality in general and/or on how to integrate gender into ACL implementation??
3. Do you think gender aspects such as women's empowerment, gender equality, etc. could be better integrated into ACL interventions? If so, how? (This question also tries to assess to what extent WFP staff are familiar with gender)
4. In what ways have the needs of persons with disability been considered in the planning and delivery of specific activities? Please provide examples. Is there a need to make further progress? How would you do this?
5. Are there particular ways in which WFPs work is addressing environment and climate change challenges? Do you think WFP is making a difference in this area? Is there a need to make further progress? How would you do this?

EQ2 – To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and outcomes - EFFECTIVENESS

6. In your perspective, what has been the major achievements of the ACL interventions? Please explain in detail and reasons behind such achievements (probe on internal and external factors such as COVID, climate change etc)
7. What are the components of ACL interventions that have been most/least successful? What is driving these results? (Probe on CYC model and MSGs especially)

EQ3 – To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated? - EFFICIENCY

8. Have the activities you were involved in been implemented on time and with enough resources (financial, human etc)? If not, explain (probe to explore what factors may have led to any breaks in delivery, and the extent to which WFP were able to mitigate against these breaks in delivery).)?
9. Do you think it would be possible to implement those activities in a more efficient way? (Cover the cost-efficiency aspect within this question.)
10. How has WFP sought to obtain community feedback? Can you provide specific examples of how feedback from the community or activity participants has been used in design and adjustment of activities? What more could be done in this area?

EQ4 – To what extent is the intervention appropriate/compatible with other interventions in a country, sector or institutions? - COHERENCE

11. In your perspective, how well are activities within ACL interventions aligned with other activities of the CSP in the field? Where are the gaps that can provide better alignment? Please give examples
12. Please explain how you have collaborated/sought synergies with other similar interventions implemented by the Government and others (UN, NGOs? Are there particular gaps?

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? - IMPACT

13. What long-term changes/effects have been, or are likely to be realized at household and community levels as a result of ACL interventions?
14. Have the ACL interventions contributed to gender equality/equity? Give examples. (Can probe for women's economic empowerment, enhanced their leadership roles etc.)

EQ6 – To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term? - SUSTAINABILITY

15. How have the ACL interventions-built capacities of government to continue without WFP assistance? Are there gaps in capacities that still need to be filled?
16. To what extent are key structures (FBOs, agricultural extensionist network, the CYCs, the mother support groups, local leaders and other local structures) that were established or supported likely to be sustained without WFP support?
17. To what extent have ACL interventions led to behavioural changes at an individual level? Specifically, what is the sense of ownership?
18. To what extent did the project promote or advance local and national ownership?

GENERAL

19. What are the main changes you would like to see in ACL interventions for the next CSP? (This open question may lead to other issues the ET may have overlooked. It may be the occasion to dig a little further).
20. Is there any data or documentation that you could share with us that would provide useful insights?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

Government of Sierra Leone (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Youth Affairs and SRAC)

EQ1 – To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and priorities of the government, targeted population and stakeholders? - RELEVANCE

1. Can you tell us about your role in the ministry? How long have you been involved?
2. Can you briefly describe/outline your collaboration with WFP? (As an alternative the ET can begin by stating what we already know and ask the interviewee to complete)
3. Has WFP supported your Ministry in the areas where you most need support (taking into account WFPs role in ACL interventions)?
4. Are there areas in WFP has made a unique contribution in ACL interventions from your perspective? (probe for areas such as training, knowledge generation, gender, innovation, as necessary). In your view what explains this contribution? Are there opportunities to contribute that WFP might not be aware of or not exploring? Please explain.
5. To what extent do you believe WFP is promoting gender equality and disability inclusion in the activities it is supporting in Sierra Leone? Is there more that needs to be done?
6. Are there particular ways in which WFPs work in ACL interventions is addressing environment and climate challenges? Do you think WFP is making a difference in this area? Are there government priorities that WFP should be seeking to support in this area?

