



WFP EVALUATION



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Evaluation of Rwanda WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Evaluation features









1. The evaluation of the Rwanda country strategic plan (CSP) for 2019–2023 was conducted between January and November 2023. Designed to fulfil accountability and learning purposes, the evaluation aimed to provide evidence for strategic decision making and accountability to stakeholders. It assessed WFP's performance, challenges and the potential future direction of its collaboration with the Rwandan Government.
2. The evaluation results, conclusions and recommendations were presented in September 2023 with the aim of informing the development of the next CSP. The evaluation team also engaged with internal and external stakeholders, including the Government of Rwanda, donors, other United Nations entities, cooperating partners and beneficiaries.
3. The evaluation was conducted by a gender-balanced team using a mixed-methods approach that included document reviews, quantitative data analysis, interviews, focus group discussions, project site visits and surveys. It addressed issues of accountability to affected populations, gender equality and inclusion, and environmental considerations.

Context






4. Rwanda is a mountainous country bordered by Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) has governed the country since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi ethnic group. Parliamentary elections were held in September 2018, when an RPF coalition won 40 of the 53 contested seats.¹ With 61 percent of seats held by women, Rwanda is the country with the highest rate of female parliamentary representation in the world.
5. Rwanda recognizes the accountability of public institutions as key to promoting citizens' well-being and development, and it involves citizens in planning and setting targets for which the Government is accountable. Rwanda has had a decentralization policy since 2000.
6. Economic and structural reforms have propelled Rwanda towards remarkable achievements in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular in poverty reduction, gender equality, environmental sustainability, education and public health. While recent years have witnessed rapid economic growth, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic caused a temporary contraction in gross domestic product in 2020, followed by recovery in 2022.
7. The country suffered a 10.9 percent surge in the national poverty rate during the lockdown imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting 1.3 million people, predominantly in rural areas. For many households – 68 percent in urban areas and 24 percent in rural regions – the pandemic was the primary shock in the 12 months leading up to April 2021 and resulted in widespread income loss, especially affecting urban women.

¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union. [Parline – Global data on national parliaments](#).

8. In general, refugees face heightened difficulties due to movement restrictions that confined them to camps and impeded their ability to seek livelihood opportunities. As of July 2023 Rwanda hosted 133,628 refugees, predominantly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, with 87 percent residing in five camps.² About 24 percent of refugees are women aged 18–59 and 16 percent are children under 5.
9. A 2021 comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis indicated a slight increase in food insecurity compared to 2018. In 2021, of 2.6 million households, 20.6 percent faced food insecurity, with 18.8 percent moderately and 1.8 percent severely food insecure. Although the percentage of stunted children under 5 fell from 38 percent to 33 percent between 2014 and 2020, health challenges have persisted. In 2019, the prevalence of HIV among people aged 15–64 was 3 percent (2.2 percent in men and 3.7 percent in women). Rwanda is vulnerable to Ebola virus disease outbreaks. In 2018, the Government developed and successfully implemented an Ebola preparedness plan to minimize the risk of outbreaks.
10. Situated in a region prone to natural hazards, Rwanda faces droughts, floods, earthquakes, landslides, storms, wildfires and disease. Key drivers of natural hazards include changes in temperature, poor soil management and extreme precipitation patterns.
11. The Government of Rwanda strongly directs the division of labour between external partners and donors. Overall, Rwanda received between USD 1.2 billion and USD 1.6 billion net in official development assistance between 2019 and 2021, with the World Bank and the United States of America as the largest donors. Humanitarian funding rose in 2022, when contributions from the United States of America doubled, but dropped significantly in 2023. Between 2019 and 2022, refugees and protection were the main focus of humanitarian funding.

TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Area (km ²) (1)	26,338	
	Population (% female/% male) (2)	13,776,698 (52/48)	2022
	Population growth (%) (2)	2.3	
	Population under 14 (%) (2)	38	2022
	Net migration (2)	-6,112	2021
	SDG progress (global index score %/rank) (3)	a) 59.42 124 of 163	2022
	Human Development Index (score/rank) (4)	0.534 165 of 191	2021
	Life expectancy at birth (years) (2)	66	2021
	Gini coefficient (%) (1)	43.7	2016

² Mahama, Kiziba, Kigeme, Nyabiheke and Mugombwa.

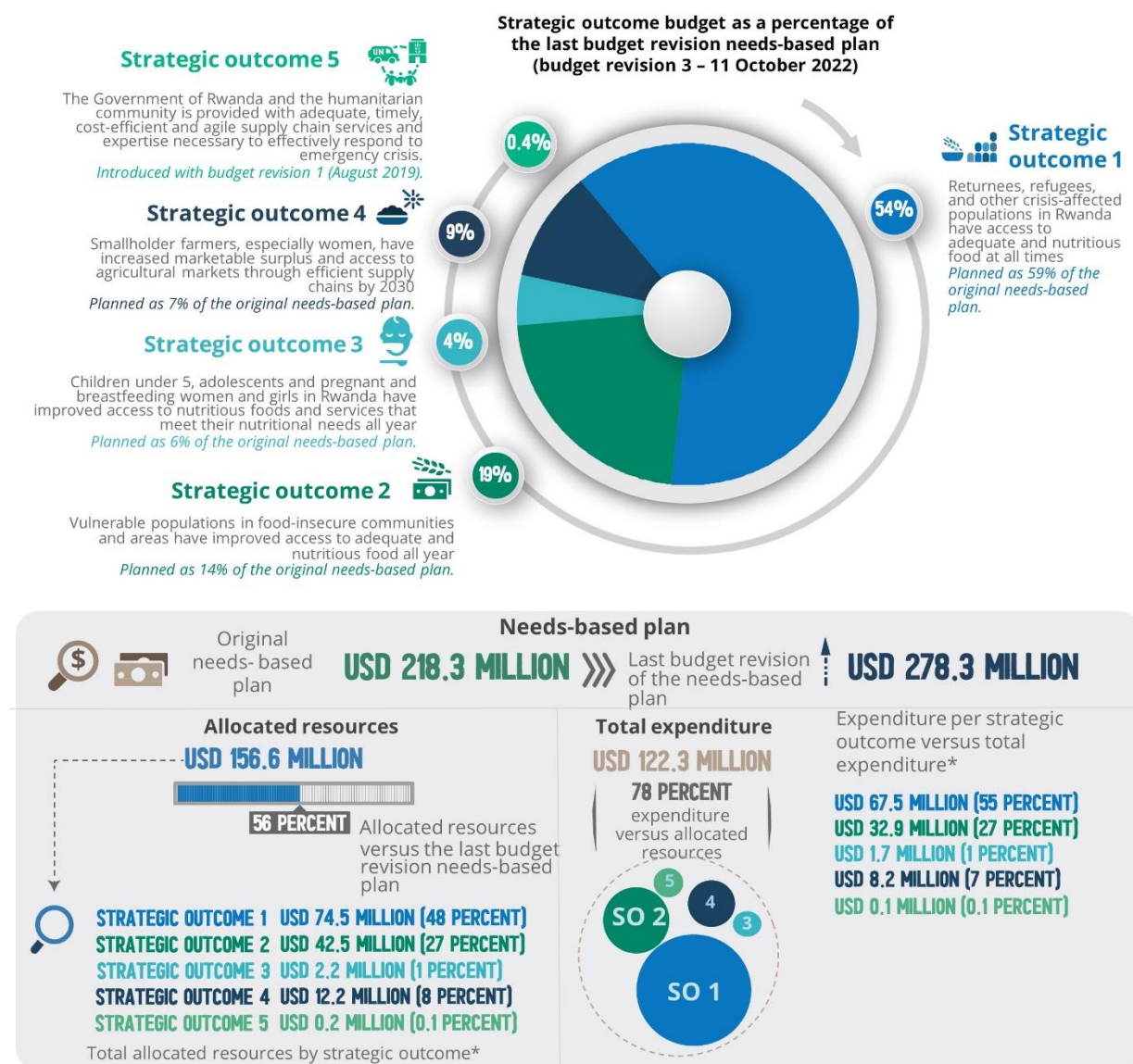
TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Population in multidimensional poverty (%) (5)	48.8	2023
	Population living below the national poverty line (%) (5)	52	2019/20
	Literacy rate (% >15 years) (2)	76	2021
	Net primary school enrolment rate (% female/male) (2)	99.1/98.7	2021
	Net secondary school enrolment rate (% female/male) (6)	37.5/31.7	2021
	Population with some secondary education (%) (4)	13.8	2022

Sources: (1) WorldData. [Rwanda](#); (2) World Bank. [Country data – Rwanda](#); (3) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2022. [Sustainable Development Report – Rankings](#); (4) UNDP. 2022. [Human Development Report 2021/2022 – Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World](#); (5) UNDP and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. 2023. [Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023. Unstacking global poverty: Data for high impact action](#); (6) Republic of Rwanda’s Ministry of Education. 2022. [2020/21 Education Statistical Yearbook](#).

WFP country strategic plan

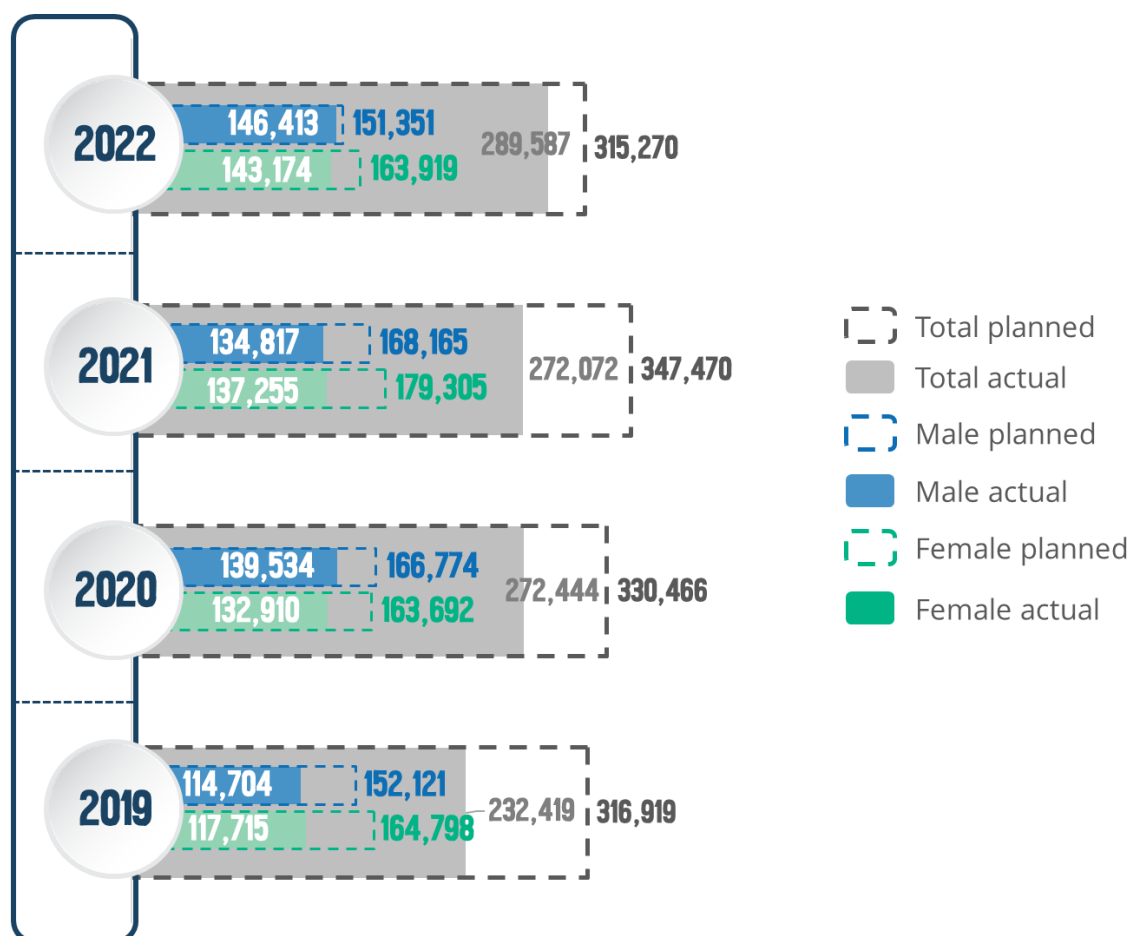
12. WFP’s CSP for Rwanda for 2019–2023 was extended to 2025 to align with the planning schedule for the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for Rwanda. It was preceded by the country programme for 2013–2018, which marked the beginning of a shift in engagement for WFP towards working alongside the Government to strengthen national capacity in food security and nutrition. The country programme featured innovation, especially in the prevention of chronic malnutrition, community resilience and productive asset creation.
13. The 2019–2023 CSP has a strong focus on country capacity strengthening and is framed around five strategic outcomes. The logic of the CSP has been to continue some activities, such as food and cash assistance for refugees; to expand other activities, such as efforts to strengthen smallholder farmer access to markets; and to introduce new areas of work, such as disaster risk reduction and management within the area of social protection. A fifth strategic outcome was added in 2019 to provide the Government of Rwanda and partners with humanitarian response services in times of crisis.
14. Since the beginning of CSP implementation, the needs-based plan has increased by 27.4 percent, with strategic outcome 2 (supporting national food security and the social protection programme) accounting for 38.4 percent of the growth, followed by strategic outcome 1 (food and nutrition assistance for refugees and returnees, 22.3 percent) and strategic outcome 4 (support for smallholder farmers and value chains, 15.3 percent). By June 2023 the CSP was 56 percent funded, with a total of USD 156.6 million in allocated resources against a needs-based plan of USD 241.6 million. Crisis response (with 56.8 percent of funding) represents the largest area of engagement under the CSP. This is followed by resilience building (with 32.3 percent of funding) and efforts to tackle the root causes of food insecurity (10.9 percent).

Figure 1: Rwanda country strategic plan (2019–2023) strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures



15. In 2022 the Rwanda country office served 289,587 beneficiaries (49 percent of whom were female), including an estimated 11,292 people with disabilities; 39.7 percent of beneficiaries were refugees. For direct beneficiary transfers under strategic outcomes 1 and 2, WFP used cash, commodity vouchers and food and other in-kind transfers. A strategic shift from in-kind transfers to cash and vouchers started in 2013 and was consolidated under the CSP. The CSP also saw the introduction of vulnerability-based targeting.

Figure 2: Country strategic plan planned and actual beneficiaries by sex, 2019–2022



Evaluation findings

To what extent is the country strategic plan evidence-based and strategically oriented to meet the needs of the most at-risk and vulnerable individuals?

Relevance to needs and alignment with national priorities

16. A strong evidence base on food security, nutrition and gender issues drawn from food security analyses and strategic reviews, combined with lessons from evaluations of WFP’s work and stakeholder consultations, supported the strategic positioning of the CSP. Programme adjustments during CSP implementation were appropriately informed by updated evidence and ensured the continued relevance of the CSP over time. The CSP emphasized development priorities and gave less prominence to WFP’s humanitarian role. Conflict-sensitive programming principles did not underpin the CSP design.
17. The CSP is well aligned with Rwanda’s commitment to ending hunger and strongly aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; beyond its primary focus on SDGs 2 (on achieving zero hunger), 1 (on poverty), 5 (on gender) and 17 (on partnerships), it is also aligned with SDGs 3 (on health), 4 (on education) and 13 (on climate).
18. The CSP reflects an explicit commitment to leaving no one behind. Specific programming priorities and strategies for vulnerability-based targeting and gender equality were included in the CSP. An analysis of gender-related issues in Rwanda and a gender action

plan supported planning, although strategies were less specific with regard to disability inclusion.

Internal and external coherence

19. A clear programme logic ensured strong internal coherence within the CSP and specific attention was given to fostering synergies across the strategic priorities of the line of sight and corresponding strategic outcomes. External coherence was reflected in a focus on collaboration and partnerships. The CSP built on implicit areas of comparative advantage that are recognized by partners, although some of the CSP priority areas are perceived by external stakeholders as overlapping with the mandates of other United Nations entities.

What are the extent and quality of WFP's specific contributions to the strategic outcomes of the country strategic plan?

Strategic outcome 1 (crisis response)

20. WFP successfully reached most of the refugees and returnees in Rwanda with cash-based transfers, although beneficiary coverage decreased from 91 percent of the target in 2019 to 85 percent in 2022. Refugees and returnees also received targeted nutrition support, supplementary food assistance and school meals. A slight drop in the number of refugees resorting to negative coping strategies suggests that food and cash transfers provided a buffer against shocks and that school meals and supplementary food assistance provided vulnerable refugees with nutrition safety nets.
21. However, resource gaps led to cuts in refugees' rations, which were reduced from providing just over two thirds of estimated requirements in 2019 to providing less than 50 percent by 2022. This had a direct effect on food and nutrition security outcomes. Indeed, despite extensive coverage WFP's assistance did not fully meet the nutrient gap for refugee households, with food consumption scores and dietary diversity levels remaining below target, including for women and children. Resource gaps also prevented the CSP from contributing to Rwanda's 2030 policy vision that refugees should eventually be able to live outside camps with the support of Government-led services and programmes. Graduation from assistance remains challenging due to a lack of livelihood opportunities in Rwanda, where access to land is very limited.
22. WFP's assistance to refugees, progressively shifting from food to cash, increased their autonomy and financial inclusion and boosted the local economy. WFP's efforts to involve refugees and host communities in working together on food assistance for assets projects and to foster exchanges among children from host and refugee communities in schools also had positive effects on social cohesion. The targeting of the most vulnerable refugees within the refugee community represented a significant innovation. On the other hand, tensions were caused by assistance packages varying across refugee groups, which was related to the earmarking of some donor support for specific categories of refugees.

Strategic outcome 2 (support for food security)

23. Strategic outcome 2 was intended to improve access to adequate and nutritious food for vulnerable populations in food-insecure communities through the delivery of six interrelated outputs in the areas of shock-responsive social protection, emergency preparedness and response, climate resilience building, school feeding services, and country capacity strengthening in food and nutrition security analysis.
24. WFP engagement in social protection – a new area under the CSP – contributed to joint efforts by various partners to strengthen national social protection strategic and accountability frameworks by integrating disaster risk management functions into them.

WFP is credited with introducing the concept of shock-responsive social protection and contributing to the update of Rwanda's national disaster risk management policy and the introduction of promising national preparedness plans.

25. In addition to generating valuable evidence through its vulnerability analysis and mapping work, WFP also provided much appreciated technical and capacity support to national institutions with regard to evidence generation, including through staff secondments. The results of these efforts, however, are not yet adequately captured by WFP monitoring and evaluation systems.
26. WFP support increased beneficiary communities' capacity to manage climate-related shocks, but while household food consumption scores improved, they remained below target. Food for assets activities produced visible improvement in productive assets and advanced women's role in household and community decision making. WFP's support also strengthened local government performance in asset creation and social and behaviour change communication (SBCC), with evidence of stronger climate, nutrition and gender-sensitive approaches in community planning and local government decision making.
27. WFP's demonstration of school feeding benefits spurred a decision by the Government to scale up school feeding to a national programme in 2021, extending access to adequate and nutritious food to all school-going children from pre-primary to secondary level. This has made school feeding a flagship programme for the Government and WFP and constitutes an example for the countries in the region and the members of the School Meals Coalition. WFP scaled up its enabling role and provided critical support for strengthened policy, strategic and accountability frameworks, together with country capacity strengthening. In parallel, WFP continued to implement its own multi-year home-grown school feeding programme, targeting vulnerable districts. The rapid expansion and significant financial commitment required by the national school feeding programme pose challenges with regard to resource mobilization, procurement and sustainability.

Strategic outcome 3 (nutrition support)

28. WFP contributed to the adoption by the Government of a child scorecard system for the surveillance of children at risk of malnutrition; the organization also supported a strengthening of national capacity in fortified blended maize processing. The successful mainstreaming of nutrition across the CSP and the integration of SBCC into several intervention types were important achievements and resulted in diversified diets for vulnerable populations. However, progress against targets for nutrition outputs and outcomes under strategic outcome 3 remained modest, with the scope of engagement constrained by resourcing challenges.

Strategic outcome 4 (food value chain support)

29. WFP's support for smallholder farmers generated positive outcomes, reflected in better quality crops and by-products, greater sales volumes, increased prices for produce and reduced post-harvest losses. The volume of smallholder produce sold through WFP-supported aggregation systems has more than tripled over the past four years. WFP made good progress in systems strengthening, with improved financing and management for cooperatives, although access to financial services remained uneven. WFP also helped to increase the participation of smallholder farmers in the value chain by facilitating their links with private and public buyers, although these links remain modest.
30. WFP missed opportunities to deliver SBCC and provide information in support of the production, purchasing and consumption of nutrient-rich foods and failed to focus on

promoting more efficient supply chain and retail systems under strategic outcome 4. As a result, producers continued to find it challenging to get produce to markets. Because of the limited involvement of WFP's vulnerability analysis and mapping team in monitoring work under strategic outcome 4, results in several important areas were not captured, in particular with regard to partnerships, market linkages, crop diversification, climate-smart practices and innovation.

Strategic outcome 5 (emergency response support services)

31. When strategic outcome 5 was activated to respond to the Ebola and COVID-19 crises and to natural disasters, WFP provided timely support to the Government, supported by an effective supply chain service that facilitated the smooth movement of commodities for WFP in the region; the organization also provided technical inputs across strategic outcomes in support of capacity strengthening. However, strong programmatic integration has not been matched by budgetary integration. The visibility of supply chain work across CSP priorities remains modest, with results not well captured by monitoring and evaluation systems.

Contribution to the achievement of cross-cutting aims

32. The CSP's ambitions to produce gender-transformative results across programmatic areas were only partially achieved. When applied through specific initiatives such as the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women, the gender action learning system methodology produced notable results, including in relation to the empowerment of women. However, the gender-related ambitions of the CSP were not sufficiently supported with funds or technical capacity. CSP performance on disability inclusion was both late and very modest. WFP adhered well to humanitarian principles where applicable, although the social tension among refugees created by the effects of earmarked contributions created challenges.
33. Significant progress was made with regard to community feedback mechanisms under the CSP, which covered the majority of beneficiaries (although some experienced difficulty in accessing the mechanisms). There is evidence that feedback informed programme adjustments. WFP has also supported national mechanisms, although it is premature to assess the results of that work.
34. Although WFP enhanced its attention to environmental and climate change activities during CSP implementation by implementing a strategy dedicated to these concerns, efforts remain modest compared to the environmental challenges in Rwanda, and performance has yet to be measured.
35. CSP progress on enhancing the sustainability of institutions has been strong, supported by growing attention to country capacity strengthening, whereas social, financial and environmental sustainability show more inconsistent progress. WFP programming has overall paid limited attention to sustainability or the potential replicability of activities.
36. WFP has contributed to work at the humanitarian–development nexus through its efforts on the social and economic integration of refugees, disaster risk reduction and management and social protection. Contributions to peace were not explicitly mentioned in the CSP but the evaluation identified various examples of interventions supporting social cohesion, such as efforts to integrate refugees and host communities into school committees.

To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to country strategic plan outputs and strategic outcomes?

37. WFP generally delivered outputs within the intended timeframe, when not obstructed by circumstances beyond its control such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Innovative modalities such as “cash-to-schools” and digital transfers for social protection, as well as effective supply chain and logistics functions, facilitated timely delivery. Funding challenges and delays in contracting partners affected the implementation of capacity strengthening activities and activities that required partnership agreements.
38. WFP’s targeting strategies were consistently evidence-based but constrained in practice by a lack of socioeconomic data. Although the introduction of vulnerability-based targeting for refugees was generally successful, it was hampered by targeting errors (in particular inclusion errors), which WFP has been working to reduce. Gender considerations were analysed throughout to ensure the inclusion of women; this was done unevenly across programmes, however, and attention to persons with disabilities was insufficient. Overall, the scale of WFP engagement in Rwanda remains modest compared to the needs of vulnerable people.
39. A range of measures to improve cost efficiency were introduced under the CSP, including a shift to cash-based transfers, the use of train-the-trainer approaches and the pursuit of a range of strategic partnerships, all of which contributed to efficiency gains. WFP has not tracked or reported on cost-efficiency, however, and United Nations joint programmes have not produced the efficiency gains anticipated. Duplication of monitoring work between WFP field offices and cooperating partners also undermined efficient implementation.

What are the factors that explain WFP’s performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected under the country strategic plan?

40. WFP has successfully retained its strong donor base but a lack of donor diversity and heavy earmarking of contributions at the activity level have hampered its efforts to secure sufficient funding, especially for strategic outcomes 1 and 3. Compounded by insufficient internal fundraising capacity, this has affected WFP’s ability to implement CSP activities as planned. In the context of an increasingly competitive funding environment, these resource mobilization challenges present a significant concern for the implementation of the upcoming CSP.
41. Monitoring systems favour mostly output data and therefore capture only a portion of the outcomes of WFP’s efforts, with especially notable gaps in measuring country capacity strengthening results. Despite efforts to enhance WFP staff engagement with data and the dissemination of findings, there is still room to improve knowledge-sharing and learning from CSP implementation.
42. WFP has expanded its partnerships under the CSP, with enhanced ministerial relationships and stronger district-level engagement across strategic outcomes, increased private sector engagement under strategic outcome 4 and stronger technical engagement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and cooperating partners. WFP engagement with partners has at times lacked consistency, and challenges persist in partnering with women’s organizations.
43. The staff of WFP’s Rwanda country office are recognized by partners for their commitment, responsiveness and expertise. Ambitions of aligning staffing profiles with the focus of the CSP have not been realized, however, notably with regard to country capacity strengthening and gender-transformative approaches. While management has been significantly engaged in national dialogue and consultation, capacity gaps in some technical areas have impeded the consistency of that engagement and constrained

progress, including in fundraising. There is room for greater alignment between country office competencies and CSP portfolio requirements and better internal management of the portfolio for improved coherence.

44. Overall, although CSP implementation was well served by strong leadership and government support, this was counterbalanced by a highly challenging funding environment and multiple external shocks.

Conclusions

45. **Conclusion 1: WFP's current value proposition, with a dual focus on saving lives and changing lives and an enhanced role in country capacity strengthening, remains strongly relevant and has appropriately positioned WFP to work at the humanitarian-development nexus.** WFP has established its added value in supporting shock-responsive social protection systems, nutrition-sensitive food systems and effective crisis response. Its positioning on country capacity strengthening has also provided a springboard for more strategic engagement with national partners. Against this backdrop and given Rwanda's strong policy framework, further investment in WFP's enabling role in relation to national and subnational stakeholders may be appropriate.
46. **Conclusion 2: Limited funding capacity represented a constant constraint and remains the biggest challenge for WFP in achieving the ambitions of its CSP in Rwanda.** Given the ongoing food security needs of refugees, sustained WFP support and coordination with the Government and partners is needed to enable refugees to graduate from assistance. Overall, funding prospects suggest that under the next CSP, WFP will need to be more selective in its engagements and further enhance its operational efficiency. Successful fundraising from selected private partners under strategic outcome 4 and the building of innovative partnerships (focused on the brokering of connections between stakeholders and shared contribution to outcomes) should provide inspiration for new ways to support programmatic priorities.
47. **Conclusion 3: While its refugee response and nutrition support were weakened by funding constraints, under the CSP WFP delivered good results in relation to social safety nets and nutrition-sensitive food systems and responded effectively and flexibly to external shocks. The sustainability of these achievements remains inconsistent, however.** WFP delivered valuable support in the humanitarian sphere and was mostly effective in reaching the most vulnerable, although performance against targets for its refugee response and nutrition work was relatively weak and limited by funding constraints. WFP clearly contributed to strengthening social protection policy frameworks, raising awareness of the importance of shock-responsive social protection, improving the production of farmer cooperatives and increasing incomes across the country. WFP's school feeding programme contributed to the adoption of a nationally owned programme with scaled-up coverage. WFP also demonstrated its added value in strengthening country capacity and its ability to adapt to changing priorities. WFP would benefit from further defining its strategic positioning in the country capacity strengthening sphere in relation to its partners. CSP activities have not always focused on the most vulnerable, and the sustainability of WFP's work is unclear.
48. **Conclusion 4: The CSP successfully fostered multiple internal links between strategic outcomes and enabled strategic partnerships that supported innovation, efficiency and CSP results across a relatively wide portfolio.** Results were supported by strong internal collaboration and synergies across focus areas; by efforts to adopt efficient implementation modalities despite funding limitations; by a general openness to innovation regarding delivery modalities, financing and partnership models; and by the

ready uptake of technology. For innovation and pilots, however, scale-up was not always possible and greater attention to sustainability was required.

49. **Conclusion 5: Under the CSP, WFP made progress in cross-cutting priorities including accountability to affected populations, humanitarian principles, protection and gender equality, which it can build on for the next CSP.** Opportunities exist for expanding gender transformative approaches, while disability inclusion requires greater attention. WFP has mainstreamed gender sensitivity across the various areas of its CSP and is a recognized advocate of gender equality. While it generated valuable experience in implementing gender-transformative approaches, however, such efforts must be expanded across its portfolio. In addition, inadequate attention has been paid to disability inclusion during the implementation of the CSP.
50. **Conclusion 6: CSP environmental priorities did not match the scale and importance of Rwanda's climate-related challenges.** WFP's efforts to strengthen the climate resilience of vulnerable communities and its policy work helped to mitigate some of the negative impacts of Rwanda's increasingly frequent and severe climate shocks. It also drew attention to opportunities to scale up advocacy and work with partners (including at decentralized levels) and to weaknesses such as the vulnerability and maintenance challenges of assets. In view of the growing climate-related risks that Rwanda faces, there is room for WFP to significantly scale up its efforts to build climate resilience capacity, strengthen the resilience of assets and enhance advocacy in this area.
51. **Conclusion 7: WFP's organizational structure, management and monitoring arrangements and staffing were not optimally aligned with the CSP.** WFP's ambition to establish the capacity needed to implement its CSP was largely unfulfilled over the period under evaluation and internal management arrangements were insufficient to ensure coherent oversight over a wide portfolio. The planned staff realignment exercise presents an opportunity to address identified gaps. Other operational weaknesses to be addressed include some duplication of work between WFP and cooperating partners; weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation system, including gaps in indicators for country capacity strengthening and activities conducted under strategic outcome 4; and inadequate arrangements for supporting programme management and learning.

Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	Maintain a dual focus on saving lives and changing lives for the next CSP, ensuring adequate support for refugee self-reliance and appropriate links across the portfolio.	Strategic	Country office management	Country office units: Programme; Human Resources; External Partnerships and Communication	High	
1.1	Ensure that the next CSP identifies a set of priorities for engagement in areas where WFP adds value to the work of other partners and that reduce the breadth of WFP's portfolio. This will involve making some difficult choices about which activities should be maintained and which should be dropped. WFP may consider focusing on areas where its added value is recognized, such as shock-responsive social protection and nutrition-sensitive food systems.					1.1. First quarter 2024 (as part of the development of the next CSP)
1.2	Further enhance programme integration to improve the self-reliance and integration of refugees.					1.2 First quarter 2025 (as part of the development of the next CSP)
2	Continue to pursue a multi-pronged approach to country capacity strengthening, informed by a corresponding strategy, well-defined expected outcomes and enhanced monitoring.	Strategic	Country office programme unit	Country office units: Programme; Monitoring and Evaluation/ Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping; Human Resources	High	
2.1	Define WFP's enabling role based on its experience with school feeding operations in Rwanda and ensure a consistent focus on that enabling role throughout its work. In the context of its enabling role, WFP should identify how its efforts in areas such as policy and systems strengthening will lead to concrete changes for vulnerable beneficiaries and should ensure that its efforts are articulated with those of partners in a clear chain of actions from the enabling functions to delivery. WFP's engagement in enabling					2.1. Second quarter 2024, with follow-up over the period of CSP implementation

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	work should anticipate how its efforts in areas such as policy and systems strengthening will lead to concrete changes for vulnerable beneficiaries and integrate engagement with partners in the chain of actions from these enabling functions to delivery.					
2.2	Refocus the enabling role of WFP firmly on supporting the implementation (including at the subnational level) of the policies of the Government of Rwanda in social protection, nutrition and support for smallholder farmers rather than the development of new policies or strategies.					2.2. First quarter 2025, with follow-up over the period of CSP implementation
2.3	Equip WFP with strong internal national expertise to deepen its understanding of the political economy and use this knowledge to inform WFP's approach to country capacity strengthening.					2.3. Fourth quarter 2024
3	Strengthen WFP's organizational readiness for the implementation of the next CSP.	Operational	Country office management	Country office units: Programme; Human Resources; Monitoring and Evaluation/ Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping; Supply Chain; Budget and Programming. Support required from the regional bureau.	High	
3.1	Consolidate internal management oversight of humanitarian and development programmes under a single head of programme to enhance synergies and facilitate internal learning.					3.1. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
3.2	Ensure that WFP has a comprehensive monitoring function that is relevant to Rwanda and can adequately capture progress in all areas of its portfolio, including those currently not covered (work under strategic outcome 4 and WFP's enabling and capacity strengthening initiatives).					3.2. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
3.3	Ensure that work under the various strategic outcomes is supported by dedicated staff with appropriate expertise, including in resource mobilization.					3.3. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.4	Assign dedicated senior experts to WFP's climate change and gender-transformative work (one position each) and provide them with access to training and other capacity development opportunities as needed for these positions.					3.4. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
3.5	Establish a fully integrated supply chain by integrating supply chain budgeting with CSP budgeting and by ensuring that supply chain operations are covered by monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms.					3.5. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
3.6	Capture learning from smallholder agriculture market support initiatives on innovative partnerships, the brokering of partnerships and collaboration, and financing. Use this learning to inform WFP's broader efforts to strengthen partnerships for CSP implementation.					3.6. Second quarter 2024, to inform the roll-out of the next CSP
4	Strengthen WFP's approach to disability inclusion across its portfolio and scale up the focus on gender-related issues in all its work.	Operational	Country office programme unit	Country office units: Gender and Protection; External Partnerships and Communication; Monitoring and Evaluation/ Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping	Medium	
4.1	Ensure that the next CSP takes full account of disability inclusion across all strategic outcomes, with annual monitoring against disability inclusion targets. At the start of implementation, conduct a study on disability inclusion and identify entry points for interventions and their implications for WFP programming and targeting.					4.1. Fourth quarter 2024 (for inclusion in the design of activities under the next CSP)
4.2	Informed by WFP analyses of gender-related issues, clearly identify entry points, strategies and targets for all CSP programmatic areas to seize opportunities for achieving gender-transformative results in all relevant areas of WFP's portfolio. Conduct regular monitoring and learning exercises to					4.2. Fourth quarter 2024 (for inclusion in the design of activities under the next CSP)

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	gauge WFP's progress in implementing its plans and achieving its targets in relation to gender equality.					
4.3	Engage partners with strong expertise in gender issues and pursue strategic partnerships with government institutions, NGOs, women's associations, associations for disabled persons and sister United Nations entities (in particular the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Development Programme) that can advance progress towards the aims of the new CSP with regard to gender equality and disability inclusion.					4.3. Third quarter 2024 (for inclusion in the design of activities under the next CSP)
4.4	Ensure enhanced visibility of and attention to gender and disability concerns by allocating dedicated country office technical and financial resources to both of these priority areas.					4.4. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
5	Significantly increase WFP's focus on the environment and climate change throughout the next CSP, with attention to preparedness, mitigation and adaptation, and continue to reduce the carbon footprint of WFP's work in Rwanda.	Operational	Country office programme unit	Country office units: Programme; Monitoring and Evaluation/ Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping	High	
5.1	Conduct an environmental assessment of WFP's ways of working to identify how they can be optimized to reduce the organization's carbon footprint.					5.1. Second quarter 2025
5.2	Refocus WFP's environmental and climate change work with regard to mitigation, adaptation and emergency preparedness and ensure attention is given to key climate change issues across all of WFP's work.					5.2. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.3	At the start of CSP implementation, conduct a comprehensive assessment of opportunities for and constraints to mainstreaming environmental and climate change considerations across WFP's portfolio and ensure that recommendations from the assessment are reflected in management priorities.					5.3. Second quarter 2025
6	Ensure that consideration is given to the sustainability of all activities in WFP's portfolio in a balanced manner, starting at the design phase, and increase the emphasis on partnerships and diversified funding sources in order to achieve programmatic ambitions.	Strategic	Country office management	Country office strategic outcome heads; country office; Budget and Programming unit; Head of Programme: country office; External Partnerships and Communication unit	High	
6.1	Design specific CSP programmes with outcomes and sustainability firmly in mind, paying attention to sustainability at the design phase, including in terms of its implications for partnerships and the timeframes of activities. Prioritize early planning for handover and exit strategies. Systematically audit new initiatives for their potential sustainability.					6.1. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
6.2	Set ambitious targets for innovative partnerships in the domain of refugee livelihoods and integration. Ensure strong links with the Mastercard Foundation project for women and young people.					6.2. Fourth quarter 2024 (to feed into the design of activities under the next CSP)
6.3	Scale up WFP's efforts to mobilize resources for refugee assistance and ensure that they are informed by a cost-benefit study of investments in livelihoods, in particular for women.					6.3. Second quarter 2024; with continued prioritization throughout implementation of the CSP

1. Introduction

1.1 EVALUATION FEATURES

1. The 2016 World Food Programme (WFP) Policy on Country Strategic Plans (CSP) introduced a programmatic framework based on coherent country portfolios, replacing former programme categories and project documents. The WFP evaluation policy requires an evaluation towards the end of each CSP period.³ This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Rwanda CSP evaluation (CSPE) 2019-2024, which was commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) to Mokoro Limited and took place between January and November 2023. The evaluation covers four evaluation questions related to relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence and sustainability as well as connectedness and coverage.
2. The evaluation has dual objectives of accountability and learning. The summary terms of reference (ToR) are provided in Annex 1. The evaluation seeks to provide:
 - evaluation evidence and learning on WFP performance for country, regional and global-level strategic decision making; and
 - accountability for results to WFP stakeholders.
3. The evaluation offers WFP stakeholders an independent assessment of its performance, opportunities, challenges and potential future directions. It provides an opportunity for learning from a context where WFP works alongside a strong government and focuses significantly on the “changing lives” agenda, although 59 percent of the budget remains on the “saving lives” component through crisis response activities. The evaluation feeds into the next CSP (2024-2029), for which detailed planning was initiated in parallel to this evaluation. The current CSP cycle in Rwanda has been extended to align with the timing of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The new CSP, initially set to be presented to the WFP Executive Board in June 2024, is now scheduled for presentation at the November 2024 session to align with other national programming frameworks.
4. The evaluation focused on CSP implementation from January 2019 to May 2023 (data collection was completed on 2 June 2023). It also considered the preceding year, to understand the relevance and quality of CSP design. An inception mission to Kigali from 6 to 10 February 2023 confirmed the utility of the evaluation, informed the evaluation design and provided clarity on priority areas of focus. Field data collection took place over three weeks in-country between 2 and 19 May 2023. Prior to field work the evaluation team launched three surveys (further detailed in Annex 2). An exit presentation on 18 May in Kigali provided an opportunity to share preliminary impressions. A full (remote) preliminary findings presentation followed on 6 June and covered findings, conclusions and emerging recommendations. Presentation of the draft evaluation report took place on 4 and 5 September 2023 in Kigali, in separate sessions with the country office (CO), followed by dissemination to Rwanda stakeholders. Utilization of this report will be ensured through the implementation of an official management response to the evaluation’s recommendations; through various communication products; and by the integration of the evaluation results in future evaluation summaries and syntheses (for the full evaluation timeline see Annex 3).
5. The evaluation engaged with, and is of relevance to, internal and external stakeholders. Internal evaluation stakeholders include the WFP country office in Rwanda, the Office of Evaluation, WFP headquarters (HQ) and the WFP regional bureau in Nairobi (RBN). The external stakeholders include the Government of Rwanda (GoR) ministries and departments and agencies engaged in CSP implementation at central and decentralized levels, as well as CSP partners including donors, other United Nations agencies, and cooperating partners - including civil society organizations (CSOs) and other partners (private sector, etc.). Beneficiaries of CSP activities are central to the CSP focus and therefore to this evaluation.
6. The evaluation was carried out by a gender-balanced team of senior international and national experts. A mixed methods approach combined document review, quantitative data analysis, key informant interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), project site visits, and surveys administered to beneficiaries, WFP partners and WFP staff. The evaluation adhered to the WFP approach to accountability to affected

³ WFP. 2016. “Policy on Country Strategic Plans” WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/1/Rev1.

populations (AAP), gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE), persons with disabilities (PWD) and environmental considerations. WFP principles for integration of gender in evaluation were applied across the evaluation process. For more detail on the methodology, see Section 1.4 and Annex 5.