EQ2 – To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and outcomes - EFFECTIVENESS

7. In your perspective, what has been the major achievements under the ACL interventions that you are implementing with WFP? Please explain in detail and reasons behind such achievements (probe on internal and external factors such as COVID, climate change etc)
8. What are the areas that have been most/least successful? What is driving these results? Where are the gaps?
9. In what ways has WFP contributed to strengthening national and district capacities and needs at national government level? Has this contribution matched your expectations? What has worked well? What has worked less well?

EQ3 – To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated? - EFFICIENCY

10. In the area where your ministry has collaborated with WFP, have the activities been delivered on time and with the quality you expected? Please explain.
11. In your view, were the ACL interventions you are involved in implemented in a cost-efficient way? If not, what advice could you give for WFP to implement in a more cost-effective way?

EQ4 – To what extent is the intervention appropriate/compatible with other interventions in a country, sector or institutions? - COHERENCE

12. Has WFP sought synergies with other similar interventions implemented by the Government? Are there particular gaps? Where do you think better synergies could be made?

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? - IMPACT

13. What long-term changes are likely to be realized at household and community levels as a result of WFP supported ACL interventions?
14. To what extent have the ACL interventions contributed to gender equality/equity? Give examples. (For example, women economic or social empowerment)

EQ6 – To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term? - SUSTAINABILITY

15. How have the ACL interventions-built capacities of Government to continue without WFP assistance?
16. To what extent are key structures (FBOs, agricultural extensionist network, the CYCs, the mother support groups, local leaders and other local structures) that were established or supported likely to be sustained without WFP's support?

GENERAL

17. What are the main changes you would like to see in WFP supported ACL interventions (This open question may lead to other issues the ET may have overlooked. It may be the occasion to dig a little further).
18. Is there any data or documentation that you could share with us that would provide useful insights?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

NGOs: Action Against Hunger, Welthungerhilfe, CONCERN WORLDWIDE, and others.

EQ1 – To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and priorities of the government, targeted population and stakeholders? - RELEVANCE

1. Can you briefly explain your collaboration with WFP? The ET can also explain what it already knows and ask the interviewee to complete)
2. Regarding the activities you are involved in, do you reckon that WFP is reaching the people most in need?
3. To what extent do you believe WFP is promoting gender equality and disability inclusion in the activities it is supporting in Sierra Leone? Does more need to be done? How?

EQ2 – To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and outcomes - EFFECTIVENESS

4. In your perspective, what has been the major achievements of the activities you have been implementing with WFP? Please explain in detail and reasons behind such achievements (probe on internal and external factors such as COVID, climate change etc)
5. What are the areas that have been most/least successful? What is driving these results?

EQ3 – To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated? - EFFICIENCY

6. Have the activities you were involved in been implemented on time and with enough resources (financial, human etc)? If not, explain (probe to explore what factors may have led to any breaks in delivery, and the extent to which WFP were able to mitigate against these breaks in delivery).)?

EQ4 – To what extent is the intervention appropriate/compatible with other interventions in a country, sector or institutions? - COHERENCE

7. Please explain how WFP collaborated/sought synergies with other similar interventions implemented by your organization and others? Are there areas that WFP could better align with these activities

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? - IMPACT

8. What long-term changes/effects that are likely to be realized at household and community levels as a result the ACL interventions that you are implementing with support from WFP
9. Have the activities that you are implementing contributed to women economic empowerment, enhanced their leadership roles or led to other changes in gender equality/equity? Give examples.

EQ6 – To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term? - SUSTAINABILITY

40. To what extent are key structures (e.g., FBOs, agricultural extensionist network, the CYCs, the mother support groups, local leaders and other local structures) that were established or supported likely to be sustained without support? - give relevant examples when probing
41. To what extent did the project promote or advance local and national ownership?

GENERAL

Annex 10. What are the main changes you would like to see in ACL interventions for the next CSP? (This open question may lead to other issues the ET may have overlooked. It may be the occasion to dig a little further).

Annex 11. Is there any data or documentation that you could share with us that would provide useful insights?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

UNCT: FAO, IFAD and others where required

EQ1 – To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and priorities of the government, targeted population and stakeholders? - RELEVANCE

1. Can you briefly explain your collaboration with WFP? The ET can also explain what it already knows and ask the interviewee to complete)
2. Regarding the activities you are involved in, do you reckon that WFP is reaching the people most in need?
3. To what extent do you believe WFP is promoting gender equality and disability inclusion in the activities it is supporting in Sierra Leone? Does more need to be done? How?

EQ2 – To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and outcomes - EFFECTIVENESS

4. In your perspective, what has been the major achievements of the activities you have been implementing with WFP? Please explain in detail and reasons behind such achievements (probe on internal and external factors such as COVID, climate change etc)
5. What are the areas that have been most/least successful? What is driving these results?

EQ3 – To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated? - EFFICIENCY

6. Have the activities you were involved in been implemented on time and with enough resources (financial, human etc)? If not, explain (probe to explore what factors may have led to any breaks in delivery, and the extent to which WFP were able to mitigate against these breaks in delivery).)?

EQ4 – To what extent is the intervention appropriate/compatible with other interventions in a country, sector or institutions? - COHERENCE

7. Please explain how WFP collaborated/sought synergies with other similar interventions implemented by your organization and others? Are there areas that WFP could better align with these activities

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? - IMPACT

8. What long-term changes/effects that are likely to be realized at household and community levels as a result the ACL interventions that you are implementing with support from WFP

EQ6 – To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term? - SUSTAINABILITY

6. To what extent did the project promote or advance local and national ownership?

GENERAL

10. What are the main changes you would like to see in ACL interventions for the next CSP? (This open question may lead to other issues the ET may have overlooked. It may be the occasion to dig a little further).
11. Is there any data or documentation that you could share with us that would provide useful insights?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

Donors (JICA, EU, Irish AID)

EQ1 – To what extent is the intervention relevant to the needs and priorities of the government, targeted population and stakeholders? - RELEVANCE

1. Considering the priorities regarding resilience building in Sierra Leone, do you feel WFP is on the right track when tackling those issues through ACL interventions? Is WFP reaching the right people? covering the right priorities and has it identified appropriate entry points? (Note on what basis the interviewee may be arguing his case, i.e., what analyses or existing evidence is (s)he using?)

EQ2 – To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and outcomes - EFFECTIVENESS

2. Are you satisfied with the extent to which WFP has achieved its objectives? What have been the main challenges to WFP in reaching its objectives?
3. To what extent do you believe WFP is promoting gender equality and disability inclusion in the activities it is supporting in Sierra Leone under the ACL interventions? Is more needed to be done?

EQ3 – To what extent did the intervention achieve an optimal use of the budget and time allocated? - EFFICIENCY

4. Do you think WFP was able to deliver ACL interventions on time?
5. Do you feel that WFP's interventions have been cost-efficient?

EQ6 – To what extent will the activities and achievements of the intervention be sustained long-term? - SUSTAINABILITY

6. To what extent did the project promote or advance local and national ownership?

GENERAL

7. What recommendation would you give to WFP for the next CSP regarding resilience building pursued by the ACL interventions? Are there things that WFP needs to be doing differently?
8. Are there particular opportunities or priorities that WFP must grasp? (This open question may lead to other issues the ET may have overlooked. It may be the occasion to dig a little further).

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Note: The FGD guide was revised halfway through data collection based on identification of what questions worked well/less well. Text in bold indicates new questions/prompts added to the FGD guide. A few questions were removed (noted in red).

Project Participants - FBOs (Smallholder farmers-IVS, vegetable farmers, Mothers Support Groups; Community Leaders & CYCs)

Facilitator prompt: Welcome and thank participants for their time. Briefly introduce the FGD and objectives as follows (facilitator to adapt wording as needed)

- My name is XXX. I am working on behalf of the KonTerra Group to understand how farmers are producing food and what is impacting food security in your community. By food security I mean the ability of people to meet their food needs at all times. You have been asked to come and talk with us today as a part of a wider assessment going on in Sierra Leone to understand these issues.
- Your feedback is important to inform strategies on how to support communities to achieve food security. It is important for us to understand what communities are doing better or worse in achieving food security and why. We would like your feedback to inform a report that we are writing to provide recommendations and lessons learned on how to support communities better.
- Please note that your participation is voluntary, you will not receive any compensation for participation nor will your chances of receiving support in the future be affected. I will be taking notes throughout, but your feedback is confidential. Your input will be included in the final report in a way that maintains your anonymity.