1.2 CONTEXT

General overview

7. Rwanda is a mountainous country bordered by Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Rwandan Patriotic Front, led by President Kagame since 1998, has governed the country since the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Parliamentary elections were last held in September 2018, which saw the Rwandan Patriotic Front coalition winning 40 of the 53 elected seats⁴. With 61 percent of seats held by women, Rwanda retained its position as the country with the highest proportion of members of parliament who are women. The next parliamentary election will take place in 2024.

8. Rwanda has an ample policy framework that complements and reinforces the National Strategy for Transformation 1 (NST1) and Vision 2050 and guides WFP work. Disaster risk management is coordinated by the National Disaster Management Committee (NADIMAC) chaired by the Minister in charge of Emergency Management with its technical committee, the National Disaster Management Technical Committee (NADIMATEC).⁵ The National Child Development Agency (NCDA) coordinates all food and nutrition interventions.⁶ Other government ministries include the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA), the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), and the Ministry of Health (MoH) as key partners of WFP. In addition, WFP supports various national and subnational multi-stakeholder coordination platforms.

9. Rwanda recognizes accountability of public institutions and service delivery as key to promoting citizens’ well-being and country development. Among other government initiatives to strengthen the accountability of public institutions is the *Imihigo* “performance contract”.⁷ This sees citizens participate in the planning from household to national levels and is translated into targets that the Government at different levels is accountable for.⁸ Rwanda’s Decentralization Policy was first adopted in 2000 and subsequently updated in 2012 and 2021.

⁴ Source: <https://data.ipu.org/>















⁵ Government of Rwanda, 2020. National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020-2025.

⁶ One UN Joint Nutrition Project Phase II Effectively fighting Chronic Malnutrition in Rwanda Annual Report: January – December 2020.

⁷ Imihigo: an individual would set targets or goals to be achieved within a specific period of time.

⁸ United Nations Rwanda. 2021. Common Country Analysis March 2021.

Table 1 Geographic and socioeconomic indicators for Rwanda

Indicator	Value	Reference year
 Area (km2) (1)	26,338	
 Population (% female / % male) (2) Population growth (%) (2)	13,776,698 (52/48) 2.3	2022
 Population under 14 (%) (2)	38	2022
 Net migration (2)	-6,112	2021
 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) progress (global index score %/rank) (3)	59.42 / 124 of 163	2022
 Human development index (score/rank) (4)	0.534 / 165 of 191	2021
 Life expectancy at birth (years) (2)	66	2021
 GINI coefficient (%)	43.7	2010-2021 ⁶
 Population in multidimensional poverty (%) (5)	48.8	2023
 Population living below the national poverty line (%) (5)	52	2019/20
 Literacy rate (% >15 years) (2)	76	2021
 Net primary school enrolment rate (% female/male) (6)	99.1 / 98.7	2021
 Net secondary school enrolment rate (% female/male) (6)	37.5 / 31.7	2021
 Population with some secondary education (%) (4)	13.8	2022

⁶ A GINI index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.

Sources: (1) [World data](#) (2) World Bank, 2023. [Rwanda](#) (3) sustainable development reports, 2022 [dashboard](#) (4) UNDP, 2022. Human Development Report 2021-2022 Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World (5) UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023 (6) Government of Rwanda, MINEDUC EMA. 2022. 2020/2021 Education Statistical Yearbook.

10. Economic and structural reforms have brought significant achievements in poverty reduction, gender equality, environmental sustainability, education and public health, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Rwanda has experienced rapid economic growth in recent years, but the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic caused a contraction in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020, with a recovery in 2022.⁹ Initiatives towards middle income country (MIC) status are guided by the national development plan “Vision 2050” and seven-year National Strategies for Transformations, which were preceded by two Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies (EDPRS 1 and 2) that had been in place since 2008.

11. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), in July 2023, Rwanda hosted 133,628 refugees, mainly originating from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi; 87 percent of whom live in five camps (Mahama, Kiziba, Kigeme, Nyabiheke and Mugombwa).¹⁰ Of these refugees, 24.2 percent are women between 18 to 59 years of age, and 16 percent are children under 5. A recent deterioration of the security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo brought refugee inflows into Rwanda, As of the end of September 2023, 12,684 new asylum seekers had arrived in Rwanda.¹¹ Under its Strategic Plan for Refugee Inclusion (2019–2024), the Government supports livelihood strategies to enable refugees to become self-reliant and integrated into Rwandan society.¹² However, livelihood opportunities for camp-based refugees are minimal due to the lack of land. In August 2020, the United Nations began facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees and, by October 2022, over 30,000 refugees had returned to their country of origin.¹³

Food security and agriculture

12. The 2021 Rwanda Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) showed slightly worse food insecurity levels compared to 2018.¹⁴ Out of 2.6 million households, 20.6 percent were food insecure, of which 18.8 percent were moderately food insecure, and 1.8 percent were severely food insecure. The Western Province was the most food insecure and Kigali the least (Figure 1).

13. The percentage of stunted children under the age of 5 dropped from 38 percent to 33 percent during 2014-2020, according to the Rwanda Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2019-2020.¹⁵ The prevalence of acute malnutrition was 1.1 percent in 2020, a slight decrease compared to 2014 figures.¹⁶

⁹ Government of Rwanda, MINECOFIN. 2021. Budget Framework Paper 2021/2022-2023/2024 April 2021.

¹⁰ UNHCR, 2023, Rwanda Operational Update, July 2023.

¹¹ UNHCR n.d. Rwanda Refugees <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/104114> (data updated in October 2023).

¹² Government of Rwanda, MINEMA and WFP. 2021. Joint Strategy on Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities in Rwanda 2021-2024.

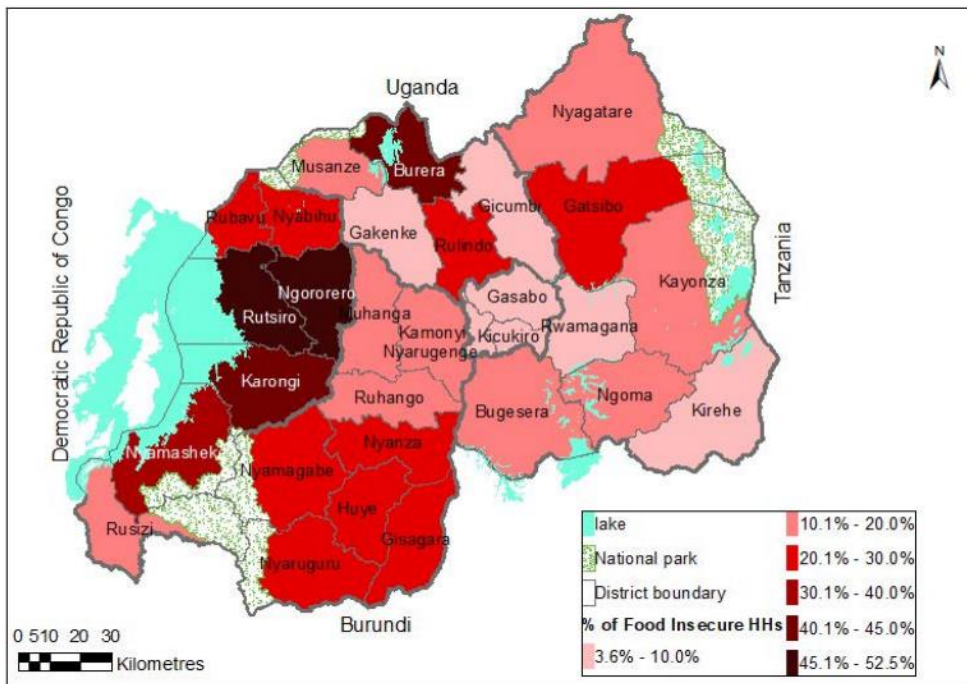
¹³ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/burundi>.

¹⁴ WFP. 2021. Rwanda 2021 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis.

¹⁵ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) and Ministry of Health. 2021. Rwanda Demographic and Health (DHS) Survey 2019-2020 Summary Report.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

Figure 1 Rwanda, percentage of food insecure households per district (2021)



Source: Rwanda Comprehensive Food Security Vulnerability Analysis, 2021.

14. An increase in the use of improved seeds may account for the steady increase in crop production, although overall agricultural outputs are declining due to climate-related disasters. Food access remains constrained by low purchasing power caused by steep food price increases (59.2 percent annual year-on-year inflation for 2022).¹⁷ Household food consumption reflects poor dietary diversity and limited intake of nutritional supplements. Refugees are disproportionately affected by these constraints.¹⁸

15. Agriculture accounts for 27 percent of the gross domestic product¹⁹ and 69 percent of households engaged in some form of agricultural economic activity.²⁰ This excludes subsistence farming.

Climate change and natural disasters

16. Rwanda is at significant risk of natural hazards including droughts, floods, earthquakes, landslides, storms, wildfires, diseases and epidemics.²¹ The MINEMA dataset illustrates the effects of these disasters in terms of deaths, injuries and damages to houses and crops since 2018. This is reflected in Figure 2.²²

¹⁷ World Data, Rwanda. <https://www.worlddata.info/africa/rwanda/index.php>.

¹⁸ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. 2021.

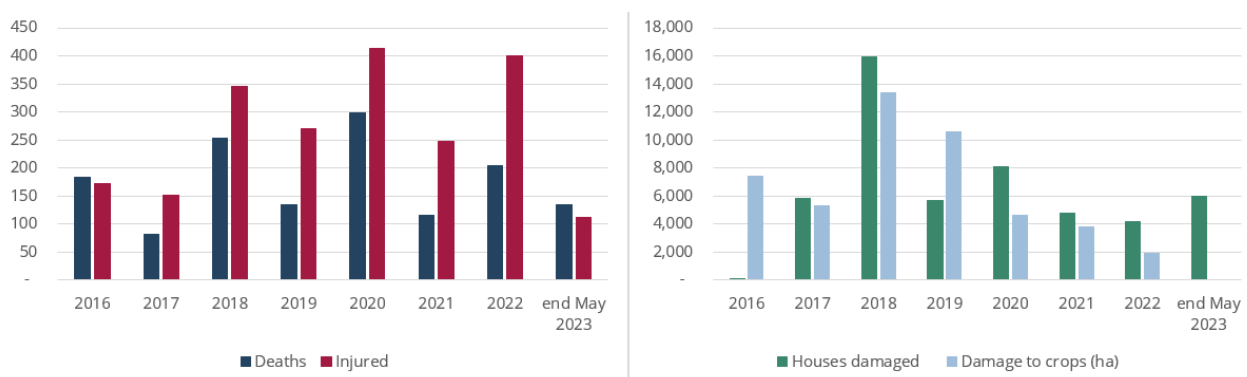
¹⁹ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. 2023. GDP National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2022), March 2023.

²⁰ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. 2022. The Fifth Population and Housing Census in Rwanda. August 2022.

²¹ World Bank n.d. Climate Risk Profile, <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/rwanda> (accessed in February 2023).

²² The natural disasters considered in the MINEMA dataset include: fire, floods, hailstorm, house collapse, landslides, lightning, mine disaster, rainstorms, wildfire, windstorm. Source: Government of Rwanda, MINEMA 2022 Disaster Effects Situation.

Figure 2 Total effects of natural disasters by year (2016-2020)



Source: Republic of Rwanda, MINEMA.

17. Changes in temperature, poor soil management, and extreme precipitation patterns (both excess and deficit) are the key drivers of many of these disasters. Vulnerability to climate-related shocks stems from Rwanda's topography, weak water resource management and high dependence on rain-fed agriculture; as well as from poor road networks, socioeconomic vulnerability and low capacities to manage climate risks.²³ The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative Index (ND-GAIN) (2021)²⁴ ranks Rwanda at 112 of 182 countries.

18. Heavy rainfall on 2 and 3 May 2023 in Rwanda's northern, western and southern provinces caused severe flooding, landslides and significant infrastructure damage. This caused 135 deaths, with 5,693 homes destroyed and infrastructure damaged, including power stations and water treatment works. A total of 20,000 people were evacuated from their homes.²⁵

Health

19. In 2019, the prevalence of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) among people aged 15-64 years was 3 percent (2.2 percent in men and 3.7 percent in women).²⁶ Estimates indicate that 97.5 percent of diagnosed adults were receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) in 2019.²⁷

20. Rwanda is vulnerable to Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreaks, due to its high population density and well-developed transport infrastructure, which favours influx from bordering countries. In 2018, the Government developed and successfully implemented an Ebola preparedness plan to minimize the risk of importing outbreaks from Uganda, Burundi (2018) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2018/2019).²⁸

21. The COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected lives and livelihoods. During the lockdown period, the national poverty rate increased by 10.9 percent, and 1.3 million people, mostly in rural areas, fell into temporary poverty.²⁹ For 68 percent of urban households and 24 percent of rural households, COVID-19 was the main shock that affected them in the 12 months prior to April 2021.³⁰ In more than 95 percent of cases, this caused a loss of income among women in urban areas. Effects were also aggravated for refugees

²³ World Bank Climate Risk Profile.

²⁴ The ND-GAIN Country Index summarizes a country's vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges in combination with its readiness to improve resilience. University of Notre Dame. 2020. Global Adaptation Index Country Index.

²⁵ <https://www.minema.gov.rw/updates/news/latest-updates-on-2-3-may-disaster> (accessed on 16 June 2023).

²⁶ Rwanda Biomedical Centre. 2020. Rwanda Population-Based HIV Impact Assessment 2018-2019 Final Report.

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ Government of Rwanda, Ministry of Health. 2019, Ebola Virus Disease National Ebola Preparedness and Contingency Plan June 2019.

²⁹ Aragie, E; Diao, X; Robinson, S et al. 2021. Assessing the economy-wide impacts of COVID-19 on Rwanda's economy, agri-food system, and poverty A social accounting matrix (SAM) multiplier approach. Strategy Support Programme | Working Paper 01 May 2021. IFPRI Rwanda.

<https://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/134400/filename/134614.pdf>.

³⁰ WFP. 2021. CFSVA.

who were unable to travel outside refugee camps in search of livelihood opportunities due to the restrictions on movement.³¹

International development assistance

22. The Government provides a strong steer and enforcement of the division of labour among external partners and donors. Between 2019 and 2021, Rwanda received United States Dollar (USD) 1.2 billion, 1.6 billion and 1.3 billion net for official development assistance (ODA) respectively. The proportion of net official development assistance to total gross national income (GNI) increased from 11.7 percent in 2019 to 12.1 percent in 2021.³² Health and population, social infrastructure and services, and production were the top three sectors receiving official development assistance. The World Bank is the largest donor overall, followed by the United States of America (USA). See Annex 7 for detailed aid data.

23. In 2019 to 2022, humanitarian resources were mainly directed to refugees (61.8 percent) and protection (18.7 percent).³³ The USA is the largest humanitarian donor, with a contribution that exceeds that of the next four donors combined. A significant uplift in humanitarian funding in 2022 was driven by a doubling in USA contributions. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported low contribution levels for humanitarian assistance in 2020 and 2021 (2 and 13 percent respectively, against response plans and appeals) but an increase to 61.8 percent was observed in 2022, while funding has dipped significantly again in 2023.³⁴

United Nations collaboration

24. Rwanda has been a United Nations “delivering as one” pilot country since 2008 and continues to operate under a unified United Nations country team. The Rwanda UNSDCF³⁵ will end mid-2024. It supports government priorities with United Nations expertise, capacity and resources. The UNSDCF is aligned with the three pillars of the NST1 and aims to contribute to six outcomes through the delivery of 25 outputs at an estimated cost of USD 631 million for both development and humanitarian assistance. WFP contributes to four expected outcomes under the economic and social transformation pillars of the UNSDCF, accounting for 62 percent of the UNSDCF total budget (see Figure 3).

³¹ Employment to population ratio during COVID-19 lockdown decreased from 48.3 to 43 percent (6.2 percent women, 4 percent men). World Bank. 2021. Rwanda Economic Update, Protect and Promote Human Capital in a Post-COVID-19 World. 16 January 2021.

³² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) 2022 Interactive summary charts by aid (ODA) recipients <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm> (accessed in June 2023).

³³ OCHA n.d. Financial Tracking System. <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/185/summary/2022> (accessed in June 2023).

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ UN Rwanda. 2018. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. UNSDCF 2018–2024.

Figure 3 UNSDCF outcomes



Source: UNSDCF 2018-2024.

25. Activities of United Nations agencies in Rwanda also contribute to the regional ten-year United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes region, approved in October 2020.³⁶

1.3 SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED

26. The WFP CSP for Rwanda 2019-2023, and its associated country plan budget (CPB) were approved by the Executive Board in November 2018, with a start date of 1 January 2019, and subsequently extended to mid-2024.³⁷ It was preceded by the WFP Country Programme 2013-2018, which marked the beginning of a shift in engagement for WFP towards working alongside the Government to strengthen capacity in food security and nutrition.³⁸ The country programme also modelled innovations, especially in chronic malnutrition, community resilience and productive asset creation.

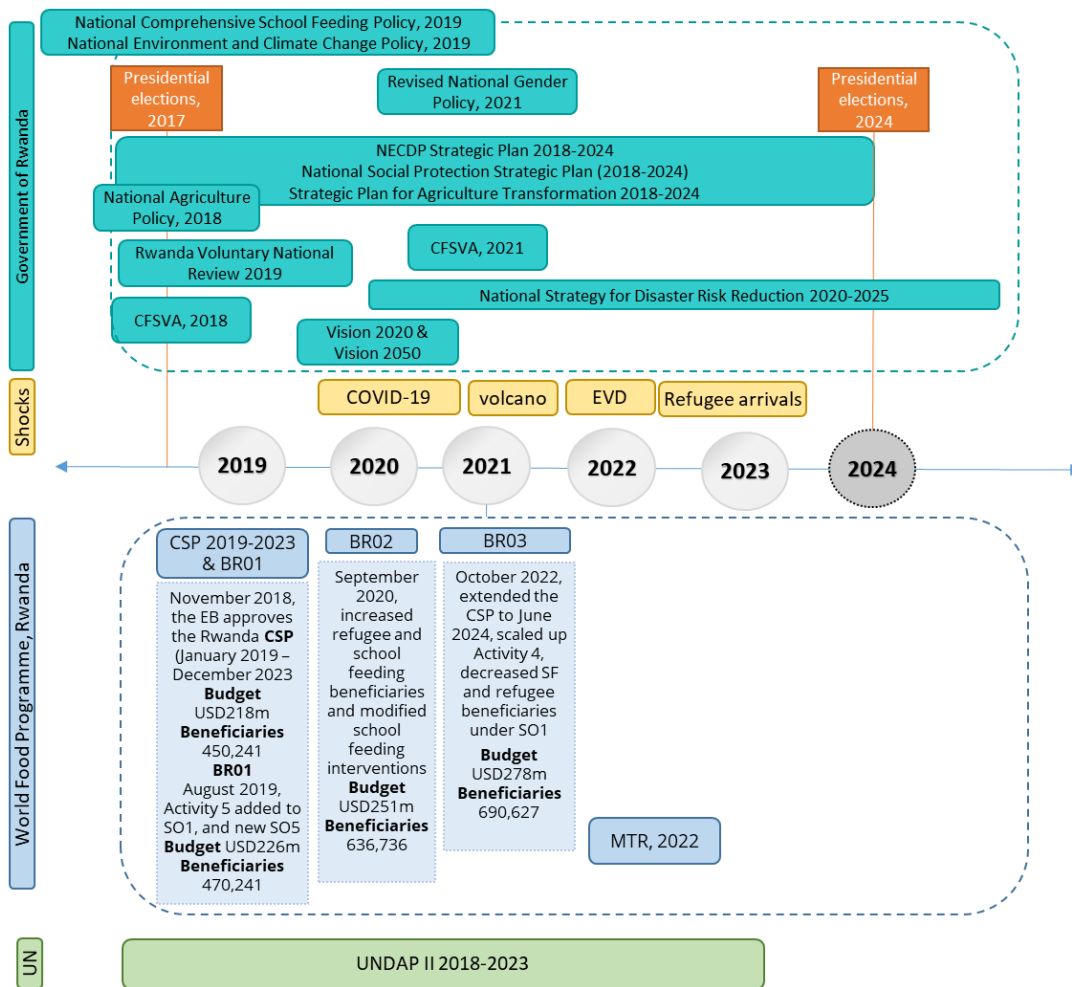
27. Figure 4 below outlines the change in budget and target beneficiaries over the CSP period through budget revisions (BRs). Since the CSP start, the needs-based plan (NBP) has increased by 27.4 percent, with Activity 2 accounting for 38.4 percent of the growth, followed by Activity 1 (22.3 percent) and Activity 4 (15.3 percent). A mid-term review (MTR) of the CSP was conducted in 2022.

³⁶ UN Security Council. 2020. Letter dated 4 December 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council. United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region.

³⁷ The CSP was extended to mid-2024 after budget revision (BR03) in October 2022.

³⁸ Preceding the country programme, support was delivered through four separate emergency operations (EMOPs) and a protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO).

Figure 4 Evolution of the CSP and changes in the external context 2019-2024



Source: Evaluation team.

28. Figure 5 provides an overview of CSP outcomes, activities and focus areas. The 2019-2024 CSP has a strong focus on country capacity strengthening (CCS)³⁹ and is framed around five strategic outcomes (SOs). The logic of the CSP has been to continue some existing activities such as: food and cash assistance to refugees; to expand some activities such as strengthening smallholder farmer (SHF) access to markets; and introduce new areas of work such as disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) within the social protection umbrella. A fifth strategic outcome was added in 2019 to provide the Government and partners with humanitarian response services in times of crises. Modalities of intervention of the CSP are listed in Figure 5 below. Capacity strengthening for the Government and partners is integrated across all strategic outcomes.

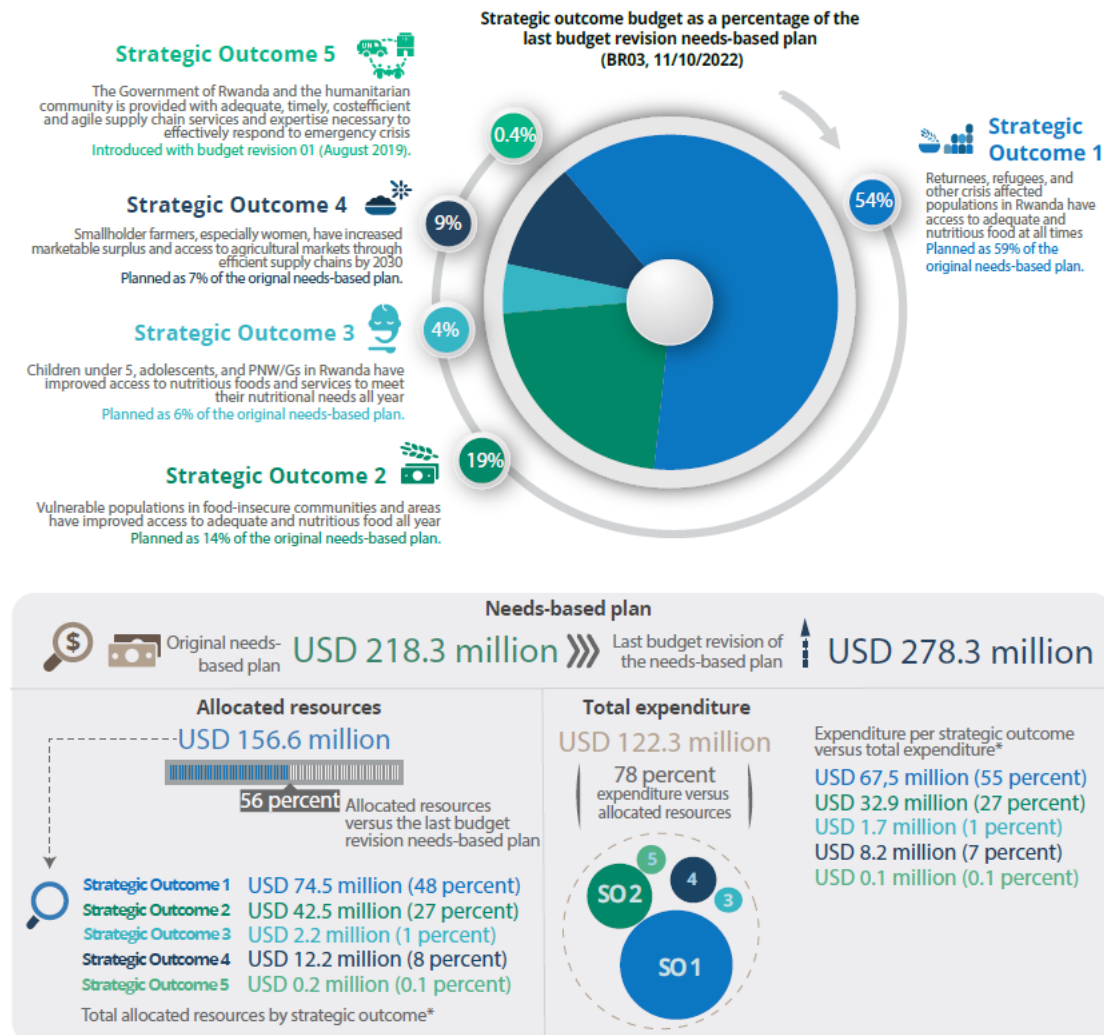
29. The CSP includes the following cross-cutting priorities: accountability to affected populations, protection, people with disabilities, gender and environment. These elements are addressed in this evaluation in evaluation sub-question 2.2. Work by WFP on gender over the period has included the implementation (together with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and UN Women) of the Joint Programme on Rural Women Economic Empowerment (JPRWEE), for which WFP is the lead. Other strands include various gender studies (see Table 2), as well as gender mainstreaming across CSP areas of work, including in resilience building, home-

³⁹ CCS include technical advice, evidence generation, policy dialogue, and advocacy to enhance the individual, institutional and enabling environment.

grown school feeding (HGSF), refugee support, nutrition and smallholder farming. The only new initiative under the CSP has been the introduction of conservation agriculture with a pilot since August 2022 in line with the WFP Rwanda country office's (RWCO) Internal Strategy on Environment and Climate Change (2022-2024). The Gender and Age Marker (GaM) of the CSP varies between 3 and 4 across the strategic outcomes.

Financial position

Figure 5 Rwanda country strategic plan budget, funding and expenditure



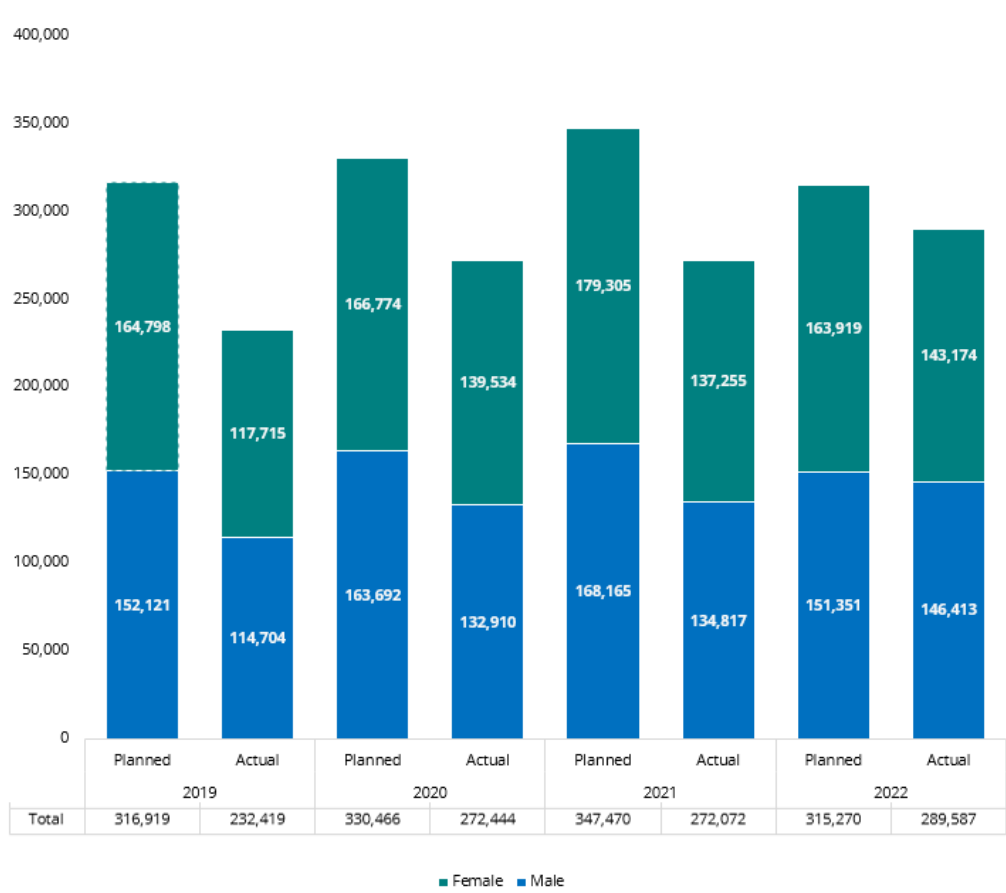
30. As of June 2023, the Rwanda CSP is 57 percent funded, with a total of USD 156,551,104 allocated resources against a needs-based plan of USD 241,613,879. Crisis response (with 56.8 percent of funding) represents the largest area of engagement within the CSP. This is followed by resilience building (with 32.3 percent of funding) and root causes (10.9 percent).

Performance

31. In 2022, the Rwanda country office served 289,587 beneficiaries (49 percent women and girls) including an estimated 11,292 persons with disabilities. Of these beneficiaries, 39.7 percent were refugees.⁴⁰ There is relative gender parity in planned and actual beneficiary numbers (Figure 6). The CSP activities cover all provinces in Rwanda.

⁴⁰ ACR 2022.

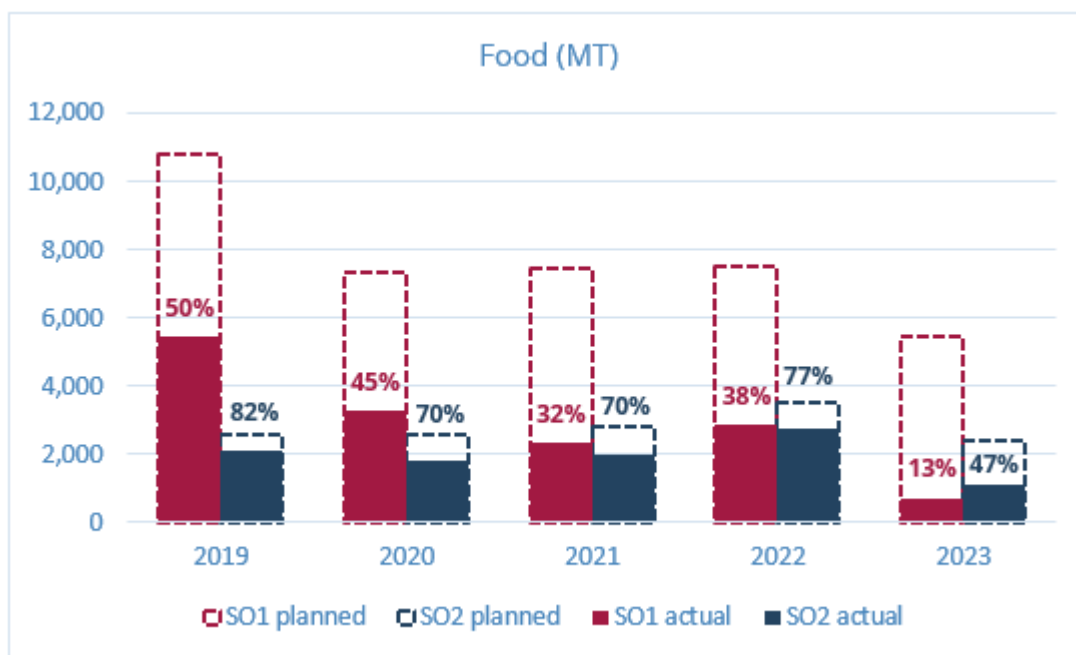
Figure 6 CSP planned and actual beneficiaries by sex, 2019-2022



Source: COMET CM-R001b (25.05.2023).

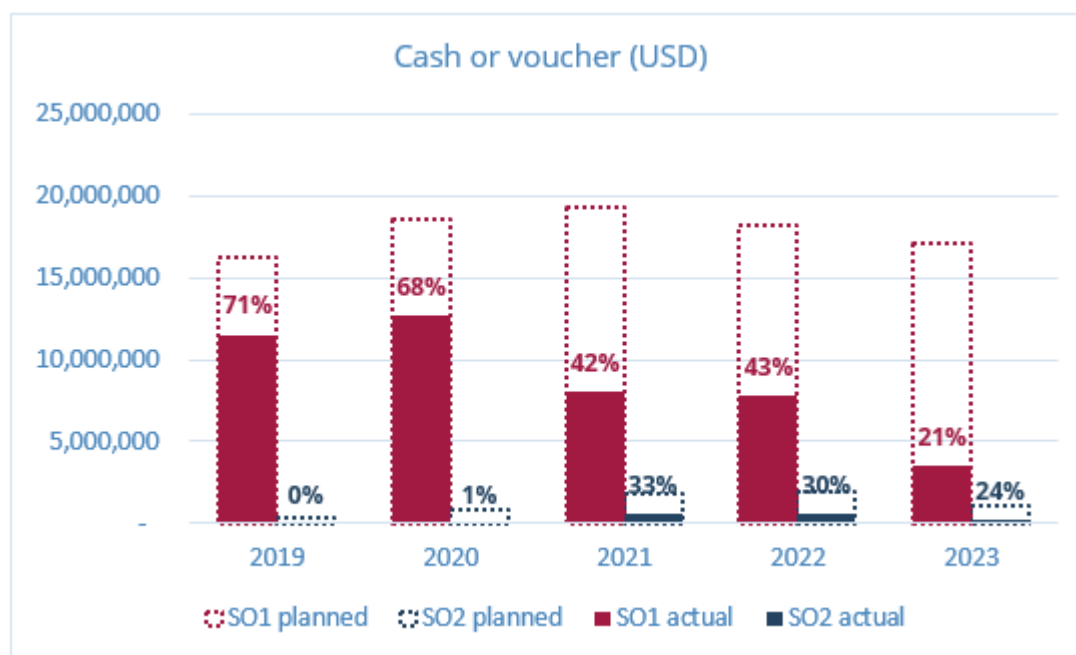
32. For direct beneficiary transfers in SO1 and SO2, WFP adopted a combination of modalities: cash, commodity vouchers, food and other in-kind transfers. The strategic shift from in-kind to cash or vouchers (which had started in 2013) was consolidated during the CSP. Figure 7 below shows the annual distribution of cash and food against the planned distribution. Excluding 2023, which had not concluded at the time of this report, on average SO1 food distributions were 41 percent of planned, and 75 percent for SO2. For cash and vouchers the average distribution was 56 percent of the planned amount for SO1 and 16 percent for SO2.

Figure 7 Planned versus actual food transfers



Source: COMET Annual_Distribution_(CSP)_-v1.4 2019-2023 (25.05.2023).

Figure 8 Planned versus actual cash and voucher transfers



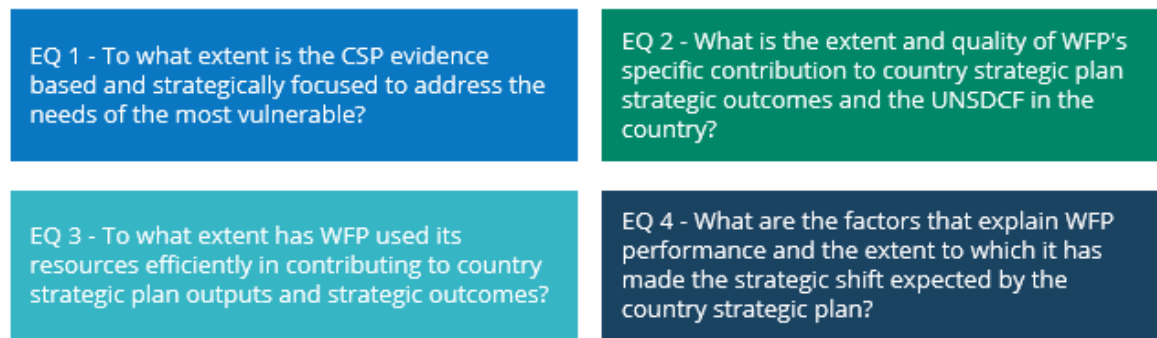
Source: COMET Annual_Distribution_(CSP)_-v1.4 2019-2023 (25.05.2023).

1.4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

33. This evaluation used a theory-based, mixed methods approach. During the inception phase the team reviewed documents, developed a stakeholder analysis, drafted a theory of change (ToC) and evaluation matrix, and designed a detailed approach to data collection and evidence analysis. Stakeholders were consulted through a combination of remote and in-person interviews.

34. The evaluation focused on four evaluation questions (EQs):

Figure 9 Four evaluation questions



Source: Evaluation ToR.

35. The evaluation drew on the theory of change and associated assumptions (Annex 5) to construct the evaluation matrix (Annex 9). The theory of change was constructed to reflect the CSP logic as designed at the start of the evaluation period, while including the major changes that took place as a result of the three budget revisions. It was informed by the CSP document, the CSP line of sight (LoS), and interviews with persons who were involved in the early CSP design phase. It maps the main components (activities to outputs, strategic outcomes and impact) and brings out the interconnectedness between strategic outcomes and activities. A set of “enablers” reflects the factors that make the different components of the theory of change work together to produce the anticipated outcomes and eventually, impact. Enablers were included in specific assumptions underlying the theory of change.⁴¹ The evaluation matrix was built around the evaluation questions. Sub-questions were adapted to the specific context of the CSP and to the needs of the country office and its stakeholders in Rwanda.

36. To maximize evaluation utility, a case study approach was taken to two themes identified by the country office for further exploration, namely country capacity strengthening and gender. A specific annex at the inception phase outlined the approach for each case study (see Annexes 7, 8 and 9 of the inception report).⁴² A dedicated annex in the evaluation report for each case study brings out the main findings and associated learning for these themes (Annex 10 for gender, and Annex 11 for country capacity strengthening). The evaluation scope included an assessment of how relevant and effective WFP was in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

37. The evaluation’s analysis of how equity and inclusion (in terms of the dimensions of gender, age and disability) were considered in CSP design and implementation was guided by the WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020), and the updated Gender Policy 2022, while taking into account that the latter policy was not in place for most of the CSP implementation period.⁴³ It was also guided by the WFP Disability Inclusion Road Map, and the WFP Protection and Accountability Policy.

38. Data collection included documentation compilation, review and analysis (Annex 9); processing and analysis of secondary quantitative data from WFP; project site visits (12 communities over seven days); key informant interviews (KII) with 111 people (56 women, 55 men);⁴⁴ focus group discussions with stakeholders at country and regional levels, including 196 beneficiaries (102 women, 94 men); and three surveys. Data collection tools are in Annex 12. The evaluation visited three provinces to collect evidence from beneficiaries of WFP activities and provincial authorities and to conduct site visits. The fourth province was covered by remote data collection (see Annex 2). Sampling of locations was informed by a mapping of WFP activities, and criteria focused on ensuring coverage of a range of the types of work done by WFP.

39. Three validation workshops grouped by strategic outcome were held with WFP staff to validate the results of the initial observations developed by the team. The nutrition workshop could not take place due

⁴¹ The new WFP strategic plan (WFP. 2021. WFP Strategic Plan (2022–2025) WFP/EB.2/2021/4-A/1/Rev.2 12 November 2021) also includes enablers as an important component of the overall ToC for the strategy.

⁴² WFP/Mokoro 2022 Evaluation of Rwanda WFP Country Strategic Plan (2019-2024) Inception report. May 2022.

⁴³ WFP. 2022. WFP Gender Policy. Executive Board, first regular session, 28 February–2 March 2022.

⁴⁴ A breakdown of the number of participants in KIIs and FGDs can be found in Annex 16.

to staff availability and was replaced by individual interviews. An exit debriefing at the end of data collection (18 May 2023) and a full briefing of findings and emerging conclusions and areas of recommendation (6 June 2023) provided an opportunity for feedback and preliminary validation.

40. The report was quality assured by Mokoro and by the Office of Evaluation. The evaluation was guided by WFP Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (CEQAS) and conducted according to the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines. Gender considerations, and principles of inclusion, participation and non-discrimination were included in the design, questioning, data collection and reporting in line with the UNEG Guidance on Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation. The evaluation team ensured ethical standards were adhered to through the evaluation, in line with the Ethical Pledge of Conduct that each team member signed. Annex 5 details the methodology as well as the approach to data analysis, triangulation and quality assurance.

41. Data collected were sufficient to answer the evaluation questions. Responses to the partner survey were lower than expected because of the parallel administration of surveys from other United Nations partners. No other major data collection issues affected the evaluation. Contextualization of the data analysis on grant expenditure was, however, constrained by country office feedback. The planned comparisons of Rwanda data on cost efficiency could also not be conducted as data, particularly on supply chain – although requested - could not be provided by the regional bureau in Nairobi to support this analysis.

Evaluation findings

EQ1: TO WHAT EXTENT IS WFP'S STRATEGIC POSITION, ROLE AND SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION BASED ON COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND PEOPLE'S NEEDS AS WELL AS WFP'S STRENGTHS?

1.1 To what extent was the CSP informed by existing evidence on the hunger challenges, the food security and nutrition issues prevailing in the country to ensure its relevance at design stage?

Finding 1. The CSP design was underpinned by a strong evidence base on hunger, food security, nutrition and gender. It took place in consultation with partners and took account of evolving evidence to ensure continued relevance. A country gender analysis and a gender action plan supported gender planning. Work done by WFP in the humanitarian and crisis response domain - while important - had limited visibility in the approved CSP document. Priorities were not informed by conflict-sensitive programming principles.

42. The CSP was informed by the 2018 Rwanda Country Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security,⁴⁵ which emphasized the need for stronger attention to: a) policy and strategic frameworks, especially in social protection, climate change and climate-related shocks; b) strengthening targeting and enhancing synergies with emergency response; c) improving data and knowledge on food and nutrition; and, d) strengthening institutional arrangements and capacity for food and nutrition governance. The CSP design was also substantively informed by recommendations of the 2018 CFSVA,⁴⁶ which identified priorities around access, quality, diversity and availability of food. These priorities were taken on board in the CSP focus, as is evident from Annex 6. A gender action plan,⁴⁷ aligned with the WFP regional gender strategy⁴⁸ and the corporate WFP Gender Policy,⁴⁹ also informed the design and ensured that gender was comprehensively included in the CSP narrative and approach.

43. The CSP drew on the evaluation of the preceding WFP common country programme,⁵⁰ on extensive stakeholder consultations and on specific activity evaluations⁵¹ to identify areas for pursuit.⁵² Taken together, the evaluations highlighted the strengths of WFP work in refugee response, school feeding, nutrition and support to smallholder farmers, as well as progress in working on country capacity strengthening. They also emphasized areas of improvement through a shift towards: a) stronger capacity development across activities; b) enhancing sustainability; c) upscaling engagement in social protection; d) stronger attention to climate issues; e) improving self-reliance for refugees; f) strengthening work across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP or triple) nexus; and g) ensuring stronger attention to gender, equity (including disability) and protection throughout WFP engagements. Existing data was supplemented by dedicated scoping missions on social protection, nutrition, school meals and gender.⁵³ CSP priority setting was supported by an iterative consultative process with the Government, donors, the United Nations and development partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), drawing on evidence

⁴⁵ Government of Rwanda, MIGEPROF. 2018. Rwanda Country Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security June 2018.

⁴⁶ CFSVA 2018.

⁴⁷ WFP Rwanda. 2017. Country Gender Action Plan (2016-2020).

⁴⁸ WFP RBN. 2015. Regional Implementation Strategy of the Gender Policy (2015-2020).

⁴⁹ WFP. 2015. Gender Policy.

⁵⁰ WFP. 2017. Operation Evaluation: Rwanda, Common Country Programme, 200539, Mid-Term Evaluation (2013-2016). OEV/2016/008.

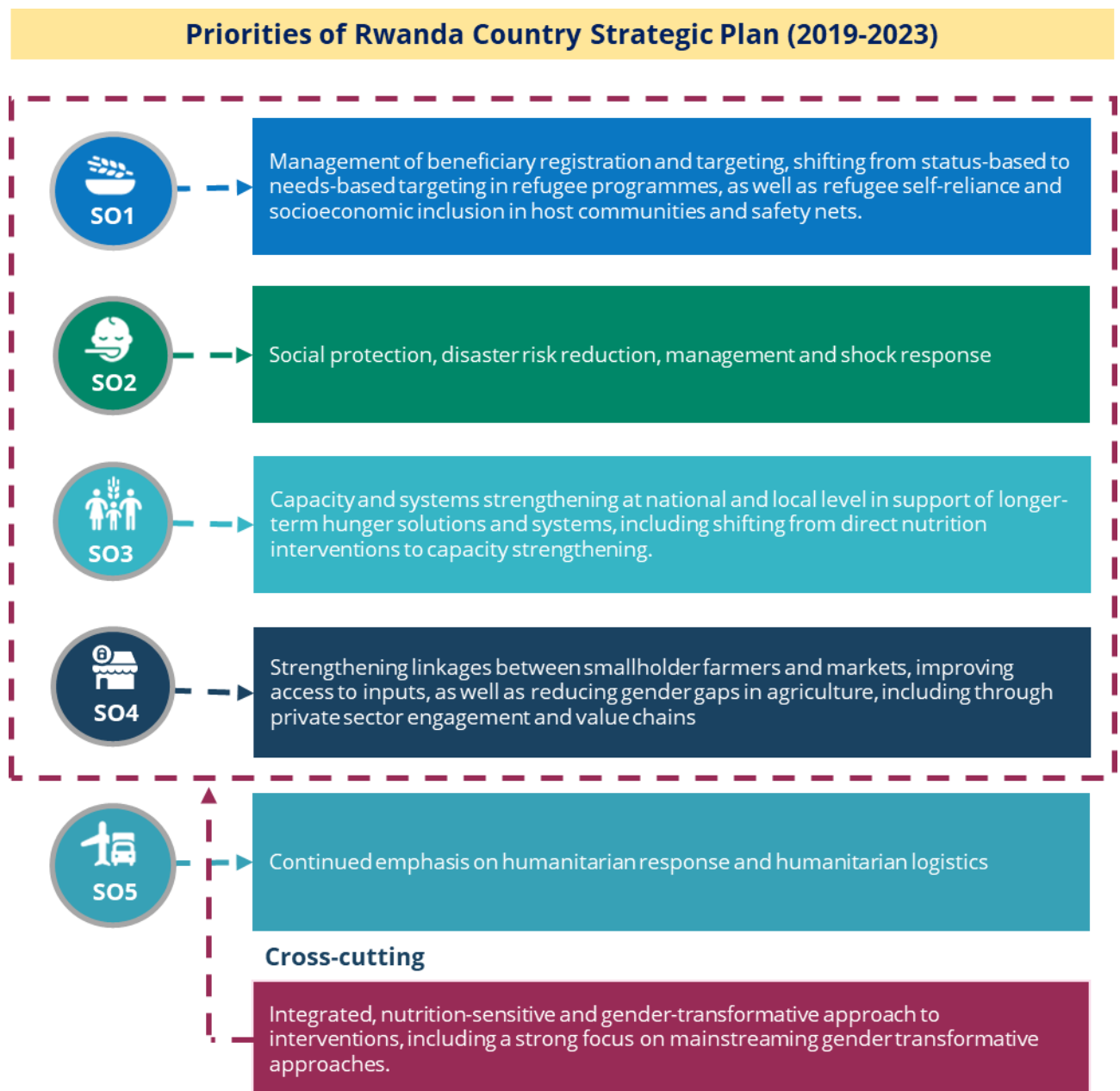
⁵¹ WFP. 2016. Rwanda PRRO 200744: Food and Nutrition Assistance to Refugees and Returnees – A Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's Operation (2015-2016) - Evaluation Report. Office of Evaluation, WFP.

⁵² This included the move to and enabling/capacity strengthening role and three specific opportunities for increased WFP engagement: (1) shock responsive social protection systems; (2) resilience-building social protection; (3) nutrition-sensitive social protection. Source: WFP RWANDA: Concept Note for Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023) Strategic-Programme Review Process (S-PRP).

⁵³ Ibidem.

including the zero hunger strategic review (ZHSR).⁵⁴ The CSP design acknowledged the humanitarian role of WFP. However, the CSP emphasis was on development priorities.⁵⁵

Figure 10 CSP priorities



Source: Evaluation team.

44. **The CSP design was not informed by principles of conflict-sensitive programming.** The CSP concept note was silent on this, and while the final approved CSP states that its priorities align with the corporate policy on the role of WFP in peacebuilding and transition settings,⁵⁶ it did not outline specific strategies for, or priorities in, promoting peace and reducing conflict, which is relevant to the operational modalities of WFP in Rwanda.

⁵⁴ KII.

⁵⁵ KII.

⁵⁶ WFP Rwanda Annual Country Report 2022 Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023.

45. **During CSP implementation WFP produced qualitative and quantitative data** to ensure continued technical relevance (see Table 2). This informed the design of activities under specific strategic outcomes at the start of the CSP, and their adjustment over time. In this vein, the McGovern-Dole (MGD) baseline in 2022,⁵⁷ usefully complemented by a gender baseline,⁵⁸ informed detailed programming together with the findings of the MGD evaluation.⁵⁹ In a similar vein, the country's flagship JPRWEE demonstrated the importance of specific gender-transformative approaches⁶⁰ and saw the adoption of this approach in other CSP areas such as the Sustainable Market Alliance and Assets Creation for Resilient Communities and Gender Transformation (SMART) project. In a few areas country capacity strengthening gap analyses were conducted as part of the CSP implementation, including in shock responsive social protection, school feeding and emergency preparedness.

Table 2 Evaluations, assessments and studies

Evaluations, assessments and reviews	Year
Decentralized evaluations (DE) and reviews	
Rwanda PRRO 200744 Food and Nutrition Assistance to Refugees and Returnees: A Mid-Term Operation Evaluation	2016
SO2 Food for Education and Child Nutrition (2016-2020): Mid-Term and Endline Evaluations	Midterm 2019 Endline 2022
SO5 Local Regional Procurement Project (2017-2019): Endline Evaluation	2020
Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020	2021
SO2 SMART Impact Evaluation (Baseline, Midline and Endline)	Baseline 2020 Mid/End 2022
SO4 Innovative Pilot Evaluation: Aflatoxin Reduction in the Rwanda Maize Value Chain	2021
SO2 Acceleration of Integrated Social Protection Interventions in Rwanda (AISPR) Programme: Study in 5 Districts	Baseline 2021 Endline 2022
SO2 Cash-Based Transfers on Food Security and Gender Equality: Impact Evaluation	2022

⁵⁷ WFP. 2022. FY 20 McGovern-Dole Rwanda project implemented by World Food Programme Baseline Evaluation McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition, September 2022.

⁵⁸ WFP Rwanda. 2021. Gender Assessment Brief, Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, December 2021.






⁵⁹ WFP. 2021. WFP's USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Programme's Support in Rwanda (2016-2021) - Decentralized Evaluation (DE) Report.

⁶⁰ WFP, FAO, IFAD, UN Women. 2021. Decentralized Evaluation Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020, Final Evaluation Report, 5 May 2021.

Evaluations, assessments and reviews	Year
SO2 Cost-Benefit Analysis of WFP's Food Assistance for Assets Projects: Evidence from Rwanda and Zimbabwe	2022
SO4 Joint Evaluation of Smallholder Farmers Farm to Market Alliance II	2022
CSP Mid-Term Review	2022
SO2 Baseline Study: USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for WFP Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in Rwanda (2020-2025)	2022
Qualitative review of asset creation/resilient livelihoods programme	2023
Assessments	
SO2 Assessment of the Sensitivity of the Social Protection Sector in Rwanda to Climate-Related Shocks	2020
SO2 Beyond COVID-19: Lessons for Social Protection from WFP's Work in East Africa in 2020	2021
SO2 Integrated Context Analysis	2022
Food Security and Nutrition Studies	
The Cost of Hunger in Rwanda	2014
Rwanda Country Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security	2018
Comprehensive Food Security & Vulnerability Analysis	2018 2021

46. Source: MTR 2022, adapted with evaluation team additions.

Figure 11 Rwanda CSP 2019-2024. Overview of strategic outcomes, activities and focus areas

Rwanda Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)		
 SO1	<p>FOCUS: CRISIS RESPONSE</p> <p>Strategic Outcome 1: returnees, refugees, and other crisis-affected populations in Rwanda have access to adequate and nutritious food at all times</p>	<p>Activity 1: Provide food and nutrition assistance and basic livelihood support to refugees and returnees including through provision of WFP services to the Government of Rwanda and humanitarian agencies</p> <p>Activity 5: Provide food or cash, nutrition support and other assistance to local Rwandan populations affected by crises, including through provision of WFP services to the Government of Rwanda and partner agencies</p> <p>Activity Category: unconditional resource transfers (URT)</p> <p>Modality: food; CBT &/or vouchers; capacity strengthening; service delivery</p>
 SO2	<p>FOCUS: RESILIENCE BUILDING</p> <p>Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable populations in food-insecure communities and areas have improved access to adequate and nutritious food all year</p>	<p>Activity 2: Support the design, implementation, and scale up of national food security and nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes</p> <p>Activity Category: social protection sector support (SPS)</p> <p>Modality: food; CBT &/or vouchers; capacity strengthening</p>
 SO3	<p>FOCUS: ROOT CAUSES</p> <p>Strategic Outcome 3: Children under 5, adolescents, and PNW/Gs in Rwanda have improved access to nutritious foods and services to meet their nutritional needs all year</p>	<p>Activity 3: Provide capacity strengthening support to national programmes that improve the nutrition status of targeted populations</p> <p>Activity Category: social protection sector support (SPS)</p> <p>Modality: capacity strengthening</p>
 SO4	<p>FOCUS: ROOT CAUSES</p> <p>Strategic Outcome 4: Smallholder farmers, especially women, have increased marketable surplus and access to agricultural markets through efficient supply chains by 2030</p>	<p>Activity 4: Provide support, education, and capacity strengthening services for smallholder farmers and value chain actors</p> <p>Activity Category: Smallholder agricultural market support programmes (SMS)</p> <p>Modality: capacity strengthening</p>
 SO5	<p>FOCUS: CRISIS RESPONSE</p> <p>Strategic Outcome 5: The Government of Rwanda and the humanitarian community is provided with adequate, timely, cost-efficient and agile supply chain services and expertise necessary to effectively respond to emergency crisis (Introduced with Budget Revision 01)</p>	<p>Activity 6: Deliver supply chain services and expertise to enable all partners to provide timely assistance to affected population</p> <p>Activity Category: service provision and platform activities</p> <p>Modality: capacity strengthening; service delivery</p>

Source: WFP Rwanda CSP and BRs.

47. Adjustments to programming were not only informed by evidence. Some of the important shifts were motivated by funding and policy prerogatives, and by external events, as is further discussed under Evaluation Sub-Question 4 .5.



1.2 To what extent is the CSP aligned to national policies and plans and to the SDGs?

Finding 2. The CSP is well aligned with Rwanda's commitment to end hunger. It is coherent with government and United Nations priorities.

48. The CSP was developed in alignment with the NST1 (2017–2024), Vision 2020, Vision 2050 and the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP) for Rwanda (2018–2023) all of which are geared towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). Table 3 depicts government priority pillars and the alignment of CSP strategic outcomes. There is clear alignment with the NST1 economic and social transformation pillars, and with the broader agenda of ending hunger. Alignment with NST1 is evident in support to food systems and sustainable use of natural resources, and in the focus of WFP on helping households graduate from poverty, eradicating malnutrition and ensuring access to education for all.⁶¹ Furthermore, the CSP strategic shift from direct implementation to government support was in alignment the Government's agenda and donor preferences.

⁶¹ MTR, 2022.

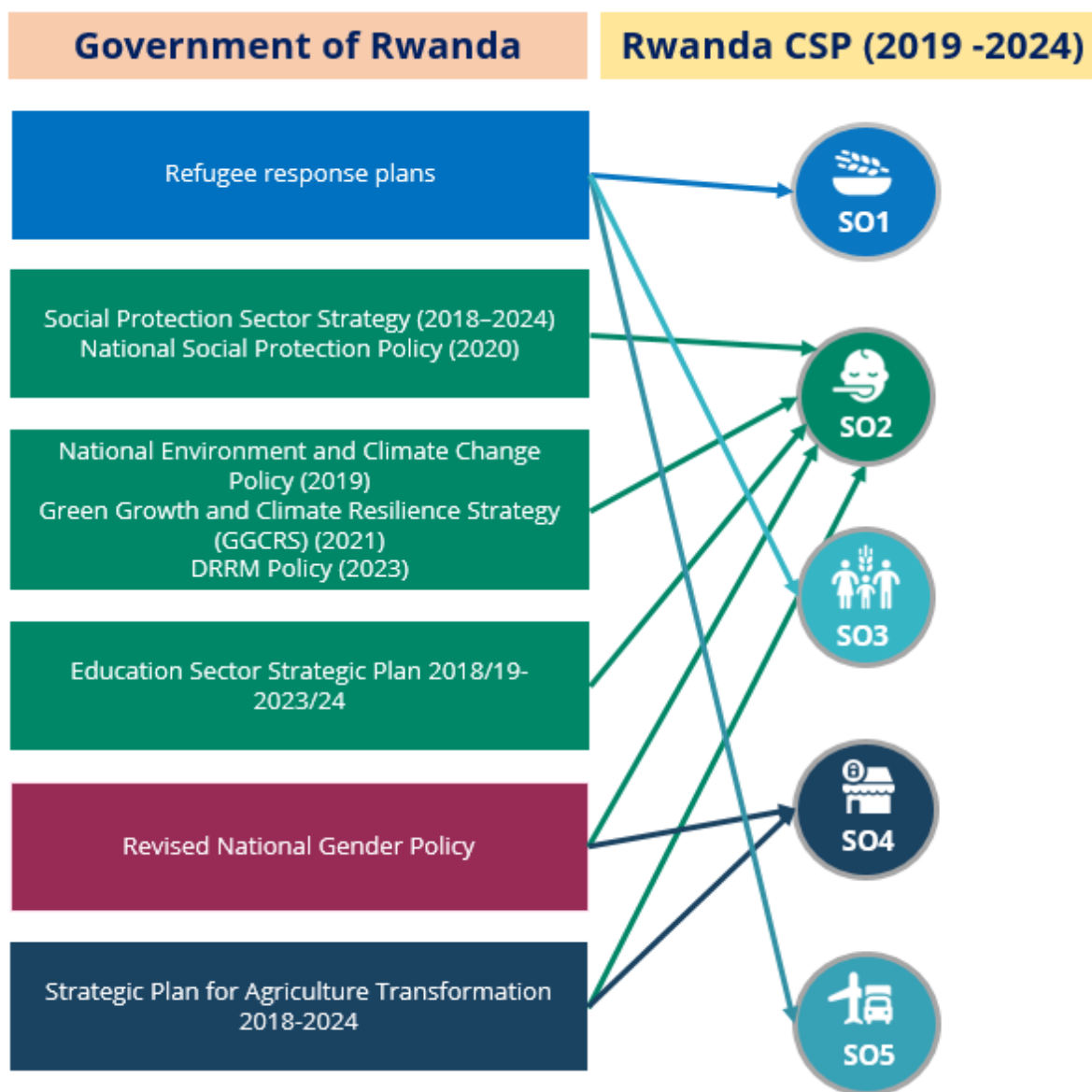
Table 3 Pillars of Vision 2020 and Vision 2050

	Selected Pillars	CSP Priorities
	Productive and market-oriented agriculture	SO4
	Gender equality	All SOs Cross-cutting issues (CCI)
	Protection of environment and sustainable natural resource management	SO2, SO4 CCI
	Universal access to high quality education	SO1, SO2
	Modern and innovative services sectors driving transformative growth	SO4
	Modern market-oriented and climate resilient agriculture	SO4 CCI
	Scaled up use of modern inputs and technologies to maximize productivity	SO4
	Increased access to agriculture finance and risk sharing facilities	SO4 CCS
	Integration within global value chains for higher-value products	SO4
Ensuring efficient and accountable institutions for socioeconomic transformation	SO2 CCS	

Source: Evaluation team interpretation of Government of Rwanda. 2020. Vision 2020. July 2020, Kigali and Government of Rwanda, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN). 2020. Vision 2050. December 2020, Kigali.

49. **The CSP was strongly aligned with the 2030 Agenda.** The WFP contribution to the SDGs was formulated in the CSP as being primarily to SDGs 1 (poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 5 (gender equality) and 17 (partnerships). While not specifically identified as such, the work done by WFP in school feeding was framed as contributing to education outcomes, including quality education (SDG 4); the work done by WFP on nutrition aligned with government and SDG priorities around good health and well-being (SDG 3) and the shock responsive social protection engagement contributes to government priorities in the domain of climate action (SDG 13). As a result, at the level of sector priorities, the CSP shows good alignment between the specific strategic outcomes of the CSP and government policies and priorities, as illustrated through the examples in Figure 12.

Figure 12 Examples of CSP and Government of Rwanda alignment



Source: Evaluation team.

1.3 To what extent is the CSP internally and externally coherent?

Finding 3. CSP internal coherence was assured by the clear programmatic logic and priorities reflected in the line of sight and corresponding strategic outcome, as well as specific attention to synergies across areas of work. Externally, coherence was reflected in a CSP focus on collaboration and partnerships. The CSP built on implicit areas of comparative advantage that are recognized by partners, although some of the CSP priority areas are perceived as overlapping with mandates of other United Nations agencies.

50. The CSP operationalized the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) and envisioned contributions directly to strategic results 1, 2 and 3 and to Strategic Result 5 as a cross-cutting theme, as well as to a range of corporate and regional bureau policies and strategies.⁶² It was also clearly aligned with the strategic shift by WFP from implementation to enabling. A distinct set of opportunities for WFP in Rwanda was clearly

⁶² MTR, 2022.

articulated in the CSP and provided the framework for the identified priorities, and was translated into strategic outcomes. The CSP envisioned horizontal work and efforts at learning between strategic outcomes as a way to maximize internal coherence.⁶³ While no theory of change was developed for the CSP, the line of sight with activities and outputs for five strategic outcomes constituted a coherent framework for implementation, as reflected in both the CSP operationalization and in stakeholder views. The framework was also appropriately complemented by a logical framework and brief description of assumptions. However, neither the CSP concept note⁶⁴ nor the CSP document formulated how activities would synergize to deliver intended outcomes.

51. CSP external coherence was pursued through close consultation and search of alignment with the Government, United Nations and partner priorities in CSP design and through carefully selected partnerships in implementation. External alignment has been pursued within the United Nations through participation in the United Nations country team (UNCT), and in the design of the next UNSDCF. The CSP identified opportunities for complementarity and joint work with sister agencies, notably UNHCR, FAO, IFAD, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women, and the World Health Organization (WHO). These were pursued under the CSP period through joint thematic programmes around nutrition, social protection and women's economic empowerment,⁶⁵ strong coordination around refugee support and good quality joint monitoring. However, some CSP priorities in practice encroached on the remit of other United Nations agencies, such as on areas of UNICEF work on nutrition, and with FAO work in smallholder agriculture. In most of the joint programmes, implementation was managed separately by the different agencies, the exception being the JPRWEE, where implementation has been well coordinated and jointness, promoted by a full-time national coordinator, a joint needs assessment at the start of the second phase (2016–2019), and a scaling down of geographical scope to enhance coordination.⁶⁶

52. External coherence with government priorities was also clearly formulated and set out in the CSP, with WFP supporting specific government programmes and priorities and engaging in national- and district-level coordination. Examples include the WFP contribution to shock responsive social protection through SO2 under the Government's social protection Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP)⁶⁷ to enhance climate and gender sensitivity, and the WFP contribution to district targets on asset creation for vulnerable households. WFP has reportedly been consistently present in national dialogue structures, providing opportunities for exchange and engagement, such as the Maize Value Chain Platform, which WFP co-chairs, and WFP participation in the Agriculture Sector Working Group (ASWG). External coherence has been further advanced through innovative partnerships with private sector partners such as Ironji, Africa Improved Foods (AIF), and the East Africa Exchange, mostly in the context of SO4 priorities.⁶⁸

1.4 To what extent does the country strategic plan address the needs of the most vulnerable people in the country to ensure that no one is left behind?

Finding 4. The CSP reflected an explicit commitment to leaving no one behind through a focus on vulnerable persons, in particular vulnerable women, persons with disabilities, disaster-affected people, those lacking land or based in specific geographical zones, and those with specific legal status (refugees and asylum seekers). Specific programming priorities and strategies for vulnerability-based targeting and gender were included in the CSP, but strategies were less specific on the disability inclusion.

53. **The CSP clearly reflected a focus on the most vulnerable and on leaving no one behind.** The CSP context analysis, and the preparatory work leading up to the CSP formulation had included specific

⁶³ WFP Rwanda ACR 2022, p. 24.

⁶⁴ WFP RWANDA: Concept Note for Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023) Strategic-Programme Review Process (S-PRP).

⁶⁵ These programmes reflect key CSP (and broader GoR and United Nations agency) priorities having focused on social protection (with UNICEF and FAO), nutrition (with UNICEF and FAO), gender (through the JPRWEE with FAO, IFAD and UN Women), and value chains and export markets (with UNDP).

⁶⁶ WFP et al 2021 JPRWEE decentralized evaluation.

⁶⁷ Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) - is an Integrated Local Development Programme to Accelerate Poverty Eradication, Rural Growth, and Social Protection. It is an initiative by the GoR in collaboration with development partners and NGOs.

⁶⁸ This finding is also noted the Endline Evaluation of USDA's Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Programme (May 2020), which found that key factors affecting results was the strong and well-selected partner (RWARRI), and strong coordination between WFP and the partner.

attention to vulnerable women, among others, through a dedicated gender scoping study.⁶⁹ Achieving women's empowerment and working towards gender-transformative results was prominently envisioned in the CSP approach to programming and implementation. Thus, the CSP section on the WFP 'strategic orientation' foresaw CSP implementation being based on gender-responsive, data driven, planning and implementation of gender-transformative food and nutrition security priorities.⁷⁰ Priority for vulnerable women was reflected across the strategic outcomes with specific strategies for support and inclusion. The CSP also prioritized expanded and strengthened partnerships, in particular those that would add value to its gender and disability work. For some of the WFP areas of work, specific other vulnerable groups were also prioritized, in particular: those affected by disasters, those lacking land or based in specific geographical zones, and those with specific legal status (refugees and asylum seekers).