Community information:

- 1.1: community/village name
- 1.2: District name
- 1.3: Date
- 1.4: # of participants
- 1.5: Gender (#)
- 1.6: approximate age range

Food security in the community

1. Could you please tell me/us about the “food security” situation in your community.
 - a. Do you think accessing food is a problem in your community? Why or why not?
 - b. Are there particular types of households or household members that have trouble accessing food more often (differences by age, disability, location, etc.)?
2. How would you describe a ‘healthy diet’? Do you think farmers in your community are able to eat a healthy diet? Why or why not? Is a healthy diet important?

Changes in food security

I am interested in any changes that have happened in your community in the past three years that have made it easier or harder for farmers to get enough food. These could be any events in the community, from your own efforts or support from other people like the Government or NGOs. It could also be changes from the private sector, like new shops being available.

3. What things have happened that meant you/smallholder farmers did not having enough food to eat? What did you/farmers do when things happened?
4. Have there been any changes in your community that improved your ability to eat enough food in the recent times (in the last 3 years)?

- a. Can you describe how things improved and why that was important? (Probe for whether benefits happened for all households equally or only some/some household members)
 - b. Thinking for the future, do you think these benefits will continue? Why or why not?
- 5. Thinking for the future, what new activities/services/changes need to happen or what is the most important to continue to make sure smallholder farmers can be food secure in the future? (Facilitator please list all ideas then ask for consensus on what the most important change to happen)

WFP ACL interventions

Facilitator: note, I would like to ask more specifically about WFP's programmes in the community. In this community, WFP has been [describe what programmes have been ongoing in the specific community].

- 6. Were you or any member of this community involved in designing these activities?
 - a. If yes, how were communities involved?
 - b. Could everyone that wanted to provide input be involved? If not, who was excluded?
 - c. Is there anything that needs to change to allow people in the community to provide input in the design of activities?
 - d. For land use: who owns the land? How was this agreement made? (newly added)
- 7. Out of the activities WFP implemented in your community, what was the most important to improving food security for you and other farmers? Probe: differentiate between sales to WFP vs. other markets
 - a. What changed as a result of participation?
- 8. Will you be able to keep this benefit without support? Probe based on what people say is the most important WFP interventions
 - a. For training: will you need refresher trainings?
 - b. How will communities afford maintenance or replacement of technologies/services/outputs from WFP?
- 9. Out of the activities, what was the least important/helpful? What should change to improve the activities? (Probe: what resources are needed to make the suggested changes, who should be responsible for making these changes?)
- 10. Do you think everyone in the community was affected in the same way? Did anyone benefit more/less from WFP's activities? Why?
 - a. Were men and women affected differently?
 - b. Do you think the activities provided benefits to everyone who needed them? Was there anyone needy that was left out?
- 11. Has there been any negative effects from WFP's activities on your or anyone else in the community?
- 12. Besides WFP, are there any groups or specific people in your community that support farmers? Probe: try to understand if these activities are coordinated with WFP if they say there are other organizations

Farmer based organizations.

Finally, I want to ask about how farmers in your community are organized and supported.

- 13. Could you describe how long your organization has been operating in the community? How did it get set up? (probe to understand who is involved, can everyone be involved or only certain people)
- 14. Can you describe what FBOs are responsible for in the community? (What specific decisions do they make/tasks do they do) (originally asked as: Are there any groups or specific people in your community that support farmers? Could you describe who is part of this and what they do in the community?)
 - a. Is there a difference between how men and women participate in these organizations? Probe: ask if the role of men/women in the FBO has changed at all
 - b. What about between younger and older members? Probe: ask if the role of men/women in the FBO has changed at all
 - c. Can anyone join an FBO or are there certain criteria?

d. If they are supported by WFP or anyone else, do you think they could continue to help you/farmers if WFP stopped providing support?