54. Disability inclusion was less visible in the CSP document. While persons with disabilities were mentioned as a priority, the CSP context analysis provided limited background of the specific challenges to the inclusion of persons with disabilities, no specific disability study was conducted, and the concept note for CSP design, while including references to persons with disabilities as a target group, did not identify specific priorities for this group of vulnerable persons. None of the strategic outcomes included specific strategies for inclusion, other than mention that such persons would be prioritized.

1.5 To what extent has the strategic positioning of WFP remained relevant throughout the implementation of the CSP considering changing context, national capacities and needs – in particular to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Finding 5. WFP strategic positioning remained relevant over the period evaluated. Increasing frequency of shocks emphasized the continued relevance of the humanitarian and crisis response roles of the WFP. Strong national and district partnerships facilitated adaptation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and WFP advocacy and technical assistance supported scale-up of school feeding to a national programme and priority.

55. WFP strategic positioning remained relevant throughout the CSP period and required no major adjustment. WFP interventions in support of refugees, social protection (including school feeding), and food and nutrition systems continued to be coherent and relevant with government priorities. The strategic positioning corresponded to the CSP ambitions of working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, and of enhancing an enabling country capacity strengthening role for WFP.

56. The increasing frequency of climate shocks and continued refugee influxes from neighbouring countries highlighted the continued importance of the dual mandate of WFP. Unforeseen shocks included the COVID-19 pandemic (2019), a volcano eruption in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2021), Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2022), various refugee movements into Rwanda (2022/2023), and floods and landslides (2023). The response to these sudden onset events was managed centrally by the Government, with WFP providing technical and operational support upon government request. It underscores that the strategic shift under the CSP to a stronger enabling role in practice needed to be balanced with continued engagement in humanitarian and crisis response, as appropriate.

57. During COVID-19 and in spite of one of the strictest lockdowns globally, the CSP strategic positioning continued to be relevant, with adjustments made to allow for the continuation of work by WFP in direct delivery and in the enabling sphere. Close coordination of WFP with district authorities and with refugee camp authorities played a major role in maintaining access to beneficiaries in need. Adjustments during COVID-19 also included changes in ways of working, for example by conducting post-distribution monitoring (PDM) remotely and including a specific module to better understand the impact of the lockdown on refugees.⁷¹ In the MGD school feeding programme, adjustments were made to promote community literacy and provide take-home rations (THR) while schools were closed.⁷² Activities shifted and funds were reallocated to building stronger organizational capacity, through infrastructure development for

⁶⁹ WFP RWANDA: Concept Note for Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023) Strategic-Programme Review Process (S-PRP).

⁷⁰ WFP Rwanda ACR 2022, p. 12.

⁷¹ WFP Rwanda Annual Country Report 2020 Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023).

⁷² Two rounds of alternative take-home rations were provided in four districts reaching 78,410 children in June and 46,541 in November as a safety net to help reduce the effects of COVID-19 on the children's nutrition and food security (ACR, 2020).

school meal delivery (kitchens, water points), and by remote country capacity strengthening through the cascading of guidelines to school managers during pandemic restrictions, both of which were government priorities for the imminent launch of the national school feeding programme (NSFP).⁷³

58. WFP positioning also remained relevant with the sudden and unexpected government decision in 2021 to launch a universal school feeding programme as one of the ten top priority government programmes. The decision built on WFP work in developing an acknowledged proof-of-concept on school feeding that was scalable. The sudden nature of the decision nonetheless required WFP to make major adjustments to the type and scope of support it offered to the Government and to secure funding for essential capacity strengthening; studies (for example, on procurement) and the technical assistance that the Government needed. Further details of the country capacity strengthening work during the CSP are discussed in Annex 11.

EQ2: WHAT IS THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF WFP'S SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES IN RWANDA?

2.1 To what extent did WFP activities and outputs contribute to the expected outcomes of the CSP and to the UNSDCF? Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative?

59. The next sections of this report provide an overview of progress against outcomes under each of the CSP strategic outcomes. Table 4 below provides an overview of output and outcome performance for the CSP. Under this evaluation question the evaluation team considered performance against each strategic outcome in turn.

Table 4 CSP performance summary, 2022 progress to end of CSP target

Strategic Outcome	Output progress	Outcome progress
Strategic Outcome 01	Significant progress	Limited progress
Strategic Outcome 02	Some progress	Significant progress
Strategic Outcome 03	Some progress	Limited progress
Strategic Outcome 04	Significant progress	Significant progress
Strategic Outcome 05	No data	No data

Key: Dark green: = progress at least 90 percent of indicator target; light green = Progress between 50 percent and 90 percent or indicator target; yellow = Progress less than 50 percent of indicator target; grey = no data

Source: Evaluation team assessment of indicators reported in the annual country report (ACR) 2022.

Strategic Outcome 1

Finding 6. WFP reached over 80 percent of vulnerable refugees and returnees in Rwanda with cash-based transfers (CBT) and targeted nutrition assistance through school feeding and supplementary food transfers. Performance in ensuring access to adequate and nutritious food at the outcome level fell short, as reflected in the drop in food consumption scores. While WFP successfully introduced refugee targeting based on vulnerability criteria, exclusion errors were still seen due to the lack of socioeconomic data. The CSP-envisioned contribution to refugee graduation and self-reliance did not

⁷³ WFP Rwanda, 2021. WFP USDA McGovern-Dole International food for education and child nutrition programme's support in Rwanda (2016-2021): decentralized evaluation report.

materialize. Achievement of results under this outcome was particularly affected by significant funding constraints and external shocks.

60. SO1 focused on ensuring that refugees and returnees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi had access to adequate and nutritious food at all times. It included six outputs:

- provision of **unconditional food and cash transfers** (Output 1.1);
- **targeted nutrition** and supplementary feeding (Outputs 1.2 through to 1.4);
- provision of **nutritious school meals** to refugee and host communities (Output 1.5); and
- establishment of an **enabling environment** for refugee self-reliance and integration (Output 1.6).

61. BR1 in 2019, introduced Activity 1.7, which expanded beneficiaries to Rwandan Tier 1 populations affected by shocks, and Activity 1.8 to allow for WFP delivery of services to government and humanitarian agencies in response to shocks.

62. **WFP successfully reached a majority of all refugees and returnees in Rwanda with cash-based transfers**, although beneficiary coverage decreased over the period from 91 percent of the target in 2019 to 85 percent in 2022.⁷⁴ Planned beneficiary numbers dropped over time, reflecting changes in refugee movements, including the voluntary repatriation of 35,000 refugees from Burundi.

63. **CSP assistance did not fully meet the nutrient gap for refugee households.** At the time of the evaluation the percentage of households with an acceptable food consumption score remained substantially below target at 62.2 in 2022 against at target of 67.6 (64 against 73.8 for females and 59.3 against 62.4 for males). Access to cash-based transfers and school feeding provided a buffer against shocks with a slight improvement in the percentage of refugees not using livelihood and crisis coping strategies, compared to baseline (see Annex 14).

64. **CSP outcome targets on malnutrition for women and children were not met.** Key malnutrition indicators for women and children remained significantly behind target.⁷⁵ At the time of the evaluation, the acceptable food consumption scores, the minimum dietary diversity of women, minimum acceptable diet for children aged 6-23 months and adoption of an iron-rich diet were all behind target (Annex 14).

65. **Resource constraints significantly curtailed WFP refugee activities.** Resource shortfalls (see sub-EQ 4.1) meant that, while in 2019-2020 beneficiaries received just over two thirds of the estimated cash-based transfer requirement, reflecting available resources (70 percent), in 2021 this dropped to 43 percent, and in 2022 to just 54 percent (Category 1) and 23 percent (Category 2).⁷⁶ When examined against outcome indicators (Annex 14) the halving of cash support in 2021 appears to have had a direct knock-on effect in reducing performance against food and nutrition security outcome indicators in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded this, as refugees could not leave the camps to find alternative sources of income. While WFP reassessed and revised the transfer value for cash-based transfers in 2022 to buffer the effect of increases in food and energy prices, the actual transfer value remained significantly below estimated requirements.

66. **The CSP period saw the successful transition from food distribution to cash-based transfers.** Cash-based transfers have been progressively extended to all refugee beneficiaries, with food distribution reduced (see Figure 13). The cash-based transfer approach has contributed to increased beneficiary autonomy, promoted the financial inclusion of refugees, improved efficiency and contributed to the local economy⁷⁷ through enhanced cash flow for local businesses.⁷⁸ At the time of the evaluation cash-based transfer systems were fully functional and rolled out in all camps with minimal challenges persisting. The complaints feedback mechanism (CFM) captured issues related to the transition, most of which were addressed. Some delays in the issuing of bank cards remained at the time of this evaluation.

⁷⁴ COMET CM-R002b 25.05.2023.

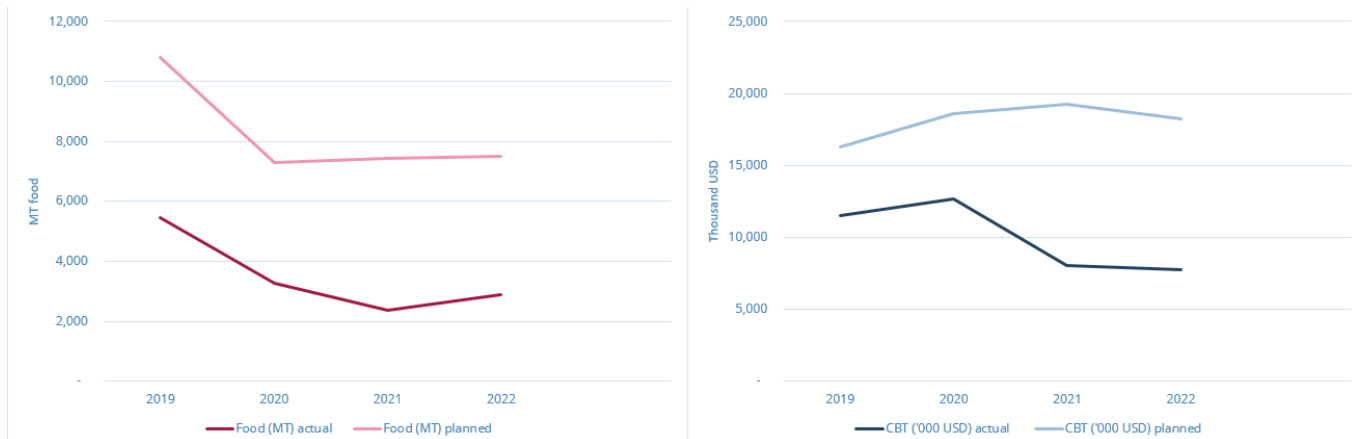
⁷⁵ ACR 2022.

⁷⁶ WFP Rwanda ACR 2022.

⁷⁷ Refugee camp FGD with DRC and Burundi refugees.

⁷⁸ MTR, 2022.

Figure 13 SO1: Planned and actual in kind and cash-based transfers (2019-2023)



Source: COMET Annual_Distribution_(CSP)-_v1.4_2019_25.05.2023.

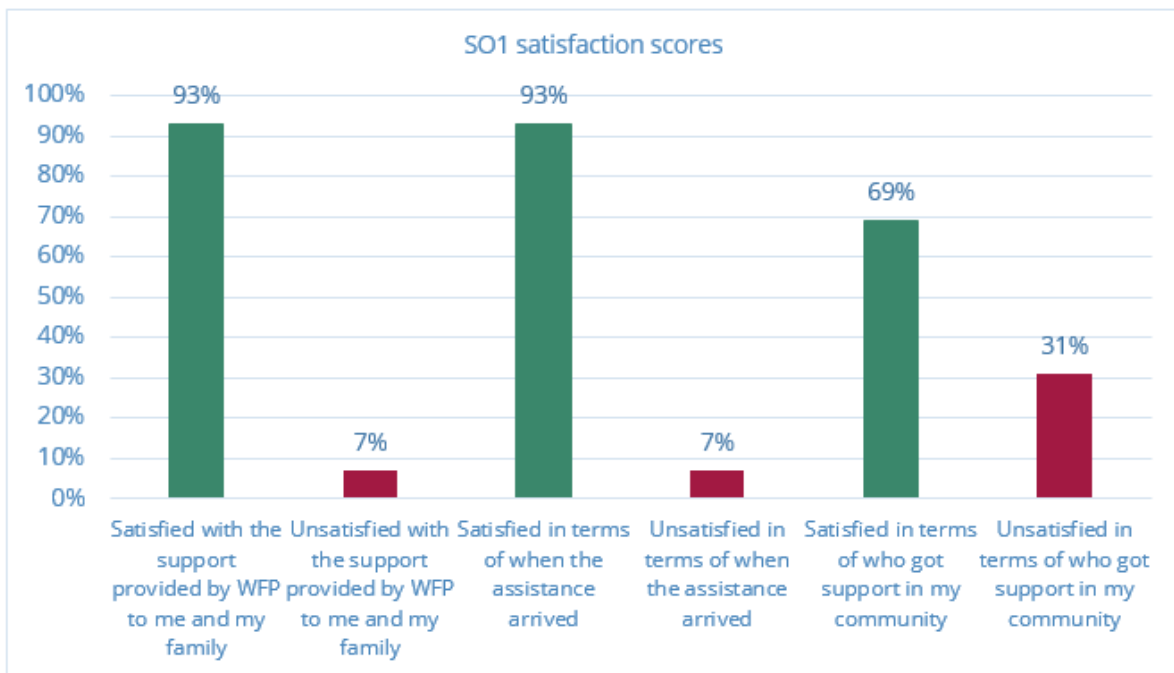
67. Targeting of the most vulnerable refugees within the refugee community represented a significant innovation, but with challenges of inclusion and exclusion. Aligning with government priorities for reducing dependency and in light of resource insufficiencies, WFP and UNHCR moved away from blanket support to all refugees and introduced refugee targeting in 2021. Targeting was to be based on combined socioeconomic, demographic and protection criteria. Lack of socioeconomic data⁷⁹ appears to be the main explanatory factor for the exclusion and inclusion errors that occurred. WFP has been working on correcting exclusion errors, which has resulted in a substantial number of erroneously excluded beneficiaries being re-included as eligible for transfers. Inclusion errors had not been solved at the time of the evaluation although a list of 18,000 refugees who were not eligible for transfers had been drawn up. After the adoption of targeting, WFP support still covers 94 percent of refugees, with 88 percent of camp residents classified as highly vulnerable receiving full cash-based transfer and 6 percent classified as moderately vulnerable receiving half of the cash-based transfer.⁸⁰ This suggests there have been only limited cost savings from the introduction of targeting. Responses to the evaluation mobile vulnerability analysis and monitoring (mVAM) survey highlight challenges with the targeting. While 93 percent of the beneficiaries were satisfied with the support and its timeliness, only two thirds (69 percent) were satisfied with who received support (see Figure 14 and Annex 2).⁸¹

⁷⁹ In implementation, socioeconomic indicators could not be used due to limitations of the UNHCR refugee data base.

⁸⁰ Refugee camp FGD with DRC and Burundi refugees, analysis of CFM data, MTR, 2022 and ACR 2022.

⁸¹ Source: mVAM survey.

Figure 14 Beneficiary satisfaction with SO1 service delivery



Source: Evaluation mVAMsurvey results (n=417) (May 2023). Note, percentage denotes the proportion of 471 people reacting positively or negatively. 'Satisfied' includes those who were 'fairly satisfied' and 'very satisfied'. 'Unsatisfied' also includes those who were 'highly unsatisfied'.

68. Access to nutrition safety nets for vulnerable refugees was assured through school feeding and supplementary feeding. WFP supported nutrition through several interventions. Provision of food and nutrition support under SO1 appropriately included safety net provisions through school feeding to refugee children, which during COVID-19 was converted to a take-home rations. With the launch of the NSFP in 2021, WFP has been supporting the integration of refugee schools into the national programme. WFP also provided supplementary food transfers to prevent malnutrition. Field visits by the evaluation team testified to the efforts and importance of the moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment in camps.

69. Various unintended outcomes are in evidence. The role of WFP in bringing the refugees together and training them to work jointly on projects has facilitated social cohesion. Provision of school meals to children from both host and refugee communities in the same schools has fostered integration.⁸² Negative unintended outcomes relate to tensions among the refugees with different origins resulting from the fact that some refugee groups receive better packages of assistance than other refugees based on their origin and type of refugee status. The evaluation team's understanding of these issues from follow-up engagement with camp managers suggests this is related to donor earmarking of support to specific categories of refugees, which underlines the detrimental effect of earmarking on humanitarian principles.⁸³ Limitations in the coverage of Equity Bank ATM services outside of camps have restricted refugee movement and Equity Bank has struggled to ensure cards can be used for any transactions outside camps, with negative effects on the financial inclusion of beneficiaries.

70. CSP ambitions around refugee self-reliance and graduation remain to be achieved. The CSP has not played the envisioned role of contributing to Rwanda's 2030 policy vision that refugees should eventually be able to live outside the camp with the support of government-led services and programmes due to lack of resources. Graduation from assistance remains challenging due to beneficiary dependency and a lack of livelihood opportunities in the Rwanda context, where access to land is very limited.

71. Country capacity strengthening and GEWE results under SO1 have been modest to date. Country capacity strengthening has focused on training for NGOs that implement WFP programmes related to WFP

⁸² As observed in site visits to Kinyinya and Akarurusha by the ET.

⁸³ It was beyond the means of this evaluation to further investigate this issue.

procedures for monitoring and reporting,⁸⁴ but it has not included the upstream country capacity strengthening role that the CSP envisioned. SO1 has focused on ensuring equal access to benefits by women and men, with gender and disability indicators included in targeting criteria. Women empowerment has been partially covered by the fact that 75 percent of beneficiary heads of household are women and through a focus on nutrition social behaviour change.

Strategic Outcome 2

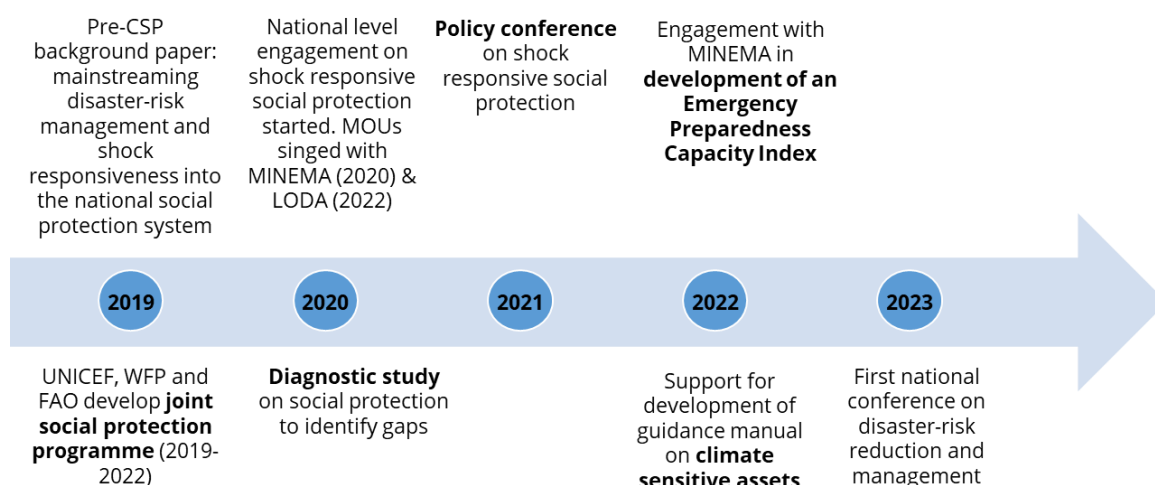
72. SO2 aims to ensure vulnerable populations in food-insecure communities and areas have improved access to adequate and nutritious food all year. It covers six interrelated outputs, including shock responsive social protection (Output 2.2), community asset building and skills to increase resilience to climate-related shocks (Output 2.3) and government and local responders' emergency preparedness and response (Output 2.4). Other components include provision of school feeding services to pre-school and primary school children (Output 2.5) and the introduction of a national nutrition-sensitive school feeding programme (Output 2.6). Output 2.1 focuses on country capacity strengthening to the Government for food and nutrition security analysis and the formulation of evidence-based policies and programmes.

Shock responsive social protection

Finding 7. WFP engagement in social protection – a new area under the CSP – contributed to partner-supported efforts to achieve stronger national social protection strategic and accountability frameworks that integrate disaster risk management functions. WFP is credited by partners in-country with having introduced the concept of shock responsive social protection.

73. WFP positioned itself as core partner, technical assistance provider and broker in integrated national shock responsive social protection, which is quite remarkable since this was a new area under the CSP. The country office's approach to social protection aligns with the WFP strategy for support to social protection⁸⁵ and focuses on making social protection shock responsive with integrated disaster risk management functions. The support includes technical assistance, other forms of capacity strengthening and direct implementation through the joint social protection programme and the WFP work of food assistance for assets (FFA). These efforts are acknowledged and appreciated by the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA), MINEDUC and MINEMA and United Nations partners particularly within the social protection working groups and the United Nations joint programme. An overview of the trajectory of WFP support to social protection in Rwanda is reflected in Figure 15.

Figure 15 Trajectory of WFP engagement in social protection in Rwanda



Source: Evaluation team's interpretation using CSP documentation.

⁸⁴ KII.

⁸⁵ WFP. 2017. WFP and Social Protection - Options for Framing WFP Assistance to National Social Protection in Country Strategic Plans – For internal Use.

74. A WFP study⁸⁶ on mainstreaming disaster risk management and shock responsiveness into the national social protection system informed WFP engagement in this area, including activities under a two-year Joint Programme on Social Protection with FAO and UNICEF financed by the SDG Fund⁸⁷ and the WFP flexible 2030 fund.

75. As part of institutional capacity strengthening, WFP signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with LODA, which WFP management interviews suggest has helped enhance government buy-in and ownership in working with WFP on social protection. Several country capacity strengthening activities were supported under this memorandum:⁸⁸

- the development of a shock responsive social protection strategy and supporting protocols;
- training on shock responsive social protection focusing on linkages between disaster management and social protection, which was delivered to LODA at central levels and to all 30 districts, reaching a total of 158 government officers;
- a guidance manual on climate-sensitive assets in VUP which has been prepared and is yet to be approved;
- the secondment of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and data expert in LODA to support COVID-19 recovery and shock responsive social protection; and
- the secondment of a specialist to LODA, who conducted training for LODA officers and collected data for a diagnostic assessment of the complaints management system in Rwanda.

76. Short-term funding for social protection has limited the ability of WFP to provide country capacity strengthening support to LODA. After WFP failed to renew the contract of the monitoring and evaluation person, LODA received support from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to continue with this work.

Disaster risk reduction management (DRRM)

Finding 8. WFP support contributed to the national disaster risk management policy update and the introduction of national preparedness plans. Approaches are working well but remain in their infancy.

77. WFP has worked through a memorandum of understanding with MINEMA⁸⁹ to update the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy.⁹⁰ WFP seconded a DRRM policy advisor to MINEMA to provide support in generating workplans, coordinating regular technical meetings and creating progress reports and technical inputs into key policy documents, including the shock responsive social protection strategy and guidelines.

78. Other notable WFP support was towards utilizing the emergency preparedness capacity index exercise focused on MINEMA priority technical areas, to further inform the DRRM strategic plan and monitoring and evaluation framework, investment cases and national preparedness plans, which will improve DRRM mechanisms at district levels. As noted by field offices (FOs), national and district level support on DRRM is working well but is in its infancy and a clear strategy is still needed to move this forward given its expected increasing level of importance.

Food assistance for assets

Finding 9. In areas of intervention, community capacity to manage climate shocks and risks improved, but envisioned household food consumption scores were not achieved. WFP support strengthened local government performance in asset creation and social and behaviour change

⁸⁶ ACR, 2019.

⁸⁷ Adaptive Social Protection in Rwanda's Emergency Management (ASPIRE) – July 2019 to June 2022 (USD 350,000).

⁸⁸ Annual Work Plan: 2022 for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between LODA and WFP. Update as of Wednesday 28th September 2022.

⁸⁹ Annual Work Plan: 2022 for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between MINEMA and WFP (2020-2023).

⁹⁰ MINEMA. 2023. National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy.

communication (SBCC), with evidence of stronger climate, nutrition and gender-sensitive approaches in community planning and local government decision making. Food assistance for assets work has produced visible improvement in productive assets and in women having a more active role in household and community decision making.

79. Food assistance for assets was introduced in one district (2012-2015), scaled up to three districts in 2016-2019 and during the CSP period implemented under the “Sustainable Market Alliance and Assets creation for Resilient Communities and Gender Transformation (SMART)” project (2020-2023) with Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) funding.⁹¹ SMART integrates food assistance for assets with longer term resilience including natural resource management, restoring agricultural potential in drought-affected areas, skills development, access to market and shock responsive social protection.⁹² SMART has also spearheaded a promising pilot on conservation agriculture (see paragraph 132). Focus group discussions with beneficiaries confirmed progress on asset building and appreciation for the programme but voiced some gaps, in particular towards the development of household assets, such as small livestock, that contribute to improved diet.

80. WFP is using experiences from the SMART programme to inform national policy dialogues on climate-sensitive social protection, particularly on the Vision 2020 Umurenge (VUP) Programme.⁹³ This has helped bring about greater attention to climate, nutrition and gender-sensitive approaches in local government decision making and local planning, particularly by using seasonal livelihood analysis (SLA) and community-based participatory planning (CBPP).

81. SMART performance has varied. Households having an acceptable food consumption score were at 56 percent in 2022 compared to 33 percent recorded at baseline. An increasing share of the participating households had the economic capacity to meet their food and non-food needs using their resources at 64 percent of households in 2022 - a slight dip from the 77 percent recorded in 2021.⁹⁴ Gender was mainstreamed in all of SMART activities.⁹⁵ Beneficiaries confirmed that through gender training, women and men were now playing complementary roles at household levels. A significant increase in households resorting to crisis or emergency coping strategies (55 percent) in 2021 relative to the 2019 baseline (41 percent) was attributed to COVID-19 impacts on livelihoods. The proportion came down to 44 percent in 2022 but was still above the baseline of 41 percent. Households with a poor food consumption score increased from 3 percent in 2021 to 10 percent in 2022 and remained below target.

⁹¹ ACR, 2019.

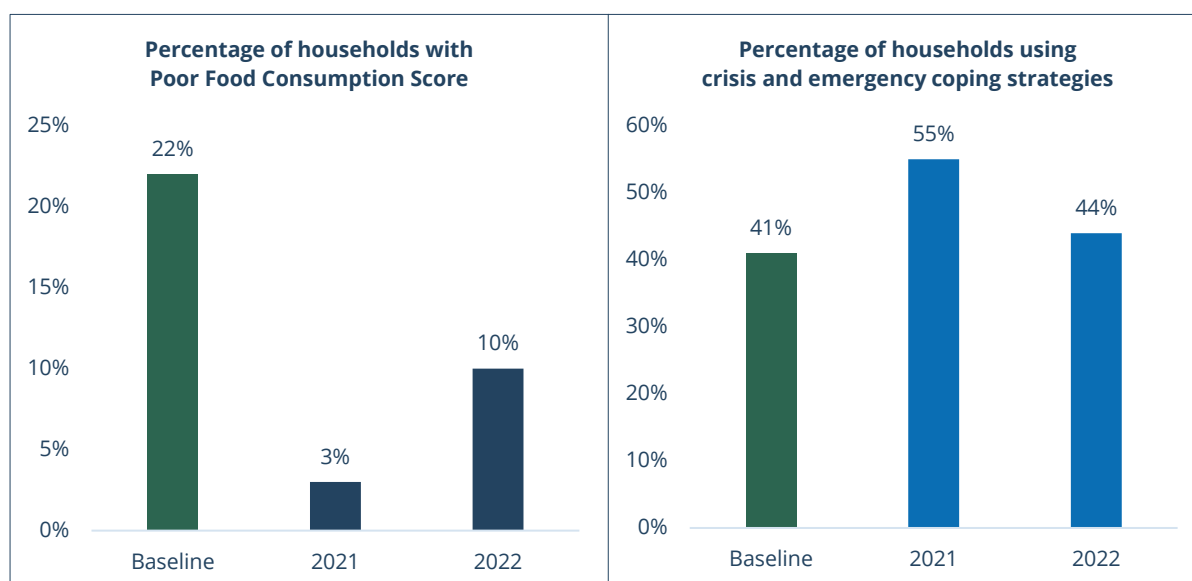
⁹² MTR, 2022.

⁹³ GoR. 2022. Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP). Kigali: LODA.

⁹⁴ WFP. 2022. Impact Evaluation of Cash-Based Transfers on Food Security and Gender Equality in Rwanda (preliminary results, not yet published).

⁹⁵ Sustainable Market Alliance and Assets creation for Resilient communities and Gender Transformation (SMART Project), Rwanda 2020–2023. Guidelines day care services – Mobile creches, July 2021.

Figure 16 SO2 outcome indicators



Source: ACRs 2021 and 2022.

82. The proportion of targeted communities where there is evidence of improved capacity to manage climate shocks and risks was 42.3, slightly above the CSP target of 40, thus demonstrating that food assistance for asset activities, including those implemented under the SMART project, have improved the capacities of communities. Engagement in the policy space supported inclusion of the concept of climate-sensitive assets as part of LODA's classic public works.

School feeding

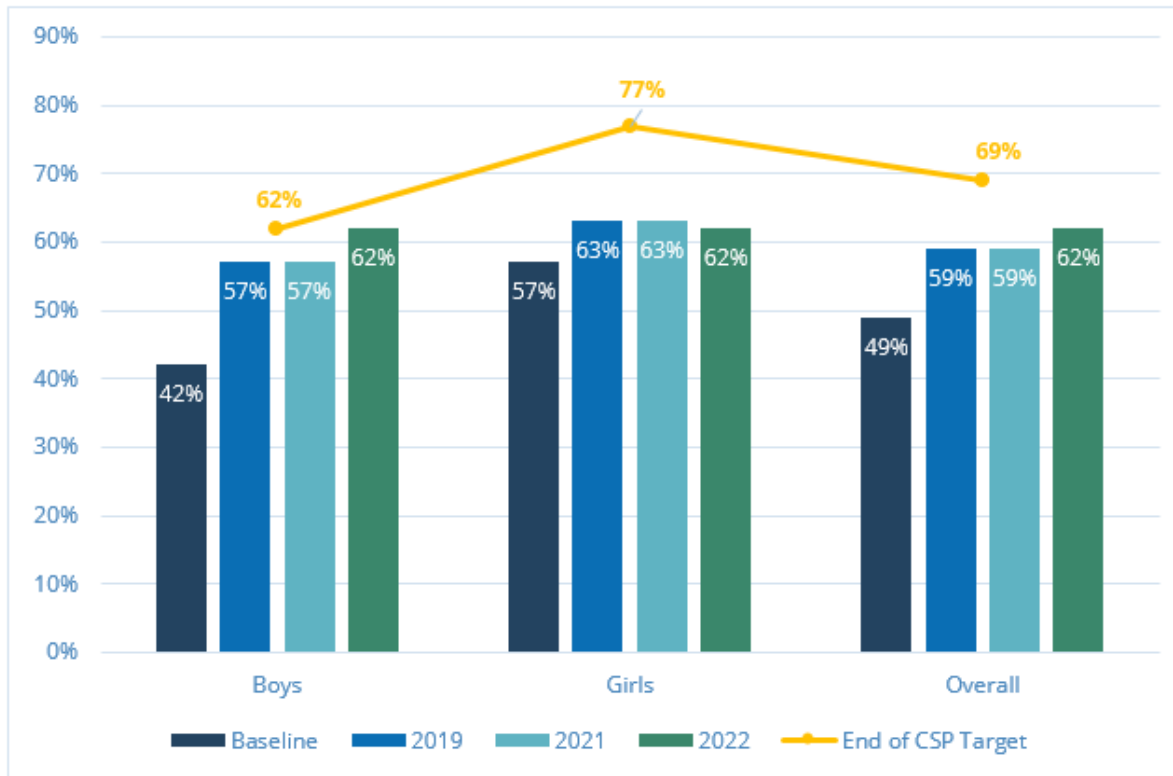
Finding 10. The demonstration by WFP of school feeding benefits spurred the government decision to scale up school feeding to a national programme in 2021, extending access to adequate and nutritious food to all school-going children in Rwanda from pre-primary through to secondary level. This has made school feeding a flagship programme for the Government and WFP and constitutes an example for the countries in the region and within the School Meals Coalition. WFP scaled up its enabling role and provided critical support to strengthened policy, strategic and accountability frameworks, together with country capacity strengthening. Outstanding challenges concern the financing model, procurement arrangements and sustainability. In parallel, WFP continued to implement its own multi-year HGSFP, targeting vulnerable districts.

83. Over the period, and in line with the CSP plans, WFP continued to provide school meals to children through the HGSFP, reaching 117,000 children in 140 schools across seven districts.⁹⁶ Performance against school feeding outcome and output indicators for the HGSFP was largely positive. An important innovation under the CSP included shifting WFP school meals from refined fortified maize meal to fortified wholegrain maize meal. The cost of the meals has remained the same but the meals have far more nutritious value. At the end of the CSP, the target for reading and understanding a grade-level text for girls and boys combined was well exceeded (62.1 percent versus 42 percent at baseline) as reflected in Figure 17. Boys were mostly outperformed by girls during the CSP, although there was parity in reading comprehension in 2022, and school meals have helped to decrease absenteeism and lateness for girls. While some HGSF activities have had a notable positive impact for girls, there are still more opportunities to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls more effectively.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ WFP Rwanda ACR 2022.

⁹⁷ WFP Rwanda, Gender Assessment Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, December 2021.

Figure 17 Percentage of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text



Source: WFP Rwanda ACRs 2019-2022.

84. Attendance rates remained high (over 90 percent) while the retention rate was at 88 percent in 2022, short of achieving the CSP target of 100 percent and being higher for girls (90 percent) than boys (86 percent). Site visits and focus group discussions strongly supported the link between school feeding and attendance.

85. With the introduction of the NSFP, WFP support necessitated an immediate shift from implementation to enabling support to the Government. Two indicators were included in WFP corporate results framework (CRF) on country capacity strengthening in school feeding, namely the number of policies supported and the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) score.⁹⁸ While the first indicator on policies was not met (Annex 6), and the SABER not conducted, the government decision in 2020 to scale up school feeding to a NFSP clearly built on a number of developments over time, namely: strong accumulated national experience with school feeding since 2002; a strong relationship with WFP; the demonstration by WFP of school feeding as a proof of concept through programmes implemented in Rwanda and beyond; and the evidence base linking school feeding to social and economic development (Annex 11). Over the CSP period, WFP supported the launch of the NFSP and since then the programme has reached national coverage, ensuring nutritious and diverse meals for about 4 million children in government or government-supported pre-primary, primary and secondary schools on every single day of school. In the region Rwanda is a poster child of the School Meals Coalition and the country is garnering a lot of international attention for bold investment in the NFSP.

86. WFP provided important technical support to strengthening the legal and policy framework for the NSFP, including establishment of the school feeding policy in 2021,⁹⁹ the School Feeding Financing

⁹⁸ The SABER indicator assesses the degree of national system readiness for school meal programme management; however, it has not been measured since baseline when the capacity was determined to be at level 3 – “Established, some policy development”.

⁹⁹ GoR. 2019. National Comprehensive School Feeding Policy.

Strategy,¹⁰⁰ and the National School Feeding Strategy (2023-2032).¹⁰¹ A case study of WFP support to school feeding is provided in Annex 11 and provides full details. WFP played a key role in establishing a school feeding unit in MINEDUC and in garnering engagement of partners through support for the national school feeding technical working group. Apart from the training of trainers (ToT), a total of 15 HGSF secondments were also made possible by the MGD in MINEDUC, MINAGRI, NCDA, and the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), in seven districts (the latter as school feeding coordinators). In the near future, secondments will also include two specialist trainers in food safety who will focus on quality food procurements and the development of school menus.

87. Rapid expansion, and the significant financial commitment required from national resources, are posing challenges. Procurement of food commodities for school feeding has been challenged not only by rising food costs, but also insufficient or delayed parental contribution,¹⁰² limited procurement capacity among school feeding committees and school tender committees, and minimal linkages between schools and cooperatives (with the large majority of cooperatives not aware of the school market and only 37 percent of schools having contracts with either farmers, or farmer cooperatives).¹⁰³ The use of firewood for cooking remains challenging from an environmental perspective. A fuel efficiency study commissioned by the country office in 2022, determined how school menus might be designed to use ingredients that use less energy to prepare, and to pilot different stove types.¹⁰⁴ At the time of the evaluation, WFP was working with the Government to address these challenges. As a result, in a recent mission (April 2023) by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Government made a strong call for additional funding and for a more phased transition to full government handover and implementation of school feeding.

Vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM)

Finding 11. VAM generated valuable evidence and has provided technical support to government ministries. CSP reporting does not capture the work that VAM has done in country capacity strengthening and evidence generation. VAM involvement in SO4 monitoring has been very limited.

88. Overall, VAM has produced substantial evidence through assessments, studies, research etc. and supported MINAGRA, LODA and other government ministries. This includes market assessments and the CFSVA, which are valued by partners, although with limitations in the CFSVA use towards SDG reporting on prevalence of food insecurity indicators¹⁰⁵ and challenges in the dissemination of CFSVA findings at district levels because of the political sensitivity around food security. VAM also plays an important technical support function to government counterpart institutions on data. However, the WFP monitoring and reporting system does not capture VAM support to building technical capacity and conducting studies, constituting a missed opportunity to record progress in an important domain of the CSP.

89. Internally, in support of better mainstreaming of evidence in WFP work, VAM has introduced “data parties”, where evidence is shared and discussed. The draft VAM strategy proposes a real-time data collection service using its mobile VAM (mVAM) technology (also used by this evaluation for data collection), and the introduction of remote sensing and geospatial analysis to support the planning and monitoring of asset-building programmes and emergency preparedness and response efforts.

Strategic Outcome 3

Finding 12. SO3 contributed to nutrition surveillance systems through the government adoption of the WFP-supported “child scorecard” for the surveillance of children at risk of malnutrition. WFP successfully mainstreamed nutrition social and behaviour change communication in SO1, SO2 and SO4 interventions, supporting nutrition knowledge and diversification of diets of priority populations. Combined, SO3, SO4 and WFP supply chain support strengthened the Government’s capacity to process and supply fortified blended maize. Progress against planned CSP nutrition outputs and

¹⁰⁰ Government of Rwanda. 2023. National School Feeding Programme Financing Strategy. April 2023.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem.

¹⁰² The NSFP required a 60 percent contribution from parents against 40 percent from the GoR.

¹⁰³ WFP. 2022. The national school feeding programme in Rwanda: a case study.

¹⁰⁴ Loughborough University, WFP and MINEDU, 2022. Fuel-Efficient Menu Study,

¹⁰⁵ This requires reporting on indicator 2.1.2 - prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES).

outcomes under SO3 remained modest overall, with the scope and scale of engagement – including in the envisioned country capacity strengthening role by WFP in nutrition – constrained by funding and staffing challenges.

90. SO3 consists of a single activity focusing on improved access to nutritious foods and services for children under 5, adolescents, and pregnant and nursing women and girls (PNW/Gs). The main modality of engagement for SO3 has been capacity strengthening of government partners. Key areas of engagement have included coordination to reduce stunting, strengthening nutrition surveillance of vulnerable groups, nutrition services for people living with HIV and TB (PLHIV-TB), and mainstreaming nutrition SBCC across all WFP programmes.

91. National nutrition surveillance systems were strengthened through the “child scorecard” initiative under SO3. A “stunting-free village” model was introduced by WFP at the start of the CSP, drawing on the experience of the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)-funded Joint Programme for Nutrition, which preceded the CSP period and has been scaled up by the Government with funding from donors. The child scorecard allows community health-care workers to track 22 nutrition-related indicators. The evaluation team visit to a stunting-free village testified to the child scorecard being used by village health-care workers in combination with growth monitoring. Meetings with district officials highlighted the utility of the tool in promoting a holistic view of nutrition drivers and identifying child and family cases in need of attention. The Government has used the aggregated data to target resources to specific districts. However, WFP efforts to produce a digital tool to bring the different scorecard indicators together (which requires aggregation across different ministries and platforms) faced challenges, as it was technically challenging to work across different data systems, and this activity did not receive further support from WFP beyond a trial phase despite being perceived as useful by government technical counterparts.

92. The successful mainstreaming of nutrition across the CSP has been a major achievement over the CSP period. Mainstreaming across strategic outcomes has allowed WFP to successfully pursue nutrition objectives, and to contribute to nutrition integration, despite serious funding challenges.¹⁰⁶ The mid-term review nutrition mapping illustrates this achievement and highlights how nutrition has been mainstreamed (see Figure 18).

93. Through joint SO3 and SO4 engagement, fortified maize blend was adopted by the Government and taken to scale. WFP provided technical support on nutrition to the Government and the private sector. A major achievement includes the strengthening of national processing and the supply of fortified blended foods by Rwanda’s private sector company, AIF, to nationally approved standards (Output 3.1). This engagement has seen cross-cutting linkages with the SO4 smallholder programme and the Rwanda country office supply chain unit (SO5). As a result of these efforts, fortified maize blend was adopted and expanded by the Government in the NSFP for some schools in the 2022/2023 academic year. SO3 and SO1 have also worked together on nutrition in the refugee context, with SO3 providing support to moderate to severe acute malnutrition (MAM/SAM) treatment in refugees. In addition, SO3 has supported nutrition evidence generation in the refugee context (for example, the conduct of a standardized expanded nutrition survey (SENS)).

94. Nutrition SBCC activities were mainstreamed across different strategic outcomes, although funding limitations have constrained the scale of mainstreaming and the effects on nutrition indicators have not been measured. SBCC has focused on the training of nutrition health-care workers and stakeholders in refugee camps, the sensitization of communities, adolescents and youth and HIV prevention, stigma and discrimination. Field visits by the evaluation team highlighted that messaging has been consistently integrated into existing activities such as nutrition campaigns, cooking demonstrations and community debates. Nutrition SBCC was effectively combined with other CSP interventions such as hygiene and gender, savings groups and terracing, reflecting joint work of SO3 and SO2. Beneficiary interviews highlighted the importance of the complementarity between nutrition, livelihood and gender activities. However, funding constraint has meant that SBCC support has been short term and effects at the outcome level have not been measured. Field-level cooperating partners and beneficiaries expressed concerns about limited continuity and about the need for scaling to achieve durable changes in nutrition indicators.

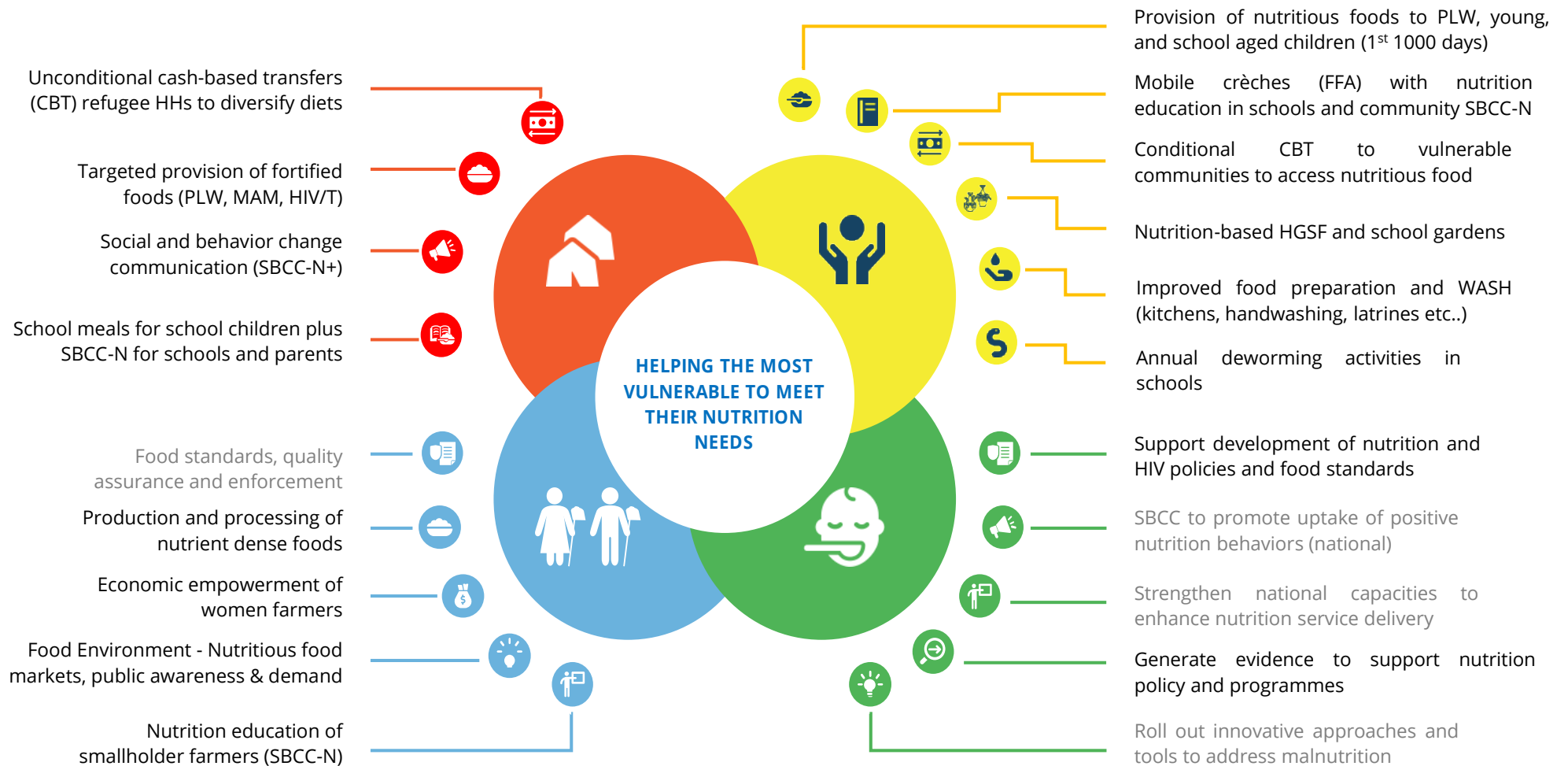
¹⁰⁶ MTR 2022.

95. WFP has provided technical expertise and studies on nutrition monitoring and reporting through joint work between strategic outcomes, which have been used and appreciated by partners. WFP technical expertise in nutrition was mentioned by national partners as an asset, including in the context of United Nations joint programmes (for example, JPRWEE, and the Joint Programme on Nutrition). Partners highlighted the utility of specific nutrition knowledge products, such as the WFP joint Fill the Nutrient Gap (2019) analysis of refugee populations with UNHCR, which alerted partners to the fact that adolescent girls are the group most at risk of not receiving a healthy diet and led to a revision of the national operational guidelines for school nutrition.¹⁰⁷ More broadly, partners see WFP as having a particularly valuable role in linking nutrition with food systems. However, due to staffing gaps, WFP engagement in the nutrition space has been more modest since mid-2022.

96. **Funding severely constrained ambitions for engagement in nutrition over the CSP period.** From 2019 to 2022, WFP secured just 17 percent of the needs-based plan for this strategic outcome. While limited funding led the country office to mainstream nutrition in other strategic outcomes, funding constraints nonetheless reduced the scope and strategic nature of WFP engagement. It constrained the staffing of SO3, and placed limits on what and how WFP could contribute to the nutrition space, driving WFP to relatively short-term opportunistic activities (such as printing of guidelines). In this context, some informants suggested that there is – erroneously – a perception within WFP that capacity strengthening does not require funding.

¹⁰⁷ WFP 2019 Fill the Nutrient Gap Rwanda, Refugee Summary Report. March 2019.

Figure 18 Nutrition mainstreaming across the WFP CSP portfolio



Source: WFP Board Friends of Nutrition support group, Rwanda visit, 2022, quoted in the MTR 2022.

Strategic Outcome 4

Finding 13. There is strong evidence of increased crop quality, increased sales and reduced losses linked to WFP efforts on post-harvest handling and storage (PHHS). Smallholder farmers have improved access to equipment and technical support, but enhancing their access to financial services remains challenging. WFP also played a role in coordinating food value chain actors, including both private and public buyers, contributing to increased participation of smallholder farmers in the value chain. Anticipated linkages between smallholder farmers and cooperatives remained very modest. WFP did not systematically deliver SBCC and information in support of production, purchasing and consumption of nutrient-rich foods. SO4 also did not focus on promoting more efficient supply chain and retail systems, which meant producers continued to find it challenging to get produce to markets. Several important areas of SO4 results are not captured by WFP monitoring systems.

97. SO4 seeks to ensure smallholder farmers, especially women, have increased marketable surplus and access to agricultural markets through efficient supply chains. Strategies include technical and financial services for smallholder farmers (Output 4.1) and cooperatives (Output 4.2) in food production, post-harvest management and marketing; strengthening of value chain linkages and connecting smallholder farmers to aggregators and agroprocessing companies (Output 4.3); production and retail of nutrient-dense food products to consumers (Output 4.5), and introduction of cross-cutting measures to improve the local production and consumption of nutrient-rich food (Output 4.4, linked to SO3).

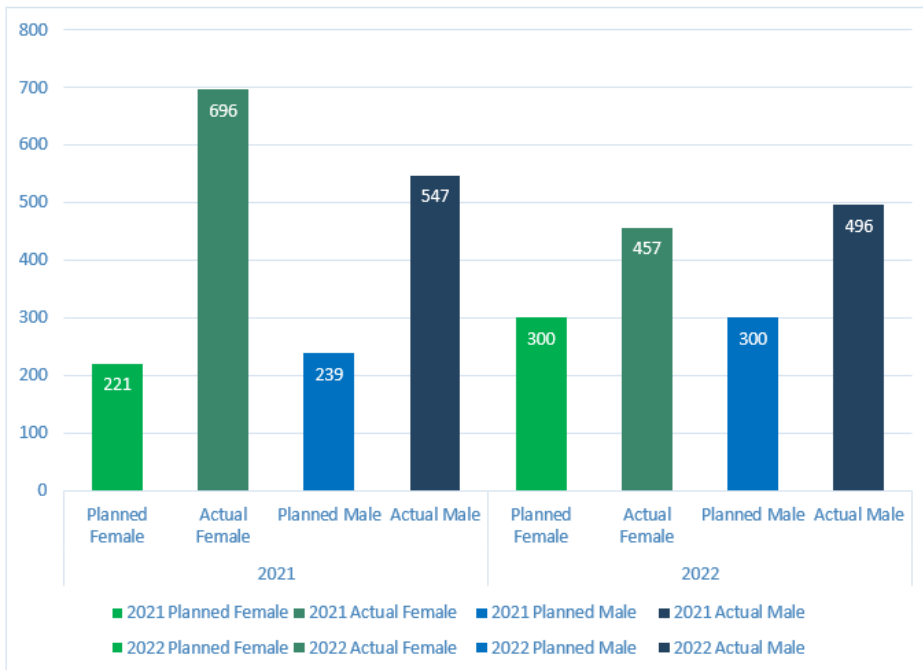
98. **WFP over-delivered in terms of planned support to smallholder farmers.** Cascade training (training of trainers), as well as establishing strategic partnerships with local partners and demonstrating the value of good agricultural practices (GAP) enhanced the reach of WFP and allowed WFP to reach more farmers. Funding shortfalls did, however, mean that direct provision of post-harvest equipment was limited to HGSF districts, with private sector linkages prioritized to give access to the equipment needed by smallholder farmers for purchase.¹⁰⁸

99. **WFP made good progress against the objective of strengthening systems components (especially within cooperatives).** The country office, through a partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), provided governance and financial management training and coaching to farmer cooperatives.¹⁰⁹ Cooperatives reported this had improved cooperative financing and management. More recently, WFP has worked on awareness of tax requirements and compliance in collaboration with the Rwanda Revenue Authority to enhance farmers' linkage to formal food markets.

¹⁰⁸ WFP Rwanda ACR 2019 & 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Prior to the pandemic, 191 cooperatives received face-to-face support (WFP Rwanda ACR 2019 and 2020).

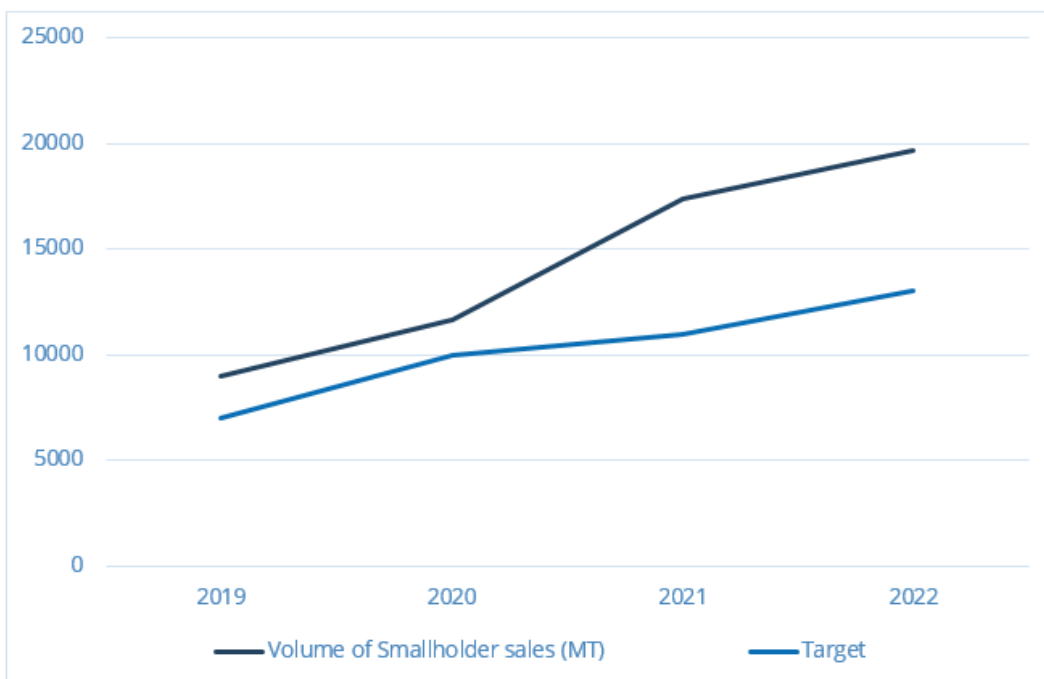
Figure 19 Planned versus actual beneficiaries in SO4 (2021–2022) – smallholder agricultural market support activities



Activity tag: Smallholder agricultural market support activities. Source: COMET CM-R020 (25.05.2023).

100. **The volume of smallholder sales through WFP-supported aggregation systems has more than tripled over the past four years** (Figure 20), from 8,957 metric tons (mt) in 2019 to 20,644 mt in 2022. The value of sales over the same period increased from USD 2.3 million in 2019 to USD 6.8 million in 2022 (Figure 21). A substantial increase in tonnage has seen partner agroprocessors source more than half of their raw materials locally.

Figure 20 Volume of smallholder sales (mt)



Source: WFP Rwanda ACRs 2019-2022.

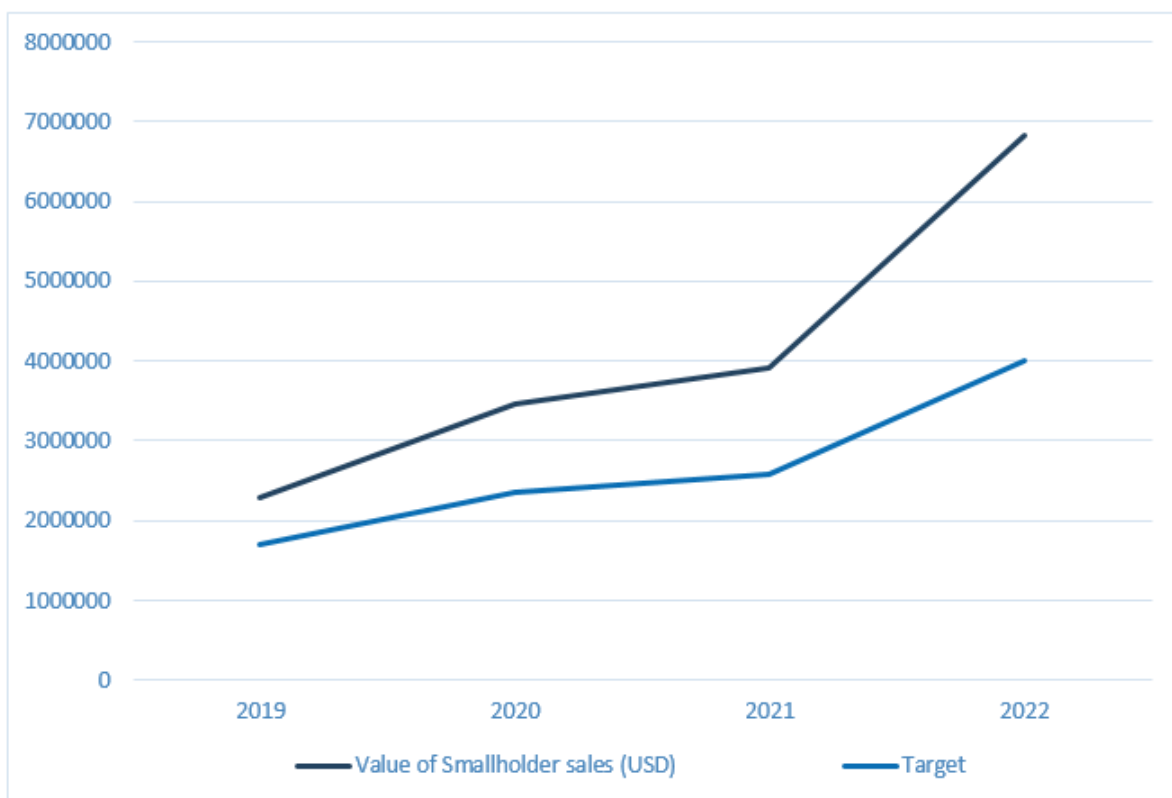
101. **Smallholder farmers in WFP-supported cooperatives received better prices for their produce.** In 2019, approximately 58,000 maize and bean smallholder farmers (50 percent women) were linked to buyers via WFP and were able to sell at 13 percent higher prices compared to the average market price.¹¹⁰ Through WFP support, smallholder farmers were able to sell 8,957 mt of maize and beans (Figure 20) at a value of USD 2.3 million (Figure 21), contributing to income generation among farmers as well as the local economy.

102. In 2020, cooperatives selling to WFP-linked buyers were able to earn an average of 27 percent higher prices for maize sold compared to sales in other markets. Supported farmers were able to sell 11,682 mt of maize and beans at a value of approximately USD 3.6 million.¹¹¹

103. Compared to sales in other markets, smallholder farmer cooperatives selling to WFP-linked buyers earned an average of 3 percent higher prices for maize sold during 2021, a significant decrease from 2020, when premiums were at 27 percent higher prices for maize sold compared to sales in other markets. Despite these challenges, supported farmers sold more than 16,000 mt of maize and beans worth USD 3.8 million.¹¹²

104. In 2022, WFP-supported farmers sold 20,644 mt of maize, beans, soya, rice and Irish potatoes at a value of approximately USD 6.8 million, providing income opportunities for smallholders in the formal market. This represents a significant increase in both tonnage and value over 2021 (17,380 mt worth USD 3.9 million).

Figure 21 Value of smallholder sales (USD)



Source: WFP Rwanda ACRs 2019-2022.

105. **Farmers are increasingly taking up opportunities to diversify their income.** In 2022, 13 WFP-supported farmer organizations upgraded their operations to multiply seeds instead of selling maize grain,

¹¹⁰ WFP Rwanda ACR 2019.

¹¹¹ WFP Rwanda ACR 2020.

¹¹² WFP Rwanda ACR 2021.

allowing farmers to earn considerable price premiums.¹¹³ Farmers have also begun to formally sell soybeans to off-takers since season 2022B.¹¹⁴ These gains increased smallholder farmer incomes, and allowed households to invest in nutritious food, school fees and social protection (health insurance, savings, retirement schemes).¹¹⁵ Focus group discussions also confirmed a strong desire among cooperatives to become agrodealers themselves, including with a focus on the production of organic fertiliser, and providing seeds better adapted to local context/environment.

106. Results in ensuring smallholder farmer access to financial services are mixed. WFP has been effective in providing governance and financial management training and coaching to cooperatives, which has allowed cooperatives to professionalize, recruit staff (for example, accountants), reduce financial mismanagement, and build up capital for investments and to finance loans to its members.¹¹⁶ Initial attempts to work with Kenya Commercial Bank on financial services to smallholder farmers were less successful, with smallholder farmers challenged to provide collateral for loans. A new approach to financial service provision is being piloted through the Innovation & Knowledge Accelerator (INKA) in conjunction with Cordaid. This project, called “SheCan”, creates digital credit platforms.¹¹⁷ The pilot has a focus on women. At the time of the evaluation, it was too early to determine the success of the pilot. In addition, there is considerable work by WFP to support farmer savings groups in several cooperatives to build their capital base to support agricultural activities.¹¹⁸

107. Food quality has seen significant improvement through engagement with farmer organizations. Smallholder farmers have increased crop quality and reduced their losses through PHHS techniques, although inputs were insufficient and certain inputs were not easily replaced.¹¹⁹ At the national level, WFP actively engaged as a founding member of the technical working group to combat aflatoxin, initiated by MINAGRI.¹²⁰ WFP conducted a training of trainers to staff of the National Strategic Grain Reserve (NSGR) from MINAGRI and of the Climate Resilient and Post-Harvest Agribusiness Support Project (PASP) from Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) on the “Blue Box” sampling tool for aflatoxins prevention and control.¹²¹ These skills helped MINAGRI staff ensure quality of commodities stored in the National Strategic Reserve. In addition, WFP has played an important role in the formulation of the “National Post-Harvest Management Strategy 2022/2023-2026/2027.”¹²² WFP also contributed to the development of national cereal specifications and guidelines, allowing Rwanda to better assure quality of cereals, and supporting efforts at exporting cereals in the region.¹²³ WFP was selected as a co-chair of the maize value chain coordination platform, along with MINAGRI and the Private Sector Federation, reflecting WFP standing in the sector, especially in post-harvest management of maize.

108. Private sector off-takers and agoprocessors reported a substantial increase in the quality of smallholder-sourced produce. MINIMEX, Rwanda’s largest maize product producer, noted that through the Farm to Market Alliance (FtMA) PHSS training, MINEMEX accessed higher quality maize from domestic farmers, with rejections down from nearly half to less than 10 percent in two years.¹²⁴ In addition, 99 percent of surveyed smallholders also reported benefiting from reduced losses and better-quality home food supplies.¹²⁵ Key informant interviews reported better forecasting of yields as a result of WFP support on post-harvest management.

¹¹³ Farmers earned more than 125 percent higher incomes per kilogramme of seed produced compared to grain sales (WFP Rwanda ACR 2022).

¹¹⁴ Season B: February to June.

¹¹⁵ KII and FGD with cooperative members by the ET.

¹¹⁶ FGD with cooperative members by the ET.

¹¹⁷ See <https://www.cordaid.org/en/countries/rwanda/>.

¹¹⁸ FGD with cooperative members by the ET.

¹¹⁹ FGD with cooperative members, with members mentioning examples of water harvesting equipment being poor quality and not being easily replaceable.

¹²⁰ WFP Rwanda ACR 2021.

¹²¹ WFP Rwanda ACR 2019.

¹²² WFP Rwanda ACR 2020.

¹²³ WFP Rwanda ACR 2021.

¹²⁴ WFP Rwanda ACR 2020.

¹²⁵ WFP Rwanda ACR 2022.

109. **Farmers are increasingly aware of the necessary steps required to control aflatoxins.** The country office has been pursuing a promising pilot¹²⁶ on addressing the challenges that aflatoxin presents to maize production in Rwanda (see Box 1). The success of the pilot could lead to increased domestic high-quality grain production, which should reduce input costs for processors and may contribute to improved profitability, lower food prices and increased exports of food products.

Box 1 AflaSight pilot

AflaSight is an innovative pilot activity for aflatoxin reduction in the maize value chain of Rwanda. The pilot uses an innovative aflatoxin reduction technology developed by a multinational plant equipment manufacturer (Bühler). The technology (LumoVision) identifies and sorts infected kernels. With little loss in maize weight, the remaining volume fulfils aflatoxin-related and market requirements. The direct users of AflaSight are agroprocessors and traders that source maize from smallholder cooperatives.

110. The country office facilitated linkages between food value chain actors, which addressed various weaknesses such as market access, access to finance and post-harvest loss. WFP worked on linking cooperatives to schools under the HGSF. However, as already noted under SO2, few cooperatives are aware of this opportunity and practical challenges remain. The country office has worked with partners to enhance cooperatives' access to markets and finance initiatives linked to SMART, among others, through a memorandum of understanding-guided arrangement with One Acre Fund, which leveraged the NGO's farmer network and strong input distribution scheme with WFP expertise in post-harvest and market access.¹²⁷ To address gaps in the value chain, the country office has provided support and resources through the Ignite Business Accelerator challenge. WFP is currently working with start-ups to develop innovative solutions in post-harvest management, organic fertilizer production and more efficient transport solutions.¹²⁸ It is too early to tell whether any of these solutions will be adopted in the future.

111. WFP did not systematically deliver SBCC in support of production, purchase and consumption of nutrient-rich foods with the exception of under the JPRWEE project, nor did it focus directly on promoting more efficient supply chain and retail systems. The country office does not report against these two expected outputs in the corporate results framework under SO4. However, the country office's work to enhance crop diversification reflects a focus on enhancing consumption of nutrient-rich foods,[§] which has also been pursued by SMART. Surveys by mVAM of smallholder farmers conducted in 2021 found that on average, 68 percent of supported farmers (70 percent women and 67 percent men) reported an increase in the production of nutritious crops (including vegetables) as a result of training received from WFP and partners.¹²⁹

112. **Annual country office reporting does not provide a full picture of SO4 work.**¹³⁰ Examples of areas where reporting under SO4 is currently not capturing whether and how results are being achieved include:

- partnerships at the local level;
- market linkages;
- climate-smart agriculture;
- crop diversification;
- financial and technological innovations, knowledge sharing and social innovation; and
- the take-up of financial services and insurance.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Innovative Pilot Evaluation: Aflatoxin Reduction in the Rwanda Maize Value Chain (February 2022), Decentralized Evaluation Report, WFP RBN.

¹²⁷ WFP Rwanda ACR 2021.

¹²⁸ Ibidem.

¹²⁹ Ibidem.

¹³⁰ Ibidem. See for instance pp. 53–54.

¹³¹ FGD.

113. Significant innovation has included the adoption of a value chains approach under the FtMA, the IGNITE food system challenge for agribusiness expansion, and an entrepreneurial approach to agricultural services and sales for youth through the new *Shora Neza* initiative.

Strategic Outcome 5

114. SO5 (when activated in response to crises) provided timely support to government requests for assistance to the Ebola and COVID-19 emergencies, and to natural disasters. The supply chain facilitated smooth movement of commodities for WFP in the region. This strategic outcome aims at ensuring that the Government and the humanitarian community is provided with supply chain services and the expertise necessary to effectively respond to emergency crises. In practice, SO5 is dormant, and can be activated in the event of a crisis or a disaster to provide efficient supply chain services.

115. WFP has appropriately retained and deployed its emergency response capacity in Rwanda to respond to several sudden-onset crises. In most emergencies over the evaluation period, the Government took the lead, with WFP appropriately and swiftly providing on-demand support to specific government requests including on Ebola contingency planning in 2020, provision of screening tents and mobile storage units (MSU) during the 2020 and 2021 COVID-19 pandemic, and in support of the response to landslides and floods in 2023. Flexibility in policies and procedures also enabled quick procurement of food for asylum seekers, for example a change from maize to rice to provide more familiar food for children, which was delivered in less than one week. The supply chain and logistics function has also played an important support function for WFP regionally, with logistics services in the event of a crisis and through prepositioned supplies in Kigali.

116. The supply chain function has moved towards technical support and capacity strengthening and worked in an integrated manner with other strategic outcomes. The WFP supply chain supported the adopting of fortification standards together with the Government in a combined effort with SO3 and SO4. The supply chain has supported capacity building of school committees in procurement and warehousing of food, and has supported private sector capacity strengthening, for example, by working with traders and food processors to build capacity to meet the Rwanda Standards Board food safety standards. Support to SO1 included conducting market functionality index assessments to understand the cost of living and see the trends and to support cash-based transfers. The supply chain supported specific activities, such as conducting a logistics capacity assessment (LCA) for Rwanda and assessing warehouse structures. WFP supported the Ministry of Health with a supply chain of fortified foods for some of the most vulnerable households (under the *Chai* project). A new logistics officer function is tasked with further facilitating supply chain integration and preparedness planning and ensuring collaboration with external partners. To enhance this capacity strengthening role, a study has been commissioned by the regional bureau in Nairobi to identify how to measure the impact of supply chain capacity strengthening.

117. **The supply chain unit has continued to provide service delivery and programme support in its traditional role.** The supply chain remains involved in its traditional function, including support to WFP country offices in the region, handling commodity movements to other countries, and handling contracts such as with private sector actors. Rwanda is a commodity movement corridor, and many of the supply chain activities in Rwanda benefit other countries in the region by making sure that the quality and quantities are correct, as well as providing support to internal programmes.¹³²

118. Supply chain integration is not yet reflected in dimensions such as budgeting, and work by the supply chain function remains only weakly visible in the WFP reporting system, constituting a missed opportunity to highlight an area where WFP has valuable expertise. The supply chain budget is allocated under direct support costs and SO5 funding is limited to USD 100,000 a year for warehouse rental to MINEMA. More broadly, programme budgets for capacity strengthening have posed a challenge, for example only USD 1,200 is allocated for government district staff training.

¹³² Data obtained from KII, while quantitative data could not be obtained despite repeated requests to substantiate results.

2.2 To what extent did WFP contribute to the achievement of cross-cutting aims?

119. This section provides evaluation findings against the cross-cutting issues of gender, disability and inclusion, accountability to affected populations, protection and humanitarian principles, as well as the environment and climate change. Findings on gender are further elaborated in a detailed case study on gender in Annex 10.

Gender, disability and inclusion

Finding 14. The CSP's ambitions to produce gender-transformative results across programmatic areas have been only partially met. Where Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology has been used, there have been notable changes, including in power relations. In spite of management attention to the gender agenda, the CSP gender ambitions have not been sufficiently supported with funds and technical capacity. CSP performance on disability inclusion has been very modest and this area has only recently started receiving attention. WFP has adhered well to humanitarian principles.

120. **Gender has been mainstreamed across the CSP.** Table 5 below provides examples of gender work under the different strategic outcomes. Annex 10 provides a full case study of the CSP approach to gender as well as examples of gender work by WFP across different strategic outcomes. For the CSP, the Rwanda country office used a combination of approaches in mainstreaming gender and equity issues including: (i) studies/assessments; (ii) training; and (iii) implementation of tools such as SBCC and the GALS approach.