15. What do you think are the best ways these organizations/people could support farmers in the community? Are they able to do this now? Why or why not? (make sure to differentiate between what they could do on their own vs. what they could do only with WFP support)

Thank you and close

Thank you for talking with me today. Is there anything else you would like to add?

ANNEX 10. FIELDWORK AGENDA

Day/Date	Time	Tasks
WEEK 1		
Sunday 14 Jan 2024		Arrival of international team member (Dr. Sithabiso Gandure)
Monday 15 Jan 2024	morning	Main briefing with WFP SL Country Office Management Finalization of fieldwork schedule with WFP Evaluation Manager
	afternoon	Briefings with Asset Creation & Livelihood team
Tuesday 16 Jan 2024	morning	Briefings with Nutrition, School Feeding, Head of Programme, Disaster Response, RAM team, Procurement, Finance/Admin.
	afternoon	Travel from Freetown to Kenema via Bo
	overnight	Kenema
KENEMA		
Wednesday 17 Jan 2024	morning	Meetings/KIIs with WFP staff & partners in Kenema
	afternoon	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries/FBOs
	overnight	Kenema
Thursday 18 Jan 2024	morning	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries/FBOs-continued
	afternoon	Travel from Kenema to Pujehun via Bo
	overnight	Pujehun
PUJEHUN		
Friday 19 Jan 2024	morning	Meetings/KIIs with WFP staff & partners in Pujehun
	afternoon	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries
	overnight	Pujehun
Saturday 20 Jan 2024	all day	BREAK
	overnight	Pujehun
Sunday 21 Jan 2024	morning	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries continued
	afternoon	Travel from Pujehun to Moyamba
	overnight	Moyamba
WEEK 2		
MOYAMBA		
Monday 22 Jan 2024	morning	Meetings/KIIs with partners in Moyamba
	afternoon	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries
	overnight	Moyamba/Moriba Town (Sierra Rutile)
Tuesday 23 Jan 2024	morning	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries continued
	afternoon	Travel from Moyamba/Moriba Town to Makeni (and Tonkolili)
	overnight	Makeni
MAKENI/TONKOLILI		
Wednesday 24 Jan 2024	morning	Meetings/KIIs with WFP staff in Makeni Field Office & partners in Tonkolili

Day/Date	Time	Tasks
	afternoon	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries in Tonkolili
	overnight	Tonkolili (Magburaka)
Thursday 25 Jan 2024	morning	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries in Tonkolili continued
	afternoon	Travel from Tonkolili to Kambia
	overnight	Kambia
KAMBIA		
Friday 26 Jan 2024	morning	Meetings/KIs with WFP field staff & partners in Kambia
	afternoon	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries in Kambia
	overnight	Kambia
Saturday 27 Jan 2024	all day	TEAM REST DAY
	overnight	Kambia
Sunday 28 Jan 2024	morning	Site visits/FGDs with smallholder farmer beneficiaries in Kambia continued
	afternoon	Return to Freetown
WEEK 3		
FREETOWN		
Monday 29 Jan 2024	morning	Meetings with Government partners
	afternoon	Meetings with donors, NGOs
Tuesday 30 Jan 2024	all day	Meetings with outstanding partners
Wednesday 31 Jan 2024	all day	Team meeting to discuss preliminary findings and preparation for debrief
Thursday 1 Feb 2024	morning	Debriefing presentation for CO
	afternoon	Departure of Dr. Sithabiso Gandure

ANNEX 11. FINDINGS CONCLUSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS MAPPING