Table 5 Examples of WFP efforts on gender

SO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 WFP CBT impact study on impact of CBT on gender and monitoring surveys (2019) to assess women decision making. • Gender training in all Congolese refugee camps. • Implementation of activities in all refugee camps on gender-based violence (GBV) through SBCC including debates. • Gender and protection assessment in 2018 to identify protection related issues in all six camps.
SO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming of gender in the quarterly training of cooks, administrators. • Construction of girls' menstrual rooms. • Introduction of mobile day-care platform under the Sustainable Market Alliance and Assets creation for Resilient Communities and Gender Transformation (SMART) project. • Training for teachers and other school and parent representatives about menstrual health and hygiene, in partnership with World Vision. • Gender assessment of the home-grown school feeding (HGSF) in 2021.¹³³ • Training of teachers and other school and parent representatives about menstrual health and hygiene. • Knowledge, attitudes and practices study of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in schools with sanitary rooms compared to those without.
SO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study to investigate participation of women on beans value chain. • Cooperatives received 'gender in agribusiness leadership' trainings to promote the engagement of women in farmer organizations. • Training on financial literacy and bookkeeping trainings to group members and supporting linkage with formal financial institutions.

Source: WFP Rwanda ACR for 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022.

121. **The Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JPRWEE) has produced demonstrated gender-transformative results.** JPRWEE adopted the GALS approach¹³⁴ and project achievements include evidence of women's increased confidence and self-esteem as reflected by increased

¹³³ WFP 2021. Gender Assessment of the Home Grown School Feeding Programme.

¹³⁴ GALS is a community-led household methodology that aims to give women and men control over their personal, household, community and organizational development while promoting shared planning and decision making.

participation in agricultural events and advancement into more leadership roles in agricultural cooperatives. The JPRWEE also enabled women to improve their financial outcomes and independence.¹³⁵ Based on this experience, the GALS methodology has also been rolled out in the SMART 2 project in 2021 with identical significant changes in decision making processes and social norms at the community level. WFP also prioritized gender in a range of evaluations and studies. This includes a gender analysis in assessments of the maize and bean value chains and an assessment of school feeding contributions to the empowerment of girl students, women cooks, and women involved in school-level decision making.

122. Partnerships on gender have been in the form of multi-year engagements with some NGOs (such as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA) and Good Neighbors International) or shorter contracts for specific pieces of work. WFP partners include NGOs with significant experience in gender. For example, WFP partnered with the University of Global Health Equity on a knowledge, attitudes and practices study of menstrual health management in schools with sanitary rooms compared to those without.

Table 6 Selected examples of gender partnerships under the CSP

Gender partners	Key roles played in gender mainstreaming
Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC)	Conducted training to sensitize refugees on the importance of shared household responsibilities and advocating for increased participation of women and girls in decision making structures within camps and households.
IFC	Participation in the value chain study to understand the participation of women.
World Vision	Training for teachers and other school and parent representatives about menstrual health and hygiene.
Plan International	Conducted sessions on maternal, infant, and young child nutrition.
University of Global Health Equity	Participated on a knowledge, attitudes and practices study of MHM in schools with sanitary rooms compared to those without.
ADRI/Duhamic	Roll-out of the GALS methodology under the SMART programme.

Source: Consolidated from ACRs and stakeholder interviews.

123. WFP has worked with some organizations that have gender expertise but has not worked specifically with women's organizations. A combination of limited in-house capacity by WFP for gender and weaknesses in women's organizations appears to have contributed to this.

124. Commitments on gender transformation are not currently part of WFP field-level agreements (FLA) with cooperating partners. The evaluation noted that while cooperating partners (CPs) currently commit to upholding WFP gender equality, protection and accountability to affected population standards in their contracts with WFP, field-level agreements do not include commitments to gender-transformative actions. In fact, most gender examples were found to be limited to a single bullet point in the agreement focusing on cooperating partner requirements to report gender disaggregated beneficiary numbers.¹³⁶ Given that some NGOs are significantly ahead of WFP in terms of their work on gender and equity, opportunities exist for more strongly engaging cooperating partners and academic partners in gender-transformative work across the CSP.

125. WFP management and strategic outcome leadership have prioritized gender and are perceived as advocates on gender issues, though follow-up requires increased attention. Gender oversight has been consistent as reflected in annual gender plans and commensurate reporting of gender results, and attention to gender in WFP evaluations and other studies, though follow-up has not been strong. Efforts

¹³⁵ WFP, FAO, IFAD, UN Women 2021 Decentralized Evaluation Global End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020, Final Evaluation Report, 5 May 2021.

¹³⁶ MTR, 2022; KII with cooperating partners.

have been made internally to increase the recruitment of national women staff, including through the recruitment of women interns.

126. Gender capacity and funding have fallen short of CSP needs. A WFP national gender expert accumulates three inter-related portfolios: accountability to affected populations, protection and gender. As reported to the evaluation team, the accountability to affected populations portfolio takes up the bulk of staff time. Support from the regional bureau in Nairobi has been sporadic and lacked continuity. Turnover of staff and long periods of vacancy of the gender position at the regional bureau level have affected this. The WFP country office does not have a dedicated budget line for gender although it reports on funds spent. This has constrained dedicated gender-specific work, though does not explain a lack of focused attention to gender mainstreaming across strategic outcomes and activities.¹³⁷ Mechanisms to measure the effects of gender work have been insufficient and have contributed to limited learning and visibility of successful WFP gender work. Overall, there is room for strengthening the mainstreaming of gender-transformative programming and programme implementation.

127. Disability inclusion has received only minimal attention under the CSP with some scattered efforts in evidence. There has been deliberate selection of persons with disabilities for some activities, but this has not been consistent across strategic outcomes and does not take account of the different dimensions of disabilities that need to be treated case-by-case. SO4 only recently started working with the National Agency on People with Disabilities to address challenges in terms of making tools more disability inclusive. Similar to gender, the disability agenda does not have a dedicated budget.

Accountability to affected populations and protection

Finding 15. Beneficiary feedback and complaints mechanisms have strengthened significantly under the CSP with some gaps in refugee access to communication. A majority of beneficiaries are covered and there is evidence that feedback has informed programme adjustments. WFP has also supported a strengthened government complaints feedback mechanism, with results expected to materialize subsequently.

128. WFP priorities on protection concern ensuring that the exposure of refugees to risks, such as sexual and gender-based violence, child abuse and violence, are minimized.¹³⁸

129. Beneficiary feedback improved tremendously over the evaluation period with 80 percent of project activities having had beneficiary feedback documented, analysed and integrated into programme activities compared to 63 percent at baseline. For example, beneficiary feedback on the introduction of targeting resulted in the reintegration of erroneously excluded beneficiaries.¹³⁹ Progress in beneficiary feedback was also positively perceived by WFP country office staff (see Figure 22). In terms of protection, the proportion of targeted people (refugees) having unhindered access to WFP programmes is high at 90 percent in 2022 (although still below the 100 percent at baseline). There was an improvement in the proportion of refugees that reported being informed about the programme in 2022 (49 percent) compared to 20 percent at baseline, although this fell far short of the CSP target of 95 percent.¹⁴⁰ These findings concur with mid-term review findings that WFP successfully introduced and maintained a range of complaints feedback mechanisms across the refugee and social protection programmes (see Box 2 for example). Findings also align with the results of refugee focus group discussions by this evaluation, which revealed that some challenges remain in communication with refugees, in particular insufficient clarity on strategic decisions around targeting.

Box 2 Examples of WFP complaints and feedback mechanisms

A hotline, answered by a dedicated staff member based in Kigali that anyone (affected persons and other stakeholders) can call or SMS to request information, lodge a complaint or provide feedback

¹³⁷ KII.

¹³⁸ ACR 2022.

¹³⁹ KII.

¹⁴⁰ ACR 2022.

Help desks at SMART project sites and refugee camps, allowing for feedback and complaints being delivered face-to-face

Establishment of complaints feedback mechanism committees under SMART to provide community outreach, share complaints information with WFP and provide feedback to beneficiaries on monitoring findings

A suggestion box for anonymous complaints and feedback and an email account for those with internet access. Both require a level of literacy among users

In cases where refugees report sensitive protection issues (such as gender-based violence or theft), complaints are referred through dedicated protection teams overseen by UNHCR and Plan International

Complaints feedback mechanism committees have been formed by beneficiaries/refugees and run voluntarily by themselves to receive complaints and feedback

130. Source: MTR page 24.

131. WFP has worked on strengthening government complaints and feedback systems. With funding from the European Union (EU), WFP supported LODA through a staff secondment. WFP support included designing manuals for operationalization of a complaints feedback mechanism and supporting the roll out of a complaints feedback mechanism capacity strengthening strategy. However, at the time of the evaluation, the outcome of these efforts remains dependent on LODA and MINALOC's commitment to revamping the information management system to facilitate a digital platform that will allow social workers to implement it at decentralized levels.

Humanitarian principles

132. WFP adhered to the humanitarian principles and maintained a neutral and impartial stance in responding to various emergencies. As noted, there were some challenges in targeting under SO1 but WFP managed to address these concerns and reincluded beneficiaries who had been erroneously excluded. Also, the tension noted between certain groups as generated from donor earmarking underlines the latter's detrimental effect on humanitarian principles. Dedicated complaints and feedback lines were reinforced over the CSP period. WFP was able to ensure the protection of people during the delivery of its assistance and activities.

Environment and climate change

Finding 16. WFP has enhanced attention to environment and climate change activities and has made progress in implementing its internal strategy. WFP has not measured its work in environment and climate change. The engagement of WFP on environmental issues has remained modest in view of Rwanda's climate challenge.

133. In line with the 2017 WFP environmental policy,¹⁴¹ the CSP committed to applying environmental and social safeguards for minimizing risks under all outcomes, although there are no cross-cutting indicators to measure progress. In February 2022, WFP adopted a country office Internal Strategy on Environment and Climate Change,¹⁴² which was developed within SO2 and with support from VAM, with a timeframe up to 2024. The strategy lays out six priority focus areas with clear indications of WFP commitments under each.

134. **CSP activities have included attention to climate change through direct implementation and engagement in the policy sphere.** WFP has engaged in direct implementation of asset and livelihood programmes that integrate environmental and social considerations and develop climate-resilient infrastructure, such as land terraces, marshland, small-scale irrigation systems, PHHS and market infrastructure and the rehabilitation of feeder roads. Livelihoods initiatives have also included attention to maintenance of assets through training of community members and district government staff. A pilot project on conservation agriculture with farmer field schools has focused on climate-smart farming techniques such as minimum tillage, soil cover and crop diversification.¹⁴³ The pilot generated positive

¹⁴¹ WFP, 2017. Environment Policy. February 2017.

¹⁴² WFP Rwanda, 2021, WFP Rwanda CO Internal Strategy on Environment and Climate Change 2022-2024.

¹⁴³ WFP Rwanda ACR 2022.

results for farmers who have implemented conservation agriculture, and focus group discussions found that irrigation driven by solar-powered pumps has made a noticeable difference in yields and production during drought. WFP has also begun engaging in the policy sphere and this has seen the country office lead a policy forum on climate-sensitive and shock responsive social protection and actively participates in the UN Technical Working Group on the Environment and Climate Change. It is also developing a climate-sensitive assets manual for the Government.¹⁴⁴ Weaknesses observed by the evaluation team include the facts that WFP work around climate and environmental concerns is not being measured by the country office and that climate change preparedness and building back better have only recently started receiving attention according to country office planning and activities undertaken. Country office capacity remains weak in this area, connected to staff knowledge or specialisms and with limited training.

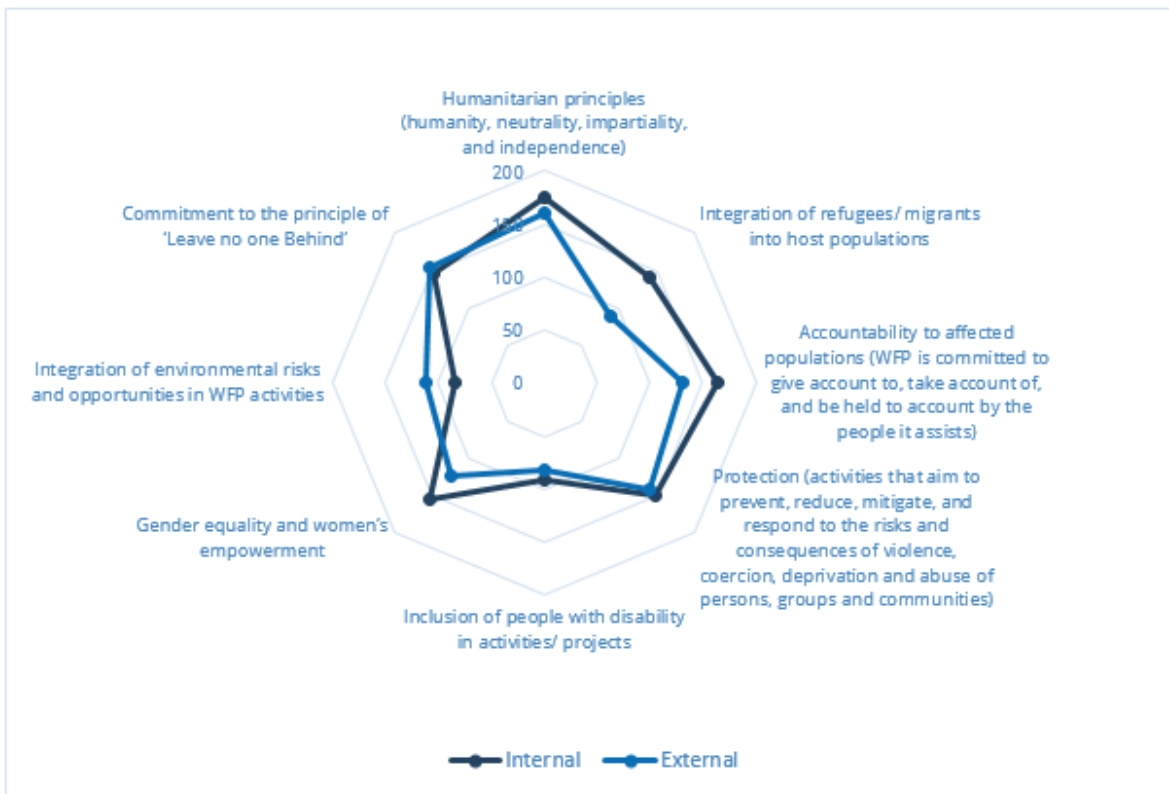
135. Overall, progress has been made on implementing the WFP internal climate and environmental strategy, which is based on positioning the country office to utilize comparative advantages and to support the Government's climate change agenda. Of the six focus areas, most progress has been made in four areas, as follows: in focus area 2 on policy advocacy, among others, by bringing a climate adaptation and mitigation lens to social protection; in focus areas 3 on innovation through the designing of a public works manual, which mitigates climate risks and prioritizes recovery after shocks, as well as through the pilot project on conservation agriculture under SO2; in focus area 4 on climate smart agriculture, among others, through WFP work on terracing and irrigation under the SMART project (SO2); and in focus area 5 in energy where work has been done on food procurement for schools (sourcing food closer to schools thus reducing environmental footprint), school meal preparation, and on fuel. Supply chain solutions (focus area 6) and WFP VAM work (focus area 1) may see fuller implementation under the next CSP and both represent important potentials given the positioning of WFP. It should also be noted that the transition to cash-based transfers under SO1, while not explicitly framed as climate sensitive, has reduced the carbon footprint associated with the large-scale movement of food. The climate and environmental work have benefited from regional bureau and headquarters support.

136. Climate challenges are increasingly evident. Over the CSP period the increasing frequency of climate shocks has been felt and underscores the critical importance of the climate agenda, a point that was also consistently raised in community interviews. Overall, and recognizing that progress has been made, interviews suggested that there is potential for a stronger role leveraging from the position that WFP has gained during this CSP, with more pronounced advocacy and strategic partnerships. It was also suggested that WFP could tap into climate funding (including from private sources), and work more systematically (and not just through pilots) with decision makers at the district level to integrate attention to climate issues (including asset maintenance) in district programming and in implementation of district plans, and support the Government in developing solutions to do training at scale. Paragraph 140 below has more details on asset maintenance.

137. WFP staff and external stakeholders' views on WFP performance on cross-cutting areas are reflected in Figure 22. Broadly, these views align with the evaluation findings presented in this section.

¹⁴⁴ MTR, 2022.

Figure 22 Staff and partners' perceptions of cross-cutting performance



Source: Evaluation staff survey results (n=71) and partner stakeholder e-survey, April-May 2023 (n=12).

2.3 To what extent are the achievements of the CSP likely to be sustainable, in particular from a financial, social, institutional and environmental perspective?

Finding 17. CSP progress on institutional sustainability has been strong and supported by the enhanced attention to country capacity strengthening. Social, financial and environmental sustainability have progressed, but not consistently. Sustainability and replicability have not been sufficiently taken into account in WFP programming.

138. The ability of the WFP CSP to enhance sustainability relies on its capacity to achieve a balance across financial, social, institutional and environmental sustainability aspects. These dimensions were reviewed by the evaluation in relation to different strategic outcomes (as shown in Table 7). All strategic outcomes incorporated attention to sustainability, but application has been uneven. Financial sustainability has been actively pursued under SO2 and SO4. Social sustainability has received more focus under SO2, SO3 and SO4. Institutional sustainability is emphasized in SO2 and SO4, while environmental sustainability is prominently addressed in SO2 and SO4.

Table 7 Assessment of sustainability

Sustainability indicators	SO1/SO5	SO2 SF	SO2 SP	SO3	SO4
Financial sustainability	Limited progress	Significant progress	Some progress	Very limited progress	Significant progress
Social sustainability / ownership	Some progress	Significant progress	Limited progress	Limited progress	Significant progress
Institutional sustainability	Some progress	Significant progress	Significant progress	Very limited progress	Significant progress
Environmental sustainability	Limited progress	Some progress	Significant progress	Limited progress	Some progress

Source: Evaluation team assessment.¹⁴⁵

139. The country office has promoted programme integration as a key measure to ensuring greater financial sustainability of its actions. Examples are: the integration of SO2 and SO4 to enhance the impact of the FtMA toolkit for food assistance for assets farmers; delivering capacity strengthening on procurement under the NSFP to address supply chain challenges that were undermining the sustainability of the NSFP; and SO2 and SO4 working to broker linkages between farmers and schools to enable greater financial sustainability of the work the country office has been doing with beneficiaries. However, challenges persist in securing funding for all strategic outcomes. One notable challenge is the expected significant reduction in funding for refugee support, which poses a substantial threat to the sustainability of these activities. At the time of the evaluation, WFP and UNHCR were developing a fundraising plan to seek to minimize the funding gap.

140. Across all strategic outcomes, WFP strongly emphasizes the empowerment of communities and individuals to assume responsibility for their own development (social sustainability).¹⁴⁶ An illustration of this is evident in the SMART activities (SO2 and SO4), which demonstrate a strong alignment with district priorities and national targets. Additionally, the cascade model and training of trainers used across different strategic outcomes have proven to be effective strategies in promoting sustainability and local ownership.

141. **There have been notable efforts by WFP to enhance institutional sustainability.**¹⁴⁷ This can be seen in the school feeding programme, where WFP collaborates extensively with multiple stakeholders, including MINEDUC, local communities, parents, teachers and school administrators, to ensure the successful provision of nutritious meals to students. This multi-stakeholder approach facilitates the pooling of resources, knowledge and expertise, thereby enhancing the prospective sustainability of school feeding programmes under SO2. In SO3 institutional sustainability has been pursued through a focus on developing nutrition surveillance systems that are part of government internal systems. Under SO4, the country office has conducted multiple initiatives targeting different aspects to promote sustainability, including the work done at the national level with regards to improving the quality of maize, for inclusion in the NSFP and at the local level through its assistance to farming cooperatives, which focuses on enhancing their long-term viability through the improvement of governance structures and strengthening management practices. By empowering cooperatives with effective management systems, WFP plays a crucial role in enabling them to operate independently and thrive beyond the initial support provided.

¹⁴⁵ Financial sustainability is defined here as having sufficient funding, or projected funding, to continue the programme beyond WFP involvement. Social sustainability is when the system and structures are in place for a community to take ownership and continue the programme beyond WFP intervention. Institutional sustainability is achieved when institutions, structures and processes have the capacity to continue to support the programming over the long term. Environmental sustainability is defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1978).

¹⁴⁶ Within the scope of WFP, social sustainability centres around fulfilling the social needs of beneficiaries. It gives priority to promoting well-being, empowerment, and inclusive environments that facilitate the flourishing of individuals and communities.

¹⁴⁷ In the context of WFP, institutional sustainability encompasses effective management, strong partnerships, stakeholder engagement and ensuring the consistent delivery of services over time.

142. **There is room for promoting environmental sustainability and climate change resilience more forcefully in the Rwanda portfolio.** WFP has adopted conservation agriculture initiatives that promote sustainable farming practices (through SMART under SO2). These practices include the enhancement of soil health, conservation of water and building resilience to climate-related challenges. This has allowed farmers to maintain productivity while mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. The pilot project in conservation agriculture with farmer field schools supports 2,000 farmers (48 percent women) to practice climate-smart farming techniques such as minimum tillage, soil cover and crop diversification.¹⁴⁸ For ownership and sustainability, three members from each cooperative have been trained on basic maintenance and repair techniques and the local authorities will continue to monitor the scheme. However, sustainability and replication may not be achieved given the high costs of the inputs. Maintenance and replacement of community assets is also an issue of significant concern to beneficiaries. Notwithstanding WFP efforts to provide training on asset maintenance, community members remained concerned about the capacity for long-term upkeep and maintenance of assets as it requires continued technical work and financial inputs.¹⁴⁹ Environmental sustainability could receive enhanced attention in other parts of the portfolio, for example, to further the efforts to reduce the use of firewood for the preparation of school meals. The use of clean and sustainable fuels, such as improved cookstoves, biogas, or solar energy, was not observed in schools visited, despite the work done by the country office in this area.

143. Due to financial uncertainty and limited funding available, pilots are not always designed with scalability and replicability in mind. Limited funding has led the country office to designing pilots that are responsive to funding opportunities. Some of these pilots operate on short timelines and the limited funding results in pilots covering few beneficiaries and therefore not being adequately tested, as well as insufficient consideration of the iterations that are needed in order for the pilot to demonstrate proof of concept of the results (in agriculture this would typically be a minimum of three agricultural seasons). Greater emphasis needs to be put on identifying elements that can be easily replicated in different contexts, ensuring that successful interventions can be expanded to reach a larger number of smallholder farmers without significant increases in costs (for example, the cascade training approach is estimated to cost roughly USD 1 per smallholder, whereas the conservation agriculture pilot is estimated to cost roughly USD 15 per smallholder).

2.4 To what extent did the CSP facilitate more strategic linkages between humanitarian action, development cooperation and, where appropriate, contributions to peace?

Finding 18. WFP has contributed to the humanitarian-development nexus through efforts at refugee integration, DRRM and social protection. The peace dimension was not explicitly mentioned in the CSP but the evaluation identified various examples of interventions supporting social cohesion and contributing to peace.

144. The CSP recognized the importance of bridging the humanitarian-development-peace-nexus and prioritized mainstreaming the nexus in its four strategic outcomes (p.1). At the level of specific activities, the CSP proposed a livelihood component for refugees to enable them to graduate off assistance, as well as working on DRRM and resilience. More broadly programme integration - with close work between strategic outcomes - was seen as a means for ensuring linkages across humanitarian and development cooperation. The inclusion of these livelihood and resilience priorities aligned with the UNDAP evaluation for Rwanda, which recommended the need for a strengthened approach to humanitarian and development programming, and in particular a focus on graduation and integration.¹⁵⁰ The CSP did not explicitly refer to contributions to peace, other than stating (p.12) that the CSP is in line with the corporate policy on the role of WFP in peacebuilding and transition settings.

145. **In implementing the CSP, WFP worked to advance graduation and integration of refugees through coordination and advocacy.** WFP has appropriately sought to advance - with partners - a “whole

¹⁴⁸ Four farmer organizations were provided with solar-powered irrigation systems as part of the JPRWEE, allowing them to cultivate high-value vegetables during the dry season for the first time. FGDs found that irrigation provided as part of SMART initiative (driven by solar powered pumps) has been effective (as have the other techniques such as improved terracing, improved agricultural/smart agricultural practices) and has made a noticeable difference in yields/production during drought.

¹⁴⁹ KII and FGD.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP) July 2018 to June 2023 for Rwanda.

society” approach to refugee response, involving all stakeholders including development actors in refugee operations, with the intention of implementing short-term humanitarian support alongside longer-term livelihood activities. WFP engaged consistently in forums for humanitarian and development coordination. In the advocacy arena, WFP has been vocal in advocating for refugee rights.¹⁵¹ WFP also collaborated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and FAO on a cross-border peacebuilding initiative targeting women and youth, although results fell short of expectations, in part due to challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and volcano eruptions.¹⁵²

146. Across its different areas of programme implementation, WFP has pursued strategies for enhancing refugee integration. However, lack of funding for the livelihood component curtailed the ambitions of the CSP in practice. Thus, the evaluation was able to establish that the HGSP has enhanced social cohesion by giving the same rights to food to all beneficiaries. Refugee and host communities working together and collaborating as members of school committees was reported to have advanced refugee integration in host communities. Similarly, marshland livelihood activities near refugee camps have resulted in the establishment of joint cooperatives, which informants suggested enhanced community and host links, helped build trust, and promoted a more symbiotic relationship.¹⁵³ WFP efforts to enable able-bodied refugees to access work opportunities outside of the camp have seen the refugee community involved in food assistance for assets projects with similar benefits for integration. However, the envisioned livelihood component could not be implemented due to lack of funding. WFP work also targets Rwandan populations that find themselves in situation of crisis. WFP work on shock responsive social protection and DRRM constitute a further important nexus bridge by seeking to prevent them from sliding into poverty and dependence.

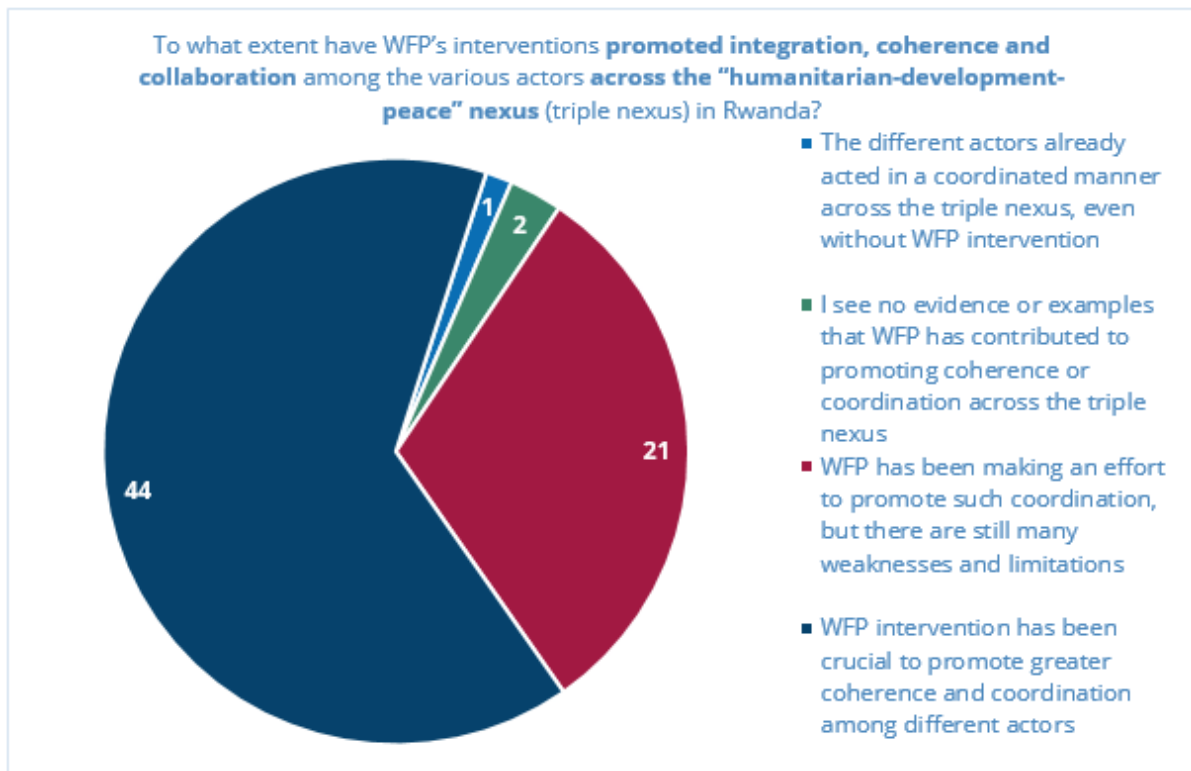
147. For partners, WFP has a clearly recognized role across the nexus. However, this has not been reflected in funding for WFP work in this area. Externally, interviewees were unanimous in stressing that WFP is one of the few agencies that fully straddles the nexus, with some informants underscoring that this contributes to an enhanced understanding of the nexus by bringing perspectives from different sides of the spectrum. The Government in particular is keen to see WFP engaging in livelihood efforts for refugees and expressed high expectations of WFP upscaling its work in this area, and in the two other important nexus areas of DRRM and social protection. WFP staff also have an overall relatively positive view of WFP work in the nexus space as illustrated by the responses to the evaluation staff survey (Figure 23).

¹⁵¹ KII.

¹⁵² DRC - Rwanda cross-border project: Creating peace dividends for women and youth through increased cross-border trade and strengthened food security, Secretary-General's Peacebuilding fund.

¹⁵³ KII and FGD.

Figure 23 WFP Staff perceptions on the triple nexus



Source: Evaluation staff survey results (n=71, 3 people did not answer this question).

EQ3: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS WFP USED ITS RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY IN CONTRIBUTING TO COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTPUTS AND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES?

3.1 1 To what extent were outputs delivered within the intended timeframe?

Finding 19. Other than during COVID-19 restrictions, or other circumstances outside WFP control, WFP has delivered outputs within the intended timeframe. An innovative cash-to-schools component and digital transfers to social protection beneficiaries are showing positive results and an effective supply chain and logistics function plays a critical role in timely commodity movement. Practical implementation of sound plans has been affected by funding challenges as well as delays in contracting of partners, affecting capacity strengthening activities and activities that require signed agreements with partners.

148. 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 the country office, the regional bureau, nor headquarters, the analysis is limited to information that was triangulated across survey evidence, documentation review, interviews and focus group discussions.

149. In the refugee response, WFP has delivered a substantial portion of its support to beneficiaries in a timely manner, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the SO1 beneficiaries,¹⁵⁴ 93 percent reported to have received assistance when it was expected. A small number of people surveyed reported issues with entitlement delays, but these were all resolved satisfactorily. The pre-CSP shift from in-kind to cash-based transfer assistance ensured timely distributions were maintained throughout the COVID-19 restrictions. The

¹⁵⁴ Evaluation mVAM survey.

introduction of SO5 has enhanced strategic positioning for immediate response in emergencies and allowed for WFP to deliver inputs in a timely manner in response to government requests¹⁵⁵ (see Annex 2).

150. Overall timeliness of SO2 inputs has been adequate, but some delays were noted under SO2 food assistance for assets work. Timeliness of WFP inputs to school feeding has been good, although with some initial delays related to COVID-19.¹⁵⁶ Overall, informants confirmed that WFP made timely shifts in its inputs (in particular country capacity strengthening) to respond to the launch of the NSFP. For some of the food assistance for assets activities, cooperating partners reported delays in transfer of funds, which impacted negatively on agricultural activities.¹⁵⁷ Payments to beneficiaries were disrupted as a result of the refusal of the financial service provider to sign the contract to deliver cash-based transfers and delayed contracting processes. This new system was further challenged during COVID-19 due to social distancing requirements, which significantly complicated cash distribution. This also created complications for cooperating partners that had to manage the risks associated with transporting large quantities of cash.¹⁵⁸

151. SO3 inputs experienced considerable delays and some disappointment was felt among partners due to funding shortages and COVID-19-related challenges. The delivery of policy and strategy development under SO3 was impacted by funding constraints with challenges in the implementation of SO3 planned activities.¹⁵⁹ COVID-19 restrictions hindered the organization of some workshops to strengthen the capacity of government staff on nutrition and supply chain. Due to the large number of participants involved and the practical, hands-on nature, it was infeasible to conduct virtually. A planned survey on the nutritional status of people living with HIV was also postponed to 2021.¹⁶⁰

152. Under SO4, outputs were delivered in a timely manner in 2021 and 2022, but funding challenges in 2019 and 2020, meant that planned outputs were not delivered in the expected timeframe. Initial challenges in delivery were overcome when WFP secured multi-year funding.¹⁶¹ This has enhanced long-term planning and enabled more coherent programming. The evaluation mVAM survey reflected the satisfaction of beneficiaries with timeliness of inputs under SO4 with only 4 percent of respondents mentioning delays. Interviews in the field suggested these delays, which affected only a small number of beneficiaries, have been predominantly related to delivery of PHHS equipment.

153. Innovative approaches are helping to improve timeliness. SO1 beneficiaries report that the transfer of payments digitally has led to them receiving payments more quickly, and that the management of the payment processes is far more efficient now that data is captured in real time as opposed to being paper-based, which in turn has led to more accurate and timely payments.

154. The country office has placed considerable emphasis on improved logistics preparedness, commodity management and quality control although some challenges remain with slow contracting processes. Rwanda is the only country office with a 100 percent record of uplifting within the requested time, and is one of the most successful of the regional country offices in terms of ensuring that commodities are distributed well before expiry date.¹⁶² The supply chain team endeavours to respond rapidly to changing needs on the ground while working within corporate requirements. With the support of the regional bureau in Nairobi, the country office has reportedly also introduced more flexible procurement systems to enable the supply chain to respond faster in the event of an emergency. The WFP Rwanda logistics team plays a very critical role in timely commodity movement along the regional corridors. However, slow contracting with partners and procurement processes have on occasion affected delivery of support to farmers and resulted in missing key windows in the agricultural season. Paragraph 188 provides details on how trusted partnerships are improving the timeliness of interventions.

155. Challenges in the context have resulted in expenditure delays. The graph in Figure 24 shows the proportion of expenditure against the implementation plan. The reasons for a shortfall in expenditure are

¹⁵⁵ KII.

¹⁵⁶ ACR, 2021.

¹⁵⁷ FGD with cooperative members and individual farmers.

¹⁵⁸ KII.

¹⁵⁹ KII.

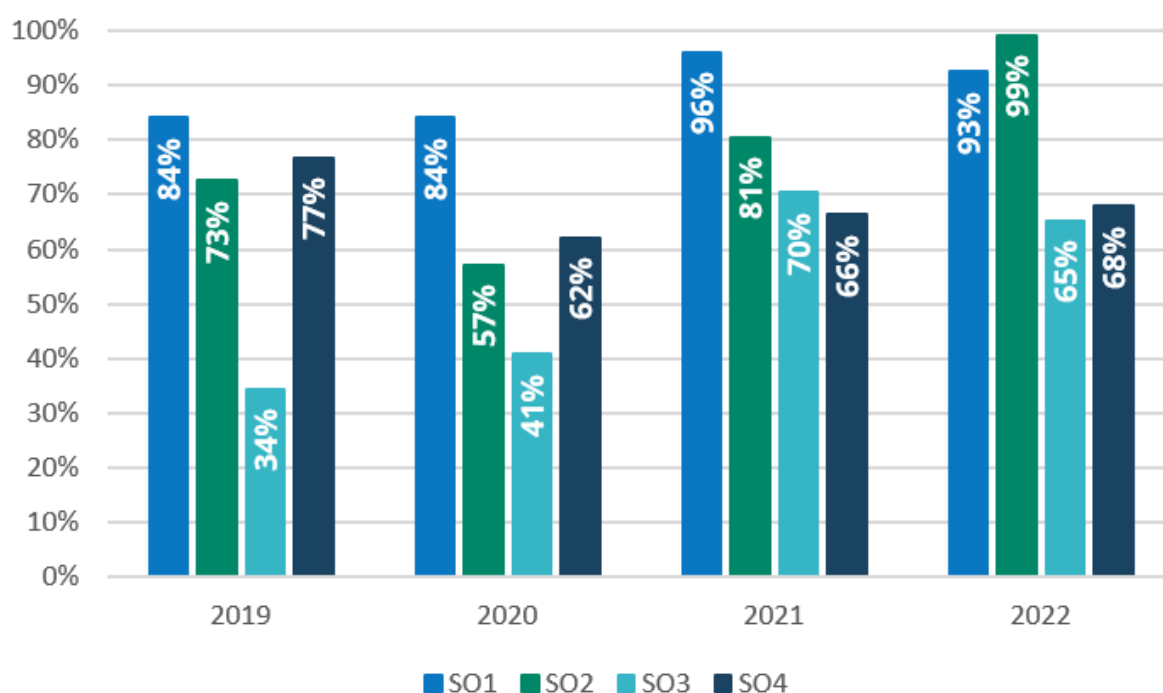
¹⁶⁰ ACR 2020.

¹⁶¹ Five-year (2022-2027) Mastercard Foundation-funded "Strengthening food systems to empower smallholder farmers and young people."

¹⁶² RBN Supply Chain Dashboard (November, 2022) reports.

multifaceted and are influenced to a large extent by circumstances beyond the country office’s control. The refugee crisis is protracted and unpredictable, and planning is primarily responsive in nature rather than proactive (for instance, while there has been repatriation of refugees back to Burundi, at the same time refugees continue to arrive from conflicts in northern Rwanda). COVID-19 also heavily impacted 2020. From 2019-2022, 63 percent of grants commenced spending within 90 days of the grant being available to spend by the country office, and 80 percent within 150 days.¹⁶³ The length of time for the remaining 20 percent includes some outliers with considerable delay. The longest delays are associated with private donor grants, and grants from other United Nations agencies. The reasons for these delays may be operational such as the impact of COVID-19, seasonality of agricultural interventions, or recruitment of staff. Though sought from the country office, no further clarification could be obtained.

Figure 24 Actual expenditure per strategic outcome as percentage of implementation plan 2019-2022



Source: CPB_Plan_vs_Actuals_Report_v2.1 (25.05.2023).

3.2 To what extent does the depth and breadth of coverage ensure that the most vulnerable to food insecurity benefit from WFP activities?

Finding 20. Targeting by WFP was consistently evidence-based. Nonetheless, some vulnerable persons have been excluded within activities and other activities have covered some beneficiaries who do not fall in the category of the most vulnerable. Gender considerations have been analysed throughout to ensure the inclusion of women although not equally across programmes. Targeting of persons with disabilities has not received visible attention. The scale of WFP work remains modest compared to the needs of vulnerable persons.

156. As noted under EQ 1.4, in its efforts at delivery, WFP mostly used appropriate targeting criteria to identify vulnerable populations. Nonetheless, some vulnerable persons have been excluded within activities due to externally set requirements for participation or targeting errors.

157. WFP portfolio implementation has included significant efforts at targeting vulnerable persons, including women. The good practice example from the JPRWEE illustrates this.

¹⁶³ CPB grant balances report 25.05.2023.

Box 3 Targeting the most vulnerable women through JPRWEE

JPRWEE, a collaborative initiative by FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women, has targeted self-reliance through a focus on sustainable incomes and economic empowerment, promoting leadership and participation; and establishing a gender-responsive policy environment. The project targeted the most vulnerable – households headed by women who were poor, women living with special needs, teen mothers and women with disabilities. Focus group discussions with beneficiaries testified to the success of the programme in bringing about durable change, with beneficiaries testifying to increased income, empowered decision making, and the capacity to invest in diversifying sources of income.

158. Source: ET data collection.

159. **Externally set conditions affected capacity to reach the most vulnerable in some cases.** In the support to cooperatives under SO4, entry-level requirements for cooperative membership, which are set by these government-supported cooperatives and include being able to provide a financial participation together with land ownership, are reported to constitute barriers to inclusion of the most vulnerable.¹⁶⁴ The country office recognizes this, and the recently started the *Shora Neza* programme under SO4 (funded by the Mastercard Foundation (MCF)) focuses on youth and young women – two groups that have challenges in accessing cooperatives. In school feeding, the requirement for parental financial contribution to school meals is similarly raising some concern as it may constitute a barrier for highly vulnerable families. No mechanism is currently in place to address this.

160. Under the CSP SO1, targeting of refugees for cash-based transfers was introduced as a cost-saving mechanism in 2020.¹⁶⁵ WFP used UNHCR datasets on refugee targeting for cash-based transfers, which were excessively narrow and did not take into account socioeconomic status. Beneficiary feedback from focus group discussions, as well as conversations with WFP staff and partners, highlighted significant inclusion and exclusion errors as well as anecdotal reports of negative coping mechanisms by excluded beneficiaries, including resorting to leaving children without care in order to pursue employment opportunities and engaging in transactional sex. These issues were acknowledged by the country office and UNHCR, with both organizations suggesting that external factors intervened that were likely to explain these phenomena, including the increase in food prices and the effects of COVID-19, which made it difficult for refugees to find alternative sources of income. At the time of reporting, and as reported by the WFP country office to the evaluation team, the exclusion errors had been addressed. Conversely, the inclusion errors that have been identified – with a large group of non-qualifying refugees receiving cash-based transfer – had yet to be solved.

161. **Targeting of persons with disabilities has not received attention.** As reported in sub-EQ2.2, this evaluation was unable to identify any examples where the country office had mainstreamed disability inclusion as part of CSP programming, monitoring, or evidence-based learning. In field work, a single example emerged of attention to disability, where, as part of food assistance for assets work, the recruitment of childminders took into consideration the importance of providing this employment opportunity to those community members who were disabled and therefore not in a position to participate in the more physical food assistance for assets work. However, it was not clear whether this initiative was attributable to WFP efforts or reflected an initiative by a cooperating partner.

162. With the move to upstream engagement under the CSP, the scale of direct WFP support to beneficiaries remains small compared to needs. WFP reaches approximately 250,000 direct beneficiaries per year, which represents 4 percent of people in Rwanda in multidimensional poverty.¹⁶⁶ The upstream work of WFP assumes country capacity strengthening will ultimately bring benefits for vulnerable populations. In this context, it is relevant to note that the majority view of external stakeholders is that, given the strong policy context in Rwanda, WFP efforts should be pitched at enabling policy implementation, rather than further strengthening policies and strategies. Stakeholder consultations suggested a focus primarily at subnational levels, including on capacity strengthening of those who are at

¹⁶⁴ Cooperative membership requires access to land and a financial contribution.

¹⁶⁵ Prior to this change, WFP support had consistently been of a blanket nature and covered all refugees in refugee camps.

¹⁶⁶ WFP Rwanda ACR 2019–2022 and UNDP Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023.

the forefront of delivery of policy promises, and promoting linkages between actors that play a key role in policy implementation in favour of the needs of vulnerable populations.

3.3 To what extent were WFP activities cost-efficient in delivery of its assistance?

Finding 21. A range of measures to improve cost efficiency was introduced under the CSP including the cascade training, strategic partnerships and the use of government platforms. WFP has not tracked or reported on cost efficiency. United Nations joint programmes have not produced the expected efficiency gains in the delivery. Duplication of monitoring effort between field office staff and cooperating partners undermines efficient implementation.

163. The available data do not suffice for a comprehensive analysis of the extent to which the country office has minimized the cost of delivering CSP inputs in Rwanda, nor does performance reporting by the country office systematically measure cost efficiency of actions by WFP. Funding challenges, exacerbated by COVID-19, spurred the country office to try to find ways to work more efficiently. These include:

- an enhanced focus on cascade training (SO2 and SO4);
- modelling of school feeding menus with associated financial modelling, including fuel-efficient menu pilot with MINEDUC (SO2);
- joint field visits, workshops and monitoring, which maximized the use of internal resources and contributed to more efficient delivery (SO1, SO2 and SO4);
- using government platforms for community action (SO3) instead of separate systems; and
- strategic partnerships and private sector linkages (SO3, SO4).

164. Initiatives such as post-harvest management are underpinned by ensuring a cost-conscious approach to securing and preserving yields prior to collection, and the work with cooperatives was primarily aimed at making them more efficient in addition to more effective (through strengthened governance and improved financial management).¹⁶⁷

165. **Duplication of monitoring efforts undermines efficient implementation.** As reported further under EQ4, there has been a duplication of monitoring the implementation of activities in the field (with both the cooperating partners and the field office conducting monitoring). This suggests efficiency savings can be made in favour of a stronger focus by field office on technical oversight, learning and partnership building with districts, with cooperating partners maintaining the practical technical and implementation role.

166. **Procurement processes within the United Nations have yet to contribute to cost-efficient delivery by WFP.** Procurement reports¹⁶⁸ prepared by the country office note that, as procurement systems and procedures vary across different United Nations agencies, this often leads to delays, exacerbated by the level of scrutiny required by each different agency. In addition, the country office notes that procuring through One UN often creates unnecessary extra workload for country office staff as each agency requires its own tender process to be followed, thus leading to duplication of effort.

3.4 To what extent were alternative, more cost-effective measures considered?

Finding 22. Cash-based transfers have been introduced and proved to be a more cost-effective measure.

167. **Under SO1 there has been an evident reduction in transaction costs through the shift from in-kind to cash-based transfers.** Table 8 provides a comparison of the value of the distribution of food versus the value of cash-based transfer distributions under SO1, which clearly illustrates that food is consistently more expensive to deliver in Rwanda than the cost of cash-based transfers.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ WFP Rwanda ACR 2019–2022.

¹⁶⁸ WFP RBN 2021 Rwanda country office procurement oversight report.

¹⁶⁹ In 2021 the difference between cost of food delivery and cost of cash disbursement was exacerbated by the unusually high costs of the implementing partner.

168. The cash-based transfer approach has improved transfer efficiencies as it links beneficiaries directly to payments, simultaneously reducing costs associated with general food distribution. This was supported by WFP building the capacity of retailers to better manage payments linked to cash-based transfers.

Table 8 SO1 Activity 1 food and cash-based transfer comparison of value and cost of implementation

Activity 1	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (5 months)	Total
Food value (USD)	2,640,206	1,900,501	1,103,960	2,100,185	1,676,032	9,420,883
Food costs (USD)	800,774	1,684,312	1,142,804	1,097,925	502,688	5,228,503
Food costs/food value (%)	30%	89%	104%	52%	30%	55%
CBT value (USD)	11,587,534	12,408,887	8,053,931	7,758,920	3,528,780	43,338,051
CBT costs (USD)	238,718	231,811	522,570	586,667	173,230	1,752,996
CBT costs/CBT value (%)	2%	2%	6%	8%	5%	4%

Source: CPB Plan vs Actual Report 25.05.2023.

169. The approach of SMART under SO2 is underpinned by cost efficiency considerations.

Conservation agricultural techniques improve water resource management, increase yields and promote climate change resilience - conservation agriculture is based on cost-effective principles (for example, mulching, irrigation and prospective terracing). A cost-benefit analysis of this approach (see box below)¹⁷⁰ in 2022 found the WFP approach to food assistance for assets had not only been cost-effective in the delivery of outputs, but that the approach had leveraged a range of benefits to the targeted communities.

Box 4 Cost-benefit analysis of food assistance for assets

A cost-benefit analysis of food assistance for assets in the Saemaul Zero Hunger Communities (SZHC) Phase II villages found that income generation increased when faced with economic or non-economic shocks, and households can resort to income smoothing mechanism using their livestock by selling them in local markets.

Every US dollar invested between 2016-2019 gives a long-term return of 3.09 US dollars in 2022, considering a timeframe of 12 years of project benefits.¹⁷¹

Source: Evaluation team review of documentation.

¹⁷⁰ Gupta, A. & Quaye, I (March 2022) "Cost Benefit Analysis of WFP's Food Assistance for Assets projects: Evidence from Rwanda and Zimbabwe."

¹⁷¹ Ibidem.

EQ4: WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT EXPLAIN WFP PERFORMANCE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT HAS MADE THE STRATEGIC SHIFT EXPECTED BY THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN?

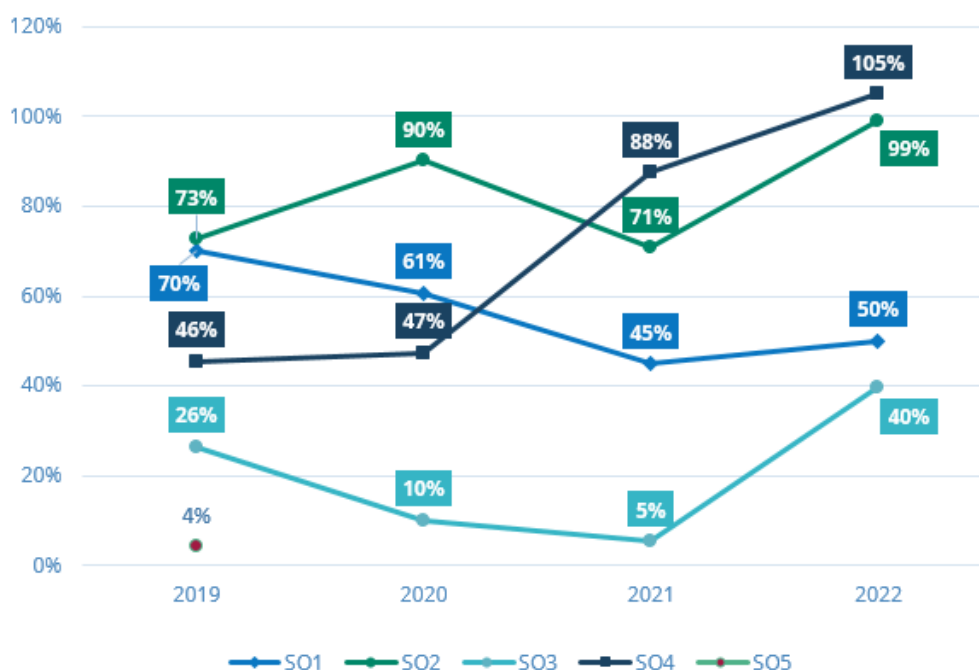
4.1 To what extent has WFP been able to mobilize adequate, timely, predictable and flexible resources to finance the CSP?

Finding 23. The country office has successfully retained its strong donor base but the lack of diversity of donors, heavy earmarking at the activity level, and challenges in securing funding – in particular for SO1 and SO3 - have affected the country office’s capacity to implement the CSP activities as planned. Insufficient internal fundraising capacity and limited flexibility have posed challenges for CSP implementation. In the context of a competitive funding environment, with donor preferences for direct funding to the Government, this presents a significant concern for the funding of the next CSP.

170. **There has been relative consistency in the donor base for many of the CSP activities in spite of efforts at fundraising by the WFP country office.** The needs-based plan was 57 percent funded in May 2023 (USD 160,098,158 million out of USD 278,285,038 million). There is a shortfall of funding against the needs-based plan across all strategic outcomes for at least part of the CSP period, ranging from a shortfall over the whole CSP of just 17 percent for SO2, to 81 percent for SO3, which is reliant on funding from other United Nations agencies (see Figure 25 below).

171. **Most current funds are not guaranteed to continue beyond the CSP,** and donors are urging WFP to diversify its funding sources and enhance efficiencies so that the same funding can extend further. Lack of alternative funding has meant that WFP has had challenges in implementing programming under some strategic outcomes.¹⁷² Under SO3, funding was just 10 percent in 2021 of the 2019 figure, reaching just 5 percent of the needs-based plan, which had already been adjusted down under BR02 (2019). This has limited planned SBCC initiatives and instead priority has been given to providing technical assistance to the Government.¹⁷³

Figure 25 Funding secured for specific strategic outcomes (programmed budget), as a percentage of current needs-based plan by year



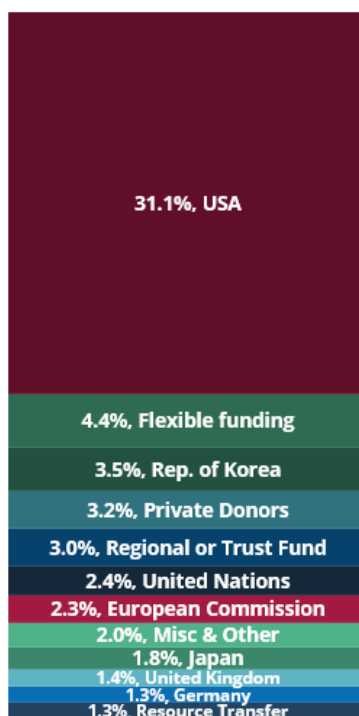
¹⁷² KII, ACRs.

¹⁷³ MTR, 2022.

Source: EV_CPB_Resource 14.06.2023. Note. Support costs and unprogrammed budget are excluded.

172. Figure 26 shows the **predominance of funding from the USA**, which provided 54 percent of all funding for the CSP (31 percent of the needs-based plan), this includes McGovern-Dole funding for school feeding and USA Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) funding for refugee support.

Figure 26 Funding sources of the CSP as of 25 May 2023 as percentage of needs-based plan



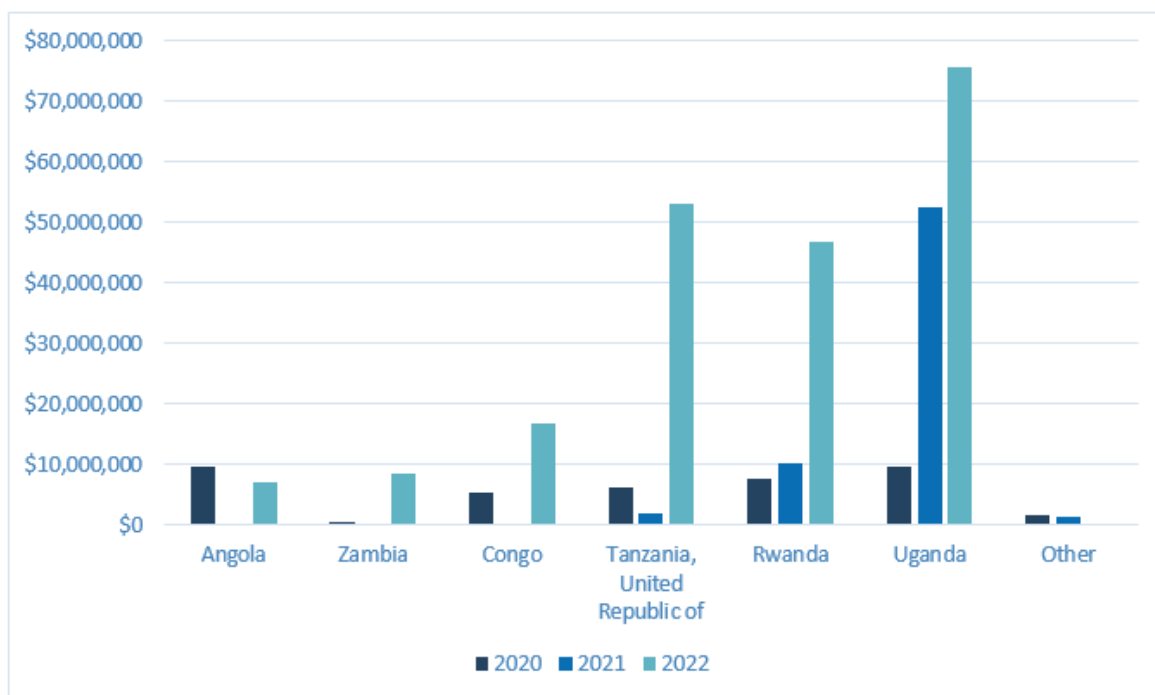
Source: FACTory CPB Resource Situation 25.05.23.

173. **Humanitarian funding has become more challenging to secure.** A significant source of humanitarian funding to Rwanda comes through the Democratic Republic of the Congo Regional Refugee Response Plan (DRCRRRP), 99.8 percent of all humanitarian aid in 2023. WFP is the largest recipient of this funding (USD 7.6m in 2023) followed by UNICEF (USD 2.8m), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (USD 1.2m) and Plan International (USD 1.1m) and this is reflected in the 37 percent of the funding used in the food security sector in 2022.¹⁷⁴ Regionally, historically only Uganda received a larger share of this fund but in 2022 Tanzania received a significant uplift in funding from this plan.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/185/summary/2023>.

¹⁷⁵ In 2023 the number of refugees from DRC were Rwanda 79,166; Uganda 522,000; Tanzania 123,106.

Figure 27 Funding received by regional countries under the Democratic Republic of the Congo Regional Refugee Response Plan



Source: UNOCHA website (Date of Extraction: 27.06.2023).

174. Refugee crises elsewhere (such as in Ethiopia and more recently Ukraine) have contributed to donor fatigue in the region and there is currently very little evidence that new donors are likely to emerge to support WFP efforts under SO1 and SO2.¹⁷⁶ There is also evidence that donors are less likely to fund other key aspects of WFP work under these strategic outcomes – for instance BHA support for school feeding is ending, with little prospect of alternative donor funding.

175. WFP was able to obtain additional funding for SO1 in 2021 to avert further ration cuts (from existing donors and USD 1.2 million from a new donor, Germany) but remains heavily reliant on BHA funding that is earmarked for food and cash to refugees.¹⁷⁷ A lack of funding provided an impetus to the introduction of targeting for refugees (strongly encouraged by the donor) and affected plans to implement the livelihoods programme under the CSP.¹⁷⁸

176. **Uneven funding under SO2 also impacted on planned activities.** CSP funding evolved from USD 5 million in 2019 to USD 12 million in 2021, in part as a result of securing significant earmarked contributions in late 2021. This allowed WFP under SO2 to increase what it had initially planned with regards to HGSP and resilience and food assistance for assets sub-activities. The country office obtained additional funding from the EU of EUR 500,000 to provide technical support to Rwanda’s COVID-19 recovery efforts as part of SO2.¹⁷⁹ SO2 has been well funded but there is a lack of funding for capacity strengthening. This has affected much of the portfolio, for example school feeding, which has constrained the support to the Government in this area.

177. **Securing funding for nutrition has posed a challenge for the country office throughout the CSP** and, while capacity strengthening within the Government does require less funding than large-scale nutrition initiatives, this has nonetheless significantly curtailed ambitions under this strategic outcome. The challenges underscore donor preferences to provide support directly to the Government, as was the case

¹⁷⁶ KII.

¹⁷⁷ WFP Rwanda ACR 2021.

¹⁷⁸ See also Finding 21

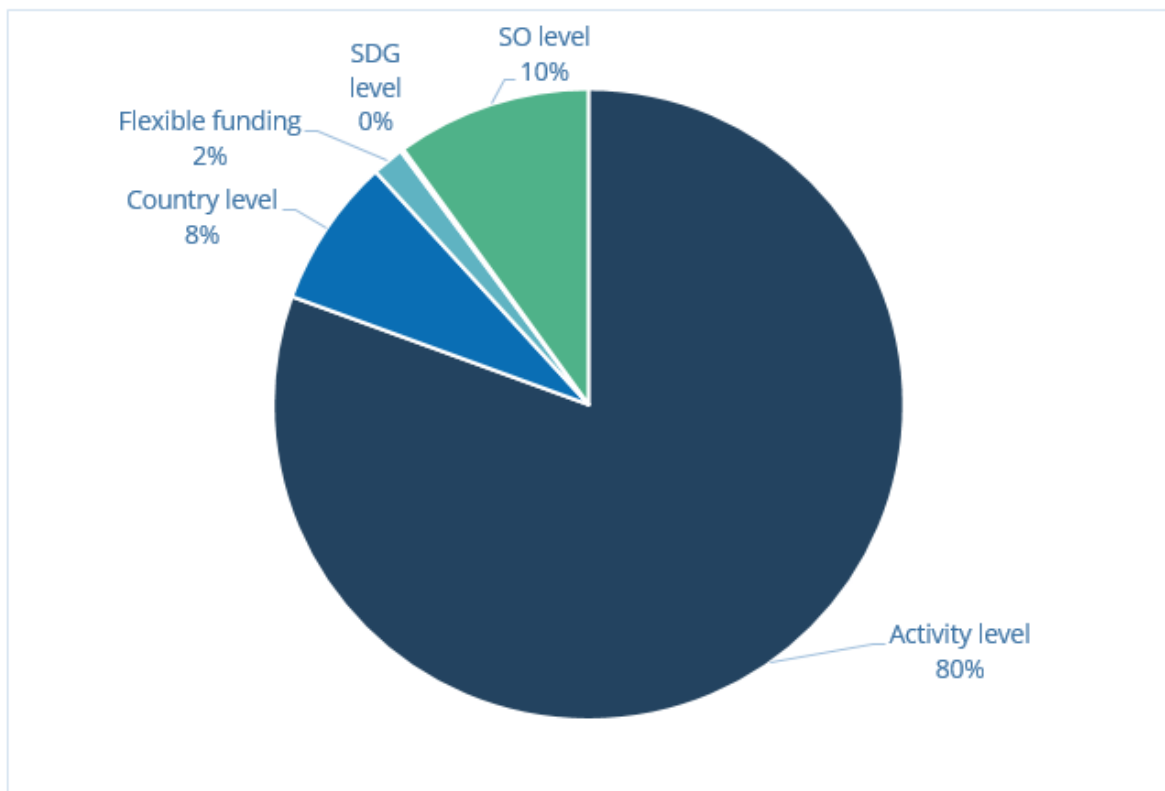
¹⁷⁹ European Commission International Partnerships.

for the scorecard initiative which – although launched by WFP – saw expansion with World Bank funding to the Government.¹⁸⁰

178. **SO4 was significantly underfunded for the first two years, with increased funding over the following two years** (see Figure 25). This saw SO4 increasing its reach and introducing new activities as well as surpassing its target in terms of beneficiaries reached. The number of government or partner staff trained increased from 147 in 2019 to 953 in 2022, for example.

179. **The CSP has not brought more flexible funding for the WFP portfolio.** Figure 28 below shows that **most funds received are earmarked at the activity level**. Examples include BHA funding for food and cash distributions, KOICA support for the SMART project, and SDC funding for the joint nutrition project.

Figure 28 CSP funding - level of earmarking (2019-2023)



Source: FACTory, Distribution Contribution and Forecast Stats 22.05.2023.

180. **The country office has endeavoured to secure funding from non-traditional and traditional donors, but in a very competitive funding environment this has had limited success**, for example, Mastercard Foundation support for food system strengthening (SO4), as well as funding from two foundations, Novo Nordisk and Rockefeller. The mid-term review notes the lack of a country office fundraising plan, and insufficient skills among strategic outcome leads for fundraising. Technical staff of adequate seniority are required to strategically network and mobilize funding, which has been a challenge, particularly for some of the strategic outcomes.

181. The WFP funding model and resource mobilization constraints pose a series of challenges that undermine the country office's ability to deliver outputs within the intended time frame. The staff e-survey notes that the biggest challenge to implementation of the CSP is "funding flexibility in financial resource allocation" and "flexibility (rules, requirements) to build/establish partnerships", with 74 percent and 69 percent of responses, respectively.

¹⁸⁰ Stunting Prevention and Reduction Project for Rwanda, USD 55m to MINECOFIN/RBC. See <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P164845>.

4.2 To what extent were the monitoring and reporting systems useful to track and demonstrate progress towards expected outcomes and to inform management decisions?

Finding 24. The current monitoring and evaluation system favours output data collection. Outcome indicators capture only a portion of WFP work, with a particularly notable gap in country capacity strengthening, which represents an important part of the CSP efforts. The CSP has seen efforts to enhance WFP staff engagement with data and to enhance dissemination of findings. Nonetheless, knowledge-sharing and learning from CSP implementation could be significantly improved.

182. The collection and dissemination of data is thorough and well-planned, both internally through management meetings and events, and externally through working groups and government channels. However, the **utilization of this data to influence the direction of programming is limited**, and the data is predominantly used for corporate and donor reporting and compliance.¹⁸¹ A data-centred learning culture is still in its infancy, despite efforts of the monitoring and evaluation team to push this agenda forward.¹⁸² An oversight mission from the regional bureau in Nairobi recommended stronger links be made between assessments and implementation.¹⁸³

183. Funding constraints prevent more frequent data collection and have shaped the breadth and depth of monitoring efforts. Post-distribution monitoring has been reduced in frequency from twice annually to annually due to the time and monetary commitment it requires. The mid-term review noted that post-distribution monitoring was no longer relevant for cash-based programmes that operate digitally. Real-time monitoring of food consumption would provide a lower cost, constituting a more agile data collection to influence decision making. More recently, the country office has developed this capability through its mVAM solution.

184. The limitations in corporate indicators have created a barrier to effective reporting of achievements,¹⁸⁴ particularly with regards to country capacity strengthening but also in respect to SBCC for nutrition, climate change, and SO5 (findings 10, 12 and 15). Interviews highlighted the fact that the focus of country capacity strengthening indicators is solely on selected outputs of national capacity strengthening activities – for example, number of policies written – and therefore does not capture activities aimed at decentralized government or community capacity strengthening, something which is present across the portfolio including in SO4 programming. Country capacity strengthening indicators also do not capture the eventual changes in delivery that emanate from enhanced skills and systems. To remedy weaknesses in outcome reporting, the SO4 team have more recently introduced new measures that are more appropriate (for example, the FtMA logframe, a new results framework for the *Shora Neza* programme) and have a team member dedicated to the management of the data collected. This will enable stronger learning. However, this system is managed in parallel with the overall country office monitoring system and is not integrated with the overall VAM function.

185. The (m)VAM capability provides a valuable resource to the Government with the ability to collect and analyse data, which covers more than WFP activities. More recently the country office produced a VAM strategy to position its expertise both within WFP and externally. VAM assessments supported the 2020 landslides response, though the Government is now able to conduct needs assessments independently, such as after the May 2023 floods and landslides.

186. The link between output indicators and progress against outcome indicators is not strong and raises issues about indicator adequacy in capturing progress towards envisioned outcomes. For example, despite achieving output targets of SBCC for nutrition under SO1, families with poor food consumption scores remain higher than envisaged and insufficient children are receiving an acceptable diet. In the absence of data needed to understand the specific constraints, this limits learning that could inform changes in programming.

¹⁸¹ KII.

¹⁸² Sources include MTR 2022 and WFP 2021 McGovern Dole Evaluation Report 2016-2021.

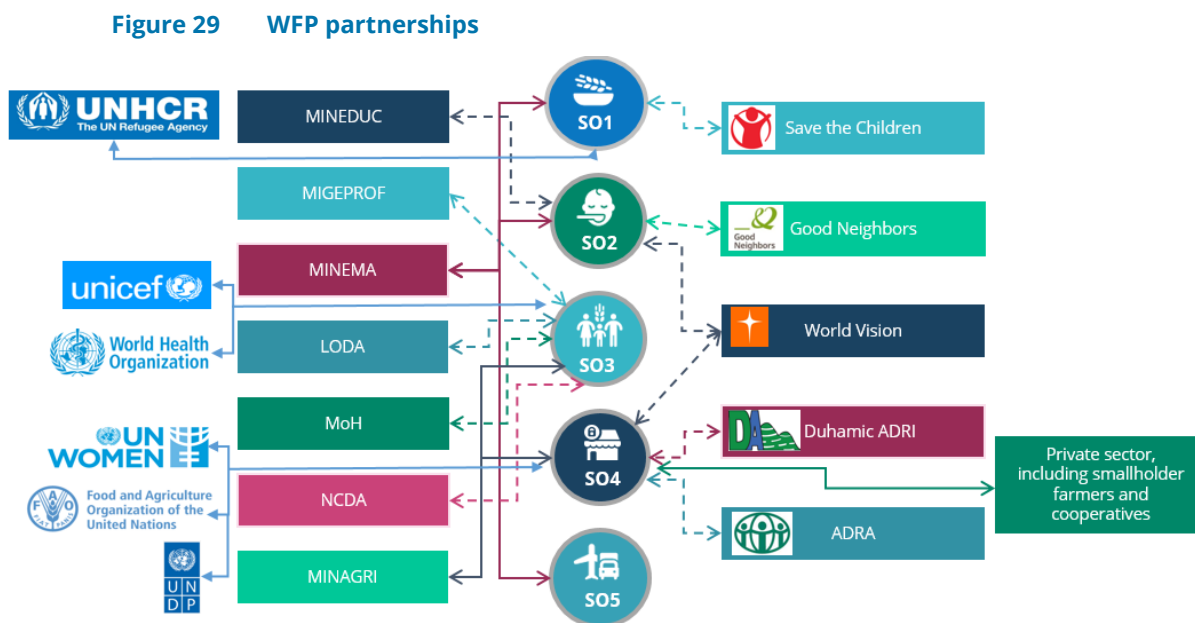
¹⁸³ RBN oversight mission VAM and M&E - 20-24 January 2020.

¹⁸⁴ MTR, 2022.

4.3 How did the partnerships and collaborations with other actors influence performance and results?

Finding 25. The CSP has seen a growth in private sector partnerships under SO4. The relationship with the Government has expanded to include new ministries and stronger district-level engagement. The relationship of WFP with cooperating partners also evolved to allow for stronger technical engagement by partners. However, challenges persist related to contracting and partnering with women's organizations. WFP engagement with partners has at times lacked consistency.

187. WFP has actively and strategically worked together with a range of different partners. The most significant United Nations, government, and NGO partnerships are shown in Figure 29.



Source: Evaluation team analysis.

188. WFP maintains strong partnerships with the Government, United Nations agencies, NGOs and increasingly with the private sector. WFP has longstanding relationships with the Government. Under the CSP some of these relationships saw significant strengthening, such as with LODA, and MINEMA. With the upscaling of country capacity strengthening, the relationship with the Government at the district level also evolved, including through WFP support to district planning processes, as well as training and systems strengthening work (see also Annex 11). Other engagements predated the CSP, such as with MINEDUC but with the relationship evolving as a result of the role of WFP in supporting the NSFP, including in terms of support to the inter-sectoral government engagement and in key areas such as financing and procurement. External interview informants presented a mixed view on partnerships, with some gaps noted in consistency of engagement. Government interviews were overall positive about the relationship with WFP. Respondents to the partner e-survey noted that strong engagement with ministries will be key to increasing the impact of WFP efforts. Some informants were of the view that this necessitates a stronger capacity in political economy analysis and stronger internal WFP capacity to maintain consistent levels of engagement across its priority areas, noting for example that WFP engagement in nutrition had dropped due to staff turnover, with the international position not being replaced.¹⁸⁵

189. WFP maintains overall strong collaboration with United Nations agencies, including with UNICEF (in nutrition), UNHCR (in refugee response) and other United Nations agencies through joint programmes in social protection¹⁸⁶ and gender¹⁸⁷ and through participation in United Nations coordination mechanisms

¹⁸⁵ Annex 2.

¹⁸⁶ Accelerating Integrated Policy Interventions to Promote Social Protection in Rwanda.

¹⁸⁷ JPRWEE adopts a holistic approach to rural women's economic empowerment, building on each agency's comparative advantage and strengths to improve the status of women in rural areas.

including for fundraising and technical coordination. At the time of the evaluation, opportunities for stronger joint work between FAO and WFP in the food systems sphere and shock responsive social protection were being explored.

190. **The relationship with NGOs has evolved considerably over the CSP** from a relationship that was perceived as mainly transactional to a more genuine mutual partnership.¹⁸⁸ The CSP has also seen a move to multi-year contracts, which has strengthened the links with cooperating partners. In the field, partnerships have been strongly supported by the field office staff who play a role in supporting cooperating partners with advice, and in linking with WFP and partners at the national level. The recent decentralization of functions to field office-level is expected to further contribute to a positive evolution of this relationship. However, some NGOs operating at the field level have expressed challenges stemming from contract breaks caused by field-level agreement renewals. These disruptions occasionally lead to delays or untimely provision of resources, which is particularly critical in the agricultural context. It was also noted in interviews that with the field-level agreement system operating on the basis of advance payments, organizations with the potential to be strong partners but lacking the financial capacity for pre-financing are potentially excluded from collaborating with WFP.