Recommendation	Conclusions	Findings	Related objective
<p>Recommendation 1: Strengthen the integrated approach to resilience building by enhancing the strategic design of ACL interventions and improving implementation. This should involve clear articulation of inclusion, integration, sustainability, and scalability of ACL interventions.</p> <p>1.1 Assess and strengthen partnership to increase coverage of ACL interventions and address funding constraints. Following WFP's Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition. ACL intervention strategy should be based on multi-sector and multi-stakeholder partnerships to utilize the comparative advantages of each stakeholder.</p> <p>1.2 Develop a comprehensive resilience building ToC that addresses the interconnected nature of food security, nutrition, environmental management, climate risk management and adaptation and resilience and aligned with national and district priorities.</p> <p>1.3 Foster greater integration and synergy among different components of ACL interventions across the CSP such as agricultural development, nutrition, disaster risk reduction, school feeding, and market access initiatives.</p> <p>1.4 Consolidate and document standardized protocols and guidelines for implementing ACL interventions to ensure consistency and quality across different districts and communities.</p> <p>1.5 Develop and implement clear inclusion criteria and guidelines to ensure the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, including marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>1.6 Develop long-term sustainability and scale up plans for ACL interventions, including strategies for infrastructure maintenance, capacity building plan across all ACL interventions, graduation/exit plans.</p>	<p>Conclusion 1</p> <p>Conclusion 2</p> <p>Conclusion 5</p> <p>Conclusion 8</p>	<p>Finding 1</p> <p>Finding 3</p> <p>Finding 11</p> <p>Finding 13</p> <p>Finding 15</p> <p>Finding 16</p> <p>Finding 17</p>	<p>Learning</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Enhance capacity-building efforts with an inclusive strategy for sustainable ACL interventions involving key sectors of nutrition, HGSF, DRR, environment, and gender.</p>	<p>Conclusion 2</p>	<p>Finding 4</p> <p>Finding10</p> <p>Finding 13</p>	<p>Learning</p>

<p>2.1 Conduct a needs assessment of beneficiaries to identify specific capacity-building requirements across ACL focus areas. Internal capacity building should consider WFP and potential partner's comparative advantages.</p> <p>2.2. Create an integrated strategy that combines capacity-building initiatives from different focus areas.</p> <p>2.3. Continuously review and strengthen training programs that build on existing modules and focus on areas such as disaster preparedness, gender mainstreaming, and other relevant topics to provide participants with expanded and up to date skills and knowledge.</p> <p>2.4 Strengthen collaboration and coordination among different SOs to jointly plan, implement, maximizing synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts.</p>		Finding 18	
<p>Recommendation 3: Address gaps in coverage and implementation of ACL interventions</p> <p>3.1 Strengthen the linkage between research, training and implementation of OFSP at district levels</p> <p>3.2 Strengthen supply and maintenance of post-harvest management infrastructure.</p>	<p>Conclusion 1</p> <p>Conclusion 2</p> <p>Conclusion 3</p> <p>Conclusion 4</p> <p>Conclusion 8</p>	<p>Finding 1</p> <p>Finding 4</p> <p>Finding 5</p> <p>Finding 6</p> <p>Finding 8</p> <p>Finding 18</p>	Learning
<p>Recommendation 4: Build on remedial actions already taken to address late procurement and payment delays.</p> <p>4.1 Conduct a participatory review/analysis of supply chain- procurement to identify the main challenges.</p> <p>4.2 Review the procurement guidelines for smallholder farmers and adopt a flexible approach that accommodates smallholder farmers and WFP quality assurance and internal guidelines.</p>	<p>Conclusion 2</p> <p>Conclusion 3</p> <p>Conclusion 4</p> <p>Conclusion 5</p> <p>Conclusion 6</p>	<p>Finding 2</p> <p>Finding 5</p> <p>Finding 7</p> <p>Finding 10</p> <p>Finding 12</p>	Learning