191. **It has also been challenging to establish partnerships with women's organizations.** This reflects a weak external environment, and the aforementioned gender capacity issues internally in the country office. While the updated Rwanda Country Office Partnership Action Plan mentions collaboration with UN Women, it does not specifically highlight plans for stronger engagement with women's organizations.¹⁸⁹

192. **WFP has made progress towards stronger and more innovative partnerships with the private sector, mostly in its work with cooperatives and smallholder farmers.** As noted already under SO4 a key component of the WFP value chain work and strengthening linkages to market has been through the use of strategic partners, both in terms of partners implementing initiatives with cooperatives, and in terms of forging stronger links to aggregators and private sector processors. The evolution in the relationship with private sector partners under the CSP, and the role of WFP in facilitating and brokering linkages where they were not strong, represents a valuable lesson for the next CSP. The Rwanda Country Office Partnership Action Plan¹⁹⁰ acknowledges the importance of scaling up this relationship for financial and technical reasons but does not capture the evolution of this particular relationship and how it could be leveraged in the future.

193. **WFP actively collaborates with donors and development partners** to secure the necessary funding, technical support and resources for its operations. Notably, WFP has received commendation from USAID for its exceptional work in the field of school feeding. Additionally, WFP has established a strategic partnership with the IFC of the World Bank, focusing on key areas such as access to finance, cooperative governance, gender equality and leadership in agribusiness. Although this partnership does not provide financial support, it has successfully trained a significant number of women leaders and has positively influenced JPRWEE. SO2 also has a written agreement on areas of complementarity with the World Bank in social protection that includes areas such as disaster risk financing, climate-sensitive public works and operational systems strengthening.

¹⁸⁸ KII with external stakeholders.

¹⁸⁹ WFP Rwanda. 2023. Rwanda Country Office Partnership Action Plan (updated version).

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

4.4 To what extent did the country office have appropriate human resources capacity to deliver on the CSP?

Finding 26. WFP staff are recognized by partners for their significant commitment, responsiveness and expertise. The CSP-envisioned enhanced staffing profiles to match country capacity strengthening ambitions, as well as gender-transformative goals, have not been realized. While management has been significantly engaged in national dialogue and consultation, capacity in selected areas affected consistency and continuity of engagement and progress, including in fundraising. Opportunities exist to improve internal management of the portfolio to enhance coherence and to ensure a more even and strengthened set of skills across strategic outcome leads.

194. The CSP appropriately recognized the need to align the country office operational structure with the WFP-envisioned role of upscaled engagement and promotion of national ownership. The CSP envisioned the promotion of national staff, recruitment of new technical expertise, progressive capacity strengthening, the need for enhanced gender competencies and gender parity in the workforce, and greater autonomy of field offices through enhanced delegation of authority and accountability. At the time of the evaluation reporting, the country office was about to embark on its first human resource alignment exercise to review staffing in light of the next CSP.

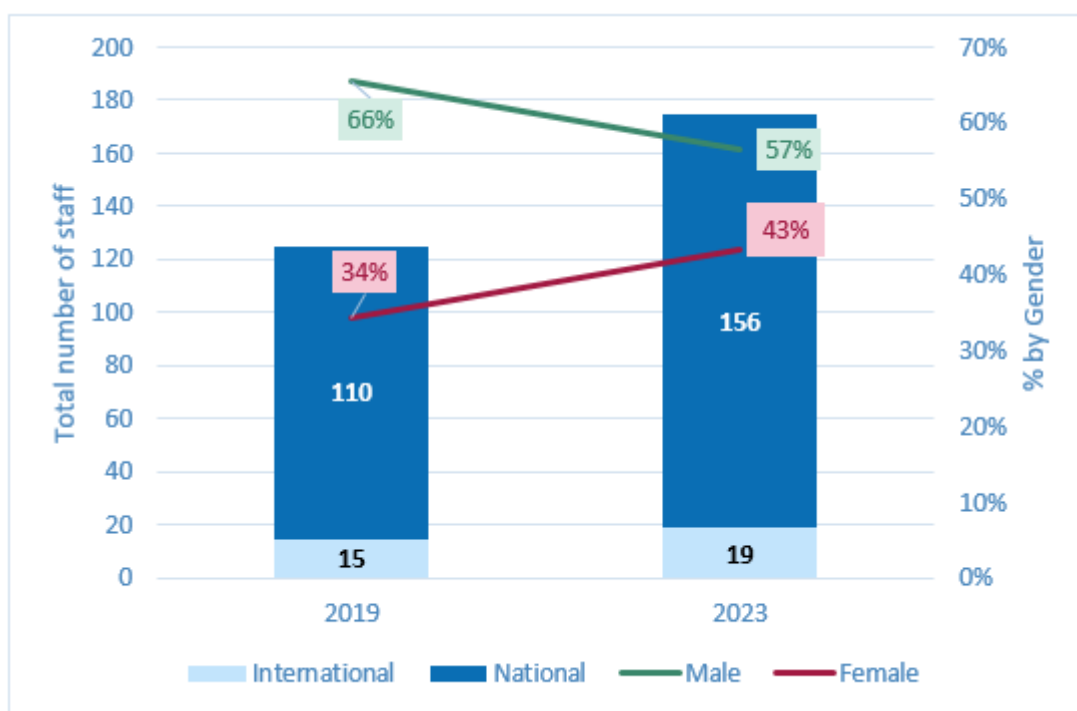
195. WFP senior management is recognized for its constructive engagement with the Government and with the United Nations, and for its efforts to be complementary to the work of others, as well as for its pursuit of specific priority advocacy agendas.¹⁹¹ WFP country office and field office staff are recognized by partners for their commitment to, and responsiveness in, dealing with a large and complex portfolio and for being proactive to developments and to the needs of a changing context. The CSP period has seen attempts at evolution of staff mindset to adjust to new roles. This evolution reflects efforts at internal coaching, dialogue between staff, and between strategic outcomes on ambitions, common issues and challenges, and WFP efforts at learning.¹⁹² The WFP WeLearn platform has been useful to new recruits (interns) in understanding the organization and its priorities. However, there has been insufficient funding for skills development to ensure the role of WFP in the changing lives domain.

196. The CSP introduced new positions, particularly at the field office-level and new responsibilities. The country office has grown over the period of the CSP (125 staff members to 175 staff members see Figure 30). The increase is predominantly in national staff in the job categories of: general service (GS) field; service contract (GS and professional (Pro)); and special services agreements (SSA) field (GS and Pro). Field offices now have much more decision making responsibility over activities in the field. The geographic coverage provided by the field offices is seen as a key competitive advantage of WFP, which allows real-time monitoring of interventions, and rapid responses to challenges as they emerge. This was seen as particularly important during COVID-19 lockdowns when field office staff were in situ and the only source for monitoring data due to travel restrictions across Rwanda. It was also referenced by external partners as a key added value of the WFP presence and during field work as being a major advantage for field-level cooperating partners who can approach the field office to discuss or address issues as they arise.

¹⁹¹ KII

¹⁹² MTR, 2022.

Figure 30 WFP Rwanda staff 2019 and 2023



Source: Staff data provided by Rwanda country office (July 2023).

197. **However, staffing has remained inadequately aligned with needs.** According to the organogram, positions in the country office largely remained the same (same titles and positions), and it has proven challenging to attract and recruit the right calibre of staff for the CSP. No human resource plan or strategy was developed to accompany the current CSP and while there was an increase in staff overall the positions remained the same. As a result, and as concluded in the mid-term review, the country office remains insufficiently equipped for an enabling or country capacity strengthening role.¹⁹³ Senior national expertise for the upstream role of WFP has not been sufficient, in particular in country capacity strengthening, but also more broadly to substantially understand the political economy and to identify issues and opportunities, a fact that was emphasized both in external interviews and by WFP staff internally. Figure 31 shows the change in contract types over the CSP period. Staffing gaps further reduced engagement and affected continuity. For example, the country office has not been able to secure the critically important role of an expert in fundraising.¹⁹⁴ The monitoring and evaluation function, and nutrition (SO3 lead) functions have both been vacant for long periods, with the latter filled by national staff temporarily. Gaps were also noted in capacity related to climate expertise and sufficient staff time for the gender portfolio.

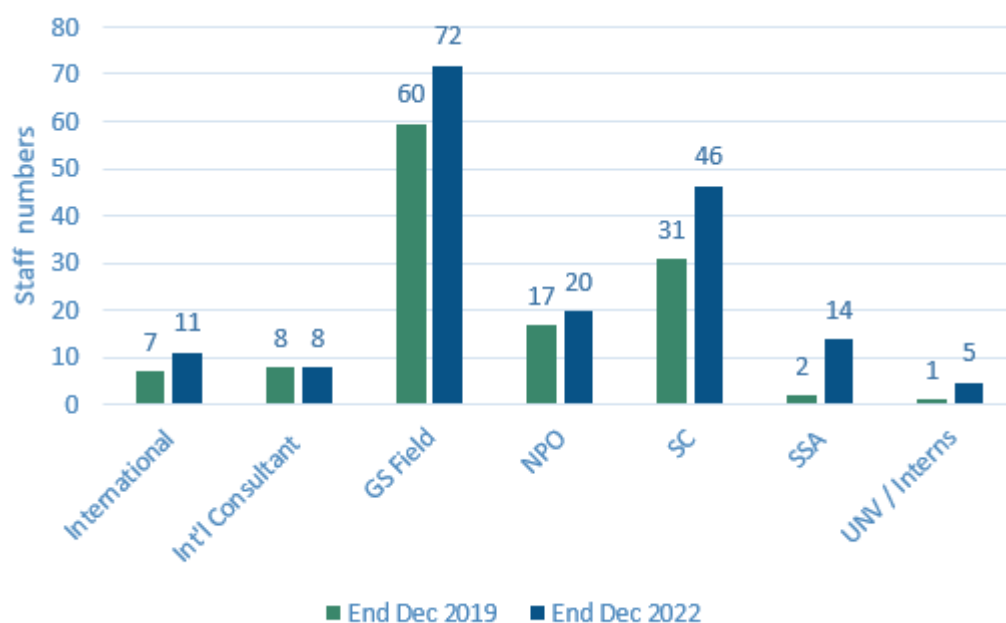
198. **In the case of national senior-level expertise, the competitive external environment, funding constraints, and insufficiently attractive contracts have made it difficult to attract the right profiles,** although some senior (valued) national expertise has been secured through the outposted technical assistance positions, but with similar limitations in terms of contract duration. In the evaluation staff e-survey both the office structure and the expertise of current staff were raised as two significant issues hindering CSP implementation.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ MTR 2022 and survey responses.

¹⁹⁴ MTR, 2022.

¹⁹⁵ Hindrance to CSP implementation: CO structure/organogram 19 percent 'noticeable effect', 22 percent 'moderate effect'; adequacy and expertise of staff 22 percent 'noticeable effect', 16 percent 'moderate effect'. Source: internal stakeholder e-survey, April 2023 (n=71).

Figure 31 WFP Rwanda staff numbers by contract type 2019-2022



Source: staff data provided by Rwanda country office (July 2023).

199. Changing priorities have put additional strains on country office capacity but have mostly been managed well. The change in strategic direction from implementation to country capacity strengthening has required additional skills, necessitating short-term consultants. Within SO4 there remains a need to recruit staff with specific skills experience in enhancing market linkages and analysis to inform design of activities (in terms of both political economy skills and gender analysis). To enhance linkages between activities and the government programmes, the country office has also seconded staff to key ministries. Secondments have enabled strong communication with the Government and allowed WFP to be responsive to government requests in a timely manner. An overview of these outposted positions under the CSP, and a more detailed discussion of their value, can be found in Annex 11.

200. The WFP organogram has presented some challenges for effective management, together with the uneven profile of strategic outcome leads. The organizational structure of the country office has seen three strategic outcomes report to the head of programmes (HoP) and one (SO4) to the deputy country director (DCD), with implications for coherence and effectiveness of decision making, as well as sharing across teams. In addition, some strategic outcome lead positions, as well as technical staff-level positions, have been filled by staff members who do not match the envisioned profile, in part due to funding constraints and changing priorities. Thus, the SO1 manager position was never filled and has been led by a national staff member rather than the envisioned P3 level staff member due to funding constraints. The SO4 lead position was never recruited, but rather covered by a smallholder agriculture market support (SAMS) manager. At the time of the evaluation, recruitment of a new SO4 manager was ongoing, but with reservations about whether the position could be filled with a candidate of the right calibre. And some of the engagements with new partners - such as foundations, which are potentially critical for future funding opportunities - have been managed by relatively junior staff.

201. Gaps in capacity are in evidence and corporate support from headquarters and the regional bureau in strengthening the country office's human resource capabilities have been insufficient. WFP work in gender, accountability to affected populations and protection has been accumulated into a single position, which, in light of the heavy workload on accountability to affected populations, has seen the capacity to pursue a gender agenda being reduced. Gaps in technical skill sets to match WFP areas of engagement were also in evidence. WFP does not have sufficient in-house capacity in DRRM, and climate

and environmental issues, and it has been up to the individual initiatives of staff members to acquire expertise.¹⁹⁶

202. WFP human resource capacity includes its access to support from the regional bureau in Nairobi. This support has been variable and has not always met needs. Enhanced support was provided on engagement with new foundations (Novo Nordisk and Rockefeller). In gender there have been significant gaps as the position (regionally) has seen turnover and remained unfilled for periods during the CSP, affecting support to the Rwanda country office's gender work. There has been some support in school feeding and for the climate agenda from the regional level, but with limited corporate support to the Rwanda country office's needs in terms of fundraising expertise. Rwanda's position in the region (relatively stable small country in a region with significant crises, and small size of the programme) has meant limited visibility on the radar of the regional bureau in Nairobi and headquarters priorities (including in terms of funding opportunities), and this has also contributed to insufficient support.

203. Achieving gender parity in staffing has remained challenging. WFP management has a strong representation of women (country director (CD), deputy country director, and one strategic outcome lead) as well as there being strong representation of women in international positions (two thirds are held by women). However, the gender balance for national staff remains strongly in favour of men and it has been challenging to get good women candidates in the final shortlist for national positions. The WFP internship programme is attracting committed young women professionals into the organization. However, there are opportunities to further structure the internship experience with clearer expectations at the start and training in support of the expectations of the position.

4.5 What are the other factors that can explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the CSP?

Finding 27. Strongly conducive government leadership supported programme design and delivery. However, a highly challenging funding environment, an escalation of external shocks and evolving global and political developments have posed challenges to CSP implementation.

204. The Government has a strong policy framework with clear priorities and requires development partners to contribute to these. It also has its own internal systems for accountability with strict performance indicators. Government policies and their enforcement mechanisms have thus formed the backdrop and provided a considerable impetus and sense of direction for WFP work. As one interviewee said to the evaluation team: "in Rwanda it is impossible not to be aligned and coherent with government priorities".

205. Funding challenges have affected WFP capacity to implement its programming as planned at different levels. Rwanda represents a challenging funding environment for United Nations agencies, with the majority of donor resources being channelled directly to the Government. While the country office has been (mostly) successful in maintaining funding from its core donors, this has been a constant challenge, and the anticipated uplift in income and donor diversity have not materialized, nor has there been expressed appetite from partners to fund the WFP enabling and capacity strengthening roles. As a result, some WFP efforts in upstream work (for example in social protection), while appreciated and valued externally, have seen the funding being directed to other sources, mainly the Government. This raises questions about the framing of the role of WFP in a context like Rwanda and about ways in which to fund enabling and capacity strengthening work – questions that many United Nations agencies face. As noted in the mid-term review, opportunities exist that can be tapped, in particular from the experience of SO4 resourcing, but these will require a highly skilled team of strategic outcome leads to drive fundraising.

206. External shocks disrupted the work by WFP and its partners and undermined achievement of results. The COVID-19 pandemic required major adjustments in ways of working, and resulted in delays in some types of activities, for example, community mobilization and training. Sudden shocks such as recent floods and landslides have destroyed carefully built assets and represent a set-back to achievements (for example, for SO4 cooperatives located in the affected areas).

207. Evolving global political and economic developments brought additional challenges and strains for communities and affected results. New humanitarian crises have reduced available funding. Fluctuating

¹⁹⁶ KII.

food prices, in part due to developments in Ukraine, have created funding challenges as it meant WFP purchased less food for the same amount. This also impacted on beneficiaries who have seen their purchasing power decrease in the face of increasing food prices. During 2022, for instance, the weekly WFP price monitoring of key commodities in the vicinity of refugee camps has been increasing incrementally for much of that year.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ WFP Rwanda ACR 2022, p. 17 notes that the transfer value for highly vulnerable refugees of the average cost of the food basket was 10 percent lower by March 2022, decreasing to 52 percent by December 2022. For moderately vulnerable refugees, the cost of the food basket was 55 percent lower by March 2022, decreasing further to 76 percent by December 2022.

Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

208. The evaluation findings lead to the following main areas of conclusion. This section of the evaluation refers back to a number of the underlying assumptions in the reconstructed theory of change. A full review of those assumptions and their validity in light of evaluation findings can be found in Annex 5, Table 5.

Conclusion 1: The current value proposition of WFP with a dual focus on saving lives and changing lives and an enhanced country capacity strengthening role remains strongly relevant. Minor adjustments could enhance continued relevance.

209. The shift to the CSP has facilitated stronger working by WFP across the nexus. It has allowed WFP to progressively occupy a recognized position in the changing lives sphere, in particular in the domain of shock responsive social protection and nutrition-sensitive food systems. In both these domains, the Government and partners recognize the contribution of WFP and its added value, while continuing to value and emphasize the critical role of WFP in humanitarian and crisis response. While not significantly emphasized by WFP itself, the CSP has also provided a framework for contributing to social cohesion and stability through WFP efforts in meeting the nutrition and food security needs of the most vulnerable. In parallel, the focus on country capacity strengthening as a cross-cutting priority under the CSP has provided a significant springboard for more strategic engagement with the Government and partners. It has aligned well with the priorities of the Government, with the evolving United Nations role, and with the SDG agenda.

210. The strong policy context in Rwanda suggests that strategic positioning for vulnerable populations would come from pitching country capacity strengthening strategically at **enabling** policy implementation, with a focus primarily at subnational levels, in other words, strengthening the capacity of those who are at the forefront of delivery of policy promises. In a similar vein, value could come from using strategic influence to promoting linkages between actors that play a key role in policy implementation in favour of the needs of vulnerable populations.

Conclusion 2: Funding remains the biggest threat to the CSP ambitions.

211. A challenging funding environment has been a constant constraining factor on WFP work and is likely to remain the single biggest challenge for WFP – and for United Nations agencies more generally. The theory of change assumption related to funding (Assumption 2) is therefore only partially supported.

212. The most immediate threat in this context is the reduction in funding for the refugee response, which is an area that is receiving attention by both WFP and UNHCR. Geopolitical realities suggest that the refugee response will remain one that will need WFP support and where WFP has to meet its mandate. Even greater efforts will be needed to identify solutions in coordination with the Government and partners, including in upscaled efforts for livelihood consolidation and to achieve full graduation of beneficiaries no longer needing support.

213. More broadly, it is clear that the CSP design will need to frame ambitions with a clear recognition of the funding reality, and the likely challenges in obtaining conventional and traditional funding for the upstream country capacity strengthening role. WFP (as an organization and including the regional and headquarters levels) will need to equip itself internally and enhance its capacity to mobilize resources for delivery and to further enhance efficiencies in its way of operating. CSP success with fundraising from selected private partners under SO4 and in building innovative partnerships (focused on brokering and shared contribution to outcomes) should provide inspiration for new types of engagement under the next CSP in light of funding realities. Continued funding realities also suggest that the next CSP will need to reflect careful and precise choices around where WFP work and engagement adds more value.

Conclusion 3: The CSP performed well against planned outputs and selected outcomes in social safety nets and nutrition-sensitive food systems where activities have been scaled up. Performance against planned targets for the refugee response and nutrition work was weaker and limited by funding constraints. WFP responded well and flexibly to external shocks. However, CSP work has not always focused on the most vulnerable and sustainability of WFP work remains challenging.

214. WFP has delivered valued support in the humanitarian sphere through cash-based transfers to refugees, combined with nutrition support, although with persistent, funding-related, challenges in fully meeting the needs of vulnerable persons. WFP strategies were mostly effective and appropriate and sought to identify and respond to the most vulnerable, although with gaps noted in SO1 (some vulnerable beneficiaries excluded) and SO4 (beneficiaries who are not the most vulnerable farmers), and some challenges in communication of targeting to SO1 beneficiaries. The humanitarian role of WFP will remain relevant and partners, including the Government, will continue to look towards WFP as a key actor in this sphere. In a complementary manner, WFP also worked effectively on a range of resilience building activities.

215. A commendable strengthening of social protection policy frameworks is evident and was facilitated with inputs over the CSP period. Examples include important policy and strategy work in shock responsive social protection and school feeding and WFP contributing to a stronger recognition of the importance of shock responsive social protection. These efforts were combined with the strengthening of government and partner capacities and systems at national and decentralized levels. Efforts also included a range of technical support as well as advocacy across CSP priorities, which has seen strong support by WFP senior management. Notwithstanding significant funding constraints, the CSP period also saw an important scale-up in the coverage of beneficiaries in selected priority CSP areas, in particular through the expansion of school feeding to a national scale – an area where WFP country capacity strengthening efforts have been commendable and significant and where WFP has developed a proof of concept that led to the eventual national ownership of the programme. WFP engagement also brought about a significant expansion of support to farmer cooperatives with activities covering all of Rwanda's districts at the time of the evaluation.

216. Over the CSP, WFP demonstrated its added value in the country capacity strengthening domain by mobilizing, positioning and delivering expertise and support that has been well aligned with government and partner needs, including in response to changing priorities. CSP implementation has allowed WFP to strengthen its understanding and skills in country capacity strengthening across the individual, organizational and enabling spheres. This has been done with limited resources and by strong collaboration and synergies across strategic outcomes. The theory of change assumptions around government country capacity strengthening uptake and government staffing are both supported (assumptions 6 and 8). Value could be gained from more precisely defining WFP strategic positioning in the country capacity strengthening sphere, informed by the identification of niche areas – such as shock responsive social protection, school feeding, and linking smallholder farmers to markets – where WFP can continue to add value to the work of other partners. Under funding pressure, CSP performance has also been strong in using limited resources carefully and seeking alternative means of delivery that reduce costs and time.

217. The WFP funding profile supported strong performance in some areas of the portfolio, such as school feeding. Performance was impeded in areas of the portfolio where it has been particularly hard to mobilize funding, such as for the planned focus on refugee graduation through livelihoods and the CSP nutrition ambitions. Stronger resource mobilization efforts will likely only partially address these gaps, suggesting that solutions may need to come from other efforts, such as smart partnering – identifying and working with partners that complement WFP skills and inputs and that can advance agendas by adding technical knowledge, outreach, and/or financial resources – to achieve these important government goals.

218. The CSP clearly identified priorities in terms of vulnerable populations and some areas of the portfolio have performed strongly in focusing on specific categories of those most in need. However, WFP support to farmer cooperatives likely excluded the most vulnerable groups, although seen as a logical choice from the perspective of being able to achieve results. This constitutes a lesson in terms of stronger up-front identification of barriers to participation in WFP work and identifying specific approaches and measures for

inclusion. In a similar vein, disability inclusion remains to be adequately recognized as a priority and emerges as an area for stronger attention in future programming and delivery.

219. Finally, CSP funding, project design and implementation have not sufficiently supported sustainability with a number of initiatives – including pilots – running the risk of not seeing benefits sustained after WFP-supported interventions end. Sustaining hard-won gains, and ensuring environmental sustainability in light of climate challenges and increasing shocks similarly remains a key concern, which is shared with United Nations partners and the Government.

Conclusion 4 - The CSP has successfully fostered multiple internal linkages across strategic outcomes and enabled some strategic partnerships, which have supported innovations, efficiency and CSP results across a relatively wide portfolio.

220. The Rwanda CSP has been implemented in an integrated way, which has supported (i) efficiency and (ii) nexus delivery. Significant progress has been made over the CSP period in programme integration with CSP implementation and results in many cases reflecting joint efforts across different CSP strategic outcome teams, and strong collaboration with field office and WFP partners. Integrating technical inputs from the supply chain function across strategic outcomes also contributed to delivering effective results. In a challenging funding context, the search for efficiency has been a key driver for integration. The theory of change Assumption 7 around synergies for delivery and work across the nexus is broadly supported by the evaluation findings, although inevitably there are opportunities for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of such joint work.

221. The CSP has also applied innovative approaches, including a focus on market linkages, strengthening value chains, cash-based transfers, and climate-smart agriculture, as well as its work on exploring financial and technological innovations, promoting knowledge sharing and enhancing social innovation. WFP partnerships evolved to include new and different actors, in particular through SO4, and constitute important progress under this CSP. Partnership lessons from the SO4 component merit further analysis and application across the portfolio. WFP innovations and pilots were not, however, consistently aligned with specific WFP priorities, nor to prospects for scaling and uptake. An emphasis on longer-term planning and strategic partnerships within programmatic areas to reduce the relatively wide range of activities and to focus on niche areas where WFP adds value, could enhance performance, efficiency and sustainability further and is likely to be a key necessity in a funding space that will continue to be extremely constrained in the future.

Conclusion 5: The CSP progressed WFP cross-cutting priorities in accountability to affected populations, humanitarian principles, protection and gender, all of which WFP can build on for the next CSP. Disability inclusion needs enhanced attention, and opportunities exist for an upscaled focus on gender transformation.

222. Good progress has been made over the CSP implementation on accountability to affected populations with the vast majority of beneficiaries now accessing complaints feedback mechanisms and evidence of use of this information and feedback to beneficiaries. Protection and humanitarian principles have been well integrated and received prioritized attention throughout.

223. The CSP design, country office staff and management commitment and a conducive external environment have seen the CSP make inroads into gender mainstreaming in spite of staffing and funding challenges. This is reflected in the CSP having mainstreamed attention to gender throughout its portfolio, and the generation of valuable experience through specific initiatives such as the JPRWEE. These efforts have allowed WFP to comply with corporate requirements on gender sensitivity across its different areas of work and has seen WFP being recognized as a gender advocate. However, the CSP has stopped short of reaching CSP ambitions around gender transformation. While valuable experience was gained in gender-transformative approaches through JPRWEE and is part of the new SMART project, gender-transformative efforts remain to be expanded to most other areas of WFP work.

224. The needs and rights of persons with disabilities remained unaddressed in CSP implementation and require urgent attention. While included in the CSP design, the CSP did not substantially support United Nations commitments on disability inclusion nor did it advance on WFP priorities for disability inclusion as reflected in the WFP Disability Inclusion Road Map, which was approved after the CSP, with only few and disparate examples of attention to disability in evidence during the evaluation, some of which reflect partner - rather than WFP - prioritization.

Conclusion 6: CSP environmental priorities have not matched the scale and importance of Rwanda's climate challenges.

225. In line with the organization's policy on climate change,¹⁹⁸ the CSP has seen efforts to reduce climate change impacts on hunger. This is reflected in WFP CSP work on strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate-related hazards through direct support to vulnerable communities, as well as engagement in the policy space.

226. As documented in this evaluation, these efforts have helped buffer some of the negative impacts of increasing climate shocks but have also drawn attention to opportunities for scale-up in advocacy and working with partners (including at decentralized levels) and weaknesses such as vulnerability of assets created and challenges in maintenance. Attention to environmental priorities has not been uniform across the portfolio. More urgently, and as consistently expressed by stakeholders, it needs significant further upscaling to match the pressing and increasing climate risks that Rwanda faces as one of the more vulnerable countries in Africa.

Conclusion 7: WFP organizational structure, management and monitoring arrangements and staffing have not been optimally aligned with the needs of the CSP.

227. While the CSP recognized the need for a different set of organizational skills for programme implementation, CSP promises around putting in place the capacity for its upstream role remained mostly unfulfilled over the period. Assumption 3 of the theory of change is therefore only partially met.

228. There are challenges related to recruitment of the right type and calibre of skillsets (in particular in the areas of gender expertise, fundraising and political economy analysis), but also challenges in terms of years of staff experience and inefficiencies in delivery, such as duplications of work between WFP and cooperating partners. In addition, internal management arrangements have not been optimal in ensuring coherent oversight over the full set of strategic outcomes.

229. Efforts on data collection have responded to corporate and donor needs. However, the gaps in outcome indicators left significant areas of learning and performance uncaptured. This includes almost all the work that WFP has done under SO4 as well as WFP efforts across the portfolio in country capacity strengthening.

230. The upcoming staff realignment exercise should position WFP Rwanda well for addressing capacity gaps provided resources for positions can be secured. A stand-alone supportive function for monitoring and evaluation (rather than being under SO2), together with stronger arrangements for CSP implementation and programme management could address the most significant weaknesses.

231.

¹⁹⁸ WFP 2017. Climate Change Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	Maintain a dual focus on saving lives and changing lives for the next CSP, ensuring adequate support for refugee self-reliance and appropriate links across the portfolio.	Strategic	Country office management	Country office units: Programme; Human Resources; External Partnerships and Communication	High	
1.1	Ensure that the next CSP identifies a set of priorities for engagement in areas where WFP adds value to the work of other partners and that reduce the breadth of WFP's portfolio. This will involve making some difficult choices about which activities should be maintained and which should be dropped. WFP may consider focusing on areas where its added value is recognized, such as shock-responsive social protection and nutrition-sensitive food systems.					1.1. First quarter 2024 (as part of the development of the next CSP)
1.2	Further enhance programme integration to improve the self-reliance and integration of refugees.					1.2 First quarter 2025 (as part of the development of the next CSP)
2	Continue to pursue a multi-pronged approach to country capacity strengthening, informed by a corresponding strategy, well-defined expected outcomes and enhanced monitoring.	Strategic	Country office programme unit	Country office units: Programme; Monitoring and Evaluation/ Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping; Human Resources	High	
2.1	Define WFP's enabling role based on its experience with school feeding operations in Rwanda and ensure a consistent focus on that enabling role throughout its work. In the context of its enabling role, WFP should identify how its efforts in areas such as policy and systems strengthening will lead to concrete changes for vulnerable beneficiaries and should ensure that its efforts are articulated with those of partners in a clear chain of actions from the enabling functions to delivery. WFP's engagement in enabling					2.1. Second quarter 2024, with follow-up over the period of CSP implementation

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	work should anticipate how its efforts in areas such as policy and systems strengthening will lead to concrete changes for vulnerable beneficiaries and integrate engagement with partners in the chain of actions from these enabling functions to delivery.					
2.2	Refocus the enabling role of WFP firmly on supporting the implementation (including at the subnational level) of the policies of the Government of Rwanda in social protection, nutrition and support for smallholder farmers rather than the development of new policies or strategies.					2.2. First quarter 2025, with follow-up over the period of CSP implementation
2.3	Equip WFP with strong internal national expertise to deepen its understanding of the political economy and use this knowledge to inform WFP's approach to country capacity strengthening.					2.3. Fourth quarter 2024
3	Strengthen WFP's organizational readiness for the implementation of the next CSP.	Operational	Country office management	Country office units: Programme; Human Resources; Monitoring and Evaluation/ Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping; Supply Chain; Budget and Programming. Support required from the regional bureau.	High	
3.1	Consolidate internal management oversight of humanitarian and development programmes under a single head of programme to enhance synergies and facilitate internal learning.					3.1. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
3.2	Ensure that WFP has a comprehensive monitoring function that is relevant to Rwanda and can adequately capture progress in all areas of its portfolio, including those currently not covered (work under strategic outcome 4 and WFP's enabling and capacity strengthening initiatives).					3.2. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
3.3	Ensure that work under the various strategic outcomes is supported by dedicated staff with appropriate expertise, including in resource mobilization.					3.3. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.4	Assign dedicated senior experts to WFP's climate change and gender-transformative work (one position each) and provide them with access to training and other capacity development opportunities as needed for these positions.					3.4. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
3.5	Establish a fully integrated supply chain by integrating supply chain budgeting with CSP budgeting and by ensuring that supply chain operations are covered by monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms.					3.5. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
3.6	Capture learning from smallholder agriculture market support initiatives on innovative partnerships, the brokering of partnerships and collaboration, and financing. Use this learning to inform WFP's broader efforts to strengthen partnerships for CSP implementation.					3.6. Second quarter 2024, to inform the roll-out of the next CSP
4	Strengthen WFP's approach to disability inclusion across its portfolio and scale up the focus on gender-related issues in all its work.	Operational	Country office programme unit	Country office units: Gender and Protection; External Partnerships and Communication; Monitoring and Evaluation/ Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping	Medium	
4.1	Ensure that the next CSP takes full account of disability inclusion across all strategic outcomes, with annual monitoring against disability inclusion targets. At the start of implementation, conduct a study on disability inclusion and identify entry points for interventions and their implications for WFP programming and targeting.					4.1. Fourth quarter 2024 (for inclusion in the design of activities under the next CSP)
4.2	Informed by WFP analyses of gender-related issues, clearly identify entry points, strategies and targets for all CSP programmatic areas to seize opportunities for achieving gender-transformative results in all relevant areas of WFP's portfolio. Conduct regular monitoring and learning exercises to					4.2. Fourth quarter 2024 (for inclusion in the design of activities under the next CSP)

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	gauge WFP's progress in implementing its plans and achieving its targets in relation to gender equality.					
4.3	Engage partners with strong expertise in gender issues and pursue strategic partnerships with government institutions, NGOs, women's associations, associations for disabled persons and sister United Nations entities (in particular the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Development Programme) that can advance progress towards the aims of the new CSP with regard to gender equality and disability inclusion.					4.3. Third quarter 2024 (for inclusion in the design of activities under the next CSP)
4.4	Ensure enhanced visibility of and attention to gender and disability concerns by allocating dedicated country office technical and financial resources to both of these priority areas.					4.4. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
5	Significantly increase WFP's focus on the environment and climate change throughout the next CSP, with attention to preparedness, mitigation and adaptation, and continue to reduce the carbon footprint of WFP's work in Rwanda.	Operational	Country office programme unit	Country office units: Programme; Monitoring and Evaluation/ Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping	High	
5.1	Conduct an environmental assessment of WFP's ways of working to identify how they can be optimized to reduce the organization's carbon footprint.					5.1. Second quarter 2025
5.2	Refocus WFP's environmental and climate change work with regard to mitigation, adaptation and emergency preparedness and ensure attention is given to key climate change issues across all of WFP's work.					5.2. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.3	At the start of CSP implementation, conduct a comprehensive assessment of opportunities for and constraints to mainstreaming environmental and climate change considerations across WFP's portfolio and ensure that recommendations from the assessment are reflected in management priorities.					5.3. Second quarter 2025
6	Ensure that consideration is given to the sustainability of all activities in WFP's portfolio in a balanced manner, starting at the design phase, and increase the emphasis on partnerships and diversified funding sources in order to achieve programmatic ambitions.	Strategic	Country office management	Country office strategic outcome heads; country office; Budget and Programming unit; Head of Programme: country office; External Partnerships and Communication unit	High	
6.1	Design specific CSP programmes with outcomes and sustainability firmly in mind, paying attention to sustainability at the design phase, including in terms of its implications for partnerships and the timeframes of activities. Prioritize early planning for handover and exit strategies. Systematically audit new initiatives for their potential sustainability.					6.1. First quarter 2025 (in line with the start of the next CSP)
6.2	Set ambitious targets for innovative partnerships in the domain of refugee livelihoods and integration. Ensure strong links with the Mastercard Foundation project for women and young people.					6.2. Fourth quarter 2024 (to feed into the design of activities under the next CSP)
6.3	Scale up WFP's efforts to mobilize resources for refugee assistance and ensure that they are informed by a cost-benefit study of investments in livelihoods, in particular for women.					6.3. Second quarter 2024; with continued prioritization throughout implementation of the CSP

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