4.3 Strengthen capacity of smallholder farmers to meet the adapted guidelines			
Recommendation 5. Strengthen environmental management in design and implementation of ACL interventions 5.1: Develop a comprehensive environmental plan and clear operational guidelines for extension workers and farmers to minimize risks associated with IVS cultivation. 5.2: To address these needs effectively, involve the Forestry division under MAFS more extensively, particularly given their mandate for climate resilience building. 5.3: Strengthen capacity of MAFS staff in implementation of environmental management plans	Conclusion 1 Conclusion 2 Conclusion 7	Finding 1 Finding 3 Finding 14 Finding 18	Accountability and Learning
Recommendation 6: Revise M&E to cover gaps in outcome and broader impact monitoring especially for nutrition, GEWE and resilience measurements. 6.1: WFP has made progress on developing evidence on resilience with anticipated rollout of six-step approach and two new resilience-specific indicators in 2024. Progress should be followed to determine if intermediary steps should be taken by WFP. 6.2: As the WFP expands coverage of VSLAs, implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress and impact of VSLA initiatives, identifying areas for improvement and refining strategies accordingly. 6.3: Adjust the M&E strategy to track longitudinal change in the food security of ACL intervention beneficiaries with more intentional consideration of sample demographics to ensure comparability of cohorts and including measurements not tied to resource transfer. 6.4: Improve disaggregation of activity monitoring data, especially by age and disability 6.5: Consider sampling procedures to meaningfully track differences between men and women participants.	Conclusion 2	Finding 4 Finding 6 Finding 9 Finding 11	Accountability and Learning

ANNEX 12. LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Position	Location	Remote/in-person	Gender
WFP Stakeholders			
Country Director	Freetown	Remote	Woman
Head of Programme	Freetown	Remote	Man
Evaluation Manager	Freetown	Remote	Man
Nutritionist	Freetown	Remote	Woman
School Feeding Team	Freetown	Remote	Woman
School Feeding Team	Freetown	Remote	Woman
School Feeding Team	Freetown	Remote	Woman
ACL Team/Food Systems Unit	Freetown	Remote	Woman
ACL Team/Food Systems Unit	Freetown	Remote	Man
ACL Team/Food Systems Unit	Freetown	Remote	Man
ACL Team/Food Systems Unit	Freetown	Remote	Man
Cash Transfer Coordinator	Freetown	Remote	Woman
Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Officer	Freetown	Remote	Man
Complaints and Feedback Officer	Freetown	Remote	Woman
Government stakeholders (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security)			
Assistant Deputy Director	Freetown	In-Person	Man
Field Extension Worker, Kenema	Benduma	In-Person	Man
Block Extension Supervisor, Moyamba	Mokeppi	In-Person	Man
Field Extension Worker, Moyamba	Mokeppi	In-Person	Man

Field Extension Worker, Tonkolli	Wonkibor	In-Person	Man
ACL community participants			
CYC, Kenema	Bandawor	In-Person	Woman
Block Extension Supervisor, Kenema	Bandawor	In-Person	Man
CYC, Moyamba	Mokeppi	In-Person	Man
CYC, Pujehun	Helebu	In-Person	Man
CYC, Pujehun	Felegoma	In-Person	Man
CYC, Tonkolli	Wonkibor	In-Person	Man
CYC, Tonkolli	Matonkara	In-Person	Woman
CYC, Kambia	Rokupr	In-Person	Man
Partners			
Country Programme Officer, IFAD	Freetown	In-Person	Man
Senior Programme Advisor, Irish Aid	Freetown	In-Person	Man
Consultant, JICA	Freetown	In-Person	Man
Consultant, JICA	Freetown	In-Person	Man

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ANNEX 14. DETAILED TIMELINE

Responsible Party	Activities and Deliverables	Timeline
Phase 2 - Inception		Nov. – Dec. 2023
EM/TL	Brief core team	6 th Nov. 2023
ET	Desk review of key documents and inception meetings	6 th -17 th Nov. 2023
ET	Draft inception report	6 th Dec. 2023
EM	Quality assurance of draft IR by EM and REO using QC, share draft IR with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS	11 th Dec. 2023
ET	Review draft IR based on feedback received by DEQS, EM and REO	22 nd Dec. 2023
EM	Share revised IR with ERG	23 rd Dec. 2023
ERG	Review and comment on draft IR	10 th Jan 2023
EM	Consolidate comments	11 th Jan 2023
ET	Review draft IR based on feedback received and submit final revised IR	12 th Jan 2023
EM	Review final IR and submit to the evaluation committee for approval	17 th Jan 2023
Evaluation Committee (EC) Chair	Approve final IR and share with ERG for information	22 nd Jan 2023
Phase 3 – Data collection		Jan.-Feb. 2024
EC Chair/ EM	Brief the evaluation team at CO	17 th Jan. 2024
ET	Data collection	19 th Jan. 2024
ET	In-country debriefing (s)	5 th Feb. 2024
Phase 4 – Data analysis and Reporting		Feb.-April 2024
ET	Analysis and Draft evaluation report	13 th Feb. 2024
EM	Quality assurance of draft ER by EM and REO using the QC, share draft ER with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS	26 th Feb. 2024

ET	Review and submit draft ER based on feedback received by DEQS, EM and REO	8 th Mar. 2024
EM	Circulate draft ER for review and comments to ERG, RBD and other stakeholders	13 th Mar. 2024
ERG	Review and comment on draft ER	27 th Mar. 2024
EM	Consolidate comments received	29 th Mar. 2024
ET	Review draft ER based on feedback received and submit final revised ER	8 th Apr. 2024
EM	Review final revised ER and submit to the evaluation committee	12 th Apr. 2024
EC Chair	Approve final evaluation report and share with key stakeholders for information	26 th Apr. 2024
Phase 5 - Dissemination and follow-up		April-May 2024
ET	Infographic	30 th Apr. 2024
EC Chair	Prepare management response	16 th May 2024
EM	Share final evaluation report and management response with the REO and OEV for publication and participate in end-of-evaluation lessons learned call	TBD

ACRONYMS

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
ABC	Agricultural Business Centres
ACL	asset creation and livelihoods
ACR	Annual Country Report
AIMS	Asset Impact Monitoring from Space
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
BES	Block Extension Supervisors
BR	Budget Revision
CARI	Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security
CBPP	Community Based Participatory Plans
CBT	Cash Based Transfer
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFM	complaints and feedback mechanism
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security Vulnerability Analysis
CH	Cadre Harmonize
CRF	corporate results framework
CS	Capacity Strengthening
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
CSPE	Country Strategic Plan Evaluation
CYC	Community Youth Contractors
DAC	Development Assistance Commission
DE	Decentralized Evaluation
DEQAS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance Standards
DEQS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Support
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EB	Executive Board
EC	Evaluation Committee
ECMEN	Economic capacity to meet essential Needs
EM	Evaluation Manager
EQ	Evaluation Question
ER	Evaluation report
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
EVD	Ebola virus disease
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FBO	Farmer Based Organizations
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FES	Food Expenditure Share
FEW	field extension workers
FFA	Food-Assistance-for-Assets
FFS	farmer field school
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FQSE	Free Quality School Education
FSMS	Food Security Monitoring System
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GAP	good agronomic practices
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GiAP	Gender in Agriculture Policy
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
HGSF	Home-Grown School Feeding
HKI	Helen Keller International

HoH	Head of Household
HQ	Headquarters
IFAD	International Fund Agricultural Development
IR	Inception Report
IVS	Inland Valley Swamps
JBP	Japan Bilateral Project
JICA	Japan International Corporation Agency
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCS	Livelihood Coping Strategy
MAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MEB	minimum expenditure basket
MSG	Mother Support Group
MTNDP	Mid-Term National Development Plan
MUAC	mid-upper arm circumference
NAP	National Action Plan
NBP	Needs Based Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OEV	Office of Evaluation
OFSP	Orange flesh sweet potato
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PHL	post-harvest loss
PRORL	livelihoods, Asset Creation and Resilience unit
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
RAM	Research, Assessment & Monitoring
RBD	Regional Bureau in Dakar
SAMS	Smallholder Agricultural Market Support
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHF	smallholder farmers
SLARI	Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute
SLCO	Sierra Leone Country Office
SO	Strategic Objective
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRAC	Strategic Resource Allocation Committee
TL	Team Lead
ToC	Theory of Change
TPRP	Technical Package for Rice Production
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UN SWAP	United Nations System-wide Action Plan
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WFP	World Food Programme
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
VNR	Voluntary National Review

VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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<https://www.wfp.org/countries/sierra-leone>

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